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PCGZine

Issue 11 | Nov 2007

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

OUR VERDICT!

CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

The end of World War II as we know it...

MASSIVE REVIEW!

HALF-LIFE 2: THE ORANGE BOX

The ultimate shooter package!





FIRST LOOK!

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE PAYBACK

Why it will be the goriest yet!

PROTOTYPE

GTA IV meets Half-Life!

SUPREME COMMANDER: FORGED ALLIANCE

The Infinite War is over!



REVIEWS



1

Clive Barker's Jericho

Hellish horror for Halloween!



2

Pro Evolution Soccer 2008

Can it relegate FIFA 08?



3

Stranglehold

Woo's action rampage!

PLUS

Win! Sidewinder Gaming Mouse

Welcome to PCGZine



Yes, it's that time of year when Christmas decorations are appearing in all the shops and we're all moaning that the preparations seem to have started far too early once again. But Christmas really has come early for PC games this month with Half-Life 2's Orange Box, Call of Duty 4, FIFA 08 and PES 2008, Gears of War and loads more. You'll find the latest verdicts on all of these in this packed issue.

But that doesn't mean that the real Christmas will be a washout. We still have massive hits like Crysis, Hellgate: London, Guitar Hero III, Supreme Commander: Forged Alliance and more to look forward to under the tree. Start grandma knitting you a bigger stocking right now!

Steve Brown, 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*





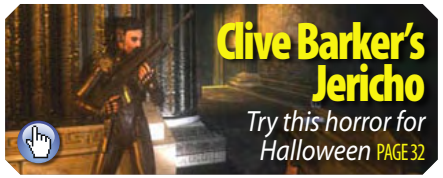
+WIN COPIES OF THE GAME PAGE 38

QUICK FINDER
Every game's just a click away!

Soldier of Fortune Payback	MotoGP 07
Prototype	Clive Barker's Jericho
Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	Borderlands
Gears of War	Guitar Hero III
Universe at War	WET
Orange Box	S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Clear Sky
Company of Heroes: OF	The Bard's Tale
FIFA 08	Dead Island
PES 2008	Brutal Legend
Stranglehold	Sidewinder Mouse compo













MEET THE TEAM
Probably the best games writers on the planet



Steve Hill
Went football crazy with a FIFA vs. PES battle of the giants.



Quintin Smith
Got to grips with Stranglehold and nearly choked himself.



Richard Melville
Opened the Orange Box and fell through a Portal.



Ian Morris
Interviewed Cliffy B and renamed himself Iany M.

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.



SOLDIER OF FORTUNE PAYBACK

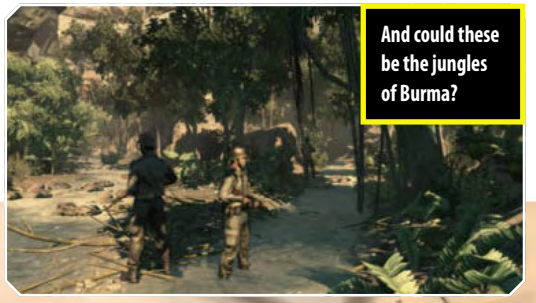
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Activision Minnesota
Heritage: Soldier of Fortune, Soldier of Fortune II Double Helix
Link: www.activision.com
ETA: November

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

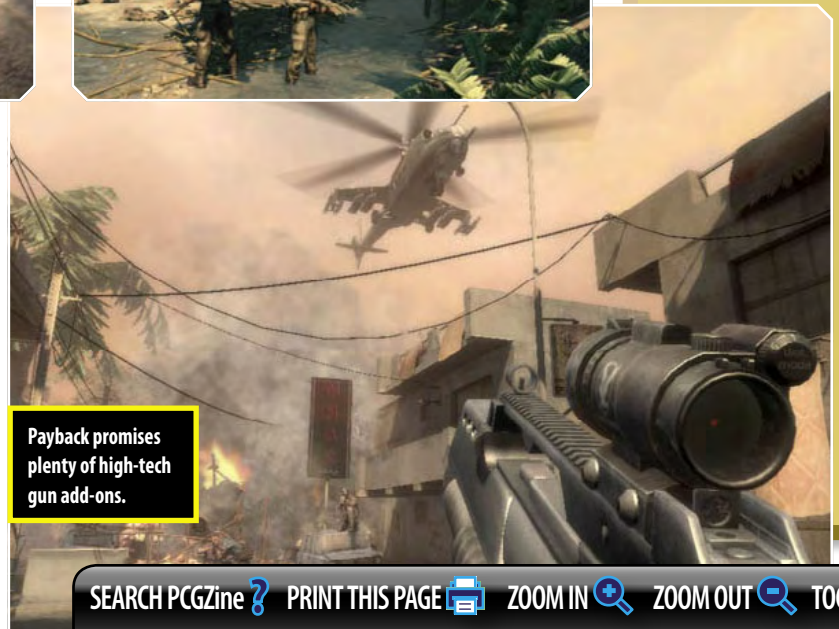


Looks like the hills of Afghanistan to us.


The dangerous streets of an Iraqi town?


And could these be the jungles of Burma?




Payback promises plenty of high-tech gun add-ons.

LATEST NEWS

Soldier of Fortune: Payback

Current status – mostly armless…

What's the story?
Brutal and gruesome first-person shooter starring a Rambo-style mercenary cutting a swathe through global terrorism hotspots.

What do we know?
For starters we know that it's not being developed by series originator Raven Software of Quake IV and Jedi Knight II fame, which will be an initial disappointment to some. However, Payback still promises the trademark dismemberment of enemies by high-power modern weapons and close-combat knife work that rocketed the original game to controversial popularity in 2000.

The modern mercenary warfare theme, working for shady US freelance company 'The Shop' is likely to stir up equal controversy this year, especially with the prevalence of and complaints against US mercenary outfits in war zones like Iraq. If anything, Payback promises to be even more gory this time and we're warned it "may be shocking to even experienced FPS gamers". Fairly standard online modes will include Deathmatch, Elimination, CTF and Demolition.

When do we get more?
We're hoping to have the full review for you next issue, so prepare for some grisly screenshots!

Anything else to declare?
This time the franchise seems to have dropped the advisory and starring role of ex-Green Beret, high profile real-world mercenary and security expert John Mullins. Instead you'll be playing as black ops merc Thomas Mason, presumed to be a fictional character. Or is he?



REPLAY THIS VIDEO

"NOTHING CURRENTLY SET IN MODERN WARFARE COMES CLOSE TO THE HIGH QUALITY FOUND WITHIN CALL OF DUTY" - 360 MAGAZINE

"ASTONISHINGLY BRUTAL"
- OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

"THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE IT OUT THERE"
-PC GAMER

CALL OF DUTY 4
MODERN WARFARE

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PC DVD ROM

NINTENDO DS

Infinity Ward

ACTIVISION

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Publisher: THQ
Developer: Gas Powered Games
Heritage: Dungeon Siege, Dungeon Siege II, Supreme Commander
Link: www.gaspoweredgames.com
ETA: November



See Megalith, the amphibious mega bot, attack from the sea!



"Navies, orbital strike weapons and counter-intelligence"

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



Just like your local LaserQuest, but without 12-year-olds.

LATEST NEWS

Supreme Commander: Forged Alliance

But how can anything come after an Infinite War?

What's the story?
Follow-up to the massively successful sci-fi RTS. Humanity faces new, overwhelming odds and must put aside factional fighting for a last, desperate allied stand.

What do we know?
This sequel is set two years after the Infinite War (and who could have guessed that would ever end?) and everything has gone the shape of a space pear. The once proud and magnificent warring nations, including the UEF, Aeon Loyalist and Cybran are now in absolute disarray and ruined Earth faces its last terrible days if nothing can be done to stop the dark new threat that has turned its advanced quantum technology on mankind, encouraged by the dastardly Order.

So this Alliance seems more forced than Forged, but however it comes about, the important thing is that Earth at last can present a united front to face this endwar. The new enemy faction will also be playable in multiplayer, which promises new weapons, strategies and conquests.

When do we get more?
Look out for our exclusive review on the next cover of PCGZine.

Anything else to declare?
Massive new navies, devastating orbital strike weapons and advanced counter-intelligence are just three new available tactics that should provide a new Supreme Commander experience with Forged Alliance and 100 new units are promised.

STRATEGY ON A REVOLUTIONARY SCALE



REPLAY THIS VIDEO

SUPREME COMMANDER
Forged Alliance

THE INVASION BEGINS NOVEMBER 2007

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7 UP

More golden nuggets of gaming glory to come

Guitar Hero III



Publisher: Activision | **ETA:** Christmas

Yes, it's no longer a console exclusive and the super-popular strum 'em up will now be heading to PC as well. We don't have any news on the peripheral guitar yet, but we imagine a USB version for PC is already in the works. A massive advantage for PC axe-wielders is the online capability of our version, so you can thrash with and against your friends and really rock around the world.

Brutal Legend

Developer: Double Fine | **ETA:** Late 2008

Game creator Tim Schafer is something of a legend himself, the creative genius behind Full Throttle, Grim Fandango and Psychonauts (pictured). He's working on a new game which promises to comically unravel the dark history of Rock music in a project associated with singer/actor Jack Black, who will play roadie Eddie Riggs in the game. More details next issue.



WET



Publisher: Vivendi | **ETA:** Autumn 2008

Think Tomb Raider meets Kill Bill and you'll have some idea of the sexy action in the works at developer A2M. Heroine Rubi is a grittier version of Lara Croft and shares her acrobatic moves and gun slinging skills, also packing a deadly Katana sword.

Dead Island

Developer: Techland | **ETA:** Mid 2008

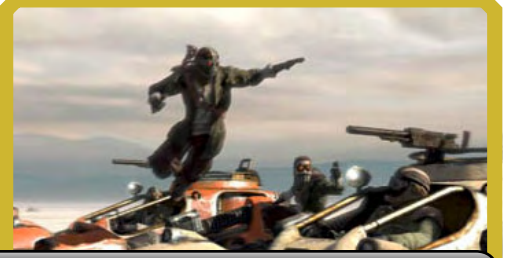
You know the end of the Dawn of the Dead remake where the survivors escape on a yacht to a maybe-not-so-deserted-as-they-thought island? Well that's pretty much where this shooter picks up, setting you against zombie hordes who are getting really quite hungry and bored on their retreat. So don't expect a holiday from terror – this is going to be a bloody and brutal trip.



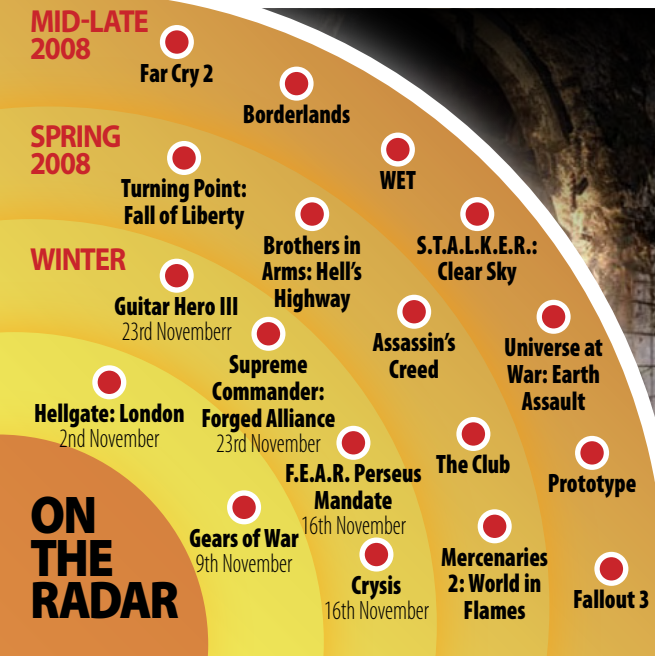
Borderlands

Publisher: 2K Games | **ETA:** Late 2008

From Gearbox, the maker of Half-Life: Blue Shift and Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway, comes an innovative sci-fi shooter that promises unprecedented degrees of customisation, with options to randomly generate thousands of unique missions, weapons and scenarios. The world is a Mad Max-style zone of brutal car gangs and desert locations and is looking very tasty.



ON THE RADAR



S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Clear Sky

Developer: GSC Game World | **ETA:** Mid 2008

The sequel to the unusual Chernobyl-set shooter is still set in the Zone, but this time you are a mercenary out to kill Stalker Strelok. This all takes place during a massive war between armed factions, leading to a far more open game compared to the linear story of the original. Far faster travel between game areas is promised.



MOTORM4X



Developer: The Easy Company | **ETA:** Mid 2008

This off-road racer comes from an ex-Illusion team, some of whom worked on Hidden & Dangerous and Mafia. This one really is off-road, with massive open terrains that you'll have to navigate using GPS. This could be the most realistic 4x4 sim to date.

THE EVOLUTION OF FRAGGING

Unreal Tournament III

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www.unrealtournament3.com

"There isn't any other shooter on the radar that has UT3's breadth of weapons, vehicles and level design"
- PC ZONE









COMING TO YOUR PC
NOVEMBER 2007

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EPIC GAMES

MIDWAY

[PROTOTYPE]

Publisher: Vivendi
Developer: Radical Entertainment
Heritage: The Simpsons Hit & Run, The Hulk, Scarface: The World is Yours
Link: www.radical.ca
ETA: Christmas 2008

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


More civilians than GTA IV.


Take on the forms of other mutants you meet.


Wasn't that thing in Ghostbusters too?


Motion blurring adds great dynamism to explosions.



Alex begins to mutate and transform.

Prototype

LATEST NEWS

Something's very rotten in this Big Apple

what's the story?

Plague-ridden New York is overrun by mutants and a US military coverup. You play a superhuman mutant in this massive open-world action title.

What do we know?

In Half-Life style you play a government scientist (Alex Mercer) at the heart of a government conspiracy relating to your military research company, Genetech. As the name implies, genetic mutations are at the heart of your research and when a virulent plague is unleashed on New York, the government send in a massive strike force to clean up. As you have also been affected by the mutant strain and are demonstrating new superhuman powers to leap buildings, throw out a whiplike arm and assimilate the specialist skills of others, you're also a military target.

This is a massive free-roaming game world where you'll be choosing your own way to complete tasks, battle mutants and survive the military clampdown. Think BioShock meets GTA IV and you'll have some idea of the delicious treats in store.

When do we get more?

We'll have a hands-on preview for you before Christmas



Anything else to declare?

You'll be able to gain, develop and choose between your superpowers in a very similar way to BioShock and they will be divided into Sensory, Attack and Defensive. The Attack powers we've been shown include brutal spikes to impale your victims.

HANDS ON

CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

The best parts of every real world shooter. And then some!

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Infinity Ward
Heritage: Call of Duty, Call of Duty 2
Link: www.charlieoscardelta.com
ETA: 9th November

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Call of Duty 4!

Call of Duty has become synonymous with World War II, but for the first time in its long and distinguished service history, Modern Warfare jumps half a century ahead to bring us the most cutting-edge combat experience we've ever experienced. Rumour has it that Infinity Ward didn't even want to call this a Call of Duty game and had in mind a totally new franchise, but Activision decided to retain the COD branding and although the setting is very different, we think this was the right decision.

Modern Warfare may be totally Nazi free, but within seconds of play you know beyond doubt that this is a Call of Duty game. The classic controls give it that solid and familiar COD feel, with click to zoom and hold breath to steady. There's no smart-cover as in Medal of Honor: Airbourne, or cling-to-cover as in Gears of War, but instead we have the new ability to shoot through certain materials with high calibre weapons, so cover is no longer as safe as it used to be.

Graphically it's also a familiar COD style, but textures are far more detailed, as are character models and the complexity (and sheer scale) of buildings and environments. Although this is still a linear game for the most part, levels and objectives are linked together perfectly and battle pace rages between attack, stealth and defence so frequently, with so many vehicle rides in between, that you feel part of a much wider world and plot.

And plot is far more important this time. It's a dark story of global >

"The most cutting-edge combat experience we've ever experienced"



The detail on character models is stunning.



Squad AI works really well in live fire exchanges.



Helicopters are used in great numbers in COD 4.

CALL OF DUTY 4 MODERN WARFARE



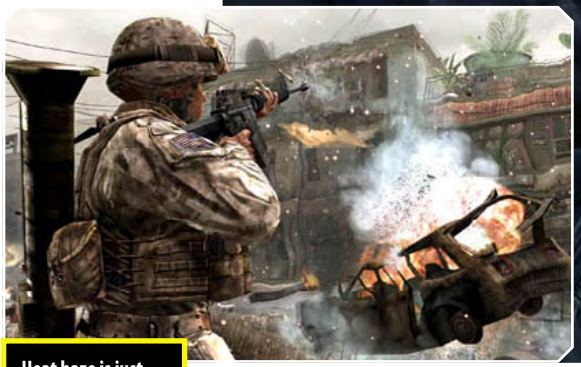
You could reach out and grab a codfish.

> Call of Duty 4 continued

terrorism and your play is split between the SAS in Russia and the USMC in the Middle East. It's a far slicker game than Call of Duty 2 and 3, with their dislocated parts and stilted cut-scenes, and Modern Warfare has opened up very modern script delivery that's easily on a par with TV series like 24. Modern Warfare will suck you in and keep you glued to your PC until you've (hopefully) saved the world without the world even knowing that it was in a nasty spot of bother.

The opening level of the game (post intro and training) sets you on your first SAS mission to infiltrate a massive ship mid-ocean. Of course nothing's easy and your drop-off chopper comes in at night amidst heavy sees, flying low between massive rolling swells and through visibility that fluctuates between shit and really shit as sheets of rain gust in the storm force winds. Unlike other shooter levels set on boats, this one really moves with sickening lurches through the wild ocean, waves crashing on deck and spray exploding over you as you clear deck guards and then move into the belly of the ship.

But it's all a big trap and after some intense firefights the ship starts to sink fast and it's a mad dash through >

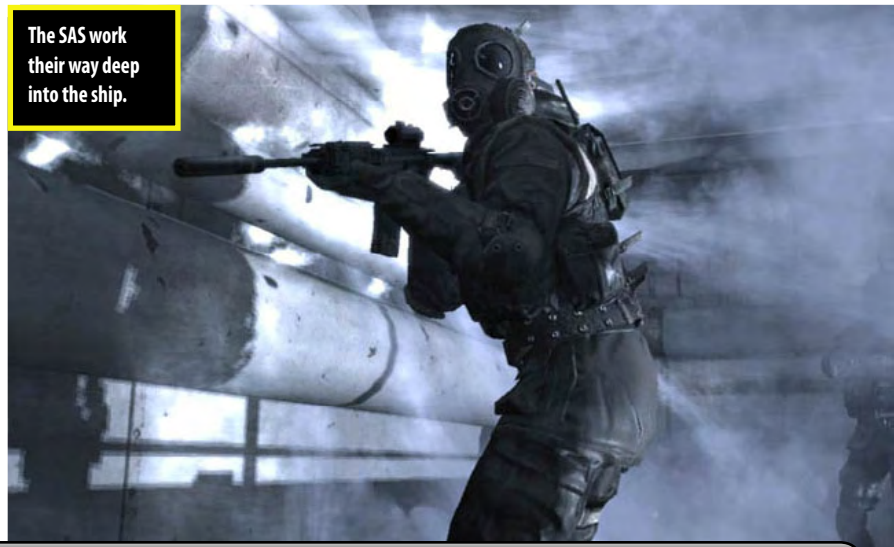


Heat haze is just one of many brilliant effects.



"Modern script delivery that's easily on a par with TV series like 24"

SAS men smoke fat cigars and sport dashing facial hair.



The SAS work their way deep into the ship.

CALL OF DUTY 4 MODERN WARFARE



Higher calibre guns can shoot through thinner walls.

"Don't worry, no Andrex puppies were harmed in Bog Rescue"

The sense of being there is constantly spot on.

> Call of Duty 4 continued

corridors and across walkways that are turning on their sides while you run, before attempting a leap onto your escape chopper's ramp at the desperate end. It's an utterly thrilling introduction to Modern Warfare and gives your adrenal glands a good idea of how much work they're going to have to put in before it's all over.

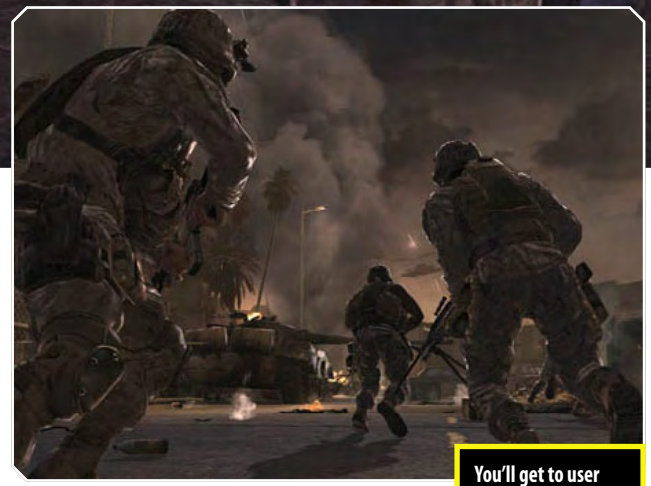
One of the first USMC missions is called Bog Rescue, but don't worry, no Andrex puppies are harmed. This starts as a street patrol by night through a ruined Middle Eastern city. The action erupts almost immediately as RPG trails corkscrew from upper windows, one of your Cobra attack helicopters is hit and goes down and it's your job to clear the broken buildings of snipers before the attack force takes more damage. Here your run control is very useful to hare between burned out cars and rubble walls until you can find a way into the building and flip on your night vision to navigate its pitch corridors. Gunfire is everywhere and laser sights cut through the spooky green vision as your squad infiltrates. This is Ghost Recon times ten, Rainbow Six but fun.

Add an incredibly extensive multiplayer game, with persistent stats and customisable upgrades, and more great modes than any other shooter we can think of and you can be sure that this awesome game isn't going to disappoint on any front.

Modern Warfare is a brave step out of the World War II arena, but one that Call of Duty and its fans will never regret taking.

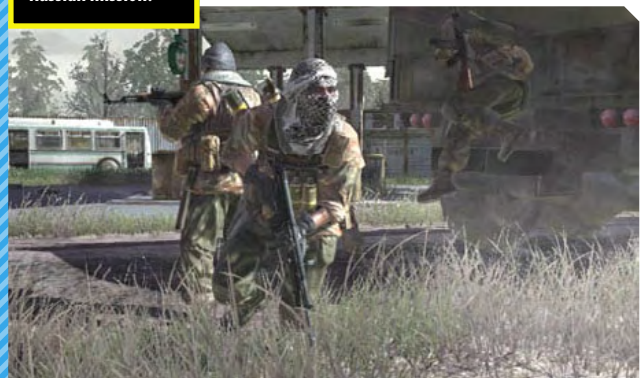
Wave goodbye to that Cobra above, because it's going down!





You'll get to user smoke, but also flashbang grenades.

Take and defend this fuel station in a Russian mission.



PCGZine

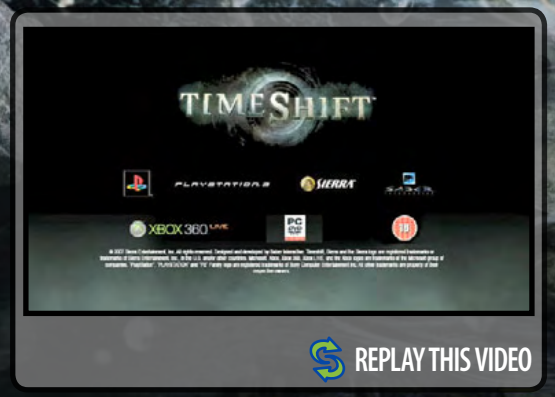
CALL OF DUTY 4 MODERN WARFARE

HOW COMPLETE? 99%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS? 95%

You'd be mad, or a Buddhist pacifist, not to buy this.

MASTER TIME TO
BECOME THE ULTIMATE WEAPON





5/5
MAXIM

TIMESHIFT

SLOW, STOP. AND REVERSE TIME.



COMING 2ND NOVEMBER

18 SIERRA SABER INTERACTIVE XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE PC DVD ROM COMING SOON TO PLAYSTATION 3

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HANDS ON

GEARS OF WAR

PC gamers beware – the Locust Horde is coming.

Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Epic
Heritage: Unreal Tournament, Unreal
Link: www.gearsofwar.com
ETA: November

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

There are few games on PC that need little introduction. Gears of War is one of the few.

It may have been the PC's worse kept secret for a while, turning up in such bizarre places as driver profiles, and point-of-sale displays, but a couple of months ago Microsoft made the news official : Gears of War, the 4 million+ selling Xbox 360 title would be making its way to its spiritual home, the PC, with extra content to boot. We got to go hands on with the exclusive new content and the awesome multiplayer mode at a recent Microsoft event in London's Covent Garden.

"The brand new content makes up a whole new Act of the game"

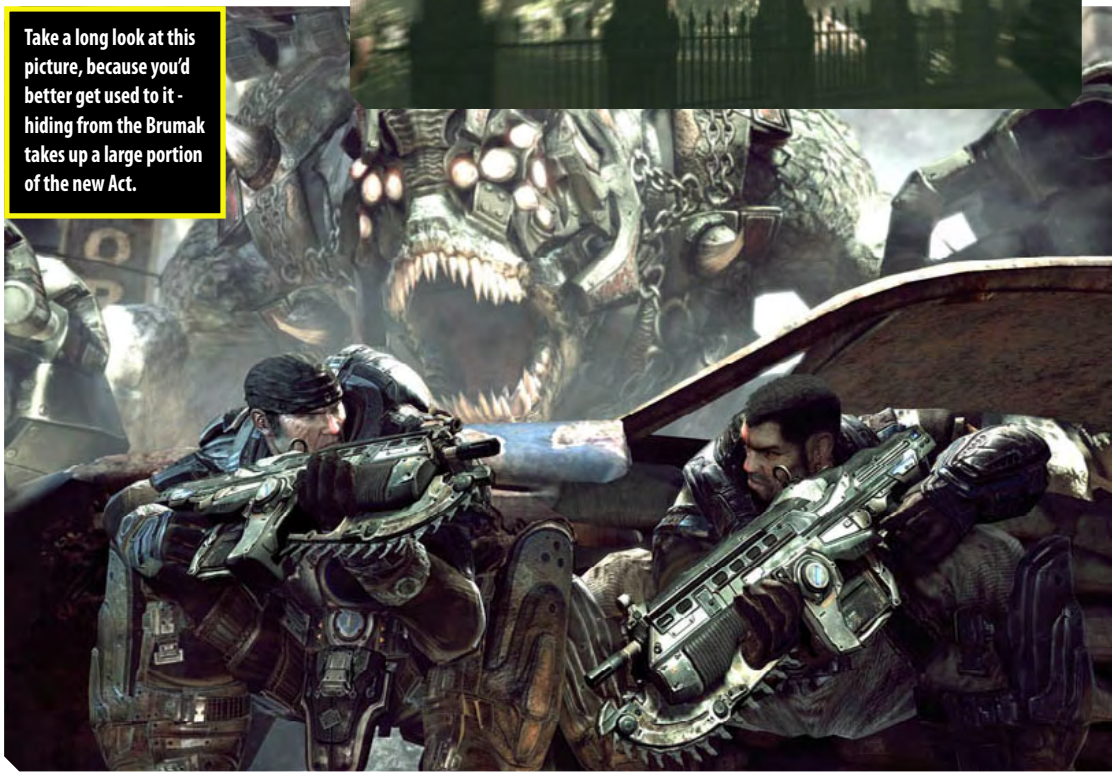
As you may expect being a first party Microsoft game, Gears of War is playable with either the mouse and keyboard, or an Xbox 360 controller, but at first, it actually felt easier playing with the 360 pad. Using the mouse and keyboard, Gears of War's context-sensitive run-for-cover button was actually mapped to the right mouse button, which, although quickly remapped to the more logical space bar, provided some initial confusion.

After our minor period of adjustment, and a quick play through the training level, it was on to the brand new content, which makes up a whole new Act of the game – an episode which sees the player, and Delta Squad, under attack by a huge new PC exclusive boss called the Brumak. The Act's plot revolves around what happened to the team after they left Adam's house on the 360 game, and explains what happened to the bomb they were carrying, and how it turns up in the train station.

The one moment that stuck out in our mind from this play-through was a shootout inside the theatre. Being pursued by the Brumak, you and your partner find your way into the crumbling ruins of a theatre – a spectacular showcase of GOW's "destroyed beauty" theme if there ever was one. Here, the mission branches, >



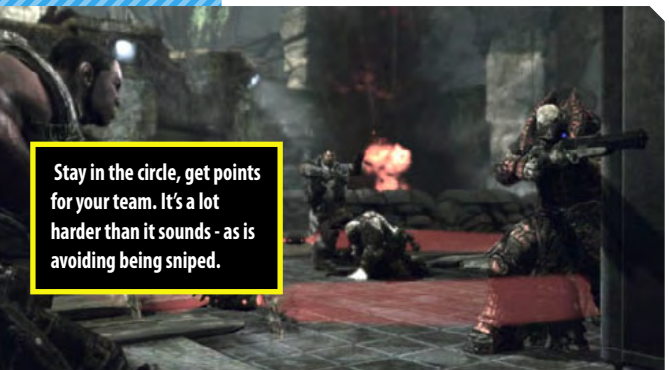
Here's the Brumak - scary eyes, scary weapons, and a set of gnashers to rival Janet Street Porter.



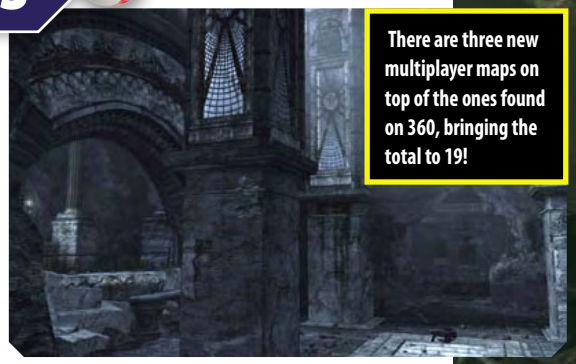
Take a long look at this picture, because you'd better get used to it - hiding from the Brumak takes up a large portion of the new Act.



King of the Hill really is something special - it uses GOW's stop and pop gameplay perfectly.



Stay in the circle, get points for your team. It's a lot harder than it sounds - as is avoiding being sniped.



There are three new multiplayer maps on top of the ones found on 360, bringing the total to 19!



Rather than having one button handle the dash, cover and jump over cover animations, you can now double tap w,s,a or d to leap over scenery.

"The PC version will be shipping with two new multiplayer modes"

> Gears of War continued

giving you the option to either take to the balconies, or fight your way through the cheap seats. Opting for the high (and we presumed, easier) route, we took to the balconies and found the cause of our problems – a Seeder that had burst up through the ground. For those of you not familiar with Gears of War, Seeders are spider-type things that are usually impossible to kill without the Hammer of Dawn. As you're inside, you can't use the Hammer of Dawn, so you're forced to think on your feet. Picking up a sniper rifle, and cracking off a few immensely satisfying headshots on the locusts on the other side of the theatre, you notice there's a huge metal stage wall behind the beast, suspended by a few pulleys. Shoot out the pulleys with the sniper rifle, and the stage collapses, taking with it the Seeder.

Needless to say, we were impressed with just how complete the new chapters feel – rather than simply being a bolted-on extra, the new levels are easily of the same quality as the rest of the game, link with the plot and give PC gamers yet another reason to invest in Gears of War.

We were also lucky enough to sample GOW's multiplayer mode at this event, and it's here the mouse and keyboard combo comes into its own. Letting you snap off headshots, and turn with speed that simply isn't possible on the 360, GOW's multiplayer is even more fast-paced and brutal than has been experienced on console.

The PC version will be shipping with two new multiplayer modes, one of which we got to play on the day. King of the Hill is, as you might expect, a mode that revolves around two teams commanding a certain point on the map. Stay inside that circle for a few seconds, and you'll start clocking up points, but become a target.

It may have been a long time coming, but now it's finally here – the Unreal Engine 3's best showcase, and the game of 2006 is finally making its way to PC. If you want a solid shooter, with an immense multiplayer game this Christmas, you'd better hope that Santa leaves you a locust under your tree! ●



The PC version's graphics look absolutely gorgeous, and you can crank the resolution up to 1900x1200, hardware providing.

GEARS OF WAR INTERVIEW! Click here to go to our exclusive CliffyB interview!

PCGZine GEARS OF WAR

HOW COMPLETE? 90%

ANTICIPATION? 90%

Guns, gears and grubs. Who said invasion's a bad idea?

"Looking almost like the illegitimate love-spawn of Oblivion and Dungeon Siege, there is a whole world of adventure out there."
PC Format

"The Witcher is a hot RPG, resonating on similar frequencies to Oblivion and Fable."
PC Zone

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"This could be one of the RPG surprises of the year."
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HANDS ON

UNIVERSE AT WAR: EARTH ASSAULT

That's an awful lot of very angry sentient beings!

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Petroglpyh
Heritage: Star Wars: Empire at War
Link: www.sega.com/gamesite/universeatwar
ETA: Jan 2008

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Universe at War!

While many were hoping for a sequel to Empire at War, we doubt many gamers will be disappointed with what they've got instead. A completely original IP, set on Earth in the near future (2012, to be precise), Universe at War is shaping up to be a sci-fi behemoth.

So what makes Universe at War stand out? Well, other than the obvious pedigree of its developers, one of the things that we're most excited about is the cross-platform multiplayer. Thanks to Microsoft's Games for Windows Live service, gamers on Vista or XP will be able to play games with their console-owning brethren over the magic of t'interweb. While it might cost £40 a year if you don't already have a Live subscription through your 360, Universe at War is the first RTS to allow for cross-platform multiplayer, and this is something the developers have been quick to boast about.

"The first RTS to allow cross-platform multiplayer"

But while original IP is all well and good, we were initially a little bit worried about how this one was going to turn out. We've all played sci-fi RTSs that promise the world and never deliver, and we've all got our tongues tied trying to pronounce alien names like "x'asdc"xllxl'", so who's to say this is going to be any different? After going hands-on with the game, and playing many sessions of multiplayer, we're pleased to report that it really is shaping up nicely.

The single most impressive feature of Universe at War so far, is just how diverse each of the game's races are. Letting you play as either the Hierarchy, the technologically advanced Novus, or the mysterious race, the Masarai, who've apparently been lying underneath our seas for millions of years, there are plenty of options for even the most experienced RTS players, and everyone should be able to find a side that >



At times, the camera seems to be far too close to the battlefield, making us yearn for a Supreme Commander-style camera.



Certain enemies give out this massive snot-like smog when destroyed. It'd be a good idea to avoid it.



The game's cinematic view, a product of Empire at War, is great for taking screenshots.



The giant walkers of the Hierarchy often simply overwhelm the enemy. The game needs some pretty hefty balancing at this stage.



While immensely powerful, the walkers aren't indestructible. Thank God...

> Universe at War continued

suits their style.

For the defensively strategic player, there's the Novus. These creatures, while technologically advanced, are typically lacking in firepower (at least, until they've unlocked their technology tree) and require some incredibly strategic decisions on the battlefield if you're going to win. Relying on their soldiers hacking into enemy machinery, and using it against them, the Novus are stealthy, and should be used accordingly.

However, if you simply prefer blowing stuff up, and stomping on things until they stop moving, you'll likely play as the Heirarchy. An alien race that relies on gigantic walkers to power their combat force, the Heirarchy are the most physically powerful force in the game, and have no real base.

The Masarai, however, act as the in-between pole. With a decent range of firepower, and traditional base-building methods, the developers are keeping schtum about this race's history, and all we know at the moment is they've been hiding under the earth's surface for years, only to be mysteriously re-awoken when the Heirarchy invaded.

While a few balancing issues are prevalent, we're confident that the recent delay will give the developers time to iron out all the flaws.



Each faction has its own interface, as well as a diverse selection of exclusive units.



Don't want to waste valuable time firing a laser? Simply squish your enemies into the ground! Mmm, squashed enemy taste good.



With Games for Windows Live, you can even play Universe at War against your 360-owning friends.

PCGZine

UNIVERSE AT WAR

HOW COMPLETE? 75%

ANTICIPATION? 75%

With its pedigree we're hoping for the best.



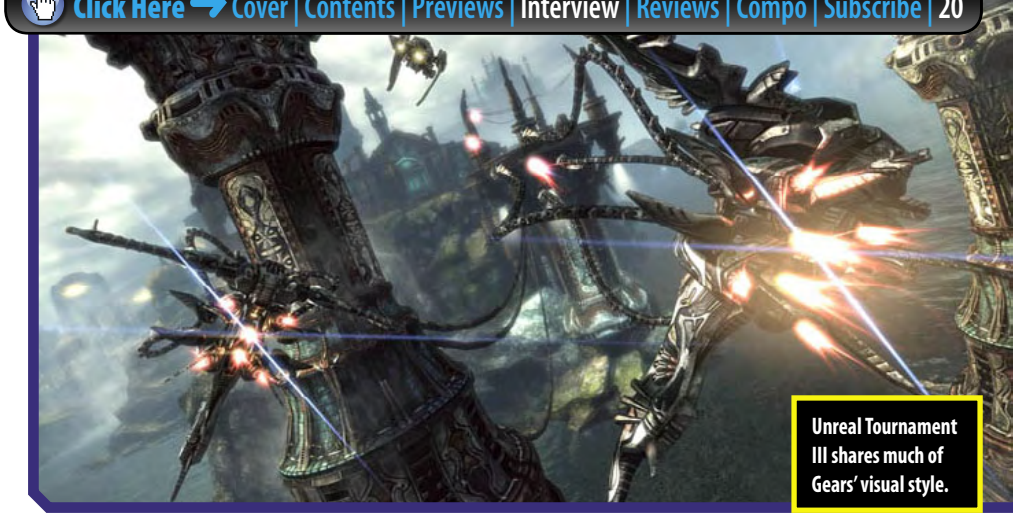
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Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Epic
Players: 1-8
Certificate: 18
Features: Co-op story mode, Game Editor, Exclusive new extra chapter for PC version
ETA: November

Good Gear!

On the eve of its PC launch, we sat down with Gears of War main man Cliffy B to ask – what's so special about our version?

Gears of War may be about to launch, but Epic has built impressive longevity into their sci-fi shooter with a whole new chapter and exclusive editing suites for PC. Cliffy B explains...

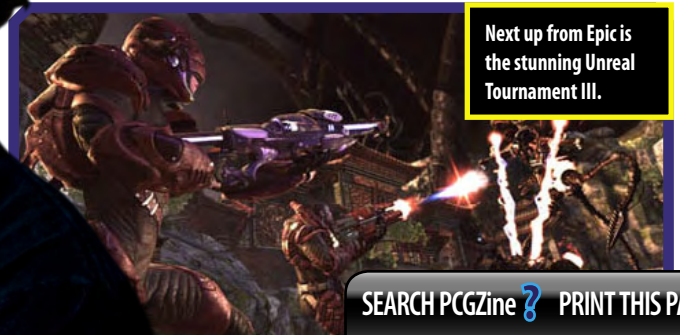

Unreal Tournament III shares much of Gears' visual style.

The biggest update to Gears of War on PC is the new chapter – could you tell us how much new gameplay you think this is going to provide?
I'm not really much of a fan of speaking in terms of how many hours it's going to take a person to play through something like that, because if one person's hardcore, it might take a few hours, if one person's casual, it might take four times as long. As far as compared to the original Gears of War, you're going to be getting around one eighth of the original single player campaign added on. Plus a boss monster, which is cool.

Do you have a specific, awesome moment that stands out from this chapter that you'd like to share?
It's all about the Brumak, he's a big bastard. The player and Delta squad are essentially being stalked by a giant cat. We have this one bit where the players are holed up underneath a bridge, and the Brumak's above them trying to smash down and get to them, there's a part where the players are holed up in an old theatre, and the Brumak's coming at you, and you have no idea how you're going to stop it. It keeps making its presence known to the players – I like to call that monster foreplay, as far as the monster keeps >

CliffyB is as close as you get to a gaming rock star.




Next up from Epic is the stunning Unreal Tournament III.


You won't see this in the Xbox 360 version!

"It's all about the Brumak. He's a big bastard... You have no idea how to stop it!"


You don't get to fight him in the Xbox 360 game.

>Interview continued

poking and tickling and bugging them and letting them know he's there, then by the end you're like "AARRGHH, I wanna strangle the big bastard"

This is all fully playable in co-op?
Absolutely!

Are there going to be any PC-exclusive Achievements?
Well, yeah, it's basically an entire separate set of 1000 gamer points for the PC version. If we had the PC version play with the 360 version then we'd have to have a unified points system, but because we don't have PC-360 multiplay, we can have the extra 1000 points. Which is good news for Achievement whores.

Can you earn Achievements on XP?
Oh yeah, the entire game works on XP or Vista, even the Live parts. We, Epic, as a business, wanted to make sure that our game had the functionality that it needed on as many computers as possible. Which is just good business.

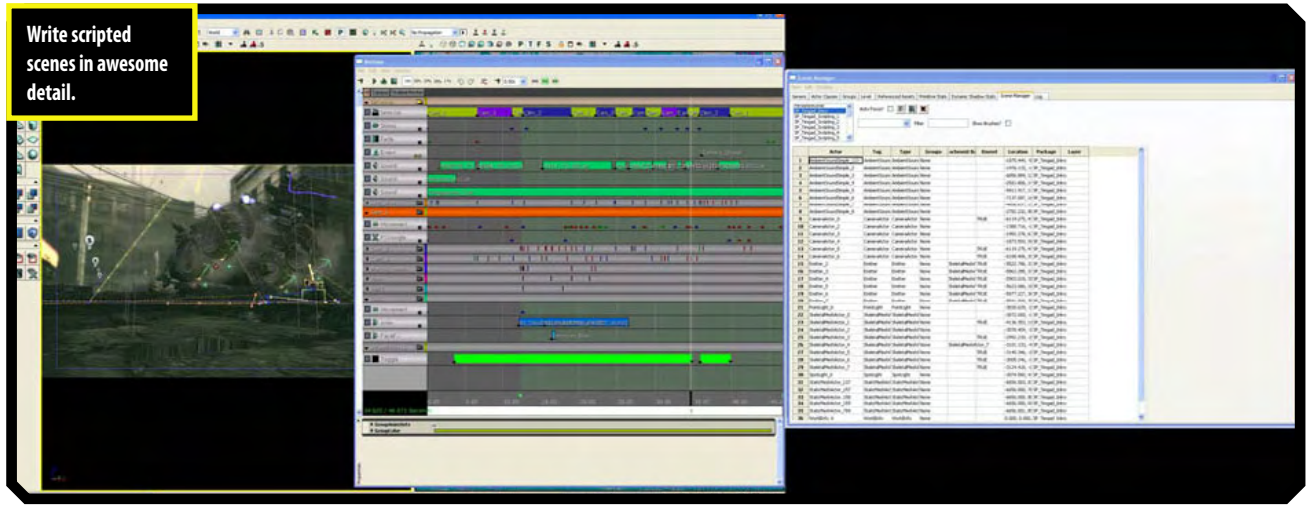
How is the multiplayer going to work with Live – what restrictions are going to be imposed on Silver players as opposed to Gold?
We're still talking through that, I can't really comment on a lot of it.

Gears of War is also one of few games with DirectX 10 support, will this provide anything fancy for gamers who own a DX10 card?
There's nothing specific – basically, the faster the computer, and the bigger video card you have, the higher resolution you can run it in, and the higher resolution textures you can have. That's the long and short of it. It's basically running on DX9 right now.



Multiplayer will be massive in the PC version, with more user maps to come!

Can you tell us the minimum specs we'll be looking at?
The bottom line is if you've bought a computer in the past two years you'll be fine.


Write scripted scenes in awesome detail.

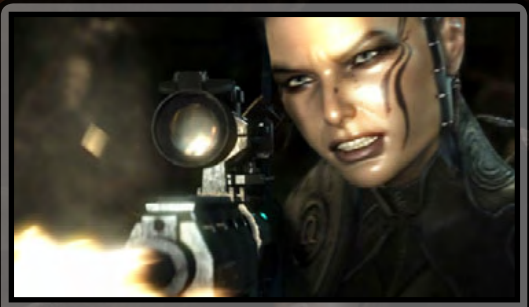
Was the new chapter developed originally for the 360, and then ported over to the PC, or is this entirely new content for PC?
The new chapter was developed exclusively for PC, but the boss was originally intended to be on Xbox 360. We could have shipped it on 360, but the problem is the game wouldn't have been as polished as we would have wanted, and the boss monster wouldn't have been as big a thing, so we made an active decision before shipping to push that off to a later date, for another product.

It's also been said that these new chapters won't be making their way to 360, because their version of GOW uses a different version of the Unreal engine – is this another never say never case?
It's not gonna happen. We wanted there to be a reason for people to have the PC version, and this is it. This chapter, these multiplayer modes and levels, the map editor, all provide the reason to buy.

Speaking of the editor – is it possible to make single player levels, new characters, new weapons, or is it just limited to creating new maps?
Everything! You can make single player, you can make co-op, you can make machinima movies, you can use Unreal script and make an entire new game. You could make it a top-down RPG if you wanted to, and that's what's just so f***ing cool about it. That's what I'm most excited about by shipping the PC version. It's basically an Unreal Engine "lite" at this point. Hopefully we'll be finding the next crop of level designers off the back of this game.

CLIVE BARKER'S

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>Inbox

Let your opinion be heard. Mail the zine at pcgzine@gamerzines.com

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

WE JUST CLICKED!
I REALLY LOVE MY MOUSE. It's a Razer Deathadder and it's my baby. I love its killer name, its sleek black lines and especially its blue glowing nipple. Sometimes I even sleep with it under my pillow and dream of deathmatch glories it has won for me.

> Jon Camber

> PCGZ says… Well, thanks Jon for that brave insight into a love that often dares not speak its name. In this day and age we're amazed you still can't marry your gaming mouse (except in Wales of course). Why not enter our Microsoft Sidewinder compo this month (page 38), or is that infidelity?

Don't miss Issue 11
Out Nov 22nd
Sign up now!


The sails are now on with Empire: Total War.

HALO 3 PC
WHEN, WHEN, WHEN, WHEN, WHEN is Microsoft going to bring the final fight to PC?

> Robert Anderson

> PCGZ says… Microsoft still claims than not one single line of code has been written for a PC version of the Xbox 360 hit, nor even confirmed there will be one. But don't despair, we all know that it will make the jump, even if it's late 2008 or even further off. Look how long Gears of War took. We just have to accept that their biggest first-party console games will always have long exclusives, but look at all the great shooters we're getting first in the meantime with Unreal Tournament III, Crysis, Haze and Far Cry 2 to name a few.

TOTALLY STOKED
AS SOMEONE WHO LOVED Rome: Total War I am STOKED over this new game in a great series.

> Andy Pennell

> PCGZ says… Empire does indeed look most tasty. We wonder if Creative Assembly's new console announcement Viking: Battle for Asgard will come to PC too?

DUTY FREE
DAMN YOU, INFINITY WARD. You made the best World War II shooter ever, ever, ever with Call of Duty 2 and now you've dumped it all to churn out the same contemporary dross as games like Ghost Recon, Rainbow Six, etc. I LOVE second world war FPS games and it's going to be far slimmer pickings for me now with crap like Hour of Victory (but let's hope that never gets a sequel) and the solid but unremarkable Medal of Honor. You should be stripped of your medals!

> Tom Sanders

> PCGZ says… Wait until you've played it – it really is a brilliant game. And they may well return to WWII. Also, don't forget Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway in early 2008.

TERRAIN TIMETABLE

Blowing chunks never felt so good!
I'd just like to applaud the games that are at last rejuvenating the concept of terrain deformation. When you're using powerful weapons in a game, there's nothing so unrealistic as their lack of effect on surroundings, particularly with explosives. So I'm really looking forward to Fracture (which I'm sure will come to PC) and Frontlines in particular.

> Jason Hinds

> PCGZ says… We love this feature in games too. We also really like it when you can shoot through some walls, like in Call of Duty 4. You'll be glad to hear that a new Red Faction game is rumoured and THQ should have an announcement soon.


Chunk terrain with LucasArts' Fracture tech.

MMOZine

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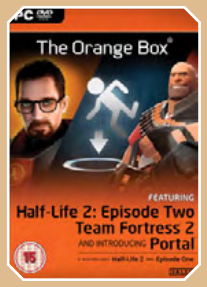
PREVIEWS
Tabula Rasa, Fury, Huxley & more

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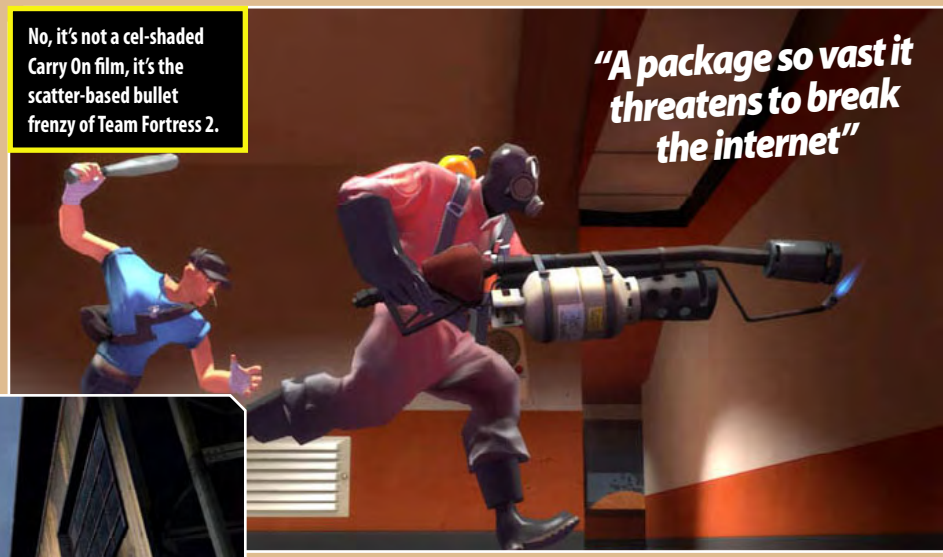
The Orange Box

The definitive FPS collected, reborn and remixed in one gigantic box. Which happens to be orange.

PCGZine GOLD

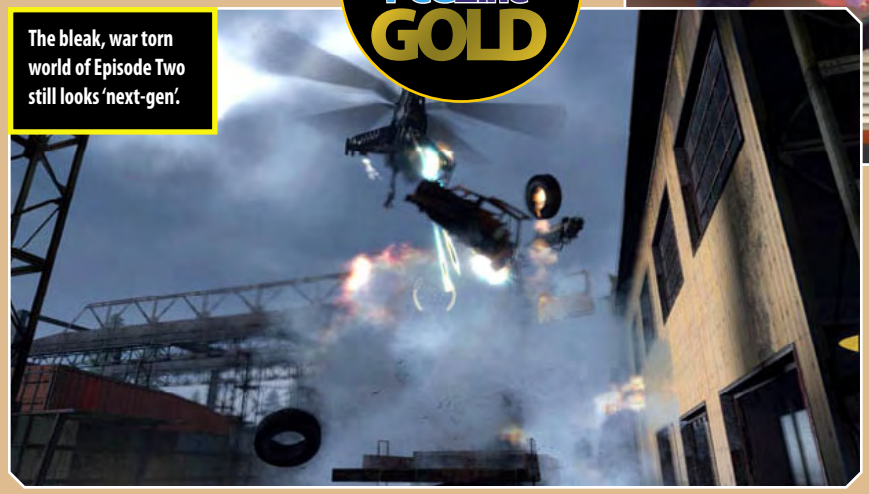
Publisher: EA
Developer: Valve
Heritage: Half-Life
Link: Steampowered.com
OUT NOW

System Requirements: 1.2 GHz processor, 256 MB, DirectX 7 level graphics card.



No, it's not a cel-shaded Carry On film, it's the scatter-based bullet frenzy of Team Fortress 2.

"A package so vast it threatens to break the internet"



The bleak, war torn world of Episode Two still looks 'next-gen'.

There's no point arguing about whether you think the Half-Life series is the ultimate PC FPS. Looking at the figures, such as hours played by humans, number of copies purchased or simply the sheer amount of influence Half-Life wields on all game developers, it's clear that Half-Life simply means business. It's the bullet-ridden benchmark that all wannabes are tested against. Now, just in time for Christmas, Developer Valve has come along with a package so vast it threatens to break the internet via Valve's revolutionary Steam network which provides the game download.

Black Box Fight Recorder

As an overview, you get the following: Half-Life 2, Half-Life 2: Episode One, Portal, Team Fortress 2 and Half-Life 2: Episode Two. If you're a Half-Life convert, you can buy the Black Box instead, which simply comes with all the new games you won't have seen before (Episode 2, Portal and Team Fortress 2) which are covered below. If you own a PC and haven't already played Half-Life 2, let's simply say that you should, as soon as possible for fear of being laughed at by strangers in the street. If you own a PC and only own one game, it should be Half-Life 2 – it still looks next-gen, plays like a dream and will last for months. We would say more but there's probably not any more room left on the promotional billboard advertising campaign.

Half-Life 2 : Episode Two evolves the plot in a way that's both shocking and familiar – there's nothing which fans won't love and, yes, this episodic gameplay can leave you wanting more answers than a series of Lost, but there are satisfying surprises, which we aren't going to spoil for you. In terms of gameplay, there are few innovations but that's not what the game is about – Episode Two is simply new landscapes and new experiences in the world you're already comfortable and familiar with. As a single player >



The fun of Team Fortress 2 is identifying unique characters from a distance, rather than trying to pick out friends in a mass of identical Marines.



Think through puzzles with your brain and your weapon in Portal.



As always, you need a decent spec (and speakers) to really appreciate every Episode Two encounter.

> The Orange Box continued

game, Episode Two brings Half-Life 2 to a satisfying half-way way point before the final Episode Three arrives. Team Fortress 2 is the game you'll play most online and Portal is like peeking into Valve's Work In Progress folder...

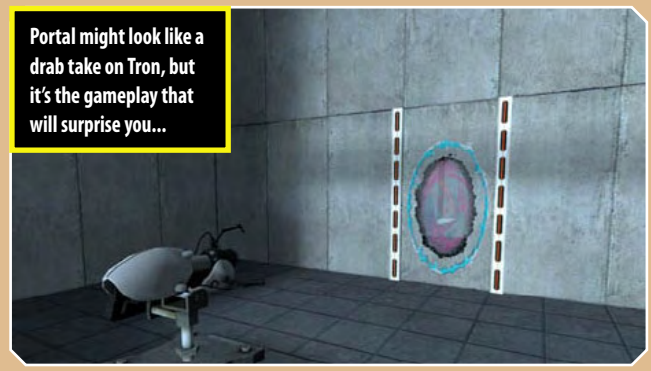
Team Fortress 2 is where most seasoned Half Life players will head upon completing Episode Two because it suddenly makes online gaming easy, understandable and far more fun than anything else that's appeared on PC. Yes, the makeover of cartoon characters might look at odds with the legions of identical Marine-based shooters in other games but, take a step back and you'll discover that this is the most playable, strategic and enjoyable shooting session ever. The fun, no-holds-barred multiplayer design ethic will remind you of GoldenEye on the Nintendo 64 and the range of new skills and weapons are the kind of deviant and childish design genius you'd expect from Nintendo, rather than a PC games developer. If you want to play with friends online, there's simply no better way of competing with them than playing Team Fortress 2. It doesn't matter whether you want to play for ten minutes or ten hours, you'll soon find your social time swallowed in a way that WoW can only dream of.

Any Portal in a storm

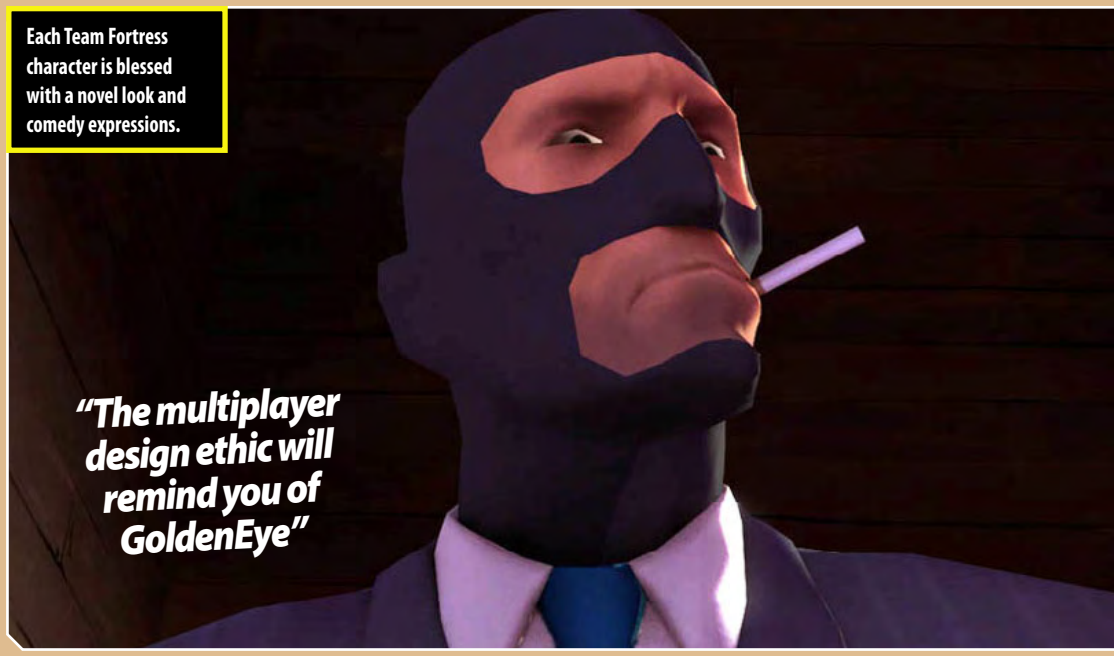
Portal is an odd puzzle-based take on Half-Life, with added jokes and the 'portal gun' which bridges gaps and feels like you're messing with science itself. In fact, everything from gravity-defying jumps, weapons and teleporting incidents make you feel like you're in some kind of twisted, alternate version of Half Life. It's essentially a testing ground for new ideas and points towards a revolution of the genre. As a stand alone item, it's impressive, but as part of the Orange Box, it's the best 'add-on' you'll ever get in the gaming world. ● ***Rich Melville***



Outside the Episode One universe, Episode Two suddenly seems widescreen...



Portal might look like a drab take on Tron, but it's the gameplay that will surprise you...



Each Team Fortress character is blessed with a novel look and comedy expressions.

"The multiplayer design ethic will remind you of GoldenEye"

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

There's three brand new games in the box...



Half-Life 2 | **Team Fortress 2** | **Portal**

Half-Life 2: Episode Two

The story continues with a great plot, bigger (and more interesting) scenarios and a massive setting. You'll feel at home straight away and understand why Valve choose to release Half-Life 2 in Episodes: the plot and sheer effort on show here can't be completed in a normal 12 month development cycle...

PCGZine Verdict

This is an epic, innovative and revolutionary pack of the best PC FPS games.

- Hours of gameplay
- Epic mix of plot and innovations
- You'll want Episode Three tomorrow!

94%



Company of Heroes: Opposing Fronts

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Relic
Heritage: Homeworld, Company of Heroes
Link: www.companyofheroesgame.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
CPU : 2.0 Ghz P4 SSE capable processor
RAM : 512MB RAM; Vista 1GB RAM
Graphics : 64MB w/Pixel Shader 1.1
Any other : 9GB HDD

"Harder than a Rottweiler who's seen an attractive bitch!"

Proving you can never have too much of a good thing!

Is it an expansion pack, or isn't it? With two full huge campaigns to play through, two entirely new sides to learn the ins and outs of, and two distinctly different ways of playing, there's certainly enough to consider buying this, even if you haven't played the first CoH, and the action's just as good as before.

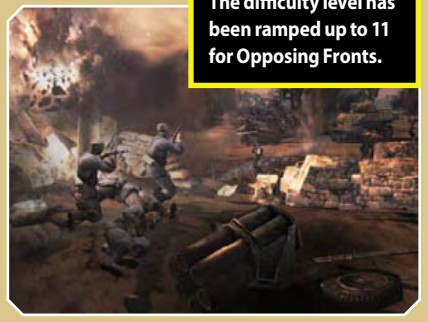
Although the game doesn't require the original CoH to run, you'll be a lot better off if you've got the original on your hard drive. With a level of difficulty that makes the game harder than a Rottweiler who's just seen a particularly attractive bitch, Opposing Fronts has been aimed at the gamer who has at least experienced the original.

During the course of the game, you'll get to take the reins of either the German Panzer Elite, or the British 2nd Army, through two very different campaigns. Playing for the Germans, you'll be trying to halt the allied advance in Operation Market Garden, but if you choose to play as the British, you'll be fighting to liberate Caen.

One of the best things about Opposing Fronts is just how asymmetric the two teams are, and how different the game feels as a result. Whereas the British have a mobile command centre, (which really turns your strategic game on its head), the Germans are particularly skilled with half-tracks and other vehicles. With each side having completely different strengths and weaknesses, CoH forces you to explore each side's intricacies, and both feel completely different.

With AI up to the usual standard, some phenomenal visuals, and a whole host of strategic encounters, it looks like the PC's best strategy game just got even better. ● ***Ian Morris***


It even supports DX10 "enhancements". That, if we're honest, don't actually do that much.


The difficulty level has been ramped up to 11 for Opposing Fronts.


It doesn't get much more atmospheric than this. Pure gaming magic.


Listening to the Northern accents of the UK troops is funny enough - hearing the camp Germans is enough to make you cry.

ROLL CALL
The history of the Heroes



If you haven't played the original game, you'll probably be feeling a bit lost now, so let us explain. Company of Heroes was a fantastically polished RTS game that - while it didn't do anything phenomenally new - did everything better than anything else in the genre. With a reliance on tactics rather than simply overpowering your enemy, and compelling territory-based gameplay, Company of Heroes went on to win a whole host of awards. Opposing Fronts is an expansion-cum-standalone product that, while it doesn't need the original game to work, adds a decent number of features for people who do own it, and should provide hours of gameplay to newbies and veterans alike.

PCGZine Verdict

It's time to join the Company of Legends

- Great new sides
- Same solid gameplay
- Hard, but not impossible

94%



FIFA 08

What's another year?

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Canada
Heritage: FIFA 95-08
Link: www.fifa08.ea.com
OUT NOW

System Requirements:
1.3Ghz CPU, 256MB RAM
64MB Graphics card

Despite allegedly making more cash than Star Wars, the FIFA series has often taken something of a critical mauling. It's a depressing affirmation of the power of marketing that it repeatedly clogs up the charts at this time of year, like dead leaves in the gutter.

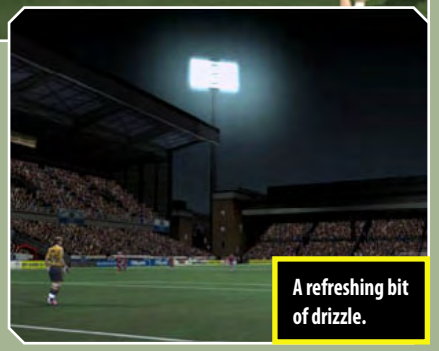
Each instalment is met with a shrug, particularly on PC, where it is little more than an afterthought. Unplayable on keyboard, setting up a compatible joypad is a royal pain in the arse, and for a PC game, it's a great advert for consoles. You will ideally need a PS2 pad though, as this is the PS2 game. Surprisingly, this is good news for PC owners, as it is a far more accomplished affair than the tortuous next-gen game.

Essentially a tweaked version of the engine that's been used for the last few years, it's been honed to the stage where it does actually deliver a decent game of football. It still feels a little bit like playing on the moon, but the tackling is accurate enough, and the new manual through-ball and crossing controls provide more varied play. While end-to-end action is the norm, it's somewhat contrived as the score is kept realistic by a combination of errant finishing and improbable goalkeeping.



Point blank saves are something of a formality.


A strong claim for a penalty.


A refreshing bit of drizzle.


Looks pleased to see his shot go in.

Hands free

The goalkeepers play a further starring role in that you can control them directly with a simple click of the right stick (if it worked). As such, you can dash heroically from the net, or shift along the goal line when defending a free kick. And in a nod to occasional real life dramatics, when you're chasing the game you can come thundering up the field for a late corner.

Other genuinely new stuff sees the quirky Be A Pro mode, whereby you control just one player, and a co-op mode with defence, midfield and attack each controlled separately.

The obligatory universal licensing is in place, enabling you to play in numerous leagues, all filled with real clubs, real players, and real stadiums. Further realism is provided by an optional in-game ticker, giving scores from actual games, as well as breaking football news.

EA has certainly squeezed a lot into FIFA 08: a football-based multimedia experience with a playable game attached.

Steve Hill



A face only a mother could love. And our Colleen.

COME AND HAVE A GO...

The Interactive League returns

With the honour of your club at stake, the idea is to win more matches than supporters of the team you're playing. There's also an overall league table reflecting the success and popularity of every club.



PCGZine Verdict

A triumph of content, marketing and product

- Highly authentic
- Decent online options
- Gameplay still lacking

80%



Pro Evolution Soccer 2008

Better than the England team…

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Heritage: ISS, PES 1-6
Link: www.pes2008.net
ETA: 26th October

System Requirements: 1.4Ghz CPU, 512MB RAM, 64MB Graphics card

That the greatest football game series of all time should come from Japan must be a cause of consternation to European developers, particularly as its closest rival is made in Canada. While it's easy to be swayed by the all-pervasive FIFA, after kicking off and knocking a few passes around in PES 2008, it's obvious which is superior. FIFA 08 is an all-singing, all-dancing, officially licensed multimedia extravaganza, but in terms of pure gameplay, PES 2008 plays it off the park.

"Its quality makes it one of the best PC games of the year. This is football"

Traditionally, PES has had a reputation as the more hardcore game, with FIFA catering to the more casual market. The goalposts have shifted a little this season though, and Konami has chopped off a lot of fat, making this year's model a more streamlined arcade-like affair. Goals are easier to come by than last year, although that's no guarantee of victory, as the opposition mercilessly punish mistakes.

There's allegedly a new AI system called Teamvision, whereby the computer-controlled team adapts to your style of play, forcing you to attempt different approaches. As for more tangible additions, there's a sneaky shirt-pulling move, as well as the controversial dive, whereby you launch yourself to the ground and appeal the referee for a free kick or penalty. A despicable reflection of the direction of the modern game, more often then not you'll rightly receive a yellow card for your troubles.

Harsh words

If a game can be judged on the swearing that accompanies it, then PES 2008 is in a league of its own, due to the fact that when you concede a goal it's almost always as a result of your own ineptitude. You can't blame the game or the controls, as they are honed to near-perfection.

The PC is by no means the natural home of football games, and this is just a port of this year's Xbox 360 title. Even so, the inherent quality of the gameplay is enough to make it one of the best PC games of the year. This is football.

Steve Hill

TOP OF THE LEAGUE

The Master League returns

As well as using the default team or actual clubs, you can also create your own custom club, giving them the name of your choice as well as designing the kit.

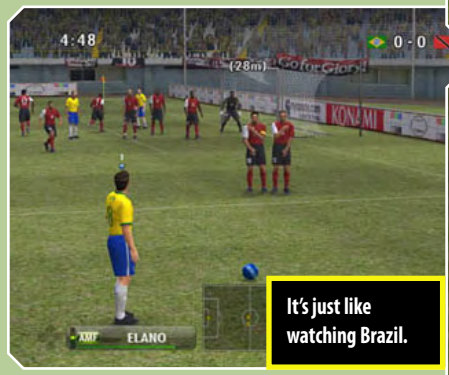




That'll please the England fans.



An ambitious attempt from long range.



It's just like watching Brazil.

PCGZine GOLD


Hollywood Beckham takes the plaudits.

PCGZine Verdict

The best a man can get

- Sublime gameplay
- Excellent controls
- Lack of licenses

90%



Stranglehold

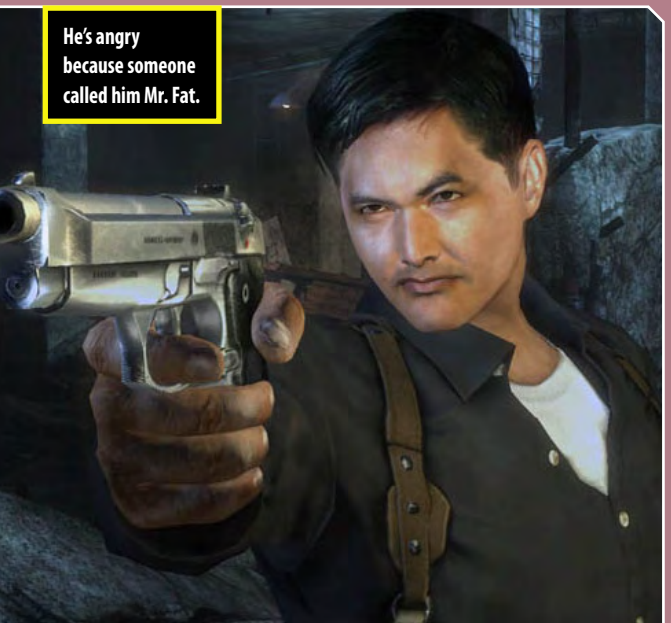
Is Woo's project a Tequila Slammer or killer hangover?

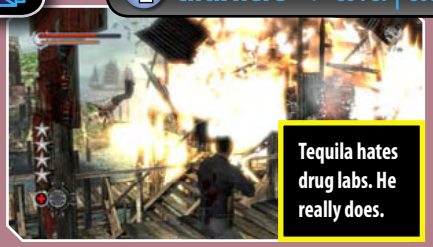
Publisher: Midway
Developer: In-House (Midway)
Heritage: The Suffering, Lord of the Rings Online, Spy Hunter
Link: www.midway.com
OUT NOW

System Requirements: Dual Core processor, 2GB RAM, 512MB Graphics Card, 15GB HDD space

First things first - put down your Limited Edition Director's Special Collected Extension of Hard Boiled and calm down, because Stranglehold is more or less just a straight, slightly floaty third-person shooter. John Woo's involvement here means little more than a brief cameo and an opportunity for the developers to crowbar all of his trademarks into the action, with varying degrees of success.

For example, levels are jam packed with rails you can run up or down, counters you can slide over or wheeled trolleys you can belly flop onto. Huge chunks of scenery like signs or flimsy balconies can be shot off onto the bad guys that can always be found standing still directly beneath or on top of them. Best of all are the slo-mo showdowns that occur when your renegade Hong Kong cop ass is instructed to surrender. You need to take aim and fire at each of the aggressors while avoiding the bullets they fire at you by leaning and ducking with the movement controls.


He's angry because someone called him Mr. Fat.


Tequila hates drug labs. He really does.


The men cooly ignored the falling baguettes.


Literally faster than a speeding bullet.

"There's always something exploding, or someone running at you!"

But it all feels gimmicky, and the running, gunning and hiding behind cover that's the mainstay of the game is at best a little flimsy and at worst weightless and unsatisfying. And yet, fittingly, Stranglehold manages to hold your attention. Perhaps it's because the single player's so short, but there's always something exploding or someone running at you, or some new gun or scenario just around the corner.

If you have the rig to run it and a spare £30 burning a hole in your pocket, you might find you dig Stranglehold just like you might enjoy a mindless action flick. Just don't expect anything more.

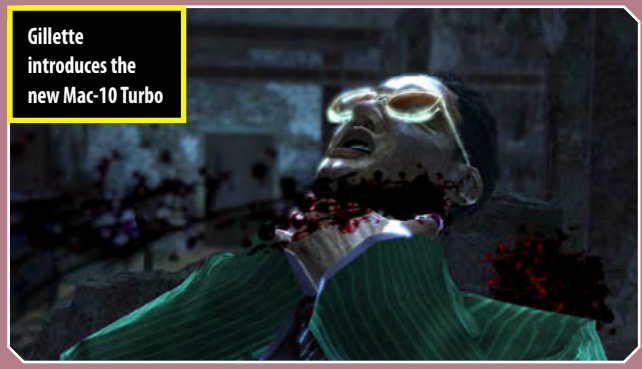
Quintin Smith

CLICHÈ HOTKEY

Tequila's skills might ring bells

When the going gets tough, the tough get cinematic. As you dispatch enemies in creative ways you earn 'Tequila Bomb' techniques, reminiscent of Woo's films. These range from single, lethal, marksman-like shots, to sudden direct barrages of bullets. Best of all there's a 360 degree spin attack that's accompanied by the inexplicable appearance of doves.




Gillette introduces the new Mac-10 Turbo

PCGZine Verdict

John Woo does Max Payne, and it's not too painful

- Pretty much everything explodes
- Slick, but not smart
- Fairly short

76%



MotoGP 07

"Involves an awful lot of slapping and even more swearing"

Wheelie not bad at all!

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Climax
Heritage: MotoGP 06, Ghost Rider
Link: www.motogpthegame.com
ETA: OUT NOW

System Requirements:
2.4GHz processor
512MB RAM
128Mb 3D Card (ATI 9800 or similar)

After a few horrifically painful looking tumbles there are a few things you learn very quickly when you're racing motorbikes instead of cars. You still need to follow the racing line, power through corners and know when to brake, but humans on two wheels are predictably a bit flimsy. Anything from attempting a cheeky nudge to accelerating too fast will cause things to swap to the darkly funny crash camera, and you'll have plenty of time to think about what you did wrong while you watch your poor avatar slide along the tarmac.

It's made worse because MotoGP '07, just like '06, straddles the gap between arcade and simulation. The imagined racetracks and more lenient physics of Extreme mode, plus a generic rock soundtrack, live alongside the option to tinker with your suspension and wheelbase.

Fortunately a range of options lets you steer the game in the direction you want, and once you've got comfortable you'll find MotoGP an enjoyable, perfectly solid racing game. If there's a criticism it's simply that nothing in MotoGP inspires. The front end's clean, but never dares to be flashy. The career mode and bike mechanics are detailed enough, but nothing too in-depth. The AI sure is fast, but never feels human. And the Extreme mode is nice for players who aren't into motorsports, but there's nothing, well, extreme about fictional names and slightly bent laws of nature. It's hardly Xen.

If you're interested, you'll definitely want a pad or racing wheel though. Trying to take corners smoothly by gently banking your bike and holding it there is 80% of the game, and using only a cursor key to do this involves an awful lot of slapping and even more swearing.

Quintin Smith



Hang on. Weíve got a Ghostbuster in the bottom left.



Being dominated by aggressive AI takes getting used to.



We want the option to lean forward in car racing games, too.



MOTORBIKE MADSKILLZ

Battling with MotoGP's lunatic AI

We're not asking to be able to form friendships and bitter rivalries while we race, but AI opponents that have some regard for their own safety would be nice. Here your opposing bikers are fanatical in their need to stick to the racing line, and to avoid a collision it's you who always has to get out of the way.



Travis took the job of race track inspector rather seriously

PCGZine Verdict

Lacks any competition, but still a clear winner

- Almost flawless in execution
- Few changes to a decent formula
- Few changes at all

80%



Jericho

Just when you thought horror was only found in the cinema, along comes Clive Barker and gives your PC something to worry about.

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Mercury Steam
Heritage: American McGee presents: Scrapland
Link: www.jericho-game.com
ETA: October 26th

System Requirements:
2.4 GHz CPU
1GB RAM; 3D card

The world of Clive Barker isn't nice. It's not even disgusting or evil, it's simply foul and chilling. Forget demented teen horror flicks or even something remotely nightmarish like the Alien films because the mind of Barker is full of the perverse, weird and truly terrifying. The man that gave you Hellraiser and Nightbreed flicks has created Jericho as an original game project, just weeks after film director John Woo did the same with Stranglehold (see page 30).

BioShocking

Jericho treads familiar ground as a squad-based shooter with the kind of dark visuals you've seen in BioShock but much darker than that. How much? How about a seedy, 22 stone pervert strung up by his fleshy shoulders, dripping blood on your head while his minions attack? It's fantasy horror in a Rainbow Six world. Your team have special abilities for example, despite looking like traditional rubber faced army types. Flames can be shot from fists, letting blood conjures magic ability and one of the female team members can move bullets with her mind. It doesn't really change the fact that Jericho is a simple shooter but with great visuals and the kind of style and enemies that only someone with a background in both pulp fiction and Hollywood can provide.

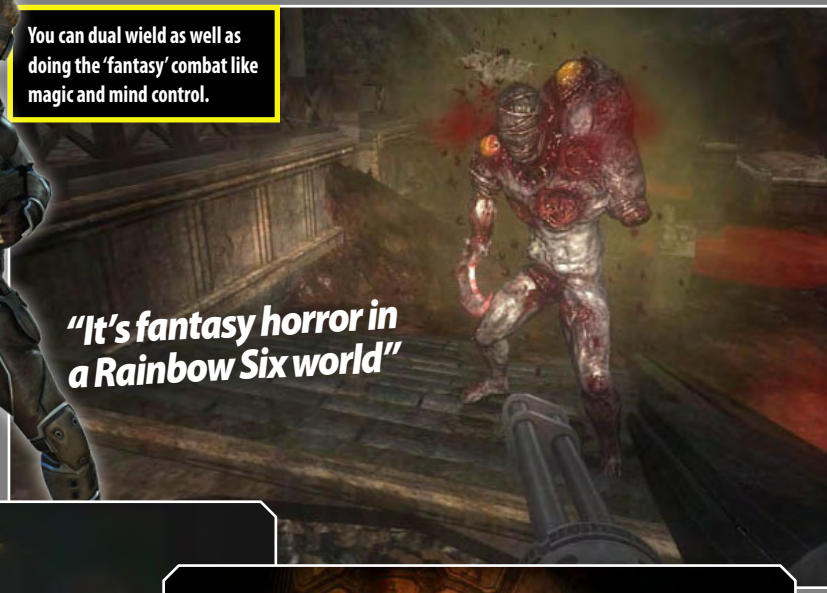
It's a bit Resident Evil at the start, with loads of undead types wanting to wrap their tongue around your face, but the plot and general atmosphere is enough to propel you to the next encounter. Part of you just wants to see what the next boss looks like and part of you wants to see if there can be any end to the relentless blood that flows from every moving object. There's even a bloody river of claret, which has been deemed grim enough for the German authorities to refuse to rate the game.

Jericho is a polished shooter which won't win any awards for being original but at least takes the squad based shooter action away from the marines and dumps it squarely at the feet of the monsters.

Richard Melville



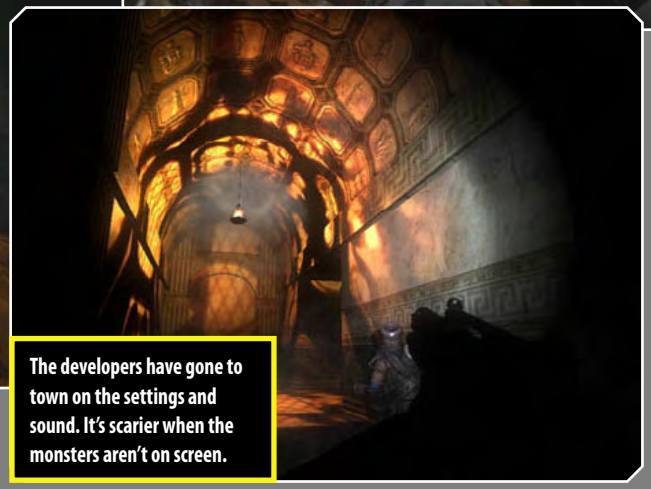
You can dual wield as well as doing the 'fantasy' combat like magic and mind control.



"It's fantasy horror in a Rainbow Six world"



Lycra AND leather? You're spoiling us.



The developers have gone to town on the settings and sound. It's scarier when the monsters aren't on screen.

THE FILTH AND THE FURY

How Jericho will really get its hooks into you!

This is the kind of gore you can expect in Jericho. This chap is Cassus Vicus, a deeply perverted man who hasn't followed the Jamie Oliver diet plan and has blood constantly poring from his eyeballs. He reminds us of the fat man that Jerry Springer saved by demolishing his house but with added gore, sex offender status and er, bigger tits. No wonder the German ratings board wet themselves.



PCGZine Verdict

A simple but chilling shooter for those sick of shooting people from Iraq.

- Original horror and great visuals
- A chilling atmosphere
- A bit simple for pros

88%



Peggle and Peggle Extreme

PCGZine GOLD

Publisher: PopCap Games
Developer: PopCap Games
Price: £14.95 (or £5 on Steam!)

Peggle has become a cult favourite, despite its child-friendly colourings. A cross between pinball and pachinko, the concept should be familiar to anyone who's played Shenmue – simply drop a small metallic ball down the course, and watch as it bounces off the various pegs, gathering points. Hit all the orange pegs, and you'll complete the level. If you pre-order Orange Box, you'll also get Peggle Extreme, a collection of 15 extra levels using Half-Life 2 imagery and sound effects. Worth every penny.

- Peggle extreme is hilarious
- Addictive
- Pure gameplay

How about a game of lucky hit? **90%**



The Blob

Publisher: http://www.gamedev.net/community/forums/topic.asp?topic_id=401276
Developer: Students
Price: Free

Starting off as a University project by a group of Dutch students, The Blob was commissioned by a local council, to illustrate to the public what changes were going to happen around city of Utrecht. Taking it upon themselves, the students came up with this – a charming Katamari-style game, which sees you painting the town red – literally. Controlled entirely by the mouse, you can roll over characters in the town to absorb their colours, before crashing into the buildings to paint them with your tone. It's a lot of fun and free – the only downside is "na naa na na na na The Blob" doesn't quite work.

- Easy to learn
- Not substantial enough
- Occasionally inaccurate controls

Katamari the Blob **78%**



The Bard's Tale

Publisher: Focus Revival
Developer: inXile
Price: £4.99

If you were much of a gamer back in the 1980's, you'll probably remember The Bard's Tale, but although it shares the same name, this game is nothing like the original. A top-down hack-and-slash game with more in common with Baldur's Gate, the game tries far too hard to be funny, and rarely ever succeeds. At least never for the right reasons. You may find yourself laughing at it, but never with it. Add some awful voice acting into the mix, questionable shots of polygonal characters' cleavage, and the most basic of combat systems, and you've got a disappointing game.

- Some funny narrator lines
- Awful voice acting
- Poor combat

Seems a bit long in the tale **50%**



Hoshi Saga 2

Publisher: Neko Games
Developer: Neko Games
Price: Free

It's not a traditional game, per se, but rather some browser based silliness in Hoshi Saga 2, a collection of Wario Ware-style mini-games that require you to find a star. With a minimal of on-screen instructions, working out what you've got to do in the first place is often half of the challenge, and although the vast majority of puzzles are only discrete enough to provide a vague challenge (such as the slide puzzle game, or the one that gives you half a star and requires you to hold it next to a mirror), this game also has its fair share of impossibly difficult puzzles that are sure to eat into your lunch hour. And of course, it does benefit from being free.

- Challenging
- Enjoyable
- Perhaps too obscure

Perfect for wasting your lunch hour **74%**



The Legacy of Cthulhu

Publisher: JoWood
Developer: HRMC Project Management
Price: £14.99

You may think a "fan-made" game about the horror stories of H.P. Lovecraft sounds interesting. You'd be wrong. As you may expect from a fan made project, the game doesn't have the level of visual flair you may hope for, but that doesn't excuse the lazy design. When all the game's menus are in German (even on the UK release), enemies take numerous headshots without dying, and the game's difficulty is so sky high it's obvious no-one's bothered to play the game from start to finish, you're left with an utter mess. The German industrial music playing as the multiplayer loads is spookier still.

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

Scary, for all the wrong reasons **41%**

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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!

OBLIVION DENIED

I've got a brand new laptop with 2GB of memory and a 160GB hard drive. So hardware shouldn't be a problem but I can't figure out why Oblivion keeps crashing. The install went fine and the main menu loads, but as soon as I choose play Windows pops up an error saying Oblivion has stopped responding. I'm running Windows Vista, so could that be the problem?

VanBegg

> *Despite what you say, hardware is the likely problem. Oblivion is a graphically demanding game and we'd say your laptop's integrated graphics are not up to the job – Oblivion requires true T&L2.0 support. Thankfully a tool from www.oldblivion.com will help you out. Its main limitation is you can't patch Oblivion past version 1.1.511 but all patches are available from www.elderscrolls.com, otherwise ensure you're using the "1.x render path" and "Emulate HW TnL" options and that should fix your problem!*

This is actually the bottom of our garden, honest

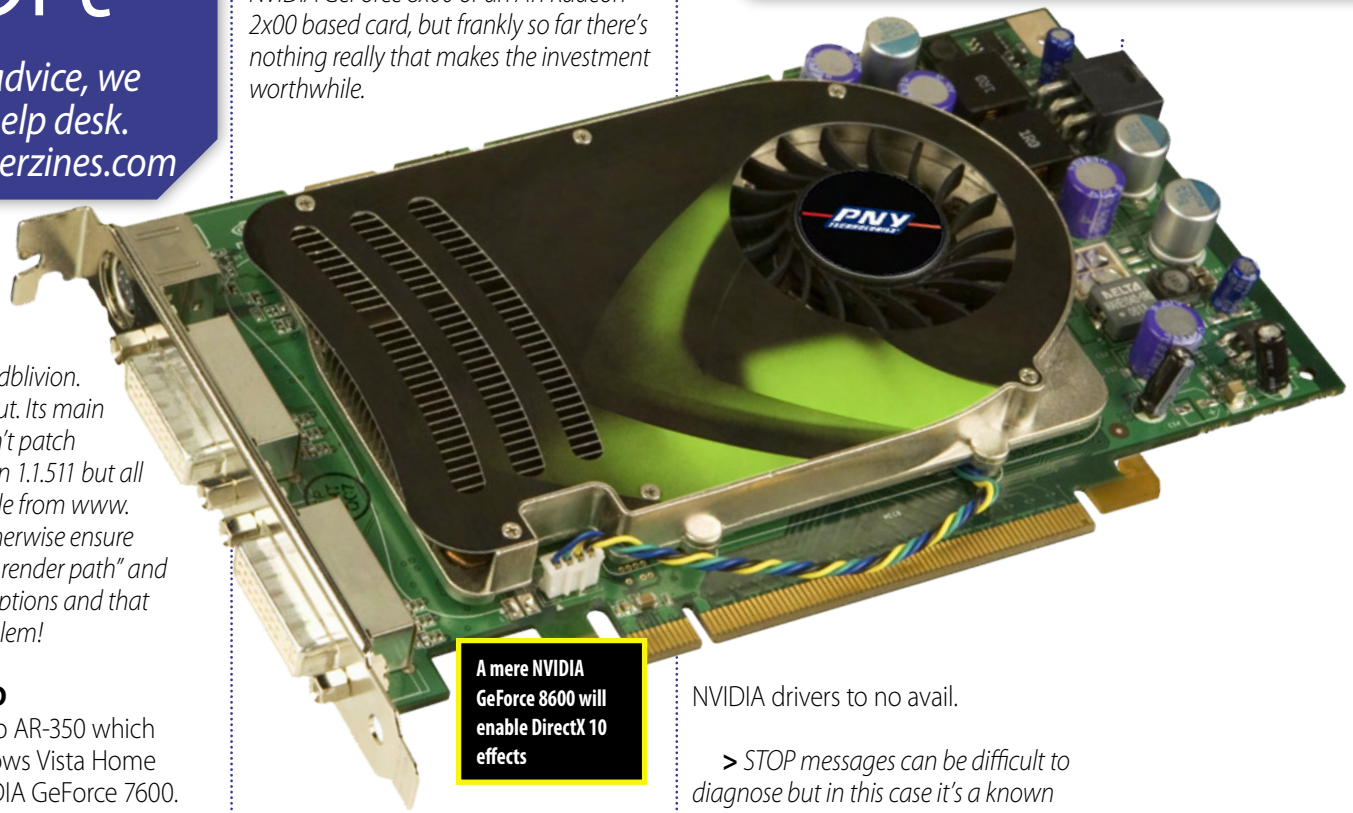


DIRECTX DENIED

I have a Vaio laptop AR-350 which comes with Windows Vista Home Premium and NVIDIA GeForce 7600. Some games like BioShock have an option to use DirectX 10, but on my computer these options are always turned off. In the game manual it says this is available when DirectX 10 in enabled. I checked the DirectX Diagnostic tool and it shows DirectX 10 is enabled!

> *It's a situation that can easily get people confused, but to use DirectX 10 you'll need Windows Vista, a DirectX 10 game and a DirectX 10 graphics card. In your case the GeForce 7600 isn't DirectX 10 capable – even though DirectX 10 is installed as part of Vista. To run Bioshock in DirectX 10 mode you need either an NVIDIA GeForce 8x00 or an ATI Radeon 2x00 based card, but frankly so far there's nothing really that makes the investment worthwhile.*

"I'm having problems running Halo 2 on Vista. I get a blue screen of death"



A mere NVIDIA GeForce 8600 will enable DirectX 10 effects

THE BIOS BLUES

I'm having problems running Halo 2 on Vista. I keep getting a blue screen of death after around a minute of play with the following STOP error message:

x0000008E (0x00000005, 0x8A81CE34, 0x99334A88, 0x00000000)

I'm running a Core 2 Duo E4300 processor with a GeForce 8800GTX and 2GB of memory. I've tried starting with a clean startup and updating the NVIDIA drivers to no avail.

> *STOP messages can be difficult to diagnose but in this case it's a known problem. The simple solution is to update the BIOS, this error is linked to a memory compatibility problem with the memory not getting enough voltage. Getting the latest BIOS should sort this out – either from the motherboard manufacturer's website or using the Windows based update tool that came with it.*

MO MEMORY

I've just built a new computer using an Intel mobo, Core 2 Duo processor, 4GB

Tech Support



Blue screens tend to have this effect on people.

of memory and a Quadro FX graphics card. My problem is that when Windows XP starts, it's only reporting 3.25GB of memory, while the BIOS says 4GB. Where's the missing memory?

> *Unfortunately you're only ever going to have 3.25GB of memory with a 32-bit OS, which is what most versions of Windows XP are. The highest memory address of a 32bit OS is just over 3GB, which is all it and you can see. Using the 64-bit version of XP or Vista will open up the full amount, otherwise there's nothing you can do about it.*



If you want 4GB, you'll need a 64-bit OS.

CORRECT COLOUR

What's the colour correction setting in Steam games – like Team Fortress 2 – I've tried it on and off and I don't seem to see any difference?

> *It was originally introduced for Day of Defeat and is based on the movie term where a colour is applied to a scene in post-production – such as the scenes in the Matrix where a green wash is applied. Valve's games can now apply similar effects to games, most commonly for day, night, sunrise and sunset type conditions. So really you should turn it on.*

THE GO TEAM

After the last TF2 hotfix my graphics are now totally broken with missing objects and walls all over the place. I know Valve are continually updating this to fix problems, but this time it seems to be causing problems. Any idea of a fix?

> *On the whole TF2 seems really stable but there are a few recurring problems. The one you're suffering can often be fixed in Steam by right-clicking on TF2 in the My Games tab, and then selecting Properties > Local files > Verify integrity of game cache. This will update any missing texture files. Similarly people have complained of lock-ups and crashes. Many people have fixed these by adding these launch options by again right-clicking TF2 in the My Games window and clicking 'Set launch options'. Add this line, replacing the width and height figures with your monitor's native resolution: -fullscreen -width 1280 -height 1024 -refresh 60 -dev*

Finally there have been issues with virtual memory also known as the swap file, filling up. Allow Windows to control this by right-clicking the My Computer icon and selecting Properties > Advanced > Performance Settings > Advanced > Change. Then in the list of drives choose the C drive and the 'System managed size' option. Also make sure there is at least 1GB of free drive space available.

"My Team Fortress 2 graphics are totally broken, with missing objects"



Time away from Sasha, is time my heart weeps.

GOT A PROBLEM?

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

Click here now!

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Gears of War & a Sidewinder gaming mouse



- We've got three awesome new Microsoft Sidewinder gaming mice to give away (worth £70 a shot) and a free copy of the stunning sci-fi action shooter Gears of War to go with each. Three runners-up will also get a copy of the game!
- The Sidewinder mouse is the perfect Gears of War controller, with totally customisable weight and balance, stunning response and ultimate comfort. Chainsaw your foes with the very best technology that the world can offer and just hope they don't all have Sidewinders too!

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Download it for free on 22nd November



REVIEWS

Supreme Commander: Forged Alliance

Crysis | Gears of War | Guitar Hero III

F.E.A.R. Perseus Mandate

Hellgate: London

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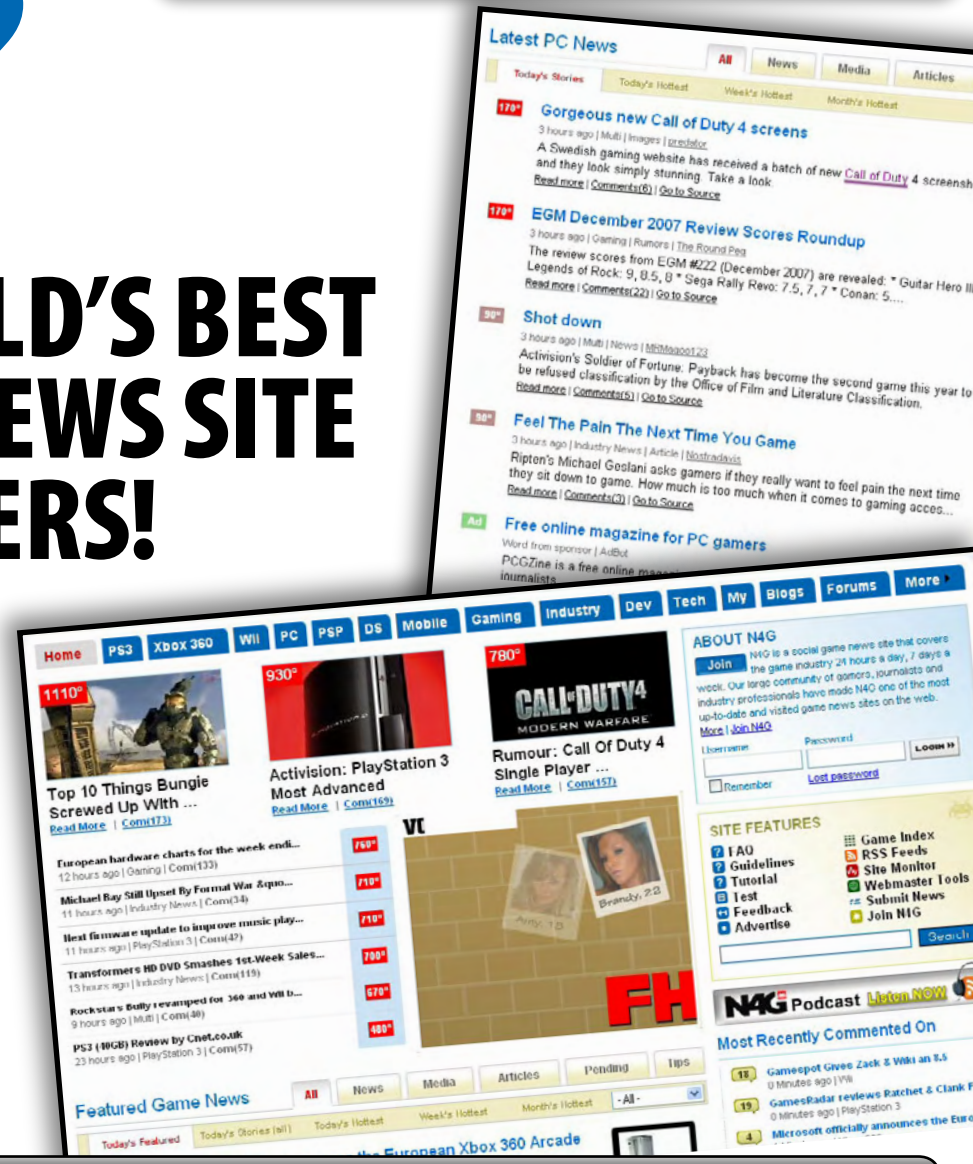
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