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PCGZine

Issue 10 | Oct 2007

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

FIRST ONLINE REVIEW

ENEMY TERRITORY: QUAKE WARS

Get ready for the ultimate team shooter

MASSIVE REVIEW!

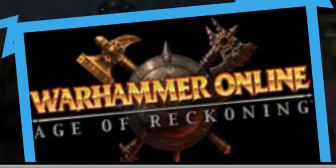
WORLD IN CONFLICT

The most explosive RTS ever!





EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!
Warhammer Online's Paul Barnett



FIRST LOOK!

EMPIRE: TOTAL WAR

Creative Assembly takes on the age of imperial expansion

BLACKSITE

Uncovering the plot of the conspiracy 'em up



REVIEWS



1 **Guild Wars: Eye of the North**
Huge MMO expansion



2 **Two Worlds**
Can it beat Oblivion at its own game?



3 **Galactic Assault**
Epic space battles

PLUS

Football Manager 08
Age of Empires: Eastern Kingdoms

Welcome to PCGZine



It's confession time. I haven't been playing this month's cover game, Quake Wars: Enemy Territory. Sure, I want to, and I most certainly will, but the day before review code arrived Valve opened the doors to the Team Fortress 2 beta. I was so busy enjoying the ludicrous cartoon violence there I didn't notice young Andy swipe the ET code from under my chaingun.

It's definitely the year of the online shooter. With TF2 coming next month and Unreal Tournament III just a few weeks later, you're spoiled for choice. RTS fans can get in on the action too with World in Conflict – check out our definitive review of that this month too.

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*

















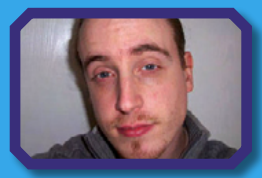
QUICK FINDER
Every game's just a click away!

Empire: Total War	Warhammer Online
AOE3: Eastern Kingdoms	Quake Wars: Enemy Territory
Mythos	World in Conflict
Age of Conan	Guild Wars: EON
FEAR: Perseus Mandate	Galactic Assault
Saboteur	Two Worlds
Conflict: Denied Ops	Bounty Bay Online
Starcraft II	ObsCure 2
Blacksite: Area 51	Madden 2008
Football Manager 08	Reviews Roundup

MEET THE TEAM
Probably the best games writers on the planet



Steve Hill
Conquered the world in a big bad online conflict.



Darran Hepworth
Found much to like in ObsCure, but has his reservations.



Alec Meer
Took his words to the world in a brand new blog.



Ian Morris
Played with mice and is strangely taken with an LCD screen.

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.



EMPIRE TOTAL WAR

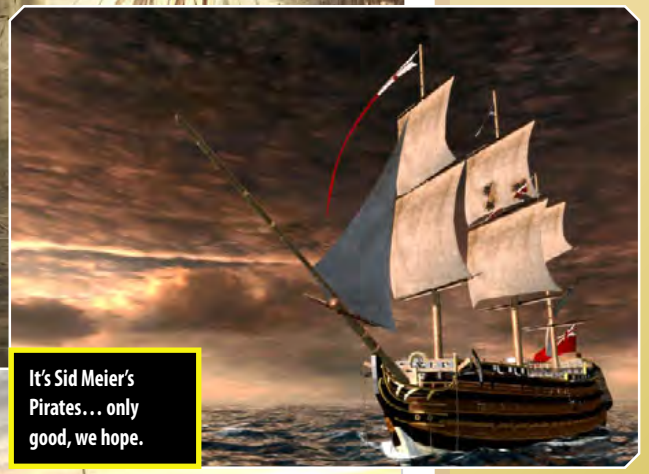
Publisher: SEGA
Developer: Creative Assembly
Heritage: Shogun, Medieval, Rome: Total War
Link: www.totalwar.com
ETA: TBC

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Empire: Total War!



Ah, the grand vessels, imposing castle, and the unmistakable stench of sewerage…

"Cannon and musket will force players to reassess tactics"



It's Sid Meier's Pirates… only good, we hope.



Empire brings sailors to life. Then kills them again.

LATEST NEWS

Empire: Total War

Indulge in a spot of naval gazing…

What's the story?

Tearing another page from the bloody annals of history, the genius Total War series sets sail for the 18th century.

What do we know?

The game will still be built around the central pillars of epic real-time strategy battling and turn-based map conquest, but will include 3D naval warfare for the first time.

Set in a period of rapid technological advancement – and that means a vast armoury of weapons – Empire: Total War promises varied campaigns.

America's battle for independence (American Conquest look out), the industrial revolution that mechanised warfare in Europe and rampant globalisation form the backdrop for this fifth full Total War monster.

On the ground the dominance of cannon and musket will force gamers to reassess their strategies and formulate a more modern, rangey battleplan.

On sea, the pathetic dice-rolls of earlier Total War naval combat is replaced by smoke-framed real-time battling where cannon-balls fly and grapeshot rends human flesh. Far more interesting…

When do we get more?

We'll probably have to wait until after Christmas for more details, sadly.

Anything else to declare?

Creative Assembly are vowing to further improve an already brilliant game engine, with tarted-up trade, diplomacy and espionage. Improved advisors and a streamlined user interface are also on the menu.



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Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Big Huge Games
Heritage: Catan, Rise of Legends
Link: www.ageofempires3.com
ETA: 1st November

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of AoE: Asian Dynasties!



If you see an elephant charging, run the other way.

God knows what special abilities these wonders will unleash. Or should that be Buddah knows?



House boats were a bit more extravagant in ancient Japan.







Some years on, the engine still looks as impressive as it did on Day 1.

LATEST NEWS

Age of Empires: Asian Dynasties

AoE goes East

What's the story?

For the second expansion pack to the award winning Age of Empires 3, Ensemble Studios, obviously hard at work on 360 RTS Halo Wars, have handed over the development reins to the immensely capable Big Huge Games. What follows is a voyage into the East for the franchise, as we get ready to butt heads with Far Eastern civilisations.

What do we know?

The expansion pack's set to bring with it lots of new things, not least the ability to play as three new nations: Japan, China and India. Of course, each of these nations has their own dedicated campaign, and also comes with their own unique buildings, units and "wonders" for you to get to grips with, which will surely provide plenty of new strengths and weaknesses for you to find and expose.

When do we get more?

Early November, when the game's released.

Anything else to declare?

Apparently, the campaign mode is set to provide a return to a more traditional, civilisation based format, letting you wage war against one of the other far eastern nations across the course of a campaign. For those of you looking for an enhanced multiplayer experience, there's good news here too, as Asian Dynasties adds two new modes: King of the Hill, and Regicide, which will apparently involve the assassination of a monarch. Offering a more traditional Age of Empires experience, we're actually quite looking forward to this one. We'll find out how it's turned out come mid-November.

A people to manage, an Empire to build

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7 UP

More golden nuggets of gaming glory to come



Team Fortress 2

Publisher: Valve | **ETA:** October 10th

Although it may be firmly in the shadow of Half-Life 2 : Episode 2, there's going to be another game packed into the Orange Box that's well worth a portion of your time. Team Fortress 2 is a madcap class based shooter that's a lot better than most people will give it credit for. You can take part in a Beta now if you pre-order the Orange Box through Steam – find PCGZ on public servers and fight!



Universe at War

Publisher: SEGA | **ETA:** December

As the Beta gets pushed further and further back, people's anticipation for this sci-fi RTS just rises. Only the second game to allow for cross-platform Games for Windows Live play, we should be getting our hands on this one very soon. Watch this space.

Sidewinder Mouse

Publisher: Microsoft | **ETA:** October

Claiming to be "5,000 mice in one", and coming with "never-before-seen features that gamers want, uncovered during worldwide research", these "features" include an LCD display, and a weight cartridge system, which lets you find the perfect weight for your gaming hand. However, these new mice don't exactly look comfy – hopefully, they'll play a lot better than they look.



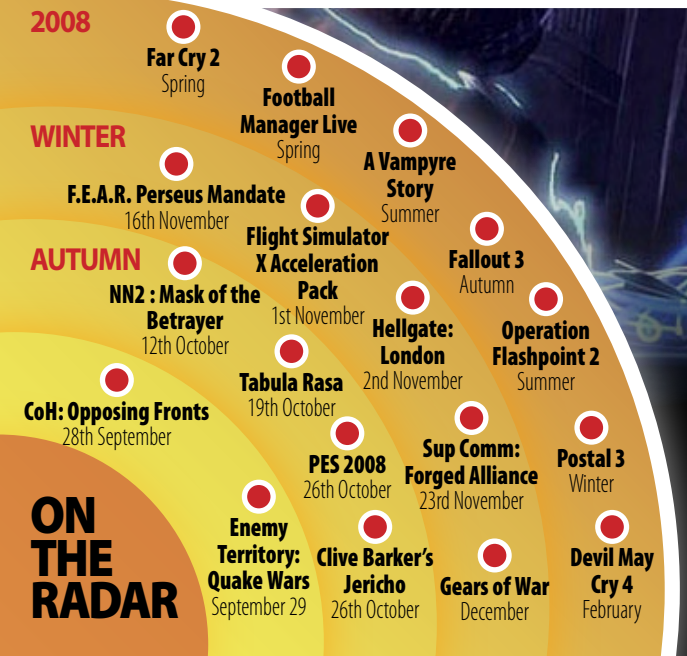
Viva Piñata

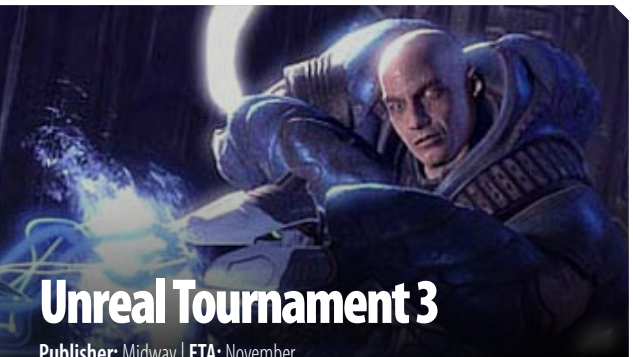
Publisher : Microsoft | **ETA:** December

Based on the "hit" kids TV show, Viva Piñata is Microsoft's attempt to dig into your valuable BioShock time by ensuring your little sister/ other half's glued to your PC 24/7. Putting you in charge of a garden, it's up to you to plant different flowers in an attempt to attract various cute and cuddly animals into your land, but beware – just like in real life, not all cute animals are friendly…



ON THE RADAR

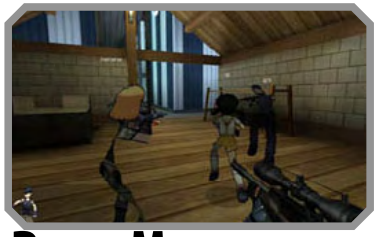




Unreal Tournament 3

Publisher: Midway | **ETA:** November

While Epic play down rumblings of cross-platform PS3-PC multiplay, the internet just won't let the rumours stop. Cross-platform or not, with a new mode, new maps, new weapons and all new vehicles to get your teeth around, this will be eating up a lot of our time this Christmas.



Paper Man

Publisher: TBA | **ETA:** TBA

It's just like Paper Mario, but as an arena-based FPS, on the PC. OK, so the two games couldn't be more different, but this inventive FPS has been turning heads at the Tokyo Game Show – hopefully if it turns enough heads, we might see a UK release.

Turning Point: Fall of Liberty

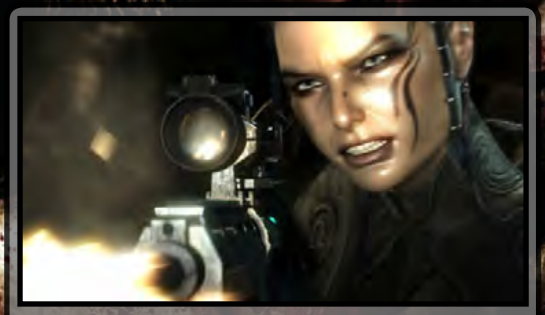
Publisher: Codemasters | **ETA:** 2008

"Not another WW2 shooter" we hear you say, but bear with us for a moment, because this one's actually looking a bit different. Set in an alternate WW2 where the Nazi's invade New York, Turning Point is a promising looking FPS, that may have what it takes to stand out from the crowd. We'll see.



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HANDS ON

BLACKSITE

It's time to return to Area 51, but this time, things might get a little GRAWy

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway Austin
Heritage: Area 51, Tribes: Aerial Assault
Link: www.blacksitegame.com
ETA: November

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

A while back thousands of Americans fled from their homes after learning of the impending alien invasion during Orson Welles' The War of the Worlds broadcast, but the general populace's fascination, and sometimes unflinching belief in life of an extraterrestrial origin has not waned. It almost goes without saying then, that if you create a game that involves small grey men with abnormally large heads, and, even better, let the player shoot at them, you'll be on to a winner. Which is exactly what happened when Midway released Area 51 in 2003 – a disappointingly average shooter, which, thanks to its original location and plot, managed to notch up enough sales to warrant a sequel.

Thankfully, Blacksite: Area 51, is looking a lot more promising.

Putting players in the boots of a military veteran in the middle of the Iraq war, Blacksite doesn't exactly begin like your normal sci-fi shooter. As the intro unfolds, you find yourself in an unknown Iraqi town, surrounded by your squad, who have been tasked with finding and assassinating an Iraqi military leader, who's meant to be hoarding WMDs. So far, so Call of Duty, but things soon get a lot more interesting when it turns out your enemy isn't exactly equipped with your everyday WMDs, per se, but rather, something a bit more alien in origin.

It doesn't take long for your team to have a change of orders from HQ, and you're set the task of following the trail of aliens back to their home – the ruins Area 51. The eagle eyed amongst you will have noticed that we mentioned >



The ground textures are particularly accomplished.



Is it just us who think this looks like a haunted house? Ghosts, and aliens?

"It's gorgeous to look at and boasts destructible environments to boot"



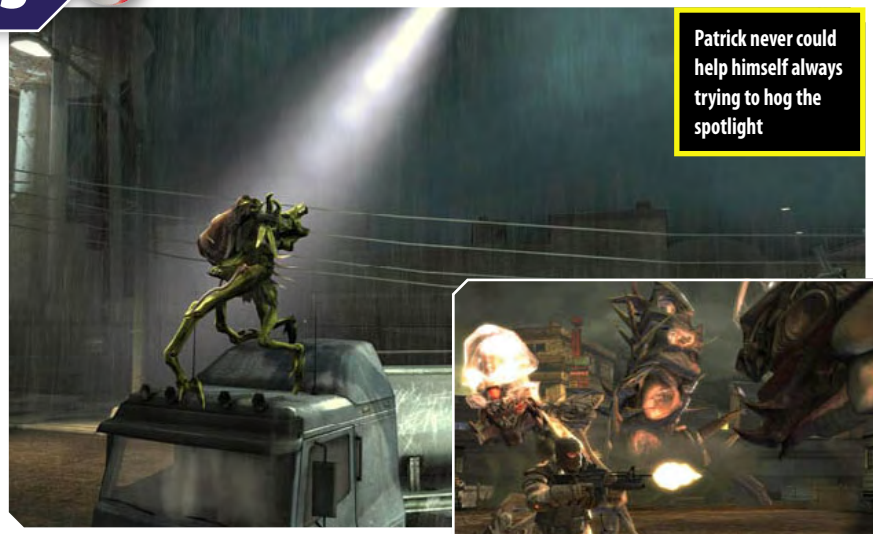
Some of the environments alone are enough to send a shiver down your spine. And then you see one of these things.



Thankfully, the weapons are looking particularly meaty – hopefully they pack a mean punch too.



A door exploding, or a portal to another dimension? You can never be sure in Area 51.



Patrick never could help himself always trying to hog the spotlight



This alien here that's twice the size of this man? That's a small one.



"It doesn't take long before you're sent following... to Area 51"

The game's going to come complete with a variety of multiplayer modes too, including co-op and online deathmatches.

> Blacksite continued

"squad" there, and whereas the first Area 51 was a very solitary, and therefore spooky experience, in Blacksite your squad is integral to your success. Your team mates are versatile in the actions they can perform, from placing a charge on a door, to flanking an enemy, but while there's a wide range of commands you can issue, the entire team system is controlled with one, context sensitive button. While the pessimist in us sees this as a chance to majorly cock things up, we've seen it in action, and we can report it works surprisingly well, with your squad intuitively working out exactly what you want them to do.

One of the more original features of Blacksite is the way command of your team will dictate how much they trust you, and therefore how well they react in a combat situation. Constantly put your men in harm's way and they'll lose confidence in your leadership, spending more time trembling behind cover, and less time returning fire, but look after them well, and you'll have a crack killing team at your control.

Graphically, the game is shaping up very well. Powered by the Unreal 3 Engine, which has been genetically spliced with the environmental destruction technology from Stranglehold, it's gorgeous to look at, and contains some nicely interactive environments to boot. Chuck in some aliens the size of buildings, drivable vehicles, the project lead on Deus Ex: Invisible War and a campaign that's fully playable in two player co-op, and we're left with a game that's looking a lot more positive than its predecessor. Keep an eye on this one – it could be quite the sleeper hit this Christmas.



PCGZine

HOW COMPLETE? 70%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS 80%

Dark, broody and full of intrigue. Could be a hit.

PARADISE TO SOME... HELL ON EARTH TO OTHERS

An explosive mix of action, strategy and RPG, **Escape from Paradise City** immerses you in a city infested with crime.

Claw your way up the echelons of the underworld, surround yourself with formidable gangsters, take control of key territories, expand your businesses and extend your influence over **Paradise City**.







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HANDS ON

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2008

Publisher: SEGA
Developer: Sports Interactive
Heritage: Champ Man, FM
Link: www.sigames.com
ETA: October 19th

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of FM 2008...

'Tis the season to be jolly…

When you're at the top of your game they say you have to be one step ahead of your opposition. It's a saying Sports Interactive – the obsessives behind first Champ Man and then Football Manager – have roundly ignored. For them, it's only good enough to be ten steps ahead of the chasing pack, with hundreds of feature tweaks and gameplay additions announced with each new boss simulation.



As ever, friendly faces greet you at less glamorous clubs.

Since it's very much a chip off the old block, Football Manager 2008 continues this tradition, revamping the game's look, accessibility and gameplay with a host of managerial changes. From the kick-off FM2008 is obviously designed to appeal to a wider audience, to capture new supporters to add to the legions of football fanatics, students and disciples that help make this the most popular management game on the planet.

The more icon-driven look and friendlier, younger-looking menu screens will rile up the hardcore of extremist who believe every step away from a spreadsheet dilutes the purity of the FM experience. An 'advisor' button that enables you to better understand the myriad options at your disposal, whether it's shuffling your finances or building up a relationship with your star striker, will also annoy retro players.

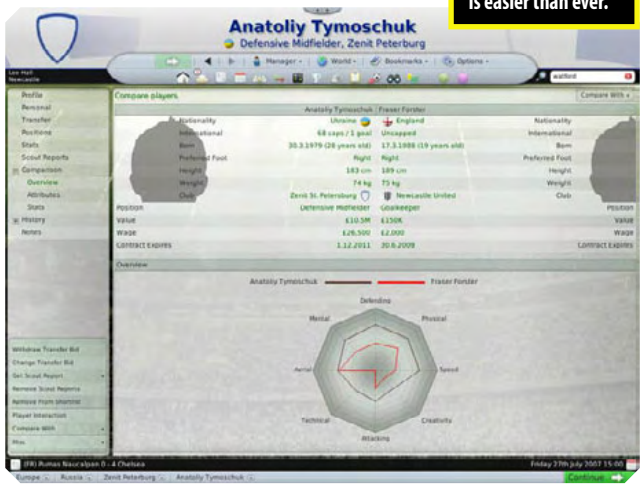
For us, however, such accessibility boosts simply serve to bring you closer to a game that is about making those big decisions in a world that is become unnervingly human with each iteration. Off the pitch, FM is invested with more personality than ever. There are more opportunities to interact with players and the board – from the word go you can even choose to set your own targets and the board will allocate funds accordingly.

There are host of tweaks and innovations to enjoy, such as hosting fan days to raise cash for ravaged clubs and confidence bars so you can more easily see how much faith your board has in you, even when it comes to the quality of signings. The minute you walk through the managerial door to be greeted with an informative statement from the chairman,



View the action as you endlessly fiddle with your tactics...

"FMs past only called to footie geeks. This has a much broader appeal"



Comparing players is easier than ever.

> FM2008 continued

hinting at behind the scenes schemes for the greater good of the club, you know you're playing the Special One.

When you're handed an in-depth report on a star player, which includes a mountain of personal and professional information about him, comparing them with key rivals for their position, you know the huge database of playing staff is just as well-researched as it's ever been.

And there's plenty of new additions to the FM squad to get as excited as a schoolboy on matchday about too.

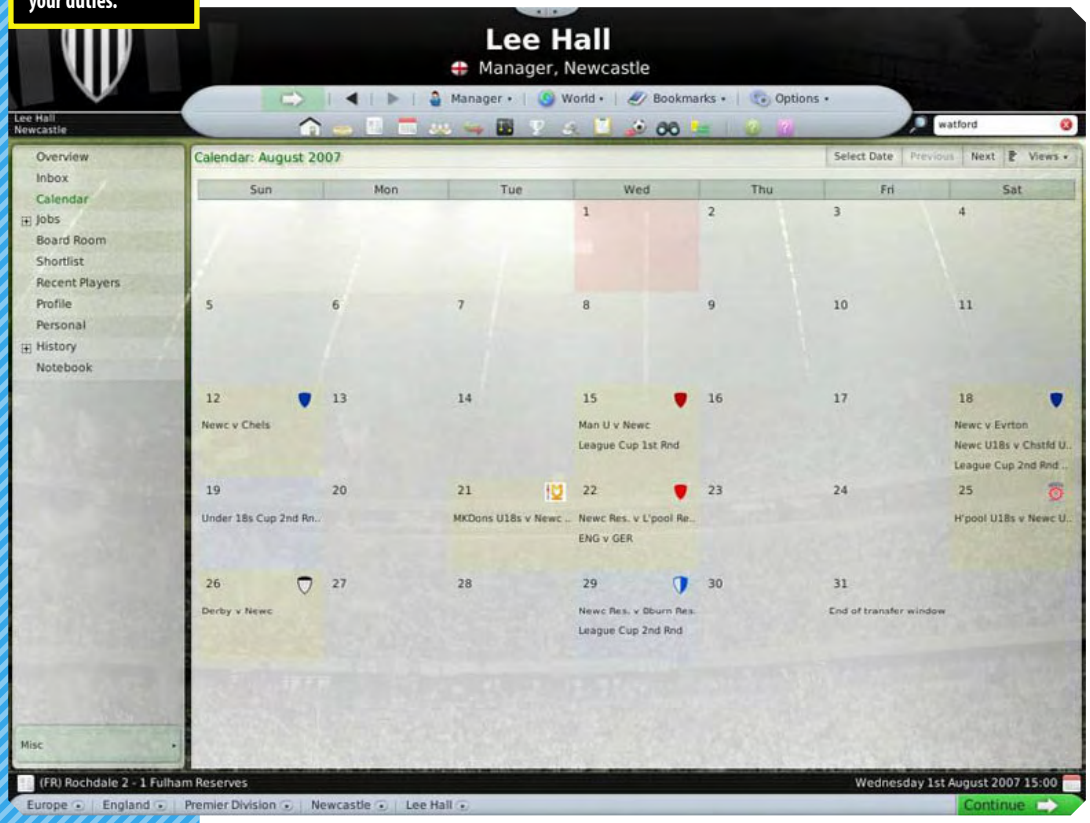
Transfers have been simplified into a new screen that gives you an overview of current negotiations, finances have been improved so you can shuffle your budget between wage allocations and your transfer kitty, and the previously underdeveloped international aspect of the game has been given a shot in the arm. When you hit the international stage you're under far more pressure to manage the individuals at your disposal.

Your choice of a captain is vital, and will be the focus of much media attention, and you'll need to keep an eye on players down to the under-19 level. Players now have an international dimension to their personal happiness too, so it's no longer simply a case of picking the eleven best individuals – you have to work to keep your charges happy and help them gel together into a winning side.

"Off the pitch, FM 08 is invested with more personality than ever"

On the pitch, the match engine keeps faith with the top-down circles approach, unlike the more Subbutteo-like style set to debut in rival Championship Manager 2008. Games have less of a pinball feel, with the ball passed in a more considered fashion between your players. The early signs are good that FM will maintain it's reputation for realism on the field, despite a lack of graphics, but only prolonged review play will reveal the full extent of improvements here.

One instantly recognisable step forward on match day is the introduction of new screen featuring a real-time match view so you can keep one eye on the action while you tinker with your tactics and monitor player fitness. It's the equivalent of watching your boys from the stands, and a must for those of us who love to incessantly



Use the new calendar option to get an overview of your duties.



You can incentivise players with match bonuses now.

faff with our system. Overall, FM creators SI have warmed up a sometimes cold simulation, capturing the friendliness of the beautiful game.

In FMs past you sometimes got the feeling the game was only really appealing to those with an unending passion for footy proper, and at the very least those with a sound knowledge of the cloggers and geniuses that have taken to the field. FM2008 is a management sim that will welcome newcomers, enjoyable on a fairly superficial level as an elegantly structured game. But on another level it's still the darkly obsessive monster we know and love.

Expect another title-winning review score next issue, but only because this is once again shaping up to be truly the champion of managers.

PCGZine

HOW COMPLETE? 96%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS 90%

Friendlier, deeper and more brilliant the ever.

TARR CHRONICLES

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A time of Darkness,
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And human haste.

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Publisher: EA
Developer: EA Mythic
Players: Millions+
Certificate: TBA
Features: Six playable armies, point-based battles, Realm v Realm, perpetual conflict, Elves
ETA: 2008

Hammer of the gods

We flew to LA to chat with Lancastrian Paul Barnett, Creative Director of Warhammer Online: Age Of Reckoning and self-confessed performing monkey…



Paul Barnett. The frankest interviewee a journo can hope for.

Based on Games Workshop's long standing tabletop fantasy universe, Warhammer Online: Age Of Reckoning is looking to shake up the nefarious world of Massively Multiplayer Online Roleplaying.

For people who don't know much about the franchise, can you give us a potted history?

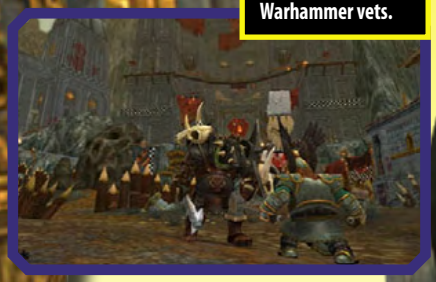
Yeah, 25 years ago these complete nutters in England who wore leather patches on their elbows started carving little bits of miniatures that they thought were never going to be popular. Lo and behold, they then sold millions, they even floated on the stock market. I don't know what floating on the stock market means, all I do know is they now have an enormous factory and they can afford really, really buff leather patches on their elbows. They made millions and millions of pounds – which is much better than dollars I might add – and then Americans, who are the sort of people who know how to exploit things mercilessly and make money, came and offered them a wheelbarrow full of money and said "We're going to take Warhammer and turn it into a great big MMO." So they did, and that's what we're doing.



A priest versus a zealot. Anything could happen.

So the whole tabletop thing is still going? >

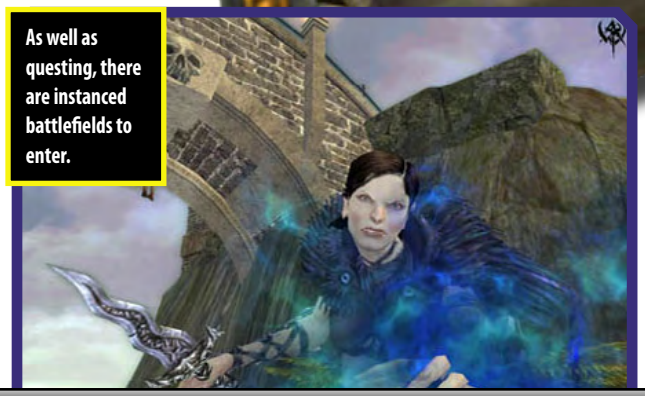
"Superficially, it's a fantasy game with fart gags"



Locations will be familiar to Warhammer vets.



He may look green, but this is a Black Orc.



As well as questing, there are instanced battlefields to enter.

> Interview continued

140 million pounds a year. Who would have believed it? And these are insular semi-autistic people; they have no right being super rich. All they did was sit in little rooms going "I love toy soldiers". How did that happen?

Terrifying business. So is this the first Warhammer video game?
There's been lots of standalone ones; some are good, some are bad. There was one attempt to try and do an online one a while back, that didn't work. And then there's this one, originally done by Mythic and then the all-consuming behemoth of EA came along and basically shrugged, found hundreds of millions of dollars down the side of their sofa and went "We'll just buy it". So now it's an EA Mythic production, which means we too have an air conditioning unit fuelled by hundred dollar bills put into a furnace. It's great.

These games are all the same aren't they? Do this, go there, collect that. How's this going to stand out from the mire?
What I like about journalists is that they are not jaded people. What are we doing? We're taking a model that works – 8 million people can be wrong but I'm still going to take their money – and then we're going to put a licence on it that is very close to the WoW licence in look and feel, and then we're going to put in enough innovation so that people go "Actually it's not crap is it?"



Glastonbury's not what it used to be.



A Goblin Shaman, in all his glory.

Then we're going to make it stable, then we're going to get EA to pimp it out the door. Is it the same old, same old? Yeah, just like movies are the same old, same old.

Why does it always have to be about goblins? Why can't it be about a bloke who goes down the pub and plays darts? Always with the goblins and fairies…
Pixies! What you've got to understand is the Warhammer world is much, much cleverer than any one ever invented. For instance, dwarves aren't dwarves, they're the English working class. You know, live down mines, grubby, have no money, drink a lot of beer, got a chip on their shoulder, want

"They have no right being super rich. All they did was say 'I love toy soldiers'"

to fight everyone. Elves are English posh people, wander around, lofty, never done a hard day's work in their life, read a load of books, la-de-da. Dark Elves: English posh people what have taken drugs. Lord Byron, that's what they are. Orcs: soccer hooligans, that's what they are, walk around going 'I'm just going to beat people up.' Our game works on three levels. On the one it's a superficial fantasy game. On the second level it's got things like fart gags. On the third level it's all about deep philosophy. Milton's Paradise Lost is in our game.



"If I had a Warhammer, I'd hammer in the morning"

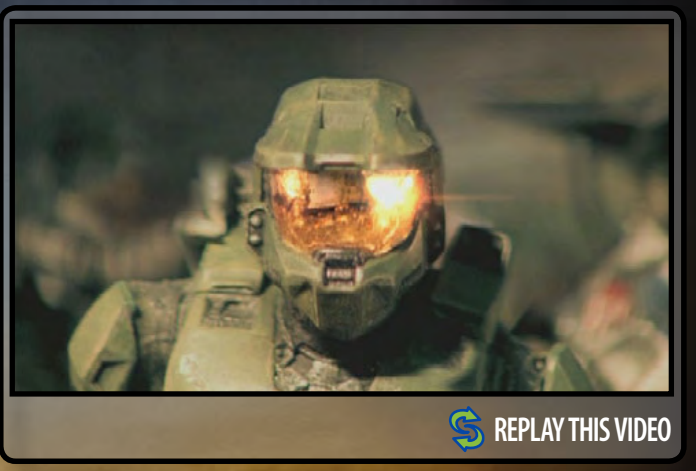
You're telling me there's a political subtext to your MMO?
Acute xenophobia from the mindset of English people, yes.

You're English, you're working over here with a load of Americans.
Yeah I know, it's frightening, I basically don't tell the immigration service that I'm here, I declare tax exile status at every opportunity, and I say things very quickly so that Americans don't understand it. I don't wear white socks, I refuse to look at their transport system and I try not to get fatter.

You know you're going to get death threats from tabletop fans if you get anything wrong.
Death threats from insular, quiet, semi-autistic people who live with their mums. I can live with that. It's the death threats from people who've got money and guns you've got to worry about. Games Workshop said 'Here is our IP. Don't bollocks it up.'

Are you on medication?
No.

A hero never dies



REPLAY THIS VIDEO





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15

Microsoft game studios BUNGIE

xbox.com/halo3

HALO 3

BELIEVE

26th September 2007

Jump in.

XBOX 360 LIVE

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THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE...
JUST DISCOVERED YOUR EZINE yesterday, I was more than pleasantly surprised. Nice pics, short and informative texts and couple of great interactive features that makes it much more interesting than simply scrolling one huge PDF document. And all of that for free!

> Alex Din

Don't miss Issue 11
Out 25th Oct
Sign up now!

BIG IN SOUTH AMERICA
THE MAGAZINE IS GREAT! I'm from Montevideo, Uruguay, far far away. And this magazine is my favourite. Kick ass!

> Federico

> PCGZ says Thanks Federico, and greetings to Montevideo. Any chance of putting the team up for a cheap holiday?

HERE WE WOW AGAIN
HI PCGZ, I KNOW IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, but the news of another WoW expansion fills me with terror. I've only just managed to wean myself off of the endgame RAIDing as it is, and now I can see another year of my life being spent in Azeroth. Part of me is really excited, but part of me is filled with dread! Can you help?

> Aaron

> PCGZ says Oh dear, looks like Warcrack has claimed another victim. All we can suggest is cutting your PCs power cable in two and standing away from the sparks.

WIZARDS OF ID
HOW GOOD DOES RAGE LOOK? There's never been a really great car-based combat game that does what it's trying to do, and I'm really hoping the guys at id can pull it off. Do you think it'll be another Doom III though?

> John Pickering

> PCGZ says We doubt it. By the sound of the rumours coming out of id lately, they've learnt their lesson when it comes to games design.

NO SPOILER ZONE
WOW. YOU MANAGED TO REVIEW BIOSHOCK and barely give anything away about the plot. I only wish other reviews had been as thoughtful – halfway through the game I felt like I hadn't seen anything I hadn't read about already: even the ending came as an (Snip – Spoiler ed).
Thanks

> Brian Peters

> PCGZ Steady on there Brian, you almost gave the game away (literally) to other readers who haven't had chance to play yet. If such a person exists.


Heading to Northrend. WoW just got even bigger.


What id did next: Rage is raising the bar once more.

FOOTBALL SUPERSTARS
Lifestyle of the fame and richness

HI PCGZ, JUST FINISHED READING your Football Superstars preview, and it looks really interesting. Do you think it will work though? After all, there's some serious competition out there from the likes of Football Manager Online and CMO, and I'm not sure the comedy angle will be enough to swing it in FS' favour. I mean, it's not that I don't like a laugh, but is there enough meat in the 'lifestyle' aspects to really make a good game?

> Karl Waters

> PCGZ says We'll forgo judging that until the game is released – for now it's enough for us that there's an original idea being tried here, and that's always welcome. Whether it works or not we just won't know for a while...



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3+ www.pegi.info

BIZARRE CREATIONS

Microsoft game studios

OUT OCTOBER 12

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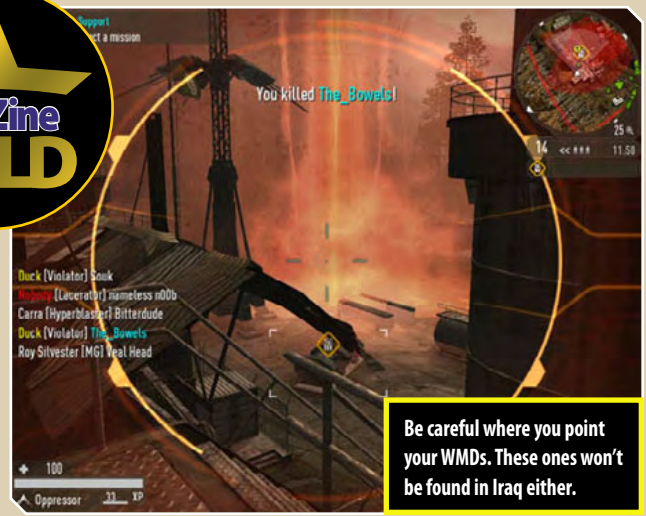
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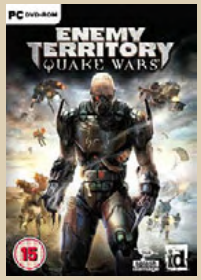
XBOX 360 LIVE



Achieving team goals and individual goals gains you promotions, unlocking various rewards.



Be careful where you point your WMDs. These ones won't be found in Iraq either.



Publisher: Activision
Developer: id/Splash Damage
Heritage: Quake 2, Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory
Link: www.enemyterritory.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
2.8GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, DX9 3D card

Enemy Territory: Quake Wars

It took five games for them to get here. Now the Earth is doomed. Again.

Were it wasn't our job to prove otherwise, we might suggest there aren't enough words to describe the frenzied anticipation facing this game. There's a lot of hype and hyperbole over what is essentially yet another online shooter.

Why all the fuss? There are two main reasons: the first is that it's the new Quake title. That alone guarantees a significant chunk of column inches. It's actually the prequel to Quake 2's Strogg bashing, set in 2065. The second is that it's a follow-up to the criminally-underrated Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory by Splash Damage that was canned as a commercial add-on in 2003 and released as a standalone game for diddly-squat.

For this title to deliver, it needs to maintain the elements of W: ET that still make it a popular online pastime despite an aging engine. And of course, it has to look as good as an FPS bearing the Quake name should look.

Feels familiar

From a playability standpoint, the essential element is obviously maintained. This is a team-based, objective-focused game, using a modified Doom 3 engine. That means you play in two teams – Global Defence Force (GDF) and Strogg. And you don't just wander around mercilessly meting out unimaginably painful variations of slaughter. There are things to do: to build, to blow up, drive, to escort and to hack. Even if you're on defence (which usually means playing Strogg) you'll have to do more than the fragging and packing you can get away with in the original ET.

Objectives are achieved in a very similar way to the previous game. Engineers, for example, still construct bridges and suchlike by waving their >

"The game is played out over 13 huge maps from all corners of the world..."

CLASS ACTION

Got to play them all!



Covert Ops | **Covie** | **Medic**

Covert Ops

As a Covert Ops, you can steal the identities of fallen enemies and walk amongst your foes. You can also choose the sniper rifle, climb a cliff and kill enemies before they get too close to the objectives.



Some interior locations are as impressive as the exteriors.

> Quake Wars continued

pliers at the construction areas. This is no bad thing though, because it gives the game a very high level of accessibility to anyone who played ET.

There are, of course, new twists for fans. The inclusion of vehicles is a staple for the online shooter nowadays, but Quake Wars gives you an enormous variety of fast and light alongside slower and more powerful, with a few airborne and amphibious creations also included. Crucially, though, the vehicles are not merely a cosmetic cliché – they're integral to achieving the various map objectives.

Team working

Organisation of teams is also very worthy of praise. As in the original, there are five different classes to choose from. For the GDF, it's exactly the same five – Soldier, Engineer, Medic, Field Ops and Covert Ops. For the Strogg it's slightly different. That's partly because Strogg don't require separate supplies of health and ammo – they simply demand Stroyent to fulfil both of these needs. And the Strogg classes – Aggressor, Constructor, Technician, Oppressor and Infiltrator are not all directly linked with their GDF counterparts. For example, the Technician is very similar to Medic but also replenishes ammo (in the form of Stroyent), and Technicians don't revive fallen Strogg from the battlefield. More gruesomely, they use a GDF player's corpse as a host body.

That means there's a different gaming experience based on which team you choose. It also means learning the subtleties of each class will take slightly longer, which in turn will provide a better and longer-lasting gaming experience than even the excellent W: ET was.

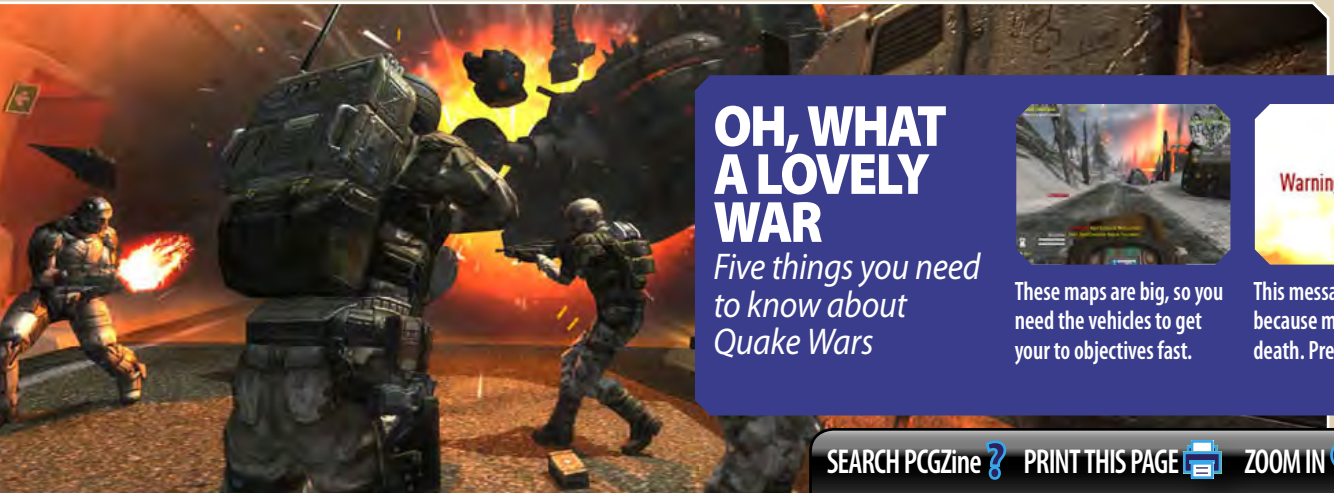


The Violator is the Strogg's equivalent of an airstrike. It's much more graphically impressive.



We defy anyone to not want a go in the Cyclops when they play as Strogg.

"You don't just wander round meting out unimaginable slaughter..."



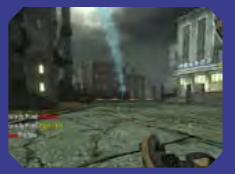
OH, WHAT A LOVELY WAR

Five things you need to know about Quake Wars

These maps are big, so you need the vehicles to get your to objectives fast.



This message is bad because missiles mean death. Press G to get away.



Blue smoke means the GDF is about to launch a napalm-beating airstrike.



Covert Ops steal identities from fallen foe. Perfect for sneaky assassinations.



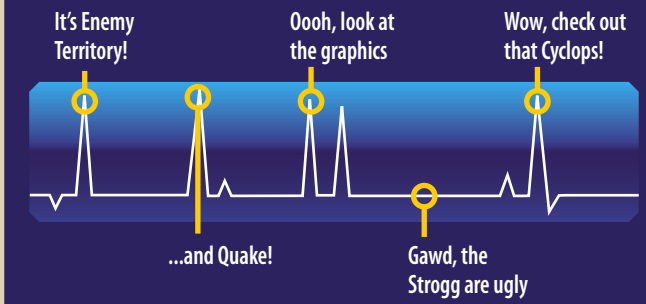
Engineers planting proximity mines give you a final line of defence.

Objectives have helpful icons so you can learn the maps quickly.

"Technicians can use falled GDI corpses as hosts. Gruesome"

Terrains are varied as maps are spread out all over the world.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*





Press Tab to find out what you're supposed to be doing at any time.

than happy with the stock maps, which provide a good variety of terrain. We'd guess, however, that the countries chosen were based more on the likely sales of the game in that country than their respective geography.

Our only gripe with QW is that it's pandered to the stat-brigade and included persistent player stats. That might not be such a bad thing overall, but it does seem to dent the claims of this being a team-oriented experience. Stats-obsessed players are the bane of many W: ET server admins so we hope the situation doesn't repeat itself here. ● ***Andrew Sutcliffe***

> Quake Wars continued

The game is played out over thirteen beautiful maps based all over the world (except Russia, West Asia and South America, which might hint at a later expansion pack). These are generally very well designed. They're also bigger, providing more freedom of movement. With the whole world now potentially opened up, we can't wait to see if the community will be busily building into their own maps. The thought of a Tasian-crafted map that lets us fly up to the top of the Christ the Redeemer statue and start sniping makes us salivate. Let's hope Splash Damage gets behind the modding community in the same way it did with W: ET. For now, though, we're more

PCGZine Verdict

Play it once and you'll want to play for months

- Objective-based game play
- Imaginative deployables
- Stats-focus

92%



World In Conflict

The Russians are coming…

Publisher: Sierra
Developer: Massive Entertainment
Heritage: Ground Control
Link: www.worldinconflict.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
2GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 128MB 3D card

There's a bit in Christopher Guest's latest film, For Your Consideration, where Harry Shearer is congratulated for almost getting an Oscar nomination. In a tenuously related coincidence, World In Conflict has been nominated for a BAFTA, up for consideration in the Strategy & Simulation category alongside such leviathans of the genre as the Medieval II: Total War expansion pack and, er, Wii Sports.

On the subject of film, there are parallels with a classic movie, namely 1984's Red Dawn, which saw a pre-Dirty Dancing Patrick Swayze and Jennifer 'Baby' Grey attempting to put the Russian Army in the corner following a US invasion by Soviet troops. In the world of World In Conflict, it's 1989 and the Cold War has warmed up to boiling point, with the Russkies ploughing through France, Europe and the US of A, which is where you're thrown into the action, assuming that your PC is up to the challenge. It's not often that your jaw actually drops when reviewing a game, but this is proper drool-on-the keyboard stuff. Even when setting the benchmark to adjust for your set-up, the graphical clarity and detail is mind-boggling, an ultra-detailed world of building, tanks, planes, and of course massive explosions.



"Multiplayer is a pioneering affair that owes more to FPS than RTS"

Keep an eye on the chat to see where support should go.



Black Hawks down a bridge. That'll stop the commies.

There's a war going on

You haven't got time to gawp though, as the "commie bastards" are all over The States like a soup sandwich, the >

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Planes, brains and Armageddon…



Jet | Chute | Nuke

Jet

Stay under the radar with these US fighter jets. Just be careful not to needlessly slaughter your own troops.



Multiplay forces commanders to work together.

>WiC continued

story related via some quirky hand drawn picture and tolerable voice-acting, including a contribution from Alec Baldwin. You are fresh-faced Lieutenant Parker, armed only with a reasonably intuitive RTS interface and accompanied by a cast of counterparts, with some surprisingly deep characterisation for a game that essentially involves clicking on things until they explode.

Hand holding

Novices are led into the action by a comprehensive tutorial, and it's a relatively smooth process that sees you tumble headlong into some massive battles, eschewing resource management in favour of balls-out action. In fact it can become so hectic that it's possible to lose track of what you're doing, having to constantly flit to various areas of the map to pick up reinforcements, keep your troops alive, order in napalm strikes, and, if it comes to it, drop the big one: the nuke.

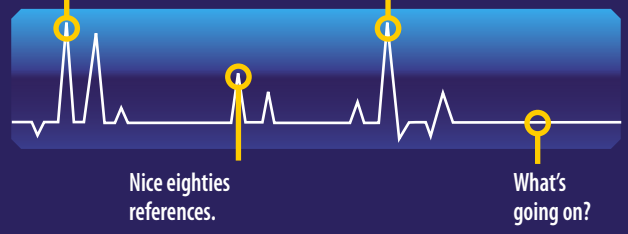
While more studious strategy buffs may balk at the action-oriented approach, allied to the extraordinary graphics it gives World In Conflict an intensity rarely seen in RTS games, or indeed in any genre. Absolute concentration is required, and it can be a breathless affair, with strategy sometime going out of the window in favour of sheer firepower. As for the multiplayer, it's a pioneering affair that owes more to FPS games than RTS. Almost worth the admission fee alone, the bespoke Massgate system enables up to four players a side to drop in and out of the action at any time. It may be a World In Conflict, but this RTS is a world of fun.

Steve Hill



Look at the DX10 lighting on that. Lovely.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*





You need an anti-air unit to fend off those attacks.



"The graphical clarity and attention to detail is drool on the keyboard stuff"

Combined arms is the key to a successful strategy.

PCGZine Verdict

Explosive stuff

- Incredible graphics
- Revolutionary multiplayer
- Almost too hectic

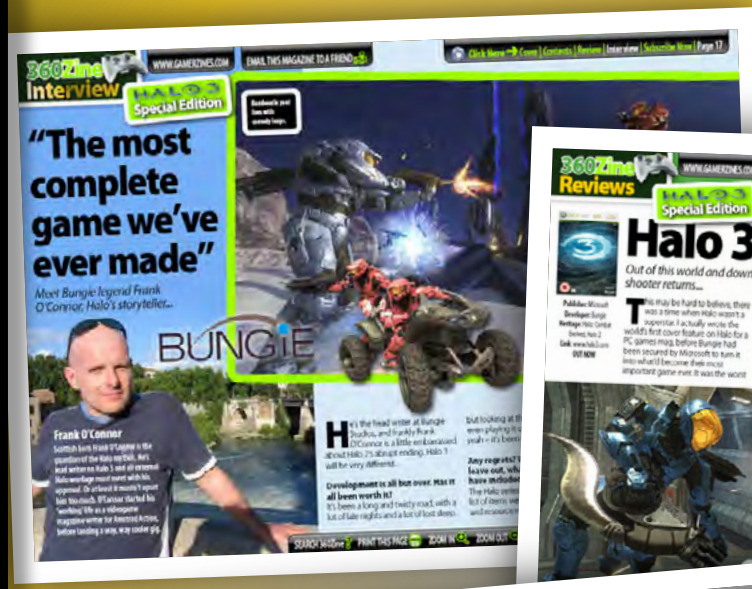
90%

360Zine Halo 3 Special

★★★
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Dedicated to the biggest releases
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Frank O'Connor on Halo 3, downloadable content and what happens next



Guild Wars: Eye Of The North

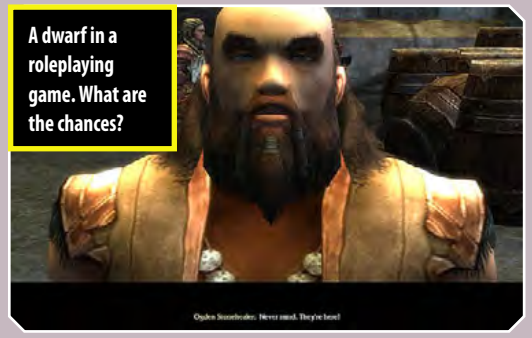
Just a dwarf and his will to survive…

Publisher: NCSoft
Developer: ArenaNet
Heritage: Guild Wars
Link: www.eu.guildwars.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
1.GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 64MB 3D card

If you haven't dabbled with Guild Wars before, it's the massively multiplayer online roleplaying game you can play between other games without ruining your life. Designed to be dipped in and out of without laborious rat-killing – or a subscription fee – it's arguably the acceptable face of the genre. Following a number of themed campaigns, Eye Of The North is an expansion pack with new content only accessible to level 20 characters.

That content kicks off with rumblings underfoot, accompanied by screen-shaking effects, resulting in a fissure in the surface of the earth caused by a massive quake. Naturally you are charged with the task of exploring it, and having put together a merry band of heroes, down you go. For a multiplayer game, finding human players willing to join you is a largely thankless task, as they all seem to have their own agenda, mainly involving trading things with impenetrable abbreviations.


A dwarf in a roleplaying game. What are the chances?



A motley crew of heroes and hangers-on.

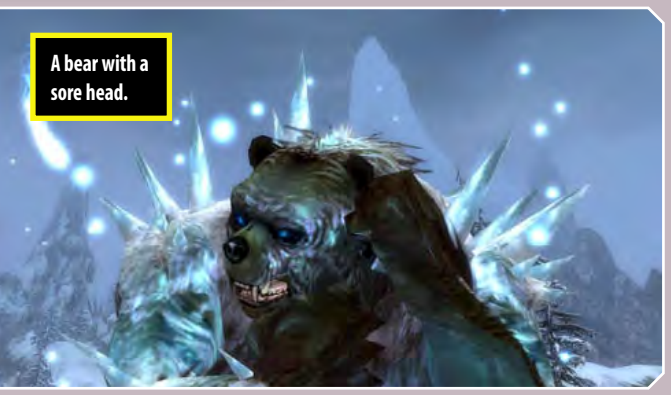

"You'll catch your death of cold, love."

Thankfully, Guild Wars can easily be played as a single player game, so while there may be less banter, your computer-controlled allies are up to the job. That job predominantly entails killing a variety of unpleasant creatures, with a more combat-based Player v Environment approach than the main game, which often had you collecting petals instead of hitting ogres with an axe. As ever, the combat is an entirely non-kinetic process of clicking on an enemy then clicking on a panel to carry out various attacks and spells, with most battles passing by in a blur of limbs and colour.

Bear necessities

There is some kind of narrative amidst the bloodshed, as related via a number of stilted cut scenes, with voices seemingly straight out of the video >


A dippy-inny outy MMO? Play an MMO and have a life.


A bear with a sore head.

>Guild Wars continued

game book of shit voice acting. There are a few decisions to be made as well, such as which of the new races to side with – Dwarves or Asura – but either way you're mainly marauding a frozen wasteland clicking on monsters until they disappear. The action gets somewhat livelier when you team up with some huge buxom women and go hunting for a bear, but most of the enemies are fairly characterless, including your newfound nemeses, The Destroyers.

If you've played Guild Wars before, particularly all the way to level 20, the gameplay mechanic is all too familiar, and the only real skill is in having the patience to arrange your inventory in the most efficient manner. All the same, the time passes by remarkably quickly, with the game reminding you every hour how long you've been playing. As ever the graphics are pretty sumptuous, if not quite as impressive as when the game first appeared.

With Guild Wars 2 on the horizon, this final fling in the original universe is probably for the completists, although newcomers can get a Platinum edition featuring the first game and the expansion together. Judged on its own merits, Eye Of The North is a passable romp, and while it doesn't offer anything particularly new, it simply offers more.

Steve Hill


Another faceless monster to fight.


Careful, you'll go blind.



You're not in Kansas now.

GOING UNDERGROUND

Guild Wars gets a little deeper



Bendah | **Crack** | **Cavern**

Bendah

In Kamadar, find someone called Bendah who explains about the earthquake. Having bought the expansion, you should probably accept the quest to get your money's worth.

PCGZine Verdict

Still good old Guild Wars, no more, no less

- No subscription
- Tangible storyline
- It's just pressing buttons

80%



Galactic Assault: Prisoner of Power

And the award for the least original title goes to…

Publisher: Paradox Interactive
Developer: Wargaming.net
Heritage: Europa Universalis III, Massive Assault Network
Link: www.galacticassault.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
2.4 GHz CPU, 1GB RAM, GeForce 6600 or better.

When developers decide to splash out on licensing IPs, you'd at least expect them to capitalise on what they've paid for. Based on the Russian sci-fi novel "Prisoner of Power" by the Strugatsky brothers, Galactic Assault is a turn-based strategy game with one of the weakest storylines around. It's a good job, then, that the quality of gameplay on offer here far eclipses its plot.

As this is a turn-based strategy rather than an RTS, each mission has had a huge amount of thought go into its tactical layout, and each map has been designed to really challenge your inner general. There's a range of objectives from simply defending your base against an enemy attack, to smuggling a spy behind enemy lines without being spotted, and the challenges are quick and plentiful. As you can't simply churn units out of your base, you'll have to be conservative, and, more importantly, clever with what you've got.

Casting a hex

The battlefield is divided into hexagons (much like the seminal Battle Isle), and each unit can move a number of tiles depending on its unit type. Each unit type also has a huge host of different weaknesses and strengths, which makes you even more careful with the positioning of your troops.

Your units aren't locked after they've attacked an enemy, meaning you can execute swift hit-and-run manoeuvres before the enemy's even had a chance to move. There's also a turn-based day/night cycle, which affects how far your units can see depending on the time of day, making assaults on enemy positions all that more potent, but also more risky at night.

While the graphics, voiceovers and storyline may not be up to much, Galactic Assault gets all the really important stuff right. One of the better examples turn-based strategy game – a bit of polish and it could have been a classic. ● ***Darren Hepworth***


Attacking the enemy's base in the morning or at night can be much easier than at other times of day.


Flash! Ahhh! He'll save every one of us!


You have access to all sorts of troops, on land, air and sea.


Gameplay is a victory over graphics.



The army begin to feel the effects of last night's curry.

PCGZine Verdict

Brain over brawn – don't let the graphics put you off.

- Deeply Strategic
- Turn-based, but fluent
- Poor Presentation

76%

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Two Worlds

Comedy is tragedy that happens to other people. Specifically, whoever hired the translator for this.

Publisher: South Peak
Developer: Reality Pump
Heritage: Oblivion, Diablo
Link: www.2-worlds.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
2GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 256MB 3D card



This is you. Though you can give yourself a bigger nose and sad eyes if you like.



There's some brilliant animations, surprisingly – check out the guy on the right.

You could be sniffy about how just how transparent an Oblivion clone this fantasy RPG is. It's based around exactly the same kind of gamer wish-fulfilment – you, on a horse, with a really big sword, riding through vast, verdant countryside and thumping orcs at your leisure. Oblivion hit the Lord of the Rings zeitgeist head on, becoming a huge success despite not featuring a single piece of automatic weaponry. Cheap imitations were thus inevitable. Thanks heavens, then, for dodgy translation, which makes this into an entirely different game than the cynical one it's trying to be. When you're playing as a character bellows "I AM THE BEST!" whenever he levels up, what's not to love?



You can attempt to cause mischief in towns, though a heavy fine or a fight with incredibly tough guards means being bad ain't easy.

Second life

It's sometimes hard to see past Two Worlds' hilariously confused dialogue and ascertain what quality of game lurks beneath. For every line that sounds like it may hold intentional guffaws, there'll be a conversation in which an AI character cheerlessly forsooths and prithees for around 30 bored, infuriated clicks on the 'Next' button. Pages and pages of unbearably incoherent cod-Shakespeare amount to nothing more than "orcs that-a-way. Go get 'em". But then you'll spend 20 minutes throwing fireballs at wyverns while your guy spouts Arnie-quips about feeling the heat, and you'll swear it really is playing it for laughs.

"It's impossible not to have fun in Two Worlds, at least for a while"

It really isn't. By the dozenth NPC lecture that comes dangerously close to the thousand word limit, even the inadvertent joke isn't terribly funny anymore. Fortunately, a whole lot of hammering on the spacebar gets you through such tortures quite quickly, then it's a simple matter of checking the map for a new coloured dot denoting your goal.



The wildlife really isn't friendly. Fortunately, you can make potions out of their guts once they're dead.

> Two Worlds continued

In terms of combat and character abilities, Two Worlds owes as much to Diablo as it does to Oblivion. This makes it an agreeably mindless hack'n'slasher that lets you tailor your guy to something like your own tastes, rather than be constrained to prescribed Mage or fighter. Unlike Oblivion, non-violent disciplines such as thievery or the fine art of smalltalk are consigned to token inclusions that hardly affect your passage through the game. This is strictly about how hard you can hit.

To this end is, of course, loot, and this is where Two Worlds is most compelling. The levelling up is fast and the new weapons and armour drop faster. The yearning for bigger and better is as strong here as anywhere, and, as in Diablo, you'll be far more focused on finding, selling and buying trinkets than actually completing quests. An unusual twist to this age-old formula is that you can combine an item with another of exactly the same the type to create a single, stronger one. If Two Worlds was the intentional comedy it sometimes appears to be, this would be manifested in the game as twelve broadswords crudely gaffer-taped together. Instead, it's just a baffling example of crazy game-logic that gives packrat players one more fine detail to obsess over.

It's impossible not to have a good time in Two Worlds, at least for a while. It rarely makes much sense, though occasional glimmers of attempted cleverness shine through, and that's as much as its charm as its undoing.

If you can somehow block that out, in terms of presenting a large, open and good-looking world to go chase experience points in while you wait for Elder Scrolls V, Two Worlds just about stays on its horse. ● ***Alec Meer***

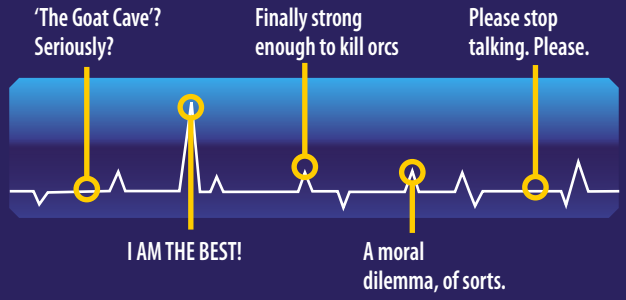
Horse based combat is a worthy attempt at a new idea.





There's an ability to burn folks' faces with the torch, which somehow seems more brutal than hitting them in the gut with a big axe.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*





This is your sister, whom the plot revolves around. She talks a lot, and keeps sending you on unnecessarily long walks.



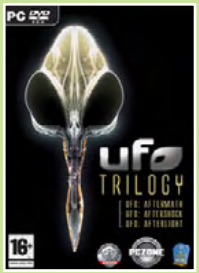
Orcs are impossibly tough to begin with, but come level 20 or so, attacking them seems rather cruel.

PCGZine Verdict

Should have focused on getting one world right

- Ridiculous dialogue
- A meaty enough RPG somewhere
- Ridiculous dialogue

70%



UFO Trilogy

We all like to play… Why don't you play on your own?

Publisher: Ascaron/1C
Developer: Altar Games
Heritage: Original War, UFO : Aftershock
Link: www.ufo-afterlight.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
1GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, DX8 3D card

They came from outer space. We think we should send them back On this one, innocent looking disc is a collection of sub-par turn-based-cum-real-time strategy games, that form the UFO series. With the oldest (and by far, the best) game coming from 2003, and the newest one being released just a few months ago in February, this is a hotchpotch collection that varies greatly in quality.

So let's start with the good. UFO Aftermath, the oldest game in the collection is also by far the greatest game in the series so far. This isn't to say that it's comparatively very good, but it's certainly better than the other rubbish here. The action is divided into two stages: a tactical and strategic one, with the former being small scale combat between your troops and a few enemies on the planet's surface, and the latter taking place in outer space. Whizzing the 3D model of the world around to pass the time, every now and then a message box will pop up to tell you a mission is available on the planet, and it's up to you to accept the mission, before carrying out the objectives in the strangely turn-based but not surroundings.


Look at those Greys over there, with their big, cartoon heads.

Intelligence quotient

It's somewhat depressing, then, that you have to guide your troops by the hand through every mission. If the enemy's out of range, or, heaven forbid, should wonder off, it leaves your troops feeling utterly dumbfounded until you lead them by their pinky to where the big bad outlanders are hiding. Obviously AI was an alien concept to the developers (snort.)


Your troops have a habit of moaning at you when you give orders.

And, unfortunately, that's where the good ends. Afterlight is much the same as Aftermath, with a slightly stronger story but a less polished tactical engine, whereas the latest Extraterrestrials is so bad (it's a completely cartoony, brightly coloured bubbly game – the complete opposite of the previous two instalments), it really isn't worth the space on your hard drive.

Ian Morris


The tactical aspect of the UFO games comes into play.


Who said romance wasn't alive in gaming?

"Afterlight has a better story, but a weaker tactical engine"

ALIEN INVASION

Mmm, Cheesy.



Aftermath | **Aftershock** | **Afterlight**

UFO Aftermath

A UFO is sighted above the planet's surface, and releases thousands of spores into the air. Days later, these spores fall to the Earth's surface, cutting off the planet's water supplies and smothering the majority of the population. As one of few survivors who were holed up in underground bunkers, it's up to you to find out what happened, and seek revenge.

PCGZine Verdict

UFO Aftermath really is the rose in this bed of thorns.

- Aftermath is good
- But that's it
- No AI. At all

61%

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Stuntman | Fatal Inertia | Blue Dragon



Bounty Bay Online

All your ship are belong to us

Publisher: Frogster Interactive
Developer: Snail Games/ Yusho
Heritage: This is a debut title, m'hearties
Link: bbo.yusho.de/en/
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
1.2Ghz CPU, 128Mb RAM, 64Mb Graphics Card

Sail the seas beneath a skull and crossbones, loot and destroy other sea-faring vessels, take your sword to their beaten crew, and take control of the oceans themselves. You can't really go wrong when it comes to a bit of good 'ol piracy. Or can you?

Bounty Bay Online is essentially the European version of Voyage Century, a free-to-play MMO which has also seen release in the same format in North America. BBO's origins, unfortunately, are very much evident. Firstly, the game looks and feels like bargain-basement fare, so it comes as no surprise that other territories received the same game for free. Secondly, the translation into English is sometimes laughable, and at best, somewhat awkward.


Not the most successful battle.

The locals have a way of making you feel welcome.


It's gonna be a loooong journey.

Old hat

The real problem however lies with neither subscription type nor translation. but with gameplay which to be honest is exceedingly dull. If you have any experience with MMOs at all, you've seen it all before, executed in a far more satisfying and enjoyable manner. You'll be presented with the clichéd professions of warrior, merchant or explorer, so you'll find yourself either putting cannonballs through the hulls of passing ships in a painfully slow and uninvolved combat system, or buying, selling and transporting goods for profit. Where as other MMOs such as Eve Online have made the most of such simple concepts, BBO presents them without originality or panache.

"You'll find yourself putting cannonballs through hulls"

With polished and addictive titles such as WoW or LotRO readily available, it makes you wonder how on earth there's a market for third class titles such as BBO. You're much better off waiting for the upcoming Pirates of the Burning Sea for swashbuckling action.

At a £19.99 RRP and a monthly subscription fee of £6.99, it would appear that Frogster Interactive really seem to be getting into the whole pillaging and looting theme.

Ian Morris

A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR ME

Making coin on the open seas



The Warrior | **The Adventurer** | **The Merchant**

The Warrior

For the Warrior, the weapon in your hand and the canons aboard your ship are your key to feeding yourself and your crew. It's not always a matter of killing though, there's money to be made from escorting merchants and ensuring their safety.

PCGZine Verdict

Money for old rope, me hearties

- Poor presentation
- Wholly unoriginal
- Pricing

65%



ObsCure 2

Mystery, death, mutant plants and lost girlfriends. Welcome to fresher's week.

Publisher: Playlogic
Developer: Hydravision
Heritage: Obscure
Link: ww.obscure2.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
700MHz CPU, 256MB RAM, 64MB 3D card

As we're faced with the prospect of reviewing yet another sequel, it's easy to be cynical (especially for us). Fortunately, however, this little gem confounded our expectations and turned out to be an absolute riot. The key, it would appear, is to not take this game too seriously.

School daze

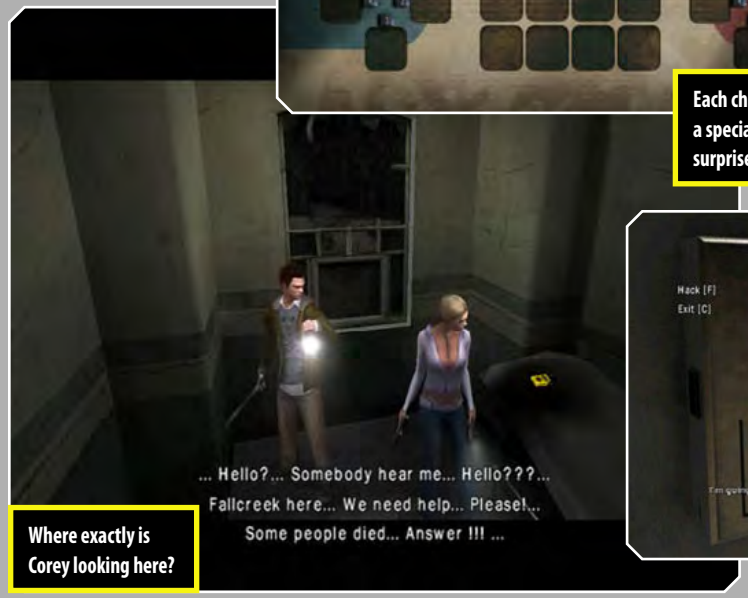
You'll be familiar with horror films based in American colleges and high schools – think Scream and you're on the right lines. But this story is slightly removed from that. The wonderfully stereotypical-and-yet-not-stereotypical characters and wafer-thin plot are more reminiscent of films like Scary Movie and Shriek If You Know What I Did Last Friday the Thirteenth.

Before you dismiss this as puerile nonsense, though, the fun is apparently being poked at everyone, even the developers themselves. This is a game to play with a smile on your face.

"This is a game you can play with a smile on your face"



Each character has a special skill, so no surprises there.

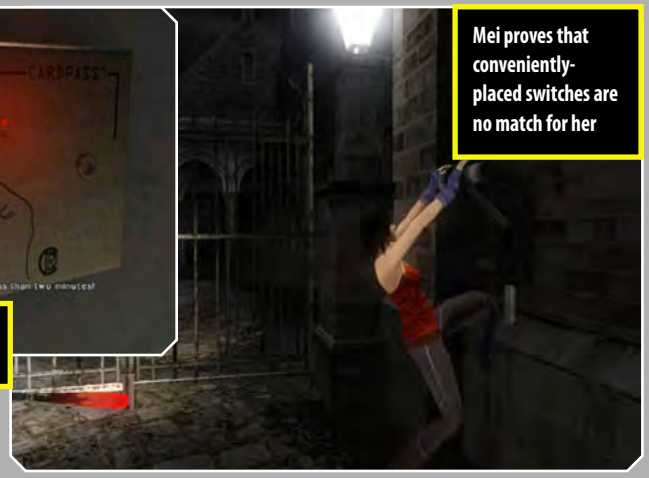


Where exactly is Corey looking here?



It's Mei's… time to shine.





Mei proves that conveniently-placed switches are no match for her

You can take control of one of two characters at any time. Initially, there are four (two male, two female – of course) and the game forces you into playing the pairs as they arrive in the story. It's your job to solve puzzles and interpret clues to enable you to progress through each chapter.

Controlling characters when they need to move at certain angles can be awkward as their partner can get in the way. The voice-acting is suitably camp and amusing, though, and more than makes up for it. There is a combat element but this results almost exclusively in console-style button-bashing to kill the once-human-now-evil-mutated-plant enemies.

The 'consoley' nature of the game is without question its biggest flaw – and possibly also to blame for the limited save-game system. PC gamers have a keyboard. There are enough buttons for one to act as 'save game.' Aside from that, this was a very pleasant surprise.

Andrew Sutcliffe

PCGZine Verdict

Fantastic fun if you don't take mutant student/plant hybrids too seriously

- Deliberately funny
- Varied puzzles
- Too 'consoley'

78%



Madden NFL 08

EA punts on second and two…

Publisher: EA
Developer: Tiburon
Heritage: Over 20 years of Madden
Link: www.easports.com/maddennfl/home.jsp
ETA: Out now

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
800MHz CPU, 256Mb RAM, 64MB 3D card

The NFL is currently spending a lot of it's resources on pushing it's brand of 'football' in the UK. TV coverage has been cranked up to eleven, and October sees the New York Giants take on the Miami Dolphins in our very own Wembley stadium in the NFL's first ever overseas season game. It's an exciting time for European NFL fans, just so long as their Madden fix isn't restricted solely to PC gaming.

While this year's PS3 and 360 incarnations have taken a few steps forward, and upped the game somewhat over previous titles, PC owners are left with little more than a half-arsed PS2 port with extremely minor improvements over last year's offering, at best.

Lucky PC owners are rewarded with the likes of Skill Drills mode, which sees you working through a series of mini games against gigantic dummies (don't ask), under the promise that it'll improve your running/passing/playcalling skills. Maybe so, but surely a few extra mini games isn't all that 08 has to offer?

Too many blows to the head

Of course not, AI has been another touted improvement over 07, but it's rather difficult to see just where these supposed improvements have been made. CPU-controlled runningbacks will gracefully crash into a defensive lineman rather than exploiting a gaping canyon in the defensive line, and quarterbacks quite wittingly throw ridiculous interceptions while receivers sprint unhindered towards the endzone empty handed. When we're promised "players smarter than ever before", you're left wondering how they even made it onto the pitch without assistance in last years Madden.

Other improvements include the all new Player Weapon system, redesigned menus, and the option to play as a real rookie in Superstar mode.

Last but not least, there's Widescreen support for those of you with widescreen monitors! Grasping at straws? We think so.

Not all is lost, let's be honest. Madden 08 is still a decent enough game, and there's plenty of gridiron fun to be had here, but there's really no reason other than updated rosters to pick this above last years offering.

While next-gen consoles have been rewarded a feature-rich and improved Madden experience, the PC version once again proves to be the least of EA's concerns. ● ***Andrew Sutcliffe***


Reggie Bush's last ever game



The NFL re-enactment of the London tube map.



"AI has been touted as an improvement, but it's hard to see how"

What do you mean you forgot the ball?

PLAYER WEAPONS

Going against the odds

Madden 08's big new feature is the new Player Weapon system, which introduces an element of paper, scissors, stone on top of the usual player-rating system. Unfortunately where as on the 360 and PS3 version you'd be mad to run your runningback at a Run Stopper defensive lineman, on the PC version it seems to make little difference. The Player Weapon system is included, that's for sure, but in this incarnation, there seems little point.



PCGZine Verdict

Still the best NFL sim, but not enough new stuff

- It's Madden!
- Dated engine
- Lazy implementation

65%

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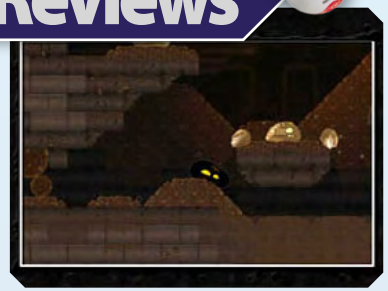
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Gish

Developer: Chronologic
Publisher: Chronologic
Price: $19.95

Life isn't easy for a ball of tar, as you'll soon find out when you play Gish. Guiding Gish – your friendly little blob of tar – through the numerous physics based levels, you'll be squished, flattened, and maybe even eaten by some bizarre zombie teddy bear type things, all in the name of simply rescuing your girlfriend. One of the nicer features of Gish is the way you can affect your blob's properties, either making him heavy, less dense, or giving him little spikes, which will allow you to crawl up walls, and access previous inaccessible areas. It's an ambitious game, and one that's been well executed, but the two player vs mode is really the icing on the cake.

- Different States
- Original gameplay
- Two player versus is great

Tar very much **89%**



Word Kingdom

Developer: Magic Indie
Publisher: Magic Indie
Price: £7.50

It may have a fancy name, but Word Kingdom basically boils down to a glorified game of Boggle with – believe it or not – a medieval setting. You can choose to play in either "classic mode" which simply lets you play as you see fit, or through a campaign mode, which sets you a minimum amount of points you must achieve in a certain time limit. As is crucial with these games, the in-game dictionary does recognise the majority of real words you'll try and play, but we did have a few occasions where it wouldn't agree, and without an editing option, this is a limiting factor.

- It's an alright game
- But it's just Boggle
- Locked dictionary

A-V-E-R-A-G-E. Average **65%**



KwonHo: The Fist of Heroes

Developer: iiji
Publisher: www.kwonho.ijji.com
Price: Free

With the recent announcement that Dead or Alive Online will be coming to PC, you may be wanting to give yourself a bit of a warm up for the impending competiton, and there are worse ways to get into shape than with this free, online DoA clone. Create your own character, before progressing through a number of single player challenges, or a full online mode, KwonHo's blend of fast DoA style gameplay and fighting styles provides a decent challenge, against AI or a human opponents. But be the online community its fair share of aggressive players.

- Decent fighting styles
- Free!
- Aggressive players

Fun with friends but boring alone **69%**



Sam & Max: Season One

Developer: Telltale Games
Publisher: The Adventure Company
Price: £24.99

You may have heard us waxing lyrical about the individual episodes of Sam & Max over the past few months, but if you're one of the many who're still a bit shy about downloading things off the internet, you'll be pleased to know the dynamic duo's latest adventures are now all available to buy on one DVD. Containing a whole host of bonuses, extras and behind the scenes material, this package represents excellent value for money. If you want to familiarise yourself with what is quite possibly the greatest point and click series of modern times, this is the best way to start.

- Hilarious
- Thought provoking
- All in one box

Still fantastic **90%**



Crayon Physics

Developer: Kloonigames
Publisher: Kloonigames
Price: Free

Although it may look a lot like ancient arcade hit, Breakout, the gameplay in Ricochet: Infinity is actually a whole lot deeper. One of the game's most unique features, the ability to alter the angle of your ball mid-air by using a pseudo-aftertouch technique, really gives it a unique feel, and adds to what's an incredibly accomplished game. Each level has been fantastically themed, and there are hundreds of new puzzles available for download. With an inventive achievements system that pushes you to get the most out of each game, Ricochet Infinity is a casual classic.

- Great use of physics
- Inventive gameplay
- Just not enough!

A fantastic little game with a bright future **89%**

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Tech Support

We've received so many emails asking for advice, we thought we'd better open up a dedicated help desk. Send your questions to help.pcgzine@gamerzines.com



Neil Mohr has been playing with and playing on PCs for over a decade

OLD TIMER

I've got an ATI 9550 graphics card with the latest drivers running on a P4 and 1GB of RAM. BioShock loads fine but when the game starts it's mostly black. I can see fire and lots of square patches but that's all.

> *We hate to tell you but your PC doesn't meet the minimum requirements for BioShock. It needs a full DirectX 9c (Shader 3.0) compliant graphics cards – that's to say at least an ATI x1300, an NVIDIA 6600 or better. 1GB of memory is great and the Pentium 4 is fine, but you'll need a new graphics card.*

Once it was the bee's knees, now it's ageing junk.



BIOSHOCKING

I'm trying to run BioShock and it's consistently freezing when I get in the bathysphere and descend into the sea. I'm running an Athlon FX55, 2GB RAM, ATI HD 2600XT and Windows Vista.

> *We're seeing a lot of reports of this type or with the screen going black when running DirectX 10 hardware. The easiest solution is to force it to use DirectX 9; to do this right-click the BioShock shortcut, click Properties and at the end of the Target box add a space and put –DX9. That should get the game up and running, in some cases using the Window mode can also solve the problem.*

If you're desperate to try DirectX 10 – for which there are few advantages – we suggest the following tips. The most obvious is to get the latest drivers, ATI and NVIDIA both have specific BioShock updates. For Intel systems, get the latest Intel INF motherboard drivers from downloadcenter.intel.com.

We've also heard if you select Control Panel > open Programs > Turn Windows Features ON or OFF and uncheck the Tablet PC Optional Components. This can sort out some problems.

Finally you should check your Virtual Memory settings are set to automatic. As it's so system heavy having this fixed can cause it to crash. To do this select Start Menu > Control Panel > System > Advanced Tab > Performance > Advanced Tab > Virtual Memory. Make sure the Virtual Memory is set to System Managed and all should be fine.

NOT WIDE ENOUGH

What's all this I hear about BioShock not supporting widescreen displays, is that true? It seems crazy as everyone I know owns a widescreen monitor!

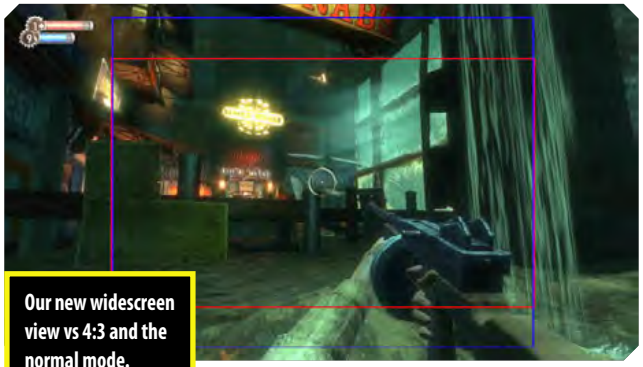
"My graphics card is hot as hell, how on Earth do I cool it down?"

> *Bioshock works absolutely fine on a widescreen display – so we can put your mind to rest on that point. The big issue that the internet pipes are full of, is that some people think the game doesn't correctly render the display. As far as we're concerned it's more a difference of opinion. The developers decided on a set field of view – or FOV – while some gamers would prefer a wider FOV. Grab the hack tool that Racer_S developed so you can adjust it from dl.tocaedit.com/*

This is how Mr Bubbles handles shoddy tech support.



Tech Support



Our new widescreen view vs 4:3 and the normal mode.

> *bioshockdFOV.zip we recommend using 0.75 for a 16:9 ratio display.*

OLD & TIRED

I heard that old games like Counter-Strike, Quake 4 and WarCraft III aren't compatible with Windows Vista. In other words, Vista can't run these games, is it true?

> *Most games in our experience will work fine with Vista, though some require a degree of badgering. Quake 4, for instance, throws up an installation warning but the game works fine with the latest patch. Counter-Strike also runs fine as it's updated via Steam, so that takes care of itself.*

In general most problems can be solved by running a game as administrator, right-clicking on the shortcut and selecting that option. Others may complain about the version of Windows – to cure this right-click on the shortcut and choose Properties > Compatibility > Run this program in compatibility mode.

For DOS games and ones that require SoundBlaster calls, we recommend DOSBox from dosbox.sourceforge.net this is a combined CPU and DOS emulation platform that makes it far easier to run very old games.



DOSBox is the best way to relive those classic PC gaming moments.

WHAT'S COOKING?

I have an NVIDIA 8800 GTS Overclocked Edition. After half and hour of gameplay my CPU and GPU are as hot as hell. How do I cool the damn things down?

> *Generally CPUs and GPUs do run 'as hot as hell', typically GPUs around 70 degrees while a CPU would be more around 50 degrees – though this can go up to 70 or 80 depending on the processor. You can monitor NVIDIA and ATI temperatures via their respective Control Panels.*

The fact you have an Overlocked Edition makes us think you are overclocking it, which is only going to make it hotter. As long as the heatsinks for both your CPU and CPU are fixed correctly – it's always worth checking as they can come lose if the PC has been moved – we'd suggest you check the airflow within the case.

Make sure cables are tucked away and any internal case fans, as well as the PSU fans, are all working correctly. If you have no case fans we'd advise you invest in a 120mm – if your case supports it – or else a good 80mm rear fan. The fact is without good airflow coolers can't cool the hardware lower than the air stuck in the case.

"I'm trying to run BioShock on my Vista PC and keep crashing to a black screen"



There's a whole heap of technology in there, and that's just in the cooler.

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