Game of the month: TOSHINDEN The next generation punch up

10 Most wanted games: first look

PC REVIEW

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO PC LEISURE

June 1996 • £4.99 CD Review Edition

Make friends and influence people

INTERNET SPECIAL

Access All Areas
Exclusive interactive history of the Net

Makers of the 20th Century
Massive demo of the PC who's who

Harvard Graphics Clip Art
Library of 1000 top images

Top Gun: Fire at Will
Two fully playable missions

Turbo Browser
Replacement for Win95 Explorer

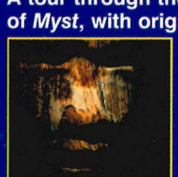
Belly laughs
Can PC games ever be funny?

Buyers guide
Your next sound card

Poser
Killer PC art app reviewed

Get more memory
A quick, easy and cheap upgrade

MYST SCREEN SAVER: FULL PRODUCT
A tour through the making of *Myst*, with original and new music, sounds and images.



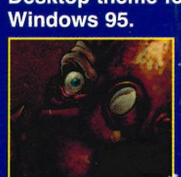
GEOFF HAMILTON'S GARDEN DESIGNER
Design, save and print your own back yard with up to 25 plants.



BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN
Play as three warriors in this brilliant fighting game.



MAGIC: THE GATHERING
Desktop theme for Windows 95.

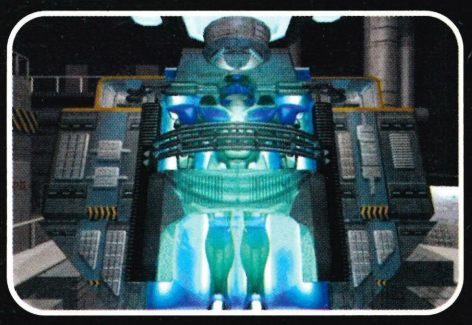


CD REVIEW

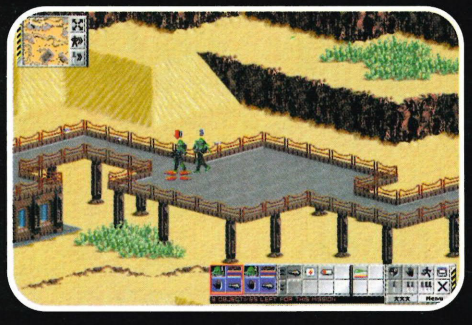
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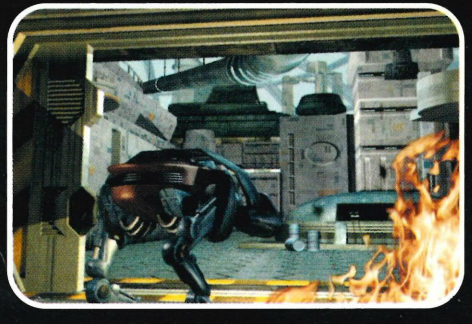
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PCREVIEW • Issue 56
• Make friends and influence people •
JUNE 1996











TOTAL MANIA

"i'm sure you'll agree that the graphics look very impressive indeed, domark have a real winner on their hands."

-pc zone

"with its eight player network option, powerful zoom feature and advanced ai, total mania looks likely to provide some of the fastest shoot 'em up action ever witnessed in a real-time isometric adventure."

-pc format

DOMARK®

http://www.domark.com/

HEAD TO HEAD NETWORK PLAY

pc cd rom

Mankind had no future...

Until now



June 1996 Issue 56

CONTENT



Welcome back. Our third issue of PC Review under new management and you're still here. Or maybe you've just joined us, either way hope you enjoy the issue.

This month we take a good long look at the Internet and let you into one of its best kept secrets – how to make friends and influence people.

Also look out for our new look reviews section, grouped under the headings Player, Multimedia and the Works we're set to bring you the very best buying advice.

On the features side look out for our top interview with comedy writers Leigh and Lepine. Maybe PC games can be made funny after all.

See you next month.

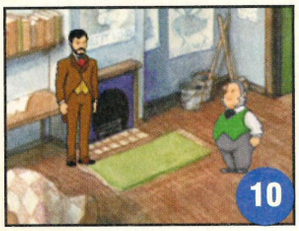
James Binns
Editor
jbinns@futurenet.co.uk

Make friends and influence people
INTERNET SPECIAL



This month's Internet feature tells you everything you need to know about life on-line. Turn to page 67 for the cover story. Then we bring you a modem buyers guide on page 68, a guide to getting started with CompuServe on page 69 and a step by step turotial on authoring your own home page on page 70. We finish up with a look at 5 ways to make friends on-line, page 71, and some attempts to influence people on page 72.

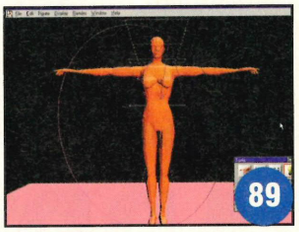
Highlights



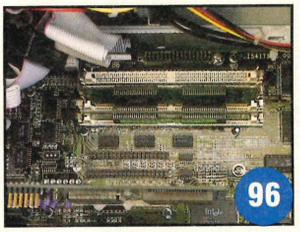
Belly laughs
We interview two top TV script writers who've been drafted in to make the Gene Machine funny. Can it be done?



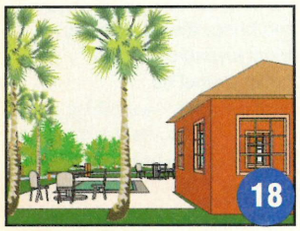
Buyer's guide
It's time to update that old soundcard. We review and rate four new cards and pick the best of the bunch.



Poser
PC creativity has never been this easy. We review the program that lets you put people into original artworks.



Get more memory
We show you how to improve your PCs performance easily and cheaply by adding RAM chips.



PC gardening
Why indulge in back breaking labour when you can use your PC to design the garden of you dreams?



Who's who
Makers of the 20th Century reviewed. The disc which brings you details on the great and good of our age.



Animal magic
We search CD-ROM and the Net to bring back everything you ever wanted to know about the exotic pets of the world.



The gods must be crazy
We review the two hotly tipped God games, Conquest of the New World and Settlers 2.

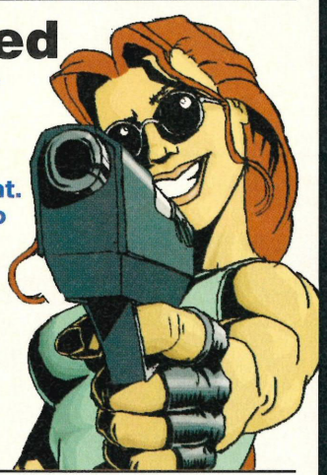
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Most Wanted

Turn to page 14 for our mammoth preview section – with the ten games that we are covinced will be brilliant. A first look at these top upcoming titles...

Time
Commando
Flying Corps
Little Big
Adventure 2
Tomb Raider
Syndicate Wars
Red Alert
MDK
John Madden: NFL 97
Road Rash
Hardwar



CD REVIEW

See the Internet feature for details on our Compuserve disk and page 107 for a full rundown on this month's CD Review.

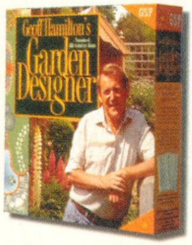
Myst Screen Saver

Yes, it's a full commercial product. A tour through the making of *Myst* with original images and music.



Geoff Hamilton's Garden designer

Design your own virtual garden with out fully working, save and print enabled demo, featuring 25 plants.



Battle Arena Toshinden

Playable version of Toshinden, with three enabled characters and options for one- or two-player games.



Magic: The Gathering

Windows 95 theme based on the hit card game. Contains images taken from the Desktop Illusions pack.



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NEWS

HAPPY HAPPY JOY JOY

Microsoft hardware moves on up



The SideWinder GamePad. Ergonomically speaking it owes a debt of gratitude to the PlayStation controller.

Microsoft is to up its presence in the joystick market and has plans to release a 'force feedback' joystick and a joypad.

Force feedback joysticks enhance the playing experience by giving users physical feedback during play. Rather than merely sending signals to your PC, they can recieve them too, responding to the game by robotically pushing in various directions. In flight sims, this means that you'll feel the controller shake when you go through turbulence. In driving games, it will wobble on sharp turns and in action games you'll be able to feel weapon recoil. Top stuff!

"Players will feel every bump, brake and crash, every jab and every shot."

Microsoft has, in its usual fashion, gone out and purchased a developer of force feedback technology called EXOS Inc, which has designed systems from arcades through to home video systems. After the buy-out Rick Thompson, general manager of input devices at Microsoft, said: "Soon, players will feel every bump, every brake and crash, every jab and every shot."

Just as pressing is Microsoft's desire to be a serious games hardware outfit and hence the company is releasing a joypad called the SideWinder GamePad.

There are a few clever thing about Microsoft's foray into game pads. Firstly it supports six buttons, and an eight-way cross pad – all with their own inputs. All buttons and triggers can be operational at all times, banishing the trauma of having two buttons on the same function. You'll be able to pre-program move sequences, so for example you could carry out sophisticated combos in a beat-'em up. Most interesting is the multiplayer support for up to four joypads.

Microsoft's force feedback joystick should be ready within a year's time, and the Sidewinder Joypad will be out by Christmas. For further information call Microsoft on 01734 270001.

SPEAKA-DE-LINGO

Klingon Language lessons on CD-ROM

There's a theory that the Internet was set up solely as a means for Star Trek fans to communicate. Any casual trawl might confirm this terrifying suspicion. More worrying however, is the spread of the Klingon language. Rumours that more people speak Klingon than Esperanto (the universal-language-that-never-was) are hopefully apocryphal, but more plausible is the claim that Klingon is in fact the world's fastest growing language.

So, here's *Klingon*, a CD-ROM package about the language. The three disc extravaganza out next month from Simon and Schuster Interactive tells you more than you'll ever need to know about Klingon language and culture.

The first two discs feature 90 minutes of video – an interactive episode where you make choices at key moments. It's a common-style interactive movie, with a branching storyline and lots of authentic FMV. The plotline has you playing a young Klingon out to avenge the death of your dear old dad.

To really make the most of the movie however you're going to need to speaka-de-lingo and that's where the third disc comes in – it's a language lab that takes you through the words, phrases, grammar, punctuation, pronunciation and phonetics of the Klingon argot. Attach a microphone and speak into your PC and it will even correct you.

We'll be reviewing this immensely useful software (price £39.99) next month, but until then (insert Klingon wait-and-see expression here).

For further information, phone CIC 0181 846 9433.



Klingons: strange headed aliens with their own language.

Turned out nice again

New Voxel Engine from NovaLogic

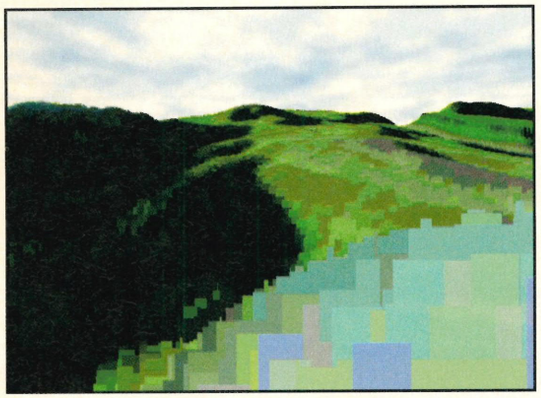
Over the last six months, voxels have become an increasingly unfashionable way to render in-game graphics. It seems that developers have all fallen in love with the textured polygons that make everything look like a PlayStation game. But, all that could change as the arch-voxel house itself NovaLogic has recently unveiled its new technology, imaginatively called Voxel Space 2.

The technology will be familiar to anyone who has played any of NovaLogic's top combat simulations, such as *Armoured Fist* or *Commanche*. Voxel graphics, rather than using sprites or polygons, use 3D shapes represented by pixels. The net effect is a blocky display, particularly if you get up close. A tank or helicopter can end up as a few rubbishy squares centimetres across.

Finally though, it looks – and we've seen it – like NovaLogic has managed to enhance its graphics engine, with improved rendering, increased line of sight and very little pixelation even up close. And what's more, it runs stacks faster than any voxel based engine yet.

But all this is no good without some games to use the engine and conveniently, NovaLogic has just announced stacks of new product. Look out for *F22-Lightning II*, an air combat simulator, Kill Suit (working title only) a sci-fi shoot-'em-up and *Armoured Fist 2*, more tank war action. Less typically for NovaLogic, it is also releasing *Dirty Racing*, an offroad driving game.

Depressingly however, the promising *Hard Wired* (based on the cyberpunk novel of the same name) has been dropped from the schedule. Release dates for all the new games are sketchy. Our money's on *Armoured Fist 2* making it out first for September. For further information call NovaLogic on 0171 405 1777.



Before. Green hills and valleys all rendered using Nova Logic's old Voxel engine.



After. More green hills and valleys rendered using the new, improved Voxel Space 2. Note the reduced blockiness.

No Limits

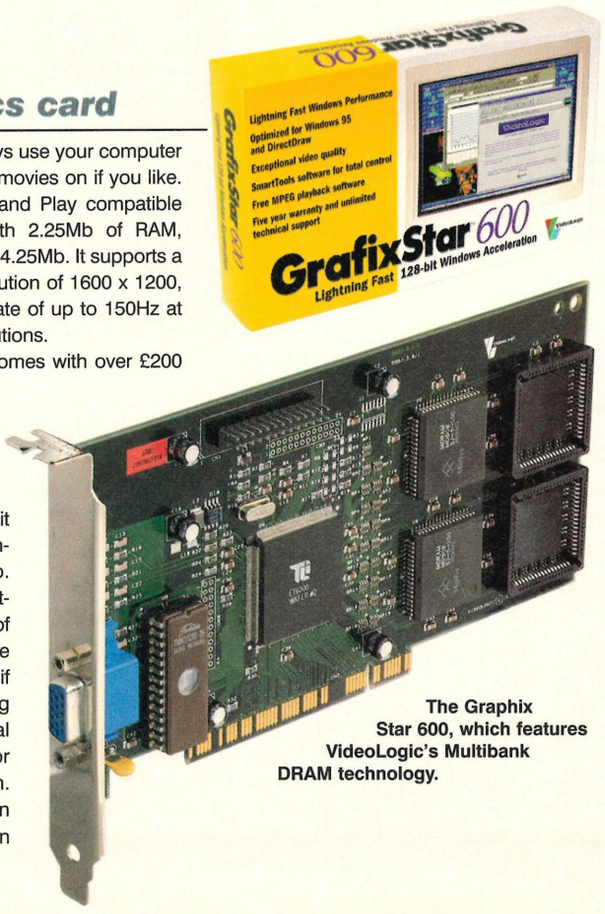
VideoLogic's new graphics card

Although VRAM has long been upheld as the sacred cow for fast graphics card performance, Video Logic has just released a new card that vastly out-performs VRAM-based systems, while still using less expensive DRAM.

The GrafixStar 600 uses a system called Multi-bank DRAM (MDRAM) which exceeds VRAM's 400Mb per second throughput by up to 250%. It's capable of maintaining an average performance of 600Mb per second. Still, that speed is pointless with a slow processor, so VideoLogic has used a 128-bit system for serious acceleration. Of course, that means that all of your applications will be faster, but the most significant ramification is in the play-back of Video for Windows and even software MPEG footage.

Because the GrafixStar 600 provides interpolation in both the vertical and horizontal axes, you can play full-screen video with minimal loss of quality. The card comes with the XING software MPEG player, so you could always use your computer to watch video movies on if you like. It is also Plug and Play compatible and comes with 2.25Mb of RAM, upgradeable to 4.25Mb. It supports a maximum resolution of 1600 x 1200, and a refresh rate of up to 150Hz at the lower resolutions.

The card comes with over £200 worth of software, including a program that enables you to record and edit your own high-quality video. With an estimated street price of only £150, the 600 looks as if it'll be causing some real headaches for the opposition. VideoLogic can be reached on 01923 260511.



The Graphix Star 600, which features VideoLogic's Multibank DRAM technology.

Freebies

Welcome to Freebies. The home of your and our favourite software companies. Favourite because they've consented to giving PC Review readers a once-an-issue offer to get some of the clobber they've got cluttering up their offices.

ACCLAIM

Having produced a demo for the moody CD-ROM adventure/ puzzler D, Acclaim found to its horror that, at a stonking 400Mb, the trailer was simply too big to include on any magazine's cover mounted disc. Freebies, however, has stepped in, taking 100 of the discs off their hands. Acclaim is going to mail them out to the first 100 people who write in asking for them. Just put your name and address in block capitals on a sheet of paper. For this exclusive offer, write to D is for Demo, Acclaim Entertainment, 116 Brompton Road, London, SW3 1JJ.

KIXX XL

Buy two titles and get one free. Not so much a free thing as a special offer. But when you consider that the offer includes titles like Terminal Velocity, Flashback, Rise of the Triad, Under a Killing Moon and Sam and Max it's much more appealing. Kixx stuff is onsale in stores everywhere so you don't even need a stamp. Further information is available on: 0121 625 3366.

SIERRA

Those nice folk at Sierra are giving away CD-ROM multimedia catalogues, which as well as featuring details on all their releases have stacks of trailers too. Write to the company at Sierra, 4 Brewery Court, The Old Brewery, Theale, Reading, Berkshire, BRG7, 5AJ. Ask for your CD-ROM catalogue and don't forget to include your name and address.

ELECTRONIC ARTS

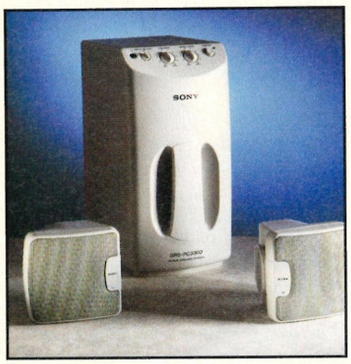
The purveyor of the EA Sports knock arounds, Origin adventures and Bullfrog beauties makes a most generous appearance in Freebies this month. Electronic Arts is giving away 25 NBA Live Posters and 25 Wing Commander IV T-shirts to the first lucky punters to write in. After the stock has gone you'll still get a glossy games catalogue, so like the man says, 'everyone's a winner, baby!' Don't hesitate to write with your name and address to Freebies, PR Department, Electronic Arts, 90 Heron Drive, Langley, Berks, SL3 8XP.

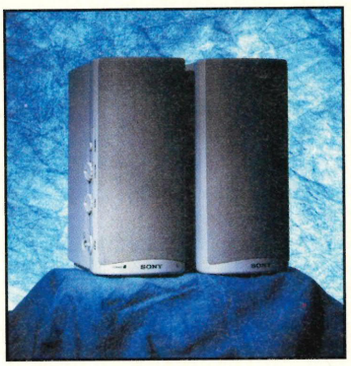
NEXT MONTH

VIRGIN INTERACTIVE will be offering demo CD-ROMs, plus we'll have an Internet offer, plenty more free T-shirts, posters and software action. Maybe, just maybe we'll also have some tequila to give away to the over 18s too. See you then.

HI FIDELITY

Sony launches new PC speakers





Sony speakers. More quality audio from the Japanese giant.

Although many multimedia speaker systems are mere noise-boxes, thrown together to provide optimum volume, some companies have been taking the trouble to design something with a bit more class. With years of experience in the hi-fi market, Sony would appear to be ideally placed when it comes to computer audio. In fact, the company has just announced two new complimentary products aimed at users who demand a bit more from their PC when it comes to sound. These will add to Sony's existing range of CD-ROM drives and monitors.

The first is the SRS-PC300D, a sub-woofer speaker system. The kit comprises a 15-watt sub-woofer that's best placed on the floor. According to Sony, the SRS-PC300D will provide the kind of bass presence that you would normally only associate with a decent hi-fi speaker system. In addition to the sub-woofer, there are two 5-watt tweeters which will pump out the higher frequency sounds. Sony claims that the system gives an impressive response across a very wide frequency, making it ideal for those who use their PCs for professional audio applications. At £139, the SRS-PC300D is certainly priced for those who demand a bit extra.

Sony's second set of speakers comes in the form of the SRS-PC91 speaker system. Although it's in the same price range, this system is designed to give more rounded performance with everyday applications, from multimedia titles, to games.

The speakers incorporate a lot of Sony's most cutting edge technology to ensure optimum acoustical reproduction. Although they only provide 10-watts per channel of music power, the bass reflex system ensures rich, powerful bass sound. The carefully positioned speaker grilles are designed to reduce reflected sound, thus delivering a more realistic tone. With dual inputs, input mixing and headphone sockets, the speakers are surprisingly flexible.

The SRS-PC91 speakers cost £125. You can get more information directly from Sony on 0181 760 0500.

Slim & Sexy

The alternative to bulky monitors

Do you find that monitors occupy altogether far too much space on your desk-top? Perhaps you need the new PanoView 550 from CTX.

The PanoView uses thin film transistor (TFT) technology to provide a screen that's less than two inches thick. Its light weight of only 5lbs with its slim-line profile means that it's small enough to hang on a wall.

If you prefer a more conventional approach, CTX does include a special mount so that you can stand it on your desk. Because it uses TFT modules rather than the conventional cathode ray tube (CRT) technology used in ordinary monitors, the PanoVision does suffer some limitations. TFT is the system used in decent portable screens, and it's expensive. That might be one of the reasons why the new monitor range currently has a maximum size of only 12.1 inches. Furthermore, it can only display up to 262,144 colours. Still, that's better than Hi colour, and is equivalent to an 18- or 19-bit palette.

Perhaps a more serious limitation is the fact that the screen can only manage a resolution of 640x480. CTX claims to have overcome many problems associated with existing TFT screens, in particular, it has managed to come up with superior brightness and contrast. Because the screen is absolutely flat, it offers an increased viewing angle, while an anti-glare coating keeps it sharply visible no matter which angle you choose to view it from.

The PanoVision also sports a built-in stereo speaker system which uses an amplifier providing three watts per channel. With its exceptionally low power consumption, easy portability and integrated speakers, the PanoVision seems a good tool for people wanting to add professionalism to their on-site multimedia presentations. CTX also envisions the monitors being widely adopted by OEM bundlers. Phone CTX on 01923 818461 for details.



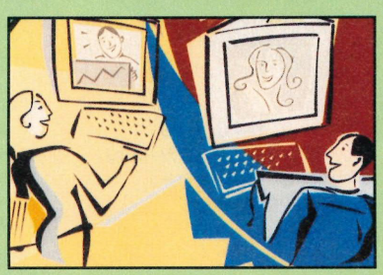
Thin film transistor technology at work with CTX's PanoVision.

Face to face

Videophone becomes even friendlier

Affordable face to face communications moved a step nearer this month with the release of Connectix VideoPhone version 1.1. VideoPhone is already selling for as little as $150 (£100), and the current package includes the VideoPhone for Windows software, and a monitor-top camera called the QuickCam.

One of the key hurdles for such systems to overcome, is the electronic bandwidth required to transmit voice and images real-time via ordinary phone lines. Until now, the system has only worked via networks and ISDN links, which makes it inaccessible for most home users. Connectix has now addressed that problem, and the latest version works with ordinary 28.8 baud modems. Connectix points out that the other main problem with video phone applications, is ease of use, and they've made great efforts to make the software as user-friendly as possible. Using your Web browser, you can simply connect to other users by accessing their Web page and clicking on an appropriate hot-spot. The VideoPhone software then takes over, and you can talk as normal.



From now on, always dress for the phone.

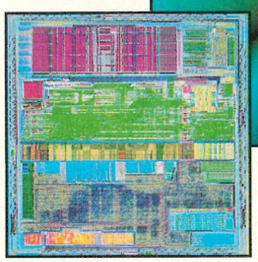
The software also has a dormant mode, so that you can receive incoming calls, even if it isn't running. This can also be used to screen external calls, while permitting access to calls directed via the local network. You can even embed auto-call commands within third party applications so that calls are automatically made upon receipt of the appropriate trigger. Further enhancements include improved audio handling, support for full duplex sound cards and standard Windows audio compression codecs, a stand-alone video mail application and improved support for variable sized windows. Version 1.1 is available as a free update patch to existing users who can download it from Connectix's Web page at www.connectix.com. For more details, phone Banner on 0171 351 4488.

Go-Speedracer-Go

The fastest Pentium processors yet?

When it comes to processing power, it simply has to be a Pentium chip, but which one? Cyrix is convinced that their new 6x86 range of processors outperform anything on the market, and has the figures to prove it. In recent tests using the Winstone bench-marking software, their new P166 processor ran on average, 5% faster than the equivalent Intel chip. Interestingly enough, Norton Si rated the chip at 80% faster than the Intel P166, which proves if nothing else, that Bejamin Disraeli knew what he was talking about when he said "There are three types of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics!"




Competition for Intel in the form of the Cyrix P166.

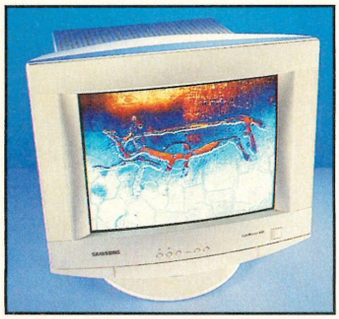
What makes the Cyrix P166 chip really interesting, is the fact that it only runs at a clock speed of 133MHz. Given the fact that a Pentium's number traditionally denotes its clock speed, Cyrix is being a bit tricky by naming theirs a P166 at all. Trickier still, is the fact that the company is actually charging a little more for their 133Mz chip, than Intel does for its 166MHz version. Because the new Cyrix chips can be very sensitive to the motherboard in which they're placed, Micronics has just released a new board specially optimised for its Pentium processors. This, the firm claims, produces superior performance over non-optimised motherboards. You can phone Cyrix on 01793 417777 and you can reach Micronics on 01256 479898. Look out for a review of both products soon.

Sight & Sound

Samsung launch multimedia monitors

As more and more people start to explore the full range of their PC's abilities, it's certain that desktop clutter is a widely shared problem. It's bad enough to lose half the desk to your monitor, without losing the other half to microphones and speakers.

A new range of monitors from Samsung, however, aims to give you a little more space. The new devices incorporate both speakers and a microphone, enabling you to integrate your multimedia system into a single unit. There are two new monitors, the 15M and the 15Me, and between them they address both ends of the market. The 15M is a high-end solution using flat-screen technology to provide the maximum possible viewing area without loss of picture quality. It provides a sharp display at resolutions up to 1280 x 1024 at 60Hz, or 1028 x 768 at 76Hz.


Audio-visual appeal: Samsung's latest range of monitors.

A special proprietary Ultra Clear coating produces the same fine readability as that offered by a glass filter. An additional coating also reduces static electricity and the accumulation of dust. It's Windows 95 Plug and Play compliant, which means it automatically sets itself up, and optimises the display when you turn your computer on. It incorporates two 1.5-watt per channel speakers, a mute button, volume control, microphone and headphone socket.

The economy solution, the 15Me, has similar specifications but a smaller resolution at 1024x768 At £261, it only costs £30 less than the 15M.

So, as that other man said: 'You pays you money…' Find out your nearest stockist by calling Samsung on 0181 391 0168.

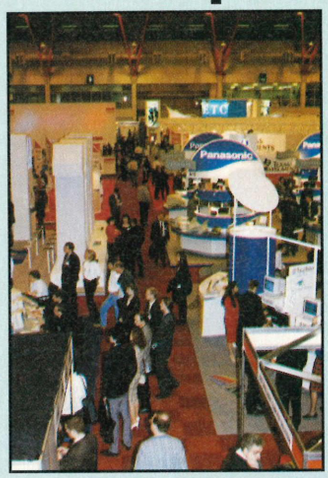
EYEWITNESS
COMDEX: Show Report

Despite being held a week after the last ever Spring European Computer Trade Show, the first British Comdex went down well.

The first day of the show was quiet, but by the second, it was buzzing, and numerous overseas exhibitors said they had already rebooked for next year's show. For the tech-heads, the show was very rewarding, but gameplayers and less serious minded visitors would have become bored almost immediately. There were plenty of big names in consumer electronics, such as Panasonic, Sharp, Pioneer, Yamaha and others, but little of eye-popping significance from them, although Yamaha did unveil their breath-taking new Soft-synth system. Like all trade shows, there were plenty of box-shifters in evidence trying to make a quick buck.

At ECTS, many companies were showing dime-a-dozen multimedia programs. At Comdex these were replaced by companies selling printer ink, Internet software, memory and system diagnostic tools. There were at least half a dozen vendors selling printer supplies. You could easily recognise these stands by the mounds of snoozing visitors around them! Another product greatly in evidence, was digital white-boards. These seem to be a new innovation, and they work just like a normal black board, except you write on a large white formica-like board using non-permanent markers. The computer detects your movements, and translates them into text and graphics on a screen.

It was startling to see just how many companies have eight- or even ten-speed CD-ROMs available. There were at least six eight-speed and three ten-speeders advertised at the show. For the movers and shakers of the computer industry, there were dozens of seminars to attend, ranging from 'Windows 95 vs Windows NT' to the 'Internet and Advertising on the Web'. Most of the conferences were pretty stodgy, and seemed designed primarily for marketing people and systems engineers.


Multi-million pound industry deals were struck at Comdex.

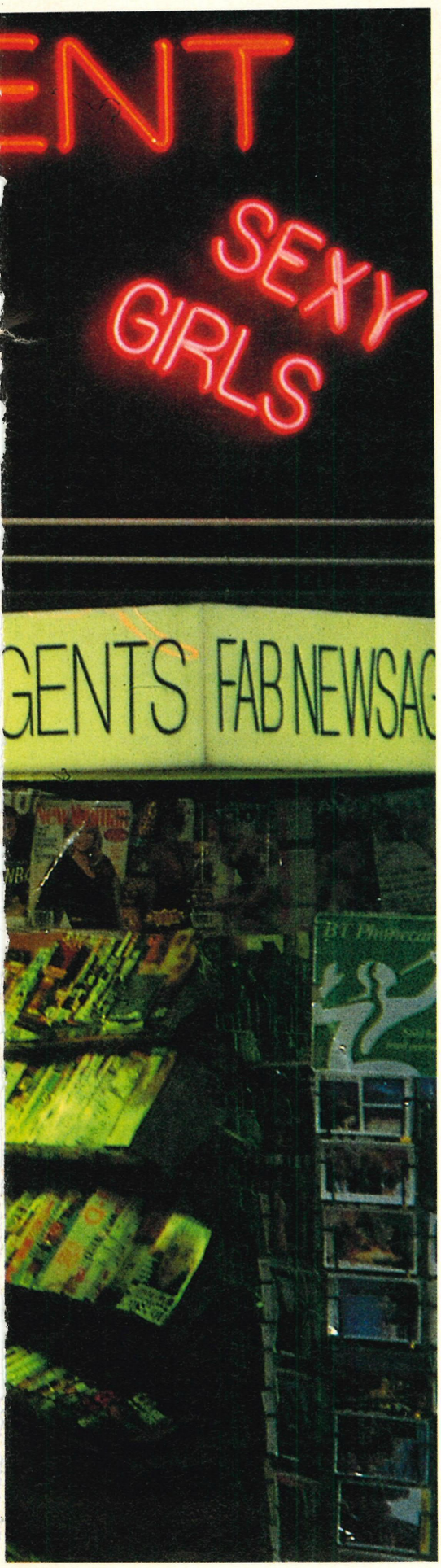
As ever, the bars were easily the most popular venues. The PC Review correspondent witnessed a deal worth several million pounds being forged over drinks in the space of half an hour. Among the larger electronics companies, there were lots of digital cameras and laser and bubble jet printers on display. Mannesman Tally were showing a particularly impressive and reasonably priced A2 colour bubble jet. It was also amazing to see just how small laser printers have become, with many of them no larger than a portable cassette player. The show was the most rewarding of the year so far, and it'll be exciting to see how it develops in the future.



Philips: one of several big name electronics firms getting into computing.



Comedy writers Mike Lepine (left) and Mark Leigh (right). A double act making good use of one of Soho's seedier Fab Newsagents. Are these the men who can make a game which is funnier than LucasArts' top Sam 'n' Max?



BELLY LAUGH

CD REVIEW 56 ON THE DISC

Try the brilliant fully playable demo of The Gene Machine with CD Review.

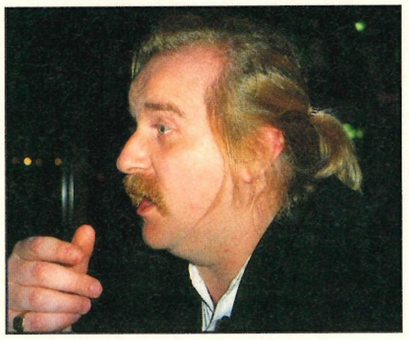
Comedy writers Mark Leigh and Mike Lepine are on a difficult mission. They're out to script a funny PC game. PC Review cornered them in Soho and asked: "Funny how?"

Seasoned gamesplayers are rightly cynical of attempts to draft in Hollywood talent for interactive movies. However the polishing of games by humorists is a much more promising concept. So, enter stage left Mark Leigh and Mike Lepine, two writers with an impressive creative history. They've worked in television with the likes of Hale and Pace, Josie Lawrence, Rory Bremner, Jonathan Ross, Brian Conley, Jimmy Tarbuck, Russ Abbot and even Jeremy Beadle. But it's their books that make you really know and love the double act. They're the creative team behind the outrageously successful *How to be a Complete Bastard* and *The Ultimate Revenge Kit* books. Basically, they're jobbing comedy authors and they're on a new mission: to make a game funny. We cornered them in Soho and asked them about *The Gene Machine*.

This game is being developed by Divide By Zero, whose most conspicuous efforts include *The Orion Conspiracy* and *Innocent Until Caught*. Their new product, until recently named *Victoriana*, follows the adventures of hero Piers and manservant Mossop around a Jules Verne/HG Wells version of Victorian London. Not so much steam punk as Victorian revival with an evil Doctor Dinsey out to rule the world, using a living being-combiner called… you guessed it… The Gene Machine. But, is it funny?

You and Your Mates

Leigh and Lepine didn't actually create the game their names will be adorning. Essentially, they've been brought in as script editors. As Mark Leigh explains: "Ideally we'd have liked to have been involved earlier on, when the germ of the game was being designed. We had ready-made characters to work with, but we'd have liked to change some of the cast completely. Saying that, we had a good brief. And the script to start with was excellent." Mike Lepine adds, "You need to involve writers at a much earlier stage. That's where the future of this sort of collaboration lies. You need to bring in different areas of expertise, writing and acting, and then combine that with people who's talent lies in designing games. If you're a Hollywood script writer, you don't get your mates to act for you. It needs a more multi-disciplined approach. Just because you can write a great computer game, it doesn't mean that you can write great comedy and vice versa."



"We like the idea that the game throws away all that space age cyberpunk stuff that every game wants to use and takes it right back to a sort of Verne/ Wells era." – Lepine

So, what is this dynamic duo ▶

INFORMATION

The Gene Machine from Vic Tokai should be in the stores at the beginning of the June. For information call 0171 721 7607. The next CD-ROM project for Leigh and Lepine will be an interactive guide to love and sex.

Five games that made us smile

FLIGHT OF THE AMAZON QUEEN
£39.99 Renegade
A journey through the jungle, that is always more puerile than entertaining. Some of the jokes drag and others don't even have punchlines. But it's a brave attempt.

SAM AND MAX HIT THE ROAD
£12.99 LucasArts/ White Label
Two detectives on a mission. Sam, a tough-talking dog. And Max, a psychotic rabbit. A funny game, based on a funny comic! Wonderful entertainment.

DAY OF THE TENTACLE
£12.99 LucasArts/ White Label
Meet Bernard the nerd, Lavine the air head and Laverne the metaller. This LucasArts adventure captures the Wayne's World mentality to a tee and integrates an aliens-taking-over-the-world plot too.

3D LEMMINGS

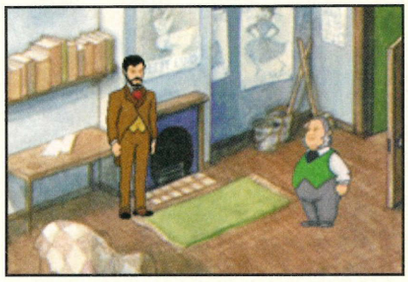


£44.99 Psygnosis
Pot-bellied critters with green hair and blue body suits who make funny 'Oh no' noises before they blow up. Ho ho ho.

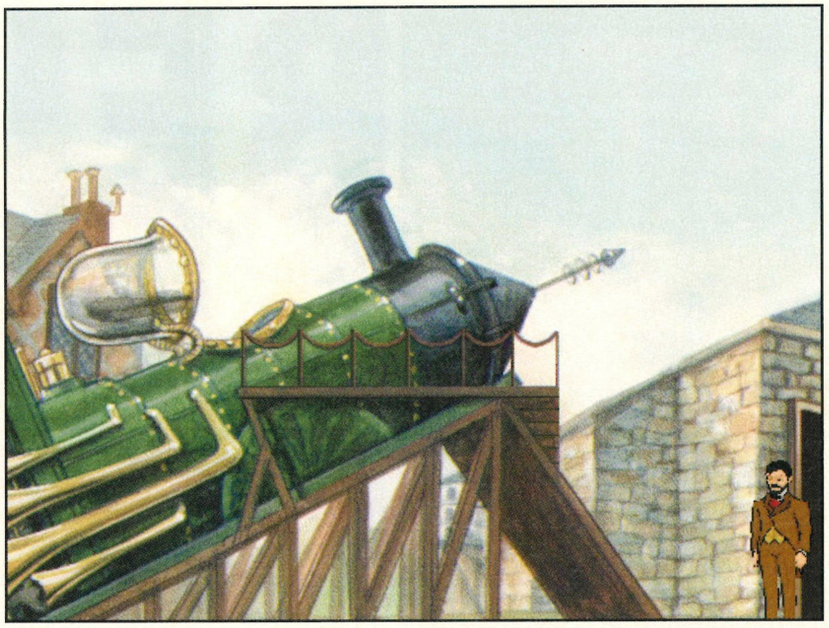
DISCWORLD
£44.99 Psygnosis
Yes. If you think Terry Pratchett is funny then you'll appreciate his involvement in the game. And hello, is that Jon Pertwee doing some of the voices? Looks like CD-ROM runs in the family.



It's a cat. Except in the DNA meddling world of The Gene Machine it's got a man's brain.



On the left adventurer Piers Fanshaw (Sean Pertwee), on the right Mossop (Jeff Rawle).



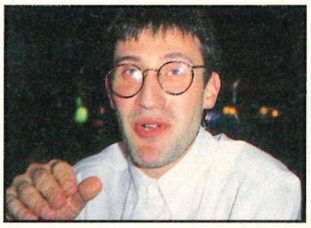
This steam rocket is your ticket to the moon. The Verne/Wells type contraption typifies the batty optimism of Victorian science fiction. Just look at the rivetting and finish on it.

▶bringing to *The Gene Machine*? Well, they're happy to say that their fee was based merely on editing the script. As Leigh explains, they'd have been paid whether or not they'd made any changes.

"We weren't there to ask them to change everything about the game. More to work out how to get some extra gags in," he says. "What we see our strengths are, and why we're involved in the project, is that we can exploit the characters. That's what you've got to do. React to the situation in the way the characters would. You've got the cheese obsessed professor. The Captain Nemo character. The relationship between Piers and Mossop. What we're doing is accentuating the relationships between the characters. Creating extremes. The stronger the character the more room there is for manoeuvre with humour."

So, personality is what it's all about. Leigh again, "The strongest humour is character based. That's why a lot of our personal favourites tend to be comedy from yesteryear. Steptoe, Hancock, Dad's Army – all strong, individual characters that seem to be missing today. It's now all very two-dimensional." The writing duo picked up on things that Divide By Zero had never spotted. Cheap gags like everyone getting the hero Piers Fanshaw's name wrong. Little touches like that.

Typically for adventures these days, developer Divide By Zero are wheeling in celebrity voice talent for the lead game characters. Listen for Sean Pertwee playing Piers. The son-of-the-Doctor's most recent acting credits the wonderful *Leon the Pig Farmer* and the appalling *Shopping*. Also look out for Jeff Rawle as manservant Mossop. He plays George in the sitcom *Drop the Dead Donkey*. However, the script team didn't write for the talent, as Leigh explains, "It wasn't until we'd completed the script that we knew who the cast was. We weren't writing for Sean Pertwee, we were writing for Piers as he heard him in our heads. We had a very defined view of who the characters were. What their motivations were. How would they react to the other characters.



"I don't find Sam and Max that funny. Because it's cartoony to start with, your expectations are higher because you're presented with these cartoon figures." – Leigh

Mike Lepine is open on the weakness of interactive entertainment. Particularly on the visual side. "Most of the time sprites work too hard. Rather like actors doing desperately bad comedy. They're drawn to look funny and end up doing desperate gestures. They're very crude, penny dreadful at times. It's like when you sit down and watch a bad sitcom where the actors are desperately selling-it, selling-it. You start getting worried that these people have no faith in their product and that's why they're all overacting. Trying to be funny. It would be nice in cartoons to reign them in a little. You won't lose from it. We're talking about older games here. Not like *Sonic The Hedgehog*. With many games you don't need to sell it that hard." So what's the problem? "They're not characters at all. They're just cyphers. Sprites. Set to do a series of functions. One of the things that games must address for the future is how to bring characters to these sprites. How to bring these things alive in a much more three-dimensional way."

While it's easy to sneer at interactive products which try to be funny, Mark Leigh lays the blame at the scriptwriters feet. "It's crucial that the games are script-led. You can't have the graphics and then decide to write something funny."

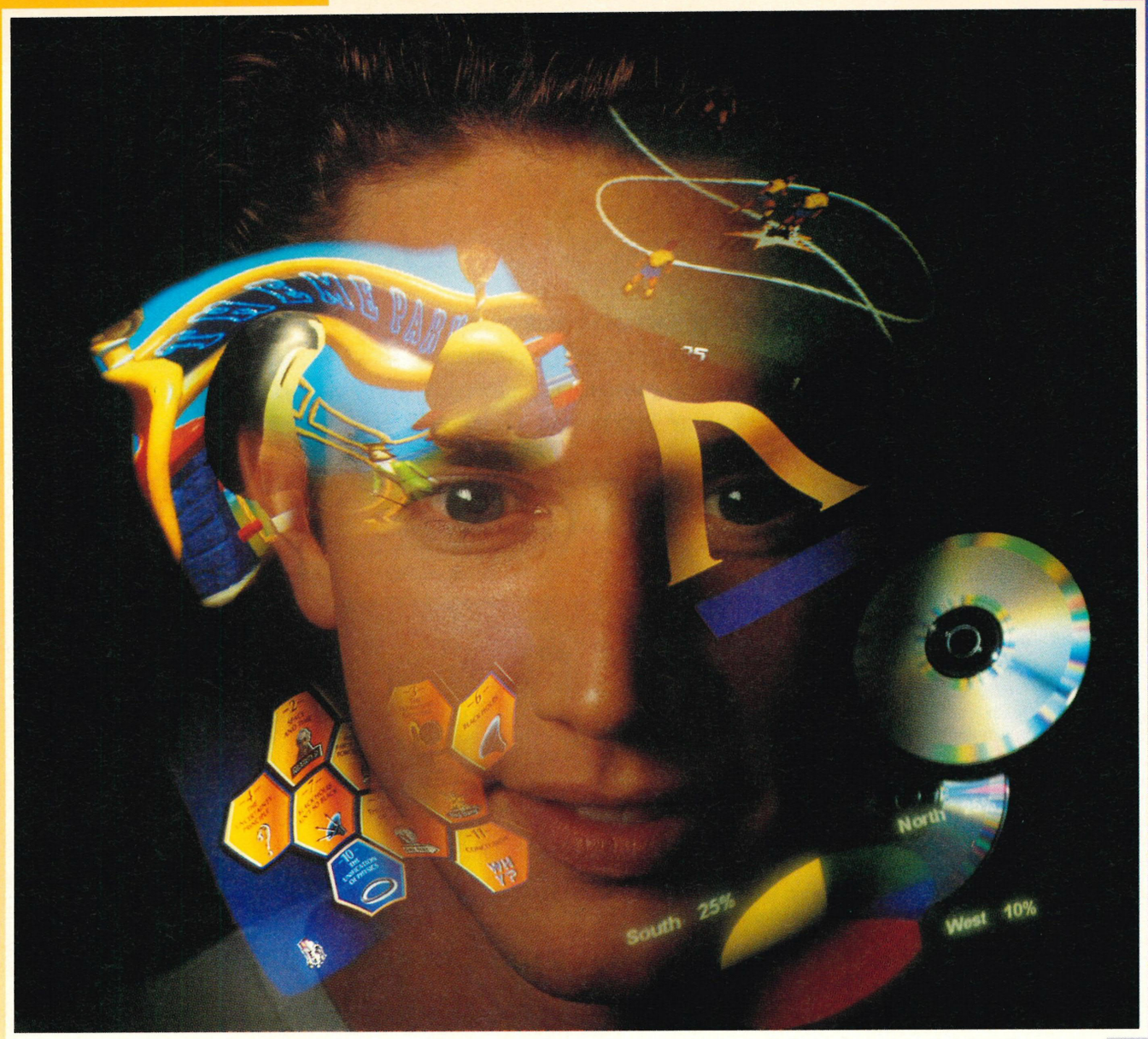
Funny bit, unfunny bit...

Lepine makes no bones about the challenges facing game writers. "The trickiest thing in any discipline, whether it's a novel, a film, a sitcom or a CD-ROM, is to make comedy that advances the plot. You'll see many films like *Life Of Brian* – brilliant film, but just a series of sketches. A funny bit, then an unfunny bit that links it. When trying to overcome this, CD-ROM magnifies the problem. As there are so many different paths and outcomes. You're trying to advance the plot in several different ways. Move things on and make it as amusing as possible in its own right."

Closing the interview, he points out that, "In a lot of games the characters are there merely to propel the plot. They're not fleshed out enough and I think people are missing a trick." Mark Leigh's version of it, was that, "We're in a stage of infancy really. There are fair questions being raised, but there's a lot more that can be done in terms of comedy in CD-ROM games… In the words of Karen Carpenter we've only just begun." ***(JB)***



Do you believe them? Is it funny or not? Next month's review will bring the answers.



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Join the winner's club with our preview special...

10 Most Wanted

The future's looking bright for PC games players. One day Quake, F1GP2 and Dungeon Keeper will make it out, but they've all been previewed to death anyway. The following games are ten of our hottest tips for the coming year...

The Big boys are coming

While Sega's first three PC releases, Ecco, Tomcat Alley and Comix Zone were a mere toe in the water, the company has just announced a deluge of product. Some of which could be very promising. Sega plans to release titles from its next generation catalogue, unassisted by the Edge video accelerator. Now the minimum spec required is to be a Pentium PC.

First up is Virtua Fighter PC, out in July. Previously only available for the Diamond Edge card, Sega now has it up and running with texture maps and the works. Playable demo next month with any luck. Also look out for Sonic CD, Baku Baku Animal, Sonic 3 and Knuckles, Bug, Panzer Dragoon and, in Autumn, the killer games Daytona, Virtua Cop and Sega Rally.

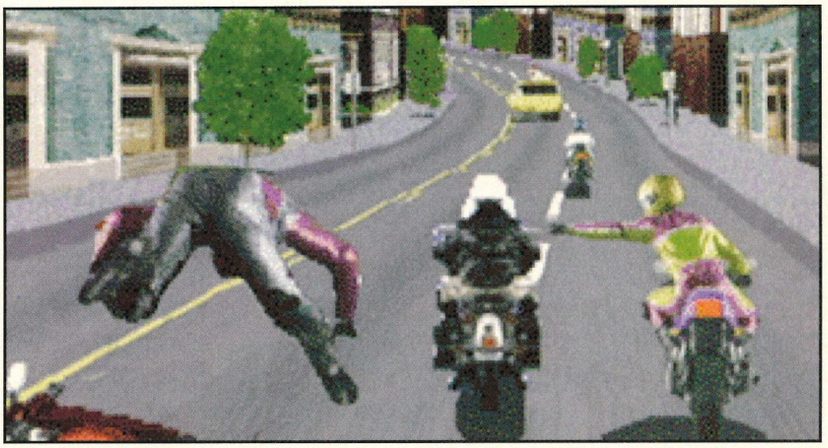
Road Rash

Electronic Arts, expected August 1996

With all the excitement surrounding *F1GP2*, this top bikes, fights and girls racing game could be easily have been lost in the rush. And that would be a great pity, because *Road Rash* is wonderful. The game, which started life on the Sega Mega Drive, is based around motorbike racing through urban and rural North America. You rev your machine and thrash along, dispensing and taking brutal punishment with fists and swinging chains. Get knocked from your bike and after the obligatory high speed slide ('road rash' for your information is the term to describe third degree friction burns) you have to jog back, rev it up and let loose again.

The PC conversion has most in common with the 3D0 version. It shares the same rock video style presentation with excessively macho, leather clad, heavy metal cut scenes, but comes up trumps with some audio tracks from the likes of Soundgarden and Therapy among others.

The beta version we got to play recently was coming along stormingly with the kind of playability most PC games still beg for. The graphics engine is looking super fast and incredibly detailed, which should come as no surprise when you consider that it was designed by Papyrus – the developer who brought the world Indycar.



Helmet meets concrete at high speed. And is that a chain in the gob for a CHIPS cop?

Syndicate Wars

Electronic Arts, expected September 1996

We've all heard about about *Dungeon Keeper*. There's been no end of unmet release dates for Bullfrog's epic fantasy role playing game. And then there's *Theme Hospital*. That's late too. But the most eagelry awaited in the *PC Review* offices just has to be the follow up to the glorious *Syndicate*.

The biggest flaw in the original, an action game set in a dark, cyberpunk world where sinister corporations hired even more sinister cyborgs for assassination and terrorism, was the graphics engine. Even though it's already spawned stacks of imitators (Such as SCIs *Gender Wars*, Mirage's *Mayhem* and Domark's *Total Mania*) none of these has addressed the key problem - that the isometric view meant you could only see your agents maybe half the time.

Ah. But there's good news. The action in *Syndicate Wares* is to be viewed from one of those floating cameras so popular in games these days. The viewpoint can move in real time to give you the best kill shots imaginable. So, expect lots of sore, injured and dying innocents… the horror.

The gameplay is to borrow heavily from the original with a team of four agent controlled individually or as a group using the mouse. The weaponry selection has gone beyond the uzis, flamethrowers and mini-guns and now includes grenades, bazookas plus the chance to call in an airstrike when things get crazy. And oh what a city… with towerblocks, video walls, street lights and… well much, much more. This game is going to re-define point and click shoot-'em-ups.



Calling in an air strike will quite literally bring the house down.



Your team are those four little geezers with numbers above their heads.



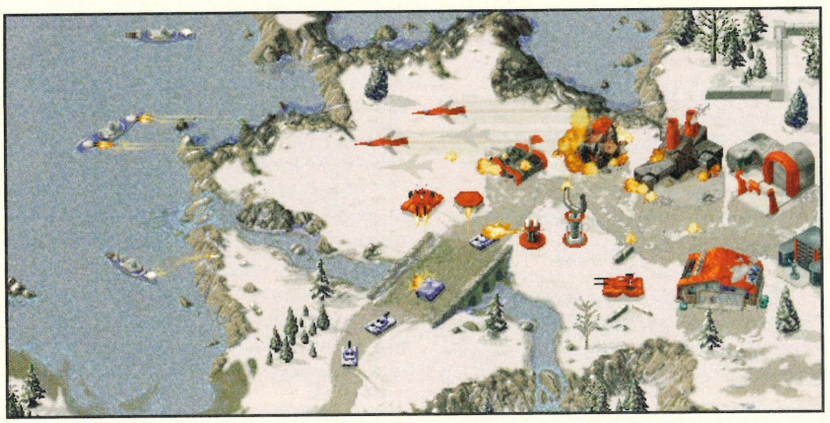
These lads are crazy. They'll even use hand held lasers to take down flying cars!

Red Alert

Virgin Interactive, expected October 1996

It all began with *Dune* 2. Westwood Studios, rather than developing a tedious graphic adventure or management game, created a wonderful point-and-click strategy, resource, explore and kill affair that had games players in a right lather. Then came *Command and Conquer*, with a sophisticated original storyline, killer network play and all the point-and-click carnage you could handle. The mission disc *Covert Operations* was a pleasing enough stop gap, but now the company is bringing us a prequel to *C&C*.

The prequel before the sequel. *Red Alert* is set decades before *Command and Conquer* in a 1940s-esque alternative world. World War 2 is replaced by a series of localised battles between the Allies and the Soviets. The storyline promises to go into the origins of the Tiberium ore, the radioactive stuff you mined to make money in *Command and Conquer*, and also chart the emergence of the Brotherhood of NOD and the Global Defence Initiative.



Action on the snowy sea shore in classic blues versus the reds anti-Stalin gameplay.

In gameplay terms don't expect any radical departure. The action will be viewed from the same point of view and use the same control interface. However expect improved artificial intelligence for troop units. New elements in combat are to include attack dogs and kennels, saboteurs, vehicle thieves, submarines, bombers, airfields, spies and stealth fighters. The inclusion of thorougly modern stealth technology is typical of the fusion between modern and retro weaponry – sounds a bit like Rowan Software's *Air Power* to us. A talked about addition, unconfirmed at time of going to press are the paratroopers, which should make it possible to introduce all sorts of late in the day twists to combat.

Quake watch

The latest news on Id Software's masterpiece is that it'll be ready when it's finished. Argh! We called Id up just before going to press to see if there was any progress and it was explained that the company were currently working on the bosses. No other update.

Publisher GTi hasn't been resting on its laurels. It's already designed Quake pens, mugs and desktop jotter pads. Next month we'll be bringing you the chance to win some of these immensely desirable goods, but until then, it'll be ready when it's finished. No news is no news.

MDK

Shiny Entertainment, expected December 1996

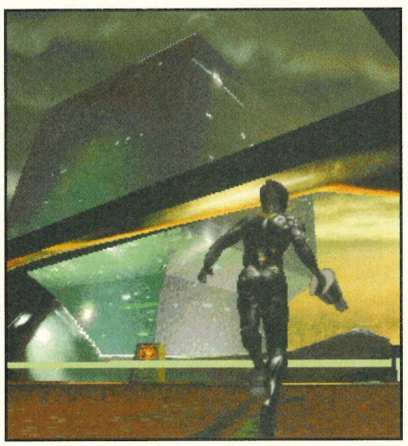
Some would say that it's a risky decision to name Shiny Entertainment's first PC game as one of the most wanted that will be appearing this year. But once you've seen the title up and running though, all doubts about the *Earthworm Jim*'s creator's ability to cope with the PC are *MDK*ed (that's *Murder, Death, Killed*, acronym fans).

MDK features what could well be the largest and most involving true 3D polygon world the PC will have seen. In *Doom* and *Duke Nukem 3D* there are always bitmaps representing the backdrop that cannot be explored. In *MDK* you'll be able to visit every structure you can see, wandering far into the distance before scaling a skyscraper and peering down to the streets below. All the texture maps are drawn in SVGA so the pixellation is almost non-existent and it's extremely quick even at this early stage.

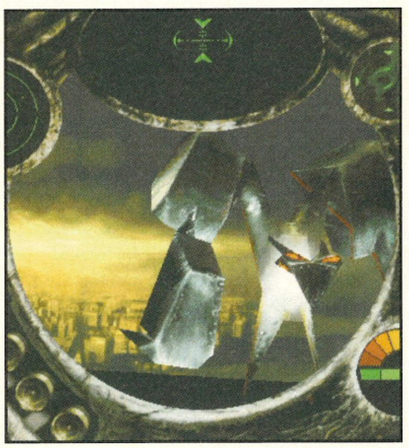
Strong character and scenario design is central to Shiny's philosophy and *MDK*'s is unusual to say the least. The aim of the game is to stop huge, wheeled fortress cities from crushing the ecosystem.

The pre-rendered sprite with which you control in order to accomplish this is unusual. His main weapon is attached to his head to leave his hands free to climb and run faster. Looking around moves the gun and focusing on a distant object for a second magnifies it repeatedly until you can pick it off with the sniper's rifle.

The beauty of the *MDK* system is that the shoot-'em- up can now incorporate a subtle, tactical element while maintaining the out and out stalking fear everyone loves.



Your character in MDK sports a nifty, black rubber suit. Verrrry kinky.



The head up display zooms and shoots with frightening power.

Hardwar

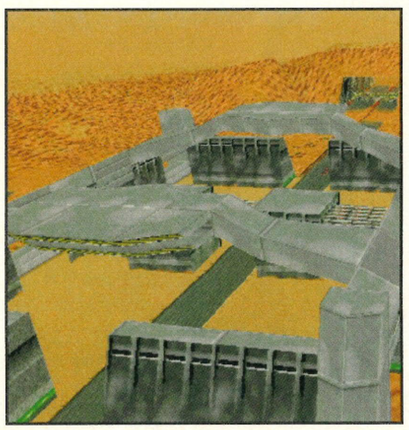
Gremlin Interactive, October 1996

Software Refinery, developer of the awesome *Slipstream,* hasn't rested on its laurels. Instead, its pulled out the stops to design a game with elements of David Braben's *Elite* and Argonaut Software's *Star Glider*.

The action all takes place in a city called Misplaced Optimism. It sprawls across nine crators on Jupiter's icy moon Titan. You're the future equivalent of Arthur Dailey, doing whatever it takes to get by. The game environment is open-ended leaving you to get on with assassinations, bounty hunting, gun running, and maybe even a little trading.

The graphics engine is born again since *Slipstream* and is beautifully detailed, offering a true 3D environment players can explore, entering buildings and even travelling around by mono-rail.

In a drive towards autheticity, the action takes place in a real time environment with short night/day cycles. Time of day is crucial as you fly a solar-powered craft. That means night time will involve races to get energy at 'light wells'. Bold claims are also being made for the quality of the artificial intelligence. The police, traders and other factions will all respond to and learn from player behaviour. There will be missions up for grabs, available from the communications channel, but players are to have the freedom to develop their own playing styles and agenda. We reckon *Hardwar* is going to pick up where David Braben's *Elite* games left off.



Check out the texture mapping on these structures in Gremlin's coming sensation.

Just Missed Out

There were games we'd just love to have included in this adoring preview feature. Worthy ones that just missed out are Domark's Deathtrap Dungeon, Ocean's Tunnel B1, X-Wing Versus TIE Fighter and Gremlin's Actua Golf.

Little Big Adventure 2

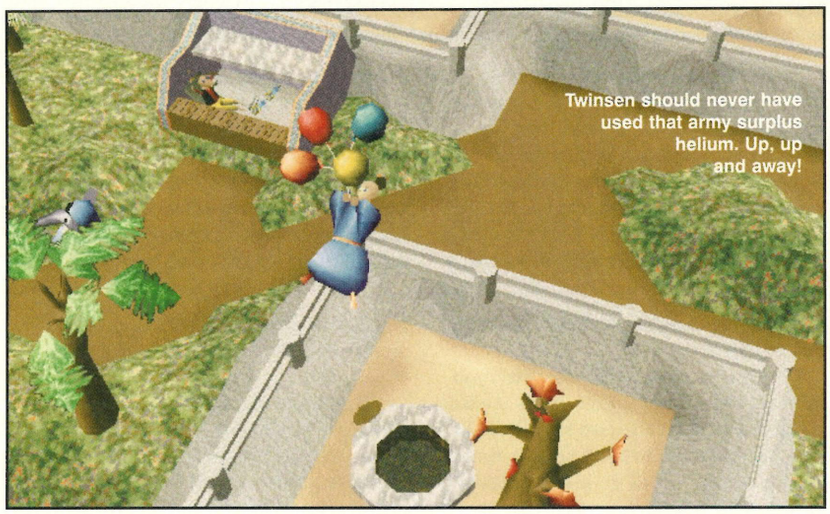
Electronic Arts, December 1996

There were three things that made Adeline's glorious *LBA* just less than perfect. The irritating save game structure that only let you save your game between episodes, rather than, say just before you were about to die horribly. Frederick Raynal and Serge Plagnol promise they've fixed it.

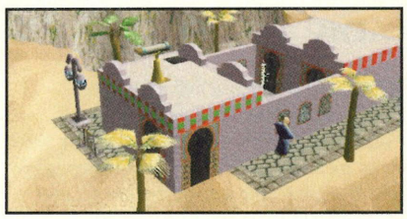
Then there was the harsh way your damage metre suffered when you did something as innocent as bumping into a wall. An unforgiving flaw which again Fred and Serge have sorted. They even reckon they've enhanced the control system to boot. And the third vexation? Well, seeing as the game was played from a fixed 3D isometric point of view it could sometimes be dead fiddly trying to work out where you were.

The news on the presentation front is that they're keeping the gloriously rendered SVGA backdrops for the indoor sequences, but out and about expect plenty of changes. Locations are rendered at their most basic level when you enter them. The player can then position a moving camera, which sets the point of view from which the scene is to be completed in all its shinier, more detailed glory. It's a big step, but suits the pensive, graphical gameplay style of LBA perfectly.

And the storyline for this most graphical of adventures? It's being kept behind closed doors for now, but expect to see more of pony-tailed blue-coated boy Twinsen. The original *LBA*, a huge game in itself, ended with Twinsen defeating a character called Dr Funrock and at time of going to press it was still unconfirmed whether said bad guy will be making an appearance, all we know is that the action will be set many years on into the game world's future.







(Above) Twinsen gets into a robo-embrace. (Below) Render buildings from any angle.

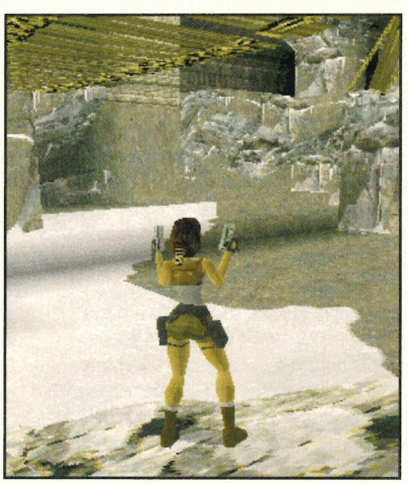


Tomb Raider

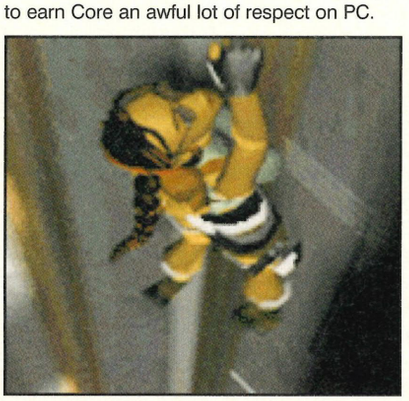
Core, due out Christmas 1996

At last getting to grips with PC games, *Tomb Raider*, now only half finished is already very playable and indeed glorious to look at. You play a female Indiana Jones type, named Lara Croft, out to recover an ancient artifact called The Scion. Most of the exploration is done underground, with ancient ruins, pyramids and palaces, dungeons, corridors and tunnels. Then of course there's a selection of puzzles to solve, traps to escape, and friends or foe to help or hinder your progress. The action is all viewed from floating third person cameras that zip around and seem uncannily able to always pick the best viewing angle. While *Quake* is the 3D engine of choice for high action gamers, *Tomb Raider* offers a more detailed, atmospheric and pensive alternative.

The thing that marks *Tomb Raider* out for special consideration might be its control mechanism, which is simply wonderful. Pistols are held in both hands for a very *Reservoir Dogs* looking experience. Your polygonal player will ping off shots, compensating for your poor aiming and adjust body posture intelligently. For example if the enemy is coming from the left hand side, it will drop the right arm and fire only with the nearest pistol. It just all feels so right. Your character will have over 2000 frames of animation making for fluid leaps, jumps, climbing and running. *Tomb Raider* is going to earn Core an awful lot of respect on PC.



Female lead Lara Croft packs shooters in both hands. Nice pair love (etc).



Pre-rendered sequences will pop up at key points to let you in on the storyline.



The bear takes a good dozen shots to finish off. Walk back slowly and keep firing.

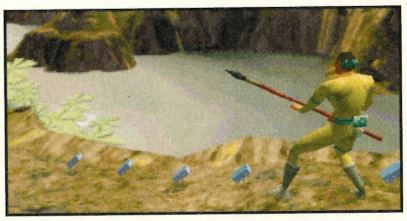
Time Commando

Electronic Arts, June 1996

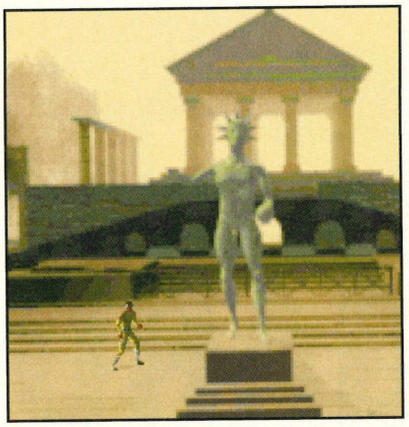
It's one of the less well known facts in the industry that, following the release of the seminal *Alone in the Dark*, the main man responsible left Infogrames and has had nothing to do with it since. Frederick Raynal instead formed Adeline with, amongst others, Serge Plagnol, in an attempt to usurp Infogrames' position as the leading French company. Not an easy task but one they have achieved with a combination of stunning imagination and technical excellence.

Time Commando is the latest title about to emerge from Adeline's Lyon stables. In a time of seemingly endless supplies of average 3D engines, *Time Commando* employs brilliant combination of traditional control methods and pre-rendered action to create its unique atmosphere. All the characters featured in the game are SVGA polygons which can run, jump and crawl according to your wishes. The unusual aspect is that they move over high-quality pre-generated backgrounds that are streamed off CD while playing to provide an almost photo-like quality to the entire game.

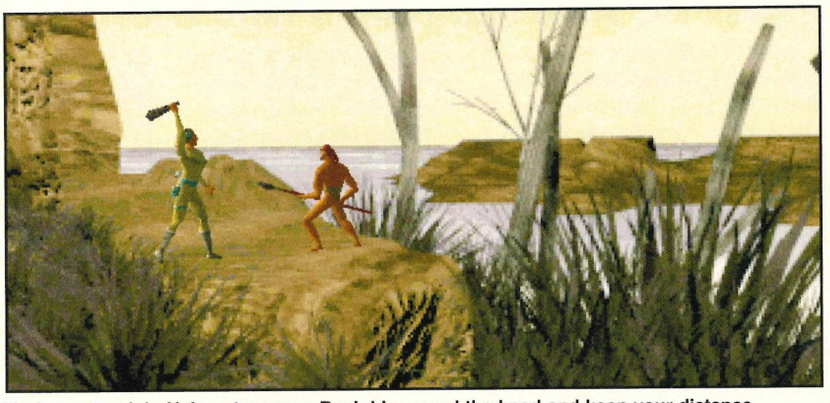
The story does justice to this innovation and provides more than just an excuse to play the game. You control the eponymous hero as he ventures backwards and forwards through time in an attempt to defeat a master computer. The nine levels, including prehistoric, medieval Japan and the wild west, all are packed with superbly constructed friends and enemies ranging from sabre-toothed tigers to Manga robots. *Time Commando* simultaneously offers two of the rarest ingredients in the PC industry today – imagination and innovation. That's why it'll be worth playing when it's released.



Pick up the little blue square things. You'll need them to add salt to potato chips.



The ancient Rome levels have plenty of Doric detailing and sculptures too.



You've got a club. He's got a spear. Bosh him round the head and keep your distance.

Flying Corps

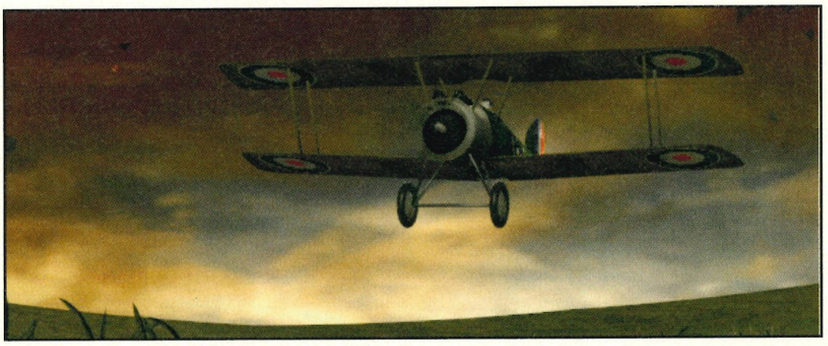
Empire, expected October

Rowan Software is pretty much a master of vintage air combat flight simulation. Its now legendary 3D flight engine graced four games, including *Dawn Patrol* and *Air Power*, but now the time has come to move on with a dazzling new graphic engine and more of the same seat of your pants flying action.

The flight model for Flying Corps is completely new. Rod Hyde explained to *PC Review* how World War I aeroplane experts had been drafted in to give the game a terrfiyingly realistic feel. "For example, the Sopwith Camel turns quicker to the right than left thanks to the big heavy rotating engine at the front. We've introduced that kind of peculiarity into the flight model," he said.

Set in World War I, *Flying Corps* takes you through four genuine campaigns. Two of them cast you as German, one British and one American. A common failing in campaign-based games is that they are too disjointed, with bursts of action but no feeling of consistency. The flow of *Flying Corps* looks set to change all that. For example, one of the campaigns is based around the Battle Of Cambray in November 1917. British tanks are attacking the German line and you play the squadron leader of the Germans, trying to repulse the attack. At the end of each mission the position of the tanks is saved, making it a proper, on-going campaign.

The graphics engine is also new. As combat is mostly low level, lots of effort has gone into the terrain rendering. Whereas modern sims can use satellite data, Rowan has had to rely on photo reconnaisance photos from the War. On top of the trench maps, artists actually went over to France to get colour matches for the ground. Hyde explained he wanted it "absolutely as it was". As for the planes, they're to be complicated structures that you'll be able to paint up yourself using the 64,000 varied colour schemes. A guaranteed winner.



Aeroplanes like they used to be in the good old days. Vintage bone shaking action.

Off to E3

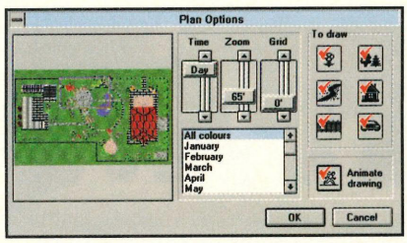
PC Review is trotting off to E3, the Electronic Entertainment Exhibition in Los Angeles, where stacks of new products are to be announced. So we'll be bringing you even more top games news next month.

Stop press

Our 10th game was going to be *John Madden NFL 96*. We were going to tell you about how EA Sports was reusing its Virtual Stadium technology as seen in *FIFA 96*, *NFL 96* and *NBA 96*. How this was the first appearance of the killer console grid-iron simulation. How the in-game commentary was going to join John Madden up with three other TV chatterboxes. How this was going to be best American football game you'd ever see. Except... and we're probably the first mag to tell you this... it's been dropped from the release schedule. The horror. And, it has been replaced by *John Madden NFL 97*. The joy. More news on this next month.

DID YOU KNOW?

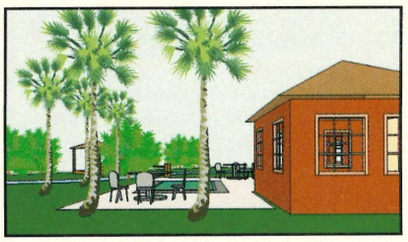
The hanging gardens of Babylon were considered to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world? Ironically, they didn't actually 'hang' at all, rather, they were a series of terraced roof gardens set within the palace at Babylonia and created some time between 810 and 562BC. It's thought that they may have been designed to remind Queen Sammu-ramat of the green hills of her homelands. Wells thought to part of their complex irrigation system have been discovered. It would have been a lot easier with a hose pipe!



Geoff Hamilton's Garden Designer: no 3D view, but an animated changing of seasons.



Garden designer's overhead view helps you plan your garden to be.



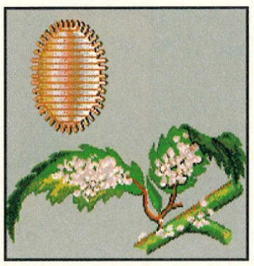
Landscape Design 3D: fewer plants than the opposition, but a full 3D walkthrough mode.

GARDEN DESIGN

Summer's arriving, and if you have gardening woes, why not let your PC help you plan a new back yard?

According to Tennyson, in Spring, a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love. Just once a year, though, eh? If you've got a green thumb, Spring's more likely to be the time of year your thoughts turn to gardening. A garden can be much more than a plastic gnome, a bin-liner pond and dandelion-infested lawn. With some advanced planning, it can be a vibrant playground for the kids, or a haven of tranquillity for yourself. Instead of using it as place to store dog muck and rusting engine parts, you can use your garden to make a statement. But you'll need to think carefully about what you want to achieve, and that's where these programs come into things. Each of them is very different, which should make it easy to choose the right one for you.

There are several elements to garden planning including landscaping, building and choosing plants. If you want to keep work to a minimum, you can change your yard by simply changing or adding plants. You probably already have some plants, but these programs will teach you about selecting a variety of flora for year-round blooming. The strongest in that regard is *Garden Designer*, which was created in conjunction with *Gardener's World* presenter Geoff Hamilton. It has a database of plants which can be referenced by common or Latin names. Each plant in the database is accompanied by a photograph or a drawing so that you can see what it will look like in full growth.

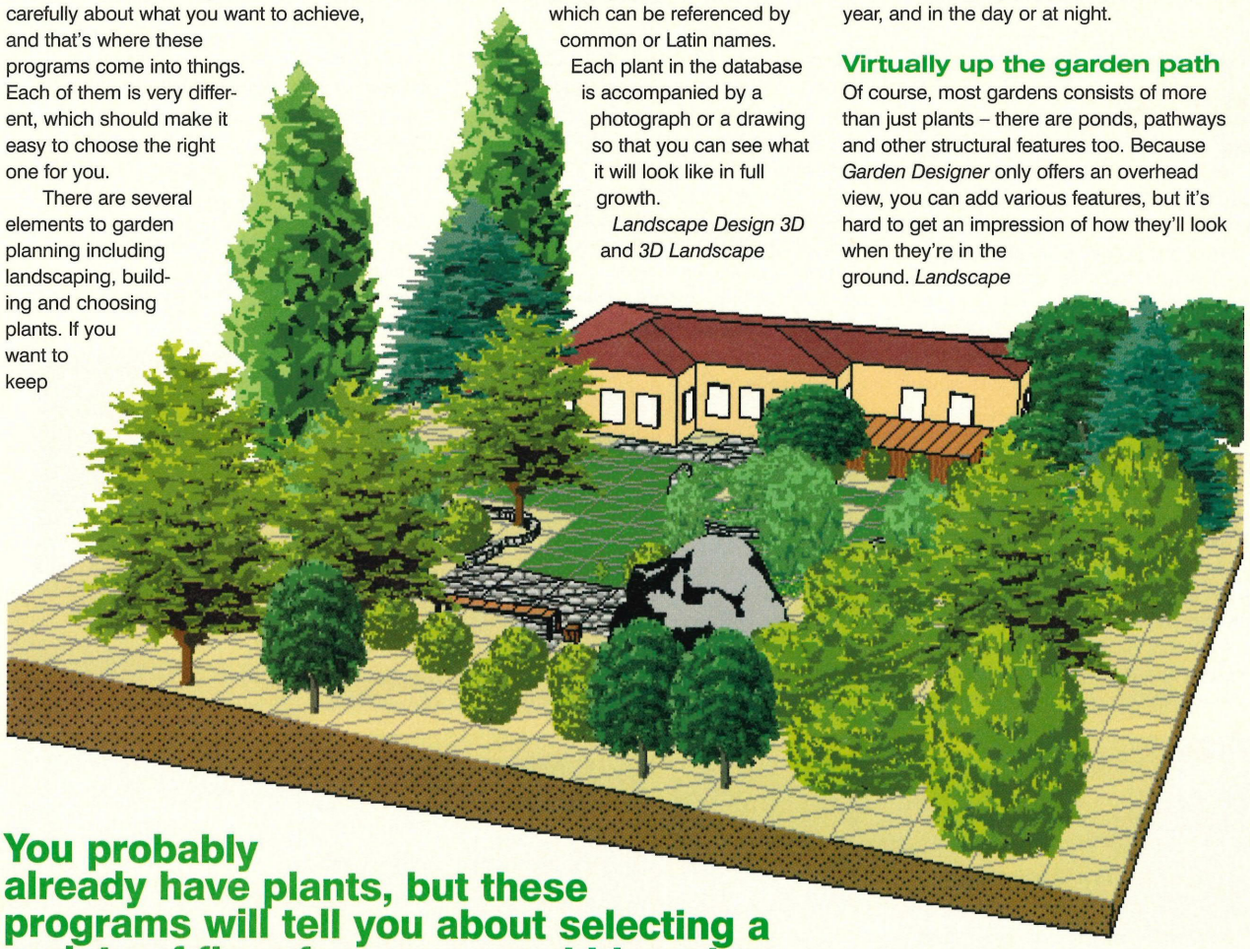


Garden Designer even teaches you about plant diseases and how to deal with them effectively.

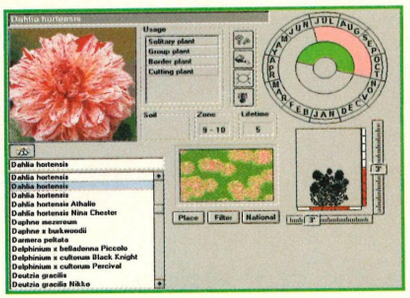
Landscape Design 3D and *3D Landscape* make up the points because they can generate 3D views incorporating your plants, so that you can get an accurate impression of the way they'll look in real life. All three programs enable you to alter the ages of the plants, so that you can see how large they'll grow, and in the case of *3D Landscape*, what shadows they'll cast. *Garden Designer* also enables you to view your design at different times of year, and in the day or at night.

Virtually up the garden path

Of course, most gardens consists of more than just plants – there are ponds, pathways and other structural features too. Because *Garden Designer* only offers an overhead view, you can add various features, but it's hard to get an impression of how they'll look when they're in the ground. *Landscape*



You probably already have plants, but these programs will tell you about selecting a variety of flora for year-round blooming.



Geoff Hamilton's Garden

Thanks to its comprehensive encyclopedia, this is an excellent program for planning the specific plants, shrubs and trees for your garden.

Developer: GSP
Publisher: GSP
Contact: 01480 496666
Price: £19.95
Minimum system:
486, 4Mb RAM, Windows 3.1, CD drive, 2Mb hard disk space, VGA

7

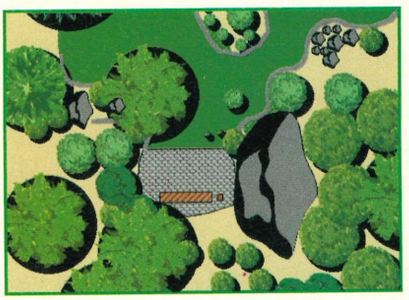


Landscape Design 3D

With its friendly video tutorials, Landscape Design gives you a good head-start when you want to remodel your garden and a 3D walkthrough to boot. Not bad.

Developer: Expert
Publisher: Expert
Contact: 01954 206626
Price: £14.99
Minimum system:
386DX, 4Mb RAM, Windows 3.1, CD drive, 1Mb hard disk space, SVGA, Sound card

6



3D Landscape

This is the most professional and complete of the three programs, but then it does cost twice as much as the others. If you have the money, get it.

Developer: Books That Work
Publisher: FastTrak
Contact: 01923 495496
Price: £49.95
Minimum system:
386, 4Mb RAM, Windows 3.1, CD drive, 5Mb hard disk space, VGA

8

You say Eden, I say Edinu

Although Christians and Jews have adopted the Garden of Eden story as a part of their religious histories, its story predates Christianity by thousands of years, originating in all probability in the ancient civilisation of Sumeria. In their language 'Edinu' meant 'plain' and was associated with fertility and tranquillity. Stories about gardens that provide for their inhabitants' needs are found in the stories and legends of many ancient middle-eastern cultures.

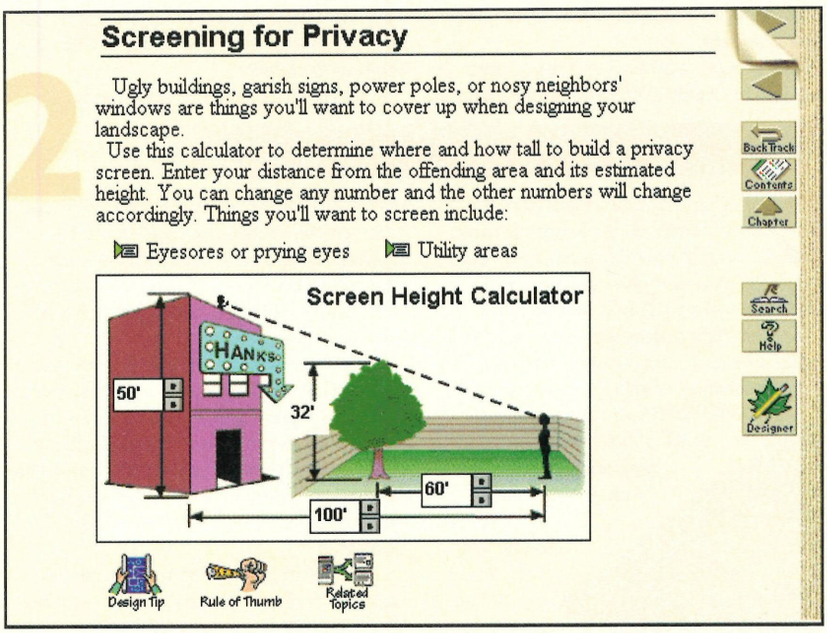
Design 3D is based on Expert's *3D Home Designer*, which means that not only can you view a virtual image of your garden, you can also walk around it to see how it looks. *3D Landscape* provides a much nicer 3D view, with more detailed plants, however, although you can rotate the camera, it doesn't offer the same real-time walkthrough mode.

Digging for depth

The last element to a perfect garden is landscaping. The real world isn't flat, and nor need your garden be. You may have a sloping or multi-level garden, or you might want to add some vertical height to provide interest. With *Garden Designer*, you can certainly define areas of your garden which are elevated or lowered, but as it only gives a plan view, such areas provide no visual reference in the finished project. Despite its 3D view, *Landscape Design* doesn't enable you to alter the 3D lie of the land either. Only *3D Landscape* gives you with the freedom to alter the elevation of your plot. You can add an overall slope to the ground, or by digging and filling holes one square at a time, you can produce more precise changes which are just perfect for creating rockeries, cut-aways and so on.

We've looked at the main elements of garden planning, but unless you're a closet Percy Thrower, you'll probably have lots of questions about how to achieve the desired effect. Because all three programs come on CD, there's plenty of extra space for tutorials and advice sections. *3D Landscape* scores massively over the other programs in this area due to the sheer quality and diversity of its material. It comes with dozens of sections covering everything from designing your landscape to renting tools and buying materials. The sections contain numerous pages consisting of text, photos, drawings, animations and video footage.

The other two packages depend upon tie-ins with gardening personalities. *Landscape Design 3D* includes over 30 minutes of video footage from *Yardworks!*, an American gardening show hosted by Melinda Meyers. These clips are of adequate quality, and are combined with a Q&A section for common queries. However, they confine themselves exclusively to plants and the growing thereof. *Garden Designer* doesn't have any video footage whatsoever, but it does come with a fantastic and comprehensive encyclopedia of plants, showing each blooming period, maximum size, soil, lighting and care requirements and more. In fact, the program is a horticulturist's delight, and if you know the Latin name for ten plants in your garden, this is the package for you, even if you subsequently buy another program for the 3D views.



When it comes to helpful interactive tutorials, 3D Landscape offers by far the most diverse and helpful selection, ranging from stills and animations, to video clips.

If, on the other hand, your idea of gardening involves hiring a digger and changing the entire geography of your plot on the planet, *3D Landscape* is definitely your top choice. Its ability to display detailed and convincing 3D views, that incorporate ground elevation plus plants and buildings, makes it a very attractive prospect.

Last, and in some ways least, is *Landscape Design 3D*, an inexpensive program, for people who pick unknown shrubs at summer fetes and grow them for the fun of it. It's perfect if you want to plan your garden but don't want to have to qualify as an architect or botanist first.

All three programs are impressive, and you're going to have a lot of fun whichever you go for. If you can afford it, try more than one. ***(MB)***

CD REVIEW ON THE DISC 56

Dig into the demo of Geoff Hamilton's Garden Designer with CD Review

Sounds fo

Don't get stuck in a musical time warp. Check out this

People spend hundreds of pounds on their home hi-fi systems, yet when it comes to computer sound, why is it that you settle for the same old third-rate card that came with your system, when you bought it years ago. It might have served you well, but with recent technological advancements in sound chip technology and the subsequent related improvements in sound quality, now's a good time to consider something that packs a bit more aural punch. Especially considering that many of the top music and sampling programs around these days like *CuBase Score*, *Samplitude Studio*, *S.A.W*, *Koan Pro* and *Internet Phone* only work optimally with a hi tech new card.

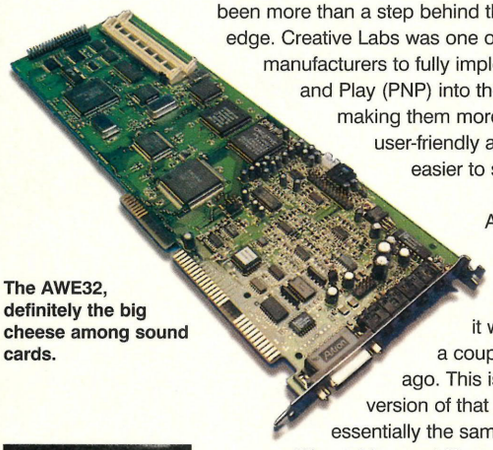
Until now, when buying a sound card, you had to decide in advance what sorts of applications you mainly intended to use it for. Cards that were good for games were not necessarily strong for music, and vice-versa. But all that's changed. Manufacturers are desperate to get your business, so they're adding an ever increasing number of new features in the hope that they will be able to dip into your wallet. In this round up, we selected the four best cards that we could find. During the last six months, two great cards have ceased production, the Sound Edge and the Soundscape Elite. Ever quick to fill the void, two impressive new replacements have appeared in the form of the Tropez Plus and the Ultrasound Plug and Play. We'll be looking at them, as well as the ever-popular Sound Blaster AWE32 PNP and the Nusound PNP.

All of the sound cards reviewed here will knock your socks off in terms of audio quality and power. All support General MIDI, and have on-board instrument ROM. Some also have upgradeable RAM. If you're a musician, these features are especially important because they enable you to use your computer as a music studio.

Even if you only ever play games on your computer, the extra depth of sound offered by a General MIDI instrument set means that background music will be transformed from mere noise, into an epic score worthy of your efforts. You'll be amazed how much more atmosphere there is to arcade and adventure games alike, when the background music is complimentary. Without further ado, let's take a look at the best sound cards on the market. ***(MB)***

SOUNDBLASTER AWE32 PNP

PC REVIEW ESSENTIAL



The AWE32, definitely the big cheese among sound cards.

Supplier: Creative Labs

Contact: 01734 344322

Drive: £229.13

Creative has dominated the sound card market almost since the year dot, and although the company has never been known for producing the most powerful cards that money can buy, they've never been more than a step behind the leading edge. Creative Labs was one of the first manufacturers to fully implement Plug and Play (PNP) into their cards, making them more user-friendly and much easier to set up. The AWE32 has been turning heads since it was released a couple of years ago. This is the latest version of that card, and it's essentially the same. It features Wavetable capability and 1Mb of instrument ROM, containing over 127 instruments and nine drum sets. It supports a feature known as Soundfonts, which enables you to replace the existing sounds with your own samples. This proves perfect if you have a favourite instrument sound that you like to use in your MIDI tunes. The card comes with 512k of user RAM, into which you can load your own Soundfonts.

The Soundblaster AWE32 also has space for two 30 pin SIMMs, a feature which obviously enables you to add additional memory up to a maximum of 28Mb. This is the largest amount of memory that any home sound card supports, and if you're seriously into creating your own music, you'll find it invaluable.

The card's greatest strength is almost certainly for games players. This is because in native mode it is widely supported by all the most exciting games on the market. When running in this mode, the full power of the card's instruments and digital playback makes it simply unrivalled, and has to be heard to be believed.

If your games don't support AWE32 mode, the card also responds to Sound Blaster 16 commands, so you can be sure of absolute, 100 per cent compatibility with all of your software, past, present and future. Can you think of a time when you installed a game and Soundblaster wasn't on the sound card set-up menu? Thought not.

The only negative point is the huge size of its drivers, which can make a serious impact upon your ability to load such games.

The AWE32 PnP is one of the best all-rounders on the market. There's nothing better for the games player, and its versatility makes it a valuable tool for musicians too. And obviously, to get the most out of all the top-of-the-range music software available, you need a card like this one. If you're thinking of moving from an 8- or 16-bit sound card onto something a bit more lavish, the AWE32 comes strongly recommended.

PCR VERDICT

The AWE32 is well supported by the games industry, and a very versatile performer.

9

GLOSSARY

Duplex

This refers to a sound card's ability to record and replay samples simultaneously. It's something like the sound card world's version of Karaoke functionality. The Duplex feature is ideal for replaying a backing track whilst you record yourself singing over the top of it.

Wavetable

Sound cards often store instruments as samples (waves), which are organised in banks (tables) and arranged according to the General MIDI protocol. Wavetable samples generally sound better than synthesised ones because they're recordings of real instruments. That's why they're preferred.

MIDI

Stands for Musical Instruments Digital Interface, a term which has come to mean any instruments that can connect to another and communicate musical instructions using the same set of commands. A standard by which you can use your computer to create music or control instruments.

r the future

TROPEZ PLUS

Here's a sound card for a really discerning buyer. At £269, it's the most expensive card in our round up by a good £40. Still, it easily justifies its hefty price tag. Above all else, it's a sound card meant for musicians. It supports games, of course, but it does musical things so much better.

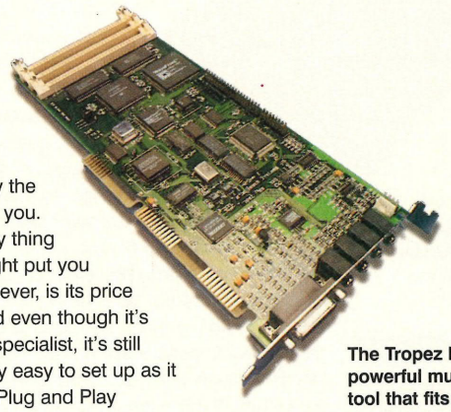
For starters, it's the only card here that has a low enough signal to noise ratio for professional musicians to record from. That means that the components are of such high quality that no unnecessary hiss or distortion corrupts the signal. This comes into play when you use it to record sound samples. It's capable of simultaneous duplex recording and playback at up to 48Khz, which is slightly higher than CD quality.

It also comes with a hefty 4Mb of instrument ROM. Because this is only shared between 128 samples, it means that the quality of each is absolutely superb, rivalling the DB50XG. Having said that, the Tropez Plus only supports General MIDI, rather than the far more impressive XG MIDI standard. Very few music programs or games recognise XG yet, so the loss is not as serious as you might fear.

You can load your own samples into RAM, and the card enables you to add up to 12Mb of extra SIMM memory. Although it doesn't come with any memory at all, there are three SIMM slots and you can install any combination of 70Ns SIMMs that you like, so it's good chance to use RAM that might have been left over when you upgraded.

In case you're wondering, the Tropez Plus does work with your games, and is Soundblaster Pro compatible. If you choose MPU-401 compatibility mode, there's not another sound card that can match this in terms of pure richness and quality. The Tropez Plus is a very impressive sound board. It is equally happy as a duplex sampler, a General MIDI synthesizer or a game card.

If you're a discerning musician wanting the highest possible quality of sound output, then this is certainly the card for you. The only thing that might put you off, however, is its price tag. And even though it's for the specialist, it's still relatively easy to set up as it comes Plug and Play compatible. A strong card.



The Tropez Plus, a powerful musicians' tool that fits inside your PC.

PCR VERDICT

Serious sound sampling at a reasonable enough price. A good MIDI card too.

8

Supplier: Turtle Beach
Contact: 01706 219999
Price: £269

ULTRASOUND PLUG AND PLAY PRO

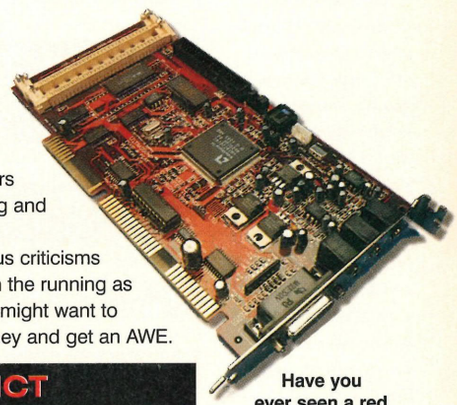
Like Betamax video technology, the original Ultrasound card was technically superior to its rivals of the day, yet failed to become the industry standard.

Gravis always worked under the assumption that the industry would leap to accommodate its superior product, so the company didn't make efforts to keep up with changes in the technology. To some pundits, Gravis seems to be just another bunch of has-beens.

But with this card, the company is certainly attempting to re-establish a serious market share. Although it's a Plug and Play card, you'll still need to run special patches to get Soundblaster compatibility. About 70% of new games support the card in its native mode, which produces rich, sonorous tones. Unfortunately, there's too much mucking about involved with the Ultrasound Plug and Play Pro, and it's frustrating to use. This version of the card is fully compatible with the standard Ultrasound, but the non-Pro version requires additional memory in order to be compatible.

Although Gravis pioneered RAM-based MIDI instruments, it has finally changed its ideas and decided to include wavetable instruments on a 1Mb ROM too. The firm always argued, unconvincingly, that 512k (upgradeable to 1Mb), was all the memory you'd need for wave usage. This was clearly not the case, and now Gravis is giving you the option to expand the 512k default RAM to 8Mb using 30 pin SIMMs. The previous card forced you to use Gravis' own over-priced upgrade module, so this new policy is a double bonus.

The Pro is capable of duplex sampling, and offers a signal to noise ratio of over 80dB, which is almost as good as the Tropez Plus. Gravis has clearly listened to its detractors for the Ultrasound Plug and Play Pro successfully addresses most serious criticisms and puts them back in the running as a contender. Still, you might want to save up the extra money and get an AWE.



Have you ever seen a red one before?

PCR VERDICT

Compatibility is still the UltraSound's greatest weakness, but it's reasonable for the money.

7

Supplier: Advanced Gravis
Contact: 01252 714340
Price: £179

Plug and Play (PNP)

This is innovation that simplifies the process of adding hardware to your computer. It's one of the key features that's meant to make Windows 95 so attractive. All settings are handled using software, and you don't need to fiddle about with IRQs, DMAs or address ports before you connect a card. The software takes care of everything for you.

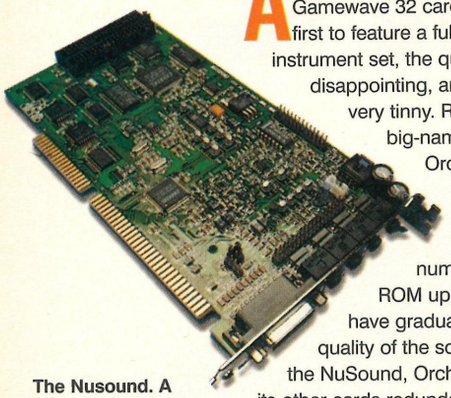
Signal to Noise

The phrase signal to noise refers to the purity of an audio signal, and is a result of the quality of the components used, and the design of the equipment onto which they're mounted. The higher the number, the less unwanted noise there will be. Not really important for home users unless you're serious about recording sound samples.

Soundblaster compatible

Creative Labs' Soundblaster cards have become an industry standard supported by every single game publisher and developer. As a result, you can be sure that every PC game you'll ever see will be Soundblaster compatible. If your sound card is not able to emulate that standard fully, then you might not get proper sound reproduction.

NUSOUND PNP



The Nusound. A good all rounder at a good price.

Supplier: Orchid

Contact: 01256 479898

Price: £151.58

Although Orchid's Soundwave and Gamewave 32 cards were among the first to feature a full General MIDI instrument set, the quality was extremely disappointing, and the sounds were very tinny. Rather than using a big-name synth engine, Orchid went for its own technology. Since then, there have been numerous instrument ROM upgrade chips, which have gradually improved the quality of the sounds. By releasing the NuSound, Orchid has made most of its other cards redundant.

It features a 1Mb instrument set of moderate quality, but the addition of a special 'spatializer' chip, makes all of the card's output sound much richer. However, 1Mb isn't much, and you can't increase that using RAM. It does come with a Wave Blaster connector, to which you can attach any standard wave table daughter-board. That means that you could add a GS daughter-board such as the Wave Blaster 2, or even a DB50, the awesome new XG card from Yamaha. (See margin note.)

The NuSound card does include one important unique feature. This is a special panel connector plug to which you can attach an Orchid front panel. This panel fits into a 3.5" drive bay, and brings all of the card's controls and sockets to the front of the computer where they're easier to access. This is a great idea, especially if you do a lot of sampling, but it's also useful even if used only for listening to CDs using headphones.

Of course, the NuSound is compatible with most of the games you'll come across. It's nigh upon impossible to achieve 100 per cent Soundblaster compatibility, because there'll always be one clever programmer who ends up hitting the hardware directly, leading to problems.

Still, it's as compatible as any non-Creative Labs card can be, and produces vibrant 16-bit sound. It's not up to the standards of the AWE32, but the spatializer certainly does its best to keep up. Furthermore, the card has duplex functionality which means you can use it to simultaneously play and record samples.

The NuSound doesn't excel in any particular area. Like all the other cards here, it's Plug and Play compatible and therefore easy to install. Furthermore, it carries the lowest price tag among the sound cards in this round up. It may not have the versatility of the Soundblaster AWE 32 or the powerful sampling facilities of the Tropez Plus, but at this price it does fairly well and is certainly nothing to be scoffed at.

PCR VERDICT

It might not be quite as powerful as the opposition, it's very attractively priced with good features.

7

JUST TOO LATE...

Just as we were going to press, a finished version of the new Yamaha SW60 sound card materialised in our offices. The card features the same revolutionary chip-set found in the DB50XG, which means that it offers over 600 high quality instruments. Furthermore, it extends the GS MIDI command set with more special effects and audio features including multiple types of reverb and chorus. Because it's a stand-alone card, the special effects filters can now be applied to incoming audio signals in real-time. Watch out for a full review soon.

Test Results

Never before have four such capable sound cards been gathered together in a single feature. Each of these on its own could demonstrate just how far the technology has come in such a short space of time. As ever, compatibility must be a key issue for games players, and the Gravis card continues to alienate itself on that score. Upgradability has also become a significant issue this time around, particularly for musicians and three of these cards feature memory slots. Fortunately, each card has clear strengths and weaknesses, enabling you to select one that exactly meets your needs and your budget. Happy shopping!

Sound card	Plug 'n' play	Compatibility	Wavetable ROM	Wavetable RAM	Upgradeable RAM	Daughter-board Slot
AWE32 PnP	Yes	SB16, GM, AWE32	1Mb	512K	Up tp 28Mb (SIMMS)	Yes
Tropez Plus	Yes	SB Pro, MPU-401	4Mb	Ok	12Mb (SIMMS)	No
Ultrasound PnP	Yes	Ultrasound	1Mb	512K	8Mb (SIMMS)	No
NuSound PnP	Yes	SB Pro, GM, MPU401	1Mb (compressed)	Ok	No	Yes

Sound card	CD-ROM Interfaces	Software	Sampling Rate	Duplex	Siganal to noise ratio	Extras
AWE32 PnP	IDE	Excellent	44.1khz (CD quality)	No	<80dB	Microphone
Tropez Plus	Atapi EIDE	Good	48khz	Yes	89dB	Nothing
Ultrasound PnP	Atapi IDE	Very good	48khz	Yes	80dB	Microphone
NuSound PnP	Atapi, IDE, Panasonic	Adequate	48khz (DAT Quality)	No	>85dB	Nothing

SOUND WAVES OF THE FUTURE

Although wavetable sound dominates current high-end cards, a new technology known as Soft-synth looks as if it might redefine the nature of computer audio in a couple of years.

The idea behind it is that it will use your computer's processor to generate sounds. The quality of these sounds, and the number of voices that can be played will depend directly upon the power of your processor, but at the recent Comdex show, one manufacturer was demonstrating the system on a 486 machine, replaying 16 instruments and 32 notes simultaneously.

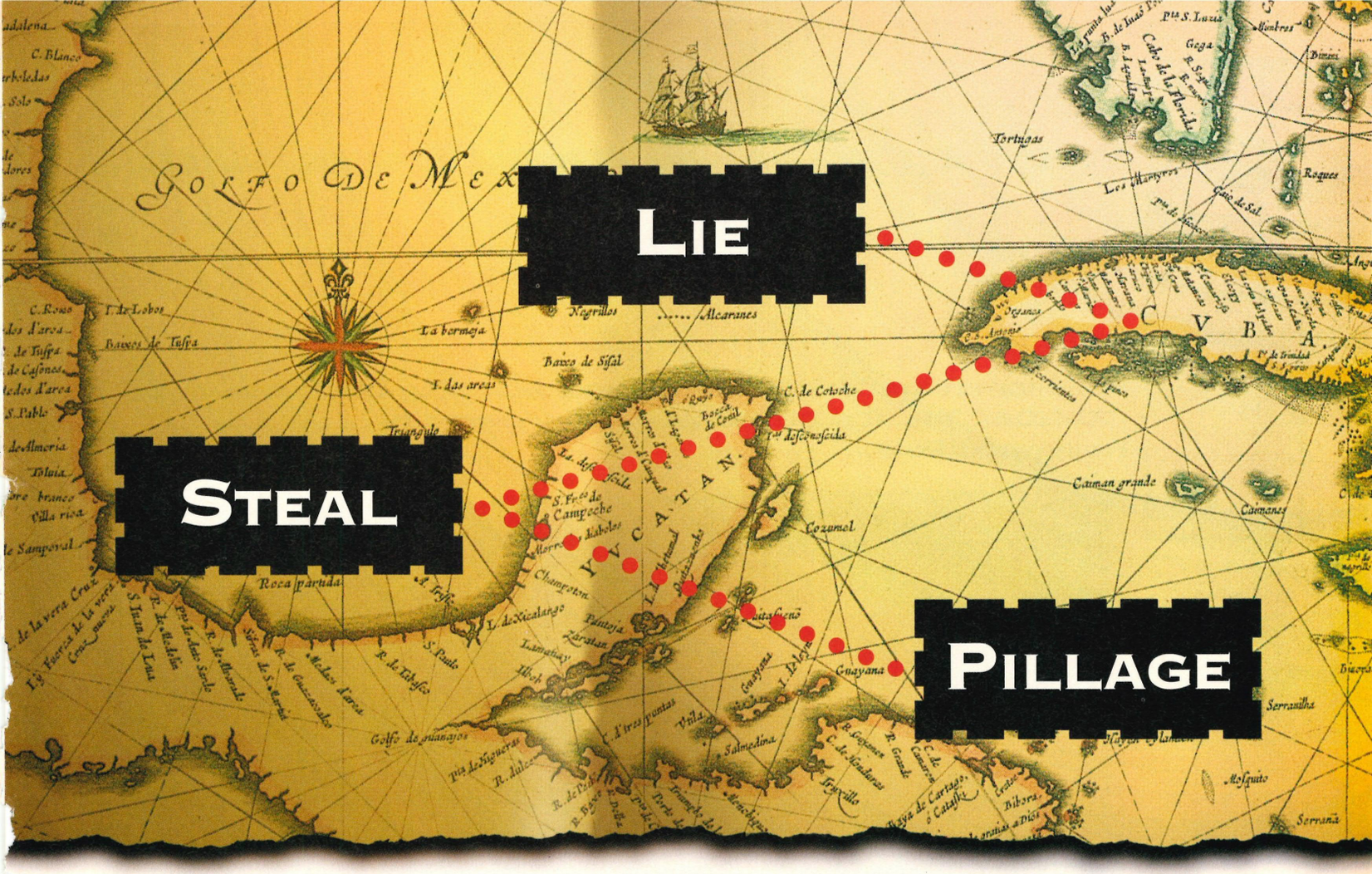
To be honest, it was hard to tell the difference between the Soft-synth audio and any decent wavetable card. *PC Review* expects to bring you a working demo within the next few months. And of course, the impact of this technology will most likely be as far reaching as the internet itself. For one thing, having high quality sound without the need for a space hungry sound card could be an important feature of the small Internet-dedicated computers currently being discussed by the likes of IBM, Sun and Oracle. Keep your eyes peeled.

Conclusion

Solid conclusions are hard to formulate here, because the three leaders are so expensive. The NuSound is the most reasonably priced option, and is worth a look if your budget is limited. The UltraSound sounds great, but still requires extra drivers to emulate a Soundblaster. That counts against it. Nevertheless, its duplex sampling makes it an attractive alternative to the Tropez for musical users.

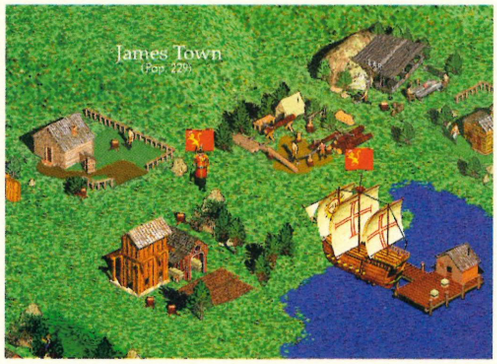
Even if money were no object, it would be still be tough to choose between the Tropez Plus and the AWE32. The Tropez is a connoisseur's card, and you pay for the privilege. Unfortunately, it only emulates a Soundblaster Pro, so games don't sound as rich as they might, unless you use MPU-401 MIDI mode, which is not always available.

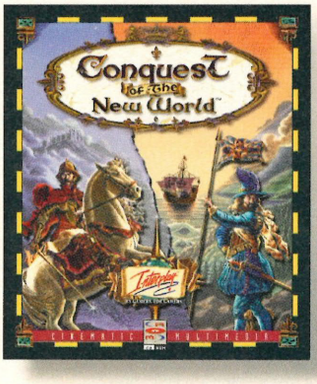
For all-round performance and compatibility, the Soundblaster AWE32 must take the prize yet again, mainly because it's directly supported by most games. ***(MB)***



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New from Interplay, the game that promises you the world. But only if you conquer it first. In this ultimate strategy game your mission is to explore and colonise the New World. To succeed you'll need a combination of ruthlessness, deceit and cunning. With stunning SVGA graphics, brilliant 3D animation and explosive SFX, this game is set for world domination.







"Sid Meier should watch his back"

PC Format - Feb '96

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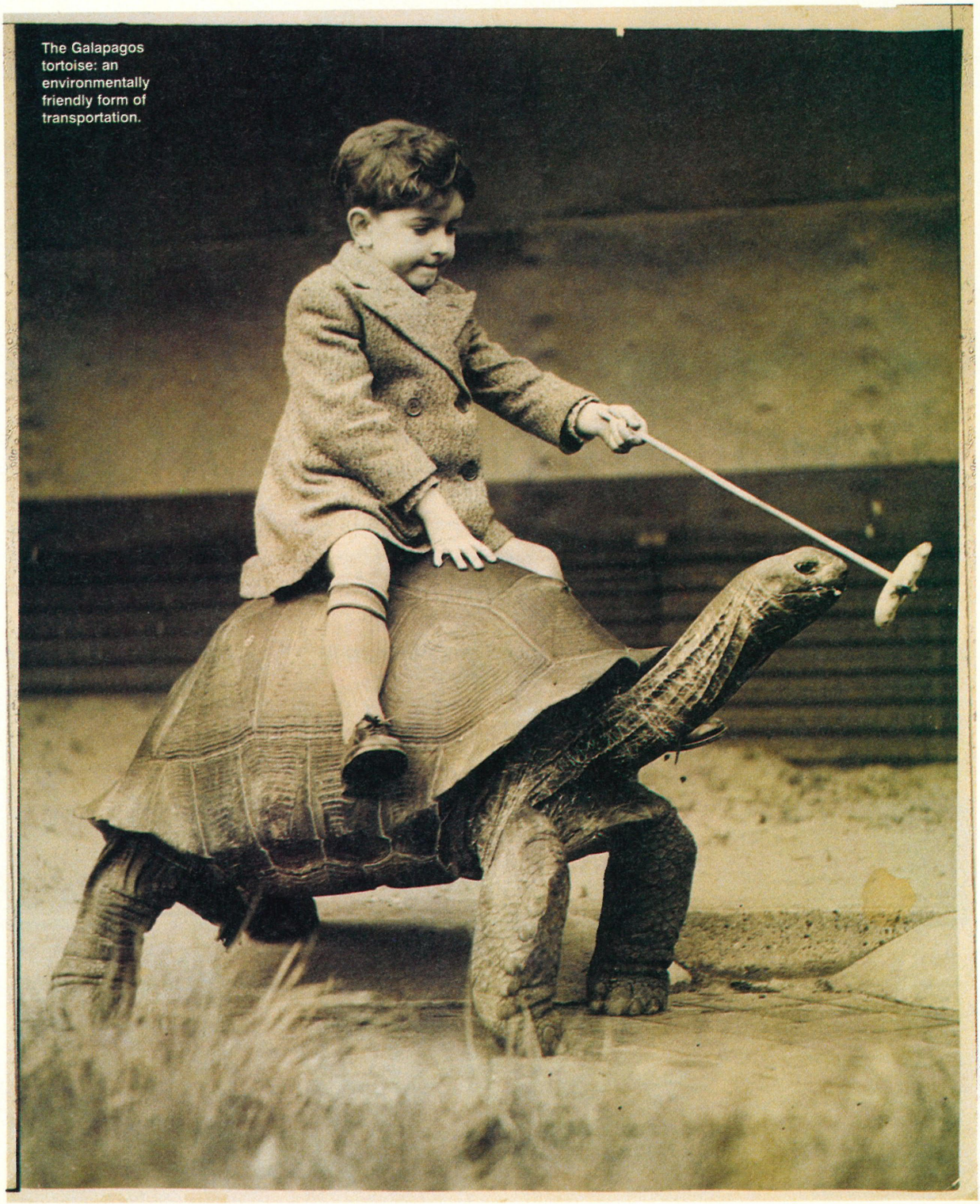
CD REVIEW 56 ON THE DISC

To accompany this feature CD Review features the demo of Exotic Pets, the Tropical Fish Reference Guide shareware version, the demo of Dogz and Fishsaver, a screensaver that sees fish swim around your desktop.

Everything you always wanted to know about...

EXOTIC PETS

Peculiar animal companions explored using the Internet and CD-ROM. Yes, it's PC Review's very own digital answer to Hollywood Pets...



The Galapagos tortoise: an environmentally friendly form of transportation.

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0345 002 000

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MULTIMEDIA EXOTIC PETS
£19.99 One Stop
0181 947 1001

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0171 836 5411

Sure, plenty of home page owners put their strange pets up on the Internet. It's not hard to find pictures of Billy's tarantula or Patti's tortoise. You might even find a site by someone in Tennessee with sharks in the swimming pool.

This is all useless rubbish. It may be fun for a moment to look at wet ferrets, boas or showpigs at sites like *Shredded Heart*, but you're not likely to find any information that will help you choose an exotic pet, or care for an existing one better. For that, you'll want a CD-ROM or Web site devoted to data rather than novelty or trivia. That's what we're going to look for here.

Who killed that parrot?

We've all heard of the Dead Parrot Sketch, but has anyone pondered why said parrot fell from its perch? Taking a gander at the *Hotspot for Birds* offers one clue. Apparently, caffeine and chocolate can raise the metabolic rate in a bird to the point where respiratory seizures occur. So, keep Nestlé products away from your parrots!

Killing a parrot is deplorable to members of the International Aviculturists Society, dedicated to birds of the world. You can benefit from their dedication by reading the article *Keeping Your Pet Bird Happy and Healthy* on their Web site. "For the cage to be large enough, the bird must be able to dance the Hokey-Pokey inside the cage. It should be able to spread both wings out, up and turn around without touching the sides of the cage," it says.

Though *My Secret Garden Exotic Birds* has some limited fact sheets on lovebirds, cockatiels and parrots, there don't seem to be many sites offering comprehensive details or photos of the huge variety of bird species around the world. For this, you could try Dorling Kindersley's *Virtual Reality Bird*. Hundreds of types are presented in a sort of 3D gallery. Parrots, lorikeets, toucans and so on all appear (though the budgie barely gets a mention) with key facts about nesting, wingspan, lifespan and so on. There is also a very good bird anatomy screen with organ, muscular and skeletal views. *VR Bird* does take an anti-bird-trade stance, barely countenancing the fact that many of its potential buyers might keep birds as pets. Very little practical care advice is here.

DK also does a disc called *VR Cat* which is similar, but to read up on more radical pets on CD-ROM, *Multimedia Exotic Pets* is your best bet. Included are photos, text files and video clips on some 120 critters. Spiders, horses, potbellied pigs, fish, lizards and even pet rocks are featured. On top of general info on each animal are advice sections on setting up an aquarium or bird cage, and caring for its occupants. Best of all is the Pick-a-Pet screen. Set ratings for how big, costly, durable and dangerous you want your pet to be, and it tells you which animal suits you. For us, it offered up the scorpion. This disc is a reasonable buy if you can't get on the Net.



Shredded Heart Productions is a classic example of Internet triviality. Lots of pictures of ferrets and snakes, but no information at all.

Nearly every animal featured on *Exotic Pets* is, however, served better on the Internet. Take geckos for example. If you're thinking of buying one, *Heatherk's Gecko* page is a good starting point. "When I first held an African fat-tail gecko, I had no intention of acquiring a lizard. But when she looked up at me with those beautiful and exotic eyes, I was hooked. I now have a male and female named Mulder and Scully," says Heather. Ahhh. That prehistoric gaze.

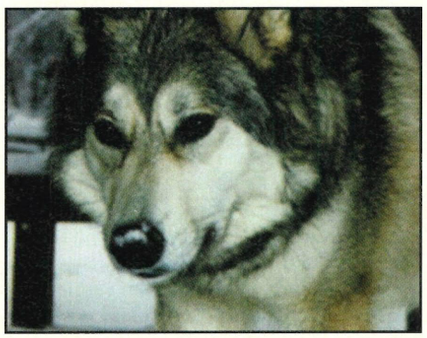
Might sound silly, but the site includes care sheets on African fat-tail, leopard and Madagascar ground geckos. She easily outdoes the gecko entry on *Exotic Pets*. Add a beginner's guide to chameleons and iguana care sheet, and it's almost reptile heaven.

But not quite, because there's an even larger herps site. *The Basking Spot* may be little more than a links page, but it isn't the kind that sends you off to silly home pages or photos of people's snakes. Here you have direct access to care and keeping info on everything from African bullfrogs to water dragons. How to choose a healthy newt, breeding boas and iguana training classes are a few of the topics discussed.

Then there's *Herp Haven*, an on-line magazine. Though it swerves to trivia with exposés like *Not all Skinks From the Solomon Islands are Green* (shock!), it does have a good turnover of new things to read each month and so is worth bookmarking.

Similar in proportions to *The Basking Spot*, but devoted to tropical fish, is *Aqualinks*. The numerous articles on both freshwater and marine aquariums remind you of the importance of things like the nitrogen cycle, filtration, diet variance and water replacement. Fish clip art and shareware programs about tropical fishkeeping are downloadable and there are articles on specific species. An icthyology history

Apparently, caffeine and chocolate can raise the metabolic rate in a bird to the point where respiratory seizures occur.



Hybrid wolves are lovable and loyal, and their hair can be knitted into scarves and jumpers.



Monitor lizards need love too. Herp Haven sees to it that they get it.



Bird eating spiders at one stage in their evolution were supreme beings on the planet, or so Arachnomania would have it. Now they're threatened by deforestation.

Web Sites

Acme Pets
http://www.acmepet.com/

Aqualinks
http://www.aqualink.com/

Arachnomania
http://www.mcs.com/%7Espider/arachnomania.html

The Basking Spot
http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/~iguana/index.html

Chinese Water Dragons
http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/2629/dragon1.html

Clown Loach Home Page
http://www.wcnet.org/~shafer/

Cybergrrl Pig Page
http://www.cybergrrl.com/things/pigs.html

Dukes of Hazzard
http://www.ghgcorp.com/rbigoness/hazzard.html

FishCam
http://www1.netscape.com/fishcam/fish_refresh.html

GeckoCam
http://mirage.scl.ameslab.gov/jc/gecko-cam.html

Gordon's Entomological Home Page
http://www.ex.ac.uk/~gjlramel/welcome.html

Herp Haven
http://www.herphaven.com/

Hotspot for Birds
http://www.lainet.com/advin/birdhome.htm

International Aviculturists Society
http://www.mecca.org/~rporter/PARROTS/iasindex.html

My Secret Garden Exotic Birds
http://www.secret.com/msgbirds/index.html

PiranhaCam
http://www.ultranet.com/strength/

Shredded Hearts Productions
http://www.nashville.net/%7Etrisha/pet-sites.htm

Sus Scrofa
http://www.sover.net/~graham/php.html

Virtual Pet Cemetery
http://www.lavamind.com/pet.html

Wolf Dunn
http://www.ecst.csuchico.edu/~gfehrer/index.html

News Flash!



Keeping up on our pathological tendency to mention the Dukes of Hazzard, we've found for you Flash. This exotic hound was Boss Hogg's droopy dog, who loved going on car chases. Here he is enjoying the comforts of Rosco's lap. Get an image of Flash from Ray's Dukes of Hazzard Web site.

FutureNet

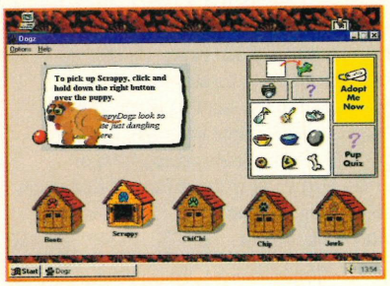
All the Websites mentioned can be linked to from PC Review's home page at FutureNet. Steer to: http://www.futurenet.co.uk

Keeping a pet inside your PC

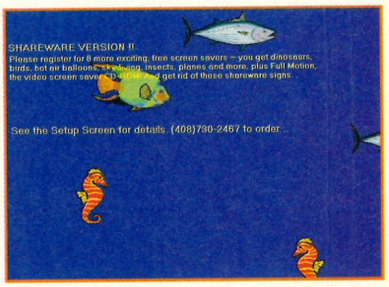
Let's fact it, exotic pets can be demanding and expensive. So instead of getting a real pet, why not get a digital pet on demand. Here are some of the places you'll find fun (and sometimes friendly) pixellated familiars.



The Fish Cam is an interesting Net innovation. Log on and see blue and yellow fishies swim around live over the wire.



Dogs aren't exotic, but the pooches in Dogz are cute and lots of fun. There's a demo is on CD Review.

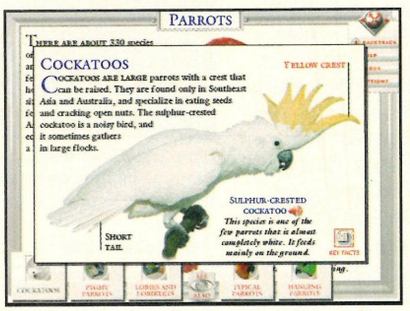


How about a fishtank screensaver? Beats flying toasters, and looks quite relaxing. FishSaver is on CD Review.





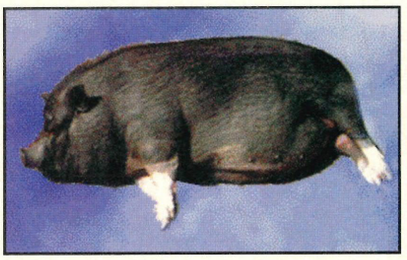
Meet Mulder and Scully, two of the Internet's best known African fat-tailed geckos, and beloved pets of Heartherk.



Virtual Reality Bird has information on some pet birds, but no practical advice.



AquaLinks is the undisputed champion of tropical fish sites on pure data alone.



Pigs fly at Cybergrrl's Pig page, but if you want the real dope on the potbellies, you should look at the Sus Scrofa site.



Find out some brief facts about lovebirds at My Secret Garden Exotic Birds. There's also a fantastic image bank at the site.

section, meanwhile, informs us that Aristotle was the first great student of fish (insert 'school' pun). Indeed, the philosopher noted some 115 scaly species in the Aegean.

The reticent loach

Alternatively, you could try and search out a home page on a specific kind of fish or other exotic pet. There is, for instance, *the Clown Loach Home Page*. If you know anything about the relative bashfulness of loaches, such gems as, "The Clown Loach is not as shy as other loaches," will have some meaning to you.

Fish are a pretty safe to keep, but how about more deadly friends? *Arachnomania* enlightens you on what loving a spider is all about. The site is a resource with specific information on Costa Rican zebras, Peruvian pinktoes and Togo starbursts, all of which are tarantulas. Though not comprehensive on care notes, *Arachnomania* has photos of many kinds of spider. Although it's called *Arachnomania*, it doesn't have anything on that octopedal cuddler, the scorpion. Compensation comes by way of taxonomy articles citing such seminal works as *When Bird-Eating Spiders Ruled the Earth*. Sounds like Saturday morning TV, but actually it was around 120 million years ago.

Heaps more on creepy crawlies is found at *Gordon's Entomological Home Page*. This site really will tell you more than you'll ever need to know about all kinds of keepable insects – mantids, stick insects, millipedes, crickets, roaches and so on.

Learn to knit with Mushka

If having poisonous insects in the house isn't risky enough, how about a hybrid wolf? Some say these canines are lovable and loyal. Perhaps they never read *White Fang*… The *Wolf Dunn* is an American site dedicated to fighting for the rights of wolf owners. Caring for a wolf-dog is the same as with any other mutt, and there is a benefit to running the risk of having your face ripped off when Mushka shows her true spirit. As the site points out, you can spin wolf-fur into wool. "Having a scarf, blanket or hat made from a special pet can be a lovely way to remember them," says the article *Turn Wolf Fur into Yarn*. The alternative is scars. Sheep in wolves' clothing or what?

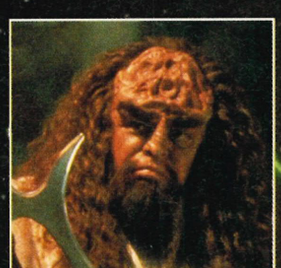
More sensible exotic dogs can be found on CD-ROMs like *Microsoft Dogs* and *Multimedia Dogs*. Both are good enough for dog lovers not on the Net. The top general pet Web site, however, has to be *Acme Pets*. It's got dogs, cats, horses, birds and even pigs. Yes, porcine pets are a fashion unto themselves. Go over to *Sus Scrofa*, the pot-bellied pig resource centre, and you'll find the pig owner's code of ethics. Nothing is mentioned about bacon eating in Porky's presence, but you must swear to "train my pig so he/she is an active part of my family with acceptable social skills."

The main advantage of the Internet over CD-ROM when it comes to pets, however, is being able to get first-hand advice on any problem quickly. Got a question? Just post it to the person running the relevant Web site, or the newsgroup relating to your animal. Within a day or two someone will most likely email you with more than you need to know, as *PC Review* found out with rec.pets.herp when wanted to get a gecko for the office.

As ever there are plenty of things we just couldn't get in, but that's it for exotic pets. Next month… music. Be here. ***(GW)***

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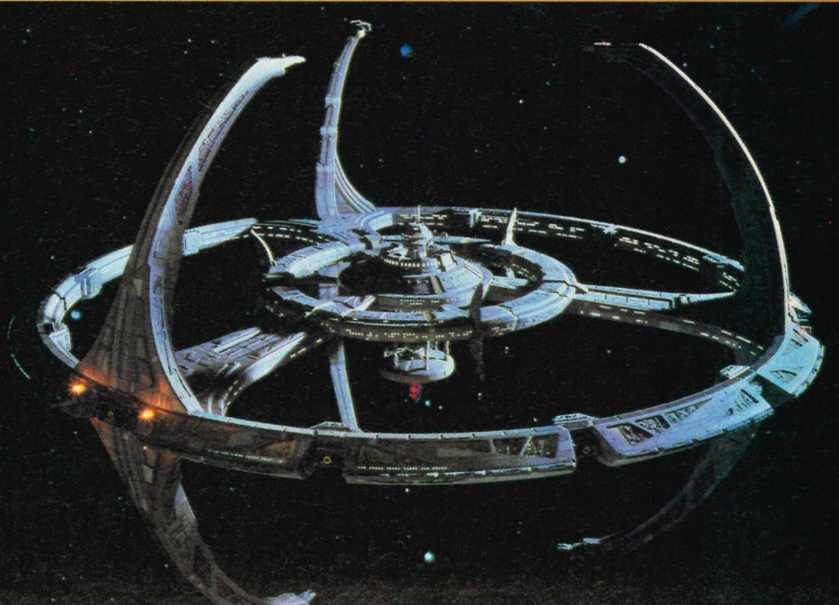
PC CD-ROM

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STORMFRONT

Meet the team

James Binns (JB)



(jbinns@futurenet.co.uk)
Editor of PC Review and self-confessed beat-'em-up fan. Read his crazed review of Toshinden on page 33.

Garrick Webster (GW)



(gwebster@futurenet.co.uk)
The deputy editor with a passion for exotic pets. Read his quest for facts on keeping a pet gecko on page 24.

Mat Broomfield (MB)



(pcreview@futurenet.co.uk)
Our technical editor reckons Poser is one of the finest art programs imaginable. Check out his original art works on page 89.

Graham Barlow
(gbarlow@futurenet.co.uk)
Got something for our cover disc? Dying to praise someone for our utterly cool new interface? Then tell our CD-ROM editor.

Mark Ramshaw (MR)
As well as being the main games writer for PC Review, Mark used to edit the top magazine Amiga Power.

Chris Buxton (CB)
He wants to make films. And play American sports simulations. Simple ambitions for our Spielberg wannabe.

Andy Butcher (AB)
Strategy buff Butch is deputy editor of Arcane, the role-playing games magazine. He is master of all phrases with hit-point in them.

James Thomas (JT)
Never trust a school teacher. Unless of course he's writing multimedia reviews – this month, Of Mice and Men.

Matthew Richards (MRR)
The editor of CD-ROM Today casts his experienced eye over Escher Interactive and Cezanne on page 84.

Peter Lee (PL)
Creativity supremo Peter shows us how to get more out of Print Artist 3.0 and do up the garden too.

Les Ellis (LE)
Forgive him for the Gothic look and the Gamesmaster deputy editor is always a good man to turn to for an informed opinion.

Clive Parker (CP)
Author of our Make Friends and Influence People feature. The personality cult of .net technical editor Clive Parker must be stopped.

Damien Noonan (DN)
He may be the associate editor of Comedy Review, but he still knows enough about astronomy and soccer to fill his reviews on page 80 and 87.

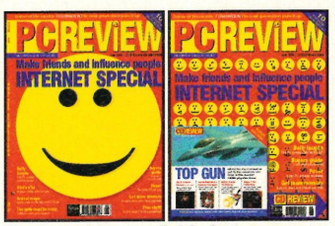
THE MAIL TH

Red Dwarf home pages stomped out, PC Review clothing, needless warranty flogging and the colour debate. Just some of topics in this month's mail...

CD-Less

Just bought your new issue and I realise that I've actually got the regular rather than the *CD Review* issue. That was all I could actually get in the store. I thought maybe someone had pinched the CD in the shop, but I visited a few stores in a weekend and there were none to be found. The newsagents I spoke to were vague. Not everybody wants a CD but I particularly wanted this one.
Carolyn Hollett, Derby

We've had several letters from readers experiencing problems getting hold of the *CD Review* (priced £4.99) or our normal issue (priced £2.65). Looks like we're going to have to educate the newsagents of the world one by one. Follow these simple instructions. Go to your regular vendor. Explain that *PCR* is available in two great flavours and that you are interested in 'x' flavour. Point out that should the newsagent be willing to enter into a trading arrangement, then you will be happy to exchange cash for copies of your prefered version of *PC Review*. Remember to explain to the newsagent that the two versions of *PCR* may not always come in on exactly the same date. If this doesn't work, try a subscription. See page 30 for further details.



That's right... available in two great flavours.

Eureka

I have an idea for making your mag even better. I remember that *PC Review* once had a list of all their reviewed games at the last page of the section. It had all the titles on it, and was sorted by the mark the games had been given. This gave a really good overview of the games reviewed in the particular issue, and since today you review loads more games than you used to, you could really use such a list. It doesn't have to be very big – maybe a half page, so why not bring it back?
Line Wolff, Denmark

We've thought about doing something like that, but decided against it, simply because we'd rather use that space, even if it is just a half page to bring you something new. It's all part of your guarantee of value you see.

Is this cool?

Why don't you have t-shirts printed with the *PC Review* logo on them that readers can buy? Also maybe advertise T-shirts from different computer companies or software houses. I am a sucker for T-shirts and have a fine collection including the whole set of CompuServe shirts that are excellent. Funnily enough after changing to AOL I have found that the form you have to fill in to buy AOL t-shirts doesn't allow for UK users. Anyway I'm trying to get one from a friend in the US.
Alan Simpson, via the Internet

Anybody else out there interested in wearing their favourite magazine on their chest? If we get enough reader requests then we'll give T-shirts a thought. Software companies are forever using T-shirts to promote their stuff and that's why we've set up our free stuff column in the news pages, see page 7. This month EA is giving away *Wing Commander* T-shirts, so check it out.

Dwarf-less

Great magazine – I'm looking forward to your Internet special. Have you considered doing an article on copyright over the Internet? I used to have a *Red Dwarf* homepage but since the beginning of April it has existed no more due to an E-mail from the BBC saying it was against copyright law. The annoying thing is, it took me ages to set up and within three months I had nearly had 10,000 visitors, which I was very proud of. So it might be a good thing to clarify what is and what isn't allowed.

I got all my pictures and scripts from other unofficial Web sites and ftp sites and nothing has happened to them. When I phoned the BBC the company said it wasn't going to allow anyone to put up *Red Dwarf* pages on the Internet except the BBC itself. I know it is illegal and wrong to use copyrighted material but why haven't they sent e-mails to all the *Black Adder* pages, or all the *Brittas Empire* pages etc... the list goes on.
It isn't as if we are making money out of it. If they did decide to get rid of all those pages then surely there wouldn't be many pages left around on the Web. Any thoughts you have on this topic will be welcomed.
Dave Williamson, via the Internet



Is the BBC stamping out unofficial Web pages on Red Dwarf?

We're on the case. It seems odd that the BBC would want to pick on your page... has anyone else been so cruelly censored? Let us know. We'll compile all the information, wheel in some lawyers and bring you the definitive guide to exactly what you can get away with in a future feature article.

Front end fury

How come your magazine is always so critical of the front ends on interactive CD-ROMs, when your own on *CD Review* is so basic? I like the way you do a DOS menu too, but how come your menu has no sound and lousy graphics?
Tim Pultney, York

Ahhh. Just in time for you we've resigned our front end. Now, on loading up, your eyes can feast on a beach and your ears be tickled by the sound of waves lapping at the shore. That's our Summer theme, a relaxing seaside. Look out

E MAIL THE MAI

for the leaves of Autumn in a few months. Happy now?



Chill out with the most relaxing front end you'll ever see.

Colour crisis

I think that the crusade you started in your letters page to get more games running in 24-bit colour is nonsense. While, yes it's very nice to have photo realistic back grounds, I can't really believe that you think it will make games that much better. As everyone knows *Doom* took every visual short cut in the book and still rules in the playability stakes. And as for *Greg Norman's Ultimate Challenge Golf*... it's not a bad game but not a touch on the 'old-fashioned' *PGA Tour 96*.
Ian Carter, Halifax

Good point, well brought out. Colour isn't everything, we made that point last month. But photo-realistic graphics are integral to the PCs development. Playability doesn't rely on technology. Just look at how popular old arcade games are. The fact is though, if your PC can handle 16.7 million colours then isn't it time developers started using them. To the question, 'Why 24-bit colour?' we reply, 'Because it's there.'



Greg Norman Golf: Lots of colour, but not much fun.

Simply Bill

Interested to read your story last month on Simply Interactive PCs (SIPC). But where does Bill Gates think he's coming from? Is the world ready for such a conceptual shift from PCs as they are now? The spectacular failure of PC TVs and the slowness of Internet consoles to catch on surely shows that any planned change is really up against it. It might sound a bit conservative to say, but PCs as we know them now weren't invented. They evolved. Peripherals were added here and there, operating systems changed, production processes streamlined. Gates is trying to reinvent the wheel and I reckon he'll blow his fortune on it!
Tony Goodwin, Devon

Gates has been wrong before, with his massive infrastructure investment in the Microsoft Network as a closed system, so you could be right. Everyone wants PCs to be easier to use, but maybe ripping-'em up and starting again is using a sledge hammer to crack a nut. Only time will tell.

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Letter of the month

Warranty War

As someone who has gone through the process of researching and buying several computers and peripherals for home and business use, I feel that I have the right to have a bit of a moan about the methods used in trying to flog us small buyers these machines.

My main concern lies with the aggressive way these extended warranties are marketed. Three years ago I went into my local Dixons to buy a bubblejet printer which I had seen advertised for a very good price. Indeed the staff were very happy to sell me the printer at this price with no strings attached. Except that, just as I was paying for the thing, the sales assistant quietly informed me that, along with the necessary cables, I would probably also be wanting an two year extended warranty for my L150. When I asked why I should want to pay that much for a little peace of mind, the assistant did an extremely good job at convincing me of just how large a piece of peace of mind I was buying.

I was told about moving parts being more likely to break down, coupled with extortionate call out charges plus parts and servicing, and was brought to the conclusion that even if my printer were to break down only once in those two years, I would still save money. Thus convinced, I duly paid out. Three years on, and my little Canon BJ-200 has performed wonderfully without a single glitch, and I intend to go on using it for several years to come.

What disturbs me is that companies now think they can sell extended warranties on absolutely anything, from a modem to a keyboard to a word processing package. I think it is shameful that they should resort to preying on the lack of knowledge and confidence of a new customer to get them to pay for something they are simply will not going to need.

In my opinion, companies could, for the same money, offer courses or personal advice on how to use their purchase correctly so that the need to repair it should almost never arise. I have received calls from distraught people who think their PC has broken and are about to call out the repair man. Very often it transpires that they have simply not turned the screen on, or something has become unplugged at the back. Worries like this could so easily be avoided If a little preliminary training were on offer. That is my moan for the week. Keep up the good work on the magazine, it is good to see that the much loved format has remained the same, but PLEASE bring back 'Surf of the Month.' It is always good to have somewhere new and interesting (?) to start an evening's Web Surfing!
David Burleigh, Guildford

In an ideal world PCs would become what we all want them to be. Consumer products. Which you'd buy without fear of break down and expect, quite rightly, just to work and fulfil the function of entertaining you. Only problem is that most people still can't program their videos, so what hope for the future of interactive entertainment? You've made a good point about dealers slipping on warranties, as an extra charge to which they believe they're entitled – and you can bet the salesman gets a commission. But like any insurance it buys peace of mind. The fact that you didn't get to use yours simply shows what a good choice you made in buying such a robust piece of kit. We're afraid Surf of the Month is definitely out, but next month as well as Everything you ever wanted to know about Music using CD-ROM and the Net, we'll also be bringing you a new column listing our five favourite sites of the month. On sale Friday 21 June.

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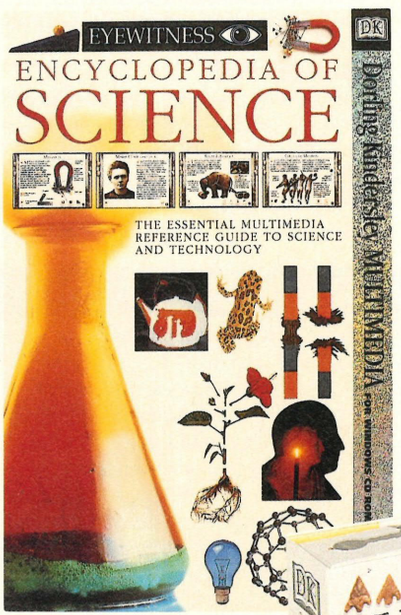
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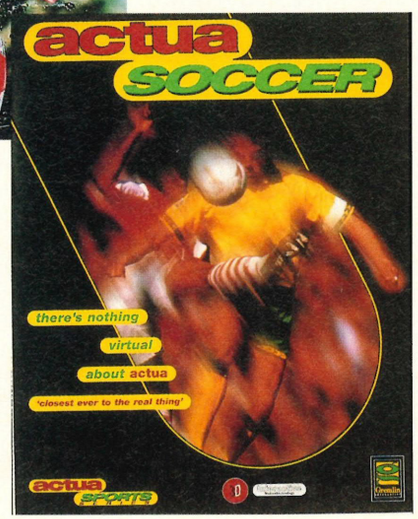
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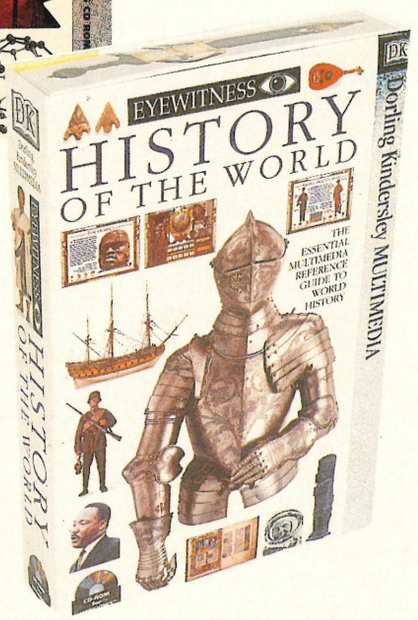
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Science

The *Dorling Kindersley Encyclopedia of Science* offers an information-packed and user-friendly reference guide to the world of science.

History

Interested in the past? Then you'll be wanting to take a look at *Dorling Kindersley's History of the World*.

Fatal Racing

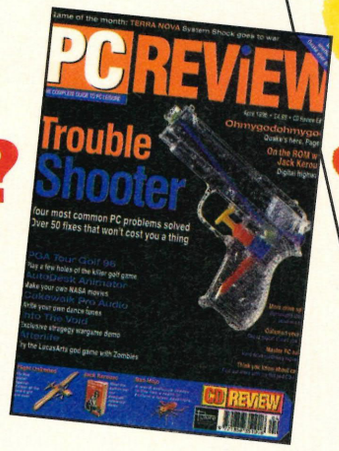
Speed kills. But in *Fatal Racing* it could be all that saves your life as you race and jump in this mad driving game.

Actua Soccer

Without question the finest footie game you can buy for the PC, Actua Soccer is a vital addition to any self-respecting game player's collection.

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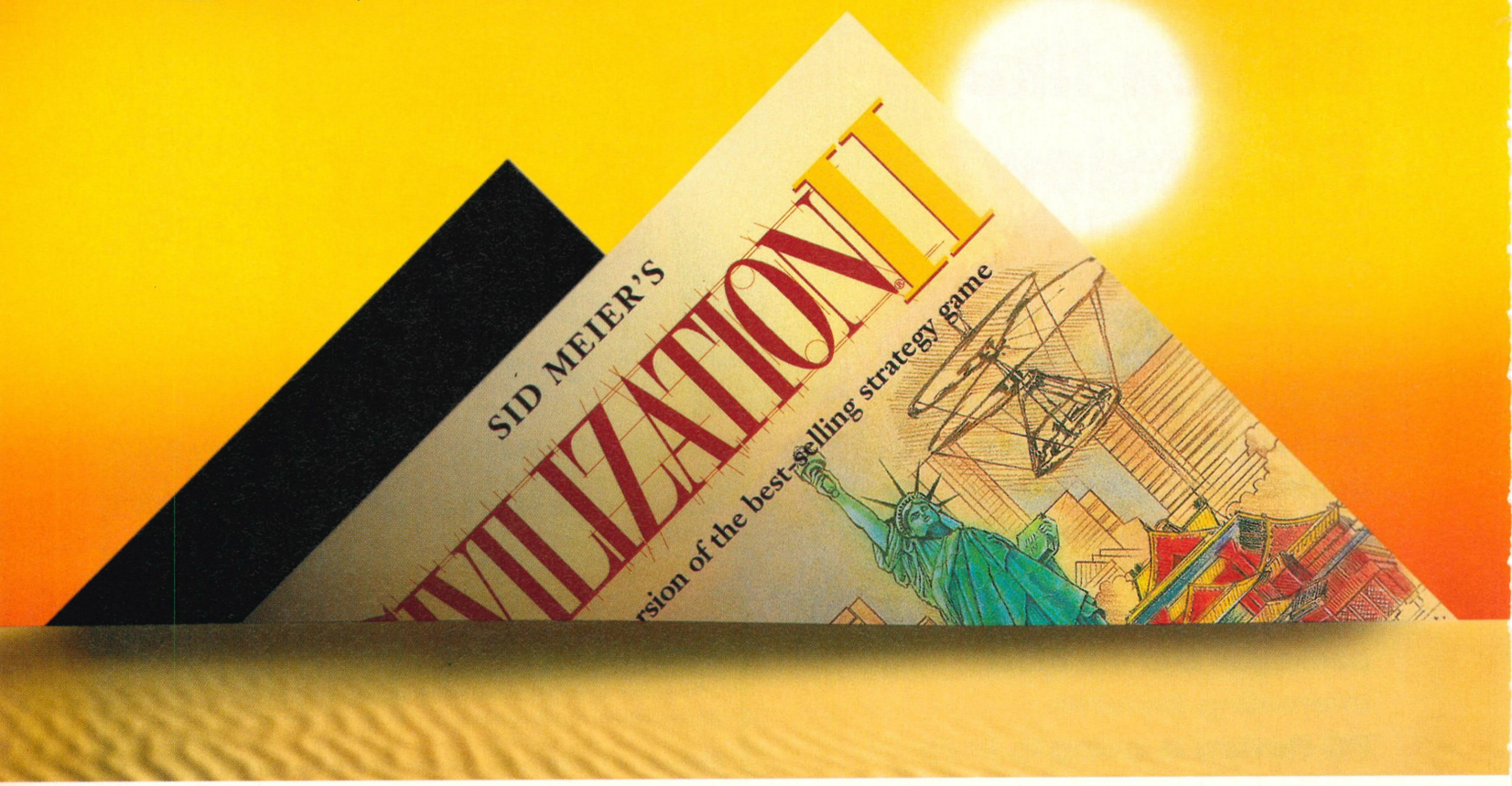
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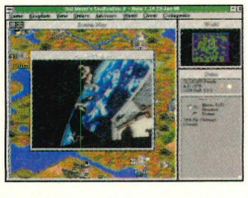
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THE DAWN OF A NEW CIVILIZATION

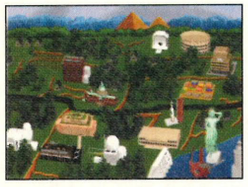


Sid Meier's Civilization® II is the ultimate version of the world's best selling strategy game. On practically every level the depth, detail and gameplay is enhanced. You'll discover new wonders of the world, meet new tribes, create new technologies and see it all come to life in an isometric 3-D world utilising SVGA graphics and Full Motion Video sequences. The evolutionary process is complete. Sid Meier's Civilization® II is, quite simply, the best game in the history of the world.

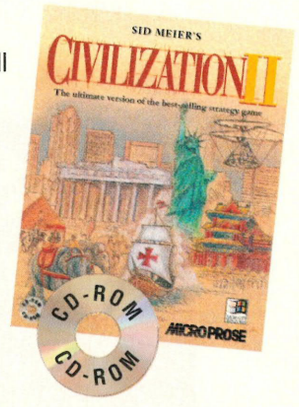
GAME OF THE MONTH
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Manga-style fighter Mondo lets rip!

Hello Tosh, got a Toshinden? Meet the PlayStation beat-'em up getting its PC debut.

PC REVIEW ESSENTIAL

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN

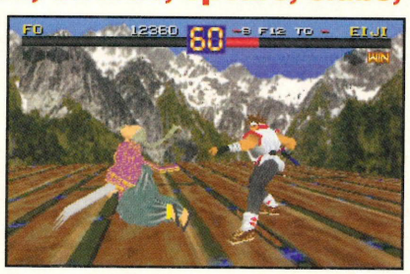
Nowhere has the PC's credibility grown in the last year more than in the beat-'em up arena. Excelling at strategy games and first person shooters has always been the PC's forté, but the fast graphics and responsive controls demanded by a fighting game require a whole new set of programming disciplines. But, as new chips have notched up the numbers and a newer breed of PC gamer has emerged, so too have decent knock-abouts. We've already had a stack of arcade conversions, including *Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo*, *Mortal Kombat 3* and *Virtua Fighter*. We've even had some home grown talent with Argonaut's underrated *FX Fighter*. Now, there's *Battle Arena Toshinden* and the PC's fighting cred has never been stronger.

Toshinden is based on the hideously successful PlayStation game, the first 3D beat-'em up to hit the market for Sony's console. It was flavour of the month for gamers weened on a 16-bit diet of 2D toe-to-toe punch-ups. Since then however, ▶

The warriors in Toshinden have all come tooled-up for battle with a vicious selection of daggers, swords, spears, clubs, talons and even a whip.



Flat on his back after being belted with a club, Kayin considers getting up to fight back. But the power gauge says it all – game over.

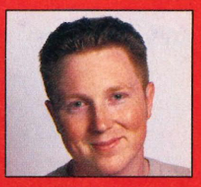


Blows from behind are super painful. Here Fo falls to a punch from Eiji. Flailing convincingly to his knees it's all over for the Kruger-wizard.



Phwoah, eh lads. Check out the transparent effects on that. Even though she has green hair Ellis is a worthy fighter.

PLAYER



Packed Player section this month. Two of the finest new God games battle it out as we put Settlers 2 up against Conquest of the New World (see pages 38-41). It would have been three, except the LucasArts offering Afterlife has slipped to next month.

Then there's air war as we pit Silent Thunder against Jane's ATF (see pages 46-48). Our A10 review does a top job of bringing home the horrors of modern warfare, where the only way of identifying the liquified victims is via DNA testing. On a lighter note, we bring you four of the best American sports sims including basketball, grid iron, bowling and wrestlin'! (pages 50-52). Enjoy!

James Binns, Editor
jbinns@futurenet.co.uk

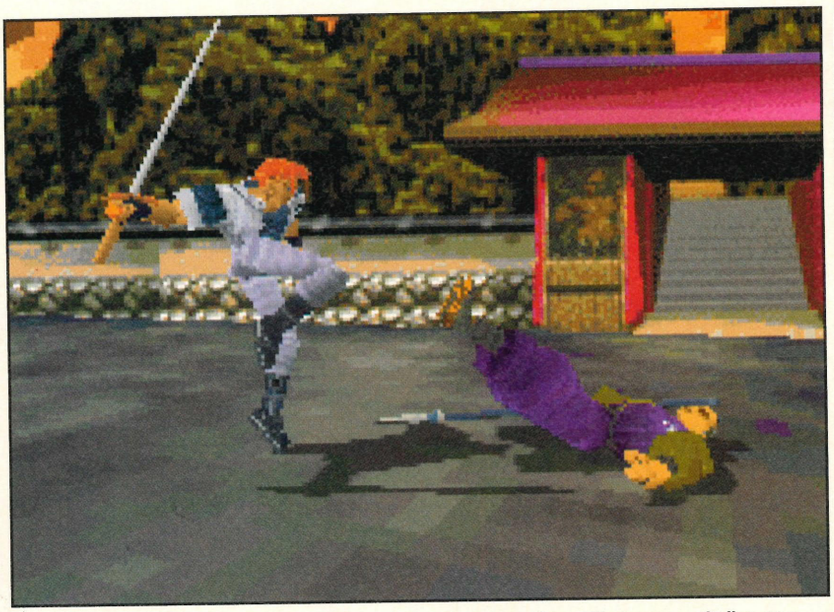
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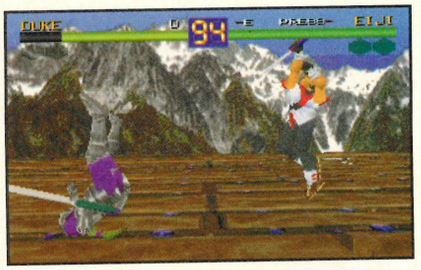
Smile you're on Kayin Camera



Kayin and Mondo take you through the different camera perspectives. That's normal (1), long (2), sky (3) and overhead (4). Make no mistake these are nothing more than a pretty gimmick.



You'll spend a lot of time falling on your backside. Smart warriors will always capitalise on a downed opponent, running in to score hits as they stagger to their feet.



Eiji's spinning attack downs the Duke. It's about now that he'll be yelling 'Hey Susan!' We have no idea who Susan is.



After winning fights, players will strut their stuff a little and show off. Posers.

PlayStation developers have churned out a mountain of similar 3D beat-'em ups. So we won't mention the PS word again, suffice to say that this is an excellent port of the game and note that on PC, *Toshinden* has a clearer run, unblocked by *Tekken* and *Criticom*, the two new flavours for Sony fighting fans.

In 3D but on one plane

We'll skip straight over the story and instead get straight down to the nitty gritty of gameplay and presentation. At first glance *Toshinden* is another toe-to-toe beat-'em-up, with the same problem as the first wave of 3D beat-'em ups – fighting across one plane, with the gimmick of a floating camera. But the key to the complexity of *Toshinden* lies in your ability to circle an opponent. A well-timed roll isn't just a smart way to dodge a projectile attack, it enables you to get behind an enemy – a major advantage when up against a human player. They can't just block and wait for you to attack from the front, as in a mere second you can pop up behind them without risking a jump where you could get hit mid-air. The 3D presentation, as well as being a glossy gimmick is also integral to the gameplay, as you can't spin sprites!

The characterisation of the players is brilliant, with manga-style bodies, grunts and victory pronouncements. The manga look isn't only for the oriental characters either. Many of the fighters are supposed to be North American or European and yet still shriek like natural martial artists.

The character detail is impressive. With texture mapped polygons like these, you have to wonder why you need a special 3D card to play the chunkier *Virtua Fighter*. They move well too, with convincing attack and block positions and spectacular spinning falls. Touches to watch for include the flimsy layered clothing of female character Ellis. Crassness aside, the transparency effects are handled brilliantly. The backdrops are some of the best in any PC beat-'em-up with lots of quirky architecture and cloudy skies.

Don't roll the cameras

The speed of your processor will determine just how much detail you can enjoy, with four different resolution settings up to 640x480, plus options for gouraud, flat or no shading, three shadow levels and other sundry texture, detail and background options. On a Pentium 90 system you can turn have the works without any noticeable performance lag. There is an option to change camera angles, but usually the PC's own selection works best.

True to the manga theme, the battles themselves have a suitably surreal style. As players get further away from each other the

True to the manga theme of the graphics, the battle themselves have a suitably surreal style.

The Characters

Eiji

Young Japanese adventurer wielding a magical Bakko sword. Favourite move is the 'Hey Susan!' or 'HishouZan': a flaming shoulder barge followed by a spinning leap.



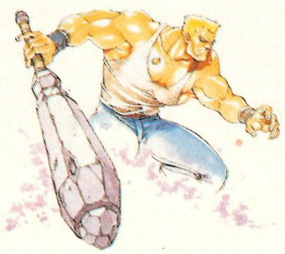
Ellis

A Hungarian gypsy, this dancing queens's chosen weapon is a dirk – a dagger which is most effective at close range. She's also one of the few characters with a decent range of kicks.



Rungo

A North American miner with a giant's strength and a huge iron club, this meat head relies on brute force rather than elegance. Waving the club around isn't too much fun, but the head butt makes him worthwhile.



Mondo

Japanese laughing boy Mondo carries a Seiryu Spear, a versatile weapon which can skewer you and hoist you into the air, call up magical energies and spin majorette style.

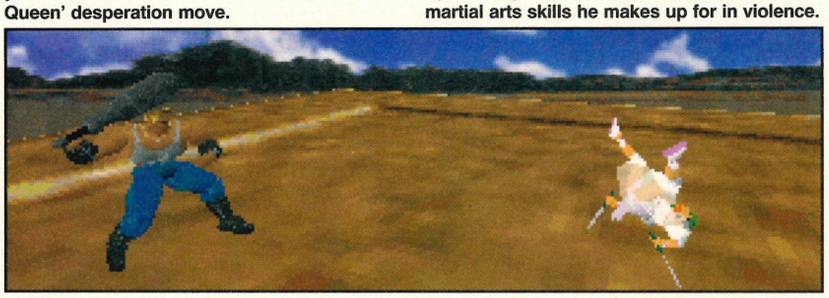




Buxom Sofia waggles her finger seductively at you when she wins. Look out for her 'Call me Queen' desperation move.



Rungo can send a fire wave along the ground by bashing his club down. What he lacks in martial arts skills he makes up for in violence.



Ellis feels the force of Rungo's fire wave move. Note how, even when in the normal view, the camera has pulled back as the players get further away from each other.



Sofia dishes out the punishment. "Eiji. Come here. You've been a naughty boy."

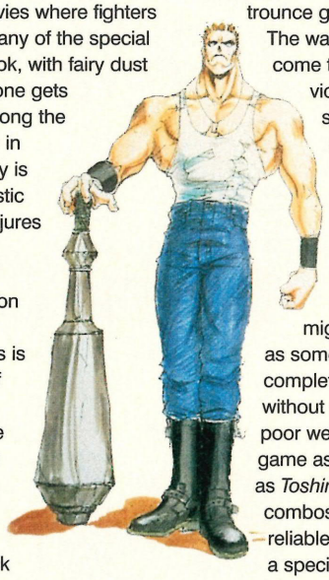
CD REVIEW ON THE DISC

Try your hand as Mondo, Eiji or Sofia in our one- or two-player demo.

THE STORYLINE

This is how they explain it… "Eight traveling fighters brought together by a common destiny now meet at the Battle Arena Toshinden. Known only to those in the underworld, many years have passed since this Tournament was last held. Some of the fighters have come for personal glory. Some have come to fight for those they love. All will do their utmost to gain victory in the Tournament which will decide their Fortunes." So, are they saying it's a a bundle, or a pile-on?

camera pulls back, making combat look like those old martial arts movies where fighters make incredible leaps. Many of the special moves have a magical look, with fairy dust sparkling off when someone gets chinned. Ellis can slide along the ground, then rip upwards in twinkly style. More spooky is the wizard, Fo, with a Mystic Sphere attack, which conjures an energy ball. Perhaps, though, too much time is spent scrabbling around on the floor trying to recover one's wits. But maybe this is to make up for the lack of the dazed time in some beat-'em ups when you're vulnerable. Thankfully the designers have avoided including any easy trounce moves. So, you're unlikely to get stuck into *FX Fighter*'s cheap, repetitive trip and trounce gameplay.



The warriors in *Toshinden* have all come tooled-up for battle, with a vicious selection of daggers, swords, spears, clubs, talons and even a whip. Blocking produces clanging metal-on-metal sounds. Weaponry changes the nature of the combat, making players more reliant on special moves, since the sword is mightier than the boot. Fighting as some characters you can even complete the single player game without ever using your kicks. Such poor weighting is out of place in a game as well balanced and playable as *Toshinden*. There are stacks of combos in place, but the most reliable is the light punch followed by a special move. Short-cut options are included for special moves, a compromise that will appal purists. Nevertheless, you can still do it the old fashioned way with keyboard or joypad sequences.

Toshinden is a polished, entertaining and fun to play beat-'em-up. It has none of the intimidating complexity of *MK3* and slicker graphics than *FX Fighter*. As a two-player game it'll keep you going for months, but combat against the PC does let you get away with too many repetitive moves. The range of projectile and projection attacks give you plenty to master, and coupled with the gorgeous graphics make it an essential purchase. ***(JB)***

PCR VERDICT

Gorgeous to look at and glorious to play. The PC fighting game just went up a level.

9

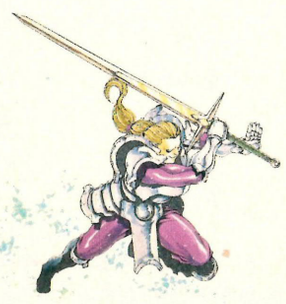
Kayin
Unusual ancestry, half Scottish Highlander, half Japanese means that while he packs a meaty Cariburn Saber, AKA Excalibur, the legendary sacred sword, he's still a martial arts master.

Duke
This lord of an ancient French castle clunks around in armour and likes nothing better than leaping into the air and impaling you with a downward stab of Dernier Vancour, his double-handed sword.

Fo
Looks and sounds like an old woman, but Chinese magician Fo Fai is no such thing. He not only has Freddy Kruger-like talons, but also a Mystic Sphere move guaranteed to hurt.

Sofia
A kinky whip-waving dominatrix, this Russian character's best move is the face slap. Try it when close to an opponent for a cheap laugh. On victory she taunts you with a tutting finger. Veeeery humiliating.









Developer: Playmates

Publisher: Funsoft

Contact: 0181 748 7565

Price: £34.99

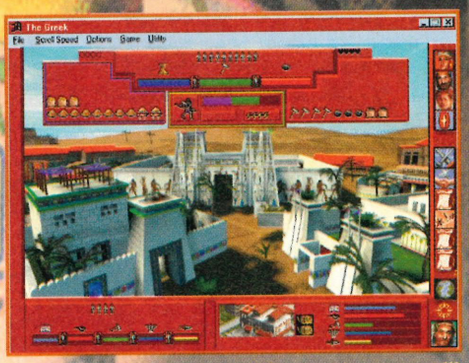
Minimum system: 486/66, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD drive, 15Mb hard disk space

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SIERRA®



The ice levels are prone to crack open and swallow toys without warning. As if the game wasn't hard enough already.

CD REVIEW 56 ON THE DISC

We've got a fully playable demo of Gearheads, complete with three toys.

GEARHEADS

Stone-scissors-paper meets Tetris meets lots of pretty rendering in quite the silliest game this year.

Ever since *Tetris* demonstrated that the best ideas are sometimes the simplest, and that the best games sometimes look the worst, PC owners have periodically seen games which proclaim a back-to-basics formula. *Zoop* was the last memorable one.

This year's model is *Gearheads*, an attempt to take the same sort of gameplay first concept and weld it to visuals which are altogether more modern. Classic simplicity and classy graphics are the aim here. Created by R/GA Interactive, better known creating the opening credits for *Seven*, *Gearheads* opens a box of clockwork toys, pitting the player against a friend or the PC in one-off battles or increasingly difficult tournaments with up to twelve of those little gadgets as weapons. Battling on a variety of terrains, gameplay is a matter of waiting until a toy has been wound up to the desired level, selecting a starting point for it, then releasing it. Reaching the other side of the playing area takes it out of the game and scores a point. But things aren't that simple.

The problems facing each toy master are severalfold. The different playing arenas may include traps or blocks, for instance. The most important element, however, is the way the various toys interact. Some, like the insect Ziggy, are designed for speed, while the sluggish bulldozer is capable of pushing toys out of its way. The skull and hands toys, meanwhile, can turn opponents around, making it possible to score using opposition toys. Then there's the winding up side of things. Launch a toy quickly and it'll run out of steam in the field. Spend too long winding each toy up and the other toy master is likely to be scoring points using fast-moving toys. A balance is called for. That and a keen eye for what's happening at any one moment.

Gearheads is nearly brilliant. Certainly it's a good idea to use the old paper-scissors-stone game, expand it to include 12 elements, and add the wind-up variable. But it does tend to get random, particularly when some toys zig zag at wierd angles, colliding and messing with toys on their own side. Such uncontrolled accidents make things even more manic, become infuriating.

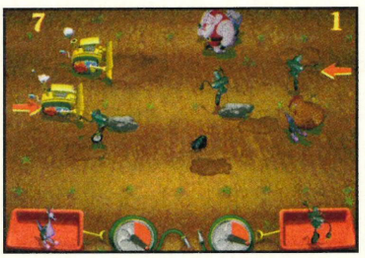
Furthermore, the gameplay is simply too loose to possess that addictive hook. Perseverance does teach strategies, but not quickly enough to make *Gearheads* a game of precision and playing style, robbing it of long term appeal. It's fast and frantic, but just a little too much to deal with sometimes. But this weird blend of puzzle game and adult toy is is easily the most visually alluring puzzle-cum-action game to date. And while it's no challenger to the *Tetris* crown, it'll do just fine as a second best. ***(MR)***

Out in the fields (and other locations)

Here are two of the four different and dangerous war grounds on which you play.



Here the industrial level is littered with toy-swallowing chutes. Later levels get ridiculously silly.



Out in the back yard the bulldozers are making mincemeat of a motley collection of wrestling robots. The wrestling santa at the top has simply ran out of steam.

Terrors of toyland



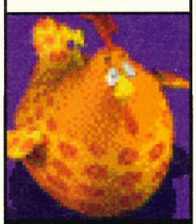
Big Al



Krush Kringle



Presto



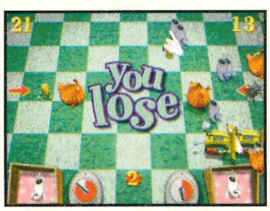
Clucketta



Midway through a match, the battlers have been culled down to an egg-laying chicken and some robots.



The Kanga's Quit bonus game. Players have to fend off those pesky toy-reversing hands using the brute force.



A last minute bid to turn the computer's toys back using the direction flipping hand toys fails to even the score.

PCR VERDICT

Brilliantly simple and stupidly fun, but lacking the genius to overcome its simplicity.

6

Developer: R/GA Interactive

Publisher: Philips Media

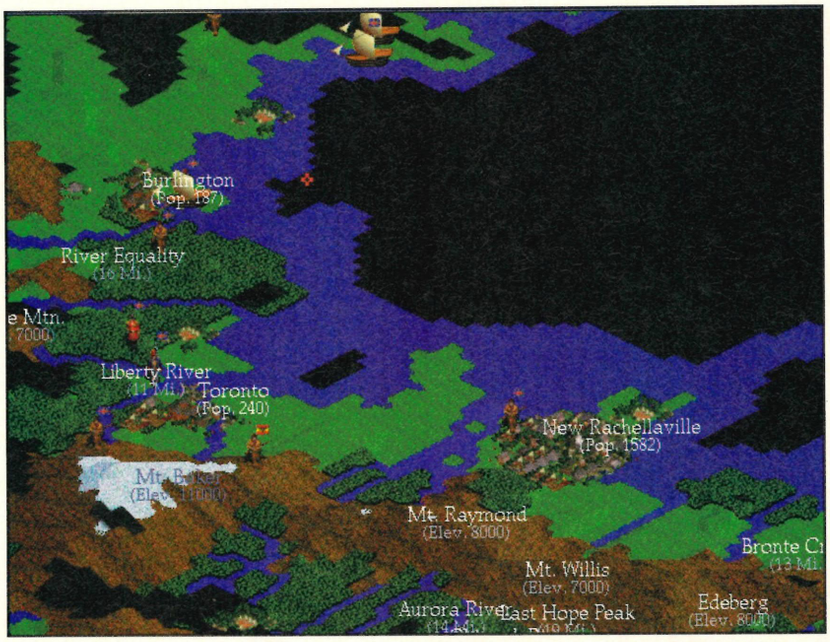
Contact: 0171 911 3094

Price: £29.99

Minimum system: 486/33, 8MB RAM, 6Mb hard disk space, SVGA video card, single speed CD-Rom drive, Windows 3.1 or 95

History Lesson Part 1

One of the worst acts in the colonisation of the new world was the 1503 massacre at Xaragua. The Spanish governor Ovando invited a local queen to dinner and hanged her while her followers were burnt alive. Just one of many attrocities conducted in the name of European royalty, or God. – taken from Conquest of the New World's between turn colonial history lessons.



When a main new colony has been established, you can send out new settlers to establish satellites which can send their raw materials to the main colonial centre.



One of your explorers has discovered a major river. Name it and claim it.



Forests, fields to farm and a ready supply of water. An excellent place to found a colony.

CONQUEST

Of The New World

Think you can do better than Columbus and all his rivals? Now's your chance to find out...

The world was changed forever in 1492 when Columbus found the Americas. Encouraged by his success, others set off on voyages of exploration to map the New World. They found two vast continents, rich in natural resources of all types, from completely new plant species to gold and other precious metals. They also discovered numerous tribes of local peoples, many of whom had developed sophisticated cultures, and proceeded, intentionally or accidentally, to wipe them out.

It didn't take long for the European powers to realise the potential of these new lands, or the benefits of laying claim to them. Britain, Holland, France, Portugal, and Spain were all frantically colonising the entire area. Given their reputations for headstrong diplomacy, it wasn't long before conflicts broke out, both between rival colonies and, as they became more established, between the colonies and their mother countries.

Conquest of the New World, the latest strategy game from Interplay, is based on this period of exploration, colonisation and war. Rather than attempting to be an accurate simulation of the period, the game uses history as its inspiration, putting you in charge of one of the colonisation efforts of either one of the European powers, or a strong native tribe attempting to become a nation in its own right.

The main aim in *Conquest of the New World* is to score points, which are awarded for achievements in four areas: exploration, colonisation, combat, and diplomacy. What makes it stand out slightly from the host of similar strategy games is the freedom the player has over the objectives. Upon starting a game you can select from a range of options to customise the game to your tastes. As well as the usual decisions, such as the difficulty and number of computer players, you define the winning conditions by setting the winning score and time limit (both of which can be set to 'infinity' so that the winner is the last player standing).

The custom in the colony

You also customise your game choosing your mother country, various special powers, and your scoring bonuses. By spreading the points between the four scoring areas you can emphasise certain aspects of the game. So, if you want a military game, you'd place all your bonuses in combat. If you want to win by charting the continent, you'd place more points in exploration. Once you've made your choices the *New World* is generated. Every game has a different map, which can vary from a huge continent to a chain of islands.

Conquest of the New World is played from an isometric view that will be familiar to any strategy gamer. However, instead of using a tile system, where squares or hexes are each of a specific terrain type, *Conquest*'s map is 3D, made up of textured polygons. Not only does it look great, but you can zoom in and out, going from a satellite view to an extreme close-up.

The gameplay itself consists of moving units around on this map and found, develop and protect colonies. Four basic units are available including ships, explorers, settlers, and military. Ships can transport other units over water, attack enemy ships, and explore coasts. Explorers are fast moving units best suited to mapping the unknown landforms of the New World. Settlers, of course, are used to start new colonies, while military units come in four types: infantry, cavalry, artillery and leaders.

Most of the game centres around your colonies and managing them. When a settler founds a new town it begins with just a colony centre. You then construct buildings to supply and refine raw materials for more building and trading, as well as housing and several other more specialised structures.

The presentation in *Conquest of the New World* is top notch throughout, from the map itself to the animations during combat, and is rounded out by atmospheric sound effects. More importantly, it's a very easy game to learn, mainly due to the inclusion of a

Developer: Quicksilver

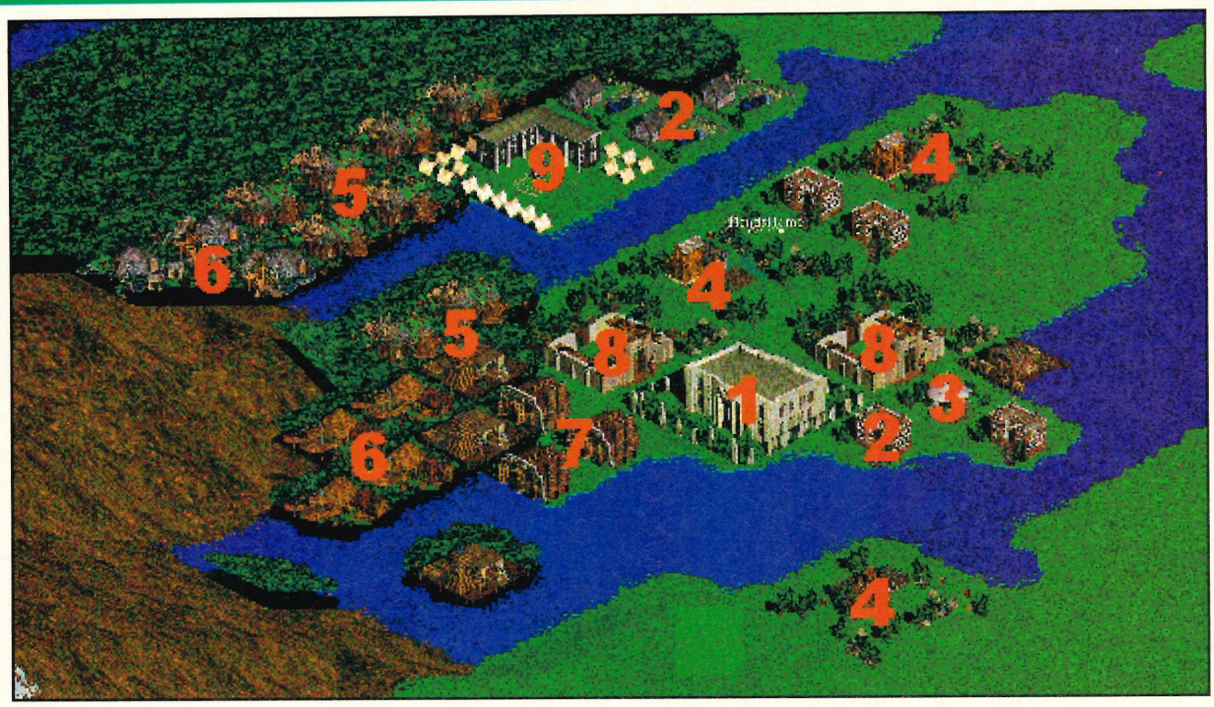
Publisher: Interplay

Contact: 01628 423666

Price: £45

Minimum system: 486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM, SVGA, double speed CD drive, 28Mb hard disk space

Anatomy of a Colony



1 The colony centre: The first building to be constructed, it houses part of the population, and enables you to build to structures, organise trade and execute a host of other important functions.

2 Housing: Colonies need people to do the work, and people need houses.

3 Church: As well being the religious centre for the town, it encourages people to emigrate, swelling your population at an increased rate.

4 Farms: Of course, all those people have to eat. Farms provide crops, and are best off on flat, open terrain near to rivers or the sea.

5 Mills: Best situated in forests, near to rivers, mills provide your colony with all-important wood.

6 Mines: Producing either metals or gold, mines are best placed near mountains or hills. Metal is a useful commodity to trade with the Natives.

7 Commerce: Though you can trade in raw materials, you get more for finished goods. Commerce buildings turn wood and metal into such goods.

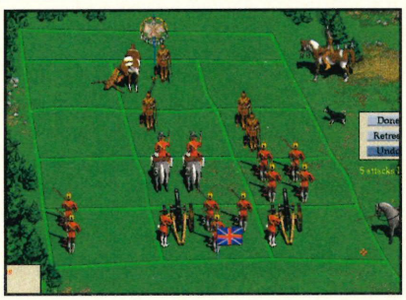
8 Forts: The New World is a dangerous place, and your colonies must be defended. Forts recruit new military units.

9 War College: Keep your military at the cutting edge by developing new tactics and equipment here. Just be sure you have enough gold to pay for it.

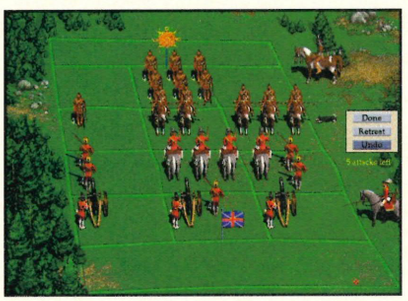
History Lesson Part 2

Christopher Columbus first thought the natives he encountered in the New World to be gentle and softly-spoken. His description of them soon changed when he found he could sell them as slaves. He began talking about selling 'head of women' and equated men with beasts. – taken from The Colonial Gazette in Conquest of the New World.

tutorial that gradually introduces you to the areas that must be dealt with. Beneath this seeming simplicity, however, is a challenging game that allows for varying styles of play, and a great deal more strategy is involved than you first realise. The complications in *Conquest of the New World* arise from the clever computer opponents and the range of options open to you, not from having to learn the details of a huge manual and hundreds of different buildings and units.



When the Natives send raiding parties, it calls up the capture the flag turn-based combat.



Later, it becomes necessary to sort out the menace and attack the hostile settlement.

Niche of respectability

To be honest, it's not going to knock *Civilization 2* from its place as the greatest strategy sim available. By offering a different style of gameplay and having a more focused objective, though, *Conquest of the New World* manages to carve itself a respectable little niche. It is ideal as both an introduction to PC strategy games for new players, and as a change of pace for more experienced gamers. ***(AB)***

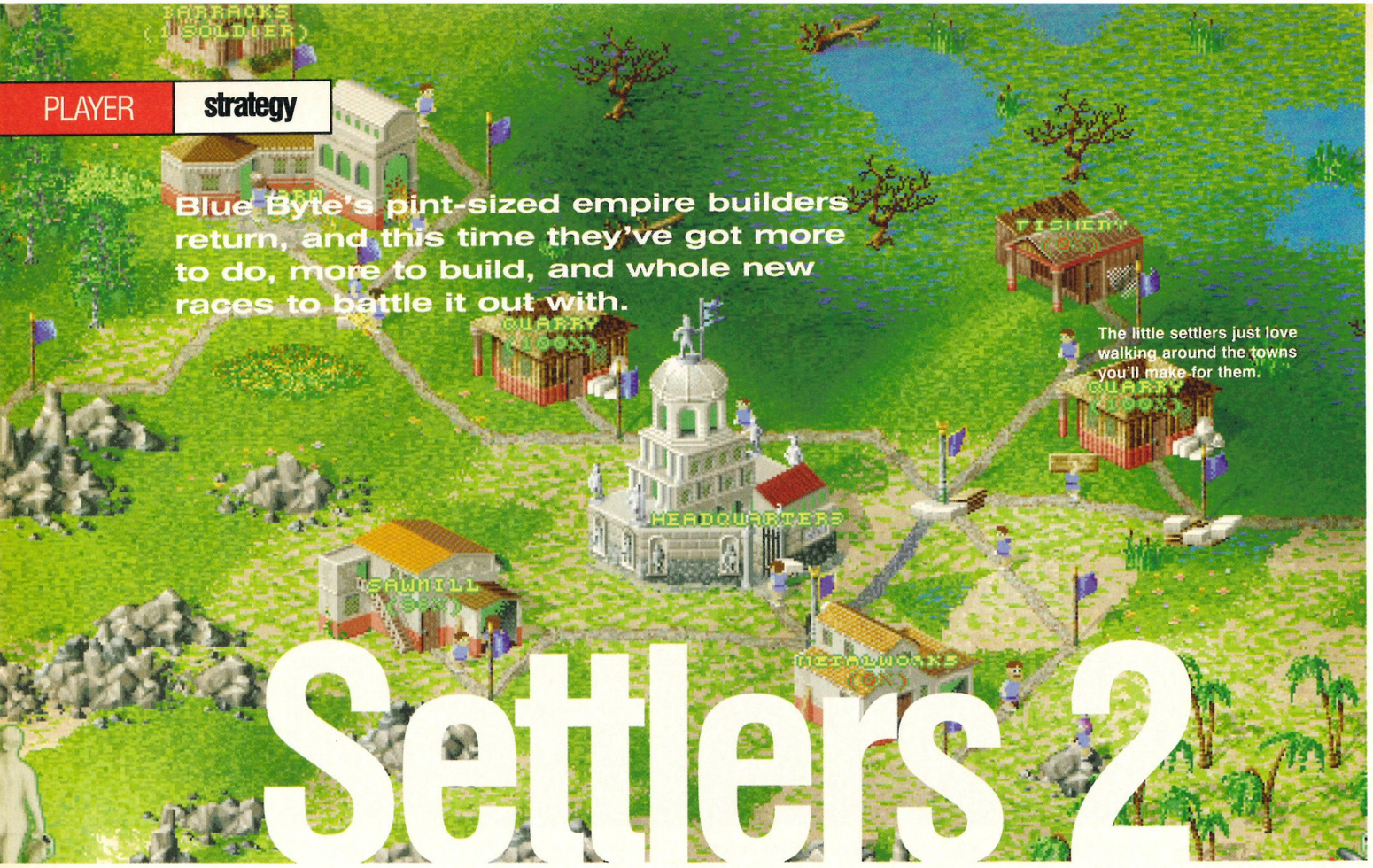


Zoom in close on your colony and you can see everything in great detail. Little farmers plough their plots while woodcutters saw and hack. A nice reward for your explorative labours.

PCR VERDICT

Deceptively simple with loads of neat features, good graphics and hidden depth.

8



Blue Byte's pint-sized empire builders return, and this time they've got more to do, more to build, and whole new races to battle it out with.

The little settlers just love walking around the towns you'll make for them.

Settlers 2

There's an undeniable buzz generated by games which offer control of little computer people. The likes of *Populous*, *Civilization* and *Settlers* may seem like innocuous exercises in large scale simulation and management, but the reality is they give a mainline hit direct to the ego. After all, what could be more fulfilling than directing the lives of countless people? Power is the key – and with *Settlers 2* control is just that bit smoother and wider-ranging.

Picture a shipwreck, not the Robinson Crusoe scenario, instead imagine a whole community stranded on a strange island. With nothing but the raw materials around them, a skilled workforce and good management it's just feasible that our band of survivors will have more luck on land than at sea. This is the starting point of *Settlers 2*, and it's the perfect place to begin empire building, as players instruct the workers to build accommodations for woodcutters, foresters, stonemasons, then expand outward, digging mines, constructing barracks for troops, eventually even taking to the sea again – all with an eye to building a successful new civilization. That and a strong army – just in case other settlers are out there, waiting to pounce.

As the uninspired title suggests, this is very much an expansion of the ideas utilised in the original *Settlers* rather than some heavy reworking of the God sim/empire building concept. That's not really a problem here, however, partly because the first game was so well fashioned in the first place, and partly because every single new feature adds to the playability, likeability, and smooth running of the thing. First off, the system now runs under a much shinier Windows style interface, enabling cameras to be placed on key members of the community, and also offering screen resolutions of up to 1024x800. There are still sometimes too many buttons and charts to deal with - particularly in the central management of resources (this is a game where every sword and every piece of wood is accounted for). But mostly, *Settlers 2* is a pain-free playing and learning experience.

Logical segmentation

The learning curve is the key to it all, really. Playing in the campaign mode, players get to start from scratch, taking their little computer people through the basics of village construction and on to bigger and better things. The campaign is neatly segmented into logical missions, and things are made yet smoother by a 'postal system' whereby the computer sends 'letters' to the player, giving hints, guidance on what to do next, or warnings of impending management disasters. The game may seem pretty daunting for the first few minutes, but this handy help system soon sorts things out.

Campaign play isn't the only way to muck about with empires, however. Free play modes are also available, where one or two players can battle it out with up to seven (or six with two humans) computer controlled leaders. This time round there are four distinct race styles – North European, Greek/Roman, Asiatic and African –each with its own visual hooks.

Objective: thrills

A number of other variables are also under user control in free play mode, including actual game objectives (total conquest, ownership of the island, etc), whether or not unexplored areas are visible, and the level of initial resources. It all works to give *Settlers 2* the sort of quick thrill appeal that made *Warcraft 2* so much fun, albeit with a less warfare-orientated gameplay style.

In gaming terms, *Settlers 2* is complex, but in reality could hardly be easier. The construction of buildings and linking of roads forms the core of it all, understanding what

Developer: Blue Byte

Publisher: Blue Byte

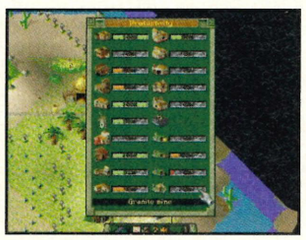
Contact: 01604 232200

Price: £39.99

Minimum system: 486/33, 8Mb RAM, 30Mb hard disk space, VESA-compatible SVGA video card, mouse (2nd mouse required for two player mode), supports all major soundcards (optional: Windows 95)



Settlers II may be icon heavy but the online help facility...helps.



Every building's stats can be called up to improve productivity.



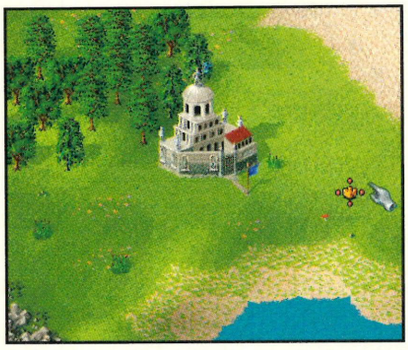
Managing the military effectively is the key to all your victories.



The observation window allows you to keep key people in view.



Manage large open spaces carefully and pack the farms in to ensure food is plentiful.



Trees, rocks, hills and water are the four natural resources that will help you flourish.



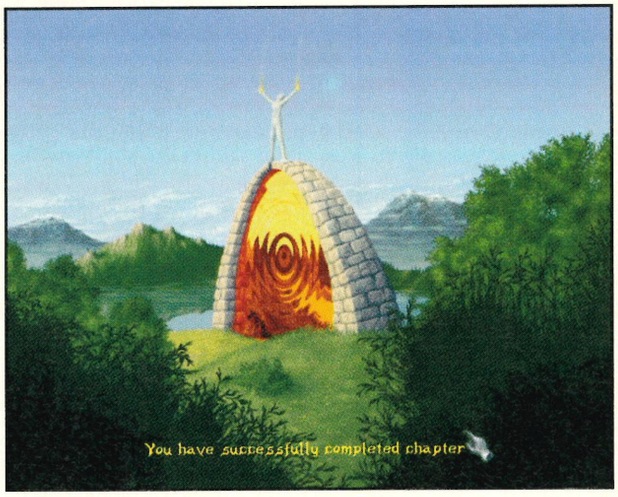
to build and how to best use the island's geography and resources providing the key to success. While overseeing the building of quarries, pubs, lookout posts and so on is hardly inspiring on paper, *Settlers 2* makes full use of its graphics to turn the minutiae of such empire-building into a truly fascinating experience. It's possible to actually watch every element of a process take place in real time – from the growing of a tree, to its being chopped down, stored as lumber, subsequently sawed up, and then used in the building of some wooden object. Add the routines of countless other workers, and the world of *Settlers 2* becomes very busy and intriguing indeed.

No fun in the empire

Of course, building an empire is no fun if there's no threat, and so *Settlers 2* expands on the conflcit side of things, bringing in those water-borne elements as well as stuff like military tents – where armies can be amassed before going in for the kill. Obviously all this stuff is most satisfying when taking on a human opponent in free play, but even the computer sides provide a satisfyingly realistic challenge.

It's important to emphasise the feeling of quality *Settlers 2* possesses. The visuals may look par for the course in stills, but watching the empire grow brick by brick, footstep by footstep is an enormously rewarding experience, all pushed along by suitably crowded sound effects and various pleasant music scores. The new Windows-style control system is a real boon, too. This is very much a hands-on game, after all, even though quick reactions aren't paramount, it's nice to be able to give orders using an intuitive, helpful system. And those higher resolutions are a genuine boon too – particularly in two player modes where the split-screen could potentially make it hard to keep track of the daily goings on.

Settlers 2 is a winner on almost all counts, then. Owners of the original *Settlers* may be a little disappointed that the styling is so familiar. After all, though the graphics are better, it looks like known territory. But when a game is refined as well as this it's hard to grumble. *Settlers 2* is just as cute and complex as its predecessor, but far more polished and generally fun to play. The mission-based structure as opposed to the freeform game style helps here. It may be a lot more frivolous than the likes of *Civilization 2*, but that's something which works in its favour. Rarely has a game looked so cute, yet proved so absorbing. ***(MR)***



The jump gate. The Settlers II's pre-rendered parts are pretty and unobtrusive.

PCR VERDICT

Builds on the strengths of the original's little computer people appeal. Bigger and better than what came before.

8



Start with a hut on your island and build an empire from there.



Bringing mines into production requires good food distribution.

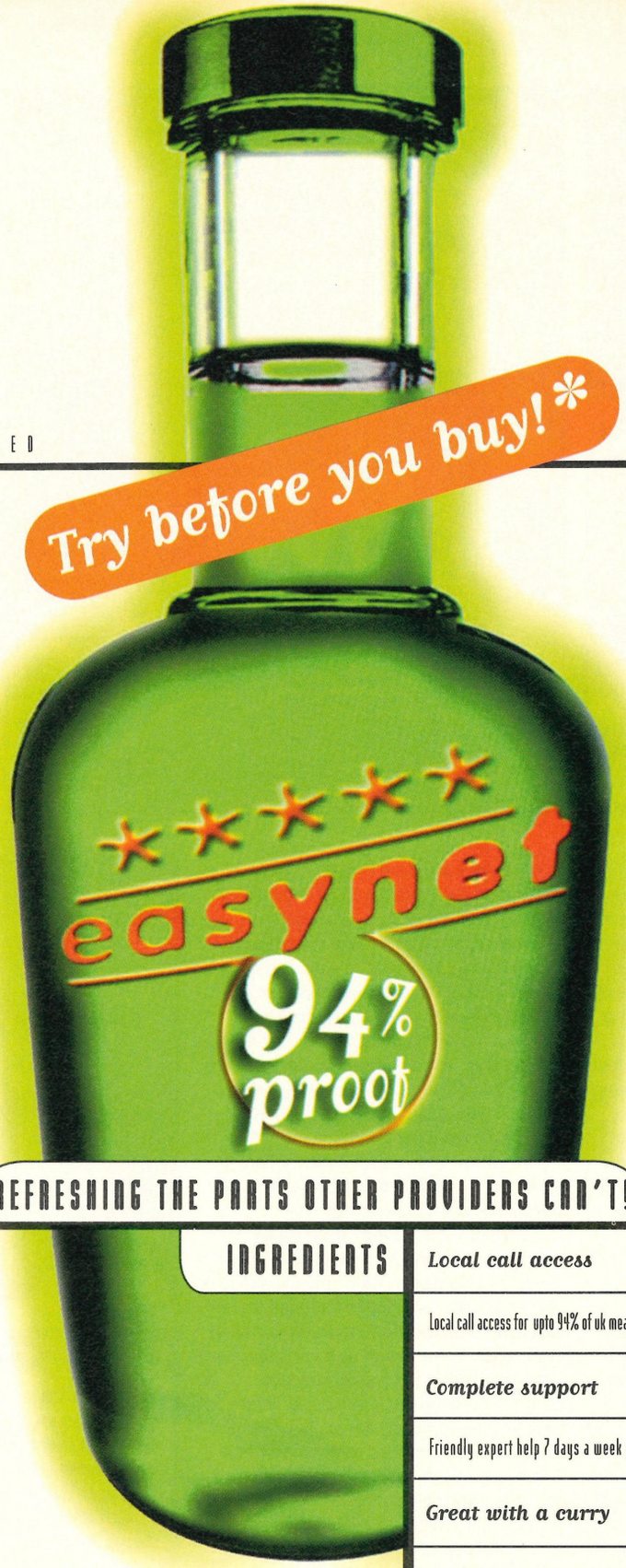


The grey roads are the most heavily travelled routes.



Locate and capture the jump gate to advance to the next mission.

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E-mail: ***postbox@easynet.co.uk*** Web: ***http://www.easynet.co.uk***



Doom-y days are here again, in the celebration of Id software that is Witchhaven 2. Good looking the sprites may be, but it's not Hexen, and certainly not Quake.



Water levels vary between the true blue ones you see here and calmer waters which reflect the surrounding room (but not the bad guys).



This is about as scary as the bad guys get, and these moments are few and far between.

NEXT MONTH
You'll be able to play the demo of Witchhaven because it's going to be on CD Review.

THE JOKES ON THEM
The organisation behind 3D Realms, Agogee, thought they'd make a little extra cash by licensing their 3D game engine to Capstone. After all, Duke Nukem 3D was just about finished, it was unlikely Capstone would design a better game, and even more unlikely that they'd get it out before the Duke. However, Duke Nukem 3D has slipped a dozen times and Capstone are up to their third game, having already done the Witchhaven 1 and TekWar.

WITCHHAVEN 2

The original wasn't noted for its originality, but that hasn't stopped Capstone from repeating the formula.

Picture a game where players get to roam in corridors, run headlong into rooms, using chopping and missile weapons to butcher hordes of hellspawn. The world, sectioned with doors, locked or otherwise, is littered with countless potions, power-ups and extra weapons. But the big bad guys aren't all that stand in the way of the hardy adventurer and the booty (or the exit to the next level). Traps, tests and dead ends abound. All but the most dextrous and hardy players can expect to meet their doom. *Doom* – now, there's a word.

Witchhaven 2 is a game of challenges, but guessing the prime influence isn't one of them. Held together by 3D Realms' Build engine, it is a mix of the gore and hellsawn themes of Id's slightly famous title, with a bunch of spells and classic fantasy weapons which will be familiar to anybody who has played *Heretic* or *Hexen*. Get the picture yet?

The original *Witchhaven* wasn't such a bad deal. Neat level design and an SVGA mode helped it stand out from the crowd, and made up for the dull enemy intelligence routines and absence of original ideas. Today, it's hard to be so lenient. The monsters leave a lot to be desired – both visually and in their strategies. The animation frequently fails to gel, and the impression is that they're searching the catacombs for a braincell to share. Pawns to do the bidding of some demonic leader they may be, but they sure don't act like it.

All but the most dextrous and hardy players can expect to meet their doom.

To its credit *Witchhaven 2* is pretty playable. The graphics engine holds up well enough and there is an attempt to provide variation between levels, from the firepits and swamplands of the early scenes to the hell-breaking-loose levels at the end. But the textures are basic, the use of light and dark rudimentary, and those bad guys often fail to interact with the environment properly. Oh dear.

The use of enchantment pools to give weapons magical properties is neat. But every other element is all too familiar, from use of melee weapons and spells (as in *Heretic*), to the *Doom*-ish feel of so many level areas. Even were *Witchhaven* a fully rounded hack, slash and spellcasting experience, it would still struggle to register on the enthusiasm meter. It's all been done countless times, not least in a game that's now over two years old. There can't be a PC gamer out there who hasn't already got *Doom* or one of the derivatives. It's hard to think of any reason for forking out for yet another clone, particularly such an unsatisfying one. Then again, if you'd rather have this than *Doom*, *Heretic*, *Hexen* – even *Quake* – just go right ahead. ***(MR)***



Now this is getting silly. We're not claiming that Doom invented the idea of impaling people on spikes, but credit where it's due and all.

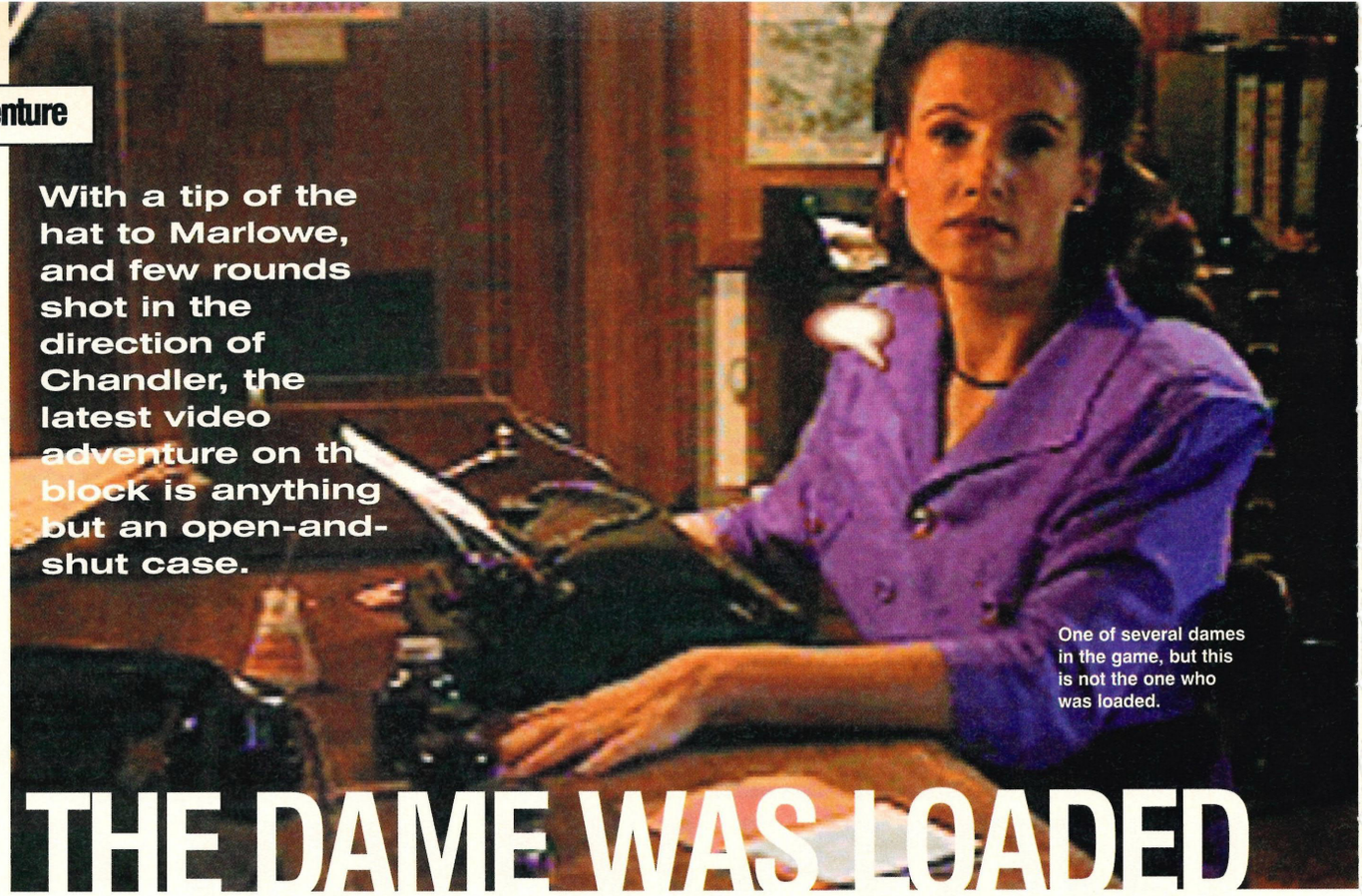
PCR VERDICT

Another Doom clone. With more work on the levels and combat, this could have been a great game.

5

Developer: Capstone
Publisher: US Gold
Contact: 0121 625 3366
Price: £29.99

Minimum system: 486, 8Mb RAM, VGA, CD-ROM drive, 50Mb hard disk space



One of several dames in the game, but this is not the one who was loaded.

THE DAME WAS LOADED

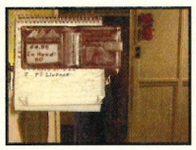
With a tip of the hat to Marlowe, and few rounds shot in the direction of Chandler, the latest video adventure on the block is anything but an open-and-shut case.

AIN'T NOTHING GOING ON

But the rent. At least when the game opens...



As Anger gets ready to begin his case to locate missing person Sam Klein, his progress is blocked by the imposing figure of the landlord.



It seems only money towards the rent will appease him. Time to get with the point and click program, and use that wallet.



Anger reluctantly hands over $50. It'll take some smooth card playing down with his compadres at the local whiskey haunt to recover that cash.

Video games that try to bring detective work to the PC masses are ten a penny, but those which attempt to offer some Chandler-esque pastiche are thinner on the ground. *The Dame Was Loaded* benefits from being pretty much one of a kind, then. Because it sticks firmly to pulp-ish roots, and uses stock crime story characters, situations and terminology, it's easy to overcome initial fears about the FMV nature of the game. And, as it turns out, such caution is unfounded. *The Dame Was Loaded* may pack video sequences, but the real ammunition lies in its adventure format, several hours of audio footage and a cool blue jazz sountrack.

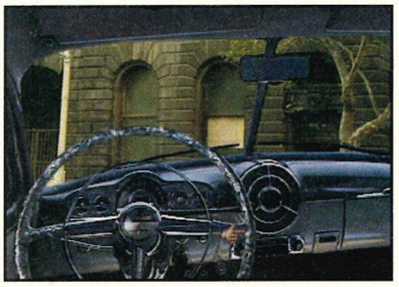
In the role of hardened PI, Scott Anger, players get to coast around the kind of less than hospitable, sepia-tinted 1940s America that never really existed. In this game's Los Angeles the old cops have ulcers, the town officials are crooked, and there's plenty of opportunity for moody voice-over work. Indeed, this is a game whose success hinges on the voice-over, using it to describe objects, situations and events, as well as witty (sometimes useful) asides during dialogue with other characters. The amount of footage is disappointingly small – understandable given the size of the game – but the way so many things are heard rather than seen is disappointing. It's particularly noticeable when stills of a character appear to accompany their words. Video is used for only a portion of events the events and this just doesn't seem logical.

When the movie footage is up and running, it's impressive stuff. The acting is hammy, but then that's the idea. And while the video spooling system is fairly blocky, flesh tones and those essential sepia golds are handled perfectly, and glitches in the audio-video synching are non-existent. Less impressive is the choice of actor for the voice of Anger. The delivery doesn't quite hit the mark, and an attempt to add that classic voice-in-the-head echo doesn't really come.

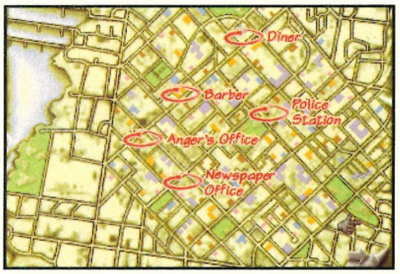
In reality, this is very much an adventure of the old school. Certainly there are nods to modernity – the way the current time of day has an impact on things (though Beam did use this technique back in its *Hobbit* and *Sherlock* days), and the point and click interface. But in terms of clue-finding, talking to characters and asking the right questions, and being in the right place at the right time, *The Dame Was Loaded* probably could've been written as an old text adventure. While this may make it less sexy, it's actually a very positive thing in the long run.

As far as the plot goes, the use of staples of film is excellent, and once players get into the swing of the game style, things really begin to move along at a cracking pace. The way Anger constantly has to go back to old locations can be frustrating, however. It's also a little too easy to miss some clues, or to get things wrong simply because of the real time nature of the game (a problem which also plagued Beam Software's old Spectrum adventure, *Sherlock*) in which case the player is left floundering with dead ends all around – or worse, forced to repeat the same actions over again.

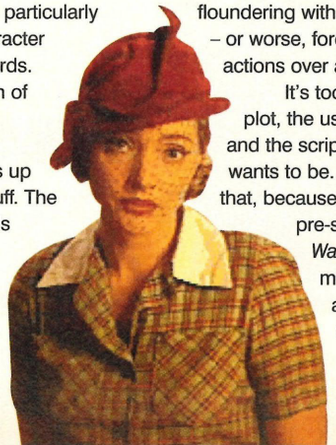
It's too easy to get lost in the plot, the use of stills is annoying, and the script isn't quite as witty as it wants to be. But the fact remains that, because it doesn't totally rely on pre-shot video, *The Dame Was Loaded* mixes movie moments with classic adventur gaming better than many of its contempories. More flow to the puzzles and plot and less reliance on the ineffective voice-over work would have made this a criminally wonderful adventure, but as it stands *The Dame Was Loaded* is still worth investigating. ***(MR)***



Anger's car is essential for getting around Los Angeles. A quick scan of the glove compartment is all that's needed...



...to find a handy street map. Anger marks on new locations as they come up in conversation or by other less honest or straightforward means.



Developer: Beam

Publisher: Philips Media

Contact: 0171 911 3000

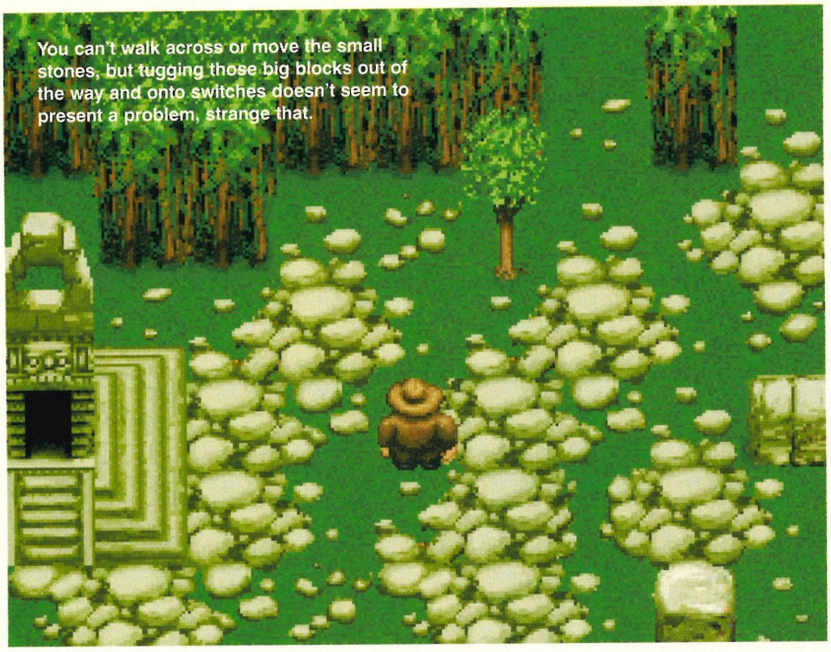
Price: £39.99

Minimum system: 486/33, 8Mb RAM, 6Mb hard disk space, single speed CD-ROM drive, mouse (optional: all major soundcards)

PCR VERDICT

More of a classy B-movie than a blockbuster. Nevertheless a sturdy adventure.

7





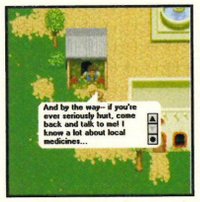
By moving boulders around Indy diverts the flow of rivers, triggering switches to open doors or make other events occur. He can pull or push them with a quick hit of your shift key.



Indy's team back at base is always there to help. Here Indy gets a mission.



If things get too tough for you then you can return to base for some help.



Get into a scrape and you'll need to see this medicine man to get your health back.



The sweet little Senorita behind the bar is the queen of local gossip.

INDIANA JONES AND HIS DESKTOP ADVENTURES

Could LucasArts be making the move from huge adventures into the realm of desktop accessories?

That whip-cracking, Nazi bashing hero of the big screen, Indiana Jones, returns to your desktop once again courtesy of those clever people at LucasArts.

Unlike the ever more ambitious titles released by the company of late, *Indiana Jones and his Desktop Adventures* takes a novel approach that, with a little tweaking, should prove very popular with office PC users and home enthusiasts alike. By far the most attractive thing about this game is the price. Less than £15 for a game that is literally never the same twice is a bargain.

It's cheap and so easy to get up and running.

This game takes its style from the old Nintendo *Zelda* games. The graphics take a back seat and let the pure puzzle solving and exploration gameplay take the wheel. As such, the graphics are very close to being appalling and the game jerks badly when you try and move around. This would normally be enough to put you off but after a few minutes you get into the plot and puzzle solving, and don't really take any notice of these presentation flaws.

Unlike a lot of adventure games the puzzles in Indy are fairly obvious. You see a boat, you need some oars; get to a door and you need something with which to open it. Thankfully, most of the items you need are never too far away from the places where you need to use them, which means it doesn't take forever to hunt out an item. Another advantage that Indy has is that every episode (for want of a better word) is designed to be completed in an hour or so. Perfect for those rainy lunch breaks or when you don't feel like getting too deeply into a game. This way it's very rewarding to finish one, and you know there are plenty more to complete next time you play.

Releasing this desktop adventure package for only £14.99 is a real coup for LucasArts, making it accessible to every single PC user. It's cheap and so easy to get up and running that anyone who works in an office where PCs become available during lunch breaks should feel almost obliged to have this somewhere on their system.

Sure, *Indiana Jones and his Desktop Adventures* may be a disappointment to players used to high class adventure games that need a Pentium before they'll even consider coming out of their packaging. But, how many of those adventures offer something different every single time you play? None.

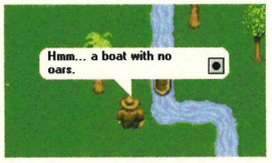
Here's a game that's affordable, runs on just about every PC out there, has the ultimate in replay value and is very easy to set up. It may lack the glossy looks that you would normally expect from LucasArts but that's the only failing. Forget all those screen savers and samples, this is the desktop package that you really need to complement Windows. ***(LE)***



You pick up the whip here. As usual, this is Indy's first line of defence.



Almost every time you come to a puzzle you get some kind of clue about getting past it.



The oar two screens to the right would seem the obvious solution but it's a red herring.

PCR VERDICT

A puzzle-adventure game that offers great value to almost every PC user out there.

7

CD REVIEW ON THE DISC 56

Crack Indy's whip with the playable demo on this month's CD Review.

Developer: LucasArts

Publisher: Virgin/LucasArts

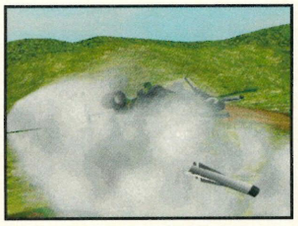
Contact: 0171 368 2255

Price: £14.99

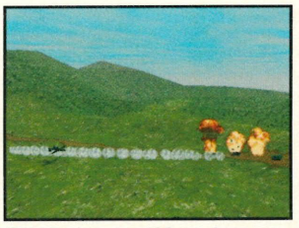
Minimum system:
486/33, 8MB RAM,
3Mb hard disk space,
VGA, Windows 3.1 or 95



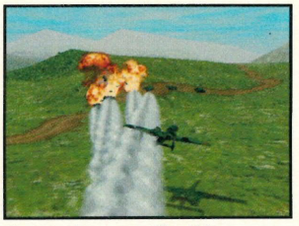
Since you can freeze the game but still alter the views, you can watch the action in fantastic detail. This is the start of an attack on a convoy.



Switch to a front view and you can actually see individual missiles. Hardware geeks will be pleased to note that the Hellfire actually looks just like a real one.



The Engagement View gives you a default overview of each skirmish, usually viewed from the nearest high point. You can't lock on or fire in this mode.



To get close-ups like this you need to play around. Annoyingly, you can't trap the convoy by blasting the point and rear vehicles. They just keep driving.



The smoke trail looks incredible from this viewpoint. It even envelopes part of the A-10's wing.

Ugly – but only to survive – that's the tank busting A-10 Warthog for you. And Sierra has come up with the most hardcore ground attack flight sim to date.

SILENT THUNDER

There's more energy stored in a candle than in a stick of dynamite. The major difference being, of course, the rate at which the energy is released. The Fairchild A-10 Thunderbolt knows all about releasing energy, and expells a lot of it in an extremely short time indeed. Usually at about 70 rounds a second.



The rolling terrain is integral to the game. You have to get right into this gully to see the boats.

It achieves this primarily because the A-10 isn't a plane at all. It's a large gun with wings. The gun, a GAU-8/A 30mm cannon has to be large because each shell is the size of a milk bottle, and there are 1,174 of them on board. Each one can take out a tank. Pilots are trained to ration this supply by firing in tenth of a second bursts – just seven shots per trigger pull.

Everything happens quickly, so by the time the last shot in a burst leaves one of the seven rotating barrels, the first shot is hitting the target. The slugs are made from very heavy depleted uranium so their kinetic energy is incredible. Add the pyroplastic qualities of the material, and you've got a high energy round spraying supersonic shards of burning, radioactive material into an armoured target full of ammunition, fuel and people. Forget WW2 footage of tanks being hit and crews bailing out as flames lick the sides, on the modern battlefield, armoured vehicles go up instantly and are reduced to hulks in seconds. People rarely walk away. This process is duplicated astonishingly well in this game, which is why it's such a shame that, along with every other A-10 game that's ever been produced, they've got the gun sound completely wrong. At 70rps, you can't here each shot 'Banga-banga-banga' like it does here, all you get is a 'Raaaarrr' like a chainsaw.

However, since that's about the only realism fault (apart from missiles ranges being taken down to around 1km), we'll let it slide. But while we're on problems, let's get them all out of the way, leaving the end of the review for a homage to the astonishing ingenuity of modern killing technology.

The short 'wrong' list then, is headed by most (but not all) of the missions being too tightly structured. "Go and support a friendly armoured unit," you're told, but unless you get to them that second, they get pasted. "Take out the planes as they refuel," you're told, but once again, unless you get there ricky-tick and take out all the planes plus the hangar on your first pass, they're up in the air, you've failed the mission and, because of the number of missiles flying around, you're in a world of hurt. Sure, some missions give you plenty of time to fumble about, miss your target and still succeed, but others cut

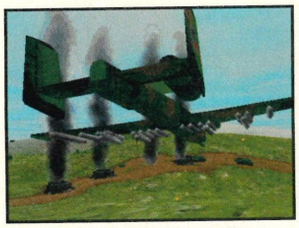
Developer: Dynamix

Publisher: Sierra

Contact: 01734 303322

Price: £45

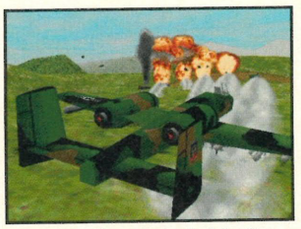
Minimum System: 486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM, 25Mb hard disk space, double speed CD-ROM drive, SVGA, Windows



This view gives an interesting perspective on things. Note the array of weaponry hanging beneath the wings of the A-10, and the dead tanks ahead.



Switch back to the cockpit view and let that target eat some pyroplastic Hell fire. The explosions at ground zero don't look too bad either.



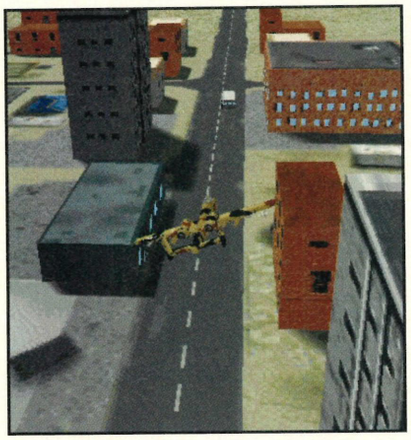
Less than five seconds into the attack and you've wasted pretty much everything. Note the flying chunks of debris. The detail's incredible.



And that's it, everyone's toast. But seconds later, you're radioed and warned that helicopters are attacking a bridge. Full throttle and get out of there fast.

Dna Tests

These days, apparently, tank crews must all undergo DNA testing. The reason for this is that when a tank gets hit by something like a shell from an A-10 the impact is such that all that's remains of the crew is often found in liquid form. Sick, but that's war for you.



The A-10 swoops between the buildings. Motorists better beware.



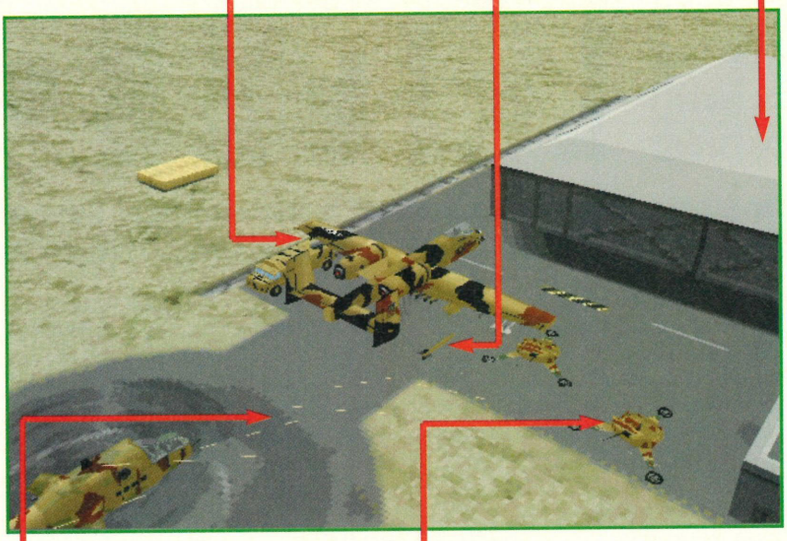
Although the A-10's a ground attack plane, it's still possible to take on other aircraft. Sidewinder missiles are usually the best bet

Snapshot from a video game war

Your A-10. The colour and markings on it change to suit the terrain type you find in the mission. In this one, we get a light desert camouflage.

This large, free fall bomb appears to be right on target. In a second's time it wil crash through the roof of the hangar below wreaking devastation.

This hangar's the target. You must lock all the weapons on target before letting them fly. This aspect of the game is far too limiting.



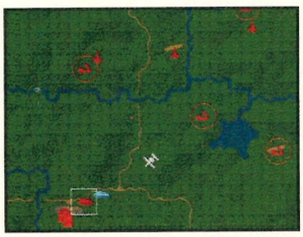
The detail is to such a high level that the AAA shells from this ground based gun actually show up as tracers in the game. The plane's passing the gun at an altitude of just 120 feet here.

Anti aircraft can blast engines and chop into the wings and the fuselage. This damage, in turn, changes the way the plane handles. Good thing this gun's shooting off target.

you no slack, preferring you either complete things exactly as you're supposed to or not at all. This isn't in the spirit of flight sims.

Also imposing rigid play is the weapons system which gives you only the gun as a free-fire weapon. All the others, freefall bombs and unguided rockets included, can only be fired when you're locked on a target, which takes any fun-packed, seat-of-the-pants feeling out of game. You can't, for example, release a bomb at a hanger and accidentally blow yourself up because you're too low. Worse still, if you choose a weapon that's unsuitable for a target (say, cluster bombs on a battle tank), then it won't let you use it. You either hit your target or don't use your weapon at all; there are no near misses. This is not good.

That aside, everything's dreamy. Photorealistic graphics aside (though it's hard to not mention them – they are, after all, completely gorgeous), the thing worth paying for is the believably rolling terrain that's an integral part of the game. The A-10 is a close range ground attack/support plane, so you spend most of the time flying low and slow over targets, in range of everything from Soviet made SAM systems to Roberto Miguel Badguy up a guard tower with an AK47.



The terrain's details help you relate features to the map. Here you can see an A-10 (in white) approaching an airstrip.

The joy of *Silent Thunder* is to find the cleverest route to each target without overflying too many secondary targets. Ideally, you zap along river valleys at zero feet, cut under bridges and then climb to the crest of a mountain so you can cut the throttle, coast down the other side, and drop onto the target, hopefully blowing away all the SAM sites and triple-As that would've carved your plane to bits if you'd lumbered, without guile, up the valley towards them.

But those graphics, hey? At any point you can freeze the game but, in a rare moment for game programmers, it doesn't lock up the game or print 'Pause' across the display. Instead, you can switch to an outside view and use the mouse to twist or zoom the viewpoint anywhere. It's usually worth it, but if that sounds like too much of a faff, hit the 'Engagement view' button to get a hillside observer's view of the bombs falling and the trucks blowing up.

War may be Hell, but at this sort of resolution, it's also beautiful. ***(CW)***

PCR VERDICT

Frequently too rigid, but an awesome flight sim that favours action. Way points? Pah!

8

JANE'S SAYS

As Ladybird books are the essential readers for tiny tots everywhere, so military fanatics the world over look to Jane's reference works as bibles of combat and hardware information. Even the military powers themselves look to Jane's knowledge base, relying on it to be accurate, up-to-date and authoritative. Starting with Jane's All The World's Fighting Ships way back in 1898, combat buffs can now soak up the delights of of Jane's All The World's Aircraft, Jane's Armour and Artillery, even Jane's Space Directory? It was all started by one John Frederick Thomas Jane.



ATF features accurately modelled fighters and speedy combat in the skies, plus reference material on all the aircraft in the game.

Advanced Tactical FIGHTERS

Tapping into the sea of knowledge in Jane's combat libraries, Electronic Arts' 21st Century high flyer tries to go ballistic.

Advanced Tactical Fighter is an admirable attempt to please both plane-spotters and thrill seekers. To please the former, there's the Jane's licence, which ensures that the flight models, combat data and mission situations are all as close to the real thing as a PC is likely to get. And then there's the sort of intuitive control systems (if you can call a game which uses at least half the keys on the keyboard intuitive), gentle mission curve, custom flight options and general arcade feel to it all. It may be advanced and tactical, but it's the fighting that gets pride of place.

In comparison to the multimedia stylings of *Top Gun*, *ATF* can't help but appear clumpy, but then *Top Gun* doesn't even begin to offer the depth or subtlety on offer here. And *ATF* looks better, with less blocky ground detail and a range of visual hooks like vapour trails, smooth cloud effects and nice, crisp plane detail. Nevertheless, the graphics in *ATF* are disappointing, as is the ground detail. In terms of ground-based structures there's little to fault, but the land itself is bloody dull for a game based so heavily around air-to-ground and low level air-to-air combat. The rendered intro is crammed with mountain ranges and craggy valleys – where did they all go? Even the ground texturing gets warped out of perspective when up close. Nasty.

Pulling loops and rolls several hundred feet over enemy installations feels so right.

The lack of attention paid to the landscapes aside, *ATF* is a bit of a success story. Certainly in terms of simple flying enjoyment, the game has what it takes. Opting to simulate a bunch of spanking new fighter types (some of which aren't actually airborne in the real world yet) means that flight is forgiving and always dynamic. Pulling loops and rolls several hundred feet over enemy installations feels so right, thanks to some canny flight modelling. And while there's plenty for the real flying buffs to get to grips with, it's not so complex that keeping an F-22 or B-2A Spirit in the air proves too much of a challenge for the Tom Cruise wannabes.

Combat is where it's really at, however. Despite the supersonic speeds of the planes featured, there's no small amount of dog-fighting to be done. Getting up close and personal with enemy jets is a surprisingly frequent thing, as are opportunities for real ground scraping acrobatics. Stick *ATF* on a decent Pentium in SVGA mode and the fight sequences are nothing short of cinematic.

This is most certainly the right stuff. From the mission options right through to the on-line database (courtesy of Jane's, naturally) and the wonderfully varied high-jinks of the single missions and campaigns, *ATF* balances the sim and fun elements with near faultless style. It's only when comparing the land detail to the likes of Sierra's *Silent Thunder* that Electronic Arts' futuristic flyer begins to look a little too traditional, but even then it's the game that matters here, not the scenery. Frankly, you won't find a better way to try out the shape of military things to come. ***(MR)***

PCR VERDICT

Classy design and some impressive combat situations. Jane's good name has been upheld.

7

Developer: Electronic Arts

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Contact: 01753 549442

Price: £44.99

Minimum system: 486/66, 8Mb RAM, 29Mb hard disk space, double speed CD drive, mouse (optional: joysticks and all major soundcards, SVGA cards)



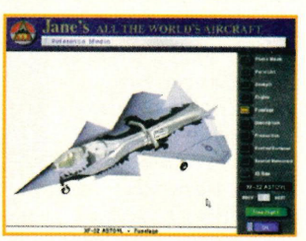
The ground detail only looks good from a distance.



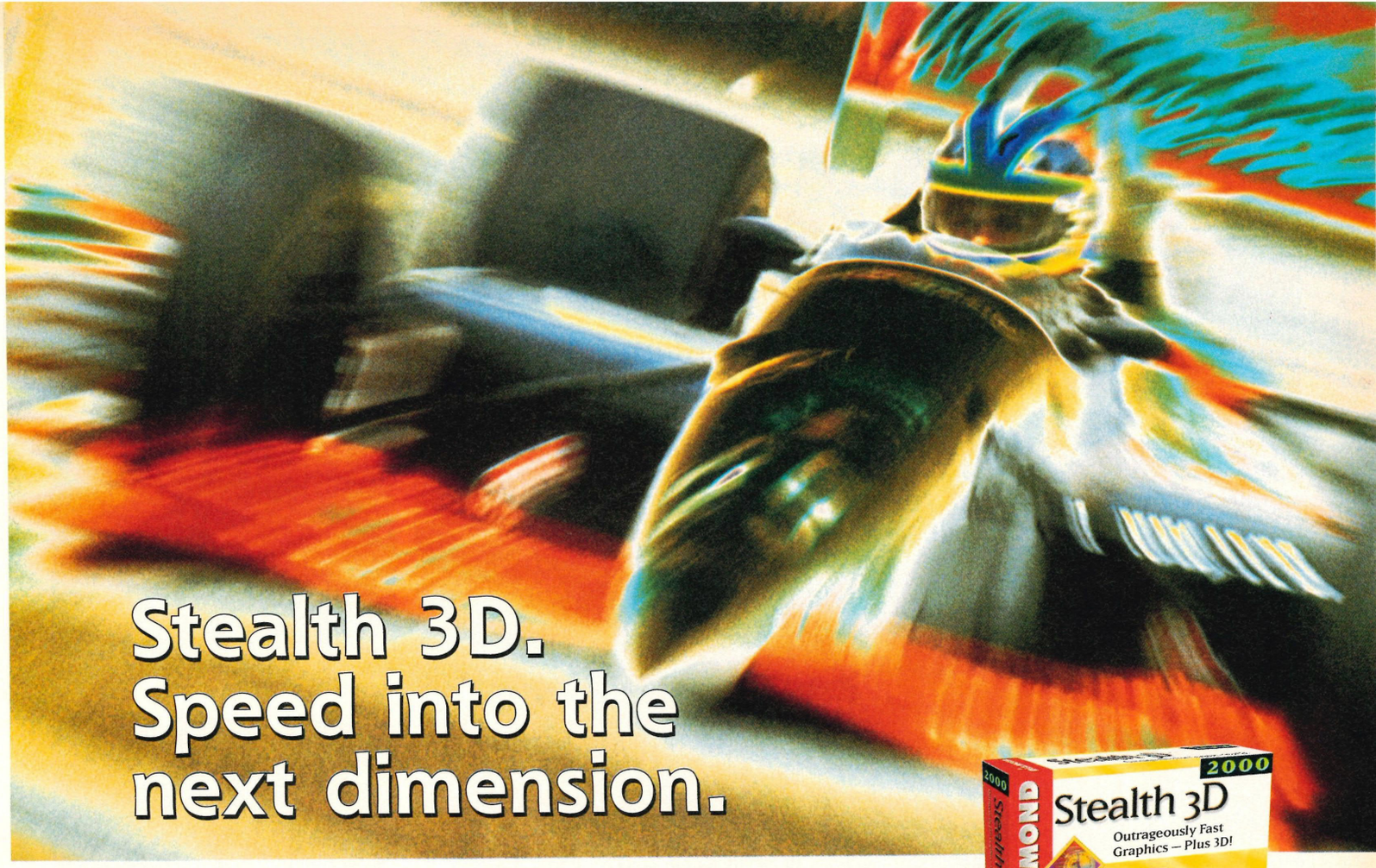
Hurtling in between attackers, and seeing all the action close-up.



Cockpit view, with the addition of a rear view mirror.



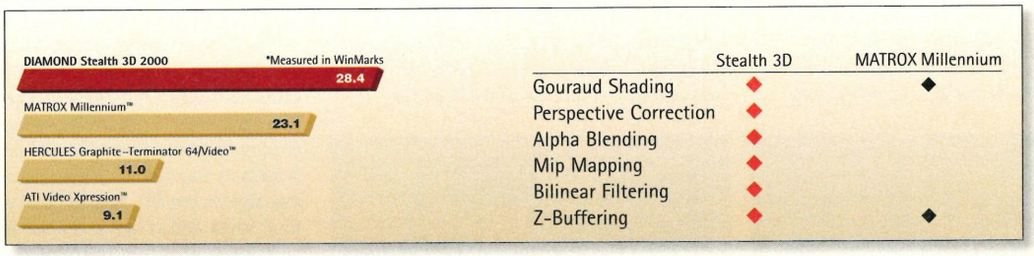
Drop into the Jane's refference section for plane data.



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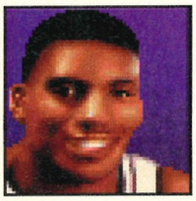
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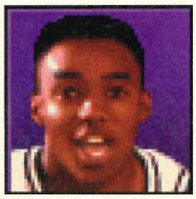
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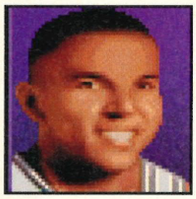


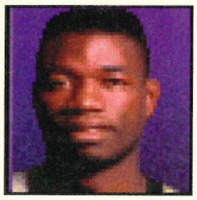
NBA JAM TE



Basketball is hard to simulate. This conversion of Midway's arcade game, instead offers superb gameplay.





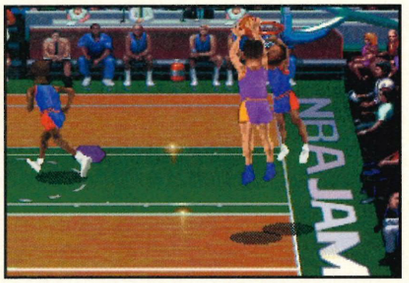




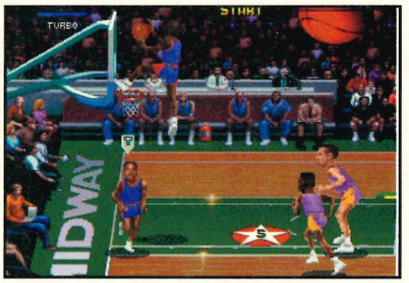
The large heads of all these grinning NBA stars were imposed on a set of spindly sprite bodies for some truly hilarious in-game results. Watch for these guys endorsing air-filled trainers, soon.



The more physical aspect of basketball hasn't been overlooked in NBA Jam TE. A swift jab of the button can send an opponent to floor in a satisfying mess of bruises and contusions.



Jump shots are the easiest kind of baskets to score using a joypad.



Slam dunks are what NBA Jam TE is all about, with the powerdunk being supreme.

Very tall men. That's what basketball is about. Lots of very tall men doing impossible things with a ball and obeying a seemingly unfathomable set of rules. Strange then, that *NBA Jam* has lots of small men with very large heads, precious few rules and a host of outlandish dunks and moves at the press of a button.

When Midway designed the original *NBA Jam* coin-op, they realised that basketball isn't ideal arcade material. The fast-paced action is perfect but the substitutions, complex passing and multiplayer teams bog things down immensely. So, Midway made it two-on-two, gave the players small bodies with digitised heads of actual players and put in a load of spectacular moves. The result was one of the most successful coin-ops in the USA. Thankfully, not much has been lost in the conversion.

The first thing that strikes you about *NBA Jam TE* is how easy it is to play. Even novices will be up and running in minutes. Apart from movement, three buttons control the whole affair with different actions coming from the same button depending on whether you tap it or hold it down. It's a neat system and ideally suited to the speed of the game. These three buttons let you pass, fake, shoot, dunk, block, steal, turbo, superpass and superdunk.

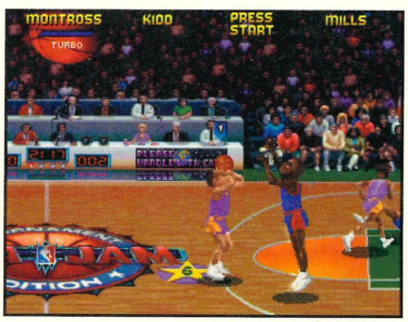
The long tall shorts of it

Now, the last three may not be traditional features of basketball but they're perfectly at home here. Some standard basketball rules do apply – the three point zone, a shot clock, no travelling – but most of them can be switched off. Substitutions are still a must, especially if you've turned off the fouls, but they only take place between quarters and you've only got a squad of three or four actual NBA players.

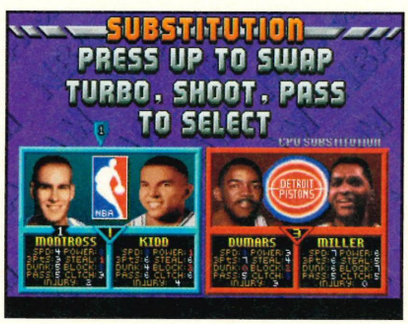
Bomb the bass-ketball

Two special features are the hot spots and power ups. Hot spots are numbered stars which appear for a limited time on the court. Sink a basket from the star and you score whatever number was on the star – from four to nine points. Most of the power ups simply improve the ability of the player who grabs them but the bomb causes the other players to drop to the floor giving you an open court.

These extras may offend the purist, but they give the gameplay an added edge allowing exciting last-minute comebacks. The excitement's not limited to the last minute, however. Every second, every basket is thrilling and the two player game is one of the best on the PC. Add the possibility of four player action with a special adaptor and you've got what's undoubtedly the best basketball game on the PC and one of the finest sports sims around. ***(CB)***



Hot spots are the great innovation of NBA Jam TE. They appear at random across the court and enable you to feast on points.



In-play substitutions are not permitted in NBA Jam. Instead you can only change players between quarters.

Developer: Iguana

Publisher: Acclaim

Contact: 0171 344 5000

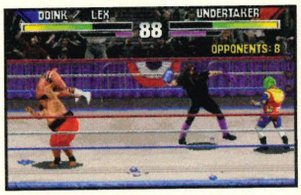
Price: £44.99

Minimum system: 486SX/33, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD drive, 2Mb hard disk, SVGA

PCR VERDICT

Fast, spectacular and playable, NBA Jam TE is a near-perfect sports game.

9



Taking a bodyslam in an out-of-hand tag team match.



The tag-team match continues as Lek prepares a super-fly jump.



Spomp! Boof! Ooooh! Did he really stamp on his head?



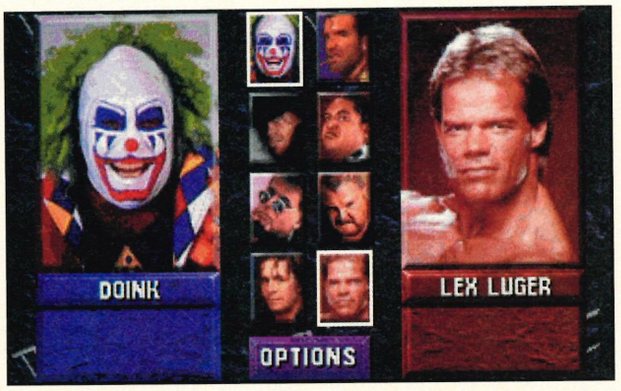
Bret Hart is going to meet the canvas head-first.

Next Month

We'll be bringing you all the moves to get the most out of WWF Wrestlemania in our Play to Win section.



Doink the Clown might look silly. That's because he is silly. Nevertheless, Lex Luger suffers at his hand.



The disappointing thing about WWF Wrestlemania is that there are but eight fighters to choose from and no sign of hidden characters.

WRESTLEMANIA

WWF gave us Hulk Hogan. It gave us Jake the Snake. Now, it has given us a riotously playable arcade beat 'em up.

Let's get one thing straight first. WWF wrestling is one of the crassest televisual experiences this side of *It's A Knockout*. It's loud. It's tasteless. It's full of inane a-whoopin' and a-hollerin' Americans. It's bereft of any element of real sporting competition and fuelled by incessant overbearing self-hype. It all makes for one tragic TV show… but one hell of a great game.

Arcade-bred

A conversion of the successful Midway coin-op, *WWF Wrestlemania* takes all the things that make WWF such a low-class, high-ratings hit and turns them into one of the most fun games around. For the most part, the game plays in the same way as a conventional beat-'em-up with punches, kicks, throws and special moves accessed by button pushes and ever-complex combos of key presses.

There's a cast of eight fighters to choose from and they reflect the prevailing trends in the WWF canon. There are four of the 'normal' type wrestlers – oily body builders with naff long-at-the-back-short-at-the-side hairdos – and four 'novelty' ones – the fat, the foreign or the dubiously costumed. Now, despite the differences between them they all fight in roughly the same way.

Each wrestler has two punches and kicks, a head hold, an uppercut and the ability to pick up an opponent. These basic moves are versatile enough, and the whole game moves at such a fast pace that it's possible to play using only them.

However, each wrestler has many special moves – a few are listed in the game's skimpy manual, the rest you have to discover for yourself. There's Doink the Clown's electric hand buzzer, Lex Luger's medieval mace and The Undertaker's flight of demons. All very silly but at the same time it's ideal arcade fodder.



Move over, Giant Haystacks, the real lardboys of wrestling are to be found in the WWF. Fat they may be, but friendly they aren't.

Ready to rumble

And as in all the best arcade games, there's some finely balanced gameplay lurking beneath the frantic action. Play the simple way, using the easy moves and keeping your guard up, and you'll win, but not on the higher difficulty levels. Use the more flashy moves and you'll inflict more damage but leave yourself open to attack. The type of game you play affects the difficulty too. In the one player game you can go for either the easier Intercontinental Title or the tough WWF Title which culminates in the Royal Rumble – you against eight other wrestlers at once. Two players can either go head-to-head against each other or form a tag-team and take on all comers.

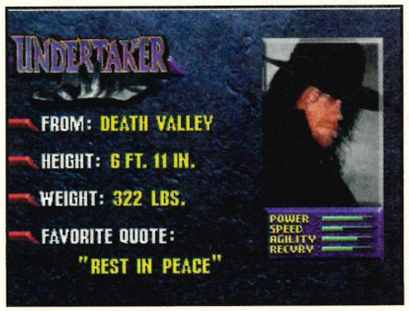
Fun is what WWF Wrestlemania is all about. What, on TV, is an unbearable dollop of lowest common denominator tripe is, on the PC, a mightily enjoyable and highly polished arcade romp.

All the noise, those bickering commentators, the outlandish wrestlers and the ridiculously over-the-top action combine to make an irresistible beat 'em up. Forget your prejudices, if you want to enjoy yourself and want to play a great game then get *WWF Wrestlemania*. And best of all, the outcome of each fight isn't rigged in advance. ***(CB)***

PCR VERDICT

Slick arcade beat-'em-up that's more fun than to play than any other PC fighting game.

8



The Undertaker. He looks grim, smells like a corpse, and he'll bury you. Under his own flesh, that is, when he splashes down.

Developer: Sculptured

Publisher: Acclaim

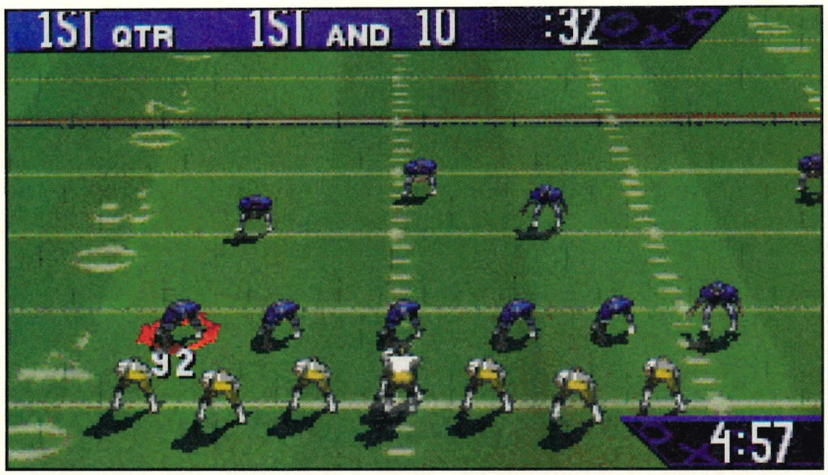
Contact: 0171 3445000

Price: £44.99

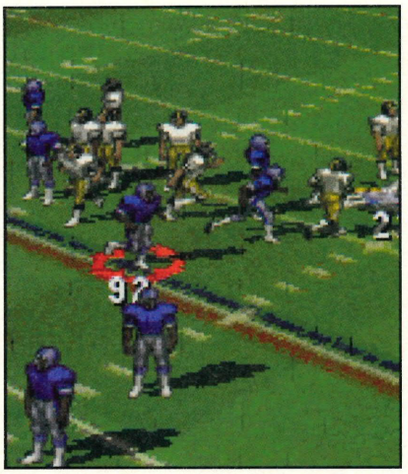
Minimum system: 486SX/25, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD drive, 8Mb hard disk space, VGA

NFL QUARTERBACK Club 96

The quarterback yelled, "Hut!" and passed the ball to Acclaim. But will they score?



The default view of NFL QBC '96 is this plain yet functional above-the-action one. It does the job but that job isn't exactly brain surgery.



This dynamic view is reminiscent of 1920's German Expressionist cinema.

Developer: Iguana
Publisher: Acclaim
Contact: 0171 3445000
Price: £44.99
Minimum system: 486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD drive, 35Mb hard disk space, SVGA

PCR VERDICT

Dogged down by a sluggish engine and bad controls.

5

The original console *NFL Quarterback Club* was a novelty title inspired by a *Superstars*-esque TV challenge where the NFL's great QBs threw balls at targets, ran around obstacles and so on. It was a pretty lame excuse of a sports sim. It's all change for this PC game which looks to gazump EA's delayed *John Madden Football* by offering a similar arcade slant on gridiron.

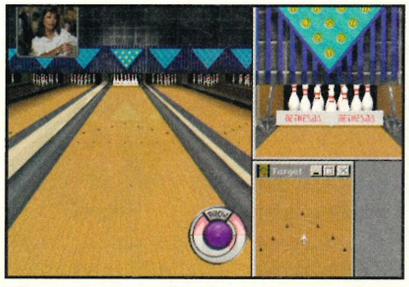
Most PC American football titles are heavy sims, laden down with manuals, stats and complex engines. *NFL QB Club 96* takes its lead from *Madden* and favours of a more pick up 'n' play approach. Importance is placed on the controls and responsiveness of the players. Which is unfortunate, here.

The sluggish pace of the players is a surprise given the simplicity of the game – a major disappointment. The passing game is particularly hard to master and you're not helped by the realistic but irritating delay as the QB cocks his arm back to throw.

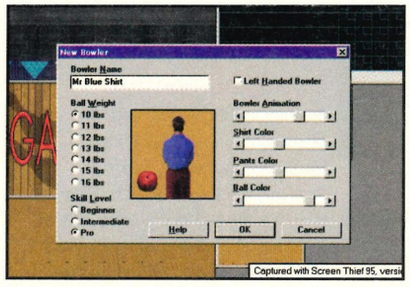
Superficially, *NFL QB Club 96* is pretty good but no improvement on its rivals. There are flashy intros and menu screens, some neatly animated players with nice shadows on the field, a manageable selection of views and all the NFL players and teams. But, crucially, it lacks the arcade fluidity that *Madden* promises and ends up in the same mire that makes the current gridiron titles a must only for die-hard American Football fans. ***(CB)***

PBA BOWLING

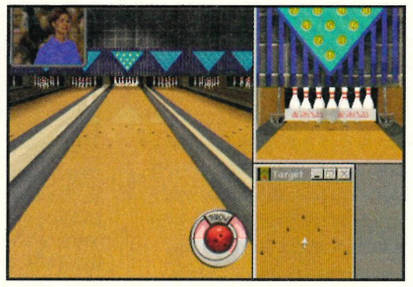
The sport with the biggest balls going arrives on the PC.



When you get a strike, a spare or miss all ten pins, a little window pops up in the corner showing the reactions of the bowler.



You can customise the appearance of your bowler (shirt, slacks and ball) and choose from eight ethnically diverse bowlers.



After you've done your mouse-clicking the bowler takes off down the lane and delivers the ball. The corner window shows the result.

Developer: Bethesda
Publisher: Virgin
Contact: 0171 3682255
Price: £TBA
Minimum system: 486 DX33, 4Mb, Windows 3.1 or better, 14 Mb hard disk space, SVGA

PCR VERDICT

A mundane, mouse-clicking game with little action.

5

Let's face it. In the UK bowling is in that dubious sporting category known as the 'birthday treat', along with other notables such as pitch 'n' putt golfing and ice skating. The sort of thing you do once a year with a group of mates. You have a laugh and then don't play again until the next birthday or funeral. That's just what *PBA Bowling* is like.

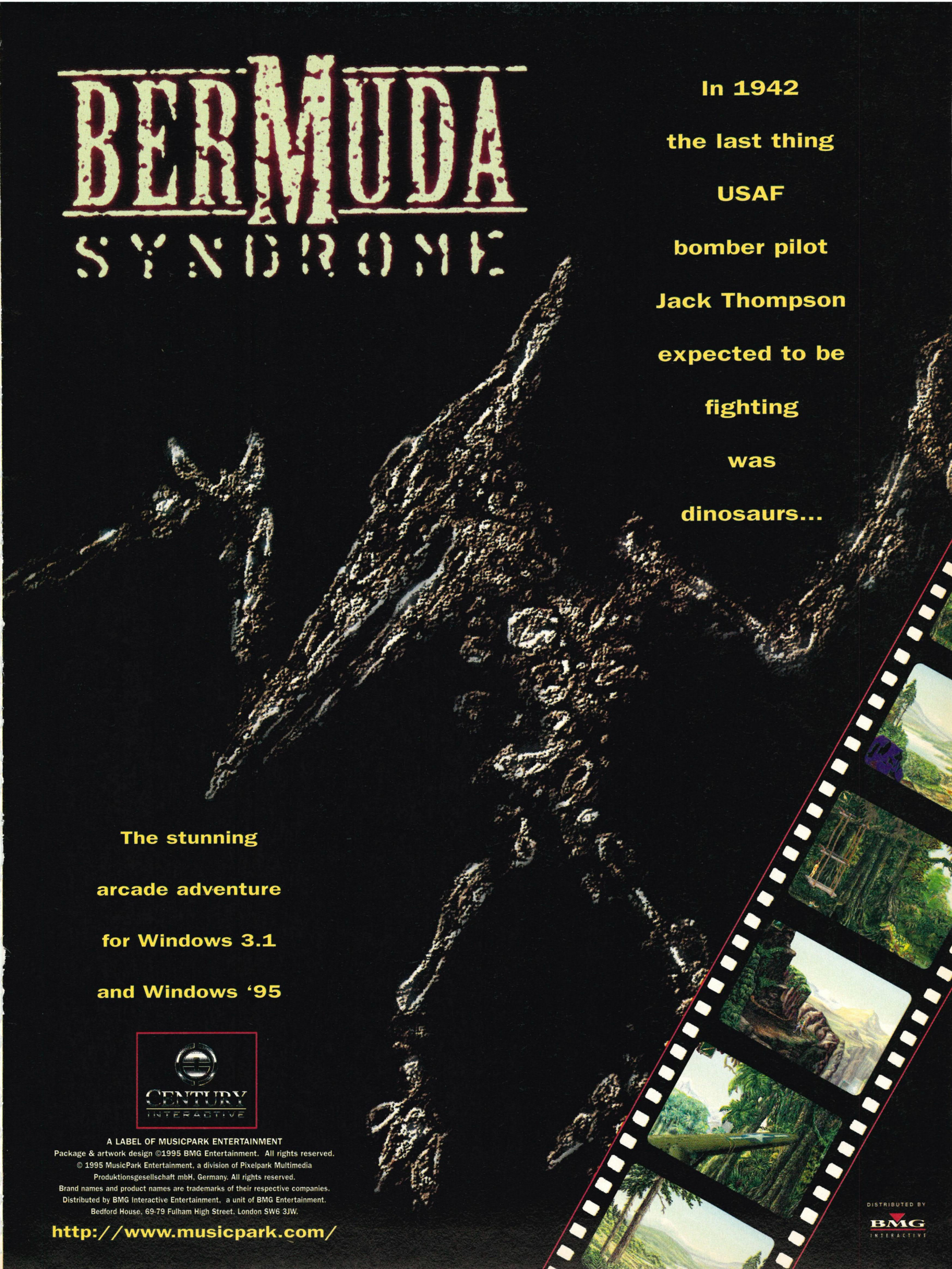
It's played from a set of four windows which show the lane, pins, scorecard and a close-up of the target (that hitherto-ignored chevron of arrows halfway down the lane). Some perfunctory animation of the bowler, ball and tumbling pins are the only action, but clattering sound effects do help to create something approaching an atmosphere.

PBA Bowling uses a variant on standard golf game controls. You choose where to aim by moving the ball across the lane and placing an arrow over the target chevrons. Bowling is handled by a power-hook-snap meter that sets how hard the ball is thrown and what spin is put on it. The higher the skill level, the faster the meter moves and the more precision required.

And that's all there is to it. Team play and league play do extend the life of it, but PBA Bowling is no more than a functional sports sim. It's an exercise in nervous mouse clicking that'll entertain two or three people for a night, but it's not worth a regular place on your hard drive. Kind of like a bad golf game without the scenery. ***(CB)***

BERMUDA SYNDROME

In 1942
the last thing
USAF
bomber pilot
Jack Thompson
expected to be
fighting
was
dinosaurs...



The stunning
arcade adventure
for Windows 3.1
and Windows '95

CENTURY INTERACTIVE

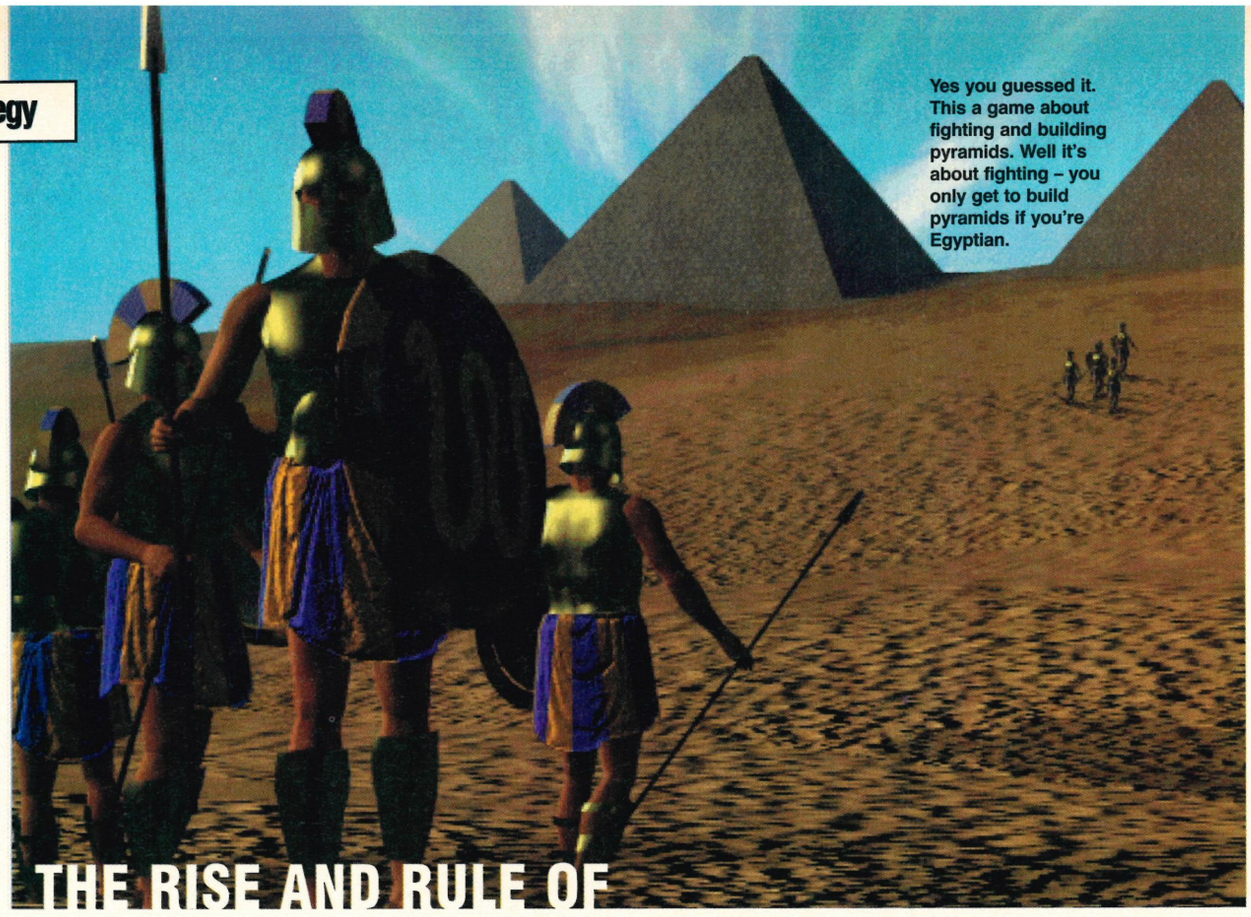
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Yes you guessed it. This a game about fighting and building pyramids. Well it's about fighting – you only get to build pyramids if you're Egyptian.

THE RISE AND RULE OF ANCIENT EMPIRES

Theming itself on the development of an ancient civilisation, this game pits itself directly against Civilization II.

Basically, this *Civilization II* clone casts you in the role of the leader of one of the great ancient tribes (Celtic, Greek, Egyptian and so on).You found a city, build units, conduct research, improve your city and then expand your empire to conquer the known world.

Okay, it's a whole lot prettier all round, but there just isn't the depth of play or involvement you get in *Civ*. It's also mind numbingly slow. The back of the box says you can play a game in a single sitting – fine if that sitting lasts over 12 hours. And it's almost certain terminal boredom will set in long before then.

For example, it's usually between 50 and 60 turns before you even encounter another civilisation, and then it's likely only to be a minor skirmish. The real battles don't start for another 20 turns or so. By then each turn is taking up to five minutes to play. Or longer if you have a 486.

There are some good points though, mainly the stylish interface and the ease of play. *Civilization* is a daunting prospect for the beginner, but *Rise and Rule* keeps it simple, and is a good starting point for someone new to god games.

Furthermore, it does capture mood and spirit of an ancient time, and its style is let down only by the poor labels that pop-up in the hot-spots in the various views. City development is also prettier than in *Civ*. You have different versions of the same buildings For example, the academy, where most of your research is done, has three levels – each one more impressive than the previous.

However, the fact that *Rise and Rule* doesn't break away enough from the *Civilisation* model and the very slow pace of the game means it will never be a classic and, in fact, it's hardly a must have for anyone's collection no matter how much of a fan of god games they are. The only possible reasons for buying this game are if you're a beginner or if you've completely worn out *Civilisation II*. ***(JT)***



This is ending sequence, representing your passage into Valhalla. It is one of the better animations offered in the game.



Every time your city gets bigger you have to go through this boring animation.



You have to build a blacksmiths before you can produce horse shoes for your cavalry.

Developer: Impressions

Publisher: Sierra On-line

Contact: 01734 303322

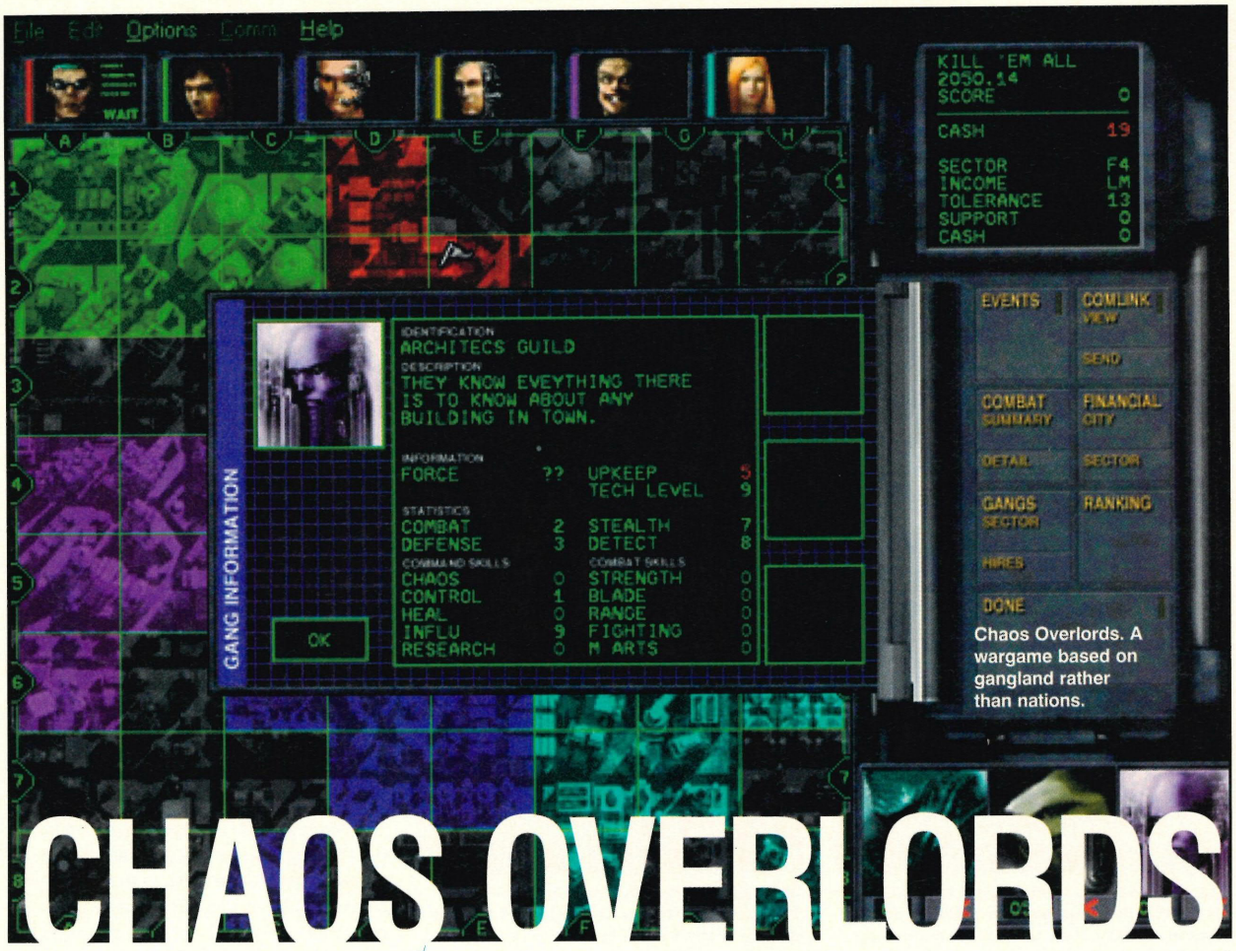
Price: £40

Minimum system: 486DX 33, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD drive, 20Mb hard disk, SVGA

PCR VERDICT

Just not different enough to Civilisation to be taken seriously by experienced players.

6



Chaos Overlords. A wargame based on gangland rather than nations.


Once you've got control of a sector, you get all sorts of options. True, most of the time the only option is to kick the guy's head in. But hey, this is gang warfare after all.


It may be a long time before you see a screen with so many red squares (the colour you play).

CHAOS OVERLORDS

Wanna be in our gang? Join us in the latest street wargame!

Although the scenario behind *Chaos Overlords* isn't mouth watering – a board game set in a future where nations have collapsed and corporations are in control, (ie Cyberpunk) – it is an extremely compulsive and addictive game.

Not least because it majors on gameplay and even on the easy settings presents a challenge. The basic idea is that you play the part of one of six overlords in a 2050AD city where gangsters rule. There are ten scenarios all played on the same grid which represents the city you have to dominate.

You do so by hiring various gangs of thugs, desperadoes and twisted experts. They range in usefulness and expense from Nancy Boys, who cost nothing and are useless, to 12 credits for the meanest dudes going (apart from yourself of course).

Each gang has a range of skills (or lack of them in some cases). These skills range from combat, through intimidation, to stealth and healing abilities. Some gangs have a negative value in some areas. For example, clowns have a negative combat value, but a high healing value. And a gang of Neck Kickers or a Suicide Squad will be good at taking out opposing gangs their high attack value, but don't expect them to hang around long as they have a low defensive value.

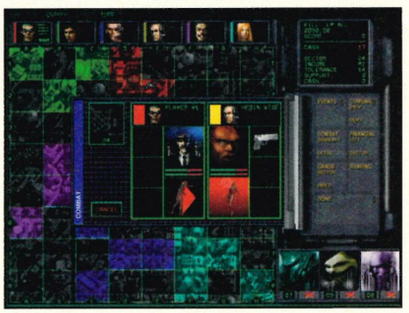

The first thing you have to do, is decide which scenario you want. In this case "Kill 'em all" just about fits the bill.

Victory is based on generating enough money to hire, pay and equip the gangs under your control, as well as controlling enough sectors to satisfy the requirements of the scenario you are playing. You start each scenario in your own headquarters with one gang and 20 credits. Your boys aren't up to much at this stage, but are loyal, and are your main source of income for the moment.

You also get to choose between three gangs. You can view all their abilities (except hit points which remains a mystery) before hiring. You can only hire one gang a turn, or you can reject one gang forever. This is the game's only weakness. Later on, when the bullets are flying and the gangs are rampaging around the city you'll find the pool of available gangs declines in quality, while you'll find the the gangs you're up against are steadily improving. It makes an already difficult game that much harder.

In the initial stages, your aim is to control as many sectors as possible, and if you have the right gangs, you can 'influence' various sites like casinos, bars, sports arenas and so on. You have to do this at some point if you're going to get any steady income.

Chaos Overlords really is an absorbing game which uses a few basic concepts and good gameplay to create an acutely tense atmosphere. And it's challenging enough to prevent you from winning until you really have got to grips with the strategy. ***(JT)***


Once again, a simple screen, with simple graphics – but there are some good sound effects, especially when you or your opponent gets squished.

PCR VERDICT

Atmospheric, and compulsive. It will challenge you and beat you time and again.

7

Developer: Stickman Games

Publisher: US Gold

Contact: 0121 625 3388

Price: £34.99

Minimum system: 486DX 33, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD drive, 30Mb hard disk, SVGA, major sound card

DEADLINE

Take on international terrorists and violent criminals in this complex game.

PCR VERDICT

An ambitious attempt let down by lack-lustre presentation and its own over-complexity.

6

Developer: Millennium

Publisher: Psygnosis

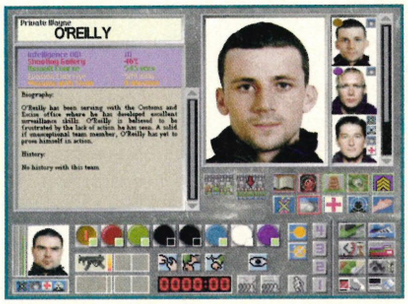
Contact: 0151 282 3297

Price: £39.99

Minimum system: 486/33, 8MB RAM, double-speed CD drive, Soudblaster or compatible

As violent crime and terrorism continue to increase, more and more countries have formed special groups to deal with the crisis situations that can arise. *Deadline* is a tactical and management simulation that puts you in charge of just such a group, and gives you a series of tough missions to complete in a limited amount of time.

Your first task is normally to find out everything you can about the situation, including details of the people involved and the surrounding area. Then you move on to planning the mission, which involves choosing a team of troops, equipping them and giving them orders. Finally you execute your plan, viewing the action from an isometric 3D view. Here, you control individual team members as the situation requires, reacting to changes in the situation.



This chap is just one of a range of recruits from which you choose your team for each mission. Luckily, they often wear gas-masks.



The equipment on offer is impressive. Just how much the various models make to your team's performance is debatable, though.



Once a mission is set under way, all your careful research and planning is reduced a few brief minutes of hectic, fast-paced action. Shame it's not much to look at...

Then comes a debriefing, in which your performance is assessed.

A real effort has been made to make *Deadline* as accurate, comprehensive and realistic as possible, and this certainly shows in the authentic atmosphere. Unfortunately, this complexity also makes it difficult to get into, hard to understand, and frustrating to play. Add a generally low standard of presentation. Although some parts of the game – such as the video phone and the constant radio chatter from your troops during a mission – are well done, as a whole *Deadline* is very disappointing to look at.

If you're willing to spend lots of time deciphering the manual and fiddling with the controls, there's the basis of a challenging and absorbing game here. Only truly dedicated gamers need apply, though. ***(AB)***



STORM

It had to happen – the underwater shoot-'em-up of a decade ago returns with a new lick of pre-rendered paint.

PCR VERDICT

Shockingly dull to play, with far too little to do. Stil, it looks nice.

3

Developer: Virtual Studios

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Contact: 01753 549442

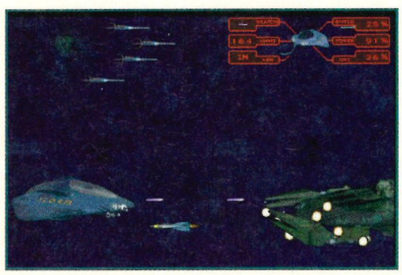
Price: £39.99

Minimum system: 486/66, 8Mb RAM, 7.5Mb hard disk space, SVGA video card, Windows 95 optional

Storm is a scary thing. Veteran gamers might recall a Spectrum game called *Scuba Dive*. In it the player got to guide a little diver around various undersea caves and tunnels, marvelling at the sea life and generally mucking about in the water.

Somebody at Virtual Studios obviously remembers this game too, and used it as the starting point of a blue-tinted shoot-'em-up featuring submarine and lone diver exploration, and even first-person action bits. Aquatic music gurgles in the background and carefully animated sprites float around the pre-rendered setting. The whole thing is so slick you could almost oil your car's engine with it. So why isn't *Storm* half as good as *Scuba Dive*?

Well, it seems very old-fashioned. The up, down, left, right shoot-'em-up isn't exactly flavour of the month on the PC. But to condemn it for its simplicity would be inaccurate. Rather, *Storm* fails to play particularly well. Fighting enemy frogmen and subs is repetitious in the extreme, their intelligence routines being non-existent. And then there's the homing mines – fiddly to shoot anyway, without the added penalty of only being able to fire to the right of the screen, and with bad collision detection.



An end-of-level bad guy. Not entirely surprisingly, it displays no cleverness, simply moving up and down as it launches rockets.

Okay, so there's the first-person shooting to look forward to, but few will bother persevering that far. Storm may pack a gorgeous SVGA pre-rendered intro (with the worst scripting for some time, by the way), and those in-game visuals may impress even more. But the gameplay here really does plumb the depths, and no amount of visual trickery is going to hide that. ***(MR)***

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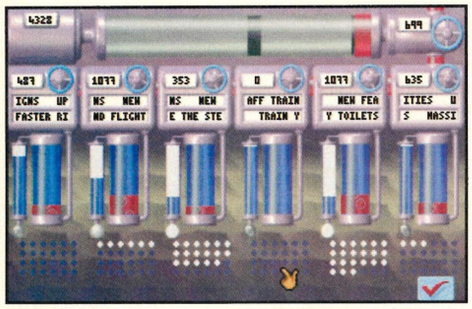
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Zork Nemesis	£N/A	£32.99

Re-issues

Buying budget games is a great and inexpensive way to track your way back into the annuls of PC gaming history. We rate this months batch of low-priced releases...



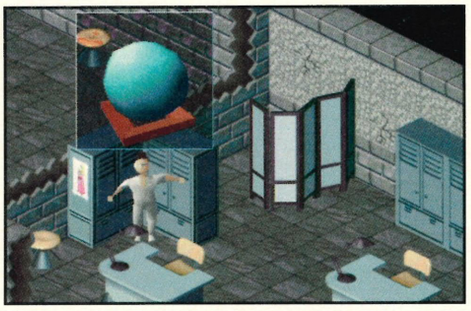
This is the research lab. Pump in time and money for new rides.

Theme Park

£11.99 EA Classics 01753 549442

Another seminal game from Bullfrog, and one that, if anything, is even more essential than *Magic Carpet*. It's hard to believe that any PC game fans haven't sampled it by now but if you're such an individual then this subtly holistic business simulator will quickly suck you in. And it looks nice.

PCR VERDICT 9/10



A plot that can best be described as off-beat complements LBA's beautiful presentation.

Little Big Adventure

£11.99 EA Classics 01753 549442

Another ground-breaker finally mingling uneasily with its inferiors in Budgetland. This is a beautifully presented graphical adventure distinguished by both its involving plot and attractive cast, who are all made of ellipsoids. Quirky and stylish, the only slight flaw is the control system.

PCR VERDICT 8/10



Nascar's beautiful in still pictures. If only it moved as well as it looks here.

Nascar Racing

£11.99 White Label 0171 3682255

This highly anticipated racer, which we were assured would boast an optimised *Indy Car* engine, was savaged for its slow graphics. By adding damage to the engine and banks to the tracks the programmers only succeeded in crippling the frame rate. Stunning on a very high spec machine, forget it otherwise.

PCR VERDICT 7/10



A typically bleak city scene. It's depressing stuff.

Beneath a Steel Sky

£9.99 White Label 0171 3682255

Richard Foster is trapped in a bleak city of the future slowly uncovering a conspiracy against him, but with far greater ends. Yes, a point 'n' click adventure, and a fairly moody one. Steve Gibbons, famous for his comic book work provides the oppressive atmosphere, while the plot unfolds smoothly enough. Po-faced but well structured.

PCR VERDICT 7/10



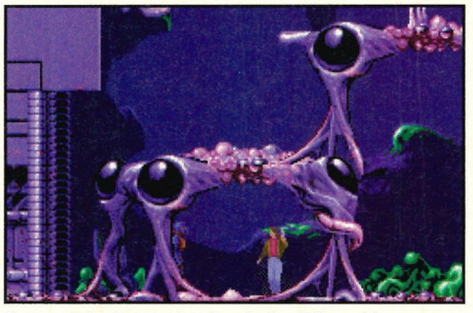
Pre-rendered textures equals slow gameplay.

Journeyman Project Turbo

£9.99 Kixx 0121 625 3366

This mysterious adventure doesn't look its age. The stunning visuals hold their own against most releases today and go some way to compensating for the interface which does feel just sooooo 1993. We're talking about a lot of slow-paced puzzling here interspersed with the occasional alien encounter. A moody piece of software.

PCR VERDICT 7/10



Some of the best animation in the PC world.

Flashback

£9.99 Kixx 0121 625 3366

Before motion capture became a day to day reality there was rotoscoping, and *Flashback* was the best reason to believe it was the future. Beautiful animations combine with a demanding game to give one of the most compulsive gaming experiences of the time. The precise gameplay is not to everyone's taste though.

PCR VERDICT 8/10



That's you that is. Cheer up.for new rides.

Strike Commander 2

£11.99 EA Classics 01753 549442

Strike Commander 2 makes some genuine improvements to an already respectable flight and fight experience. Plenty of detail allied to a healthy streak of warmongery should keep potential Mavericks on a tight budget happy. It may not be bang up to date but its not archaic either.

PCR VERDICT 7/10



Just one of the friendly faces you'll come across.

Shadow of the Comet

£9.99 White Label 0171 368 2255

Yep, it's time to strap on your heptangle and once again try to pay Cthulhu, surely the least pronouncable fictional system of evil super-entities yet. This is standard issue adventuring and it's not glaringly bad in any way, although it's not as scary as HP Lovecraft would have wanted either.

PCR VERDICT 6/10



Yes, it's time to boldly go again. Don't bother.

Star Trek Judgement Rites

£10 White Label 0171 3682255

A mediocre adventure/enterprise sim involving some sort of shoddy *Star Trek* plot involving the original lo-fi crew. All of which means that any trekkie who hasn't already got this will snap it up. Normal adventurers should beware though. This is distinctly lacklustre stuff, pointy ears or no pointy ears.

PCR VERDICT 5/10



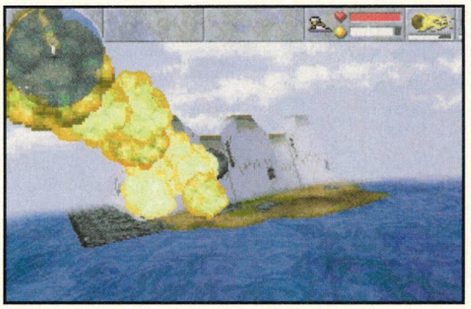
This screenshot gives you some idea of just how poor Detroit really is.

Detroit

£9.99 Sierra Originals 01734 303322

Take the automobile industry by the scruff of its neck and reshape it to your specifications, taking control over everything from body and engine design to marketing. Sure, it sounds dull, and it is. You can have this aged business sim in any colour, as long as its grey.

PCR VERDICT 4/10



Magic Carpet offers a near perfect blend of strategy and action.

Magic Carpet

£11.99 EA Classics 01753 549442

The fact that only now are PlayStation owners being treated to a dose of Bullfrog's seminal *Magic Carpet* should be some indication of just how well the game holds up, sequel or not, in today's cut-throat 3D market. The original benchmark in blending action and strategy in a fluid 3D world.

PCR VERDICT 9/10



Machiavelli's random event generator offers little more than frustration.

Machiavelli The Prince

£9.99 Powerplus 01276 684959

Much like the man himself, this sounds far more interesting than it is. A dryly presented strategy trading game that, while challenging enough, offers less in the way of instant skullduggery than it might have done. A more creative approach to history would have been helpful.

PCR VERDICT 6/10



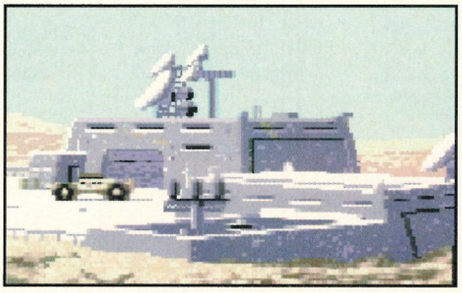
Choose from a wizard and customise yourself.

Master of Magic,

£9.99 Powerplus 01276 684959

A standard strategy game premise and structure. You're a wizard in competition with other wizards in the inevitable quest for world domination. It soon founders on a slow turn based pace and poor Artificial Intelligence. There's magic in here, naturally, but the fact is that it's too easy to offer the hardcore a challenge and too ploddy for the half-hearted.

PCR VERDICT 5/10



Dune 2 paved the way for Command and Conquer.



It's 3D animation and silly laughs in Kyrandia 3.

Compilation: 10 Westwood Anthology

£34.99 White Label 0171 368 2255

This might not look too pretty but it works, just. Most of you will be familiar with Westwood's name and logo after exposure to their smash hit, Command and Conquer, but as this compilation shows, they've paid their dues. This collection, marking 10 years of Westwood development, includes four adventures and, far more interestingly, *Dune 2. The Legend of Kyrandia Trilogy* (*Book One*, *Hand of Fate* and *Book Three*) is good quality point-and-click adventuring and should keep you happy for some time, while *Lands Of Lore* is an even slicker adventure. And *Dune 2*? It's Command and Conquer v1.0, basically. Three tribes battling for domination in James Herbert's fantastical desert planet setting, with the same resource management and tactical combat basis. Excellent.

PCR VERDICT 8/10

PLAY TO WIN

So what if you're getting stuck at a game? The first step in overcoming this problem is to admit that you actually have a problem. Let's face it, it's a very grown up and sensible thing to do. The second step, of course is to read our tips section each month.

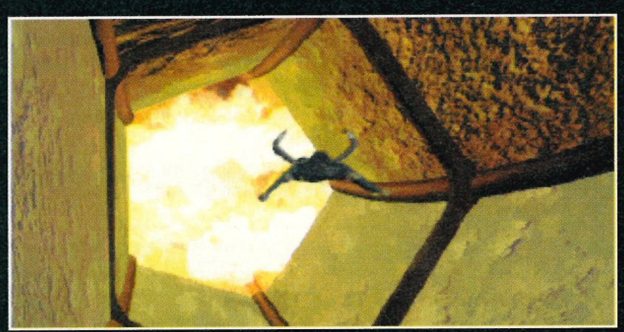
DESCENT II (PCR54, Score:9)

After thrilling to the delights of the *Descent II* demo (aided by the cheat codes we gave you last month) you must by now have felt the urge to part with your hard-earned for the full version. Well, when you do this lot of codes should sort you out quite nicely. Type them in mid-game and you'll be away with the mixer.

ALMIGHTY: Invulnerability.
LPNLIZARD: Turns every weapon into a homing weapon.
FREESPACE: Type it in, then pick the level you want to play.
ALIFALAFEL: Adds all the crafts accessories
SPANIARD: Kills all the robots instantly. Use it twice and it will destroy your Guidebot too.
GOWINGNUT: Guidebot will attack the robots. Stay out of his way though, or he'll attack you.
GODZILLA: Kill robots by running into them.

BEWARE: The codes from the demo version will remove all but 1% from your shields and energy, so don't try them! The only two which still work are the following:
BITTERSWEET: Gives strange warping walls.
PIGFARMER: Which, once you reduce the screen size, displays one of the programmer's spammy heads.

And why not start the game adding [-superhires] to the EXE instruction to enable the hi-res version of the game. Superb, if your PC's up it.



Using the demo cheat codes in the full version of Descent II will give you a headache. You'll want to be using the ones above.

MK3 (PCR50, Score:7)



Let the green gunge flow and take Jax to victory.



Another amazing combo floors the opponent.

Three games on and they still can't spell 'combat'. When will they ever learn? At least it's an absolutely cracking game especially with those Kombat Kodes. Liven the game up no end they do. We love 'em. All you've got to do is enter them on the VS BATTLE screen and they do all sorts of neat stuff.

6-4-2-4-6-8: Loads and plays Galaga, then the game ends. Abruptly.
2-0-5-2-0-5: Winner fights Smoke for a round.
0-3-3-5-6-4: Winner fights Shao Kahn for a round.
9-6-9-1-4-1: Winner fights Motaro for a round.
7-6-9-3-4-2: Winner fights Noob Saibot for a round.
9-7-8-2-4-3: Shortens time of rounds.
3-4-8-2-7-9: Half timer.
9-7-2-2-7-9: Remove timer.
4-6-0-4-6-4: Fight a random competitor.
1-0-0-1-0-0: Disables throwing.
2-3-9-4-9-4: No sweeping.
0-2-0-0-2-0: No blocking.
9-8-7-1-2-3: No power bars.
0-3-3-0-0-0: Handicaps player 1.
0-0-0-0-3-3: Handicaps player 2.
3-3-4-0-0-0: Player 1 only takes half damage from hits.
0-0-0-3-3-4: Player 2 only takes half damage from hits.
5-5-2-2-5-5: Both players take double damage from hits.
3-3-4-4-3-3: Both players take half damage from hits.

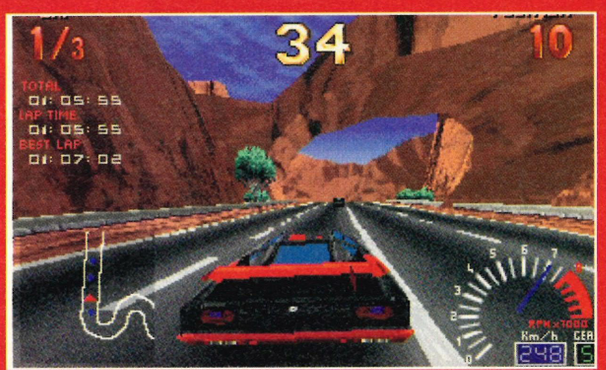
Finally, how about starting the game with these commands from the DOS prompt, for the very latest in rather silly game alterations? And we do mean silly.

MK3 603015: Engage slo-mo mode.
MK3 12345: Super skinny extra tall fighters.
MK3 54321: Tiny dwarf fighters.
MK3 831: Stupidly invisible fighters.

SCREAMER (not reviewed)

Because its only one of the finest racer games around, Screamer is still selling by the bucketload. Just in case its lure is beginning to wane however, you can pep up the *Screamer*'s speeding action a bit by typing these codes at the main selection screen. You don't have to if you don't want to. Just a suggestion, no need to get shirty.

TAZOR: Instant access to the bullet car.
VTELO: There you go mate – all the tracks.
CLOCK: Helps you out a touch by stopping the clock.
MONTY: Turns various road objects into girls, bunnies and prams. They just don't make raod mayhem like they used to.
JOINT: As above but now it's ghosts, cones and boxes. Useful, eh?
ABURN: The ultimate challenge. This gives all your opponents bullet cars.
INVER: Reverses the six tracks for six alternative races.
MIRRO: Mirror images the six tracks. That's 12, now. Sort of.
UPDOW: Turns tracks upside down. We've lost count of just how many variations on the tracks these cheats have released.



Throw a few bunnies and prams out there and this place could start to look like a decent sort of highway.

SIM ISLE (PCR50, Score:9)

Imagine it. A verdant wilderness of your own design. Acres of luscious woodland and miles of golden beaches without another power-obsessed landscape-altering megalomaniac in sight. Lovely.

Make your lurid dreams a startling reality even more quickly by saving your game using any of the following names. When you resume your saved game curious changes will have taken place.

SIMONCHICKENB: Increases your heavy machinery by 100 points and your unskilled labour by 10.
IAINTESTEDITCO: Adds 10,000 EMUs to your funds
DEESEXTRAPIXEL: Adds 1000 to building materials points.
RAGSCHOCOLATESTACH: Adds 5000 points worth of food.
MARKSANCHOVYPIZZA: Switches agents pay off meaning that they foolishly work for free.



Hmm. Should we bring a Tescos to this tropical isle, or another refinery?

11th HOUR (not reviewed)

Just a quicky for those of you currently wading through this puzzle-packed nightmare of a game. There's no need to sit through any of that intro rubbish every time you start (or resume) your game, you know. By merely hitting [P] twice at the skulls monitor adjust screen and then right-clicking with the mouse you can dive straight into the, ahem, action.



Oh. A broken telly. Be on the lookout for a rampant rock star.

ACTUA SOCCER (PCR51, Score: 9)

Football truly is the sport of the gods and Gremlin's *Actua Soccer* is the closest thing to heaven you're going to find on your PC. But what should you do when your mate can thrash the pants off you with with Wales when you're playing as Germany? Well you'll stand a better chance by playing as the excrement-hot Gremlin Showbiz 11 instead.

Run the game by typing SOCCER -01142475549 and they'll be added to the available teams.



FIFA '96 (PCR50, Score:9)

Those of you who opted for *FIFA* instead of *Actua* needn't feel left out at this point, for we have some top cheats for you as well. And let's face it, you could do with cheering up...

Just start a game, pause it, then select Options and key in a code from below. You should hear the distinctive *FIFA* 'click' if everything's gone according to plan. Now exit the Options menu and highlight Resume Game.

Now pressing [A] will produce a secret Options menu where the option you keyed in the code for will be turn-on/offable. Use left and right to change its settings. Repeat the process for each of the codes you want to use. You can use any number of them at once, so have some fun.

BBZAAZ: Creates invisible walls around the pitch. The ball can't go out, so no more throw-ins.
ZBZBB: Curve ball.
ZAZZZZZZZZ: Super power.
AAAAAZZZZZ: Super goalie.
ZZZZZBZ: Super offence.
AZABAZ: Shootout.
AZBAZB: Stupid team.
AAZZBBAA: Dream team.

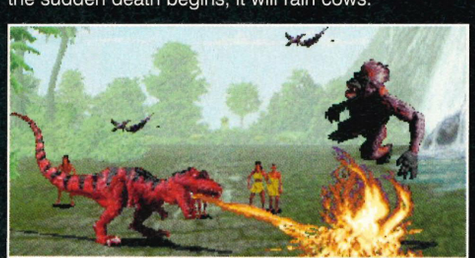
PRIMAL RAGE (PCR50, Score:9)

Make those dinosaurs play strange new combat games by following these instructions.

Volleyball: On Sauron's stage perform a combo on your opponent that will prompt a worshipper running forward to worship you. One player should punch the worshipper, over to the other player who can press punch to bat him back. After a few successful passes a referee and net will appear! First one to three wins.

Bowling: Both players should be Aramadon and doing spinning death hits. After one player has scored three successive hits, both players can take turns bowling across the screen, knocking down ten worshipper 'pins' at the other side.

Raining Cows: Play as Chaos in the Ruins stage. Perform a Fart-Of-Fury as the final hit in a sudden death round (when you have one round each). If the timing is right, and the green cloud is overhead when the sudden death begins, it will rain cows.

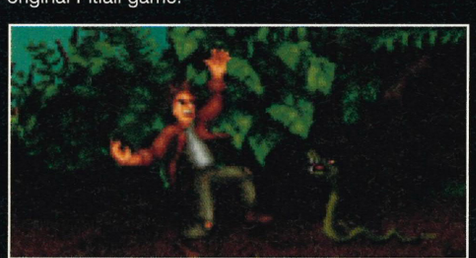


If you fail to make it rain cows, it will rain bricks instead. Just practice that Fart-Of-Fury.

PITFALL95 (PCR50, Score:9)

Now that the initial excitement of Windows 95 has subsided, chances are you'll be wanting to have a cheat-enhanced session on one of the remarkably few games that have been developed for it. Progress is a wonderful thing is it not?

MEOWMEOWLIKEMEOWMAN: Rewards you with a feline nine lives.
EATMOREBRAN: Delivers a cool nine continues.
HATMAN: Suddenly, you are turned into Hatman!
HATMAN: (2nd time) Now all the other creatures wear hats instead.
HATMAN (3rd time).Vanquishes those damned hats.
IDDD: Delivers a 'this ain't Doom' message and reminds you of the developers.
FRAMERATE: Displays the remarkably useful frame rate read-out.
FIVEEASYPIECES: Warp to the fifth level.
PUMPYOUUP: Delivers 99 of every weapon.
LETSDOTHETIMEWARP: Transforms '95 into the original Pitfall game.

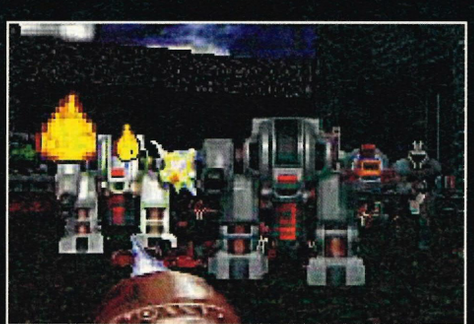


Have some PUMPYOUUP and this slithery critter won't present many problems.

STRIFE (PCR50, Score:9)

Have you tried *Strife*, the latest game to use the *Doom* engine licensed from id software? Well perhaps, as it was on last month's *CD Review*, you should. Soon. And when you do you'll find life's easier using these cheat codes.

STUFF: Gives invincibility, all the weapons, all the keys and a teleporter beacon to boot.
GUNS: Just all weapons.
LISTIT: Just all the accessories.
OPEN: Delivers all the keys.
SPIRIT: Walk through walls by disabling the so-called clipping.
GOTO*xx*: A level warp, where *xx* is the number of the level you require.
MONEY: Increases you money and 'toughness'.
IDMUS*xx*: Pick your own musical accompaniment, where *xx* is number of the track you want to hear.



Strife. It has the Doom engine and one of its designers is off to work on Quake.

Ripper part one

You'll need some sort of guide to stand a chance of getting through this six-CD monster. Here's part one of just the sort of guide you need. Final part next month.

THE PROLOGUE

Before we begin, a few notes. This solution is for puzzle difficulty 'medium'. On 'easy' or 'hard', some of the puzzles will be different. When in a conversation, keep talking until you have no questions left. Always choose the replies you feel are most appropriate. This won't change the game, there are no wrong answers, but what you say will help determine which of the four possible endings you arrive at. Okay. Here we go.

First, talk to Magnotta and Karl. Look at the computer and scan the broken mug into your WAC. You must rebuild the mug to read the word written on it. Set the largest piece the right way up and fit all the others against it. They all need flipping to some degree to fit correctly. You will now be magically transported to the Newsroom.



Start with the big piece first, then add the smaller bits.

ACT ONE



The fine figure of Farley. Later in the game you'll see his stomach explode.

Go to the police station and talk to Brannon, the desk sergeant. Sneak into Magnotta's office and scan the papers on his desk. He'll catch you at it but talk to him, then visit the evidence room and try to get some evidence from the man at the counter. You won't be able to, but it's all vital to the plot.

Next, visit the Tribecca Centre. Talk with the sex-starved receptionist then take the lift up to the wards. Turn right out of the lift. Talk with Drs Burton and Cable, then look at the holograph journal and the fuzzy Ripper image on the monitor. When you're done go down to the Morgue and talk to fat Farley. Look at the three bodies for some background info.

At the Newsroom talk to Ben then have a look through Catherine's Rolodex files. Go to your desk on the other side of the room and read Catherine's note for you. On your desk you'll find a 'decking' cyberspace terminal. Whenever you need to visit cyberspace this is the place to come. Enter cyberspace, read the *Virtual Herald* then visit the library and get the list of call numbers. Talk to the librarian. The call number you're trying in vain to decipher is HC2021R.

In Catherine's apartment look at the laser cane, birthday card, and star chart. At the crystal puzzle, position the stones to form Pisces, Catherine's birth sign. Number the rows from one, at the top to eight at the bottom, and the columns from one on the left to nine on the right. Now place stones at each of the following locations:

Row	Column
1	3
2	1
3	4 and 8
4	6
5	2 and 9
6	4
7	7 and 9
8	5

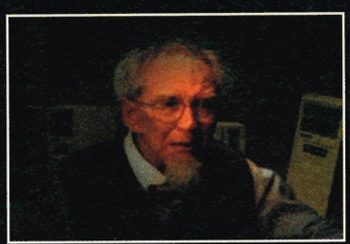


Put one there, and one there, and there you go – Pisces. Whadd'ya mean it looks nothing like a fish?

When you've finished a light will illuminate a couple of books. Look at them. Now visit Soap Beatty's. Talk to Soap then scan the *Popular Cybertronics* magazine in the magazine rack into your WAC.

Visit the Wofford Cottage and talk to Covington Wofford. Find three vacuum tubes and use them to replace the three broken ones on the Wofford's computer. They are hidden in three different puzzles in the house.

First, there's the ball-maze puzzle.



Clever old Wofford has hidden three puzzles in his house. Solve all three to fix his computer.

Number the buttons on the right side of the puzzle from one at the top down to five at the bottom. Press buttons 1, 2, and 5. Now press 2, 5 and 4.

Go upstairs, look at the plaque on the wall, and find the bank puzzle in the bedroom. The four coin holders on the puzzle contain, from the left, ones, fives, tens, and twenty-fives. Click on five, ten, twenty-five and five again to solve the puzzle. Look at the clock upstairs and make a note of the time. Now go back downstairs and look at the timezone chart on the wall.

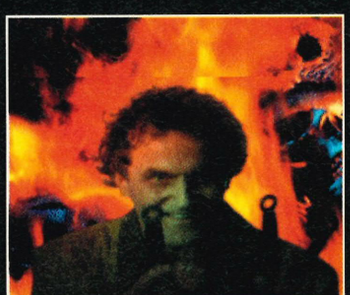
You must set the three clocks nearby to the correct times, assuming the time in America is 2:25pm, the time in Egypt (pyramid) is 9:35pm, the time in Switzerland (cuckoo) is 8:35, and America (digital) is 14:35.

Use your vacuum tubes on the three broken ones on the table in the centre of the room by Wofford. Turn the machine on and watch the screen. Now enter cyberspace from this computer. Visit Wofford's well (password: VULCAN), and Catherine's well (password: HOROSCOPE). Shoot out the security system to gain access. Just aim for the robot's jets at the bottom to kill him. Hold the mouse button to keep up a constant stream of fire. Alternatively, type in ARCADE to skip this part. Collect Catherine's journal to decode later.



Hey man, cool your jets. Aim for this robot's rockets to finish him off. See him blown to bits.

Now visit Cafe Duchamps and talk to Gambit Nelson and the bartender. Visit Falcon Eddie's and talk to Twig. Next, go to the Newsroom and access cyberspace. Visit Falconetti's well. His password is CIRCUS MAXIMUS. Eddie's shooting game is confusing but easy. Shoot all the armed zombies. They are usually a bit green in colour. A bell sounds when you've done it right. Don't shoot the brown unarmed zombies. Now go and talk to Eddie.



It's Falcon Eddie. Also known as that bloke out of 'The Warriors' from years ago. Remember? Thought not.

ACT TWO



Spy on Magnotta's interviews when you get the chance. You might learn a thing or two about interrogation techinques.

Visit the Tribecca Centre again and continue your conversation with the receptionist. You'll find Dr Burton and Eddie in the wards. Talk to them, then deck into Catherine's brain. A shooting game will commence. Shoot all the ICE particles. Once you reach Catherine she won't say much.

Go to the morgue and talk to Bob, Farley's replacement, then visit the police station and talk to Brannon. Steal Magnotta's card from the desk. Now go to the interrogation room (it's the one with a single chair in it) and click on the controls at the bottom right to open the window and spy on Magnotta a couple of times. Go to the files room and use Magnotta's card to open his personnel file.

At Catherine's apartment you can now decrypt her journal. The password is SCORPIO, from Magnotta's file. It won't all be decrypted now. The rest of it will magically appear later. Your next task is to open the book. Look at the numbers in the third paragraph of the journal. They are 1, 5, 5, 3, 6, and 2. Look at the book and number the segments of the dial clockwise from one to six. Now press the segments in the above order. You'll get a CD which you can use with Catherine's computer. This will produce a bizarre mathematical equation. Make a note of it and go to the Newsroom.

Type the equation into Catherine's calculator exactly as it's written to receive two hidden bugs. One is for Magnotta, the other for Dr Burton. Go to the Tribecca centre and chat up that sassy old receptionist again. Take Dr Burton's pass card from the desk and go to the wards. When leaving the lift turn left to find Dr Burton's locked office door. Look at it then use the passcard on it. Scan the items on her desk into your WAC and find the skull. Read the inscription in the book and exchange the skull's eyeball for one of the bugs.

Now, go to Magnotta's office and look at the cigars on his desk. Replace the cigar band with your other bug.

Pay a visit to the gym next, where you'll find Dr Burton working up a sweat. Talk to the receptionist and look through the records computer to find that Burton is actually Falconetti's wife. Interrupt her exercise with this startling revelation.

Now it's time to visit the university and talk to Professor Bech at the end of the corridor. Look at the bulletin board. Arrange the flyers in the following order from left to right: Dragnet film fest, Attention, Gearing up for 2041, For rent, Inconceivable outrageous. There we go.

Make a note of the numbers on the bottom of the flyers: 4, 50, 14, 42, 86. The papers are now displaying an address (sort of). The Web Runners new address is at a former warehouse on Grammercy Street. Go there. The passcode for the door is the above numbers. Once inside talk to Kashi and look at the photographs on the wall. Nice?



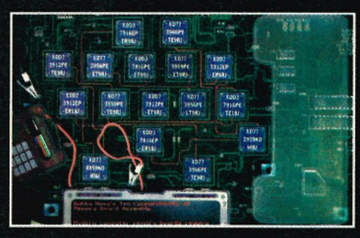
Poor old Kashi. Lord knows how she's going to get the stains out.

Now visit the news room and get an update from Ben before re-entering cyberspace. Access the Web Runners well. The password was on the photographs: ANACHRONY STATION. You'll be confronted with a sliding square puzzle. You can either solve it or, type ZZTOP to skip it. Click on the screens to find out about the eight members. Exit cyberspace and go to the gym. A WAC message from Stephanie Jordan will interrupt you so dash to the Web Runner's loft. You're too late to save Stephanie. Look at the pictures before you go to see that Magnotta has nicked one.

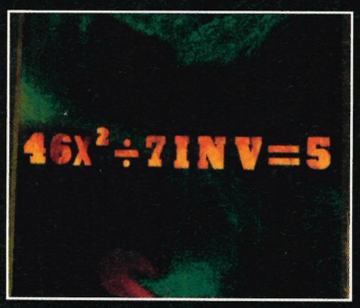
Return to the gym and talk to Burton, then go to Falconetti's and talk with Eddie. Now, trundle your way over to the Police Station and talk to Brannon and Magnotta. Next stop is the Tribecca centre. Go to the morgue and fix Bob's computer for him. The solution is in the *Popular Cybertronics* magazine you scanned at Soap's. You've got to place the chips on the right into their positions on the board. Number each chip, moving in rows down the screen, from 1 to 16. Now number each of the five rows on the circuit board from 1 to 5 working down. Place the numbered chips in the five rows thus:

Row 1: 11 4
Row 2: 5 8 13 16 6
Row 3: 1 10 7 15 14
Row 4: 9 12
Row 5: 2 3

You are now approximately half-way through *Ripper*. Congratulations, and come back after the intermission.



This chip puzzle is a real nightmare. Good job the solution is printed above isn't it.



What is all this supposed to mean? Type it into the calculator and all will be revealed.



Place one of those bugs you've found in Magnotta's Old Bold cigar box. Fingers crossed he doesn't go and smoke the damned thing. Say, wonder if Boss Hogg used to smoke that brand.

Next Month

Would we pour all our affections onto you with half the solution, then leave you on your lonesome to figure out the rest of the game? 'Course we wouldn't. The second half of the *Ripper* solution will be printed next month. That's guaranteed. Look for *PC Review* on sale from May 23, 1996.

In the meantime, here's what our review said about *Ripper* last month:

"The acting and adventuring work in close harmony, and time and money have been invested on the script and control system as well as on the movie footage."

Ripper received a mark of seven out of ten and was reviewed last issue.

Terminator future shock

Welcome to PART TWO of our definitive guide to TFS. We'll be taking you through the nightmare that is missions eight to 17, right to the very end. Future Los Angeles might just be a safer place...

MISSION EIGHT: DELIVER THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES

First drive south blowing up everything. Continue until you reach the elevated highway, where you should begin heading west, travelling underneath it for cover. When you reach a fork in the road stick to the right and keep going. The highway ends at a wall and it'll look like the game's up, but don't worry, there is a way through. Blow up the bus to expose a gap and go through. Now continue west and eventually you'll reach a path which will bring you to a new area of the city where the new church-bound base is hidden.

Drive north east through the city until you reach its most north easterly corner. Look around there and you'll find the church no bother. It's the place that looks like God lives there.



Ah, the remnants of the once beautiful city. Fair brings a tear to your eye, it does.



See that bus up ahead? Well you'd best blow it up to reveal a pathway through. Just a thought.



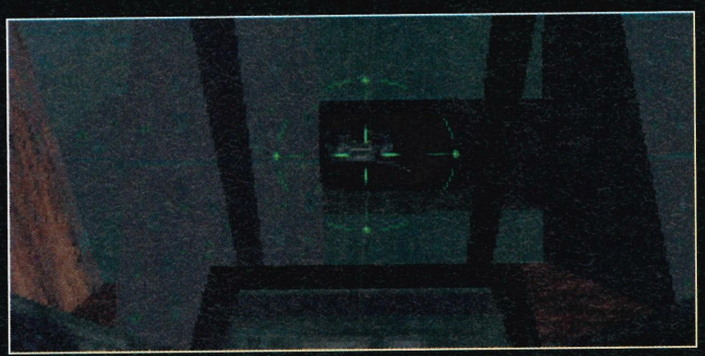
You're definitely getting close now. Every so often your buddies will get a message through to you so just push on.

MISSION NINE: FLY THROUGH RIVER TO HK CAMP

All you've have to do here is fly the HK, following the river, until you reach the camp.

When the river forks take the route to the left. There's no subtlety to this level, just waste everything that moves at the camp when you reach it. And even things that don't move too. Shoot out all the guns on the turrets and make sure you blast the turret bases too to finish them off properly.

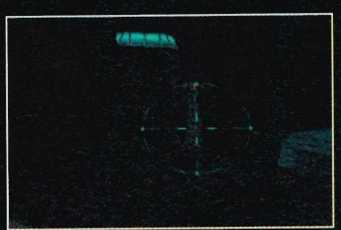
There are plenty of walkers here too. Blast them, then methodically sneak up on each turret in turn to avoid being fired on from all sides. Once everything is toast, it's mission over. You may proceed.



Fly through tunnels without hitting the sides. And kill lots of stuff. Wise words



At the base there's umpteen things that are in dire need of destruction.



Always shoot out gun turret bases too. Or you'll be sorry.

MISSION TEN: DESTROY THE TANKS, TOWERS, 'N' DISHES

Another HK mission. This time you're flying above a road, on which there are 27 tanks. We know, we've counted them. Destroy them all for for a successful mission. Work your way along the road taking out each tank in turn.

After the tanks there are some towers to destroy. Shoot their bases to bring them down. You'll also find a set of satellite dishes here too. Destroy all six, blasting each one you come across until they're rubble.



The tanks and HKs will put up quite a fight, but the forces of flesh will prevail.



Look at the moonlight on that tower. Lovely isn't it. Now blow it to hell.



Seek and destroy the satellite dishes to complete your mission.

MISSION 11: DESTROY EVERYTHING

From your start position you can see the convoy up ahead. There are four trucks to destroy. Do so, then find the bridge across the chasm. Make your way down onto the platforms underneath it and find the centre column.

Jump across the gap to place the satchel charge as close to this column as you can. Now you must get to the other side of the bridge, NOT the side you came in. The bridge should explode leaving you near an enemy camp and a ruined city in which you'll find plenty of power-ups. Have a good nose about until you're satisfied.

At the camp you'll see a generator protected by a force field. Destroy it then enter the camp, wandering around shooting everything. When you're done enter the refinery, it's the building right on the other side of the camp. Throw the switch you'll find at the far end of the ground level, then make your way up to the platforms above. Eventually you'll reach a dead end.

Jump over to the door there and take out the mines. Drop your second satchel charge next to the generator. Your only remaining task is to get the hell out of there quickly as possible. When the charge blows the mission is over.



Looks confusing, but it isn't. Just keep looking for that generator.

MISSION 12: DOWNLOAD DATA

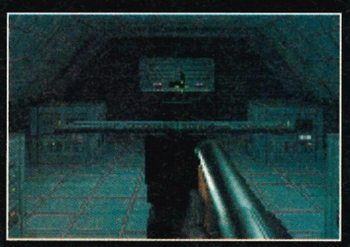
At the start of the level head east until you find a hill. Go left at its foot and find a route up. Go up the hill grabbing power-ups and blasting waiting enemies. Eventually you'll reach a generator behind a fence. Blow up it up and you're in.

In the first room, hit the buttons on the columns until the two rotating platforms line up. Now go to the end of the room and shoot the wall to raise a platform beneath you. Jump from platform to platform across the room. Go through the door at the other end and follow the corridor round. Go down the corridor to the left first then download the data from each computer you find.

By the third computer is another generator. Needless to say, it must be destroyed. Return to computer number one and escape via the sewer there. Just negotiate the sewer maze out into the fresh air.



Blast the generator to remove the fence. It really is that simple.



Once inside hit the buttons to turn the platforms then leap across.

MISSION 13: FIND AND KILL MILTON BISHOP

First go south into the hills and work your way through the maze of paths until you find the camp hidden there. Once you reach the camp go for the building in the middle. You must go down all the pistons and throw every switch you find to open all the doors. Make sure you've got everything. When you reach the room with the one with the blue power core throw the switch here to open a ventilation shaft.

Return to the room with the four pistons and go down the one on the right into a room below. Go down the piston in this lower room and through the doorway into a ventilation shaft. Jump down another shaft to find Bishop's room. Kill him. Go out the door into the hallway. Down the hall is an elevator, which takes you to another hallway. Freedom awaits.



Don't let that convoy out of your sight. And take no prisoners.



It may look confusing, but it isn't. Just keep looking for that generator.

MISSION 14: DESTROY THE GUN TOWERS

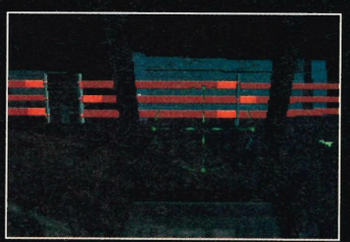
A nice quick and simple mission now. Use the HK to follow the directions given to you by the spotters to find the TDTS. (Just what a TDTS is, we're not exactly sure. If you happen to find out, please write in and tell us. Anyway, that's what it's called in the game, so let's get on with it, eh?)

Once you're there destroy the gun turrets. Don't forget to tidy things up and take out the turret bases as well. Then, of course, there's the generator building.

This you will find between the hanger and the TDTS. Once the building is out of the way you can simply destroy the generator itself. Now is a good time to take a break if you've been playing for ages, because after mission 15 things are going to get pretty damned hot.



Follow the directions given to you to find the enemy base.



Destroy the generator to remove this rather pesky fence.

MISSION 15: DRIVE TO TDTS

Use the jeep to drive beneath the highway for cover. Eventually you'll reach the end where you'll see a bridge on your left. Turn left into a kind of gully and continue along it and the tunnel afterwards. At the end drive up the road, which is pretty steep. When you reach the top the mission is over.



Drive up the slope and you've completed the mission.

MISSION 16: THE ENTRANCE TO TDTS

You'll start this mission right in the thick of it. Concentrate on one enemy at a time and try not to get caught between them. Try to dodge enemy fire too, side-stepping should be second nature by now.

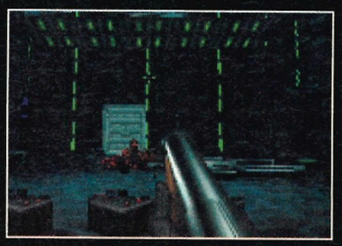
Once most of the enemies have been removed, go round to the front of the base. Millions of Goliaths will appear and attempt to colanderise you. There's nothing for it but to keep fighting and diving for what little cover there is. When you get a spare moment place a satchel charge in front of the entrance to the base and run for cover. When that blows it'll destroy the energy field and you'll be able to get inside.

MISSION 17: INSERT DISK

This, friends, is the final mission of the game. In it, you must find and activate the five computers hidden in the base. It's basically a huge maze with oodles of enemies lurking within.

Make your way along each corridor killing anything you come across. Slip by something and, just like in previous missions of this sort, it'll only return later to shoot you in the back.

Once you've found and activated all five terminals, Skynet is defeated and the game is completed. That's it. You've just completed *Terminator Future Shock*.



Look at the size of that thing. There's no escaping it, this level's a biggy.



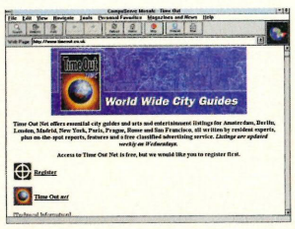
Here's one of the terminals you must find. Only four to go. Keep at it.



Nobody takes more people netsurfing.

With nearly four million members, CompuServe is the world's leading Internet access provider. It's also the world's coolest online service (well, we did start in the summer of '69). So if you want to surf the net or just immerse yourself in over 3,000 CompuServe services, it's time to get on board.

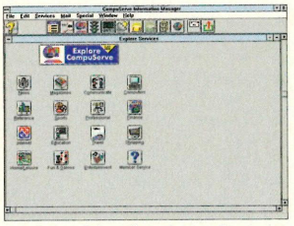
You don't have to be a computer whizz-kid. CompuServe software gives you everything you need to get going straightaway. A couple of clicks and the World Wide Web is your oyster.



SPRY Mosaic: one-step access to the World Wide Web.

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Make friends and influence people

INTERNET SPECIAL



Plenty has been said about the Net, both by bedazzled nerds and paranoid technophobes. For PC Review, however, the Internet is neither overawing nor fearful, but an incredibly accessible communications system. Over the following pages Clive Parker of our sister magazine, .net, explains how you can connect with people everywhere using the Internet, including a guide to making a home page in 30 minutes.



The Internet. It seems that everyone's talking about it these days. Whether you're, watching TV, reading the paper, listening to the radio or watching a film, you can be certain that someone, somewhere is going to mention the Net, even if it's just an Internet address tacked at on the end of an advert.

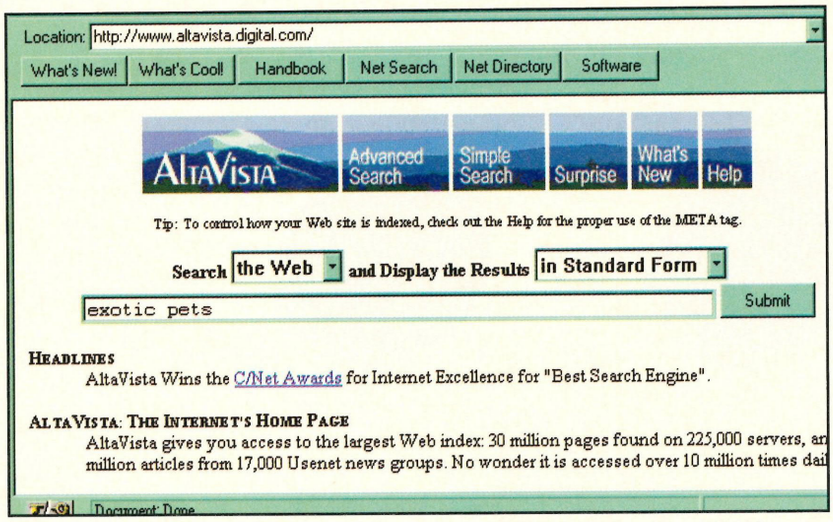
So what is the Net? Put simply, it's thousands, perhaps millions, of computers worldwide all connected to each other and passing information to and fro. It sounds very modern and high-tech, but the Net has actually been around in various forms since 1969. That's almost 30 years of Internet use in one form or another. The original Internet was developed by the Advance Research Projects Agency (ARPA) in the USA. Called ARPANet, it was created to enable three universities to share scientific data between one another. It was this simple beginning, just three UNIX based computers talking to each other, that that was the basic structure that evolved into the multi-million computer Internet of today.

The Web arrives

It all seems stuffy and boring, and the first academic and government networks were quite dull even though more and more networks were added to ARPANet until it became a worldwide network of networks. However, the phenomenal growth in of the Internet as we know it can be traced back to the development of the World Wide Web in 1991. Developed at the CERN laboratory in Switzerland, The Web added a graphical point-and-click interface to the Internet and got rid of the UNIX command structure that most Internet applications used. The Web made the Net simple enough for anyone to use – if you can use Windows or Windows 95, you can use the Internet. Because of this new simplicity, the Net started expanding into the business and home markets and today has 35 million users, or more.

Clichés unlimited

The Web is packed with information you can download and view on your PC. It's not (as is claimed) heaving with terrorists posting DIY guides to building nuclear devices or manufacturing Sarin nerve gas, and isn't awash with paedophiles creating Web pages full child pornography available at the click ▶



To find the information you want on the Net, you'll need a search engine. Currently in favour at PC Review is Alta Vista at http://www.altavista.digital.com. Log on and search.

JARGON

Access Provider
Commercial organisation offering connection to the Internet. Also known as a service provider or Internet provider.

Alias
A nickname for an e-mail address stored in your e-mail address book, so you can click on PC Review in the address book instead of entering: pcreview@futurenet.co.uk

Anonymous FTP
The method used to connect to FTP sites anywhere. It's called anonymous FTP because anyone can log into an FTP site using the username 'anonymous' and their e-mail address as a password.

Bandwidth
Used on the Net to describe the connection speed to a site. The higher the connection speed, the more bandwidth the connection is said to have.

Bookmark
Web browsers and other Net programs enable you to save the addresses of favourite sites in a bookmark list. To connect, you click on the bookmark.

Browser
The program used to view Web pages is called a Web browser. Netscape Navigator is the most popular browser now used.

CIM
The CompuServe Information Manager, Windows (WinCIM) and Mac (MacCIM) programs for connecting to CompuServe.

It could be illegal to use swear words or discuss 'unsuitable' subjects in private e-mail to friends in the US

Modem round-up

Pace Message Desk 14,400
£233.83 Pace 01274 532000

Rather over-priced at over £200. The justification is that the modem has voice mail capabilities so you can use it as a your phone answering system. This modem is easy to set up and use, and the build quality is excellent. A built-in power supply means you don't need another adapter hanging around. Not great for Web browsing, but ideal for voice and fax duties.

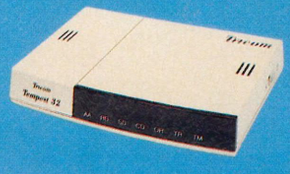


Speed: 4/10
Build quality: 8/10
Ease of use: 8/10
Value for money: 5/10

PCR VERDICT 7

Tricom Tempest 32
£186.83 Tricom 1494 480263

This is smoothly designed and looks good on any desk with an easy to read front panel. But the two letter acronyms that clutter the panel are about as friendly as a rabid pit-bull. Why must they print things like AA, RD and SD? Why not just sending, receiving, etc? At over £180, the Tempest is too pricey for a 14.4K model, you can get 28.8K one for less. Still, it works well with few problems. Not fast enough for the Web.



Speed: 4/10
Build quality: 5/10
Ease of use: 6/10
Value for money: 4/10

PCR VERDICT 5

Hayes Internet Kit
£151.57 Hayes 01252 775577

The Hayes Internet Kit contains the Accura 144 Fax modem, which is a good looking beast. Hayes probably hopes bundling the Accura 144 with a kit will get rid of what amounts to obsolete stock. 14,4Kbps modems should be regarded as standbys rather than the main way to connect. The bundled software and guide adds a little value to the pack and the Accura is as good a 14.4 as you're likely to get.



Speed: 4/10
Build quality: 8/10
Ease of use: 7/10
Value for money: 6/10

PCR VERDICT 6

US Robotics Vi 14400
£116.33 US Robotics
0800 225252

The Sportster VI is more than just an old modem dressed up in new clothing, it's new on the inside, too. Smartly designed in a matt black case, the new Sportster includes voice mail alongside good data handling ability for fax and the Net. Still, we can't really recommend a 14.4K for Web access. You can always get the 28,800 version for voice mail and Web use.

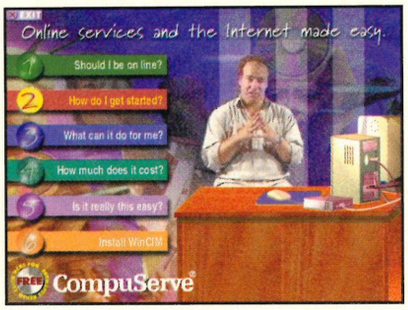


Speed: 5/10
Build quality: 8/10
Ease of use: 8/10
Value for money: 7/10

PCR VERDICT 7

Getting started with your CompuServe CD

Stand by for a bit of a shock. It's dead easy to set up the CompuServe software supplied on the free CD-ROM disc with CD version of PC Review. Just follow the steps spelled out below.



You can skip through the items by pressing the Space bar.

1 Take the disc out of its casing and stick it into your CD-ROM drive. Close the drive, hear the whirring. Easy.

2 If you use Windows 3.1 or Windows 3.11, click on File and then select Run in the Program Manager. Type this:

```
d:\demo.exe
```

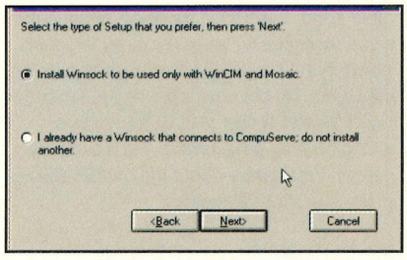
Then press [Enter]. Obviously, you have to use a different drive letter if your CD-ROM drive has a different designation.

3 If you have Windows 95, all you have to do is stick the CD in the drive and let the marvelous new AutoPlay feature thrum into action. If you've already got Video for Windows, you'll now get a ten minute demo telling you all about CompuServe's services. This will run automatically.

4 The demo program copies a few files to your hard drive, including Video for Windows, and a program manager group CompuServe pops into existence. If you don't already have Video for Windows you should restart your PC at this point.

5 After the restart, click on the new CompuServe icon to start the demo. It's basically an advert for CompuServe but there's some good information included.

6 The demo takes about ten minutes to run through completely. If you don't want to go through the whole thing in sequential order, hit [Space] to bring up the main menu.



Installing CompuServe's Winsock enables you to dial into the CompuServe network.

Now you can click on any other section of the demo for multimedia presentations on what CompuServe is all about.

7 If the demo stops after section two, press [Space] to continue.

8 Section six contains the option for installing WinCIM, the CompuServe Information Manager for Windows. Click on the Install Now! button to install the software onto your hard drive. You'll need credit card or bank details handy to register, but the first month is free. Well, your first ten hours are gratis anyway.

9 The installation program now asks the most important question, do you want to install the Winsock program? If you don't already have CompuServe software on your hard drive, choose Yes.

10 All you have to do now is follow the instructions on screen and fill in details as requested. Your agreement number and serial number is printed on the sleeve of the CD.

Congratulations, you should now be able to use the Internet. To get onto the World Wide Web, use Mosaic Web browser which is provided. Come and visit us at:

http://www.futurenet.co.uk

Problems?

CompuServe have numerous technical support people waiting by the phone to help you should you have a problem. We've had to phone them once or twice and they always managed to help us with our difficulties.

If you have a problem installing the CompuServe CD-ROM, call the company on:

0800 000 400

For other queries, just dial:

0800 000 200

US Robotics 28800
£233.83 US Robotics 0800 225252

The Sportster is one of the most reliable modems on the market. It's got a retro design, but the hardware makes up for the basic looking case. It is one of the fastest modems around when it comes to throughput and connects to any BBS, on-line service or Internet provider. Comms and fax software is standard, plus a trial Pipex account.



Speed: 9/10
Build quality: 8/10
Ease of use: 8/10
Value for money: 9/10

PCR VERDICT 9

US Robotics Courier V34
£351.33 US Robotics 0800 225252

The V34 Courier is very versatile and has everything you'll need to get on-line. It's a little more expensive, but the software is stored in flash-ROM so it can be easily updated by downloading the new files. A high speed serial card means you can use it with older PCs that are not up to today's data transfer standards. An excellent modem that is quite future proof too.



Speed: 9/10
Build quality: 8/10
Ease of use: 8/10
Value for money: 7/10

PCR VERDICT 9

Lasat Safire 288
£292.57 Lasat 0181 899 1765

The Safire is a small modem that seems expensive. It's a basic 28.8Kbps modem that comes without comms software or fax software. The Safire also gets very hot after a short period of time although this doesn't appear to affect the average connection speeds. There are only three indicators on the front panel, which keeps things simple. Better 28,800 modems can be found.



Speed: 6/10
Build quality: 5/10
Ease of use: 4/10
Value for money: 5/10

PCR VERDICT 4

Multitech MT2834
£399 Multitech 01344 891266

The Multitech is aimed corporate users and comes with a price tag to match. £400 for a 28,800 modem is steep, although you do get a good bang for your buck. Professional features like UNIX connections and asynchronous transfer on leased lines are not the kind of thing you need at home. Connection speed is average for a 28.8K but the build quality of the modem is excellent. An ideal business modem.



Speed: 7/10
Build quality: 8/10
Ease of use: 7/10
Value for money: 7/10

PCR VERDICT 7



CIS
CompuServe Information Service, the US on-line service available world-wide.

Client
Technospeak for an Internet program that runs on your computer. Netscape Navigator is a Web client, WS_FTP is an FTP client. You can safely substitute 'client' with 'program' when you read other Internet magazines.

E-mail
Electronic mail, a method of sending messages over the Internet to anyone who has an e-mail account.

FAQ
Frequently Asked Questions, text files found on the Net answering common questions about specific subjects.

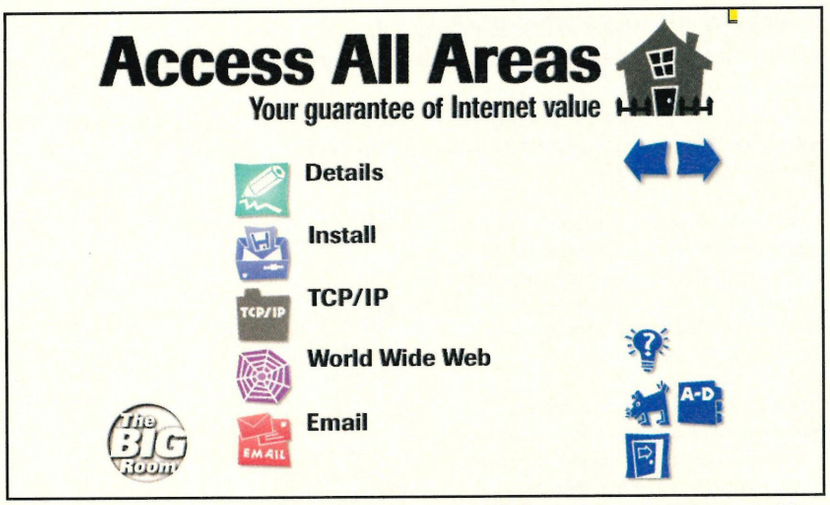
Flame
Abusive message sent by e-mail, usually as the result of a Usenet posting.

Hacker
Current slang for someone who breaks into computer systems or software, originally slang generally meaning a programmer.

Home page
Default page displayed when you connect to a Web site like FutureNet. It can also be the specific index page for a company or an individual on a Web site. PC Review's home page on FutureNet, for example.

HTML
HyperText Mark-up Language. This is the text-based language most commonly used to create Web pages.

Inline image
Image on a Web page, usually in GIF format, though JPEGs are commonly used as well.



For an in-depth history of the Net, you'll find an exclusive demo of Access All Areas on CD Review. Among all the 'learn the Net' CDs available, the full AAA is the one we recommend.

of a mouse button. While these things do exist in various areas on the Net, you're not going to find them while innocently browsing for Windows software, Simpsons icons, Manga videos or the latest Star Trek DS9 episode guides. To find material like this you have to consciously search for it, and if you do find it after a search you've got no right to be outraged by it. After all, you asked for it.

Freedom of speech is a very important part of the way the Net operates. The basic principle on which the Net was founded was sharing of information and data between universities and research establishments. That basic ethic has carried over onto the Net and the Web in general. Usenet newsgroups have long been a bastion of heated debate, with bad language, insults and 'flaming' a common occurence within certain groups. If you don't like the bad language and abuse found in these groups, you don't have to look in them. It's the same as the old option to change channel if you don't like a TV programme.

Sadly, misguided attempts are being made to censor the contents of the Net. Not just in newsgroups or on Web pages, but in private e-mail too. If certain tabled US bills pass into law, it could be illegal to use swear words or discuss 'unsuitable' subjects in private e-mail to friends in the US. On the other hand, it wouldn't be illegal to send the same message by letter, fax or by telegram. Weird, huh? It's unlikely that such draconian measures will become law with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and others taking on their government, but it certainly makes you wonder about the mental abilities of the so-called lawmakers.

Safeguards and traps

Luckily, most people are more sensible than the nanny state believes. The majority of parents are responsible adults who do take an interest in what their children are doing, whether it's watching videos or exploring the Internet. With the easy availability of filtering software such as *SurfWatch* and *CyberSitter*, parents can restrict the kind of Net content their kids can look at. So don't worry about the Net, it's less likely to corrupt morals than watching TV, going to church, or reading a book or even your daily newspaper.

But there are areas where you can get yourself into bother. A seemingly innocent remark in a Usenet newsgroup could make you the target of a flame war or be the unlucky recipient of a mail bomb.

What the hell is a flame war? Well, your remarks may have been taken the wrong way by certain members of a newsgroup which may be less forgiving than most Net users. The Net, like any other community, contains its fair share of weirdos, loonies, bigots and plain nasty folk. As a result of your remarks you could face a barrage of abuse in the newsgroup the next time you drop in to check the messages.

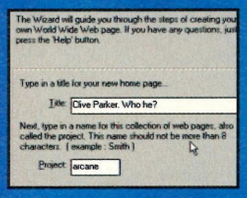
The first time it happens it can be quite a shock. We upset the good old boys in alt.nuke.the.usa on one occasion, and there were several hundred messages waiting for us the next time we looked in the group, none of them very complimentary. Not very nice if you're not used to foul language and personal abuse. It can be very frightning to a Net virgin, especially if you start getting mail bombs consisting of hundreds of e-mails all abusing you in the most personal terms imaginable.

There are two courses of action you can take in these circumstances. Ignore the Usenet postings and e-mail messages, and they'll go away after a while. Or if you're a bit braver, you can simply dive into the group and give as good as you get. Most abusive Usenet posters are really quite cowardly, give them a roasting and they will leave you alone. In our case, we went back in and had a go. The abuse simply tailed off after a while. Surprisingly, we received a few private e-mail messages from regular posters to the group congratulating us for having a go back at them. But they asked us not to mention their messages in the group.

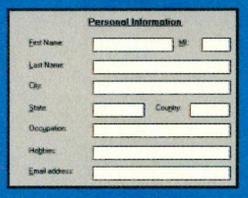
As ever, common sense is your best safeguard. Hang around a newsgroup and see what the usual content of the group is like. If you don't like what you see, don't go back. It's as simple as that. Oh, and be very careful about ever giving your smail mail address or telephone number. ***(CP)*** ■

Your own page in half an hour – using Web Wizard, provided by CompuServe

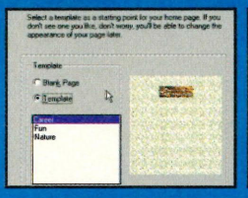
Okay, so you're onto the Net. Now's the time to create your own home page and put it on the World Wide Web. CompuServe has thoughtfully included a small program called the Home Page Wizard with the software on the CompuServe CD. It won't let you make professional quality pages with tables and image maps, and you can't enter complex HTML commands using it, but it's a great drag-and-drop tool for making your own home page.



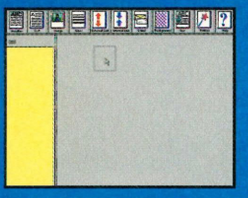
1 From the main page of the CompuServe demo, click Extra Free Software to install Home Page Wizard. Run it and wait for the first dialog box. Fill in the boxes with the title of your page (which appears in the top bar of a Web browser) and a name for the project. Click the Next button to continue.



2 Now it's time to enter your personal details into the program. You don't have to fill in everything, but at least some fields must be completed for your home page to function properly. You can also choose to display the information on your page if you want. Click the Next button again to advance.



3 Now you can choose a template for your home page, including a background image and a graphic. The first time you try to make a page, it's a good idea to pick a blank background so you can design it to your own format. When you've chosen one, click on the Finish button to continue.

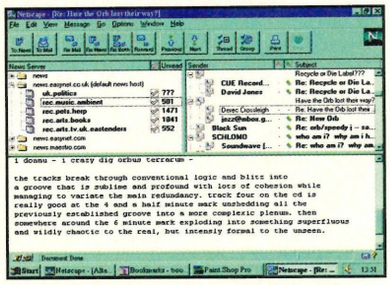


4 This is the main work area. Each icon across the top enables you to put information onto the page. Just click on an icon and drag it to the position on the page where you want the function it represents to be. In this case, we've chosen to put a heading across the top of the page. Drop the symbol.

Making friends...

The classic tabloid press view of Net users is that they are shy introverts with no social skills whatsoever. Nonsense. To use the Net effectively you've got to be able to communicate, usually in a more coherent fashion then the tabloid press can manage. So here are five ways you can meet people on the Net.

Newsgroups



Strike up e-mail conversations with people around the world through newsgroups.

Although one of the best ways to communicate with other people on the Net, Newsgroups are much maligned. With over 16,000 different groups available, at least a couple of them are going to cover subjects you have an interest in. You can start off as a lurker – someone who reads messages but never posts replies. After you have lurked in the group for a while, and thought of something to say, you can start to contribute to the group by posting replies to queries or simply joining a discussion. Be warned, a lot of baiting goes on in newsgroups, with people posting outrageous things just to stir up responses. Don't bite. If you read through some of the threads on any popular newsgroup, you'll see the posters tend to know each other quite well, though they've probably never met face to face. Use newsgroups well, and you'll soon build up relationships with regular posters, and you can send private replies by e-mail too.



Go Politics. The UK politics forum on CompuServe.

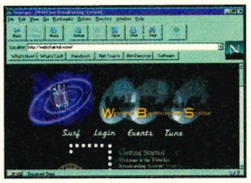
CompuServe Forums

CompuServe has more forums than you can shake a soggy stick at, each of which is full of information about a specific subject. Many CompuServe members don't realise that you can chat to other members in the same forum by selecting the Rooms icon. Click on the icon and you are whisked into a world of real-time banter with CompuServe members from around the world. Some of the chat is of the 'Hi, I'm Randy from Utah' kind of thing, but you soon learn to ignore the oddball that lurks in the rooms. Using CompuServe rooms is a good way to make contact with like-minded individuals.

IRC

IRC stands for Internet Relay Chat and is a real-time chat system you can use over the Net. It's horribly old-fashioned, with a DOS-like look to it that is the legacy of its UNIX origins. IRC is pretty easy to use, you enter the name of the IRC channel you want to connect to and take part in the real-time conversations taking place there. Each channel has either its own name or number. To join in the chat on channel 228 you'd enter `#228`, or to take part in the conversation on the My England channel you'd just type `#MyEngland` into your IRC software. Almost all service providers include an IRC program with its supplied software, but if you want to find out more about IRC look at the IRC information page at:
http://www.cryst.bbk.ac.uk/~ubcgp02/irc.htm.

Apart from telling you all about IRC, the page includes a long list of IRC servers and links to sites where you can get other IRC software.



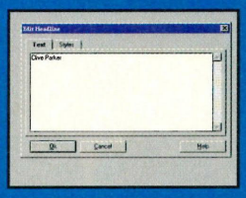
To talk directly with other Web users, get Webchat.

Webchat

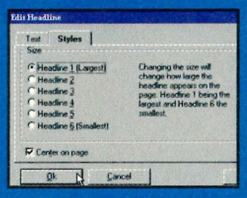
Webchat is a little like a Web version of IRC, except it all happens in your Web browser rather than in a clunky looking UNIX based system. To join Webchat, just go to the home page of the Webchat Broadcasting System at http://webchat.tsb.com/ and register (for free). You are sent a validation code by e-mail within a couple of minutes, just enter the code and you can chat to people around the world on hundreds of subjects. It takes a while to get used to the page updating system, but once you're chatting away just watch the hours fly by.

Send an e-mail to a Web author

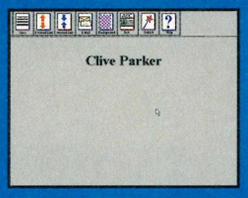
Almost every Web site has a contact address so you can send an e-mail message to the author of the pages. It doesn't matter if it's a commercial Web site like FutureNet or if it's a page put together by someone in his bedroom, you're sure to find an e-mail address somewhere on the page. Web pages are created by Net users who want to get information across about themeselves or their interests. If you share an interest with the author of a Web page, such as collecting Bristol blue glass or supporting Torquay Utd, then all you have to do is click on the e-mail address and type a little message into your Web browser. Send the message off and the chances of getting a reply are very good.



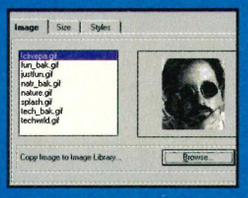
5 The Edit Headline box opens. You can enter as much text as you like into the heading box, but it's a good idea to keep it as simple as possible. Many people call their home pages after themselves. If your page is just about you, do this, if you're going to post other information up there, give it a relevant title.



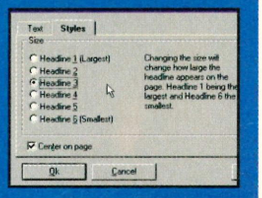
6 Now click on the Styles tag at the top of the box. This displays a new options screen where you can choose what the heading text is to look like. Because it's the main heading, it's probably best to use 'Headline 1', the largest text size. You can then centre it on the page, or leave it justified to the left as normal. Up to you.



7 You should now see something like this on the page after selecting the heading. Almost all functions have a Styles menu, so you can position images, text and lines wherever you like on the page. Of course, the page is still rudimentary and dull looking. So, it's time to add an image to liven it up.



8 Click on the Image icon and the Edit Image box will open. Use the file selector to choose the image you want to use on the page. In this case, Clive Parker has chosen a moody picture of himself to go underneath the heading. Because the heading was centred, he'll centre this picture on the page as well.



9 Now it's time to add more large text to the page. Choose the Headline icon and enter your text into the Edit Headline box. you'll probably want to make this text a little smaller here, so we've picked Headline 3 and centred the headline on the page. Type in what you want to say next.

continued overleaf

Internet
Thousands of computer networks around the world all linked together using common protocols to 'talk' to each other.

Internet Explorer
This is Microsoft's Web browser, available for Windows 95, Windows 3.1 and for the Macintosh. The main competitor of Netscape Navigator.

JAVA
New programming language for the Net enabling small applications called applets to be down-loaded and run within a Web page. The applet can be any kind of program; an animation, a calculator a small spreadsheet or even a game.

Lurker
Someone who reads newsgroup articles but never posts an article.

Mailing list
An automatic e-mail forwarding system about a specific subject. You can join a mailing list be sending an e-mail requesting to subscribe, after you have subscribed you start receiving regular e-mail messages from the system.

Modem
Little box or internal card which connects your computer to the phone system.

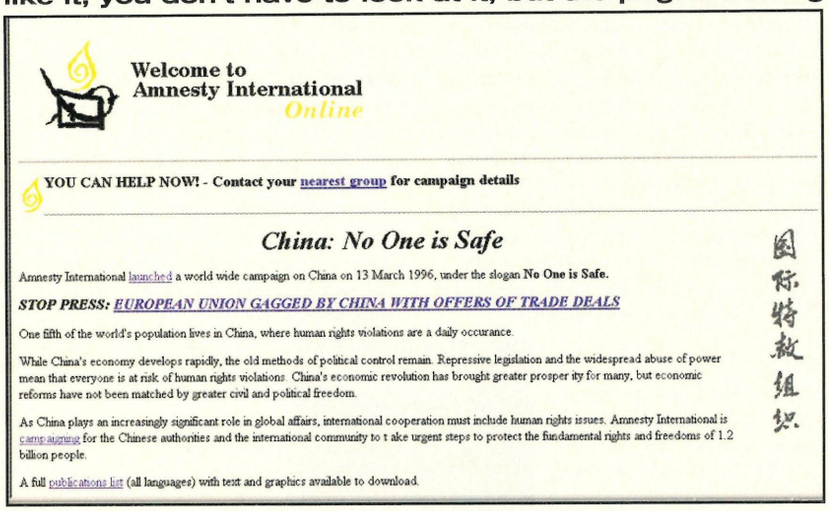
Newbie
Horrible name used to describe a new-comers to the Net.

Password
Alpha-numeric string used for security. Letters and numbers.

Point of Presence or PoP
Connection point to your service provider, usually available by making a local telephone call.

Influencing people

The Net is growing in popularity as a platform for protest groups. Because of the way the Net works, any protest group can publish its views on the Web. If you don't like it, you don't have to look at it, but the pages won't go away.



The human rights group Amnesty International has a Web presence that spreads the campaign nearly as effectively as their advertising or mail shots.

Amnesty International

http://www.amnesty.org/

Everyone's heard of Amnesty International (AI) and the work it does promoting the cause of human rights in various countries around the world. You can find out all about the major campaigns currently underway and much more.

The current campaign (last we looked) is about human rights in China. About a fifth of the world's population is Chinese, and human rights violations occur daily in the country. Even though China's economy is developing rapidly, all of the old methods of political control remain. The AI home page highlights the widespread abuse of power that mean everyone is at risk of human rights violations. Although China's economic revolution has brought greater prosperity for many, the economic reforms have not been matched by greater civil freedom. Amnesty is campaigning for the Chinese authorities and the international community to take urgent steps to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of 1.2 billion people.

The beauty of this type of campaign on the Internet is that it can be seen worldwide, even by people in China with Net access. However their government is trying to limit access to the Net by imposing regulations on anyone with on-line access. In February, those with Net accounts were told to register with the police within 30 days. The punishment for not doing so wasn't specified.

Of course, AI covers much more than human rights issues in China, it covers the whole world. There are many links on the site where you can find out about AI's other activities, plus there are links to other organisations concerned with human rights issues. The pages are slickly designed and they don't go over the top with graphics, but an extraordinary amount of information can be found here.

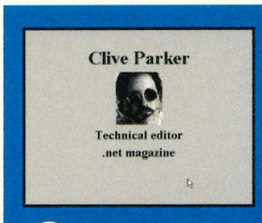
Blue Ribbon Campaign

http://www.eff.org/

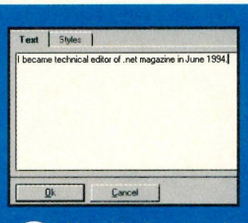
The Blue Ribbon Campaign was set up by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) to fight the Communications Decency Amendment (CDA) of the 1996 Telecommunition Act in the US. Visit the EFF home page and you can download the Blue Ribbon graphics, so you can include them on your own home page. The Blue Ribbon is the on-line equivalent of the red ribbons worn by AIDS campaigners.

The EFF feels that the CDA effectively destroys the right to free speech on the Internet under the First Amendment of the US Constitution, which Americans take very seriously. The EFF, along with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has challenged the CDA in court, and has managed to get some portions of it suspended while legal hearings take place to determine whether the bill is unconstitutional or not.

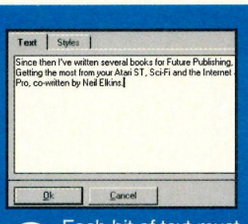
So how does this affect you? Well, the Internet is effectively uncensored as it stands. No government or authority has the power to prevent you talking freely about whatever you wish in newsgroups or on IRC channels. Of course, individual service providers can choose which Usenet news-groups it carries, but there's no overall control. The CDA would effectively mean that the level of 'decency' on the Net – whatever that may be – will be governed by the most restrictive moral laws in the US. So while



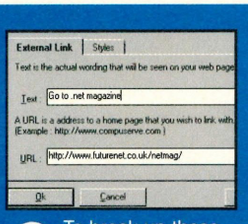
10 If you want two short lines of text, one beneath the other, you must enter two separate headlines. Here we demonstrate by adding Clive Parker's job title and the name of the magazine beneath the image on the page. Of course, you could put in something more interesting, if you like.



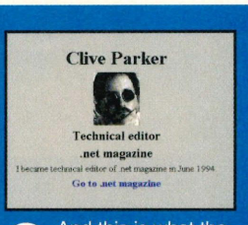
11 Now it's time to add some text about yourself to the page. Click on the Text icon and enter the text into the Edit Text box. Use the Styles tab to position the text, and you can also choose to add bullet points to emphasis lines of text. Clive is simply giving details of his work history over on .net magazine.



12 Each bit of text must be added as a discreet chunk, so for each new detail we return to the Edit text screen and type it in. The key to a good home page is to give people interesting information, and particu-larly information they can use. Don't bother telling us the colour of your carpet, please.



13 To break up these chunks of text you can use the Lines icon to make lines, or add graphics. But even more interesting would be some links to other home pages related to the information you're imparting. So, click on the Link icon, enter the line to represent the link and the URL of the desired Web site.

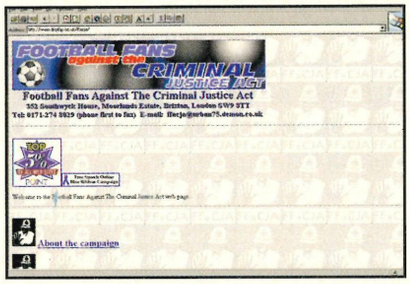


14 And this is what the page looks like so far. Clive's link was to the home page of the magazine he works for full time. Again, a key to effective links is info. Don't just link to someone's page because they're going to link back to yours. Give people things to look at, learn from and experience.

California laws are quite relaxed compared to, say, South Carolina, all Net content would have to comply to the laws of the state with the most restrictive code of practice. This means that when a picture or document is downloaded from a PC in California (where it is legal) to a PC in North Carolina (where it is illegal), an offence has taken place. And it's the owner of the PC where the image originated who has commited the offence. This would mean a severe cutback in the content of the Internet. And we're not just talking about pictures, the amendment would mean that it's illegal to use a swear-word in a private e-mail to a friend.

Football Fans Against The Criminal Justice Act

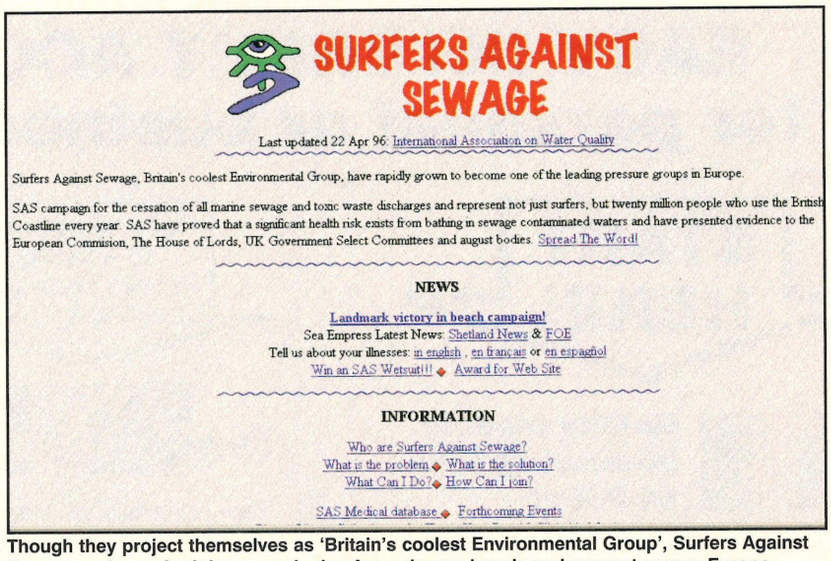
http://www.demon.co.uk/display/ffacja/



Apparently, some fans are a bit worried by some sections of the Criminal Justice Act (CJA), specifically sections 68 to 71 which details a new offence called aggrevated trespass.

The *Football Fans Against The Criminal Justice Act* Web site has been set up to inform fans of the implications of the Act. Portions of the Act which affect footy fans include the loss of the right to silence and the right of the police to take DNA samples by swab or by removing a hair (by force, if necessary). More pressing though is the way that many of the normal activities that take place at football grounds are now criminal offences. So if you run onto the pitch, you can be nicked for it. Or, if you're at a game shouting at your team for playing badly, you can be arrested under the 'intentional harassment' laws, dragged off to the station, have samples 'removed' and identity details taken. The next time you try and go to a match might find yourself barred. Oddly, the new laws only apply to football grounds, it doesn't relate to any other sport. You can't even sell a spare ticket, so if you bought one for a mate and he can't go to the match, it's now an offence to sell it on.

The Web site has recently undergone a redesign. It's not too graphical, but it includes a good background graphic of Mr. Plod and the organisers are now planning a 'Bust Card' to be handed out at all grounds. This will detail the rights you have if arrested and has details of a network of sympathetic lawyers.They are also working on a Charter of Rights for football fans which will establish the rights of fans to enjoy their game without harassment and intimidation.



Though they project themselves as 'Britain's coolest Environmental Group', Surfers Against Sewage make up for it by campaigning for a cleaner beach environment across Europe.

Surfers Against Sewage

http://www.sas.org.uk/

Not, as you might think, a US Web site devoted to clearing the beaches of California, but a UK site devoted to cleaning up Britain's beaches. Besides, we had to use the word 'surf' at least once in the feature.

Yep, it's a site where you can find out about the activities of Surfers Against Sewage (SAS), now a leading environmental pressure group in Europe. The SAS campaigns for the cessation of all marine sewage and toxic waste discharges in the UK and represents not just surfers, but the 20 million who use British beaches every year. The SAS has proved that a significant health risk exists from bathing in sewage contaminated waters and has presented evidence to the European Commision, The House of Lords, UK Government Select Committees and other bodies.

The site contains areas describing the SAS, a summary of the problems and how they can be solved. You can join the SAS from the Web pages if you feel strongly about the problems of sewage on British beaches. Other areas include a medical database detailing the kinds of diseases you can get, a list of upcoming events and a clickable map where you can find out the condition of local beaches. There are also newsletters, press releases and other information including contact details for the SAS in Cornwall. This is a campaign that affects everyone in the UK who visits the coast, and it's well worth supporting.

Server
A server is a computer that shares data with other computers on a network. Web servers store Web pages, FTP servers store files and news servers store Usenet information.

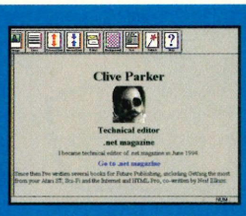
Service provider
A company that provides access to the Net, usually for a monthly fee. To connect to the Net, you use a modem to call a local access number called a PoP.

Spam and spamming
Posting the same article to hundreds, or even all, newsgroups. Usually used as a form of advertising or publicity.

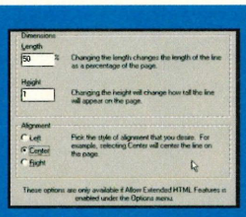
Usenet
Text based part of the Internet used as a huge message system about any subject you care to think of. Often referred to simply as Newsgroups.

UNIX
A mainfram operating system used in research, military and government institutions. Was the basis of the Net.

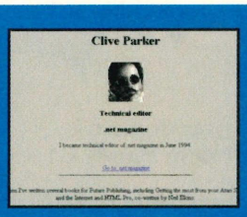
Yahoo
Well known search engine and indexed Web site. Slightly American but good.



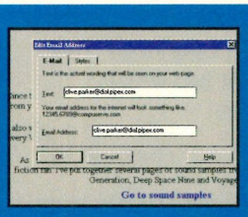
15 Using the link line between pieces of Clive's work history text works well to break up the page and gives people the chance to move to the other page quickly if they want to. It's not looking too bad, but what if you want to add other graphical elements to separate information, links and so on?



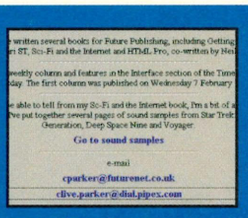
16 To do this, you might want to add a line to the page. Lines are easily added using the Lines icon. Just click on it, and this screen appears enabling you to define the length and shape of your line. As the text stretches all the way across the screen, perhaps we'll us a shorter line and centre it on the page.



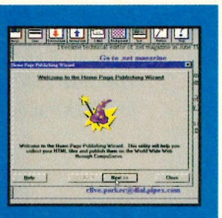
17 Here's the page with more text, a dividing line and the link to .net magazine. Though the graphical features in Home Page Wizard aren't astounding, you can do all the basics and come up with an attractive page. Now, however, you might want to add your e-mail address. Read on.



18 If you want people to contact you, click on the E-mail icon and enter your e-mail address in the bottom field. The top text field can be any invitation you like, such as: "E-mail us now!" Many people, however, just enter their e-mail address again, and that's what we've done here. Click Okay when you're done.



19 Now that your e-mail address is up there, anyone can e-mail you just by finding your home page and clicking on the e-mail address in their Web browser. If the information on your home page is any good, this is how you'll start making friends using the Internet. But there's one crucial step to go.



20 If the page works okay, it's time to upload it to CompuServe. Click on the Publish icon and follow the instructions in the Home Page Publishing Wizard to put your page on-line. Congratulations, you now have a Web presence.

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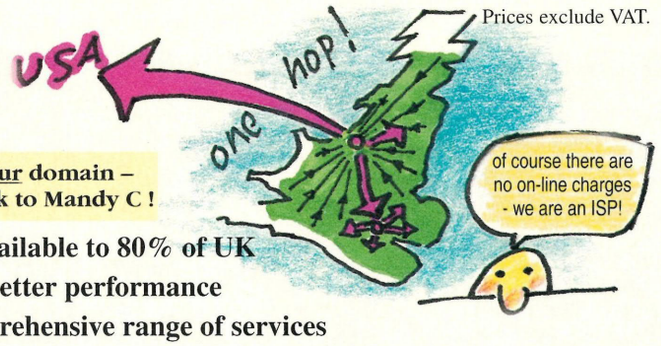
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more PoPs... Lancaster, Leicester, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Markyate, Martin, Mertsham, Matlock, Monmouth, Nettlebed, Newark, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oakham, Pontypridd, Preston, Rangeworthy, Reading, Ripon, Rothbury, Scunthorpe, Settle, Sheffield, Shepton Mallet, Weedon, Warrington (NOC), Wellingborough, Wetherby, Wolverhampton, Workington.

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Up-beat music and wacky sound effects accompany the montaged start-up screen. The music and visuals vary greatly within this disc.

MAKERS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

From boxer Muhammad Ali through Lenin the Bolshevik and on to the oil boss Ahmed Zaki Yamani, Makers of the 20th Century details the key personalities of our times.

Our general desire to understand the thoughts and actions of great and famous people is satiated daily by magazines, newspapers and television. Consequently, it's hard to see the point of a reference CD-ROM crammed full of data on the most influential personalities of the Century when flicking through any newspaper or watching the news will usually give you a pretty good idea of who's doing what to whom and why. And what they have to say about it too.

What *Makers of the 20th Century* does manage to do, however, is transcend time, spanning the key points in each so-called maker's entire public career rather than providing ephemeral snapshots of their day-to-day activities. Furthermore, taking a retrospective viewpoint allows for a dusting aside of temporary hype and a cooler, more objective approach than is possible in your average here and now reporting on big name history makers.

Ironically, much of the content in *Makers* was actually taken from newspapers. As the disc was made by News Multimedia (part of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation), its creators took full advantage of articles from the *Times* and *Sunday Times*, and to a lesser extent the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Today* and even the *Sun*. Because of this (though some would say despite it), *Makers of the 20th Century* contains a huge amount of accurately written information.

When you arrive at a screen devoted to any given maker, you're greeted with a short, brusque summation of his or her career which serves as the title on that person. For the drugs baron Pablo Escobar this title reads "Cocaine merchant to the western world" while for Charlie Parker it's "Sax sorcerer and be-bop pioneer". If these headlines don't give you any clues as to why the person is considered a maker of the history, the introductory text should.

This is where the proper content of the disc begins to manifest itself. The intros ▶



Murdoch's men made this disc, so he appears at the expense of competitors like Robert Maxwell, Ted Turner or Kerry Packer.

"Madonna SPRAWLS on a satin-covered bed, and THRUSTS her pelvis while singing her massive hit Like A Virgin."

MULTI-MEDIA



Variety, they say, is the spice of life. If this is the case, our multimedia section month this would appear to be the paper equivalent of the hottest vindaloo curry around.

First up, and on accompanied on CD Review by a superb demo, is Makers of the 20th Century, a content-packed look at some of the people who have shaped the way we think. We conclude our series of literary CD-ROMs with Miller's of Mice and Men, probably the best disc in the Penguin Electronic range, while two art CDs go head-to-head on pages 84 and 85. Summertime sailors might want to take a peek at page 81, meanwhile, to find out all about Interactive Sailing, and if you're not fed up with footy yet, the Ultimate Soccer Encyclopedia comes under scrutiny over on 87. Finally, star gazers might take note of Discover Astronomy reviewed on page 90. Like I said, hotter than a vindaloo. Savour it.

Garrick Webster
gwebster@futurenet.co.uk

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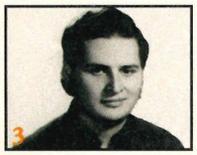
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PCR Quiz

Can you put names to these famous faces? All of them are people who featured in Makers of the 20th Century, though some of them are seen here in their youthful years, before they became famous. If you get stuck, the answers are below. Good luck…





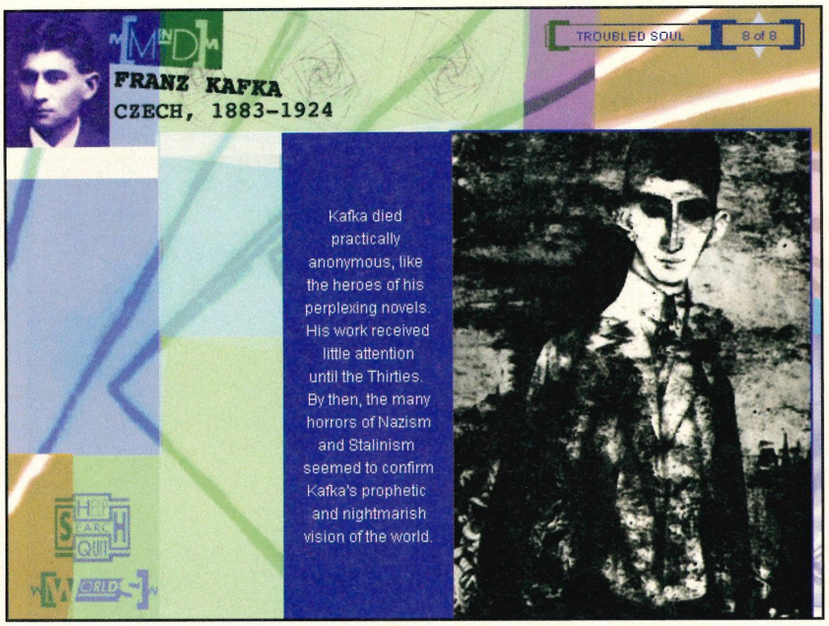








1. Charles Chaplin
2. Malcolm X
3. Ilyich Ramirez 'Carlos the Jackal' Sanchez
4. Virginia Woolf
5. Hirohito
6. Brigitte Bardot.



Strangely, there are more pictures of the expressionis author Franz Kafka on the disc than of Madonna. Not a bad thing – we already know what she looks like…



…but just in case you've forgotten what old pointy boobs looks like, here she is.

▶are meant to encapsulate what each person was about, what they did and, sometimes, what they thought. They are more often than not well-written, giving an instant general understanding of the individual. The introduction on Malcolm X for instance, tells you, "He was brilliant at school, winning straight 'A's, but was told to scale down his aspiration of a career as a lawyer to becoming 'a mechanic or a carpenter'. He quit school and went to Harlem, where he became a successful hustler. He was in and out of jail. It was during a long prison sentence in Boston, in 1952, that he came under the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam."

Though the intro screens use maps to show you where the makers hailed from, there seems to be a disappointing lack of photographs. All you see are small mug shots in the top left corner. Delve deeper, however, and more is revealed. A quick click on a pulldown menu gives you access to upwards of half a dozen other items. These are generally newspaper articles and photographs with extended captions, but occasionally you'll find paintings, audio clips with pictures, posters and, very rarely, a video clip.

Penetrative writing

As with the introductions, the quality of writing in the articles is good. You won't find any of the spelling or grammatical errors so common in more slap-dash multimedia titles. But best of all, most of the articles manage to penetrate the subject matter quickly. If, for instance, you were new to the name Simone de Beauvoir, you'd be rapidly informed of her thoughts by reading the first main article on her, taken from the *Times* in 1974. "Childhood plays a central role in Simone de Beauvoir's theories," it reads. "It is during childhood that the foundations of future strength and temperament are laid. 'I think that one can never really understand someone properly unless one has grasped the keys of his childhood,' she says."

Morality squad confronted

Though the *Times* has been the main source of articles on people like Deng Xiaoping, Lenin, Nasser, JFK and other world leaders, this is not uniformly the case. Madonna's confrontation with 'morality squad' police in Toronto in 1990 is an obvious case meriting some tabloid sensationalism care of the *Sun*. "At one stage in the provocative show, Madonna SPRAWLS on a satin-covered bed, and THRUSTS her pelvis while singing her massive hit *Like A Virgin*."

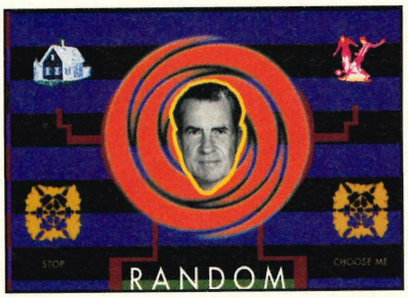
"I think that one can never really understand someone properly unless one has grasped the keys of his childhood." – Simone de Beauvoir

Meanwhile, Clarence Birdseye is surprisingly well represented in an article from that now deceased journal, *Today*. "It was on a Canadian hunting trip that Clarence, a biologist, discovered that game which had frozen rapidly still tasted fresh a few months later, just after being thawed," says the article. "After frozen moose it was an easy step to peas, fish fingers and – of course – chips. A cold new world was born."

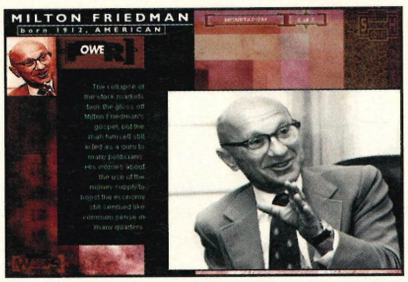
Though *Makers of the 20th Century* has more depth in each entry than you'll find on many CD-ROMs, it doesn't go quite far enough. To really out-do *Encarta 96*, which has entries on nearly all of these people and a lot more to boot, *Makers* should have got closer to their personalities, rather than viewing them second hand through old newspaper articles. Bringing out the personal foibles, predilections, odd mannerisms and prejudices where possible would have made this disc much more intriguing. Perhaps the makers of *Makers* could have interviewed people who knew some of these famous individuals to get a closer account of what they're really like. As it is, you come away knowing people like Gandhi, Bill Gates and Germaine Greer in an intellectual or historical way, but it doesn't go much deeper than that.

Due to its design, using *Makers* is, at first, a refreshing experience. The disc works in the same way as most, but provides a much greater variety of things to look at. The collection of over 200 makers is broken down into six topical sections including Power, The Body, The Mind, Discovery, Design and Senses. The interface screen for each of these, however, has a unique construction. In Power, for instance, you have to point and click your way around abstract city settings finding statues and cut out figures of the people. The Senses screen (for access to the likes of Madonna, Warhol and Ray Kroc, the man who sold us the Big Mac) is a presented as a card-matching quiz, while the Design screen (the road to Bill Gates, Laslo Biro and Nicolas Negroponte, the 'inventor' of multimedia) has 3D drafting paper background with lots of little animations.

Using these fancy screens drastically slows down your browsing of the info. The disc is very slow loading, and when the novelty wears off so will your patience. Browsing is further hampered by the disc's lack of crosslinking between articles. You might, for instance, come across the word 'existentialism' when reading about Kafka, but there's no suggestion that to know more about it you should see the Sartre screen. *Makers* would also be improved if influential philosophies, ideologies and chains of events in history could be followed between the entries. This would certainly be a more enlightening and easy-to-use approach.

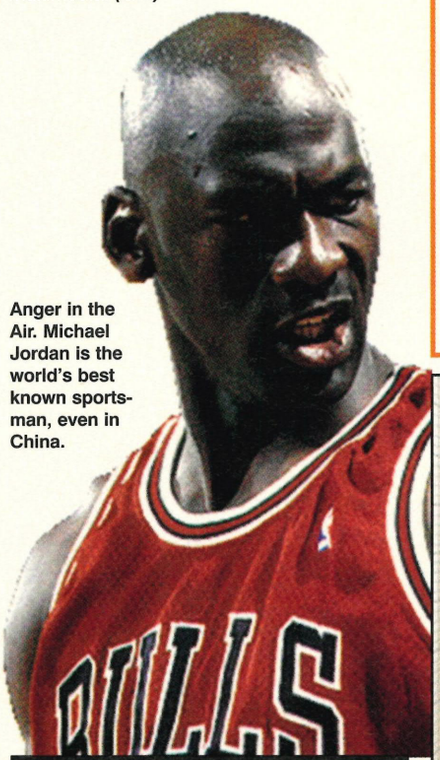


With the random selection screen you never know who's going to make an appearance.



Economist Milton Friedman is in there, but curiously Keynes is absent. Why?

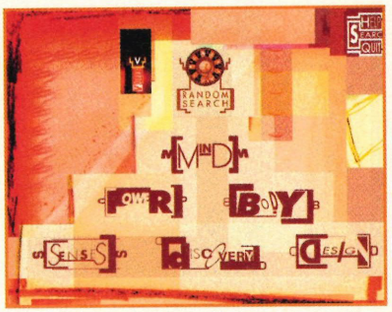
Although *Makers of the 20th Century* has its flaws, it is still far better in its content than the vast majority of multimedia titles out there. For a disc based mainly on text, it is well presented, and the quality of information is high. The overall purpose of the *Makers* might be questionable – you can read about famous people every day in the newspaper – but in and of itself it is a well constructed piece of multimedia. ***(GW)***



Anger in the Air. Michael Jordan is the world's best known sportsman, even in China.

The long march to power

Here's a quick dip into what's on offer in the Power section of Makers of the 20th Century...



1 This main screen offers routes to the disc's six main sections. We're picking the Power button.



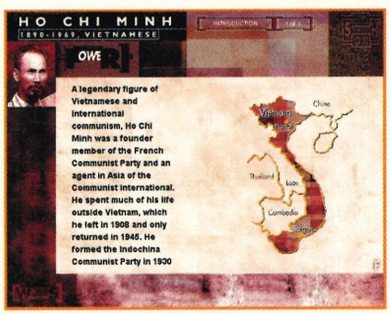
2 Now we're presented with a spinning globe and can focus on one continent. Let's zip down and take a look at Asia.



3 Hello, what's this? An oriental street setting to explore. We'll have to click our way to an Asian leader.



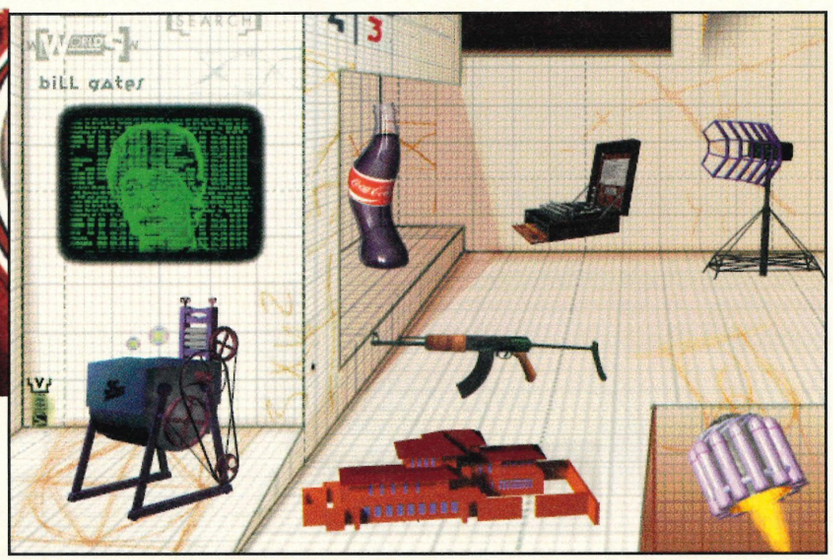
4 Here's the man we want, Ho Chi Minh, known in Vietnam as Uncle Ho. Click on him and let's go.



5 And here we see the intro to Mr Ho, complete with a map of Vietnam and small picture of the communist.



6 In amongst Times articles following his anti-colonialism are photos from wartime Vietnam and Cambodia.



The Design section's interface consists of four screens wallpapered with drafting paper. The familiar face of Bill Gates looks out at a wiggling Coke bottle and a Kalashnikov rifle.

Ten who made it in

Ringo Starr
Roger Bannister
James Brown
Pablo Escobar
Milton Friedman
Rupert Murdoch
Ted Hoff
Anita Roddick
Bill Wyman
Laslo Biro

Ten missing in action

Laurence Olivier
Robert Maxwell
Ted Turner
David Bowie
Lee Harvey Ozwald
John Maynard Keynes
Saddam Hussein
Donald Trump
Jim Henson
Al Capone

PCR VERDICT

Classy presentation backed up with lots of well-written text and quality visuals.

8

CD REVIEW 56 ON THE DISC

See the splendid interactive demo of Makers of the 20th Century on our CD-ROM.

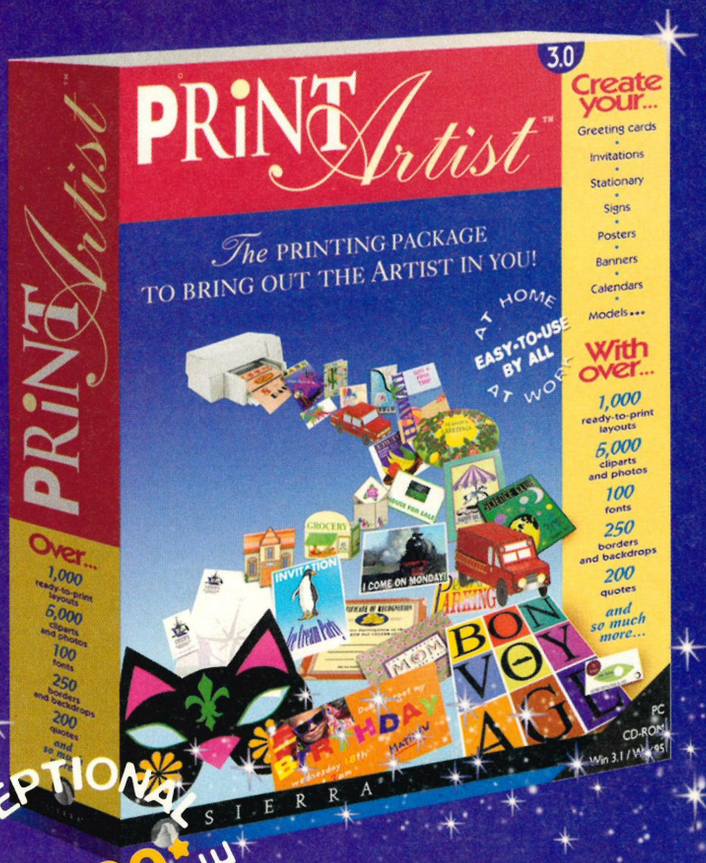
Developer: News MM

Publisher: News MM

Contact: 0171 782 3982

Price: £44.99

Minimum System: 486, 8Mb RAM, Windows 3.1 or better, SVGA, double speed CD-ROM drive



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numeric

SIERRA®

What do yachtspeople do when the wind's low and they're in the Central Mongolia? Maybe they load up Interactive Sailing...



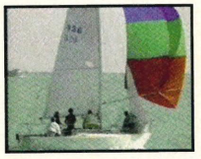


We listened to Sloop John B by the Beach Boys while we watched the videos.

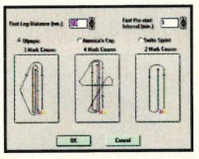
Interactive Sailing



That big sail is a spinnaker.




The video section displays some impressive sailing manoeuvres, but doesn't go into detail on how to achieve them in the simulation part of the disc.



Three racing options are available. Easiest is the two marker race, most difficult the Olympic four marker course.

While other companies try to allure us with huge, trivia-filled reference titles, Europress has set out on the choppy waters of the multimedia market with something of a different tack. Rather than bombarding you with facts, videos, photos and an obligatory end-of-disc quiz game, *Interactive Sailing* attempts to enlighten us on the practice of yachting.

Though it's billed on the box as being for landlubbers and learned sailors alike, if you approach the disc with no knowledge of sailing whatsoever, you might find it a little annoying. Nowhere are sailing terms – which are used throughout – defined or explained. It's quite easy to use *Interactive Sailing*, even racing in the simulated regatta, and come away without knowing the difference between 'in irons', 'jib' or even 'port' and 'starboard'.

Interactive Sailing is, in fact, a poor tutor. You're meant to learn about the J/105 boat and how to sail it from the video section via some 40 short video clips. Though some of these try to teach a bit of theory, without knowing the terms you're not likely to glean much from them. There's certainly no attempt to get down to the basics of how the wind affects the sails or how sailboats manoeuvre.

Windmills and hard-rigging

Apart from having muffled sound, the videos are vague in content. "The J/105 is one of the most incredibly hard-rigged craft that's come along in many years," says one introducing the bowsprit. "The four feet, 10-inch carbon fibre bow pole is custom-built by Tillets and Pearson whose expertise comes from making the large windmill blades that you see in windpower installations throughout the United States." Interesting, but useless to the task in hand.

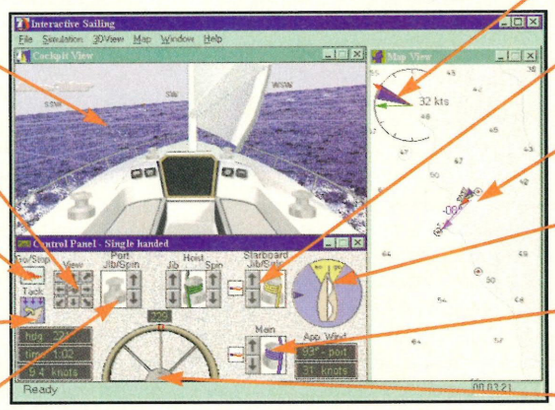
What saves the disc is the simulated regatta it contains. Here, you steer, handle the rigging, or do both at once in three types of race. Naturally, you must sail by the rules spelled out in the video section, but you have the option to set the wind conditions. Fiddling around with this is quite interesting and the atmosphere is set by a crew who shout things like "Captain, you're in irons!" or "Hey, main sail needs to be trimmed!". The sound of the wind in the sails and the waves also give you clues as to how well you're doing. Good gamers, of course, will have no problems winning races once they pick up the steering and rigging motions.

If you want to actually learn the basics, however, *Interactive Sailing* isn't that strong. It's sold at a good price, but it's unfortunate the disc is so poor at doing what most other CD-ROMs do best: delivering data. ***(GW)***



Win a regatta and you get to see these smiling guys. Lose, and it's beer and pizza for consolation. Not bad!

Controling your J/105 sailboat



- Cockpit view with direction points, grid and clouds on.
- Toggle various viewing angles.
- Pause race.
- Auto tack - can only be used in the right conditions.
- Loosen/tighten port jib.
- Wind speed and direction.
- Loosen/tighten jib on starboard side.
- The pack rounding a race marker.
- Wind direction relative to the sails.
- Loosen/tighten main sail.
- Steer the vessel.

Developer: Europress

Publisher: Europress

Contact: 01625 859444

Price: £19.99

Minimum system: 486SX/25, 4Mb RAM, 7Mb hard disk space, Double speed CD drive, SVGA, Windows 3.1 or better, Sound blaster pro or compatible

PCR VERDICT

The simulation is good fun, but the tutorial side of this disc is seriously lame.

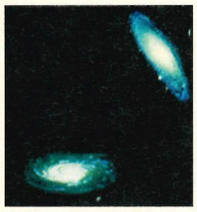
5

TIME CONUNDRUM

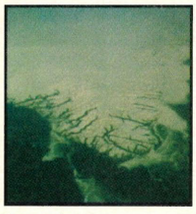
Apparently the astronomer's standard measure of time is the Julian calendar, which starts from noon on the first day of 4713BC. This disc, however, doesn't explain why 4713BC. Anyone know?

DISCOVER ASTRONOMY

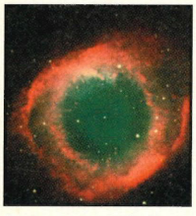




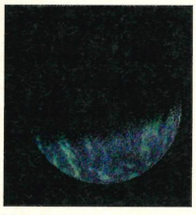
Galaxies collide in full motion animation. The Milky Way meets Andromeda.



Greenland from space – look at those fjords.



A planetary nebula, a gas and dust cloud within which planets could form.



Venus spins towards us and we learn about its phases.

It might seem like a primer for Redshift 2, but can Maris' new disc on astronomy for beginners stand in its own right?

Our sun formed about five billion years ago from a cloud of dust and gases. It will last for about another five billion years before it will begin to run out of hydrogen to burn. And that's when things will start getting a little out of hand.

Then, it will swell up to many times its present size, and shine red. What's more, it will shine that colour many thousands of times more brightly than it currently shines yellow. After billions more years the sun shrink and go through a phase of only a few months – the merest blink of an eye, by universal standards – during which it will grow and shrink, grow and shrink until finally it grows one last time, getting so big that it swallows the earth. Then, it will pop like a balloon and a discarded shell of gases will fly off. All that will be left will be a glowing white core.

A modern version of The Big Kid's Book of Astronomy, it really is rather decent.

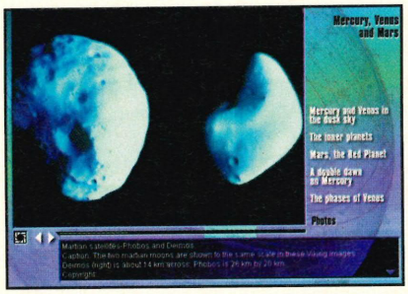
Now, all this red giant and white dwarf stuff is pretty familiar to most of us nowadays thanks to the likes of Stephen Hawking and Patrick Moore. But do we know exactly how it all works? Not really, is the answer for most of us. Never mind all the other stuff about star classifications by radiation output that goes with it in the same chapter about stars in *Discover Astronomy* where we got the information about what will happen to our sun. And we've certainly never had it read to us by Hannah Gordon, either.

So there is, indeed, lots of fascinating and possibly even useful information on this disc. It includes a good deal of text from the *Penguin Book of Astronomy*. And there are lots of pretty pictures, animations and audio narration to accompany it. It's slightly turgid in presentation and slow in places, and maybe a bit thin too, with some obvious omissions. One thing that really should be in there is a simple star-map of the main constellations, stars and planets visible in the night sky. But for this price (a mere £18) and for what it's meant to be (a modern version of *The Big Kid's Book Of Astronomy*) it really is rather decent.

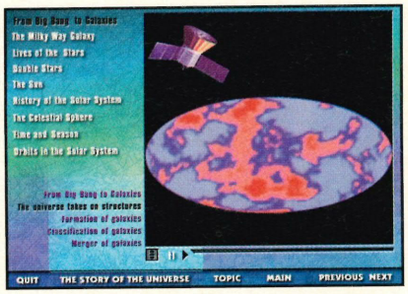
What it's not

However, there is another issue here. The significant thing about this disc is not really what it is, but what it isn't. What it isn't is *Redshift 2*, the new version of Maris Multimedia's highly intelligent and rather serious astronomy guide in which you can map and re-map the stars to your heart's content. What this disc is, is a bit of a promo – almost a trainer – for *Redshift 2*, and it does actually include a demo version of the more serious program.

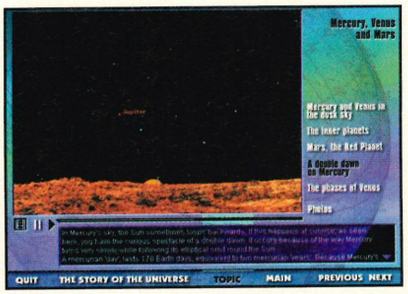
What *Redshift 2* does is show a whole different side of what you can use a PC for.



Phobos and Deimos, two moons of Mars, viewed up close.



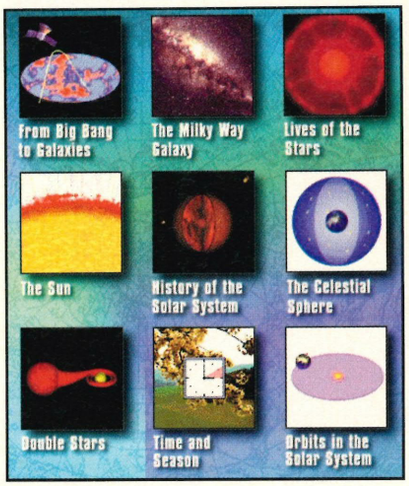
The Koby satellite. It mapped the temperature of the universe at 2.735 degrees K.



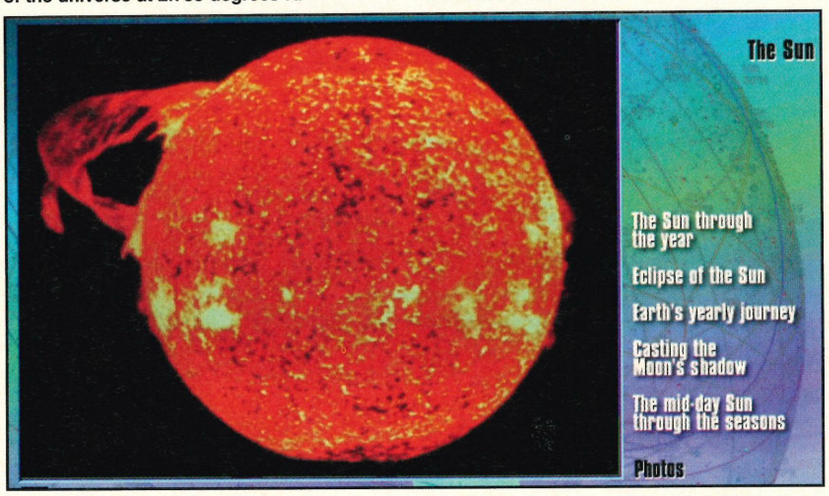
The animation shows how Mercury sometimes has two dawns.

The Big Bang

One second after the universe was born, it had cooled to a mere ten billion degrees. We know something of the age of the universe from its temperature, which is now an ambient 2.735 degrees above absolute zero.

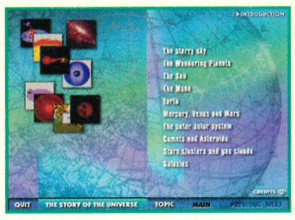


Here's the History of the Universe menu, which offers nine different animated lectures.



An amazing image of the sun, showing an enormous solar prominence, the sort of things that ruins your TV reception.

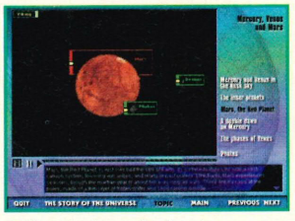
Stepping through the celestial zone



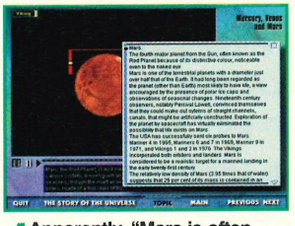
1 The main menu gives a choice of chapters. We're picking the one concerning planetary orbit.



2 All this animation stuff is great, but it makes more sense when you know it's from *Redshift*, another disc.



3 Here's the sub-chapter on Mars and its satellites. This animation shows how they orbit the planet.



4 Apparently, "Mars is often known as The Red Planet because of its distinctive colour". Amazing.

It's a glorious example of how to use the actual computing power of your PC, the processor, to manipulate raw data so that you can present it in an almost infinite variety of ways.

Displaying the night sky

Essentially *Redshift* is more than just a kind of astronomer's handbook, packed with all kinds of star and planet data. With it, you can choose to display this data in numerous different ways by actually constructing a virtual 3D night sky inside your computer. This helps you do any task you want – like picking out a particular constellation and having it drawn on the screen exactly as it will appear to you looking north from your house at 11pm this evening. You'd then be able to go outside and pick it out. Redshift makes it simple to do things like tracking the motion of Venus through the night sky. And to pep it up, there's lots of fun stuff, like flights to distant planets and fully mapped spinning globes that show where night falls.

While it seems somewhat odd that this review is talking a good deal about something that *Discover Astronomy* isn't, and which is in fact another disc altogether, there's a good reason for that. Furthermore, it would seem that Maris is, in a way, almost letting itself down with the click-on-a-subject-and-we'll-show-you-animations-words-and-narration style of *Discover Astronomy*. Because we know, from *Redshift*, that Maris can do it better.

The price of stardom

But then you remember that this disc sells for only £18 and realise that maybe this is because Maris knows damn well that these linear, audio narrative and animation-led discs are only worth about £18. And that is, after all, the price of a decent, colourful book on the subject.

This disc does also explain a number of quite complex things in a very neat fashion, using the animation beautifully as sort of moving diagrams, to help you understand complex matters like the celestial sphere (the 'globe' of the night sky) and how stars' positions are fixed using coordinates akin to latitude and longitude. We also learned what sidereal time was (and how to pronounce the word 'sidereal').

And if all the animations and narrated explanations aren't enough for you, at least there are plenty of pretty photographs to look at. That, let's be honest with ourselves, is probably all you would have done if you'd bought a coffee table book about astronomy anyway. ***(DN)***

PCR VERDICT

Clear, informative, cheap and fun, just like a good book on the subject. Nice price too.

8

CD REVIEW 56 ON THE DISC

If that's whet your appetite, then maybe we can offer you Skymap, a great shareware astronomy program.

Developer: Maris

Publisher: Maxis

Contact: 0171 4902333

Price: £17.99

Minimum system: 486, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD drive, Windows 3.1 or Windows 95

Booze Experts

Wine, Spirits and Beers uses spoken entries by several top drinking writers. Here are their credentials…

Michael Jackson – has written several books on beer and whisky, and made a TV documentary called The Beer Hunter, which also became a CD-ROM.

Rosemary George – a Master of Wine, journalist for She magazine, and author of the Bloomsbury Guide to Choosing Wine.

Charlie Bennett – runs Bennett's wines in Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire.

Roger Voss – freelance wine and spirits writer.

Andrea Gilles – the youngest and first female editor of the Good Beer Guide.

Casilda Grigg – Deputy Editor of the magazine Wine.

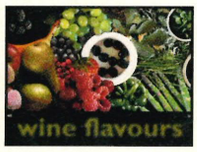
Michael Broadbent – Senior Director of Wine at Christies, and author on the subject.



The wine bar is the setting to pick if you want to find cognac, grappa, and wines both flat and bubbly.

WINE, SPIRITS & BEER

It missed our Booze feature by a month, but we're checking out Notting Hill's latest CD anyway... can it hold its drink?



The wine flavours screen is interesting. Click on the food you want your wine to resemble, and it tells you which wine to go out and get.



Wondering around in the library using QuickTime VR isn't much fun. Click the pictures to find out who the experts are.

Developer: Notting Hill

Publisher: Notting Hill

Contact: 0171 229 0592

Price: £39.95

Minimum System: 486DX/66, 8Mb RAM, SVGA, 8-bit sound card, double speed CD drive, Windows 3.1 or 95

Western society is into alcohol. Just look at the profits turned by brewers and distillers. So it shouldn't have been too hard for Notting Hill Multimedia to come up with an interesting disc full of diverse and interesting facts on the subject.

Instead, *Wine, Spirits & Beer* is generally uninspired – something of a surprise when you consider that numerous enthusiasts and experts were consulted during its making. Any expectation of enthusiasm in the proceedings is quickly dashed.

Navigate your way into the American bar, for instance, and by clicking around the setting you might come across a listing of beers. Select 'micro breweries' and you can hear a droning talk about brewpubs by the beer author Michael Jackson. His rambling is so slow and uninformative you'll be looking for a way to stop it. But you can't until you vanquish the screen using the 'back' button.



Christies' wine expert Michael Broadbent appears in an awful video clip on wine tasting. Too long, very choppy and out of synch.

Though some of the voices in other sections – like those of Rosemary George or Charlie Bennett – sound better, the disc is in stark contrast with the flamboyance of Microsoft's *Wine Guide* which has Oz Clarke.

Using *Wine, Spirits & Beer* would be better if it had more visual consistency. The start section is done in QuickTime VR. Pointing, clicking and dragging, you find your way to the disc's separate rooms, where different sections of information are presented. Enter the English pub, American bar or wine bar, however, and the style alters completely. Instead of being in 3D VR, the surroundings take on an oil-painted look.

Go in deeper, onto the drink information screens, and the background changes again, now to a bristly texture. Though these contain text boxes and occasional pictures of bottles, labels or glasses, a picture of a sumptuous pint or interesting drawing is a rare thing. You can't expand the photos, and there are no captions to say what things are.

VR-spin your way to the Library, and there's information about the speakers on the disc, plus wine and beer databases. With no indices or menus, the name of the wine, beer or its maker must be typed into a search box. Everything is hidden away, making the disc's real content unbrowsable. Try and find something a little unorthodox like Swindon's Arkells Brewery or the Kölsch beer style from Köln and you'll draw a blank. And even when you do find some text, what it tells is pretty unremarkable, in an ugly font and spread across a screen-wide box.

This CD-ROM could have encapsulated the satiating feeling of reaching for a cold lager on a hot summer afternoon, or conjured the heart-warming buzz of sipping a good malt whisky by the fire in a cosy country pub. Instead, *Wine, Spirits & Beer* fails on the flavour front, yet like the subject-matter it deals with, is uncannily good at instilling drowsiness. ***(GW)***

PCR VERDICT

Inaccessible, fragmented, lacking integrity of design and basically a great shame.

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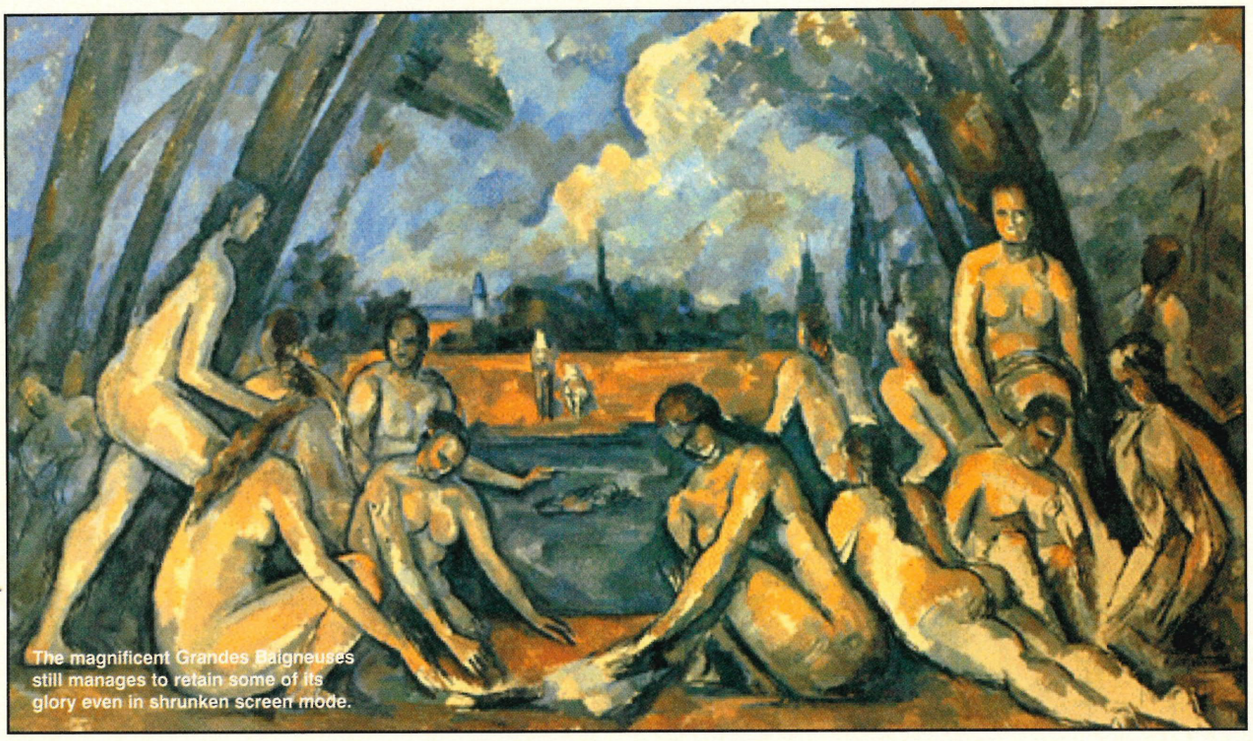
Going Mobile

The appearance in the mid-19th Century of paints in tubes as well as a network of railways made it much easier for painters to work outdoors, not only with their sketchbooks, but with folding easels, paints and brushes. Artists could now capture at first hand the fleeting variations of light on canvas.





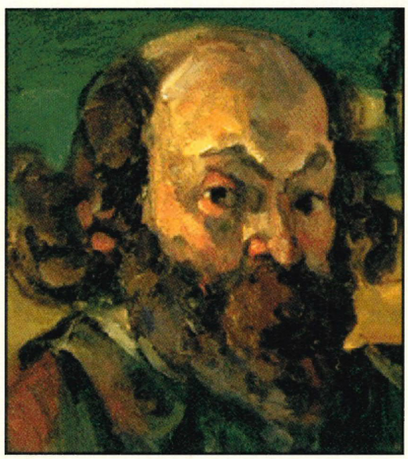
Nude mud wrestling in the fields of Provence? If it's art you can get away with it.



The magnificent Grandes Baigneuses still manages to retain some of its glory even in shrunken screen mode.

PAUL CEZANNE

"My women are beautiful," said Cezanne with little fear of contradiction. And the beauty was more than skin deep.



John Paul Cezanne, seen here doing his famous Salman Rushdie impersonation (or should that be impression?)



A full biography (well, fullish) takes you through Cezanne's life story with illustrations like this one of his hatter-turned-banker father.

Everyone's making a fuss about Cezanne at the moment. There's been an exhibition of his work at the Tate Gallery, comments aplenty about him in the press, and a patronising TV documentary on the man and his work. This new CD from Corbis, on the other hand, may sound pretentious with the title, *Paul Cezanne: Portrait of my World*, but happily it turns out to be quite the opposite.

Your guide to the disc is Cezanne himself, or at least somebody sounding suitably French, speaking with the requisite degree of passion. The first person narrative is dramatic and moving, sometimes even majestic. As the story unfolds there's a great deal of tenderness, especially when the narrator speaks of Cezanne's father. This hat maker turned banker was sure Paul's Bohemian spirit would lead him to death in destitution, but thanks to his provision, the artist was able to put all his energy into painting without financial worries.

Indeed, we're told a painter cannot master his craft until he is into his forties. Before then he should view and study works in museums. What makes the presentation work so well in this disc is the emotion in the narrative. But there's a lot more going on behind the scenes.

Corbis' first art gallery CD centred on the Barnes Foundation's impressionist collection in Philadelphia. It was a worthy effort, with a faithful reproduction of the gallery for you to roam around in. But this disc goes much further, giving you five environments to explore. There's Cezanne's studio, as you'd expect, with some of his poems, and letters and paintings to be analysed. Then there's his favourite bistro, where you can meet some of his friends and acquaintances. A museum gallery displays the work of Cezanne's contemporaries and you can hear his views on them. In the train station, you can catch up on the cultural aspects of the period before setting off to the countryside to bask in Cezanne's glorious landscapes.

A detailed biography makes interesting reading, but the thing that really makes all the parts of the CD gel is the way you can jump from one nugget of information to another. The ingenious QuickMove system shows you at a glance everything you've seen and suggests related sections which you may have missed.

Hundreds of paintings are here to view, complete with zoom facilities and all that jazz. But more to the point, the presentation brings the works of art to life and provokes feelings sadly lacking in most art collection discs and books. ***(MRR)***

Developer: Corbis

Publisher: Corbis

Contact: 0171 278 1387

Price: £49.99

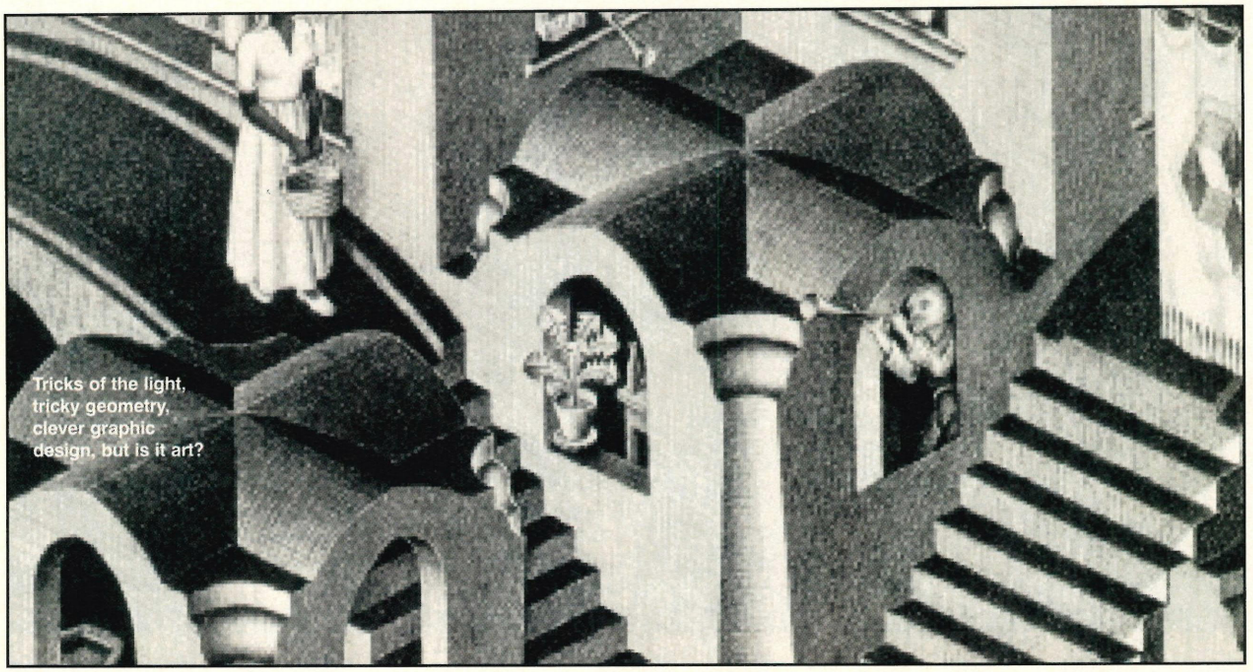
Minimum system: 486, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD drive, SVGA, mouse, Windows 95 or Window 3.1

PCR VERDICT

Finally, an art disc that manages to be inspiring yet down to earth. Deeply informative.

9

ESCHER INTERACTIVE


Tricks of the light, tricky geometry, clever graphic design, but is it art?

ESCHER THE MAN

MC Escher was born in 1898 and died in 1972, reaching the height of popularity in the 50s and 60s. Refusing to be drawn on whether the thrust of his work was artistic or mathematical, he is most famous for his complex designs of interlocking geometric patterns. Apart from his better known illustration work, he also created many wood-cut sculptures.



The catch phrase for this disc is 'Exploring the Art of the Infinite', but maybe it should have been 'Ever Decreasing Circles'.

Fitting, isn't it? While Corbis' disc on Cezanne is vibrant, this Escher Interactive has all the tedious symmetry and endless geometric patterns associated with the Dutch painter's work. In fact, Escher wasn't really a painter, he was more of a graphic artist, and while he wasn't desperately famous (not even a mention in last year's *Encarta*), his pictures of flocks of light and dark geese merging into each other, or staircases that join at impossible angles to produce illusions, seem to grace the walls of schools and colleges everywhere. With the current vogue for fractals and organic art, Escher's memory has undergone a computer enhancement, taking his reputation to a godfather-like status.

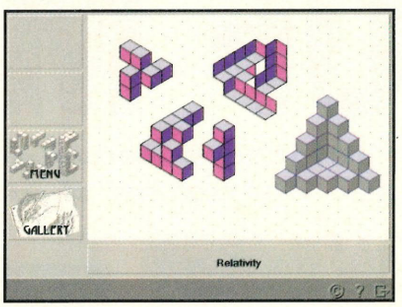
Thames and Hudson's disc on the life and works of this Dutch Renaissance Man epitomises of the impact of his paintings. Worthy, clever, but ultimately dull. Sure, it's fun to wrap your eyeballs around the perplexing and impossible imagery on the screen, but there's little in the painting to make you laugh or cry. Forget emotions, this is more about cleverness and logic. It's the sort of art Spock would enjoy.

The methodical approach to art is mirrored in the presentation of the disc itself, narrated by two Americans, one male and one female, who seem to be trying to outdo each other in their efforts to sound the most bored. This tone of indifference backs the various slide shows plastered over a uniformly grey backdrop.

The background information on the artist's life and works is delivered through photographs, narration and video clips, but sadly there's almost nothing in the way of text. You're told the unpronounceable name of the Dutch village where Escher was born, but in the absence of supporting text there's no way we can attempt to spell it for you.

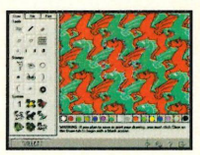
Where the disc scores better is in its fun elements. Mind games test your skill and perception in Escheresque picture quizzes and then there are all the required building blocks for creating your own Escher-style art. There's even a section for morphing images, though the pictures are very basic and morphing itself has been done to death over the last two or three years. Better additions are Animated Escher and Spheres which bring the artworks to animated life and make genuine use of the computer's abilities to add something fresh, yet relevant to the original pieces.

If you're into graphic arts rather than painting, then this disc has something to offer. But ultimately it's an expensive disc considering the lack of any detailed background text and the fact that it's confined to just one graphic artist. ***(MRR)***



Impossible Puzzles is the name of the game





Morphing options are very basic but the Tessellation Workshop is challenging.



The Spheres option gives you a big magnifying ball to roll over the images.



The Animated Escher section brings a few of the pictures to life in a genuinely new way.

PCR VERDICT

Some interesting inclusions, but overall rather dull and uninspiring. Expensive too.

5

Developer:	Thames and Hudson
Publisher:	Thames and Hudson
Contact:	0171 255 2767
Price:	£49.95

Minimum System: 486, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD-ROM drive, SVGA, mouse, Windows 95 or 3.1

Steinbeck: the Belly



"As a youngster, John was brash, stubborn, and lazy, and his misbehaviour was sometimes so persistent that he left his parents shaking their heads in exasperation. 'I don't know about John,' Mrs Steinbeck sighed on one occasion. 'He'll either be a genius or amount to nothing.' Nor was he a favorite with the neighbors. One of them described him as 'rotten-spoiled ... an overgrown kid with a big belly.' – Extract from The True Adventures of John Steinbeck: Writer, by Jackson J. Benson.



Meet Curley's wife, the only woman character in the play. But for heaven's sake, don't touch her hair.

Betty Field played an independent-minded Curley's wife in the 1939 Hal Roach film. Courtesy The John Steinbeck Collection, Stanford University Libraries.

OF MICE & MEN

First it was Kerouac, then Miller. Now we look at a CD about another canon of American literature – John Steinbeck.

Without doubt one of the finest works of twentieth century American literature, Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* is a tragic tale of two bindlestiffs (migrant farm hands) trying to earn an honest dollar in 30s California. Written in 1937, the novella focuses on the relationship between, Lennie a strong yet gentle simpleton, and George his caring friend, and is rich in poetic description and natural dialogue. Without giving too much away to those who haven't read it, the protagonists' dreams of owning their own farm and living "on the fatta of the lan'", as Lennie calls it, are shattered upon arriving at a new ranch.



The novel is approaching its tragic conclusion, and Penguin kindly provides us with a film clip to mark the moment. Not a dry eye in the house.

As with the Kerouac and Miller releases, Penguin has used one of the writer's best known works as the locus of a CD-ROM that also encompasses an array of biographical detail, literary criticism, historical background and audio-visual material. The standard of presentation is high, surpassing that of the Miller and Kerouac releases. Each chapter is preceded by a clip from the 1992 film adaptation starring John Malkovich and Gary Sinise. The live action host, Bindy the Bindlestiff outlines areas of interest as you make your way through the story.

Basically, the CD has four sections: the complete novel; a biography of the writer by Jackson Benson plus video interviews with Elaine Steinbeck; dossiers on the characters in the book with photographs and audio excerpts from the musical; and finally, a bindlestiff's diary providing a farm hand's account of life in the 30s with film footage from the period. To aid you through the mass of information, and enable you to get the most from the program, there is also a tools/help/index section, along with teacher's notes and a link to the *Of Mice and Men* Web site if you have a Web browser.

This is another more than competent release by Penguin. It will complement classroom teaching, while still interesting home users. *Of Mice and Men* the book has enthralled readers for many years. The CD will undoubtedly draw more into the moving fictional world of John Steinbeck, where the American dream of freedom and prosperity for all is consistently tested. ***(JT)***

Kerouac and Miller

We reviewed A Jack Kerouac ROMnibus in PC Review issue 54 awarding it six out of ten. Arthur Miller's The Crucible on CD-ROM was reviewed in issue 55, receiving five out of ten. Both of these discs are also by Penguin.

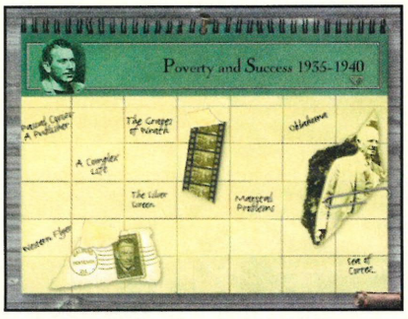
Developer: Byron Preiss

Publisher: Penguin

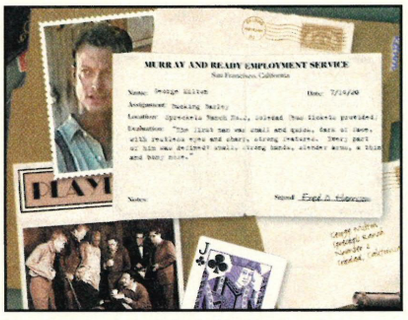
Contact: 0171 416 3000

Price: £49.99

Minimum system: 486, 8Mb RAM, 5Mb hard disk space, Windows 3.1 or 95, SVGA, Sound Blaster



Just one of the timeline diaries charting Steinbeck's life. Biographical essays, video commentary and photographs abound.

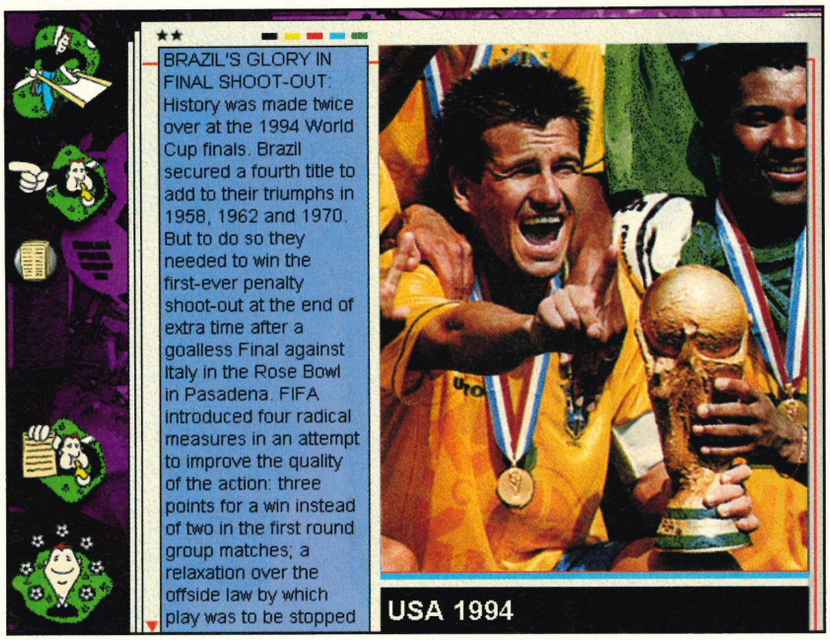


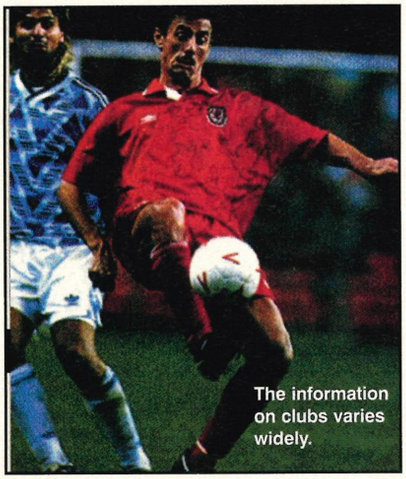
Here we are presented with the dossier on George which includes an essay, letters written by Steinbeck and sound clips.

PCR VERDICT

Another very good CD from Penguin. Useful for teaching, but expensive for the home user.

7





Highlight of International competitions is, of course, the World Cup, with a separate chapter on each tournament.

THE ULTIMATE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOCCER

Just in time for the European Championships, here's a huge tome of footy information on CD-ROM. Result?

Football meets multimedia? A far cry from cotton jerseys, small boys in the park, jumpers for goalposts, or the enduring image of three-and-in play, the Brazilians of 1970, Pele holding it aloft...

But, no. It's not 'a far cry from...' because that's all here in the *Ultimate Encyclopedia of Soccer*. Except perhaps the small boys. The entire world of football is split among six main sections.

Take, for instance, Pele and those 1970 Brazilians. There's a Player Profiles section, with literally hundreds (probably about two hundred, actually) of players profiled. From Andre 'Trello' Abegglen, who with his brother Max (nicknamed, inexplicably, Xam) formed the striking partnership for Grasshoppers Zurich in the 20s and 30s, to Andoni Zubizaretta, the great Spain and Barcelona keeper. Including Pele.

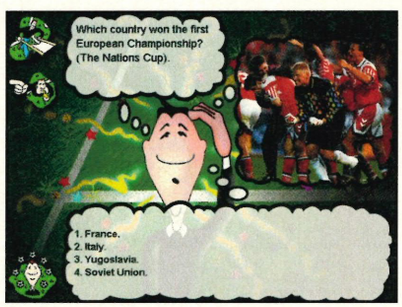
There's the Competitions section, in which you can review the Club, Continental or International competitions of the world. That's everything from the Copa America to that 1970 World Cup victory, complete with text, pictures and video footage.

There's the Soccer Nations section, with profiles of national teams like Brazil. And there's the Clubs section, within which you can find out more about the history of Pele's club, Santos.

There's also a Video Vault which you can browse to find Pele video clips, and finally, for 11 of the greats like Pele, Di Stefano, Best and Charlton, there's a special TV Presentations chapter where narration (featuring the voice of old Gabriel Clarke), full-screen pictures and video clips gel into little documentaries about each.

And that's not all, because besides the six main sections, there's also a Trivia Quiz (which is actually very good fun) and an extra section that squeezes in all sorts of stuff they couldn't fit on the main menu like rules, tactics, a slightly rubbish soccer timeline, stadiums and the Greatest Games of All Time.

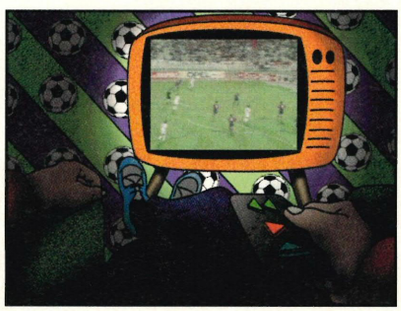
So this disc is simply packed with amazing football facts, figures and photos. There are just two things that let it down. One: the presentation, which has tried in places to be innovative but just isn't quite right. It simply doesn't help you around with sufficient ease and is not as pleasant to use as a good footy book or video tape. And two: the technology. Because the video clips are, as ever, no substitute for the real thing. Some day, the technology will be there to include proper video in an interactive product, and then a disc like this will be a world-beater. But not today. ***(DN)***



The quiz is actually very good fun. Know the answer to this one? Eh?



The European Cup is sufficiently important to have three separate chapters devoted to it. This one covers the most recent period, with Milan dominant.



When a video clip is offered, you click on the camera icon to view it on this screen, with a pause facility.

Quiz Question

What did Liverpool win in 1977 and Manchester United win in 1991? (Answer: the European Super Cup.)

Oriental Footy

One of the TV Presentations is about the history of football, and includes a lot of material from the excellent FIFA-authorised three-video set on the history of footie which was released at the time of the 1990 World Cup, with all sorts of surprising stuff like football in ancient China with footballs that look exactly like a modern one, and Japanese Su-Tsu priests playing religious keepie-uppie.

The European Cup

Started in 1955 when a French former international footballer who was then editor of sporting paper L'Equipe, Gabriel Hanot, took exception to English claims that Wolverhampton Wanderers were the best team in Europe because they'd recently beaten Honved and Spartak Moscow in friendlies. Seeing as the De Stefano-inspired Real Madrid won the first five competitions, from 1956-60, he was probably right.

PCR VERDICT

Predictably, a disc of two halves. Superb material, but less than perfect presentation.

6

Developer:	Pearson New Entertainment
Publisher:	Pearson New Entertainment
Contact:	0171 331 3920
Price:	£29.99

Minimum system: 486/DX2, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD-ROM drive, sound card, Windows 3.1 or 95

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What the press says . . . .

"The ScreenBeat Pro 50 . . . supports its high frequencies with a more solid and convincing middle range which shows the benefit of its higher-power amplifiers . . . a good all round choice, edging into the true high performance bracket . . . ".
PC PLUS MAGAZINE

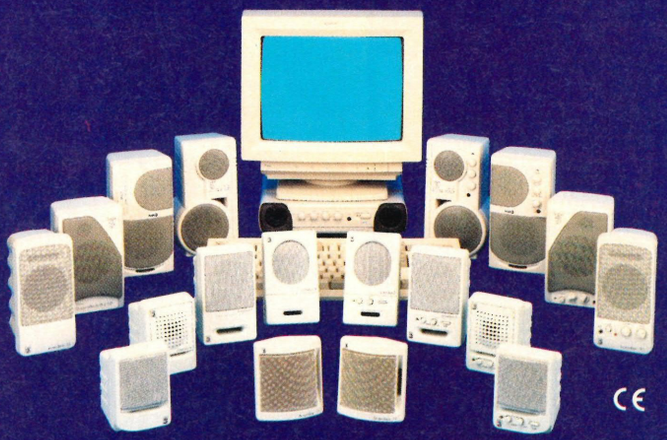
"Good sounds for such small speakers, and a very reasonable price — 90% . . . "
CD-ROM USER MAGAZINE

"Priced and performing way above the other models in the test . . . " *CD-ROM MAGAZINE*

The Wider Range of Experience . . . .

The ScreenBeat Speaker range integrates successfully with today's multimedia systems and advanced software. All speakers are magnetically shielded, and come in a variety of sizes and power with every model in the ScreenBeat range offering outstanding performance and value for money. Prices from £8 to £150.

. . . enjoy the experience

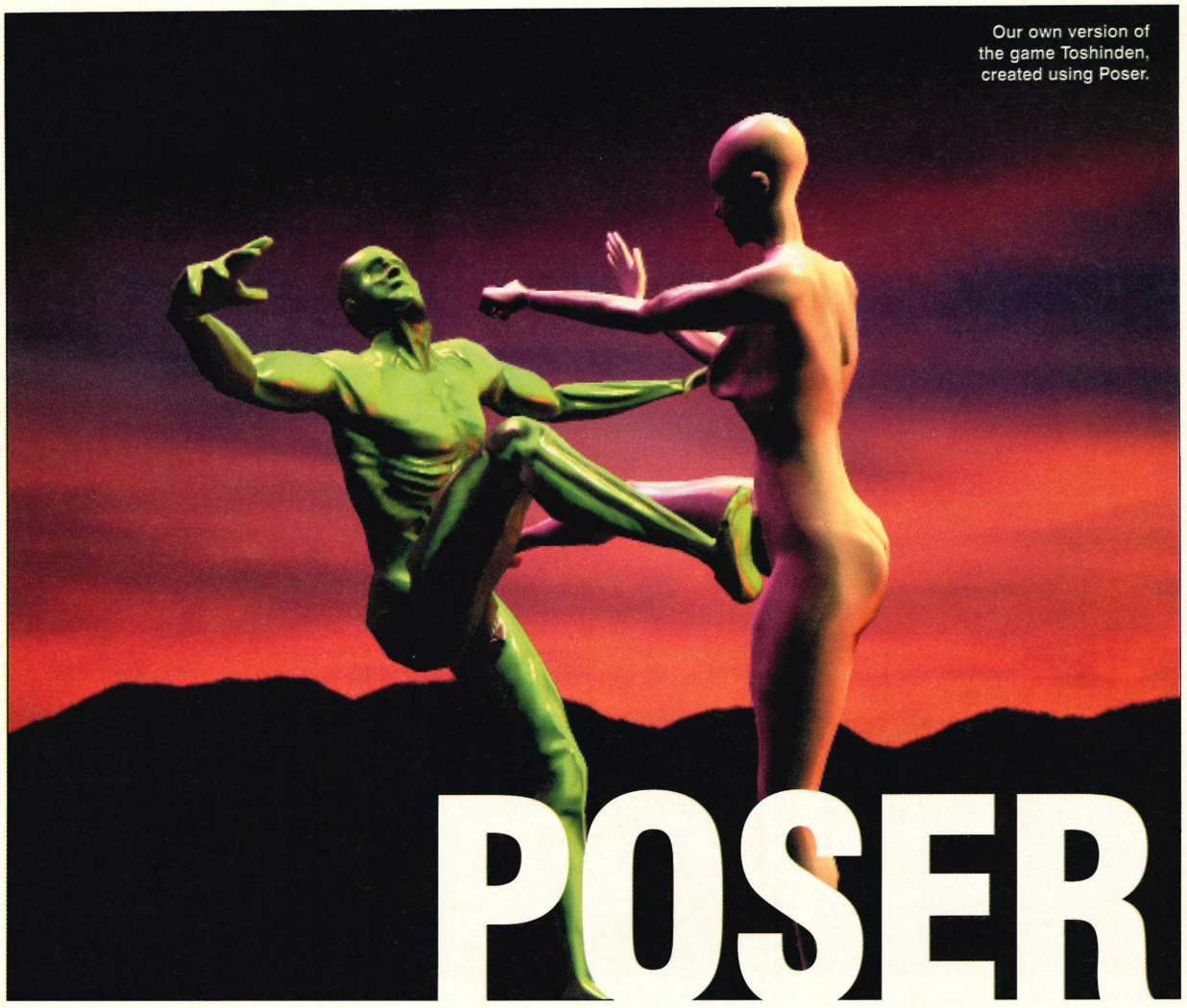


Logic 3

For multimedia speakers, the choice is only one — **ScreenBeat**

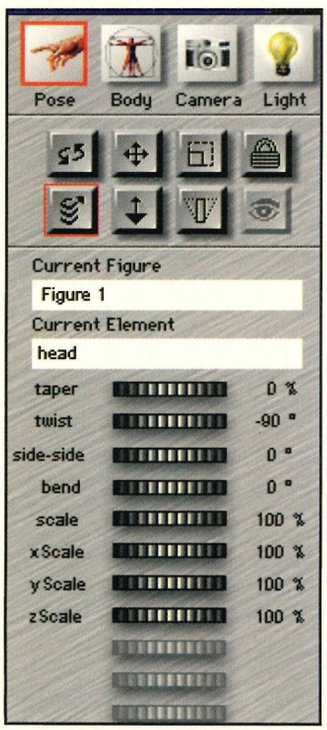
For further information contact our sales department in Wembley, UK on
Telephone number + +44 (0)181 902 2211 Fax number + +44 (0)181 903 6625

SPECTRA VIDEO



POSER

No longer do you need Michelangelo's skills to come up with realistic looking people. Poser has arrived.



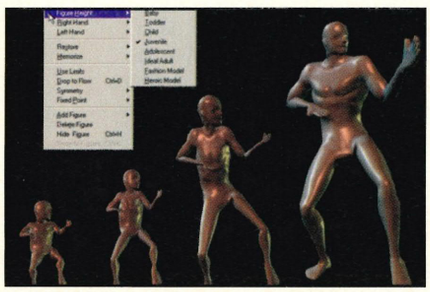
The tool palette, used for precise adjustment of the figure's position.

PC REVIEW ESSENTIAL

Being a decent artist is not an easy thing. Some people appear to have a natural talent for drawing, granted, but even some of the greatest artists in history had to spend years studying anatomy and sketching in order to accurately draw the human body. Some of them became so obsessed with muscular structures they even cut up dead bodies.

The problem is that the soft, varying curves and complex angles of skin muscle and bone that makes up your body don't lend themselves at all well to the complicated business of drawing believable perspective and shadowing. It can be hard enough just squeezing four fingers and a thumb fingers onto a hand, and that's before you've even considered such concepts as foreshortening, vanishing points or depth cuing. Fortunately for us, Fractal Designs doesn't think it's fair that only the very talented should have access to the joys of drawing the human form, so the company programmed long and hard to sculpt *Poser*, the human modelling tool that anyone can use. ▶

"Poser is a tremendous innovation, helping to accelerate the learning process for true artists"



You can alter a character's size stature. Here is the range of basic options available.



Running woman is one of numerous pre-defined poses included in the library.

THE WORKS



We've changed the name of our applications and hardware reviews section to The Works, and we've bundled more stuff into it to boot. This month sees the first in a series of features all about upgrading different aspects of your PC. If you need to know more about putting more RAM into your machine, go straight to page 112.

Of course, we're still reviewing all the top new practical software in these pages and first up is Poser, an astounding art program. Another interesting package we're looking at is MindLink over on page 97. It's meant to help you strenghten your thinking. Finally, if you find your CD-ROM drive is woefully slow these days, speed over to our review of D-Time on page 92. Have a good month.

Mat Broomfield
pcreview@futurenet.co.uk

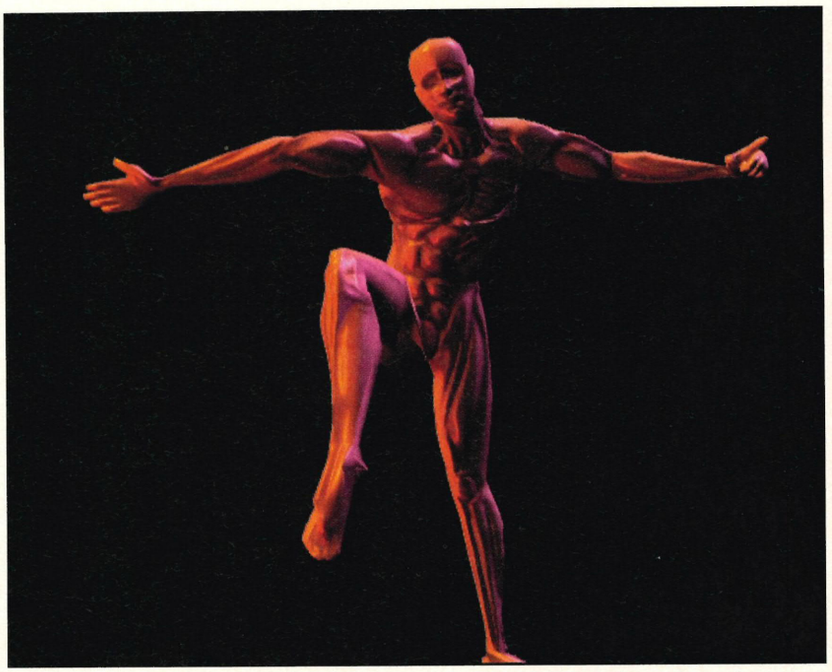
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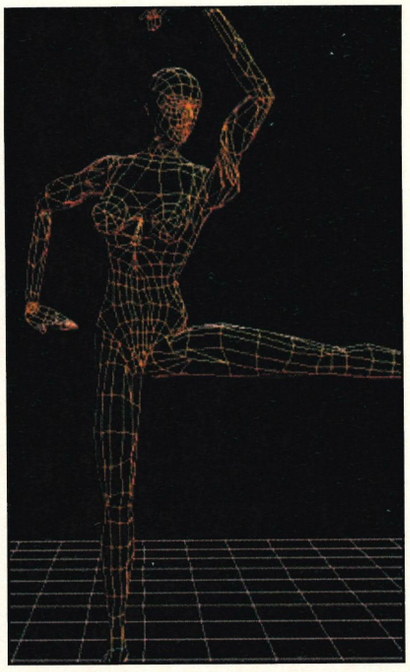
Painter 4.0



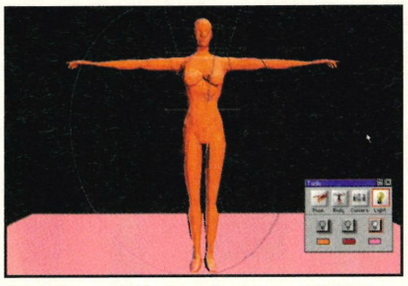
Fractal Designs is no stranger to the creativity business. The company's highly regarded Painter 4.0 program is a natural media painting package containing some brilliant texturing, a huge variety of brush stroke simulations and even a mosaic feature so you can make artworks just like the ancient Romans.



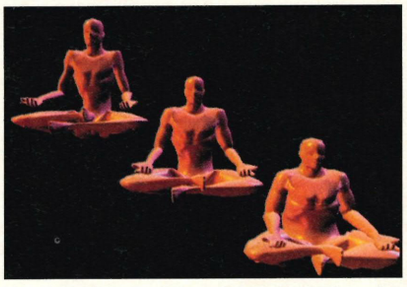
Time to party with dancing twisty muscle boy. No-one would pose like this, not even for money, but our complicated figure here took a minute or two to create. Note the highly detailed musculature and the lighting set-up with proper shadowing.



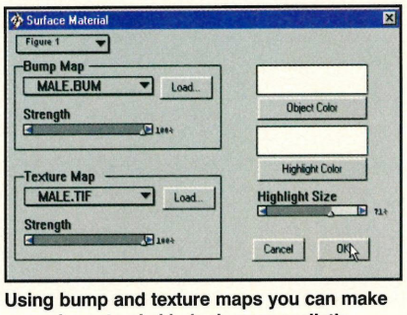
The more powerful your PC, the better model-mode you can work in. This is the lit wire-frame mode, which the second most detailed.



Here, the ground plane, horizon, vanishing point and shoulder/hip guides are all on.



The three little Buddhas demonstrate Poser's ability to alter the amount of flesh on a body.



Using bump and texture maps you can make your characters' skin look more realistic.

▶ Fractal is already internationally renowned for *Painter*, an unrivalled natural media art package. It's therefore not such great a surprise to see them releasing a 21st Century version of the artist's dummy, but when you realise just how powerful it is, you may still stand agape with wonder and anticipation...

Artistic limitations

Unless they're exceptionally talented, artists have nearly always used some form of model when drawing, painting or sculpting the human form. The wealthier and luckier ones may have used patient, real-life models, while the rest have had to make do with manikins, or even photographs. But whichever method an artist chooses, there are always limitations. Live models aren't always available at a moment's notice, manikins, though properly proportioned, have no flesh on them. Photographs are two dimensional and immobile. *Poser* addresses all of these issues and more.

When you load the program, you're faced with a half-screen outline of a man, arms outstretched on either side. The figure is roughly drawn, and his features appear only in the crudest of detail. Not really an auspicious start, but it doesn't take long before you start to discover some of the program's true potential.

The figure you encounter on start up is the representation of an electronic artist's dummy. You can twist and turn every part of the model, just as if it were a real person. In fact, you can twist and turn the dummy in more ways than is possible even with the most flexible of people. The outline is just one of six model modes, and is the one which strikes the best balance between redraw speed, and image clarity on lower spec machines.

If you own a Pentium there's no reason why you shouldn't work with a full 3D, flat-shaded model. Which leads us on to a very important point. *Poser* is at all times internally manipulating a full 3D data set, so correct perspective is accurately realised. Furthermore, because *Poser* utilises 3D data, there's no reason why you can't export it for use in your favourite ray tracing or 3D graphics program.

When you start working on a model, you can specify a number of parameters like gender and body type. The quick menu offers a choice between male and female models, stick man representations, skeletons, manikins and the fully-fleshed body. You can then further choose the physique and size of the character, ranging from infant, through adolescent to adult. And to cap it off, you can even select the muscle-bound superhero physique, which would seem a great inclusion for comic artists.

Bend and manipulate

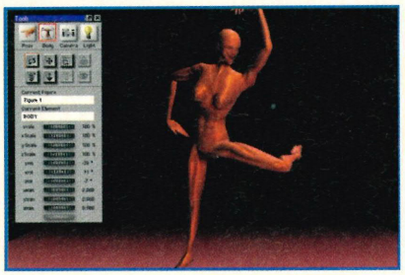
Poser gives you three movement tools – move, rotate and bend. Each of these tools is accessed through the globe, translated and joint-by-joint modes of movement. In global mode, any movement applies to the entire figure. This is useful for positioning the form relative to other elements of a scene such as props or other figures. It's also a quick alternative to repositioning a camera.

In joint-by-joint mode, each moveable

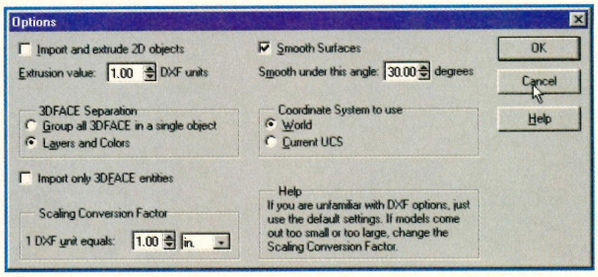
"Sometimes, unrealistic wrinkles of skin appear at joints, especially when you're moving them to their natural limits"

Four steps to a great image

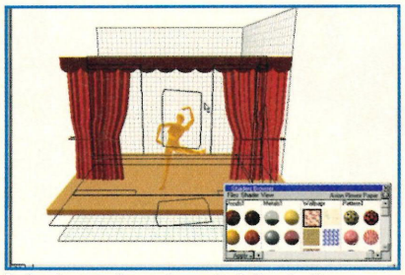
Here's a quick walkthrough demonstrating how simple it is to make a figure using *Poser*, then export it to a 3D rendering or ray tracing package. *Poser* will be used to come up with a realistic looking ballerine, and we're going to use our ray tracing package to put her on the stage. Read on.



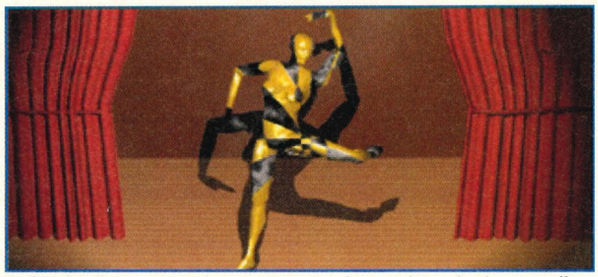
1. Create a 3D character using Poser, then export it as a 3D DXF model.



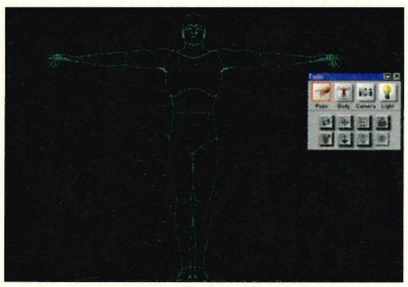
2. Load your ray tracing package and import the Poser DXF into your existing scene.



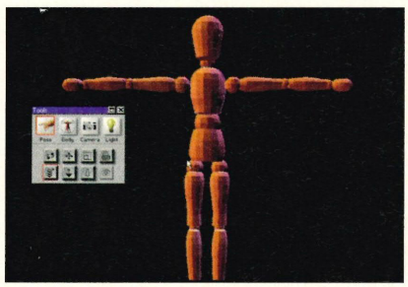
3. Assign surface characteristics to the model, and position it precisely.



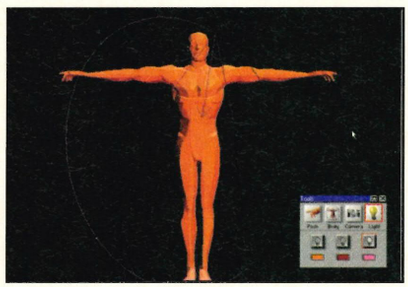
4. Render the scene using your ray tracing package for best quality. And we're left with a splendid pirouetting model.



Here's your first view of Poser, a digital figure-modelling tool of surprising power.



Purists can always revert to a manikin. This one has the proportions of a female model.



To bring out the best in muscle detail, you can set up multiple lights.

body part (except fingers and toes), can be moved independently of the rest of the body. Naturally, anatomical joins still apply, so parts can't literally be torn from their host bodies. Apart from that, you can do anything, moving body parts far beyond their normal ranges of movement. This absence of restrictions is useful for modelling cartoon-esque motions. However, if you find that level of freedom a bit counterproductive, you can always switch on Limit mode, where limbs can only move within defined limits which you can set yourself.

This is particularly useful when using the Translation method of model manipulation. Unlike the joint-by-joint mode, where each bit is independent, Translate applies movement forces to each joint naturalistically. That means that if you pull one arm down, the shoulder follows, the upper part of the chest bends, the opposite shoulder rises and the other arm protrudes slightly. This method of manipulation is certainly the most realistic, and it greatly simplifies the simulation of really complicated positioning while retaining a proper sense of balance.

Flexible output

When you've created a model, you can perform a full render. *Poser* automatically creates lighting, and you can add a back-ground if you so desire. There are two rendering modes: muscle render and smooth render. The former creates a deeply sculptured character which looks much like a highly-tuned body builder. The underlying physique remains the same, but the muscle curves are greatly exaggerated. The alternative, smooth render, is perhaps a little too smooth, but is more representative of the shape of an averagely built person.

To help you position your characters, a number of props are available including stairs, a ball and a cane. These can be positioned wherever you like. You can also incorporate multiple figures of different sizes and shapes in a single scene.

Poser also features an advanced user dialogue box that incorporates a library of extras including various lighting set-ups and different camera positions. This section enables you to add (or remove) up to 50lbs of virtual weight to your figure, making it look chubby or skinny as the whim takes you. Serious artists might also appreciate the library of pre-posed characters, each of which adopts a different, and quite interesting stance.

The program's not perfect. Sometimes unrealistic wrinkles of skin appear on the characters' joints, especially when you're moving them beyond their natural limits. It would also have been nice to have a tween option, where the program generates intermediate stages between one user-defined pose and another. Even better would have been an option to link parts of a figure to props, other figures or different bits of its own anatomy, so that the translate mode could be applied to multiple figures or objects simultaneously.

Despite these gripes, Poser is a tremendous innovation, helping to accelerate anatomical study for true artists while greatly simplifying the creative process for the rest of us. Its ability to export images as 3D models means that you can quickly create characters for inclusion in your 3D worlds. As the human figure is among the hardest of forms to accurately render, this is a huge bonus. Poser is a lot of fun to use in its own right, but when used as a means to an end it becomes simply magical. It's easy to learn and instantly accessible. An excellent piece of software. ***(MB)***

PCR VERDICT

A flexible, powerful tool that's as useful to the seasoned professional as it is to the day-one artist.

9

Fractal Design

For more information on Poser and other Fractal Design software, as well as a wonderful gallery of images, log on to: http://unix.fractal.com

Developer: Fractal Designs

Publisher: Fractal Designs

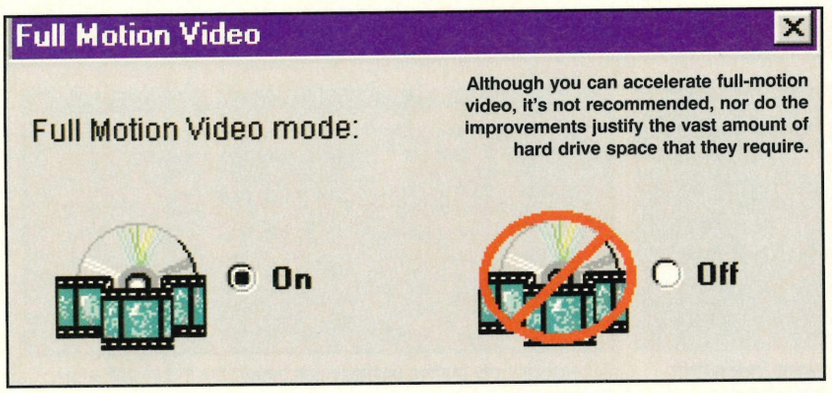
Contact: 0181 358 5857

Price: £104.85

Minimum System: 486, 8Mb RAM, Windows 95, 15Mb hard disk space, SVGA graphics

CD Speed

Working using a similar principle to that of D-Time is one of its main competitors, CD Speed, which is produced by Databecker. This program also requires about 20Mb of hard disk space to use for buffering. It sells for about £30 at the moment, but there isn't yet a Windows 95 version of it.



D-Time 95

Even if you own the fastest CD drive on the market, you can significantly enhance its performance. Here's how.

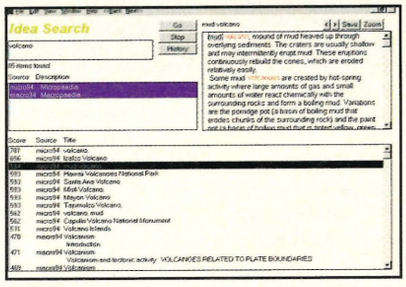
We live in impatient times. A few extra seconds waiting for a program to load can become intolerable. Multiply that by the number of times you load files from CD-ROM, and you'll soon realise that hours of your life are trickling away as your CDs whirl in the drive. You can't completely do away with waiting, but you can minimise it.

D-Time is a software accelerator that works with most drives and can speed things up by 1000%. Unlike the hardware it enhances, the program won't be surpassed by faster model every six months. It's designed to last, and will work with all foreseeable drives, provided they're recognised by Windows 95.

Ballard Synergy is protective about exactly how the program works, but it seems to act as a glorified drive buffer, operating in a similar way to hardware caches. When installed, it speed-checks your CD-ROM and hard drives, calculating an expected performance gain based on your fastest hard drive. It incorrectly identified our quad speed as a double speed, then said that it could give the performance of a 44 speed drive.

The first time you run a CD after installing *D-Time*, you'll see no improvement, but with subsequent reads, transfer times will decrease. The program learns as it's used, and each time you read a specific CD it updates the profile it has built of that title. It utilises the profile to copy the most often accessed data to hard disk to minimise data access bottlenecks.

We tested the system on a variety of files, including encyclopedias, video animations and high res pictures. Performance varies wildly from one data type to another. High res images showed the least improvement, with a saving of less than 10%. When doing complex searches in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, we saw time savings of 300%. As for the video files, they were odd. Running the same file ten times, replay became smoother and smoother, but then suddenly pauses started appearing again, demonstrating that disruptive CD access was occurring.



Programs such as Encyclopedia Britannica can gain the greatest benefits from D-Time. During a complex search, waiting time fell to a third of its previous level.

D-Time requires a hard drive buffer in order to work. 20MB is the bare minimum size, although 30 to 50Mb is better. The buffer size required depends upon the titles you're regularly using, but it's possible that you may need a buffer as large as 150 Mb for optimum performance. This size is user-definable, choose a smaller setting and performance suffers.

Ballard Synergy claims this hard drive usage is balanced by the fact that you can run most software straight from CD. If your hard drive is slow and your CD fast, *D-Time* is of limited use, but to everyone else, it's a cheap alternative to a new CD drive. ***(MB)***

Developer: Ballard Synergy

Supplier: Roderick Manhattan

Contact: 0181 875 4444

Price: £46.95

Minimum system: 386, 8Mb, CD drive, Windows 95, 20Mb uncompressed hard disk space

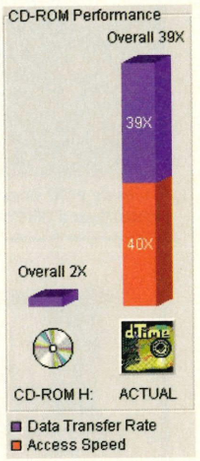
PCR VERDICT

D-Time makes your CD-ROM faster, and doesn't need to be upgraded when you change your drive.

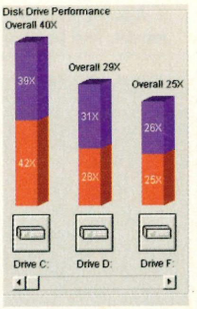
7

Four steps to a faster CD ROM

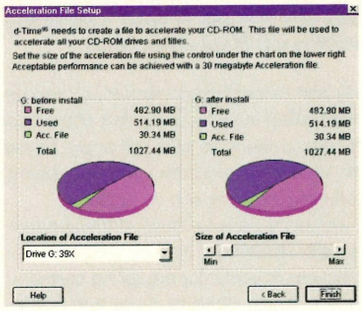
Here's a quick walthrough showing how you'd use D-Time to speed up your drive.



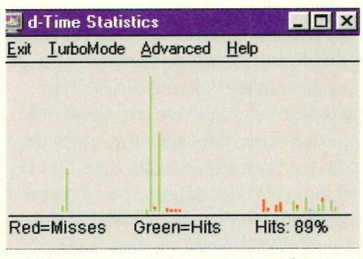
1 Start by measuring the performance of your CD-ROM drive. This figure is a rating based upon both data transfer speed and access time.



2 Now measure the speed of your hard drives. The faster the drive, the better the potential gains in CD performance. If you only have a very slow hard drive, the program's not for you.



3 The next stage is to specify the hard drive that will hold the D-Time buffer, and determine the amount of space to be allocated to it. 30-50 megabytes will do for most users.



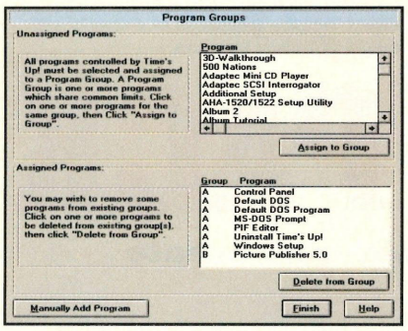
4 After restarting the computer, the program is installed. This monitor shows it in action. The green lines show that D-Time has avoided reading the CD. The red bits show slower, CD-ROM accesses. Any rating above 80% means major speed improvements.

DIGITAL CHAPERONES

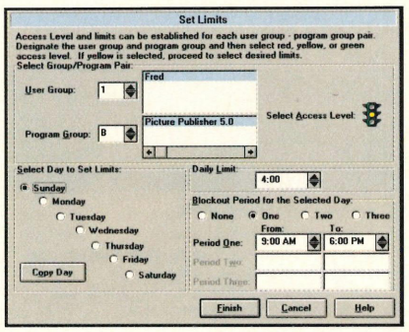
If you're concerned that your children are spending too much time on the computer, here are a couple of programs to help you regulate their use of it. But are they any good?

Time's Up

This Windows program enables you to restrict program access, set overall usage and individual program time limits. It works by attaching limits to individual program info files. Because certain programs such as Control Panels, File Manager and DOS allow the experienced user to circumvent the program's protection, they can only be accessed by you.



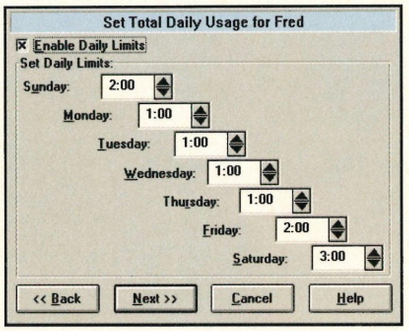
Create program groups and set security levels for the applications in each group, preventing your kids from getting to the dangerous ones.



If you merely want to stop your kids spending too long playing games, you can limit their daily usage of specific programs.

You create an individual profile for each user, setting usage limits. You might exclude Fred from using your comms software during peak times, or limit Jane to two hours computing daily. You could allow everyone unrestricted overall access, whilst limiting the amount of time that they can spend using particular programs or games.

Chances are, however, teenagers have a better idea of how to disable the program than you. And, it doesn't control DOS access either. By rebooting and skipping the start-up files, a moderately competent user can easily disable the program.



You can use Time's Up to set the amount of time that your kids or students can use the computer for each day.

For the imposition of program and time limits upon unsophisticated users, *Time's Up* is a good idea. However, the program hasn't been implemented with sufficient security to make it useful across the board. ***(MB)***

PCR VERDICT

Computer literate kids will know enough to get around these security facilities.

3

Developer: Fresh Software
Publisher: Fresh Software
Contact: 0171 875 4444
Price: £19.95
Minimum system: 4MB, 386, Windows, 5MB hard disk, VGA

Safer Posture

Whether or not you think too much computer time is bad for you or your children, you can c ertainly improve your environment while you're at the keyboard. Ionisers counteract the air-drying effect of monitors, whilst anti-reflective screen covers can reduce glare. Both are potential headache causers. Correct posture is critical in avoiding back problems later on. Try to use a chair that prevents you from slouching. Most important of all, try to take a short break away from the key-board every hour. Repetitive strain injury accounts for millions of hours off work each year, and can lead to permanent hand, arm and wrist damage.

KidSecure

The second of our security programs is for Windows 95 only and works in a different manner to *Time's Up*. Rather than imposing usage time limits, it restricts the programs that people have access to. Each user is given access to rooms in a house, and by clicking on objects within the rooms, they can load the various programs.

This approach is extremely intrusive because it forces you to surrender many of the features that make Windows 95 so appealing, such as the task bar and program menu. Furthermore, virtual offices, arcades and bedrooms are fine for the kids, but adults will quickly become irritated.

As with *Time's Up*, the program is flawed because experienced users can still get to DOS and tamper with the underlying code. In fact, on one occasion, the mere process of restarting in DOS mode was enough to damage the installation files and render them useless.

KidSecure is pretty program for kids, but it distances them from a proper computing environment. If you're a parent, you may consider it worth the personal inconvenience in order to protect your children. ***(MB)***



Click on the various objects within a room to load associated programs or documents. Adults may find this approach stifling.

PCR VERDICT

If you want to dedicate your computer to your kids, you won't mind the garish graphics here.

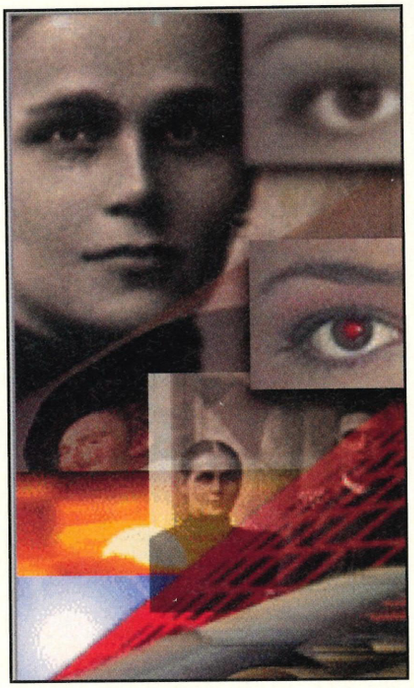
4

Developer: Phoenix
Publisher: Alpha Software Corperation
Contact: 01752 895100
Price: £35.20
Minimum system: 8Mb, 486DX, CD-ROM, Windows 95, VGA, 3Mb hard disk space

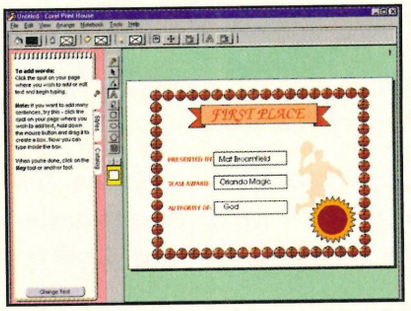
PC REVIEW ESSENTIAL

Wizards

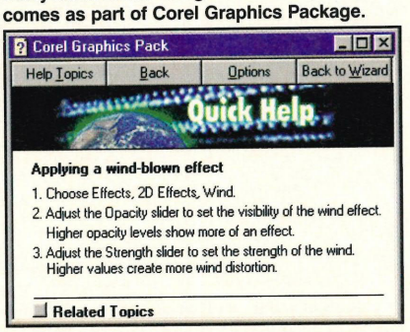
Wizards, like those found in Corel Graphics, are a wonderful way of cutting corners. Rather than having you specify and create your documents or objects they do all the hard work for you. By simply asking you questions they let you concentrate on the real work. One day a Wizard will produce PC Review... probably.



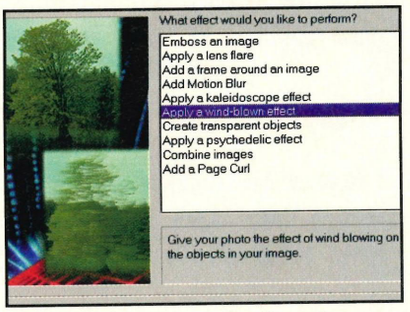
An assortment of overlaying, transparent and softening effects make for an artistic feel.



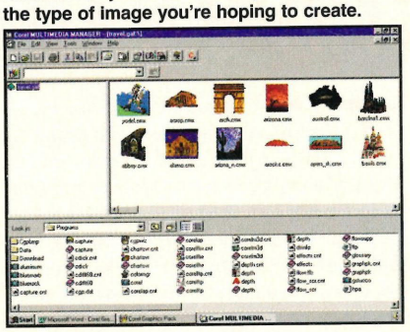
You can quickly make cards, certificates and many other items using Print House, which comes as part of Corel Graphics Package.



Or it will complete the job for you, leaving you simply to customise the near-finished work in whatever way pleases you.



A program is loaded, along with another Wizard. You just answer the questions about the type of image you're hoping to create.

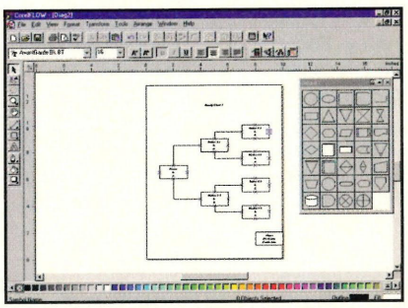


Here the Multimedia Manager is used to select from the thousands of pieces of clip media that come included.

COREL GRAPHICS PACK

Using Corel Graphics Pack even PC novices can create professional work in minutes.

Over the past few years, software companies have realised the importance of wizards, user-friendly short cuts that guide you through a creative procedures. Now, Corel has taken the concept forward with this a suite of graphics programs all linked by wizards. Even a beginner can create impressive documents and presentations in minutes. Although you can load each program individually if you prefer, the wizards will create images, while you just answer a series of questions.



The program will tell you in detail how to create the effect you're after using the menus and tools provided.

Corel is best known for *CorelDraw!*, a suite of graphics programs aimed at the professional. It is a cut down version of this which forms the heart of the *Corel Graphics. Draw*, however, the vector drawing program in *CorelDraw!* has been replaced in this budget package by *Print House*. This lacks most of the sophisticated tools found in *Draw*, but is powerful enough for average users. Most are unlikely to require more than the rudimentary vector drawing tools, and will find the 25,000 pieces of clip art, 1000 photos and thousands of document templates more than satisfy their needs. After all, why waste time drawing if someone else has already done the job for you? *Print House* may be disappointing, as the review in our May issue revealed, but it's only one part of a more comprehensive package.

The next big inclusion is *PhotoPaint 6*, a full version of the top-rated bitmap and photo-editing program. For every failing in *Print House*, you can find a matching superlative to describe this flexible program. It's suitable for all levels of experience and can output professional images.

In addition to *Photo Paint* you'll find *Corel Presents*, *Corel Flow*, *Corel Depth*, *Corel Multimedia Manager*, *Corel Motion* and a cluster of Internet tools, including *Home Page Author*. *Presents* is a multimedia presentation tool ideal for creating slide-shows and interactive demos. *Corel Flow* is a technical drawing package designed for creating charts, calendars, diagrams and so on. There's even a section where you can make play-charts to help you plan your sporting tactics, whether it's football, basketball or frisbee soccer. *Corel Depth* is useful for taking two dimensional drawings and text, and extruding them into 3D for that extra bit of impact. *Corel Motion 3D* is an animation tool that can be used to bring life to your static vector graphics. *Multimedia Manager* enables you to catalogue all your multimedia material, ranging from drawings and photos to sound samples and text documents.

Whether you want to make a Web page, design a card or edit a photo for commercial output, this suite provides the tools you need to do the job. ***(MB)***

Developer: Corel

Publisher: Channel Market

Contact: 01703 812755

Price: £116.34

Minimum system: 486, 8Mb RAM, CD drive, Windows 95, 20 Mb hard disk space, VGA

PCR VERDICT

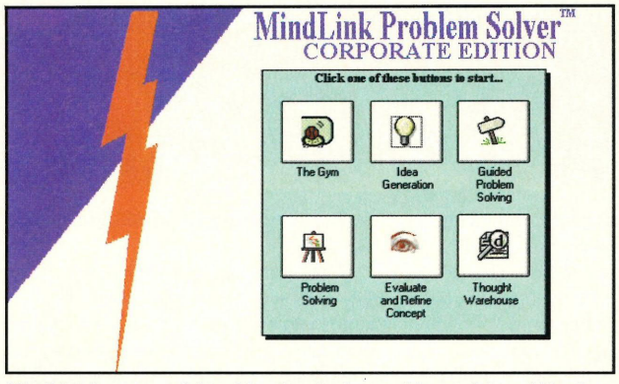
A comprehensive assortment of programs to fulfil the needs of most amatuer users.

9

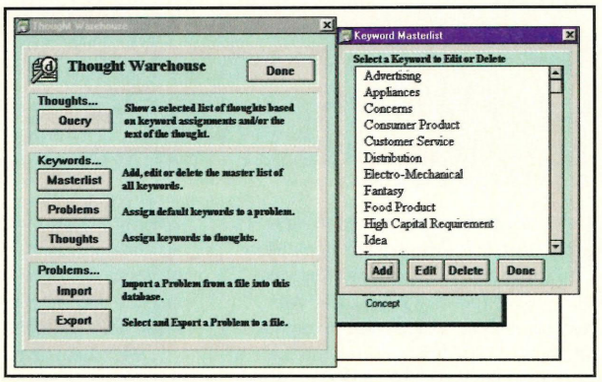
Why waste time drawing if someone else has already done the job for you?

MindLink

Expand the power of your mind. Learn to think like a winner. MindLink helps you to be all that you can be.



MindLink is a powerful tool for developing problem solving skills via lateral thinking. The benefits can be applied to all areas of life.



You can store your best ideas in the Idea Warehouse. From here you can access them time and again when you need inspiration.

Successful people, if you think about it, generally share a common ability: they can use their brains. *MindLink Corporate Edition* is a program that tries to promote creative and unrestricted thinking, thus helping you use your brain more successfully.

If you can get that little voice in your head to stop saying, "You can't do that because..." and start saying, "Here's another possible way to do that," you can be far more productive, and you'll have a better, more positive outlook on life. *MindLink* helps you to teach your inner self to find alternative routes through seemingly impassable situations. It does so using a variety of exercises and also provides a series of routines that may be applied to numerous real-world problems.

The Gym is where you go to perform a mental warm-up. One interesting exercise asks you to name several ways that a specified object can be used, and several in which it could never be used. The next stage then takes your second list, and asks you to find ways that the object can used in situations where you said it couldn't be used. The purpose of is to break down preconceived ideas and open your mind to a greater range of possibilities. Whilst wholly undisciplined thinking may be counter-productive, disciplined thinking free from preconceptions is positively advantageous.

The main bulk of *MindLink* is dedicated to solving specific problems. There are four sections designed to this end, each approaching the objective from a slightly different angle, enabling you to choose more than one module in order to generate a broader variety of ideas. Key to all of these different approaches is the Trigger. The program starts by getting you to express and clarify your problem, along with a wish list or problem solving ideas. It then creates a Trigger situation which may provoke previously unconsidered trains of thought.

There are a number of kinds of trigger, but most involve creative or lateral thinking. For example, you may be asked to come up with an absurd situation involving two unrelated words or phrases. Having done so, you might have to include items pertaining to your problem, and then relate that situation to another part of your problem. Although this may sound like directionless mumbo jumbo, it's actually getting you to put your problem into different contexts, so that you stop imposing automatic limitations on the solution to it.

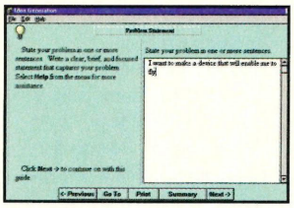
If you're the kind of person who believes in unlocking the power of your brain, then *MindLink* is for you. If you work at it, you really might expand your mind. ***(MB)***

PCR VERDICT

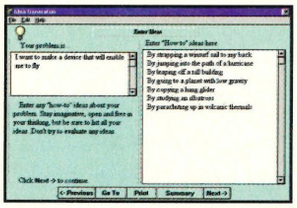
It can free you from the self-imposed chains of conventional thinking, but is very expensive

6

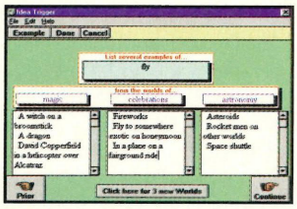
Mental training with MindLink



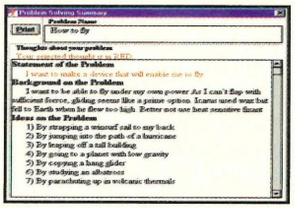
1 Before you can use MindLink to generate fresh ideas for problem solving, you need to outline your problem. This helps to clarify things in your mind.



2 The next stage is to come up with as many solutions to the problem as you can. This gets you thinking in terms of solutions rather obstacles.



3 The Trigger is where you'll be taught how to put your problem into irrelevant contexts in order to trigger fresh approaches to its solution.



4 By now, you've done enough for the program to produce a summary of ideas and solutions. This forms the basis for further problem solving.

Developer: Synetics

Publisher: Guildsoft

Contact: 01752 895100

Price: £233.83

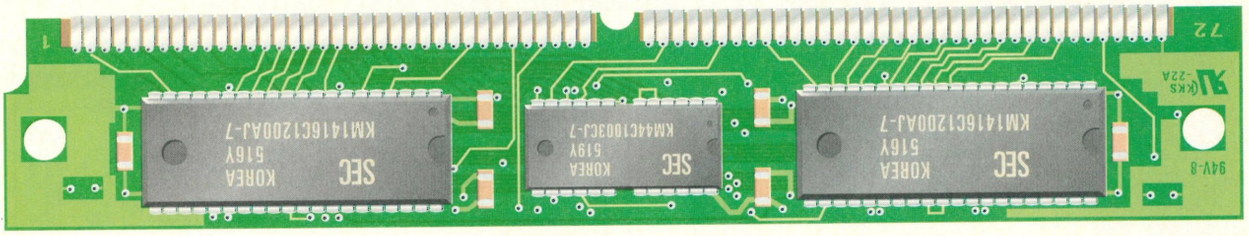
Minimum system: 386, 4Mb RAM, 10Mb hard disk, VGA

Shopping

The price of SIMMs varies wildly, but there are many second-hand bargains to be had in magazines such as Micromart. The current going rate is about £10 per megabyte second-hand and anything up to twice that for new SIMMs. If you're upgrading from 30 to 72 pin SIMMs, you might be lucky enough to find a supplier that will take your old ones in full or part exchange. For new SIMMs, try Kingston Technology on 01252 303500. You can buy a SIMM sharer from Linefeed on 0171 474 1765.

UPGRADE MEMORY

You can double your PC's performance for as little as £40. Find out how easy it is to add extra memory.



In these performance obsessed days, it's surprising how little mention is made of the gains that can be made simply by adding some memory to your PC. With Windows, adding an extra four or eight megabytes of RAM can make it run twice as fast, cutting the waiting time as you work with everyday applications.

Although you can run Windows 3.1 in 2Mb, it only reaches optimum performance at around 8Mb. Windows 95 needs even more. It's a matter of great controversy that Microsoft claims it can be run in just 4Mb. Realistically, you need about 12Mb before it starts to run well.

RAM is the lifeblood of your computer. Along with processing power and hard drive space, it's one of the resources that forms the bedrock of your computer activities. Virtually all desktop computers use a type of RAM known as SIMMs, small circuit boards each holding a number of memory chips. They're fairly robust and easy to install and remove. They come in two main types, 30 pin and 72 pin, although the term 'pin' is something of a misnomer because SIMMs actually interface with your computer using an edge connector rather than pins. Both types have a cutaway on one side. This is called a 'key' and is used to ensure that you insert them the right way around.

Each SIMM has a memory capacity ranging from 256k to 32Mb, and is capable of transferring data at a certain rate. That rate is described in terms of its speed in nanoseconds and its bit width. A bit is the smallest unit of information that a computer can recognise and SIMMs come in 8- or 16-bit varieties. 72 pin SIMMs communicate 16-bits at a time, whilst 30 pin ones can only manage 8-bits. Because your PC reads and writes to these memory chips in 32-bit chunks, multiple SIMMs must be used.

Generally, PCI motherboards use 72 pin SIMMs, whilst VESA or ISA motherboards use the 30 pin variety. Some VESA motherboards can support both types. While we're on the subject of speed, you'll need to match the memory's nanosecond rating to the your processor speed. Intel recommends 70Ns SIMMs with processors up to 100hz, and 60Ns SIMMs with processors faster than that. This applies equally to 486 and Pentium processors.

SIMMs may also be parity or non-parity. Parity is an error checking method which ensures that the data stored in memory is uncorrupted. While it's not 100% reliable, a general way to discern the parity status of your existing SIMMs is to count the number of memory chips on each one. If the total number is odd, then chances are you need parity SIMMs. If the total is even, it's 90 per cent certain that you can get away with the non-parity variety.

PCI motherboards generally come with between two and six 72 pin SIMM slots. So long as you add extra SIMMs in matching pairs, you can upgrade two SIMMs at a time, using any capacity at every step up to a maximum of 128Mb. VESA and ISA motherboards tend to have four or eight 30 pin slots. Remember, you must upgrade them using four matching SIMMs at a time. If you have no more SIMM slots, you'll have to exchange four existing SIMMs for four of a higher capacity. Some shops offer part exchange for such an eventuality. ***(MB)***

Many people will gladly spend a hundred pounds or more, just to make their CD software load a bit faster, yet they never consider the upgrade that really makes a difference.

What's he talking about?

30 pin
A SIMM used on older motherboards. It's 8-bits, so more of them are needed at a time.

72 pin
A SIMM used on Pentium, PCI and newer 486 motherboards. It's 16-bits wide so you only add two of them at a time.

BIOS
Basic Input Output System. A ROM program built into your PC enabling it to recognise DOS and perform basic disk operations.

DRAM
Dynamic Random Access Memory. The standard type of SIMM memory.

EDO
A faster type of SIMM memory. Not generally used in off-the-shelf computers.

Parity
A type of SIMM error checking. Phased out on newer SIMMs as it serves little useful purpose.

PCI
The latest type of motherboard slot. It's 32-bits wide, and enables fast communication with devices plugged into it, such as graphics and SCSI cards, etc.

RAM
Random Access Memory. Memory that can be used by software to store information. All data stored in RAM is lost when you turn the power off.

ROM
Read Only Memory. Memory that comes with data already stored in it, which can't be erased or modified.

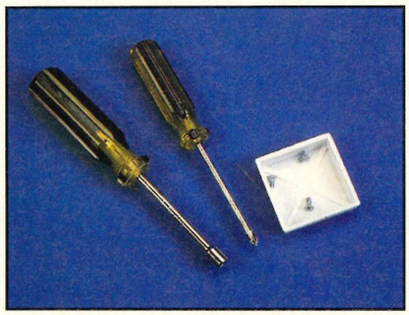
SIMM
Single Inline Memory Module. A compact and robust RAM chip commonly used to upgrade non-portable PCs.

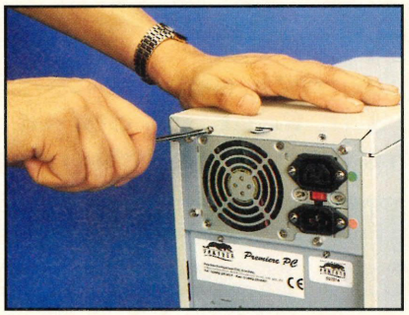
SIMM Sharer
A special board enabling you to use 30 pin SIMMs in 72 pin SIMM sockets. So you don't need new SIMMs when you upgrade your motherboard.

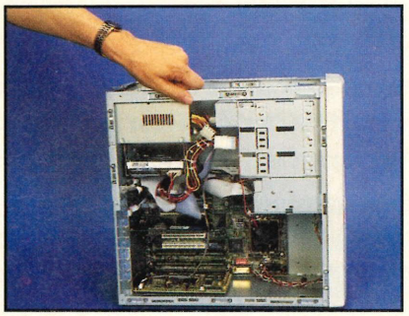
VESA
An older type of motherboard slot. Faster than ISA, but slower than PCI.

Step by Step

Many PC owners have an aversion to opening up the bonnet of their PCs and having a look inside, let alone changing any of the hardware in there. There is no reason whatsoever for this apprehension, and to get the most out of your PC you're going to need to add new memory at some stage, anyway. It's easier than you'd think. Here's how...

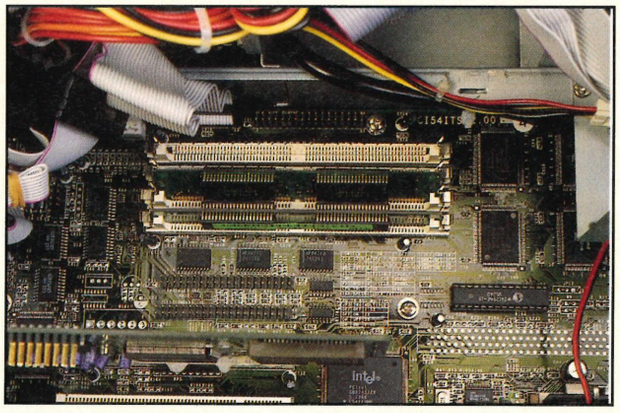




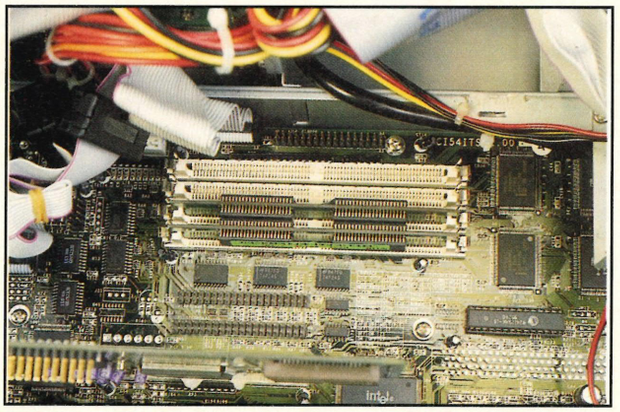


1 Before you do anything, switch your computer off and unplug it from the mains. Now you'll need to open your PC's case. If you look at the back, you'll find a number of screws around the rim of the case. Unscrew these using a cross-head screw driver, or a hex driver. Make sure you don't unscrew the power supply by mistake. Its screws are further from the edge of the case, and close to the power socket. Once the screws are removed, carefully lift or slide the case open. This may involve removing a single panel, or the entire lid, and you might have to tilt the case or lid to remove it.

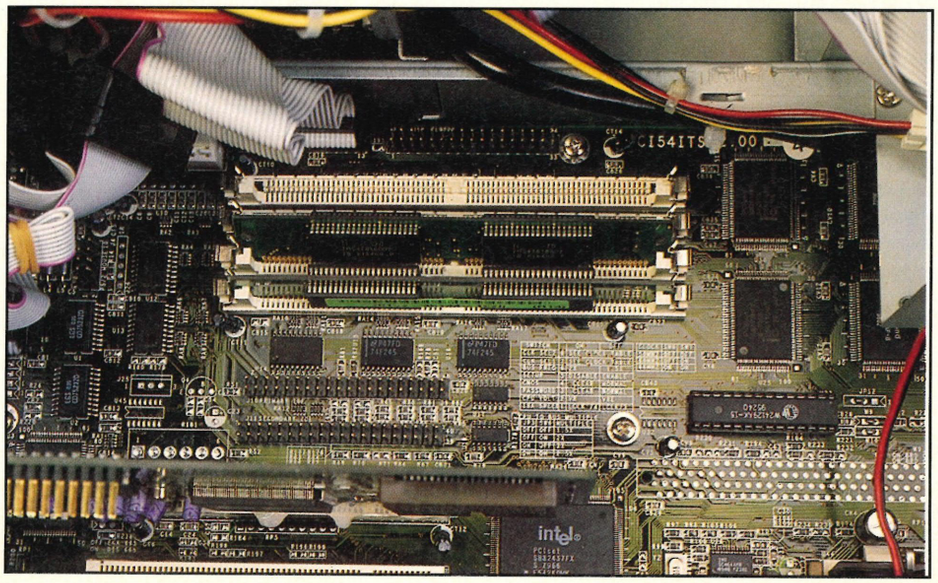
2 The next step is absolutely critical. Before you touch the SIMMs, or root about inside the case, touch the computer's metal frame to ground yourself. This will discharge any static electricity in your body that might otherwise damage your computer's components.



3 Now you need to locate the memory bay. This is usually near to the point where the internal power cable connects to the motherboard. If you need to, remove any cables in order to get clear access to the SIMMs. For goodness sake, make a note of the location and orientation of any cables that you remove. Remember their colours too. Most cables have a red stripe or dotted line on one edge to help you with this. You may even need to unscrew part of the internal computer frame to access the SIMMs. It's probably best to avoid touching any of the components you don't need to touch.



4 Now all you need to do is add the extra SIMMs. You'll see a cutaway on each SIMM. This generally goes on the side nearest to the internal power connector, but if that doesn't work, try it the other way around. The SIMMs slide into the open socket, and then as you rock them forwards using firm pressure, they click into place. They should become locked by the metal clips at either end of the socket. When adding SIMMs, start at the nearest empty socket to any existing ones. If you're replacing existing chips, simply insert the new SIMMs into the sockets where the old ones were.



5 Reconnect everything and plug the power back in. Switch the computer on and watch the BIOS screen as it boots up. It should identify the total amount of RAM correctly, in which case the job's done. If it doesn't, reset, then press and hold [Delete] as the PC boots up. After a while, the BIOS settings screen should appear. Select 'Standard CMOS Setup'. This is where you configure your PC's memory. It's different for each computer, so you'll need to use your initiative. In most cases, merely coming to this screen should be adequate, and you won't need to set anything. Now just press [Esc] to leave the screen then choose Save and Exit Setup. The computer will reboot and should then work perfectly.

Portable?

If you own a portable sorry, but portable memory is a separate subject on its own. Many portables use proprietary memory, so you'll need to consult your operating manual to find out exactly what you need to do in order to upgrade it.

Special thanks to Martin Cohen of Kingston Technology for his advice with this feature.

Next Month

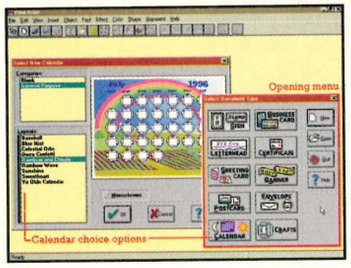
We're going to show you how to upgrade your hard disk.

Getting to grips with...

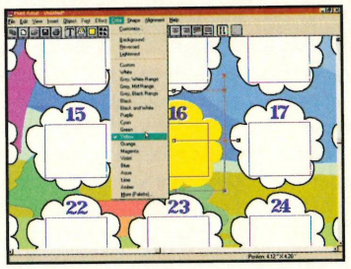
Print Artist 3.0

Get your message across with Sierra's simple-to-use desktop publishing software, Print Artist 3.0. Fast, colourful and striking DTP work is at your fingertips with the demo on this month's CD Review.

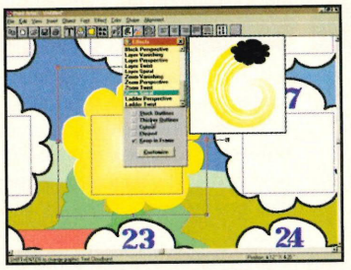
The calendar: Time flies when you're having fun...



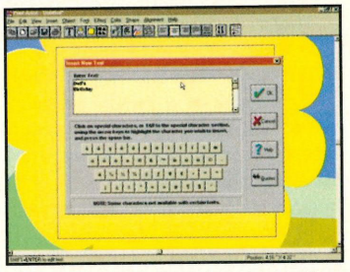
1 As soon as you run *Print Artist*, you see a requester showing available document templates. In this composite image, it's shown on the right. Double click on that button takes us to the date selection panel as we are making a calendar. After choosing a month you arrive at the layout options requester on the left. There are several calendar styles to choose from, and ours is labeled Rainbow and Clouds. You can see a preview of it in the requester window. You can now edit the template.



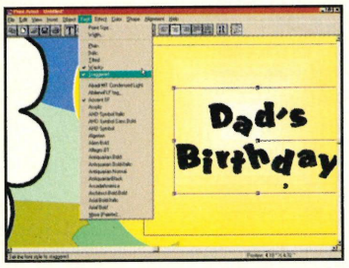
2 If you click anywhere on the image, an object will become highlighted. An object can be a text frame, an image, or simply a drawn shape. Once clicked, you may move or resize it using the node handles. Nodes are key points on the frame can be moved with a left mouse click. To zoom in on a selected object, press [Ctrl Q]. To unzoom, [Ctrl W]. Here we've selected the frame holding the cloud image under the 16th date. To make it yellow pull down the Colour menu, and make the selection.



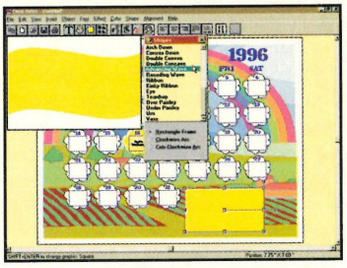
3 To add some finesse to our special day, we pulled down the Effect menu, and selected More (Palette), which brings up a taster of all the special effects that can be applied to the chosen object. We've selected Box Strata, which gives a kind of raised cushion look to the cloud. Here you can see one of the variety of other styles previewed.



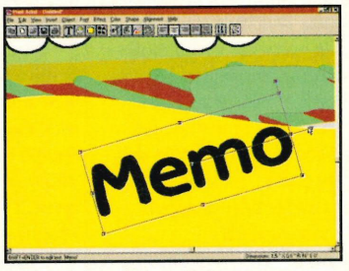
4 Having edited the graphic it's time to focus on the text. The text box laying over the cloud is activated by double clicking on it. You can enter text here on a line by line basis, pressing [Return] after each line. We've just written a birthday reminder. Once you've entered the text, you need to give the give a style, which is available from the Fonts menu. All your available type styles will be listed, and whichever you choose, the program will fit your words into the specified space.



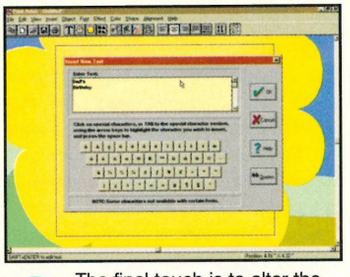
5 To add a touch of fun to your DTP work, *Print Artist* provides a mixture of special effects which can be applied to text items. Here we've used Staggered from the Font pull-down menu to bring some informality to the project. Although the program works on pre-designed templates, you can see how easy it is to customise things.



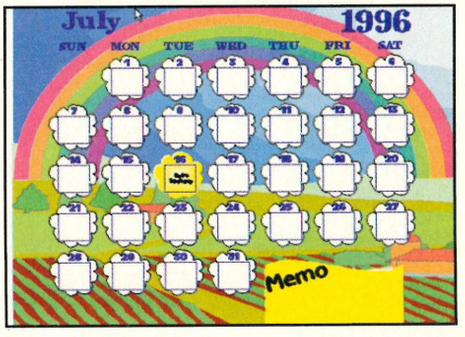
6 Here's how to add a new, great-looking frame. Resize the image with [Ctrl W]. Click on the Basic Shape tool and select a square. This is put on screen by the program and can be moved and re-sized to your exact needs. We moved ours to the space on the calendar in the bottom right, and also changed the colour to yellow. To give it a little more pizzazz, we altered the style using the Shape pull-down menu, selecting the More(Palette) item. From the options listed we chose for Advancing Wave.



7 Time for a little more text, entered as earlier but this time using the Insert/Text object menu item and a different font. You can see how we clicked and grabbed the rightmost node of the text object box, and rotated it upwords to 16 degrees. The angle is visible as a read-out on the bottom right of the screen. Once rotated, the text was moved to its position on the left of the advancing wave item.

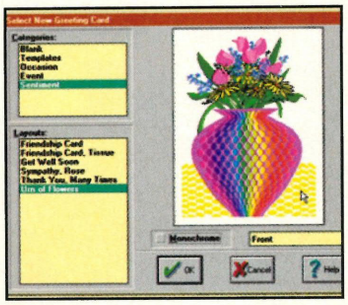


8 The final touch is to alter the font used for the dates. This illustrates how friendly the program is. From the Edit menu select All date numbers, then access the Font menu and make your choice. Global changes are simply made, with no fuss. Really neat.

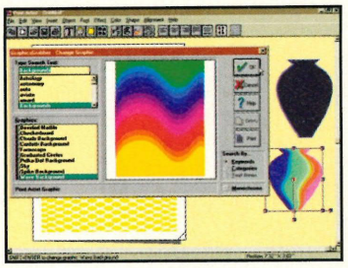


The finished calendar, not quite all our own work, but tailored perfectly to PC Review's needs.

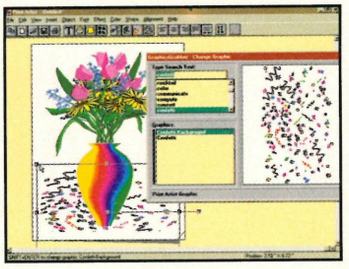
The Greetings Card: Don't be sheepish about this... get your message across!



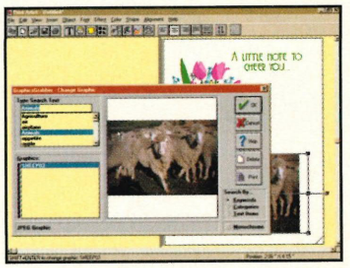
1 From the opening screen click twice on the Greeting Card style, and from the templates choose a tall side-open card. From the Styles menu select Urn of Flowers from the Sentiment offerings.



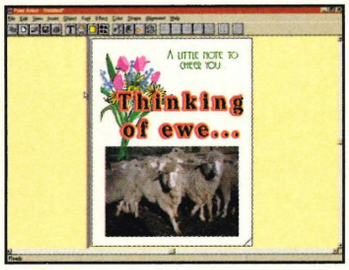
2 Print Artist enables you to move items onto a paste-board, which is useful for separating objects. Here the pattern and the vase itself are separated, and a new vase fill pattern is being selected. Double click on the vase pattern, select backgrounds then Wave background. Click 'Okay'. Change the vase colour to Black and White from the Colour menu, and move the two items back under the flowers, re-sizing as you wish.



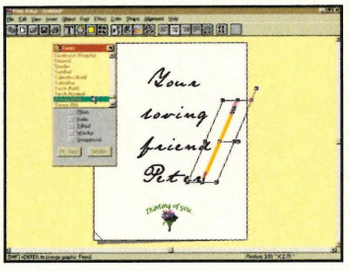
3 Final customisation for the card front is to change the background. Double click on the graphic object containing the background of yellow dots and replace it from the top requester with Confetti. To move on to the inside page of the card, click on the grey area under the front page to 'turn over'.



4 On the inside page of the card, select Insert Graphic from the menu, and under the Animals category you'll find this bitmap of a flock of sheep. Place it below the bunch of flowers, which you can enlarge and rotate to suit your tastes. To edit the flowers so their stalks lay on top of the sheep image, select the drawing of the bouquet, and Bring to Front from the Object menu.

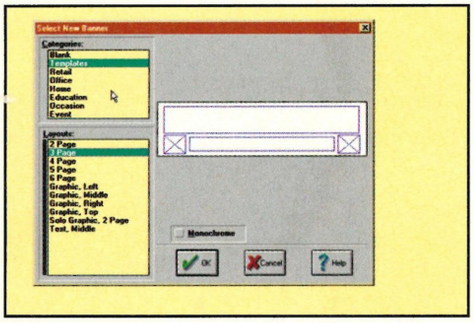


5 Insert a text object with a colour of orange, and an Effect of Multi outline. Again, the text can be re-sized at will, and you can use any fonts you have available.

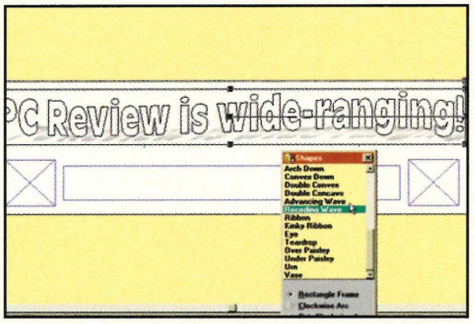


6 Advancing to the back page by clicking on the tab on the lower right of the inside page, you can add another message. Here we've used a handwriting font, and finished it off with a graphic object pencil, rotated and resized to make it appear as if it's been used to scrawl the message.

The Banner: Spread the word



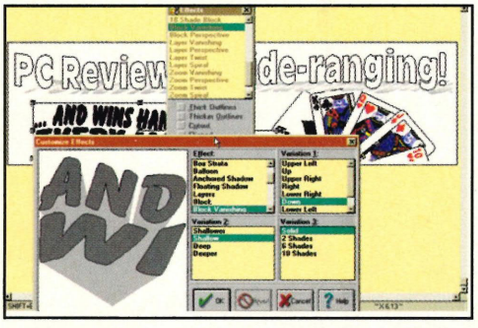
1 After double clicking on Banners in the style requester, select this 3-page example from the Templates layouts. This is one of the smaller posters, being only three A4 sheets wide.



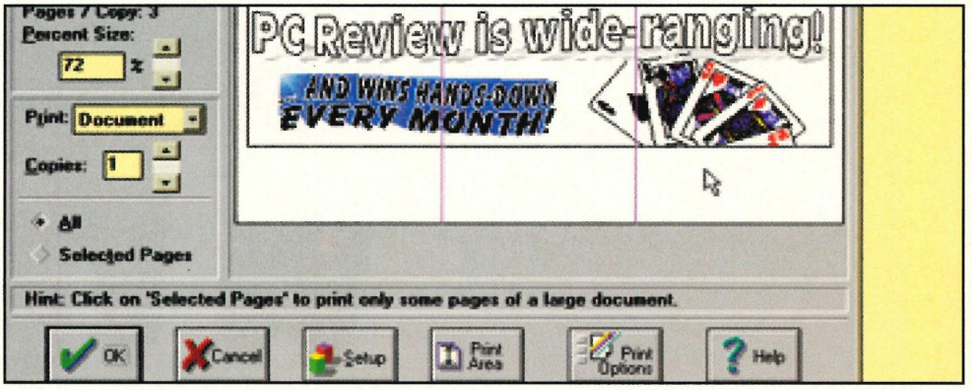
2 Insert a Text object and type in your text. To get the shadow, choose Floating Shadow as the Effect, and white as the colour. To style the text, use the shape Concave Up.



3 The right hand graphic is the Poker/ Cards item in the graphics object requester. And here you can see the Advancing Wave effect being imposed on a new text object.



4 Finally the actual effect itself can be edited. Here we've altered the dimensions of the shadow, and its start position by clicking on the Customize button in the Effects Palette window.

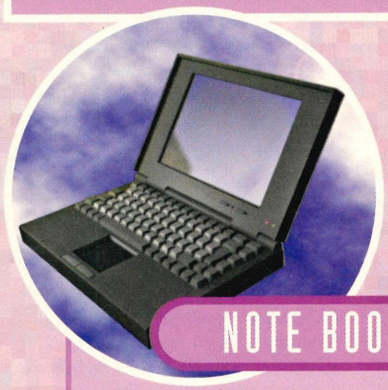


5 The print preview allows you to tailor output, and shows how your work will be split as the program tiles the image across three sheets of paper, which you join together afterwards to make a whole.

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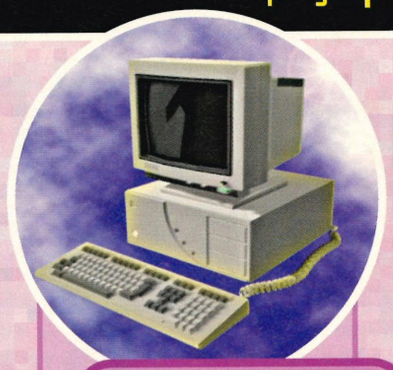
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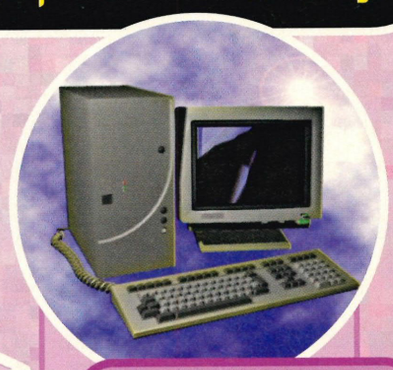
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Q&A

Here's the bit where you ask questions, and we answer 'em. So pull up a bean-bag as Mat Broomfield puffs on an old pipe and prepares to weave his own peculiar brand of magic.

Got a problem you just can't fix? Well, write it down on a piece of paper and send it in to PC Review, Q&A, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. We'll do our best to solve it.

WINDOWS

Ghost Buttons?

Q For some reason, an empty button has appeared on my Windows 95 task bar. I haven't defined it and clicking it doesn't seem to produce any result. I don't have a clue what I did to make it appear, do you?

A We've received quite a lot of questions about this recently. The problem is caused by using any screen saver made by Ziff-Davies. Apparently, they're not screen savers in the normal sense, which explains why they do odd things to your task bar. If you disable the screen savers, the blank buttons go away.

Slow Windows Install

Q I regularly need to install the Windows 95 upgrade, but sometimes, for no apparent reason, it slows down while copying the CAB files, and eventually comes to a grinding halt. There seems to be no consistency as to why it does this, but I'd appreciate a solution if you can suggest one?

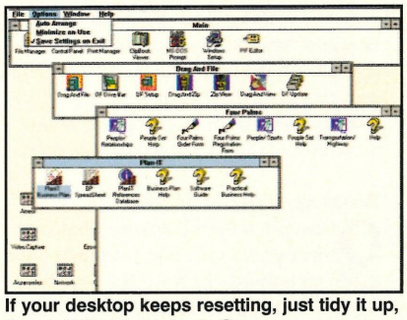
A You're right, there doesn't seem to be any reason for the program to do this, but many other people have encountered it too. The CAB (cabinet) files are actually large blocks of data from which Windows extracts individual files during the installation. Why it should get hung up on them is a total mystery, but for some reason, if you copy the files to your hard drive, then install from there, the problems should disappear.

Better yet, copy the entire Win95 directory to your hard drive, then run the setup program from there. The installation will be quicker, and you won't encounter these irritating problems any more.

Messy Windows

Q I'm running Windows 3.1 and for some reason, all my desktop settings keep resetting to their default positions whenever I restart the computer. They used to stay where I put them. Any ideas on this one, please?

A It sounds like Windows is simply not recording your desktop settings when you exit. If you exit Windows by simply switching the power off, it won't record your settings because it only does so when you go through a proper shut down using [Alt] and [F4]. Worse yet, it can litter your hard drive with unneeded temp files. If that's not



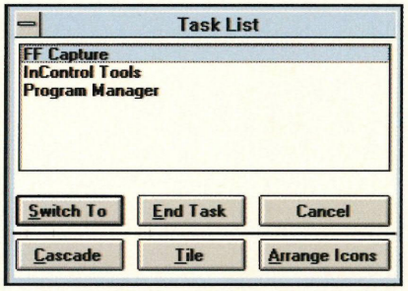
If your desktop keeps resetting, just tidy it up, then tell the computer to Save your new settings.

the answer, is it possible that you've switched off the Save Settings On Exit option? You'll find it in the Options menu, so just ensure that it's selected.

Program Manager Invisible

Q My computer crashed this morning, and now when I restart Windows 3.1, although it loads perfectly, the Program Manager is gone. I know it's running, because I can still use the keyboard to load my programs – albeit in a rather random manner! Is it something I've done, or was the crash responsible?

A Hard to tell whose fault it was, but it's quite possible that the Program Manager is merely off the visible screen. Try double-clicking on the desktop to recall the task manager, then choose Program Manager and select Tile. If the Program Manager is still alive it should reappear.



You might be able to find an invisible Program Manager using the Task Manager.

Printer Margins

Q I have a Canon BJC600 printer, but I'm having trouble with the margins using *Ventura Publisher*. If I set them to the 3mm, which provides the maximum printable area according to the printer's manual, I end up with graphics all over the place. If I increase the margin to 10mm within *Ventura*, my documents print fine, but it annoys me to lose that much space from each page. Is there an easy solution for this?

A Printers can be very tricky, and there are so many permutations that it's quite hard to diagnose problems with such scant details. However, it's worth remembering that your application's printer settings work in conjunction with the default values that you specify in Windows when you first install the printer. That 3mm is a very small margin. Did you perhaps think that that figure is added to the defaults in the driver? You're mistaken if you did. Your DTP program gives you a full A4 page on which to work, and it's up to you to consider the unprintable part of the paper when designing your documents.

Starting Directory

Q I'm told that you can set a Windows program's start directory, so that the program automatically looks there when you do any file operations. How do I go about setting it up?

A It's different according to which version of Windows you use. In Windows 95, create a shortcut for the program, then select the properties for that shortcut by right-clicking on its icon. Now click on the Shortcut tab and specify whatever directory you like in the 'Start in' requester. Under Windows 3.x, simply select the program's icon then click Properties from the File menu under program manager. Now specify the path name you like in the Properties requester. Remember though, some programs over-write these settings with their own path names, which can often be changed via internal preferences or options.

Windows Setup Problem

Q I'm trying to Install Windows for Workgroups and it keeps hanging at the same place. It's at the part where it copies the SVGA driver to the computer. ▶

Reader's Tip: Loading Games

Microsoft might think that Windows 95 is some sort of messiah among operating systems, but many games are still programmed for DOS. Some work, but more slowly, with Windows 95, others don't work at all. The only answer, as far as I can tell, is to drop back into DOS. And, of course, to get these games to run in DOS you need to have your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files to load the drivers for your CD drive, mouse, sound card and so on. Just like in the old days. I recently bought a new PC, however, and although it was set up for Windows 95, there was no configuration set for running in DOS. The only answer is to write the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files yourself. I think anyone buying a new Windows 95 PC should demand the supplier configures it for DOS before they pay their money. It's only fair if they want to play games.

Darren Winter, Huddersfield

Reader's Tip: TrueType Vs Postscript

Your readers may not be aware that there's quite a difference between the way that the PC handles TrueType and Postscript fonts. Although TrueType was developed specifically for Windows, Postscript actually produces more accurate WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) results, especially for desktop publishing. Thing is, anyone who wants to use Postscript fonts will need to get themselves a copy of Adobe ATM. The payoff is generally higher quality, more reliable fonts.
Bill Eastham, Grimsby

I own a Diamond Pro Video 64 graphics card, which comes with Windows drivers. I don't recall this hassle when I installed Windows 3.1.

A It sounds as if the card's S3 chip-set doesn't recognise the standard SVGA drivers. As you're going to install the card's dedicated drivers anyway, you may as well install using the standard Windows VGA drivers. All graphics cards seem to work with these, so you should be OK. You can set up your desktop once you've installed the card-specific drivers.

Quicktime Vs VFW

Q I'm hoping to make a multimedia program for my local tourist board. We've not decided on the final format yet, but we've already video recorded the clips that will be part of the program. I was going to edit them using Adobe Premiere, but I was wondering which format is best, QuickTime or Video For Windows?

A QuickTime is a good format for cross-platform work because it can be used with Macs and PCs, but it's a basic format. Video for Windows encompasses many sub-formats, some of which display dramatic increases in quality and performance on powerful PCs. You could boost performance further by purchasing an accelerated play-back card, such as the Videola, to provide full-screen animation using this VFW. Whichever format you choose, you can always convert the clips into a different one at a later date. Having said that, you should probably record at the largest size, highest colour depth and with the best sound that your current hardware set-up will allow. That way, you have the best quality raw material to work from if you subsequently choose to convert to a different format.

HARDWARE

Dead Partition

Q I've just accidentally deleted a hard drive partion. I then recreated it. Is there any way I can retrieve the data? I tried using *Norton Tools* and there is definitely stuff there. The biggest problem is that it was also Doublespaced into two separate drives.

A Depending on the software you used to delete the partition, if you recreated it before you reset the machine, you could carry on as normal. That's no longer an option. Most of the data is still physically on the drive, however, the fact that you've since written to the drive, plus the fact that it was Doublespaced, almost certainly means that you're in trouble. *Doublespace* creates a single block of compressed data, which is more susceptible to damage than lots of individual files. There are agencies which specialise in recovering trashed data, and if your drive contained anything valuable, you might consider such a service. You should be warned though, they're very expensive.

Wrong Upgrade Kit

Q I bought a Sound Blaster 16 about three years ago, and I recently got a CD-ROM upgrade kit from Game. I've followed the instructions, but the drive just won't work. I've tried two different drives, and the man in Game has tested them and says they work properly. Is it possible that my computer just won't support a CD drive?

A Sound Blaster 16 cards from that era came equipped with a variety of CD interfaces supporting the popular formats at the time. Since then, IDE and SCSI have emerged as the two connection standards. Unfortunately, neither are supported by your sound card. Modern Sound Blaster Upgrade Kits are designed solely to work with new cards and use an IDE interface.

If you only have one hard drive, you can connect the CD to the spare slot on your IDE interface, alternatively, you can buy a new EIDE interface, and connect your hard drives and the CD-ROM to it. You may need to modify the software commands in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file if you use your own IDE interface. Check your manual or phone Creative Labs to find out exactly what changes need to be made. Incidentally, Creative does supply a CD-ROM upgrade that comes with the appropriate interface.

Over-clocking a CPU

Q I've heard it's possible to improve processor performance by simply changing my motherboard. Is it true, and if so, are there any side-effects?

A It is true. In fact our, 90MHz Pentium has been running at 100MHz for months now. However, there is the danger of damaging the chip by overheating it. If your chip has a good fan, you should be alright, but if it only has a heat sink, you should reconsider, or at least add a fan.

Your motherboard has jumpers which determine the speed of the CPU. They should be clearly labelled, and your manual will tell you how to change them. You can't over-clock all CPUs, but here are the ones we know about: 486/25 increased to

DOS

Not Enough Drive Space

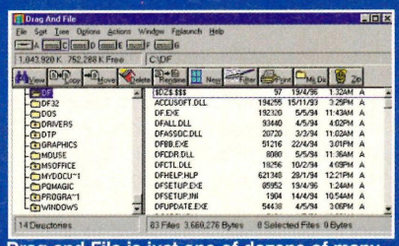
Q I'm constantly running out of space on my hard drive, and I was going to use *Doublespace* to raise my drive's capacity. Do you recommend it?

A *Doublespace* has a terrible reputation among those in the know, and I'd be reluctant to risk it myself. I used *Stacker* for a year without problems. However, with new 1Gb hard drives costing under £150, is it really worth the aggro and potential danger of using *Doublespace*? Even if you're unemployed or a student, you could perhaps save £50 and buy a 300 or 400Mb drive. If you do use *Doublespace* (and thousands do), be sure to leave part of your drive uncompressed so that you can store irreplaceable info in that part.

Of course, it's also worth mentioning at this stage, that you should always keep at least one copy of any truly irreplaceable data. Hard drives, in our experience, are far from 100% reliable.

Copying Big Files

Q I need to copy some large files onto floppy disks, but the disks are too small. Is there any way that I can break the files up into smaller chunks?



Drag and File is just one of dozens of many PKZip-based programs that enables you to spread big files over multiple floppy disks.

A Actually, there are several solutions. You could try compressing the files using *PKZip*. If that doesn't make them small enough, try using *PKZip* version 2 or higher which has an option to spread a file across multiple floppies. Last month we talked about a program called *Nformat* that enables you to create higher capacity floppy disks, and that might be your answer. If neither of these solutions are suitable, look under the hardware section of this month's Q&A to find out about high capacity portable storage media.

Sluggish Computer

Q I run Windows 95, and since I've installed it, the computer seems to get slower and slower each day. The effect is particularly noticeable during file access, when it can take over a minute to generate a directory listing. I've checked the System dialogue, and it says that the machine is optimally set up. Can you suggest an answer?

A Assuming you've set everything up properly, it seems quite likely that it's merely disk fragmentation that's causing the problem. The fact that disk operations are slow, seems to lend weight to this theory. The easiest cure for this is simply to run the defrag program, which you'll find in the System Tools folder which is itself within the Accessories folder from the Start menu. It

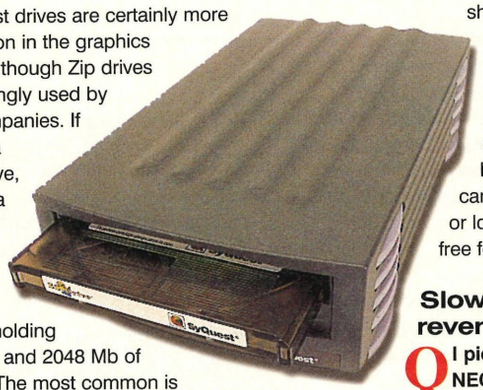
486/33, 486/50 increased to 486/66, Pentium 60 to 66, Pentium 75 to 90 and Pentium 90 increased to Pentium 100. The important thing here is to ensure adequate cooling for your chip when you try it out. That way, even if it doesn't work, you probably won't hurt anything.

This is a tip for experienced users, and *PC Review* takes no responsibility for any damage you may cause while attempting it.

Which Drive is Best

Q I've been thinking about buying a high capacity storage medium, and I think that my choice is between a Zip drive or a Syquest drive. I was hoping for something that I could use to send my graphic art portfolio to potential employers on. I was also looking for a drive that I could use to take large sound samples round to my friend's studio. Which drive do you think is best for me?

A Syquest drives are certainly more common in the graphics community, though Zip drives are increasingly used by smaller companies. If you go for a Syquest drive, you'll have a choice between 3.5-inch and 5.25-inch units, holding between 44 and 2048 Mb of data each. The most common is probably a 5.25-inch 88MB drive (which can also read and write 44Mb cartridges). Having said that, potential employers would probably prefer something more accessible, so printed examples of your work are a cheaper and more immediate solution.

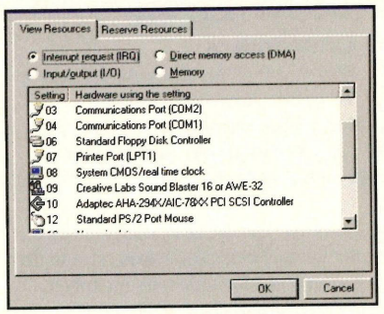


As for the music, the great advantage of a Zip drive is that you can simply take it round to his house, plug it into his parallel port, and start work immediately. A Zip drive is also much cheaper. It's certainly the most popular solution for the home user.

IRQ Limitation

Q I own a 486 that contains an AWE 32, a Real Magic, an Adaptec SCSI card, a Video Blaster, an EIDE card and a Cirrus Logic 5429 graphics card. I've just bought a US Robotics internal modem, but my computer says I have no more IRQs available. What can I do?

A You have four options; disable one of the COM ports on your EIDE card, thus freeing up its IRQ; remove cards like the Real Magic which are infrequently used; share a single IRQ between devices provided both don't run simultaneously (this may not work); or, if the card only uses a specific IRQ, you can juggle the cards so that they use high or low IRQs, leaving one free for your modem.



There are numerous ways that you can re-organise your computer to gain extra IRQs. It's basic PC housekeeping.

Slow CD - The revenge

Q I picked up an external NEC CD drive at a car boot sale, and it works, but it's much slower than it should be. I read what you said last month about using it with Windows 95, but I'm only using it under Windows 3.1. It came with a driver, and of course, I'm using that too. Can you offer any explanation for its poor performance?

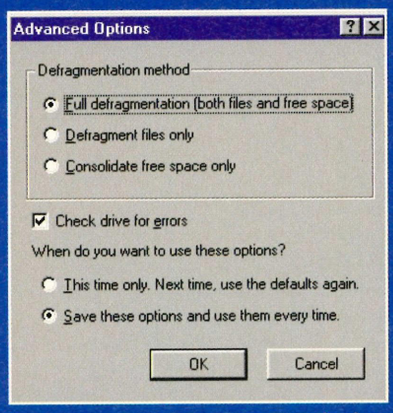
A The faster CD drives run, the greater any shortfalls seem to be. Of course, those shortfalls represent a lesser percentage of overall performance with fast units. If you're using an eight speed drive that only runs at 1150K per second, you can simply write off the difference as an acceptable loss. If you lose 50K per second on a double speed drive, then you need to find out why.

The fact that you've got an external drive limits the number of different units it might be. Aztec, Toshiba and NEC all make external units. NEC once made a quad speed that performed abysmally, but there are no major problems with the other drives. It's worth remembering that external units are generally designed to sit horizontally on your desk, so if you're using it vertically, that could certainly cause problems.

Reader's Tip: Password Problem

Last month, you talked about problems with password protected machines. You offered a variety of solutions, all of which work perfectly, but you completely missed the most obvious and easiest solution. Most, if not all, motherboards, have a jumper which enables you to activate, or de-activate passwords. By simply changing that to its de-activated state, any passwords that have been set can be bypassed. The password system isn't really intended as a permanent lock-out. After all, if someone wants to get at the data that badly, they can always just take the hard drive and plug it into a different PC. The BIOS password, is just a deterrent against casual browsers.
David Bulge, Tipton

should clean up your hard drive so that any operation involving the hard drive, becomes much faster again.



You can use the Defrag program to check your drive for physical errors, as well as tidying it up to improve performance.

DOS Upgrade Shortcut

Q I frequently reformat my hard drive, and re-install all of the software on it. Unfortunately, I only have an upgrade version of DOS 6, so I have to start by installing DOS 5, then I install the newer version over the top. This seems like a ridiculous waste of effort. Is there any way of simplifying the process?

A If you only have an upgrade version of DOS 6, and you want to install it onto a freshly formatted drive without first re-installing the earlier version, there's a simple way to trick the program's checking routine. Boot your computer using the first of your original DOS disks. When you come to the installation screen, press [F3] to quit and return to the DOS prompt. Now type: SYS C: (assuming C is the letter of the drive you're installing DOS onto). Now type COPY COMMAND.COM C:\ (again assuming C is the letter of the drive you're setting up).

That's all you need to do. From now on, when you boot using your upgrade version of DOS, it'll find the files you copied onto the hard drive, and install accordingly. If you reformat the hard drive, you'll need to go through this process again.

Reader's Tip
Dodgy DOS

Some time ago, I thought that my DOS installation disks had worn out because a dialogue box kept appearing at inappropriate times, asking for the installation disks to be changed. There were also several file copying errors, although repeated installations produced errors with different files each time.

After spending several long and lonely days on the problem, I eventually determined that it was due, quite simply, to the speed of the machine. I confirmed this by performing the installation, with the turbo mode switch turned off. The installation was always successful on these occasions. I don't know why the installation is so sensitive to the processor speed, but hopefully my observations will save quite a bit of time for anyone else out there who is experiencing the same problems.
Jo Smith, Isle of Wight

Next page for the Mixed Bag section.

Error Arena

Q I was using Visual Reality for a while, and I've just noticed that it always crashes when I try to do a particular operation giving me the message 'Floating Point Error'. I have a P120 and I was wondering if this means that I have a bugged Pentium chip?

A The Pentium bug only affects floating point calculations. Almost the second you start using Visual Reality, you start performing these sorts of operations. The bug is unlikely to cause your computer to crash, so it's probable that you're experiencing a software bug, rather than the Pentium problem. In your case, we can be certain of that because no 120MHz Pentium chips ever contained the bug. The only ones affected were 60, 66, 75, 90 and 100MHz processors. Just in case you're still worried, go to a spreadsheet and perform the following calculation: =(4195835/3145727) 3145727. The right answer is 4195835. If you have a faulty Pentium it will incorrectly tell you that the answer is 4195579. Anyone owning a faulty chip, can have it replaced by calling 0800 374838.*

Mixed Bag

3D Characters

Q Why is it that the characters in some 3D games look really smooth, rounded and convincing, but those in other, sometimes newer games, look blocky and angular?

A There are numerous possible reasons, but the two most likely ones have to do with the way the characters are modelled, and the way they're coloured in.

3D characters are built from simple flat-sided shaped called polygons which are connected along their edges to create complex objects. The more polygons that are used on an object, the more power is needed to animate it realistically. Sometimes, it's better to use less polygons, but retain convincing movement.

When it comes to colouring in the polygons, again there's a trade-off between reality and speed. Single colour (flat shaded) polygons, look unconvincing, but are quick to shade. More complex shading patterns may look better, but they take a huge effort to colour, and may not always be needed.



Toshinden's huge number of polygons create realistic characters, but they won't move very fast on a 486! See the review on page 33.

Green PC

Q I'm going to be buying a new PC soon, and I've noticed that some of them are labelled 'Green PC'. I like to do my bit for the environment provided it doesn't cost me in terms of performance. What exactly does the expression mean?

A There is a variety of ways in which a PC can be green, but in general, the term refers to a machine's ability to save power. This is usually a feature of the motherboard, which may feature low-power components, but more importantly, which will switch the power into a kind of dormant state when the machine is out of use for any period of time.

This means that the hard drives and monitor both go to sleep until they're woken up by any sort of desktop activity. You need a special monitor and IDE hard drives for this feature to work. If you do choose a green PC, ensure that the feature is fully working when you buy it, because it can be difficult to set up.

Hot Monitor

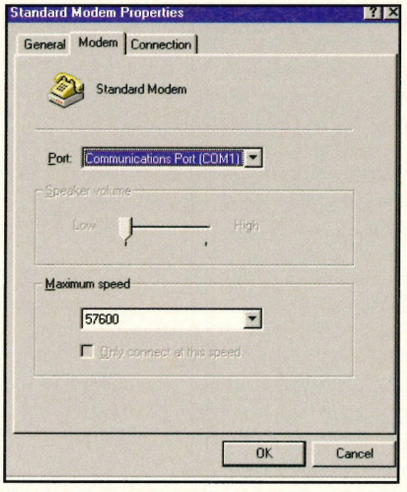
Q I've bought a second-hand Samsung monitor with no manual. One of the controls is called Temp, and is marked in degrees. As the range is in the thousands, I presume it doesn't refer to temperature in the normal sense. What does it refer to, and what does it do?

A This does refer to temperature, but it's light temperature rather than thermal temperature, and it's measured in degrees Kelvin. It's a photographic concept which denotes the 'warmth' of light. Warmer light (with more red in it) has a lower temperature. Ironically, overcast days can produce higher temperature light than sunny ones. This option is used to determine the way light is emitted from the monitor, and is only of use if you're attempting to perform colour matching, either with a video image, or something on paper.

Slow Modem

Q I have 486SX/25, and I've been connecting to CompuServe and BBSes quite happily on my 9600 bps modem for years. I've just upgraded to a 28.8 baud modem, but I don't seem to be getting any noticable increase in performance. In fact, the modem's behaviour is very quirky.

A You do realise that you have to tell your comms software that you have a faster modem? If you've done that, and you have an older computer, chances are it doesn't have the power to handle such a fast modem. There are two solutions. You can swap your (presumably) external modem for an internal one, or you can invest in an I/O card that uses 16550UART chips. This will form a faster link between your modem and the computer, and should resolve your problems.

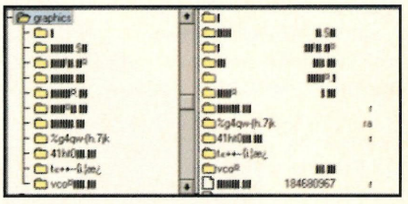


When you upgrade to a faster modem, don't forget to tell your Internet software about its new capabilities.

Junk File Names

Q Occasionally, I come across a file name on my hard drive that simply can't be deleted, moved or otherwise manipulated. The file name usually seems to consist of nonsense characters and punctuation. I don't know how they get there, or what purpose they serve, but they're damned annoying as the only way to get rid of them seems to be to reformat the hard drive. Is there an alternative?

A There are any number of ways that you can damage data in such a way that file names become corrupted in the way you've described, but as you've not mentioned any other problems, it's likely that the files you've encountered have been deliberately named like this. Such practices have been used as a rather stupid and user-belligerent form of copy protection by some companies. They prevent the casual duplication of entire program directories. Fortunately, many programs can copy or delete the files perfectly well. We use a shareware package called File Magician. It's a alternative to File Manager. You can buy a copy from your local shareware library.



File names like this could mean that your hard drive is trashed, or that someone's protecting their software from being copied.

Scan Resolution

Q I have great trouble determining the best resolution to scan images at. If I scan at the same resolution as my printer, the print-outs look dirty, with blurry colours. If I scan at a low resolution, I pick up the distortion from the pictures I'm scanning. There doesn't seem to be any happy medium.

A You're entering a complicated area now. If your files look distorted, that's because you're scanning pictures that have been printed in a book or magazine. The distortion is known as moiré patterns, and you can get rid of it by choosing the correct resolution. Because photos are printed at different resolutions, there's no single DPI that will solve all your problems, but good values to try are 72, 96, 100, 144 and 300 DPI. Most goodgraphics software includes filters for reducing moiré patterns too. As for an ideal scanning resolution, you should never scan at the same resolution as your printer unless you intend to print the image at a larger size. Here's the formula you need to use to work out the optimum scan resolution: divide the resolution you'll be printing at, by the square root of the number of grey scales your printer can produce, then times the result by two. The number of grey shades your printer can manage may be listed in your manual, and it's embedded in the driver too.

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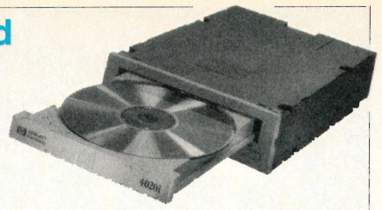
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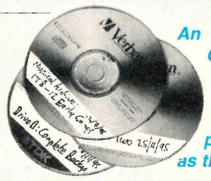
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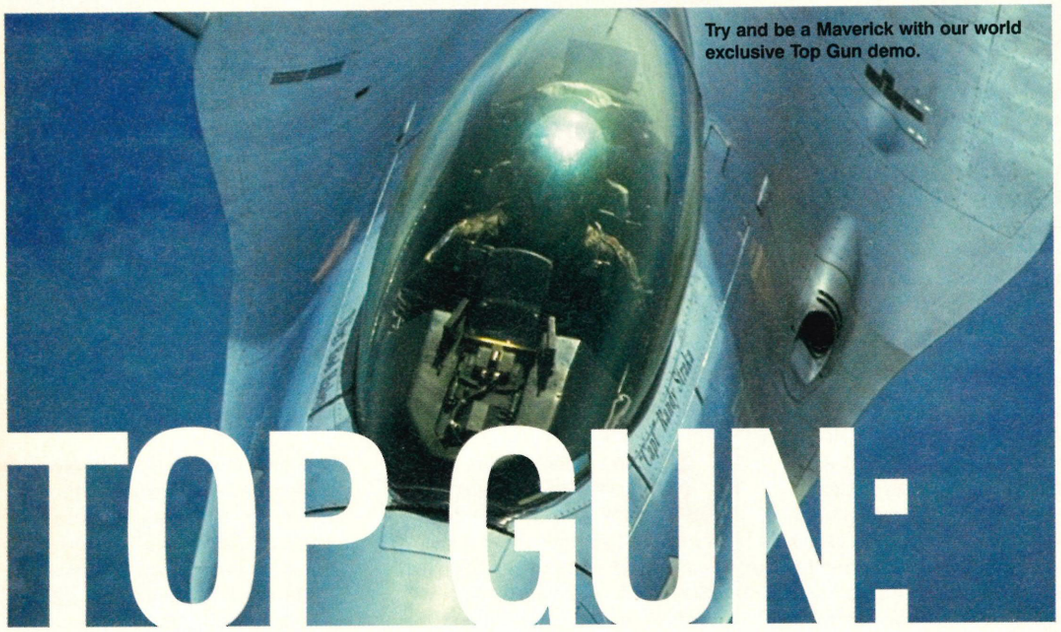
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CD REVIEW



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TOP GUN:

Fire at Will

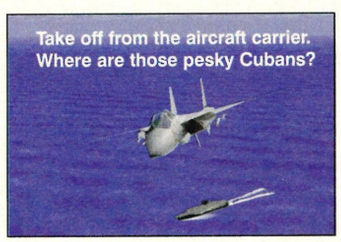
Try our exclusive demo of the killer air war sim.

When the developers at Spectrum Holobyte started working on this out-of-time film license, they wanted to try something different.

Microprose, the publishers, meanwhile, already had a realistic line in flight combat simulations with the Falcon series, the forth instalment of which seems to slip further down release schedules every time you look away. So, the ambition with *Top Gun* was to make something which gamers could pick up straight away and play without all the sophistication offered by ultra-realistic and fiendishly difficult 'authentic' simulation products.

We reviewed the game in PCR 54, and this world exclusive demo now gives you an ace opportunity to sample the action. Running the game, you're dropped into a briefing. Predictably enough there's trouble-a-brewin' so it's down to you and your wing men to exert a little muscle in the skies over Cuba.

When you run the demo, it'll ask whether you have a joystick installed. You don't need one to make the demo work, but obviously a good control stick will help make those flying sensations feel that bit better. If you're playing on keyboard then use the numeric pad for the stick controls – handily the [5] key will auto-level your nose. Go to it!

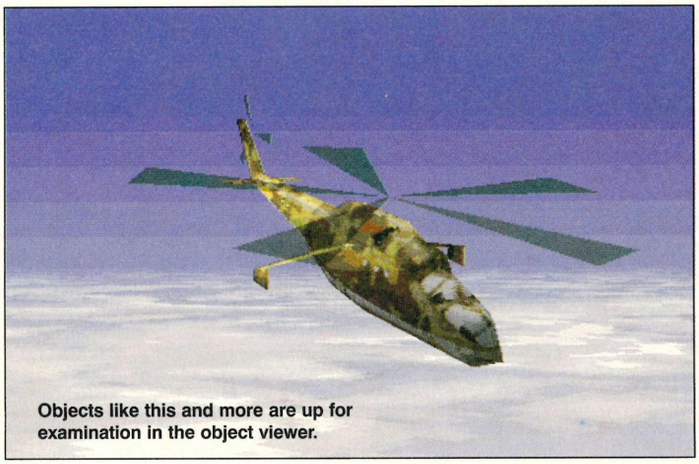


Take off from the aircraft carrier. Where are those pesky Cubans?

Developer: Spectrum Holobyte
Publisher: Microprose
Contact: 01454 326532
Minimum System: 486/66, 8Mb RAM, double speed CD drive, 14Mb hard disk



Don't worry - you won't be flying on instruments in this demo.



Objects like this and more are up for examination in the object viewer.

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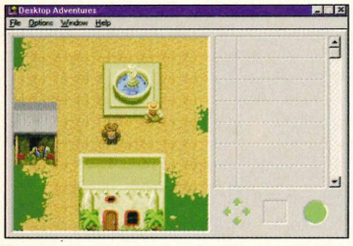
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Indiana Jones and his Desktop Adventures



The little town of Lucasio. Buzzing with activity.



Indy's love nest is the place you'll find the whip.

This special preview of the latest game from LucasArts lets you play and replay a single Indy adventure. The full game, reviewed page 45, randomly generates desktop adventures with millions of possibilities. Depending on the level of difficulty you choose, you might finish the whole thing in 30 minutes or less.

The wonderful thing about this game is that it's just so easy to run and play. LucasArts set its sights low to bring you a common denominator product – something that no-one will ever find too challenging and everyone will be able to make work… first time. Click the Install button and an icon will be added to your desktop from which you can run the demo. If you have any problems installing the game then run the FIXIT.EXE file in the GAMES\INDYPREV directory of the disc. Then try installing again.

It's the mid-1930s, and Indiana Jones, excited by the fantastic finds emerging from the deserts and jungles of Middle America, travels south of the border to make his mark on archaeology. The stated purpose of his expedition is to survey a temple complex known as Site R, but no sooner have Indy and his colleague, Marcus Brody set up headquarters in the little town of Lucasio than they realise more important issues are at stake. Everywhere they turn, thieves and scavengers, many calling themselves scientists, are ransacking historical sites and selling off the treasures to the highest bidder.

Soon Indy is embroiled in a dangerous contest, rushing to find a series of dazzling artefacts and get them into safe hands before his unscrupulous rivals, led by the shady collector Dr. Victor Van Loon and a crackpot Nazi general, Anton Schlossberg, can steal them.

As the player, you are Indiana Jones. At the start of each game, you should consult with Marcus on the latest emergency. He'll supply the first item you need to get going. From there it's up to you to explore, trade, and fight your way through dangerous terrain to resolve the crisis at hand.

Developer: Lucas Arts
Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment
Contact: 0171 368 2255
Minimum System: 486, 8Mb RAM, 2.5Mb hard disk, Windows 3.1 or 95.



Marcus Brody will fill you in on the storyline.

The Gene Machine



Say 'meow' to the catman, a product of the Gene Machine from which this game gets its name.

Join hero Piers Fanshaw and his lick-spittle Mossop in this playable preview of Divide by Zero's latest adventure, *The Gene Machine*. Developers Mark Leigh and Mike Lepine are featured in this month's interview (page 10) and this demo is a fine sample of their rather twisted take on life in Victorian London.

The game starts with a lush intro sequence full of mystery. Just who is that cat, and how is it that the said feline can think like a man? Looks like some kind of meddling with DNA to us. When the animated movie ends, you can join the action at a Victorian railway station.

To control Piers, move the cursor around the screen using the Mouse. When it is over a character or item that can be interacted with, its name will appear. Select the item using the left mouse button and a number of icons will appear at the bottom of the screen. Move the cursor over these to see what they do. If you can only interact with the item in one way, your character will automatically do that, otherwise you will be able to select an action.

You can cycle through the options available using the right mouse button. To see what objects you are carrying move the cursor off the bottom of the screen, or press [Space]. To get out of the inventory, either move the cursor back up on to the playing area, select the EXIT icon or press [Space] again. Clicking on the STATUS icon in the inventory gives you access to the Main Menu. Here you can change audio and control options. Look out for our review of the finished game next month.

Developer: Divide by Zero
Publisher: Vic Tokai
Contact: 0171 721 7607
Minimum System: 486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM, 4Mb hard disk space, SVGA.



But what's this? The cat… he's reading a newspaper! And it's a broadsheet.

Battle Arena Toshinden

Fresh from the PlayStation, *Toshinden* is an entertaining beat-'em-up. Our fully playable demo enables you to play as three characters from the full game. Eiji is a swordsman, Mondo carries a staff and Sofia can do nasty things with a whip. As well as offering fast and furious single player action you can also try the two-player game, which should keep you going for ages. Be extra careful not to get pushed out of the ring and you should be fine.

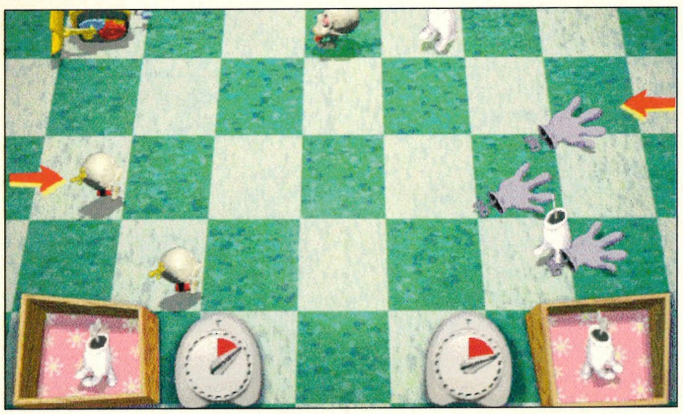
Also note that *Toshinden* is designed to run under DOS, so if you experience problems running it under Windows 95 then choose Restart in DOS mode using the Shut Down menu and try running it again from the *CD Review* DOS Menu. (Just type D:\GO, where D is your CD drive letter). Turn to page 33 for an exclusive review of the finished game.



Sofia... again mocks you cruelly as she savours victory.

Developer: Digital Planet/Playmates Int.
Publisher: FunSoft
Contact: 01782 566 511
Minimum System: 486, 8Mb RAM, 6Mb hard disk space

Gearheads



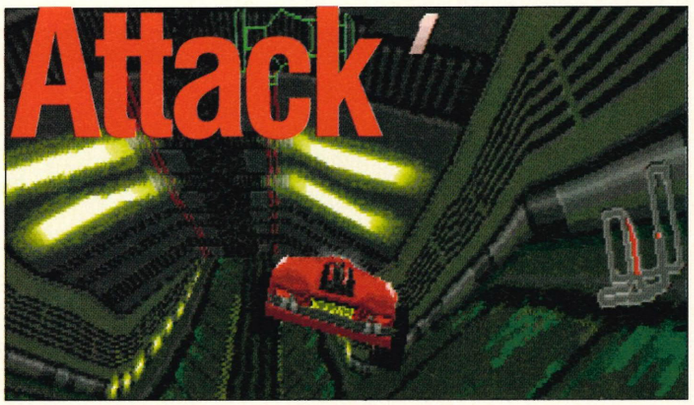
In our superb demo the gloves can revive unwound toys, the bulldozers can push other toys back and the skulls scare other toys so much they run away.

Gearheads is a game of battling wind-up toys. Our fully playable demo features three toys from the toybox and has a one- and two-player game option. Check out our review on page 37.

To win you have to get 21 toys across the playfield. Each toy has a different weight, speed and style of movement, plus special abilities Once you release a toy its on its own to get across. Your opponent might even use it to score against you, so watch out! Once you've selected your toy during play let it wind up before releasing it. The more you let it wind, the more energy it will have.

Developer: R/GA Interactive
Publisher: Philips Media
Contact: 0171 911 3081
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM, 2.5Mb hard disk space.

Track Attack



Burning rubber at 92 mph in our great Track Attack demo.

This racer offers unashamed American slam 'n' bash driving turmoil. Our great fully playable demo has the Gutter Run circuit for you to try out. You'll find the demo in our DOS and Windows 95 menus. After installation click on Practice to try the course out on your own, or on Race Venue to compete against your opponents – either Space Cadet, The Snow Queen and The Panther, or Kicking Bird, Ram Master and The Enforcer.

You'll find that you can customise your car model, and driver to suit your tastes. Before the race you stop in at the autoshop. Here you have a budget to spend on upgrading your car. You can buy new wheels, ram bar, armour, engine and shell. While racing look out for the spikes which can cause a lot of damage to your car and tires, putting an end to your race in one fell swoop. For further information, check out last month's *PC Review* for more on the full version of the game.

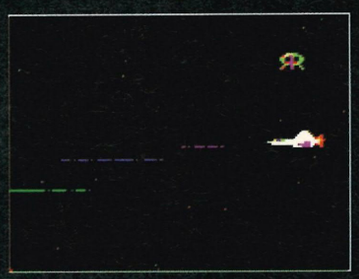
Developer: Microprose
Publisher: Microprose
Contact: 01454 326532
Minimum System: 486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM, 4.5Mb hard disk space

Retro game of the month Number 1

Defender



The Williams Arcade real thing. A snip at £19.99 from GTi on 0171 258 3791.



The next best thing: Defendroid 1.1- freeware brought to you by CD Review.

After the thump, thump of *Space Invaders* and the screeching aliens of *Galaxians*, arcade punters wanted something more sophisticated. So in 1980 along came the Williams coin-op, *Defender*.

Developer Eugene Jarvis built on the shoot'-em-up theme and added what, in those days, was a bewildering selection of controls. A reverse key brought bi-directional scrolling (before we'd made do with the left to right *Scramble*). Then on top of the blasting lasers we also had a smart bomb – the powerup's first appearance. Then there was hyperspace, thrust and... phew did it ever look complicated.

For an arcade perfect version of *Defender*, its sequel *Stargate* and a four other retro games, you can buy Williams Arcade Classics from GTi. Jeff Minter has reworked the classic *Defender* theme, adding his own brand of psychedelic graphics and techno music to create *Defender 2000*. Already out on the Atari Jaguar, expect a PC version by Christmas. But if you just fancy sampling a very similar experience then load up *Defendroid* from CD Review. We think you'll find its a most competent homage to one of the best coin-ops of all time.

Developer: Glen Summers
Publisher: Freeware
Contact gsummers@physics.ox.ac.uk
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM, 0.5Mb hard disk space

Geoff Hamilton's Garden Designer

Gardening is a fascinating hobby - most of us can watch someone else do it for hours - but now you can create your own all-year-round dream plot without even getting your hands dirty, thanks to Geoff Hamilton's Garden Designer. It's easy when you know how.

Some gardens just happen. Over the years bits get added – a space filled here, a corner cleared there. Before you know it, you've created a set from *The Land Time Forgot*. The best gardens, however, are carefully planned. Not in a regimented way, but structured for colour throughout the year, with interesting additions to make it look pleasant even on bleak winter days.

What better way to create your own little bit of Eden than using your computer? Which is where *Geoff Hamilton's Garden Designer* comes in. Without even getting your shoes messy you can create a harmonic masterpiece and watch it develop through the seasons.

Design is done from an overhead view and you get a feel for growing things, their relationship with each other and the local environment. Anything bearing Geoff Hamilton's name is bound to attract interest, and the advice offered on plants, for example their preferred conditions, when to prune, suitable locations and so on is concise.

This demo version is restricted to 25 species of plant, which is quite enough for a modest garden. You also get a library of buildings – sheds, houses, greenhouses and so on, to place and re-size on your plot.

Garden furniture is catered for too. Patio umbrellas, benches and lanterns can be placed anywhere. In fact, the lanterns are a superb feature, allowing you to illuminate the garden and see the results in night mode. The lights can have varied brightness, and be high or low so buildings can block out part of their beam.

The program, which takes up around 4Mb of hard drive space, lets you select surface materials for an authentic look. Paths can be made of several substances, with many kinds of borders. And once placed, they can be re-sized, duplicated or rotated using the mouse buttons.

If you're serious about garden planning, this software gives you the chance to try out ideas without lifting a spade. You can watch how the seasons affect your ideas and tame nature without any of the backache! See page 18 for our round up of gardening programs including this one, and follow this easy walkthrough.

Developer: GSP
Publisher: GSP
Contact: 01480 496666
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM, 4Mb hard disk space

The

Magic: The Gathering

In anticipation of the new game from Microprose we've got a *Magic: The Gathering* Windows 95 desktop theme for you. Once installed it changes your desktop properties (fonts, wallpaper etc) to the new theme. If, however, you want to revert to the way your desktop looked before you installed *Magic* just click the Revert button.

Developer: Wizards of the Coast
Publisher: MicroProse
Contact: (01454) 326532
Minimum System: 486, 8Mb RAM, Windows 95

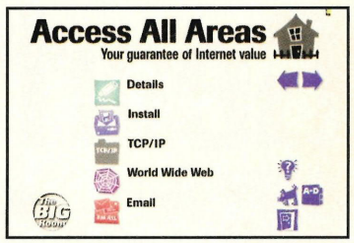


Just one of the images from our sample of the Desktop Illusions pack.

Access All Areas

Find out everything you've ever wanted to know about the history of the Net with this superb, exclusive tutorial. When running with Windows 95 we recommend you go through the program menu in Windows 95. We found clicking on the setup icon after the install sequence could sometimes cause confusion over video drivers.

Developer: The Big Room
Publisher: Team17
Contact: 01924 267 776
Minimum System: 486, 8Mb RAM

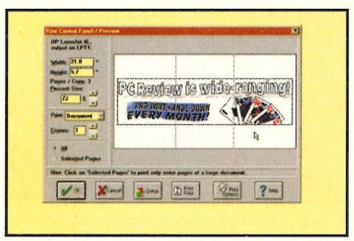


It includes a history of the Net and a complete glossary.

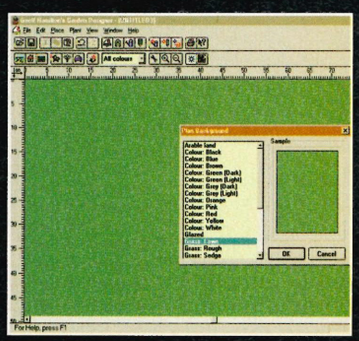
Print Artist 3.0

Print Artist can do the lot: birthday cards, greeting cards, business cards and much, much more. Our fully interactive demo lets you change and print all the different types of design available, you just can't save any changes you make to them. Turn to page 98 for our easy-to-follow tutorial project.

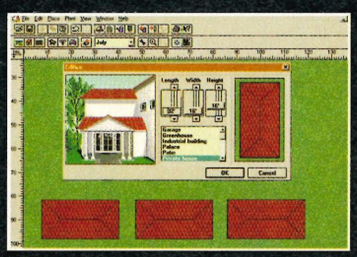
Developer: Pixellite Group
Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Contact: 01734 303322
Minimum System: 386, 4Mb RAM, 3Mb hard disk



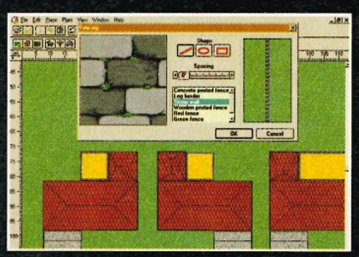
All this and more with our working demo.



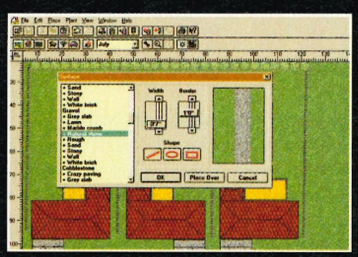
1 Once you've selected New from the file menu, you should create a background for the design. Do this by either pressing [Ctrl B] or locate the command on the View pull-down menu. We chose Grass (lawn), but you can select arable, cobbles or any of the other options.



2 We've added a row of three homes to the lawn background. Structures are added by selecting the Edifice tool, and there is a wide range to choose from – greenhouses, industrial units, sheds and the like. Specify a building and size using the slider controls to the right. Once put on the plan, you can duplicate any building or plant by clicking on it, and dragging while holding the [CTRL] key.



3 Using the Fencing requester, which is accessed from the Fence icon, we can make a wall. A number of styles, including wood and concrete are available. Duplicate it for each boundary. Note on the main plan how we've placed hard-standings at the front of each home using the Surface tool, and also put patio areas to the rear in the same way. The extensions to the home are created in a similar way.



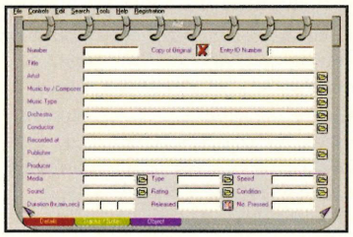
4 As will walls, paths come in may shapes and sizes, and feature many kinds of edging to add either a formal look, or natural feel to your garden. If you look on the surface requester, the Place Over button allows you to draw your path as part of a continuation of an existing one, so joins are created naturally. Once placed, paths can be edited if a particular size, shape or style doesn't fit in with what's planned later.

Works

Music Quest

Music Quest enables you organise your music collection. Our demo is fully functional, but you'll have to register for the full version to have more than 25 recordings in your collection. Click the Install button and an icon will be added to your desktop from which you can run the demo.

Developer: Quest Technology
Publisher: Quest Technology
Contact: 01623 659 571
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM, 1Mb hard disk, Windows 95



We'll be entering the new Sleeper album in here then.

Turbo Browser

Turbo Browser is a jazzed-up version of the Explorer for Windows 95. There's a display screen so you can view any file without having to open an application. Our great demo is fully functioning and will work until 31st August. Click the Install button and it will be added to your Start menu.

Developer: Pacific Gold Coast
Publisher: The Thompson Partnership
Contact: 01889 564 601
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM, 2Mb hard disk, Windows 95



Yes. It's odd that they chose this image for a Win95 Explorer replacement.

Koan Plugin and Web

Koan Plugin allows you to hear music embedded in Web pages, making your search of the Internet even more enjoyable. We've got the Koan Plugin for Netscape Navigator 2.0, both 16-bit and 32-bit versions. There's also a helper program called Koan Web, on our CD. Use it to open the sample files you'll find in the KOAN\GIFTBOX directory.

Developer: SSEYO Limited
Publisher: SSEYO Limited
Contact: 01344 712017
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM, 2Mb hard disk



Log onto http://www.sseyo.com any you should hears some ambient music.

Harvard Graphics Clip Art

Harvard Graphics 2.0 for Windows enables you to quickly create presentations that communicate your ideas. Click the Run button to find out more about Harvard Graphics 2.0. To promote the CD we've got 1000 clip art images. You'll find the images in the CLIPART directory of our disc, grouped under the categories – cartoon, computers, sport and transport.

Developer: Harvard Graphics
Publisher: Crown Distribution
Contact: 01704 895 815
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM



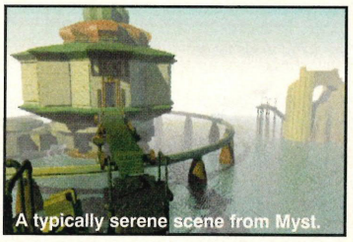
A thousand illustrations, much in the style of these two.

The Myst Screen Saver

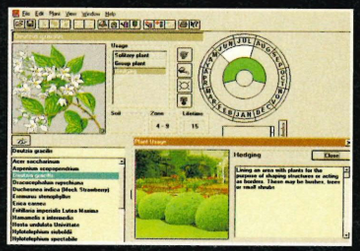
Myst 2, the long awaited sequel to one of the best selling CD-ROM games ever, is expect to be released around Christmas time. As an appetiser, Broderbund has let us bring you the complete version of their *Myst Screen Saver*, containing over 200 images from *Myst*, including some never seen before. Plus there's the choice of taking tours through the ages for anyone who hasn't seen the entire game, a behind-the-scenes module showing stages from the earliest sketch and wireframe to fully rendered images, and plenty of samples and music from the original soundtrack.

The *Myst Screen Saver* is *After Dark* compatible and protects your monitor from screen phosphor damage by sensing when the screen has been inactive for a set period of time (referred to as Sleep Time) and presenting screen-saving slide show displays. After installation the *After Dark* program needs to be running on your computer for the screen saver to be active, if you quit from it then the screen saver will not work. Note that during installation you will need to enter a serial number. The number is: MSS-00670-6681.

Developer: Berkeley Systems/ Broderbund
Publisher: Broderbund
Contact: 01429 273029
Minimum System: 386, 4Mb RAM (8Mb with Windows 95), 23Mb hard disk space



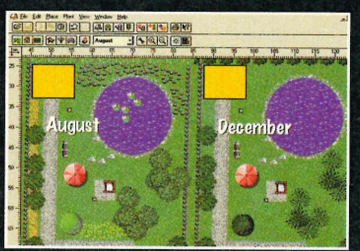
A typically serene scene from Myst.



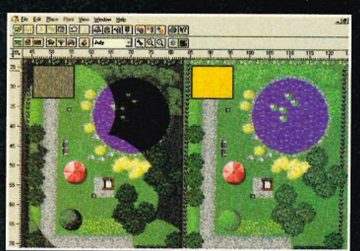
5 The detail offered by the program is superb. Activate the Encyclopedia view tool and you get a colour picture of available plants, plus information about their preferences and uses. Here we've selected a hedging shrub. You can see how Geoff advises it should be used and see a gauge showing the months it will look its best in terms of foliage and colour. Each plant has a similar feature, plus health information.



6 This is the Decor requester, which allows you to choose from 30 adornments for your garden from little monuments to benches. We're about to choose a garden umbrella, with table and chairs, in a tasteful red. Note the colour swatches on the top of the requester. You can also see the barbecue we've placed for the summer, whichever day that's on. Hey – you're all invited!



7 Here you can see how our garden looks in the summer and winter. Gone are the colours and scents, but the choice of trees means we still have something to look at. The pond is still an interesting feature in winter, and can be enjoyed by anyone sitting at the table on a fresh crisp morning. We could now return to the plants list to find more greenery for the colder months of the year.



8 Maybe on a humid September evening you'd like to hold a barbie. Well here's how it would look. You can switch from day to night by clicking on the appropriate tool icon. We have placed three lanterns from the Decor list, two at six feet high, the other at ground level, and you can see the amount of garden they illuminate. Lights can be bright or dim, for subtle control of your garden.

MULTIMEDIA

Makers of the 20th Century

This disc brings together all the people who made the 20th Century what it is today. This authoritative multimedia experience contains articles from various News International newspapers such as the *Times*, *Today* and the *Sun* which relay key events of the individuals' lives accompanied by pictures and video clips.

The full version is split into six uniquely designed 'worlds', each representing a key area of human endeavour. Our fully interactive demo lets you explore the Medicine and Sport sections from the Body world, and the American section from the Power world.

Install the demo from our Windows menu and click on the new Makers icon to start it up. From the main menu you'll notice that the Power and Body icons become active when you move the cursor over them.

In the Body section you'll find both the worlds of Sport and Medicine are available. In the Sport section you can find out all about the sporting legends Babe Ruth, Muhammad Ali, Michael Jordan, Pele, Jesse Owens, Martina Navratilova, Olga Korbut and Roger Bannister.

In the Medicine section there's a wealth of information on Paul Ehrlich, the father of modern chemotherapy; the double act who discoverered DNA, Francis Crick and George Watson; the men who identified HIV, Luc Montagnier and Robert Gallo; the inventor of the contraceptive pill Gregory Pincus; Benjamin Spock the child psycology guru of the 60s and many more.

As if all that wasn't enough the highlight of the demo is yet to come. Choose the America section from in the Power world and you'll find yourself wandering around a 3D virtual landscape scattered with famous political icons and people from American history. Simply click on a person to find out about his or her life by reading about it via the *Times* and *Sunday Times* articles on offer.

All the big names are here: John F Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Fidel Castro, Malcom X, Martin Luther King and numerous others.

Developer: Zappa Digital Arts
Publisher: News Multimedia
Contact: 0171 782 3982
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM

Dogz

Our demo features the Adoption Kit from the full version, where you get to play with four puppies to decide which one you want to keep.

To pick up Dogz click the right mouse button. If you drop the Dogz back on top of their doghouses they will pop back inside. To pet your Dogz click and hold the left mouse button. The cursor will change to a 'petting hand'. Stroke the dog with the cursor while holding down the left mouse button. If you pet your Dogz just right and long enough, it will roll over and let you tickle its tummy. The full version, however, lets you do a great deal more.

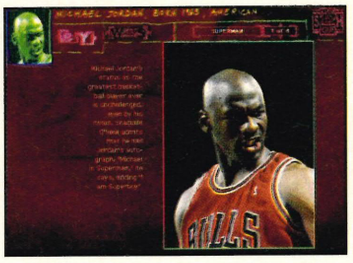
Developer: PF Magic
Publisher: Mindscape
Contact: 01444 246333
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM



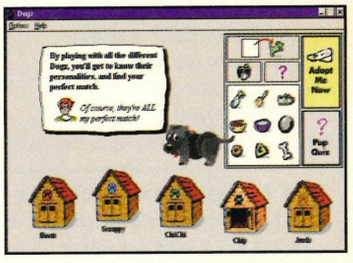
Each world in Makers is given a unique design. In the Body World this miming dancer is your host.



Here's the incredible 3D virtual landscape you get to explore in the American section of Power.



Michael Jordan from the Sport world. As you read about the people flashing fact icons appear. Click on them.



The ball toy is the only one available in the demo. Try throwing it around the screen and see what happens.

SHAREWARE

Financial Wizard

More than just a standard calculator, *Financial Wizard* combines many other functions, making it a general purpose abacus for all office and home users. These operations range from everyday basic calculations to complex financial functions.

Contact: Springsoft on 01352 770049
Minimum System: 386, 4Mb RAM

Fish Saver

Fish Saver is a tropical fish screen saver designed to protect fish lovers' screens from burn out. Our fully working shareware version features an underwater scene with lots of tropical fish. It's easy to install.

Contact: Galt on 001 (408)730-2467
Minimum System: 386, 4Mb RAM, 1Mb hard disk space

SkyMap

SkyMap is a Planetarium program for Microsoft Windows 95 or Windows NT. It will display a map of the sky as seen from any point on Earth for any date between 4000BC and 8000AD. Two different types of map can be drawn – a Horizon map showing the observer's local horizon, and a Sky Area map showing a detailed view of a small area of the sky. Just click on things in the sky to find out what they are.

Contact: Thompson 01889 564 601
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM, 2.5Mb Hard Disk, Windows 95.

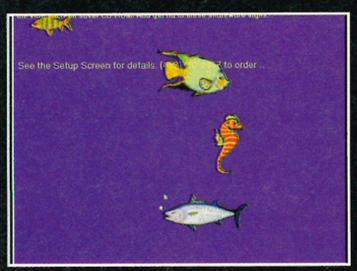
The Tropical Fish Reference Guide

The *Tropical Fish Reference Guide* is designed for the fish enthusiast. To help you build up a complete database of tropical fish and plants there are seven separate places to store your information from a Tropical Fish library to an an Accessories Library for cataloguing your equipment purchases. For more on tropical fish see out Exotic Pets feature on page 24.

Contact: 001 (609) 783 4413
Minimum System: 386, 4Mb RAM, 4Mb hard disk space



Financial Wizard pops up discretely on your desktop and makes light of your financial transactions.



It's a screensaver with some fish on. You don't need a goldfish when you've got one of these on your desktop.



When you have the map just as you want it, you can print it on any printer supported by Windows.



Every Tropical Fish enthusiast's dream. Try our shareware version of this great database for the little fish

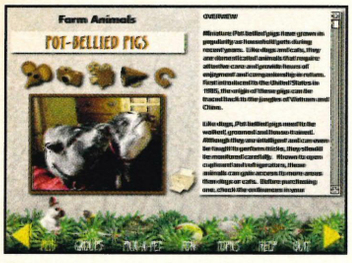
Exotic Pets

Find out all about the weird pets of the world. Our interactive demo has one animal from the each of the seven main pet groups in the full version: Aquatics, Birds, Creepy Crawlies, Farm Animals, Horses, Pocket Pets and Reptiles and Amphibians.

For each pet, there's a video clip, a full-screen photo and lots of text. You'll find out all about their habitats, habits and grooming requirements.

If you want to see an unusual video of Pig Races then got to the Movie Theatre in the Fun section. There's also Pet Quiz and Name that Pet games to try.

Developer: Inroads Interactive
Publisher: Pinnacle
Contact: 0171 782 3982
Minimum System: 486, 4Mb RAM



From this screen of our demo you can click on the projector for a movie or the camera for a bigger picture.

Windows 95

Some DOS games have problems running in Windows 95. We've included an option to run the DOS games that we know work in Windows 95 from our menu, but we can't guarantee they'll work on all systems. If you're having trouble running a DOS game in Windows 95, try running it from our DOS Menu instead.

First select Restart in DOS Mode from the Shut Down Menu. When DOS has started type D:\PCR, where D is the letter of your CD drive.

Install options

Make sure you select the default Installation path for all demos, otherwise when you click the Run button nothing will happen.

Support

If you need help getting a demo to work, call our support line on 01225 442244 and ask for Trevor Witt. Or email him on support@futurenet.co.uk

Disclaimer

CD Review is thoroughly checked for all known viruses and independently certified before duplication. While every care is taken in selection, testing and installation of *CD Review*, Future Publishing cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage occurring during its use. You are advised to have recent, verified back-ups of all important files before installing new software.

Memory

If you have trouble running a demo it may be because you need more conventional memory. Conventional memory is the memory below 640K. Even if you have a PC with 8Mb of RAM, that doesn't mean you'll have the conventional memory to run a *CD Review* demo.

To find out how much free conventional memory you have type `MEM[Enter]` at the DOS prompt. If the figure beside the line 'largest executable program size' is less than about 550k then you're system isn't set-up right.

You can free up more conventional memory by loading the EMM386 driver which allows you to move device drivers into upper memory, thus freeing up more space. To add the EMM386 driver you need to edit your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files. It is always a good idea to make copies of them before editing them. At the C:\> prompt type:

```
COPY C:\CONFIG.SYS
CONFIG.BAK [ENTER]
COPY C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT
AUTOEXEC.BAK [ENTER]
```

If you have any problems later on you can return to these by typing:

```
COPY C:\CONFIG.BAK
CONFIG.SYS [ENTER]
COPY C:\AUTOEXEC.BAK AUTOEX-
EC.BAT [ENTER]
```

To edit your system files type `EDIT` followed by the name of the file. These lines should be in your CONFIG.SYS file:

```
DEVICE=C:\DOS\HIMEM.SYS
DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE
NOEMS
DOS=HIGH, UMB
```

Any lines starting with `DEVICE` should be changed to:

```
DEVICEHIGH
```

In the AUTOEXEC.BAT any device should now be sent to high memory. For example:

```
C:\MOUSE\MOUSE
```

should read:

```
LH C:\MOUSE\MOUSE
```

These changes will free more conventional memery

Another way to free up more conventional memory is to remove any Terminate and Stay Resident (TSR) programs from the system files. The following lines are not essential for using *CD Review*. Kill them by putting REM at the start of the line.

In CONFIG.SYS:
Any line containing `SMARTDRV.SYS`, `DISPLAY.SYS` or `COUNTRY.SYS`

In AUTOEXEC.BAT
Any line containing `SMARTDRV`, `DOSKEY`, or which loads a virus checker.

When you've made all the necessary changes reboot. To restore your system, simply reverse any changes you've made, or replace the new CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files with your back-ups.

EMS Memory

Some PC games require EMS memory rather then XMS memory. To configure your PC for EMS memory change the line in your CONFIG.SYS reading:

```
DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.
EXE NOEMS
```

to:

```
DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.
EXE RAM
```

Reboot your machine for this change to take effect. You will have to reverse the above change for other programs to work.

RUNNING PROGRAMS MANUALLY

If you have memory constraints, or you find there are palette problems and the display colours look wrong when running programs from our menus, then you may need to run the demos manually. Here's how.

Program Directory and File name

Access All Areas	D:\AAADEMO\SETUP.EXE
Defendroid	D:\GAMES\DEFEND\INSTALL.EXE
Dogz	D:\DOGZ\SETUP.EXE
Exotic Pets	D:\DEMOS\PETDISC\MMPETS1D.EXE
Financial Wizard	D:\SHARE\FINWIZ\INSTALL.EXE
Fishsaver	D:\SHARE\FISHSAVER\SETUP.EXE
Gearheads	D:\GAMES\GEARH\SETUP.EXE
The Gene Machine	D:\GENEDEMO\INSTALL.BAT
Harvard Clip Art	D:\CLIPART\HGPLAYER.EXE
Indiana Jones	D:\GAMES\INDYPREV\SETUP.EXE
Koan Pluggin + Web	D:\KOAN\PLUGIN\16BIT\SETUP16.EXE
Magic: The Gathering	D:\DEMOS\MAGIC\SETUP.EXE
Makers Of The 20th	D:\INSTALLM.EXE
Music Quest	D:\MUSIC\SETUP.EXE
Myst Screen Saver	D:\MYST\SETUP.EXE
Print Art	D:\PRINTART\SETUP.EXE
Skymap	D:\SHARE\SKYMAP\SETUP.EXE
Top Gun	D:\INSTALL.EXE
Tropical Fish Reference Guide	D:\SHARE\FISH\SETUP.EXE
Toshinden	D:\GAMES\TSD\INSTALL.BAT
Track Attack	D:\TATTACK\INSTALLT.EXE
Turbo Browser	D:\SHARE\TURBO\SETUP.EXE
Words	D:\SHARE\WORDS\SETUP.EXE

Words

Words is a *Tetris*-style spelling game. The idea is to spell the words in the order they appear before the screen fills up. This is achieved by stacking the coloured letters which are falling from the top of the screen. "Easy!" you cry, but not every falling block has letters attached. Sometimes, *Words* provides you with Scatter Bombs, Morph letters, Morphing Lava Rocks , Photon Beams or Crystal Cubes to help you.

Contact: Thompson on 01889 564601
Minimum System: 486, 8Mb RAM, 1Mb hard disk, Windows 95.



This is Words. The letters fall down the screen and you have to make words at the bottom. Play it.

The Essential Selection

To help you out with all your computing needs, and to assist you in getting the most out of this *CD Review*, we've bundled together a set of very handy utilities. It's called the Essential Selection for an obvious reason: if you don't have these things already, you need them.

Video helpers

Because multimedia products are so often produced on Apple Macs, you'll find QuickTime for Windows 2.03 handy whenever one of those Apple standard videos rears its head. Likewise, there's a run-time version Video for Windows 1.1a for the Windows-based video files.

PaintShop Pro

Every PC user needs a graphics package and the most widely used is *PaintShop Pro*. We've included both Windows 95 and 3.1 versions on *CD Review*. Remember, this version of PaintShop Pro is shareware. Pay the fee and you can upgrade to the commercial version.

WinZip

Winzip is an invaluable compression tool which can even help you free up more hard drive space when you need it. It's also extremly useful if you send or receive files over the Net or when you need to squeeze something onto a floppy disk. Again, we've included both Windows 95 and 3.1 versions on our disc.

Win32

A lot of Windows 3.1 programs require you to have Win32 installed on your system. You'll find a version here. Register it if you keep it.

NEXT MONTH

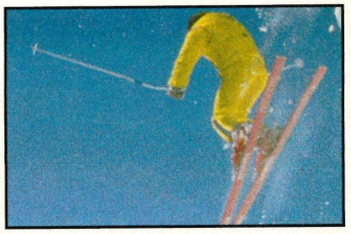
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