FREE!

PCGZine

Issue 8 | Aug 2007

Free Magazine For PC Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates…

DEFINITIVE REVIEW INSIDE!

Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2

The fighting men of the future return

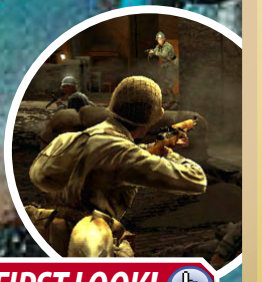


LATEST NEWS

HELLGATE: LONDON

Diablo meets Deus Ex in a dodgy Tube station

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!
Martin van Balkom briefs us on the latest Combat Mission



FIRST LOOK!

Company of Heroes: OF

First add-on for the WWII strategy smash



Gears of War

Epic's magnificent shooter comes to the PC at last

REVIEWS



1 **Pearl Harbour**
Furious in-flight fighting



2 **Lost Planet**
Intense arcade action



3 **UFO**
Turn based strategy lives!

PLUS

Assassin's Creed
Battlestar Galactica
Unreal Tournament 3

Welcome to PCGZine



There's been a lot of talk about the new-look E3 show this year. For those who don't know, it's traditionally been a gigantic trade show in the centre of Los Angeles, where all the latest games are shown off on giant stands with lights, music and often dancing girls in tow.

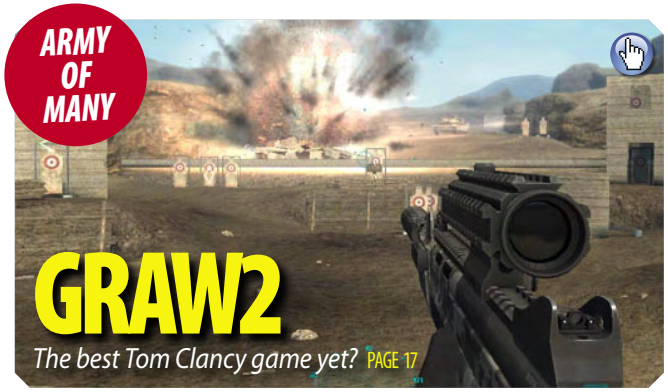
This year's event was much more subdued. Instead of one big show, there were a series of press conferences, mostly in quiet hotel rooms, reducing the element of showmanship and concentrating focus on what really matters: the games in hand.

It's a shame the old style E3 has gone, but good news that the great games keep coming. Read on to find out all the latest…

Adam Oxford, Editor
pcgzine@gamerzines.com

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

Don't miss! *This month's top highlights*





QUICK FINDER
Every game's just a click away!

Gears of War	Assassin's Creed
Company of Heroes: OF	Combat Mission: Shock Force
Unreal Tournament 3	GRAW 2
Brothers in Arms	Pearl Harbour
Battlestar Galactica	Lost Planet
Kung-Fu Hustle	UFO: Extraterrestrial
Space Siege	Bone: Out from Boneville
Viva Pinata	Jules Verne
Medal of Honor: Airborne	Online gaming
Hellgate: London	Technical Q&A





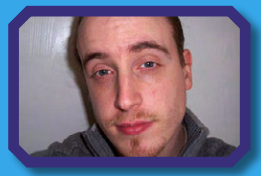




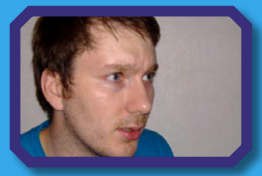




MEET THE TEAM
Probably the best games writers on the planet



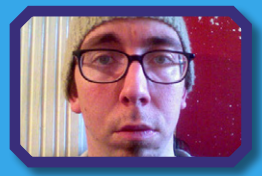
Darran Hepworth
Got to grips with slippery physics in GRAW2. E=MC² now.



Lee Hall
Found the fountain of all news by saving his pen until E3 week.



Ian Morris
Is still waiting for a good game or film based on Pearl Harbour.



Dan Muir
Is now scared to travel on the Tube after seeing Hellgate.

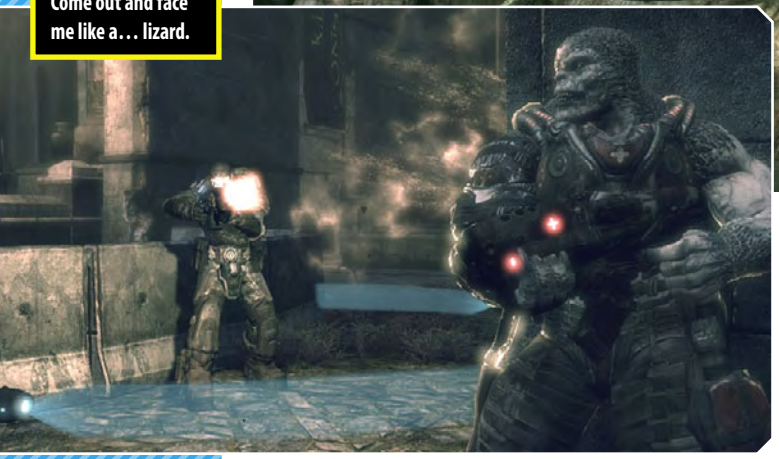
ALIENWARE
To experience games at their best PCGZine uses the Area 51-ALX from Alienware. Packed to the gills with cutting-edge power and technology, if a game can't perform on this it has to be a dud.





Come on – that's just not fair.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Gears Of War!



Come out and face me like a… lizard.



Looks like the scales are weighed against him.

Gears Of War

LATEST NEWS

Stepping it up a Gear…

Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Epic Games
Heritage: A whole reel of Unreals. And Jazz Jackrabbit, oddly.
Link: www.epicgames.com
ETA: Christmas

What's the story?

Gears of War, the burly, surly Xbox shooter is diving headlong at PC.

What do we know?

The 360 game was genuinely stunning, by console standards, and will look even better on PC. But Gears of War is about way more than real purdy graphics…

It's a shooter in the console tradition of accessibility and relentless action, in which cover is crucial and the Locust Horde alien foe is more than a match from the fragmented human forces battling to save Earth.

Best of all, the PC version is even more muscular than the 360 original.

The core experience of co-operative battling, solo player and multiplayer gunnery is give a shot of adrenaline thanks to three new multiplayer maps, an extra multiplayer mode, a game editor and five new campaign chapters.

When do we get more?

Preview code will be in our trigger-squeezing pinkies in Autumn. And expect plenty of lavish footage in the meantime.

Anything else to declare?

That Mad World advert last Christmas made us cry a little bit. Oh, you mean about the game – It's on Windows Live and it's DirectX 10-friendly.





…Eight, nine, ten. I'm coming, ready or not!



Expect the same loveliness in Unreal Tournament 3.

EXPERIENCE THE EPIC STORY ALONE
OR ADVENTURE WITH OTHERS ONLINE



BATTLE ENEMIES FROM ATOP VARIOUS
BEASTS SUCH AS HORSES AND LIZARDS



CREATE AND CUSTOMISE YOUR OWN
SPELLS IN FIVE SCHOOLS OF MAGIC





IT'S UP TO YOU TO SAVE THE WORLD...
...OR DESTROY IT



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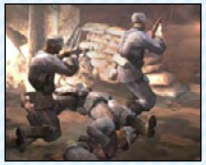
TWO WORLDS

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XBOX 360 LIVE PC DVD-ROM TopWare INTERACTIVE SOUTHPEAK GAMES

TBC

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Publisher: THQ
Developer: Relic
Heritage: Company of Heroes, Warhammer 40k Dawn Of War
Link: www.thq.com
ETA: TBA

FIRST LOOK

Company of Heroes: Opposing Force

Once more into the breach, dear friends

What's the story?

The brilliantly immersive, authentic and atmospheric strategy blast Company Of Heroes is being followed up good and proper.

What do we know?

The Allied and German armies of the first game are brushed aside like Poland's defences in 1939. Your new command sees you in charge of the British 2nd Army, smashing your way towards Caen in northern France, or the German Panzer Elite who are determined to keep the swastika flying.

The Brits are a formidable force, especially if you fancy yourself as a defensive general. They can lay down suppressing mortar fire and build trenches at great speed, redeploy bases closer to enemy lines and even use gliders to deliver tanks to weak points in your line.

The Panzer Elite, as you'd expect, are less numerous and don't hang around to hold ground. They roll forward in meaty tanks, always on the front track, braver than a man who's let his wife trim his personal hair with a cut-throat razor.

The Relic boys have been working hard to upgrade the Essence Engine that drives its stunning war machine and have implemented specific tweaks such as more realistic weather, better vehicle AI and some top secret new multiplayer modes.

When do we get more?

Though there's no official release date, our sources say Opposing Force will be on the shelves before the Christmas rush. Expect a hands-on soon.

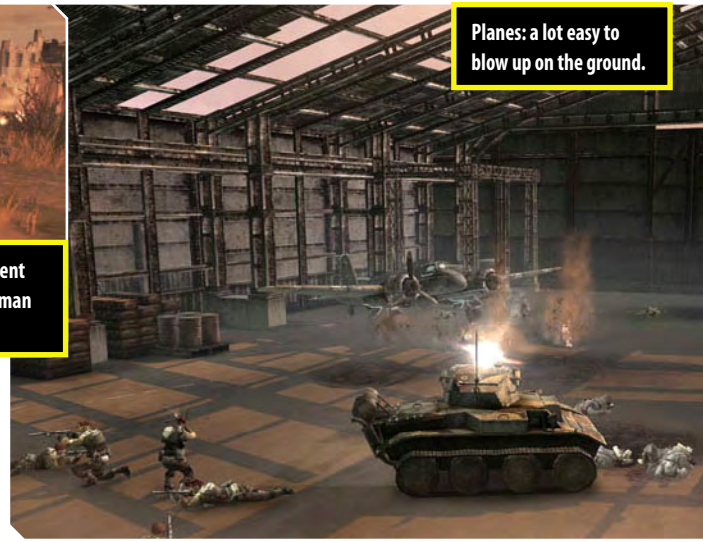


Fancy weather effects make war even more miserable…

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Company of Heroes: Opposing Force



A rare defensive moment for the advancing German war machine.



Planes: a lot easy to blow up on the ground.

"The Brits are a formidable force if you fancy yourself as a defensive general"

LOKI

ON SALE: 24TH AUGUST 2007

CHALLENGE THE GODS

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Enter this legendary adventure and give battle to mighty creatures, destroy hordes of fearsome enemies and, finally, challenge the gods themselves.

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- Customise weapons and armour at the Blacksmith's forge
- Worship the Gods, Challenge the Gods, Defeat the Gods
- Battle Great Beasts of Legend: Fafnir the Dragon, Medusa, Fenrir the Wolf, the Minotaur...









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PC DVD ROM

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7 UP

The tasting menu of gaming news

Kung Fu Hustle



Publisher: Sony Online Entertainment
ETA: TBC

What madness is this? Well, it's an online Kung Fu scrapper based on the high-kicking movie, made in China and tailored for the Chinese player (actually there are quite a few of them). It'll be initially free-to-play, with dosh changing hands if you want to pick up a few extra lives once you've been battered to within an inch of your life in up to eight-player versus battles. You'll even be able to scout opponents to spy their weakness before you get stuck in.

Unreal Tournament 3

Publisher: Midway ETA: Never. Ok, Christmas



Imagine our feigned shock when we noticed a sneaked out press release proclaiming UT 3 as a PS3 exclusive… What Midway means is that the game will not be coming to Xbox 360, well – not until a few months after the PS3 version anyway. It will still be out on PC, though. Expect Unreal 3 engine-based first-person majesty. You bloody well deserve it.

Battlestar Galactica



Publisher: Vivendi **ETA:** Late 2007

A game of the space show that so mercilessly, yet entertainingly, capitalised on Star Wars. So much scope for tense space battling against a scary robotic foe, a godsend for cheesy comms patter. Oh, it's a top-down RTS… Get past the disappointment of this missed opportunity and how can you fail to be excited by a space station full of online modes and ships like the purring cylon Raider.

Medal of Honor: Airborne

Publisher: EA **ETA:** August 31

The invasion may have been delayed until late August, but we still can't wait for MOH:A to parachute into our sorry lives. In case you've forgotten, the game casts you as an 82nd Airborne Division trooper, catapulting you straight into the heart of fighting in a war-wrecked Europe. Are EA are putting out a later release date to take us by surprise?



Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway

Publisher: Ubisoft ETA: November

Here's a game that's been profoundly influenced by TV shows such as Band of Brothers. This latest BIA is all about building up brotherly love with your comrades in the 101st Airborne Division. 'Bro Mo's' are moments when you get to save them and prove your mettle as a squad leader. Any cheesier they'd be handing out crackers.



ON THE RADAR

WINTER 2007
- Spider-Man: Friend or Foe — October 19
- PES 2008 — October 26

AUTUMN 2007
- Stranglehold — September 7
- Crysis — September 14
- Need for Speed Prostreet — November 2
- The Witcher — September 14
- The Simpsons — November 2
- Haze — November 30
- Democracy — September 14
- Guild Wars: Eye of the North — August 31
- Clive Barker's Jericho — September 21
- Alone in the Dark — December 14
- Enemy Territory: Quake Wars — August 31
- World In Conflict — September 28
- Hour of Victor — December 14

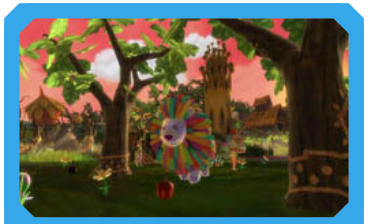
SUMMER 2007
- Medieval II: Kingdoms — August 31
- Two Worlds — August 17
- Premier Manager 08 — August 17
- Bioshock — August 24
- Loki — August 24
- Lost — August 31



Space Siege

Publisher: SEGA **ETA:** March

Dungeon Siege and Supreme Commander creators Gas Powered Games are busy chiselling out a spacey 'action RPG'. SS is a single-player game that can also be player out as an up to four-player cooperative blast. We're promised tactical action, a raft of futuristic killing tools and a customisable robot partner. No word yet on whether you can customise your sidekick to love you physically.

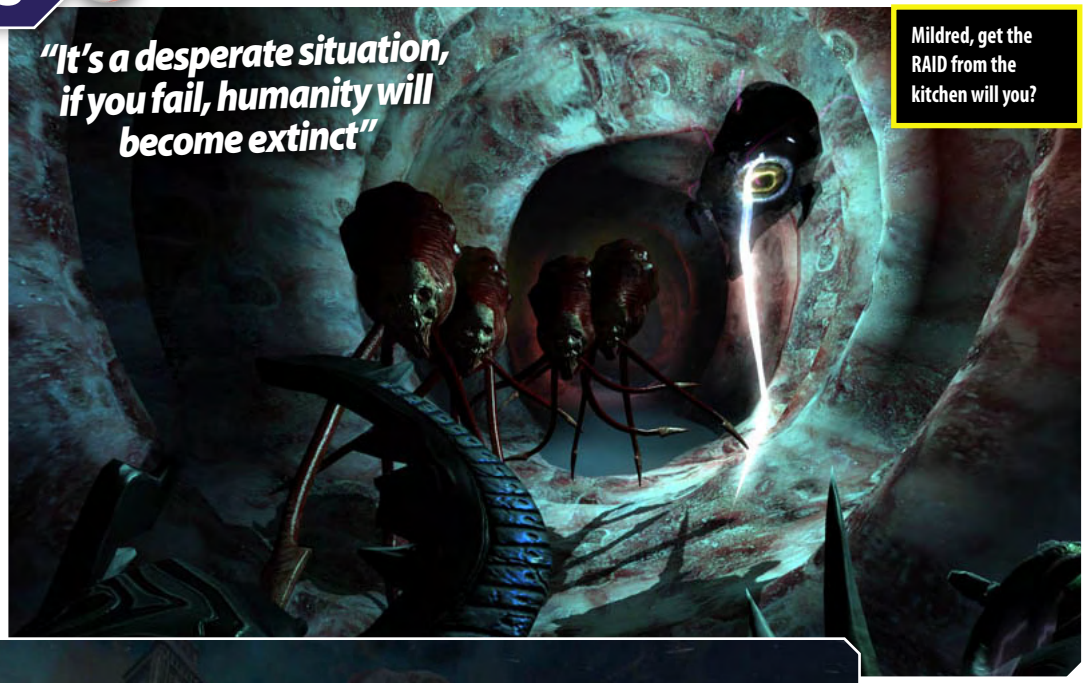


Viva Pinata

Publisher: Microsoft **ETA:** Christmas

The animal bashing Xbox 360 party game that's on it's way to PC, and more specifically Vista. This is the most cutesy disc you'll ever slip into your PC, inviting you to please animals with colourful worlds.

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Flagship Studios
Heritage: Many ex-Blizzard staff
Link: www.hellgatelondon.com
ETA: Sept



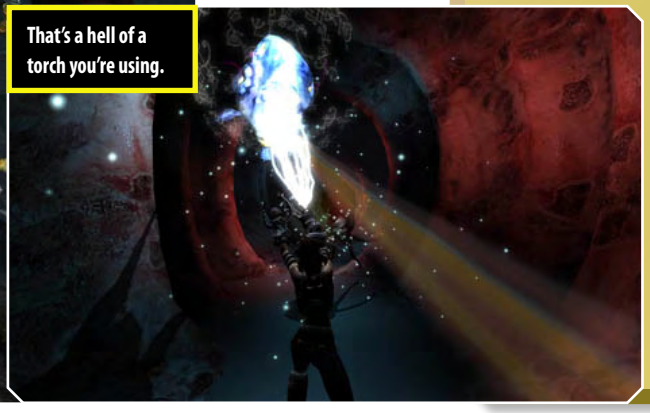
Mildred, get the RAID from the kitchen will you?

Jumping with swords is cool, but it's not clever.



PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Hellgate: London

That's a hell of a torch you're using.



LATEST NEWS

Hellgate: London

Shedding light on the dead of night…

What do we know?

There are two games for PC owners that are on everyone's lips; BioShock and Crysis. Yet Hellgate: London is a visually stunning and exciting RPG-cum-FPS, which could be every bit as worthy of your cash as the afore-mentioned duo. Developed by the brains behind Diablo, Flagship Studios is an experienced force to deal with in the RPG world.

Ok, so what's the story?

Help, the year's 2038 and London lies in ruins. A gate to Hell has opened in England's major city, and the inhabitants were quickly overwhelmed by the demons that slew through. The remaining cockneys have banded together in the undergrounds, forming factions to try to regain a foothold against the demonic forces. It's a fairly desperate situation: if they fail, humanity faces extinction.

Welcome to Hellgate: London.

Taking on the role of one of the defenders of the Smoke, you can choose from one of three factions to align with. The Templar are a secretive society who specialise in mixing technology and artefacts to create the ultimate in weapons and armours: which makes them particularly talented at short range and melee attacks. Next up are the Cabalists, a group of warlock-type warriors who study science and the dark arts to create devastating magical spells.

Last, but not least, there's the Hunter faction. These are mysterious, but highly trained, ex-military operatives. Apt at combining theoretical science and technology, they prefer to engage their enemies at a distance with an array of sniper weapons and missiles. Presumably to keep their shiny armour clean of blood spatters.

> Hellgate: London continued

Infinite re-playability

Hellgate builds on the success of games like Elder Scrolls 2: Daggerfall and the classic ASCII adventure, Rogue, by using a random dungeon generator to create the game levels. It's a technique that worked for Diablo – a game many of the Flagship team worked on – and basically does what it says on the tin. Every time you enter a dungeon, which in this case will be part of the Tube network, the layout and contents are generated on the fly – that includes item drops and treasures too. If it works, it means the game is infinitely replayable: the danger is that dungeons may feel a little generic.

Don't fight the demons alone

The spawn of hell shouldn't be fought alone, and while Hellgate isn't an MMO as such, it's expected that a fair amount of your time will be spent playing in multiplayer mode. Before setting out to conquer a dungeon, you can team up with friends to help wiping out the demonic threat from the streets of London. If you have no friends, there are in-game meeting areas and lobbies where you'll be able to recruit others. So there really is no excuse for not doing your duty and banishing the evil back to the pits of Hell from whence it came.

Hellgate: London is shaping up to be something special, not only graphically but in terms of what's promised by the developers. The whole RPG come FPS has been done before but not with such gusto and don't forget Flagship are no strangers to the RPG genre. The gates of Hell are opening in London, and we can't wait to jump in.

LOOK INTO HELL
Click to see Hellgate in action





Fighting isn't just in Underground stations.



If in doubt, sing. Demons hate that don't you know.



Changing rooms in Carnaby St haven't changed much.

HANDS ON

ASSASSIN'S CREED

As if the Third Crusade wasn't bloody enough...

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft Montreal
Heritage: Prince of Persia
Link: www.assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com
ETA: November

Your list of gaming desires is less than likely to feature a free-roaming 12th Century Jerusalem would in the top spot. But when you fill it with brutal assassinations, glorious eye-candy and some seriously stealthy gameplay, it's no wonder that Assassin's Creed has become one of the most highly anticipated titles of the year.

Taking on the role of Altair, a fallen master-assassin, you'll find yourself fighting to redeem Altair in the eyes of his peers, and rebuild his status within the Assassin's Order after a failed assassination attempt robs him of his status. As the bodycount rises, so does your reputation, and the skill with which you'll have to manipulate your environment.

"Realism takes priority over Matrix-style exaggerations"

Harnessing the Holy Land

The streets of Jerusalem are positively thriving with life. In fact, you've probably heard games journalists spouting countless times over the years about "living, breathing" cities. Well, for once it appears the cliché deserves it's use. The Holy Land and it's inhabitants prove to be both boon and bane, and play as large a role in your ongoing success as the blade in your hand.

After completing a successful assassination, your next task is to escape with your limbs intact. As guards chase you though the city, you can opt to disappear into the crowd using the 'blend' feature. Using this you'll bow your head and disguise yourself as a monk amongst the masses, sounds like a plan, but the guards are still looking for the killer and the slightest mistake can bring unwanted attention your way. You can also opt to hide, but civilians can give away your position. You can also obviously flee, but you'll be chased every step of the way, and losing your enemies isn't as easy as you'd hope.

The key to conquering the city is mastering the vertical cityscape. You can climb pretty much everything you >



Dance-offs, second only to hangings.



Even 900 years ago, hoodies were a nuisance.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Assassin's Creed!



STEALTHY, WEALTHY & WISE
Take a look through the eyes of an assassin

> Assassins Creed continued

see. Scaling buildings isn't a matter of finding special climbing walls, or grabbing a ladder. Find a wall and so long as you can find holes, cracks, protruding bricks or anything else to grab a hold of, you can make your way up it.

Reaching the summit of some buildings you'll discover Leap of Faith spots, which present you with the opportunity to throw yourself off the edge, and hopefully land in a life-saving bail of hay. Misjudge your leap, and you'll be at one with the streets below. Or at two, three and four.

Gorgeous Gore

Assassin's Creed looks downright beautiful, simple as that. The limited pastel pallet adds a sense of realism to the Holy Land's visuals, and makes the act of plunging a dagger into an enemy's face all the more sickeningly satisfying.

Also, with over 10,000 animations reportedly used for Altair, things look just as impressive in motion as they do in a carefully selected screenshot. Choreography looks amazing, and in keeping with much of the game, realism takes priority over Matrix-style exaggeration.



Leaps of Faith, also known as Leaps of Idiocy.



Tag, you're it.



"He's not the messiah, he's a very naughty boy."



12th Century kebab.

> *"As the body count rises, so does your reputation and skill"*

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of the whole experience is not an issue with either gameplay or visuals, but of storyline. Over the past year there's been plenty of speculation in regards to whether the 12th Century setting is as it would first appear, and there's been countless hints that advanced technology could in fact play an integral part behind the scenes of 12th century Jerusalem, but there's little point in dwelling on the rumours. At this point, Ubisoft could tell us that Altair turns out to be a space marine, and quite frankly, we'd still be quaking with anticipation for what looks set to be one of the year's best titles.



Arthur had a bad feeling about this

PCGZine — Assassins Creed

HOW COMPLETE? 80%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS 88%

We just can't wait for the blood-letting to commence.

THE TACTICAL FIRST PERSON SHOOTER
DEVELOPED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE PC







Individual order system, strategic planning phase, extended supports, specific maps, various environments.



Battle with up to 32 players in one of the 7 coop and adversarial multiplayer modes including the brand new "Recon vs Assault" mode.

Tom Clancy's
GHOST RECON
ADVANCED WARFIGHTER

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UBISOFT

SEARCH PCGZine PRINT THIS PAGE ZOOM IN ZOOM OUT TOGGLE FULL SCREEN VIEW PREVIOUS PAGE NEXT PAGE

Publisher: Paradox Interactive
Developer: Battefront.com
Certificate: PEGI 12
Features: Turn based action, taking the WWII formula and placing it in the modern world.
OUT NOW

On a mission

Part wargame, part squad shooter, Martin van Balkom of Battlefront.com explains why Combat Mission isn't just another Tom Clancy clone.



Camouflage lesson #3: Make an APC look like a picket fence.

After staggering success with the Combat Mission games set in WWII, Battlefront.com has taken it's popular military sims to the near future for some fighting in the Middle East. We caught up with Martin van Balkom to find out why Shock Force is as hard hitting as its name suggests.

What's the scenario for Combat Mission: Shock Force?
Combat Mission: Shock Force is assuming a near-future conflict in Syria in the summer of 2008. Following a number of detonations of dirty nuclear bombs in some major western cities, the trail leads to Syria, where a fanatical group has overtaken the government. An Alliance of western Armies invades the country to remove the terrorists. The game follows a task force of the US Army – the Task Force Thunder – comprised of a Stryker Brigade Combat Team and a Heavy Brigade Combat Team with support elements through that campaign.

The main reason for this backdrop is that we wanted a real-world scenario (as opposed to a pure fantasy setting in a country which doesn't exist) which gives us the potential to simulate a conventional military conflict. Syria is not Iraq, and has a large and efficient military force. Our game is set to give an idea of how such a conventional conflict could pan out.



Although Syria isn't Iraq, there is quite a bit of desert in parts of the game.

What's new over previous war sims you've made?
Some of the high points are that we added a highly story driven campaign, and the ability for players to create such campaigns themselves with the editors. The ability to show and simulate each individual soldier on the battlefield. The ability to script your own tactical AI. The ability to do true asymmetrical warfare by the use and combination of different types of goals and objectives. The realistic simulation of battlefield communications, which dictate what each unit knows on the battlefield, how information is passed up and down the chain (and laterally), which for the first time allows us to properly simulate modern satellite based comms systems in a tactical game.

Of course, the stuff that isn't even new but was part of our earlier titles is unique and worthy of mention all in itself. A realistic physics engine with detailed ballistics calculations, the map editor which allows you to create maps and topography from scratch, a complex morale model and so forth. All of the good stuff which made the previous games into wargames of the year are still there.

"The player is removed from micro managing soldiers and elevated to the role of battlefield commander"

Why did you choose a modern setting for the game this time?
There is a whole number of reasons, but perhaps the two most important >

MISSION VERY POSSIBLE
Click to watch the strategy unfold. See how turn based operation plays out on the modern day battlefield.





Well placed artillery can change a battle.



Thanks to an advanced graphics engine, even the shadows can help.

> Interview continued

ones are for personal reasons and smart development ones.

After making three WW2 games in a row we needed a break and change of scenery. That's the personal reason.

From a professional point of view, though, the Shock Force engine has been coded completely from scratch and contains basically zero code from the previous games. It is supposed to become the foundation for a series of games, which will eventually go back to WW2, but also visit other theatres and time periods. We needed an engine with the flexibility to do that, which the previous engine couldn't. If the first game was set it in, say, medieval times or WW2 because then we would have to add completely new things later on for a modern environment.

Why is getting the graphics engine important for a strategy game?

It's important because it allows us to properly simulate certain things in detail which more traditional 2D or top-down wargames can only abstract. Adding and properly simulating the third dimension is key to delivering a credible tactical warfare simulation.

Just one example: wind. You will see trees and grass sway with the wind, depending on the strength and direction set for a given scenario. This is cool to watch, but also serves an important function: it gives a visual clue to the player that firing a round or an anti-tank missile might lead to unexpected results under certain wind conditions. Early anti-tank missiles are extremely prone to side winds and loose accuracy fast. So in this way we tie in the immersion factor with the simulation and achieve a result which goes way beyond spectacular explosions or nice textures.

How important is the multiplayer component?

Very important. No AI can replace a human opponent in the long term (or even medium term). While the human player is capable of learning and improving his tactical skills, the AI is only as good as it's programmed.

That's why we support a wide range of multiplayer modes. You can play online in real-time, but you can also play using PBEM (play by email) mode, where players exchange their turns by email. This is especially interesting for players who have little time, you can play through a battle over a few days or even weeks, exchanging a just few turns each day.

Tell us how the turn-based system works.

We use what is known as "We Go" instead of the more traditional "I go, you go" system (famous example: Chess). In other words, both players are plotting their moves simultaneously for the coming turn. Once they are done with issuing commands to their units, both hit "Go" and the game plays out in real time for the next 60 seconds. During this turn, both players cannot give any more orders to their units, but can move around the battlefield freely and observe the action. After the turn is over, both can replay the action as often as they wish and view it from different angles or pay attention to different parts of the battlefield to make sure they don't miss any important events. The player is removed from micro managing his soldiers and takes the role of a battlefield commander, while at the same time it requires forward thinking and anticipation of opponent moves, perhaps more so than in real-time play.



The magic carpet will not be in the finished game.

> *"We can properly simulate modern satellite based comms"*

What's your favourite winning tactic, then?

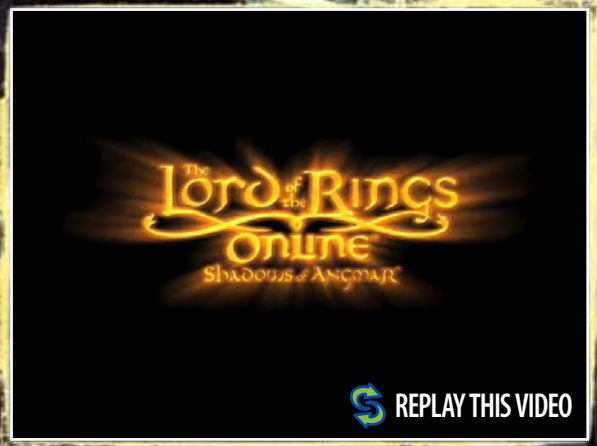
As in the real world, there is no one winning tactic. Shock Force attempts to simulate modern warfare as realistically as possible by today's standards, so if there was one winning tactic then we would have done something wrong. Part of the beauty of Shock Force is that it's not artificially constructed to follow a rock-paper-scissors concept, but instead attempts to simulate real world abilities of both soft components (doctrine, military organizational structure, communications) and hard components (weapons capabilities).

Therefore, the "winning tactic" is the same as it would be if you were a real commander in charge of a real military force. Use combined arms and know your own capabilities and those of your opponent inside out.

Can you tell us something that no-one else knows about Combat Mission: Shock Force?

No, but I can show you what nobody else has seen besides our internal testing group: a "blooper" screenshot from an early beta version of the game. I call this the "flying carpet"…

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READER FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of PC games or PCGZine!

MAKING A DRAMA
THANKS FOR THE CRYSIS PREVIEW. I'VE been tracking this game for many years now, and so I can't wait for the release!

> Bobby Gemert

> None of us can Bobby – it looks ace doesn't it?

NEWS FROM LA
GREETINGS. APART FROM THE regular monthly issue of PCGZine, and E3 2007 just gone, it will be GREAT if you could do an 'E3 2007 Special PCGZine'. This issue being one that covers ALL the gaming news, announcements, services etc made for the PC. I can only imagine it will be an amazing issue the readers of PCGZine will appreciate – bringing E3 2007 of PC goodies to their desktops.

It will be a COOL thing to do.

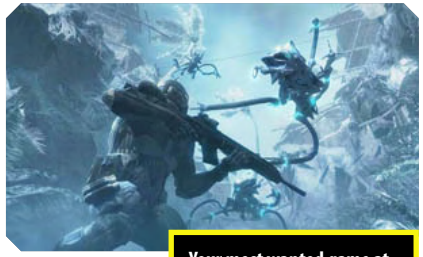
Thank you very much for reading my e-mail. I love you guys and the exceptional work you are doing for the gaming community.

Yours faithfully

> Ndositwe Chizimbi

> Well, we don't quite have the bandwidth for an E3 special edition this year, but I think you'll find we've covered all the main events pretty well.

Don't miss Issue 9
Out 30/8/07
Sign up now!



Your most wanted game at the moment by far: Crysis.

MAKING A DRAMA. AGAIN.
CAN'T WAIT!!! IT'S TAKING TOO LONG.... But from what it looks like it's really thrilling… (*He's talking about Crysis – Ed*)

> Dyreck

> There's no game in development that looks as good as Crysis at the moment – those guys at Crytek know what they're doing in the graphics department. Check out Merchants of Brooklyn, from Paleo Entertainment for another game using the same engine.

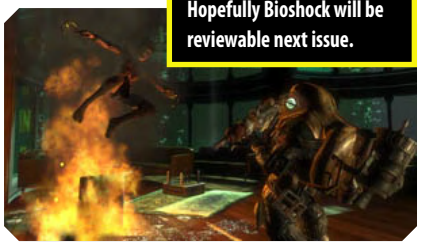
BETTER THAN THE REAL THING?
AS A 54 YEAR. OLD GAMER AND games machine builder, I subscribe to the big three mags for gamers and geeks and I came across a link to you guys while surfing for PC games. I was very sceptical about a FREE e-zine that would be a worthwhile read… But PCGZ is OUTSTANDING! It's well formatted and easy to navigate quickly to my favourite part! The Reviews and Previews are actually about PC GAMES. So Hall, Morris, Hep and Hill, thank you for a GREAT read, I look forward to the next issue!

> Mick Stewart

> It was all going so well, until you missed off the Editor from your list of thanks. Who do you think makes those guys sound so good? (Only kidding, natch.)

UNDERSTATED
THANKS FOR THE BIOSHOCK PREVIEW. Looks very promising.

> Narasimha Baliga



Hopefully Bioshock will be reviewable next issue.

WORLD AT WAR

Defcon review falls on deaf ears

YOUR REVIEW OF DEFCON IN ISSUE 7 OF YOUR otherwise great publication I think gives more credit to this game than it deserves.

The game in my opinion is just a poor attempt at the old Amiga classic (and I seem to recall it being banned at one point) of Nuclear War but without the fun characterisations of Thatcher, Reagan, and the mad man from Libya amongst various other characters to negotiate with and nuke out of existence.

I'm surprised this wasn't mentioned, but then again maybe you have to be of a certain age to remember this classic game.

> Phil Hughes

> Sadly, the reviewer (ie. me) *is* of a certain age, but was an ST man, so Nuclear War slipped his mind because it was never ported across. Probably because it wasn't very good (that old ST/Amiga bias in me). It doesn't take anything away from the indie classic that Defcon is – where NW hid its simplicity behind humour, Defcon uses its minimalist design to encourage strategic play.

> Very promising? It looks like a Game of the Year to us!

ANOTHER OLD TIMER
LESS SUGGESTION, MORE congratulations. Last games mag I subscribed to was Crash. Very useful, grown up. Good choice of some obscure games too, like Theatre of War.

> Darren

> Thanks Darren, we'll be improving our coverage of lesser known games and community events in the near future.



Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: GRIN
Heritage: Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter, Splinter Cell
Link: ghostrecon.us.ubi.com/graw2
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
2GHz CPU, 1GB RAM, 128MB 3D card

"Subduing the enemy forces with a minimum of fuss is the aim"

The tactical team shooter that isn't just another lazy console conversion

Tom Clancy might be a literate fellow, but that doesn't grant him an excuse to pop his name in front of some of the longest game names in recent memory. Apologies to our art team for the dogs dinner at the top of this page. Since Ubisoft didn't go for something snappy and punchy like Oblivion, or Bioshock this is going to have to put up with being GRAW2 for the foreseeable.

As the numerative indicator decrees, this is the sequel to the game that introduced us to Ghosts last year. As a tactical shooter in the same mould as its predecessor, this isn't a game where you can charge into an open area screaming about how invincible you are. That scenario will inevitably lead to a state of deadness. Hideous, limb-mangling, lead-and-shrapnel-induced deadness. You have to play it cool. Fortunately, this time around you don't need to rely solely on checkpoints for your savegames. Now you can die as often as you like (or as often as the Mexicans outwit you).

That's what an explosion should look like.





This is one of the least helpful tutorials ever – they don't even fire back!

Getting to know you

That's where your team comes in – you and your ghosts will need stealth and organisation if you're going to be successful. That essentially means you have to sneak around as quietly as heavily-armed soldiers can and, when appropriate, apply ammunition to enemy forces.

It sounds simple, but there's quite a tactical challenge here. In its favour, the control system is very easy to get to grips with – all the orders can be issued with a bit of clicking and scrolling of the mousewheel. For example, you

>



Online playing modes get you familiar with the different terrain.

LEARNING TO THINK BY NUMBERS

Rush in guns blazing and you're sure to die.



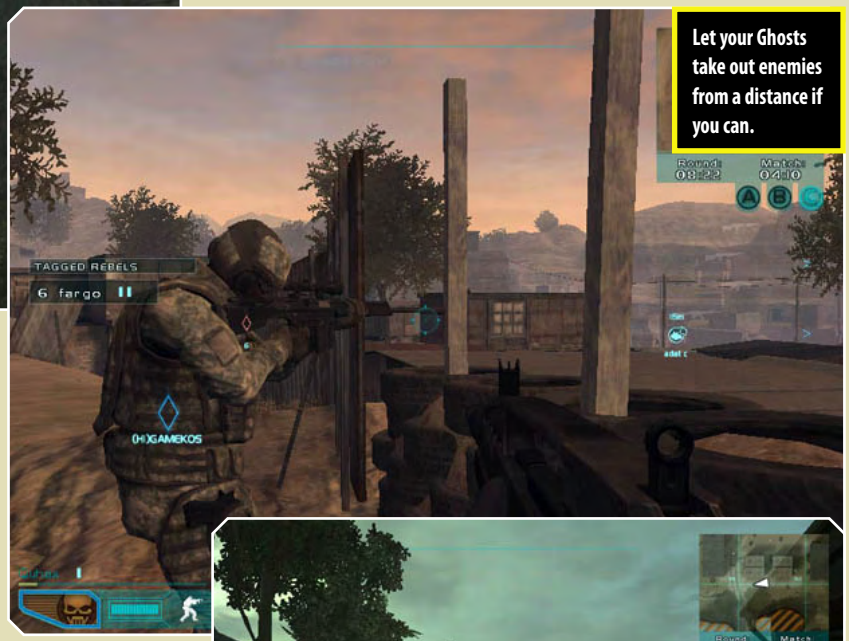
Gun thiefs
Overview
Shooting styles

Gun thiefs

There's a bigger range of weapons in the sequel than the original, and now you can half-inch your victim's guns as well. Oh how we laughed when using one of the Mexicans' own weapons against them…



It's no Apocalypse Now, but getting to those insertion points is a fun journey.



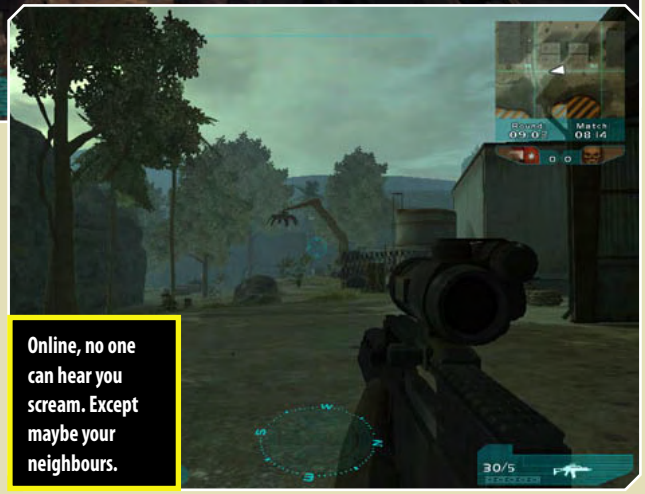
Let your Ghosts take out enemies from a distance if you can.

> GRAW 2 continued

can set your Ghosts to recon mode, which automatically makes them move stealthily. This has the drawback of slowing you down, so it's best saved for the outskirts of combat zones.

When it comes to engaging the enemy, it's best to do it before he sees you. It's a simple theory; if they don't know you're there, you don't get shot. That might sound rather simplistic, but this isn't the sort of game where you can wander over to a drinks vendor and have your health replenished. This is as much about strategy as anything else, and subduing the opposing forces with a minimum of fuss is aim.

At the start of each mission you can assign your squad from the characters available. To do this, you need to assess exactly what's required in the mission. Will you have enough cover on the Mexican border to justify taking a sniper? Or would you be better off having extra men by your side? You have a finite supply of ammo at your >



Online, no one can hear you scream. Except maybe your neighbours.

THE FIRSTS OF MANY

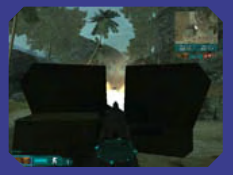
Even soldiers had to start somewhere



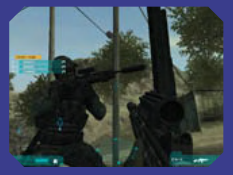
SPOTTED The first enemies you encounter are easy pickings, especially with their red halos.



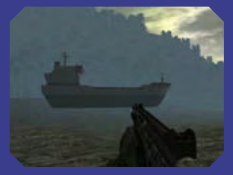
HEADCAM Use the helmet cam to guide and instruct your Ghosts.



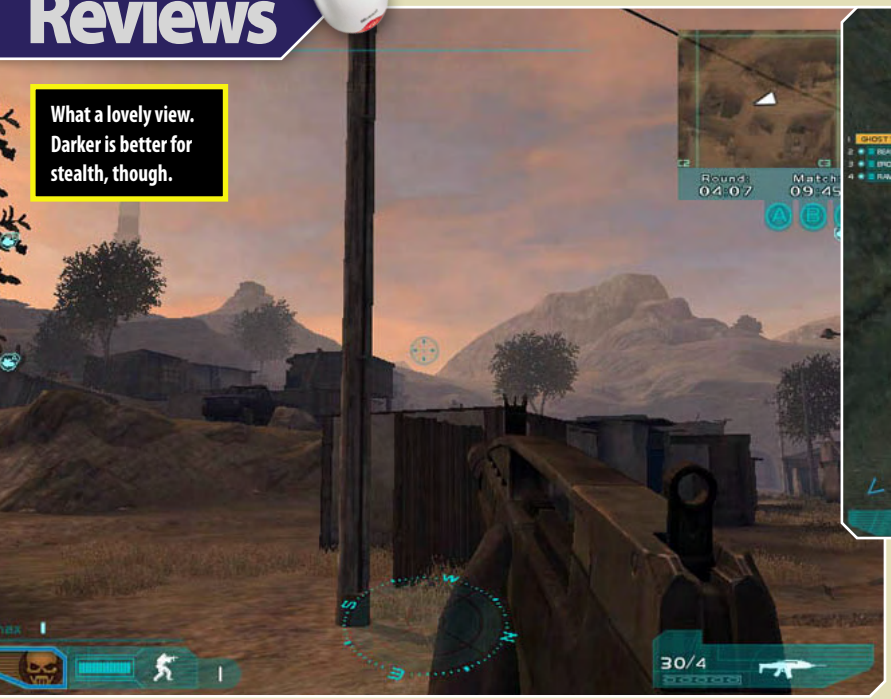
BLASTING Fixed machine guns aren't subtle but they save your ammo.



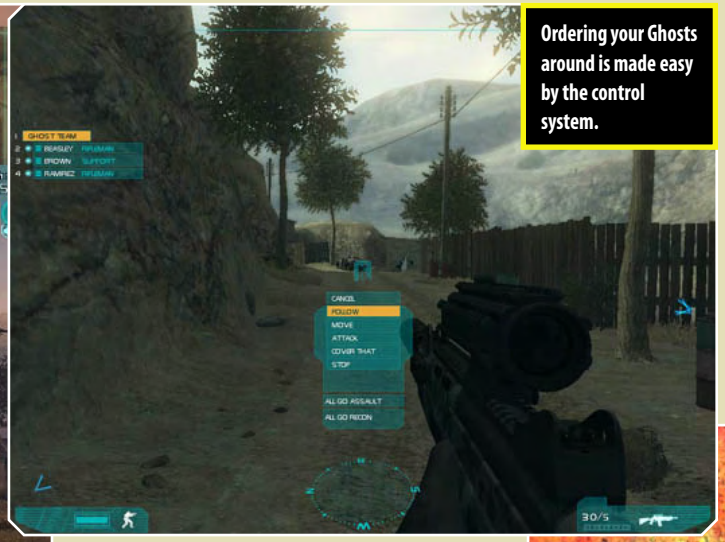
TEAMTALK Don't run away from your Ghosts unless you know everything's all clear.



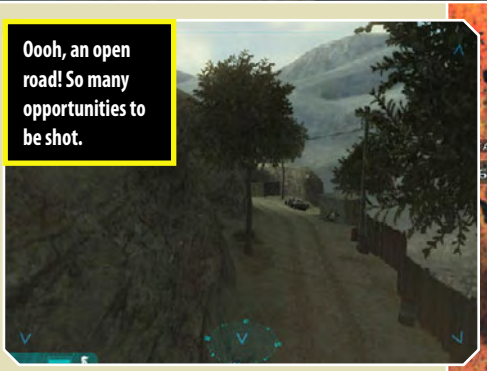
BOATS This is an online map where you can't go in the water. Which isn't much fun.



What a lovely view. Darker is better for stealth, though.



Ordering your Ghosts around is made easy by the control system.


Oooh, an open road! So many opportunities to be shot.



Bet it'd look even better if we had a PhysX card.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



> GRAW 2 continued

disposal, so its imperative that you choose your line-up wisely.

Graphically there's a lot to admire. It certainly isn't a game to run on an ageing system, but that seems to be the norm with modern shooters anyway. Your surroundings aren't entirely interactive, but you won't have time or opportunity to go sightseeing. The characters are well drawn and it's impressive from a visual perspective.

I hear voices

Likewise, the voice acting is of a reasonable standard. Nothing has the potential to ruin a game more than bad voice acting, but GRAW2's cast does a pretty good job without risking winning any Oscars. They're suitably gruff and macho without sounding like Sly Stallone – and there's a bit of variety in there as well.

There's also an impressive array of weapons and vehicles, including being able to pick up guns dropped by vanquished foe, and fixed weapons such as machine guns. These are both additions since the original. You get to choose your kit when selecting your squad, so don't underestimate the importance of taking as much as you can carry. A pistol might not be hugely effective, but when you run out of ammo in your other guns, it's a damn sight better than flinging rocks.

GRAW2 is a very impressive game. It has pretty much everything that you might find on an 'elements of an impressive game' checklist. The big question is whether or not the PC version can mimic the online success of GRAW on Xbox 360, where it dominates multiplayer gaming. It's certainly a polished contender, but up against some stiff competition from Quake Wars and Team Fortress 2 in a few months. Will this strategy win out on that battlefield? ● ***Andy Sutcliffe***

"This isn't the sort of game in which a drinks vendor can replenish health..."

PCGZine Verdict

Sure shooting fun, but at the same time a lasting and cerebral challenge.

- Great control system
- Rewards tactical play
- Impressive environments

88%



Attack On Pearl Harbour

There's a war going on in the Pacific, but something's not quite right here…

Publisher: Ascaron
Developer: Legendo Entertainment
Heritage: Dracula Twins, The Three Musketeers
Link: www.pearlharbor-game.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
2.0 GHz CPU, 512mb RAM, 64MB 3D card



There's a somewhat limited selection of planes on offer, all of which are huge.



Disproportionate scenery abounds.

Somewhere in a secret bunker in the darkest jungles of Japan, the Imperial Air Force were hard at work developing one of WWIIs most secret weapons – the Gigantoplane™. So rare, that no other flight sim since has dared replicate it: Attack on Pearl Harbour is the first game to feature the man made monster, and as such, should be of interest to any flight fan.

OK, so we made that, but if you look at the screenshots here, you could easily be convinced that the Gigantoplane is real. You see, although all of the planes in game have been meticulously modelled, for some strange reason, the developers have managed to get the relative proportions completely wrong. Flying a plane the size of a small town is enough to shatter the atmosphere in even the best of flight sims, but here it just puts an exclamation point on what's already a poor sim.

"Although the acting is cheesy, the campaign does its job well."

Good looking

The game has a distinct arcade bent, and sports some gorgeous visuals (giant planes notwithstanding), and although the storyline and voice acting may be incredibly cheesy, the campaign does its job well, and presents a variety of interesting missions. Unfortunately, however, the majority of problems with this game concern the flight model, which has to be the strangest mix of realistic and arcade flying we've ever seen. What's worse, for some reason, the planes don't even seem to fly through the air so much as being suspended like puppets from giant invisible strings. If you can manage to look past the hilariously wrong proportions and dodgy flight model, there's a decent arcade sim waiting to get out from under here. However, as good as the game may look, that the graphics are only there to divert you away from the dodgy gameplay, meaning you'd be best off finding your arcade thrills elsewhere.

Ian Morris

Even the RAF get a look in, with British Naval fighters scrambling to defeat the menace.



A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES

And no sign of Ben Afleck.

The campaign mode is by far the strongest element of Attack on Pearl Harbour, with four on offer (an early and late choice for both the USA and Japan), and a variety of missions in each.

Dealing with either the USA's Douglas Knox, or Japan's Zenji Yamada, the story is progressed through graphic novel style cutscenes, which, while being badly dubbed, at least look the part.

Sadly, however, the storyline drops off almost completely after the first mission, with your pilot just undertaking a number of varied, but unconnected missions. As you progress through the missions, you earn experience, which will eventually lead to you being awarded medals for your achievements.





PCGZine Verdict

At least it's not as bad as the movie…

- Interesting missions
- Dodgy flight model
- Inaccurate dimensions

56%



Lost Planet: Extreme Condition

Revenge is a dish best served absolutely bloody freezing

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Heritage: Resident Evil series, Dead Rising
Link: www.lostplanet-thegame.com
OUT NOW

System Requirements: Pentium 4, 512MB RAM, 256MB 3D Card

Let's just get Lost Planet's plot out of the way. You play some guy who's father is killed by a giant bug. You develop amnesia, have to fight to remember who you are, and avenge your father's death with the help of some two-dimensional buddies. Yes the story really is that bad.

All you need to know is this, you're going to be fighting giant bugs, pirates and armoured mechs on a frozen planet. Cue the explosions…

Lost Planet is a no-holds-barred no-brainer of a shooter. Forget any notions of stealth or tactical manoeuvring that you've come to expect from your modern games. Tactics are for wimps. Get your arse in there and blow stuff up. Just don't expect enemies to offer up much of a challenge outside of the old-school scripted boss fights. AI seems almost none existent. Flying bugs will swoop at you while you cut them to pieces with gunfire, rolling bugs will spin towards you while you blow them to bits with grenades, and pirates will helpfully stand in place for you to snipe their faces off.



There's only one way to keep them away from the sandwiches.

Not so old school

To be fair, Capcom has served up a few new(ish) ideas to liven things up a bit. One of the best being your 'anchor'. Essentially a nifty grappling hook which helps open up the environment by allowing you access to otherwise unreachable areas. It can be more than a little infuriating to use when you come under fire though, as being hit cancels your use of the anchor, so the very times at which you should be using it for a fast getaway it becomes pretty much useless. Still, it's a nice quirky gadget to have, and one of the few little touches that prevent Lost Planet from becoming an entirely unoriginal experience.



So you worked out what the sight was for?

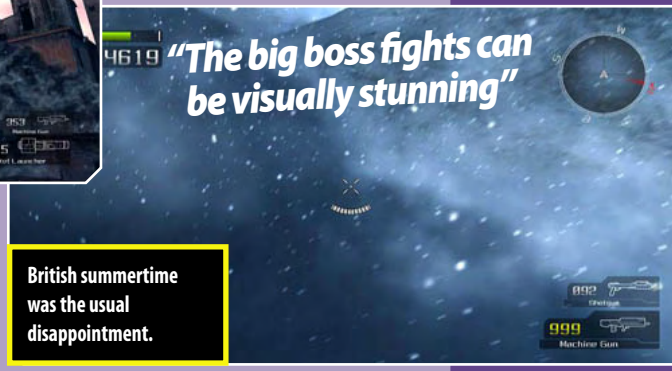


Smoke effects can look great.

Pest control

The boss fights can be visually stunning. Huge monolithic bugs and beasties lie in wait, and savour every opportunity to squish, stab and swallow you. It's just a shame that these fights don't play as well as they look. What could and should have been exciting edge-of-your-seat battles with these giants are handed to you in scripted, restrictive chunks which rely more on memory than skill. Just like the games we were playing 20 years ago, it's a matter of learning what the boss's attacks consist of, what order they'll be dealt in, how best to avoid being hit, and then drilling a few holes into the critter's weak point(s). Routine it would seem is the dish of the day.

>



British summertime was the usual disappointment.



Fortunately, he'll just stand there waiting for you to shoot him.

> Lost Planet continued

PC gamers tend to be more than a little pessimistic when it comes to console-to-PC ports, but on the whole Capcom has made a decent enough job of transferring a big Xbox 360 title onto our beloved personal computers.



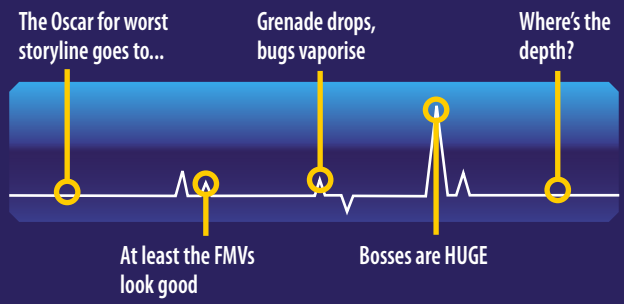
Game Law 538E: All barrels must contain explosive materials.

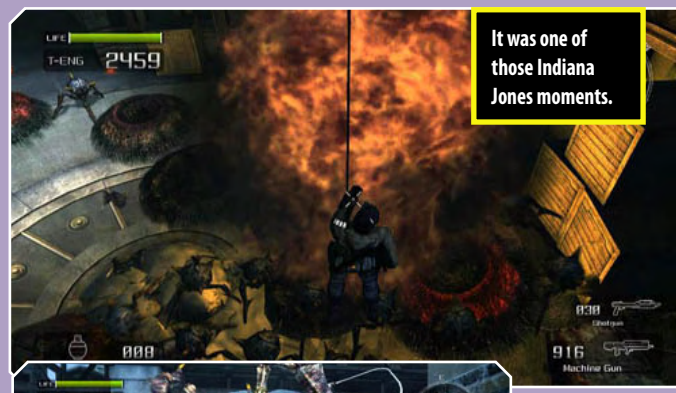
Controls aren't bad (in fact there's some great customisable options) and graphics courtesy of DX10 have seen a sizeable improvement over the console version, so where's the catch?

Well, the less said about Lost Planet's multiplayer the better. The fairly slick, if uninspired, Xbox 360 multiplayer game has been lovingly replaced by a buggy, laggy and sparse online PC experience.

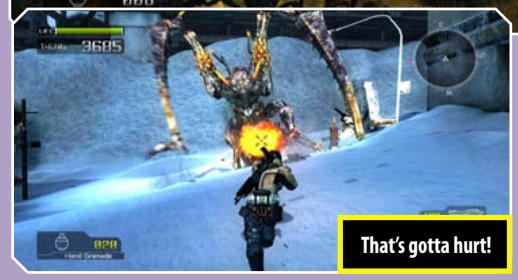
All in all you it's best not to expect too much from Lost Planet: hours of mindless but pretty bug bashing and little else. There's not enough of a challenge to keep you gripped for long sittings, and the combination of the short solo campaign and a poor multiplayer experience severely limit any replay value somewhat. But if you're looking for some pick-up-and-play action, there are worse to throw your wallet at. ● ***Darran Hepworth***

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*





It was one of those Indiana Jones moments.



A GUIDE TO E.D.N. III

Thing's you'll need to know if you're to survive the extreme conditions

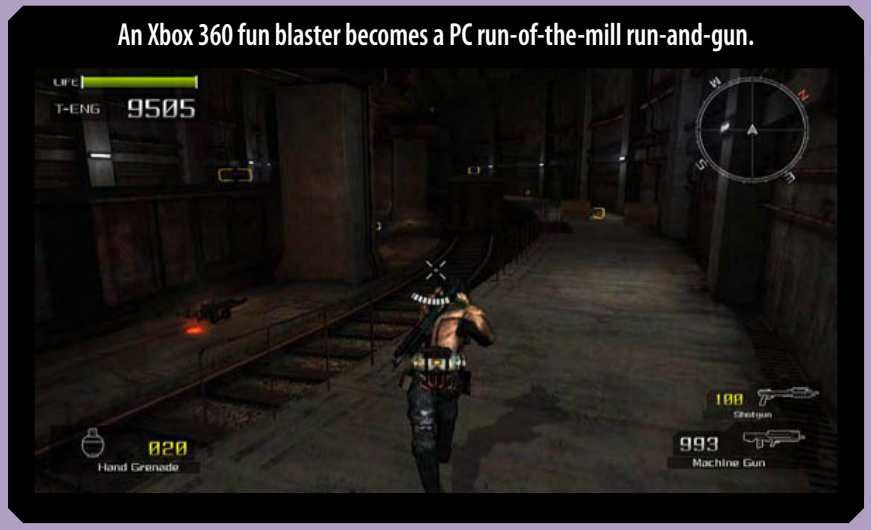


The Akrid | **T-ENG** | **VS**

The Akrid

When colonizing the frozen wastes, mankind stumbled upon the nightmarish Akrid. There are as many different species as there are reasons to wipe them off the face of the planet. From the minor annoyances of the Trilid and Sepia, to the gigantic worm-like Undeep, and good old Green Eye himself, just be sure to hit them where it hurts. Luckily, you'll usually find those parts conveniently glowing.

An Xbox 360 fun blaster becomes a PC run-of-the-mill run-and-gun.



PCGZine Verdict

Fun but shallow old school bug-bashing.

- Fancy visuals
- Woeful story
- Broken Multiplayer

75%

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You get to fight through all manner of environments.



Your base has a modular design, and can be customised as you see fit.



Publisher: Paradox Interactive
Developer: Chaos Concepts
Heritage: None
Link: www.ufo-extraterrestrials.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
PIII 1.5GHz, 256MB RAM

UFO Extraterrestrials

The chances of anything coming from Mars are a million to one they say.

When this one first rolled onto the desk, we'll admit we were a little confused. "UFO Extraterrestrials, you say? That's a heck of a typo. Shouldn't it say X-Com: UFO Defence?" Set in the year 2025, an alien planet us earthlings have colonised finds itself under attack from a deadly alien foe. It's up to you to set up a network of bases on the planet, intercepting and destroying enemy spacecraft as you detect them, before travelling to their crash site and wiping out the survivors. Sound familiar?

As anyone who's played the original X-Com will know, the gameplay is divided into two halves – a base management side, which is run from the world map, and a turn-based strategy part, which occurs whenever you send out troops to explore an alien crash site.



You can rescue alien technology from the missions, and flog it when you return to base.

Stay in control

There's a surprising amount of micro-management to do in and around your base, as you have to manage your finances, research, as well as upgrade your HQ with new structures. Of course, while you're busy managing your base, your base's defences are hard at work repelling the alien invasion, and shooting down any UFOs that dare to come near.

When the UFO crashes (or manages to land), it's time to send in the troops to mop up the mess, and it's here the game morphs into an isometric turn-based strategy. Each soldier and vehicle in your party has a number of action points, which deplete as you move, shoot, or use items, and this really forces you to think carefully about every move. The grid based combat, and destructible environments also open up a whole host of strategic possibilities. In all, it's as good an homage to X-Com as you'll find.

> *"Destructible environments open up strategic possibilities"*

X-COME AGAIN?

Familiarity breeds familiarity



As good as UFO Extraterrestrials may be, we still can't shake the niggling feeling that it's really doing nothing new. Everything X-Com did has been pretty much identically reflected here – from the world map, to the base construction, which almost looks like it's been plucked directly from the original game. Although the graphical overhaul is much appreciated, it could really do with having some new features, which may have helped it to emerge from the shadow of its inspiration.

The only remaining problem is that games have moved on a lot since the original X-Com was released, and we really wish UFO did something with this kind of turn-based structure that we hadn't seen before. ● ***Ian Morris***

PCGZine Verdict

Haven't we met somewhere before?

- Deep turn-based combat
- X-Com in all but name
- Nothing really new

74%



Jules Verne Collector's Edition

Developer: Kheops Studio
Publisher: The Adventure Company
Price: £19.99

At just under £20, this adventure collection is pretty good value for money. Loosely based on the Jules Verne novels "From the Earth, to the Moon" and "The Mysterious Island", the two point-and-click games benefit greatly from Verne's scientific vision. While the character design may leave a lot to be desired, and the artistic direction isn't really as strong as Verne's original dreams, both titles are solid, requiring you to complete many different challenges, rather than just solving puzzles. For the price, you can't go far wrong.

- Great puzzles
- Decent plot
- Naff artistic direction

Verne Value. **78%**



Bone: Out From Boneville

Developer: Telltale Games
Publisher: Xider
Price: £9.99

Based on the popular comic book series by Jeff Smith, Bone: Out From Boneville is the first in a series of episodic instalments to be released on a disc. From the developers of the sublime Sam & Max, Bone is a top-notch adventure from start to finish, with striking characters, humorous dialogue, and a variety of different puzzles. The only real problem we had with this one was that the puzzles were too easy, meaning the game only lasts around an hour, but for a mere tenner, the price is just about right.

- Stand-out characters
- Well presented
- A bit too short

This Bone's connected to the adventure bone. **81%**



Panzer Elite: Gold Edition

Developer: Zootfly
Publisher: JoWood
Price: £34.99

Hoorah for zee cheesy var games! Zere are bad accents all round this month in Panzer Elite, a game which puts you into ze shoes of a german tank commander in the middle of numerous intense tank battles spread over three campaigns. Graphically, the game looks very nice, with a horizon that stretches as far as the eye can see – the only problem comes with the collision detection. When you clip a house, it'll collapse, yet somehow it's possible for your thirty tonne tank to get stuck on top of a fragile brick wall…

- Arcade tank fun
- A little realism wouldn't hurt
- Cheesy accents

For you, zee var is just beginning. **72%**



Morning's Wrath

Developer: Ethereal Darkness Interactive
Publisher: www.edigames.com
Price: $9.95 (~£5.00)

The first game from indie developer Ethereal Darkness Interactive, Morning's Wrath is a traditional RPG in the vein of Baldur's Gate. It has such high production values it's often hard to tell that it's an indie game, as the graphics, score, and storyline are all top-notch. Playing as Princess Morning, a young Princess whose family is slaughtered after her boyfriend betrays her, it's up to you to save your Kingdom from invasion, over some 20+ hours of gameplay. While the interface could use a bit of work, this is an impressive game, and for just £5, represents incredible value.

- Simple combat
- Many hours of gameplay
- Interface could use a polish

Hell hath no fury like a Princess scorned. **78%**



War Wound

Developer: Apothecary Studios
Publisher: AGEOD
Price: €19.99

Developed by the indy dev team Apothecary Studios, War Wound is an isometric shooter, that at first glance looks to be a lot like Cannon Fodder, with some rather nifty 3D graphics. However, it seems that graphics are about as far as this game really goes, as the game itself at times feels practically broken. Instead of being able to issue orders to your team-mates individually, all four of them simply follow wherever you click your mouse, making any strategic play impossible, and turning this into a rather disappointing point-and-click shooter.

- Nice graphics
- Glitchy
- Not much fun

Gameplay gone AWOL. **45%**

360Zine Issue 8 Out Now

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INSIDE ISSUE 8

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Welcome

Not every new MMO has dumbed down to take on the might of Warcraft.

The world of the MMOs is constantly shaping and evolving with the sheer number of subscribers skyrocketing every month. Every game offers something different from the last and the market is close to saturation with the various titles available. So for those of you who haven't trodden the waters yet, I may have the solution.

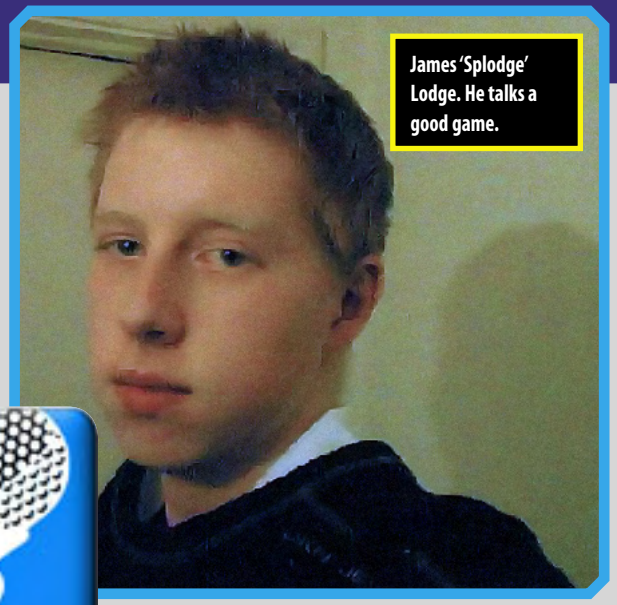
NEXON's Maplestory has finally launched in Europe. Question is, will it attract the more hardcore of MMO-RPG fan and lure them away from the likes of WoW and LOTRO? Only time will tell.



INTERVIEW

The voice of four

The fledging world of games commentary already has its stars.



James 'Splodge' Lodge. He talks a good game.

This month we're having a wee chat with James "Splodge" Lodge, gaming commentator from QuadV, a team of Shoutcasters and net radio enthusiasts who provide commentary for games tournaments around the world. Is it all talk, though, or can QuadV play with the best of them too?

Could you give our readers an idea of what you do?

We provide quality and dedicated live audio and video streaming as well as commentary of online and LAN based tournaments from all over the world. Delivering high quality online TV and radio to the masses. Whether it be an FPS or an RTS game, QuadV has someone on its books that can commentate on it. Our commentators aim to bring the game alive for listeners or viewers, much in the same way as conventional commentators for other sports such as football or rugby, we are able to give in depth analysis and making watching or listening to match an exciting experience.

As well as covering online events, you also cover LAN based tournaments. What's been the pinnacle event so far?

Well there are a number of different tournaments and events that QuadV have and will be covering so it is hard to pick the best one event. But we, either as a team, or as individuals have provided expertise for the CPC LANs, Multiplay iSeries LANs in the UK, Clanbase, TheSGL, ESWC (eSports World Cup), WSVG (World Series of Video Games), WCG UK (World Cyber Games), Intel Core 2 Extreme Challenge as well as large American events such as the CGS (Championship Gaming Series).

You can hear us right now in fact, QuadV are also covering the iPower tournament run by Packard Bell in Lisbon over the next few weeks.

With more and more professional gaming events happening, do you see pro-gaming commentary taking off in a big way?

I see no reason why it shouldn't. Just as with any conventional sport, commentating can have a large part to play in creating an enjoyable experience to either a viewer or listener. The growth of gaming be it either online or offline,

"QuadV's vision is to deliver a fantastic viewing and listening experience"

has grown substantially over the last few years and with it beginning to become more 'mainstream' in and around Europe, Asia and the USA the demand for commentary will continue to grow.

What's QuadV's ultimate goal?

QuadV's vision is to deliver a fantastic viewing and listening experience for those wishing to follow and enjoy TV style coverage of their favourite games, players and teams.

You have no women in your crew, haven't you had any female applications to join or is it a side of gaming that's not attractive to the feminine gamer?

Well, as far as I'm aware, we haven't actually received applications from any females regarding a commentating position. I'm not sure whether this is due to it online commentary not being seen as attractive for a woman, or not, but I'm sure that as gaming grows we will soon see more females getting into commentating in some way or another.

QuadV is regarded as one of the premiere crews for gaming commentating, but are any of you actually any good at clan based, multi player FPS?

I think it is safe to say between the crew we have a large amount of gaming experience behind us. For us to be able to commentate games, we have to know the game fully and this usually comes from experience gained whilst playing it. Many of the crew have played in clans for their respective games and some have even represented their country.

For more information on QuadV, pay them a visit at www.quadv.com

What's hot in the MMO gaming world?

City of Heroes & City of Villains



It's Issue 10, and the Rikti have returned to declare war. To kick things off, there's a World Event where the Rikti are dealing out some serious damage to anyone who gets in their way.

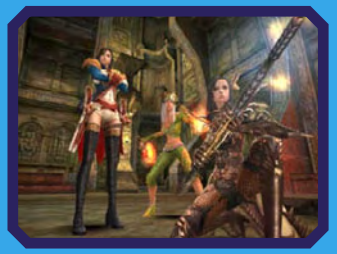
Armed with new weapons they're aiming to bring about the end of the world. What is interesting is that there's now a new zone where heroes and villains actually unite in order to rid the world of the Rikti threat. Beware though, you are required to be at least level 35 in order to stand a chance. Along with the new areas, there's also new inventions and missions to complete and a Rikti Co-op task force where again Heroes and Villains unite.

For more information on Issue 10: Invasion head over to the official site at *uk.cityofheroes.com*.



Archlord

Although free to play, Archlord survives by allowing players to purchase in game items for real cash. Codemasters is now offering new players 6,000 in-game credits (which equates to £10.00) to spend in game and purchase exclusive armours, weapons and items. With the forthcoming expansion, Episode 2 Season of Siege to launch in the next few weeks, Archlord is definitely a serious contender in the free to play MMO market. *www.archlordgame.com*



Sword of the New World: Granado Espada

K2 has announced that its epic MMORPG is now available in North America and Europe. Featuring a full spectrum of features that include character customization, large-scale maps and breathtaking graphics that are almost reminiscent of the Final Fantasy series. What's interesting is that you're able to download and start playing the game for free until you hit level 20.

Once you do so you're able to either carry on playing but bebe unable to accumulate more XP, or you pay $8.95 a month subscription for access to higher level content.

Looking for a new game? Give Sword of the New World a try after all you're not paying for the privilege! *swordofthenewworld.com*



It's a playful MMO that's really not just for kids.

Maplestory

Cute and colourful graphics, simplified game play and totally free. What's the catch? Well, as is rapidly becoming the Second Life inspired norm, if you want to give you character an original and stylish look you have to pay for the privilege.

On offer to paying players in Maplestory is a multitude of different skills, spells and abilities. Community features including detailed friends lists, communication through humorous character animations and the facility to form Guilds and adventure parties. A simple user-friendly interface is used to play the game which allows for literally anyone to play regardless of their gender, age and experience.

CABAL Online Europe



The first major content expansion is here. Key features in the add-on are new portals, items, a totally brand new area which features two dungeons (inhabited by never before seen creatures and monsters) and the ability to enchant accessories. This adds a whole extra dimension and not to mention lifespan to the CABAL universe, which again, is now totally free to play. *www.cabalonline.com*

Updates & Patches

RuneScape

Those avid RuneScape players out there who are feeling that your in-game pad's a bit on the small size will be pleased to know that the cap for maximum rooms has now been increased. Once you hit level 50 in construction the cap starts rising, to a maximum of 30 rooms at level 99 construction. With this new increase, there really is no excuse for not having the in-laws round. *www.runescape.com*

World of Warcraft

Another month, another WoW update, 2.1.3. Just a small one this time, mainly to deal with gold farming spam. In this update players will no longer be able to send mail with gold instantly. Read in-game mail is now kept for thirty days instead of three and now Abyssal monsters in Outland are now loot able. There are also a few bug fixes and more importantly the overall performance has been boosted resulting in increased frame rates, which can only be a good thing.

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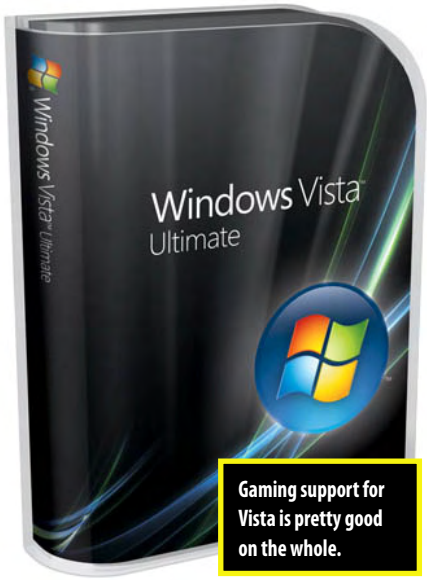


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Written by the best in the biz
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Tech Support

Got a problem with your PC?
Send your questions to help.pcgzine@gamerzines.com

"The improvements in game load times are marginal, but hard drives are very cheap"



Gaming support for Vista is pretty good on the whole.

STEAMING FURY

Whenever I try to run Lost Planet I get the error 'Lost Planet has stopped working'. I bought it through Steam and I've already tried removing the local content and downloading it again. I'm currently using the NVIDIA v158 drivers and my system is running Vista 64 Home Premium, on a E4300 @ 3.2GHz and a NVIDIA 8800GTS. I've tried both the Direct X 10 and 9 versions with the same result.

> Jonathan Barnes

> *Capcom doesn't offer much in the way of support for graphics cards when it comes to Lost Planet, but the NVIDIA 8x00 range is one of them along with the 7x00, the 6600 and the ATI 1650, 1800 and 1950. Generally its advice for video problems is to snatch the latest beta version of the NVIDIA drivers from www.guru3d.com and to also try running it in a window. However in your case we suspect the problem you're having is down to either the overclocked Core 2 Duo processor or more likely the 64-bit version of Vista you're running. We'd suggest you create a dual-boot 32-bit Vista system and give it a go on that.*



Not everyone is getting such an impressive view of Lost Planet.

MISTER VISTA

I'm considering upgrading to Vista but I've heard that it has had problems with games. I'm thinking of buying a new laptop with Vista Home Premium and I was wondering if you know if these games will work with it: FEAR, Guild Wars, Counter Strike Source, HL2, WoW and Lineage II?

> Peter X

> *First off, all of those games are Vista compatible. However it's important that when picking a laptop opt for one with decent driver support. If it comes with an AMD/ATI or NVIDIA integrated chipset, driver support technically has to come from the laptop's manufacturer and not AMD or NVIDIA – neither really provides direct up-to-date mobile support. There is a work around to this and that's hacked drivers, such as those from www.omegadrivers.net.*

SOUND ALIKE

My desktop computer only plays sound out of the right stereo channel. No matter if I'm playing a CD, DVD, WAV or a game. The computer was given to me by my brother and it's in an Antec case. I've tested the speakers and checked the Volume Control and everything works and seems to be set correctly, but I still only get one channel.

> Paul

> *If you're sure the speakers, connections and system settings are correct it sounds possible you're suffering an obscure hardware problem of missing a jumper on the internal Front Panel Audio header from the motherboard. If the case has no front headphone socket – or this isn't internally connected – then the FPA is suppose to have two jumpers covering pins 5/6 and 9/10, otherwise it'll lose the associated audio channel. Depending on how technical you are it'd be worth getting the motherboard manual and looking for the FPA or Audio Header jumper block and seeing if only one green jumper is present, as that will be the cause of your problem.*



Usually speaker and machine work in perfect harmony.

Tech Support



We'd take this drive back to the shop and ask for one with a top on.

GOT A PROBLEM?

Send us your technical questions and we'll try and help you out

Click here now!

> DOUBLE DRIVE

I've decided to put together a new gaming system and I've heard the thing to do is have Windows on one hard drive and my games on another. Is this really going to be faster than one drive?

> GamesMaster

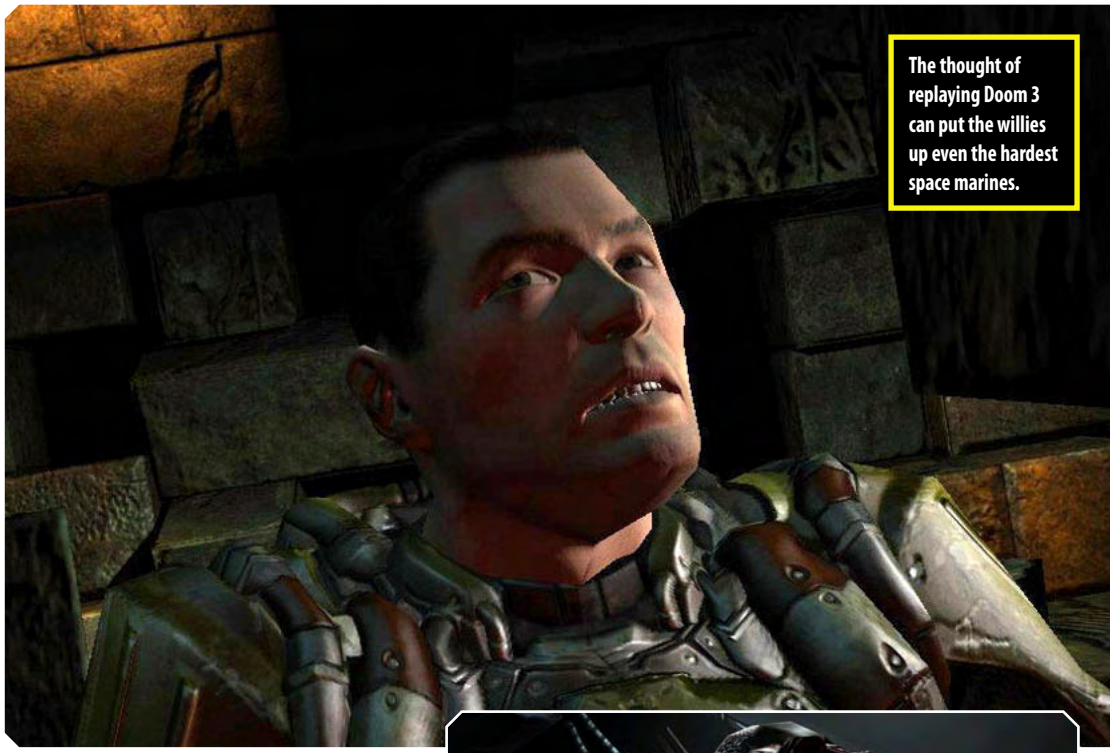
> Technically it will avoid 'disk thrashing' which is when multiple read/write requests are put to a drive and it struggles to do all those jobs at once. The set up you describe would enable Windows to read/write to its swap file and other system files, while games can load levels and the like in peace. Another consideration is that if you have to format the Windows drive your games will be left safe and sound. The improvement will be marginal but drives are cheap.

WE'RE ALL DOOMED

Just recently I came to reinstall Doom 3. I ran through the 3 CD install process without a hitch but when I come to apply the v1.3 patch gives an error message saying it was already patched, even though it wasn't.

> id fan

> Activision suggest editing the Registry to make sure it is set to version 1.2, prior to patching. Run Regedit, open Local_Machine > Software > ID > Doom 3 and set the "Version" string value to "1.2". If theses folders don't exist in the Registry you will need to create them as well as the Version string. It could also be the case that a lingering file is causing you havoc. We'd suggest you uninstall then do a search for Doom and remove any files – or at least delete the id Software folder within Program Files – then empty your Recycle Bin, restart your system and attempt the reinstall again.



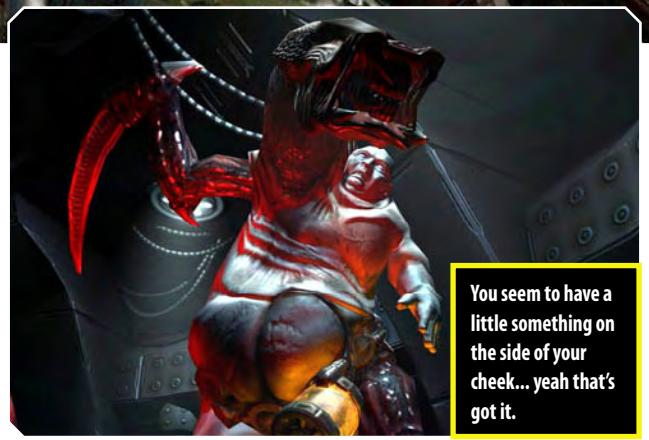
The thought of replaying Doom 3 can put the willies up even the hardest space marines.

PREYING FOR HELP

I'm having problems getting Prey up and running. It seems to start but then locks up. Any answers?

> Gary Diggins

> This is a common problem that can hinder other programs, it could be Norton Firewall causing problems. When you start Prey, Norton detects that it's trying to access the internet, so blocks it and opens a dialogue asking if you should allow it access or not. Unfortunately Prey blocks you seeing this and everything is stuck. Turn off Norton and all should be well.



You seem to have a little something on the side of your cheek... yeah that's got it.

"Dual boot your Vista 64 system with the 32-bit version for gaming on"



Aaron McKenna is the editor of Tom's Hardware Guide UK & Ireland, a site for tech enthusiasts of all persuasions. www.tomshardware.co.uk

Energy Efficient Processors

Computing to save the world.

While we all want our PC's to be a bit faster, the problems of energy efficiency are starting to become more and more important. Many environmentalists in the public eye, like Al Gore, are drawing attention to the fact that our PCs are some of the worst culprits for power demands – both at home and on the industrial scale – and we can save the world and money our electricity bills by making wise purchases.

While nice graphics and better AI are always going to require more powerful components, many companies are now producing hardware that provides the performance levels we need, without demanding the energy we usually soak up. Fingers crossed the 1000W PSU will be a short lived phenomenon.

AMD has long held the lead in the power efficiency stakes (for its processors anyway, the HD2900XT 3D card is an environmental disaster). Fortunately, Intel has remedied the situation with the introduction of the new L2 stepping on its Core 2 processors. While L2 stepped Core 2 Duos perform well in energy efficiency tests (more on that later) the more pressing issue with Intel's new processor is how to lay your hands on one.

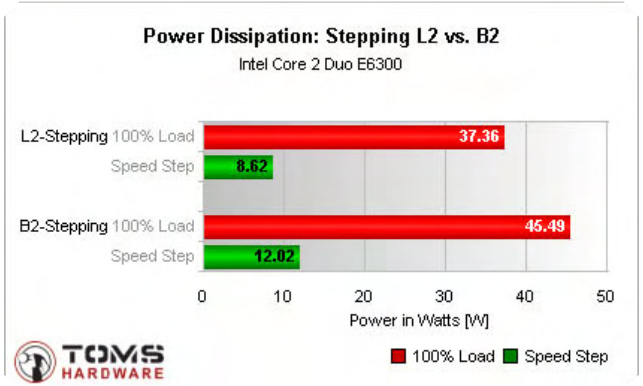
Online retailers don't make a distinction between L2 Core 2 Duo processors and the older (read: less efficient) B2 stepping. Ordering Core 2 processors online is something of a lottery, which somewhat defeats the purpose of ordering for energy efficiency.

The simplest solution is to simply go to a physical shop (how 1980s) and make some inquiries. On that note, the easiest way to spot the processor >



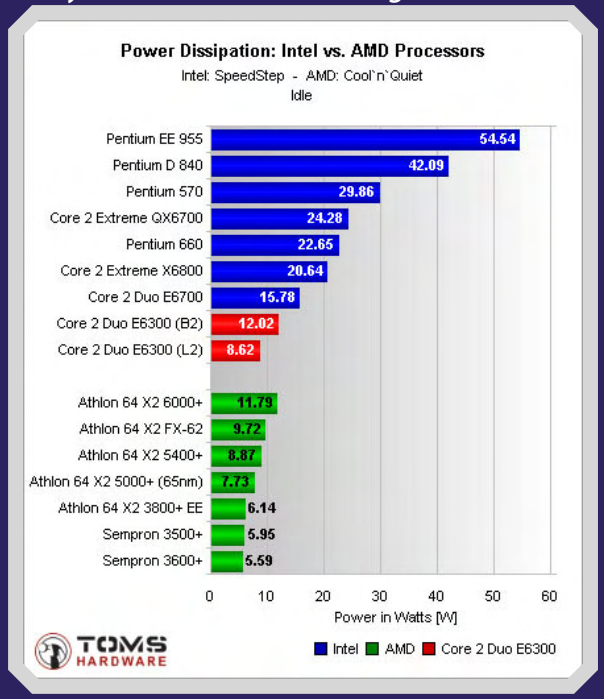
Here you can see the "SL9T" specification on the L2 box.

The L2 stepped Core 2 Duo competently outperforms the older B2.



AMD VS INTEL

Not your usual benchmarking charts.



Idle

While idle AMD processors remain unbeaten for low power consumption. At least there's one reason to buy an Athlon, then.

Idle

Full

"Online retailers don't distinguish between newer and older chips"



CONCERTS TO SAVE OUR SOULS

Souls saved, but resources burnt up.

Since the rebirth of Live Aid as Live 8, it's been an inevitability that we'd see concerts trying to solve more things than poverty. It seems a little ironic that we'd see so much energy spent on a concert whose sole purpose was to save the earth from the perils of energy over-consumption.

Microsoft's live online broadcast of the pro-environment Live Earth concert hit 8 million viewers; with peak viewership reaching 237,000 people, which makes the concert the most watched entertainment event online to date. While we might attribute this to the raft of popular musicians performing, but it's nicer to think that so high a number of internet-savvy users are so decidedly climate-conscious.

Of course, that also means that eight million desktops chugged along during the concert, probably consuming more power than if we'd just decided to switch on the telly (remember, it's your machine, whatever it's doing, plus all those servers you're accessing and heating up…) Given the somewhat unsettled "summer" we've been enjoying, energy efficiency and climate change should probably be on all of our minds a little more than it usually is… and of course, energy efficient equipment offers the opportunity to save some money on the old bills, which always helps raise awareness.

stepping from the outset (if you're physically near one) is to consult the specification number on the box. L2 stepped processors are relatively easy to spot, as their specification numbers all contain "SL9T".

Testing the L2 Core 2

While the L2 stepped Core 2 stands up well in tests against its predecessor, the B2, chances are you're far more interested to hear how Intel's new baby stacks up against rivals (and so far energy efficiency unbeaten) AMD.

We compared a number of AMD and Intel processors. From AMD we made sure to cover both 90nm EE CPUs and the newer 65nm offerings. The results, sadly, show that while the L2 is a step in the right direction, AMD still leads the energy efficiency stakes both when idle and under full load (not to mention practically everywhere in between).

Of course, this only leads to the conclusion that AMD processors are more energy efficient. Of course, this shouldn't be a sole concern when buying an energy efficient processor.

The price is right

Buying an energy efficient processor might well make sense from an environmental point of view, but there's always the cheerful upside of spending less to power the machine. With that in mind, the initial cost of the processor itself should be considered;

"You won't see much of a change in power usage unless your entire system has been built with efficiency in mind"

there's no point making a miserly saving on energy if you've broken the bank to buy the equipment in the first place.

While AMD equipment outperforms Intel's on a purely energy efficient basis, the processor's price might well put a different spin on that. To remedy this we've calculated an index that takes into account both the processor price and energy index. The lowest retail price earned 50 points, while the highest received none. Likewise the processor with the lowest power consumption was awarded 50 points, and the hungriest zero.

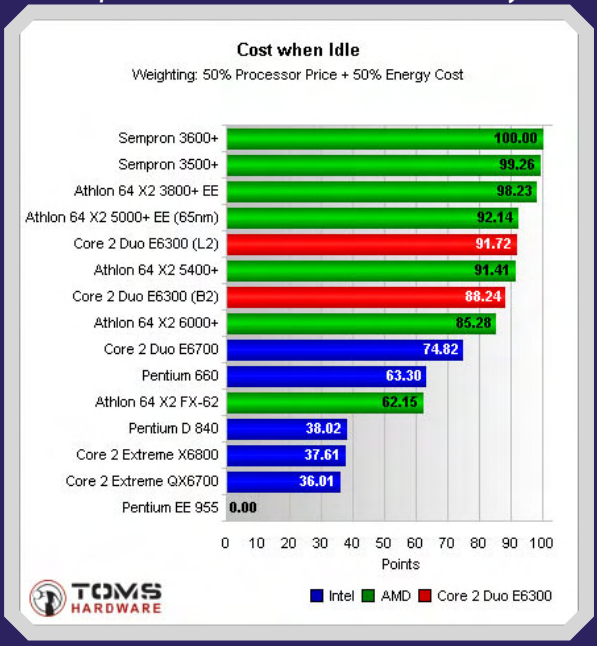
How much does it matter?

Realistically, you probably won't see a dramatic change in your power usage unless your system has been built from the ground up geared towards energy efficiency. For the vast majority of us there are some far more simple solutions to the energy efficient computing conundrum.

Unless it's doing something important, your PC is better off shut down or dropped into Window's Hibernate state. While many will scream about heightened stress on parts during power-up and the increased fail rates incurred by a system constantly booted up, for the most part you're not going to make too big an environmental impact with the waste created by switching off your desktop while you sleep… When you think about it like that, it sounds very much as though it's common sense that will save us all from climate change.

THE BEST SAVINGS

Which processor offers value for money?



Idle

As you can see from the chart, the Sempron and Athlon 64 X2 3800+ (EE) offer the best cost: performance ratio when idle, with the Intel Core Duo (L2) coming in fifth, which is something of a disappointment. However, the landscape changes somewhat while under full load.

Idle

100%



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Bioshock

Legacy of Cthulu
Medieval 2: Kingdoms

PREVIEWS

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