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PC REVIEW

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REVIEWS MANIA

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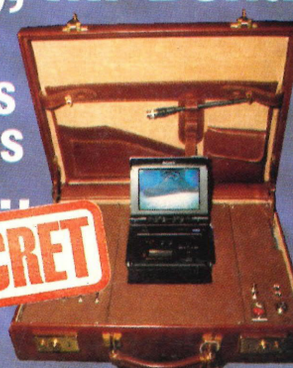




Nice toy, Mr Bond

PC gadgets the spies use...

TOP SECRET




Explore stra
seek out new civilisat
Wip

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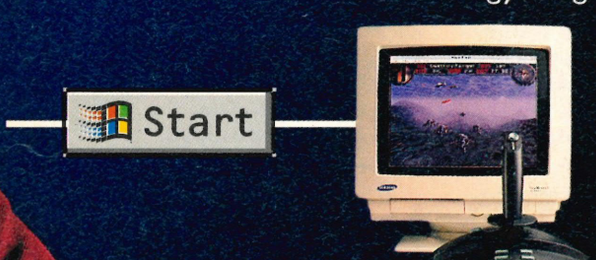
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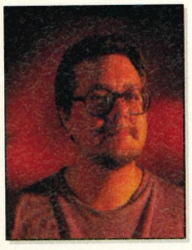
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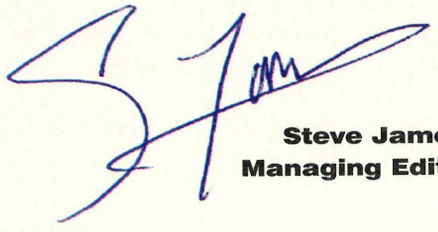
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January 1996 Issue 51



Of late, there's been a huge amount in the general press about the future of technology, and in particular the PC. Well thank heaven for small mercies... but when it comes to good old-fashioned hard information you're only going to get a true picture from specialist magazines like this. So, while bandwaggoners run articles about politicians and the PC, let's leave behind stories about Blair, Major and their 21st century play pens and get down to business. You don't have to be Mystic Meg to know, among all the other fantastic pursuits the PC offers, the majority of home owners will still be playing games well into the next millennium – but what will the software and the hardware to run it be like? That's the subject of this month's cover story. In the meantime I'm looking forward to something else – a good Christmas break. Hope you enjoy yours and I'll see you next year. Merry Xmas to each and every one of you!



Steve James,
Managing Editor

Competitions

WIN

There's a stonking £3000 worth of giveaways in this month's issue. On page 34 it's your chance to win a copy of Indycar Racing 2, to go with the excellent exclusive demo on our CD-ROM. And on page 46 there's a load of multimedia creation software up for grabs. Way to go!



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Coverdisc

Statistics, lies and damned statistics? Not really, just bloody damned fine statistics actually – like 28 programs, including four exclusive demos, 500 pieces of clip art, 1000 fonts and cheats for Command and Conquer. Timegate, Indycar 2, Touché and even the Rolling Stones compete for your attention.



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We've had the Russian revolution, the cultural revolution, and now at the tail-end of the century we've got a revolution in hardware. But what will it mean to the average gamer? PC Review boldly goes forward to the future.



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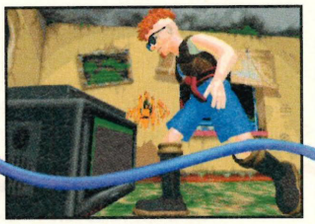
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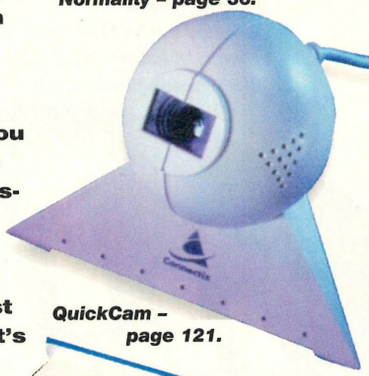
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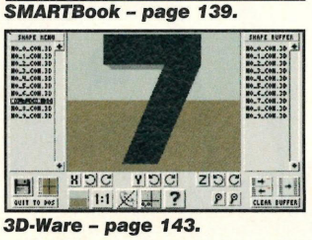
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The dream will never die...

Bigger, better, faster... the PC pushes entertainment to the infinite. That's the dream and naturally you want more. But how's it going to develop? In the first in a series of glimpses at the future, Adam Peters wonders if next gen graphics cards will send game players to paradise or into costly and bankrupt hell.

Cast your mind back a couple of years to the Dark Ages of PC gaming, the days when virtually every game was an identikit platformer, often bearing the name and characters from a movie from the previous year. How things have changed. Put out a flat 2D game now and you'll get laughed at.

Part of the reason for this shift must lie with the success of Doom and the slurry of first-person flat 3D maze games it spawned. Mainly, it's down to arcade machines, though. As they become more and more powerful, so they've started to utilise increasingly complex 3D hardware and software. And now the new generation of home consoles, attempting to replicate the arcades, live on a diet of 3D racing and fighting games.

Today's PCs have incredible processing power, massive hard disks... everything that's needed to run picture-perfect conversions of all the latest arcade games as well as any console. Everything, perhaps, except a dedicated graphics chip. But that's about to change as a tidal wave of 3D cards and chips threatens to flood the PC marketplace over the next few months.

First up there's the 3D Blaster from Creative Labs, who brought us the industry standard Sound Blaster sound card. Following closely on its heels comes the Diamond Edge, the first card to feature the NVIDIA NV-1 chip. Sega itself is producing PC versions of popular Saturn games for this chip. Arcade company and Playstation favourite Namco, meanwhile, is producing its own chip, in conjunction with NEC. The first card to use the NEC/Namco PowerVR chip will be manufactured by Video Logic and should be in the shops by the middle of 1996. A number of popular Playstation titles, including Tekken, will be available on this system. Also on the way are the first cards featuring the hotly-tipped (but still under wraps) Rendition chip. Even the Engineering Department of the University of Sussex is rumoured to have developed a 3D chip for the PC.

Do these cards represent the next step in PC gaming, or are they just another costly bit of kit? I need convincing, so I track down six people at the heart of the 3D revolution. Can they make sense of it all? Read on and find out...



At the heart of the revolution...

What's the spin from the dealers of the deck of 3D graphics cards?



Creative Labs

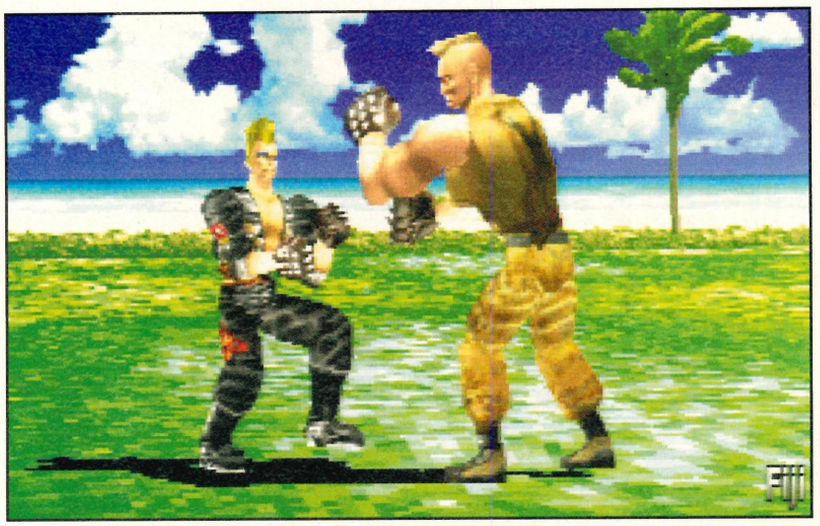
Ian Skelton, technical marketing manager

On the 14th of November you launched the 3D Blaster, the first 3D graphics card to hit the shops. So why exactly does the PC need such an item?

"The PC is a great tool for games, but it's developed out of the work environment. Years ago it only went beep. Our Sound Blaster card changed all that, bringing life to the games. Now we have CD quality sound. Whilst graphics have improved to an extent, with more colours and higher resolution, there's something of a bottleneck. But now we need a higher speed graphics card to enable the same level of realism in the graphics that we already have in the sound."

But isn't Virtual Reality, rather than flat screen 3D, meant to be the future of games?

"There are two different ways of going in 3D — the headset route or the monitor route. Headsets like the Cyber Maxx do add a lot of realism to games, but then so does each new level of monitor quality and display technology. Over the next five years we'll see lower cost, lighter VR headsets, but also much higher quality monitors and devices. The 3D Blaster offers amazing 3D quality on a flat screen. The important element is the combination of 3D visuals with 3D sound. And that's what we've concentrated on."



Another company, Diamond Multimedia, is shortly to launch its own 3D card. Is there any reason your card will do better than Diamonds?

"Creative has set the standard with sound. All games support the Sound Blaster and every other company has to make its sound card so it's compatible with ours. We have a high level of support in the industry, and software support is what's really important in the success of a product like this."

So what game would you like to see using true three dimensional graphics?

"A variant of Doom. So many people are into Doom. The idea of being able to shoot things in 3D, with an element of gore thrown in, appeals strongly. On the 3D Blaster, Magic Carpet Plus, which is bundled with the machine, looks great."



Bullfrog

Sean Cooper, producer of Magic Carpet Plus

Magic Carpet Plus comes bundled with Creative's 3D Blaster. How has the game made use of the graphics card's features?

"It's much higher resolution than the original version, and will run on a 486-50 at approximately 28 frames per second. There are some things the card can't do, though, like reflections. We found a slight problem with transparent texture mapping."

So what impact will 3D video cards have on the quality of games in the future?

"I think you'll see very fast 3D games, particularly on the 3D Blaster. The hardware allows you to get more memory onto screen quicker. It actually does the same thing as the blitter chip fitted in the Amiga. Finally the PC is getting something that the Amiga has had for the past seven years! Of course, the PC runs at about 40 times the speed of the Amiga."

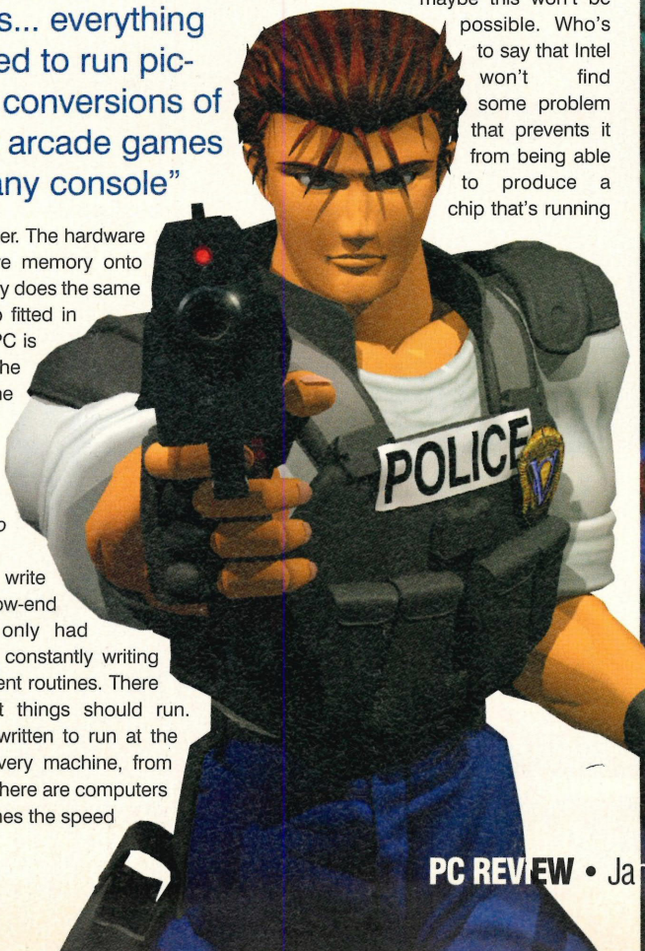
So are PCs getting too fast then?

"We're still having to write programs to support low-end machines. If people only had Pentium 120s we'd be constantly writing very processor-dependent routines. There are limits to how fast things should run. Programs need to be written to run at the same frame rate on every machine, from 486s to Pentium Pros. There are computers now that run at eight times the speed of low-end machines. If you don't include frame limiters in your game, it can become very difficult to play. Have you tried running Hi-Octane on a Pentium 120 at full whack? It's absolutely unplayable."

So what sort of games do you think we'll be playing in five years time?

"True colour hi-res will definitely be the thing then, with very realistic scenarios. Take flight sims. You'll be able to fly through a city and it will be like real photography. On the other hand, maybe this won't be possible. Who's to say that Intel won't find some problem that prevents it from being able to produce a chip that's running

> "Today's PCs have incredible processing power, massive hard disks... everything that's needed to run picture-perfect conversions of all the latest arcade games as well as any console"



- Several of the next generation graphics accelerators also feature 2D graphics hardware for faster sprite and scrolling speeds. The Diamond Edge card for instance has hardware acceleration for most 2D pixel drawing operations for faster sprite and graphics animation.

- Intel has announced that late next year it will announce a range of Pentium chips that have built-in multimedia hardware facilities, and probably faster video playback and sound handling. They will be called Multimedia Extensions for Pentiums.

"A more worrying thing to bear in mind is that these 3D graphics cards will be superseded on a regular basis"


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any faster than 200Mhz?"

What 3D game would you like to see?

"Doom is my favourite 3D game. I'd like to see a very realistic version set in a town. A game where you can walk into perfectly rendered shops and rob the stores, with all the thrills of the original Doom."

Do you see a point in time when all games will have three dimensional graphics?

"I hope not. Look at Command & Conquer — what was proved there; was that it was possible to do a brilliant 3D game using a top down view and a 2D engine. People shouldn't be concentrating on technology above all else. Bring back the gameplay!"



Diamond Multimedia

Martin Mulligan, director of European sales

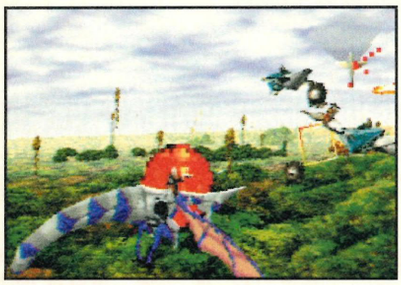
The second 3D card to hit the shops, the Diamond Edge 3D, will enable PC owners to play a number of games ported across from the Saturn console. Why would we want to do that?

"The card is aimed at the power games user. The 25-35-year-old into all the latest games technology. People have had to look to consoles for the most realistic graphics and most intense gameplay. The PC is not that well-oriented for the kind of 3D games that are emerging from the arcades at the moment. Our card changes all that, introducing high quality, high colour-depth 3D graphics, plus a digital games port channel that samples the games port faster than the four times per second people have had to make do with until now."

But why don't I just buy a Saturn instead? It's the same price as your card.

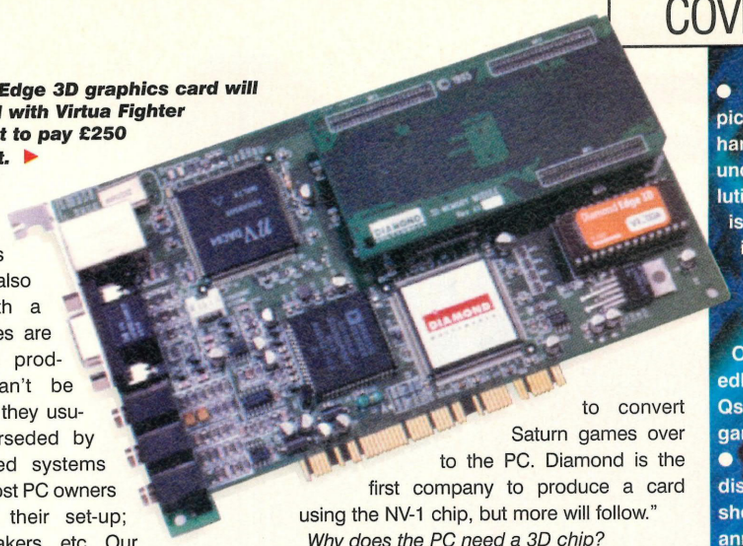


▲ ***An dramatic increase in quality, there's no doubting it at all...***



▲ ***...but are these cards the next step in PC gaming or just yet more costly kit?***

The Diamond Edge 3D graphics card will come bundled with Virtua Fighter Remix. Expect to pay £250 minimum for it. ▶



"The PC is a better platform for games in general. It's also a system with a future. Consoles are one purpose products, they can't be upgraded and they usually get superseded by more advanced systems very rapidly. Most PC owners have tailored their set-up; monitors, speakers, etc. Our card allows you to play games written for next generation consoles using your preferred system."

What sort of visuals will the PC be providing in the year 2000?

"If I knew that I'd probably be doing something else. I think that faster and faster controllers will be put on board, probably 3D CAD-CAM type arenas. These are very expensive at the moment, but they'll soon be cheaper and will start appearing on home PCs. That's not too far off, and that's the way the future's heading — ever faster and ever more cost effective."

"Gameplay is extremely important. Graphics can be there just as eye candy. Some of the latest arcade software has incorporated both of these qualities. You just need the hardware to run it, and now that's possible on the PC"

So what sort of 3D game would you personally like to see?

"Panzer Dragoon isn't out for a while, but visually it's one of the nicest demos I've seen. Of the things coming out shortly, Virtua Fighter Remix is the one that's attracting the most attention. It's really good."

Um... how about a game that isn't being bundled with your card?

"I suppose most people would be interested to see what Doom looked like in 3D, with 3D sound and truly rendered aliens coming straight at you."



Sega PC

Hitendra Naik, who is European product manager of Sega

Sega, the high profile console manufacturer, is dipping its feet into the world of PCs. Several of their Saturn games are being ported over using the Diamond 3D graphics card. How did that come about then?

"The Diamond card is based on the NV-1 chip being produced by NVIDIA in San José. Sega worked with NVIDIA to enable the chip to convert Saturn games over to the PC. Diamond is the first company to produce a card using the NV-1 chip, but more will follow."

Why does the PC need a 3D chip?

"If you try some of the next generation consoles like the Saturn and Playstation, you'll see the graphics are better even than those on the Pentium. The Saturn has two 32-bit RISC chips, and even the high-end Pentium can't replicate that. You need the 3D chip, particularly for arcade games. When you see Virtua Fighter Remix, which is being bundled with the Diamond card, you'll be able to appreciate the best fighting game ever on your PC."

Is there a risk of sacrificing gameplay in the pursuit of better graphics?

We think gameplay is extremely important. Graphics can be there just as eye candy. Some of the latest arcade software has incorporated both of these qualities. You just need the hardware to run it, and now that's possible on the PC. Whether the PC needs a new graphics card every six to eight months is open to question."

Aren't you worried about losing sales on the Sega Saturn console?

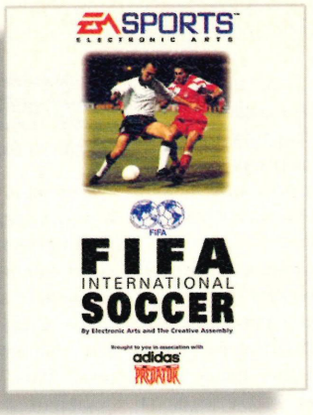
"It's a different market. You need to spend £2,000 for a fast PC, then at least £250 for the 3D card. The Saturn sells for £299.



- It's not all pretty pictures. Sound hardware is also undergoing a revolution. Europress is already encoding ProLogic surround sound into its titles, while Ocean is reportedly looking to use Qsound in its games.
- A new compact disc standard is shortly to be announced by Sony and others. The new CDs will store up to 4.5 gigabytes, a normal CD by comparison can hold just 650 megabytes. With the extra storage capacity future games will feature more sound, video clips and much, much bigger

"Faster and faster controllers will be put on board, probably 3D CAD-CAM type arenas."

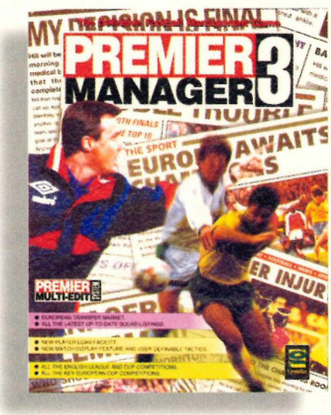
SOCCER STARS '96



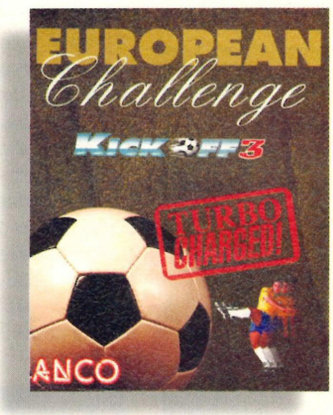
"Fantastic, fun to play and sounds brilliant too."
CD ROM Magazine
"Amazingly entertaining both to play and to watch."
87% PC Games
"It's a goal and EA have scored a blinder."
88% PC Home
"FIFA just keeps selling and selling."
86% C&VG



"The best footy management sim for years, kicks everything else into touch!"
94% Amiga User
"All the options you could ask for. The best looking footy management game around."
88% PC Games
"Football fans have to buy this. Fantastic stuff."
89% Amiga Action



"Excellent" *PC Format*
"Superbly comprehensive football management game."
91% PC Games
"PM3 is the best the series will ever get. It deserves to sell as many as it's going to."
87% The One
"If you're looking for a management game this is certainly high up on the recommended list."
85% C&VG



"Looks good... plays good. ..Pure footie action... with some of the smoothest scrolling seen on the PC."
PC Format
"The most complete football game ever."
C&VG - 87%
"Fast pace, action and control with a huge amount of gameplay."
PC Review

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are family activities, whereas PCs tend to be in separate rooms. There's a big difference between the culture of video games and that of computer games. Only a selected range of Saturn games will be ported across, and they won't be available until they've been out on the console for at least four months."

After 3D, is Virtual Reality the next step?

"Our research & engineering department has been working on headsets for a number of years, but it's not a consumer reality for the near future. You have to look at the health aspect of headsets — that's why Nintendo's Virtual Boy has a red and black screen rather than full colour. In arcades you only use a headset for five to 10 minutes. Consumers would expect to use a home version for two or three hours at a time. The physical and mental effects of such use need to be quite carefully investigated."



Papyrus

David Kaemmer, chief technical officer

Racing game expert Papyrus is producing games for a number of different 3D cards. How did that come about?

"We have an application that makes demos which really show off the abilities of these 3D cards, and consequently we've been approached by a number of manufacturers. So far we've made special versions of NASCAR Racing for three different 3D chips: Creative's 3D Blaster, Diamond's NV-1 based Edge board, plus the new Rendition chip, which isn't on the market yet. We plan to do some ports of Indy Car 2, then from next autumn our games will include built-in support for at least a few of the cards as standard. At the moment we're also doing special customised versions."

> "Take flight sims. You'll be able to fly through a city and it will be like real photography."

How are you utilising the 3D chips?

"Right now we're mainly using the chips to speed the games up, running them at decent frame rates even on a 486-40. We've also got some quite nice haze effects, with transparent dust and smoke, on the Rendition and NV-1. The PC really needs chips like these as they unload a lot of the processor's time. Using the CPU for algorithms is wasteful — 70% of them can be done in parallel by a co-processor. You end up with better image quality and increased speed."

Will these cards put the PC on a par with next generation consoles for games graphics?

"The Pentium is already on a level with the new consoles. These chips



3D Blaster, from Creative Labs, will come bundled with Magic Carpet Plus. ▶

3D Cards: The Case Against

OK, so we're all supposed to get excited about the latest new development in PC technology? Every week it seems that something — be it graphics or sound cards, operating systems, processing power or the colour of the casing — has been improved to take PCs to the next stage of their development. So what exactly do these 3D cards offer? At first glance, the chance to slip a next generation console (be it Saturn or Playstation) inside your machine, for roughly the same price as the console would cost on its own.

People talk about 'high-end games users' as the target market. How high-end a user do you need to be? The sort of person who wants 'all the latest games technology', someone who wants the most powerful games system they can get; the 'Ninja PC' owner. In other words, if you haven't got a Pentium 133 and six speed CD drive, that's probably not you.

And what games is our 'high-end games user' expected to buy? Arcade games. Simple, all-action, graphics-uber-alles arcade games. The nice to look at, interesting to play for a day or so, standard console fare. If you fancy something a little more cerebral, 3D cards are unlikely to help.

The immediate problem though is the fact that you have to choose between systems. Different cards, each with their own range of software. Unless you want to buy all the cards, and swap them over to run the different games, you're going to have to choose your poison. You might think it sensible to wait until one card has established itself as the industry standard, then perhaps wait a bit longer after all, if these cards really are necessary, pretty soon they'll be bundled with new PCs as standard, the same way the Sound Blaster now is.

A more worrying thing to bear in mind is that these 3D graphics cards will be superseded on a regular basis. We already know of a handful more 3D chips that are on the way. You can probably expect a new card bigger, better, more silicon-enhanced than the one before every few months. If you want the latest technology, you'll be splashing out a few hundred quid every six months or so. And of course, the 3D games you've got for your current card almost certainly won't work on your new one.

Perhaps that's the reason console manufactures are making their beeline for the PC. Our machine's upgrade ability has always stood in direct contrast to the console world where machines are effectively obsolete 18 months after their launch. Now we too can experience the joy of saving up to get that special new piece of hardware we need to play Mutant Death Kill 6, the latest bang whizz game everyone's talking about.

Think I'm being too strong in my cynicism? Maybe I am, but I can't help recalling the story a major games industry figure told me about when he called a programmer to find out why a game was running several months behind schedule. 'Because I'm updating it so the graphics run at 60 frames per second,' was the reply. Never mind the fact that the human eye itself has a top speed of 24 frames a second...

Still, if you've been dreaming of running Saturn and Playstation games on your PC, get down the shops with your readies and select the 3D card of your choice. Me? I think the best games of 1995 are Command & Conquer and Worms. Enough said.



● The Pentium Pro can link up with other Pentium Pros for extra power. Like the Pentium it will initially be aimed at the workstation market. However Intel now admit that most Pentium systems are sold to the home/games playing market who need the power - how long will it be before the parallel processing Pentium Pro's are used for games?

Spec savers
for collectors of technical information...

CREATIVE LABS 3D BLASTER
Released: 24th November
Price: £299 + VAT
Bundled software: Magic Carpet Plus (virtually identical to the original, just running a bit faster)
Games on the way: NASCAR Racing, Flight Unlimited
Software houses: Bullfrog, Papyrus, Looking Glass
Contact: (01734) 344322

DIAMOND EDGE 3D
Released: Late '95
Price: Unconfirmed, expected to range from around £250 for the 1-Meg D-RAM version, up to £450 for the 4-Meg V-RAM model.
Bundled software: Virtua Fighter Remix (Sega Saturn game, previously unavailable on the PC)
Games on the way: Panzer Dragoon (Jan '96), Virtua Cop, NASCAR Racing, Descent, Absolute Zero
Software houses: Sega, Papyrus, Interplay, Domark
Contact: (01753) 501400

VIDEO LOGIC CARD
Released: Mid '96
Price: Unconfirmed
Bundled software: Unconfirmed, but almost certainly a Namco title
Games on the way: Tekken, Rave Racer
Software houses: Just Namco at the moment
Contact: (01923) 260511

NUMBER NINE CARD
Released: 1st quarter '96
Price: Unconfirmed
Bundled software: Unconfirmed, possibly Quake
Games on the way: Quake definitely
Software houses: Id, do you need anyone else?
Contact: (01256) 381 194

Which Card?
The question on most people's minds is going to be 'is it compatible with my games.'

Unfortunately, for the time being at least it looks like no two cards will be compatible. The Creative Labs card won't be able to play games designed for the Diamond Edge card and vice versa. There's also a lot of confusion over which 3D software engines (BRender, etc) used in current 3D games will take advantage of which cards. Until we've seen final cards we're not prepared to put our name to any. So for the time being at least we recommend you wait until one card becomes the clear winner, or for our April issue which will feature a full round up of all the available cards.

will allow even 486s to exceed the graphic power and speed of the Playstation. Some of the new, more advanced 3D chips we've started working with are going to totally blow away the console platforms."

So which of the first generation of 3D graphics chips is the best then?

"It's hard to say. The three cards we've written for are all coming at it from different angles. Some are cheaper, some are more complete in terms of rendering. As a developer, the easiest to support is the Rendition chip. Cards based on that have a lot more bang than those based on the NV-1 chip. The NV-1 is more difficult to port to and the image quality is not quite so high."

Do you think one chip is going to eventually establish itself as the 3D standard?

"Possibly. Some might say that Microsoft's 3D API, if it's liked by developers, will become the standard. I don't feel that will happen. I expect that whichever particular card or chip establishes itself as market leader will then become the standard in the same way that the Sound Blaster is (ie any future cards will be made backwards-compatible with it)."

What will PC games be like in the year 2000?

"Well, we should be up to about the P9 processor by then. PCs will have ten times the computing power they have now, they'll be like UNIX workstations. Vehicle simulators like the ones Papyrus produce will still be very popular. The jury's still out on 3D cards, though. Will people pay the extra money to put them in their machine? I think they will."

What game would you most like to see developed for a 3D chip?

"There's some stuff we're developing now that I can't wait to see. My favourite games are the racing games that we produce. I'd also like to see some LucasArts stuff, plus a good WW2 air combat game. Plus Doom and Quake, it goes without saying."



id Software
Jay Wilbur, creator of Doom

When asked what game they'd want to see using a 3D video card, everyone we've spoken to has opted for a 3D version of Doom. Is this going to happen?

"We have no plans for a 3D version of Doom, but our next generation game Quake will be a true 3D game."

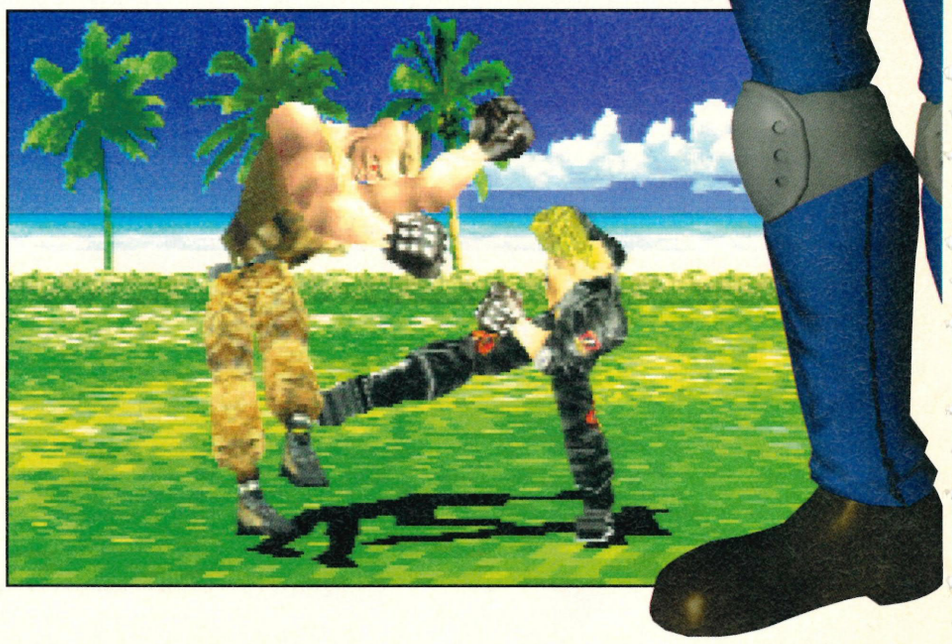
Do you believe the success of Doom has played a part in pushing the PC market towards its current preference for 3D games?

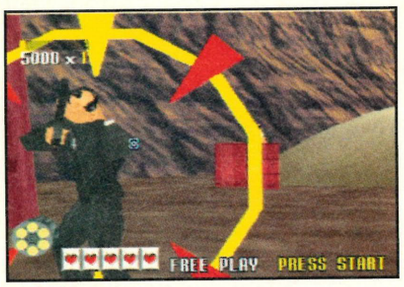
"I don't think we've pushed it in any particular direction, but we've sort of helped the PC market to grow a bit. Doom's success has meant more Doom like games appearing, but PC gaming is moving in a different direction now."

Processor speeds are increasing, 3D video cards offer faster frame rates... how

Expect to see new genres and games styles blossom onto your PC. ▼

> "A programmer was asked why a game was running behind schedule. 'Because I'm updating the graphics to run at 60 frames per second,' was the reply. Never mind that the human eye has a top speed of 24 frames a second..."





▲ ***Virtua Cop — coming soon.***

technology isn't practical at the moment. The things we see now are very expensive novelties. They're neat toys, nothing more than that."

What sort of games do you think we will be seeing in five years time?

"Technology is progressing so fast. What sort of visual power will we have at our fingertips? If you told someone five years ago that they'd be able to have a 1 gigabyte hard drive on their home PC, they'd think you were drunk. If you told them that software would need more than 64K memory to run, they'd laugh. I couldn't even guess what sort of games we'll be playing in five years time, but I know they'll still be fun."

much quicker are things able to run?

"We are going to reach a point when any further increase won't matter. We haven't reached that point yet, and I don't know where it is, but I think the limits should be the speed at which the human eye and brain can perceive. Beyond that speed — who cares?"

So what price Virtual Reality?

"At about $20,000-$30,000 for a decent quality headset. That sort of

Nirvana, new order or nightmare?

How would you like gaming to develop over the next five years? What's your dream – or nightmare – for things to come? Write and let us know. But, first of all, a few words from some ball gazers nearer to home.



The future of gaming on PCs lies not with all-singing, all-dancing 3D cards, but with dull and boring storage devices. The reason is simple, current CDs aren't big or fast enough for even today's games. Take current games (loads of audio tracks and masses of video cut scenes), now add bucket loads of 3D graphics and more levels than new 3D cards will allow and a standard CD just does not have the capacity!

What's needed, and is coming, is a higher capacity CD drive — something where storage space is measured in gigabytes not megabytes. Once such CD drives arrive, and as I said they'll be here, you'll start to see some really impressive new games — add 3D cards to systems with such drives and, well, who knows where we'll be in 12 months — but I for one can't wait to find out what lies ahead. It should be very exciting indeed.

Andy Leaning



Motion capture technology will become more commonplace, so we can wave goodbye to bad animation. Video will become sharper and will take up the whole screen rather than being restricted to a matchbox-sized window. And 3D graphics will eventually get to the stage where we'll be hard-pushed to tell them from the real thing.



All these are positive changes, because as we get used to sophisticated presentation, we come to expect more of our games. But gameplay is crucial, and we will not be satisfied with 'bimbo' games. It's no accident that one of the simplest and visually unsophisticated games around, Worms, is the one that's keeping us all in the office until late at night. I'm hoping that great graphics will soon be so commonplace that games buyers will no longer make a fuss about them. That way, the developers can concentrate on making them entertaining. That, after all, is why we chose to play games.

Cal Jones

Send your thoughts into Games 2000, PC Review, Emap Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, london EC1R 3AU or through pcreview@cix.compulink.co.uk.

Software supplies

A quick tally of the games you can expect with the next gen 3D cards

Supplied with 3D Blaster card...

Magic Carpet Plus

This is a souped up version of the original Magic Carpet game, and apart from its smoothness there's little else that's different this time round. It is thought the first version of Magic Carpet will run on a normal 486 50Mhz, and that's at 28 frames per second no less.

Supplied with Diamond Edge 3D card...

Virtua Fighter Remix

Sega's king of the beat 'em ups is coming to PC, and it's promised there'll be no recognisable difference between it and the Saturn. It's Virtua Fighter 1 reworked a tad, but the PC has only one rival in its 3D fighting game market, FX Fighter.

Supplied with Video Logic card... *Unknown*

Coming soon... With 3D Blaster card

Flight Unlimited

Although we're still pretty much in the dark as to how this version is going to improve on the superb looking Pentium game, you can bet that the whole thing will run a little more quickly and with more panache.

NASCAR Racing

Papyrus has devoted a lot of time in all the 3D video cards that are winging their way to the shelves, but the first release will be a version of NASCAR Racing for the Blaster. The game originally was accused of being a tad shallow, and a little too slow, but the latter will be improved upon immensely, and the graphics at least will be reworked.

With Video Logic card

Tekken

The best beat 'em up ever is the first title to be announced thanks to a deal involving Namco (Tekken's creator) and NEC. Supremely violent, it plays like a fight at the Millwall without anybody getting hurt.

With Diamond Edge card

Virtua Cop

The fantastic arcade blaster is to come to the PC, although it's not known whether there are plans to release the extraordinarily chunky gun that comes with it.

Sega Rally

The best arcade driving game is rumoured to be coming out for the Diamond Edge 3D, and when it does you will never look a normal PC racer in the eye again. Nothing yet is official or really known about this version, but we'll keep you updated.

used for games?

● Tsang Labs, the company behind the chipsets found at the heart of many normal Windows accelerator graphics cards has announced a new 128-bit chip. The current fastest Windows cards are 64-bit, so new Tsang Labs equipped cards should be much,

Next month we hear from those who believe on-line gaming is the way forward and talk to the people behind Wireplay, BT's new over-the-wire service.



COVERDISC

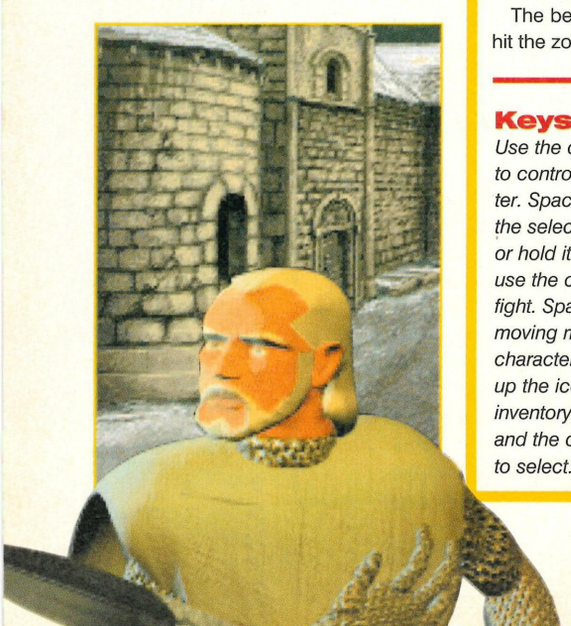
CD version only



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Timegate

Infogrames (0171) 738 8199 ● Playable Demo

This is going to be one of the hottest games of '96, so remember, you played it here first.

To run, select Timegate from the CD-ROM's menu and follow the install instructions. This game runs best under DOS.

Yes, it's another PC Review exclusive. We're first with the preview and the demo of this potential smash hit from Infogrames. It's a 3D adventure from the creator of the Alone In The Dark series (Bruno Bonnell), although graphically it's a quantum leap ahead and the control system is much easier to use.

The plot, which is explained in the game's intro sequence (which is included in its entirety in this demo) is a bizarre meld of swords, sorcery, time travel and men in frocks. It's set in medieval France, where the Knights Templar have been utterly wiped out by the forces of evil. You, a young American student studying in France, turn out to be the reincarnation of their leader. So, after a quick shimmy through time, it's back 800 years to bail them out.

Like the Alone In The Dark series, this is a 3D adventure with multiple viewpoints. But that's where the similarities end. This is a completely different offering. Not only does it look better, it's also crammed with cut-scenes and little details which make it as good to watch as it does to play.

This demo starts mid-way through the game and leaps to a later stage, so don't worry about the lack of continuity. There's a little bit of problem solving, but for the large part how well you do is all down to sword play. It's extremely important to learn the basic fight moves, especially by the time you find your way to the second part of this exclusive demo, where there's a more-than-major scrap to take part in.

Requires: DX2 50, 8 Mb, sound card.

Coward's Walk Through

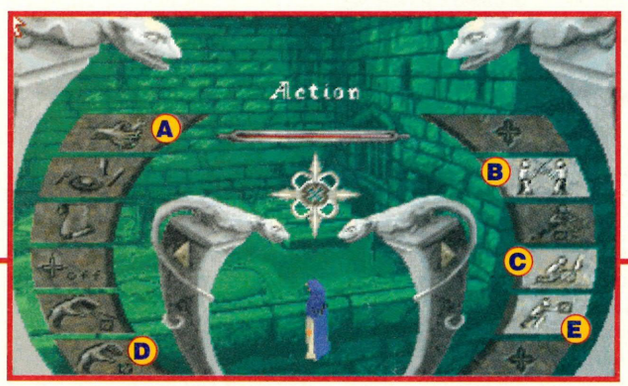
You start the game on the battlements, dressed in what looks suspiciously like a nun's robe. That's a fair and acceptable thing, the problem is you're up against two zombies and you've got no weapons. All you have in your inventory are two gems and sod-all else. Using your knightly prowess you've got to work out how to get past them. If you think you can manage that, don't bother reading this, otherwise, read-on, McDuff.

Run right to the end of the battlements where you'll find two coffins. Use the blue gem on the left-hand one to get a set of chain mail, which you should put on immediately. Do the same with the orange gem and the other coffin to find a battle axe. Arm yourself and go after the zombie, not the green creature.

The best tactic is to hit the zombie with an overhead shot, then keep him at a distance with neat little left and right slices.

Assuming you survive that, you'll then have to tackle the green creature. If you've already had a few experimental chops at it, you'll probably have realised that it's immune to weapons. However, it also hates religion. So nip into the first alcove and select the search icon. You should find a wooden crucifix. Wave it at the monster and he'll give up, die and leave a key behind. This opens the second door.

Once through that you're transported to a later stage. Now you're kitted out in full armour and armed with a mace. That's handy, as you're now facing a rather large knight armed with a gigantic sword. In a straight fight you'll always lose, instead you're going to have to use brainwork on him.



Keys

Use the cursor keys to control the character. Space activates the selection action, or hold it down and use the cursor keys to fight. Space while moving makes the character run. To call up the icon bank and inventory, use Return and the cursor keys to select.

Icon Guide

Most of the game's icons aren't used in this demo version, but there are still a few important ones you have to get to grips with if you want to survive through to the end.

A Use

Select this then use space to activate when you're back in the game.

B Hand-to-hand combat

Use this for fisticuffs. If you want to fight with a weapon, call it up on the inventory and hit the use icon.

C Search

You only need this one to find the crucifix. Select it then use space to activate.

You'll need this to find the crucifix in the first section.

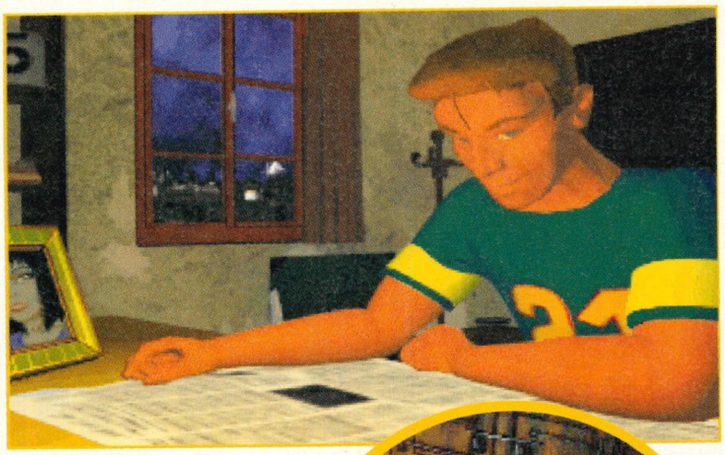
D Drop

You shouldn't need this, but it's handy if you want to dump the axe to move faster.

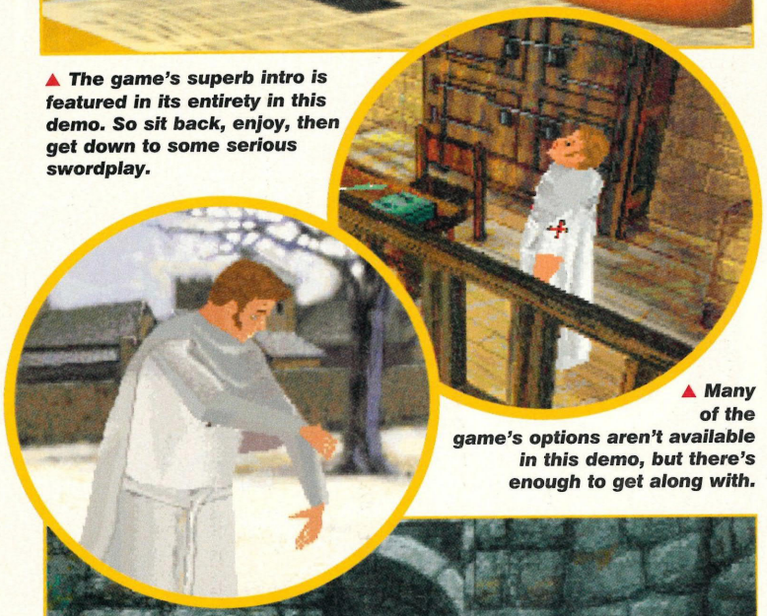
E Push

This is another one you select here then activate with space.

The coverdisc hotline is (01685) 350505, open Mon-Fri 3pm and 5pm



▲ *The game's superb intro is featured in its entirety in this demo. So sit back, enjoy, then get down to some serious swordplay.*



▲ *Many of the game's options aren't available in this demo, but there's enough to get along with.*



▲ *Beware of old blokes with swords. They're not very fast and prone to hernias when the action gets going.*



▲ *Most of the game is set inside this castle. And that's where you'll find yourself in this demo.*

CD LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

1) Insert your CD-ROM into the drive and wait for the light to go out.
2) Next log on to your CD-ROM drive by typing its drive letter.

From DOS:

3a) Now type either 'win Go.bat' for the title screen or 'win Go2.bat' for no title screen.

From Windows 3.1:

3b) Click on either Go.bat for the title screen and Go2.bat for no title screen.

From Windows '95:

3c) The CD-ROM will start automatically or you can use Explorer to run Go.bat for the title screen and Go2.bat for no title screen.

4) The screen is laid out in boxes, each box contains a screenshot of a demo and its title. Click on the next page and previous page buttons to move between screens. To run a program click on the box you want and press your enter key.
5) A sub-menu will appear, click on install or run (whichever one is highlighted) to proceed with the demo. Follow the on-screen instructions. If the program asks you to make a boot disk you are advised to take this option and reboot your system with the boot disk before you run the program.

Windows '95 users only

Some program may install to your hard disc using DOS. You may need to quit to DOS to run them. The easiest way to do this is to close the system down and reboot. When the 'Starting Windows '95' message appears press the F8 key and select the MS DOS option. If after this you find your CD-ROM drive does not respond — DON'T PANIC — as Windows '95 rems out drivers it does not like. To un-rem the CD-ROM driver lines type 'edit config.sys' and delete any rems — Windows will clearly mark the lines it has tampered with. If you still have problems you can ring the PC Review disc hotline on (01685) 350505.

BEFORE YOU START

PC's are funny things, for instance a memory problem can look like a disc problem, so we recommend that you configure your memory before you run this month's disc. To see how much memory you have type MEM at the DOS prompt. If the figure beside the line 'largest executable program size' is less than 550K your system is not set up correctly. The easiest way to reconfigure your memory is to use the Memmaker program. From the DOS prompt type MEMMAKER. The introduction screen will now appear, press the ENTER key. On the next screen select the CUSTOM SETUP option by pressing the SPACEBAR. On the next page make sure the answer to the option 'Do you wish to use any programs that need expanded memory' is 'No' and press the ENTER key. On the next page there are six options and these should be answered as follows:

Option	Answer
1. Specify which drivers and TSR's to include in optimisation?	No
2. Scan the upper memory aggressively?	Yes
3. Optimise upper memory for use with Windows?	No
4. Use monochrome region (B000 - B7FF) for running programs? (unless you have a mono monitor)	Yes
5. Keep current EMM386 memory exclusions and inclusions?	No
6. More extended BIOS data area from conventional to upper memory?	Yes

Follow the rest of the on-screen instructions, and Memmaker will reboot your system with your memory correctly configured.

Has your PC been a victim of crime?

Here are the clues to watch out for...

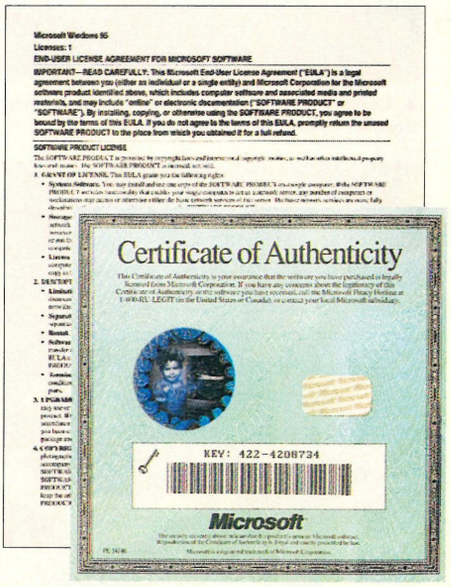
Was your operating system software delivered with the PC? Microsoft® MS-DOS® and Microsoft® Windows® are the most widely used desktop operating systems in the world. If your PC came with either of these, can you be sure that your software is legal?

To check that you have a fully authentic Microsoft product look for the Certificate of Authenticity – C.O.A. (only operating systems are required to have this) and the End-User Licence Agreement – E.U.L.A. which have to be delivered with MS-DOS and Windows.

If you have these two safeguards you will have: • Technical support. • Rights to warranty. • Right to update to the latest version from the software vendor.

If you don't have the Certificate of Authenticity and the End-User Licence Agreement your system may be illegal, you won't get any of these benefits, and illegal software carries the risk of viruses with the potential catastrophic loss of information.

You can help us with our enquiries. If you think your PC has been a victim of crime, call Microsoft on **0345 300 125** extension 1001 and tell us where you purchased your PC and Microsoft software. We will follow up on the information you give us, in the strictest confidence, and send you details of your consumer rights.



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Indycar Racing 2

Virgin Interactive (0171) 368 2255 · demo





To install select Indycar Racing 2 from the CD-ROM's main menu. Please make sure you run the setup program before you start the game.

The last few months have seen some of the best driving games ever on the PC, and here's one of our favourites. Programmed by Papyrus, the creator of the original Indycar, this is the most realistic driving simulation ever on any machine.

The original Indycar is still regarded as the best proper race simulator on the PC, and this sequel takes that winning formula and really throws it into top gear. Everything to do with proper Indycar racing is simulated, from customising your car, to engine failure during the race. On top of that, when you punt another car, or hit a wall, it can cause varying degrees of damage. A slight knock may only throw your steering off, while a major collision will completely take you out of the race.

The complete version features loads more options than the demo, all the original courses, the tracks from the expansion disk and several new road circuits to race on — so you're not limited to just ovals.

There's also a superb SVGA option, but that's something only Pentium owners will be able to make use of. The control system is straightforward, making use of the mouse, joystick or cursor keys. There's also an automatic and manual gears option, so novice drivers won't have to waste time prannying around with gear shifts when they really just want to get on with the business of racing.

Even with the options switched in your favour, it's still not going to be an easy ride. The cars' handling properties have been modelled on actual Indy racers, so completing a race takes plenty of skill and judgement as well as generous amounts of luck. So strap yourself in, slip into first gear and prepare to spin off at the first corner and go down in a blaze of glory.

If you do buy the farm big time, there's a superb replay option which lets you play your best racing disasters over and over again from a variety of different viewpoints. Of course, you can also use it to save your winning performances, but that's nowhere near as much fun as watching yourself start a five car pile-up and ruin the race for everyone else.

There's a real knack to being able to complete a race in one piece – even in this demo version. Unlike most other driving games, you will need to use the brake. It also helps to follow a racing line. Even though you're driving round one of America's famous oval race tracks and there's not exactly a wealth of twists and turns to negotiate, you still need to be in just the right position when you're taking a corner. Too low and you'll either end up on the grass or find yourself overtaken; too high and you'll ram a wall or skid. It's not easy, and anyone who drives a real car will be able to appreciate just how accurate a simulation this really is.

But that's all part of the fun. At the moment most of the racing games on the market are geared towards spectacular smashes and crashes, just look at the likes of Destruction Derby and Fatal Racing. That's what makes this game so different. For once you're actually trying to keep on the road using nothing more than pure driving skill and a bit of nous when it comes to customising your car in the pits.

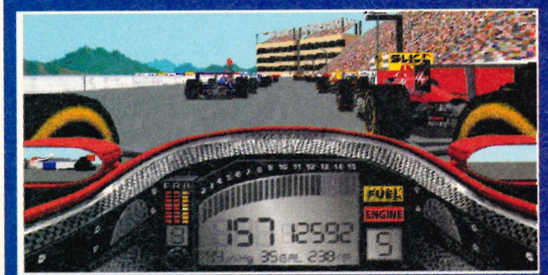
When we reviewed this game last month we gave it a whopping '9'. It is by far and away the best bit of racing action you'll find anywhere. Just remember, you read the review first in PC Review and now we've also given you the demo disc to try. What more could you ask for?

Requires 486DX2, 8Mb, VGA and Sound Blaster compatible card.

Behind the wheel

The easiest way to play the game is with the keyboard. Use the cursor buttons on the numeric keypad with forwards to accelerate, back to break and the left and right arrows to steer.





▲ *Oh dear. Right at the back of the grid again.*



▲ *Capture your best races on the replay.*

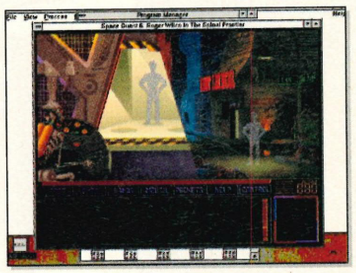
Jazz Jackrabbit

Epic Megagames
(01767) 290903

To install Jazz Jackrabbit select Jazz Xmas from the CD-ROM's main menu. Run Setup from DOS and follow the on-screen instructions.

This platformer is firmly in the Earthworm Jim mould, although aimed at slightly younger gamers. It's fast, action-packed and fun. It can be played with a joystick or keyboard and the controls are user definable.

Requires a 33MHz 486DX, 4Mb, VGA and sound card.



Pro Pinball

Empire
(0181) 343 7337

To install, select Pro Pinball from the CD-ROM's main menu. Type Demo at the DOS prompt then enter one of the options that suits your machine's spec.

Although this is only a rolling demo, so you can't play it, it gives you a very good idea of what Empire's new multi-viewpoint pintable simulation is going to be like. It also comes with plenty of user options, so even if you've got a slower machine it should run OK.

Requires: 50MHz 486, 4Mb, VGA and major sound card.

Clubmate

Shareware

To install, select Clubmate from the CD-ROM's main menu, then run Clubmate.

It's a chess-lover's dream come true. Clubmate stores match results! Moves! Player information! In fact, everything you need to run your own chess club. What next? Domino World? Craps Controller? The possibilities are endless. Full instructions are included on the demo.

Requires: 486 33MHz, 4Mb RAM.

Cheet Sheets

Eurowave Leisure
(01822) 833765

To install, select Cheet Sheets from the CD-ROM's main menu. Type Cheet to start.

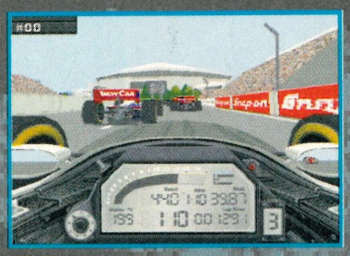
For anyone who is useless at games, this will seem heaven sent. Cheet Sheets is a monthly mag devoted to hacks, tips and cheats, and even more is available if you order the back issues.

Required: 386 33MHz, 4Mb RAM.

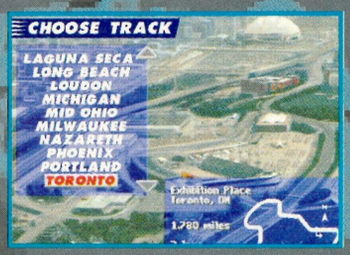
"INDYCAR RACING 2 IS DEFINITELY THE BEST RACING SIM SO FAR. BRILLIANT." 9 OUT OF 10 PC REVIEW

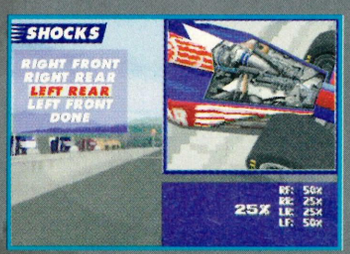
"WILL CRAMMOND AND HIS TEAM BE LEFT REELING WITH THE BLOW?" 90% PC ZONE CLASSIC











IndyCar® Racing II features the most realistic car physics model providing authentic handling, and the closest experience possible to driving behind the wheel of a real IndyCar. Papyrusís new addition of high-resolution graphics that have been optimised for incredible frame rates, and the strengthened opponent intelligence, will surely promise to make IndyCar® Racing II the latest and greatest in racing simulations.

with all new features:

SVGA Graphics
Enhanced artificial intelligence
Crashes, Accidents, and Breakdowns
Digitised and Stereo Sound Effects
15 Tracks - from curvy, tight cornered road courses, to super-speed, high banked ovals each is a different driving challenge that needs a different car setup to win.
Modelled after the 1995 racing season, with real cars, real tracks, real billboard sponsors, and real teams and drivers.

PAPYRUS™

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The coverdisc hotline is (01685) 350505, open Mon-Fri 3pm-5pm.

Touché

US Gold (0121) 606 1800 · Playable demo



▲ *This has to be one of the nicest looking graphic adventures to appear this year. You'll be able to savour the gorgeous hand-painted graphics at your leisure with this exclusive demo.*

To run Touché, select the game from the CD-ROM's main menu, follow the setup guide and run from DOS.

It's been a fair old while since the PC last saw a decent point-n-click adventure. Thankfully it's now got one just in time for Christmas. Touché is very much in the classic LucasArts mould of games such as Monkey Island and Indiana Jones, with loads of puzzle solving, character interaction and hours of speech.

The game's set in 16th century France, which isn't as bad as it sounds. You play Geoffroi le Brun, the forgotten Fifth Musketeer. As he turns up to join the musketeers' regiment, he stumbles across a hideous crime — a nobleman has been robbed and murdered, Can you help Geoffroi find the poor guy's stolen will?

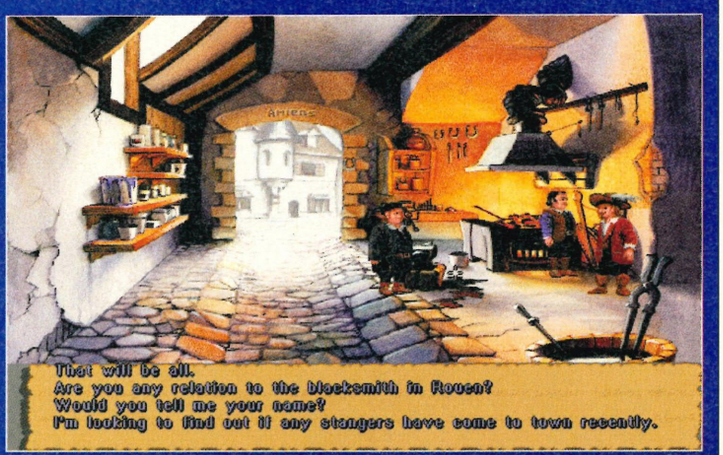
What you've got here is a superb adventure (which you can read more about in the review on page 70) that is bursting with humour as well as extremely taxing.

The demo on the cover CD gives you a decent-sized lump of action which introduces you to the characters, and sets the scene for the main game. Geoff is moved around the screen by pointing on a location with cursor and clicking with the left mouse button. To examine an object, hold down the right mouse button and scroll through the list of commands.

Requires 50MHz 486, 4Mb, VGA and sound card.



▲ *Hmm. Now just how is poor old Geoffroi going to get past those soldiers and into the tavern?*



▲ *Converse with other characters by clicking on them, holding the button down and then selecting the 'talk to' option.*

Tilt

Virgin Interactive (0171) 368 2255

To run select Tilt from the CD-ROM's main menu and follow the on-screen instructions.

Hey, who said you can have too much of a good thing? Three, yes three pinball demos on one CD. This time it's the turn of Virgin to try and impress us with its first pinball simulation. Try it out, compare it with the others and see if you agree with the reviews.

Requires 486DX2, 4Mb, sound card

Voodoo Lounge

Virgin Interactive (0171) 368 2255

To run select Voodoo Lounge from the CD-ROM's main menu.

It's hard to describe just exactly what this is. It's sort of an interactive music video type of thing. Whatever, it's certainly weird and Mick Jagger himself was apparently involved.

Requires 486 DX50, 4Mb, sound card.

Flixmix

Celeris (01822) 840648

To run select Flixmix from the CD-ROM's main menu and follow the install instructions.

Not quite a slide puzzle, not quite a jigsaw, but it's both difficult and addictive. The aim is to simply construct a picture in the shortest time possible, but it's more taxing than you think.

Requires 486DX, 4Mb, sound card.

Critical Mass

Shareware

Install by selecting Critical Mass from the CD-ROM's main menu.

It isn't pretty, but this shareware game is still more playable than many multi-million dollar productions. It's a space strategy-cum-blaster with network play and plenty of depth and variety. Details on how to order the full version are included in the game.

Requires 33MHz 486DX, 4Mb, soundcard, Windows 3.1.

3D Ultra Pinball

Sierra (01734) 303322

To install, select 3D Ultra Pinball from the CD-ROM's menu.

Of the three pinball games on this coverdisc, this is the most complex. The tables are vast, with more flippers than an ocean full of dolphins, taking the genre further ahead than ever before.

Requires 50MHz 486, 4Mb, Windows 3.1, sound card.

COVERDISC

CD version only

The coverdisc hotline is (01685) 350505, open Mon-Fri 3pm-5pm.

Uninstaller 3

Microhelp
(01703) 814 822

Install by clicking on the Uninstaller 3 program icon.

Running out of hard drive space is one of the most infuriating things that can happen to your PC. This little application, though, will help you avoid that. It gets read of all redundant links, completely deletes unused files and generally does wonders to free up disk space.

Requires 386 DX33, 4Mb.

Fractal Painter

Fractal design

Click on Fractal Painter icon in the CD-ROM's main menu to install.

This demo of one of the leading graphic design packages has the save, export and print options disabled. However, everything else works, so you'll get more than a good idea of just how powerful it is.

Requires 486 DX2 66, 8Mb RAM, Windows.

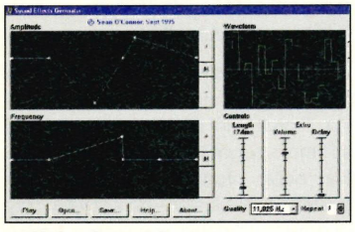
Sound Effects Generator

Shareware
(0181) 2008282

Select the Sound Effects Generator icon to install.

Remember the old BBC Radiophonics workshop? They were the people who did the sound effects for Dr Who. Well, you can now do the same, but without the valves, tubes and widgets because this little application does the lot.

Requires 386 33, 4Mb, sound card.



▲ *Noise lovers heaven.*

PD Soft Catalogue

PD Soft
(01702) 466933

Select either PD Soft 8Mb, or PD Soft 4Mb if you're short of RAM, to run.

PD Soft supply everything from operating systems to clipart, and you can find out just what's on offer in the company's disc-based catalogue. Run whichever version suits your machine. The only difference is that the 8Mb version features more software.

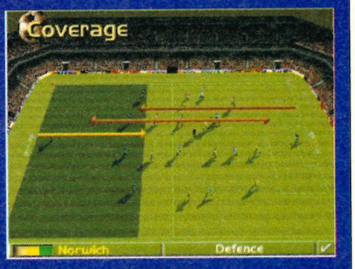
Requires 386 33, 4Mb, VGA.

Fifa Soccer 96

Electronic Arts (01753) 549442 ● Playable demo



▲ *The game comes complete with loads of camera angles.*





▲ *Today it's Brazil vs Italy.*



▲ *You need a hefty Pentium to run the game in SVGA mode.*





▲ *More action at the World Cup.*

Select FIFA Soccer from the main menu to run the demo.

We're just in time for the usual Christmas football fixtures bundle with this demo. It's that time of the year where, between bouts of mass eating, drinking and generally having fun, footballers have to turn out all during the yule and New Year thanks to the FA's football fixtures hell. Now you too can live their agony by downing a turkey sandwich and taking to the pitch in this, one of the best football game presently around.

This FIFA demo shows off just how good the game really is. The 3D graphics and sound are only rivalled by Gremlin's Actua Soccer, and you can find out just how good it looks for yourself here. The complete game features league and international teams from the world over, although this demo only allows you to play as Italy and Brazil. Hey, that's how it was in the last World Cup final, what more do you want?

Although the game can be played with keyboard and, strangely, mouse, we find you're normally better off with a joypad, or two in this case, as this demo also lets you go head-to-head against a friend. There's no installation necessary as the game runs straight from the CD, so don't worry about tying up valuable hard drive space.

Button one is used to pass the ball or, when you're defending, swap between players and go in for a tackle when you're close to the bloke with the ball. B is your all-singing, all-kicking, shoot button. Once you're inside your opponent's half you can slap a shot in. Also, when a ball's crossed, hit this button when it comes close and your player will execute a header, overhead kick, volley or diving header. These moves, along with actually crossing the ball, are tricky to master and require precise timing. However, once you've got them down-pat then you'll easily steamroller over weaker opponents, before forcing them to endure the endless replays from every available camera angle.

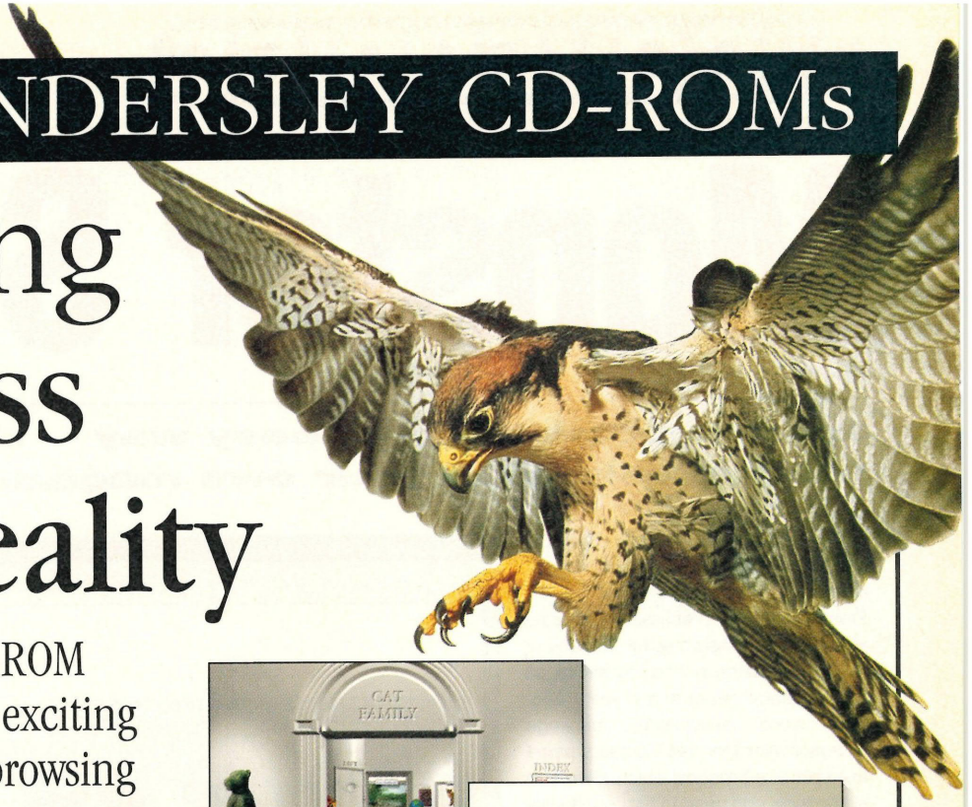
This demo only lets you play for one half, but the finished version comes complete with extra time and penalty shoot-outs when a match ends level.

All the tournaments are also disabled, but you can still get a decent overview of exactly what the game features. For more information check the football feature which is on page 93 of this issue.

Requires 486 DX2 66, 8Mb, sound card.

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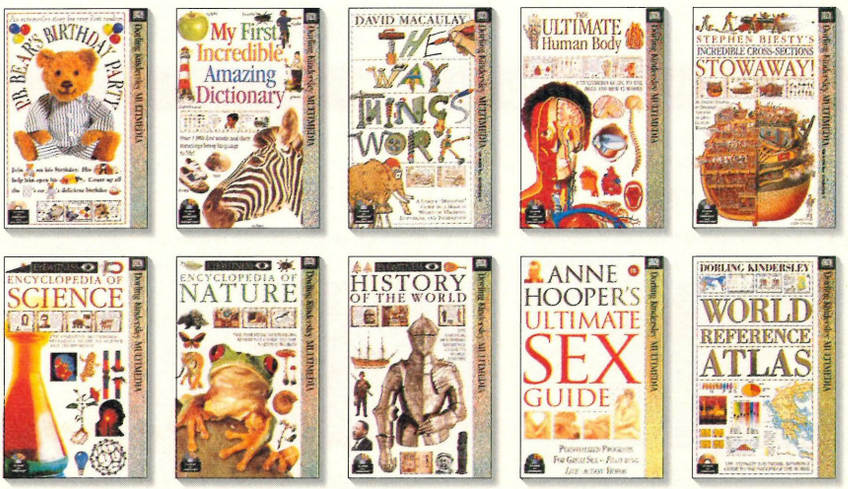
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Monster Serif CD

Serif (0800) 924295

Get into publishing the easy way — buy PC Review. Alternatively, start your own magazine with Monster Serif.

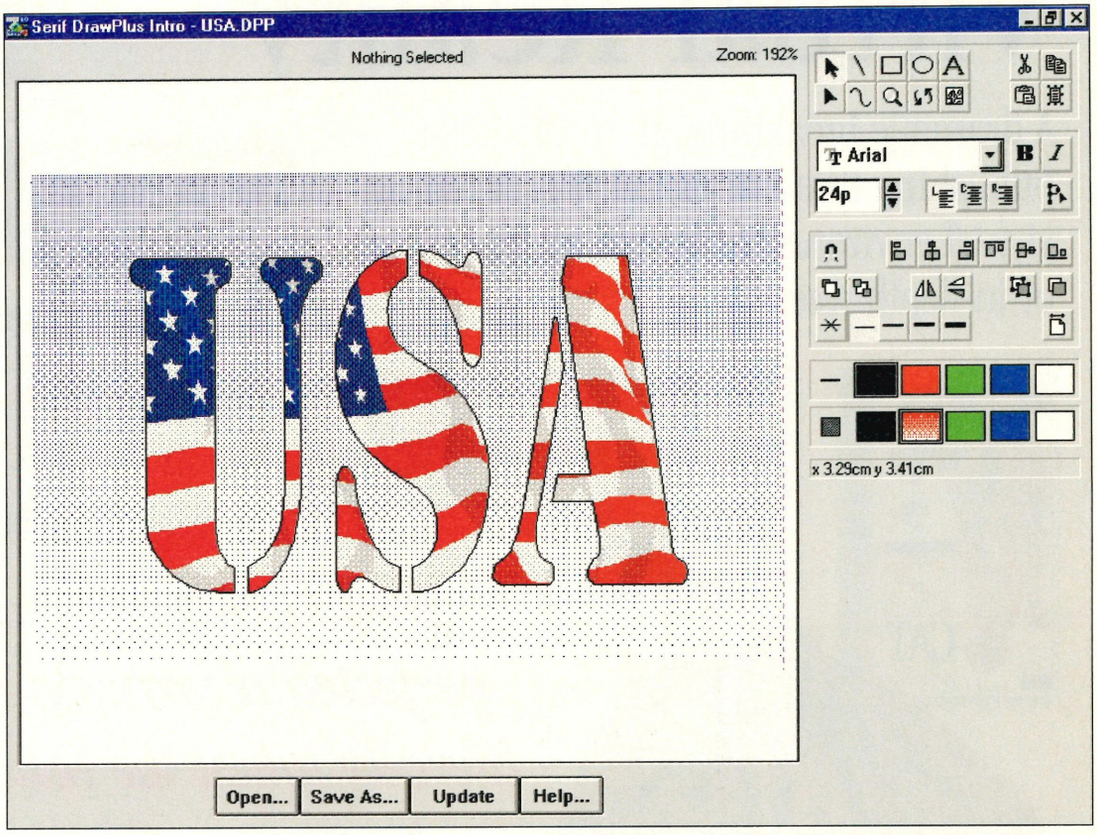
To start, click on the Monster Serif CD icon then follow the on-screen instructions.

Present day word processing packages are now almost as powerful as many of the early desktop publishing packages that appeared around five years ago. The word processing package Microsoft Word for instance, is a prime example of a program which gives you all the tools you need to turn out quality documents with minimal effort.

But even though current word processing packages are very powerful, on their own they still aren't quite enough. Install Windows and Word and all you get is a meagre collection of basic fonts, the same as everyone else. There's no scope for tailoring your work or making it look individual. This is where the Monster Serif CD comes in.

The guts of this package feature 100 scaleable fonts and over 1000 pieces of clipart. When you consider that a magazine like PC Review is put together using around 30-40 fonts and their variants, that should be more than enough to get you going. Likewise, the vast amount of clip art in the pack should come in handy for almost any document you're producing. All you need to make use of this is a wordprocessor. The fonts can be automatically installed in your system, and providing your software has an import option you'll be able to drop the artwork in straight away.

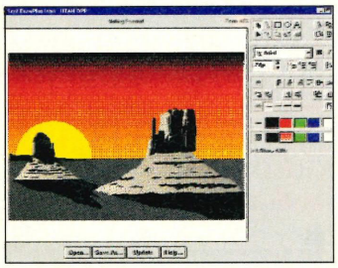
Of the two, the fonts are definitely the most important. Good use of fonts can transform even the most boring document into a quality presentation. So, whether you're sending a nasty letter to the bank manager, or simply putting together memos or notices, this pack should prove invaluable. All the fonts are True Type, which means they can be scaled to almost any size, so they're good for body text and headlines. Built-in word processor effects such as bold and italics can be also be added. A couple of the fonts are also graphics-based, which gives you a huge selection of dingbats to bullet-point or illustrate your work with. To use the clipart, simply select whatever the Get Picture tool is in



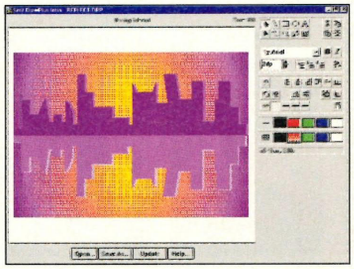
▲ ***DrawPlus Intro is a surprisingly versatile art package with easy to use tools and an on-line help system so you don't get stuck.***

Important - Getting Started

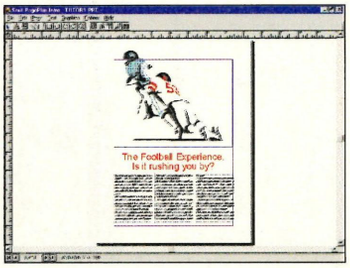
Before you run Monster Serif CD, you'll need to get hold of the serial number. Don't worry, this is TOTALLY FREE! All you have to do is call Serif's freephone number (0800 924925) or ring the PC Review coverdisc hotline. You'll get given the number and away you go. From there, the program will install and all you have to do is follow the command prompt.



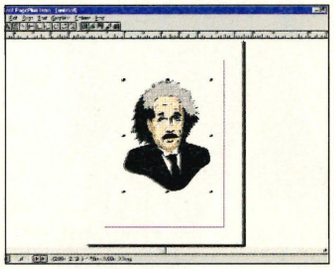
▲ ***Draw Plus allows you to create your own illustrations.***



▲ ***Draw Plus provides a range of weird and wonderful effects.***



▲ ***With Page Plus it's easy to create pages like this!***



▲ ***You don't have to be a genius to use these utilities!***

The coverdisc hotline is (01685) 350505, open Mon-Fri 3pm-5pm.

Icon Guide

ROTATE
Twist pictures and text

LINE
Draw free lines

POINTER
Move and scale boxes

TEXT
Enter text straight to screen

TEXT BOX
Create specific text areas

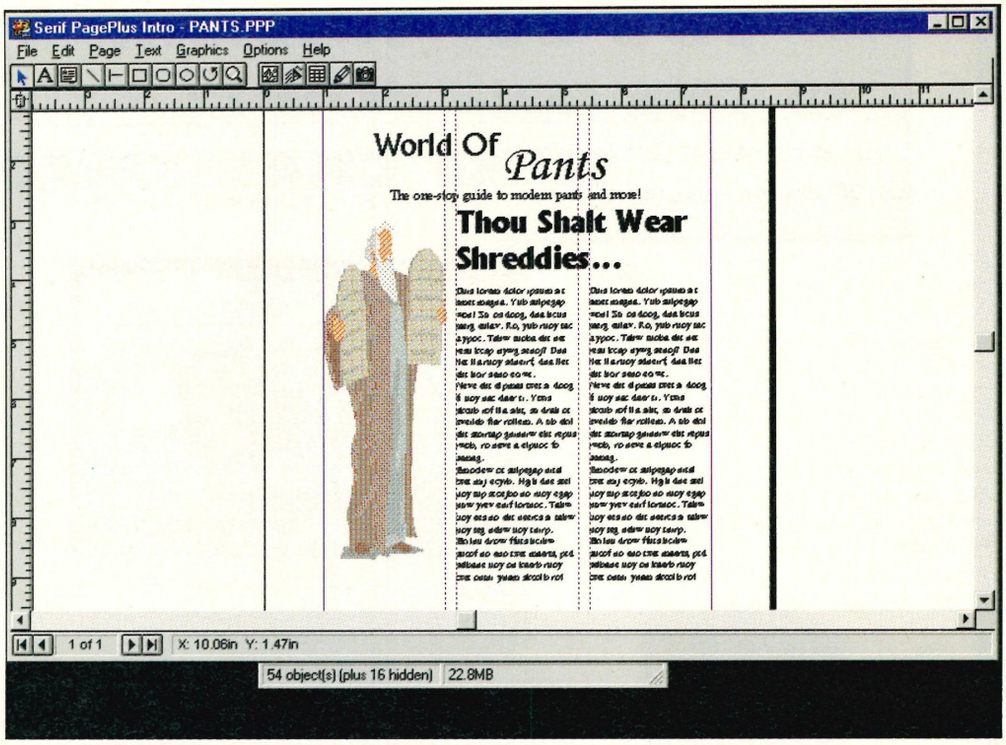
LINE 2
Draws horizontal or vertical lines

IMPORT DRAWPLUS
Loads in Drawplus picture files

ZOOM
Magnifies an area. Hold shift to zoom out.

IMPORT PHOTOPLUS
Loads in Photoplus picture files

PagePlus, the DTP package, is a flexible, and surprisingly power application. Here's what all its icons mean.



IMPORT TABLES
Lets you import a variety of spreadsheets.

BOXES
Lets you create filled frames

your application and it should load it straight away. This pic can also be loaded into your favourite art package.

On top of all these files, there are also a couple of useful applications. If, by some amazing fluke, you actually find that there isn't enough clip art on the disks for you, you'll be able to create your own. Everything you need to produce your own illustrations and export them to your documents are included here. To use the disc you'll need its serial number, don't worry, this is easy to get hold of and won't cost you a penny — even the number's freephone. Simply give Serif a call and the company will give you the number you need to get started. For the telephone number and information see the Getting Started box out. If you're still living in the dark ages and don't have a phone, you can still open the apps through file manager.

There's more than enough stuff in this package to get you started designing your own pages and it's compatible with most printers. All we ask is that when you turn out to be the next Robert Maxwell, learn how to swim and don't forget your old chums at PC Review. We could always do with a bob or two.

Apps Your Lot

Along with the fonts and clip art, Monster Serif CD also comes with two very useful applications.

Page Plus Intro

If your word processor is a little on the primitive side, don't worry. You'll still be able to use all the fonts and bits of clip art with this DTP package. Page Plus is easy to use and powerful enough to let you create a wide variety of documents. All the commands are easy to understand, although if you do get stuck there's a full help system waiting to bail you out.

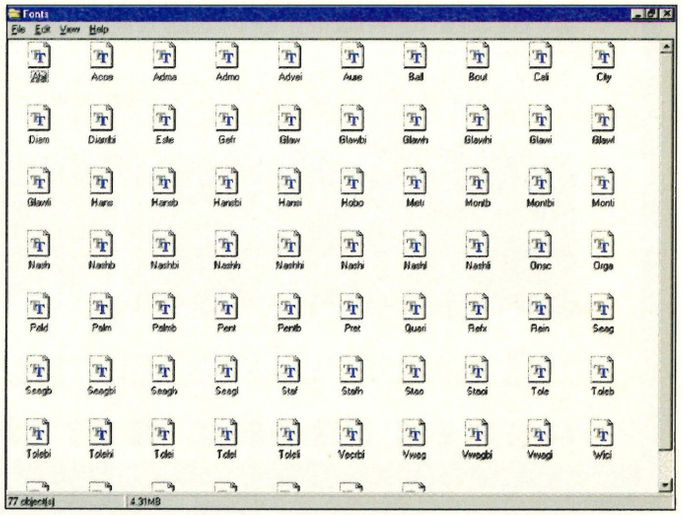
Draw Plus Intro

If you need a specialist piece of art which is covered by the clip art section of this disc, then you'll be able to create your own with Draw Plus. There's an easy to follow on-line help system which covers all the major features and you should be up and running in no time at all.

Using Fonts

An easy way to install the fonts on this disk is to open the fonts folder in the Serif CD program file on the CD then drag them to your Windows/System directory. When you've done that, restart your computer and you'll be able to use the fonts in all your applications.

If that proves a little too taxing for you, there's also an automatic install program which takes care of things for you. Likewise, to remove any fonts, open up the system directory and simply delete them. Be careful to leave all the Windows system fonts intact though, you could find things going a little haywire if you accidentally delete a typeface which is used by either Windows or one of its applications.



▲ *Adding new fonts is very easy just select one and drag it to your Window's system directory.*

MAKE SURE THE MULTIMEDIA PC YOU BUY THIS CHRISTMAS IS THE ONE YOU'LL STILL WANT NEXT CHRISTMAS.



APRICOT MS540 FROM £1349

This is the Apricot MS540, an all new multimedia PC designed expressly for the home.

It comes with a superb collection of software titles to help you explore its remarkable performance to the full, straight out of the box.

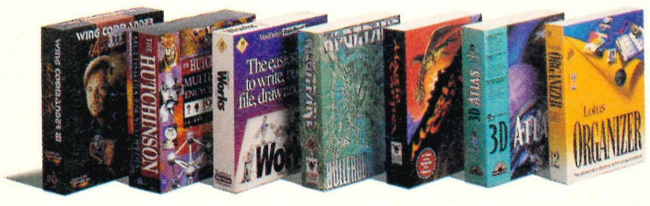
But even without the software, we're confident you'd choose this computer over its rivals, because we designed the MS540 to be not just the most advanced PC you can buy today, but to maintain its technological advantages for longer.

The key is an all-new motherboard which we designed and built ourselves to be a marvel of upgradeability. Memory, video memory, cache memory and processors have all been designed to accept simple plug-in upgrades. So as your needs grow, so can your system.

And for specialised components, we have sourced only the best: a quad-speed CD-ROM from Sony, SoundBlaster market-leading sound technology from Creative Labs. Plus 20-watt speakers that wouldn't shame a good hi-fi.

What this all adds up to is a system that exudes quality and reliability, easily seen in the way it performs and the way it's built. (Not so surprising when you consider that Apricot Computers is part of the worldwide Mitsubishi group.)

And when you see the way it looks, you'll realise this is the first PC that's really fit for your home. But don't take our word for it, come and judge for yourself.



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REVIEW 12/95

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Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2

Core Design ● (01332) 297797 ● Playable Demo



To install select Firestorm from the CD-ROM's main menu. Please make sure you run setup program before starting the game. To play the demo type TH2

The date is 1999 and the world is a dangerous place. You are part of a elite rapid NATO task force, set up to defuse any major situation.

In this top combat sim you get to fly a AH-73M Thunderhawk attack helicopter. Your objective is to successfully complete a series of highly dangerous missions. These range from running arms in South America to taking part in a new Gulf conflict. If you don't destroy all your targets, but still manage to fly out of mission zone in one piece, you'll receive one demerit. Three demerits means being stripped of your pilot's wings and grounded.



The demo on this month's CD-ROM represents four days of code translated from the PlayStation version. It should still give you fair idea of the game's terrific playablity. The final version promises to push the PC to its limits with a 'virtual' cockpit, animation sequences, 37 missions and polygon graphics. 486 owners should consider upgrading now!

Requires: P60, 8Mb, VGA display and major sound cards.

Keys

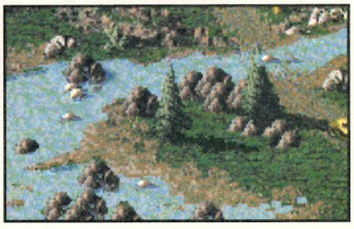
Use your cursor keys to steer	
Left Control	Fire
Q	UP
A	Down
P	Pause

Command & Conquer Cheats



You'll find these cheats in the Command & Conquer directory of this month's CD-ROM. If you wish to use them you will first need to utilise Phonzip (there's a copy in the root directory of the disc) to unzip each cheat to a directory on your hard disk. A selection of the cheats are shown here and there are more available on the CD.





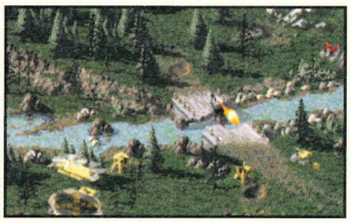
Mission Selector

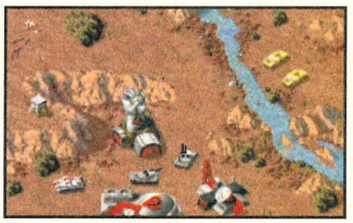
Using this you can choose which mission you want to play, either as Nod or GDI. Unfortunately it won't allow you to choose which map you want to play (for instance, Mission 4 allows you to play Poland or Belarus, and using the editor you'll have to make do with whatever it gives you). To choose a mission, just run the software and choose which one you want, then quit out, load the game, load your changed Savegame file, abort (in the options menu), and click restart. It'll then give you the mission you require.

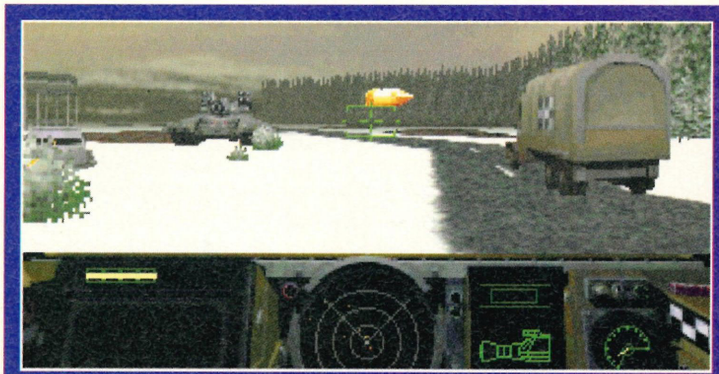


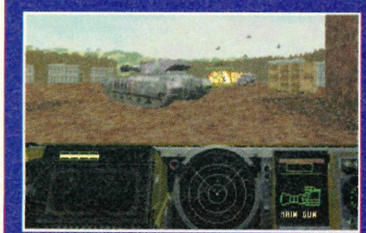
Editor

Once run this editor will allow you to change certain properties of the game. First back up your GAME.DAT file because any changes you make will change this for good, and you may want to go back to the default at a later date. Then run CCEDIT. If you scroll through the options you can chage the price of most of the facilities and buildings, the weapons that each troop member or vehicle has on board, and the amount of power a structure requires and gives out. The programme will also explain what each weapon/structure's properties really are so you can find out more about the game.









Keys

Q	Forward
A	Reverse
<	Left
>	Right
S	Change Weapon
Space	Fire

Shellshock

Core Design ● (01332) 297797 ● Playable Demo



To install select Shellshock from the CD-ROM's main menu. Please make sure you run setup program before starting the game.

In Shellshock you play the new member of a mercenary tank force, the Da Wardenz. They fight terrorism, and oppression where every they find it. The objective is to serve a tour of duty with the Da Wardenz and kill as many bad guys as possible. It's all action from the freezing forests of Mostvia to the steaming Paranaguan jungle.

Shellshock is a first-person perspective game. Well, in fact its a first-tank perspective game as you get to drive a M-13 Predator battletank. As your tour of duty progresses, however, you'll get a chance upgrade its performance, armour and weapons.

The game starts with you in the Penn, the Da Wardenz' base. The Penn is where you can attend mission briefings and talk to other members of your team, but don't expect any special treatment until you've proved yourself!

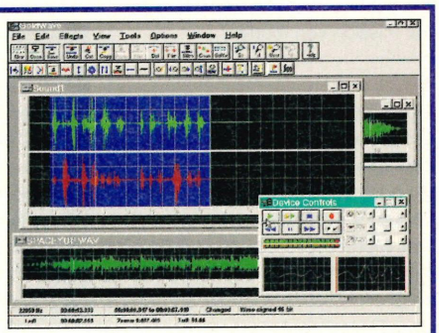
Requires: 486DX2, 4MB, SVGA and all major sound cards.

Shareware Shopping

Armed with his tartan shopping trolley, Charles Hathaway trawls the wires in search of the best in shareware for all his favourite PC Review readers. If you like what he sees, why not try it for yourself on this month's cover CD.

Goldwave

Goldwave is an excellent sound sample editor for Windows that lets you record and play back files in several formats and apply weird effects and filters at the same time. It works with any Windows compatible sound card and supports 8- or 16-bit editing in mono or stereo. Samples can be recorded using a standard microphone hooked up to your sound card and saved straight to disk or RAM.



▲ *Neat and colourful — the best sound editor around?*

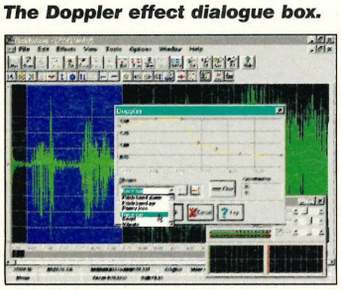
Goldwave also lets you open multiple resizable windows and the powerful editing tools let you cut and paste sound clips between files very easily. It even supports independent right and left channel editing and user defined zoom to sub-sample level for accurate editing. Even more impressive is the intelligent editing function that automatically converts sampling rates, bits, and channels when copying and pasting to different file formats.

The interface features a colourful toolbar to complement the pull down menus, a status bar with configurable time and range displays, and a separate window for play, pause, stop, rewind, fast forward, record, volume, balance, and speed controls. There are also CD-ROM controls for playing audio CDs.

The program has built-in support for WAV, VOC, IFF, AIF, AFC, AU, SND, and MAT sound sample formats as well as the ability to open RAW files.

Where Goldwave really scores is in the range of effects it offers. These include echo, volume, reverse, envelope shaping, panning, filters, resample, transpose, Doppler, distortion, noise gate, mechanise and flange, each of which has various adjustable parameters. There's even a mathematical expression evaluator for the ultimate in type of sound generation and experimentation. Once you've found a good effect, you can save its parameters and name it for future use. What's more as the program isn't crippled in any way at all, there's no frustration when you're evaluating it. If you like messing around with sound, Goldwave is a must.

The Doppler effect dialogue box.

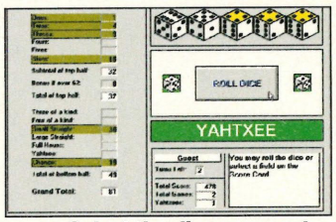


Evaluation versions from Goodman International ● (01782) 335650 ● Price US $30

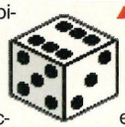
PC REVIEW RATING 8

Yahtxee for Windows

No we haven't spelled it wrong — that's what the author has called it. Anyway, there's no mistaking the origins of this game — it's that age old dice favourite Yahtzee in which you have to roll five dice up to three times a turn and score particular combinations such as straight, full house, and three of a kind as best you can.



▲ *Select the dice you want to keep and press roll...*



The interface is tidy and functional, without being terribly exciting, and the score card is displayed down the left-hand side. Click on an empty score card and it will automatically add it for you — you can even enter zero scores if your strategy (or bad luck) demands it.

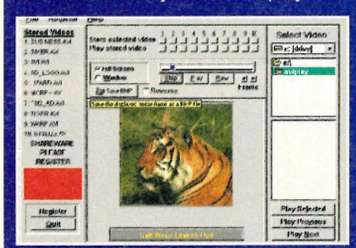
This Windows version is a solitaire version in which you simply try to beat your own high scores. That doesn't sound terribly enthralling, but if you're already a fan of this infuriatingly addictive game, that won't worry you. In fact you'll probably be a lot happier because you don't have to wait for your turn!

Evaluation versions from Creative Shareware ● (01282) 611323 ● Price US $10

PC REVIEW RATING 7

Video Launch Pad

Although Windows plays AVI videos well enough — when it comes down to it,, it just doesn't make selecting and browsing very easy at all. This is where Galt Video Launch Pad comes in. You can load up to ten of your favourite AVI videos and allocate them to one of ten slots. Whenever you want to play one, you click on the relevant button. Whether you're trying to put together a presentation or just browsing through a CD full of the things, it's a handy little tool.



▲ *Give me a 26 inch telly any day of the week.*

You can play the videos backwards and stop them at any point and move backwards or forwards a frame at a time. If you find the bit you want you can even press the BMP button and create a BMP format bitmap image file of the current frame.

Videos can be played full screen or in frames, with full sound, but Windows 3.1 users will need the Video for Windows add-on installed.

Evaluation versions from Creative Shareware ● (01282) 611323

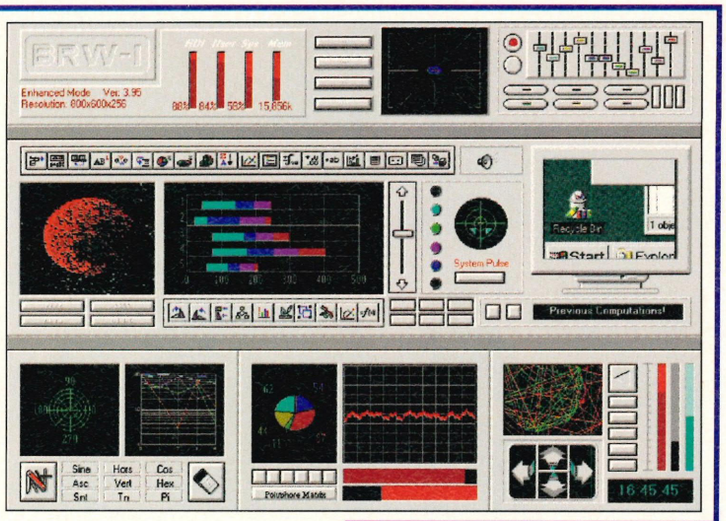
PC REVIEW RATING 6

The coverdisk hotline is (01685) 350505, open Mon-Fri 3pm-5pm

Impressions

A great one for show-offs this one. Impressions is a screen saver designed to make anyone casually looking at your screen think that something horrendously brainy is going on. It's a colourful, animated screen saver that displays some mysterious and utterly incomprehensible wave forms, graphs and charts, plus some equally mind-boggling text.

For example there's a message announcing that your PC is carrying out polyphore matrix computations integrity. Of course, the joy of this kind of thing is that nobody is likely to ask you precisely what polyphore matrix computations integrity is for fear of looking ignorant. If you set it up properly — something I failed to do — it even plays back digitised sounds of an equally incomprehensible nature. You can even redo the sound files in your own voice for the ultimate in spoof screen savers.



▲ ***Good for a laugh.***

Evaluation versions from Goodman International ● (01782) 335650 ● Price US $20

PC REVIEW RATING 5

LOADING

CD-ROM: To run this month's Shareware select the 'shareware shopping' button from the main menu and follow the on-screen instructions.



To Do

To Do is one of the utilities you use once and wonder how you ever lived without it. It's not a new idea — we've had Post-It notes and all kinds of reminder programs for years — but it's dead simple and easy to use.

The bright yellow To Do form is actually a window without scroll or move bars that can be dragged around the screen by holding down the left mouse button over the red pin. Clicking on the right mouse button when the pointer is over the form produces a pop-up configuration menu while right clicking on message offers cut, paste and delete options.

You can widen the yellow form, but not lengthen it, so there's a maximum of 15 to do items at a time displayed. Different files can be loaded and saved though, and text can be dragged around the form using the mouse or deleted when done, to make space for the next task or alter a task's priority.

Evaluation versions from Ensign ● (0181) 778 2871 ● Price £3

PC REVIEW RATING 7

Backlash

It's Stardate 1422.332 and, effective immediately, you are assigned to the System Defense Craft SD-2707 in Sector M as Turret Gunner 1st Class. You're off to Omicron station in Quadrant M01.01 where things are guaranteed to get pretty hairy. In case you haven't guessed this is a space shoot 'em up, but instead of wading into the fray you're looking backwards at it. It's up to you as rear gunner to vape the oncoming asteroids and unfriendlies as fast as you can.

Backlash is a good looking game vaguely reminiscent of X Wing though not nearly as slick. It will run on a 386 or better with just 2Mb RAM though a 486 is recommended. The controls are simple and if you choose the mouse option, it's a little like shooting barn doors at first, although things do hot up a little later on.

The first mission is a training mission, but another is provided for the hardened gamesters. More are available in the registered version. The gunnery system is similar to X Wing's too and the same strategic decisions need to be made, such as transferring power from guns to shields, switching weapons from gun to missile, and switching between targets.



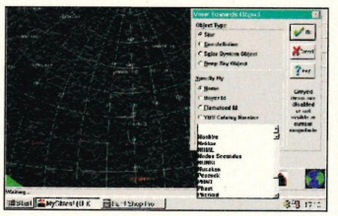
Evaluation versions from Creative Shareware ● (01282) 611323 ● Price US $30

PC REVIEW RATING 5

My Stars

My Stars is a Windows program that shows the position of stars, the sun, the planets and other objects in the solar system just as they would be seen from any position on earth. You can also vary the time of view, animating the movement of the stars and planets in real time, hour by hour, or day by day and track down and place planets, constellations and various celestial bodies. A lot of thought has clearly gone into the program — not to mention a fair amount of knowledge — and the objects can be viewed in different ways such as by name, and Messier or NGC numbers.

The database contains hundreds of stars, all the planets and a few odds and sods into the bargain. We don't have many astronomers on the staff of PC Review so we can't vouch for its accuracy, but it certainly looks good.



▲ ***Ever wondered where Nodus Secundus was at five o'clock?***

Evaluation versions from Creative Shareware ● (01282) 611323 ● Price US$12

PC REVIEW RATING 6

Cover CD-ROM

Our helpline service is open to everyone with a PC Review CD.

The PC Review cover CD-ROM discs are rigorously checked and scanned for all known viruses at each stage during their production. However, cover CDs are used at the reader's own risk. PC Review can therefore accept no responsibility for damage to either data or hardware caused by the use of our CD-ROMs. If circumstances dictate that we are unable to supply the stated program, we will endeavour to provide alternative software. Sorry, but PC Review will not be held responsible for content changes.

CD disclaimer

We cannot guarantee 100% that our cover mounted CD-ROM will work on every single PC manufactured.

Help! My CD-ROM isn't working

If only some of the programs on the disc crash or will not load then you probably have a memory problem, in this case read the 'Before you start: sort out those nasty memory problems' section on page 14 of this very issue. If you are still completely stuck after that then ring our cover disk hotline on (01685) 350505, between 3.00 pm and 5.00 pm weekdays.

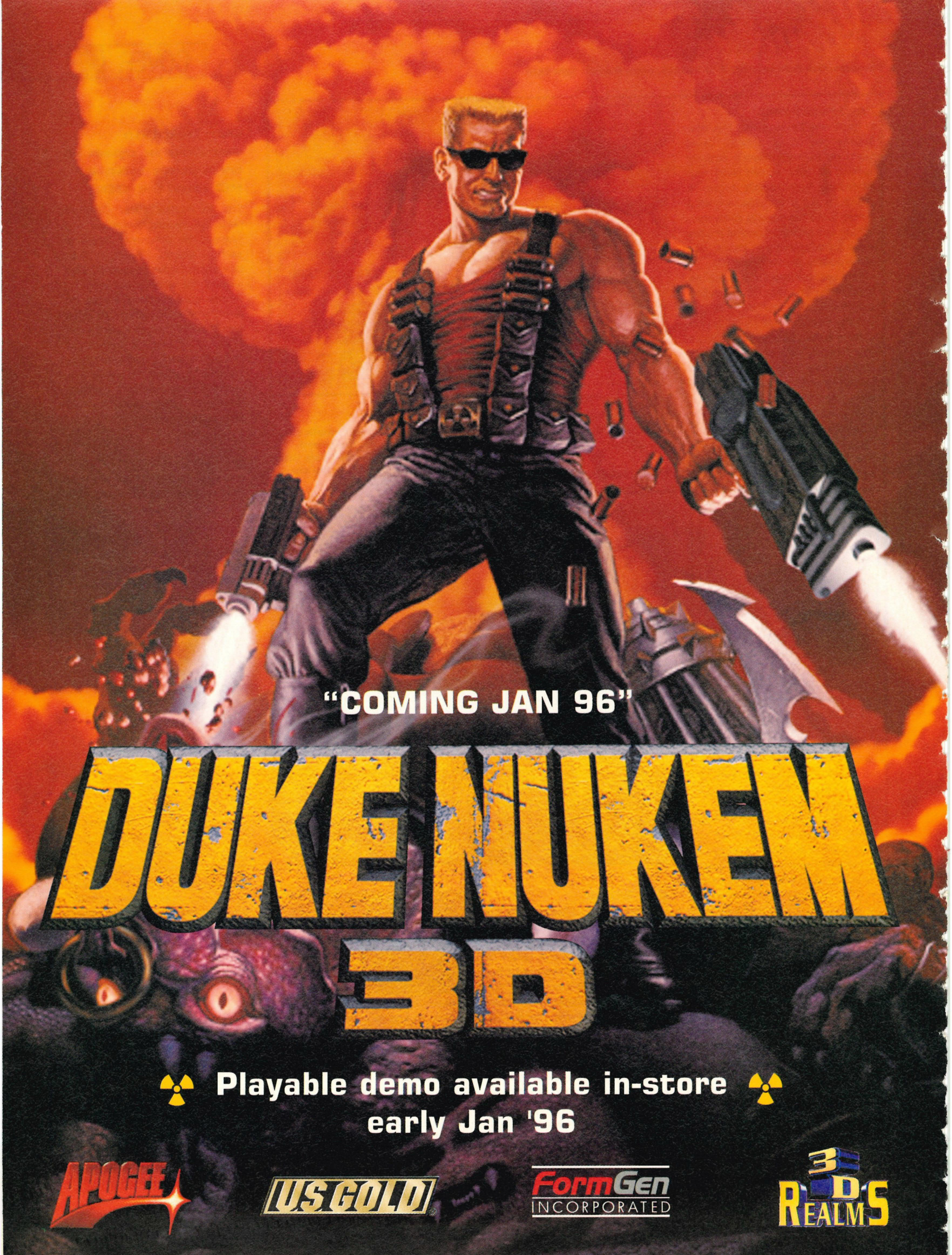
01685 350505

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Out of the thousands of cover CD-ROMs we duplicate every month, a very small number may get damaged during transit. If you think yours may be faulty, we'll replace it. Just pop the CD in to a jiffy bag with a suitably sized, self-addressed envelope and postage to the value of 28p (55p from overseas) and the form below (filled in), and send the package to: PC Wise Helpline, Dowlaistop business Park, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid-Glamorgan, CF48 2YY.

Name .....
Address .....
.....
.....

The cover /CD-ROM disc (delete as applicable) on my copy of PC Review was damaged. Please send me a replacement — I enclose return postage to the value of 28p (55p overseas) and the original disc.


"COMING JAN 96"
DUKE NUKEM
3D
Playable demo available in-store
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APOGEE
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INCORPORATED
3D REALMS



"It's the ultimate game for unleashing all your pent-up aggression"

- PC Power

"Could this be the game to outquake Quake, to outdoom Doom and more importantly change the name Doom genre to Nukem genre."

- Gamesmaster

"The Build engine's flexibility means that pretty much anything goes in Duke Nukem 3D."

- Edge Magazine

"It makes pretty much every PC game we've ever seen - Doom included - look slightly dull. Honestly!"

- PC Gamer

KICK ASS FEATURES

- Support for SVGA Modes.
- Modem and Network 8 Player (Co-operative and Comm-Bat™ Modes).
- Swim Underwater to Find Secrets and even Shoot into or out of the Water.
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NEWS

PC Games RIP?

The doomsters are out in force again — and what have they got in their dirty crystal balls? A world without fun, that's what....

Industry sources predict the falling price of writable CD-ROM drives will trigger an increase in piracy which will threaten the PC as a games system. It's feared developers could move away from PC compatibles because their games can be copied so easily. Previously, games software houses moved to the PC CD-ROM format because it was difficult to copy. Faced with falling sales as pirates copy games rather than buy them, the concern is developers will, in future, desert the PC for other formats.

Currently, the huge capacity of CDs makes it impractical to copy games to floppy disks, while the high cost of existing CD-ROM writing units (previously in excess of £1500) prevents CDs from being copied to other CDs. Now, however, such devices are starting to appear for under £1000, and are expected to fall to under £300 within the next twelve months.

Marcus Dyson, producer at Team 17, sees the threat to the PC games market as "potentially as dangerous as that faced by floppy based systems previously". The lack of big-name developers in the Amiga market has been partially attributed to the fact that Amiga games could be – and were being – copied so easily so reducing sales. "If such units do appear, the industry, police and ELSPA will have to move to stop the piracy — if they don't then it could be just as problematic as piracy in other markets."

Dyson went on to say that although writable CD drives could present a problem, the development of new high density CDs might counter the threat. "Within 12 months several American developers will be releasing games to take advantage of these new CDs, which can't be copied by the existing writable CD units. As pricing makes one technology redundant, new technology will reduce the initial problem". But this will only happen if the new high density CD format currently being developed by Sony and other manufacturers appears on schedule and is supported by enough developers to make it a success.

Divide By Zero's Andy Blazdell was less impressed by the threat, however. "It really depends on whether new anti-piracy systems such as Lazerlock work. But in any case, I can't see that pirating CD-ROM games will become any more widespread than it is already. Blank CDs are still fairly expensive, costing around £5 each if you buy them in bulk, which rules out casual piracy. Lending games is more of a threat to sales than pirating the CDs."

PC Review will be investigating the effects of the first writable CD-ROM drive for under £1000 next issue. You can be sure PC Review will bring you news of further developments as they happen.



Do got go gently into that good night, dear gamers! ▶



Doom finds a champion

Deathmatch 95, the first international Doom championship, was held at Microsoft's headquarters in Seattle last month. The hype about Deathmatch 95 being part of Microsoft's Windows 95 Judgement Day event was so strong that anyone attending the Doom championships who didn't know the game's history would have thought it was a Microsoft game pure and simple.

And it was Microsoft's Windows 95 version of Doom which was used for the finals. This didn't exactly endear the organisers to the 23 finalists, who had not had a chance to see the Windows 95 version until the day itself. Even stranger, the grand final was played out using not Doom but Hexen, the latest game to use the Doom engine.

The two British contestants were early casualties, leaving USA champion Thresh to take the ultimate accolade.

● Further information on Deathmatch 95 can be found on Microsoft's WW Web page at http://www.microsoft.com. For independent views and reports, try newsgroups such as rec.games.computer.doom.misc. Read about our own games challenge – on the excellent Worms — on page 160 this issue.



for VideoCD

Here's a tale that confirms the superiority and pre-eminence of home computing, as if you need to be reminded. PolyGram Video has taken the unusual step of releasing the cult movie Shallow Grave on VideoCD three months before it becomes available on VHS. The British-made black comedy, which tells the story of three flatmates, a corpse and a suitcase full of money, did well at the box office early this year and was even acclaimed by many as the British equivalent of Reservoir Dogs'.

PolyGram, a relative newcomer to VideoCD format, is also planning to release Malice, the thriller starring Nicole Kidman and Bill Pullman, and the comedy When Harry Met Sally (starring Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal as two New York socialites in love) this month.

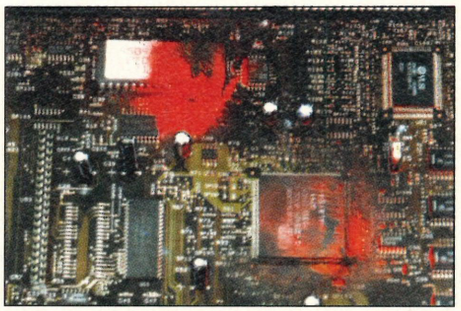
Call PolyGram on (0181) 910 5000.

Spray it again, Sam

Hardware theft is rapidly becoming a huge problem, with thieves stealing small but valuable components such as processors and SIMMS while leaving the bulky PC behind. With this in mind, Centerprise International has invented a new device designed to deter RAM bandits. The Barracuda Security Device fits into the PC's expansion slot and is alarmed via a Windows installation program. Internal light-beam sensors detect whether the PC is being tampered with, setting off a siren and detonating dye capsules which mark the chosen components with indelible paint. Legitimate users will be able to disable the device by entering the password. According to Centerprise, the paint does not harm the components, but it will show prospective buyers that they have been stolen.

The device alone costs £69.95, £79.95 with one dye capsule or £84.95 with two. Replacement dye capsules cost £12.00 each.

Call Centerprise International on (01256) 463754.



▲ Read our group test on PC security systems next month when we'll be tying them down and ripping them off our desks!



It's big, it's heavy, it's wood

Dismayed by how cheap your keyboard looks on your smart, walnut desk? Probably not, but if you do feel the need to boost your PC's image, check out the new range of keyboards from Artifact. Designed for the 'discerning customer,' the keyboards are finished in real wood which, according to Artifact, is 'painstakingly applied,' before being 'polished by hand to a mellow splendour.' Er, quite.

Other finishes can also be commissioned. With prices ranging from £199 to £499 for keyboards and £65 for matching mice.

Good news all round then, except that at PC Review, our grey, coffee-stained keyboards fit in rather well with our grey, coffee-stained desks. Nice to know, however, that someone at least doesn't work in abject squalor....

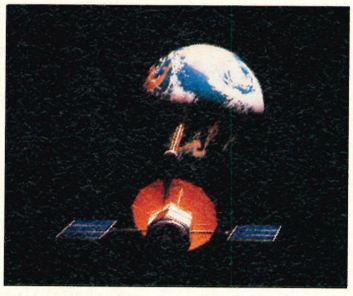
Contact Artifact on (01689) 823406.

Robots in Space!

Meet Hughie, Louie and Heavenly a new generation of intelligent flying robots! All three are part of a research project at Stanford University. Designed for use in space they feature "task level control". In English this means that an operator will tell the robot to do something and the clever old robot will work out how.

The potential for use in space is clear, sending up an astronaut is expensive and dangerous, not so with these guys. Using a simple graphical interface an operator can easily get this smart bunch to retrieve or even repair a satellite.

● Advanced computer guidance is also being developed for Halrop, a prototype airship with an antenna slung underbelly that converts microwaves by a land-based dish. The airship is being designed in Japan to replace telecomms satellites, relay Internet transmissions, and, it's been mooted, could even carry a giant electrified curtain to close holes in the ozone layer.



It's hip to be Square

If you've ever written games in your bedroom in the hope of being discovered by a large, publishing company, take note. Square Wheel Studios has a unique approach to recruitment. Run by 25-year-old Mark Dawidowicz and 24-year-old Ken Pearson, it scouts out programming talent via the net. Its first game, Vigilance of Talos V, will be released in January. If your talents are just ripe to be exploited, or if you simply want to find out more about the company, contact Square Wheel on http://www.squarew.com/squarew. Be prepared to send a demo for evaluation.

In brief

Brought to book

Myst, the picturesque adventure which sold bucketloads in the States last year, is now the subject of a fantasy novel. Titled Myst: The Book of Atrus, the story was written by the game's creators Robyn and Rand Miller and tells the story of how the island of Myst was discovered. The book will be published by Bantam Press and costs £16.99.

Call Transworld Publishers on (0181) 579 2652.

Christmas cheer from Maxis

Maxis has entered the Christmas spirit with an offer which could cut the cost of buying gifts. Buy a copy of SimIsle, SimTower or SimCity 2000 CD-ROM Collection with a 'We Free Sims' gold star on the box and you'll be able to choose a free game from the following: SimAnt, Wrath of the Gods, SimLife, Unnatural Selection and SimEarth.

Contact Maxis on (0171) 490 2333.

Penguin waddles onto PC

After 60 years of book publishing, Penguin has embraced modern technology with the launch of Penguin Electronic Publishing. Titles planned for CD-ROM include The Kerouac ROMnibus, which includes audio and video clips as well as the complete text of The Dharma Bums, Bill Gates' The Road Ahead, Arthur Miller's The Crucible, Stevenson's Treasure Island and The Call of the Wild by Jack London.

Call Penguin on (0171) 416 3000 or visit its internet site on www.penguin.co.uk.

Ex Indy boss drives Multimedia over the Hill

Andreas Whittam Smith, founder of the Independent, has turned his attention to electronic publishing. His new company, Notting Hill, will release its first four multimedia titles in March 1996. These will be International Athletics, The Evolution of Life (with controversial geneticist Richard Dawkins), The Art of Singing (which features previously unseen footage of Placido Domingo) and our favourite, Wine, Spirits and Beer.

Notting Hill is (0171) 229 0591.

● **FACT FANS** The original IBM PC was designed to run off a tape deck, just like a Sinclair Spectrum.

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Europe's Bosses are wired for crime!



White collar criminals have moved on from embezzlement and insider dealing, and are now getting wired for computer piracy. Intellectual crime as it's known covers the illegal supply and use of software. Recent cases have included company directors, hotel managers and even local government officials. Stiff prison sentences and heavy fines it seems are not deterring these copycats.

One of the more surprising markets has been the war-torn Yugoslavia. The U.N. trade boycott has provided the perfect environment for pirates. In a recent interview Marko a Serbian software privateer commented that "In a country with no laws, piracy can't be controlled, let alone stopped."

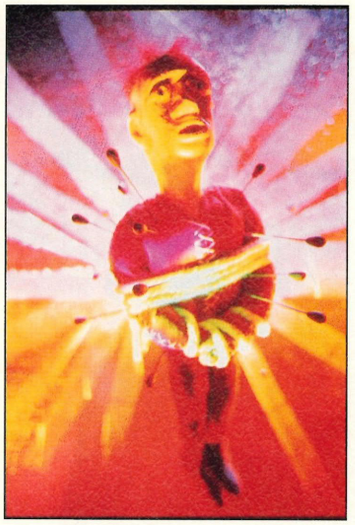
The battle rages on, with Europe's software industry losing an estimated $6 billion a year from piracy. With a potential offender more likely to be your boss than a rogue hacker, be careful what you've got on your PC or it could be the last time you have a computer for a very long time...

The Magnificent Eight

If you're thinking about upgrading to a 6-speed CD-ROM drive we suggest you give Diamond a call. The expansion card manufacturer, better known for its fast graphics cards and new 3D game card, is selling the first 8-speed CD-ROM drive.

PC Review broke the news first of 8-speed drives in our world exclusive review of 6-speed models back in August 1995. Since then several manufacturers have contacted us with details of their coming products; Diamond however are the first to ship units. The Diamond drive will be available as part of its Ultra Kit 8000 multimedia pack with a price of £399. The drive itself features reported transfer rates of a staggering 1,200Kb/second — significantly faster than the 900k per second transfer rates that PC Review found 6-speed models delivered. Call Diamond on (01753) 501400.





A plague on all our houses

1995 has been a vintage year for games, with titles such as Full Throttle, Worms and TFX:EF2000 stealing top honours. But what of the worst? PC Review nominates the ten titles that were hexed...

1. Prototype Kompart

A sideways scrolling shoot 'em up with dull weapons and pathetic enemies. State of the art — in 1980.

2. CyberBykes GameTek

Future wars are going to be fought on virtual motorbikes in Cyberspace — well, of course. An unmitigated disaster unfortunately.

3. Blown Away Daze

An exciting game with lots of explosions? No. A collection of dire puzzle games. Quite simply the worst film license ever.

4. Movie Clips Screen Saver Expert Software

If you have an urge to fill your screen with crap video clips get this now!

5. Al Unser Jr's Arcade Racing Mindscape

Not only does it look bad, but it also plays bad. In fact, this feeble attempt at a racing game is pretty bad all-round.

6. Bloodwings: Pumpkinhead's Revenge Electronic Arts

A dreadful adaption of a dreadful 'straight-to-video' horror movie. Absolutely pitiful.

7. Ten out of Ten French Software Partners

Irritating sound effects, poor graphics surrounded by an old idea — we'd rather go to France than use this

8. Radio Active US Gold

Crass American game show game which brings a whole new meaning to the word 'tacky'.

9. Playing with shapes / VCI

May be aimed at the knee-high PC learner but even the tiniest of toddlers will turn its cold wet nose up at this one.

10. Chaos Control Philips

3D shoot 'em up in which you have no control over your craft — you just sit and shoot. It doesn't even look that good.

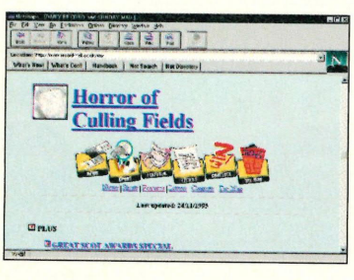
● What would you put at the top of the bonfire and why? Write to us at the usual address with ideas. A free game to the writers of the three best lists.

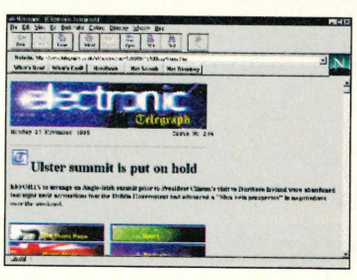
Superhighway of shame

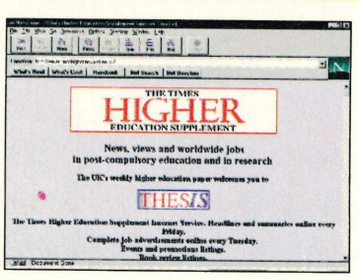
Major newspapers in net access shocker! Your instant guide to Fleet Street's soaraway bid to nab the net-heads...

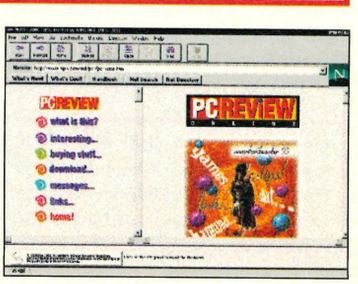
Paper(s)	Site	What is it?
Daily Record, Sunday Mail	http://www.record-mail.co.uk/rm/	The Record is the Scottish version of the Daily Mail
Daily Telegraph	http://www.telegraph.co.uk	Probably the best on-line newspaper site.
Daily Mail (football only)	http://www.soccernet.com	A footie fan's dream — packed with up to date soccer stories

Don't forget you can access the all-new PC Review online site at http://www.mpn.com/eol/pcr/#Services.
It's jam-packed with thoroughly interesting and useful information — games, technical matters, features and loads more. See you there!



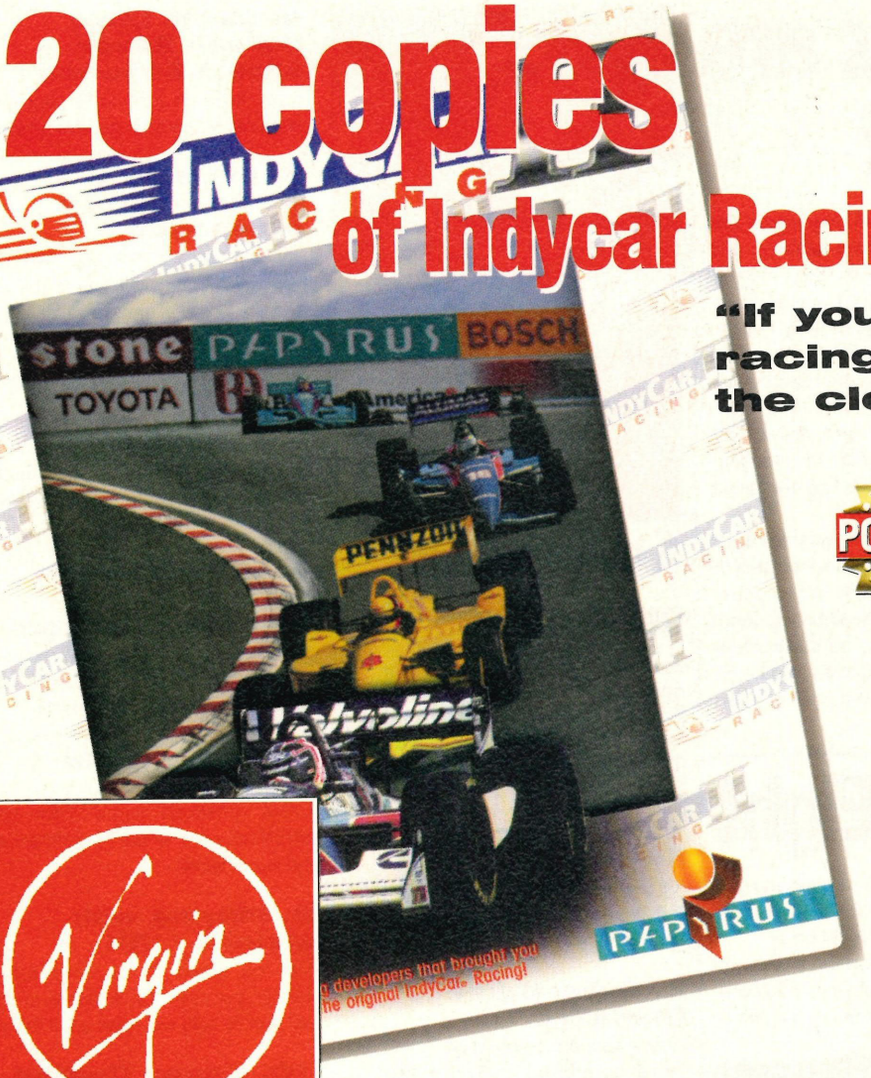




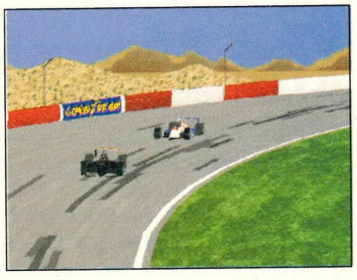


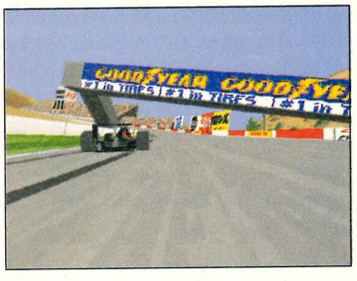
20 copies of Indycar Racing II to be Won!

"If you really dream of racing IndyCar then this is the closest thing to it"...

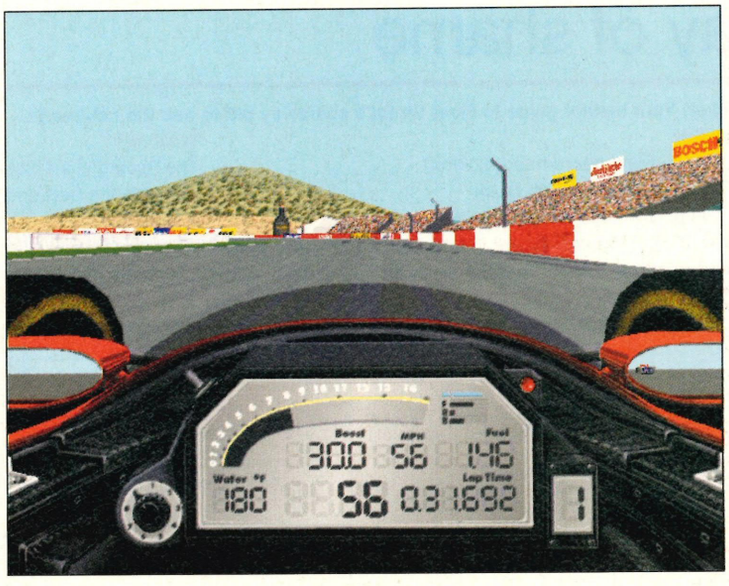


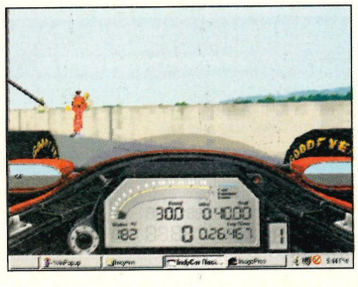












"IndyCar Racing II is definitely the best racing simulation so far, with its incredible attention to detail and action-packed races. It'll delight the hardcore sim addicts no end. Brilliant!"

PC REVIEW, DECEMBER 95

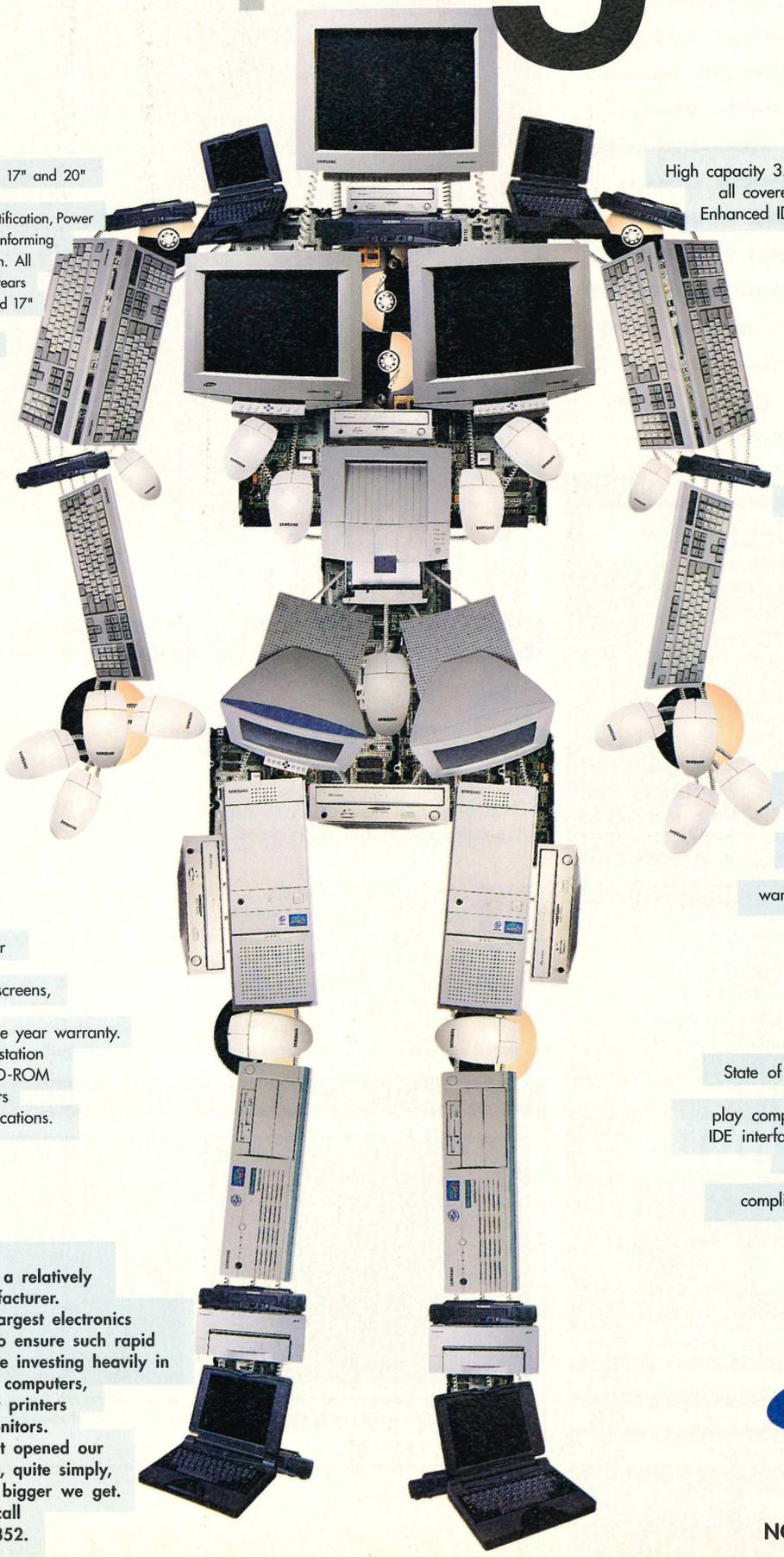
We gave the definitive verdict on IndyCar II in last month's issue. Now it's up to you to get in on the action and enter our Virgin competition: twenty of you will be the winners of a copy of the game, and a further twenty winners will receive a T-shirt each.

All you've got to do to is answer the following question correctly. IndyCar racers don't run on petrol but a special alcohol mix. True or false?

Answers on a postcard or sealed down SAE to IndyCar II competition, PC Review, Emap Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Closes 30th January 1996. Not open to employees of Emap or Virgin Interactive Entertainment. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final.

How to build a computer giant



SyncMaster Monitors
A complete range of 14", 15", 17" and 20" award winning monitors, all featuring Energy Star Certification, Power Management Systems and conforming to MPR II and CE certification. All monitors come with 2 or 3 years on site warranty, with 15" and 17" models being Plug and Play (Windows'95) compatible. And now we've started building in Britain.

DriveMaster Hard Disk Drives
High capacity 3.5" drives ranging from 850MB to 1.2GB, all covered by a three year warranty. Featuring an Enhanced IDE interface, full IBM PC compatibility and designed to meet the requirements of todays complex storage requirements.

Synabro Pentium Tower Systems
A Pentium 90Mhz processor, PCI architecture, 2MB video card, 8MB Ram as standard, Midi Tower casing and two years on site warranty are just some of the features that combine to make the Synabro System the ultimate solution to your computing needs.

MyLaser Printers
Windows based – GDI & PCL 5 – laser printers. Giving 8ppm output at 600DPI. Featuring a sealed unit toner and drum cartridge capable of printing 6000 A4 sheets. The MyLaser comes with two years on site warranty and full plug and play compatibility.

SENS 800 Notebooks
Pentium based MultiMedia Notebook PC's, with removeable 2.5" Hard Disk Drives for added security, 10.4" dual scan or TFT screens, built in microphone and speakers and a three year warranty. The MultiMedia docking station includes a dual speed CD-ROM drive, and stereo speakers for full Multi-Media applications.

SCR CD-ROM Drives
State of the Art, Quad speed CD-ROM drives, which are plug and play compatible, feature ATAPI/Enhanced IDE interface, provide some of the fastest date transfer rates, come with one year warranty and are compliant with all industry standards.

In 1974, Samsung was a relatively small electronics manufacturer. Today, it's one of the largest electronics groups in the world. To ensure such rapid growth continues, we're investing heavily in the next generation of computers, CD ROM players, laser printers and high definition monitors. What's more we've just opened our first UK plant. Because, quite simply, the better we get, the bigger we get. For more information call Freephone 0800 454 352.

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screen scene

'They're pink, they're wriggly and we've all been playing with them. Yes, PC Review has been struck down by Worms fever. Check out the best multiplayer game of the year, along with Destruction Derby and our great soccer special.'
Cal Jones

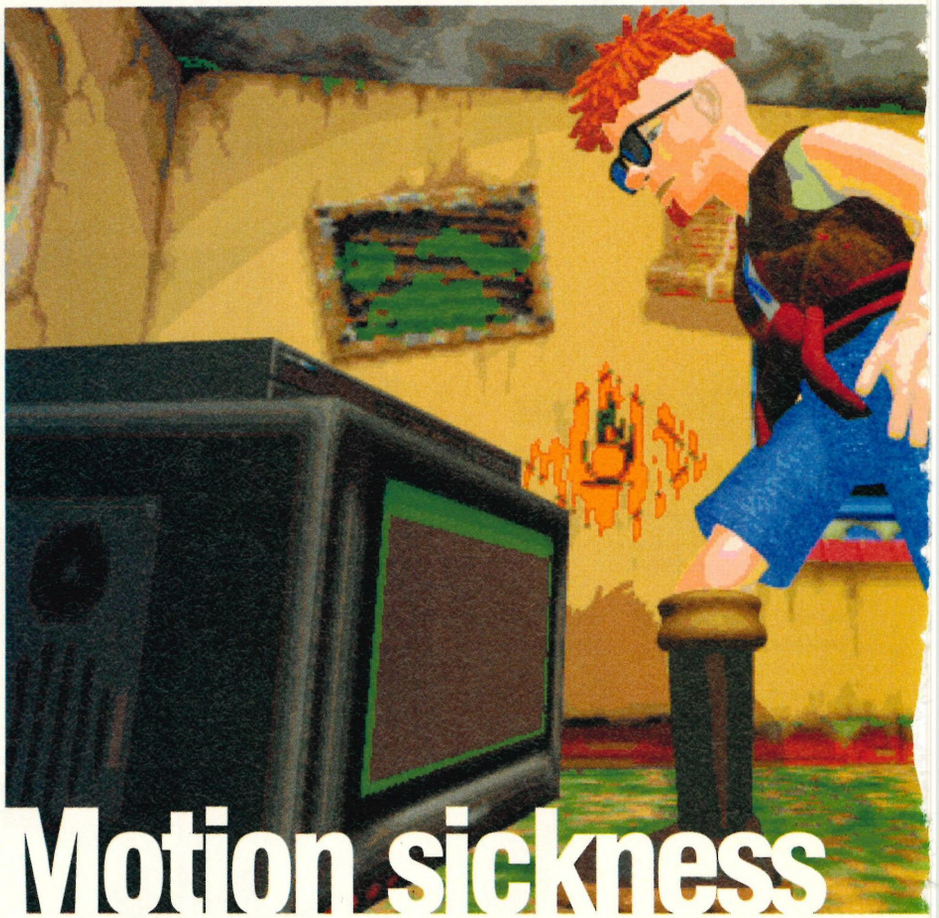
THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

0 Hang the programmers
1 No redeeming features whatsoever
2 Dire
3 Poor
4 One or two good points but otherwise flawed
5 Average
6 Not bad if you like that sort of thing
7 A solid example of the genre
8 Very good indeed
9 An essential purchase
10 Unfeasibly perfect

High Lights



Destruction Derby 54
Touché 70
Worms 62
Actua Soccer 98



Motion sickness

Normality Inc: In Progress

CD ONLY

Publisher: Gremlin
Contact: (01142) 753423
Price: £44.99
Expected release: January 1996

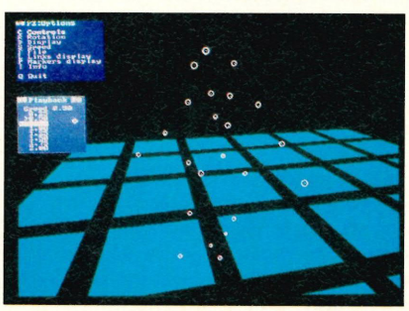
Having spent somewhere in the region of $250,000 on a motion capture studio, Gremlin Interactive seems determined to make good use of it. The Sheffield-based company has already brought us the first motion-captured football game, Actua Soccer (reviewed on page 98), and is now working on a motion-captured adventure called Normality Inc. Gremlin invited me to go up and see how the game was progressing. I would be shown the hallowed studio. And to demonstrate how motion capture worked, I would experience it first-hand as an extra in the game.

Motion capture is a funny old business. If you haven't heard the term before, it's an animation technique which is designed to make characters in a game move as realistically as possible. We've all seen games where the characters jerk along as though their joints have seized up. A bit like me on a cold morning, I guess. Motion capture, however, gets around that problem. To achieve realistic movement, actors (or sportsmen or martial artists — it depends on the type of game) have

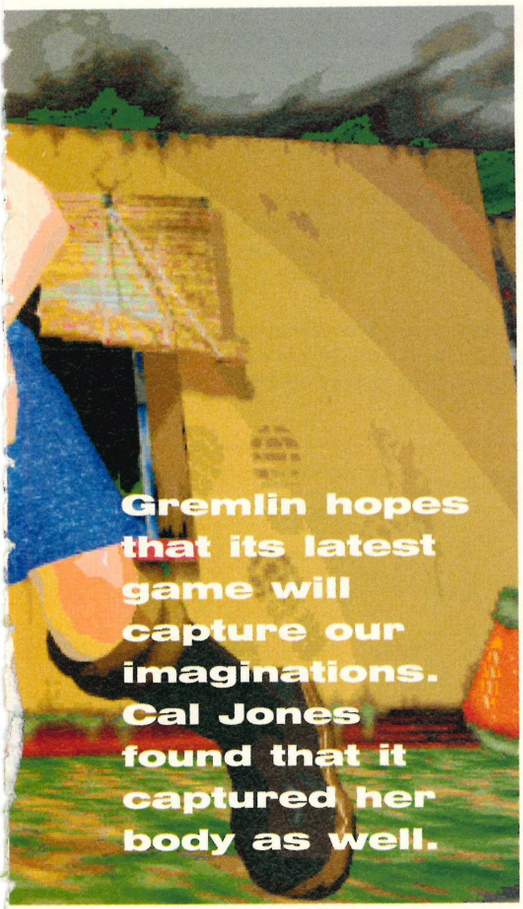
How do they do that?



▲ *After being covered by reflective balls, the mime artist acts the scene.*

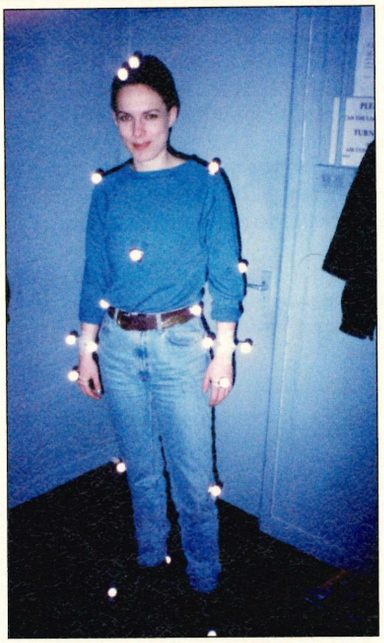


▲ *The cameras transmit their pictures to a series of monitors.*



Gremlin hopes that its latest game will capture our imaginations. Cal Jones found that it captured her body as well.

FAMOUS FOR FIVE MINUTES



▲ *Here I am in full Christmas tree regalia, feeling rather stupid. And so would you if you had two dozen balls stuck to various parts of your body. Honestly, the things you'll subject yourself to for a few fleeting moments of fame.*



▲ *Meet Heather, who is, in fact, a rocket scientist. Not so sure about the clothes, though. Heather doesn't look anything like me — my legs aren't anything like that long, alas — but for one small scene she will move like me. Unlucky, Heather.*

reflective balls attached to strategic points on their bodies (usually the joints) and are then filmed by a number of different cameras. The cameras pick up the reflections from the balls, which are then translated to a computer where they appear as a series of dots. Animators then join the dots together to make stickmen which form the basis for the characters in the game. Thus using this system you can get characters who move like real people and not like robots with a bad case of rust.

So, at some God-awful hour of the morning, I find myself sitting in London's gloomy St Pancras station feeling a wee bit apprehensive. I am not nervous about travelling, nor am I nervous about visiting Gremlin. I am not even nervous at the prospect of appearing in a game. No, I am nervous because some joker told me that in order to have my movements captured as closely as possible, I would have to wear a lycra leotard. Bulky clothes, I was informed, would get in the way. The prospect of having to squeeze myself into figure-hugging lycra does not please me. It is enough to bring me out in a cold sweat.

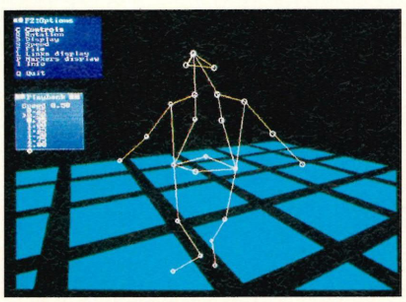
Going through the motions

I arrive at the studio where a professional mime artist is being put through his paces. I notice, to my chagrin, that he is wearing a ball-covered Linford Christie-style all-in-one. Oh dear. The mime acts out a scene in which Kent, the hero, is electrocuted after sticking his finger in a powerpoint. His movements are deliberately exaggerated. As he leaps around, his image is filmed by six cameras which are spaced around the hexagonal capture zone. The images are transmitted to a bank of monitors, each showing the action from a different angle. Since the images consist of nothing more than a constellation of dots, it's necessary to exaggerate motions so that they are as noticeable as possible. Subtlety is not rewarded, which is just as well. I have never been known for being subtle.

The beauty of motion capture is that you don't have to hire expensive film stars to play the characters. You can use pretty much anyone, from mime artists to your receptionist. The person being filmed doesn't have to look anything like the character they're portraying — the only limitation is that they have to be the same sex. "We used a woman to perform some of Kent's scenes and when we processed the footage we found that he was mincing around," says producer Ade Carless. The sequence had to be re-shot.

Now it's my turn. I ask if I have to wear the lycra thing. "You can borrow it if you want," offers the mime, "but I've been wearing it for two days and it hasn't been washed." I politely decline. Jeans and jumper will have to suffice. Phew.

So it's on with the balls. I'm forced to stand there like a lemon while they are sellotaped to various parts of my anatomy. I also have to wear what the Gremlin boys have dubbed "the cap of shame" — an unflattering skull cap with



▲ *The dots are then joined together to produce a simple stickman.*



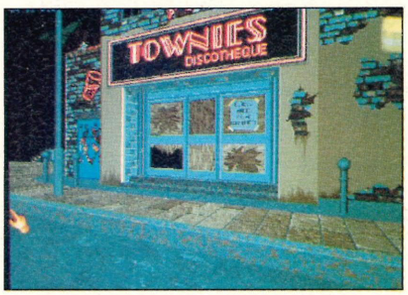
▲ *The graphic artists then go to work, mapping the character graphics*

So what's Normal, then?

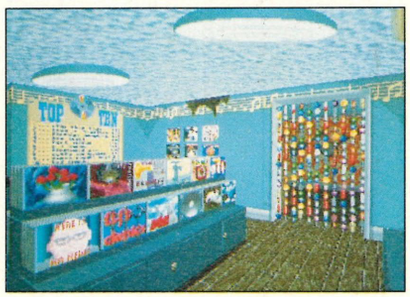
Normality Inc is one of the strangest adventures you're ever likely to come across. It's set in the fictional city of Neutropolis, where having fun is against the law and nothing interesting ever happens. You play Kent, a young slacker with a penchant for goatee beards and a complete disregard for personal hygiene. Kent has been placed under house arrest by the dreaded Norm Troopers, whose job it is to keep people 'normal' and make sure that they don't have any fun. His crime? Whistling. Kent's first goal is to escape his squalid flat — but he'll have to fool the Norms into thinking he's still there. Simple, if only he can find the remote control for his television...

Normality Inc differs from most point and click adventures in that it gives the player a Doom-style first person perspective view of the world. With complete freedom of movement (providing you manage to escape the flat, that is), the player can explore the game's 120 locations at leisure. But whenever Kent performs an important action, you're treated to a brief, motion-captured cutscene. Explore the sofa in Kent's flat and you'll see him reaching behind the cushions for items he may have lost. Get him to search the bath and you can watch him getting more than he bargained for.

Despite the tyrannical rule of the Norms, for whom dull is doubleplusgood, there's a strong current of wacky humour throughout the game. Many of the cutscenes provide comic relief, and the puzzles are suitably bizarre too. Anything LucasArts can do, Gremlin can do weirder. Normality Inc is probably the most off-the-wall game you'll ever have the pleasure of playing. So don't blow all your cash on Christmas shopping. Save some for yourself and buy this instead.



▲ ***Neutropolis is a big city with lots of interesting places to explore. But I don't think you want to go in there.***



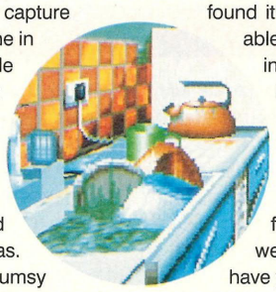
▲ ***The interactive sections are shown in first person 3D. You can even read the sleeves in the record shop.***



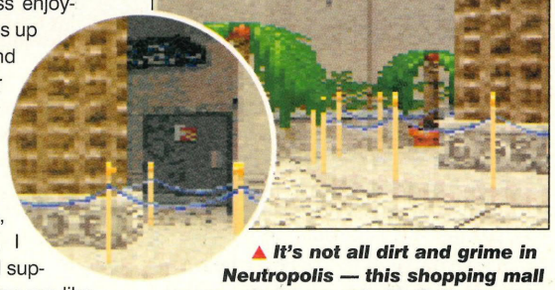
▲ ***Kent's flat is your basic student pad from hell. Several month's worth of washing-up in the sink.***

three more balls attached to it. I feel a lot like a Christmas tree.

Then I'm herded into the capture zone. I am told to act out a scene in which Heather, the main female character, launches a rocket and then runs away. It's a short scene and doesn't take long to do, although I mess up the first take because I manage to stray outside the hexagon and out of the range of the cameras. But ever so soon it's over. My clumsy movements have been immortalised forever. Or at least until the game stops selling.

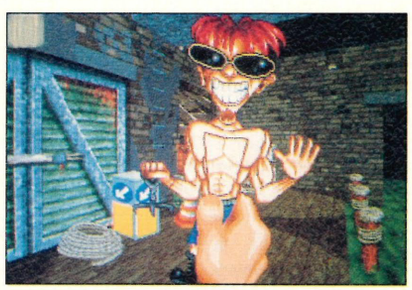


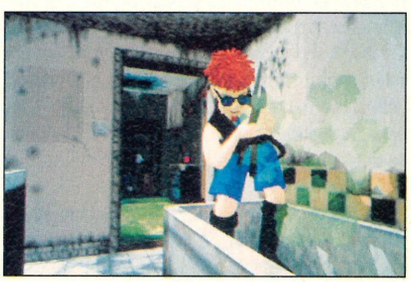
Being captured is a more enjoyable experience than I'd expected. I'm sure I would have found it considerably less enjoyable if I'd had to dress up in sweaty lycra and leap around for several days on the trot — but then I'm no professional. As for the results, well unfortunately, I have yet to see them. I suppose I'll have to wait until January like everybody else.



▲ ***It's not all dirt and grime in Neutropolis — this shopping mall seems clean enough. Until Kent gets there, of course.***

Keep your inventory in check with this handy Kent-shaped control panel. ▶





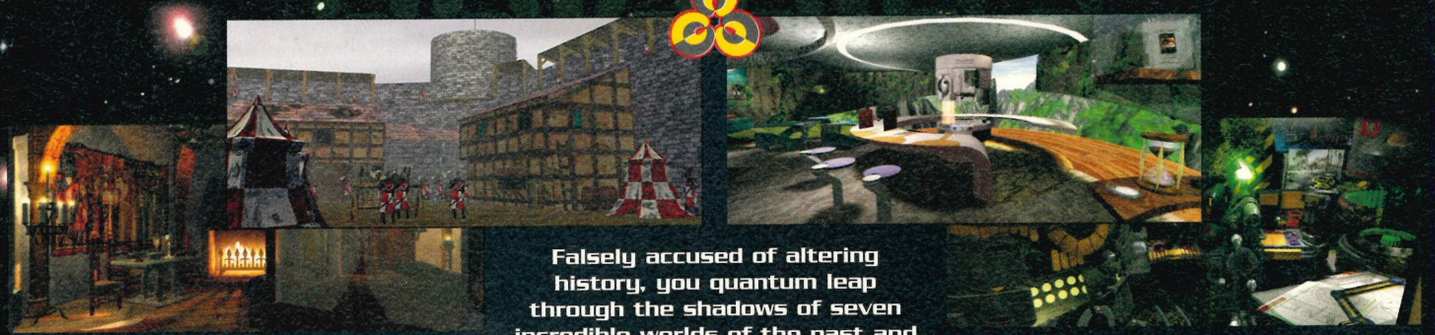
▲ ***Certain actions trigger cutscenes, such as this sequence in the bath.***



▲ ***You never know what you might find down the back of an old sofa. In fact, I'm not sure you want to find out.***

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PC CD-ROM: IBM PC or 100% Compatibles, 386DX 33MHz or faster processor, Windows 3.1 or later, 8Mb RAM, 4Mb of hard disk space, SVGA display (640x480, 256 colours), Double Speed CD-ROM drive, SoundBlaster Audio or Windows compatible sound card.

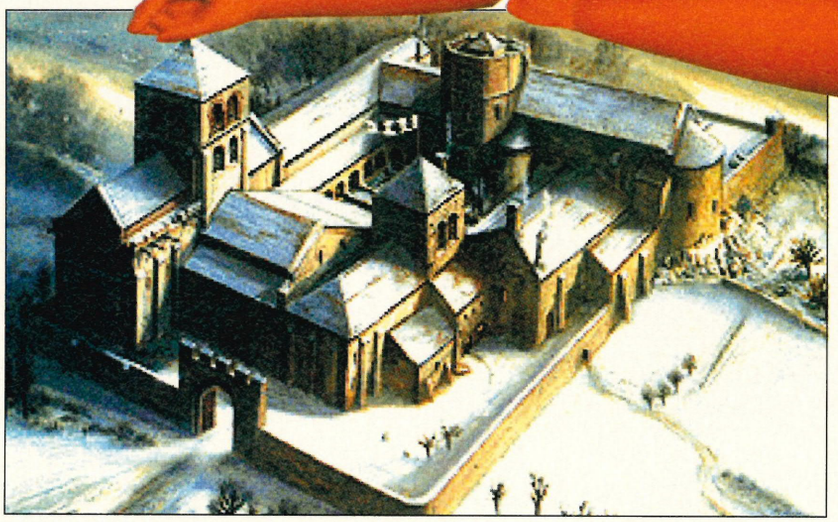
MAC CD-ROM: Macintosh or 100% Compatibles, 68040 or PowerPC processor, System 7.1 or later, RGB colour display (640x480, thousands of colours) and 8Mb RAM. QuickTime 2.0 and Sound Manager 3.0 included.

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Infogrames continues its run of ground breaking games — as Mark Patterson finds out.

Timegate





CD ONLY

Publisher: Infogrames

Contact: (0171) 738 8199

Price: TBA

Expected Release: January '96

When you're on to a good thing, you don't let it go. Nintendo still trades on the back of a fat Italian plumber, Sega has Sonic, and Infogrames a nice line in 3D adventures. With three globally successful Alone In The Dark games under its belt, Infogrames the French giant isn't letting up — with Timegate its programmers seem to have modified, adapted and invested a stack of cash to take their ground-breaking concept even further.

But to compare Timegate to any Alone In The Dark game is to sell it horrendously short. It's like comparing Dunlop trainers to Timberland's. This isn't just another 3D adventure in the Alone In The Dark mould. What's been created here is a bang up-to-date role-playing experience with some of the most stylish and stunning visuals you'll see anywhere.



▲ ***Believe it or not, that nun punching the hell out of that demon, is your character. Apparently, that's what the Knights Templar actually wore. It's good to see the art of cross-dressing was alive and kicking even in the dark ages.***

God squad

Even before playing this game I was drawn to it thanks to my pathetic fixation with slice 'n' dice sword flicks such as John Boorman's Excalibur. The plot, which is far-fetched to say the least, concerns a young American student who is sucked back in time to save the Knights Templar — a bunch of bread-breaking crusading knights from the 13th century who you'll probably remember hearing about in school. Only history's gone bonkers and the knights have been wiped out at the hands of the forces of evil and its little satanic helpers. Luckily for them, way ahead in the 20th century, their leader has been reincarnated, only he doesn't know it yet and if he did he'd probably be on the first flight back to the States pronto.

If things had worked out that way, this game would be very short, not to mention dull. But as the superb intro sequence shows, the knight gets drawn into the story, finds out his true destiny, and sets out to get back to his roots and save the day.

But before any of the swordplay starts, Mr Knight must first journey to the museum and work out exactly how to do the Michael J Fox bit and go back in time. This is merely an introduction to the main body of the game, which is as sprawling as it's well plotted. While the onus is very much on puzzle solving and progressing through the story, there's no escaping the fact that the only language a demon understands is several feet of cold steel rammed through its brain. So, that means you're also in for plenty of scrapping with superbly large weapons.

Although the intro is hefty and sets the scene perfectly, you're pretty much left on your own when it comes to working out just what you're supposed to do and where you've got

to go to do it. Thanks to some extremely clever cut-scenes you can expect to be updated on the plot, as well as receive a painless, not to mention well presented, history of the Knights Templar. Naturally, because the game's on CD, there are plenty of dead smart cut-scenes. These can be skipped as they simply update the story rather than help you work your way through to the next stage of the game — but they're so well constructed that, for once in a game, they're actually worth watching.

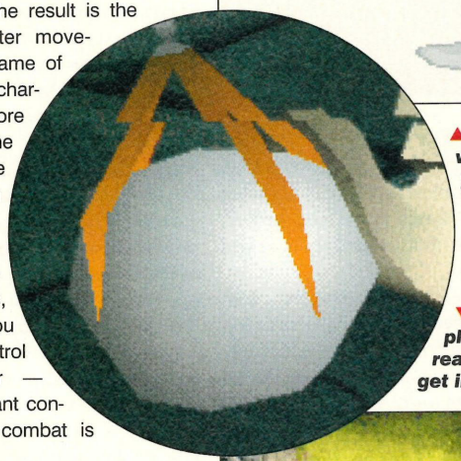
Mighty choppers

Unlike the vector graphics of the Alone In The Dark games, the characters in Timegate are made up from clusters of individual pixels. It sounds strange, but the result is the most realistic character movement yet seen in a game of this type. Because the character graphics are more flexible, it means that the control system is more intuitive. Whereas in Alone In The Dark you spent a lot of time spinning around in embarrassing little circles, here you find that you actually have full control over your character — which is pretty important considering that all the combat is hand-to-hand.

The backdrops work perfectly with the characters. They're mostly drawn in soft pastel colours, which is a personal hate of mine, but I'm prepared to forgive Timegate simply because I know good artwork when I see it, and I can't fail to miss it in this game. It also still makes use of Infogrames' pioneering camera angle system, which changes the viewpoint as you walk through a room. This greatly contributes to the atmosphere, but, as before, that can make combat tricky, so once you've found a good viewpoint in a room, it's worth trying to lead your enemy there.

In fact, there's something far more appealing about the close-up combat in this game than the long-range gun mayhem in Infogrames' previous adventures. It's all rather tricky to begin with simply because you're

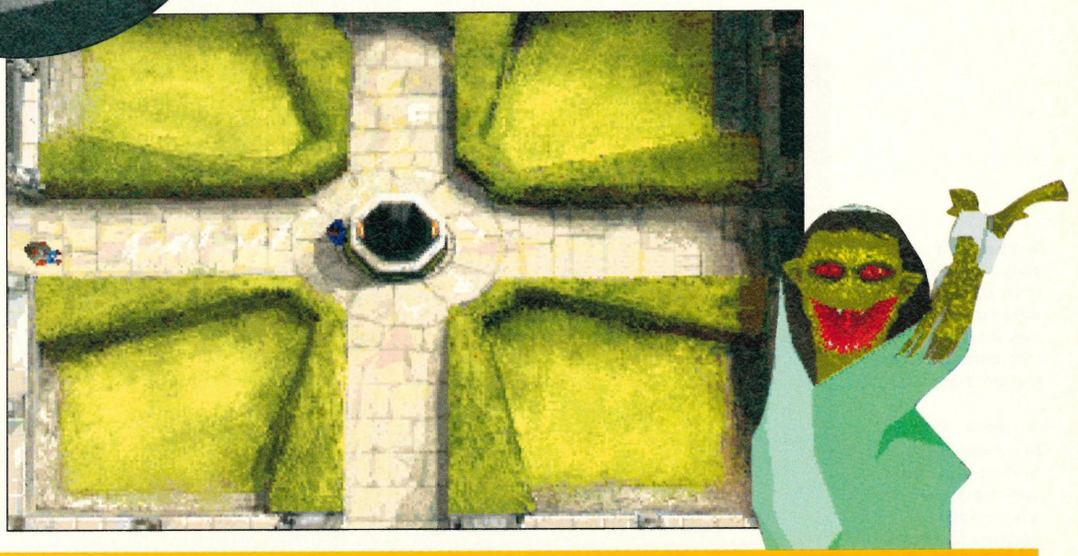




▲ ***You've just arrived back in the 13th century. You're wearing a dress, you don't know what's going on and your sideburns are frozen solid. Still, anything's better than living in the Paris squat you came from.***

◀ ***If you look really closely, you can see two tiny gladiators on that ball.***

▼ ***Although the plot remains tight throughout, there's plenty of scope for exploration. This gives the game a really nice free feel, rather than that totally linear crap you get in so-called 'interactive movies'.***



Riddle Me This

A great deal of Timegate's puzzles are elaborately constructed and demanding, but a few, like the one shown here, are simply a matter of employing a little common sense and keeping your fingers crossed that you've done the right thing.



The bloke in the Red Riding Hood get-up is just popping off for a jimmy before torturing you to death, so you've only got a few seconds to escape.



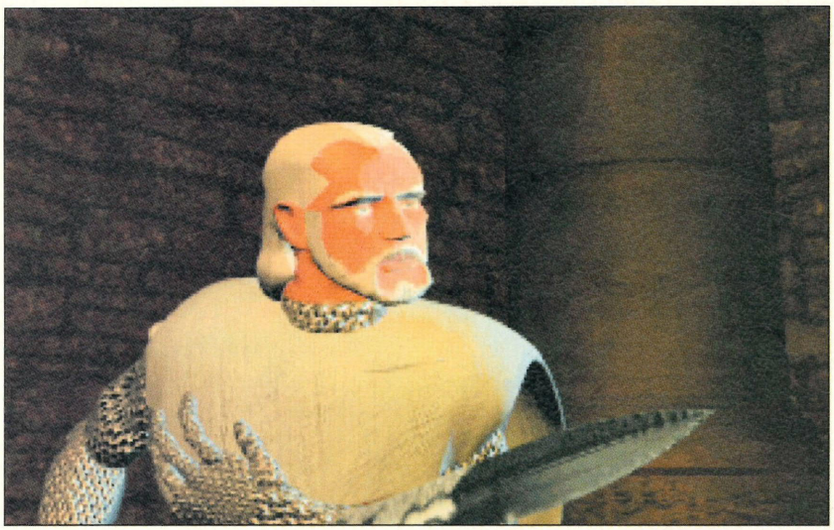
Unfortunately you're strapped to this bloody great cartwheel so there's not much you can do, really.



Or maybe not. Look at that, what a really stupid place to put a torch. Right next to bone-dry ropes.



A quick shimmy and presto! The rope starts burning and you can do a runner. Only more hassles waiting just around the corner



▶ *It's all his fault. This bloke, just before he snuffed it, is the one responsible for your current situation. Still, he's old and has probably forgotten to change his clothes in the last five months, so you can let him off.*

armed with nothing more than fists and feet. But once you're tooled up with a hefty weapon the action really starts — especially because not all the foes you encounter can be killed by mere swordplay.

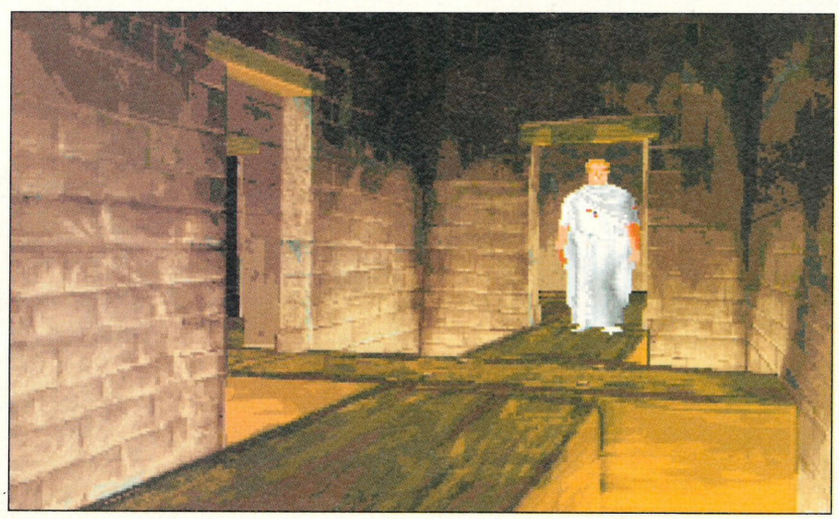
While your initial opponents are simply humans in bloody great suits of armour, the plot soon opens up and you find yourself going up against all manner of hell-spawned critters. These are invariably hard, enjoy living in dark corners and leap out on you just when you least expect it. It's important to keep your wits about you at all times, although that's pretty hard in a game where you're left pretty much to your own devices before having a slavering horde of wotnots descend on you just as you're about to get that rather large axe you really, really need...

The object manipulation system has also been completely revamped to make selecting and using items much easier. This seemingly small detail is actually very important, as so much of the game revolves around puzzle solving and using items. All you have to do now is pre-select an action, then activate it with the space bar. Calling this screen up also freezes the action, so it's also useful when you need a breather to plan out your next move. Often, though, you're just left completely without equipment, or trapped with no way of using any of the items you've found. At these points you have to rely on pure brain power alone. Heaven help us.

Gallic goofs

With valuable shelf-space already taken up by three versions of Alone In The Dark and, if you're unlucky, a few of its puny clones, it's easy to wonder if you really need another 3D adventure. But all you have to do is look at the screen shots and you can tell that Timegate is a mile away from any other 3D adventure ever written. Like so many French games it has its own unique sense of style. Yet unlike many games, it's actually got the substance to match. That's only a small detail, but one which is often overlooked by our Gallic chums. It's also good to see that in a period of the game industry where games producers spend millions on a project living out their pathetic Hollywood fantasies (grow up, kids), a game can still capture the imagination. If software houses want to create a 'cinematic experience' that's fine, personally I'm far more at home playing a beautifully designed and well plotted game like this.

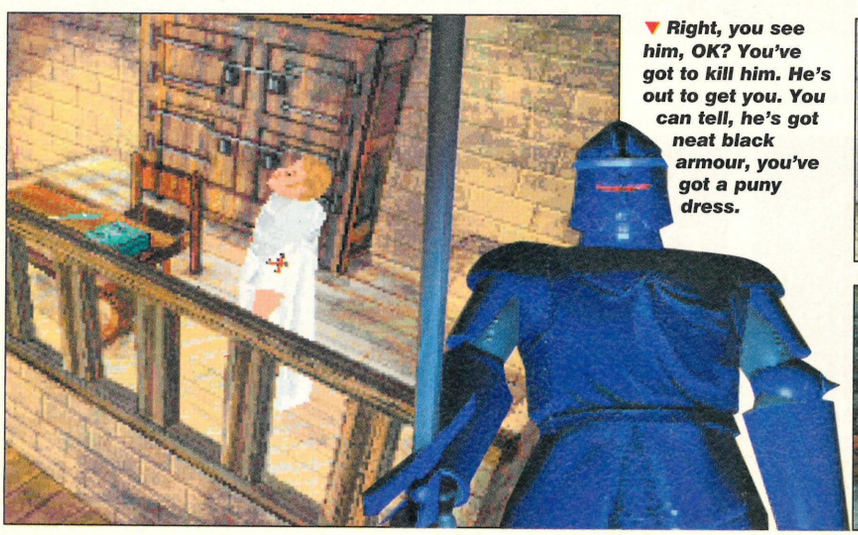
Being a busy fingers-in-more-pies-than-Frey-Bentos-produce sort of person, I rarely have time to sit down and play through an adventure game. But believe me, as soon as I can persuade Infogrames to part with a copy of this, I doubt if it will leave my CD-ROM drive until I've completed it. From what I've seen, this game deserves to be a hit and I'll eat my pants if it isn't. Judge for yourself with our exclusive cover disc demo and keep an eye out for the review next issue.



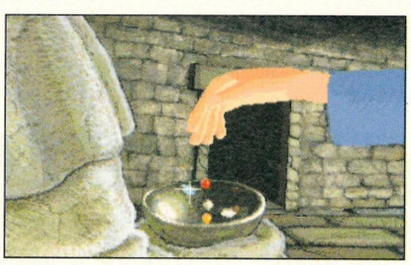
▶ *The best way to play this game is with the keyboard. Amazing, in this day and age of overpriced 3D controller things.*

▼ *Quick, look in the cupboard, there might be some proper respectable clothes in there.*

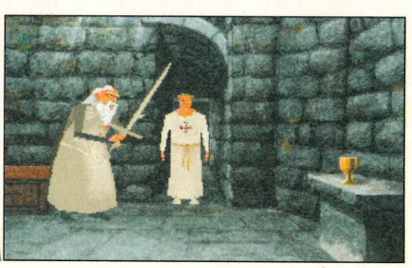




▼ *Right, you see him, OK? You've got to kill him. He's out to get you. You can tell, he's got neat black armour, you've got a puny dress.*



▲ *You've died and you're headed to the netherworld. They're never going to let you in wearing a dress though.*



◀ *That's it, give to the poor like a good lad. It'll probably pay off later.*

◀ *Erm, watch out, there's a very old man with a big sword about to have a stroke and collapse from the effort of wearing that heavy armour.*

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Six of the Best

PC Review introduces the best games of the last three months

TFX: EF2000



DID/Ocean
£49.99
Rated 9
Issue 49

Featuring the new Eurofighter, this is the definitive combat flight simulator.

Fade to Black



Electronic Arts
£44.99
Rated 9
Issue 49

The mind blowing 3D action adventure with morphing aliens, combat, puzzles and bags of atmos.

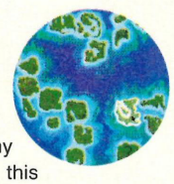
IndyCar Racing II



Virgin
£44.99
Rated 9
Issue 50

The best racing simulation to date. Or at least, until F1GP2 roars onto the scene.

Sim Isle



Maxis
£39.99
Rated 9
Issue 50

Balance economy and ecology in this addictive sim. Detailed, engrossing and very good looking.

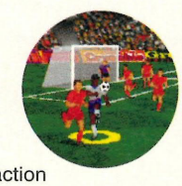
Worms



Team 17/Ocean
£29.99
Issue 51

Currently keeping everyone amused in the office is Worms, an action-packed battle game with added creepy-crawlies. Reviewed on page 62.

Actua Soccer



Gremlin Interactive
£34.99
Issue 51

The ultimate action footy game — the players were animated using motion capture. Read our review on page 99.

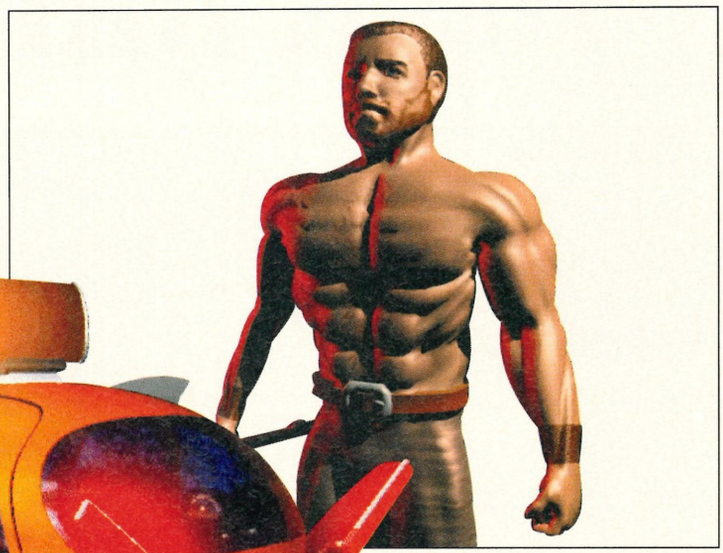
Future showing

The classics of the past, the best-sellers of the present and the stars of the future...

Druid

SirTech/Mindscape

If you thought druids were doddery old men with white beards, think again. The brawny hero of this isometric adventure is not to be messed with. Combat and puzzles provide the challenge, but you also have to choose your path through this non-linear game. There are multiple endings, and graphics and sound are polished and sharp. Look for a review in our next issue.



Yum! What a great set of abdominals. This Druid's no wimp.

Angel Devine — an interactive thriller in the mould of Bladerunner. ▶

Angel Devoid

Mindscape

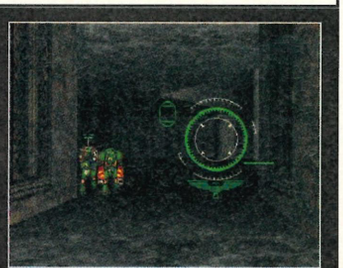
'Oh no! Not another interactive movie,' you cry, but here's one that's intriguing as well as stunning. Set in a Bladerunner-style future, you play a cop on the trail of arch criminal Angel Devoid. But the twist is that, after an operation to repair the damage he did to your face, you wake up looking just like him. Now the authorities are after you, and you have to hunt him down before you're killed instead. It's full of gore, guns and cyberpunky stuff — and it looks amazing. Due early '96.

One to Watch...

Warhammer 40,000

Mindscape

Following on from Warhammer, Mindscape's second Games Workshop license is a 3D realtime action game. As leader of a team of Dark Angels, you must plan your assault against the forces of Chaos over 30 levels. With network play and VR helmets supported, this looks likely to be a big hit in 1996.



Death in Santa Fe in Activision's murder mystery. Is your private detective up to it?

The Elk Moon Murder

Activision

A brutal murder has been committed, and you're the detective who must hunt down the killer. Co-written by Emmy winner Shannon Gilligan, and starring Amanda Donohoe (LA Law and Castaway) and Sam Egan (Northern Exposure), this is a suspenseful mystery which contains more twists than a

country lane. Visit the crime scene, interview suspects and collect evidence before the killer gets to you... Budding gumshoes will love it.

One to Watch...

TekWar

US Gold

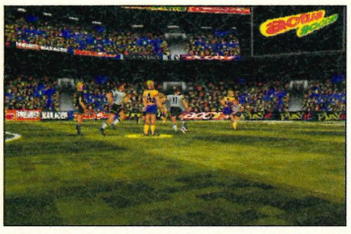
Based on William Shatner's best-selling sci-fi novels, TekWar is a 3D mission-based action adventure. You play an agent hired to put an end to the TekLords, powerful and dangerous men who push the damaging electronic drug, Tek. More than just another Doom clone, TekWar requires careful strategy and an overly itchy trigger finger will land you in hot water. Slick and attractive, and even Shatner himself puts in an appearance as your boss Walter Bascom.



Best of the year

Flight simulation
TFX: EF2000
DID/Ocean

Sports simulation
Actua Soccer
Gremlin Interactive



Adventure
Full Throttle
LucasArts/Virgin

Strategy
Command & Conquer
Westwood/Virgin



Wargame
Panzer General
SSI/Mindscape

God game
Sim Isle
Maxis

Role-playing game
Elder Scrolls: Arena
Bethesda/US Gold

Action game
Bioforge
Origin/Electronic Arts

Beat 'em-up
FX Fighter
Philips



Space combat
Wing Commander III
Origin/Electronic Arts

Arcade driving
Fatal Racing
Gremlin

One to Watch...

Into the Shadows

Scavenger

It's not often that a new game comes along and completely blows you away. Into the Shadows is such a game. Part RPG, part hack and slasher, it looks utterly amazing. The motion-captured monsters move with stunning realism, and the light-sourcing routines are some of the best we've seen, creating an extremely atmospheric, shadowy dungeon. Los Angeles-based



Scavenger is hoping to announce a deal with a British publisher soon — we'll bring you news as we hear it.

GALLUP PC CHARTS

CD-ROM

TM	LM	TITLE	BY	CHANGE
1	—	Hexen	GT Interactive	✪
2	(1)	Command & Conquer	Virgin	▼
3	(2)	Championship Manager 2	Domark	▼
4	(3)	Rebel Assault	White Label	▼
5	—	Ascendancy	Virgin	✪
6	—	Actua Soccer	Gremlin	✪
7	(8)	The 7th Guest	White Label	▲
8	(17)	Stonekeep demo	Interplay	✪
9	(6)	Star Trek TNG	MicroProse	▼
10	—	Destruction Derby	Sony Interactive	✪
11	(9)	IndyCar Racing	White Label	▼
12	—	Mortal Kombat 3	GT Interactive	✪
13	(7)	Day of the Tentacle	White Label	▼
14	—	Fatal Racing	Gremlin	✪
15	(4)	The Need for Speed	Electronic Arts	▼
16	(14)	Dark Forces	LucasArts/Virgin	▼
17	(20)	Flight Simulator 5.1	Microsoft	▲
18	(13)	PGA Tour Golf 96	Electronic Arts	▼
19	(10)	Crusader: No Remorse	Electronic Arts	▼
20	—	Premier Manager 3	Gremlin	✳

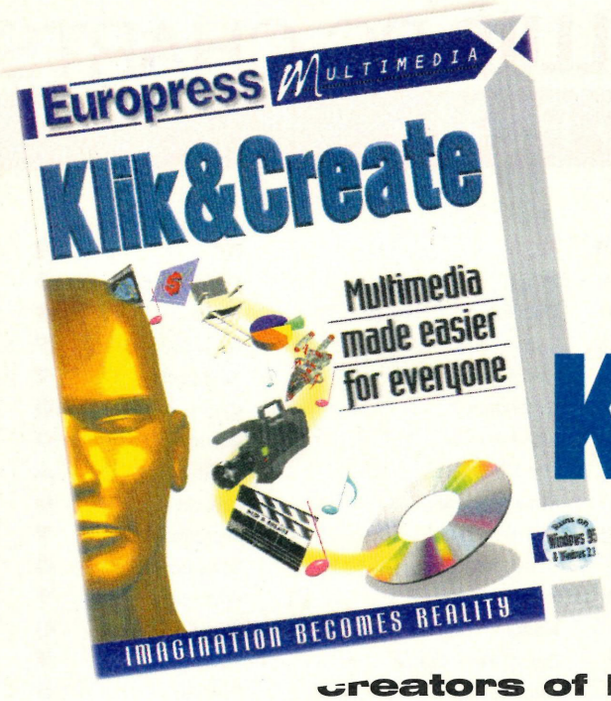
FULL PRICE

1	(1)	AutoRoute Express	Microsoft	■
2	(6)	Doom II	Virgin	▲
3	(3)	Sim City 2000	Maxis	■
4	—	The Lion King	Virgin	✳
5	—	FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts	✳
6	(5)	Ultimate Doom	GT	▼
7	(16)	Ultimate Soccer Manager	Sierra	▲
8	(4)	Flight Simulator 5.1	Microsoft	▼
9	—	Best of Windows Entertainment	Microsoft	✪
10	(2)	X-Wing Triple Pack	US Gold	▼

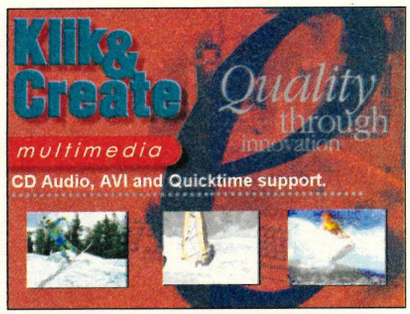
BUDGET

1	—	X-Wing	White Label	✪
2	(1)	Magic Boy	Empire	▼
3	(3)	Day of the Tentacle	White Label	■
4	(2)	Doom	Crystal Vision	▼
5	—	D-Zone	One Stop	✪
6	(4)	CyClones	Mindscape	▼
7	—	Indiana Jones & the Fate of Atlantis	White Label	✪
8	—	Expert Typing	Software Partners	✪
9	—	Easy to Learn Computing	VCI Software	✪
10	—	Tesserae	GameTek	✪

KEY: TM = THIS MONTH, LM = LAST MONTH
UP = ▲ DOWN = ▼ NO CHANGE = ■ NEW ENTRY = ✪ RE-ENTRY = ✳



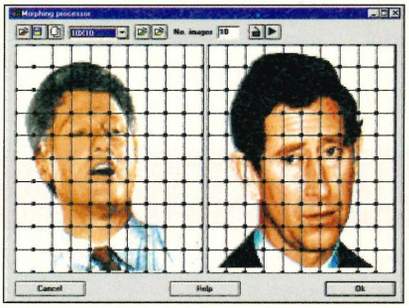


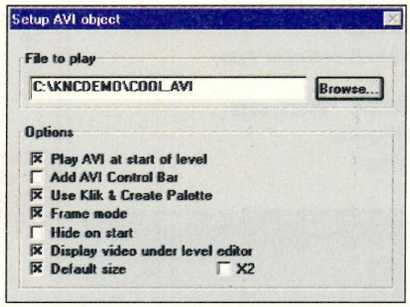


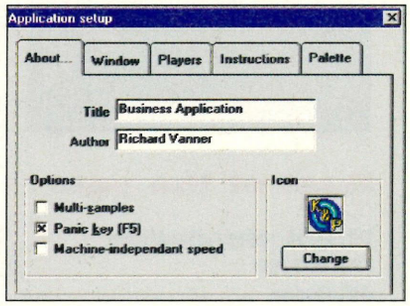
Klik & Kompete

in our fabulous multimedia competition

In a gesture of immense cockle-warmingness, Europress Software, creators of Klik & Play, is giving away 20 copies of Klik & Create, its up-to-the-minute multimedia creation package which it claims can do most anything!







So whether you want to put together your own game, screensaver, educational software or multimedia business presentation, the sky's the limit, and there's no big airline fare to pay – except for the price of a sealed-down stamped addressed envelope or a post card.

Here's what you do

Here's a group of fellows who all have a proficiency in instruments of a musical nature. But you have to take the initial letter of the popular instrument prominent on the screen — it rhymes with catarrh.



Amongst other objects there's two friendly chappies in this one, but only one of them is renowned for him intellectual status. So what's the initial letter of the surname of the famous scientist?



Now use these two letters to fill in the blanks in the word you'll be saying if you win...

_R_AT

Almost patronisingly simple, eh? Never mind, these are excellent prizes as 20 lucky winners will discover. So the easier the question, the sooner you can send in the answer. Just pop it in the post to...
Klik & Create competition, PC Review, Emap Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London. EC1R 3AU.

And a very merry Christmas to all!

Competition closes 30th January 1996. Not open to employees of Emap Images or Europress Software or their relatives. No correspondence will be entered into, the Editor's decision is final.

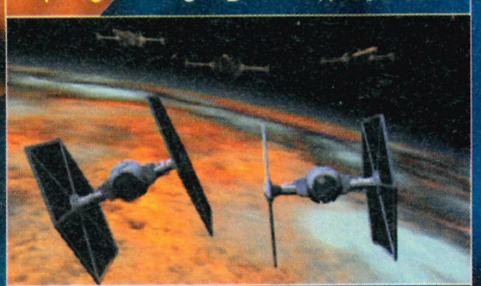


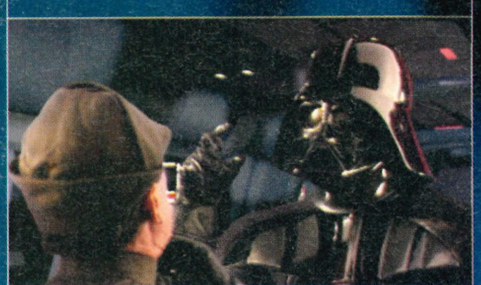
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Gametek: The Next Generation

To be completely honest, the last few releases from Gametek have been the company's equivalent of the Blackpool roller-coaster; a bit up and down with a few sick bags being filled on the way. But changes are afoot. Rik Henderson looks at the next four products and sees that things are looking up.

Battle Cruiser 3000AD: In Progress

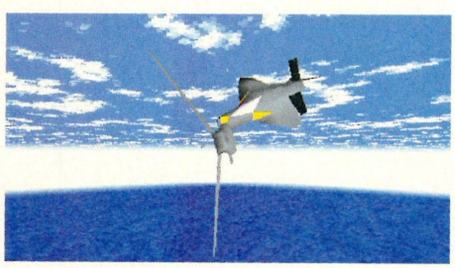
CD ONLY

Publisher: Gametek

Contact: (01753) 553445

Price: TBA

Release date: Out soon



There are very few space action/simulation games on the market, and of those that are, there are really only two that spring to mind when the genre is brought up by the local sci-fi fandom club — Frontier: Elite 2 and Wing Commander 3.

Both come from different ends of the spectrum, and both cover those areas superbly. But now there's a new kid on the block and it hopes to fit slap bang in the middle, without having to barge anybody else out of the way.

Battle Cruiser 3000AD is a huge game, that is fortunately not too overbearing for those who are put off by acres of star maps and planets with names that sound like toilet cleaning fluid. It also comes from a slightly different angle, because whereas most space simulations focus on the cockpit of one small space craft, this game allows you to take command of a huge Battlestar Galactica style mothership, that can carry numerous members of crew, and even detachable smaller craft (all of which are controllable during the game).

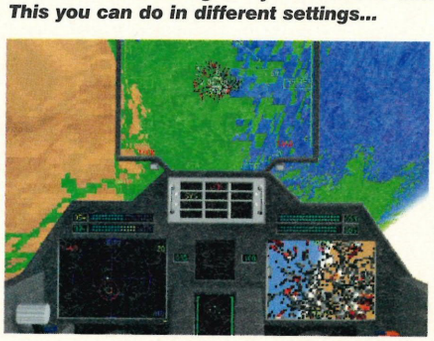
And that's not all

Get this, not only can you fly around a beautifully detailed SVGA, gouraud and phong-shaded space environment, but some missions during the game will also require you to drive around on the surface of a planet in an all terrain vehicle (ATV), or control a single marine as he jumps around a desolate Earth with but a jet-pack on his back. Another truly unique aspect of Battle Cruiser 3000AD is the fact that every part of the game — every crew member and every enemy — is controlled with very sophisticated artificial intelligence. For instance, if you've had to deploy four interceptors and two shuttle crafts there's no way you'll be able to flit from cockpit to cockpit fighting their battles for them. You can do that if you really want to, but depending on the skill of the computer controlled pilots in your crew, they will think and act for themselves.

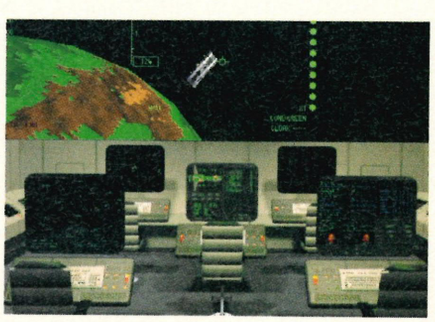
This all makes the game pretty free-flowing. You can either play it like Captain Kirk, avoiding getting your hands dirty for fear that your wig may blow off in the cruel Neptune winds, whilst commanding the bridge of the Cruiser. Or you can treat the game as a pure flight simulator and complete the missions manually. There's no restraint on what you want to do and, although you're going to have to wait for the review next issue to find out much more on this extraordinarily massive game, it all makes Battle Cruiser 3000AD definitely one to watch the skies for.

Space, the final frontier

There are millions of different ways to play Battle Cruiser 3000AD, but if you want to get the most out of the game you'll have to take control of the many different craft on offer. This you can do in different settings...



In amongst the stars
Most of the missions in the game will require you to cruise the space lanes, hyperspacing from waypoint to waypoint and conducting many interstellar battles with a wide range of different sized meanies from the four corners of the universe.



Down on the surface
One of the most impressive aspects though, both graphically and for variety, occurs when you get to fly around the surface of a planet. You may have to pick up prisoners, rescue hostages, or just plain old rid the skies of enemy craft. Lots to do.

Ripper: In Progress



CD ONLY

Publisher: Gametek

Contact: (01753) 553445

Price: TBA

Release date: February '96

Anybody who's had to bite their lip when the media dismisses the common computer game as being a big boy's toy, can now stick two fingers up in the air in jubilant delight and exclaim that the market has not only grown up, but it's doing some rather interesting things to boot. In fact the latest full motion video (FMV) game, Ripper, means the games industry can shout loudly to other media types, "Ahem, not only have we grown up, but we've gorn and nicked lots of movie actors too".

Although there have been games with stars fronting before (Tia Carrere in The Daedalus Encounter and Mark Hamill in Wing Commander 3, for example), this gory Cyberpunk adventure boasts a plethora of big-name actors and actresses, and that can only be good for ridding the 'cheesy acting' reputation that most games of this type proffer far too often.

Wait there's a plot too?

But whilst it's all well and good having a great range of talent in front of the camera, let it not be forgotten that if there's nothing for them to get their teeth into, any talented actors involved in FMV games will all end up going the equivalent of the 'straight to video' section of your local Blockbuster.

Thankfully of course, Ripper doesn't fall into that trap, because the plot is as spicy as they come. There's none of that Phantasmagoria "don't go into the cellar" Hammer House rubbish here, this is a horror tale set in the year 2046, when the spirit of Jack The Ripper has been brought into the techno age, and somebody somehow is emulating his gizzard splitting form of murder.

You are a crime reporter who is trying to suss out who's doing all of this, and it doesn't help that everybody has a motive and means.

So unlike some other FMV games, Ripper promises to have gameplay, and although the Full Motion Video sections are vital for clues (and the chance to see the odd gruesome gut exposing action), there are puzzle, arcade and 3D rendered environment sections to get you truly interacting. All this and all the music is by the Blue Oyster Cult, what more could you ask for?

And the award goes to...

It's only a matter of time before the Academy Awards (that's Oscars to me and you) starts to recognise interactive movies and their stars, and here's Ripper's entrants.



Christopher Walken
Yep, Mr. Cool himself appears as a future cop that's a bit on the psycho side. Now that doesn't sound like the guy who sprayed his brains over Robert De Niro in The Deerhunter, and blew a hole in Dennis Hopper in True Romance, does it?



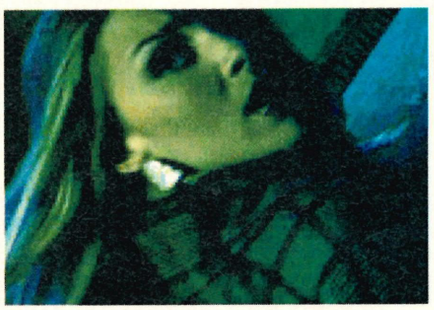
Karen Allen
Bizarrely, she also appeared in a movie I saw the other day called Ghost In The Machine directed by Rachel Talalay of Freddy's Dead and Tank Girl fame. It's odd because the film was about a serial killer who stalks her through computers. Hmmm.



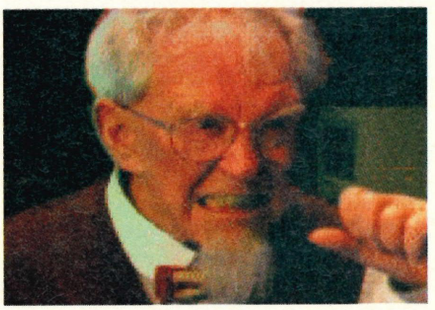
John Rhys-Davies
Big bloke with a beard who appeared in the Indiana Jones movies (the first and the last). He's also Welsh, so make your own minds up.



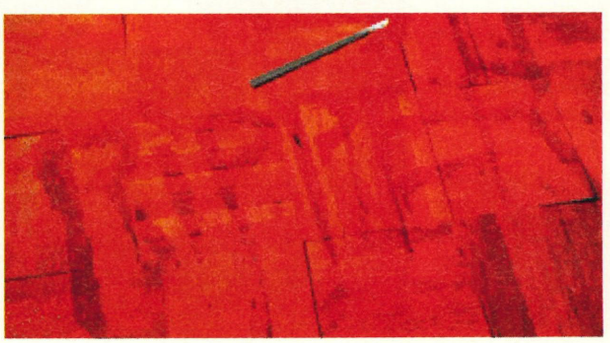
Jimmie Walker
Has appeared in billions of movies as a nutter, most memorably in Warriors as the gang leader who got in a lot of bother when he killed the main gang leader.

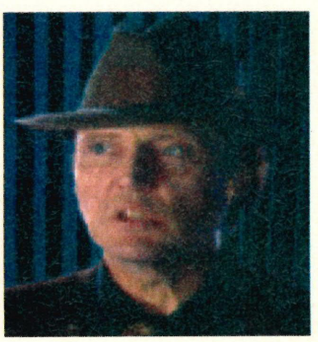


Tahnee Welch
Tahnee is the daughter of Raquel Welch and is a bit of a babe. Er... That's all I know about her really.



Burgess Meredith
Quite basically Burgess is the old geezer who played Rocky's trainer and the Penguin in the old Batman series.





The War College: In Progress

CD ONLY

Publisher: Gametek

Contact: (01753) 553445

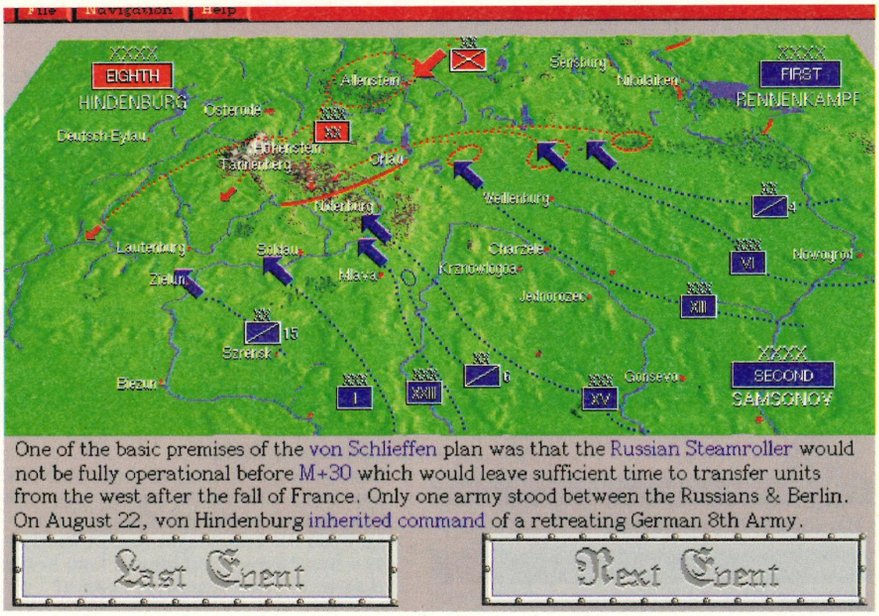
Price: TBA

Release date: January '96

I've got three words (and a number) for you that'll explain The War College in a nutshell; Universal Military Simulator 3. Er... That's it. I don't really need to go into much depth with this seeing as it's the sequel to every war gamer's essential purchase, but if I don't I certainly won't be giving it the justice it deserves.

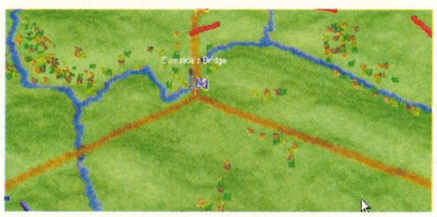
Everything has been improved, the games engine itself has undergone an artificial intelligence update, the user-controlled options, and the front interface (with its handy point and click menus), but most impressively it's the graphics that have changed the most dramatically. No longer are you constrained to playing on a grid that looks more like a school textbook than a field of battle, this time all the action takes place on superbly rendered terrain, and the soldiers actually look like such — and not matchsticks as they did in the first two efforts.

Essentially the whole thing looks and feels like Civil War, but with five different scenarios inbuilt (from the Battle of Pharsalus in Caesar's reign, to the Battle of Tennenberg during World War I), and the option to create your own battles, The War College looks like being the ideal entry point for those who liked Command & Conquer, but want a few thousand more teenage recruits to send to their graves.



One of the basic premises of the von Schlieffen plan was that the Russian Steamroller would not be fully operational before M+30 which would leave sufficient time to transfer units from the west after the fall of France. Only one army stood between the Russians & Berlin. On August 22, von Hindenburg inherited command of a retreating German 8th Army.

Last Event | Next Event





Escalation: In Progress

CD ONLY

Publisher: Gametek

Contact: (01753) 553445

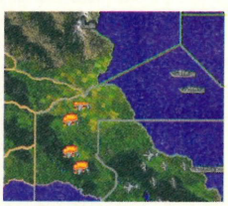
Price: TBA

Release date: January '96

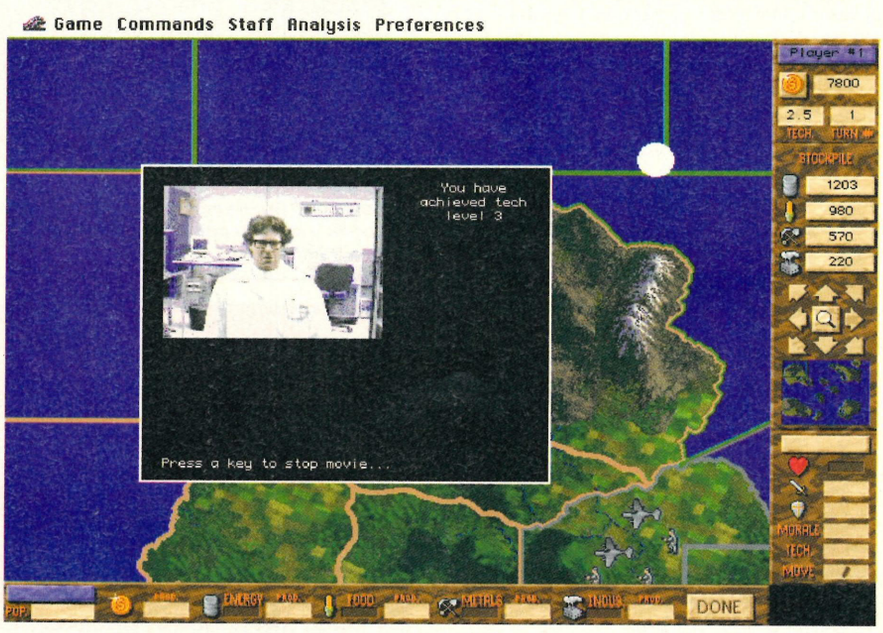
At the other end of the war stick is Gametek's own in-house wargame. The idea behind Escalation is akin to Battle Isle 3. But Escalation is based in the future, manifests itself as a takey-turny affair, includes full motion video sections and the chance of gaining high-tech weaponry with which to perform mass destruction. It also involves far more resource management than war strategy alone.

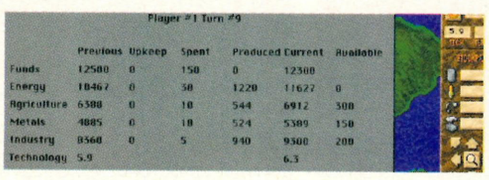
The video is also used cunningly. You don't just get a spot of acting stuff at the end of every mission (for a start there are no missions, the game will progress rather like Civilisation, and is more of a campaign) — nope here you get video when a spy is reporting back, or when one of your scientists has invented a fantastic new death-dealing tool, so it's far more integral to the game. It seems action war games are definitely the in thing at the moment, so it looks like your software library will have to make room for just one more.



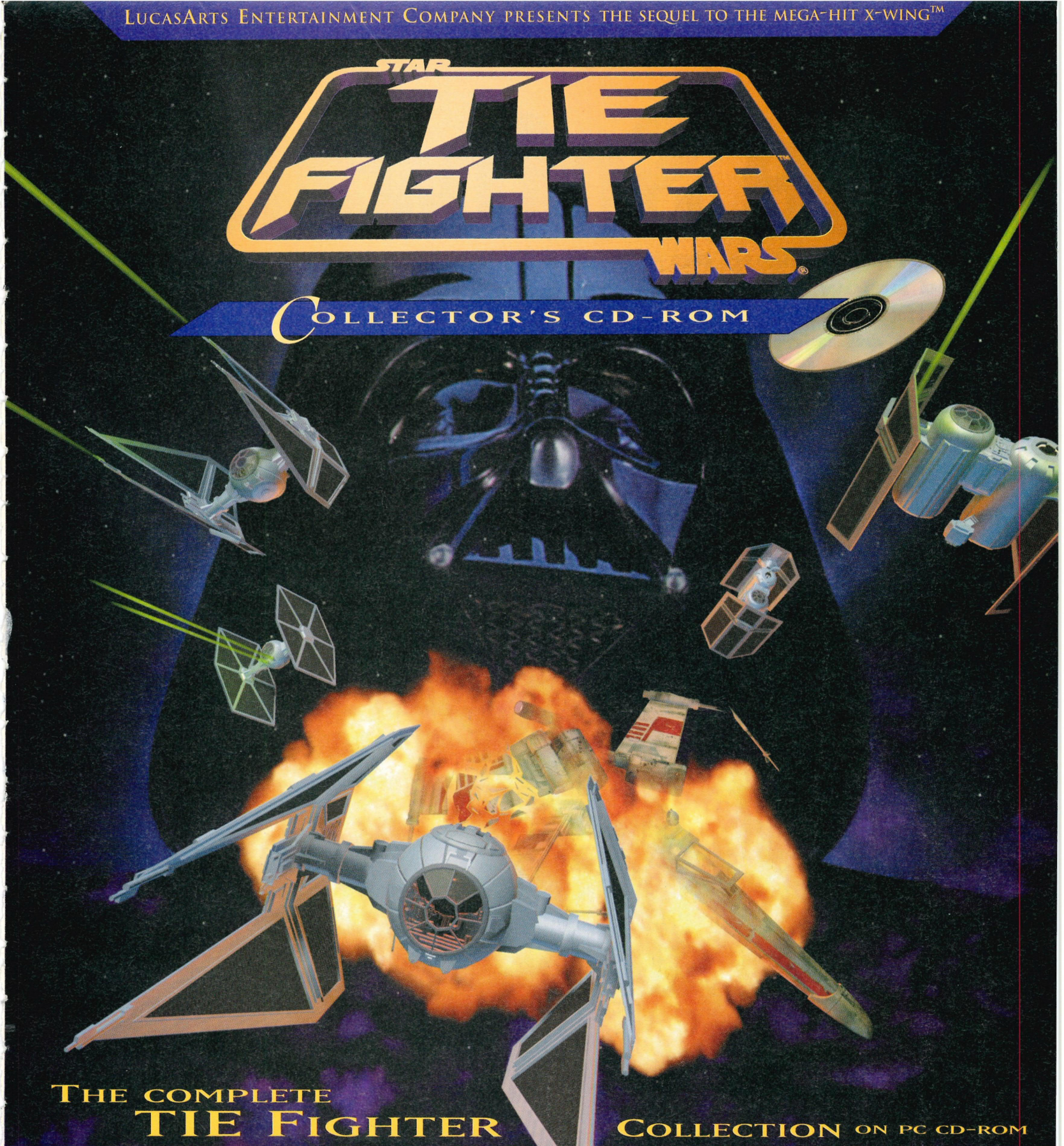








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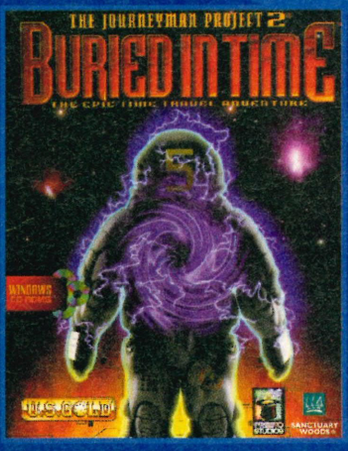
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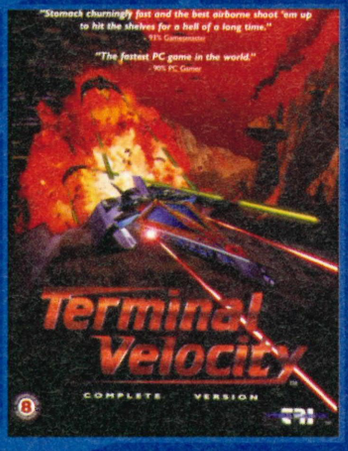
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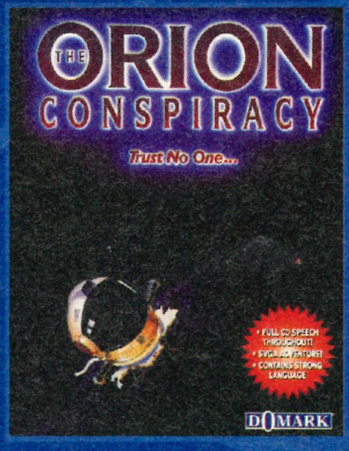
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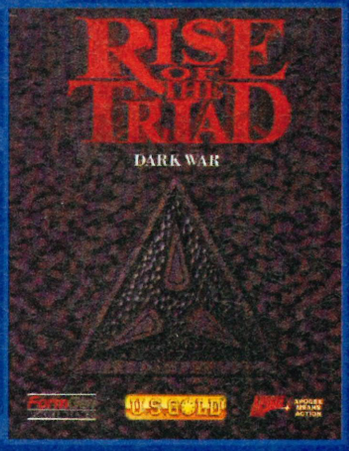
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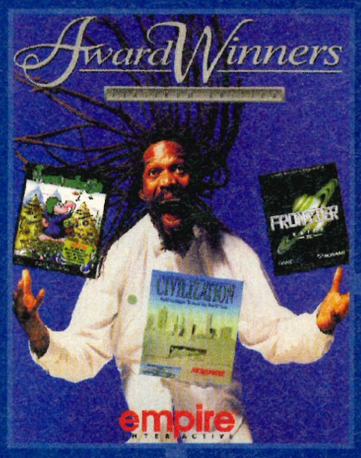
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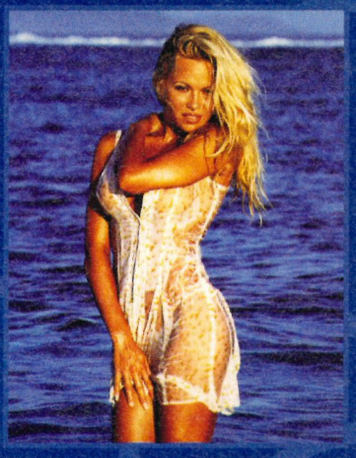
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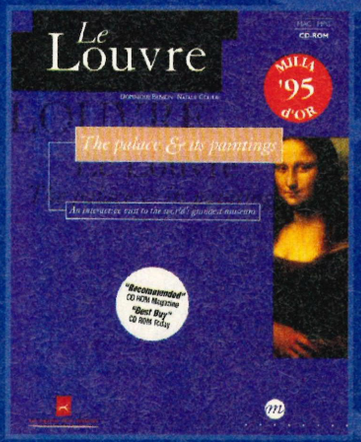
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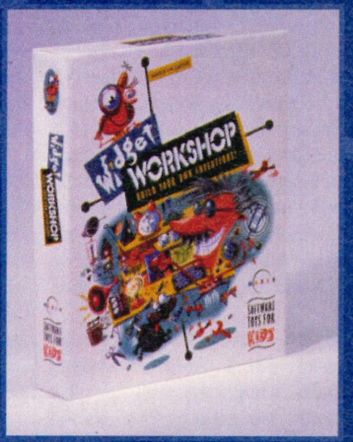
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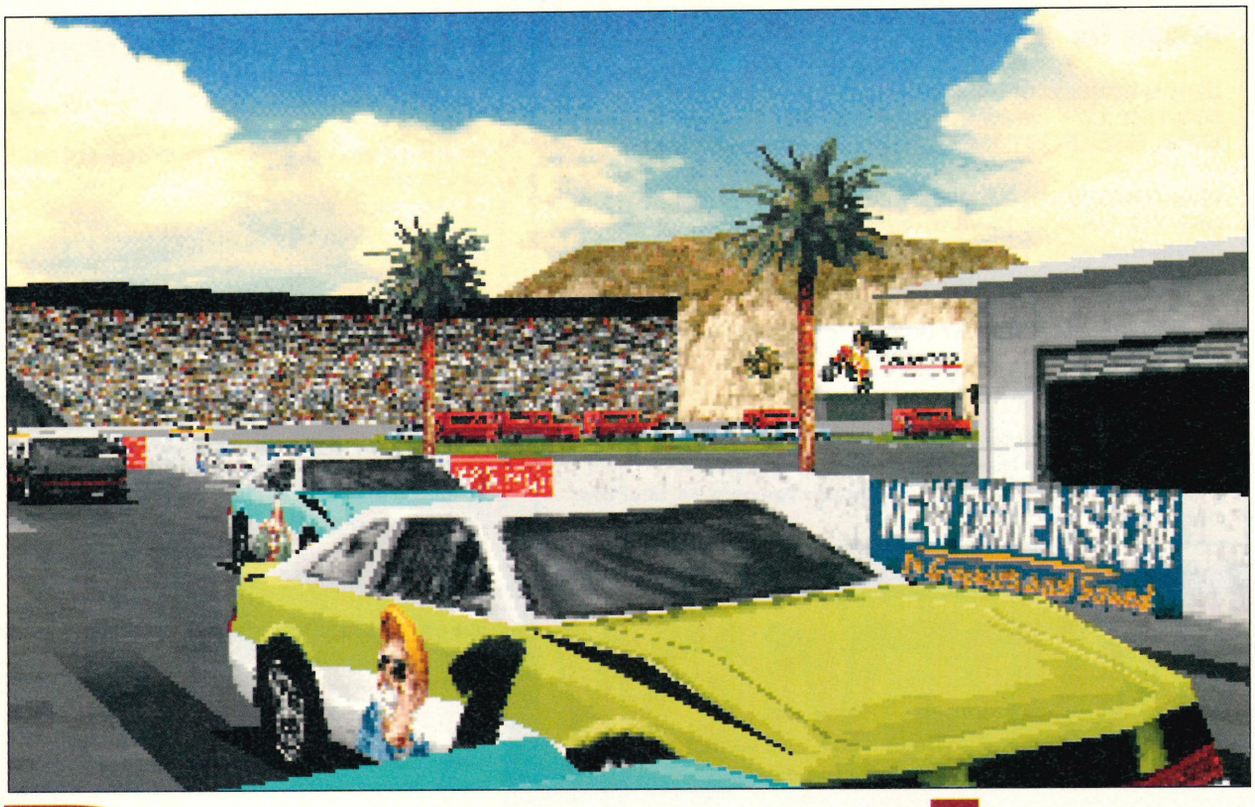
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Destruction Derby may not look quite as good on the PC as it did on the Playstation, but it still boasts a pretty impressive set of graphics.

Destruction Derby

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX, MS DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards



Cal Jones thought that London drivers were the least considerate... Until she tried Destruction Derby.

Hurrah! Here, at last, is a racing game where it's actually an advantage to be an appalling driver. Not only am I awful at the wheel, but I'm also an appalling woman driver, which is even better. Destruction Derby, you see, is not about skill and lightning reflexes. It is not about finding the racing line or carefully judged overtaking manoeuvres. It's not even about being first past the post. No, the aim of this wonderful game is to trash cars.

Damn. I knew these toll roads were a bad idea.



Sony Interactive must have studied human nature long and hard while designing this game, for Destruction Derby is plainly intended to appeal to our baser instincts. Let me explain myself. The human psyche is governed by two primary urges. One is to create, which is why people feel the need to write novels, paint pictures, have babies and build scale models of the Eiffel Tower out of matchsticks. The other, however, is to destroy. Hence the the satisfaction we gain from swatting wasps, stamping on sandcastles and knocking over matchstick models of the Eiffel Tower that some silly bugger has spent three years building. You catch my drift? Good. Then you'll understand that Destruction Derby has been created with the latter in mind. We like to wreck things, and so here is a game that allows us to do just that. Clever, huh?

But enough of my philosophical ramblings. What you really want to know is whether Destruction Derby is any good. Well, first off, it looks rather lovely. Not quite as lovely as the Playstation version, but still pretty damned impressive compared to other PC racing games. The background graphics are sumptuous, the lighting effects are superb and the cars are detailed to the point where they actually show the effects of all that bumping and barging. And with the possible exception of Virgin's Screamer, Destruction Derby is probably the best looking arcade racer ever to grace the PC.

Wreckin' crew

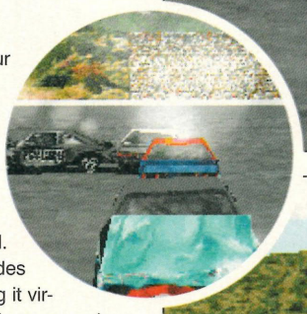
Then there's the small matter of gameplay. Yes, this game has some. In fact, it plays frighteningly well, with all sorts of racing options available to the player. Let's start with the single player game. The most mundane of the solo games is the Time Trial. This is a simple matter of racing flat-out around one of the six courses and then recording your fastest time. Simple, straightforward and generally quite boring. Opt instead for the next choice, which is Wreckin' Racing. Here you must complete a championship of six races against other drivers. Note the use of the term 'other drivers,'

because they are important. It is not enough to beat them. Sure, you'll be awarded points for finishing in the first three, but if that's all you hope to achieve, you aren't quite entering into the spirit of things. Your chief aim, then, is to make the other drivers' lives a misery. Hit another car hard enough and it will spin. You gain ten points for making a car spin 360 degrees, four points if it spins 180 degrees and two for a paltry 90 degree spin. Oh, and if the car you ram is in first place, points are doubled. Thus it's possible to finish last, or not finish at all, and still emerge the winner because you have caused the most damage.



◀ *Go on son, 'ave some of that!*

Damage done



The flipside of this is that your car gets damaged too. Depending on where and how badly you are hit, your performance will be affected. Too many knocks to the bonnet, and your engine will lose power and eventually fail. Too many bashes in the sides and your axles buckle, making it virtually impossible to steer. There are six damage zones on the car: two at the front, two at the rear and one on each side. To make it easier to assess the health of your car (as if the dented bonnet and billowing smoke were not enough), a diagram of your car has been placed in the corner of the screen. When you start out your damage zones are lit up in healthy green. Take a few knocks and they turn yellow. Take a few more and they glow red, and it's at this point that you know you should take things easy because any further collisions will put you out of the race.

The third option is common or garden Stock Car Racing. This is much the same as the



◀ *Who let a learner driver on the course? Get him!*

A matter of course



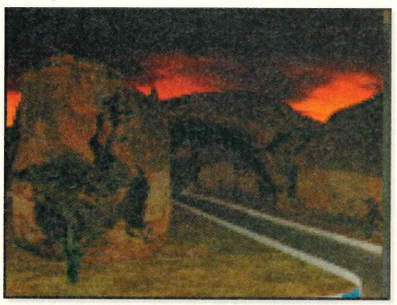
▲ *Speedway is the first track you'll come across, and is probably the most straightforward.*



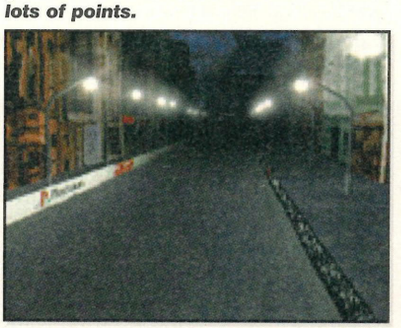
▲ *Crossover is a nice figure of eight — great for side-on smashes and lots and lots of points.*



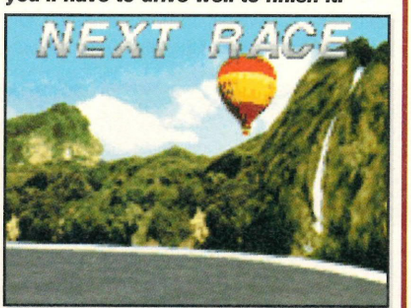
▲ *The very picturesque Ocean Drive comes third. It's a tough course and you'll have to drive well to finish it.*



▲ *Next we have Cactus Creek. Great sunset, lovely mountains and smashing pile-ups. Treat with respect.*



▲ *City Heat features a narrow chicane which always causes a jam. Another difficult course to finish.*



▲ *Last but not least is my favourite, The Bowl. Just put your foot down and head for the nearest car.*

You can edit the replays of your favourite races and then save them to your hard disk. Then you can bore your friends with the highlights. ▶

Wreckin' Racing, except that there are no points for ramming your hapless opponents. It's more of a straight race, but it can still be pretty rough. But even so I don't find it quite as much fun — there's a certain visceral pleasure to be gained from smashing into cars and being rewarded for it.

Finally, there's Destruction Derby. This is always set in a large, bowl-shaped arena. All the cars start off at the edge of the arena with their bonnets facing inwards. As soon as you get the go-ahead, it's foot to the floor and head for the middle. There is no race element to this event — your only goal is to be the last car left standing when all the others have been reduced to beaten, smoking wrecks. Pure and simple. And fun.

A league of your own

All courses can be raced individually as a practice event, but the most satisfaction is to be gained from taking part in a championship. First choose the event — Wreckin' Racing, Stock Car Racing or Destruction Derby. Then choose the difficulty — rookie, amateur or pro. Now you're ready to race. Whichever options you go for, you'll discover that championships are split into four divisions. It's not like football where lower division teams don't compete with the elite — everyone just mucks in together. It's possible to tell who's in what division by looking at the colour of their cars: fourth division cars have white roofs, third have yellow, second are red and first are black. To win the championship you must progress through the divisions at least four times. You have to win a season of six races to get promoted to the next division, but since the drivers are always the same, it's no harder to win the first division (and thus the championship) than it is to win the fourth. The only increase in difficulty is if you move up from rookie to amateur or amateur to pro.

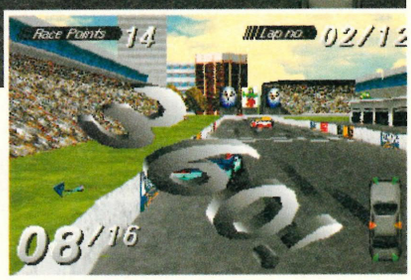
This is definite weakness, because it makes the game a bit too easy to complete. And once you've won the three championships, there isn't much incentive to keep going. Fortunately, its lifespan is prolonged by the plethora of multiplayer options. There's Duel, which pits you against a (soon to be ex-) friend on an otherwise empty track. Then there's Tag. Also designed for two players, this is a game of 'it' in which the tagged player is targeted for destruction by the 14 computer controlled cars. Similar to this is Seek and Destroy, where each of the two human players is targeted by seven computer cars. But every computer car you manage to bump then turns its attention to your friend. And last but not least is Team Pairs, which allows an astonishing 32 players to compete. This is just like the single-player championship, except that there are two players in a team and your scores are combined at the end of each race. Simply put, the highest scoring team at the end of the season is the winner.

And that's about it. Destruction Derby may lack longevity for the solo player, but it's addictive, satisfying and thoroughly entertaining. If you're bored of conventional racing games, give this a go. Sometimes it's fun to be bad.





▲ ***What a nice evening sunshine effect. But there's no time to admire it whilst bearing down on your next victim.***



▲ ***Yeah, 360! You don't know just how satisfying that is until you've done it. Ten points, please.***

Things can get a bit steamy on the racetrack. No, I don't mean that kind of steamy, I was simply referring to the all the fractured radiators... ▼

Oops. My bumper seems to have welded itself to the wall. ▼



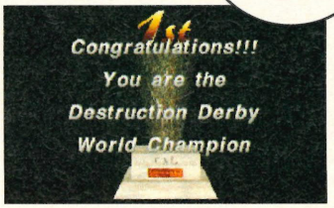


PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Stock car racing sim*
Publisher: .....*Sony Interactive*
Price: *£44.99*
Contact:.....*(0151) 282 3000*

Absolutely brilliant fun while it lasts, but sadly it just doesn't last quite long enough.

8

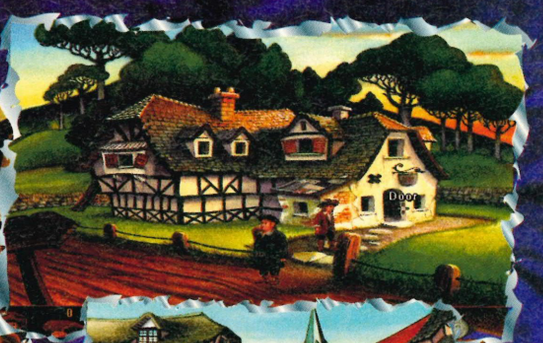


We've thrown down the gauntlet...

...are you musketeer enough to take up the challenge?











A smack in the kisser from a chain-mail gauntlet stings your face as well as your pride, but in 16th Century France you took up the challenge or sank into ignominious obscurity.

In the days when shirts were frilly and swashes were buckled, you take the role of the fifth musketeer who pledges to deliver the last will and testament of a recently deceased nobleman to the King of France.

Sounds like a walk in the park? Wrong. It's a tough assignment full of dastardly deeds with diabolical wit and slapstick humour.

You'll love the way it looks, you'll love the way it plays but most of all, you'll love those thigh-length boots and fancy duds.



Touché
The Adventures of the Fifth Musketeer

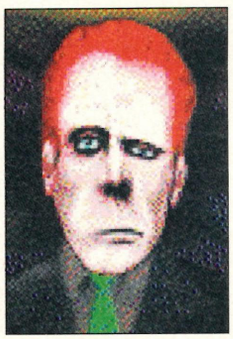
Available on PC CD-ROM.

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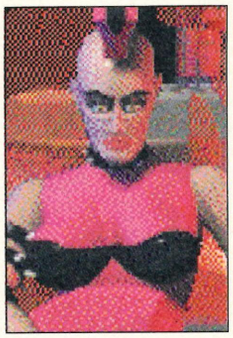
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Rock 'n' Roll Stars

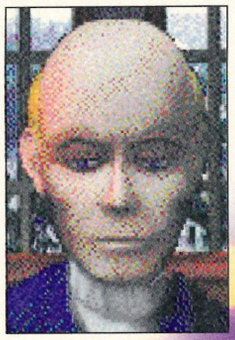
The inhabitants of the Distortion Dimension are a weird and wonderful bunch, and this is a guide to help you get to know them better — maybe you could invite them for tea. Or something.



Mr. Red
Red is the agent on Earth that's your contact, you'll really only need to chat to him if you've succeeded in your mission.



Betty Pink
A top rendered punk girlie with three songs you can watch and interact with by changing the scene. She'll not help you during the game.



Hans Kranger
This guy from Berlin is hard to please, but he has the most cash available to him. Just don't mention the war.

Rock 'n' roll man, rock 'n' roll. Rik Henderson takes the mantle of rock video director in outer space, and wonders if his sugar intake has become a tad too high.



Total Distortion

I always wanted to be a rock god. I wanted a Flying 'V' guitar, curly blonde perm, and trousers so tight that they made my legs look like snooker cues. Unfortunately, though, I can't play a note of music even with a paper and comb, my hair is currently less than half an inch long and certainly not blonde, and my thighs are bigger than Nelson's column (although they're not covered in bird crap, or at least I hope not).

Despite this, I was once in a band (we were called Indigo Shift) which I fronted by default due to my complete inability to play any instrument, not to mention and my 'skill' at writing lyrics like "you blast your views on prime time telly, through famous names like Thora Hird, and Harry Secombe in his woolly jumper, looking like a well-stuffed bird". Yep, we were a class act, or was that a crass act? I never could quite tell the difference, and we ended up where all great unsigned bands go — Safeways' meat counter.

'Hang on though, what relevance is all this?' I hear you utter in pure confusion. I'll explain. For a start, telling you the life story of one of the most dreadful bands ever to tread the stage is infinitely easier than trying to explain a jot of what Total Distortion is all about, but seeing as the reviews ed, Cal, is standing over me with a big stick, I'll give it a go.

Now the game

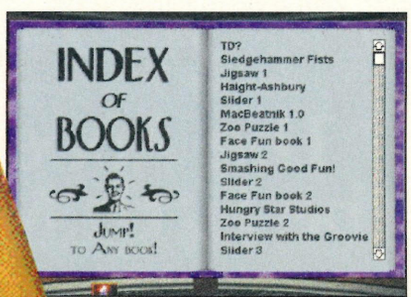
Now, I'll never make it as the new Kurt Cobain (I'd only lose my head), but I could certainly take a crack at directing a rock video. And this is exactly what you have to do in Total Distortion (see, there is a link there somewhere). It goes about this in a completely weird and sometimes wonderful way. Unlike other products which offer roughly the same kind of thing (Nickelodeon's Directors Lab for example) there's a wicked sense of bizarre humour running throughout Total Distortion (or at least I hope that's what it is, and I haven't been drinking shoe polish again).

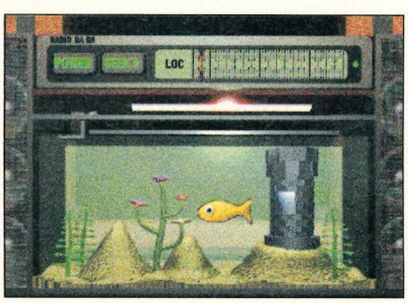
The story is a little strange to say the least. You've been marooned on some weird, parallel dimension and the only way you can get back home is pay the mysterious Mr Red the grand sum of 1,000,000 sponds. The only way you can raise that sort of cash is to make and sell pop videos for vast amounts of money — not an easy task given that the video buyers are a very picky bunch indeed. Most of my efforts were deemed awful, but then it's kind of difficult to create a masterpiece using a collage of assorted images over a frankly appalling pre-recorded soundtrack.

Fortunately, there are plenty of other things to do to keep you from getting too frustrated. Apart from editing your own pop videos and selling them to the media buyers of the top three shows on Earth, there's also a huge range of games and activities you can interact with, all of which have a beneficial effect on the

▼ Find your way around the dimension using this handy book. Oh, and take your Mum's advice and grab food and sleep when you can. ▼ It's a fish, stupid.







Rock 'n' Roll Stars



Johnny Fang
Johnny performs on the stage area and is essentially the geezer version of Betty Pink. You're not allowed to video these guys, though.



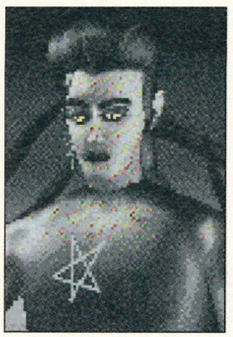
Lass in a kiosk
This comely purple-haired miss has no real relevance to the plot, but try this for a challenge. Try and chat her up, go on. Bet you can't.



Stevie Groovie
She is the most friendly of all the producers you'll try to sell your videos to. And she kind-of likes people videos. She's a bit of a skin-flint though.



MacBeatnik
Bloke random generator poem word. Laugh good for. Can annoying get bit a. Or in other words, he's just here for the weird value.



Edgar Death
Edgar is less discerning than Johnny or Betty, and will let you film as much footage of him in the Sonic Cemetery as you like. Great eyeliner.



Yuji Dude
The fellow with the big hair is Japan's top Video Jockey, and he seems to like anything with a good beat. Unfortunately he's a very busy man.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 SX 33Mhz Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

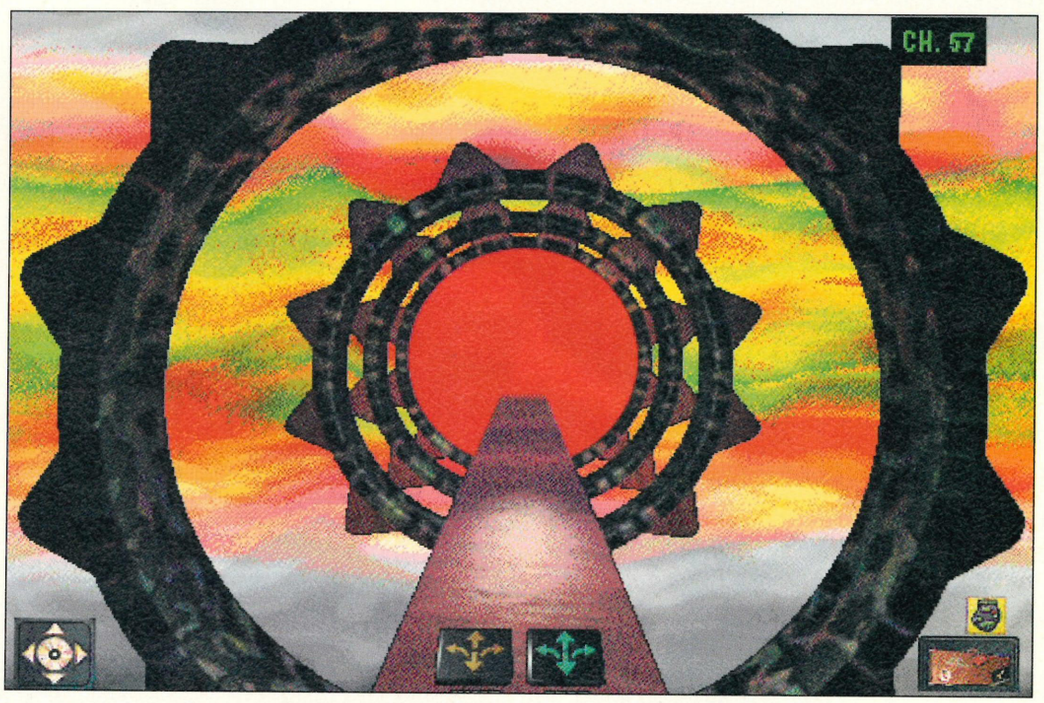
Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster and comp

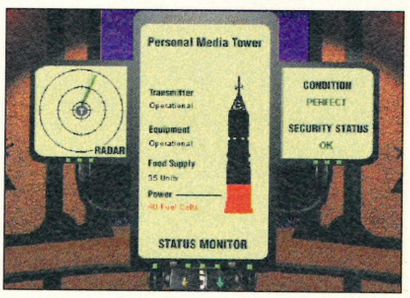
outcome in the game. Puzzles give you clues on how to progress further if you complete them in the requisite time. Or you can play 'duelling guitars' — a sort of musical 'Simon says' — with the Guitar Warrior, though you'll be lucky not to be killed by his by power chords. And there's loads of silliness, such as the MacBeatnik, a beatnik poet who makes up poems of completely random words.

It's all gone a bit French

Hmmm... I've made it sound quite serious and logical, but it's anything but. Everything is tinged with surrealism, and when you have to navigate the adventury bit (down in the caves), you definitely get a feeling of "Jeez, I wonder if the programmers live near a noxious chemical factory". This doesn't make Total Distortion a poor game, though. It's the oddness and humour that give it a truly unique slant. There's a very simple rule to getting on with Total Distortion: if you're into rock music and all things strange, buy it. If not, loosen up a little. In terms of a score, however, I'll mark it with the respect that it deserves. Even though you can roughly translate it as an eight out of ten.



▲ ***Navigate your way through the television to the different TV channels. Wouldn't it be a whole lot easier to use the Radio Times?***



▶ ***Don't forget to buy food or you'll run out of energy. Making a successful video might buy you a ticket back home.***
▼ ***Duel with the Guitar Warrior — or die.***





PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Undefinable*
Publisher:.*Pop Rocket/Mindscape*
Price: *£44.99*
Contact: .....*(01444) 246333*

This is quite honestly the oddest game I've ever played in my life. Brilliant!





Ever since I started playing Absolute Zero, I've been sleeping with a gun under my pillow...









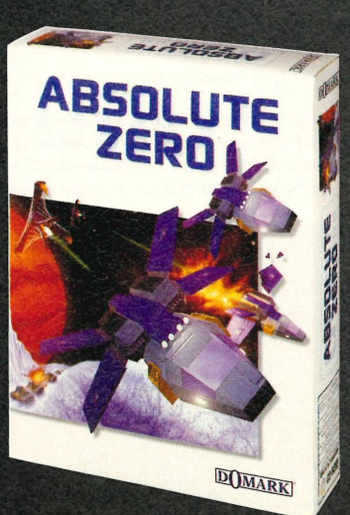
NOTHING could have prepared the peaceful mining colony for what was about to happen. From deep within Europa's icy core came an unknown and terrifying alien presence.
The ensuing onslaught instantly transformed Europa – into a living hell!

Now you must use your mining machinery as weapons of war...

With 7 different space vehicles to fly and drive, 15 weapon systems, inter-racial rivalries and mass mayhem this is one action-packed space epic you won't ever forget!!

ABSOLUTE ZERO also features:

- Dozens of missions in a complex, interwoven plot
- 7 different characters to play
- Scores of texture-mapped objects on screen simultaneously
- FMV sequences and interactive CD soundtrack with complex, layered sounds and professional voice-overs
- Stunning Gouraud shading
- Dynamic Silicon Graphics designed interface giving access to news reports, e-mail and character diaries



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Arcade Classics

Rowan Jackson takes a trip down memory lane, back to the heady days of big ten pence pieces.

Some things will never change. Wile E Coyote will never catch Roadrunner. We will never get to see Arthur Daley's missus. And I will always be crap at Defender.

It's been 15 years since I last took the helm of the little pointy ship. Since then I have frittered away thousands of hours playing hundreds of games. Sadly, it appears that all my training has been in vain. It's just as it was with the coin-op in the kebab shop after school. Once all the smart bombs are gone, my life expectancy can be measured in seconds.

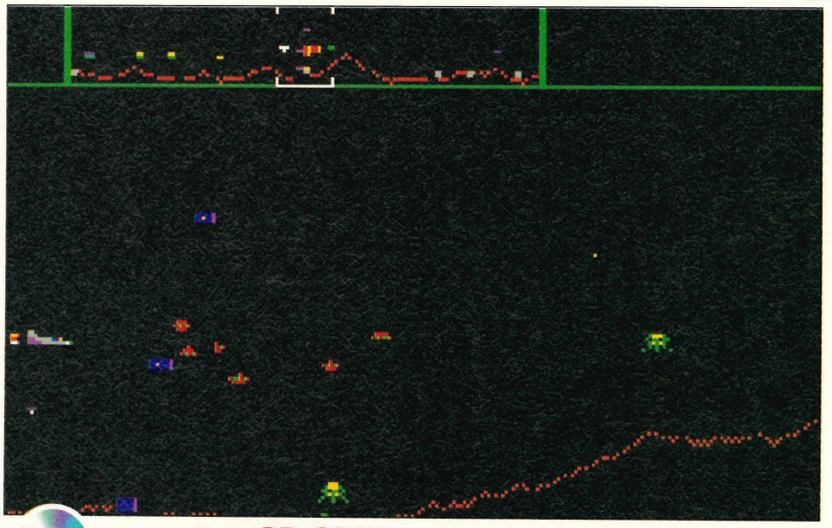
GT Interactive has produced a collection of some of the classic (and some of the best forgotten) moments from Williams coin-op history. The menu screen takes the form of an arcade containing the original games cabinets. To play, simply click on the machine of your choice. The arcade is split into two rooms — the front room, where you'll find the good stuff, and the back room, where the less attractive options lurk. I spent most of my pocket money in the front room.

Wing nuts!

Here you find the aforementioned Defender, which is totally faithful to the original. Also here are Robotron and Joust. Robotron is like an ancient version of Cannon Fodder and feels about a thousand years old. Joust, on the other hand, had me hooked. You sit astride a flying ostrich, flap your wings like a nutter and ram other ostriches. Great fun.

There isn't really much of interest in the back room. Bubbles involves dodging spiders and plug holes and is about as much fun as cleaning the bath. Sinistar is an impossibly difficult space shoot 'em up, a bit like Asteroids on speed. Finally, Defender 2 is included for those bestowed of praying mantis reflexes and bionic trigger fingers.

There is fun to be had from these games as long as you don't expect too much. Herein lies the problem. For 30 quid you have every right to expect quite a lot. All these games are as old as the hills. For a tenner more you could buy your favourite old arcade machine. I should know, I've got one — needless to say, it's not Defender.



▲ *Out of smart bombs and about to meet my maker — again. Some things never change, do they?*

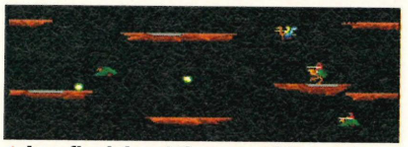
CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 386DX, DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards



▲ *In a flap! Joust the opposition and collect their eggs.*



▲ *The back room. Best kept locked.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: *Arcade compilation*

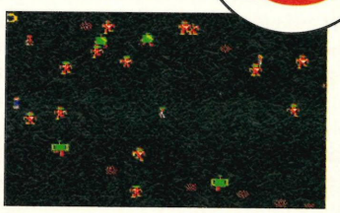
Publisher: *GT Interactive*

Price: *£29.99*

Contact: *(0171) 258 3791*

What price nostalgia? Hmm, maybe just a little too steep for my liking.

6



◀ *Robotron. Games have come a long way since this was the biz, thank god.*



.....I AUDITIONED FOR THE PART OF LOLA IN "DOUBLE TROUBLE".....BUT THEY SAID I WAS NO OIL PAINTING!!

"Bud Tucker in Double Trouble"- PC CD-ROM • Available March 1996

Merit Studios (Europe) Ltd, Metro Centre East Business Park, Waterside Drive, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE11 9HU, England. Tel:+44 (0) 191 460 60 60 • Fax: +44 (0) 191 460 22 66

MERIT STUDIOS

FUNSOFT

Worms



Pat Fox never thought he could have so much fun playing with his worm (and other cheap innuendo).

CD ONLY

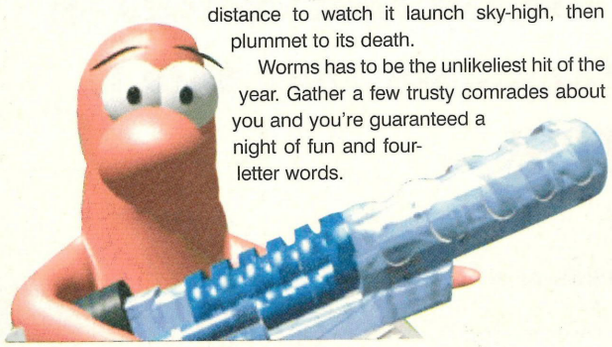
Minimum PC: 386DX/33
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster, Gravis

Worms are small, slimy things that wriggle around the countryside. Worms are also beloved by gardeners who prize their habit of eating yukky things and producing valuable compost. They are also used by pre-pubescent oiks to make girlies squeal. They are not, on the whole, known for their tendency to carry heavy-calibre weaponry and indulge in close-range tactical warfare. It might seem strange therefore that the humble annelid has been chosen as the protagonist of Team 17's latest blast — but hey, Earthworm Jim did all right for himself.

Try to explain Worms to someone who has never seen it — "Well, you get four worms, you see, and your opponent has four, and you've got all these weapons, and you have to kill each other..." — and the response will generally involve generous helpings of laughter and ridicule. But unlikely as the premise might seem, Worms is possibly the most addictive game to appear on the PC scene since Doom.

Okay, let's come clean here — as a single player game, Worms falls flat. But gather up to four players around one machine and you're in for an indecent amount of fun. The levels — generated randomly, allowing up to four billion combinations — are cramped enough that you can't afford just to spray your fire around indiscriminately, so in order to wipe out your opponents you must choose your weapon carefully. A misplaced bazooka shell or cluster bomb could send your own worm hurtling into the nearest lava pit. And there is little to compare to the sense of smugness you get from planting a stick of dynamite atop your opponent's helpless worm, and hopping to a safe distance to watch it launch sky-high, then plummet to its death.

Worms has to be the unlikeliest hit of the year. Gather a few trusty comrades about you and you're guaranteed a night of fun and four-letter words.





▲ *Ah, isn't that nice? Some of the worms took time out to build a snowman. Won't keep them alive any longer, though.*



▲ *Ouch — that's gotta hurt. Airstrikes aren't very accurate, but they can be devastating.*



▲ *A quiet day on the beach turns into all-out worm carnage. Whatever you do, don't go in the water.*



▲ *No, you can't eat the landscape.*



▲ *Doh! Juggling cluster bombs is not a good idea.*

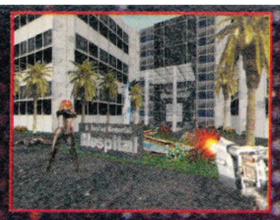
PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Arcade strategy*
Publisher: .....*Ocean*
Price: .....*£TBA*
Contact: .....*(0161) 8326633*

Games just don't get better than this. Buy it, I tell you. Buy it.

9





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William Shatner

WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEKWAR™

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IBM CD-ROM

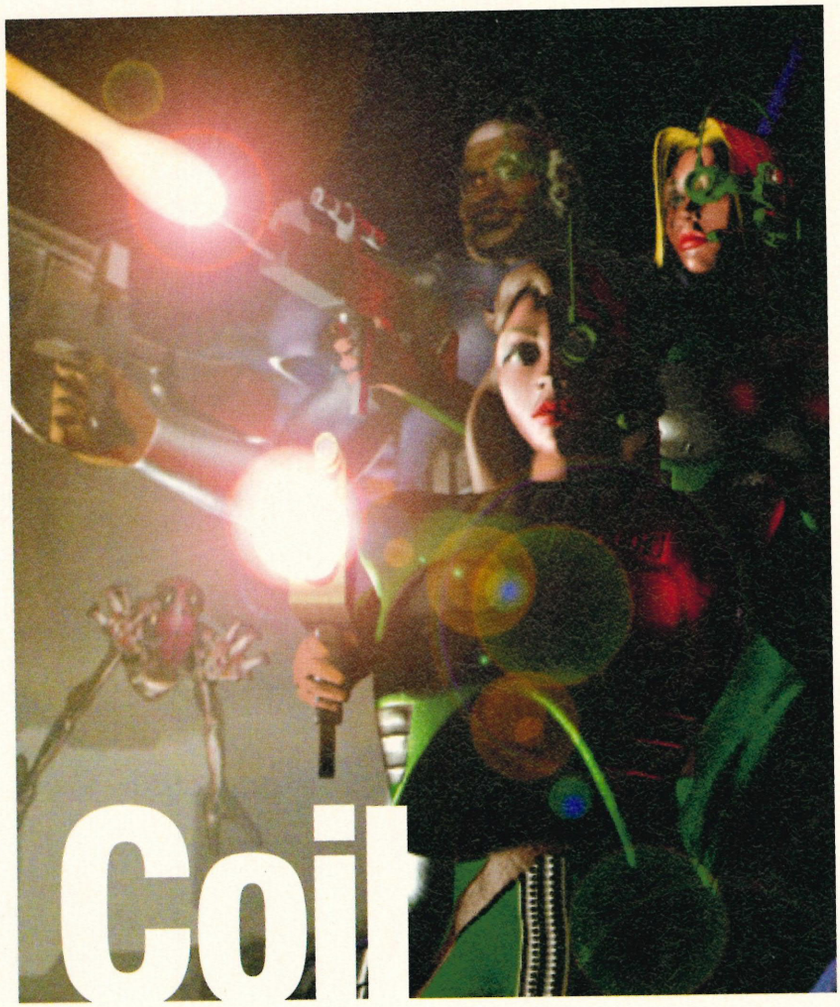
US GOLD

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Aliens have invaded, so Pat Fox and his band of ruthless mercenaries go in search of a rumble.



Mortal Coil



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX 33

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Most major sound cards

The trouble with Doom-style games, apparently, is that they just consist of running around blindly shooting everything that moves. To be honest, I never really thought that was a problem, but apparently it's just not good enough, because for some time now games developers having been trying to take the Doom formula and add that magic something to make it... better. Welcome, then, to Vic Tokai's Mortal Coil, which promises a strategic challenge as well as ample trigger-finger exercise. The Earth has been invaded by aliens (ooh, now there's a new one) and you must lead a crack team of commandos on the offensive.

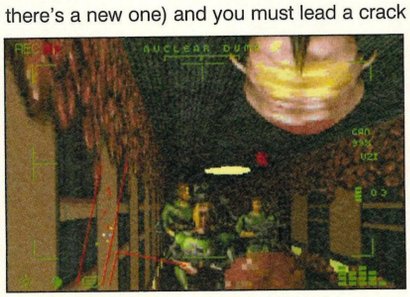
Mortal Coil still conforms to the Doom-esque first-person view style — although the action can be viewed from a third-person perspective if desired. Now, however, you are in control of not one but four characters; Candy, a buxom blonde with a knack for heavy weaponry (husky voice supplied by Word-refugee Dani Behr); Dan, a tall, macho musclehead; Peech, a smart brunette; and Dred, an enormous black Jamaican. In addition, you're followed around by BB, a "Military Recorder" which films the goings-on for posterity and lends a hand in combat situations.

Naturally you can only physically guide one character at a time, so the others are equipped with their own intelligence which allows them to act semi-independently. Normally, they will follow the team leader. You can specify one of a number of formations — from single-file, V-formation, flanks or to back-to-back — and also one of a number of attack strategies. This means that you can plan well in advance how your team will react, depending on the situation in which you find yourself. Stumble into a firefight and your mates will lend all their combat skills to fending off the enemy while you run around flapping your arms and messing your underwear.

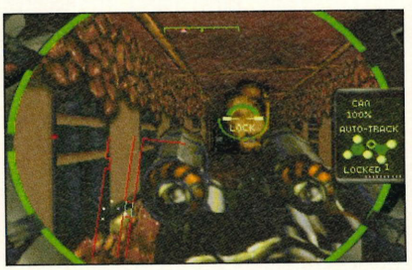
Divide & conquer

But Mortal Coil is even more versatile than that. Using the map, you can actually set individual missions for each team member, assigning them a series of waypoints to follow and specifying how you want them to behave in a given situation. You can order them to fight or flee, ignore or explore doors, or even whether or not to pick up any items they find. Once they arrive at their destination, they can guard, sweep the area, or simply come back.

This facility is not just there for effect. Certain missions actually require you to assign separate, concurrent paths for different characters



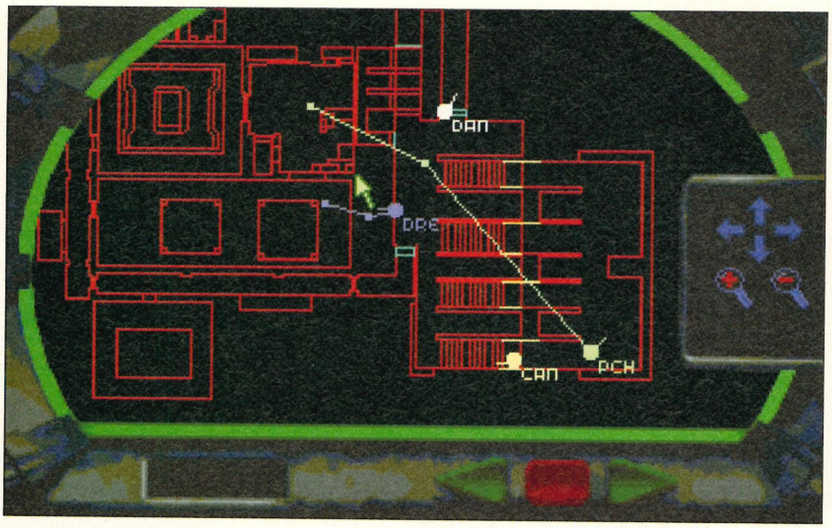
▲ *Ew! Horrible slimy pod things! I'm off home to hide behind my mummy.*

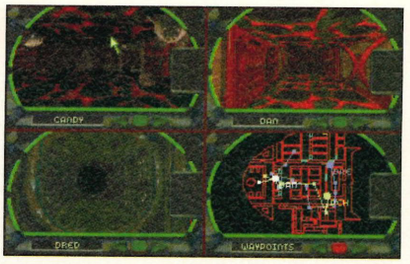


▲ *This is more like it — bloody great big guided missile launcher ahoy!*



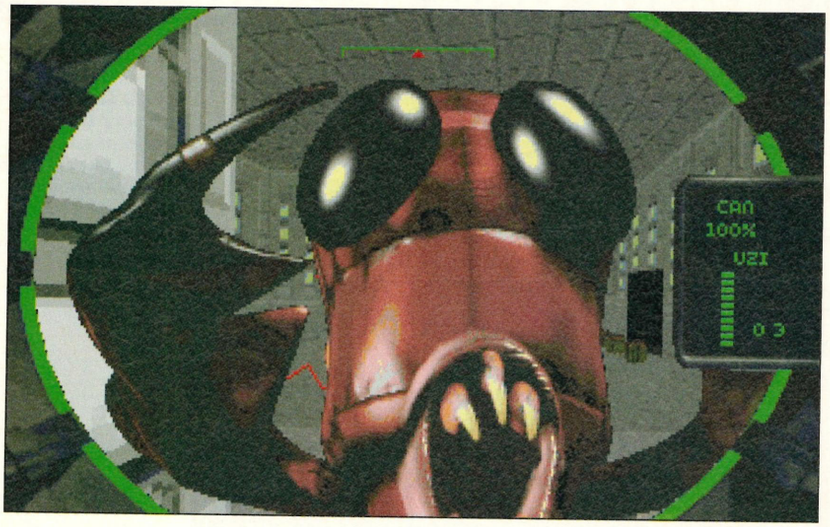
▲ *I think I've found the alien day nursery — where's the sticklebricks?*





▲ *The four-way view allows you to keep an eye on all your team simultaneously. At the moment they're on the lookout for the public toilets.*

◀ *Assigning your players waypoints means that they can go off on their own missions. This saves you time in the long run and is vital for some missions.*





▲ *The Resources screen allows you to pass equipment from one team member to another. Here Candy trades her grenades for some cerise lipstick.*

◀ *Argh! There's a horrible alien dude stuck to my face. Now where did I put that Bug-B-Gon? Eat CFC-rich pesticide death, you bulbous-eyed space weirdo.*

in order to complete the level, meaning that you must take care to assign the proper strategy for each team member. For the sake of convenience you can use the video view to keep track of all four characters at once.

Dotted around the landscape is a selection of heavy weaponry to keep the meanies at bay, from the lowly Desert Eagle pistol, right up to high-tech man-manglers like the plasma blaster or the particle cannon. Each team member can carry two heavy weapons, but as backup each has their own "personal" weapon too, as well as an array of general equipment like health packs.

More shooting things

There are seven missions, each made up of a number of maps which must be completed in order to accomplish the overall mission goal. The tasks generally consist of making your way from point A to Point B, shooting aliens all the way. If one of your team is critically wounded, their environment suit enfolds them in a protective cocoon until they can be collected. They will be out of the current mission but will be healed in time for the next. It's actually impossible to die in this game, because many of the missions require three or four team members to be present in order to complete them. In order to completely fail a mission, your entire team must be wiped out.

Does it work? Well, yes and no. This is not the gaming revolution it might purport to be; although the strategy element adds complexity, the missions are still basically shoot everything, find the keys and get out, just as they were in Doom. It's not even as complex as, say, Dark Forces. The graphics are reasonable, the sound is good, although the characters' dumb comments can get a bit annoying after a while. The team's artificial intelligence works up to a point — but they can still get stuck bashing their thick skulls against a wall instead of walking around. The four-player network option is appealing, as you can play co-operatively or one against the other if you're feeling adversarial. Overall, it's a good game based on a good idea, that isn't as revolutionary as it might have been.



▲ *Let's go for a swim around the weird alien hive thing.*



▲ *Oo-er, that's a bit rude. Candy takes time out for a bit of unnecessary nudity.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: *Strategy shoot 'em up*
Publisher: *Virgin*
Price: *£34.99*
Contact: *(0171) 368 2255*

A good idea, but doesn't quite live up to its ground-breaking hype.

7





Heroes of Might and Magic

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX, DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Might and Magic has had more comebacks than George Foreman. Gordon Houghton goes the distance with the latest.

▲ *Up to four rival players take the roles of knight, sorceress, barbarian and warlock, each with their own styles.*

After a string of decent but unspectacular RPGs, the Might and Magic series has changed direction. Devotees shouldn't panic — the change is a subtle one. The accompanying story is still packed with the worst kind of fantasy cliches, and dozens of characters from the original series make a reappearance. However, the accent is now on strategy and adventure as much as role-playing.

Up to four players control a series of lands which vary in size and difficulty. You begin each territory with a basic settlement, then recruit heroes and troops to establish a defence force. Then exploit the surrounding countryside for minerals and other supplies, and ultimately gain the resources to expand into enemy terrain.

There are three kinds of game: standard, campaign and multiplayer. Standard gives you 18 scenarios and four difficulty levels, lets you determine your opponents' strengths and gives you a choice of warlords. For example, an Easy game in which you play a warlock against one dumb computer foe is a pushover. If you play a Knight in Expert mode against three smart enemies who are all allied against you, things are considerably tougher.

A campaign gives you less choice — it's harder for beginners, there are eight linked scenarios, and you only get to pick your warlord — but the basic tactical aims are the same. Multiplayer mode allows four people to play on one computer and includes network and modem options.

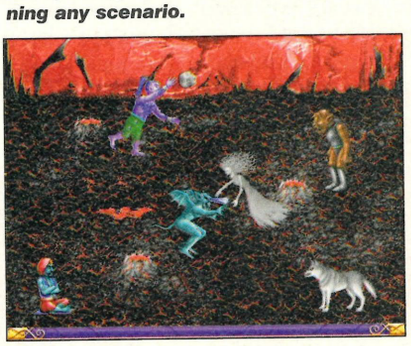
What makes Heroes of Might and Magic so enjoyable is its variety. Graded difficulty means there's something here for novices as well as experienced tacticians, and the diversity of opponents, heroes, terrain, scenarios and surprises keeps you hooked. The action is great fun from start to finish.



◀ *Survive long enough and you'll amass a huge collection of artifacts and magical objects. These increase your stats and can make you virtually invincible.*



▲ *Capturing fortresses is the key to winning any scenario.*



▲ *Apart from the four heroes there are 30 different characters in the game.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: *Fantasy adventure*

Publisher: *US Gold*

Price: *£39.99*

Contact: *(0121) 625 3388*

Occasionally looks a little crude, but overall a fun strategy game for beginners and experts alike.

7





FRANKENSTEIN

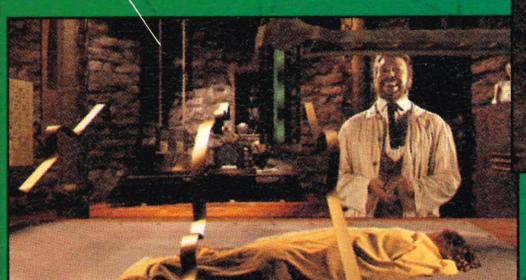
Through The Eyes Of THE MONSTER™

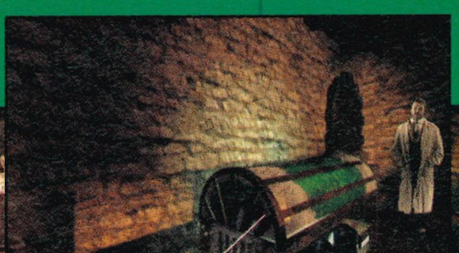


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It's time to meet your maker.

Starring Tim Curry

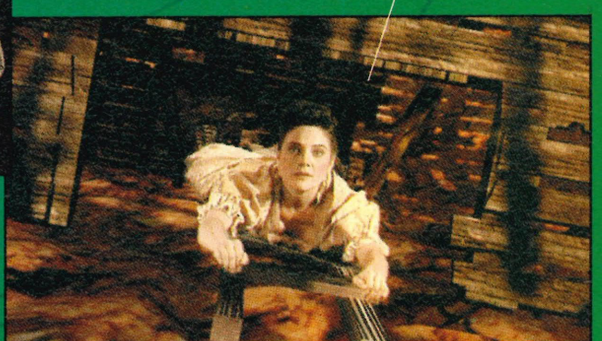
The game is state-of-the-art, featuring live actors, digitised speech and music, all set in extremely realistic 3-D environments.





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Steel Panthers

What's this, another incredibly addictive war game from SSI? Simon Shaw reels back from his optical sights in shock.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486DX
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: Sound Blaster, Gravis

Steel Panthers is a game very much in the style of Panzer General, and aims to do at the tactical level what its mould-breaking predecessor achieved in the realm of strategy. It's superbly presented, soundly structured and exhaustively thorough, with scenarios encompassing all aspects of the 1939-1945 conflict and with an excellent DIY editor tacked on. All in all, it's pretty damned good.

It's not quite as good, though, as Panzer General. To be fair, what is? But SSI has set such a high standard for the genre that your critical faculties are necessarily sharpened. There are a number of user-unfriendly niggles and flaws which, though individually innocuous, are cumulatively irritating. For instance, the purchase of units prior to scenarios is a needlessly fiddly business — why couldn't SSI have just adapted the clean and simple Panzer General system?

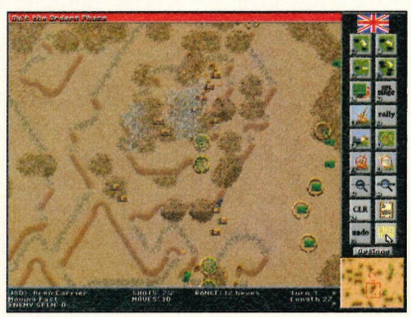
Hours of fun

But I don't want to nitpick unduly, because essentially Steel Panthers is an excellent game. You can play from a vast selection of programmed scenarios, but the seriously committed will want to get campaigning as soon as possible. Assuming that you start in 1939 there'll be hundreds of game-playing hours in store. Within campaigns scenarios are randomly generated, so although the game develops into a somewhat repetitive pattern of attack and counter-attack, there's still plenty of variety. The AI is good and there's considerable scope for exercising tactical subtlety. At the same time the overall accent is on playability rather than realism, so inexperienced wargamers shouldn't feel too daunted.

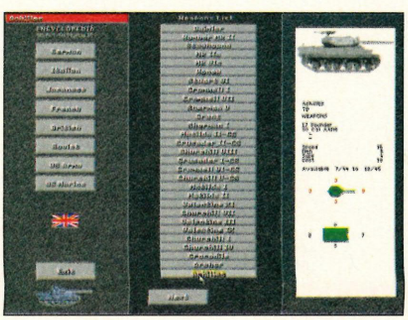
This is the best tactical/squad level game on the market. It may not be perfect, but it throws the gauntlet down to Avalon Hill and Atomic Games, whose Beyond Squad Leader (the board game is a clear and massive influence on Steel Panthers) is due out by the end of the year. Over to you, Baltimore...



▲ *Victory goes to the side which inflicts the most damage and secures the greater number of objective hexes — conveniently coded with flag icons.*



◀ *All theatres of war are covered, from Western Europe to the Pacific. Here's that old perennial favourite, 8th Army versus Afrika Corps.*



▲ *There's a complete online hardware encyclopaedia for all you stats freaks.*



▲ *The screen tends to get pretty clouded after heavy bombardment.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Wargame*
Publisher: .....SSI/*Mindscape*
Price: *£44.99*
Contact: .....*(01444) 246333*

Despite minor flaws this is a game that really gets its hooks into you. SSI has done it again.

8



Ripley's Believe It or Not!

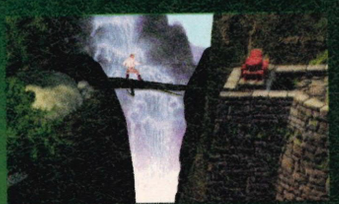
THE RIDDLE OF MASTER LU™



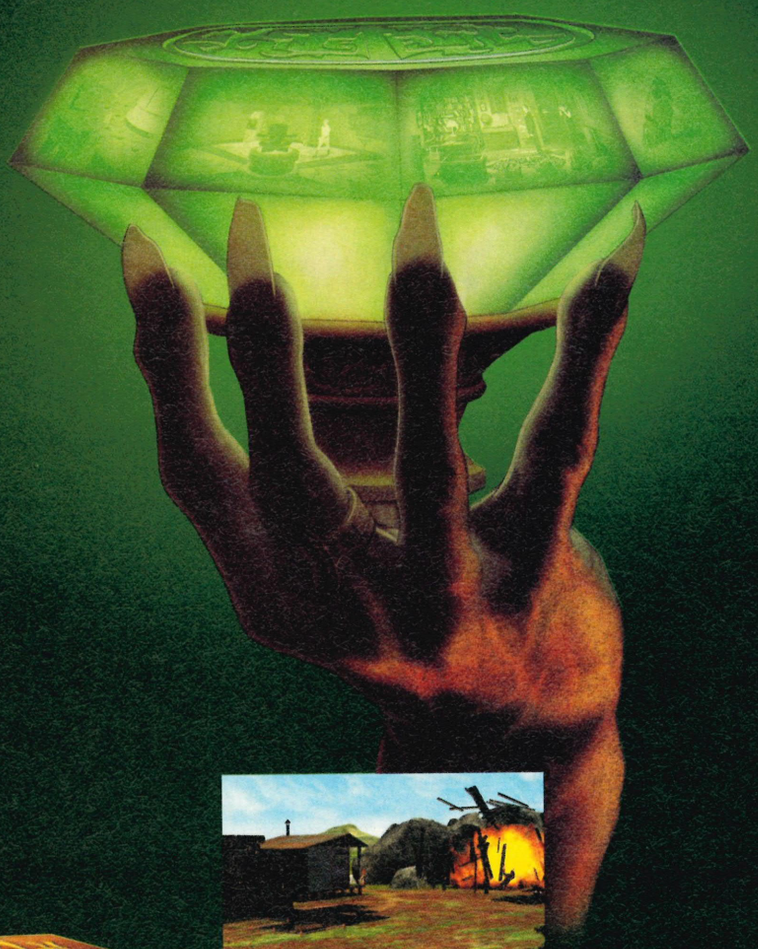
An original story based upon a baffling, true-life mystery of the ancient world.



An involving and evolving true-life storyline for a totally non-linear gaming experience.

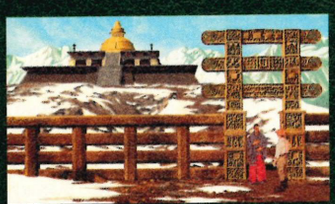


Rational, real-world puzzle-solving offers obstacles with achievable goals for all levels of expertise.





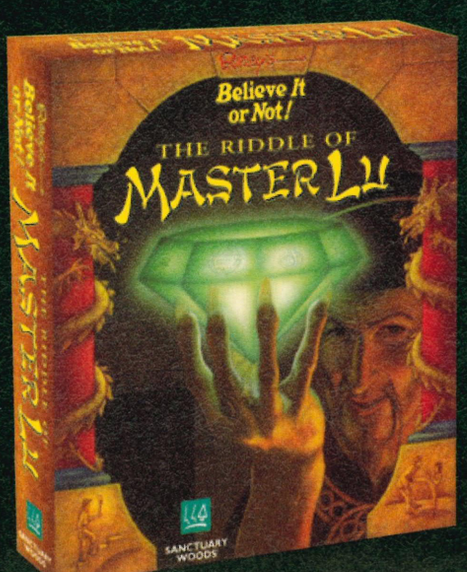




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Use of unique cinematic techniques depicting character emotions give this graphic adventure its own distinctive visual style.



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Players take on the role of Robert Ripley, adventurer, world traveller, collector of the strange and bizarre, real-life creator of the Believe It Or Not! Odditoriums. With your constant companion Mei Chen, mistress of the martial arts, you must prevent the seal from falling into the hands of a ruthless enemy. Along the way, you must also acquire new attractions to keep your Odditorium in New York in business, as the museum's revenue funds your globe-trotting adventures.

"The scenery and player environment is nothing less than awesome." PC Zone

"Sweeping animations and carefully conceived close-ups are used to give the game a sense of pace and action." PC Zone

AVAILABLE ON PC CD-ROM.

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Touché

The Adventures of the Fifth Musketeer

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: MS-DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster, Roland

Touché away! Cal Jones steps into her thigh-length boots and terrorises France.

Here's something we haven't seen for a while — a good old fashioned, honest-to-God graphic adventure. Not some multimillion dollar 'interactive' movie starring real Hollywood actors, nor some dreadful rendered confection created by 20 graphic artists with nary a thought for plot or gameplay. Nope, this is a traditional point 'n' clicker — all daft gags and hand-drawn graphics. And thank heavens for that.

Touché is the first adventure from Silicon Dreams, US Gold's own development house. It's a good first effort, though I suspect that its traditional appearance stems from the fact that the company was playing safe. Not that this is a bad thing, of course — the old tried and tested formulas often work best. But don't go expecting anything revolutionary.

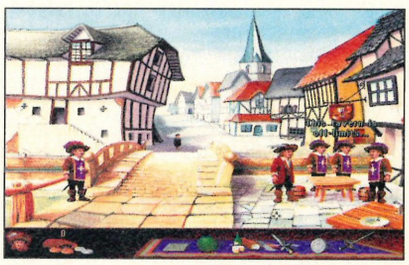
Set in 16th Century France, the game follows the adventures of rookie musketeer Geoffroi le Brun (named, as it happens, after US Gold boss Geoff Brown). It begins with his arrival in picturesque Rouen, where he stumbles across a mortally wounded man who has been stabbed and left for dead by brigands. It transpires that the man is none other than the Compte de Peuple, a wealthy nobleman who was just about to deliver his will to the Chancellor when the murderers struck. Naturally, le Brun agrees to avenge de Peuple and track down the will and return it to its rightful heir, the young King of France.

His quest will take him all over France, from Le Mans to Le Havre and on to Paris. He will find the will twice only to lose it again, bluff his way into a brothel, join a group of brigands and fool the English into thinking he's one of them by talking about the weather. Not only that, but he must put up with constant complaints from his fat, flea-ridden manservant Henri, win the heart of the fickle temptress Juliette, persuade Alexander Dumas that his true talents lie outside music and even help Leonardo da Vinci's nephew build a preposterously elaborate boat. It's a busy life, being a musketeer, but le Brun blunders his way through the whole charade without a single complaint, such is his naivety.

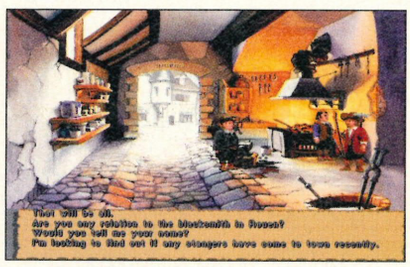
French dressing

The game, as a whole, is very enjoyable. It isn't exactly hilarious, but the humour is pleasant enough. Although it pokes fun at the French, there are remarkably few Gallic accents in evidence. Some of the characters do indeed sound like the cast of 'Allo 'Allo, but there are also cockneys, brummies and home counties-types in there. Most odd.

The story is well plotted, if a little predictable at times, and never leaves you wondering what you have to do next. The puzzles are definitely on the silly side (try dipping an altar cloth in soup to mend a hole in a boat), but are never truly illogical. You can always find clues by listening to what people say or having a good look around. The only point where it gets frustrating is when one of the objects you need is located on the other side of France, and you



▲ *Hmm, now here's an interesting puzzle. Just how do you get past those soldiers who are barring your way.*



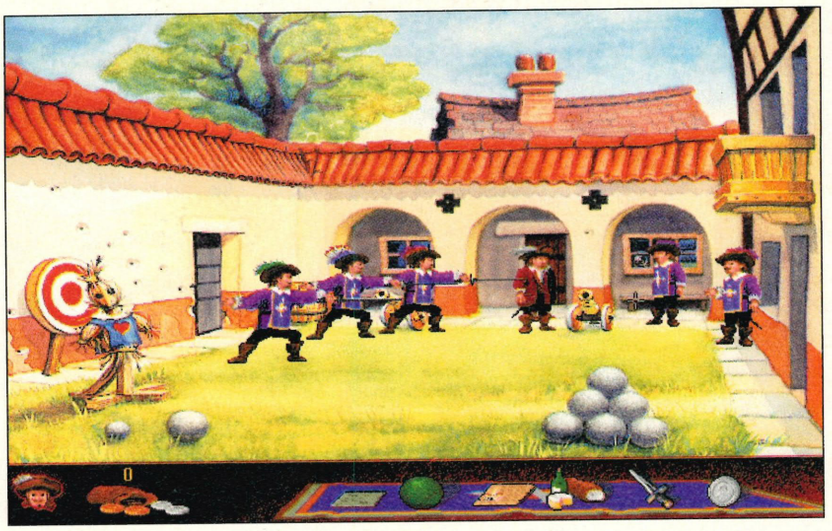
▲ *All the smithies look the same in France. Come to think of it, so do the blacksmiths. Are they related?*



▲ *Who'd have suspected that such lovely floral arrangements could conceal a gambling den and a brothel.*

have to trudge all the way back and get it. But other than that, the difficulty is well balanced and, since it's fairly non-linear, you won't get stuck for too long.

The most obvious thing it has in its favour is that it looks great. Several people came up to see what I was playing and remarked that it looked like Monkey Island. Well, it's actually a whole lot better than that (you tend to forget how primitive an old game looks when you haven't seen it for some time), but I suppose that if you imagine Monkey Island brought right up to date, you wouldn't be too far off the mark. The Touché graphics are colourful, detailed and pretty, making it a pleasure to explore the various locations. Apparently, the buildings were designed with 16th Century French architecture in mind, but since I'm no expert on that subject, you're going to have to take my word for it.



◀ *You'll get the chance to meet your four famous colleagues at musketeer headquarters.*



◀ *You might pick up a few nasty habits at the monastery.*

Flaw show

It isn't perfect, though. Although the backgrounds are attractive, the animation is not so hot. There just aren't enough frames. The characters move fairly well when seen from the side, but when they walk diagonally they sort of crab sideways while facing forwards. Set piece animations, such as when le Brun vaults onto Juliette's balcony, are jerky and unconvincing. And when le Brun picks something up, he bends over and the item miraculously pops into his inventory — without ever appearing in his hands. A few more frames of animation and the whole thing would look infinitely slicker. As it is, the poor animation doesn't harm the gameplay to any extent, but it does strip off some of the polish.

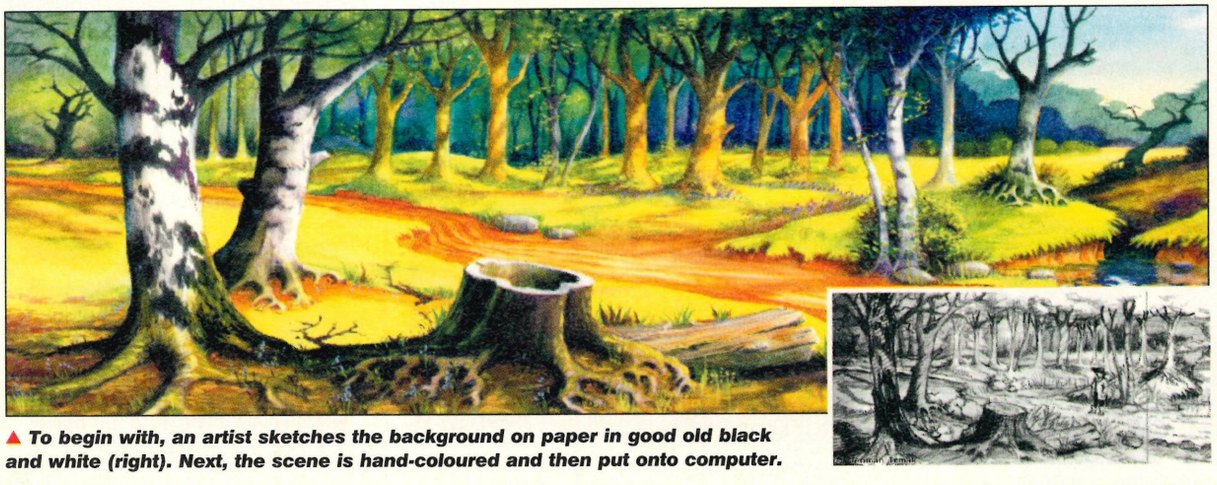
There are one or two other flaws that made me wish that Silicon Dreams had spent longer perfecting the game. A lot of the minor characters look the same, and many of the locations are remarkably similar. Silicon Dreams must have noticed this because the characters even joke about it. 'Are you related to the smith in Amiens?' le Brun asks the identical smith in St Quentin. 'All these French taverns look the same,' he says as he walks into yet another inn. Perhaps there wasn't enough time to make every character and every location look different, but it might have added to the game's otherwise pleasing appearance.

Another minor annoyance is that there's no way of getting around quickly, so you have to keep trudging backwards and forwards across the screens until you reach your destination. The Riddle of Master Lu (also from US Gold) gets around the problem by allowing you to jump across the screen by clicking the right mouse button. No such luck here.

All this trekking around prompts another problem. Your arrival at certain locations often

Setting scenes

Touché is the first adventure to emerge from US Gold's own development house, Silicon Dreams. Unlike many of the adventures released this year, it eschews rendered or digitised backgrounds in favour of hand-drawn scenes, and looks very attractive as a result. Here's how a scene is put together:



▲ *To begin with, an artist sketches the background on paper in good old black and white (right). Next, the scene is hand-coloured and then put onto computer.*



▲ *Paris is a dump — it's just one great, long street market populated by vendors selling fried rat-on-a-stick and 'things made out of wicker'. Ah yes.*

prompts an exchange between le Brun and Henri. For example, every time you visit the forge in Rouen, he asks if you plan to travel because he hasn't packed. This is all well and good the first time you hear it, but it becomes irritating when you return to the location in question and have to go through it all again. Since there's no option to bypass conversations, it's rather annoying. A small fault like this could have been easily rectified.

It might seem that I'm having one hell of a whinge here, but all the problems I've mentioned are relatively minor. They don't detract much from the overall game, which is good, frivolous fun. It is large enough to keep you going for a while, and enjoyable enough to hold your interest from start to finish. As adventures go, it holds its own against some stiff competition, and despite its lack of real polish, it could teach those interactive movie producers a thing about gameplay. I liked it. There's certainly room for improvement, but this is a promising start from Silicon Dreams.



▲ *No adventure is complete without a love interest. Enter the flame-haired Juliette. If only you could get her father out of the house...*



▲ *You might not have any cash to spend in the taverns, but some of the locals are well worth talking to.*



▲ *Can Geoffroi take his eyes off the lovely Fifi for long enough to notice those feet beneath the curtains?*



PCR VERDICT

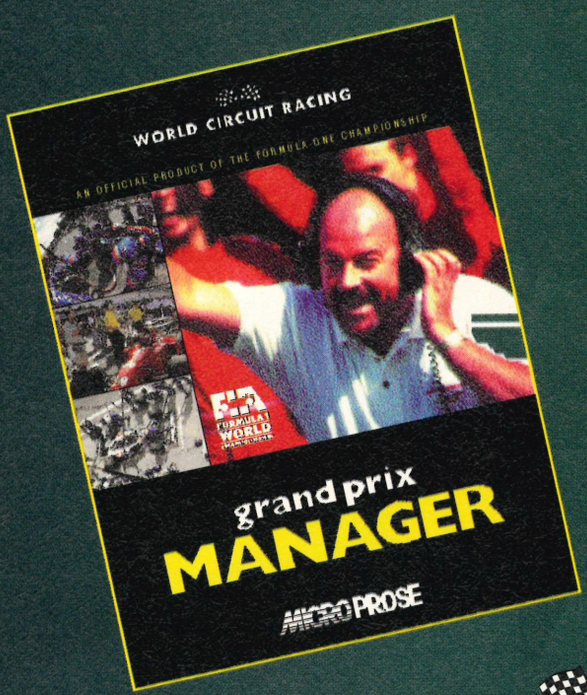
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Publisher:.....*US Gold*
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8



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The Hive

Er, excuse me — you might want to open your parachute now. ▲

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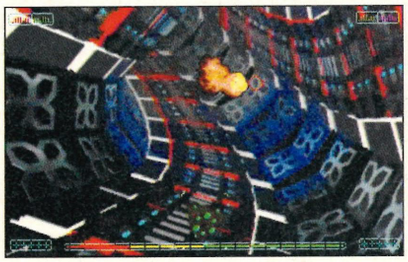
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Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible card

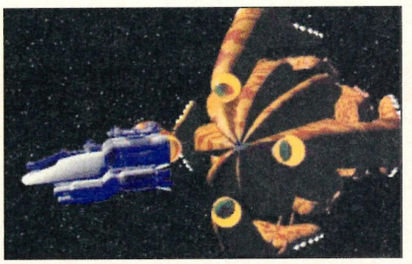
Infiltrate, annihilate, exterminate, you say? Sounds like a job for Patrick Fox.



▲ *Zooming down a tube shooting things. Don't worry about steering.*



▲ *Looks nothing like a Star Destroyer, honestly it doesn't...*



▲ *...and this looks nothing like a Vorlon ship out of Babylon 5. No, really.*

The Hive purports to be "20 levels of pulse-pounding arcade action" — in fact it's a sort of shoot 'em up on rails, much in the vein of Rebel Assault (reviewed Issue 27 rated 9) or Chaos Control (reviewed Issue 46 rated 4). The action is split into two types: pre-rendered "flight" sections — you move a cursor around shooting things while the computer takes care of the steering; and "panorama" sections, where you have a 360° view, but you cannot move.

The game integrates these sections absolutely seamlessly, switching almost imperceptibly from one to the other, which adds variety to a style of game that is otherwise rather repetitive. The graphics — all rendered in 3DStudio or somesuch — are undeniably pretty, but as we all know by now, good looks do not necessarily make for a great game.

After a promising opening sequence, flying around a huge starship, blasting alien attackers, it all began to go downhill. The next section — trying to land on the planet below — was so hit-and-miss I found myself repeatedly plonked back at the start. The trick to completing the mission had nothing to do with skill or good reflexes, it was simply a matter of learning by trial and error when to hit the fire button, then trying to repeat the sequence until you got it right.

Ever see that film Groundhog Day? You know the one — Bill Murray gets stuck repeating the same day over and over until he goes insane and tries to kill himself. It's a bit like that, only more depressing — sitting through the same thing again and again, becoming steadily more wound up with every restart.

It's a shame really, because graphically the Hive is truly impressive, and it's often truly exciting to play too — but the whole thing is spoiled by some horribly frustrating and pointless sections. Wait and see what Rebel Assault 2 is like instead.

PCR VERDICT

Type: ..... *Shoot 'em up*

Publisher: ..... *FunSoft*

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Has its moments, but some sections will drive you absolutely nuts.

6



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Wipeout



Pat Fox thought he was going to meet Paul Daniels, so he was disappointed when we gave him Sony's latest console conversion.

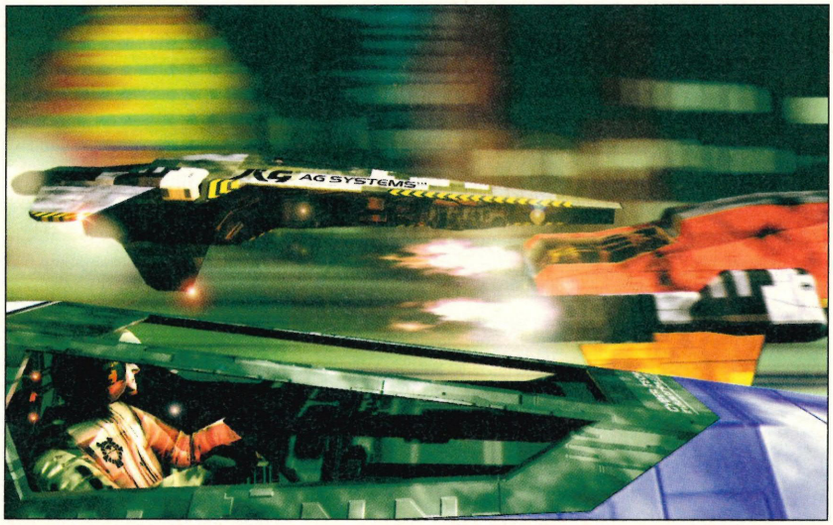
CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX2, MS-DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster, Gravis Ultra



▲ *If there's one thing that the Playstation version has in buckets, it's speed. Polygons zipping by at a sick-making rate of knots, and all in glorious technicolour.*

The console invasion marches on. Just scant months after its appearance on the PlayStation, where it caused a mighty storm of hype, Wipeout has arrived on our PCs, all textured polygons, snappy tunes and Designers Republic logos.

Wipeout, for those ignorant of the goings-on of the console scene, is a 3D futuristic hover-racing game, rather like Bullfrog's Hi-Octane or Gremlin's Slipstream.

The game places you at the helm of a preposterously pointy hoverspeeder racing at breakneck speed around specially designed tracks, hoping to outsmart and outspeed your rivals. Your opponents, of course, are out to beat you, and to help them in their task (and you in yours), there are a number of power-ups dotted about the course.

Unlike Hi-Octane, your hover vehicle is not automatically equipped with weaponry. Instead, you have to steer over special sections of the track to arm yourself, and a power-up will be enabled — usually for one shot only. Options include dumb rocket, homing missile, shockwave and mines — all of which cause the unfortunate recipient to lose speed briefly — and a weapon that confuses the anti-gravity racer's controls (very frustrating when it happens to you!).

In addition to weapons, there are power-ups that give you a one-time speed boost or an all too shortlived shield. Most important, however, are the blue areas of the track, which are dedicated speed boosters — hit these right and you can double your speed all the way round the track. It's essential to use these effectively if you are to win, and avoid bumping the side of the track which will slow you down again.

None of the tracks are simple, particularly when your opponents are doing their best to missile you into submission. In order to get anywhere, it's essential to play each track repeatedly until you know it backwards — if you want to win, then you can't afford to make any mistakes at all. You need to learn which curves to slow down for, where all the speed boosters are, and when to use each power-up most effectively.

Now you see me...

These days, it seems as if no game is complete without a huge number of texture-mapped polygons zipping about the screen, and Wipeout has more than its fair share. However, despite its console origins, the graphics aren't as smooth or as detailed as comparable PC titles like Screamer or Need for Speed. There is an annoying tendency for your opponents' craft simply to disappear when you're up close — seemingly because you are "inside" them.

However, the game's biggest problem is that the craft are rather hard to get to grips with. It soon becomes apparent that this game was designed to be played with a multi-button joypad, so you either have to invest in one or attempt some sort of bizarre keyboard/joystick combination because the keyboard-only option is simply impractical.

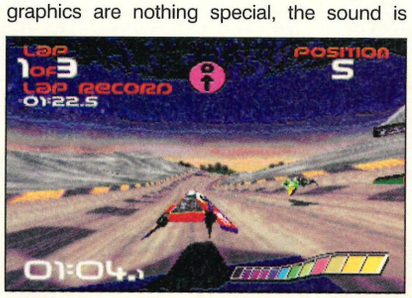
If you do have access to a four-button joypad, things are marginally better, but there's no escaping the fact that these machines are damned hard to control. You must quickly master the use of your directional air brakes, which allow you to turn sharp corners, because even a glancing contact with the side of the course is enough to strip away half your speed.

So, is Wipeout worthy of the hype? Well, I have to be honest here and say that I was rather disappointed with the whole thing. The graphics are nothing special, the sound is





▲ *Take that! A swift dose of homing missile should sort you out, you rotter.*



▲ *So here I am up in fifth place. Not very good, but then just you try it.*

uninspiring, and the game itself lacks spark. In fact, I enjoyed playing Hi Octane much more — the craft are easier to control, but the game no less challenging to complete. Wipeout on the PC lacks the sense of breakneck speed that was so impressive on the Playstation, and the sudden drops just don't have the same stomach-churning effect.

All in all, the PC version of Wipeout is not bad — there's fun to be had here, if you're prepared to stick it out — it's just rather ordinary.

Yeeehaaa! Speeding along on a blast of warm air, missiles roaring to the right and left. What fun.▼



There's nothing like speeding past the grandstand in first place — it's a shame I'm in fifth really. ▼



▲ The shield will protect you from your opponents' unwelcome attentions, but not for long! Time to veer unpredictably from side to side.



Wait a minute — why don't all the hover-speeders fall through the holes? I think we should be told. ▶





Go tobogganing on the ice world for a bit of low-temperature-type fun. ▼

▲ Somebody's built a bloody great umbrella in the middle of the course.

SECOND OPINION

Wipeout was absolutely brilliant on the PlayStation. It felt fast, it felt dangerous and when you zoomed off a precipice your stomach ended up in your throat. Sadly, it hasn't translated as well to the PC. The graphics are less impressive and you don't get the same sensation of speed. Compare it to the PC version of Destruction Derby (also from Sony) which is as good as the PlayStation version which preceded it. Why Sony has managed to convert one game very well but not the other remains a mystery. Wipeout still plays quite well, but what was outstanding on the PlayStation feels remarkably ordinary on the PC.

Cal Jones



PCR VERDICT

Type: .....3D racing game
Publisher: .....Sony Interactive
Price: £44.99
Contact: .....(0151) 282 3000

Once again, a console conversion fails to live up to the hype. Shame.

7





▲ You'll be wanting to avoid getting hit by things like missiles and such.



▲ As you can see the design is all very pretty, but looks don't make a game.



Aliens

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX2, MS-DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major soundcards

In the depths of space, nobody can hear you scream. In the PC Review office, nobody can stop Mark Patterson howling.

Like 99 per cent of this country's population, I've never read the Dark Horse Aliens comic books this game is based on. I have, however, reviewed several thousand games, watched the original Alien and its sequel umpteen times and paid money to have some bloke swear at me at Alien War in the Trocadero. So I reckon I'm something of an expert when it comes to Aliens. And games.

In light of that, and my strange and unnatural games reviewing powers, I pronounce this game a failure. Amazing, really, because I'd have thought it almost impossible to cock-up an Aliens licence, even the comic version. But Cryo seems to have managed it in spectacular style.



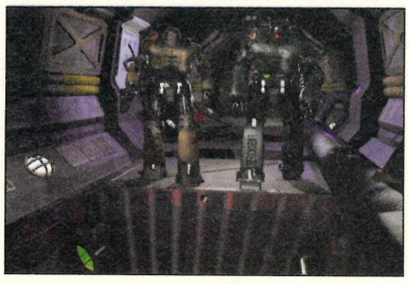
◀ ***Even with a big robot suit, the aliens paste you in almost every battle.***

Problem: one bloody great hole and two blokes in robot suits. Solution? Don't ask us. ▶

First and foremost, Aliens: The Comic Book Adventure is, as the title says, an adventure — although a rather silly one at that. Take this as an example. You're the commander of a terraforming vessel sent to investigate an SOS coming from a mining colony. Now, that suggests it's simply a matter of landing and finding inventive ways of not being eaten alive, but oh no. Your first task is to feed the crew.

Your problems are compounded by your character being a complete dillon who nobody likes. Then it transpires that, although you're in charge of the ship, you don't even have a pass card to use the elevator. The only way you can get it is by talking to your stroppy medical officer who, after a trial and error conversation, will eventually hand over the card.

And your problems don't end here. Once you arrive at the base you are given no clear indication as to what you are to do once inside. The very first room has side doors aplenty, but you can only see some of them when you're standing in a particular location. And as for the control system, it's so appallingly clumsy I lost my temper with it.



The only bright spot is the combat. Here you get your little rendered bloke going up against a little rendered enemy. It's quite jolly really.

But that's about it. The rest of the game looks like the designers have spent far too long fannying around getting the graphics right rather than working on the gameplay. So it scores a few points for looking good, and having aliens in it, but apart from that — nada.

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Graphic adventure*

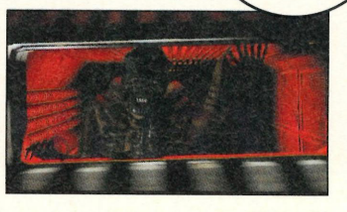
Publisher: .....*Mindscape*

Price: *£44.99*

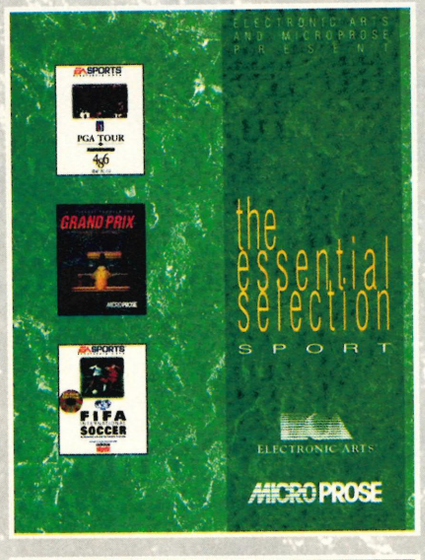
Contact: .....*(01444) 246333*

A disappointing adaption of a great theme. Good atmosphere, but gameplay seems to have been an afterthought.

4



MicroProse & Electronic Arts present...

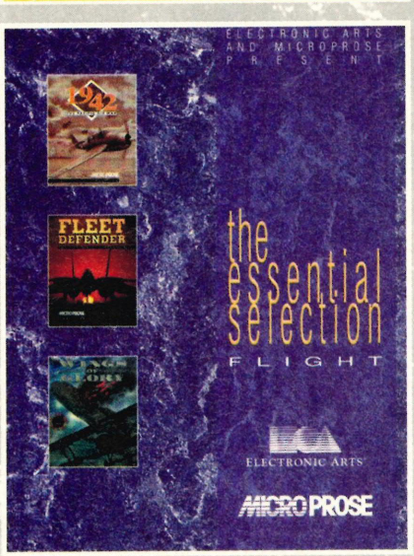


SPORTS

PGA TOUR® 486
91% PC Zone

Formula One Grand Prix
86% PC Format

FIFA International Soccer
88% PC Format

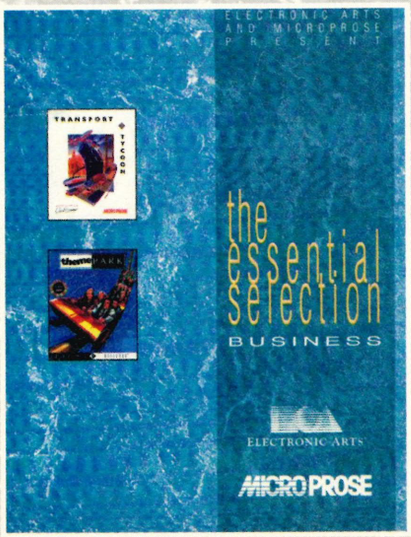


FLIGHT

1942 Pacific Air War
93% PC Games

Fleet Defender
88% PC Gamer

Wings of Glory™
89% PC Power



BUSINESS

Transport Tycoon
9/10 PC Review

Theme Park™
93% PC Zone

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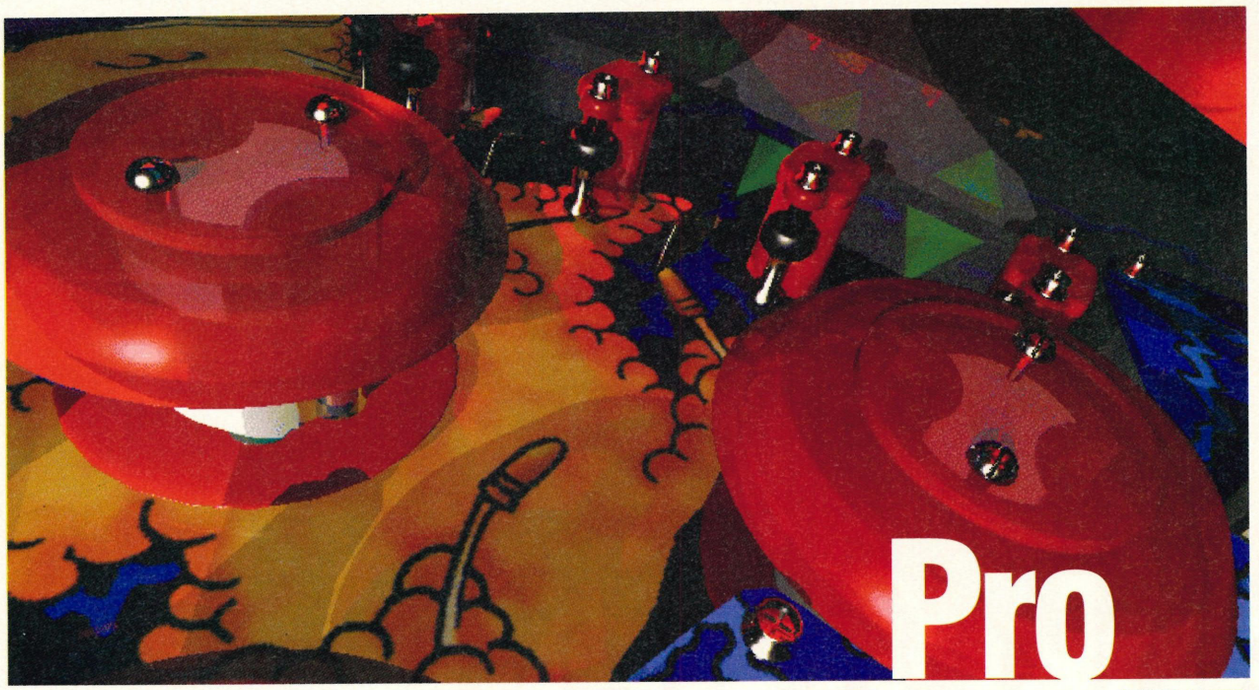
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PHILIPS

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◀ *This pinball sim is so realistic that Williams is using it to develop real tables.*

Pro Pinball

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX, MS DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster, Gravis

Ever since he was a young boy, he's played the silver ball. But that's enough of Pat Fox's personal problems...

For some time, computerised pinball has been dominated by Pinball Dreams and its many offspring: hand-drawn, top-down views, and to be honest, about as close to real pinball as Sensible Soccer is to real football. That's not to say it wasn't fun to play, it just wasn't really much like the real thing.

Pinball games are about to come of age, however. Next month, Virgin releases Tilt!, but Empire is already on the scene with Pro Pinball, and darned impressive it is too. None of that 2D hand-drawn tat here — instead we are treated to a down-to-the-last-screw model of a real table, constructed on Silicon Graphics workstations and rendered in glorious SVGA and thousands of colours.

The table is viewed from a real-world style 3D vantage point (from a choice of three different elevations, to simulate as closely as possible the player's own stature). From the first glance, the detail that has gone into the game is evident — if your machine can handle 1024x768 graphics, you're going to be in for a particular treat, but even in 800x600 or lowly 640x480, it looks gorgeous.

Of course, looks aren't everything. Luckily, the game plays like a dream too: this is quite simply the most accurate pinball simulation I have ever had the pleasure — and it is a pleasure — to play. The ball moves smoothly and fluidly — look closely and you'll even see the reflections from the table below — and behaves exactly like a pinball should. It's a joy.

BALL SAVER

Cards on the table

However, Pro Pinball suffers from one problem, and it's a biggie. Look closely at the screenshots on this page, and you might notice something a little strange. They all look a bit similar, right? That's because there is only one table. That's right, just the one. It's beautifully rendered, it has features aplenty, and so many clever combinations of play that it'll take you weeks if not months to work them all out. But there's no getting away from the fact that, if you get bored of this table, you're going to have to wait (and pay) for the updates, which will be appearing every few months or so down the line.

So, should you buy it? Well, it's a well-nigh perfect simulation, and the table that is included is very, very good indeed. However, it may be worth waiting for Tilt! (which will feature six tables) to see which of the two offers the best pinball bang for your buck.

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Pinball simulation*

Publisher:.....*Empire*

Price: *£29.99*

Contact:.....*(0181) 343 7337*

It's by far the best pinball game so far, but with only one table, is there enough of it?

8





▲ *There are all the usual ramps and targets to aim for...*



▲ *Definitely the sexiest looking pinball game ever.*



You awake to find yourself staring straight up the nasal cavities of what appears to be Jeremy Beadle. Gawd, what a nightmare!

Frankenstein

Through the Eyes of the Monster

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

With big strapping men being in such short supply lately, Kate Russell jumped at the chance to take a closer look at Frankenstein.

When Mary Shelley penned her masterpiece all those years ago, I am sure she did not envisage her monster as being quite as savagely mutilated as he has been in Interplay's version of the classic tale. I first got that sinking feeling when, following a suitably spooky and atmospheric intro sequence, I found myself confronted by Tim Curry (playing the mad Dr Frankenstein) doing an uncanny impersonation of Jeremy Beadle. Imagine. You wake up on an operating table having been hacked to pieces and then reassembled, only to find out that it was only one of Beadle's practical jokes. What a quite terrifying thought.

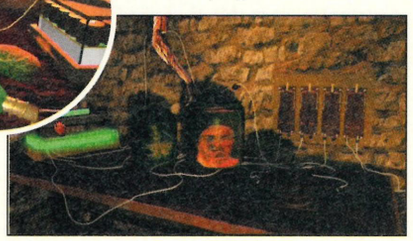
This was closely followed by the monster's shocking discovery that his left hand had been hacked off and replaced with something a little more feminine. 'Argh! I have the hand of a woman!' he exclaims in horror (though I personally know men who would pay handsomely for that particular operation). I'm sorry, but from that moment on, I found it impossible to take the plot seriously.

You take the role of the monster, following his rebirth at the hands of the evil Dr Beadle himself. The first thing you notice is that your charge is actually a very well spoken and intelligent gentleman, and not the mummified ghoul you might expect. It transpires that you have been hanged for the murder of your own daughter, and your quest is to escape the clutches of your creator, resurrect the dead body of your daughter and eventually clear your name .

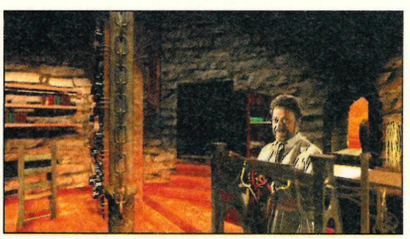
On the graphics side of things, Interplay has obviously lavished money on the project, Tim has been nicely digitised and it's a fair bet that a generous helping of 3D Studio has gone into giving the game a quite clean, sharp, overall effect. But as we all know, looks aren't everything. The gameplay was excruciatingly slow, and illogical.

I can't really see who Interplay intended this game to be aimed at really – graphic adventure novices will be way out of depth and, almost certainly, give up in frustration very quickly, whilst graphic adventure experts are likely to find the whole thing too silly and illogical for words, more's the pity.





▲ *The puzzles are of the logical variety, a bit like Myst. In fact, the game looks a lot like Myst, only much gloomier.*



▲ *Just you wait, Beadle. I'm going to wipe that grin off your smarmy face.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Graphic adventure*

Publisher: .....*Interplay*

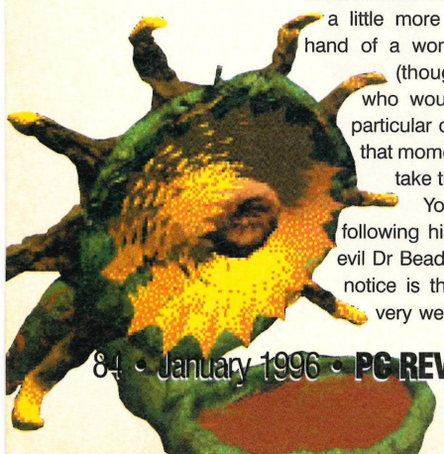
Price: *£44.99*

Contact: .....*(01235) 821666*

A misconceived concept striking only for its lack of atmosphere and illogical gameplay...

5





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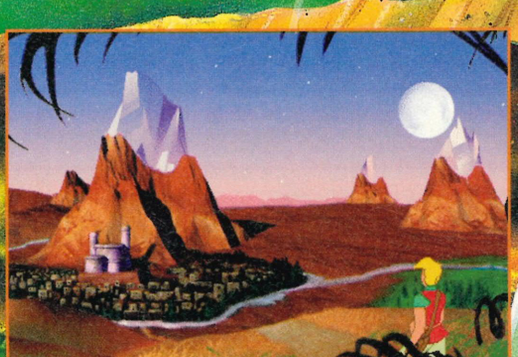
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Trivial Pursuit

Mark Patterson's in pursuit of trivia, and boy does his brain hurt.



◀ *Well, it certainly looks familiar. It's a pity it isn't any better than the original board game.*

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX2, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

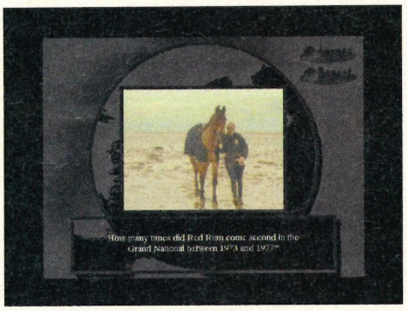
Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible

Trivial Pursuit has moved on since it invaded every Yuppie's coffee table back in the eighties. Even so, it seems to have aged faster than most boardgames, so Hasbro has developed a PC version which ought to bring it bang up to date.

This version has gone for the slick FMV and digital sound angle, and looks vastly more impressive than its predecessors. But it still doesn't make up for the fact that the biggest downer in this version of Triv is the lack of a one player mode. There's no computer controlled opponent, and when you're drunk, it's much less risky playing boardgame Triv than cramming around a PC — a major problem. Also, it seems to have lost something in the translation to PC. It's a fine game on the tabletop, but without the malicious look from a so-called 'friend' when he reads you an ultra-tough question, it just doesn't haven't the substance to make the grade.

Unlike Monopoly, which I reckon is the most advance board-to-disc conversion to date, Trivial Pursuit offers little more than video footage and sounds. Even with six players it just doesn't have the fierce competitive edge of Monopoly. It's a nice try, but the board game's better.



▲ *It's Red Rum. He now resides at the great knacker's yard in the sky.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Board game conversion*

Publisher: .....*Hasbro*

Price: *£39.99*

Contact:.....*(0181) 569 1234*

An average interpretation that's sadly not nearly half as good as the original.

6



Monopoly

Even in global Monopoly Mark Patterson ends up in debt and owning just the waterworks.



◀ *Looks like the usual Monopoly board, but looks can be deceiving.*

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX2, Windows 3.1

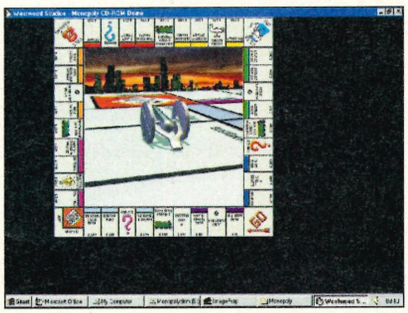
Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible

Monopoly is a game for thoroughbred bastards. Once that initial scramble for Park Lane and Mayfair is over, whoever's left holding the cards is intent on wringing the life out of his pals. That's what makes this the most successful board game ever, and that's why this latest computer incarnation has certainly come out on top.

Developer Westwood (of Command & Conquer fame) must have realised that games like this need human players. So, in comes what has to be the most sophisticated modem link-up game created. Once you're linked to Westwood's server you soon discover it's too clever by half. For example, if you're sat at home in Britain playing against someone in America they'll be playing with dollars and US properties while you'll be spending good old fashioned sterling and trying to buy Mayfair. It's the closest thing to the board game you'll ever encounter. And as attempts go, this is the best ever on a computer — if you've got a modem



▲ *I don't remember any cannons in Monopoly!*

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Board game conversion*

Publisher: .....*Hasbro*

Price: *£49.99*

Contact:.....*(0181) 569 1234*

Brilliant fun, especially if you're a real Monopoly maniac.

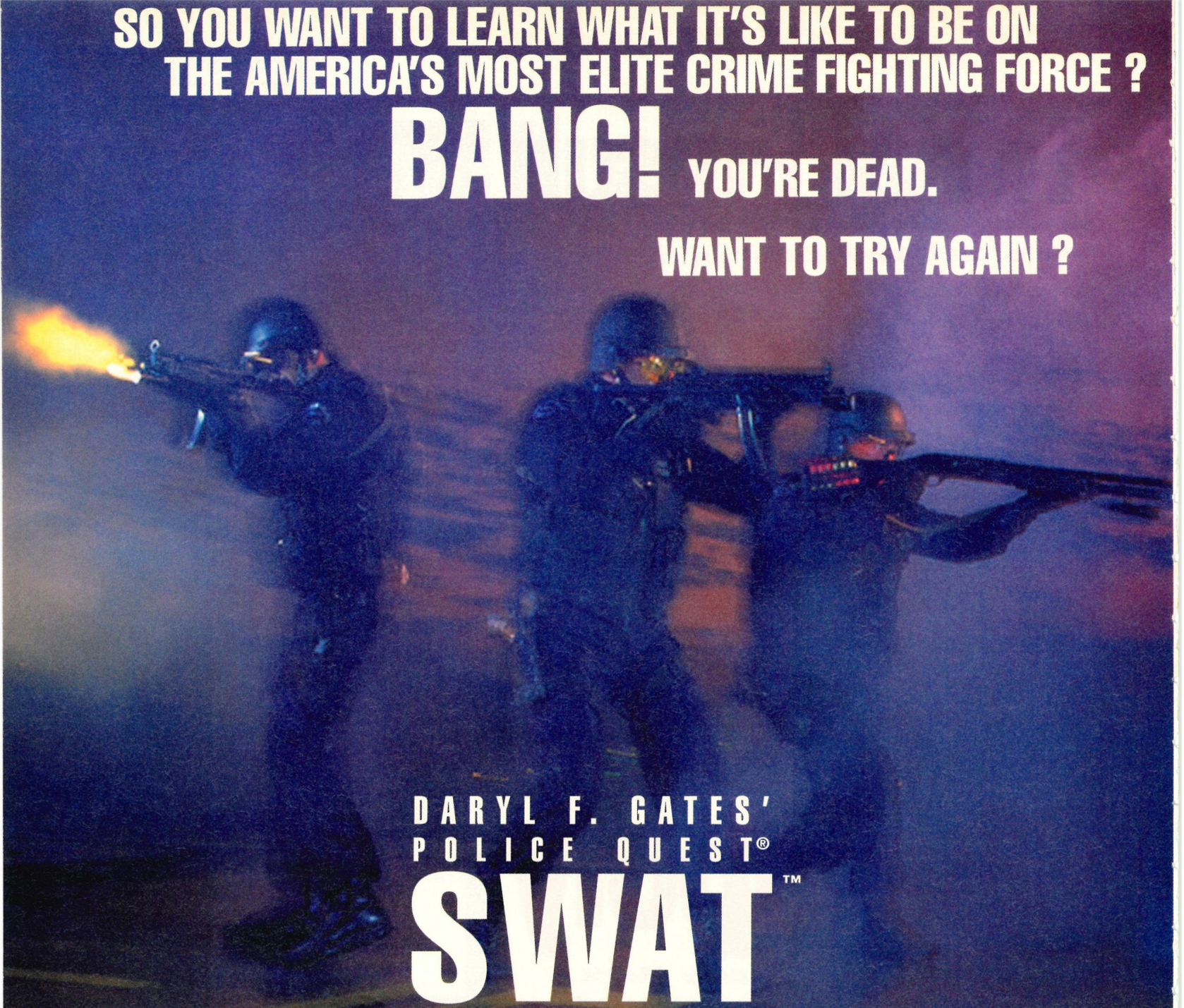
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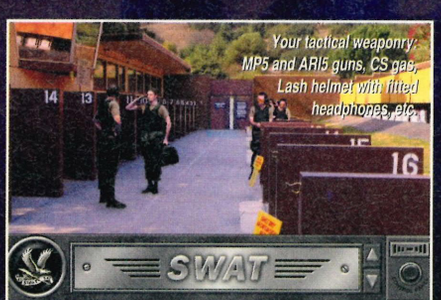
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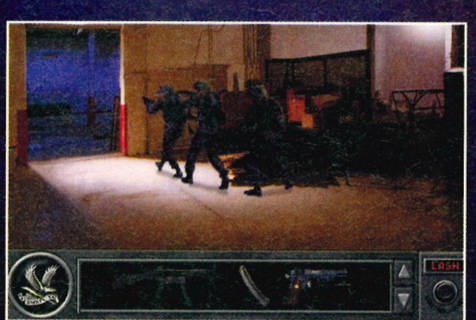
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Arachnaphobes beware — you're about to enter Bug City.

EntoMorph: Plague of the Darkfall

Insects abound in SSI's new fantasy RPG. Gordon Houghton goes bug-hunting.

After a decent enough debut with Thunderscape, this is the second in SSI's World of Aden series. Aden is a land where steam-age technology and ancient sorcery are combined. Should anything evil be stupid enough to wander by, nifty prestidigitation and manic mechanics come to the rescue.

In EntoMorph the evil is Darkfall, a malevolent plague which transforms people into big bugs. If you fail to combat the creepy crawly invasion in time you, too, will sprout four extra legs, a chitinous exoskeleton and a pair of rather fetchingly cute feelers to boot.

If you want to avoid metamorphosis, a sprawling role-playing adventure lies ahead, featuring combat, puzzles, traps, grisly foes and lots of exploration. It's mildly interesting for a while, but always unexceptional and far from original.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX2, Wind 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Win comp sound cards



▲ *Fancy some fisticuffs with a stiff? Walk this way.*



▲ *Time for a chat with a local.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: ..... *RPG*

Publisher: .....*SSI*

Price: *£44.99*

Contact: ..... *(01444) 246333*

A competent, but tediously familiar role-playing game.

5



shorts

USNF Gold

Flight sim compilation

Another incarnation of the US Navy Fighters simulator, this pack combines the original game (reviewed Issue 38, rated 8) with Marine Fighters (Issue 48, rated 8), an extension pack that puts you at the controls of several new planes, and a whole batch of new missions to fly them in. It's a thoroughly accurate simulator, with corking graphics (if you have the hardware to back it up) and tons of missions to get your teeth into. Separately both games were good, and together they're great. So if flight sims set your pulse racing then this is one for your New Year's shopping list.

Electronic Arts, £49.99 ● (01753) 549442 ● 33Mhz 486DX, SVGA, 8Mb, dual speed CD-ROM



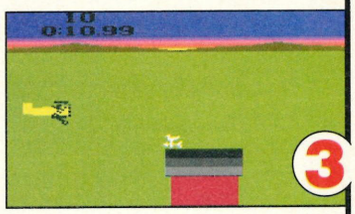
8

Atari 2600 Action Pack Volume 2

Retro game compilation

The retro gaming bandwagon rolls on, and the undisputed king of rehashing old faves, Activision, has collected together a second batch of old 2600 blockbusters to fuel your nostalgia. Included here are 15 conversions on a single CD. Highlights are Enduro, Tennis and Barnstorming; lowlights are Plaque Attack and Dragster. It's hard to rate this one objectively — if you're into nostalgia then you'll love it, otherwise you'll probably snort loudly and derisively and wonder what all the fuss is about.

Activision, £15 ● (0181) 742 9400 ● 33Mhz 486DX, VGA, 4Mb, Windows 3.1, sound card.



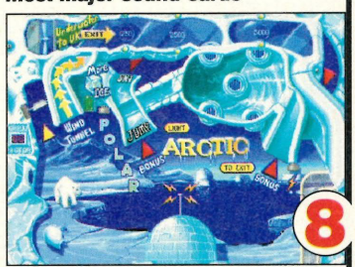
3

Pinball World

Pinball game

A 'revolution in pinball technology' apparently — from 21st Century, the people behind just about every pinball game you ever heard of — Pinball World takes the basic two-flippers-and-a-silver-ball concept a stage further. Now, instead of just playing a single table and trying to score as much as possible, there are eight tables, each of which you must 'complete' in order to travel to the next — and eventually to the secret end level. There are bonus tables and sub-games all over the place, the main tables are cleverly designed, and it's fun enough to keep flipper-fiends happy for some time. So try it and see.

21st Century, £44.99 ● (01235) 851852 ● 386DX, VGA, 4Mb, most major sound cards



8

The Machines

Arcade shoot 'em up

Ho hum, it's yet another 'imagine the sport of the future' plots, and this time it's heavily-armed, remote-control robots shooting each other for the fun of it. The graphics are of the tiny-sprites-viewed-from-above variety, the sound is suitably metallic, but playing the game is dull and frustrating. Adding to the misery is the necessity to fiddle around with things like insurance and maintenance, which you really don't want to worry about in an arcade game. It looks like a shareware game and is attractively priced, but you'd be better off having a go at Threat instead.

Merit, £14.95 (£19.95 on CD) ● (0191) 460 6060 ● 25Mhz 486SX, VGA, 4Mb, Sound Blaster and compatibles



3

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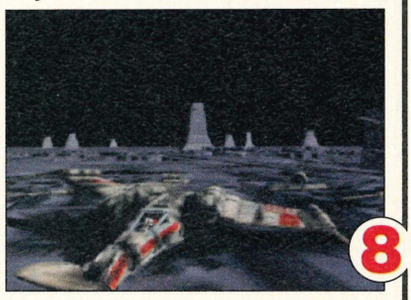
shorts

Rebel Assault

Arcade shoot 'em up

Scoring a massive 9 way back in Issue 27, this pioneering CD-ROM game doesn't look quite as impressive now, a couple of years on from its first release date. You are at the helm of a series of rebel craft (that's from the Star Wars films, if you've been living under a rock for the last two decades) in various missions. The graphics are all pre-rendered though, so it lacks the freedom of movement of a game like Descent, for example. However it's still good to look at, and in many ways superior to more recent games of this ilk — and at this price it's an absolute bargain.

Virgin, £12.99 ● (0171) 368 2255 ● 386DX, VGA, 4Mb, CD-ROM, most major sound cards



8

F1

Car racing game

Beware: this game may have 'F1' in the title, and it may be by Microprose, but it is NOT Formula 1 Grand Prix. In fact, given Microprose's pedigree in the simulation field, it is rather a surprise to find that this is a second-rate arcade-style 3D racer, somewhat reminiscent of Al Unser Jr's Arcade Racing. The graphics are fast but primitive, with simple polygon shapes for the background, and blocky sprites for the cars. For its time it was probably great, but there are far better budget racers around — IndyCar Racing (rated 8 last issue) now.

Microprose, £14.99 ● (0171) 368 2255 ● 386DX, VGA, 4Mb, CD-ROM, Sound Blaster compatible sound card.



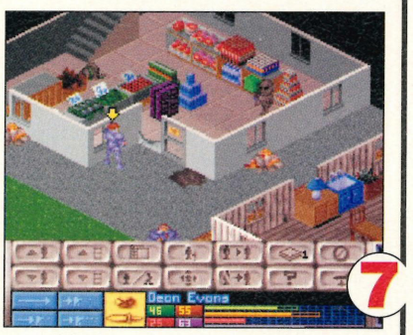
4

UFO: Enemy Unknown

Strategy

Aliens have invaded Earth (again) and you must save the world (again) from the evil hordes. This time however, it's a 3D isometric-view turn-based affair, where you must move your squads around in search of the alien scum and then try and wipe them out. In addition you can collect alien artefacts and develop them yourself to boost your arsenal in preparation for the final attack on the alien homeworld itself. UFO: Enemy Unknown was rated 7 on its first outing back in Issue 33, and it has managed to retain much of its appeal — it's still absorbing and addictive, and well worth a few quid of anyone's hard-earned money.

Microprose, £16.99 ● (0171) 368 2255 ● 386DX, VGA, 4Mb, CD-ROM, Sound Blaster compatible sound card



7

SVGA Harrier

Flight simulator

Just how accurate is this Harrier jump jet simulator? Well, it's not easy to tell for someone who has never flown an aeroplane of any sort, never mind a Harrier jump jet — but it feels accurate, if that's any kind of indication. However, apart from its obvious 'plane tie-in, there's little to distinguish this from any one of a dozen other simulators out there. So if you hanker after a hop in a Harrier, then it's a bargain, but be aware that there are many other types of flight sim out there just as deserving of your carefully-earned cash.

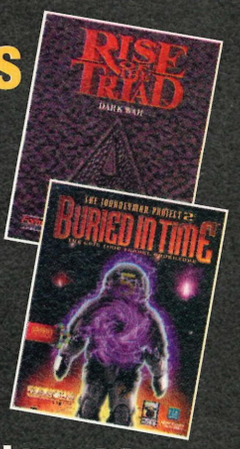
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6

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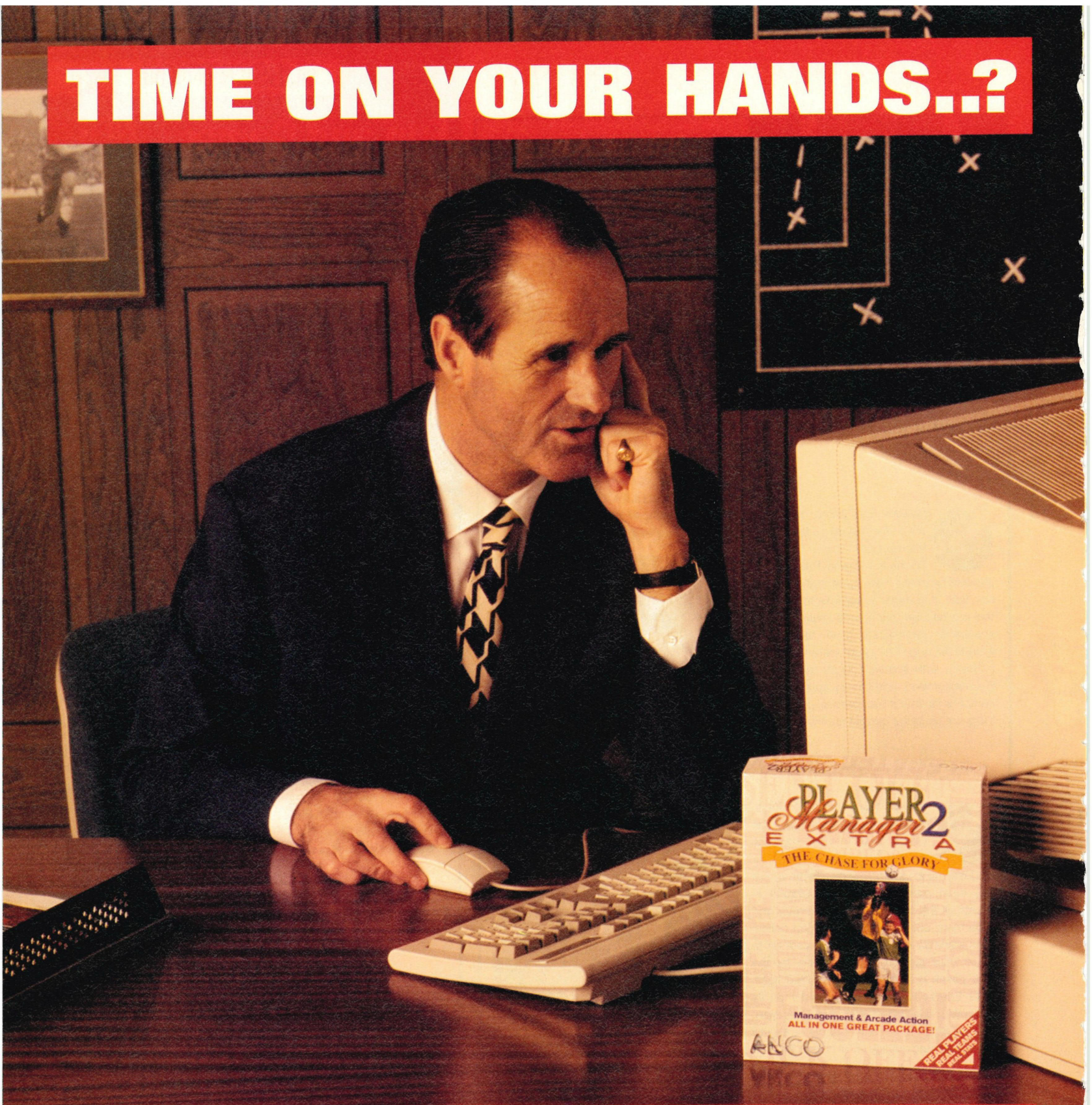
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in a league of their own

It's not like Rik Henderson to write all the blinkin' footy stuff, now is it? Although he thought he'd seen the back of football games at the start of the current league season, it's inevitable that some of the games would slip in schedule and be out in time for Christmas instead. What a treat then that four of these games are now available, and boy is it turning out to be some battle for the crown of Championship Manager 2. So in reverse order (in terms of quality) here are the four contenders...

Football Ltd.

Here's a lesson in the art of crossing football strategy with good, old fashioned double entry book-keeping...

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound blaster and comp.

Even I'll now admit that football management games have just about been heartily done to the death. Championship Manager 2 covers the pure statistical and tactical sides of the glory game. Premier Manager 3 and Ultimate Soccer Manager both focus on the more graphical and fun elements to the task at hand. To be honest, what else could there be?

Football Ltd. attempts to take it all one step further by adding pure cash-flow management to the otherwise run-of-the-mill process of picking players and winning games. It allows you to become both manager and chairman of the same football team and does so in emphatic icon-clicking fashion. There are more icons here than at a convention of the hundred top sports people in the world, and herein lies the ultimate problem.

But first things first, German football fans are already used to the engine Football Ltd. uses. They've had a version of the game that focuses on the Bundesliga for some time now, and apparently they've snapped it up in trainer's bucket-loads. This new version then, essentially replaces all the Bundesliga statistics with English league statistics, leaving the game itself relatively unchanged.

Lo! abundance

You still have a billion and one options, including the chance to manage any Premier, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd division team or even try your hand at being the England team coach (although with the latter the men in black suits worry about finances for you). There's also five different skill levels, and an abundance of different tactics and formations to fiddle about with.

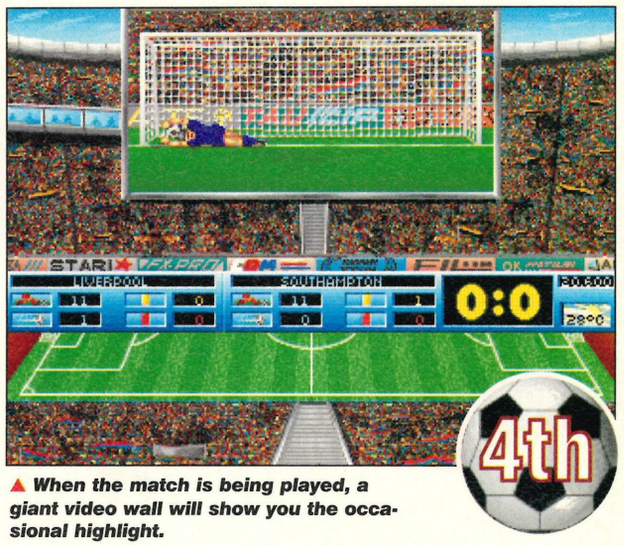




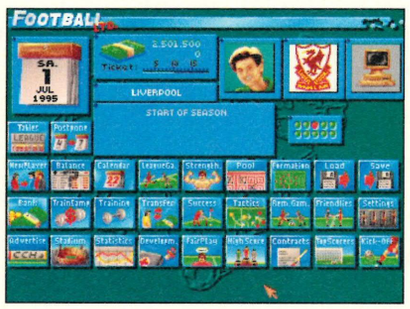
▲ *Even when you want to transfer a player there are a ton of options to choose from.*

But at the end of the period, you kind-of end up feeling so what? You see, so much has been crammed in that none of it is in any way substantial, including the on-field result-determining. Also, the graphics throughout range from being nicely drawn to positively archaic, and when you have to stare at a screen for a season's worth of play, you don't want to be staring at something that looks like the cat's had an accident over it.

There is a game in there, although it's not as sophisticated as Championship Manager 2, but then it's not trying to be. I'd put it in the same kit bag as Ultimate and Premier, and it does compete with these older games well. If you've completed all the management games that have gone before, you'll find a decent enough challenge awaiting you, but I'm afraid you certainly have to be more patient than I was.



▲ *When the match is being played, a giant video wall will show you the occasional highlight.*



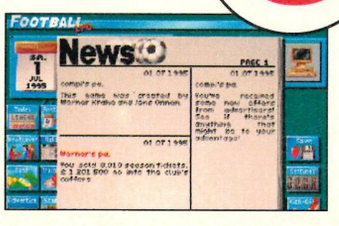
▲ *This is the main management screen, which you can customise by placing the icons anywhere you like.*

PCR VERDICT

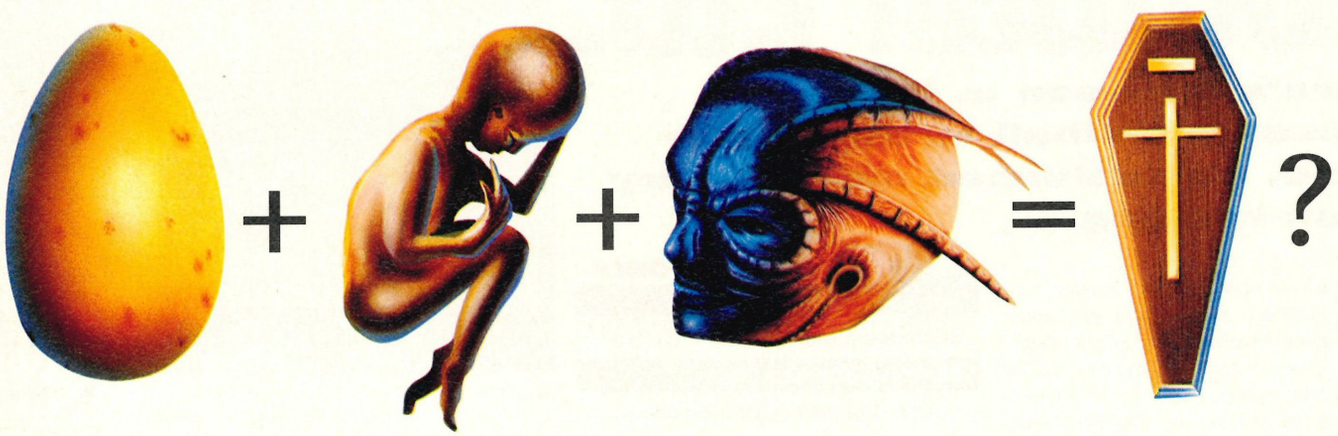
Type: .....*Management*
Publisher: .....*Ocean*
Price: .....*£TBA*
Contact:.....*(0161) 832 6633*

A slightly 'limited' management sim that should have been released a couple of years ago.

6



MILLENNIA
ALTERED DESTINIES



THE KEY TO LIFE?

"Millennia: Altered Destinies could be the most exciting game design of 1995."

Steve Honeywell
Computer Game Review

"Here's a 'God Game' with a difference ... Millennia will surely be one of the most elaborate, ambitious and sophisticated galactic-adventure games ever to hit the market."

Bill Trotter
PC Gamer (US)

"This game has it all! Time travel, space battles, diplomacy, trade ... everything! Count me in!"

Peter Smith
Strategy Plus

Gametek UK Limited, 258 Bath Road, Slough, Berks SL1 4DX, United Kingdom.

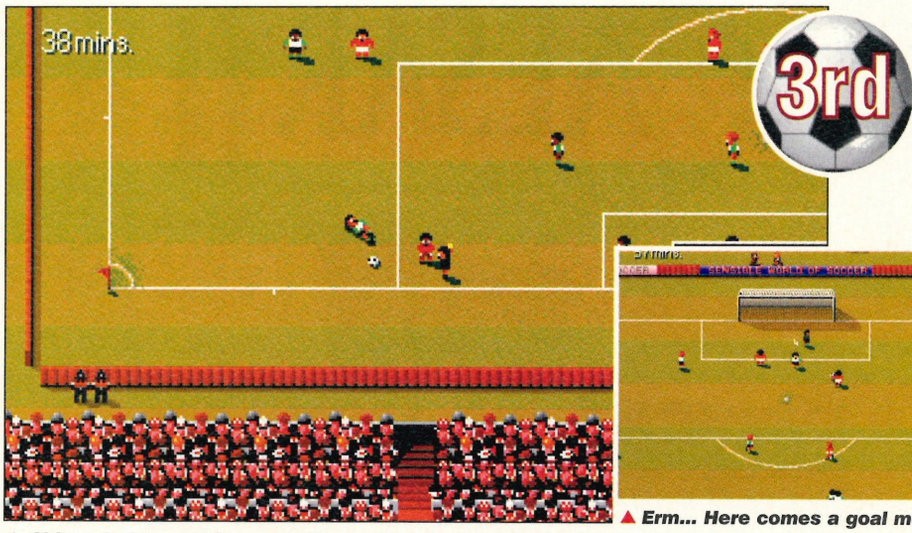
Sensible World Of Soccer

Any Amiga owner worth their salt will tell you that Sensi has reigned supreme for yonks, now it's the turn of those with a slightly more sophisticated palette to taste its wares.

CD AND DISK
Minimum PC: 486 40Mhz
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Soundblaster and comp.

There's something I want to get off my chest immediately. All the conversions of Sensible Soccer on the PC, up 'til now, have been a steaming pile of the Pharoah's revenge, making a mockery of the PC's power and versatility. To be honest, they made me sob, and all those other 90s man things that us blerks are not meant to do any more. But — hurrah! The best of the Sensible games has been given a five star conversion this time round.

For a start it is one of the very few games that combines management and on-the-field gameplay. The former is very impressive, with every bally team in the entire world to take on. Plus, all those little, but very important details have also been included, even down to the correct player's names in every squad.



▲ *Although the graphics are but wee, they have a lot of animations. I like it best when they're squirming in pain.*

▲ *Erm... Here comes a goal methinks.*

▼ *Go on, substitute the lot of 'em.*



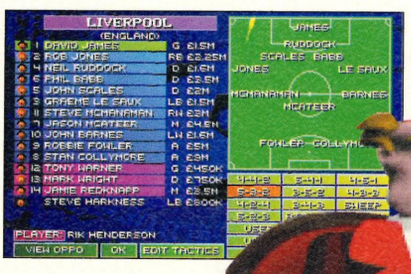
Playability-a-go-go

There are two main ways to play. Either on the management side as just coach, or on the action side as player-coach (the more rewarding method) where you control and play for your own team. It was here that many of the previous Sensible Soccer games were sent off in shame. This time though, we're talking playability-a-go-go. The players still remain in their cute, diminutive forms that allow for more of the pitch to be seen at any one time, and the one-touch wonder of the tactical passing game has been unblemished. It's the beauty in the variety of playing styles you employ, and the free-flowing action that makes SWOS so fun. It moves like a cheetah with a rocket up its behind.

Another warmly received aspect is that if you can't be bothered to compete in the management modes, you can always set up your own tournaments with any combination of teams you like, even including as many friends as you can possibly tempt round to your house. All the International teams are in there too, and a whole range of custom teams that you can fiddle around with at your leisure.

Unfortunately, I can't help feeling that I'd like even more features. For a start, it would be fantastic if the whole caboodle was networkable. Also, in Sensi's current form, you can only have one player in the management mode. Then there's the fact that Sensi's gameplay may have been the best a few years ago, but all the smarter-looking games have caught up with it (although none have bettered it). That all said, this is *the* complete football game, and you'll not tire of it. Just convince your mates that graphics do not maketh the game.

The team's tactics can be changed before every match, and you can even edit your own. ▼



The entire fixtures list is determined before you start, so you can browse through to see those tricky matches. ▼





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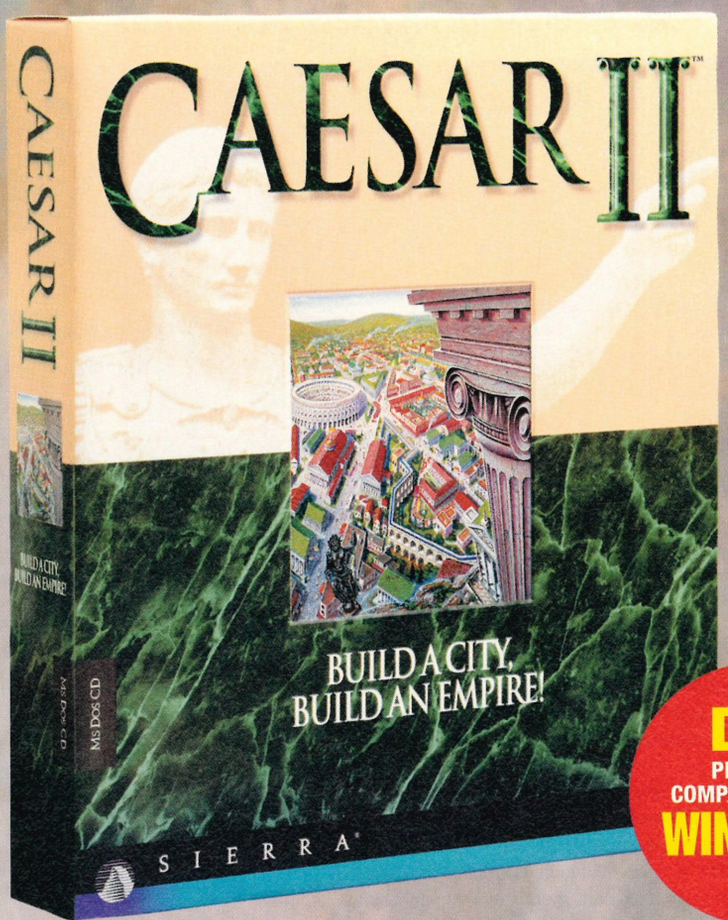
Type: .....*Management/Action*
Publisher: .....*Warner Interactive*
Price: .....*£39.99 CD, £34.99 Disk*
Contact:.....*(0171) 391 4300*

Easily the best all-round football game, but for all its stats it lacks a tad in depth.

8



BUILD THE ROMAN EMPIRE!



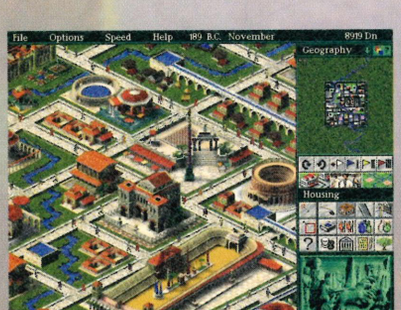
In The Top 5 Games for Fall 1995...
Computer Gaming World

"...Can't stop playing...! A solid hit"!
Strategy Plus

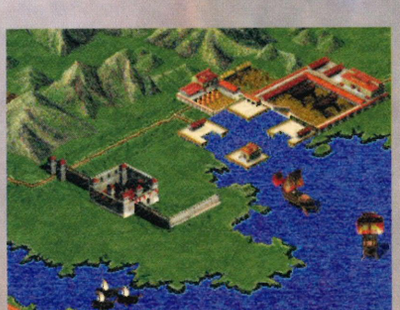
"...High on the must-play list."!
PC Gamer

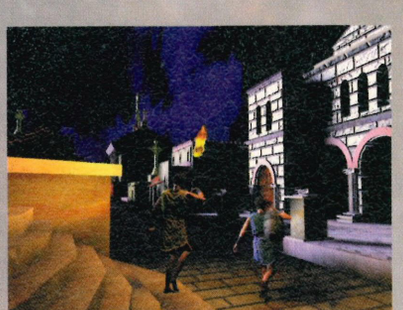
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SIERRA®

FIFA Soccer 96

Another year goes by, so here's FIFA again — it's blimmin' inevitable when you think about it.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 DX33
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster and comp

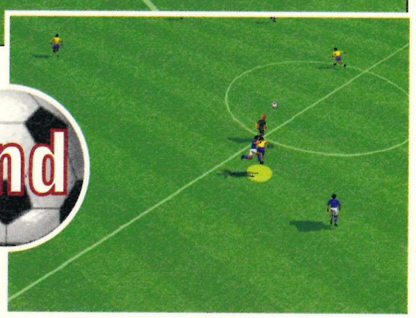
Just like Sensible Soccer, the previous incarnations of FIFA Soccer on the PC have been poor conversions by any standard. So not only is it a good thing that FIFA Soccer 96 (is that the year, or the number of previous games? I lose count) is a top banana football fest, but it's also an occasion for leaping about like a small child who's eaten one too many Smarties.

This latest version owes a lot to the 3DO version. So much, in fact, that it'll take years for it to pay back just the interest. But hey, the 3DO version was the best one out on the streets, so it's a good place to start. The first major change from the other versions is that it is in glorious 3-dimensions, and has multiple camera angles from which you can view the play. Also, the players are infinitely better animated and have far more artificial intelligence than before, allowing for more realistic gameplay (this time the players take up clever positions on the field and wait for your spot-on passes to reach them).

Unfortunately the 3DO version also suffered from lack of substantial gameplay, but this time, and this is the major gasp-worthy bonus, FIFA Soccer 96 is absolutely, without doubt, the most playable of all the versions ever. For a start you can control your players easily and without fuss. If you want to do more elaborate football-related actions you have to press a sequence of buttons at certain times, but most of the time you can simply just press one button to pass the ball to the nearest player in the direction you're facing, and another to whack the ball goal-bound. And although you won't beat the computer-controlled teams this way, you'll certainly stuff your mates, and what gives you more satisfaction, eh?



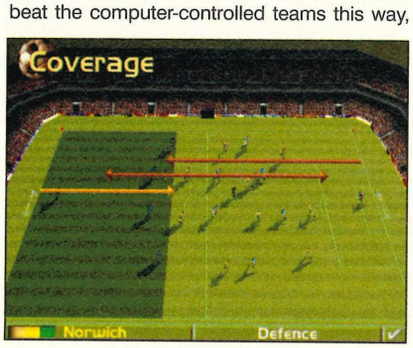
▲ *I think it's disgraceful when the goalie doesn't even wait until after the match for his 'bung'.*



▲ *"And the unbiased referee heads it to Romario to set up a golden goal-scoring opportunity."*

All this and Motty too

Then there's some fantastic commentary by the god of the live TV broadcast, John Motson. He's taken some pains (generally throat-related ones) to record every player and team name in all the top divisions of the major European nations, and all the International teams too. Not only that but there's a huge stock of footballing cliches recorded too, and unlike Championship Manager 2, which sometimes threw two quotes that didn't quite match up phonetically, good old Motty manages to keep it all going throughout with only very occasional cock-ups in the inflection department.



▲ *During any game you can change the team's movement on the pitch.*



▲ *And that's a friendly? Yeah, and Vinny Jones is a flower arranger.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: *Action*
Publisher: *Electronic Arts*
Price: *£44.99*
Contact: *(01753) 549442*

Superb! All the presentation of the best sports games, and very quick to get into.

9



Actua Soccer

And the nomination for the best-looking football game ever to grace the monitor is...



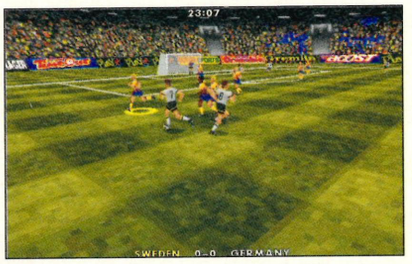
CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 DX33
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster and comp.

▲ *So England line up against an opposition that they should in all honesty beat, run ragged, kick the beejasus out of, murdelise, score lots of goals against. Of course, the match ended 15-0 to the African nation and yet another manager was sacked.*



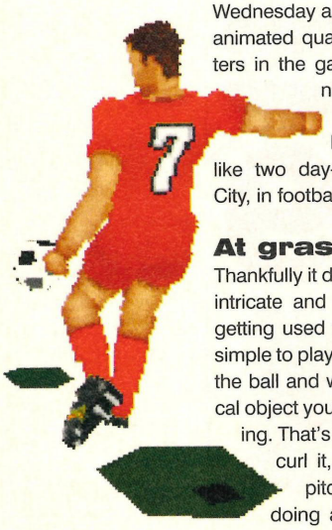
▲ *And the plucky Swede played a great game, especially considering he had a prostrate person for a right leg.*



▲ *The best way to score is to run it down the wing and cross into the box. Either that or bundle it in England style.*

It's official, the football action game has reached puberty. Its voice has broken, and it's sprouted hair in embarrassing places, and there is now no doubt that the genre is growing up. Actua Soccer is proof positive of this. Who would have guessed a couple of years ago that you could have fully 3-dimensional rendered characters running about kicking the frag out of each other and an old pig's skin? In fact it's taken some time, almost a year and a half, before anybody attempted a 3D game again after the brave effort from Infogrames with Planet Football. That game was overly ambitious, and the question can be also be thrust at Actua Soccer. But if anybody did indeed ask such a query, they would be met with a guffaw of the extremely confident kind, because Gremlin has not only talked the talk, it's walked the blooming walk too.

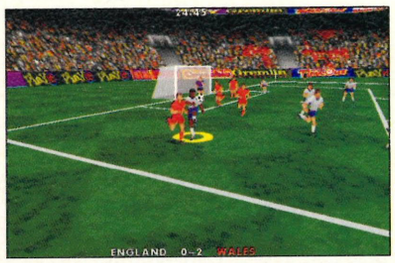
Firstly, what better way to get smooth player animations than to use motion capture techniques (you know, the idea of sticking small reflective balls on somebody and plotting their movement in a 3D environment using a variety of different camera angles — do keep up Watkins). Although when I heard that the players used in this way were Sheffield Wednesday's Andy Sinton, Chris Woods, and Graham Hyde I couldn't help but feel that it was the closest they've got to any balls for ages. But then again as pants as Sheffield Wednesday are, you can't help but admire the animated qualities this has given the characters in the game. They move with a realism never before seen in a football game, but then this doesn't really matter if the gameplay stinks like two day-old Parmesan (or Manchester City, in footballing terms).



At grass roots level

Thankfully it doesn't. In fact the gameplay is so intricate and responsive that it'll take some getting used to, although outwardly it seems simple to play. You control the player closest to the ball and when you've got the said spherical object you kick it in the direction you're facing. That's it. You can pass the ball, cross it, curl it, even just tonk it as far up the pitch that you can (and you'll be doing a heck of a lot of this to begin

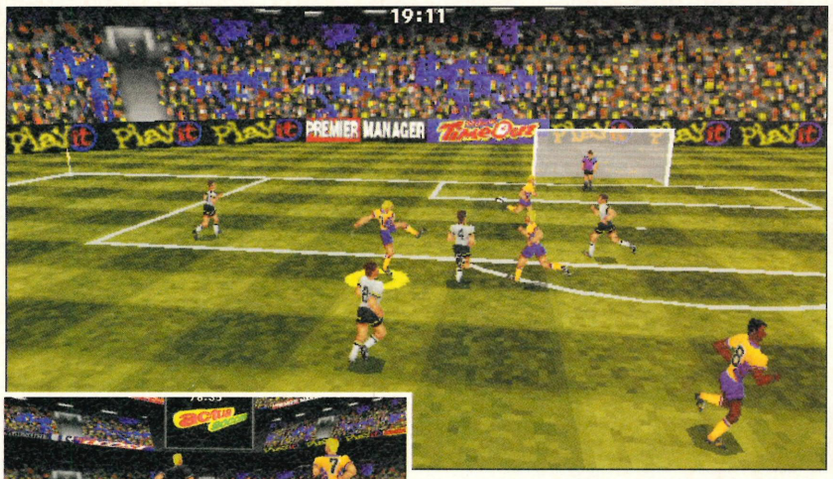
LET'S VIEW THAT FROM ANOTHER ANGLE

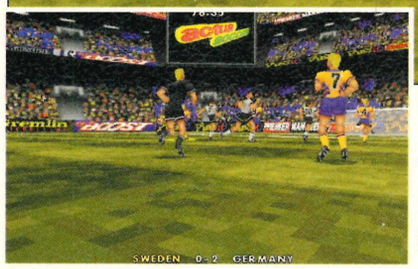




Like all the 3-D football games (and you can be guaranteed that Actua and FIFA 96 will not be the last), the beauty of them is the ability to choose your own angles to view the action from. Actua has a completely free-roaming camera system, with 8 set viewpoints and zoom and pan options, and unlike FIFA 96, when you do zoom down to player level, the graphics hold almost perfect shape and avoid outrageous pixelisation.

Also, the engine that Gremlin has created allows for great detail in the characters, you can see their features (eyes, nose, etc.) and even make out the patterns on their football kits. At the end of the day though, it's all well and





▲ ***The Swedes shoot, but if Donkey Adams played for Germany he'd have his hand up by now.***

◀ ***The referee runs over to the controller of the view screen to see if they can put on Brookie.***

with). But the skill lies in finding all the combinations of button presses that allow you to perform better functions, like overhead kicks and flick ups. Also, each player in the game has individual skill levels for shooting, passing, and things like that, all of which really make a difference when you're trying to use their talents. The benefit of using a system like this is that you can start the game playing a team like Brazil or Italy, with their plethora of star players, and as you get better at the basics you can move down to the crappier teams (England, anybody?).

Bobbins

There are 32 teams contained within, all international, which are based on the most current FIFA rankings, and extra effort has been taken in making sure that the teams themselves — right down to the players — are as accurately skilled as their true-to-life counterparts. And although this means that the Scottish team is completely bobbins (it goes without saying), it also makes for realistic results in all the computer-contested matches.

Now back to the graphics, because, to be honest, this is where the new generation of football games really excels, and it's not just the animation that's tops. The players themselves are superbly rendered, and this is where Actua beats FIFA hands on, even when you get really close-up to the action. Most games tend to turn into a battle of the legomen when blown up, but Actua's blokes, even in normal VGA, remain firmly shaped no matter what camera angle you choose to employ. Then there's the commentary, and whereas FIFA has Motty, with the very rare voice inflection error, Barry Davies does very much the same job here, but to greater effect.

If there was one minor quibble, this would be a very small paragraph, and we'd have indeed found the best football game ever to be released. Instead, I have two. Firstly, there's the absolutely outrageous over-the-top sponsorship from a major chocolate comestible producer that begins with 'c' and rhymes with 'adburys', and it does sometimes make the background too garish and busy. Plus the fact that although there are many different camera angles that you can have access to, I could only find one that I could play the game properly with — but I suppose that's just personal preference.

Actua Soccer wins my little head-to-head with the three other new football games, mainly due to its difficulty level, because after all, a football game's not just for Christmas, it's for life. Or so I should imagine.



▲ ***Each player has different skill ratings, and some players are stars in particular areas. But Andy Cole?***



▲ ***One great aspect of Actua Soccer is that the team kits are very accurately rendered both here and during the game.***





good having quality rendering, but if the animation of the characters is 'Derek Pantona' (ie. rubbish) there's little or no point. Thus the huge expenditure that was invested in Motion Capture technology, and the gathering of three of Sheffield Wednesday's players to literally go through the motions, all in order to make the in-game players move that little bit more realistically.

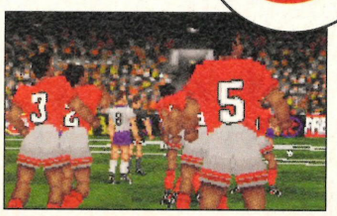
To be honest, true football fans would probably persevere with a game full of stick men chugging their way around a slab of green putty, but at least if you make it look good it'll attract those who may not have played many football games before. And that's a good thing, isn't it?

PCR VERDICT

Type: *Action*
Publisher: *Gremlin*
Price: *£44.99*
Contact: *(0114) 275 3423*

As smooth as Lily Savage's legs, and the learning curve is absolutely perfect.

9



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Nothing can save you from a grizzly death in Hexen, but this guide might help you live a little longer.

Hexen survival Guide

Hexen is tough. Especially if you really want to enjoy the game, as then you have to play it set to at least the minimum difficulty level.

World Three Important safety tips to remember

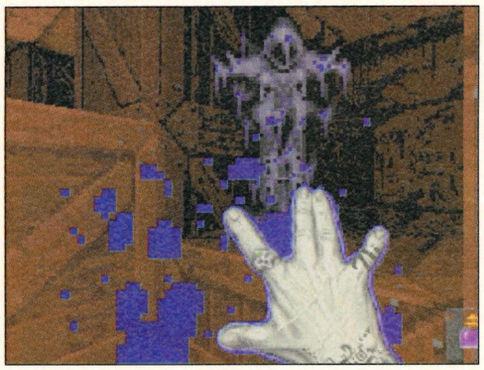
This world is the turning point in the game. Unless you've been particularly jammy, you'll start this level with almost no energy potions. Surviving through the part of this stage is possibly the toughest single thing in the game. So here's what you do.

Stay in the starting room of this level and wait for everything to attack you. If you drop down into the pit you'll be slaughtered in seconds. Stay in the first chamber and wait for the centaur blokes to come up in the lift. Things do get worse. The core chamber is packed with teleporting wizards so, if you have any kind of homing weapon, now's the time to use it. At first the lights are out and you're fighting in the dark. Stay at the side of the room and run round the sides. There are loads of mana and energy power-ups littered around and it will also trigger the lights. If you survive a complete circuit what you'll find is that the confusion you've caused should have induced several of the

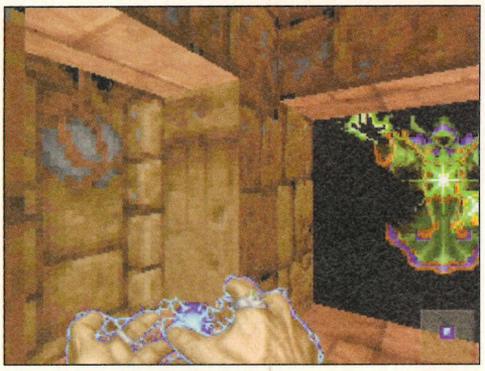


Rucking 'n' Scrapping

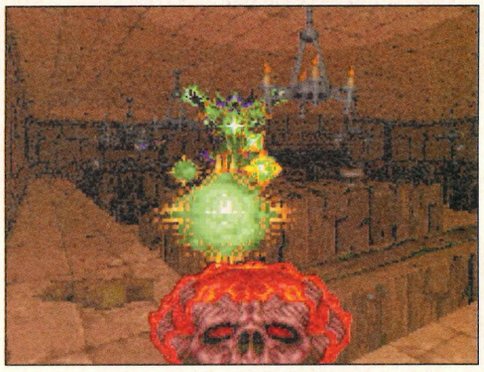
- Individually, most of the enemies you encounter can be bludgeoned or blasted to death without much effort. As soon as they band together, though, the trouble really starts. When you're not surrounded, the best tactic is to step back from your target, hit them, then step back again. This usually ensures you don't get hit while still being able to dole out plenty of damage.
- Mass attacks tend to follow the same rule, although this time it pays to get the monsters chasing you in a line. That way any creatures with projectile weapons should help your cause by zapping the back-markers.
- There's also a neat trick with the mana. When you find a dual blue and green mana pod, if you're fully charged up with green, your blue pod will fill when you collect it and the pod remains behind. This leaves you, effectively, with a limitless supply of blue mana for that level.



▲ *I don't think he recognised my secret masonic hand signal, do you? Actually, this is the freeze spell, and it's not terribly powerful.*



▲ *Some weapons take a few seconds to charge up, so make sure you don't leave yourself vulnerable to attack.*



▲ *The teleporting wizards are a real pain. Zap them with ranged weapons such as the Death Ray before they get too close.*

Puzzle Solving

● Most of Hexen's puzzles are based around locating switches, so never rule out going back to a room you've been to before. During the latter part of a world, check out all the awkward locations such as inside fireplaces and behind statues. Also keep an eye out for anything which looks out of place. For example, if there's a batch of four torches but only three are lit, light the fourth. ● A lot of passages are easy to miss, especially in dark levels such as the caves. When you think you've explored an area, carefully explore the map and zoom in on any areas you're not entirely sure about. There's a good chance you've missed something. The same goes for pits. Not all of them lead to certain doom, but when you encounter one it's worth saving before you jump in. ● The more elaborate puzzles, such as getting the clock working or fitting the gems in the pentagram are, again, based very much around your ability to find things. So the usual exploration rules apply.



▲ *Many of the puzzles are elementary. It's simply a case of tracking down the items you need.*



monsters to begin fighting one other. This makes the job slightly easier, but you're still going to have to completely clear the room before you move on.

Character selection

The best all-round character, and the one novices should go for, is the cleric. He's got the best all-round range of weapons, plus the best flak grenades. If you don't fancy him, and are confident you can work your way through the first level without too much hassle, go for the wizard. The warrior, though, is best left to the real pros, mainly because most of his weapons are designed for close-quarter combat. Even his mega-

▲ *Is it me or is it hot in here?*

weapon, the sword, isn't that effective, especially when he's surrounded.

Flak attack

On the early levels it's essential you build up a good supply of flak grenades. If you're playing as the cleric (which we recommend) use the flak bottles to block the entrance to rooms, then lure the monsters into the cloud.

If you're using the wizard or warrior you'll need to get in fairly close to your target. When you're lined up, run backwards and unload with a few shots. Remember not to get too close, as you'll be caught up in the blast.

Cheat codes

Although the cheat codes for the demo version of Hexen are pretty well known, the codes for the full game are different. So here we present the commercial version's cheats list:

SATAN	God mode
NRA	Gives all weapons
INDIANA	25 of each item
DELIVERANCE	Pig mode
ZELIGxx	Will change character class, where xx is a number from 0-2
LOCKSMITH	All keys
CLUBMED	100% health
BUTCHER	Kills all creatures
SHERLOCK	All puzzle items
WHERE	XY coordinates
NOISE	Sound debug
CASPER	Turns off clipping
VISITxx	Warp to level xx
PUKExx	Run script xx
TICKER	Frame rate
MAPSCO	Map display
INIT	Reload level

Cool Weapons



Death Ray: This is the best reason to choose the wizard. It's a multi-hit weapon that makes grinding your way through the later levels much easier. Because of the amount of creatures it effects, it also saves you mana.

Burning Hands: This is yet another reason why the cleric is such an excellent character. Activate this and he gives a sort of hands up gesture which results in every visible creature being toasted.

Crucifix Of Death: Easily the most excellent weapon in the game. This unleashes a horde of ghosts which tear all your enemies apart. Use it sparingly, though, because it really comes into its own on many of the later levels.

Eye Wand: Apart from being immensely destructive, if you use this weapon up close it also drains some of your enemy's energy and adds it to yours.

Health hazards



Freeze Ray This wizard weapon is next to useless. It takes loads of hits to actually freeze and is, quite frankly, pathetic.

Super Sword Choose the warrior and you get this as his special weapon. It's best used up close, which means you'd better have a lot of health at your disposal, or risk being taken apart.



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Come on, you know you want it, you just can't get enough can you? An' we're gonna give them to you like you've never had them before. And here they are, those tempting, teasing, tasty short tips — brace yourself...

Short TIPS

Primal Rage

Here's a quick move list for the 4Mb PC version of Primal Rage. It's not exhaustive and we're missing 13 finishing moves — but hey, it's a start huh? If anyone out there can fill in the gaps, please drop us a line...

(NB All special moves are performed by holding down buttons 1 and 3 (high quick and low quick) and using the proper joystick movements. The moves below are consequently just a simple list of all the movements since the buttons are all the same...)

ARMADON

Bed-o-nails:	D-D-T
Iron maiden:	A-U-T
Rushing uppercut:	A-D-T
Gut gouger:	T-T-A
Hornication uppercut:	D-T-A
Flying spikes:	A-A-U
*Falling spikes:	D-A-U-D
**Chomp a human:	U-T-D

BLIZZARD

Quick mega punch:	A-U-T
Short mega punch:	A-D-T
Long mega punch:	A-T-T
Fake mega punch:	D-U-U
Cold breath:	D-A-T
Ice geyser:	D-D-U
Throw:	T-D-U-A
Air Throw: buttons 1+3 in air	
*Brain bash:	D-U-T-U
*Redemption:	D-T-U-D-U

CHAOS

Grab-n-throw:	T-A-A
Slow power puke:	U-A-A
Fast power puke:	U-T-T
Fart of fury:	D-T-U-A
Ground shaker:	A-U-D
**Chomp a human:	T-D-A-U

DIABLO

Slow fireball:	D-A-A
Fast fireball:	D-T-T
Torch:	U-D-D
Hot foot:	A-D-T
Mega lunge:	D-U-T
Pulverizer:	U-T-T
Inferno flash:	U-U-U
*Incinerator:	U-A-D-D-T
*Fireball:	T-T-T
**Chomp a human:	D-U-D

SAURON

Earthquake stomp:	U-D-D
Cranium crusher:	D-U-U
Leaping bone bash:	D-U-D
Stun roar:	A-T-T
Neck throw:	T-A-A
**Chomp a human:	D-D-U

TALON

Brain basher:	A-U-T
Frantic fury:	D-T-A-T
Double slash:	D-U-T
Face ripper:	D-D-T
Run forward/back:	A-A-A or T-T-T (hold in position last time to run)
*Stampede:	T-A-U-D
**Chomp a human:	T-D-A

VERTIGO

Slow venom spit:	D-T-T
Fast venom spit:	D-A-A
Voodoo spell:	T-A-A
Teleport:	D-D-D
Come slither:	A-A-A
*Shrink and eat:	A-A-D-U
*La vache qui rit:	A-A-D-T
**Chomp a human:	D-T-U

KEY: D = Down U = Up T = Towards opponent A = Away from opponent * : finishing move ** : chomp a human

Witchaven

Ocean's Doom-style fantasy blast got a veritable thumbs up from our crack (?!) reviews team last issue — now we show you how to optimise your efforts with a list of nifty cheats. Simply tap in the following codes for the result you require:

SCOOTER: All weapons, spells and full load of spikes.

WANGO: Full health, armour, keys and transforms you into level 7.

MOMMY: Nine of every potion and spell on offer.



SimIsle

Here's a few corkers to make your life easier as you strive to create the perfect Robinson Crusoe paradise. Simply save the game you are playing at any time under any of the following names for a boost in the required areas:

iaintestedtico:	Money, $10,000
deesextrapixel:	Building materials
simonschickenkb:	Unskilled labour
ragschocolatestash:	Food
3527490:	Skilled labour

UFO

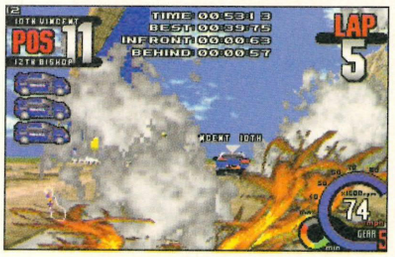
Heaven forbid that hostile aliens should be better packed (technology-wise) than the human race. Hence this strategy jaunt from Microprose that tries to redress the balance in typical xenophobic fashion. Use this little gem courtesy of Simon James from Manchester and fill your wallet with tons of special alien-bashing cash. All you do is edit your SAVEGAME file LIGLOM.DAT; and alter the first hex sets at the very beginning of the file to FF FF FF 7F.

The Even More Incredible Machine

The puzzle game sequel designed to squelch your brain cells into little balls and stomp all over them with hobnail boots need trouble you no longer with this small but perfectly formed level select heaved over to us from Jason Mead of Powys. When asked for a password selection just type in the word <RHOMBUS> and Bob's your politically correct auntie.

Fatal Racing

Burning rubber and troublesome opponents can be fun with this rip-roaring Gremlin racer. Here's a few pointers on how to pump up your performance. ● Go to the configuration menu and enter the following names to transform your vehicles into cheat cars. SUICYCO ● MAYTE ● 2X4B523P ● TINKLE ● LOVEBUN



For super hard destruction mode:	SUPERMAN
Human cars invulnerable:	DR DEATH
Remove cheats:	REMOVE
Alternative FX:	TOPTUNES
Access Premier cup:	GOLDBOY
See end of championship sequence:	CUP WON
See race win sequence:	I WON
Wide screen mode:	CINEMA
To see the credits:	ROLL EM
Access second set of cars:	FORMULA1
Access Bonus cup:	MREPRISE
For killer opponent:	DUEL

● If you enter no name at all, the game dubs you Mr Dull and runs the game in black and white (or whisks you off to number 10 Downing Street and allows you to run the country. or something. Probably). ● To make you the ultimate King of the Road (achieved by cheating your butt off, of course, but hey, nobody's perfect) the game allows you to configure a cheat button. When pressed, this performs your car's special move which involves the cars in front of you being flipped over, blown up and generally disposed of.



"In this month's section we review everything from reference titles such as Encarta 96 and Cinemania 96, to space exploration numbers such as Space Race and For All Mankind"
Cal Jones

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

PC Review gives marks out of 10 to rate multimedia products. The score takes into account elements such as presentation, ease of use and how well the subject is covered. We are strict on multimedia. Five is average, so anything rated higher is better than average and a product has to be extremely good to score a coveted eight or nine.

Highlights



Encarta 96 106
Music Central 109
Braveheart 111
Space Race 113

Encarta 96 Encyclopaedia

Encarta 95 was beautifully presented. But its successor is even better, as Gordon Houghton discovers...

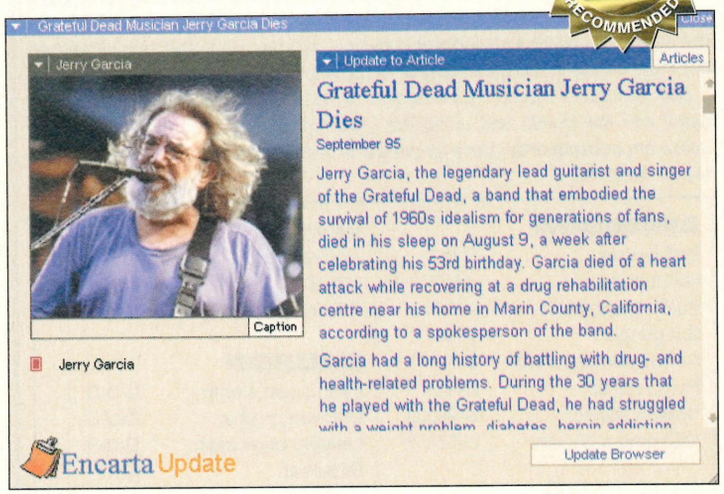
PC REVIEW RECOMMENDED

Barely a year has passed since Encarta 95 was released, and Microsoft already wants us to spend another 80 quid on this new version. The company either thinks we're really stupid or the encyclopaedia is a genuine improvement on its predecessor.

Let's look at the facts. Encarta 96 has 27,000 articles, 1,000 more than the 95 version. It's hardly a significant increase, and the number of entries isn't huge compared to book-based encyclopaedias. However, every article is concise, well-researched, detailed, and accompanied by a variety of media and cross-references. It has also been jazzed up by the addition of new sound clips, 800 new photos and illustrations, seven new videos (including the Normandy Landings and the Coronation of Elizabeth II), and 150 updated maps (including brand new county maps for the UK).

All the features which made the previous version so good have been retained, and in some cases improved upon. The excellent Find Tool is still there, as is the Media Gallery, Atlas, Mindmaze, Timeline and Back Search. In addition, there are copying and printing facilities, a word processor link and a dictionary.

Encarta 95's major failing, a bias towards US subjects and themes, has also been remedied. Encarta 96 now comes in two flavours: your standard North American version and the new, localised World English edition. The latter, which we review here, includes



▲ *With the Yearbook Builder. If you have a modem and enough hard disk space, you can download dozens of items each month.*

CD ONLY

Min. PC: 386DX, Windows 3.1
Minimum memory: 6Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: Windows comp. cards

3,800 new articles which expand the coverage of subjects relevant to the UK and other English-speaking countries. But watch out if you buy a PC which has Encarta 96 bundled with it — you could get the North American version instead, so check first.

New tools

On top of all this, Encarta 96 boasts a number of useful new tools. The Home Screen, which gives you instant access to all of the major features at the click of a button, and there are three new tools to guide you through the encyclopaedia's mass of facts.

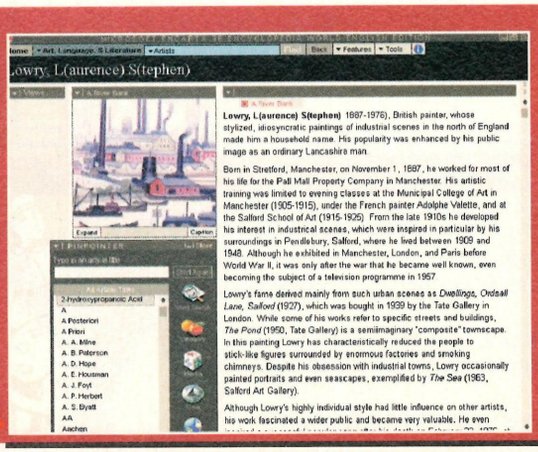
The InterActivities feature lets you play around with information on 10 different themes which vary from famous paintings to personal nutrition. These allow you to work with the information, comparing statistics or working with images, so if you feel like getting up in the middle of the night and comparing words, phrases and proverbs in 60 world languages, it's easy.

In addition, there are nearly 70 guided tours which take you through subjects connected with art and literature, mystery and imagination, the living world, past and present, and science. These

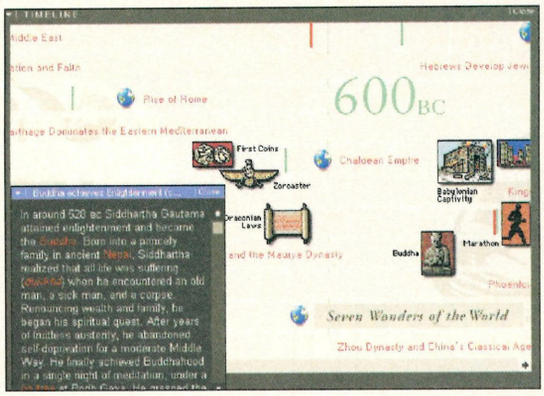
START HERE



Encarta 96 is more friendly than its rivals and has several new features. You begin at the Home Screen, which lets you access information in a variety of useful and fun ways.



If you want to take the most direct route to any of the 27,000 articles in the encyclopaedia, use the Find tool. Just type in what you're looking for, press return, and read on...





▲ The Timeline, which provides chronological access to information, and the Mindmaze will be familiar to owners of Encarta 95.

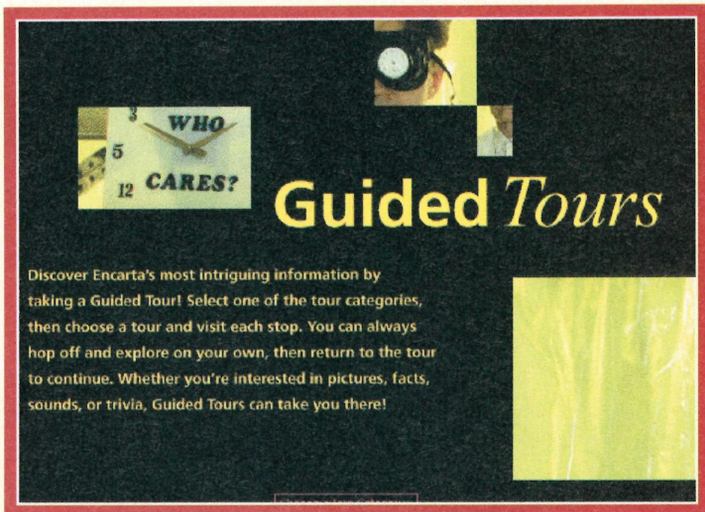
aren't just for casual browsers or trivia freaks — if you want a broad overview of, say, mythical creatures, this facility links together all the relevant articles.

However, Encarta 96's most impressive new tool is its Yearbook Builder. This allows you to keep up with current events by downloading data from Microsoft via your modem. The first installment (August/September 1995) is already included on the CD, and the rest of the 1996 updates will be available for no extra cost.

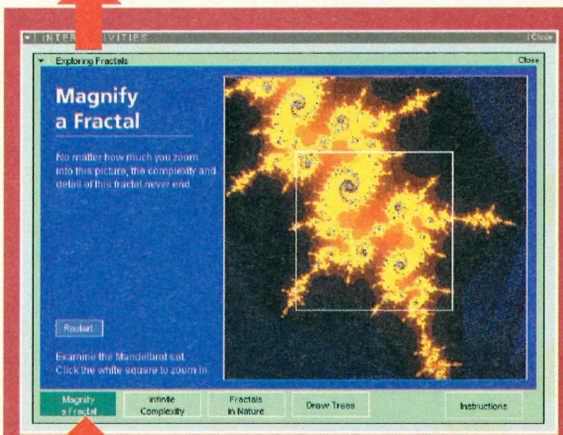
Potentially this is an outstanding feature, if the first selection of well-structured, well-written and topical articles is anything to go by. It could turn your PC into an up-to-date, online encyclopaedia. However, it could also mean you've spent a lot of money to clog up your hard disk with useless facts.

Easy does it

Encarta 96 is a superb product. The presentation is so simple that no feature is more than a couple of mouse clicks away. I've only got one reservation. If you already own Encarta 95, I'm not convinced that it's worth upgrading to this version. True, the emphasis on English facts is very welcome, but do you really need Guided Tours or InterActivities? If the answer is yes, or you're simply looking for a great encyclopaedia, get hold of Encarta 96. It's the best around.



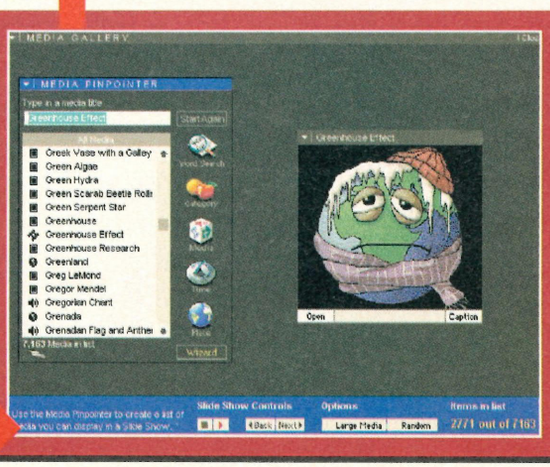
Finally, if you want to sit back and let someone else do the work, Encarta 96 offers Guided Tours in 10 themed categories. Make a couple of choices and browse at your leisure.



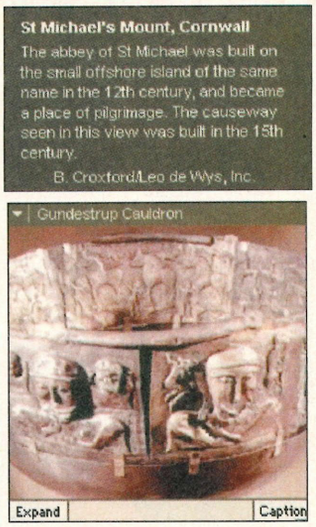
The new InterActivities feature lets you manipulate information on a diverse range of subjects. Games and activities help you learn as you play.

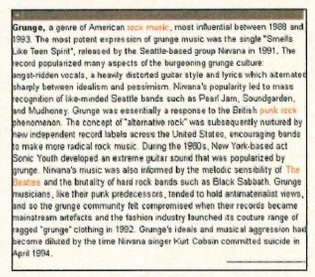


Although it's a bit weedy compared to stand-alone atlases, Encarta's maps provide a surprising amount of information. Each detail you can see links you directly to an article.



The Media Gallery is the place to go if you specifically want photographs, videos, animations, sounds, or charts and tables. There are over 7,000 to choose from.







▲ Encarta 96 addresses the American bias of its predecessor with around four thousand new articles of specific interest to the UK, Australia and other English-speaking countries.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Encyclopaedia

Publisher: Microsoft

Price: £79.99

Contact: (01734) 270000

PROS

Simply the best CD-based encyclopaedia available.

CONS

Annoying if you've already bought Encarta 95.

9

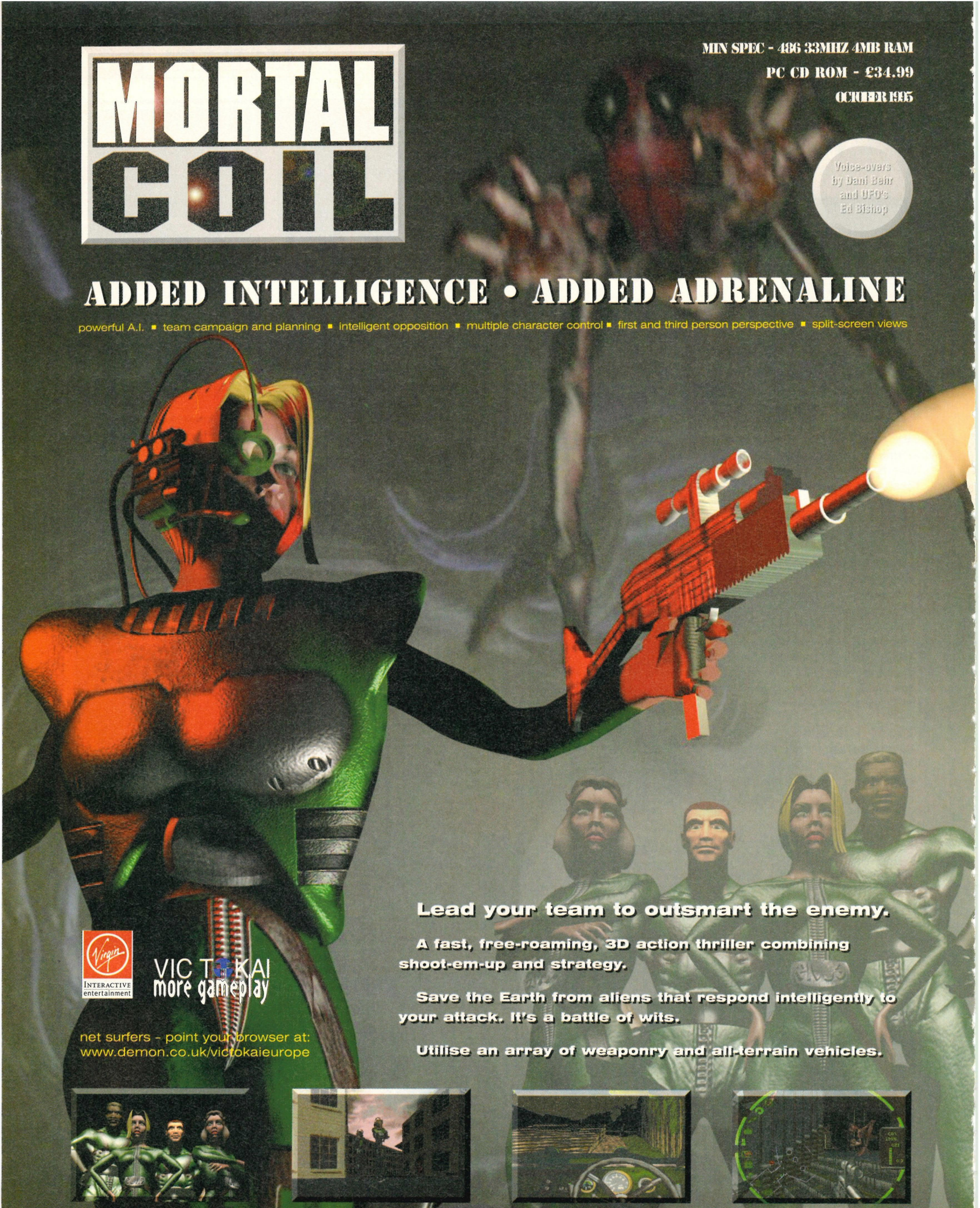
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OCTOBER 1995

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Microsoft Music Central 96

He's lost in music... caught in a trap... no turning back. Pat Fox gets down.

CD ONLY

Min. PC: 386DX, Windows 95

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major soundcards

Here's a neat idea: create an authoritative multimedia reference title — about music, say — and then offer regular updates that can be downloaded via the internet. That way, your 'authoritative' reference won't become out of date a week after you bought it. Ingenious!

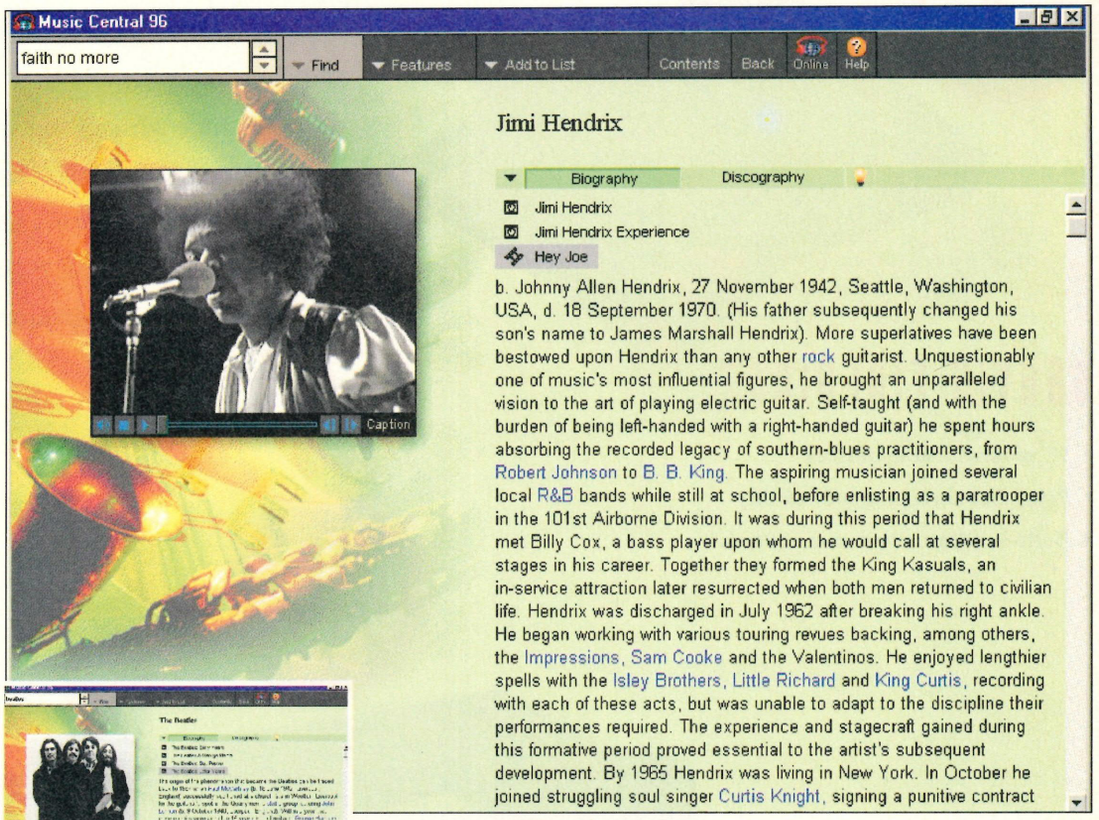
Welcome, then, to Music Central 96, Microsoft's latest multimedia extravaganza, created in association with Q Magazine. Billed as a 'complete music source', it aims to be a definitive guide to modern music — meaning everything except classical music — complete with audio and video links, reviews, discographies and biographies.

As is usual for a Microsoft multimedia product, the interface is polished to a bright sheen. You can access information via a number of routes, from a standard database search for an artist or title to a list of suggestions of music you might like, based on the sort of bands that you listen to now. The database is extensive to say the least: the PC Review staff really had to rack their brains to come up with bands so obscure that they didn't rate a mention. Although the entry for some artists is only a discography, most at least have a short biography, with hotlinks to related artists and subjects.

Video no no

But it's not all sweetness and light. Looking up the entry for the Beatles — arguably the most influential band of all time — I was shocked to find no video or audio links whatsoever. The same goes for the Rolling Stones, Prince, Michael Jackson, the Sex Pistols, and others who would almost certainly make the list of the most important figures in rock and pop history — nary a note of audio between them. And the video and audio clips that are present seem to have been chosen on the basis of availability rather than merit — surely there is no other reason why we should be subjected to Belinda Carlisle wobbling chubbily around in front of the Go Gos, while we are deprived of even a sound clip of say, Chuck Berry?

This is a typically slick Microsoft product, with an extraordinary degree of depth, and the ability to keep it up to date via the Net is a definite advantage. But it's let down by disappointing video and audio coverage — inexcusable in a 'multimedia music reference'.



▲ ***The video clips are of reasonable quality, but always postage-stamp sized. Still, the amount of accompanying detail makes up for this.***

◀ ***The Beatles — lots of info, but no sounds. Criminal.***



▲ ***The List Maker allows you to compile a shopping list for the next time you hit your local audio emporium.***

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Music reference

Publisher: Microsoft

Price: £39.99

Contact: (01734) 270001

PROS

Looks great, and it covers everybody you will ever have heard of.

CONS

The video and audio clips are very disappointing.

7

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Braveheart

There's a lot to be said for men in kilts, especially when they're Mel Gibson. Cal Jones goes sporran spotting.

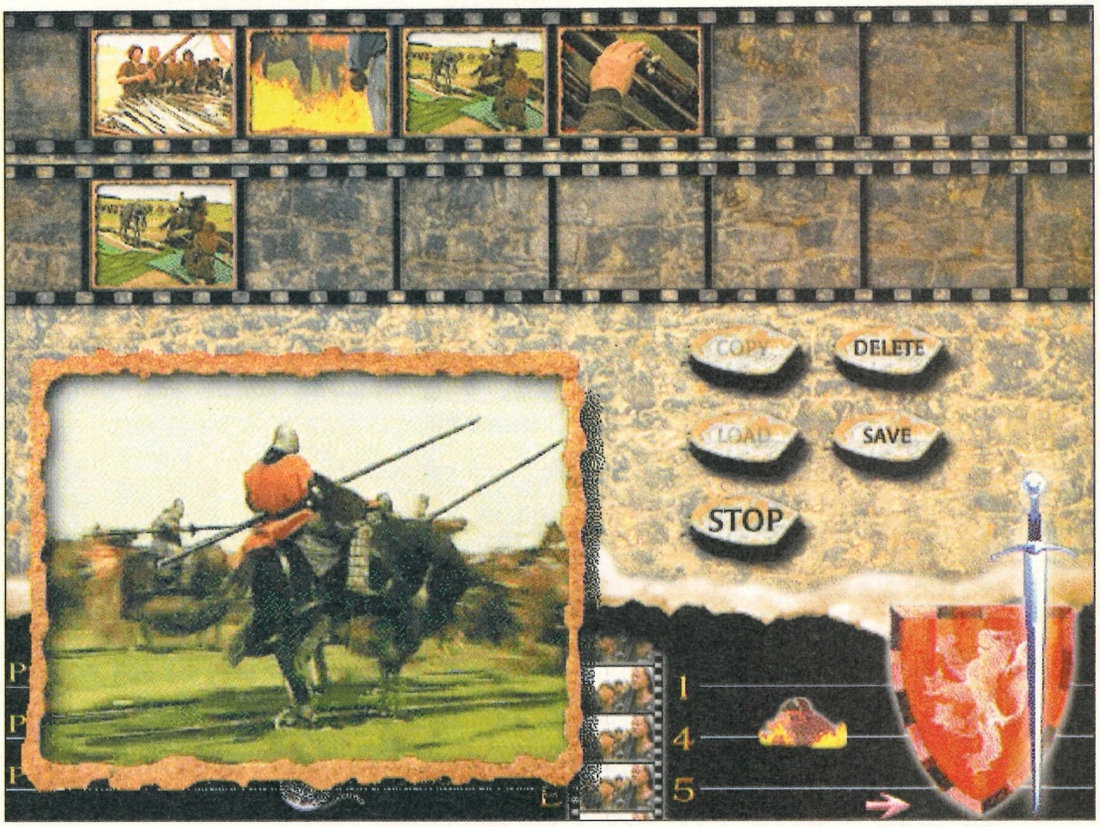
CD ONLY

Min. PC: 486SX, Windows 3.1
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster & comp

It used to be the case that whenever a big movie came along, someone would try and turn it into a game. Braveheart, however, has made the transition to the small screen not as some inane platform blaster, but as a highly polished piece of multimedia.

Starring Mel Gibson, Braveheart the film, was based on the life of 13th century Scottish hero, William Wallace. This CD covers not only the making of the movie, but also looks at the people and times that inspired it. It covers social issues, religion, rulers and warfare, and whilst it doesn't go into these topics in any real depth, it provides enough information to satisfy anyone who has developed a passing interest in 13th century Scottish history after watching the film.

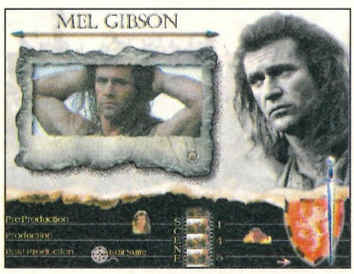
But of course, the main selling point of this CD is the movie itself. There are interviews with all the stars, a look at how the battle scenes were filmed and, of course, lots of movie clips. One of the nice things about the program is that, as well as being able to view all the clips in the movie menu, they have also been integrated into the historical sections. For example, there's a section on weapons under the warfare menu. If you want to find out about a flail, say, it gives you a photograph, information about how the weapon originated and how it was used, and a nice clip of our Mel belting some unlucky soldier over the head with one.



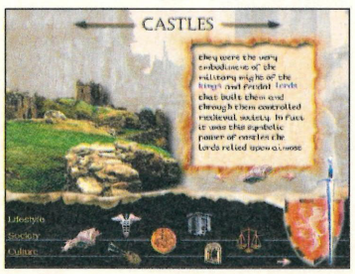
▲ *You can use the edit suite to view film clips, interviews and behind the scenes footage. This bit of film shows how the battle scenes were re-created. To avoid unnecessary cruelty to animals, any horses required to fall were mechanical models which were wheeled along a set of tracks. So now you know.*

The package also contains a simple quiz, with questions on Scottish history and the film. But perhaps the nicest tool is the edit suite, which allows you to splice together a sequence of your favourite clips, whether they be excerpts from the movie, interviews or behind-the-scenes footage.

Braveheart (the multimedia CD) is a well put-together program. It contains a good balance of information and is easy to use, thanks to its slick, attractive interface. Comptons produced a good CD based on the making of StarGate, but it wasn't quite as well balanced as this one. If you're interested in William Wallace, the movie or its historical background, this is well worth having.



▲ *You can find out about Mel Gibson's acting career, or simply drool over the movie clips.*



▲ *You'll be able to find out about 13th century Scottish history, including rulers, lifestyle and war.*



▲ *There are storyboards for major scenes in the movie — compare them to the finished footage.*

PCR VERDICT

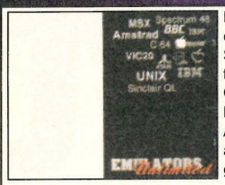
Genre: Film reference
Publisher: Koch Media
Price: £34.99
Contact: (01252) 714340

PROS
Lots of information about the movie and its stars, all well presented.

CONS
Don't expect any real depth on individual topics.

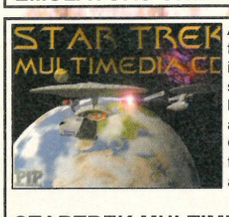
8

EPIC MARKETING
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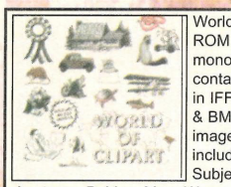


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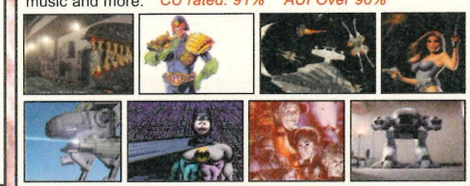


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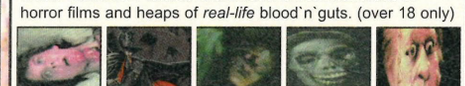


SCI-FI SENSATION DOUBLE CD (CD118) £19.99





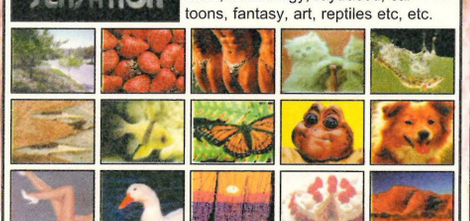
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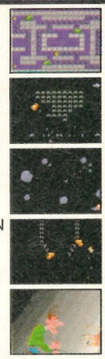


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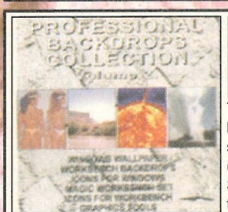
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Rated: *AF GOLD 95% - CUAMIGA 91% - AUI Over 90% - AC over 90%*

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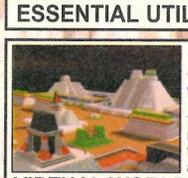


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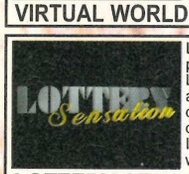
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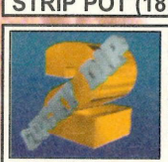
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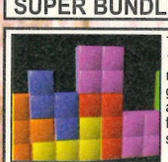
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The Space Race

Flagtower's interactive documentary speeds through 50 years of space history. Gordon Houghton tags along.

CD ONLY
Min. PC: 486DX, Windows 3.1
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: Windows compatible

Suddenly, space is fashionable again. After years in which the nearest you got to serious technology was Virgin's Shuttle and Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space, it feels like there's a new multimedia space experience every month. Personally, I blame Tom Hanks. We've had Apollo 13, SpaceAGE, For All Mankind, and now this.

The Space Race relates the post-War Soviet-American struggle to be top dog in the void. It's a seven-part documentary with two hours of commentary, half an hour of video and around 1,000 pictures. You can experience the whole thing from start to finish, or randomly select passages from each chapter.

Space ace

As you sit back and listen to the story, icons appear at the foot of the screen prompting you to explore related subjects. These tell you more about the political background, the technology involved, the media's response, facts about a mission, a personality profile, or simply more detailed information.

The Space Race also gives you some useful reference tools in addition to the main narrative. Apart from the usual help and backtracking facilities, there's a handy index giving you an A-Z of subjects, a list of 80 personality profiles and access to around 500 mission cards (US, Soviet and European).

How you feel about The Space Race will depend on how much you already know about the space race. If you know little and want a broad, step-by-step introduction to the technology, culture and politics behind the struggle, you'll be able to find it here. If you know a lot and prefer a more flexible, encyclopaedic approach, you'll probably find the whole idea of chapters and narrators irritatingly rigid.

Either way, with its slick presentation, useful interface and good choice of images, this is something space nuts will enjoy thoroughly — though not, primarily, as a reference work.



Once you get used to these icons, you can abandon the rigid documentary structure and do a little exploring.





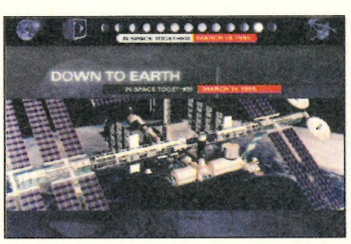
▲ *The fathers of the US and Soviet space programmes are pictured above: on the right Wernher von Braun and on the left Sergei Korolev. These two great pioneers helped to make mans greatest ever dream, an actual reality.*

ON YOUR MARKS...

The Space Race tells the tale of the intercontinental struggle to conquer space from the start of the Cold War to the present. A friendly narrator guides you through seven chapters using an ever-changing collage of images, videos and sound, and you're prompted to examine related facts at every stage. Although the space race has often been an East-West contest, there's plenty here about the European space programme, too.







PCR VERDICT

Genre: Space reference
Publisher: Flagtower
Price: £49.99
Contact: (0171) 831 3800

PROS
Professional presentation, unusual video footage and thorough research provide plenty of entertainment.

CONS
The friendly narrative style won't appeal to everyone.

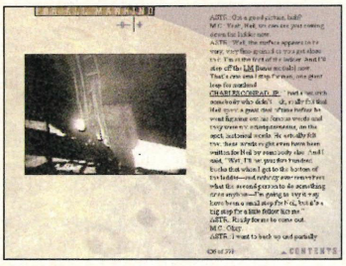
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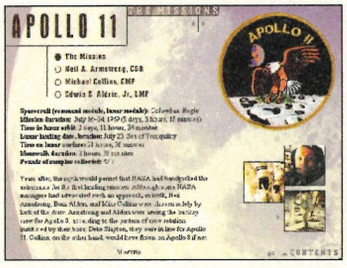
For All Mankind

The US spent billions of dollars so that just one man could stand on an airless rock 200,000 miles away. Gordon Houghton finds out why.

FLY ME TO THE MOON

For All Mankind combines a creative historical narrative with factual backup. The main chronological events are detailed in For All Mankind, an impressive interactive movie created by Al Reinert. Supporting it is a limited glossary of technospeak, a diverse selection of essays and animations, an interview with Reinert, and details of the Apollo missions.











CD ONLY

Min. PC: 486DX, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible

Between December 1968 and November 1972, the United States launched nine manned flights to the Moon as part of the Apollo space programme. Twenty-four men made the journey, the first human beings to leave the Earth for another world. No-one has been back since, partly because rockets don't come cheap and partly because the Shuttle has altered the focus for current space science.

The main part of For All Mankind is a 57-page interactive 'movie' which tells the story of the people involved with Apollo. It uses video footage, photographs, mission transcripts and interviews with the astronauts to create a personal and gripping account of the Moon landings. It's a compelling story, but one that suffers from poor presentation and lack of depth.

Astronuts

This is also true for the rest of the CD. There's a 45 definition glossary which reveals some fascinating trivia but barely covers basic space technobabble; a mission-by-mission analysis of the Apollo programme with summaries and nice photos but little else; and some potted essays and animations on subjects such as weightlessness, space suits and lunar modules. You also get an interview with Al Reinert, creator of the interactive movie, which is pretty interesting the first time around.

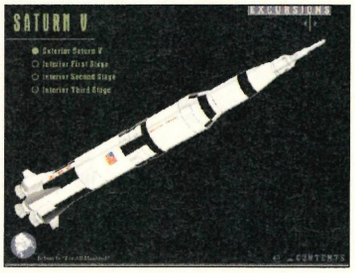
The trouble with For All Mankind is that it doesn't quite go far enough. It lacks the depth of an encyclopaedia or the entertainment appeal of a movie, and the interface is basic. If you're looking for detailed facts about space technology in general, you're better off with Arts and Letters' SpaceAGE.

However, what For All Mankind does extremely well is to reveal the human side of the race to the Moon.

If you've any interest in the personalities behind the lunar missions, you'll find Reinert's movie completely gripping from start to finish — and well worth playing several times. If you're more interested in space technology however, give it a miss.



◀ ***One small step for man, three large space-suits for mankind: Armstrong, Collins and Aldrin before lift-off.***



▲ ***The huge Saturn V rocket was the one that carried all the Apollo astronauts into space. It is well documented in the program.***

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Space reference

Publisher: Astrion

Price: £39.99

Contact: (0181) 202 0011

PROS

The main section, detailing the history of the Apollo programme, is gripping.

CONS

The supporting material isn't detailed enough and the whole package lacks polish.

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Harpoon 2 W Pacific B/set	15.99	------
Harpoon 2 Disk 5	16.99	------
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Publishers Pick:Green - *Hutchinson Encyclopedia, Fortress of Dr Radiaki,Reunion,Windows 95 Tutorial,Dreamweb,Serious Soccer,Pc Educator,Gus Goes To Cybertown,MultiMedia Space Explorer,Wil2*	------	24.99
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Riddle

Microsoft Cinemania 96

With a bag of popcorn in one hand and a vat of Coke in the other, Pat Fox goes to the flicks.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 386DX, Win 95

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible

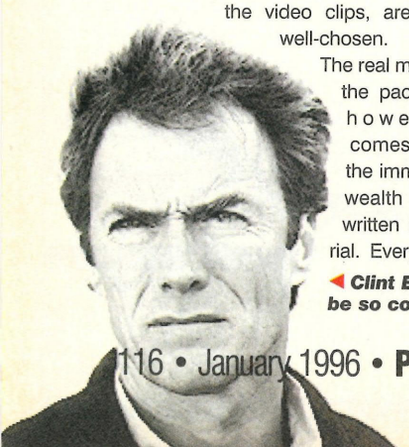
Any video junkie worth their salted popcorn needs a good film guide to consult before a trip to the local Blockbuster. Usually this will be a humungous reference book with thousands of pages and snotty reviewers making snide comments about your favourite movies — looks good on your bookshelf, but rather dull to read.

Cinemania 96 brings film reference into the multimedia age, providing information about hundreds of movies — reviews, cast lists, pictures and in some cases, video footage or audio tracks. It also covers general information about the movie world, including profiles of actors and directors, and even a list of every Oscar ever awarded.

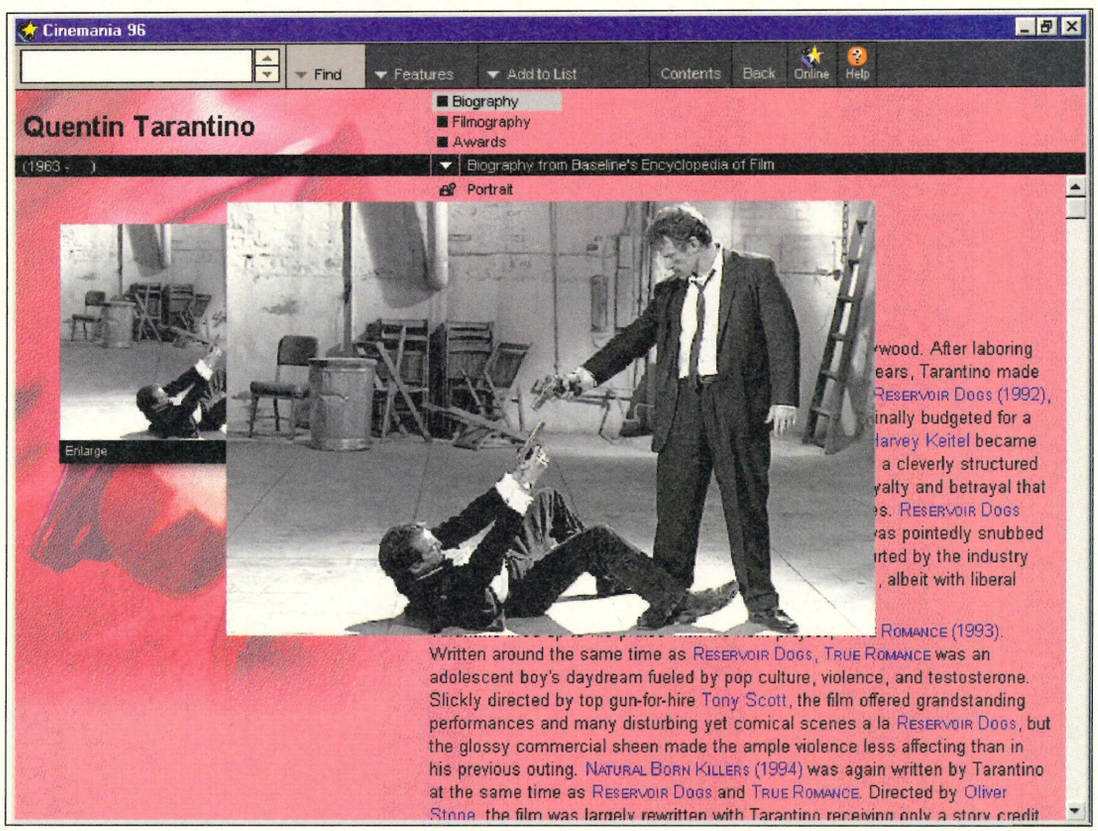
Of course it's the video footage that stands out most in any multimedia title, and Cinemania is on to a winner from the start. Unlike its stablemate Music Central 96, with Cinemania 96 Microsoft has managed to assemble some truly excellent footage — the chariot race scene from Ben Hur, Obi-Wan Kenobi in a light-sabre duel to the death with Darth Vader, Roy Scheider commenting "You're gonna need a bigger boat" after coming face to teeth with Jaws for the first time — to name but a few. Of course, being a couple of inches square they don't compare to the silver screen, but it's a nice touch. In addition, there are some movie themes to listen to, and some dialogue-only tracks which, like the video clips, are very well-chosen.

The real meat of the package, however, comes in the immense wealth of written material. Every film has at least a short review by either Leonard Maltin or Roger Ebert (of Siskel and Ebert fame), and some feature comments from the controversial Pauline Kael, former critic for the New Yorker. Many also feature more than one review – giving an excellent opportunity to compare their often contrasting opinions – and yet more detail in the form of excerpts from Cinebook reviews and plot outlines. There's even the option to download updates regularly over the internet, to keep it all up-to-date.

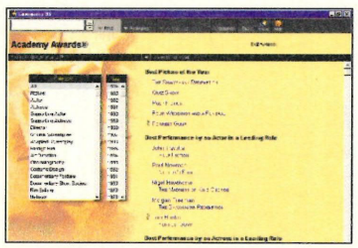
Cinemania is attractive, easy to use, a mine of movie-related information and an excellent all-round reference work. If it has a flaw then it's simply that there isn't enough of it — more great video footage, more audio clips — but as it is it's already nigh on perfect. A movie maniac's must.



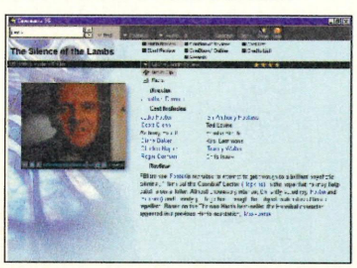
◀ *Clint Eastwood — what a dude. How can he still be so cool after all these years?*



▲ *All right, we couldn't really do a film product review without a reference to Quentin Tarantino — so here it is. Now, where have I seen that picture before? Oh yes — everywhere.*



▲ *Look — a list of every Oscar ever — a trivia fiend's dream.*



▲ *Anthony Hopkins invites Jodie Foster for dinner.*

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Film reference

Publisher: Microsoft

Price: £29.99

Contact: (01734) 270001

PROS
Preposterous amount of information, great clips, great package.

CONS
Even more video would have been nice, but otherwise it's almost perfect.

9

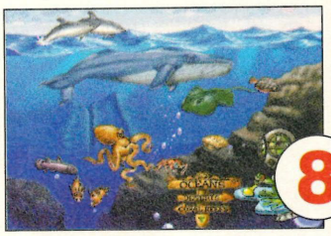
shorts

MICROSOFT EXPLORA-PEDIA

Educational

Aimed at kids aged six to 10, Explorapedia is intended as a fun way for youngsters to learn about nature and the environment. Accompanied by Tad Pole (geddit?) the space frog, you can beam down from your spacecraft to various areas of the planet — deserts, rainforests and the like — to find out about the local flora and fauna through text, cartoons and video. The humour is often a bit surreal, but it's all good fun and packed with information.

Microsoft ● £29.99 ● (01734) 270001 ● 486SX, 4Mb, SVGA, dual speed CD-ROM, Windows compatible sound card



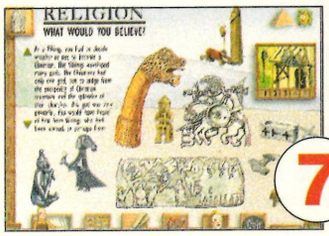
8

HOW WOULD YOU SURVIVE?

Educational

An unusual idea which doesn't quite live up to its promise: an educational package that introduces your children to the life and culture of three historic races, the Vikings, the Egyptians and the Aztecs, and then tests them on their knowledge. The information that's included is interesting and detailed. However the "how would you survive?" tests are actually very boring — a shame since the rest of the product is rather good.

Grolier Interactive ● £ TBA ● (00331) 47459445 ● 486DX33, 8Mb, SVGA, dual speed CD-ROM, Windows compatible sound card



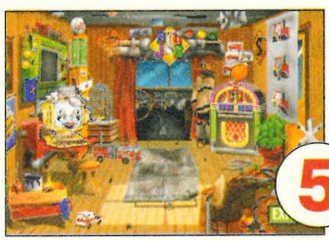
7

BIG JOB

Educational

Hur hur — big job! BIG JOB! Ahem... puerile innuendo aside, this latest product from the Discovery Channel (educational satellite TV people) is an attempt to appeal to the penchant in young boys (and girls, possibly) to play around with heavy construction machinery — diggers, dump trucks and so forth. You're part of the Big Job club, and you get to drive the club's van around, stopping in at various places to play games or view films about the vehicles featured. It's sometimes fun, but the graphics tend towards the rudimentary in places, and the narration annoys.

Astrion ● £29.99 ● (0181) 202 0011 ● 486SX, 4Mb, SVGA, dual speed CD-ROM, Windows compatible soundcard



5

REDSHIFT 2

Educational

You can explore the universe from the comfort of your front room, apparently, with this updating of the successful Redshift astronomy package. There is information here on thousands of celestial bodies, from nearby planets to distant stars and black holes, and a detailed star chart to help you in your sky-searching exploits. In addition there are narrated introductions to subjects like the Big Bang and the formation of galaxies, complete with full motion video clips. If you're into astronomy and you don't already have Redshift, then you'll want this.

Maris ● £49.99 ● (0171) 4881566 ● 386SX, 4Mb, SVGA, dual speed CD-ROM, Windows compatible soundcard



8

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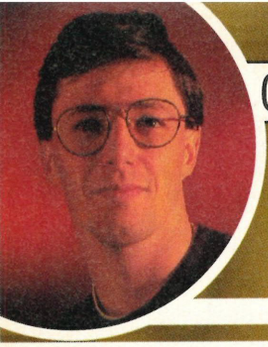
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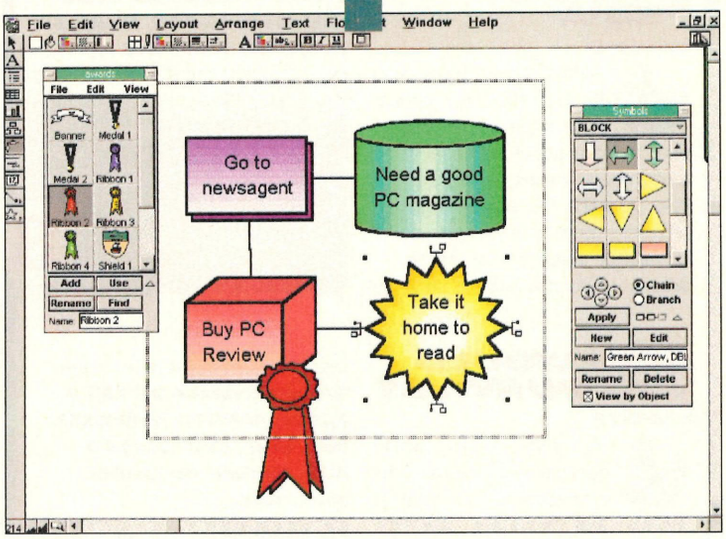
ClarisImpact 2.0

CD AND DISK

Manufacturer: Claris

Price: £121.26

Contact: 0800 929005

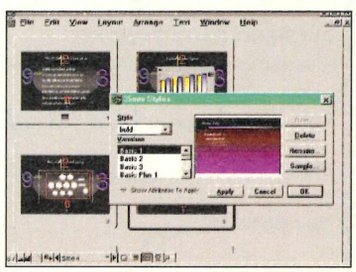


The drag and drop interface makes Impact very easy to use. ▶

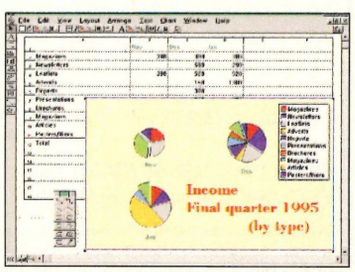
Andrew Wright makes an impact with the latest release of Claris' graphic design tool — Impact 2.0.

These days most people can create a reasonably tidy looking document, whether it's a letter to the bank manager or a club newsletter. But trying to design an organisational chart or a calendar is something else again. Where most people fail is the point where graphics are added — to the rescue comes ClarisImpact. It offers you a painless, straightforward way to create all kinds of structured business graphics without having to employ much in the way of creativity. As long as you know what you're trying to say, Impact will help you create it. At least that's the theory. But is it that easy in practice?

Each document in Impact! can be made up of text, drawings or business graphics, including organisational charts, flowcharts, tables, data charts, timelines, outlines or calendars. All the documents behave in slightly different ways, but the interface remains relatively consistent and you can mix and match to create the kind of result you need, adding text, clip art and coloured backgrounds as required.



▲ *Presentations can be built up for overheads and can feature charts.*



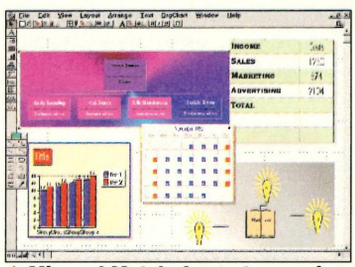
▲ *To build the charts you can enter data in mini-spreadsheets.*

This flexibility means Impact is ideal for small businesses and home users who want quick, easy business graphics. Supporting this easy approach is a huge selection of predefined formats for the many different types of graphic wanted. There are five types of organisational chart, for example, and nine types of flowchart, computer networks and brainstorm designs. There are also three types of timeline, three types of outline, monthly or weekly calendars, and 17 different chart styles.

Jack of all trades

Impact's main problem is that it's a jack of all trades and, as a result, it has to be master of none. You can use it to create simple drawings and even tear apart and customise imported vector clipart as we've seen. But it lacks some of the more sophisticated drawing tools of say Illustrator or Freehand that professionals or advanced designers will want.

Its lack of even the most basic OLE (Object Learning and Embedding) support won't endear it to professionals either. It would be nice to be able to place Impact drawings and graphics in other documents, such as Word, for example. Given that Impact claims to be a Windows application this lack of OLE is unforgivable. But for the first time user who doesn't want to spend hours on a learning curve, it is the best all-in-one business graphics package I've seen. If you've a presentation or projects that need to be done yesterday, Impact might just be the answer.



▲ *Mix and Match. Impact can mix many different types of graphic together — from charts to calendars to graduated backgrounds.*

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Presentation graphics

System requirements:
System requirements: 386 PC (486 recommended), 8Mb RAM + Windows 3 or above.

Ease of use:
Needs an hour with the manual first, easy to get confused.

Performance:
Every type of business graphic you're likely to need.

Value for money:
Unlikely to be a casual buy at this price — but very versatile which most users will find a use for at one time or another.

7

This month we had a load of fun with our Get Serious section. Firstly there was our round-up of multimedia PCs — for which, as we're sure you'll understand, we had to test using Doom, Descent, and Worms. Then we went undercover to test the very latest PC based spying equipment — eat your heart out Bond, Leaning's on the case! It's amazing what you can discover with your humble PC — if you have the right equipment.

Following this we tried two brand new illustration and paint applications, a huge hard drive, and great game slaying joysticks from Microsoft and Logitech. Finally we thought we'd do something for you and rounded up some low priced Christmas gift ides. So have fun and a happy Christmas!

Andy Leaning

Highlights

QuickCam ... 121
Xmas Gifts ... 125
Logitech Thunderbird ... 127



Dabbler 2.0

Move over Monet and poor old Picasso — Andrew Wright is here with Fractal Design Dabbler 2.0.

Chalk

Fractal Design Dabbler is a natural media painting program that lets you simulate natural brush shapes and natural media such as chalk and pencil, in order to create pictures that look as though they were done on canvas and easel instead of a computer screen. In ordinary PC paint programs you only have a few decidedly unnatural brush shapes. And it's also difficult to simulate flesh tones or the subtle shading that makes for a really life-like image. But with programs like Dabbler and Fauve Matisse, you can imitate almost any painting style from Picasso to Rembrandt — and make up a few of your own into the bargain.

Marker

CD ONLY

Publisher: Fractal Design Corp.

Distributor: Computers Unlimited

Price: £75

Contact: (0181) 200 8282

Dabbler has a unique interface, as can be seen from the screen shots on this page; its tools are available either from the drop down menus or from the unique toolbar along the top of the canvas. This bar is coloured just like a strip of wood and represents an artist's studio. It contains four "drawers", each of which slides open to reveal tool icon palets inside. Whenever a tool from inside a drawer is selected. it is then placed outside for easier access.

These tools include pencils, pens, chalk, marker pens and airbrushes, as well as oil paints and water drops which can be used to simulate water colours. There are several colour selection methods, a colour wheel is available allowing you to mix up colours to make your own new ones, and there's a dropper tool for selecting existing colours from the image.

◀ *Dabbler's graphical interface makes it easy to get started.*

Pen

Old master

Dabbler has special effects that can be applied to the whole image, including fade, glass distortion, motion, blur, sharpen and soften. The tracing and auto-clone tools let you turn a photograph into an old master in two or three easy stages and the texturise tool adds a retrospective background to the image. There are also stencil and float tools for creating and manipulating shapes, plus support for Adobe Photoshop plug-ins.

Unfortunately this latest version is a bit of a disappointment, not least because it's not much of an improvement on the earlier version, not having that many more features. Only five sizes are possible for brushes and some of them just don't look like you'd expect. There isn't a water colour brush, and the two oil paint styles, points and strokes, aren't flexible enough.

The interface looks really nice, but lacks flexibility and real power leaving you wanting after a while. Its undo and zoom facilities are also lacking. On the whole this a good choice if you want to do just what the program says — dabble in natural media, and learn basic drawing and painting techniques.

Paper Tigers

Dabbler will appeal to artists used to paper painting tools. Hence the reason for the pull out tool drawers and natural media tools. But these aren't the only aids, there are loads of others. Anyone who's ever used a drawing tablet or drawn with a pencil will know that you often end up drawing at odd angles to achieve a desired effect. For this reason Dabbler can rotate the drawing area so it reflects the angle that your hand is at. This and other concessions put Dabbler above Matisse for use by paper artists.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Paint program

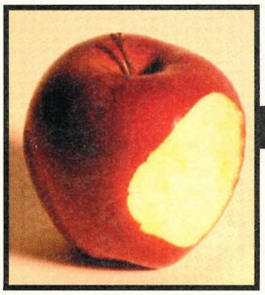
System requirements:
486DX PC, 8Mb RAM, 256 colour graphics card

Ease of use:
Easy at first, lacks power later on — has lots of tricks to appeal to traditional paper artists.

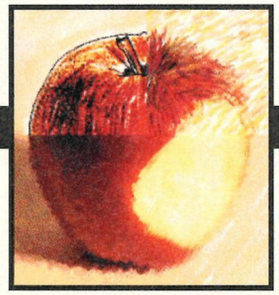
Performance:
Rapid image effects, though painting sometimes jerky.

Value for money:
Pricey for what is essentially an entry level package.

6



▲ *What can you do with an ordinary little apple?*



▲ *You can clone various parts of it...*



▲ *Or run it through a glass distortion filter...*



▲ *Or even texturise it... the choice is yours.*

ACTION REPLAY V 4.0

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Freeze your program at any point and save entire contents of memory, including extended memory, to floppy or hardrive. When you reload the program it will resume at the point it was frozen. Ideal for saving a game at a difficult point or for programs with tedious 'password' loading systems.



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Scans through memory for sound blaster sound samples. Save to disk as.voc and .wav formats. Edit and playback. Ideal for Windows effects. Very effective, even on CD games!!

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SLO MO FUNCTION

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MUSIC GRABBER

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- Mega Music Machine is a total Stereo Sound System so you don't need a sound card to blast out true stereo. If you already have a sound blaster card then Music Machine speakers plug directly into your card adding a massive 10 watts of power.



If you are a real game freak then you know that normal PC Joysticks just don't make the grade - sloppy movement and only two buttons make them useless for most role playing and fighting games.

REVENGER

NOW YOU CAN PLAY YOUR GAMES TO DESTRUCTION!

NEW

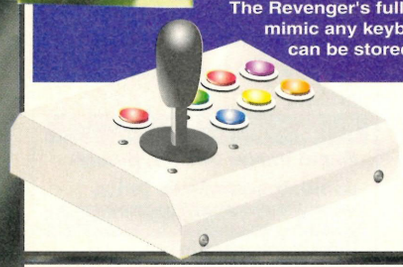


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QuickCam



It's small, white, round and has a lens on the front. Nope it's not Andy Leaning's eyeball that's slipped out, but a cunning new digital camera for your PC.

QuickCam is a simple, but oh so effective, camera and digitiser, which comes all wrapped up in a cuddly small ball. On one side of the ball (yes I know that's technically incorrect but how else can you describe it) is a small opening in which an 'eye' can be found. Pointing this at a target allows either individual pictures or moving video to be photographed, displayed and stored on your PC.

The ball unit itself is attached to the PC via a lead to the parallel centronics port (your printer port) and as such requires no further hardware, expansion cards or interfaces — fitting is dead simple. The ball rests in a base to keep it stationary, although there's also a screw thread if you want to use a tripod. The only drawback with this set-up, I found, was that the cable coming out the back occasionally pulled the ball off target when held in the base unit. But overall the arrangement proved largely successful since it did allow the camera to be placed almost anywhere — the only restriction being the actual length of the cable.

The picture quality was surprisingly good given the price (£100) and the maximum of 64 grey scales used to represent colours. I tried the camera out in a variety of lighting conditions from normal indoors, to night-time and mid-day sun levels out of doors. All were handled well, picking up good levels of detail. And whilst the maximum picture size of 320x240 may initially sound limiting, in reality it doesn't prove that much of a hindrance — most pictures in DTP publications tend to be quite small.

In use it's a blast. It makes getting video and pictures into your PC as easy as it's likely to get, and opens up whole new vistas of possible uses too. Aside from the immediately obvious practical uses (for DTP etc) it could also be used for house/office security — it's unlikely a thief would spot it. Connectix are about to release a low cost video phone system using QuickCam, and if you've got a notebook it could be used as a perfect spying device — who'd think a semi closed notebook was watching them?

The only reservations I have about it are that as the cable moves it occasionally pulls the camera out of position. Aside from that, for getting images into your PC, it can't be beaten.

Price: £100

Manufacturer: Connectix

Contact: 0800 966 199

DIY VIDEO

QuickCam doesn't just take single, still pictures, it can also record moving video. Using a supplied program it's possible to set the camera recording frames and then store them as AVI movie files for playback. The number of frames you can capture in a second depends on the speed of your PC — on my Pentium 75 it averaged out about 12 frames a second — a pretty acceptable frame rate. Naturally the length of the movie depends upon the amount of hard disk space you have available to you.

To add sound to the movies you'll also need a sound card with recording abilities — which most current sound cards have — and your own voice to add the sound effects

Sadly there's no ability to edit the AVI files afterwards, for this you'll need another program like Adobe Premier which costs a wallet-busting £550. If you want it Adobe are on 0181 606 4000. Although QuickCam's low price is bound to inspire a flood of lower priced digital editing programs in the near future.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Digital camera

System requirements:
Windows 3 or above PC with a 386 or greater processor.

Ease of use:
Does it get any easier — in short, no! Plug it in and away you go.

Performance:
Although it *just* works on a 386, for grabbing AVI with a decent frame rate you need a fast processor — Pentium minimum really.

Value for money:
Excellent, at £100 it's a real bargain.

8

Six Quick Ideas for QuickCAM

1 ***Take on Tarantino to make your own mini-films:*** *With its AVI movie recording ability you can record your own mini-films and movie clips — don't forget to add in numerous conversations about The Silver Surfer, Star Trek, etc.*

2 ***Set a private security camera:*** *With a little effort you could program your PC (Visual Basic anyone) to use QuickCam to detect movement in a room and then start recording the goings on. Apparently QuickCam can even see infra-red for night-vision.*

3 ***Personalised Windows wallpaper:*** *Why put up with the normal Windows wallpaper, when you can have your own mug plastered all over your screen. Simply grab a picture, save it in BMP format and tell Win95 to use it for a background. Done from the Display icon found in the Control Panel.*

4 ***Personalise Christmas cards:*** *Why send friends Christmas cards featuring Santa, when it could be your face adorning the Yuletide greetings. You can even use the fonts on this month's cover CD to add extra impact.*

5 ***Budget video phone:*** *Connectix are about to release a sub £200 video phone using QuickCam, it'll work over local area networks and ISDN lines, and an Internet version is being worked on too.*

6 ***The ultimate 007 gadget:*** *With a notebook PC it's the ultimate spying device. Simply leave it lying around with the notebook semi-closed and you've got a record of what's going on. Who'd ever guess a closed notebook was watching them? For Your Eyes Only... or something.*

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10 REASONS TO BUY PRESTIGE

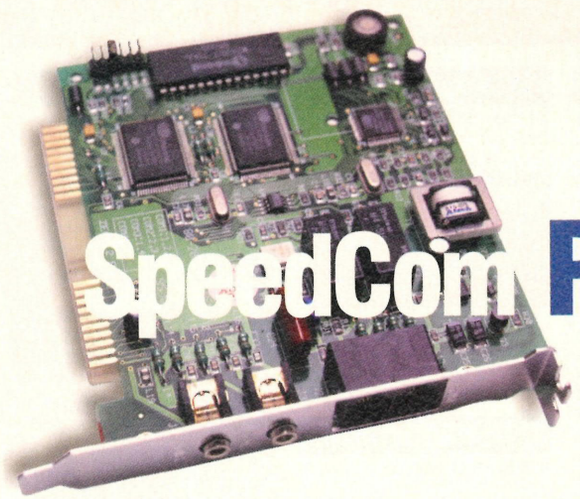
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Manufacturer: Orion

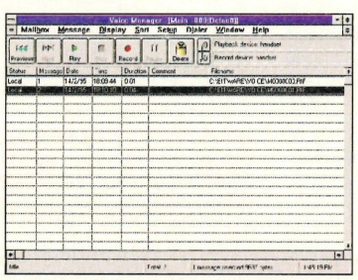
Contact: (01252) 838393

The Speedcom Plus is a small internal card (although an external option is available) combining modem, fax and voice-mail facilities. Packaged with it you get BitWare, a selection of integrated software for DOS and Windows, which, once installed, allow you to take advantage of the card's undeniably impressive specification. Capable of 14,400bps, it's compatible with V.42bis and V.32bis and MNP 2-5 standards (different speeds and error checking levels) among others.

Installation is simple enough: it'll fit in an 8-bit ISA slot, and there's only one set of jumpers on board so configuration is fairly rapid once you've decided which Com port to assign. The card connects via supplied cables to the telephone socket in your wall, and your 'phone connects through the card. The card can handle playback/recording of messages through the 'phone, your sound card or through speakers plugged into the sound card or the card itself. In short, if you've got a sound card you can use it for high quality record/playback, but you're not stuck if you don't have a suitable sound card.

The software supplied with the card comprises a suite of applications including a voice mail system for Windows, utilities for sending and viewing faxes, connection software which allows you to access bulletin boards, and some other small utilities for handling data. Each one performs its job adequately; the voice mail system in particular is simple and versatile, allowing you to record your own intro message through the telephone, and capable of storing up to 999 messages — although the record quality is fairly low.

The only blots on the landscape are the fact that this setup lacks that all-important BT approved stamp, and also, to be honest, at £175 it's rather on the steep side for a 14,400 modem (28,800bps models can be found for under £200).



▲ ***Be in when you're out with this wonderful voice mail facility.***

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Comms peripheral

System requirements:
386DX, 4Mb, MS-DOS v5.0

Ease of use:
Easy to install, simple to use. The Windows utilities in particular are very easy to understand and use.

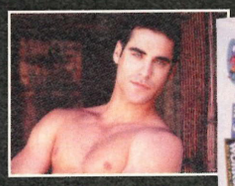
Performance:
Great range of features, and the different bits work well together.

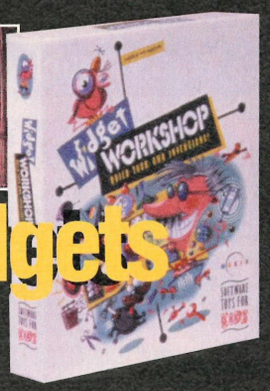
Value for money:
£175 for this spec? A bit on the steep side.

7

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Under 60s

Five presents the old folk can get you this Christmas — and they all go for under sixty quid, the presents that is, not the old folk ...



CD ONLY

Price: £24.99
Manufacturer: SoftKey
Contact: 0181 789 20000
Score: 8/10

Publishing Power Pack

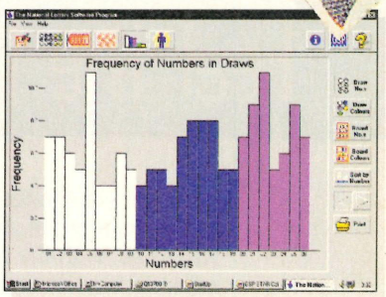
Do you create documents in a word processor, DTP package or graphics program? You do? Then you'll love this collection of fonts, clipart and pictures from SoftKey. Why put up with run-of-the-mill fonts (I'll lay a fiver on the chance that you use Ariel) when there's over a thousand different ones in this pack just begging to be used. Then there's the wad of pictures: for adding a little life to your posters, leaflets and other works of art, you can't beat a good photo, but where to get them from? Luckily this CD comes with 350 different pictures to use — all just waiting to be scattered around your productions. The pictures are copyright free — so you can use them freely without paying anything further, and all are pretty good quality. Plus, with the huge range of fonts you can create some pretty unusual Christmas cards and party invites for New Years Eve.

CD AND DISK

Price: £14.99
Manufacturer: GSP
Contact: 01480 496575
Score: 5/10

Official National Lottery Program

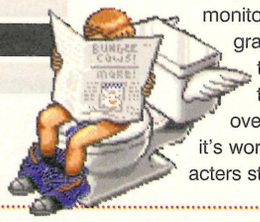
Since the National Lottery started just over a year ago the great British public has rushed out en masse every Saturday — not to buy lottery tickets, but lottery prediction programs! At the last count I came up with no less than 15 different shareware and commercial utilities that claim to aid you in your lottery predictions. This latest program is somewhat different however. From GSP (the people behind our DesignWorks cover disk utility) it carries Camelot logo and it's the only official lottery program. Sadly like most lottery programs it's little more than a glorified random number generator — computerised dice. It features amazing features such as the ability to remind you to buy your tickets, and can even check to see if you've won — isn't it stunning what PCs can do these days! Still it's good for a few laughs.



CD ONLY

Price: £59
Manufacturer: SoftLine
Contact: 0181 401 1234
Score: 9/10

The Complete After Dark Screen Saver



When it comes to screen savers you don't get much better than the After Dark series. Screen savers are tiny pieces of software that protect your monitor from screen burn. This happens when a static image is left displayed on your monitor for a long time and is burnt onto the screen surface, eventually becoming permanently visible. These programs overcome this rather annoying effect by constantly changing the image on screen, not giving it a chance to burn in. The AfterDark range has taken this coma-inducing idea and resuscitated it by creating a selection of fun and wacky animations. This collection (it features all three previous AfterDark packs too) features over 80 different animations, so it'll be some time before you tire of them. Even if you don't need a screen saver it's worth having this collection because it's so much fun — each animation is like a tiny movie where zany characters strut their stuff. Great for wasting time during the Christmas break.

CD ONLY

Price: £49
Manufacturer: Microsoft
Contact: 01743 270001
Score: 8/10

Microsoft Windows 95 Plus Pack



One for Windows 95 owners only, but essential if you've got it. Plus Pack is crammed with goodies for the Big M's new operating system, from extra sounds to background wallpaper for your desktop. There's also a selection of new screen savers — although none are as fun as those in the After Dark collection — new tricks for Windows and even utilities to schedule backups and disk optimisations for when you're not around. The best bit however is the PinBall game you get with this package — good, clean fun that'll have you wishing your keyboard had flipper buttons!



CD ONLY

Price: £19.99
Manufacturer: PD Soft
Contact: 01702 466933
Score: 5/10

Speccy II

There's an old Christmas saying that people utter on New Year's Eve to the effect of 'let out the old, show in the new', which you're supposed to recite as you run like a mad person between front door of the house and the back door. It's got something to do with seeing out the old year, and welcoming in the new — apparently. If you fancy doing the same with your PC on New Year's Eve, why not see out the old with this collection of classic Spectrum computer games? The Spectrum was one of the first home computers in the UK and many of the current game genre's were first seen on it. Playing this is like taking a step back in time. The games may all look awful compared to the latest PC standards, but the gameplay is still there and given the huge number on the CD, it's great value for money.



Personal Computer World
EDITOR'S CHOICE

Best Sound Card
Sound Galaxy WaveRider 32+
April 1995

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VALUE FOR MONEY

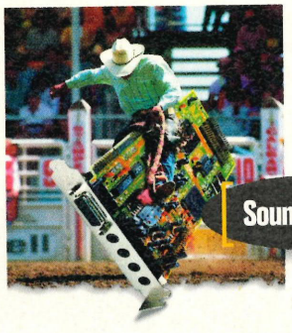


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Maxtor hard drive kit

It's big, it's fast, it's the computer equivalent of a Rolls Royce V12 — the Maxtor 1600Mb (read and weep.)



Within a week of installing Windows 95 everyone will find they need more hard drive space. Windows 95 swallows valuable storage space at an alarming rate. Yet fitting new, bigger hard drives is notoriously difficult — fitting it, changing jumper pins, formatting it....

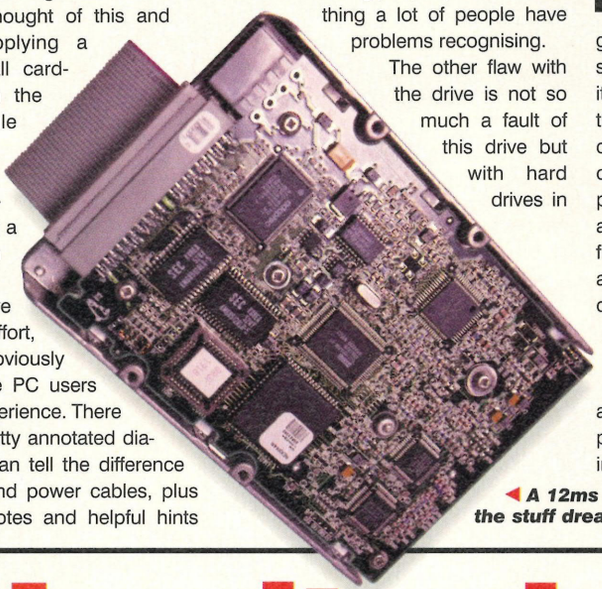
Maxtor has thought of this and instead of supplying a drive in a small cardboard box with the usual miniscule sheet of technical mumbo-jumbo, it supplies the drive in a big box and with a big manual.

You really have to applaud the effort, the manual is obviously written for those PC users with minimal experience. There are plenty of pretty annotated diagrams so you can tell the difference between data and power cables, plus loads of little notes and helpful hints about static electricity and the importance of primary and secondary IDE drives. The only thing missing is a picture illustrating jumper pins — something a lot of people have problems recognising.

The other flaw with the drive is not so much a fault of this drive but with hard drives in general. Who ever thought of building something for consumer use that has all its electronics exposed? And who ever thought that it would be a good idea to change the settings by moving a tiny bit of plastic between an even smaller two pronged metal fork — other wise known as jumper pins. These problems aside fitting is very easy thanks to the manual and the kit — you can even fit this 3.5" drive in a 5.25" drive bay!

Once the hardware fitting is complete it's time to install the software. And here Maxtor comes out tops again. A utility called Max*Blast is supplied that does it all for you. No more trying to find the relevant chapter in the mysterious vanishing MSDOS manual to figure out formatting and the like. Instead, after you've run the software all you'll notice is that you now have one or more new partitions.

I have to say that this was one of the easiest hard drives I've ever had to fit and install. Even the most technophobic of users can fit it — superb.



A 12ms access time,1600Mb hard drive — the stuff dreams are made of!

Price: £342 + vat
Manufacturer: Maxtor
Contact: 01483 747356

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Storage device

System requirements:
286 or better, IDE interface

Value for money:
Pretty good considering you get all you need for no extra cost.

9

Logitech ThunderPad

John Kennedy uses the Logictech ThunderPad controller to reach terminal velocity.

If someone can show me a better reason for networks than a linked game of Terminal Velocity then they take things way too seriously. Looping back through the clouds to catch your opponent unawares before launching a four-beam laser into his backside. Ah, the simple things in life are the most enjoyable.

If you take your games seriously, you'll need a sensible control method. In the old days, which historians call the "Pre-Nintendo/Sega console period", old-timers like me used strange psuedo-Freudian devices called "joysticks". Some of these "joysticks" even had four giant sucker-cups on the bottom for a reason no-one has even been able to explain (some postulate they were used to stick the joystick to the fridge).

Anyway, in these enlightened days of course, everyone uses a gamepad: and it's easy to see why. Gamepads are more responsive, more reliable and don't give you that peculiar form of cramp. This delightfully subtle Thunderpad from Logitech adds a touch of class to your desktop. In fact, you might even get away with convincing the boss that it's a mouse replacement for Windows 95 if you are sure s/he won't ask for a demonstration.

When they are safely out of sight, load up Terminal Velocity again and enjoy the fact that with six buttons, you can program the extra shoulder switches for accelerate/decelerate and still have enough left over for afterburners.

With the nice long cable you can sit or stand back far enough to protect your eyesight (and keep spittle off the screen when you scream in anger at your Doom buddies) and the tough plastic will easily withstand being dropped or thrown as a weapon.

The pad is snug to grip, and the yellow directional pad and buttons are all sensibly positioned for maximum killage. They lack springiness, but this simply means that the buttons have all been broken in for you and are ready for action without stressing you. Load up the software, sit back and let rip!



A new mouse for Windows 95 or the ultimate joypad?

Price: £24
Manufacturer: Logitech
Contact: 01344 891 313

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Joystick

System requirements:
15 pin game port

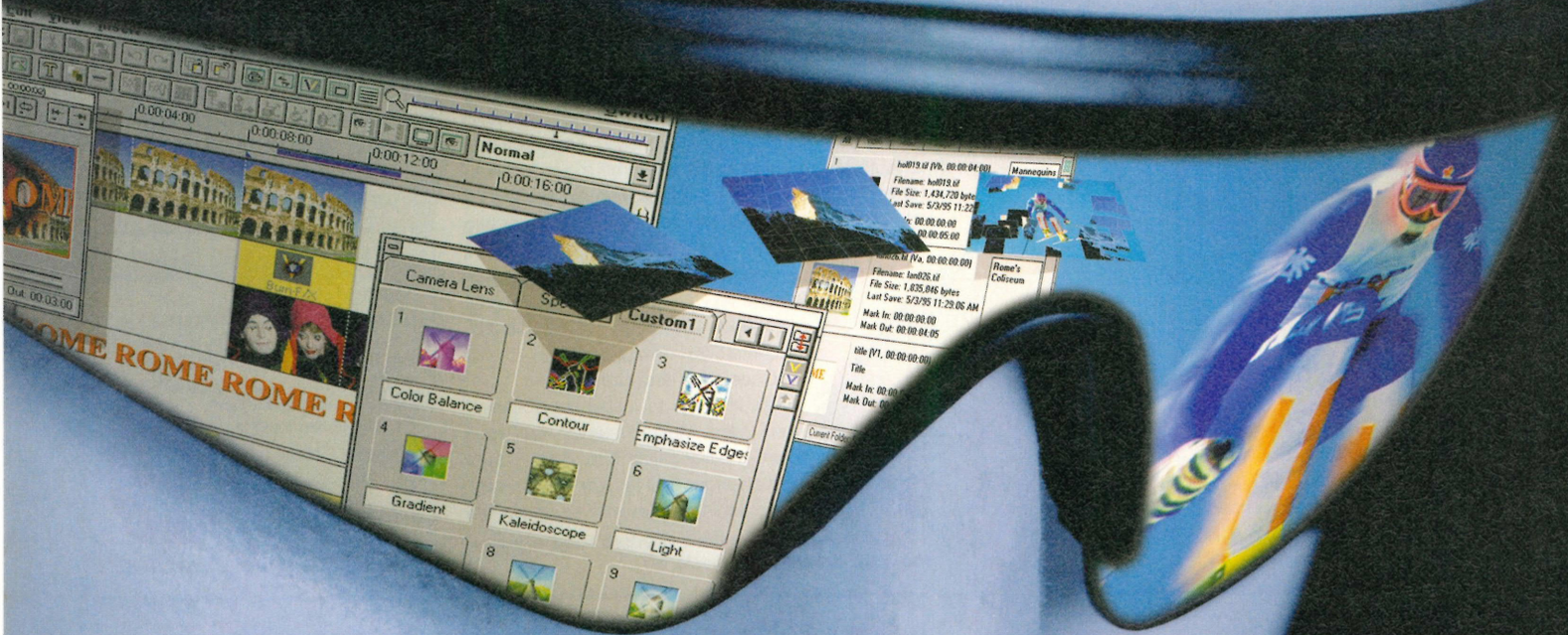
Value for money:
Worth the money, even after a long blast you can feel the quality.

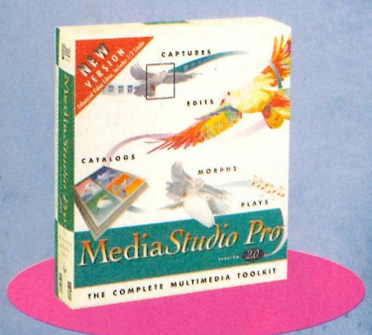
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Backer

John Kennedy has found an excuse not to video EastEnders — excellent!



DISK ONLY

Price: £34.99

Manufacturer: Danmere

Contact: (01606) 42879

Storing data on tape may bring back unhappy memories of hours spent loading games on the first early computers like C64 and Spectrum. But if you do miss the good old days, you'll love this backup system which utilises your video recorder to store masses of data onto ordinary video tape.

The hardware side of Backer consists of a single tiny ISA card which presents two Phono-style plugs at the rear of the case. One of these plugs is the video out signal, the other is the video in: sadly however, there is no indication which is which.

To connect to your video you'll need a cable to go from both these sockets to the connectors on the video. You can get this from Danmere direct or make one up from leads available from Tandy and the like. Irritatingly, the phono plugs on the card are incredibly tight: not simply tight, but incredibly tight — I actually broke the lead from a plug when I was removing it.

Well priced backup system, useful for certain tasks.

The backup software supplied (which wouldn't work under Win95) allows you to choose which files to save to tape, which compression rate to set and so on. Unfortunately, my cheap recorder wouldn't provide a sharp enough picture for the high speed modes. I was stuck with the low speed settings, although a minimum rate of 2.3Mb a minute is not to be sneezed at — it'll backup your entire system in a few hours! And you'll get a lot of data per tape so you won't have to worry about changing tapes half way through. A single three hour tape storing roughly 750Mb of data.

As a backup device it's great — but the inconvenience of having to unplug the video to backup the PC means it's only good for occasional use — but at just under 40 pounds who's complaining? If you're serious about your data however check out a proper tape drive.

Speeds

There is a choice of two back-up speeds and the compression option can be switched on and off. This means there are four different combinations to choose from. On the test system (a Pentium 75) and a test file (Doom) the rates were as follows:

Low, No compression: 2.3Mb/min
Low, Compression: 2.3Mb/min
High, no compression: 5.9Mb/min
High, Compression: 5.8Mb/min

These figures were supplied by the kindly preview option which will make sure you pick the combination of settings for your machine.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Backup peripheral

System requirements:
386 , Windows 3.1 or later VCR.

Value for money:
It's cheap and useful. Great for occasional backups in the main.

7

Family Tree

People often question Pat Fox's parentage, so he has it all written down just in case.

DISK ONLY

Price: £14.95

Manufacturer: Data Becker

Contact: (01420) 22707

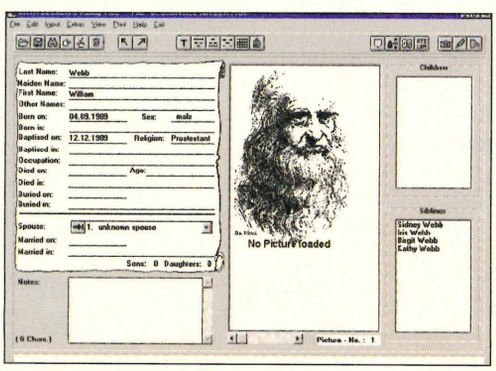
Have you ever noticed how old people are so much better at remembering family relationships than us young 'uns? My own grandmother regularly forgets my name, but can quote without hesitation the familial link between any two family members going back over a century. I can't work out anything more complicated than first cousins, but she could tell you all about my second, third and fourth cousins, once twice and three times removed — without pause for thought.

For those of us without this knack (which is apparently supplied along with your pension book), there is Data Becker's Family Tree, a nifty little utility for creating — you guessed it — family trees. It works much like a dedicated database — with fields for name, date of birth, date of death and so forth — and facilities for entering personal notes, but it is specifically designed to keep track of inter-relationships.

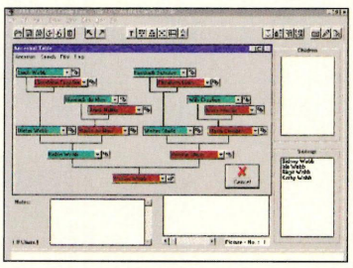
When you have built up a list of your family ties, you can view that data in a number of ways: as a traditional tree, or a simplified list, or even single out particular branches for inspection.

In addition to simply maintaining a list of your family connections, you can include scanned pictures of the subjects (if you have access to the right hardware), so that Family Tree can become a sort of structured family photo album too.

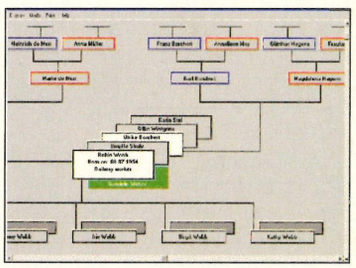
This is a well thought-out piece of software, and sensibly-priced too. Oh, and full marks to Data Becker for their common-sense packaging — just a hardback book with the disk inside. Very commendable.



Individual entries can feature pictures. William Webb apparently had a very big beard.



The ancestor view allows you to track the parentage of a single person quickly.



A traditional family tree-type arrangement. I have no idea who these people are.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Application

System requirements:
386DX, 4Mb RAM, Windows 3.1

Value for money:
Most shareware costs more, and this comes with a manual.

8

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PCR 1

PCs Packing Power

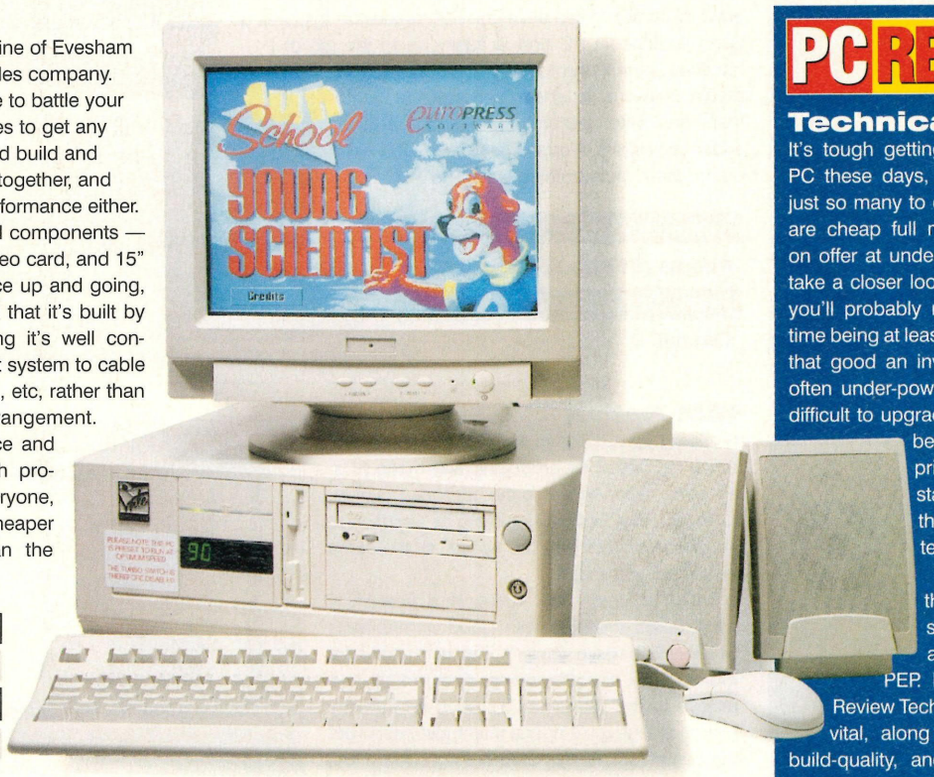
They do everything, and do it fast. Join the PC Review labs team as they road-test the very latest multimedia PCs.

Vale Multimedia P90

Vale PCs are the own-name computer line of Evesham Micros, the long standing mail order sales company. Unfortunately, that means that you have to battle your way through the sales-heavy phone lines to get any queries in. For your money you get solid build and good design, the internals are well put together, and you wouldn't feel short-changed on performance either.

For the price it's also got some good components — the Pentium 90, 2Mb of RAM on the video card, and 15" monitor particularly stand out. And once up and going, it's a dream. The only slight downer is that it's built by technical people, which while meaning it's well constructed, also means it's not the easiest system to cable up — ports being labelled VGA, COM1, etc, rather than the friendlier monitor/printer arrangement. However, the build quality, performance and bundled Microsoft Family Pack, which provides a little bit of something for everyone, leaves little to be desired. Overall, it's cheaper than the IBM, easier to set up than the Gateway and a solid multimedia PC.

Supplier: Evesham Micros
Phone: (01386) 765500
Price: £1,499
Overall: 8



Gateway P5-75

Gateway is one of the big selling PC brands at present, and the reason why is immediately clear with its P5-75. It's pretty fast, built like a tank, and is filled to bursting with top quality components. Just take the speakers, a pair of Altec Lansings. Then there's a 1 gigabyte hard drive supplied as standard — double the size of some of the hard drives found in other systems in this round-up! You won't do much better from an out-of-the-box PC. In performance terms this Pentium 75 equipped system feels faster than its specification would suggest. This is primarily because it's got some good multimedia components, and is well put together internally. Another advantage is that Gateway also give you Microsoft Office in the bundle — which would cost you about £250-£300 to buy. It also comes with Encarta which is a great example of a multimedia reference title! This collection of software, good build and specification make the Gateway a true competitor — just watch your fingers if you take the lid off — there are some sharp corners inside waiting for your fingers.

Supplier: Gateway
Phone: (0800) 552000
Price: £1,399
Overall: 7



PC REVIEW Technical Award

It's tough getting hold of the right PC these days, because there are just so many to choose from. There are cheap full multimedia systems on offer at under £1,000, but if you take a closer look at many of them, you'll probably realise that, for the time being at least, they simply aren't that good an investment. They are often under-powered and inevitably difficult to upgrade. So it's probably better to hit the mid-price option. You can start by checking out the machines we've tested here.

Of the models here the clear winner for sheer performance and power, was the PEP. But to win the PC Review Technical Award price is vital, along with performance, build-quality, and ease of use — which in terms of PCs is measured by the ease with which expansions and cables are fitted, labelling, and internal design.

Taking all these factors into account there's only one winner of the PC Review Multimedia PC round up, and it's the clear winner. The MJM Pentium 90 Multimedia system, see it on page 132.

COMING SOON...

If you've got a multimedia PC then you'll want a decent pair of speakers. Most of the speakers supplied with such PCs are fairly cheap, if you want a really good set check out the Aiwa subwoofer system — it's awesome. Then again you could take a look at our hardware round up in the March issue, which is, surprisingly enough speakers. We'll be covering the whole spectrum of speakers, from bargain basement affairs right up to those rivalling your Hi-Fi.

Pardon?

Hard drive: A device inside your computer that holds your programs, data, games, etc when you aren't using them. Go for the biggest hard drive you can afford.

RAM: The computer memory, holds the information while your working on it. It comes in two forms, namely:

DRAM: The type of memory used for general programs and data storage. You'll want lots of this for Windows 95 (at least 8Mb, but preferably 12 or even 16Mb).

VRAM: A special type of high speed memory for holding the pictures and video shown on the monitor. It costs a lot more than DRAM but will give faster picture displays.

Monitor sizes: Measured in good ol' imperial inches from one corner to the opposite diagonal corner. The bigger the screen the more you'll be able to see. For Windows you really want a 15" model.

Sound: PCs use plug-in expansions to provide their audio capabilities. The most common, and industry standard, expansion is the Sound Blaster range. For games and multimedia type stuff Sound Blaster compatibility is a must.

Sound Blaster 16: This is an updated version of the original Sound Blaster card, and provides 16-bit compact disc quality sound. For music editing you'll also probably want WaveTable support.

WaveTable cards: These have sounds of real musical instruments digitally pre-recorded on board. When you ask them to play C Sharp on a piano you'll hear the real sound of a piano. FM Synthesis cards, like Sound Blaster, on the other hand produce computerised versions, and don't sound at all realistic.

CD-ROM drives: A PC equivalent of an audio CD player. PC CD-ROM drives can play your music CDs, the CDs themselves can also hold huge amounts of data and programs.

MJN Pentium 90 MM

The MJN Pentium 90 MM is the fastest thing for its price, even faster than dearer rivals, thrashing PCs like the IBM model in general performance. There's a wonderful 16Mb of RAM under the bonnet to power the needs of Windows 95, and a big 840Mb hard disk for the more space-hungry user. Sure there are little niggles, like styling that makes it look more like an architect's model of the South Bank than a piece of household electronics. It could also do with 2Mb of video RAM, instead of the 1Mb supplied — which you'll need for higher resolutions with lots of colours, and a 15" monitor instead of the 14" model would have been nice. But these niggles aside, and taking into account its hefty hard drive and P90 processor it makes a good multimedia PC and is easily up to the job of handling games and today's demanding multimedia software. In sheer performance terms there are better performers — such as Cray super-computers, Ferraris and the such like, but for the money nothing shifts like this.

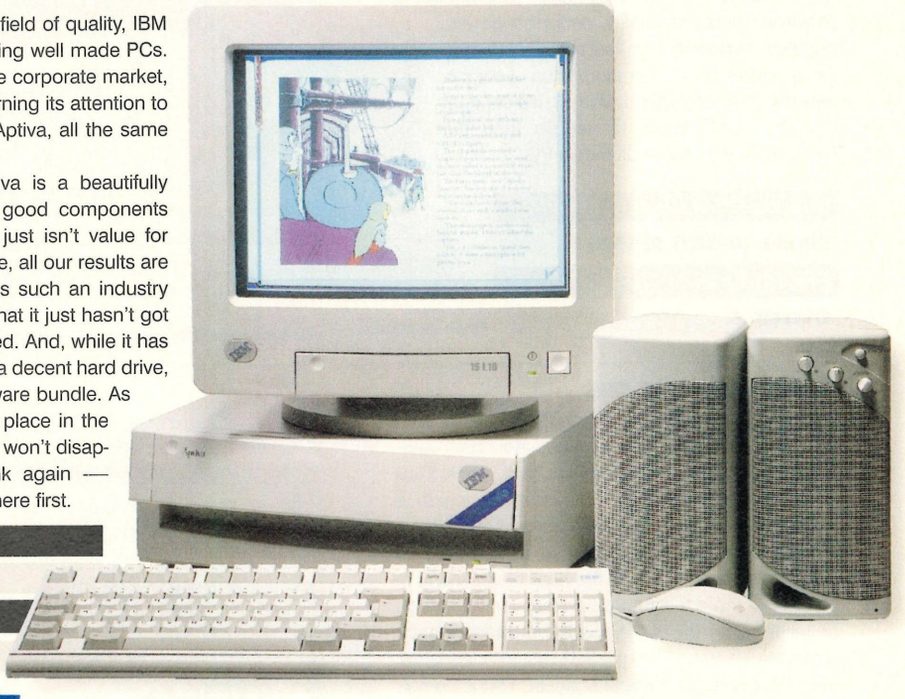


Supplier: MJN
Phone: (01282) 777555
Price: £1,526.32
Overall: 9

IBM Aptiva

Stepping up a notch in the field of quality, IBM has a reputation for producing well made PCs. It's been better known in the corporate market, for sure, but now that it's turning its attention to the home market with the Aptiva, all the same values shine through.

Sadly, although the Aptiva is a beautifully constructed machine with good components which will behave itself, it just isn't value for money. Look at performance, all our results are relative to the IBM since it's such an industry standard, but you'll notice that it just hasn't got the oomph where it's needed. And, while it has got proper video RAM, and a decent hard drive, IBM's skimped on the software bundle. As a work of art, fit to take its place in the Design Museum, the Aptiva won't disappoint. As a computer think again — check out the others seen here first.

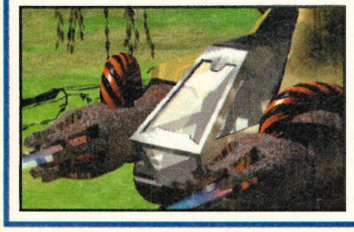


Supplier: IBM
Phone: (0345) 727272
Price: £2,199
Overall: 5

Multimedia Pcs — What They Do...

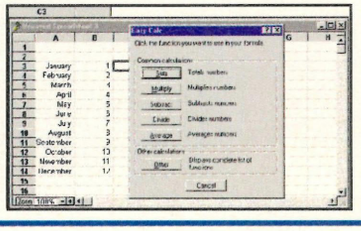
Games

These PCs will play all of the latest games: Doom, Worms, Command & Conquer. Name your game they'll play it. But you'll want lots of processing power, and a good CD drive for top performance.



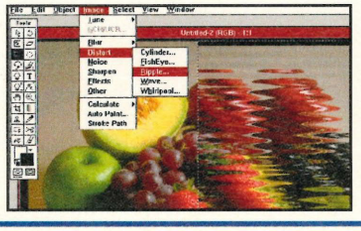
Business Bonus

None of these PCs will flinch when it comes to running business applications like spreadsheets, word processors and databases, in fact they have more power than needed. But watch out for hard drive space — you'll want lots of it.



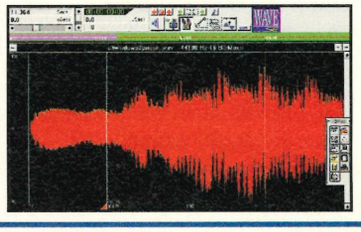
Graphics Galore

For editing your photographs, painting or drawing you want max processing power which comes as standard in these models. For this a good graphics card and bags of memory are required. A large monitor is highly recommended.



Music Mayhem

All these PCs come equipped with 16-bit sound cards as standard, so you'll be able to create, edit and play your own digital music. They don't however have WaveTable support so watch out if you're intending to create real music.



PEP ExPro 5133

If you're really going for the dog's danglies of computing, and you're willing to splash out your hard-earned savings, then a PEP PC is certainly one of the contenders even before we've discounted the IBM system as an over-priced under-performer.

The ExPro 5133 is sturdy, appealing to look at, has well thought out buttons and drive bays, clean internal architecture, and good quality components. It's stunningly quick, more-so than other P133s we've seen, even under Windows, with only an extra 8Mb of RAM really missing from making this the ultimate specification machine, guaranteed to turn your friends green with envy when they clap eyes on the smooth scrolling graphics of most any game on the market. And it's got a mini-tower case, so has loads of room for future expansion. On the down side, you need to have a lot of readies to buy one. Not more than other similar P133 systems, but still a heavy amount of dosh. But if you have the money, then it's a great investment. The design is excellent for upgrades, anticipating the need for even more power at your fingertips, and that shouldn't come too soon with this machine.

It's a stunning piece of electronics at only a few hundred quid more than the terminally average IBM, and you won't regret a penny if you shell out for it. Highly recommended, if only I could afford one!



Supplier: PEP

Phone: (01923) 212611

Price: £2,438

Overall: 8

The details...

Make	Gateway	Vale	MJM	IBM	PEP
Model	P5 75	Multimedia P90	P90 MM	Aptiva	ExPro 5133
Processor Speed	75	90	90	100	133
Memory Fitted	8Mb	8Mb	16Mb	8Mb	8Mb
Hard disk Size	1Gb	528Mb	850Mb	850Mb	1.1Gb
Screen Size	15"	15"	14"	15"	15"
Graphics Card RAM	2Mb DRAM	2Mb DRAM	1Mb DRAM	1Mb VRAM	2Mb DRAM
Sound Card	SB16	SB16	Telesound	SB16	Vibra 16
Multimedia Rating*	0.89	0.78	0.95	1	1.49
System Performance	0.78	1.02	1.26	1	1.86
Score	7	8	9	5	8

**** The IBM Aptiva (as the industry standard and the mid range Pentium system here) is the reference system. Multimedia and System Performance figures are in relation to this Aptiva, 1 being equal, below being slower, higher being faster.***

Watch out

It's all very well wanting a multimedia PC, but the specification of the components in the PC (hard drives, memory, etc) you want will largely depend upon what software you intend to run. Along the bottom of these pages you'll find common multimedia software types, each listing the particular hardware needed to run them. But what of operating systems? Here for your delectation are the major operating systems with their common requirements.

Windows 95: Starting with the latest OS from the Seattle boys and girls, Windows 95 is the most hungry of all the operating systems currently on the PC. Memory wise you'll need at least 8Mb, and ideally 12 or 16Mb for running applications. You'll also want a big hard drive, don't even think about anything less than 500Mb, 840Mb should be your minimum. These two aside, a good graphics card is also pretty useful, as is a quad speed drive.

OS/2 Warp: As powerful as Windows 95, although arguably less friendly, OS/2 Warp has similar requirements. Although it doesn't need massive amounts of RAM, we wouldn't recommend anything less than 12Mb, and again go for a major hard drive size — going cheap may seem like a good idea at first, but you'll regret it when you have to buy another drive in six months time.

Linux: A specialised Unix clone for PCs — not many will use it, but a few do. For a good Linux system you'll want a large hard drive and although Linux is less demanding of RAM than Windows 95, you'll still want 8Mb as minimum.

Windows 3: Compared to its big brother, Windows 3 has minimal hardware requirements. You don't really need a Pentium at all — it'll get by on a 386 — so all of these PCs will fly. After that you can pretty much make do with 4Mb RAM, although adding an extra 4Mb will help no end. It also requires little in the way of hard drives, at a push you'll get away with 200 or 300Mb drives!

What's missing?

The PCs seen here are intended for use as multimedia systems but strangely none of them comply with the latest industry standard dictating what a multimedia PC should have. MPC 3 (laid down in July 1995) states that a 16-bit sound card with Wavetable support is needed, none of the sound cards used here support this. They do however meet MPC 2 standard, surpassing it in most cases. For more details on MPC3 check http://www.spa.org

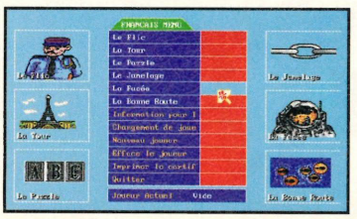
Playing Audio CDs

Every PC here has a CD drive, and can play all your music CDs, be it the latest Beatles CD or a classic Dire Straits album, they'll handle it. You'll also want good speakers — even better you could hook the PC up to a stereo.



Education

Not PC Review territory but still worth a mention. If you're looking for a PC for running educational titles these five models will be fine. There's no real main ingredient for educational software — instead opt for good all rounder.



Multimedia Reference

No matter what your interests you'll find a multimedia reference title that appeals. Here you'll want a good set of speakers, a good graphics card, and a meaty processor, don't consider anything less than 8Mb.

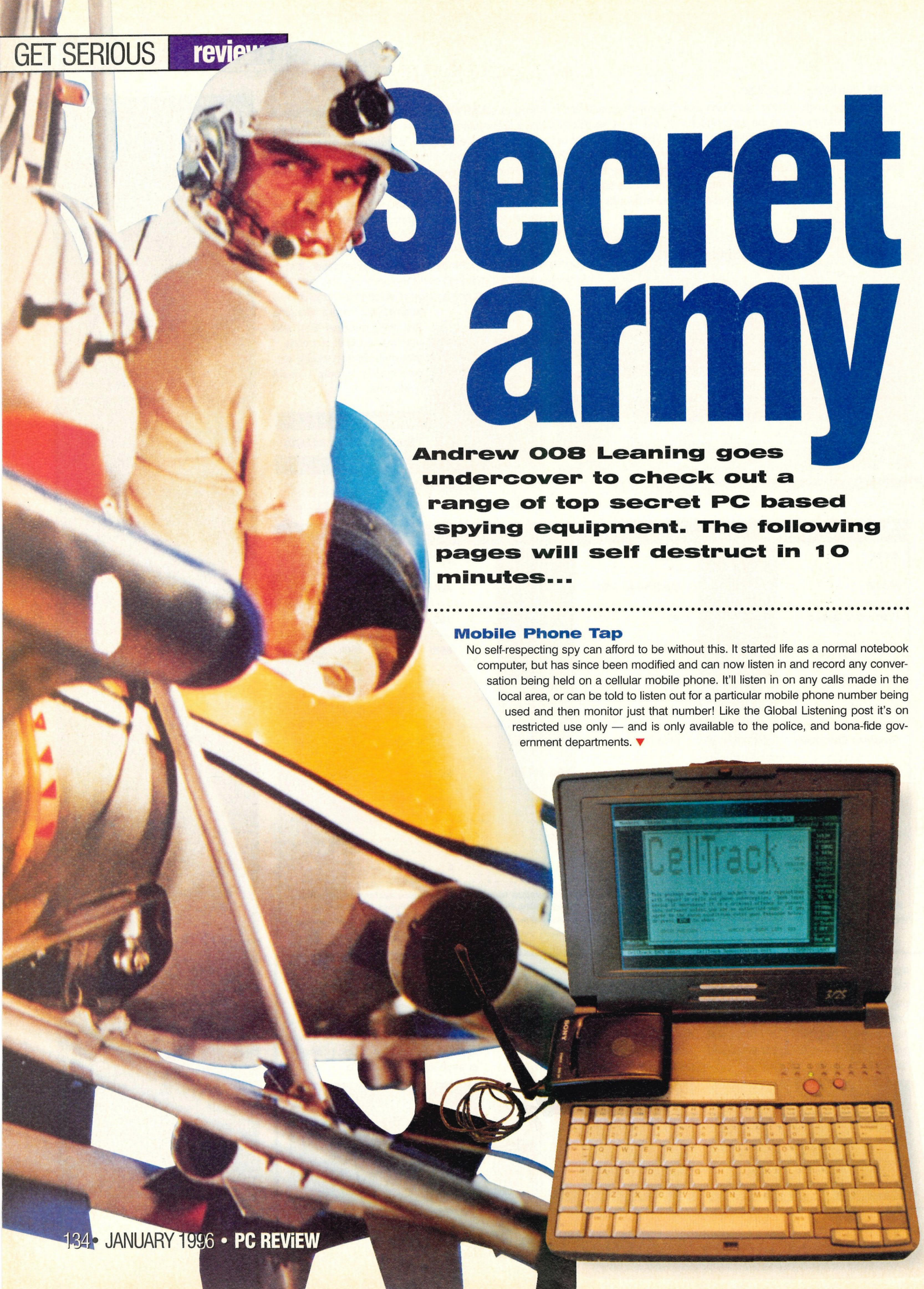


Secret army

Andrew 008 Leaning goes undercover to check out a range of top secret PC based spying equipment. The following pages will self destruct in 10 minutes...

Mobile Phone Tap

No self-respecting spy can afford to be without this. It started life as a normal notebook computer, but has since been modified and can now listen in and record any conversation being held on a cellular mobile phone. It'll listen in on any calls made in the local area, or can be told to listen out for a particular mobile phone number being used and then monitor just that number! Like the Global Listening post it's on restricted use only — and is only available to the police, and bona-fide government departments. ▼

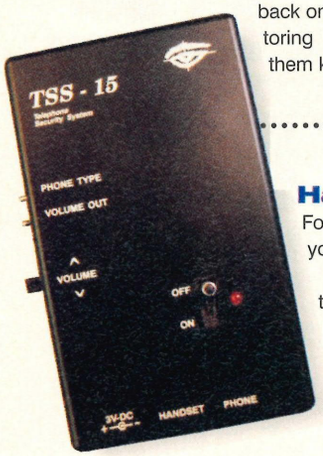


TOP SECRET



On the case

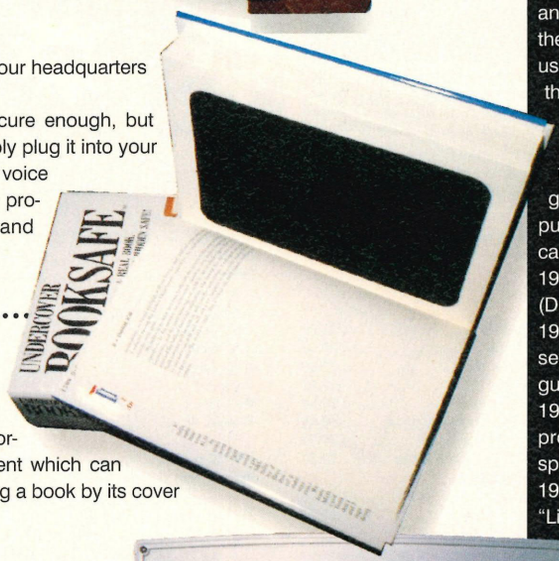
Okay, so it's got nothing to with PCs, but it's so cool we just had to feature it anyway! From the outside it's a normal attache case, at the flick of a switch however it starts recording, in glorious colour video, whatever it's pointed at (the spy hole on the side is so small you'd never know it was a camera). The film can be watched in the case via a small colour screen, or played back on a bigger TV. Ideal for monitoring enemy operatives without them knowing. ▶



Handset Scrambler

For reporting confidential data back to your headquarters you need to protect your information.

Software based encoders aren't secure enough, but this Bond gadget is hard to beat. Simply plug it into your phone line and it'll provide discrete voice and data scrambling — suitable for protection against eavesdroppers and enemy agents. ◀



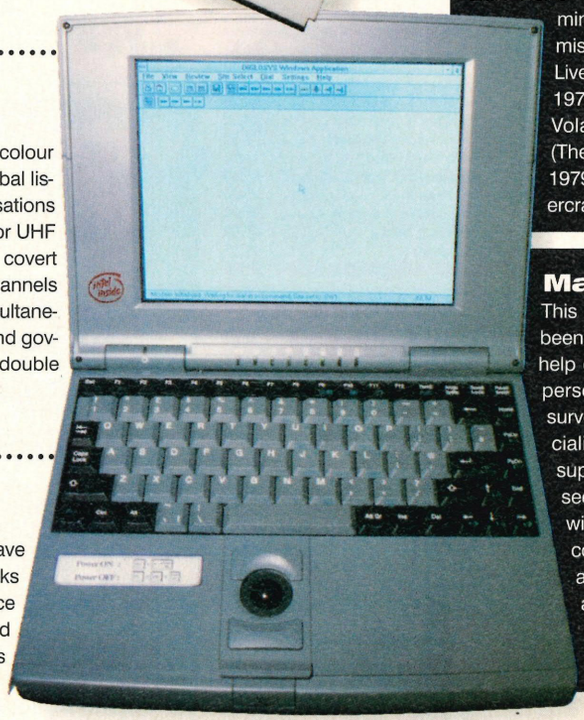
Book Safe

Got any confidential material stored on floppy disks? Then the book safe is just for you. The stuff of children's comics, from the outside, the book safe looks and feels just like a normal book. Yet open it up and there's a secret compartment which can store your disks or other confidential material. Never judging a book by its cover has never been more true. ▶



Global Listening Post

It looks like a normal PC, albeit slightly different in colour and with an ariel on the top, but in reality it's a global listening post able to monitor and record conversations held on public telephone lines, VHF, Microwave or UHF transmission systems — in short the ultimate covert surveillance device. It can even record 64 channels (conversations on different radio channels) simultaneously. Not surprisingly it's restricted to police and government departments, international spies and double agents only... ◀



Global Surveillance System (GSS)

Hook this innocent looking notebook computer up to a camera and you have the perfect surveillance device. Supporting up to 16 cameras, the GSS links cameras with the public telephone network so you can carry out surveillance on people anywhere in the world. The inconspicuous looking notebook would never be identified as an intelligence gathering unit. It also has motion sensors so it can switch on only when movement is detected. ▶

On Her Majesty's Secret Service

Message Starts ... STOP ... Activision to release espionage thriller game ... SpyCraft: The Great Game features ex-major general of the KGB – Oleg Kalugin and CIA Director – William Colby ... Game written by James Adams – defence correspondent to Sunday Times and international author of nine books on spying ... Game scheduled for release February 1996 ... STOP ... Message ends

An amusing little toy, Mr Bond...

Computer-controlled espionage made its on-screen debut in the flashily directed Billion Dollar Brain, starring Michael Caine as Bond antithesis, Harry Palmer. However, the latest 007 flick, Goldeneye, brings us bang up to date and straight on the bandwagon with an "Internet" mad villain and a new digitally friendly Bond babe. Here, though, are highlights from the golden years of Jimmy's non-computerised but nonetheless brilliant career in killer technology...

1962 – flame-throwing assault vehicle (Dr No)

1964 – Aston Martin DB5 with ejector seat and forward-firing machine guns (Goldfinger)

1965 – rocketpack, underwater propulsion system with onboard spearguns (Thunderball)

1967 – Hand-held rocket gun and "Little Nellie" gyrocopter with aerial mines and heat seeking missiles (from You Only Live Twice)

1977 – Aston Martin Volante-cum-submersible (The Spy Who Loved Me)

1979 – Gondola-cum-hovercraft (Moonraker).

Many thanks

This feature wouldn't have been possible without the help of Mike at SpyCatcher, personal protection and surveillance systems specialists. Spycatcher can supply all the covert tools seen on this page, along with many others. The company is also available for consultation and advice. Contact the company on 0171 245 9445.

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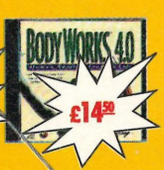
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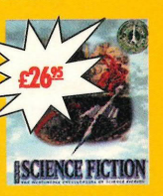
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DOS 7.0 in Win95

Optimising the Windows 95 version of MS-DOS is a breeze. The perfectly named Paul Breeze explains all...

Getting DOS 7 documentation

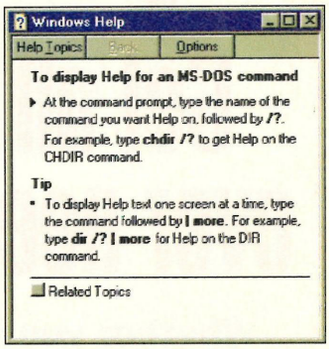
You might be forgiven for thinking that Microsoft wants to keep the launch of its brand new version of MS-DOS a closely guarded secret. MS-DOS 7 was released quietly in September as part of Win95. Perhaps Microsoft was hoping we'd forget that DOS still exists! But since Win95 still has so many problems , you need a knowledge of DOS 7 in order to run most current games within it. Hence this month's tutorial.

Unfortunately, in its effort to make Win95 look easy to use, Microsoft overlooked DOS 7 when it came to providing documentation and support. If you bought Win95 on floppy disks for instance, your main source of support will be the Win95 help file, since the printed manual is pretty thin in terms of both information and width! CD users are luckier. They have something called the resource kit. But it would be easy to miss it if you didn't know it was there. To find it, look for

\ADMIN\RESKIT\HELPFILE\WIN95RK.HLP

The ADMIN directory is in the root directory of the Windows95 CD, which you can open the file using Explorer. This is the Win95 bible, according to Microsoft.

For instructions on DOS in Windows 95 you're limited to the on-line help.



Using the DOS 7 interface

Die-hard DOS users who regard Windows as a thing only to be used by wimps may be interested to know that you can stop the Win95 graphic interface loading automatically. This is done by changing a default setting in the MSDOS.SYS file in the root directory. Do make a backup first, because this is a crucial system file. To edit it you will also need to change the attributes using the DOS ATTRIB command. The line to look for in this file is:

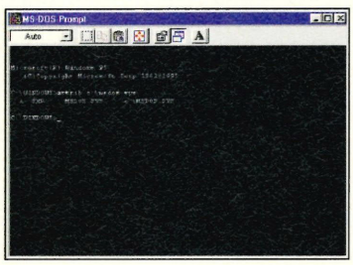
BootGUI=1

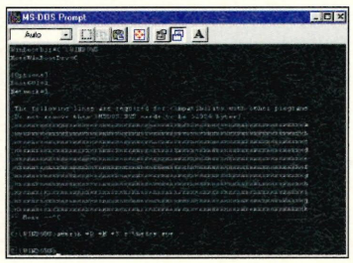
Change the 1 to a 0 and hey presto! At the same time you can turn off the animated Windows95 screen that appears when the system boots up by adding the line

Logo=0

Change the attributes of the file back using the ATTRIB command again when you have finished.

To do this type 'Attrib +R+S+H MSDOS.SYS' at the C:\ prompt. By the way, to start Win95 after this, simply type WIN at the DOS prompt, just like before.





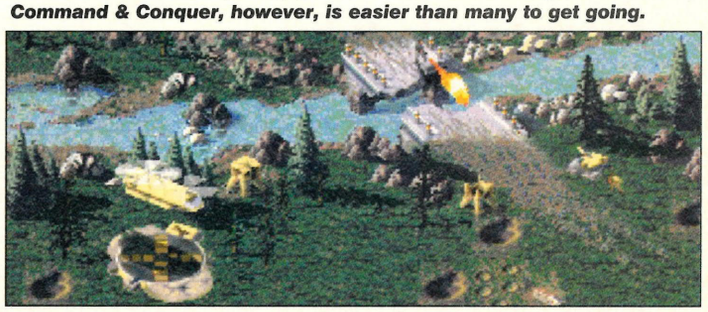
◀ ***To stop Wind95 automatically loading you'll need to edit the MSDOS.SYS file, but be careful.***

Running DOS games

To run DOS games inside Win95, the operating system provides you with two options. You can either run games in a DOS window inside Win95 or let the program automatically exit to DOS first, returning to Win95 when the game ends. There is a catch however. Either way, the amount of memory available for running the DOS software is determined by lines in the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. If you don't maximise the amount of memory before Win95 loads, you won't have the memory available while it is running. If you are a memory-hungry operator, you should have cottoned on to QEMM from Quarterdeck by now. This comes with a program called Optimize which automatically configures the system to release as much memory below 640k as possible. Microsoft provides Memmaker, which does the same thing, though usually not quite as well. To run either of these programs, the secret is to shut down Win95 using the Restart The Computer in MS-DOS Mode option. Run either Optimize or Memmaker from here and they will both work. Once run you should find that most of the memory you lost when Win95 installed itself has been retrieved. Most, but not all. QEMM could provide around 634 kB on many systems running MS-DOS 6.2. That has now been reduced to around 605 kB with Win95/DOS 7.

Ironically, Memmaker can actually find more memory than QEMM for use outside Win95, but when running inside a DOS window in Win95, QEMM appears to find the most. Quarterdeck has promised a new version of QEMM for Win95. When it arrives it will, hopefully, claw back some of the lost memory.

▼ ***Just like in MS-DOS, many games need more memory under Win95. Command & Conquer, however, is easier than many to get going.***



Coming soon

Next month Paul Breeze continues his look at optimising Windows 95 DOS for games. Not only will he provide you with some useful tricks and tips, but he will also look at what Windows 95 installation does to your Autoexec.bat and Config.sys files. Reserve your copy now.

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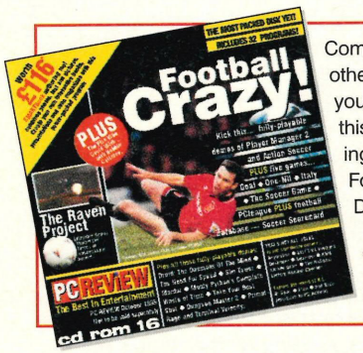
●For the Faxback service to work you must set your fax to the correct dialling code – tone dialling. This is normally done by changing the dialling method in the setup menu display. You might also have to change a tone/pulse switch on your handset. If you have any problems with the service give our Helpline a bell on (01483) 811 822.

Please note calls should cost 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times. The Faxback service is available 24 hours a day.

All the articles listed are taken from the How to section of What Personal Computer magazine. The magazine costs just £1.99 and is available on the 17th of every month from your local newsagent.

SMARTBook Tutorial

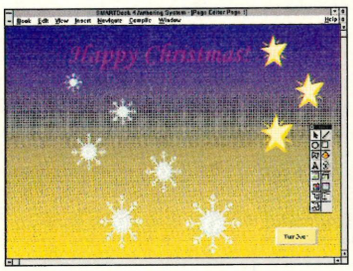
'Tis the season to be jolly . . . So how better to end our series of SMARTBook tutorials than by learning how to create a multimedia Christmas card. Andy Leaning explains.



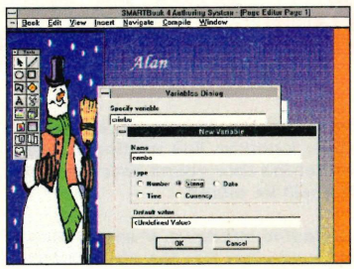
Computerised greetings cards are hugely popular in the United States at the moment, with computer-owning friends sending each other Christmas, birthday and other festive cards stored on disk. It's simply a question of loading the file up in a suitable program so you can then view it. In the supplement that came with last months PC Review we showed how to create single picture files for just this use, but why not go further? Because with SMARTBook it's possible to create interactive cards. All of the techniques for creating them are identical to those we've already covered in previous tutorials, the only difference is the content and the typical size.

For a card you only need two pages — an opening screen and an inside. Once it's created you can select the 'Create Distribution Disks' option, copy the created files to a floppy and then send them off. Your friends can then install the card and view it.

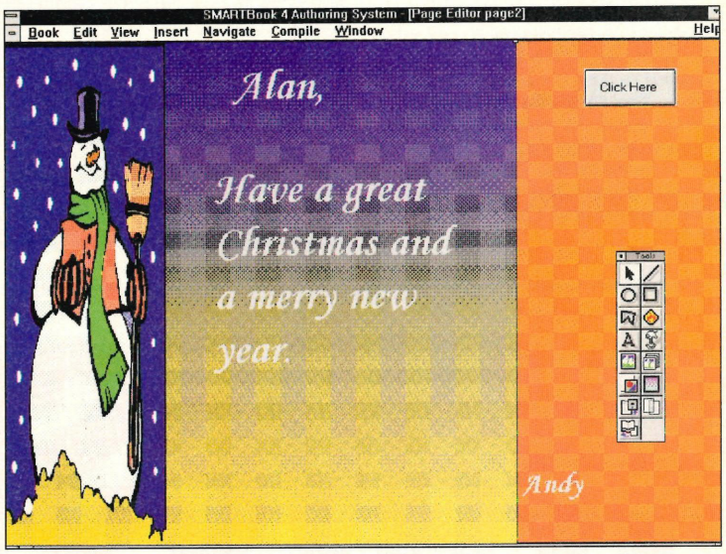
For clipart there are a mass of compact discs available that contain suitable Christmas artwork — try PD Soft (01702 466933). The pictures seen on these pages come from a SoftKey clipart collection, which has got a number of Christmas picture files on it, there are also loads of other seasonal illustrations on it for other times of year. Call SoftKey for details of its clipart CDs.



1 ***The first page of our card. It's simple and pretty (in a Christmassy sort of way). I've used a background vertical gradient to set the tone and then illustrated it with snowflakes and stars from a clipart collection. I've copied and pasted these icons several times increasing or reducing the size to add a feeling of depth. The title at the top of the page is set in a standard Windows cursive font to make it look less computerised. I used Monotype Corsiva, but any font would do. If you're looking for some attractive fonts try our cover CD this month, which has a huge collection of fonts on it. Finally, I've added a button to move to the next page at the bottom of the page. This time I've used an Embossed button and set the colour to match the background pattern so it doesn't stand out so much. Although you can't see it I've also set the button up to play a Christmas tune that I've got as a WAV file. To do this use the command 'Sound' giving it the name and location of the WAV file you want to play.***



2 ***The second page of the card is where we can use most of the power of SMARTBook to add an interactive, surprise, element to the card. Using variables we can hide messages until the reader clicks on a button. To do this place a text box on the screen, but don't type anything into it. Next select the text entry area and press the right mouse button before selecting the 'Edit' option in the menu that pops up. Finally click on the line 'Insert Variable..' that appears. You can now enter a variable name in the dialog on screen (it doesn't matter what name you use) and select a 'String' type before pressing Return — as shown here. Next select the text in the box and give it colour, size and a font — I used Silver Grey, set at 36pt in another cursive font. Variables are areas of the PCs memory where text and numbers, in this case a message, are stored. However when the reader of the card first loads it this area of memory won't have anything in it, so nothing is displayed. Now to tell the program to fill the variable with a message, which will then be displayed.***



3 ***Define a button as we've done many times before. Unlike before however this time we use the command 'Assign String' which fills the variable (part of the PCs memory) we defined earlier with our desired message. The screenshot shown here shows the final page, this time with the message present. As would happen when the eventual reader clicks on this button, the variable will fill with the message, and as we've created a text box containing this variable, its contents will then appear on the screen — as if by magic. Because we set the text box colours and so on earlier, the message will appear in the correct colours.***

To finish off I've added extra text at the bottom of the screen, so personalising it further.

Lastly, click on 'Create Distribution Disks' under the 'Compile' menu and fill in the dialog box that appears. Distribution path is where the final files will be kept, Setup Title is the title that the installer program will show when used to unpack the book, and Installation Path is where on the users hard drive the program will be put. Once finished you'll find the files in directories called Disk1, and so on. Simply copy these to floppy disks and its then ready to be distributed - alternatively you can ZIP them together and send them over the Internet to your friends.

Get hold of SMARTBook

SMARTBook was given away on the cover CD which came with our October issue. If you'd like to create Christmas cards and other multimedia productions with SMARTBook, but missed getting hold of your copy, simply call our Back Issues department on (01858) 468888. Please have your credit card number handy when you call. You may also want the other tutorials in this series which ran in the November and December issues.

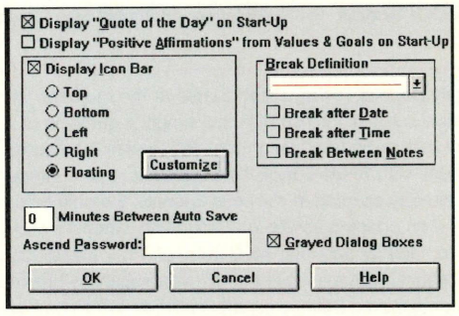
Upgrade To SMARTBook 1.1

This tutorial covers SMARTBook 1.0 given away with our October issue. An updated version is now available, this has many new commands, support for AVI video files, more background options, faster saving and lots of other options also. This version has an RRP of £316, but in an exclusive offer to PC Review readers with our cover disc it's available for £100 less at a great price of just £216. Call Frax Ltd on (01224) 621144 for more details.

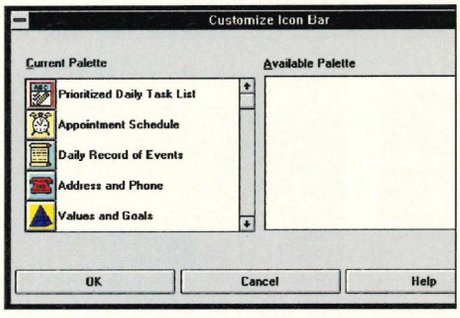
Ascend

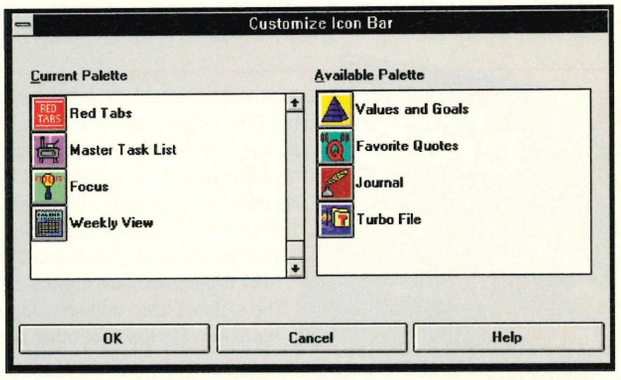
Andy Leaning ushers out our series of Ascend tutorials by showing you how to tailor the utility's toolbar to your own personal needs.

1 *First we need to get to the dialog that allows us to change the tool bar. To do this either double click on the toolbar (although not on a particular icon) or select Global Preferences and then select the Customise button — shown here. In the Global Preferences dialog there's also an option to have the icon bar floating around — so it can be moved at will on the desktop. Both of the editing options will take you on to the next screen.*



2 *You'll now see a dialog box with two lists, one called Current Palette and one called Available Palette. The Current palette lists the icons currently shown in the icon bar of Ascend — and should be all the icons. The Available Palette list shows icons not currently displayed, and thus available. As we're using all the icons on our current toolbar (the default choice) this later list won't have any icons in it.*





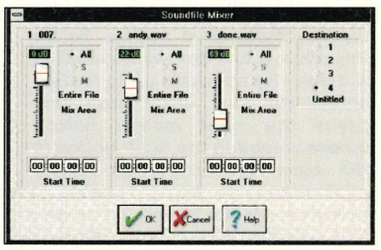
3 *To remove icons from the existing toolbar simply move the mouse over an icon in the left hand list and drag them to the right list. Once you've done this clicking on OK will return you back to the main Ascend screen, and update the toolbar accordingly. To add icons back to the tool bar drag them in reverse. Using this system you can tailor your toolbar to have just the icons you use the most.*
And that unfortunately brings us to the end of the Ascend tutorials. If you'd like more programs or this kind on our cover disks write or email us at the normal address. If you missed the September issue of PC Review with Ascend you can still get it by calling our back issues depart on (01858) 468888.

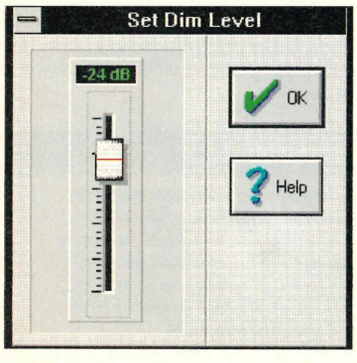
WaveSE

Our December music cover utility is so easy to use you shouldn't need a tutorial to help you. But just in case you do, Andy Leaning is on hand.

tutorial: part 1

Under the Edit menu you'll find an option called Mix. This takes up to three sound files combines them and stores them together. The window above shows the mixing panel. The three sliders on the left allow you to chose which of the four sound files the program has open are to be used as source files, and the volume level at which it will be mixed.
This menu item is used to mix up to three sound files down to a fourth.
The three boxes in the left part of this dialog correspond to three of Wave's soundfile windows. If any of these windows are empty, then the items in that box will be disabled, as in the box for window 3 in the above example. The buttons labelled M, S, and All are used to specify which part of the soundfile will be included in the mix. When you click on M, a list of the available markers will appear. The S button is used to specify the selected area, and is only available if an area is selected. Finally on the right hand side a four small buttons that allow you to set which of the four destination files the completed mix will be stored in.





The Dim button (found on the icon tool bar) allows you to quickly adjust the volume level, it even works if a sound is currently being played. To adjust the level to which it will be changed select Set Dim Level from the Options menu. The level is measured in decibels.

What's Wave

WaveSE is a powerful music and sound editing program for PCs and was given away with the December issue of PC Review. If you want to upgrade to the new version (WaveSE II) call Et Cetera distribution on 01706 228039. Alternatively you can still get the original issue of PC Review with the WaveSE cover CD (it also featured a roundup of graphics cards, 50 common problems solved and a full review of Windows 95) from our back issues sales department. For details and ordering information call them on 01858 468888.

If you're interested in sound, you're probably also want to know about our May 1996 issue of PC Review. This will feature a full round-up of PC sound cards, and will be on sale April 15th.

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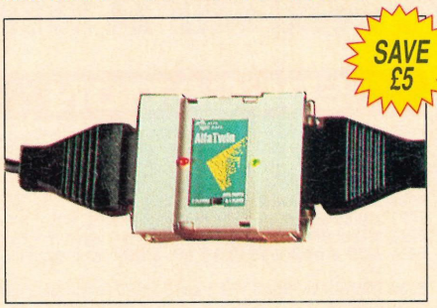


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AC01 PC-ACCOUNTING Very good. Accounts fully featured (1)
AC02 FAST BUCKS v5.07b New version. Brilliant! (1)
AC03 PURCHASE ORDER SYSTEM Ideal for business! (1)
AC04 TIME AND MONEY v1.5 Simple to use. Planning program (1)
AC05 CASH TRAC v6.08 Multi-featured tracking program (2)
AC06 B CHECK Easy, efficient checkbook program (2)
AC07 MEDLIN ACCOUNTING Excellent accounting system (1)
AC08 CHECKMATE PLUS Fully featured checkbook program (2)
AC09 CASH CONTROL Excellent program (1)
AC10 HOME MANAGEMENT II Keep track of all home ins and outs (1)
AC11 PAINLESS PAYROLL Full integrated payroll system (2)
AC12 PAINLESS ACCOUNTING v5.0 Easy to use pull down Menu driven (3)
AC13 SIMPLY BOOKKEEPER AND BILLING Very good (1)
AC14 BOTTOM LINE ACCOUNTING Fully featured accounting system - covers all (8)
AC15 PC DEAL v2.45 Double entry ledger account system (1)
AC16 BILL POWER v5.9 Time keeping, billing & bookkeeping. Excellent (1)
AC17 IN CONTROL v4.1 Tracks appointments, committments, callbacks, etc. (2)
AC18 DALTON v1.2 for individual investors to track assets & stock (1)
AC19 PC-ESTIMATOR v2.72 excellent program (2)
AC67 SOLVE IT Financial package (1)
AC68 TT time lock, ideal for solicitors and accounts (1)
AC69 EXPRESS GRAPH v. good program (1)
AC70 Z PAY powerful payroll system (2)
AC71 POWER 123 7 worksheet for Lotus 123 including documentation (1)
AC72 ORGANIZER FOR LOTUS 123 allows user to track and retrieve files easily (1)
AC73 POETRY STAR v1.1 highly interactive tutor for poetry writing (1)
AC74 PC LABEL MAKER v1.5 creates labels, print in different fonts! (1)
AC75 EZ-TREND program for forecasting future projections (1)
AC76 PERSONAL APPOINTMENT LOCATOR scheduling appointments, etc (2)
AC77 POP FORM v1.1 allows you to grab information, cram screen and print (1)
AC78 DAYO TIME AND BILLING creates invoices for services or products (2)
AC79 DAYO SMART REPORTS reports that allow you to manage purchases, etc (2)
AC80 DAYO PRICEBOOKS maintains specialised pricing for customers (1)
AC81 CALL MASTER track and set up service contracts, schedules, etc (2)
AC82 BUSINESS ANALYSIS 3 programs that will help you make better decisions (1)
AC83 PC SHIFT employee scheduling to help fill various positions (1)
AC84 BARCODE can print any kind of barcodes and labels (1)

MUSIC

M01 BLASTERMASTER play edit soundblaster (1)
M02 TRACKBLASTER excellent for .MOD files (1)
M03 DRUMBLASTER make computerised drum machines (1)
M04 GUITAR TEACHER excellent program (1)
M05 SUPER PRO PLAY play Amiga .MOD files on PC (1)
M06 PIANOMAN highly recommended (1)
M07 THE SOUNDBLASTER (1)
M08 MELODY MASTER (1)
M09 MUSICIANS TOOL BOX wicked program! (1)
M10 ADLRLOI 105 adlib ROL sound files, use with a player (1)
M11 BEATMDI midi; a collection of Beatles songs (1)
M12 BPTO5 pro MOD editor & player for EGA/VGA (1)
M13 CDBOX v2.10 excellent MOD, ROL, CMF & VOC player for SB! (1)
M14 CDP v1.20 play music CDs with your CD-ROM drive (1)
M15 COMPOS v1.2 8-channel VGA digital soundblaster composer (1)
M16 INTUNE v2.5 ROL player w/menu for soundblaser/Adlib (1)
M17 MELOD excellent PC speaker music creation program (1)
M18 MODED v2.00 music sequencer to create your own .MOD file (1)

EDUCATION

ED22 SCHOOL MUM v4.1 comprehensive education program (1)
ED23 FUNNY FACE II fun program for children (1)
ED24 HANGMAN classic program for all ages, v. good (1)
ED25 TYPE TREK good typing program (1)
ED26 COMPUTER TRIVIA QUIZ for all ages! (1)
ED27 MUMS MATHS v4.0 excellent learning program (1)
ED28 WORD GALLERY v3.0 colourful word & object program (1)
ED29 BERT'S DINOSAUR v2.0 latest version. Learn about dinos! (1)
ED30 FRENCH LESSONS v2.5 teach yourself French lang. brill tutor (2)
ED31 GERMAN LESSONS v2.5 teach yourself German lang. brill tutor (2)
ED32 ITALIAN LESSONS v2.5 teach yourself Italian lang. brill tutor (2)
ED33 SPANISH LESSONS v2.5 teach yourself Spanish lang. brill tutor (2)
ED34 RUSSIAN WORD PROCESSOR very interesting program (1)
ED35 MOKE JAPANESE excellent language program (4)
ED36 KAL program entertaining mathematics game (1)
ED37 TTT time tutorial program (1)
ED38 X WORD WRITE good crossword compiler (1)
ED39 FUNNERLS stimulating mathematics game (1)
ED40 HANGMAN v4.1 traditional English witty game (1)
ED41 C BOX maths for age groups 7-10 (1)
ED42 PLAY AND LEARN many different games for 4-8 yr olds (1)
ED43 COMPILATION OF CHILDRENS EDUC. GAMES recommended (3)
ED44 TUTOR DOS teach yourself all you need to know about DOS! (4)
ED45 GCSE: MATHS, COMPUTER STUDIES, SCIENCE & PHYSICS (4)
ED46 IQ BUILDER test your skills! (1)
ED47 PC FAST TYPE program to test how many WPM you can do (1)
ED48 LOTUS 123 TUTOR in conjunction with Lotus, many features (2)
ED49 PC QUIZ entertaining PC game (1)
ED50 FLAGS OF THE WORLD test your memory skills, good program (1)
ED51 MATHS COLLECTION wide variety of programs to improve your maths skills (3)
ED52 TUTORIAL WRITER (1)
ED53 ABC FUNKEYS for pre-schoolers. Well animated (1)
ED54 ALGEBRA TUTORIAL menu driven program, very easy to use (1)
ED55 FUN WITH DESIGN highly recommended (1)
ED56 BALLOON SPELLER good education program (1)
ED57 T. TREK very good typing game (1)
ED58 HOORAH FOR HENRIETTA a good simulation game (1)
ED89 DIFF.EQUATIONS & CALCULATIONS variety of maths problems (1)
ED90 XYSEE v3.00 VGA graph any kind of maths function (1)
ED91 MIGHTY MATH v1.4 quickly learn the Times Tables! (1)
ED92 MORAFF'S MATHER v1.0 Mather game of speed and arithmetic skill (1)
ED93 STATHELP v1.01 stat tools for both novice and experts (1)
ED94 HYPERGED v1.1 investigates geometrical properties of 4-dimensional objects (1)
ED95 NIMONIK v1.0 helps adults to improve memory skills (1)
ED96 READFAST teaches good speed reading (1)
ED97 KRYPTO computer game, encourages creativity and thinking (1)
ED98 ANIMATED MEMORY 30 animated shapes to test memory skills (1)
ED99 CREATIVITY PACKAGE v2.2 many different games to help you! (1)
ED100 COMPUSTITCH design and print cross stitch patterns (1)

GAMES

G01 DRACULA a Count Dracula arcade game (1)
G02 WOLFENSTEIN 3D (1) 5.25" - only on HD
G03 COSMOS'S COSMIC ADVENTURE (1)
G04 POWER CHESS (1)
G05 DUKE NUKEM (1)
G06 KUNG FU LOUIS (3)
G07 FLIGHT PRO-SIMULATOR (5)
G08 CREATE CROSSWORD (1)
G09 COMMANDER KEEN III (1)
G10 CAPTAIN COMIC v5 (1)
G11 PC GOLF (1)
G12 CRYSTAL CAVES (1)
G13 MARIO VGA (1)
G14 SHOOTING GALLERY (1)
G15 ALIENS ATE MY BABYSITTER (1)
G16 CROSSWORD CREATOR (1)
G17 PHAORAH'S TOMB (1)
G18 PAGANITZU (1)
G19 SECRET AGENT (1)
G20 VAMPYR (2)
G21 JUMPMAN (1)
G22 WHEEL OF FORTUNE (1)
G23 CASINO GAMES COLLECTION (1)
G24 JUNGLE JACK (1)
G25 PINBALL GAMES (1)
G26 RISK brilliant strategy game (1)
G27 DONKEY KONG very good arcade game! (1)
G28 BLACK JACK good card game! (1)
G29 DARK AGES (1)
G30 30,000 WORD DICTIONARY & ANAGRAM FINDER (1)
G31 TANK WARS (1)
G32 SCRAMBLE (1)
G33 JOYSTICK GAMES (1)
G81 PGA GOLF PGA golf game, sample 3 notes on this game (2)
G82 BUST latest puzzle game, very good graphics (1)
G83 JIGSAW PUZZLE excellent graphics (2)
G84 ARMY 12 strategy board game. Mouse needed(1)
G85 BATTLE GROUND action/strategy game (1)
G86 CONQUEST v1.7 world conquering strategy game (1)
G87 LANDSLIP strategy game, bid for electoral votes (1)
G88 DICE new game, VGA, mouse required (1)
G89 AIKEN horoscope, mindreader, fortune tellingm etc. Very good (1)
G90 ARKANOID good arcade type of game (1)
G91 BABBLE! a game for people who talk a lot (1)
G92 MARBLEMAN brilliant arcade/board game (1)
G93 CONMAN brilliant arcade/game (1)
G94 CUNNING FOOTBALL v4.5 good fun, latest version (1)
G95 CHAMPAGN run a business. Very good (1)
G96 CLASSROOM JEOPARDY (1)
G97 CLONE the very best of space invaders (1)
G98 CAPTAIN COMIC (fractured version)(1)
G99 CORPORATE SCUM work your way to the top (1)
G100 CROSSWORD GAME very extensive! (2)
G101 CRAZY SHUFFLE v.good game but like Concentration(1)
G102 DARK AGES a 'Mario' style game (1)
G103 DANGEROUS DAVE awesome VGA game (1)
G104 D. DUCK Donald Duck arcade game (1)
G105 DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (1)
G106 DRAGON HUNT a graphics oriented game (1)
G108 EMPIRE v1.5 conquest game EGA/VGA (1)
G110 FAMILY FUED brill! Family game (1)

WINDOWS

W101 ALMANAC scheduler, calender, reminder (1)
W102 CD-PLAYER brilliant win. program (1)
W103 COMMAND POST v7.2d front end menu for windows (1)
W104 SOUNDBLASTER editor for win3, brilliant (1)
W105 EASY FORMATTER v. good formatter, easy to use (1)
W106 GRAPHICS WORKSHOP excellent program (1)
W107 FINANCE MANAGER covers all aspects (2)
W108 ICON MANAGER superb utility (1)
W109 MICROCHECK home finance management (1)
W110 ORGANIZE v1.53 excellent diary like program (1)
W111 PAINLESS ACCOUNTING for windows, brill (1)
W112 PAINT SHOP PRO display/convert/print & more (1)
W113 MONEY SMITH business accounting program (1)
W114 UNICOM v3 excellent comm. program (2)
W115 WINSPELL v1.05 check spelling in win. applications (1)
W116 ORION SOL v2.0 database manager for win (1)
W117 VIRUS SCANNER Mcfees version for windows (1)
W118 TRACK personal time usage & projects (1)
W119 DUNGEONS & DUNGEONS for windows, brill (1)
W120 8 GAMES FOR WINDOWS includes card, shoot, strategy games (1)
W128 PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR WINDOWS (1)
W129 POWERPAD v1.1 (1)
W130 CLIP ART BMP (3)
W131 PARWIN genealogy program (1)
W132 COMMAND POST v7.2d (1)
W133 FRACTINT v127.2 (1)
W134 SMART ACCOUNTS v1.2 (1)
W135 RUN PK ZIP FROM WINDOWS (1)
W136 WIN ORGANISE (1)
W137 METZ UTILS COLLECTION (2)
W138 ATM FONTS FOR WINDOWS (1)

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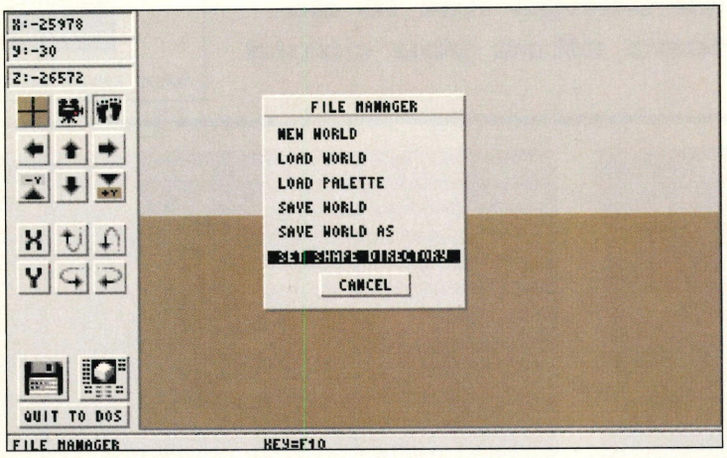
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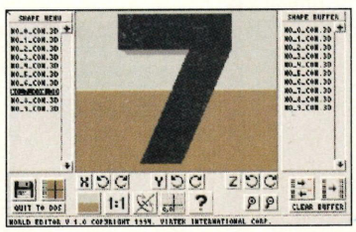
3D-Ware

Kicking off the 3D-Ware tutorial this month we show how to create your own 3D world.

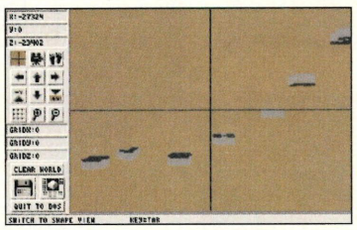




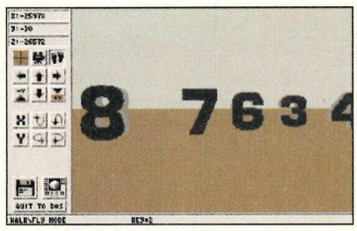
1) Start off by running the World program, found in the virtek\dos\utils directory. This is a tool for building your own worlds. As you move the mouse over the icons you'll see a description appear at the bottom of the screen. Click on the File Manager icon, and select 'SET SHAPE DIRECTORY' giving it the DOS\SHAPES\CHARSETS\BIGNUMBERS directory. Click on OK to move back to the main view.



2) Now click on the Shape View icon and press F9. Shape View allows you to select the shapes (3D objects that will make up your world) to use. F9 copies all of the shapes in the directory selected earlier to the Shape Buffer. This buffer is a store to allow the selected shapes to be used within the program later on, in this case for positioning.



3) Press TAB to jump back to the main view. Now it's time for you to position the objects that will populate your world. Press 1 and then press the left mouse button. You'll now see an object on screen, move the mouse to position it and set it in place by pressing the mouse button again. Pressing F6 will show the next object in the buffer. Place several objects and then click the right mouse button.

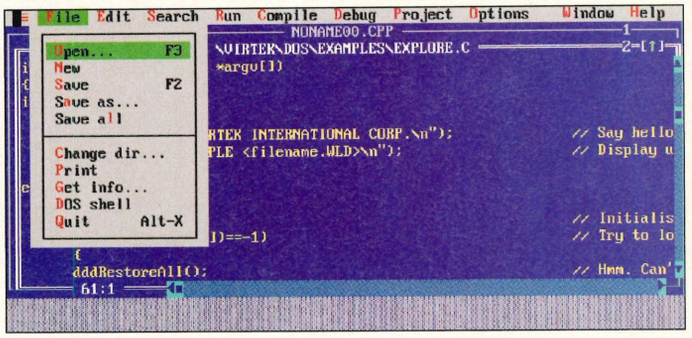


4) Now you've laid out your world you can move around it. Click on the icon of two feet, this will allow you to move over your world, and around the objects you've just placed. Use the arrow keys to move around — if you don't see anything at first hold down the left or right keys until something scrolls into view, then use the up and down keys to move towards or away from it. Hey presto, your first 3D world.

This tutorial relates to the personal version of 3D-Ware. If you want to upgrade to the professional version call Virtek on (0161) 237 9929. To order our November issue (with 3D-Ware) call (01858) 468888.

Try it and C

You may think computer languages are full of quirks, rules and confusing terms, but once over the jargon you'll find languages like C++ straightforward and easy to use. Good programming is more about being able to split problems down into logical pieces, than about being a jargon-head.



Programs are composed of commands telling the computer what to do and how to do it. When you run a program it acquires an input, it then processes this and the result is performed. For example in a war game the input could be a missile being fired, the computer would then process where the missile lands and if it hits its target a explosion would be displayed. In most cases programs do not run sequentially, instead they flow to suit your needs. In C++ are three statements used to control the flow of data: if, for, and while. 'if' performs actions when a particular condition is met (a condition can be either true or false). 'for' and 'while' are used to loop a set of statements until a condition is met.

Try the program below with TurboC Lite compiler on issue 49's cover-mounted CD-ROM.

```
#include <stdio.h>

// Give Me Five - a simple program which uses the while
statement to count to five

main()
{
    int count=1, sum=0;
    // define count and sum as integer variables

    printf("Give me Five: \n");
    // print title

    while (count <= 5) {
                sum = sum +1;
                count = count + 1;
                printf("Take %d \n", sum);
                }
}
```

The symbol <= represents the "less than or equal to" operator. A test is made to see if the variable count is less than or equal to five. If it is, the group of statements enclosed by curly brackets {} are performed. These add one to the count and to the sum. The while statement will loop the program until count is greater than five. The printf statement is used to display the numbers counting up to five.

Hopefully this tutorial has given you a taste of C, the best way to learn programming is to do it. I recommend taking a look at Visual C++ For Dummies by Michael Hyman and Bob Arson (published by IDG books), and you'll soon be able to C for yourself (groan!).

NET Surf Of the Month...

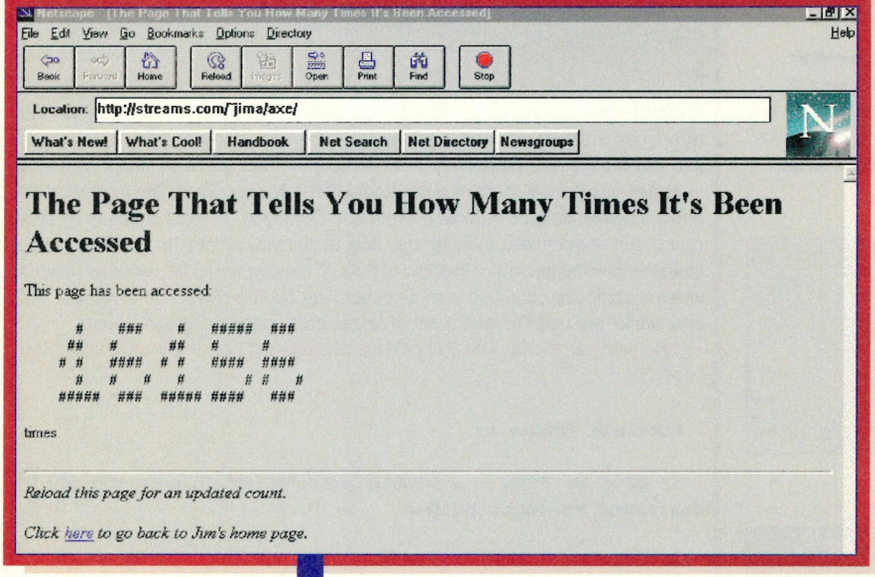
Busily doing nothing, working the whole day through, trying to find find lots of things not to do. Pat Fox looks for the most useless sites you could ever hope to find on the 'net.

KEY
00:50
£ 00.00
Top: time taken
Bottom: amount spent

http://www.primus.com/staff/paulp/useless.html
http://streams.com/~jima/axe/

By far the most satisfying way to find useless stuff on the 'net is to stumble across it accidentally, but that's not really a practical way to research an article. So instead I consult The Useless WWW pages, a repository (or is that suppository?) of all things aimless on the 'net. Here there are literally hundreds of sites devoted to the pursuit of pointlessness, all arranged in thematic lists to make your surfing experience that much simpler. So I make my start at the site that probably started it all: snappily entitled The Page that Tells You How Many Times It's Been Accessed, I think you can probably hazard a guess as to what it does. In case you were interested, it had been accessed 16156 times when I visited. Whoopee

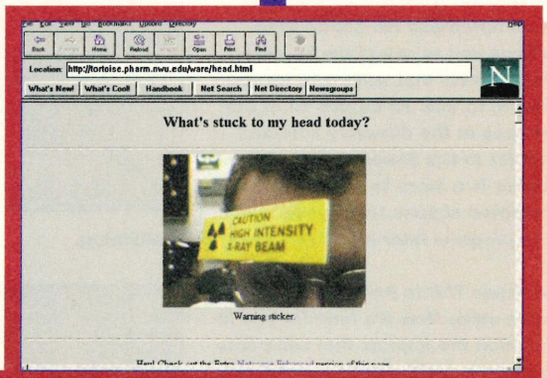
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£ 00.60



http://nlu.nl.edu/ben/mind/
http://www.cie.uci.edu/~cie/staff/sylte/99.html
http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~jburk/sog/chicken1.html

Is it possible to get any more pointless than this? Well, yes. Try logging on to the Mind Reader page, to see just how silly some people can be - it really does read your mind, and it's uncannily accurate, honest. If you've ever come up against the problem of being unable to remember the lyrics to "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall", then help is at hand because some bright spark has compiled them all for you - just print them out and you're away. And if you're sick and tired of your boring humanoid form, then just try The Page that Turns you into a Chicken. It's a riot. I should imagine.

00:46
£ 01.84

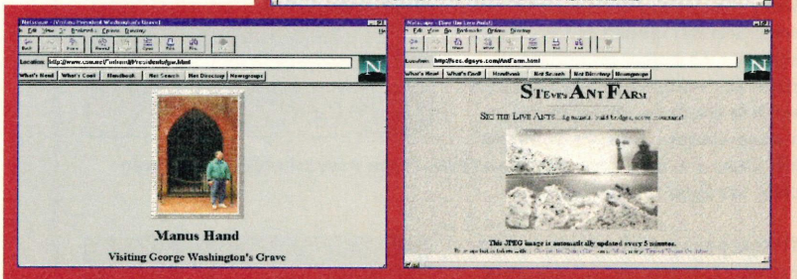


http://redwood.northcoast.com/cgi-bin/fishtime
http://www.chaco.com/~glenn/jack/

Next stop is a page with the a supremely curious name: Foam Bath Fish Time is inspired silliness, allowing you to play with a bunch of plastic fish, or use a set of magnetic letters to spell out the message of your choice - all in a virtual sense of course. In a similar vein is the Virtual Jack'o'Lantern page, where you select your pumpkin heads' facial characteristics from a list, and then it goes away to create it for you. You might need a VRML viewer to see the result, though. You could probably do this at home with a sharp knife and a large fruit, but this is the electronic age, man — get with it!

00:22
£ 00.88





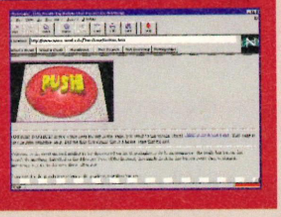
http://tortoise.pharm.nwu.edu/ware/head.html
http://www.csn.net/~mhand/Presidents/
http://sec.dgsys.com/AntFarm.html

Some pages out there make you wonder just what these people do for a living that they have so much time to spare knocking up these pointless pages. What is Stuck to my Head Today? is updated daily, featuring, not surprisingly, a photo of the author with various objects adhered to his forehead - today it's a warning sticker. The Dead Presidents site is not, as one might expect, a list of dead presidents and their biographies, but is in fact a selection of photographs of some bloke who likes to visit US presidents' graves. He's visited almost all of them, too. What a fascinating life he must lead. Log onto the AntFarm page and see a picture of...some ants, which is updated every five minutes. Thousands of pounds' worth of equipment, and all to watch ants?

00:38
£ 01.52

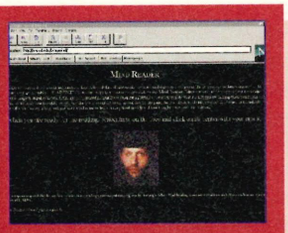
http://www.ama.caltech.edu/users/mrm/kirk.html
http://sdg.ncsa.uiuc.edu/~mag/Misc/UselessInfo.html
http://www.wam.umd.edu/ ~twoflowr/button.html

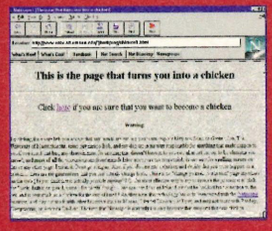




So finally we come to what I consider to be the pick of the bunch. The Captain James T Kirk Singalong Page lets you sample the delights of William Shatner's singing on his seminal 70s album The Transformed Man. His rendition of Bob Dylan's Mr Tambourine Man has to be heard to be believed, and you can experience it in all its glory here. Mag's Useless Information Page is just about as useless as you can get - did we really need to know how many steps it is from his front door to his office? No, I don't think so. But the epitome of pointlessness has to be the really big button that doesn't do anything. It's a really big button. It doesn't do anything. Just try it for yourself — it's an experience.

01:53
£ 04.52

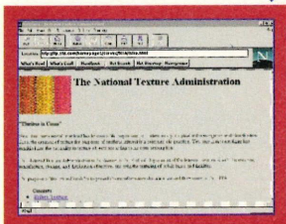




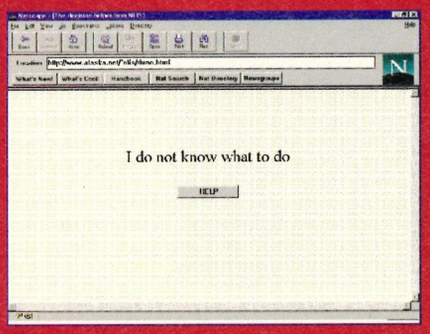
http://web.syr.edu/~ablampac/ego/ego5.html
http://www.alaska.net/~nlis/duno.html
http://www.memory.com/sex.html

Of course, not all of these pages are completely useless. If you're feeling down, try the Interactive Ego Booster. It will offer you unconditional love for as long as you can be bothered to sit there and watch it. It's just like having a particularly sycophantic friend sending you pleasant e-mails, constantly. Lacking decisiveness? Call the Decision Maker at NLIS. This site will carefully and automatically consider your dilemma and give you a decision - thus removing all responsibility and blame from your person. Apparently it is extensively used by a certain Mr Clinton... If you're truly desperate for interactivity, then you can get virtual sexual relief at the FREE SEX site. And it's completely safe, too.

01:27
£ 03.48



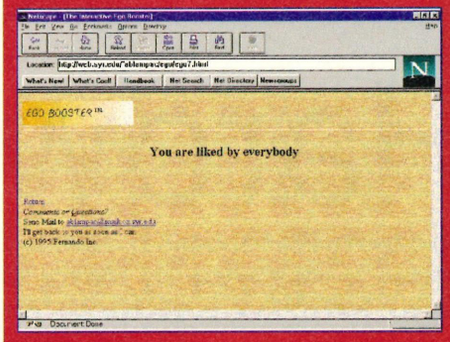


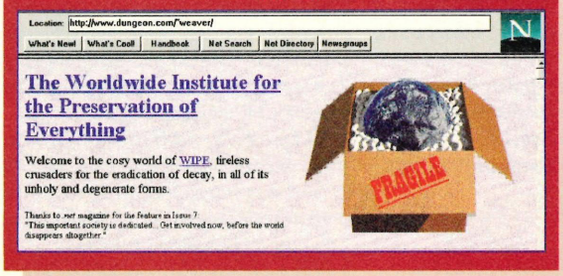


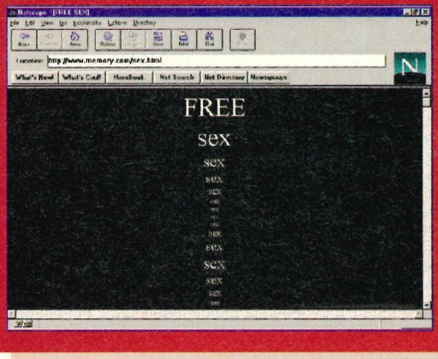
http://www.trilogy.net/velcr/
http://ftp.std.com/homepages/stevec/NTA/intro.html
http://www.dungeon.com/~weaver/

Strangely, even big business can be useless. Would you believe that there's a page on the 'net devoted to Velcro? It's "The answer to all your fixing problems", apparently. Well, that's a relief. And if you're fascinated by textures, then you'll be excited to hear that the US actually has a government department devoted to "the discovery and preservation of texture" - the National Texture Administration. No, really. I'm not entirely sure just how seriously to take The Worldwide Society for the Preservation of Everything. Their plan to coat the entire world in a protective polymer layer sounds... interesting, and you can even take part in their activities by contributing to the end-of-millennia stocktake, where they plan to find out just how much of everything there is in the world. There certainly are a lot of silly people about.

00:55
£ 02.20







Cool sites

The name's Bond...

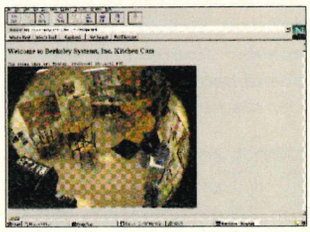
http://www.mcs.net/~klast/www/bond.html

Everything you ever wanted to know about 007 but were afraid to ask in case you were "terminated". There's stacks of info on all the films and actors (including the renowned Bond girls), as well as pictures and sounds to download, and all sorts of background stuff.

My Pet Nerd

http://www.berksys.com/www/funtour/takepick.html

Drop in here and adopt a spod from Berkeley Systems, a software house in the States - creators of the After Dark series of screen savers. This page gives you a peek into the kitchen at their headquarters, complete with big yellow plastic slide for the staff to amuse themselves.



Spies like...them

http://www1.usa1.com/~maynews/startrek/romspy1.html

Apparently you too can become a spy for the Romulan Spy Network at this site, if that's what really turns you on. There's also a Romulan dictionary and a picture of a previous Romulan spy...who could it be? For die-hard Trekkers only — we mean it.



Mossad

http://www.phoenix.ca/mossad/

But if you're after a bit of the real thing, then check out this site devoted to the Israeli Intelligence organisation. Victor Ostrovsky, ex-Mossad case officer keeps the site and lets visitors in on some of the secrets of the group. "By way of deception, thou shalt do war".

Q&A

Welcome to the new, improved PC Review questions and answers section. It's bigger and better than before with more PC experts on hand to help you out.

YOUR HELPLINE FOR TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

ICONOGRAPHY



VIDEO
For those video blues, both hard and soft..



SOUND
What do you call a dear with no ears? No ear-dear, oh well... at least you can rest assured that our sound hardware and software tips are better than our jokes.



HARDWARE
Chips, graphics cards, motherboards, and general hardware trouble may have your supplier confused, but not us!



COMMS
Broken down on the information super highway? Don't worry, just ask us — PC Review the 5th Emergency Service.



MS-DOS
For getting MS-DOS to work, or overcoming driver problems and compatibility errors, here's where you should look.



WINDOWS
For all your Windows 3 and Windows 95 problems look no further.

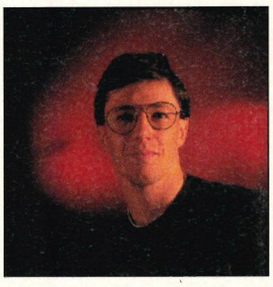


APPLICATIONS/ SOFTWARE
From PaintBrush to Office 95 we'll get you back up and running, alive and well.



PROGRAMMING
We can't help you program the video recorder unfortunately, but we can solve your Basic, C, Pascal and Assembler problems.

Start Me Up



▲ ***Andy looking suitably technical — if only the truth was known.***



▲ ***Uh-huh, Butt-head, this technical stuff sucks. Uh-huh, uh-huh.***

With the release of Windows 95 and MS-DOS 7 we felt it was about time that Q&A was also upgraded. So this month we've extended the Q&A Experts team to include our dynamic technical team duo of Andy and Pat. Not only that, but we've also introduced new Readers Recommendations panels for any tips you might have to help other readers, and started a Windows 95 problem solving column which will include tricks for both Windows 3 and its new big brother Windows 95.

Of course, we still want you to keep those Q&A questions and tips coming in, and if there's any subjects you'd like help with, then please let us know.

In particular Andy loves big application problems (Word, Excel, Claris Impact etc) and solving problems setting up hardware — you only need to mention Pentiums and he'll talk for hours. Mike on the other hand likes nothing better than to spend an evening slaving over a hot printer or sound card, whilst sorting out driver problems and incompatibilities to boot. Whilst Pat meanwhile is more of a softie, and loves clearing up software installation glitches, and general faults.

Reader Recommends

Under Windows 95 you can prevent Windows from booting by editing the system file 'MSDOS.SYS'. This is found in the root directory, 'C:\', and you'll have to change the attributes first so it can be edited (remove the hidden, read-only and system protection). Then open the file in a text editor and change the 'BootGUI=1' reference to 'BootGUI=0'. Save it and change the attributes back to what they were. Next time you turn your PC on, Windows 95 will not load, instead it'll start at the MS-DOS prompt.

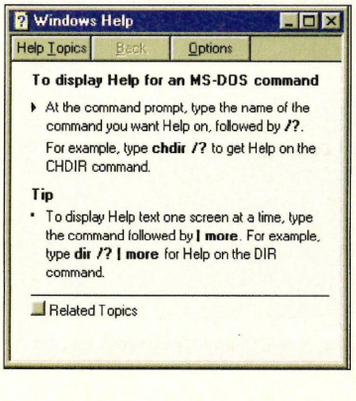
John Rowe,
Swindon.

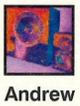
Thanks for your tip, but if you turn to page 135 you'll find we've already covered it and several other tricks for MS-DOS under Windows 95. But thanks all the same anyway. Hope you have fun with the new Microsoft Joystick that's heading your way as we speak.



Hardware

According to our mailbag you aren't having many hardware problems of late? Can this be true? Maybe, but John Hughes certainly has a few.





Blue Lightning blues

After reading the letter from Andrew Lindsey about his problem with his Blue Lightning motherboard, I started to wonder if my machine wasn't similarly defective because it too failed to produce digitised speech from the same games. I do not have a Blue Lightning motherboard though.

John Hughes
Leeds

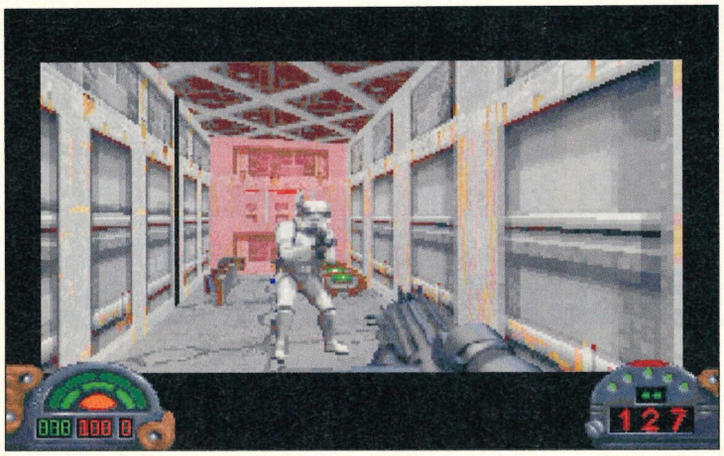
Editors' note: This is an on-going problem that we'll be covering in a future issue.

A *It is possible that you have the same problem as Andrew, yes, as some other motherboards do fail to produce digitised speech too. However, the only definites with this problem at present are Blue Lightning motherboards and motherboards that use the UMC chipset.*

To cure it you need to solder jumper wires between particular pins, but it's difficult and you should only attempt it if you're experienced with a soldering iron. The only other solution is to turn off 16-bit DMA if the sound card allows this.

Software

You've got the greatest bit of software ever — the only problem is that it doesn't work! Look no further, ladies and gentleman we give you the Q&A Software Avengers.



▲ ***Are you in the hands of Dark Forces? Barry Flecknell is.***

Dark Forces at work

I would be very grateful for your help as I am new to using a PC and it all seems very confusing.

I have found that the games I purchase need more conventional memory than my machine has. I have managed to run games such as Dark Forces, by making a boot disk using the program supplied in the game, but I am unsure how to make a boot disk for others. Also when using Dark Forces' boot disk, I seem to lose the PC's set-up info, and have to reset the date and so on.

I have tried to use such programs such as GameRunner/Qemm, but this only gives me 40K more conventional memory, and it's still not enough. I'm not sure what sections I can remove on a boot disk to give me more memory. Should I just buy myself another computer?!

Barry Flecknell
Bedfordshire

A *You certainly don't need another computer — even if you did buy a new one it would almost certainly have the same problem! All PCs have a limited amount of conventional memory no matter how much RAM you add. You can use memory managers such as QEMM to try to increase the amount of conventional memory, but an extra 40Kbs is about typical for what they can find. It is possible to increase this by intelligent hand tuning, but most people settle for using separate boot disks. To make a boot disk place a floppy in the A drive and use the following command at the C:> prompt.*

Format A: /S

the /S transfers the system and turns it into a bootable disk. In most cases you will need some sort of Config.sys and Autoexec.bat file to set up the hardware facilities of your machine. My best solution to this is to copy the existing Autoexec.bat and Config.sys from the hard disk onto the floppy. Of course if you boot up using the floppy that results you will be back to square one with exactly the same amount of conventional memory.

The next stage is to edit the start up files to remove facilities that aren't needed for playing games — a modem or fax card perhaps. Don't bother removing anything that starts

DEVICEHIGH

or

LOADHIGH

because these load drivers outside of conventional memory. If you remove lines one by one you can see how much conventional memory is freed and what effect it has. Finally don't worry about the Date prompt that appears when you start your machine from a boot disk minus start-up files. Your machine hasn't forgotten the time and date — it is just giving you the chance to change the current values — simply press return and it will carry on.

Temporary file conundrum

I have recently performed ScanDisk on my hard drive and was told that there were many lost clusters in the drive. I was then given the chance to save these lost clusters into files that were given names like "file0001.chk". I now have 60 such files taking up 5Mb of space. Can I delete these files and if I do will I be deleting any important files unknowingly? Is there any way I can view these files to find out their contents?

Another problem is, I have a huge number of .tmp files. Would it be OK to delete them? Most of them have zero values but some do have contents. Would it be possible to view them?

Sharrena A Iskandar
Walthamstow

A *Lost clusters are fragments of files that have become detached from any directory entry. They are very like pages that have fallen out of a hanging folder in a filing cabinet — only trying to find out where they belong is a much more difficult problem. The disk files created by most applications have a structure and when a section gets lost this usually destroys the structure so that the remaining file and the lost section cannot be read by the application. What this means is that in most cases recovering lost clusters is a complete waste of time and you might as well delete them sooner rather than later. There are a few exceptions though — sometimes the file contains enough plain text for you to be able to reconstruct parts of a lost document for example. Try the command "TYPE" followed by the file name at the DOS prompt and*

Continued over ▶

Reader Recommends

On your advice I recently bought the Lexmark 150c Multimedia printer. But on first using it I found it produced really strange output. The left hand side of its print outs were fine, but as the print made its way across the page the quality and height of it changed considerably. By the time it reached the far right hand side words would be almost half an inch lower down the page than at the start, and some characters were duplicated. Nothing like the display I had on screen. To cut a long story short, it turns out that I was using a non-bidirectional parallel printer cable, whatever that may be. On switching to a proper cable the printer now works fine. I don't know if this effects just the Lexmark model, or whether this letter will help other readers with different printers.

Martin Bryce,
Reading

A useful tip, and not something many people would suspect with this kind of fault. The reason is that whilst the Lexmark 150c is largely controlled by your PC — it sends information to the printer to make it work — it is also capable of returning the compliment and thus sends information back to your PC, in order to help it understand what's going on. This gives rise to the need for a 'bi-directional' printer cable — because as you have discovered, using a different type of parallel cable means the printer and PC will be unable to communicate properly. Other printers of this nature may also suffer from similar problems — has anyone else come across a similar scenario?



▲ ***Caption blah blah drivel pad prevaricate lie convince buy sell aardvark***

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see if anything readable goes past. If it does use the DOS EDIT command to extract the bits that you might need. Unfortunately file recovery is a complex business and experts in the subject make a fortune at it!

If you think that finding lost clusters isn't worth doing, then I need to tell you that it is. Lost clusters make a mess of your drive and might even cause a bigger problem for you in the future. Run ScanDisk or something similar every time you start your machine to make sure the disk is 100 per cent OK.

Finally, yes delete the .TMP files and don't bother looking at what's in them.



Tank Commander

I was an Amiga owner but, having seen the light, I've just bought myself a Pentium 90, quad CD drive — all the works with plug and play Windows 95! Or so I thought, but I've had problems with this MS-DOS thing. I've obtained Tank Commander, but I cannot get it to load through Windows. I tried DOS and it displayed 'EMM was not detected'. Using Help I discovered that I had to click with the right mouse on the program's icon to see the Properties dialog, then click on Memory — but the box Expanded memory is not highlighted and there's a button at the side called Details. However, when I click on this it tells me to do something in Notepad? All I want to do is play the game — is it available for windows?

P.S I'm not going back to the Amiga — PC's are the future!

RJ Browne
Poole

A *Yes I agree that the PC is the future, but a lot of people still miss the technical "cleanness". I have to admit that where memory is concerned the PC is a mess and the only thing I can say is that it is getting a lot better. Expanded memory is rapidly becoming a thing of the past, but Windows 95 does a good job of supporting it nevertheless.*

The reason why the properties have the expanded memory section greyed out is that the Config.sys file contains a line that explicitly disables expanded memory. Why your machine should be set up in this way is a bit of a puzzle, but it is! You need to follow the advice given when you click on the button next to it and edit the file Config.sys and remove the word

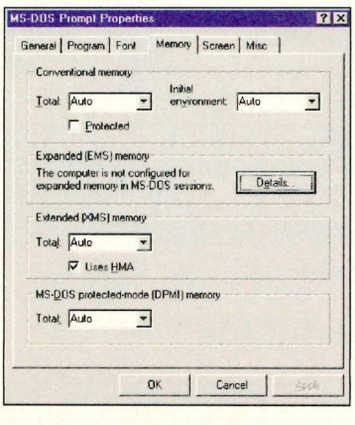
NOEMS

from the line starting

DEVICE=EMM386....

This sounds technical and messy, but expanded memory shouldn't have been disabled in this way in the first place! Also give it credit for at least telling you how to correct the problem — this is more than Windows 3.1 would have done! That config.sys and autoexec.bat files are the equivalent of the start-up sequence file in the `S' directory on your Amiga.

After you have made the change and restarted your machine you will be able to run DOS programs that need expanded memory. If you want to disable it again then use the Properties dialog box not the Config.sys file.



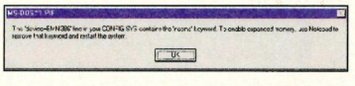


Visual basic upgrades

I have been using Visual Basic 3 for a little while and plan to upgrade to version 4, but I am very confused about what will work. Can I just load my version 3 programs and run them? Can I also use my existing VBX custom controls?

Thomas Harris
Liverpool

A *The reason why this is so confusing is that there are two versions of Visual Basic 4 — a 16-bit version which will run under Windows 3.1 and 95 and a 32-bit version which only runs under Windows 95. You only get the 16-bit version if you buy the more expensive professional edition. Having said this both the 16 and 32-bit versions should be able to load and run your existing programs without any trouble. You might have to make some minor changes to your code, but hopefully nothing serious or long winded. What's more serious is the fact that you can't use your existing VBX custom controls with the 32-bit version, but they do work with the 16-bit version. Only the new OCX style custom controls work with the 32-bit version.*



RJ Brown has problems with Win 95 DOS memory allocation. This can be altered from the DOS properties option, it then tells you the line in CONFIG.SYS to change.

Peripherals

If you've got questions about peripherals, be they modems, video cameras, mice or printers we've got the answers. So get writing...



Making movies

I have a few questions about Video Input and Output. I have been thinking of turning my PC into a TV. I looked at an old issue of PC Review (Issue 32)and the article "Make Movies on your PC" was a great starting point, but I need some things clarifying.

I wish to understand how a Codec card differs from an overlay card? You also said that the Intel Smart Video card seems jerky and jumpy. If I output this to video recorder will it appear jerky and jumpy on video?

So far I have my eye on the FS200 Video Blaster and TV Coder. Will I be able to hook a VCR to the FS200 and change channels or be able to purchase software allowing me to do so? My family has recently moved to Europe, but my sister who is much older has decided to stay in Canada. We both have video cameras, but ours is a Pal system and hers NTSC. We mail each other movies from time to time. She has to transfer the movies as she doesn't have a multi-system VCR like us. This costs money, if we had the FS200 (or similar) and TV coder, could we record Pal and then transfer it through the computer to NTSC?

Dez Sultana
London

A *Some of your questions are easy, others much harder. A video overlay works like a mixer. It takes the video signal from your computer's graphics card and mixes it with another signal (from the video recorder or TV ariel) so that both appear on the same monitor. This other video never gets into the PC, instead it's simply mixed with the computer picture after the PC has created its picture — it's only useful if you want to see another video signal on your monitor. But if you want to use the PC to modify the video footage then it has to make the trip inside. This is what the Codec card does. It converts the video signal to digital data which can be saved on disk or treated like any graphics data.*

The big problem is that the video signal generates lots and lots of data and it's part of the Codec's job to reduce this to manageable proportions. Given the massive amount of data that make up a TV picture, compressing this in realtime is very difficult — it needs lots of processing power — hence the jerky images on the screen. At the moment the only way you can get reasonably smooth live video is to keep the image size small and use the fastest hardware Codec you can find and this generally means that the more expensive boards are the best. As to recording to video tape — there's little difference from the screen display.

You can change the channel of the PC tuner using software — but not the channel of the VCR. As for using a video card to change video standards — yes it could work, but the quality wouldn't be very good for all the same reasons. A better solution would be to buy a PAL to NTSC conversion box which you can find advertised in almost any Camcorder magazine.

Reader Recommends

John Newon has not so much of a tip to improve the performance of your system, but rather a tip to save new users making a major mistake when buying or even losing money.

Apparently some smaller dealers are using new users inexperience of PC technology to con them. John was told by his dealer that when he upgraded from a double speed CD drive to a quad speed drive he'd also *need* a new sound card. As John was using the IDE interface on his motherboard this advice was, of course, completely wrong. You only need to change sound cards with the CD drive when you are using a sound card with a CD drive interface that doesn't support the new CD drive!

John was also told that he could save money by buying a slow Pentium chip and 'clocking it up' to a faster speed ie. running a slow, cheaper, chip faster than it was designed for instead of buying a more expensive faster model. This is definitely not a good idea, trying to run a P75 at 100MHz or more will almost certainly permanently damage the chip! Don't do it.

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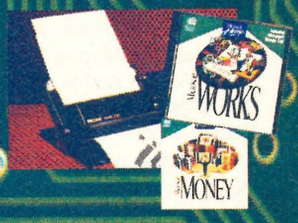
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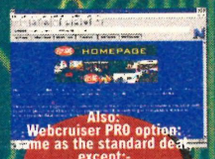
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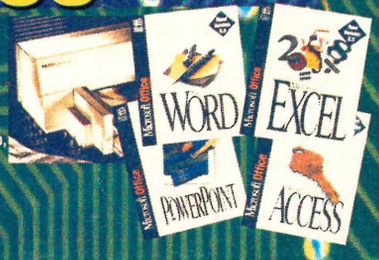
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Internet differences

Just a quick one. I am calling from South Africa and I was wondering if you could please tell me the difference between ftp sites and http sites? Thanks.

Vaughn
vaughn@prg.wcape.school.za

A *I've had a number of emails from South Africa all asking the same question! The answer is fortunately easy, as long as you don't go too deeply into what makes the Internet tick. To put it simply, an FTP site is a computer connected to the Internet allowing users (ie. you) to log on to it and use various areas of its disk storage to download files — FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol. An HTTP site is one that allows users with web browsers (NetScape etc) to connect and look at pages of information complete with pictures and links to other pages and sites. Some of the links could be to FTP sites so the web also includes this older Internet activity.*

Six shooter

I've read your round-up review of new six speed CD-ROM drives in the August issue of PC Review. However I'm still confused as to whether it's worth upgrading from my trusty Panasonic quad speed model. Can you give me any further details?

Paul Tzu
Southend-on-Sea

A *Hmmmm, it really depends upon what type of software you use with the CD drive. For video clips and many games it won't make much difference because the loading time is set by the software, not the drive. However for loading clipart, installing software and other uses where information is directly transferred off the*

Don't Panic!

Your Guide When Windows 95 Goes Pear Shaped

Microsoft® Windows™95

This is our new guide to solving common problems and disasters that effect Windows 95. This month what happens when you install Windows 95 and it doesn't start up afterwards.

According to Microsoft Technical Support the Windows 95 installation occasionally doesn't finish correctly, and won't write the vital boot-sector code. The result, after it's finished installing and you restart the system, is that nothing happens.

The solution to this alarming problem is to reinstall Windows 95, but this time ensure you make a boot-disk (when prompted). Then when you come to boot up, you should use this boot disk, which will give you a DOS prompt. At the prompt type `sys c:' and press return.

Now restart your system and Windows should start up correctly. Now you can find out it hasn't automatically detected your sound card, modem and CD-ROM drive!

Virus invasion

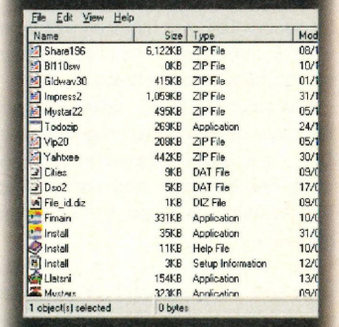
I'm taking a nightschool class in computing and my lecturer recently told me that one in three home PCs has a virus. He also told me that he thought it more than likely that I may have one on my PC at home and that thanks to the Internet he believes it's getting worse. He's asked that while I'm on the college course I don't use my modem in case I catch a virus and it infects the college systems. He's also told me that virus infections can only be stopped using his virus killer which we have to buy from him for £25. Is this true?

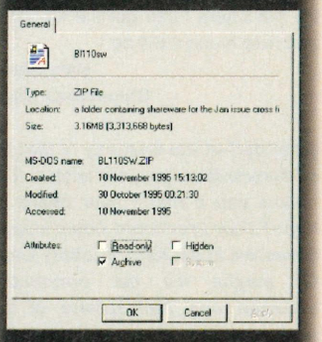
Simon Turner
Wimbledon

A *I'll have to be very delicate in how I answer this. What your tutor is telling you is pretty much all made up or exaggerated. Yes, some home PCs do have viruses, but no where near one in three! Viruses are on the Internet, but if you're careful you won't get one from it. And lastly, there are perfectly good virus killer applications available both as shareware and commercial full blown programs — in particular check out Dr. Solomons virus killers. I suspect he's told you his is the only utility that works so he can sell it to you! However I doubt whether he's told you all this just for his own good. It's more likely he's tried to scare you so you don't mess around in areas he feels may lead you astray - thus helping you in the long run. Alternatively he could be under this misunderstanding himself and is simply reciting what he's been told. It's often the case that school tutors know little about computers, and simply restate what they're told by others.*

Big Hunt

This screen shot shows the amazing file handling abilities of Windows 95. In the directory display in the first window below you can see how Windows 95 thinks the file Bl110aw is 0Kb long. Yet when we look at the properties of the same file (bottom screen) it magically grows to over 3Mbs! Quite why the Windows 95 Explorer thinks the file is approximately 3Mb smaller than it really is is anyone's guess, but if ever there was proof that Windows still has bugs this is it!





Each month we'll be giving away a prize to the reader who finds the most entertaining error message or error in Windows.

Send your screen shots to Q&A Bug Hunt, PC Review, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.



Are six speed drives better than four? Will Beth ever return to Brookside? ▲ Paul Tzu wants the answers...

Just send your PC problems to Q&A, PC Review, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London. EC1R 3AU.

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Come on fair readers — love us or hate us, you must have a view on us, our fine organ or the PC world in general — either way, we want to know about it so get your thoughts down on paper and wing them into us nowish...

Longing for more length

It's too short! No, I am not talking about a part of my anatomy that makes me a man. I am talking about the length of the demo of The Dig, to be found on last month's cover CD. I felt that it was far too short to be of any enjoyment.

When I started to play it, it looked really good and I thought 'I've got to get it', but by the end I thought it was as good as trying to get into a tank using a tin opener. Still, you might as well tell us when it comes out — I can use its manual to line my rabbit's hutch.

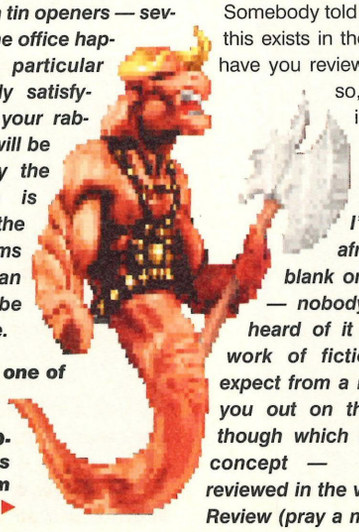
And what the heck, I loved some of the other demos on last month's cover CD. Super Speed is great. H.U.R.L and Virus are a giggle and as for Fatal Racing, Witchaven and Tekwar, I can't get enough.

My favourite though has got to be Worms — it's greeeeat! I am most definitely addicted to it. Who isn't? Please tell me where I can get the full version and how much it will be.

Sam Beevor,
Shipston-On-Stour.

What part of the anatomy is that then ol' Beavor face, pray tell what is it that makes you a man? Your beard perhaps? Your prominent Adam's apple? Excessive chest hair? Knobbly knees? Or maybe it's the connections between one hemisphere of your brain and the other (this is a 'true' story in the world according to Cal — apparently women have better connections between brain hemispheres than men — which is why women are better at multi-tasking and why most men have problems walking and chewing gum at the same time).

While we're on the subject (which we weren't) what's your problem with opening tanks with tin openers — several members of the office happen to find this particular activity excessively satisfying. The Dig, for your rabbits' information, will be on the streets by the time this issue is released as will the full version of Worms courtesy of Ocean at a price to be arranged. So there.



Witchaven – just one of the many fine programs on the October issue CD-ROM. Back issues are available from (01858) 468888. ▶

Despotic dearth

I recently read a book by Iain Banks called Complicity. The story contains a character who plays a game called Despot on his PC. Could you tell if this game exists? The author briefly describes the game as a model of early society which can be affected by such factors as famine, plague and raids by nearby Barbarians.

Somebody told me a game similar to this exists in the form of Civilisation. have you reviewed this game and if so, could you tell me the issue number?

Ian Woley,
Leeds.

I'm sorry Ian, I'm afraid we've drawn a blank on Mr Banks' Despot — nobody in this office has heard of it so it's obviously a work of fiction (as you might expect from a novel). We can help you out on the Civilization front though which is a similar sort of concept — the original was reviewed in the very first issue of PC Review (pray a moment's silence for some nostalgic musing here) and scored seven out of 10 while the more recent Civilization For Windows was featured in Issue 31 and scored a rather respectable eight out of ten.

Gore blimey

I am writing to complain regarding a review you recently published in the November issue of PC Review. The Screen Scene review of Phantasmagoria was absolutely disgusting. There is no need to have a review of that taste. I certainly was not impressed to pick up the magazine to see those sickening photographs of how the wife was killed.

Any child can purchase this magazine, this is not the kind of things we want our children to see. Parents cannot proof read everything that children buy. There is enough violence as there is. If a child can read this, or even worse play the game, they will think this kind of thing is normal. Aren't there enough murders in today's society?

I was most appalled to see your rating 'Good story, great atmosphere, nice effects'. What kind of psycho wrote this review? It made me feel quite nauseous when I saw the article. I hope you will not print anything like this in the future.

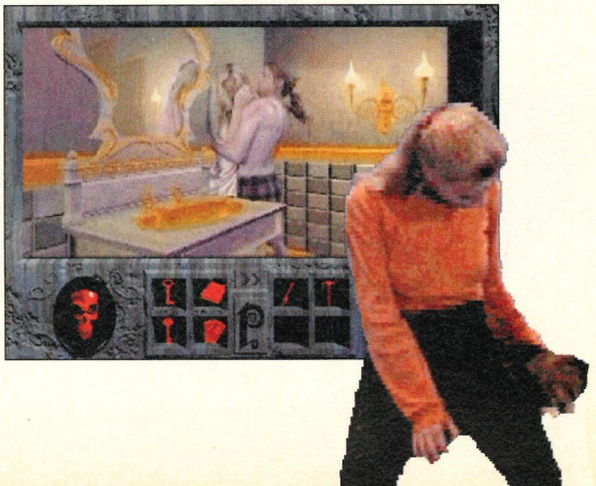
Mrs T. Gavin,
Alton, Hants.

Cal replies: I'm sorry that you found the review offensive, but the pictures of the killings were included to give readers a good idea of the game's content. If, after reading the review, you have decided that the game is too gory for you or your children, then the review has done its job.

Phantasmagoria has been pitched at an adult audience, and is designed to appeal to those who find horror movies enjoyable. When I said that the game had 'nice effects,' I meant that the special effects were as good as those you would expect to find in a modern horror movie — not that I got some sort of kick out of them. And as for me being a 'psycho', I have to disagree. Despite the fact that my dad took me to see Jaws when I was six (which I thoroughly enjoyed), I have not grown up into a mass murderer. Horror can be perfectly entertaining so long as you remember that it is pure fantasy.

Ed says: I would just like to add my own comments to Cal's reasoned reply to your letter. She is the Reviews Editor and when games come into the office, her job is to review them on their merit, not to make moral judgements. It is also not her job to decide issues of censorship and although I accept your right to a point of view I don't actually agree with the sentiment on three main grounds. Firstly, our review does warn readers that this game is

Phantasmagoria blah blah drivel pad prevaricate lie convince buy sell aardvark ▼



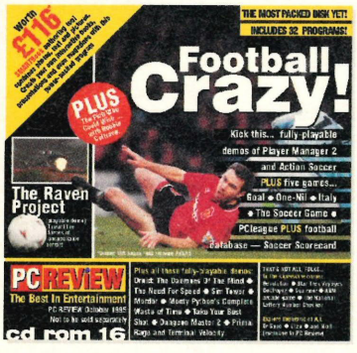
not for young or squeamish players. Secondly PC Review is a magazine essentially aimed at a more adult market and we defend our right to bring our readers up to date on the latest software in a very competitive market as I think you'll find all other PC magazines will. Finally, our magazine merely reports on games made by software companies and if we don't report on it, it doesn't stop the game going on the market. So to use an old cliche 'why shoot the messenger' — I suggest you contact the company responsible for making the game if you feel so strongly about the issue.

As for labelling a member of my staff a 'psycho' — I hardly think such an hysterical (and possibly libellous) statement does you much credit and detracts greatly from the credibility of your obviously heartfelt objection.

Bleedin' Smart!

For some time I've been looking for a multimedia authoring program to help with an international disk magazine I produce. I was therefore surprised and more than a little pleased to find SmartBook on your October CD — I've always enjoyed reading PC Review, but to get programs of this quality as well was a real treat!

I've been using it for a while now and I have to say it's amazing! Even better, I contacted Frax Software (the publisher — Ed) about upgrading, and I've never come across a company as helpful or friendly before. They talked me through the differences between the two versions, and once I'd ordered it, helped with several questions afterwards — if



only other computer firms were as helpful! Many thanks to the both of you, keep up the good work.

Shiv Cutter,
Rye, Hastings

Gosh, praise at last! We aim to please Mr Cutter and it's nice to hear that at long last we have — hurrah! It's also good to know that other branches of the industry (ie software houses or at least some of them) are striving to give you what you want as well — mutual backslapping all round methinks!

★ STAR LETTER ★

Hi- Lo-, dolly, pepper, salt

As a new owner of a PC that I use almost exclusively for games playing, I would like to make a suggestion that could improve your reviews.

I own a 486 DX/2 66 machine, which seems to be the current entry-level specification for games players. However, the reviews in both your own (and other) magazines make no mention of the machine used in the review. Although it is occasionally stated that to run a game in hi-res mode requires a Pentium, I do not know whether the marking given is based on its performance in hi-res on a Pentium or lo-res on a 486. This leaves me as much in the dark as ever when deciding whether to buy the game. It is also rarely stated what power of Pentium is required, so those with Pentium 60/75 machines are equally uncertain. Finally screenshots shown do not specify hi- or lo-res modes.

My solution to this would be either:

- give two final markings, one for say, a DX/2 66 and one for the P90, or
- have two summary paragraphs, one giving the pros and cons on the lower spec machine, the other for the Pentium.

In this format, a game such as Flight Unlimited may be given a significantly lower marking on the lower spec machine, or the final paragraph may state that it is not worth buying unless you own a fast Pentium. Conversely a game such as Little Big Adventure would get similar marks for both machines or a glowing last paragraph for the lower spec machine.

I realise that this idea may mean an extension to the space required for each review, but as a PC magazine you are in the unique position of reviewing products that will perform very differently on different readers' machines. I feel this small change would significantly improve the usefulness of the reviews as a guide to buying software.

I would like to finish by emphasising that overall, you magazine is the best choice for people like myself who, while mainly games players, enjoy reading a magazine with a varied content. The mix of hardware, serious software and features is great and the overall style and appearance are excellent, appealing to the more mature reader. The cover CDs are also top.

Mr. A Golby,
Blackpool.

Please feel free to send in correspondence to us via the Internet on pcreview@cix.compulink.co.uk or through the conventional postal system to: PC Review Letters, EMAP IMAGES, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. We value your opinions so much that we're now giving away a stonking mystery software prize for the letter of the month so remember to send in details of your system just in case you're a winner.



Thanks for your comments — flattery will get you everywhere. We've been bending over backwards trying to improve the quality of the magazine and particularly the CD and it's nice to see that alll our hard work is appreciated.

As to your suggestion of a two-tier rating system. It's an interesting point, but it should be pointed out that when we review a game, if time and opportunity permits, our reviewers do try to contrast, take into account and comment on any marked differences in performance on hi- and lo-res machine and this is reflected in the overall mark.

However, since we always try to take the comments of our readers on board it's certainly something that we will consider — provided we get enough call for it by enough readers. So, anybody else who thinks it's a good idea should wing their letters here pronto to allow us to take stock.

Worlds apart

I would like to purchase an application that is atlas-based. I would like to edit its map, by colouring countries, highlighting cities and adding my own comments such as dates etc. I would also like to be able to zoom in on individual countries or regions, and print them out with related information using a windows-based colour printer.

Atlas based applications that I have so far seen tend to be reference based multimedia offerings only, whereas I wish to add my own references and personalise it. I would be grateful for



▲ World reference atlases are not as comprehensive as Geoff Coleman would like.

any information on any product that might allow some or all of these requirements. I am not too restricted by cost either.

Geoff Coleman,
Hereford.

I'm afraid you're out of luck big time Mr Van der plank. After an extensive ferreting around the office for information we came up with four different Atlas based applications including World Reference Atlas by Dorling Kindersley, 3D Atlas by Electronic Arts, World Atlas by Mindscape and Microsoft's forthcoming Encarta World Atlas for Windows 95 — but none, as far as we know, allow you to carry out the functions which you mention above. Just as a matter of interest, in what way were you intending to personalise it anyway — were you going to highlight cities you'd visited and add the slogan 'I woz 'ere' or something?

What! No disks

Why have you discontinued the version of PC Review with the two floppy disks on the cover? This really does seem a strange thing to do.

Kevin Jacobs,
Clapham.

Times change — and any responsive magazine does likewise. As we explained last month, the switch from a version with two disks at £3.99 to one with no disks at £2.65 occured as direct result of consumer pressure for a cheaper alternative to the CD edition of PC Review. We cannot publish three editions, so PC Review readers can now buy either a good read with a top quality CD for £4.99, or the same wealth of information with no disks or CD for £2.65. This doesn't seem strange in the slightest.

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The Book includes * Installation and getting started. User Guide. System Admin Guide. Network, Kernel Hackers guide, and has over 1175 pages to go through. (telephone book size).

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If you love to read good code & tinker with your system, this disc is for you. Includes source code and manual pages for the C library, about 95% of the utilities distributed in 4.4BSD, and all but a few files from the kernal. The system is almost entirely ANSI C & IEEE POSIX 1003.1 & 1003.2 standards compliant.

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Bunker Assault is a total new episode full of traps, puzzles and violence. registered required. Reg Wolfenstein

PCG832 COTTAGE OF SORROW
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PCG834 FOOT HILLS OF HELL
If you think that you are a good Doom2 player then you will love this series of PWAD files. I have only one piece of advice for you. RUN!!!! and don't cry if you forgot to save often.

PCG842 GRENADE/PISTOL/CROSS BOWS v1.66
Patch for DooM that among other things includes a Hand, Grenades, Pistol and a Crossbow.

PCG846 PAC-MAN DOOM
Patch for DOOM. latest arrivals from Inter-Dimensional Gateway. PacMen have invaded.

PCG854 6 ADD-ONS 4 DOOM 2
from an unknown galaxy has sent his minions to Earth, & guess who has to stop them?

PCG869 EDMAP V1.31
Map Editor that supports Doom, DM2 / Heretic.

PCG872 DOOM2 PATCH V1.9
This Patch Only Works with Doom 2 version 1.7a. It will not work with any other version

PCG873 DOOM PATCH v1.9
This patch only works with the registered version of Doom v1.666. Will not work with any other.

PCG0877 DOLOCAUST DOOM
Will replace all the human dude's with Baby Dolls! Blast their head off! Churn out their eyes! But it's just the beginning! Watch for Dolocaust where you can.

PCG0878 BARFIGHT WAD
Jon Stern, Thanx, Happy Drinking and shooting

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for DOOM & II. Imagine your wandering around hell or earth depending on Which DOOM ya wanna play with and all of a sudden a 6 foot tall chicken jumps out.

PCG0882 CITADEL OF SORROW
Takes place in a Medieval Castle with highly detailed rooms,lots of hidden passages,some puzzles and other nice touches, An Interactive. Torture Chamber!

PCG0883 MK DOOM (CRINGE)
GOODY graphics! Check out the new Double-bladed chainsaw, or the gold Chaingun and Rocket Launcher. Beware new character-Son of the CyberDemon.

PCG0884 DOOM II MAPS
32 LEVELS!!! All the secrets & monsters

PCG0885 DM CONSTRUCTION KIT
Edits DOOM, DOOM 2, and HERETIC maps. If you thought 1.0 was cool, check this out:

PCG0886 CONTROL CENTRE V3.3
NEW! Supports DOOM 1.666 Run single /serial /modem /network games. Mouse-driven user interface.

PCG0887 DEEP V6.13
is a DOOM Enhanced Editor Program for editing DOOM and DOOM II HeeP V6.13 is a HERETIC Enhanced Editor Program for editing HERETIC levels Both are complete rewrites and major enhancement and extension of DEU.

PCG0888 DEU II (V1.0)
Doom Editor Utility for DII: Hell on Earth. Use this DEU ONLY with the new DOOM2.WAD from DooM II. Make use of all new textures, monsters.

PCG0889 DOOM GOLD III
Replaces DOOM sounds & music. Now in PWAD format! Requires Sound Blaster, SB16 or compatible.

PCG0890 DOOM GOLD 4
This is THE FIRST sound/lighting PWAD to be created exclusively for use with commercial DOOM II Hell On Earth! This changes a few of the sounds in DOOM-II with BETTER sounds, and it turns the light on too!

PCG0891 THUD! FOR DOOM

PCG0892 THUD2 FOR DOOM
New levels from scratch except maps 17/18, were converted over from CHRISK.WAD for Doom. The official companion to THUD!, picking up where THUD! left off

PCG0894 DOOM GOLD 5
Try the game straight first, then go ahead plug one of these in for a butt-kicking good time!

PCG0895 KENTZ LABYRINTH 1
Complete Episode w/nine levels. There are 3 new demos, & some added Sound-FX. (there's allot of action in the maps floors/ceilings will block you after passing thru areas). Levels are big enough for everybody.

PCG0896 STAR WARS / DOOM2 (2)

PCG0898 EDMAP
Software enables users to create or modify maps used in the virtual-reality game DOOM &DM II.

PCG0899 FIRESTORM FOR DOOM
Select your weapons combination and enter the grim deathmatch arena. Slug it out with your competitors and a furious horde of enemies.

PCG0901 HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY MEETS DOOM
samples from the Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy Radio series. sound effects were literally ground-breaking, with many of them taking days

PCG0902 UPDATED JCM2 EPISODE
New graphics, sounds, levels AND music!! Almost two megs and 200+ hours of new things you've NEVER seen for DOOM. visual effects using floors & walls.

PCG0903 JERKEY BOYS / DOOM
The Jerkey Boys' best sounds. Hope you enjoy! By the way, this file contains explicit language.

PCG0905 M16-DOOM V1.0 / DOOM
is an add on patch for 1.2. You must have v1.2 for this patch to work. replaces the fists, pistol, chaingun, rocket launcher, plasma gun, & BFG9000 / M16 rifle.

PCG0906 PWADDER V1.0
The best PWAD player yet. Manages 160 pwads. Saves 160 different games Plays demos, Skill Level, Delete, Read Text,Auto-warp to correct episode/map. Mouse required. 5 meg RAM required for DOOM v1.2 8 meg.

PCG0907 RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN
Replaces first 10 maps of Doom2 with new maps. This is a revision of the doom1 Episode 1 replacement.

PCG0908 SHRINE / WARRIORS
You begin right next door to hell in a twisted chamber used by hell spawn as a portal to the human realms. You venture beyond the portal to find... The shrine is a large complex that pays tribute to the hell spawn. a cross between an art museum and a mausoleum. Req Doom 2

PCG0909 TOONDOM
Funniest add-on to ever hit DOOM. It changes about 200 of the graphics files and many of the sound files to change into a game guaranteed to make you bust a gut!.

PCG0910 TRILOGY (3 LEVELS)
Tired of the 100s of amateuristic bad looking WAD-files, which are often stuffed with more BUGS than monsters?!? Then get this one RIGHT NOW! REQ v1.666 rec.

PCG0911 STAR TREK - INVASION
(NCC-1701-D) has been attacked by aliens from a group called the Underworld Alliance. They surrounded the ship with a nebula-like energy cloud rendering our phasers and photons useless.

PCG0912 WADPACK 3
Is a range of very, very large doom & doom 2 levels this one is no exception, as it is over 3Mb in size (unzipped).

PCG0913 RAVEN DOOM2 LVL (1-7)
Support for all 5 skill levels, superb DEATH-MATCH level, well placed monsters, use of all three keys, can be completed with out cheating, excellent texture alignment, great open areas and windows for attacking.

PCG0914 SCUM TREK
For Reg 1.2. Just why the Enterprise is crawling with Imps and Cacodemons no-one knows?

PCG0915 MONSTERS & WEAPONS3
Getting bored with all of the levels and WADs that seem sooo easy, well, her ya go. Plug this patch in and enjoy DooM as you never have before! This patch will increase the hit damage need for all monsters by 100.

PCG0916 WADMAN V1.03
Convert ALL of Your DOOM 1.2 stuff to DOOM2 Features: Build Custom PWADs containing MAPxx levels for DOOM2 from DOOM 1.2 or 1.6 PWADs. Use all the GFX patches made for DOOM 1.2 or 1.6 with DOOM2!!

PCG0921 DOOM MAP CONVERTE
MAPCONV wadname oldmap newmap 'wadname' : a PWAD file (the WAD extension append if necessary) oldmap' : the old map newmap' : the new map' guess :) Checking is done for valid PWADs and map names, so you can't do anything too disastrous. This program will work with DOOM and DOOM II PWADs and map names (but not iWADs, don't be suicidal).

PCG959 DM2CONV V2.0
BEST WAD CONVERTER! Convert DOOM/DOOM2 wads to run with DOOM2 or HERETIC. Inperconfigurable. Powerful object substitution! PUBLIC DOMAIN with sources.

NEW CDROM CALLED
*** PURE DOOM ***
- COMING SOON - FOR ONLY £14.99
Pre-order for only £9.99

EMULATORS

PCV477 SPECTRUM GAMES (4)
Here's four disks filled to the brim with loads of classic spectrum games. re quires resisted version

PCV452 C64 EMULATOR v1.0 (AB)
If you have a 386 or better PC you can now load, play & convert your Games, Demos to work just as fast or faster then the original machine, includes all original sounds

PCV568 C64 GAMES 1&2
This disk contains a selection of games to work with the Commodore 64 emulator. (2)

PCV795 AMSTRAD CPC EMULATOR
CPC 464/6128/CPC emulator. req 386/ VGA.

PCH177 EXECUTOR v1.2
Is a Macintosh emulator for the PC. Executor can read and write Macintosh formatted HD disks as well as run Macintosh programs. A 386+4Mb, VGA and a mouse. (2)

PCV795 SPECTRUM EMULATOR v3
If you want to run your old spectrum software on your PC then this is for you. classic games

PCV826 PC-DRAGON EMU v1.03G
Tandy CoCo II Emulator & Tools Freeware version for IBM PC, 1994 by PAUL BURGIN.

PCV827 ZX81 EMULATOR
Yes its the original home computer emulator.

PCV831 PC-DRAGON EMU V1.02
A Dragon emulator for IBM PC's and compatible's. This program allows you to use your Dragon or Tandy CoCo games and applications software without the need to clutter up your desk with more than one computer.

GAMES

PCG812 BOPPIN V1.0 (AB)
In an alternate "arcade game" universe, you must free dozens of imprisoned enemies from other video games. Each level has unique VGA graphics in this unusual game. Violence mode provided. Cool animation & cinematic. MIDI music & digital sound for all popular cards.

PCG814 GOBMAN V1.0
is a pacman clone with a few nice twists. Collect bombs, chests, and special red dot to use against the monsters.

PCG815 DARKWOLF
Action game with awesome 256 colour VGA graphics, digital sound, digital music, 32-bit parallax scrolling, and more! The play control and fun factor are impressive! As the king's wizard, you must try and keep the kingdom from being thrown into civil war, but beware Grondahl Morrison is out to shorten your lifespan!

PCG818 MICE MOVES V1.0
Maneuver your funny animated mice to the other side of the board in a battle of strategy and pure logic fun. Make your mice move by using your referee mouse to push your players into strategic positions to block your opponent from reaching your side of the board.

PCG819 PAKO (VGA)
Another perfect addition to the Pac-Man style games. 100 levels, 16 brand new ghosts or shall we say SPACE-PESTS, and lots of bonus food.

PCG824 FLYING TIGERS (AB)
is a fast paced shoot-em up game with multiple weapons, power ups, enemies and bosses. In this episode you will be thrown into the middle of 1942, where the techno bosses are starting a technology transfer to the Japanese Empire.

PCG826 VGA WAR GAMES
Strategic, played on a map of the world, divided up into more than 180 nations & over 300 cities.

PCG833 CLASH OF SPEARS
Battle up to four different players in this awesome 320x200x256 colour MEGA Wargame simulator!

PCG834 DESCENT (AB)
Shareware v1.1 by Parallax Software & Interplay Productions TMapped 3D enemies, 6 deg. of freedom, light source shading, 3D morphing! Multiplayer 8 player IPX network, full modem/serial games, Killer soundtrack!

PCG837 GALAGA '94 V2.1
1994 by APSS AUSTRIA The good old 'Space Invaders' style shoot-em-up game. (Req. i286+).

PCG838 GAZILLIONAIRE (ABC)
(an adventure/strategy game in outer space!).

PCG841 PORTS OF CALL 2
Shareware version. Excellent real life simulation. Buy ships, sell ships, make lots of cash.

PCG844 MEL ODIUS 6 STRING SEARCH
is an animated, 3-D graphic adventure in which you play the role of Mel Odius, an up-and-coming young guitarist who is about to find the big break. He has a small problem, though. The problem is that his guitar has been stolen! Your objective is to help Mel find his guitar.

PCG845 MYSTERIES OF ORIENT
A collection of ancient puzzles. Excellent graphics. Requires VGA and Windows 3.1. New Zone.

PCG847 PEA-ESP! 2 (VGA)
is copyrighted DOS-shareware by Triple-U Software. This game explores ESP (Extra Sensory Perception) phenomena in an interesting, uncommon, and scientifically valid way. It is simple, fun, exciting and challenging for all ages and sexes. It's also a check-tool for evaluating ESP potential, luck or skill; and allows you to participate in ESP research if you register, qualify and score well enough. Req 386+

PCG848 QUEST FOR NECRONOMICON
The Middle Age is here! This package takes you in the middle of medieval world. Your are a fearless Mega-Fighter, whose quest is to save the earth and find the lost book of Necronomicon. TOTAL CONVERSION!!!

PCG850 ROYAL VIDEO POKER 3
is a full featured draw poker program that has Jacks or Better, Joker Poker, and Deuces Wild. It also has High/Low double up and Triple Draw options. Music and speech are available to those with Sound Blaster cards, Also, you can save multiple game and play statistics.

PCG851 SPACE SHADES
is a 3D space flight sim game that places you in the cockpit of a Space Cruiser.

PCG852 SPACE NIGHTMARE (VG)
Very fast arcade game, take your favourite ship & kill enemies on planets and in the space. Smooth scrolling in all directions. Animation at 60 frames per second!

PCG853 TAKING CARE BUSINESS
Brain bending puzzles and awesome Super VGA will keep you busy for hours, days, perhaps decades in this latest release from Moonlite Software. Guide our hero, Demolisher Dirk, through this amazing strategic adventure!

PCG855 THE LAST RESORT (TLR)
is a Deathmatch only episode for Doom v1.666. It replaces all nine levels of episode 2, and contains new graphics, sounds, music, demos.

PCG856 CARD GAME SAMPLER 1
15 card game programs from Tommy's Toys for aspiring Earthling card sharks of all ages from 8 to adult! Old Maid, 21, Cribbage, Gin, Poker, Tuxedo (Faro, Baccarat), Spades, Hearts, Crazy 8s, Pinochle, Canasta, Pitch, Casino, Red Dog, Double Patience.works with any PC

PCG860 U.F.O
The Card Game, A high powered UNO clone with VGA graphics and digital talking alien opponents! Adlib, SoundBlaster, and Internal Speaker supported for digital playback. VGA and 286 required. 640k RAM, SoundBlaster, and 386 or better recommended. External Aliens available to expand UFO, replacement desktops.

PCG861 ULTIZURK III (ABC)
The Guildmaster's Quest V1.1 - A top/down view RPG game. Req: Dos 5.0, 2Meg Ram, 386/16 or higher, VGA

PCG864 GREAT ULTIZURKIAN UNDER-WORLD V5.0
Final - A world -simulation RPG Game. Req: Dos 5.0, 2Meg Ram, 386/16 or higher, VGA.

PCG866 ROBOT BATTLE V1.1
Can you design a robot to best all challengers? To survive, your robot must battle other robots, intelligence, and adaptability than all others. Can you out think and out gun your opponents? This is the place to find out! Watch your ANIMATED robots come to life and battle it out.

PCG870 SOKOBAN94
A Game Of Forethought & Strategic Design by Jim Radcliffe Sokoban is Japanese for warehouse man Push all boxes n the board to the designated storage positions before time runs out. You can only push one box at a time. Be careful you don't push a box into a corner.

PCG871 CLASH OF SPEARS
by Sorcerer Productions! Battle up to four different players in this awesome 320x200x256 colour, Wargame sim.

PCG874 SPIROTRIS V1.2
Strategical and fast-paced game. Drop blocks to fill rows, columns and diagonals Use bombs to get rid of those blocks. Progress through the game and discover a picture in the background. Modex, VGA, FX sound, animation.

PCG0917 VINYL GODDESS / MARS
The Vinyl Goddess' space ship has crash landed on a forbidden planet. Can you guide this beautiful goddess through dangerous and exotic locations in order to free herself from the planet. GET READY for sexy arcade action in this new release from UNION LOGIC that will blow your mind at 70 frames per second.

PCG0918 BLASTEROIDS 3-D
Fast 3-D space sim in which you must shoot your way through a series of asteroid belts. It requires lightning fast reflexes and a sharpshooter's eye to make your way through. Hostile spacecraft are patrolling the belt, and their energy blasts can finish you off quickly if you don't watch out.

PCG0919 POD 1.32
Move your POD around a network of coloured tracks to remove them, but avoid falling off or being stranded.

PCG0920 MORAFF'S DUNGEONS OF THE UNFORGIVEN
This stunning dungeons and monsters game contains 25 levels of the most realistic 3D imaging ever seen in a computer game! Battle monsters ranging from groups of flying creatures to groups of female warriors, to water creatures who inhabit flooded sections of the dungeon!

PCG0922 RISE OF THE TRIADS (ABC) [HD]
3D Shareware by Apogee Software ROTT will have every DOOM freak in the world lining up just to drool over it! A- IE Mag. Requires 386DX+, 4Megs RAM & video.

PCG0925 Z-BLAST
Lotto Number Optimization Tool is designed to provide an easy-to-do method of creating YOUR lotto number selections. Z-BLAST does NOT require you to maintain confusing, time consuming databases. You also don't have to know which numbers are hot, cold, due, etc.

PCG0926 JAZZ JACKRABBIT XMS
This is an all-new CHRISTMAS EDITION of Jazz Jackrabbit, the breakthrough PC thriller that won Best Arcade Game of the Year! 100% New levels, new 3D bonus stages, new rock

PCG0927 FIVE HUNDRED V6.2
This program plays the popular card game of 500. You can choose your style of play, as well as customise for local rules and MISERE options. It has animation and a voice synthesiser which runs through your standard PC speaker. Speed and colours can be customised.

PCG0929 BASKETBALL STATS
Analyse and print complete individual, team, and opponent basketball statistics. Save data for up to 45 teams, 45 games per team, and 17 players per team. Spreadsheet style entry, automatic percent calculations. Includes 2-and 3- point goals, total points, free throws (made, attempted, percent), assists, charges, rebounds, blocked shots, recoveries, takeaways, and 4 user-defined categories.

PCG0930 BATTLE CHARGE V1.03
is a two-player game played with two sets of opposing (red vs. blue) neutral and charged pieces. The game ends when a charged piece captures its opposing king. Requires: 80286 or later series CPU, 300K free RAM, VGA

PCG0931 ADVE OF CYBERBOX
A VGA logic/strategy game! The object is to escape from each of 15 rooms, as efficiently as you can, by pushing and pulling boxes around. Plenty of options and features!

PCG0932 CHINESE CHECKERS
Game v2.3 1-Apr-95, 6 computer or human players. Animated marbles seem to jump off the screen! Requires VGA, Mouse, Windows or DOS. SIA Winner: Best New Product 1992.

PCG0933 CLICK-IT
is a graphic item search and select game. A variety of pictures, maps or other graphic images are displayed in each game. Clues consisting of definitions, words, or phrases prompt the player to find items in the image.

PCG0934 COLOUR CROSS
is a unique, abstract and kinetic two-player colour strategy game whose objective is to freeze all of your opponent's pieces' Requires: 8086 series CPU, 300K free RAM, VGA

PCG0935 COLOURS V3.0
has been found to be very therapeutic. It's intent was for children, we found also, folks of all ages are fascinated with its simplicity. People 1 to 80 become addicted.

PCG0943 GAMEHELP
Golf Handicapping and Player Statistics allows you to maintain a history of your golf game. GameHelp now calculates handicaps for 9 and 18 hole rounds as well as many other statistics for an unlimited number of golfers. Great for monitoring the progress of your game.

PCG0944 ULTIMATE GIN V4.44
Animated, interactive Gin Simulation. Choose standard Gin or one of two versions of Oklahoma Gin. Select Hollywood scoring if desired. Adjust bonus scores. Registered users can play up to 40 games per match, or start a new match with any player at any time. A unique card holder allows you to see your hand in melds at a glance. Scores for each hand are recorded and recallable.

PCG0946 SOLITAIRE SUITE V1.12
Featuring 7 of the very best solitaire card games, each with a smooth and elegant graphical user interface. Includes Calculation, Concentration, Idiot's Delight, Midnight Oil, Monte Carlo, Osmosis, and Royal Cotillion.

PCG0947 K-CHESS V2.0
an instructional Chess program which shows its calculations as it works. It features various types of hints and help such as showing the best line of attack for several moves ahead. One-player, two-player and autoplay modes. Move undo and redo. Fully keyboard or mouse controlled. Games can be printed and saved to disk.

PCG0948 LAS VEGAS CRAPS
is an EGA/VGA Las Vegas craps game for one or two people. This is a game for beginners as well as the experienced gambler. It allows you what is permissible in a real casino. It includes complete statistical information, a screen blanker and a host of other features.

PCG0949 PLEASURES SOLITAIRE
Eight new and traditional solitaire card games. Slick mouse-driven GUI interface, full-featured with lots of customizable options. Requires EGA or VGA and a mouse. Shareware by Randy Rasa.

PCG0950 SCHTKR V1.2
ScaryFish world editing util. Many options. Create your own worlds. Stock fishing holes or let computer stock them. Worlds can have up to 32 species from a list of over 40. Extensive documentation. Includes 2 example files, test mode, screen saver, best worlds contest rules and more. Keywords: games sports fishing ScaryFish PMP Freeware lite version of Make Your Own Worlds.

PCG953 HORROR BLITZ
War strategy that assesses your ability to vanquish your opponents. You are a great general at a time when peace is out of the question.

PCG958 DIAMOND
is a fast paced VGA game that combines both extreme arcade style reflexes and puzzle solving strategy. our objective is to retrieve a set number of diamonds from fifteen different levels.

PCG960 EAST FRONT
1914 v1.0 strategy wargame. Boardgame style, operational level, DOS game covering the first 3 months of WWI on the eastern front. Needs 286, 1Meg expanded memory, 590k free RAM, VGA. 386 recommended. Forgotten Fronts Simulations.

PCG966 SUPER SPEED V1.1
This speedy car racing game delivers pure action for up to four players. Challenge your friends or compete against the computer's drivers. Eventful tracks with all the obstacles you usually prefer not to find in real life driving. Requires: 386+, VGA.

PCG968 MR. EDD'S THOROUGHBRED LONG-SHOTS
is a step by step guide to handicapping long-shots in thoroughbred horse races. It establishes basic ground rules and provides a long-shot. A report card allows you to document and compare selected long-shot contenders.

PCG976 TEEN AGENT
First class point-and-click animated graphic adventure þ Beautiful graphics þ Rotoscoped game characters þ Over 20000 frames of animation, Multi-channel digitised soundtrack, Over 100 sound effects þ Mega cool humour. 286/386/486/Pentium,MS DOS 5.0 or better,VGA PC Speaker/Covox/AdLib/SoundBlaster/Gravis.

PCG981 BREAK MACHINE V1.00
Enjoy the new 320*400 Challenge, Destroy Monsters and Bricks with your X-PAD 01 Ship, Vga, SoundBlaster, Adlib)

PCG984 GLADIATOR ARCADE GAME V1.00
A Real-time, overhead arcade game. Supports 320x200x256 color graphics and Sound Blaster compatible sound. Lead a team of warriors through a variety of scenarios, defeating all other teams in mortal battle.

PCG988 LOST IN SPACE
Skunny in a rework of the classic game Moonbuggy. Features some of the weirdest aliens ever. This arcade style game from Copysoft features 256 color VGA graphics, super power crazy animations and sounds (Adlib/Sound Blaster support), smooth horizontal scrolling, keyboard, joystick, Gravis pad support.

PCG989 NFL FORECASTER v4.0D
Using ONLY scores, it ranks teams & predicts winners & spreads of NFL games. Displays/prints 5 reports. 8 categories of statistics. Extensive on-line help. Easily customized. Install program. Accuracy increased in version 4.0d. Requires only 15 minutes per week. Sports, handicapping, football, gambling.

PCG990 SCORCHED EARTH V1.5
256 color VGA artillery game that allows up to 10 players to blow each other to bits. Tons of configurable options including weapons, defense mechanisms, weather, economics, etc. Can also be played by one person against various

PCG991 SPACE STATION ESC V1.5
is a DOOM style 3D game with digital music and sound. (Req L.Sr. Person) Fee: $20) (2)

PCG993 SUPERPOWERS 95
collection of powerful lottery tools designed to assist you in consistently winning combinations.

PCG994 ZOOM I 3-D (AB)
is a Wolfenstein like game wherein you are secret army agent, George Zoom, trying to escape a criminal fortress. (Gary Acord) (Reg.Fee: $20)

PCG995 BAD TYPE V1.0
By Tibo Software is a high-speed 3D scrolling game (like Wolfenstein 3D) for Windows 3.1 and Win95. Requires 386 or higher.

PCG997 BOXES V5.0
Fun, challenging, and addictive puzzle game for windows. Eliminate objects on the screen by maneuvering and dropping boxes on them. But, watch out for falling stones. Smarts are more important than speed. It's not as easy as it looks!

PCG998 TERRACE (WIN)
is an exciting 3-D board game. The object of this game is to move your marked 1 playing piece to the lowest square on the opposite side of the board or capture your computer opponent's

PCG999 WORD SEARCH CONSTRUCTION KIT V2.0
features the unique ability to make puzzles in fun shapes with over 25 predefined puzzle shapes (circles, apples, hearts, etc) with the ability to create unlimited new shapes. Up to 30 x 30 in size.

PCG1000 CARIBBEAN STUD POKER
is a casino poker game for Windows. You must ante before any cards are dealt, then you and the dealer are dealt five cards each. If you think your hand will beat the dealer's hand, then you bet. Requires VBRUN300.

PCG1001 TERMINAL VELOCITY (2)

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UTILITY DISKS

PCV800 FINGER MAPS V1.01
is a object-oriented drawing package supplemented with a comprehensive data- base of world geographical coordinates. It can serve as a standalone object drawing program, a world map maker or simply a PCX paint image file

PCV809 SCI-FI BASE
is a reference for science fiction & fantasy movie buffs. It lists over 600 movies. You can access the database by title, year, cast member, director or search the text.

PCV813 FOR YOUR EYES ONLY V2
FYI is a complete but simple Personal Address Book It features an elegant inface with pull down menus, Context sensitive on-line help. Function_Menu,and much more.

PCV814 JUST VOICE
is a voice recognition program. Requires a Sound Blaster compatible sound card with microphone. Features programmable patterns, instrument placement (stereo), more percussion instruments. Now works better with Sound Blaster compatables, improved stereo!

PCV820 EASY BACKUP v3.1
Compressed Backup, Disk Maker - Easy Backup makes compressed self-restoring backups. It backs up sub directories automatically and has an archive option which will remove the backed up directory structure from hard disk.

PCV832 ANIMANT PRO V4.4 (WIN)
Paint and Animate 150+ tools. Faster Saving 256 colours. Resolutions from 320x200 to 2048x1024. Make animated movies, Games, Presentations etc. Complete Documentation and Demos. Bitmap & Vector graphics with Clip Art and Objects. Font editor, Font Capture, Capture Palettes, Cut & Paste palettes, Undo/Redo with Auto save. Gradient fills, Magnetic Lines, Screen Saver. Disk Search, Cybrfind intelligent phrase search Utility.

PCV833 SCREEN THIEF [WIN] V1.0
The ultimate screen capture system for Windows. Features include: Up to 8 user defined capture configurations each with hot-key invocation; Capture from desktop, active window, active application, defined area and clip board; Send capture to disk, printer, clipboard or MDI window; Zoom in/out; Crop images; Auto colour reduction; Page preview; BMP, RLE, GIF, PCX TIFF file formats.

PCV839 VPIC V6.1E
VPIC is a file viewer/converter for EGA, VGA and Super VGA display adapters. It is configurable for your display card using a plain text configuration file and the accompanying CONFIG and CVIP configuration programs.

PCV841 LOTTOMATIC
is the best lottery tracking & gaming software in the business. Store up to 30,000 plays.. generate statistical reports... let LottoMATIC pick your numbers or pick your own. High-roller options, reports, extremely easy to use, many functions, online help, supports virtually all lotteries.

PCV842 MOD4WIN V2.12
is a player for digital music modules on PC running Windows. Supports MST, MOD, WOW, OKT, STM, S3M, 669, FAR, and MTM modules , 11-48 kHz sample rates. 8 and 16 bit sample depth, mono, stereo.

PCV843 MELODY MASTER V2.5
Create, edit, and play music on your PC speaker. Graphical interface with staff. Over 140 melodies included! Can export music into Pascal, C, BASIC, ASM, Batch files, etc. New SOUND BLASTER* Supports CGA/Herc/EGA/VGA!.

PCV844 MIDI MACHINE (WIN) V1.1
1994 Excel Progs/TOW Devel. WAV and MID player/file manager! Random, Forward, Backward, Continuous, Shuffle Play, with full load/save of album support, animations dance to sound! NEW: Semi-Minimise mode hides of the screen yet keeping functions, auto-play after drag&drop sound selection, new icon

PCV845 STORY MAKER V1.0
New VGA version of Storymaker+. Multimedia kit for children, parents, schools & writers. Create & read interactive storybooks w/animation,music, speech & sound. Compile stories into personalised, standalone programs. Easy-to-use full-featured scenery & animation editors, animated piano for music & sound effects, text editor & fonts,book editor. VGA,640K, HD,mouse,

PCV847 POWERRIP+ V3.0
NEW: Custom scanning – lets you scan for ANY type of file, and smart extraction/cleanup for MODs and 669s! PowerRIP will rip MODs, S3Ms, MTMs, STMs, 669s, PSMs, PSMs, AMFs, MIDs, GIFs, VOCs, WAVs, BMPs, and more from demos, games, etc.; byte rip parts of a file. Has an easy to use interface with mouse support!

PCV848 SCREAM TRACKER

PCV849 BWSB V1.02
Bells, Whistles, & Sound Boards is a new program policy for adding 100% digital music and sound effects to your games and demos. This is a 30 day test drive version of the library with a six channel limit and sound effect playing disabled. sounds are written in optimized 386 Assembler.

PCV850 UNIVERSAL INSTALL V2.3
Create custom installation programs with no programming featuring: greater then 50% file compression, modifications to ANY file, view/print text files, create a batch file to run your software and it LOOKS LIKE YOU WANT IT TO LOOK. Provides all the tools necessary to develop a professional installation in minutes.

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TEK DISKS

TEK002 C COMPILERS
68000 C Compiler is an optimizing C compiler for the Motorola 68000 processor and is meant for educational purposes. You can learn a lot about writing a compiler.

TEK009 A86 MACRO ASSEMBLER
Now with INCLUDE files, listings, no limit on size of source files, fwd refs in complex expressions, END operand, default ORG END in DATA SEGMENT.

TEK012 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
AI-Tutor, Alphanet, The Brain v1.2s, DEANNA v1.0, Eliza+ v1.0, ESIE 2.1, Expert, Evid, Fuzzy Cognitive Map, Public Domain Neural Network 1.1, PIE, XLisp, XXXPert.

TEK060 VIRTUAL REALITY TOOLS
Sprites editor, & designer for fractal trees & 3D walls. All the features you now find in the best commercial & shareware programs, Move inside a scenery as in a virtual world.

TEK062 INTERACTIVE 3D TOOLKIT
Helps create interactive 3D programs in C. It can be used to create MS-DOS or MS Windows applications. Features include royalty-free distribution, high speed texture mapping of walls, floors, ceilings, lighting effects, auto- mapping, animated exture maps and more.

TEK063 C TUTORIAL
is a C tutorial book-on-disk. C++ Tutorial - is a series of 14 lessons teaching C++ programming.

TEK073 MSDOS INTERRUPT LIST (AB)
Release 43. A Comprehensive listing of interrupt calls, both documented and undocumented Contains over 6550 entries (plus more than 4000 tables) in INTER43A to INTER43C, & conversion programs to convert hypertext databases as well as other miscell

C64 SENSATIONS

CODE: CD181 **PRICE: £17.99**

Remember the good Days

Contains all the Software that we have collected during our great times on the C64. Dating from 1984 up to the present day.

Surprising as it may seem to a lot of people there is still a lively C64 scene today. Although very different from a few years ago there are still a lot of people still involved into the 64. And the rest of you, like us, have a lot of great memories.

That is one of the reasons why we compiled this CD. So anytime we want to reminisce the old days you can just pull out the CD, plug it in & Everything is brought back.

We garuantee you! that you will not have seen many of these amazing Mega demos as a high amount have not been releases before.

Our C64 experts have spent months of fruitful work preparing this disc, converting files from 5 1/4 inch floppy disks. Searching through the internet sites, talking to programmers etc.

Amiga - Contains Amiga tools to be used for copying & converting the .D64 images back to your 1541 or into your Amiga. Also included is the FULL version of A64 Emulator Package.

Demos - This directory contains our entire C64 Demos collection. They date back from around 1986 until April of 1995. There are literally thousands of demos and magazines. Oh the fun I had looking over my old demos and reading charts in 5 year old magazines. The collection is as complete as it could be for someone mail trading for years.

MS-Dos - Contains various IBM tools to be used with the image files. The IBM Tools section is considerably larger than the Amiga Dir. In here you can find a tool to do virtually everything you have ever dreamed of to a .D64 file. Also included are the latest Shareware and Upgrade copies of C64S and PC64, the two most common PC C64 Emulator's.

Sid Tunes - In here you will find hundreds of Sid Player tunes. All the tunes are in Amiga Playsid format BUT have all been renamed with PC SidPlayer file extensions so they are runable on a PC as well. They are also runable through PlaySid. The latest versions of which is also on the disc are provided in the relevant Tools directories.

SPECCY SENSATIONS 2

CODE: CD180 **PRICE: £19.99**

UPDATED VERSION

Contains all the contents of Speccy Sensations and about 300Mb more (Over 5,000 Games including on the CDROM).

Its truly a multiplatform CDROM with Emulator's for various computer types such as The Amiga, Atari ST, Mac and PC. Contains some exclusive products which ONLY appear on this CD and have never been released before.

You get loads of Spectrum Techinal FAQs, Games lists, The modified spectrum ROM, Modified interface 1 ROM, other Modified ROMs, Wallpaper pictures for windows (.BMP) and Amiga Workbench (.IFF), Various pictures in .JPG & .GIF formats of .Tape inlays, Spectrum computers, Game level maps.

Have hours of fun with the best loved computer from yester-years, be prepaired to spend weeks looking through all the games, utilities, information, maps, and pictures of this classic computer. The perfect choice for anyone interested in the spectrum computer and if you want to convert your own games from tape then this disc will tell you how.

With the Speccy 2 disc you'll get:-
* ***Documents*** - Instructions, Manuals, Misc, QL FaQ's, Spectrum FaQ's, Technial details.
* ***Games A to Z*** - Over 5.000 of them.
* ***Wall Paper*** for windows and Amiga Workbench 1.2 to 4.1.

Programs provided for use with:
IBM PC Computers, Amiga, Archimedies, Atari computers, Generic, Mac's, Spec, and others.

ROMS:
* Contains all the Spectrum ROM needed for all the emulators to work direct from the CDROM or your hard drives.

PDSoft CD ROM Software

PDSoft
1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea
Essex, SS1 2YD, UK.
Tel (01702) 466933 Fax 617123
BBS (0181) 2510077/8/9
Email: pdsoft@mymagic.demon.co.uk
Please add .75p per title for Postage & Packing (£1 Non UK)

HOTTEST PC GAMES

CODE: CD178 **PRICE: £14.99**

Enjoy the latest cool Games & all our Games collection!

Hottest PC Games Volum1 gives you 660Mb of pacific domain and shareware games for MSDOS and MS Windows. We have sorted them in there original disk order (ie PCG1 to PCG1000) and into over 20 categories. Updated version of all the most popular games.

Stop working and start playing?

You'll get all the awesome new 3d virtual reality games!, and thousands more Games with most falling into these cateries

Over 5,000 Games

Dos Games:-
* Arcade Games
* Board Games
* Childrens Games
* Jokes
* Pinball Games
* Solitair Games
* Tetris
* Trivia
* Doom
* Cheats
* Multi Media Graphical feasts.
* Trivia
* Adventure Games
* Arcade Adventure
* Graphic Adventures
* Misc
* Puzzle Games
* Strategy
* Text Adventures
* Utilities
* Wads
* Simulations

Windows:-
* Adventure
* Arcade Games
* Board Games
* Card Games
* Childrens
* Gambling
* Jigsaw
* Jokes
* Memory
* Misc
* Sports
* Puzzles
* Strategy
* Solitair
* Words

We guarantee you!, that you not have seen all of these amazing games as a high amount have just been released into the Public Domain market or have never been released before. Experts have spent months of fruitful work preparing this disc, play testing the games, testing the graphical interface & so on.

The **Perfect choice** for a ***low-cost***, selection of Shareware & Public Domain Games.

Supports Windows 3.11 and Windows 95.
Minimum Req Windows 3.x (only required for our menu system), 512K, 1Mb H/Drive space.

HOTTEST PC UTILITIES

CODE: CD179 **PRICE: £14.99**

An entire Library of Dos & window utilities.

Its our complete classic MSDOS and MS Windows Utility. This is the first volume to be release on CDROM. (Previously on 1.000 floppy disks only).

You'll be sorted with Hottest PC Utilities?

You'll get software for Windows, DOS, OS2. Large Technical section, Artwork in Black & White and Colour, all 1,000 of our ***Now Famious*** PC Utilities floppy disk library.

Utilities on the disc
* Anti Virus
* Bat Files
* Clocks
* Calendars
* Copy and Delete
* Dir View
* File Finders
* File Changers
* Comparisons
* Disk copiers
* Keyboarding
* Mouse Utils
* Enhancenments
* Editors
* Menu systems
* Security
* Windows 3.11
* Astrology
* Magazines
* Communications
* Business
* Emulators
* Books
* Printing
* Archivers
* Cataloging Utilites
* Desktop calculators
* Telephone utils
* Directory
* Disk utils
* File Viewers
* Help
* File Copies
* Hard Drive utils
* Educational
* System
* Emulators
* 4Dos Utils
* C.A.D Systems
* Video Utils
* Windows 95
* Game Cheats
* Stereograms
* Desktop Publishing
* Gambling
* Genealogy
* Video
* and a hole lot more!.

Enhance your PC with powerful applications carefully sorted through-out our many years.

Our Menu system will help install any of the utilities to any device/drive on your system. Will unzip / view any zip file.

Supports
Windows 3.11 and Windows 95.
Minimum Req Windows 3.x (only required for our menu system), 512K RAM and 1Mb Hard Drive space.

PURE DOOM

CODE: CD170 **PRICE: £9.99**

The boys are back in town
Anytime you want to get away from word processors, desktop publishing etc, you can just pull out the CD, plug it in and enjoy just playing DOOM. Heretic, Wolf, TV, DOOM 2, Rrise of the Traids and other DOOM type games.

The first collection of our most popular GOLD disc CDROM series has been mastered onto ***The Pure DOOM*** CDROM. Since its introduction in december of 1993, DOOM has taken the gaming world by storm and rocketed to the top of the chats. Now registered DOOM players can put to use our ***Pure DOOM*** CDROM and see the best DOOMING Experience on CD. This collection of over 3000 extra levels for DOOM, DOOM2, Heretic, Decent, ROTT etc. DOOM Map Editors, Sound utils, Graphic utils, Edit saved games, change map data, enhance network and serial play, record movies, access devparm modes, Read FAQs, Texts, ad-on levels, tips, secret cheats, codes, sound files, etc.

We guarantee you!, that you will not have seen many of these amazing levels as a high amount have just been released or have not been seen before.

Our experts have spent months of work preparing this disc, playing the levels.

SEXY SENSATIONS

CODE: CD230 **PRICE: £19.99**

Explore the vast secret Images/Pictures of Sexy Sensations!

Each picture on this disc, have been selected as there is no text, no BBS Door text, No Large borders taking up disc space.

Only contains the Hottest Pictures in GIF format.

The 2,000 image files on ***The Sexy Sensations*** CDROM will dazzle you. We've included only the very best pictures.

This CDROM comes complete with an excellent menu system which makes it easy to view the images quickly.

The ***Superior*** collection of photos taken by professional photographers. They have been colour corrected to assure quality.

This CDROM contains ***Adult material*** and is not for the faint hearted. New material only. If this material offends you in any way please do no purchase the disc. Proof of age ***(18+ only)*** needed when buying this CD. No proof, no CD

We do not condone or supply hard core material.

Pro Clipart Volume 2

CODE: CD053 **PRICE: £17.99**

Come with a 250 Page Book

is crammed full of clipart & related software. Every one from Juniors to adults will simply love flicking through the 250 page book selecting the pictures desired as you go, instead of loading a viewer.

All pics come in dual formats ***IFF*** and ***PCX*** to cover both PC & Amiga users. Headings like Teddy Bears, Birds, People, Weddings, House's, Travel, Humorus, Family, School, Holidays, Vegetables, Japanese Folklore, SmartArt, US Navy, Cooper cartoons, hand painted scenes, Feast of Food, Cats & Dogs, Flowers, Monthly Banners, Animals, Fanzines, Aquarium of Fish, Famious Faces, Maps, Men, Christmas, Medical & Surgical, Soldiers & Weapons, Dinosaurs, Borders, Monsters, Colour cars, etc.

Then as most CDROM's we have encluded subject headed directories such as Animals, boys, cultural images, floral and natural images, girls, holiday images, literary figures, mythological images, scenery, transportation, and work images. The disc contains drawings of bears, cats, dinosaurs, dogs, insects, horses. Cultural images from Egypt, Japan, Native Amer-icans, Polynesia, Persia are also included on the disc. Floral & natural images include blossoms, plantes, sky, the sun, trees, and weather.

AMIGA

Converters - Image Studio, Rend24, Wasp, Piccon, PBM-Plus, etc.
Magic Workbench - Contains backgrounds, Disk-Icons, Disk Tools, Back Icons, MWB/DOOM. Fonts, GoldEd, HangOn, Icons, ImageDrawers. Magic CX, Magic backgrounds 4, Magic CD, Magic Cookiecons, Magic expansion, Magic Icons 1-2, Magic WB, Mirror Manager, Modules, Rom Icons, Server, Tau Icons, Templates, Update Files, and loads more Utilities.

Pagestream - Contains all the latest Update patches along with printer Updates, CG Font Engine, Editor & Print Spoolers.
Presentation - Navigator is a virtual reality presentation system and will allow you to walk, drive and fly around in a 3d dimensional generated world in realtime.
Viewers - ViewTek, Super View, GIFKit, FastJPEG, BView, BigAnim, Detex, Mostra, PPShow and many others.
WallPaper - B&W WBP, HoFidi, Plain, WallPaper, WBP, WBP v2.0, and Zip Drops which is an excellent collection of seamless textures for Workbench.

PC (Dos and Windows)

Converters - Tico View is a 24 Bit PCX graphical viewing program for VGA and SVGA will import various formats and convert them to almost any other file format like BMP, GIF, ICO, IMG, MAC, PIC, TGA and TIF. Also goes image processing and screen grabbing for DOS
Icons - Contains over 100 ZIP files each full new icons for your Windows. Will enhance anybody windows from the normal dull system setting to an exciting multi colour display.
POV - Contains all the latest Updates and over 70 new ZIP files all related to the Ray tracing program called POV-RAY.
Presentation - Contains Artshow, Brochure, CPMagic1 & 2, POPChart, QShow, Resume, SFlow, SGM, Slides, SSVWR4, TakeOne, Talk Show and ZGrab for Windows.
Graphics(WIN) - Contains the latest DOS viewers like Colour View, Draft Choice, Fantasy Art, Graphic Workshop, ESF's Holiday Clipart, HomeFiles, Fractals in motion, IFrace, KrisCards, Mandelbrot/Julia Set Generator, Microscope, NeoPaint, realize, Slideshow Animator, Trade Show, and VFD (command-line motion video cross-compiler that converts FLI, AVI and MPG, and another 30+ programs for windows. (Too many to list).
WallPaper - Contains over 15Mb of software related to Walpapers for windows. With over over 100 ZIP files there's loads of different backdrops to look through.

SPACE SHUTTLE

CODE: CD128 **PRICE: £19.99**

Fly with the Space shuttle!

Each category of material on this disc, graphics, software, and text, would probably be enough on its own. The combination is its own. The combination of all three adds up to an incredible value that shouldn't be passed up.

The ***Space Shuttle Encyclopedia*** is the most comprehensive CDROM about the space shuttle ever produced. Take time into the history and excitement of the Shuttle program, order this CDROM today!.

PC MEGA DEMOS

CODE: CD102 **PRICE: £19.99**

The Best in Grappics, Sound & Music.
All the Latest Mega Demos which we have been collecting for the last 12 months, assembled onto one cdrom all ***Ready-to-Run*** and zipped ready to install.
Contains 2nd Reality, UnReal, Panic, Jingle, Monstra, Chrome, Ice, Report, Phenomenon, Optic Nerve, The Art of Noise, The Portal, Putty, Xmas, Reversed Evolution, Vector Shock, Jangle, Virtual Leftovers, OutBurst, Asphyxia, Sogodust, Parasve, Sonic Dreams, Skin Deep, Evil, Arabs, Smashed, Cewt Muzik, Lost Destiny, Super Unknown, Modules from the Gathering, Tigers on the Prowl, Dark Legions, Orchard Music, Helious Balls, Radical Rhythms, Pop Tunes!, Low density, Space Nuts, Winter Melodies, DOOM Invasions, Out of Chaos. Also contains all the latest stuff from the past 3 months. You get over 675Mb of software and 580Mb of which are PC Mega demos in Zip format (easy dos menu system), loads of new music modules in scream tracker and MOD formats.

SPACE & ASTRONOMY

CODE: CD027 **PRICE: £19.99**

Explore our vast Universe
The 1,000 image files on the ***Space and Astronomy*** CDROM will dazzle you. We've including images of the earth, the stars, astronauts and spacecraft. 5,000 text files give you detailed accounts of NASA space missions.

THE COLOUR LIBRARY

CODE: CD182 **PRICE: £9.99**

The image you need right now over 1,700 photos!

What Categories do you get:-
* Animals
* Birds
* Buildings
* Computers
* Dogs
* Fish
* Flowers
* Helicopters
* Inserts
* Medical
* Military
* Modern
* Places
* Raytrace
* Sci-Fi
* Ships
* Smartart
* Space
* Sports
* Star Trek
* Swimsuits
* Things
* Trains
* War
* Bikes
* Boats
* Cars
* Cats
* Dinosaur's
* Fantasy
* Flags
* Food
* Houses
* Maps
* Men
* Misc
* Painting
* Planes
* Scenic
* Sea

Contains only latest Graphical public domain from all over the world, also contain clip art and stunning coloured images, perfectly scaned pictures

The ***superior images*** are divided up into various categories to aid selection.

The files may be ***"importable"*** into most of the popular desktop publishers, art packages, viewers & word processors directly from the CD.

We have included several useful utilities to enhance the performance of this disc. First is '**Filly GIF**'. This allows you to view any of the images on this disc, prior to use. Second is '***Photovision***' which is a full featured image manipulation and viewing tool from Software Vision Corporation. Another program which is also a firm favourite is the Envision Publisher which is a top quality desktop publisher, there are of course loads more of the most popular shareware titles on this disc and all come with full instructions for there use.

Prof Fonts & Clipart

CODE: CD028 **PRICE: £9.99**

You're sure to find fonts and clip artyou'll use.

Add power and elegance to any letter, document, or design with ***The Professional Fonts and Clipart*** CDROM. This disc gives you Adobe Type 1 Fonts, IFF, Computer-graphic fonts, Pro Draw fonts, Type type & 5.000 clipart files in mixed formats.

What do you get:-
* ***Adobe Type 1 Fonts*** - 4,000 different fonts for use with Adobe compatible DTP programs.
* ***True Type Fonts*** - More than 1,500 fonts you need to design documents that get noticed
* ***IFF Fonts*** - Colour fonts, Black and White fonts, Font brushes, IFF Previews & Pic Fonts.
* ***Fletcher Fonts*** - All our famious 16 colour fonts for use with DPaint & Video productions.
* ***D.T.P*** - Pagestream, Page Setter 2 & ProDraw all all supported on this disc.
* ***PDSFonts*** - 33 Disk packs, various formats.

Personlize your fonts with:
* thousands of excellent looking clipart images.

MATH SOLUTIONS

CODE: CD215 **PRICE: £19.99**

This disc has solutions for all your math problems!

With the ***Math Solutions*** CDROM. You'll get thousands of mathematics programs, subroutines, source code samples and text files for MSDOS, MS Windows & Mac.

This disc has 85 megabytes in 547 files for MSDOS, 10 megabytes in 45 files for MS Windows and 44 megabytes for Macintosh.

* Choose among desktop calculators.
* Programs that graph equations.
* 457 files for the **HP48**.

With this disc, if you have a math problem that a program of bit of source code will solve, you'll have the answer. I wish I had had this disc when I was in college.

SOURCE CODE

CODE: CD011 **PRICE: £19.99**

Program smarter by reusing code!

Have you had a project where you know the solution is possible but you don't know how to do it? Do you dread testing one dead-end approach after another? What if you had a vast collection of code that you could easily search. You could find examples of how other people solved the coding problems you face. The code collection you need is the ***Source Code*** CDROM.

This is 600Mb of source code in 15,000 files. An index file in each subdirectory briefly describes each file, making theasy tolocate files by name or subject. Our view program lets you search through the index files similar to 'grep' under unix of 'find' under DOS. The source are mostly C, but also contain Turbo pascal, Basic, Turbo basic, Assembly, etc.

This disc is a perfect addiction to any program-mer's library.

FREEBSD 2.0.5

CODE: CD198 **PRICE: £24.99**

Turn your PC into a UNIX workstation with FreeBSD!

FreeBSD 2.0.5 is a full 4.4 BSD Lite-based 32-bit operating system. This product includes software developed by the University of California, berkeley and its contributors.

Has a simple CDROM installation. You can easily switch between operating systems with a simple to set-up Multi-OS boot system.

FreeBSD comes with XFree86 3.1.1 (X11R6) with support for VGA/SVGA, TSENG ET3000/ET4000, S3 801/805/928/864/964, P9000 series, ATI Ultra Pro, W32 and IBM 8514 accelerated graphics cards. You also get ready-to-run X11 utilities such as XView, XV, Tel/Tk, JPEG, etc. **FreeBSD** incules a ***complete development environment*** with GNU C and C++ compilers (v.2.6.3), f2c (Fortran to C), source debuggers, GNU Emacs 19.28, profilers, etc.

GNU (for UNIX)

CODE: CD095 **PRICE: £19.99**

The tools you need to get the most out of Unix!

This new release of the ***GNU*** software archives from prep.ai.edu contains over 230 programs for your UNIX computer. Not only do you get over 250Mb of source code, but you also get precompiled binaries for both SunOS 4.1.4 and Solaris 2.3. These binaries are fully functional on Solaris 2.4 systems.

You get a full complement of development tools including the world's best text editor, Emacs, a production C and C++ compiler, GCC, and a host of other tools. the industry standard Emacs text editor (v. 19.29 & 18.59) will increase your programming speed with its knowledge of different programming languages

For the C developer, we include the GCC C and C++ compiler (v. 2.7.0), the C++ library (v. 2.7.0a), the debugging tool GDB (v. 4.14) and many other compilation tools.
All packages come with complete source code.

PROJECT GUTENBERG

CODE: CD012 **PRICE: £19.99**

The 400 volume classic literature collection!

The ***Project Gutenberg*** CDROM contains a collection of public domain English language literature and historical documents from the Project Gutenberg at the Illinois Benedictine College.

This collection represents some of the most commonly used and referenced works of literature. This one disc replaces hundreds of bound volumes on your self.

* ***Classic Literature*** like Alice in Wonderland, moby Dick, Huck Fin, The Wizard of OZ, The Arabian Night, and The Heart of darkness.
* ***Historical*** the magna carta, US Constitu-tion, Bill of Rights, the Gettyburg Address
* Motion Pictures & stills of Apollo 11's landing
* ***Reference Materials*** including the CIA world factbook, inaugural speeches etc.
* ***Religious Texts*** such as the Book of Mormon and the King James Bible.

CICA (WINDOWS)

CODE: CD020 **PRICE: £14.99**

CICA for Windows is your gateway to the world of Windows shareware.

Span the range of all that Windows offers. Enhance your desktop, have fun and get the most out of Windows.

With the disc you'll improve Windows with:-
* Disk, Mouse, and Keyboard utilities.
* Screen savers and power management monitors.
* Updated printer and Video drivers.
* Loan amortization programs
* Communication and email, WWW browsers
* Personal information manager programs.
* Shells, backup and restore programs and diagnostic tools. * 300 Windows NT files

Personlize your desktop with:
* Dozens of bitmaps, thousans of icons.

Enliven you writing with:
* Font viewers, editors, Postscript fonts, ATM fonts, True Type fonts.

Be more productive with utilities for:
* Microsoft Excel, Aldus Pagemaker, Paradox for Windows, Microsoft Word & Word Perfect.

SIMTEL (MSDOS)

CODE: CD021 **PRICE: £9.99**

With the Simtel MSDOS two disc CDROM set, you will always find what you need.

Use the friendly shell program for easy access to 10.000 files. You'll find what you need in seconds.

With this disc you will:-
* **Communicate** using programs such as TPCOMM, UUCP & Zmodem - along with several full comms packages.
* Use programs for the handicapped.
* **Create** exciting artwork with imaging and animation software.
* **Read books**, library programs, docs etc
* There is so much software on this disc, you'll spend hours browsing, finding hundreds of * useful programs.
* You'll find a wealth of programming tools for many languages, including C++ (there's a great 32-Bit C++ compiler), Assembly, ADL, ADA, Clipper, COBAL, DBase, Forth, Fortran, Lotus 1-2-3, Pascal, and Basic. Also has four versions of the programmers editor Emacs.

MUSIC WORKSHOP

CODE: CD096 **PRICE: £19.99**

Do you want to make music?, If you're a beginner it will help bring music to your computer. If you are a professional, you'll feel at home because a fellow musician produced the disc.

With 450Mb of music related programs and professional demos, Music Workshop is an incredible music resource for everyone. The disc features a custom interactive interface that's a delight to use.

What you do get:-
* **MIDI** Applications: Heaps of useful MIDI applications including: sequencers, MIDI setup utilities, and keyboard librarians.
* **Utilities:** goodlipsy WAV, MID, and MOD files on your computer. Dozens of players turn your CDROM drive into a music CD Player.
* **Utilities:** programs to add music to your desktop, musical clocks, editors, and more.
* **100's of WAVs** to spruce up your system.
* **Converts** to change WAV, VOC and MODs
* **MIDI:**- tons of MIDI files to listen to or study.

C User's Group Library

CODE: CD049 **PRICE: £19.99**

Refer to 11 years of C User's Journal source code!

The ***C User's Group Library*** CDROM gives you the entire C Users Group Library through Volumes 430, a collection of more than a hundred Mb of user supported C source code. Most of the source code is for MSDOS with several recent volume for UNIX.
Source code reuse is a key to software productivity. This disc provides you with thousands of files that you can read, analyze, and incorporate into your own programs.

You'll find.
* function libraries, inc text display & editing.
* genetic programming routines.
* compilers, text formatters, BBS's.
* Games inc Chess, Math Packages, Tutors.
* Cross compilers, comms support, Linkers.
* X-Windows molecular structure visualization.

The C Users Group Library is an essential addition your programming toolkit.

THE BUSINESS LIBRARY

CODE: CD216 **PRICE: £24.99**

Computerize you Business!
Do you want to put your mailing list in a database? Do you need a new payroll system? Would you like an easy way to analyze expenses?
The ***Business Software Library*** CDROM is a powerful solution to your business needs. this disc contains hundreds of software solutions written by professional people like you for their specific business needs. You'll find programs coving all aspects of your business - from finance to D.T.P
Some of the ways you'll benefit with the Business Software Library:
* **Gain** - control of your business finances with accounting payroll, and bookkeeping software.
* **Manage** your time efficiently with daily with client, contact, and project tracking tools.
* **Create** - dramatic and convincing presentations with slide, desktop publishing, grammar and spell-checking software.
* **Track** - investments and real estate
* **Organize** - your inventory (cataloging/stock).

Scientific & Technical

CODE: CD106 **PRICE: £24.99**

Stop looking for software!
The ***Scientific and technical Library*** CDROM offer the latest selection of Specialst software on the market.
* Don't want to wade through games, reminders, and the like, looking for the scientific software you need. its all here
* Included is a conveniently indexed book which describes every program on the CDROM in detail. Use the book as a reference tool to track down the application you want or use our view program on the CDROM.
* **Configure** network & communications.
* **Design** models with CAD and CAM tools.
* **Optimize** your system using computer-aided manufacturing and structual analysis.
* **Solve** mathematical programs with tools for maths & statistics.
* **Program** in assembler, basic, C/C++, Cobal, Fortran, Dbase/Clipper, Forth, logo, Pascal.
* **Reference** resources in chemistry & biology.
* Develop electrical and engineering models quickly and easily.

THE SOUND LIBRARY

CODE: CD101 **PRICE: £19.99**

Over 1,000Mb of the best quality Sound Files.

Its a ***Double Disc Set*** with the most comprehensive collection of sound related software to date.

What you do get:-
* **MIDI** - files various formats.
* **Over 6,500** Music Modules.
* **Over 1,000** Music VOC Files.
* **Over 1,000** Music WAV Files.
* **Over 1,000** Music Samples.
* **Ready to Run** - 100's of Music reltaed software packages, Editors, Mixing, Converters, Sequencers, Drivers, Players, Trackers, etc.
Amiga - Get the latest shareware & PD versions Sound Tracker, Pro Tracker, MED, Noise Tracker, EdPlayer, Rippers, Samplers, Sound Effects Pro Wizard converter's & more.
PC - Latest Whoop-il for windows, Drum Blaster, Tetra sequencer, Blaster Master, Windows sound utilities, Tak Blaster, Accu Music system, Multi Media Jukebox, Cinema, MOD4Win, Music Sculptor, Surfs UP, PC Drummer, and much, more.

GRAPHIC SENSATIONS

CODE: CD105 **PRICE: £19.99**

This CDROM contains a huge selection of ***The Best!*** graphic related programs available.

We packed this disc with virtually all available shareware Graphical and 3d software for DOS, Windows & the Amiga.

What you do get:-
* ***Animations*** in Anim, AVI and FLI formats.
* ***Pictures*** in GIF format.
* ***Imagine & Lighwave Objects*** - Aviation, Building, Computers, Earth, Food, Gears, House Hold items, Land, Logo's, Misc, Music, Organic, Outlets, Ships, Space, Sports, Text, Toys, Tree_Kit, Vechicles, Video and Weapons.
* ***Fonts*** - for Imagine & Lightwave users.
* ***PSFONTS*** - For Image & lightwave (Over 240)
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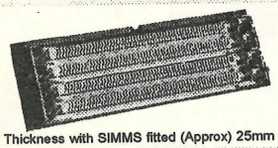
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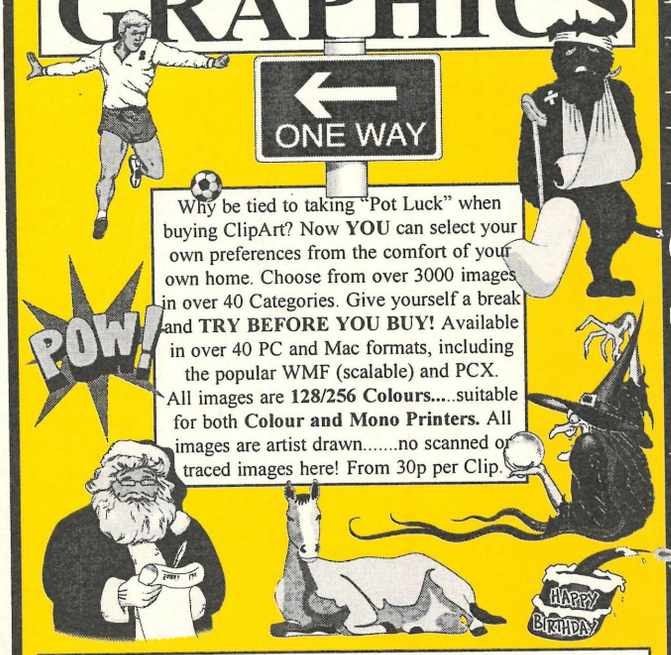
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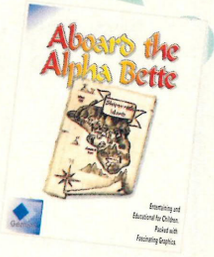
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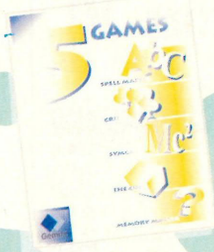
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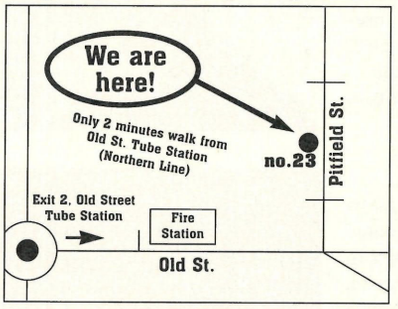
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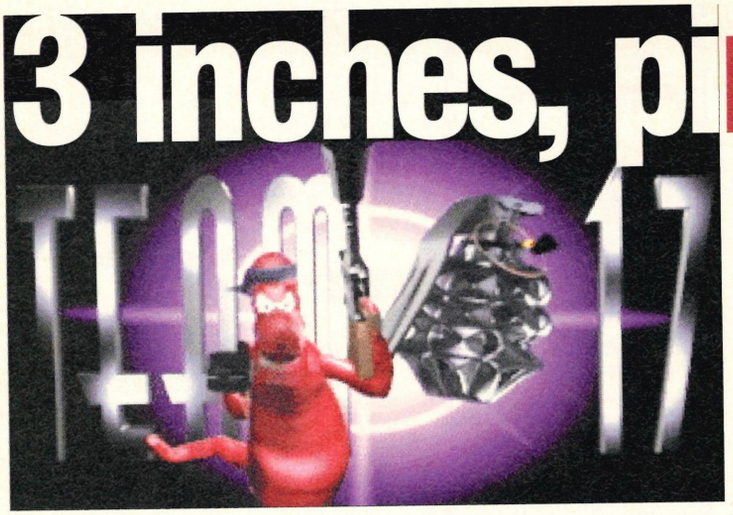
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3 inches, pink and hard

(or The PC Review Worms Tournament)



It's been nothing but Worms mania this month at PC review. So much so we decided to have our own inter-office Worms tournament and create a Worms fantasy league. Read on.

The Contestants

We couldn't get enough of it, no really we couldn't. So there was nothing for it but to forcibly round up four Worms fanatics from the office and order them to take part in the PC Review Worms tournament. Each player had control of four teams, and would play one of them in each round — the idea was simple — but the outcome bloody.

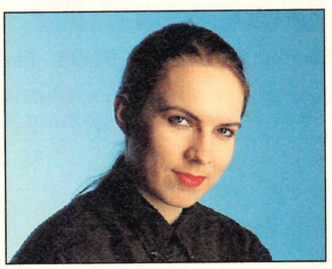
Fat Pox



The quiet reserved one in the office went into this grudge match as the favourite. His tactic of letting everybody else kill each other first is normally much to be admired for its simplicity and effectiveness, but it can cause much scrapping.

He got to play the teams Dead, Ad-Team, Pants and Suicides.

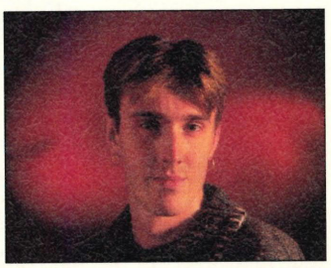
Cal Jones



Cal's natural aggressiveness put her on a good footing (and scared everybody else), and her chances of creating an upset looked pretty darn hot. Unfortunately you normally need to couple that with skill, so we waited with baited breath.

Her teams were Ed-Team, Blakes 7, Trekkies, and Crashes.

Rik Henderson



Rik plays the game like he plays football, dressed up in lycra pants and flared shorts. He does tend to go hell for leather with his small, pink tubes of fun, and is prone to mistakes.

The teams he chose to do battle with were Brookie, Pongers, Thugs, and Easties.

Mike Newson



Mike is simple to introduce. He's the only outsider (well, he's the magazine designer actually) to play, and he'd never played the game before in his life. A pushover surely? But don't tell him 'cause he's a big lad.

His teams were Fighters, Dogs, Toonies, and Fags.

Match 1

Dogs vs. Blakes 7 vs. Brookie vs. Dead



▲ *The Rik rope trick in full effect.*

Some cunning ninja rope trickery from Corky (Brookies) managed to wipe out all the worms in a little crevice, but because the ninja rope is just about the only thing Rik is proficient with, it left it wide open for Mike to win.

Winner: Dogs (Mike)

Match 2

Thugs vs. Fags vs. Suicides vs. Crashes



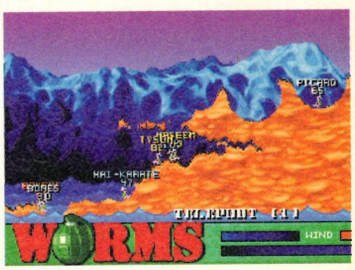
▲ *Boom, shake the room.*

"I wish I could fly", said Marlboro (Fags), and his wish came true when he hit a mine and catapulted into the air, leaving him with no option than to cash his chips. Thugs then proceeded to punch everyone else off the planet.

Winner: Thugs (Rik)

Match 3

Fighters vs. Trekkies vs. Pongers vs. Pants



▲ *"Oooh, Daddy can I build a sandcastle?" The worms have a lovely day out by the sea.*

Everybody started off in a prime opportunity for dynamite derring-do, especially seeing as everyone's standing next to the water. To be honest it looked as if Pongers had it sewn up, but Rik spectacularly managed to walk Brut left and plopped into the drink. Hence, Fighters won.

Winner: Fighters (Mike)

Match 4

Ed-Team vs. Ad-Team vs. Toonies vs. Easties



There's always one that cowers in a crevice waiting for the misfortune of others before revealing himself this time it wasn't Rik, but Mike's worm Tick (Toonies). Cal still won it though.

Winner: Ed-Team (Cal)

The Result

The final result then. It all depended on whose team ended where in the league, and for each team points were rewarded in reverse of their league position (for example 1st place got 16 points, 16th place got 1 point). So in reverse order this was the final player's ratings...

4th Rik

Thugs	16 (1st)
Brookie	4 (13th)
Pongers	3 (14th)
Easties	1 (16th)
TOTAL	24

3rd Cal

Ed-Team	15 (2nd)
Blakes 7	12 (5th)
Crashes	6 (11th)
Trekkies	2 (15th)
TOTAL	35

2nd Fat

Ad-Team	11 (6th)
Suicides	10 (7th)
Pants	9 (8th)
Dead	7 (10th)
TOTAL	37

1st Mike

Fighters	14 (3rd)
Dogs	13 (4th)
Toonies	8 (9th)
Fags	5 (12th)
TOTAL	40

It was all a bit of a shocker really, designer Mike came in, learned the controls in about three microseconds and proceeded to wipe the floor with the rest of the PC Review team. Fat Pox had an air of arrogance throughout, and was undone by his ability to wind everybody else up (so the other contestants all killed his worms off as first priority). Cal trod the very fine line between pulling off superb moves, and and just walking her worms off the screen. And Rik was just crap (even though he fluked one win).

At the end of the day though, not only is Mike now the current PCR Worms champion, he's also the hardest chap we've ever met and therefore a very worthy holder of the title. Ah, but next time...

WORM FANTASY LEAGUE

We've all heard of the many football fantasy leagues out there, but how many times have you been offered the chance to construct your own team of worms and win prizes based on their kill ratios. Er... Never we should imagine. But now PC Review and Team 17 offers you the chance to do just that. On your left you've read about the small Worms tournament we had in the office this month, and using that as a dry-run guide, you can take part in the next such event by having our pants performances count towards your good fortune. All you have to do is choose four worms from the list below for your very own team. Unfortunately, good worms cost money and you only have £450 to spend on those pink tubes of fun. We've listed each worm in order of ability based on the previous tournament, so just fill out the form at the bottom of the page and send it to us, we'll be printing the half-time results next month, and the final results the month after.

The scoring system and prizes

Each worm you choose will earn you points, and the team with the highest points accumulated at the end of the real tournament wins a six-speed CD-Rom drive, a copy of the CD-Rom version of Worms, a worms hat, a worms T-Shirt and a worms (get this) condom holder. Each of two runners-up will get the same except for the CD-Rom drive. So it's got to be worth it, huh?

The ways points are allocated isn't quite as simple though. Each worm gets points depending on the final league position of their team, which is figured out by giving them 10 points per worm if they come 16th in the league, all the way up to 160 points per worm if they finish first. Plus there is a Worm Ranking table that the game offers based on how well individual worms did. We take the score on this table and divide it by 10 (for instance, if Gazza got 600 points, he'd also get another 60 points on his overall rating), and that's it. The costs below are what they scored this time round. So good luck.



1. THUGS

Cantona	£160
Gazza	£220
Ferguson	£160
Jones	£160



5. BLAKES 7

Blake	£120
Avon	£120
Villa	£120
Gan	£120



9. TOONIES

Tick	£80
Stimpy	£80
Beavis	£80
Duckman	£80



13. BROOKIE

Sinbad	£40
Corky	£40
Trevor	£40
Cracker	£40

2. ED-TEAM

Steve	£150
Cal	£150
Pat	£150
Rik	£150

6. AD-TEAM

Maria	£110
Holly	£110
Justine	£110
Tim	£110

10. DEAD

Elvis	£120
Jesus	£70
JFK	£70
Lennon	£70

14. PONGERS

Aramis	£30
Brut	£30
Hai-Karate	£30
Old Spice	£30

3. FIGHTERS

Ali	£190
Tyson	£140
Naseem	£195
Benn	£140

7. SUICIDES

Hitler	£100
Cobain	£100
West	£160
Hancock	£100

11. CRASHES

Senna	£110
Ratzenberger	£60
Hakkinen	£60
Lauda	£60

15. TREKKIES

Kirk	£20
Spock	£20
Bones	£20
Picard	£20

4. DOGS

Pink	£200
Blonde	£130
White	£130
Brown	£130

8. PANTS

Y-Fronts	£90
Thongy	£90
Skimpy	£160
Boxers	£90

12. FAGS

Marlboro	£50
Bensons	£50
Camels	£50
Luckys	£50

16. EASTIES

Arthur	£10
Shell	£10
Grant	£10
Ricky	£10

Name: .....

.....

Address: .....

.....

.....

.....

Phone Number: .....

.....

Team Name: .....

.....

Worm 1: ..... **Cost:** .....
Worm 2: ..... **Cost:** .....
Worm 3: ..... **Cost:** .....
Worm 4: ..... **Cost:** .....
Total: .....

Once filled in please send it to:

Worm Fantasy League, PC Review, Emap Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Make sure it arrives with us no later than 7th January 1996, so get your skates on.

NEXT month

PC REVIEW

Next Month...

They'll be thanking their producers and their significant others ... those who've been given a pat on the back for technical excellence from PC Review. Who knows. we might even print pictures of the losers in floods of tears...

The Gong Show

PC Review's award winners

PLUS: Read all about it! The definitive guide to DTP — from producing a professional CV to publishing a monthly mag.
AND: A star-studded array of games for review, including (fingers crossed then) ● The Dig ● Rebel Assault 2

On sale 15 January 1996

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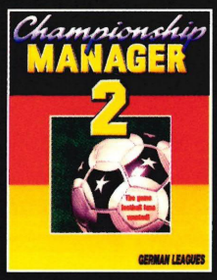
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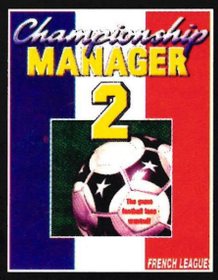
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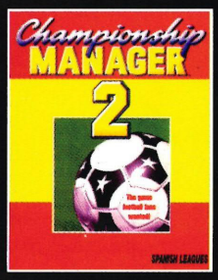
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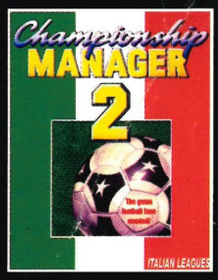
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PC HOME GAME OF THE MONTH

RECOMMENDED PC REVIEW RECOMMENDED

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PC ZONE CLASSIC

PC SPORTS CHAMPION

DOMARK®

AVAILABLE ON PC CD ROM, PC AND AMIGA



EVEN A BASIC PC CAN SOUND MUCH MORE SOPHISTICATED

Your PC may sound tinny now, but it could soon be making all the right noises thanks to a Sound Blaster card from Creative Labs.

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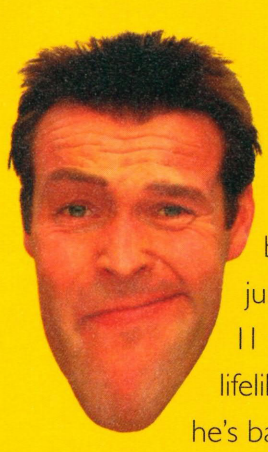
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One of us wants 32-bit architecture,
multi-tasking
and Internet support.

AND ONE OF
US WANTS
MIND-BLOWING
GAMES.

Microsoft
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO TODAY?™

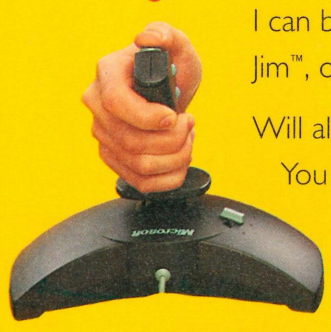


KIDS TODAY! I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND THEM!



Take my lad Jack. (Please, do.) When I bought the Microsoft® Windows® 95 Upgrade for our PC at home he nearly jumped out of his trousers with excitement. Exactly as you'd expect any healthy 11 year old to do. But not for him the thrills of mega-fast gameplay, **INTENSE** lifelike graphics and the awesome quality sound on our multimedia PC. Oh no, he's banging on about all the other stuff Windows 95 can do (which, quite frankly, is beyond me). Meanwhile, I can just slip a CD in, hit start and go gaming **CRAZY** with all the new Windows 95 based titles. On my own. Or with other game-heads via Jack's modem thingy.





This is the Microsoft® Sidewinder™ 3D Pro joystick. It's smarter, it's faster and you can twist the stick left and right (particularly handy for tank sims and the fantastic Fury³).

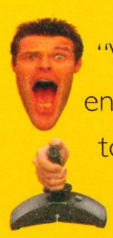
I can blast the Bions in Microsoft® Fury³, **GIGGLE** as I wriggle along with Earthworm Jim™, or use SimCity 2000® to turn my PC into a building site.



Will all this cost a bomb? I don't think so. The Windows 95 Upgrade costs around £79.99*. You can pick up a Sidewinder™ 3D Pro for £59.99*. Add a tenner to that price and you'll get a copy of Fury³ too (which normally costs £39.99*), in a special joystick/game bundle deal. If you ask me, Windows 95 is the **ULTIMATE** games platform.



But don't take my word for it. Jack's Computer Life magazine said, "Windows 95 has the potential to give **GAMERS** a less hostile environment in which to install games and hardware, in addition to adding more to the gaming experience; more reality, more colours, better resolution and better performance."





In short, it's the future of gaming. Which is exactly where I'm heading right now with my trusty Sidewinder™ 3D Pro. **HASTA LA VISTA BIONS!**



Parents just don't understand.





You should have seen my Dad when we bought the **Microsoft® Windows® 95 Upgrade.** He couldn't wait to get it up and running so he could try his new games. Good job it's a doddle to install – Windows 95 led him all the way through the procedure, step-by-step.

Then he unboxed his new Sidewinder™ 3D Pro joystick. "What do I do now?" So I told him about **Windows 95 Plug and Play technology – which automatically configures to compatible hardware** – and plugged the joystick straight into the port.







"Is that it?" Not quite, Dad. Put your disc in, it's Autoplay enabled, so the game will automatically begin. Actually, whenever you want to run an application in Windows 95, just **click on the start button and you're away.** And you can run more than one programme at a time – that's called multi-tasking . . .





"This is fantastic! It's so fast!" That's **Windows 95's powerful 32-bit architecture.** It makes a lot of things you do a lot faster. And because your new joystick is based on digital technology, it doesn't slow down the processor that drives your game.

"Look at those graphics. They're so real!" Yes Dad. Windows 95's Direct X™ technology realises the full power of our PC, which gives **24-bit colour support and smoother, higher definition graphics.** And you should see the 3D games being developed especially for Windows 95.

"Hear that! Now that's what I call sound!" Actually, that's what I call **high fidelity sound effects.** They're so clean and lifelike because of the digital Midi support.

"I would love to play this with other gameheads." But Dad, you can. My modem and Windows 95 means you can **join other gamers on the Internet.**† I use it for e-mail, but I'll let you use it to play games.

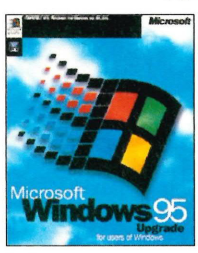
"Can you use Windows 95 for other things then?" Yes, there's **a whole new world of possibilities.** You could buy me the Microsoft® Encarta® 96 Encyclopedia on CD-ROM. Or Microsoft® 3D Movie Maker for my little sister. And we can do word processing and calculations with applications like Microsoft® Works or Microsoft® Office.



"Is that what **Multimedia** is then?" That's right Dad. You can listen to your Paul Weller CD on it, and even watch a video clip.

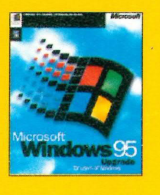
"That's a bit space-age." Oh yes, **Windows 95 is well prepared for the future, with Internet, MPEG, CD Plus and Surround Video support.** So while other games systems become obsolete, our PC will be able to take the next generation of even faster, better sounding, cleaner looking games. I could go on and on and on if you want, Dad. Dad?





†Cost per minute is the same as a telephone call. Please call your local supplier for details. Customers will need to sign up with a service provider to gain access to the Internet.

THERE ARE LOADS OF GAMES READY TO RUN ON WINDOWS 95. HERE ARE JUST TEN!



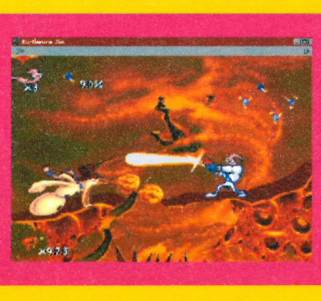
There's no second rate stuff here. They're all top titles from the top games companies. *They're on the shelves of all major PC games retailers.* And they're all available for Christmas. (So that's my pressie list taken care of.) As PC Gamer magazine said, "Windows 95 throws the PC into the 90s with one big flick of the wrist. It heralds a new age of PC gaming that will rival the 32-bit and 64-bit dedicated games consoles." Let's face it. I can't wait to get my hands on them!



Microsoft® Fury³
"Fury³ is one of the fastest shoot-em-ups you'll come across on any PC." GamePro November 95. Non-stop 3D action as you try and save eight different worlds. Use your Sidewinder™ 3D Pro to its fullest extent, attacking enemy installations from sweltering rainforests to chemical wastelands. Call the Microsoft Connection on 0345 00 2000.



Earthworm Jim™
Everyone's favourite subterranean invertebrate blasts onto Windows 95 with a stunning CD quality soundtrack and 256 colour graphics over 20 levels of cosmic madness.
Call Activision® on 0181 742 9400.





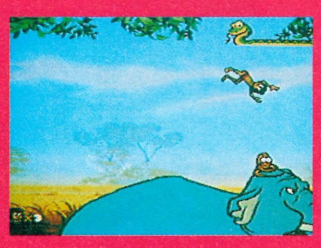
Mech Warrior® 2
The best selling combat simulation explodes with features that exploit the best of Windows 95 and the Sidewinder™ 3D Pro joystick, plus remote two player duels via a modem.
Call Activision® on 0181 742 9400.



Shockwave™ Assault
You are a rookie pilot. The world is under attack. Your mission: to fly solo through photo-realistic 3D environments and destroy the alien invaders.
Call Electronic Arts® on 01753 549 442.

SimCity 2000®
This legendary game is boosted for Windows 95, with a powerful Urban Renewal Kit, bonus cities and scenarios, plus a new zoom level that places you deep in the city amongst the Sims.
Call Maxis on 0171 490 2333.

©Disney's The Jungle Book
Now you can play the Disney classic on your PC in a game that has all the famous characters, timeless charm and knockabout humour of the original film.
Call Virgin® Interactive Entertainment on 0171 368 2255.



CyberSpeed™
It's the motorsport of the future. Hurtle around 11 courses in eight different craft in a racing shoot-em-up with super-smooth 3D graphics and a techno soundtrack to match.
Call Mindscape® on 01444 246333.



Battle Beast™
Not just another beat-em-up, this cartoon alternative to the usual gore-fests is one of the best looking combat games currently available for your Windows® 95 equipped PC.
Call 7th Level® on 01621 819898.



Warhammer™
You are a mercenary commander in a chaos-stricken world controlling huge armies against vicious enemies in a strategic challenge devised with the Games Workshop team.
Call Mindscape® on 01444 246333.

Pinball '95
Take on the challenge of three tables with 3D photo-realistic graphics, superb sound effects and accurately modelled ball movement for the ultimate in pinball action.
Call Maxis on 0171 490 2333.



AND THERE'S A FREE CD SAMPLER!

See the back cover for details.

*All anticipated street prices mentioned are inclusive of VAT.



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The CD opens with a superb full screen video that's just incredible! Then you enter a **3D interactive space station** and step up to its 'demo consoles' to play the sample games. And there's more! Leave Games for Windows 95 unattended and it will take you on a tour of the space station, complete with the **incredible sound and animation** that you can expect from games designed for Windows 95.

What do you have to do to get your hands on all this? Simply send the completed claim form, together with your proof of purchase (such as the sales receipt) to: The Microsoft Fulfilment Centre, FREEPOST TK1393, Hounslow, Middlesex TW4 5BR. Remember, no proof of purchase, no free CD! (Offer closes 31st January 1996. Please allow 28 days for delivery.)

Yes, I've bought the Windows 95 Upgrade. Please send my free Games for Windows 95 CD RIGHT NOW!

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr) Please specify_____

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Surname_____

Job title (if applicable)_____

Company name (if applicable)_____

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Where do you mainly use your PC? Home ☐ Work ☐ Both ☐

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PRV95

SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS: PC WITH 486DX/50 or higher processor ● Microsoft Windows 95 Operating System ● 8MB of Memory or higher ● MS Mouse or compatible pointing device ● 25 MB of available hard-disc space ● CD-ROM drive ● Super VGA 256-colour display ● Soundboard and headphones or speakers.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Offer only applies to those purchasing Windows 95 between 1/12/95-31/1/96. Microsoft is not responsible for applications delayed or not received by that date. Your free product will be sent to you within 28 days from receipt of application form. All free products are subject to availability. The offer is open to residents of the UK and Republic of Ireland. Only applications received on the official application form will be accepted. No cash alternatives will be offered. One free product per application form. ● Closing date for receipt of applications is February 28th 1996.

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