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PCGZine

Issue 15 | Feb 2008

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

HUGE EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

WARHAMMER 40,000

DAWN OF WAR SOULSTORM

"The most epic Dawn of War game to date!"

WIN Saitek CYBORG KIT

A morphing mouse!

MORE HOT REVIEWS...

PIRATES OF THE BURNING SEA
CONFLICT: DENIED OPS
THE CLUB

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

The Agency opens its doors



C&C SPECIAL!

RED ALERT 3 & TIBERIUM

The Command & Conquer universe explodes!

PLUS ALL THESE GAMES & MORE









Welcome to PCGZine



This was an exciting and frustrating month in equal measure. Reviews slipped like star systems through Darth Vader's fingers, with Assassin's Creed, Age of Conan, Frontlines, Turok and more now headed for the March to May period. But big news broke with the first details of Command & Conquer Red Alert 3 and we enjoyed a screen deluge for the other new C&C game, Tiberium. BioWare's galaxy-spanning RPG Mass Effect was announced for enhanced PC release and Assassin's Creed also had bonus PC-exclusive content confirmed. Strategy fans will also find much on offer in Relic's standalone Warhammer expansion, Soulstorm, which really raises the ante in that universe.

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! NEW SAITEK CYBORG KIT



Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War - Soulstorm

The epic strategy expands across an entire star system - massive, exclusive review! PAGE 22



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

The Agency

I spy, Sony Online Entertainment's stealthy new MMO PAGE 18

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

Legendary	Just Cause 2
Mass Effect	Assassin's Creed
C&C Red Alert 3	The Agency
Red Faction: Guerilla	Dawn of War - Soulstorm
Flatout: Ultimate Carnage	Conflict: Denied Ops
Pure	Pirates of the Burning Sea
This is Vegas	The Club
Dream Pinball 3D	Sam & Max 203
Men of War	Armado
Tiberium	Mr. Robot



Just Cause 2

James Bond on holiday PAGE 12



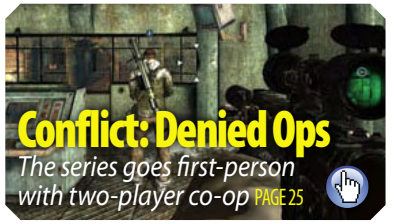
Tiberium

C&C goes first-person again! PAGE 10



Assassin's Creed

Why the PC game will be the definitive version to play PAGE 15



Conflict: Denied Ops

The series goes first-person with two-player co-op PAGE 25



The Club

Arcade shooter heaven? PAGE 30



Mass Effect

BioWare's epic comes to PC PAGE 6

MEET THE TEAM

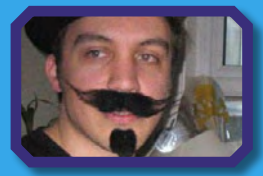
Probably the best games writers on the planet



Steve Hill
Went to see his doctor about a lifestyle change, but Denied Ops.



Martin Korda
Got Warhammered and had to have a bit of a lie down.



Jim Rossignol
Says pirated games can be a very good thing indeed.

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.



MORE FREE MAGAZINES! LATEST ISSUES!



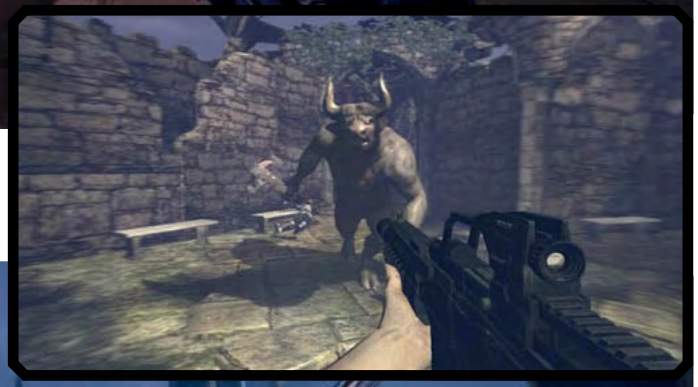
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Publisher: Atari
Developer: Spark Unlimited
Heritage: Call of Duty: Finest Hour, Turning Point: Fall of Liberty
Link: www.legendarythegame.com
ETA: Summer

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Legendary: The Box!



Where's Red Riding Hood when you need her?




A trash golem like the one from Terry Gilliam's Brazil.

Leave Big Ben alone you box of freaks!


Gryphons terrorise the streets of New York.

LATEST NEWS

Legendary: The Box

This isn't going to be an open and shut case…

What's the story?
An Art thief called Charles Deckard has stolen the legendary Pandora's box, rumoured to contain all the ills of the world. Of course his busy little fingers flip the catch and out pours a menagerie of monsters that would make Hagrid soil his giant pants. Global war between man and myth commences, with secret cabalistic societies also battling Deckard's attempts to rectify the situation.

What do we know?
Locations revealed so far include the modern day cities of London and New York, where werewolves, gryphons, minotaurs and debris-clad golems rage through the panicked streets. It's like Halloween gone bad and it's going to last forever if you don't put a lid on it. Although he's an art thief, Deckard does pack more than white gloves and a glass cutter, using powerful modern ordnance such as shotguns and automatic rifles. And he's going to need them, with the size of some creatures reminiscent of the bosses of Serious Sam and Painkiller.

When do we get more?
We'll have the review for you as soon as we dare to take the disc out of the box.

Anything else to declare?
We'd like the game to feature the legendary monster of the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, known locally as the Moose-pig!

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THE WAY NVIDIA. IT'S MEANT TO BE PLAYED

KAOS STUDIOS

THQ

Games for Windows

XBOX 360 LIVE

Publisher: EA
Developer: BioWare
Heritage: Jade Empire, NeverWinter Nights, Star Wars: KOTOR
Link: www.bioware.com
ETA: May

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



Explore diverse worlds as you save the galaxy.

The action is real-time and very intense in Mass Effect.

All aboard the Normandy for the cruise of a lifetime.





LATEST NEWS

Mass Effect

Bioware's console space-epic makes fiery re-entry on PC!

What's the story?

Assume the role of Commander Shephard and embark on a massive adventure to save the galaxy from annihilation in this action-oriented RPG of interplanetary proportions. BioWare's GM Ray Muzyka describes Mass Effect as "A powerful example of video games as art form, delivering new levels of emotional intensity, realistic characters and a gripping storyline – all set in a compelling new universe".

What do we know?

Mass Effect has been substantially redesigned for PC since its late 2007 console release. Controls have been optimised and are also fully customisable, so you'll be able to assign hotkeys to skills and biotic powers you acquire, making the fierce action even more immediate and involving. Along with a vastly improved inventory interface for PC, the game is slicker and easier to manage than before. Graphically it's also superior (and hopefully less buggy), with re-engineered visuals providing even more realistic textures, detailed character animations and stunning environments.

When do we get more?

We're hoping for a hands-on playtest next issue, followed by the review around April time.

Anything else to declare?

Controversy erupted last year over an inter-species lesbian sex scene in Mass Effect, when a commentator on the Fox News Channel slammed its explicit nature. The commentator hadn't played the game (whose sex scenes are anything but explicit) and later apologised for the erroneous comments.

BE AFRAID ...BE VERY AFRAID







A letter from a dead man.

A secret buried beneath a frozen wasteland.

A dark, sinister family mystery.

"Experience the true horror of physics with Frictional's deeply unsettling twist on the traditional adventure game." IGN

PENUMBRA
BLACK PLAGUE

Unravel the mystery on February 15!

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www.gamersgate.com

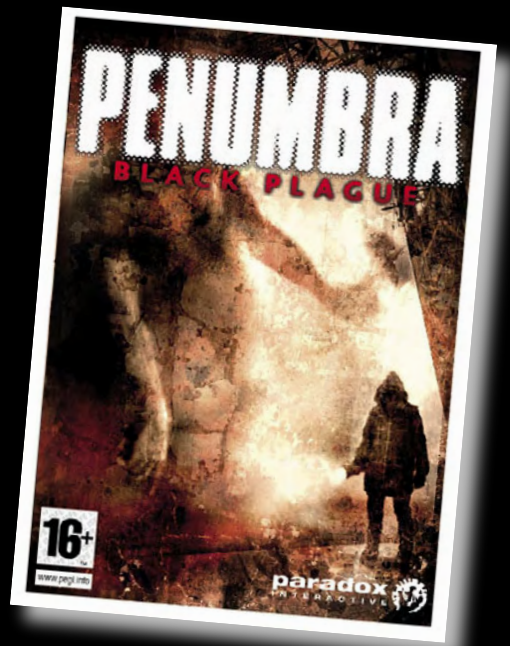
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PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED



7 UP

More golden nuggets of gaming glory to come



Flatout: Ultimate Carnage

Publisher: Empire | **ETA:** June

The best alternative to the console Burnout franchise on PC, this high-octane boost-and-smash racer features on and offline racing along with crazy stunt modes in which you'll propel the driver's body through the windscreen and towards targets such as giant bowling pins, or basketball hoops.

Pure

Publisher: Disney Interactive Studios | **ETA:** Autumn

This freshly announced offroad racer takes quad-on-quad action to a new level, with the biggest air and most spectacular photo-realistic settings yet seen in this specialist genre. Coming from Black Rock Studio, formerly Climax Racing, the team has a good heritage to deliver the top offroad experience, having worked previously on both Moto GP and ATV Offroad Fury.





This is Vegas

Publisher: Midway | **ETA:** Winter

This sandbox lifestyle title incorporates all the essentials of Sin City, with fighting, gambling, driving and partying in an open world Las Vegas where you're battling to build your own adult empire and retake the city from those who would turn it into a family playground. A noble ambition that you'll need to back up with a lot of sinning.

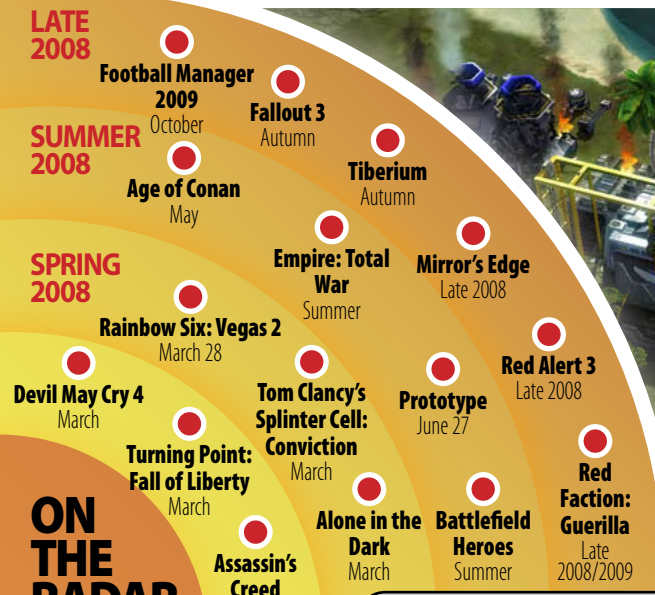
Men of War

Publisher: 1C | **ETA:** Summer

The sequel to Soldiers: Heroes of World War II and Faces of War, this WWII strategy is set in the European theatre and includes Soviet, Allied and German campaigns. The third part in the trilogy features 50 new units and a user interface that can now be customised to give you streamlined control of your troops. Multiplayer additions include new maps, CTF and 'high-value cargo' modes.



ON THE RADAR



Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3

Publisher: EA | **ETA:** Late 2008

It's been seven years and long rumoured, but at last there's confirmation that another Red Alert is on its way. Remaining true to its roots, but adding a co-op mode to the single-player campaign and a new time-travelling plot with the Soviets messing up history and starting World War III, Red Alert 3 kicks off with a PC-exclusive beta test only available through buying the upcoming C&C 3: Kane's Wrath.



Dream Pinball 3D

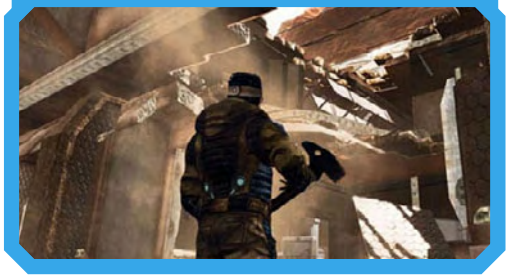
Publisher: SouthPeak | **ETA:** April

With six tables featuring themes such as Dinosaurs, Knights and Aquatic, this is the daddy of pinball games, showcasing real-world physics, advanced motion blur and lighting, plus balls of materials such as gold and oak, each with unique ballistics.

Red Faction: Guerilla

Publisher: THQ | **ETA:** Late 2008

It hasn't been seen on PC since 2003, but this environment-smashing future shooter is set to return at last in the third part of the Mars-set sci-fi. story There are few details yet, although we're told that it's in development at Volition (the Saint's Row studio) and it will of course feature "more exciting destruction technology".



REDEMPTION THROUGH ANNIHILATION

WARHAMMER 40,000 DAWN OF WAR SOULSTORM



PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED





WAGE WAR ACROSS AN ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEM AS TWO NEW ARMIES, THE SISTERS OF BATTLE AND THE DARK ELDAR UNLEASH THEIR FURY ON AN INTERPLANETARY SCALE IN A BRAND NEW STANDALONE EXPANSION TO THE AWARD-WINNING DAWN OF WAR! TAKE COMMAND OF AIR UNITS THAT REINVENT EVERY MAP, BATTLE, AND STRATEGY AS YOU LEAD ANY ONE OF NINE ARMIES IN THE LARGEST DAWN OF WAR CAMPAIGN EVER ENVISIONED. BURN THE HERETIC, KILL THE MUTANT, AND FEED THE HUNGER OF THIRSTING GODS.

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HANDS ON

TIBERIUM

Command & Conquer has another bash at first-person…

Publisher: EA
Developer: EALA
Heritage: The C&C RTS franchise
Link: www.ea.com
ETA: Late 2008

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

It's been a long time since the Command & Conquer RTS franchise made a foray into the world of first-person shooters, and 2002's C&C Renegade was not a great success. But Tiberium is already looking like a far more confident and ambitious project, a squad (or we should say squads) shooter that uses the stunning Unreal Engine 3 to show us what being on the front line of a Tiberium war is all about for the tiny soldiers you're used to ordering about with high altitude point-and-click.

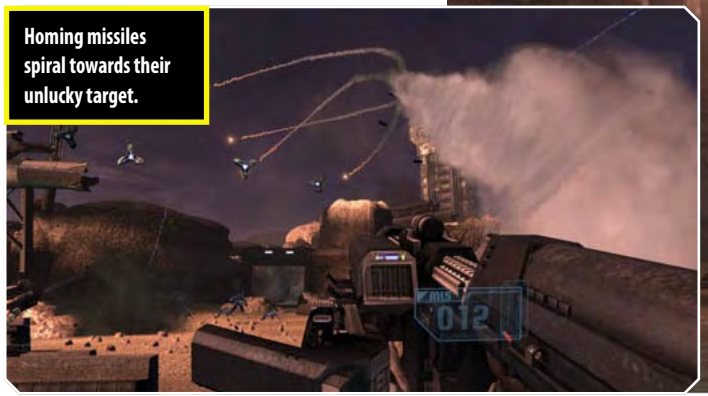
Secretly in development for three years, as you can see from these screens the game is now pretty advanced, which can also be said for the weaponry. Your squad leader will use just one main gun in Tiberium, the GD-10. But fear not, this highly advanced death-dealer combines rail-gun, rocket launcher, grenade launcher and energy beam all in one mighty morphing package. This Swiss Army Gun means that it will be far quicker to switch munitions on the fly, suited to the fast tactical decisions that you'll need to make as GD hero Ricardo Vega. Lay suppressing rail-gun fire on an enemy infantry squad then morph the GD-10 into a grenade launcher to take down an attacking chopper on a strafing run.

This isn't just a squad shooter though, but a multi-squad shooter. You'll not only command your immediate group, but also acquire a new squad for each Tiberium crystal field that you control in the future-Earth Mediterranean arena. Of course control can slip back into enemy hands if your line fails, just as in any C&C RTS game, so defending these resources is still as important as attacking enemy bases. There's nowhere near the depth of resource management of the strategy titles - you won't need to actually harvest Tiberium, or >



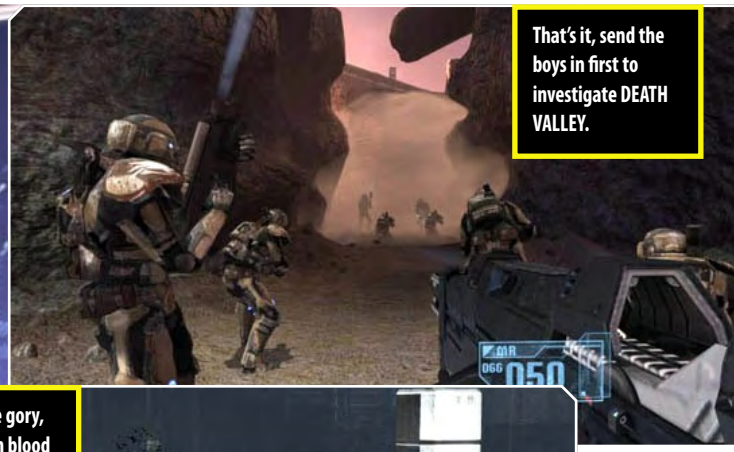
Use air and armour support as well as your squads.

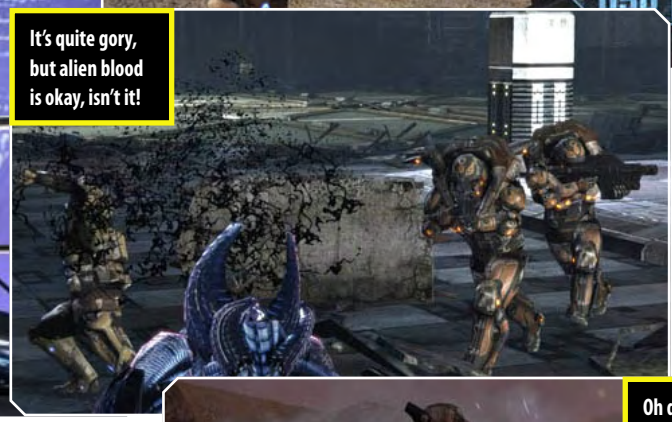

Quickly morph your gun to fire homing missiles too.


Homing missiles spiral towards their unlucky target.

TIBERIUM


The Mediterranean has certainly changed a bit.


That's it, send the boys in first to investigate DEATH VALLEY.


It's quite gory, but alien blood is okay, isn't it!


Oh dear, that's just made him really angry.

> Tiberium continued

manufacture units for example, but linking squad numbers to Tiberium control does form a nice bridge between C&C RTS and C&C FPS, maximising the appeal to strategy and shooter fans.

Squads are surprisingly expendable in Tiberium, a deliberate design decision. Your leadership is intended to be overarching, so you won't have to protect every squad and squad member to prevent mission failure. Lose some grunts and there are plenty more to fill their space boots when you recapture a Tiberium source. You'll also

"Lose some grunts and there are plenty more to fill their space boots!"

have tactical control of remote strikes from orbiting capital ships, rear line ion cannon, mobile armour and air cover.

Combat itself borrows heavily from the cover systems of games like Gears of War and Rainbow Six, so you'll be making good use of every available low wall, crate and wreckage to gain a safe tactical advantage, ordering squads to cover as you inch towards objectives. As you do so, an innovative intelligent score will adapt accompanying music to the situation. It'll be like having John Williams and the London Philharmonic performing over your shoulder.

Tiberium is a brave move for the C&C franchise, one which hopes to fill out the lore behind the warring factions while it also innovates in the first-person genre. From what we've seen so far, this ambition shows much promise and we certainly wouldn't write it off as another Renegade.

PCGZine TIBERIUM

HOW COMPLETE? 70%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS? 75%

A promising expansion into dangerous new territory

HANDS ON

JUST CAUSE 2

Paradise regained in the stunt-packed sequel!

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Avalanche
Heritage: Just Cause
Link: www.avalanchestudios.se
ETA: Summer

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Just Cause 2!

Just Cause was one of the most endearing sandbox games and surprise hits of 2006. Despite its rough edges and somewhat empty island interiors, it was bursting with fun and when you found the action you really knew it, with car-top chases down jungle roads, pursued by gun-jeeps and helicopter gunships as you wove through civilian traffic, the ability to fire a grapple at helicopters, pull out the pilots and 'jack them before raining rockets down on drug plantations. The fantastic parachute allowed you to parascend behind moving cars using your grapple, or dive out of requisitioned planes and choppers to drift towards militia-held objectives. This was GTA gone wild, a jungle playground packed with bikes, quads, cars, trucks, helicopters, planes and speedboats – all available to use in your gun-toting rampage against the goons and bosses of factional warlords. If you can believe it, Just Cause 2 promises to follow this up with an even more extreme adventure!

Unlikely-named Rico Rodriguez this time arrives at the massive 1000 square kilometres of mountainous jungle paradise that is Panau, a setting with even more varied environments and vehicles. Explore deserts in dune buggies, climb snowy crags in four-wheel-drives and parachute into dense jungle swathes. Again Rico is totally free to roam the entire island chain on foot, on wheels, from the sea, or in the air, choosing missions as desired, or just getting kicks from mad stunts and daring action. Brand Manager Alex Price tells us, "Remember everything you loved about Just Cause, then take



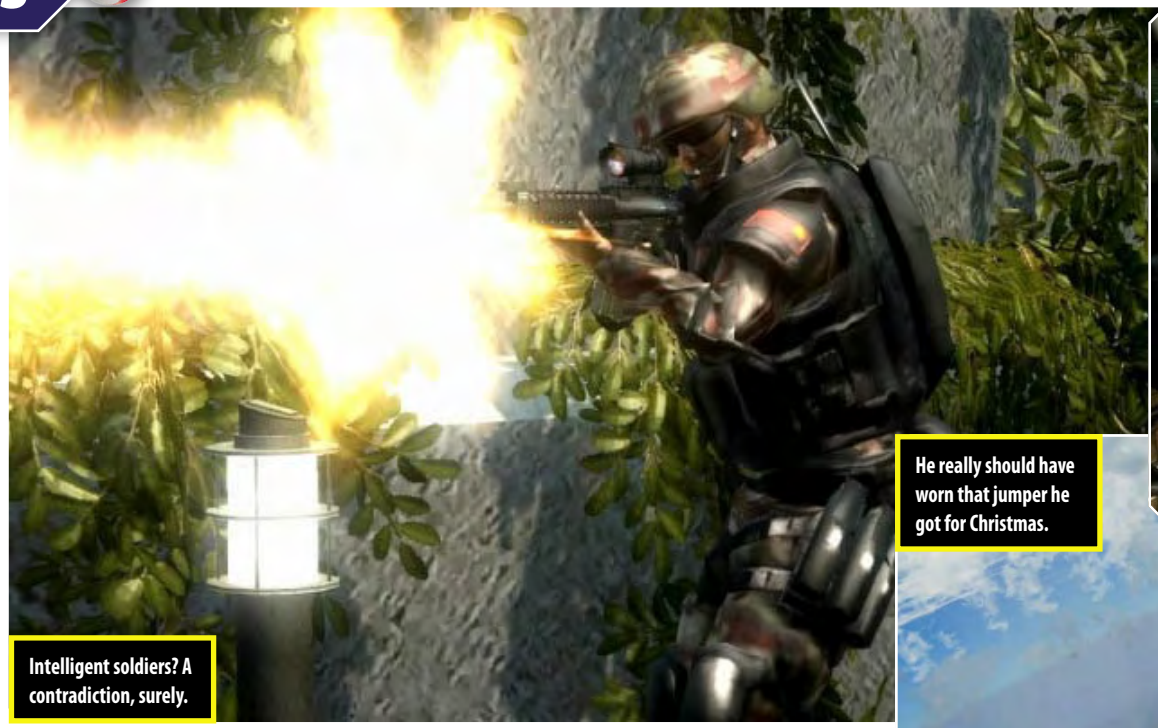
Life's a beach and then you die, riddled with bullets.


It's Rico time again, action fans!


You can see Rico's new permanent grapple glove here.


Now that's an impressive fireball!

JUST CAUSE



Intelligent soldiers? A contradiction, surely.



Don't you just hate those opportunistic windscreen washers?



He really should have worn that jumper he got for Christmas.

> Just Cause 2 continued

it to the next level: vehicles, stunts, weapons, freedom, grappling hook, action, everything!"

A new chaos system will hopefully do away with some of the original game's problems with balance and there will be more emphasis on improving Rico's reputation and power through assisting factions and gaining enough influence and advanced weaponry to take on massive missions against seemingly impenetrable government fortifications. Once you've taken a government base, a new higher level of opportunities will open up and ultimately there will be a staggering 1000 activities on offer.

Combat has been expanded with new weapons including a mounted machine-gun that can be toted around Halo 3-style, remote C4 sticky-bombs and a new grenade launcher. Rico can now target specific body parts of his unfortunate enemies with a lock-on reticule and many weapons (as well as vehicles) will benefit from an upgrade system boasting over 1000 parts. But expect far more intelligent militiamen this time, who communicate, take cover, call air support and use vehicles opportunistically just as you do.

Stunts and vehicles have been revamped too, with more parachute tricks added, a grappling hook that can be shot from Rico's arm easily at any time (instead of being a selectable gun) and the ability to not just ride car roofs, but also dodge around on top of them and even hang off bumpers, or trail objects behind vehicles you're riding with the grapple. Just Cause 2 looks like it could be one of the best playgrounds yet for action fans and if Avalanche announces a co-op mode we'll book our flight to Panau today!

"Rico is now able to target specific body parts of his unfortunate enemies with a lock-on reticule"



Always rent, never buy Just Cause vehicles.

PCGZine

JUST CAUSE

HOW COMPLETE? 65%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS? 80%

The jungle VIP returns for more extreme bloodsports

IMPERIVM ROMANVM

From Friday 22nd Feb



"In a nutshell, Imperium Romanum is one of the most polished, and enjoyable strategy titles we've played this year."

"Every single thing about this game is polished almost to perfection."

"....one of the best games I've played in a very long time"
avidgamer.co.uk

"...If you're a fan of city-building games then this is a title not to be missed."
Score ***82%*** *- gamersdailynews.com*



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

ENHANCED

"Every single thing about this game is polished almost to perfection" 91% PCGZine GOLD







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WWW.IMPERIUM-GAME.COM

HANDS ON

ASSASSIN'S CREED

Sticking a knife in the back of conventional open world games

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft
Heritage: Prince of Persia series
Link: www.assassinscreed.com
ETA: March

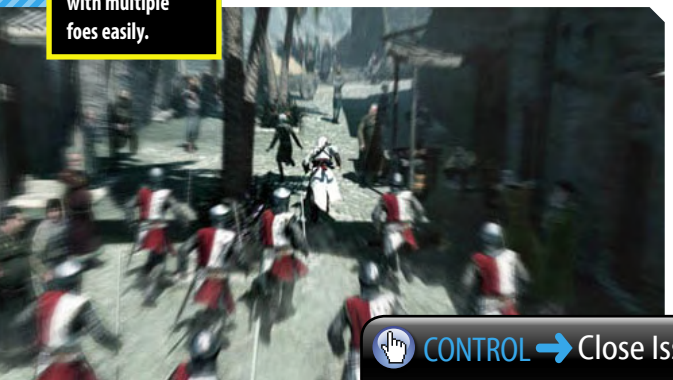
PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Assassin's Creed!

Assassin's Creed is one of those late-to-PC games like Gears of War that will really benefit from lagging behind its console release. A massive hit on Xbox 360 and PS3, outselling predictions by several million copies, it's great to hear that the PC version won't rest on this success, but build on it with significant extra content when it arrives in March. While the exact nature is still a closely guarded secret, we're told to expect at least four new missions and a range of new tasks to perform within the cities.

Set mainly during the Medieval crusades, but also linking in a modern day high-tech conspiracy thread, Assassin's Creed is a beautifully constructed and realised open-mission adventure set within the cities of Jerusalem, Acre, Damascus and Masayaf (the castle stronghold of the Assassins). You'll also get to explore the badlands between the cities on horseback.

Essentially a third-person stealth game, Assassin's Creed is still action-packed and nowhere near as delicate in the alarm stakes as titles such as Splinter Cell. HUD displays keep track of the awareness of city guards, soldiers and Templar knights as you pick and choose main and side missions within the city walls in your ultimate quest to restore the lost honour of your disgraced assassin Altair and pursue a mystical treasure while assassinating nine major targets along the way for your master.

The main criticisms of the console release have been the repetitive nature of missions and the ease of combat, but while each city does present very similar objectives, they are so addictively fun that you really won't care that the assassination build-up >



It looks overwhelming, but you can deal with multiple foes easily.



Walk slowly and stealthily to mingle and approach targets.



"Expect at least four new missions and new tasks"

Templar Knights provide tougher foes.

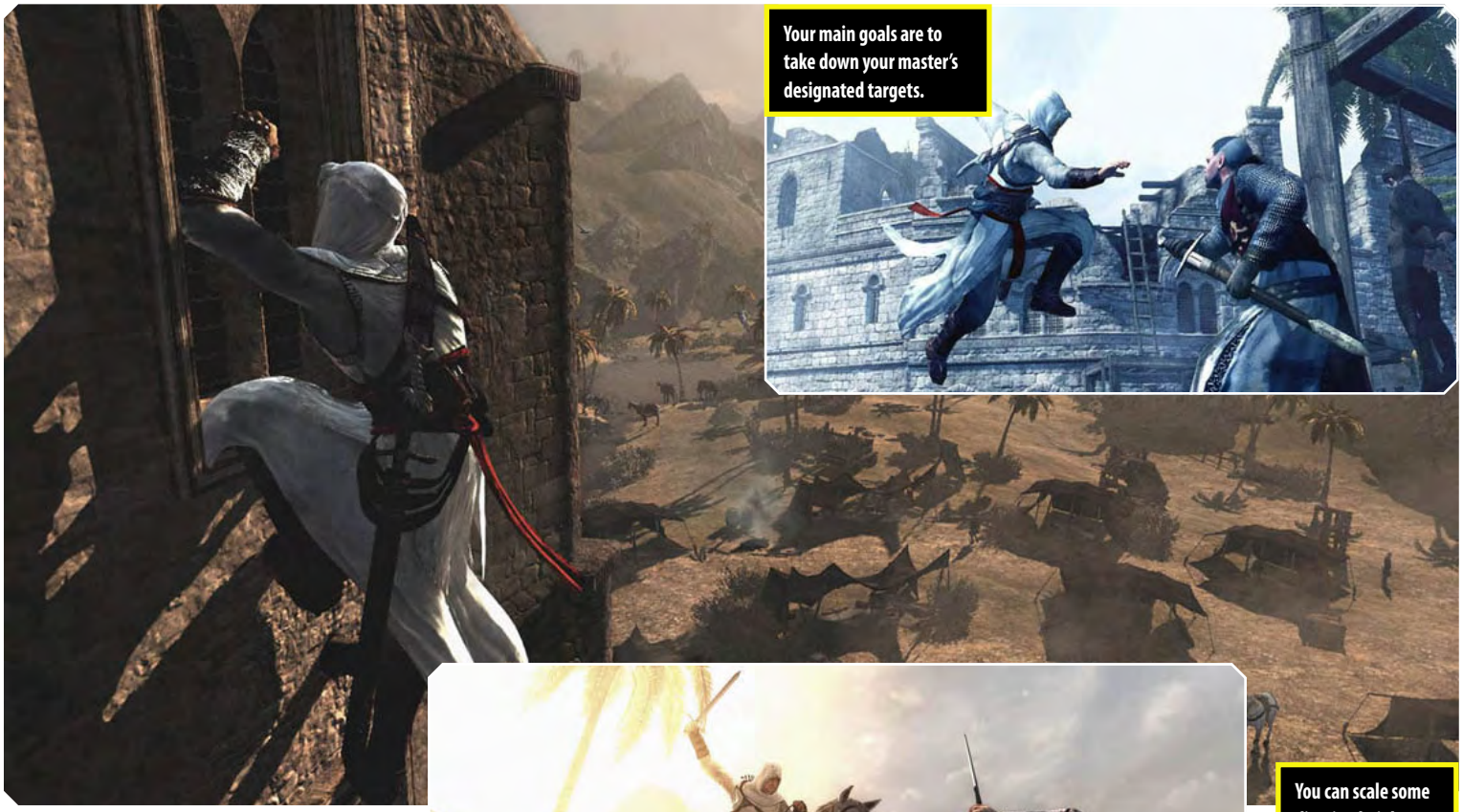
> Assassin's Creed continued

tasks are essentially cut and pasted between locations. The structure of the game means that you start with few acrobatic and combat skills, accept an assassination mission in Masayaf from your master, travel to one of the cities, find the local Assassin's Creed franchise building and go out into the city to collect information on your target via pickpocketing, eavesdropping and interrogation sub-missions. Once you have the minimum information you can return to the Assassin's Bureau to report before taking on the main target using the tips you've garnered. Or you can continue to roam the city fulfilling all side-quests such as climbing every tower to map the city to your radar, collecting flags and saving every citizen being bullied by city guards. After you've dispatched your main target it's back to Masayaf to report, collect a weapon or agility upgrade and repeat verbatim for the next of your nine initial assassination targets.

While there are some subtleties to combat (which you can practice in an arena at Masayaf as you regain the skills), it is essentially an exercise in timed button bashing, but the sword, dagger and melee duelling is so wonderfully animated and diverse in brutal finishing moves that the simplicity keeps action flowing, even if some have lamented the lack of complexity and challenge. City roaming is equally enthralling, Altair able to climb, leap and swing like a deadly ape, rooftops, spires and towers providing a whole 'other' city to explore. Of course you'll have to avoid or kill the archers higher up, or lose pursuers by finding cover until your awareness icon calms, but the sense of freedom and vertigo is a real thrill.

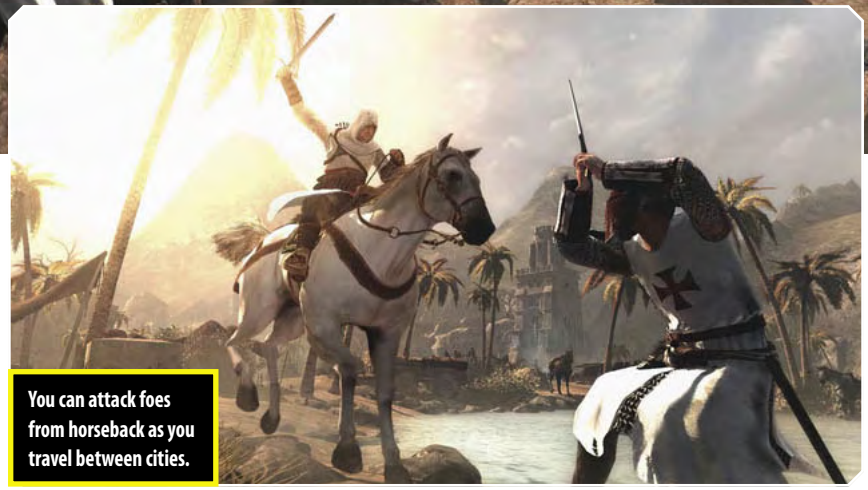
"Wonderfully animated and diverse in brutal finishing moves"

With such freedom and fun on offer, plus exclusive new content, the PC version is well worth the wait. Check out our review next issue!



Your main goals are to take down your master's designated targets.

You can scale some dizzying heights to escape or map out land.



You can attack foes from horseback as you travel between cities.

PCGZine

HOW COMPLETE? 90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS? 85%

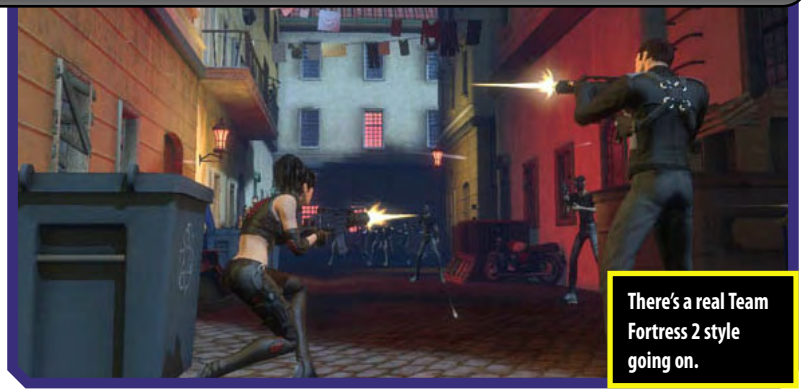
A grower and a climber, with its best version on PC!



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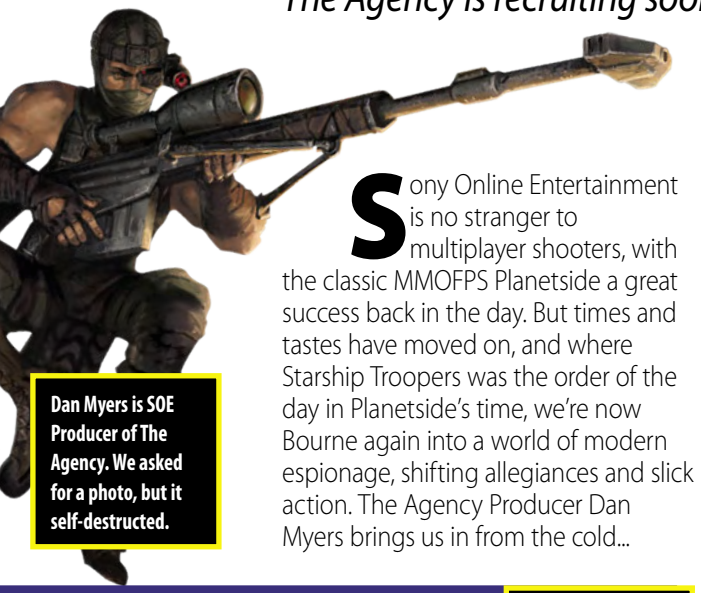
Publisher: SOE
Developer: SOE
Players: MMO
Certificate: TBA
Features: International locations, global espionage, gadgets, guns, support, stealth and combat.
ETA: TBA 2008

Spy vs. Spy, vs. Spy, vs. Spy...



There's a real Team Fortress 2 style going on.

The Agency is recruiting soon – prepare your secret dossiers!



Dan Myers is SOE Producer of The Agency. We asked for a photo, but it self-destructed.

Sony Online Entertainment is no stranger to multiplayer shooters, with the classic MMOFPS Planetside a great success back in the day. But times and tastes have moved on, and where Starship Troopers was the order of the day in Planetside's time, we're now Bourne again into a world of modern espionage, shifting allegiances and slick action. The Agency Producer Dan Myers brings us in from the cold...

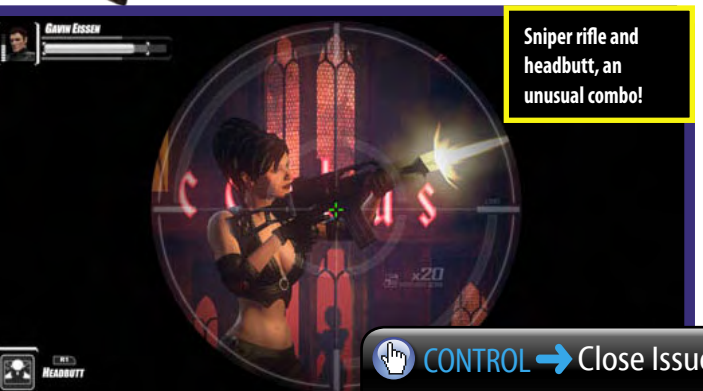
How many players will be supported in PvP gameplay? Is this an MMO or a large online shooter?
We're developing a more focused shooter, and not building large scale PvP combat like PlanetSide. Expect focused PvP that is similar to other modern shooters. The combat style and some gameplay elements take cues from action shooters, while much of the gameplay structure (progression and exploration) is similar to MMOs. The best way to think of it is as an online persistent shooter combining the best elements of both worlds.

The style is slightly cartoon-like, why did you prefer this to a more realistic look?
There are a lot of reasons to not go with a more realistic look. It can be awfully difficult to go for a realistic look and not end up with something that turns off players. Also, The Agency is going have a lighter, more humorous take on the spy genre. >

"Focussed PvP combat is similar to other modern shooters"



Complementary team skills will be essential.



Sniper rifle and headbutt, an unusual combo!



Stealth will be as important as direct approaches.



See how she blends right in with her stealthy spy skills!



Spies really shouldn't stand in floodlights. Tsk!

> Interview continued

How many NPC Operatives can you recruit and how do they help you?
We haven't publicly revealed the max number of Operatives players can recruit. You will be able to collect quite a lot of them over the course of a career, however it will always be a subset of the total available. This encourages players to either generalise or specialise by connecting with others. Each Operative will have things he or she specialises in - from a sniper you can deploy to cover your back to an executive assistant who files expense reports for you. The latter may sound a little dull, but you'll change your mind when you're sitting at work and get an email saying your character just earned some in-game cash.

Which spy games have most influenced development?
While we certainly look at spy games, our influences are much broader. And while we define U.N.I.T.E. and ParaGON as spies and mercenaries, that's more an attitude than a functional description. U.N.I.T.E will certainly have their share of ass-kickers and ParaGON will have some stealthy bastards. We look to spy games and movies for what makes players feel like an elite agent, shooters and action flicks for things to make players' hearts pound, and even to puzzles and casual games for fun ideas for minigames.



PvP combat will be similar in action to other modern shooters.

Will travel be automatic or will some action take place en route?
There's going to be a bit of both. Much of the time you'll get your mission details and then "jet off" to the appropriate part of the globe. You'll also spend some time doing assignments in larger locales, like Prague. However, there will be times that your missions actually involve the transit between locations.

"I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you"

Is there an organizational structure equivalent to Guilds?
Absolutely - We call them "Joint Agencies". Player joint-agencies will still work under the auspices of U.N.I.T.E. or ParaGON, but will be able to share resources between players. This includes Joint Agency assignments that require players share Operatives on tasks they couldn't accomplish alone.

What are the classes of Spy and Mercenary to choose from?
There are no classes, per se, in the world of The Agency. No matter whom you choose to work for, U.N.I.T.E. or ParaGON, the rule is "You are what you wear". The three main branches you can choose from are Support, Stealth, and Combat. Under each branch are a number of specialties and the more time you spend playing in the appropriate outfit, the more you advance in that specialty.

Can you reveal some of the best spy gadgets in the game so far?
Come on, now. You should know the answer to that: I could tell you, but I'd have to kill you.

>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!

WAITING AN AGE

I JUST CAN"T WAIT for the Conan MMO, that you featured last issue, but I'm still undecided whether to get it for my PC or my Xbox 360. Is there any advantage to either system?

> Andy Rolles

> PCGZ says… Well, the massive advantage to PC that's fast becoming apparent is that we may see our version well in advance of the Xbox 360 release. Age of Conan is still due on PC in May, but while it has been in development for over four years for PC, the Xbox 360 version could take a lot longer to convert, particularly because of control issues currently built around keyboard and mouse. There's some question that the Xbox 360 version will make it for 2008.

ALIENS RESURRECTION

WHAT"S HAPPENED TO that Gearbox Alien game that was announced ages ago? I loved Aliens Vs Predator, particularly the Marine missions and it's been too long since we had a decent Alien title. If Ghostbustrers can make a comeback, I really hope this can too!

> Timmi

> PCGZ says… We're hoping to get the first screens for our next issue, so watch this space. What we do know already is that this will focus on the second acclaimed Aliens film without any 'versus Predator' nonsense and closely follow its style, locations and events. It will now be called Aliens: Colonial Marines and we'd be amazed if there's no co-op squad play built into the single-player.

MEDIC!!!

I LOVE TEAM FORTRESS 2, but I am getting a little bit tired of it now. Are there any plans to update it with new official modes to spice things up a bit?

> Dangermoose

> PCGZ says… Half-Life and Team Fortress devloper Valve does indeed have plans to keep the incredible success of Team Fortress 2 rolling. We're not told exactly when the changes will roll out, but they will be significant and change many aspects of the game. New weapons are on the way, although you'll have to unlock them via in-game achievements, Call of Duty 4-style. There's also going to be a new menu interface just for your weapon loadout. Class upgrades are going to start with the Medic, who will be able to earn an Overhealer weapon that can raise a targeted teammate's health to 200%. A new Healing Ray can also be unlocked, although you'll need all the Medic achievements ticked off to do so. Finally we can tell you of a new game mode escorting a mine cart!

Don't miss Issue 16
Out March 27th
Sign up now!



Play Age of Conan first, and as it was intended, on PC.

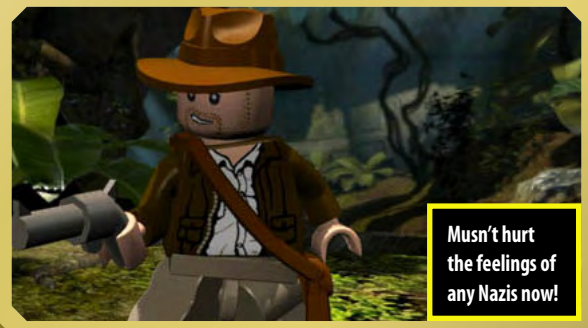
NAZIS ESCAPE WHIPPING

LEGO Indiana Jones to drop all Nazi references!

Has the world gone mad? Turned upon its head? How can an Indy game not have Nazis in it? I read Travellers Tales saying that LEGO were replacing Indy's evil nemeses with "an anonymous genocidal, occultist, trenchcoat-wearing master-race" and I just couldn't believe it. Why don't they just mash their franchises together so we have LEGO Star Wars: Indiana Jones and the Star of Death. That way at least the Nazis could be replaced by a genocidal, occultist master-race that we recognise - The Empire!

> Simon Nelson

> PCGZ says… Not a bad idea. We think Indy minus Nazis is plain wrong too. Perhaps they'll be called the Nasties? And no Crystal Skull in sight, or will there be a mine-exta like in Lego Star Wars?



Musn't hurt the feelings of any Nazis now!

LIVE FREE OR DIE

1953, THE NAZI INVASION OF NEW YORK IS COMPLETE.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
TAKE UP ARMS AND RESIST THIS UNSTOPPABLE AXIS ARMY



"HATS OFF TO CODEMASTERS...
IT LOOKS CERTAIN
TO BE A WINNER"
DAILY STAR



TURNING POINT®
FALL OF LIBERTY™

JOIN THE RESISTANCE AT
WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/TURNINGPOINT

16+ www.pegi.info

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Warhammer 40000: Dawn of War – Soulstorm

Get ready for the biggest, baddest, Warhammer RTS of all time!

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Relic Entertainment and Iron Lore Studios
Heritage: Warhammer 40000: Dawn of War
Warhammer 40000: Dawn of War - Winter Assault
Warhammer 40000: Dawn of War - Dark Crusade
Link: www.dawnofwargame.com
ETA: March 7

System Requirements: P4 2GHz; 512MB RAM; 64MB AGP graphics card with Hardware Transformation and Lighting

The Warhammer 40000: Dawn of War juggernaut rolls on unabated. Almost four years after the release of the original game, developer Relic (in conjunction with Iron Lore Studios) has once again forged another tactical gem from its furnace of RTS excellence.

Following on from the excellent Dark Crusade, this fourth outing for the series takes the freeform open-ended template of its predecessor and expands upon it. Whereas Dark Crusade offered you just one planet to conquer and seven races to play as, Soulstorm tasks you with the gargantuan challenge of crushing four planets, playing as any of nine races.

Soulstorm takes place in the Kaurava system, where each race is endowed with a Stronghold on one of the planets or on an orbiting moon, which must be held at all costs. Just like Dark Crusade, the action is broken down into two distinct sections.

Turn it up

The first of these is played from a freeform turn-based map of the system, with each planet divided into territorial segments that possess their own strategic, military and economic properties. From this tactical map you can move your troops into adjacent provinces to attack enemy held territory or reinforce your regions with military buildings and troops. Thankfully the somewhat reticent enemy AI from Dark Crusade has been made considerably more pro-active this time around, with factions scrapping far more ferociously between themselves for territorial superiority. Other features reprised from Dark Crusade's strategic map are the ability to recruit Honor Guard (lethal killers who protect your Hero) and kit out your Hero units with Wargear (powerful armour and

"Forging another tactical gem from the furnace of RTS excellence"


RTS action doesn't get much more frenetic than this.


Play as any of the nine races.


The Sisters of Battle seek to purge all evil.

FIVE STAR

Soulstorm is wide and deep. Here are just a few of the best aspects of gameplay to look forward to...


PAIN RELIEF
It's instantly clear that the Dark Eldar take great pleasure in inflicting pain on their enemies.


GAME ON AND ON
A four planet turn-based campaign and nine playable races ensure endless replayability.


POWER AND GLORY
Your Hero becomes increasingly more powerful throughout the campaign.


EVIL BE GONE
The Sisters of Battle use their well-balanced units to purge evil from the galaxy.

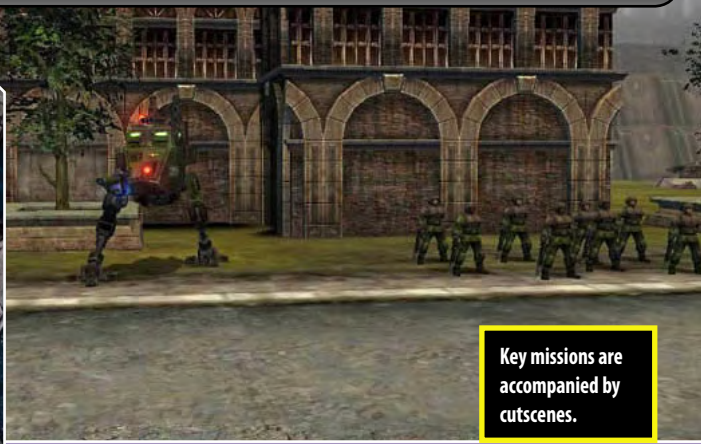

REWARD POINTS
Every time you capture an enemy province you're rewarded with Wargear and Honor Guard upgrades



Using units' secondary abilities can help sway any battle.



Conquer all planets and strongholds to rule the system.



Key missions are accompanied by cutscenes.

Roll over screen for annotations



>Soulstorm continued

weapon upgrades that make your faction's champions even more efficient killing machines).

Once you enter an enemy's territory (or an opposing faction ventures into one of yours), the action switches to a real-time 3D battleground that'll be instantly familiar to you if you've played any of the previous Dawn of War games, as will some excruciatingly long loading times. The series' brutal, strategic point-capturing RTS action is ramped up to more blistering levels than ever before, thanks to the addition of all-new aerial units that add an extra strategic dimension to the already uncompromising battlefield clashes, and demand you to equip your forces with a well-balanced array of troops. This necessity is further enforced by some stringent troop restrictions that prevent you from packing your armies with just the most powerful units.

"The Dark Eldar are evil incarnate, a race obsessed with pain"

While the sheer ferocity and unbridled entertainment of these real-time encounters can't be questioned, you can expect to encounter a smattering of pathfinding problems, while the graphics engine is starting to look seriously dated, especially compared to the likes of Company of Heroes or Medieval II: Total War.

Soulstorm's two debuting factions prove as imaginative as they are diverse. The Dark Eldar are evil incarnate, a race obsessed with inflicting pain and suffering on others. These macabre killers may be defensively frail, but make up for this deficiency with a collection of powerful infantry and armoured units, many armed with both cutting implements that tear flesh when up close and ranged attacks. By harvesting the >

STRONGHOLDS MUST FALL

Setting the scene for your conquests…



Races | **Background** | **Objectives**

Nine, nine, nine...

Nine races battle for dominance: Chaos, Dark Eldar, Eldar, Imperial Guard, Necron, Ork, Sisters of Battle, Space Marines and Tau.



The Sisters of Battle's most powerful unit is a giant, sword-wielding angel.

> Soulstorm continued

souls of the dead, Dark Eldar Hero units can cast an array of eviscerating spells, while the faction's armoured vehicles can be equipped with a cornucopia of disruption weapons that sap enemy units of courage. They also have access to teleportation gates.

Opting to play as the Dark Eldar is probably best left if you're a newcomer to the series, as their bias towards attack can leave you horribly exposed to enemy strikes if you fail to take the fight to your foes quickly enough.

The second new race – Sisters of Battle – is the antithesis of the Dark Eldar. Religiously devout and pure, their mission in life is to purge the universe of evil. Aiding them in their task is a set of devastating armoured units, many



Most missions require you to simply wipe out all enemy bases.



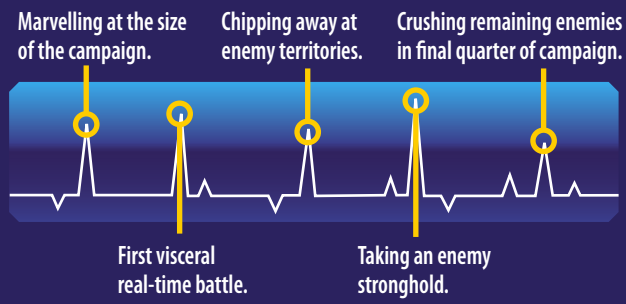
There can be only one winner.

"This is without question the most epic Dawn of War game to date"

equipped with cleansing area-damage fire attacks that can incinerate clustered hostile units in seconds, and the ability to construct forward bases before attacking a region. The Sisters' solid defensive capabilities ensure that they're just as adept at warding off invasions as they are at mounting them, providing a perfect starting platform if you're dipping your toe into Dawn of War's cauldron of carnage for the very first time.

This is without question the most epic Dawn of War game to date. Despite offering much the same gaming experience as its predecessor, Soulstorm's massive turn-based tactical campaign map and thrilling RTS combat will keep you enthralled for weeks, as will the excellent multiplayer and skirmish options. And while it may not be the best looking RTS out there, its sheer depth and entertainment value ensure that it's still right up there with the best of them. ● ***Martin Korda***

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



PCGZine Verdict

More of the same but bigger than ever.

- Massive freeform campaign
- Two excellent new playable races
- Doesn't really do anything new

88%



Conflict: Denied Ops

Way of the exploding barrel…

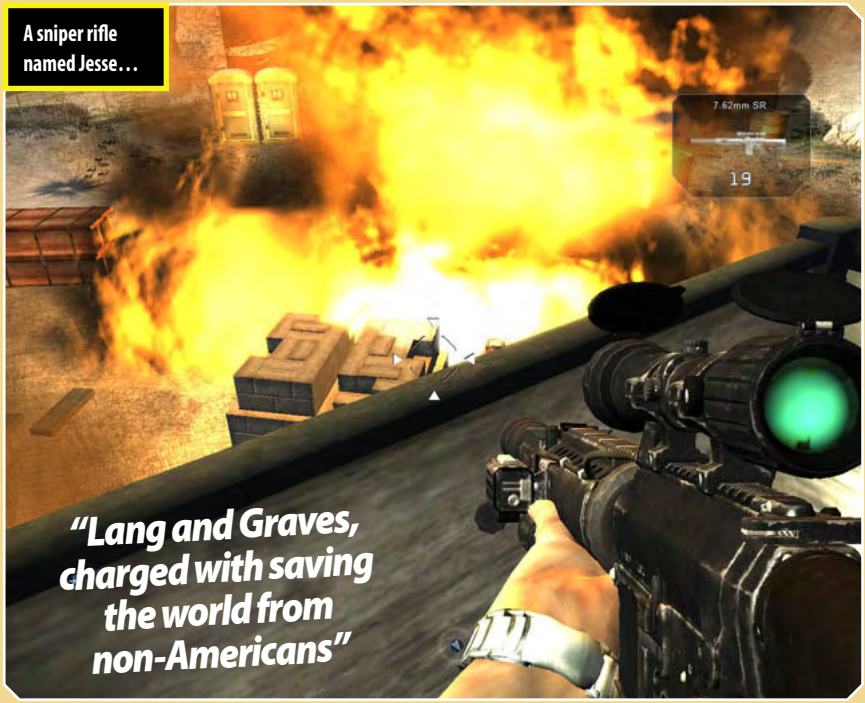
Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Pivotal Games
Heritage: Conflict series, The Great Escape
Link: www.pivotalgames.com
ETA: OUT NOW!

System Requirements: 2.4Ghz CPU, 1GB RAM, 128MB Graphics card

The once-average Conflict series has been in decline for some time now. In an attempt to arrest the slide, Denied Ops is not so much a back-to-basics approach as a completely different genre. Gone is the third person view; gone is the four-person squad, replaced by a first person shooter with a mere brace of interchangeable characters, the risibly corny Lang and Graves, charged with saving the world from non-Americans in a plot that barely does justice to the word impenetrable.

It does at least enable the pair to rack up some air miles though, with their initially uneasy alliance taking them to a variety of generic global hotspots, where they shout at each other, swear quite a lot, and kill hundreds of people, rookie Lang via a balls-out macho approach, and wizened veteran Graves though a combination of stealth and gadgetry.

Essentially the game equivalent of a buddy-movie, if it actually was a film it would be shown on a Wednesday on Channel five at 9pm, probably star Steven Seagal, and be introduced with a swathe of irony by a painfully smug continuity announcer. An all-out action romp, at its heart it's essentially a love story, as the deadly duo put their differences behind them and learn to respect each other through the medium of relentless killing, their relationship thawing as the body count rises, with the realisation that they >



A sniper rifle named Jesse…

"Lang and Graves, charged with saving the world from non-Americans"



Everything's gone green: the obligatory Night Vision.



It can be tempting to shoot your partner…

EBONY AND IVORY

Just the two of us…



Lincoln Graves | **Reggie Lang** | **Save Me, Buddy**

Lincoln Graves

God-bothering veteran of Grenada, Iraq, and Afghanistan, redneck Graves is a committed patriot who (spoiler alert) has named his gun Jesse. The same as his dog…



Vehicles are a bit floaty, especially the hovercraft…

> Conflict: Denied Ops continued

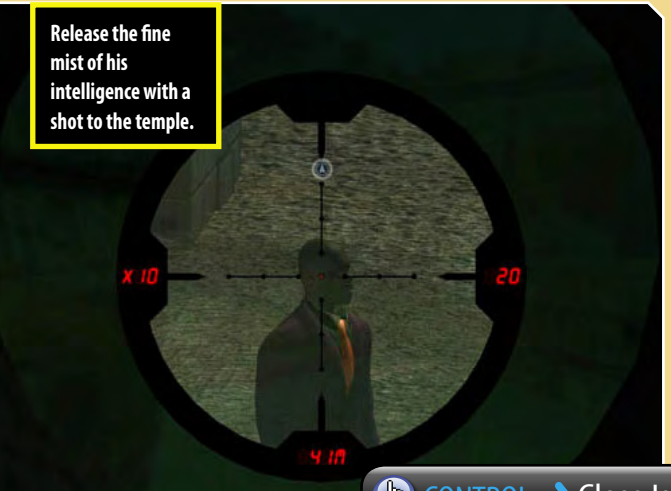
may not like each other, but by Christ they need each other. Ok, so it's not exactly The Piano.

Undead, undead

While many of the characteristics that defined the Conflict story have been ripped out, the absurd healing system remains whereby the lead exponents magically bring each other to back life with what looks like an industrial Ventolin administrator. If you can get past the fact that machine-gun wounds can be cured with an injection, it still makes for some ludicrous situations, as you're killed while healing only to be revived by the healed in a farcical circle jerk of glorified tag team.

Denied Ops has taken a critical mauling on the consoles, but the first person view makes sense on PC, and if you're prepared to overlook its clichés, by-the-numbers scenario, and almost total lack of innovation, there's actually a rip-roaring action game to be found.

The characters are different enough to force you to switch between them to counter certain situations, and you do have to apply a modicum of thought. It's certainly not easy, as enemies appear to be sporting bulletproof vests, trousers and undercrackers, and there is some genuine tension (and not just sexual). If you can leave your snobbery at the door, there are several hours of utterly mindless fun to be had. The game sets its stall out early with an exploding helicopter in the opening minutes, and the pyrotechnics rarely let up. As an imaginary tagline might have it: Two men, one cause, and a thousand exploding barrels… ● ***Steve Hill***



Release the fine mist of his intelligence with a shot to the temple.





Kill everyone, even construction workers.



Foolishy ignored the No Smoking sign.

PCGZine Verdict

An explosion in a fireworks factory.

- Exploding helicopters
- Accessible
- Dated

70%



Pirates Of The Burning Sea

PCG Zine GOLD

"A genuinely different MMO with a penchant for piratical behaviour"

Massively multiplayer buccaneering with a touch of class

Publisher: SOE
Developer: Flying Lab
Heritage: Sid Maier's Pirates, Eve Online
Link: www.burningsea.com
OUT NOW!

System Requirements: Pentium 4 1.5Ghz or better, 512MB RAM, DirextX 9 3D card

Ten million people are now paying to play World of Warcraft. You can see why: that lurid fantasy world is so enticing, and so brilliantly imagined. Nevertheless for some of us there's the nagging feeling that we really don't want to spend our time mashing goblins or frolicking with the night elves. Perhaps you'd rather do something rather less fantastical, something like plundering the high seas of the 18th century? Yeah, that's more like it. So thank Davey Jones' Locker for Pirates of the Burning Sea, a genuinely different massively multiplayer game with a personality and penchant for piratical behaviour that will bring a glimmer of happiness to even the blackest gamer's heart.

Salty Sea Dogs

Inspired by Johnny Depp's Hollywood antics this pirate revival might have been, but Pirates of the Burning Sea is very much its own game. Set in the Caribbean of the 1720s, we get to fight as English privateers, Spanish >



Step ashore and encounter the local pirate scum.



Peg-legged crew members guide you on your way.



Characters in ports have plenty to tell you about the world.

OFF THE PEG

Another typical day at the helm...



the expert | the villians | the open sea

Map it out

An early missions sees you having a mysterious map examined by one of the local collectors. He's not the only person interested in it, however, and violence rapidly ensues as evil pirates turn up to intercept it.



Equipping a ship is a vital process throughout the game.

> Pirates continued

smugglers, French colonial merchants or rogue pirates. It's all here, from the tropical perfidy of the Mexican coasts, to the pirate haven of Tortuga on the isle of Hispaniola.

Like any other online RPG you get to create your pirate character with a versatile customisation engine, and once you're in game you'll find yourself diving about on the deck of a ship, or attending to your business in the various posts that dot the huge Caribbean map. What takes place on dry land, however, is only a small fragment of what the game has to offer. Like Sid Meier's Pirates, or the less famous Age Of Sail series, Pirates of the Burning Sea puts you in charge of your own sailing ship, which can be upgraded and outfitted according to the depth of your pocket. The ships are where the real action is, allowing you to travel rapidly between ports, or to engage enemy ships in naval combat. This ship-to-ship combat relies on your manoeuvring against the wind to get the best broadside on your opponent, and it's a tricky challenge, especially against multiple forces. Once the enemy is weakened you can either sink them, or choose to board the ship to fight its crew and plunder the cargo.

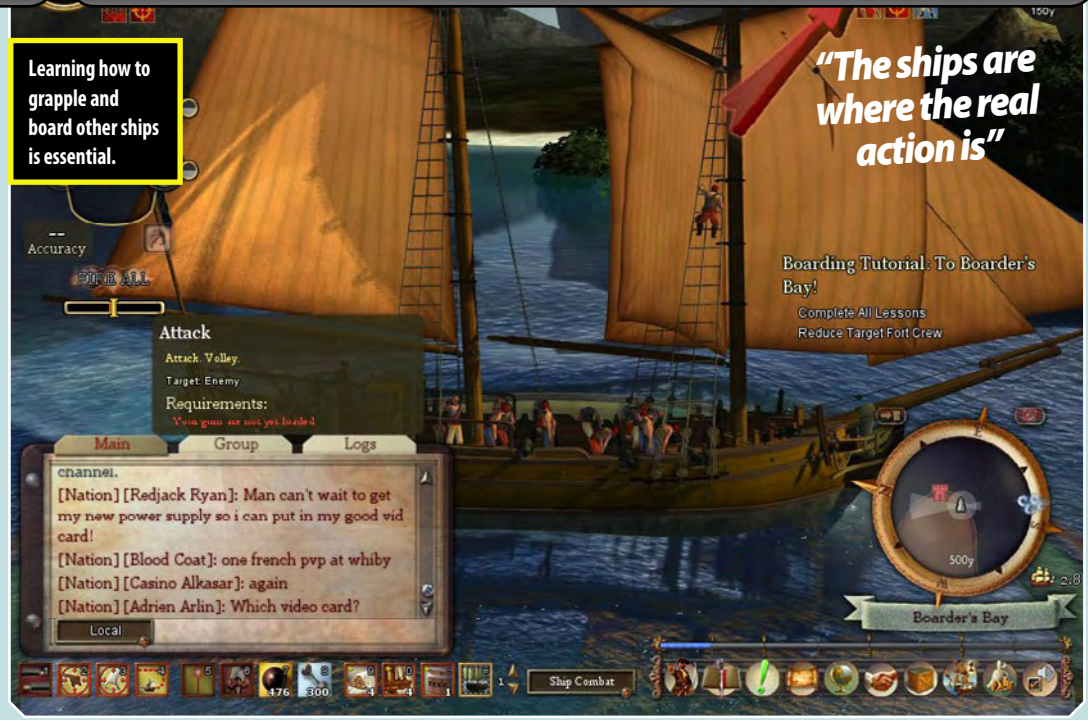


There are many different styles including 'Dirty'.

Economic Warfare

The hand-to-hand fighting is probably the most confusing aspect of the game, although the system it is trying to teach us is quite elegant and nuanced. You fight alongside a band of your crewmen and attempt to down the enemy captain. The fighting systems sees you trying to get your enemy off balance so that you can connect with a killing blow, all the while charging up your own initiative bar so that you can use your special moves. It takes some getting used to, but we'd expect to see the concept reworked by other games in the future.

Beyond the sailing, swashbuckling, and brutality there's also a fairly deep long game that requires multiplayer co-operation to play. Ports, which can be captured by various factions, allow >



Learning how to grapple and board other ships is essential.



The hand-to-hand fights are truly chaotic.

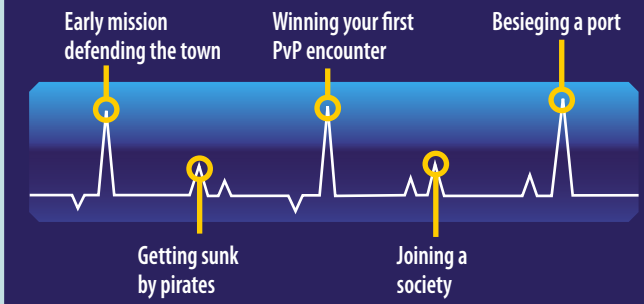


Charge up initiative for that killing blow.



Unique characters litter the world of the pirates.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



> Pirates continued

players to farm various resources. These resources are required for ship-building. A number of players will have to work to work together to produce any one ship, and they will all reap the rewards. These ships, of course, are set to be lost in combat, and so the captains who sail them will always need more.

The Player versus Player features of the game are centred around this resource battle aspect. Players can contest the ownership of ports for their faction by hanging around and attacking other ships in the vicinity. As the level of contention increases players push the town towards a decisive battle. Once the battle kicks off players from the contesting factions are all invited to join and fight for the port.



It's a long time to be at sea without female company.

"It has the whiff of classic pirate storytelling"

While it's not quite as open or free as the territorial conflict in, say, EVE Online, it is a remarkably strong concept for the player-combat endgame.

Pirates of the Burning Sea isn't quite as robust or polished as many gamers would have hoped, but it nevertheless has the whiff of classic pirate storytelling, as well as a broad massively multiplayer world, complete with the conflict and economic complexity that gives the best such games their long-term appeal.

Jim Rossignol



PCGZine Verdict

Riches to be found on treacherous waters.

- Loads of quests in a fun world
- Stimulating long PvP game
- Still a little patchy

90%



The Club

No joining fee and a free AK47 for your first session!

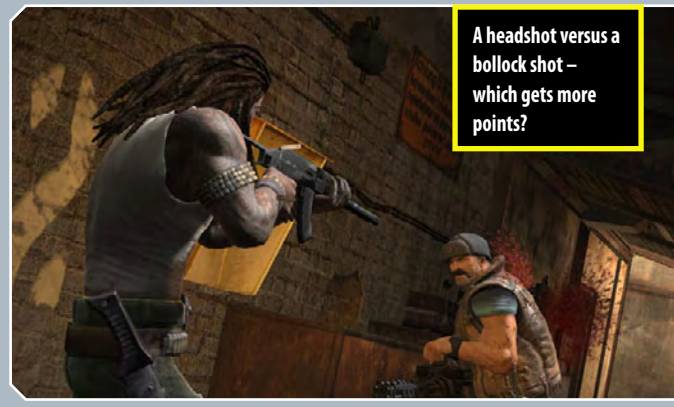
Publisher: SEGA
Developer: Bizarre Creations
Heritage: Project Gotham Racing 4 (Xbox 360)
Link: www.bizarrecreations.com/games/the_club
OUT NOW!

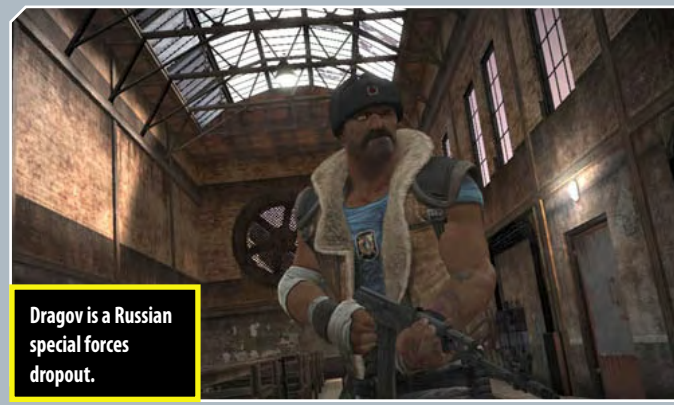
System Requirements: Windows XP / Vista, CPU: Pentium 2.4GHz or Athlon XP 2400+ 1GB RAM, Graphics Card: GeForce 6600 / Radeon X1600, DirectX 9 Compatible Sound Card, 2GB Hard Drive Space

Remember Fight Club and the rules? The Club is remarkably similar in principle, gathering a group of mental vigilantes to do battle in seedy locations that, if you could smell them, would stink of piss, smoke and rotting flesh. Instead of bloody fist fights, The Club revolves around all-out war, televised for the pleasure of the sick organiser. The characters you can play are all brilliantly realised comic book heroes that range from a giant Russian special forces dropout called Dragov to Renwick, an NYPD cop who wants to break the fighting ring and its hold on the higher echelons of the police force. He's even spending his own money to fund his undercover work in a bid for glory, fame and seeing that those pesky criminals are put behind bars. Renwick's storyline mixes Beverly Hills Cop and Scooby Doo flawlessly and though it's nothing that you wouldn't expect from a Hollywood blockbuster, it's good to see polished characters and plot in a video game.



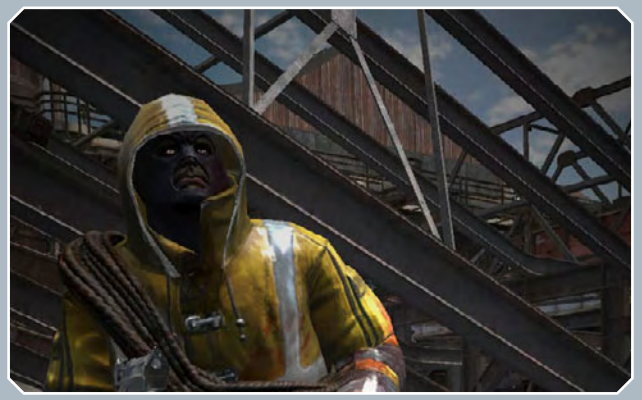






Get out alive!

From the very beginning, there's stacks of guns, grenades and turrets in each level and the objective is simply to get out alive, running and gunning as you go. Keep your kill rate up and your kill meter keeps increasing. It's a similar technique to the 'kudos' points system seen in the Xbox 360 racer Project Gotham Racing 4, produced by the same developers as The Club. In PGR 4, the aim was to drive to impress, earning kudos along the way, as well as crossing the finish line in time. The Club features a clock and a kill meter which is essentially 'kudos' by another name. Shoot enemies in quick succession to build point combos and hit them between the eyes for even more points. Despite the awkward controls, the race to the finish line is fun, but there's not the kind of depth seen in shooters like Call of Duty 4. The Club feels more like an arcade racing game due to the relentless pace which never stops. The unashamedly arcade >



>The Club continued

design of The Club means you can play it for a satisfying 30 minute session and have fun, as long as you don't miss the stealth and realism of modern FPS games. There's a satisfying selection of weapons and lack of ammo is never a problem when speeding through the impressive levels made up of a prison, mansion house and er, a German steel factory. For older readers, The Club could've easily appeared ten years ago such is the simplicty of the gamplay and it's no coincidence that arcade experts Sega are publishing the game across all formats. Which is a problem in itself because The Club is an arcade game, custom built for consoles and gamers who merely flick from the latest episode of CSI to the next 30 minute bullet frenzy of The Club. If you're a PC gamer after console bite-sized thrills, that's great but if you've logged half a lifetime playing Call of Duty 4 online, then The Club could feel like a Fisher Price first-person shooter rather than the strategy and stealth epic you were expecting. ● ***Richard Melville***



Yes, there's blood, lots of it but it's more for the shock factor than an attempt to be realistic.

"Levels made up of a prison, mansion house and German steel factory"



Say goodbye to stealth and hello to getting up close and personal with every enemy.



His elbow had been bad since tennis with Geoffrey.

THE RUNNING MAN

Because you can't, you won't and you don't stop...



The end of the road | **Ready for war** | **Running with rockets**

The end of the road

See the end of the path? You'll need to run towards the target and prepare to shoot while sprinting. But it's not an Olympic sport, so be prepared for an ambush. Eyes left, eyes right and go go go! At this exact moment, you'll wish your character had wheels instead of legs. We expect the developers feel exactly the same too.

PCGZine Verdict

A fun but brainless shooter that manages to feel a bit like the London Marathon.

- Decent, original visuals
- Great characters
- Lacks depth

70%



Armado

Publisher: http://www.trickysoftware.com/products.html
Developer: Tricky Software
Price: £9.99

Armado is a charming coming-of-age tale of a young Armadillo that's been firmly aimed at children. A simple platformer, Armado plays out almost like Donkey Kong in 3D, as the somewhat generic plot sees you guiding your young Armadillo to the top of seven mountains, to place an egg in seven ancient nests. While it's quite obviously been aimed at the younger player, what's on display here is very impressive, and should keep children occupied for many an hour to come. We didn't even know that Armadillos laid eggs, but then again, we also didn't know that cats are actually baby dogs until our friend told us under oath.

- Fun gameplay
- Easily accessible
- Good story

Armadillo to the rescue **80%**



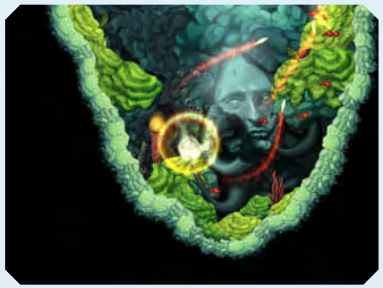
Mr. Robot

Publisher : http://www.moonpod.com/English/about_mr.robot.php
Developer : Moonpod
Price : £14.95

Mr. Robot is one of those games where, although it certainly looks good, its beauty is more than skin deep. Crammed with references to popular robotics culture (the main character's named Asimov, for one), Mr. Robot is a 3D-but-isometric platform game, set aboard a spaceship carrying cryogenically frozen human colonists to a new world. When things go wrong, it's up to you to make your way through the ship, solving a variety of puzzles as you progress through each room, shifting crates, hacking enemies, and flirting with the female robots as you go. Futurama's Bender would have a ball (bearing).

- Asimov
- Good puzzles
- Makes you think

Number 5 is alive **87%**



Aquaria

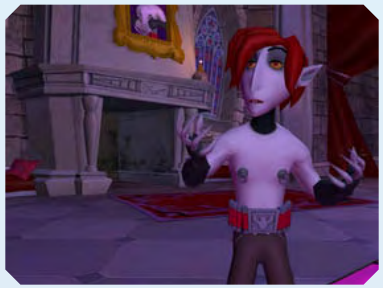
Publisher : www.bit-blot.com/aquaria
Developer : Bit Blot
Price : $30 (~£15)

PCGZine GOLD

Quite simply, Aquaria is one of the most beautiful games we've ever played. An enchanting mixture of hand-drawn graphics and ethereal music, Aquaria puts you into the flippers of Naija, a young amphibious girl, who's embarking on an adventure to discover whether or not she's the last one of her kind. With a simple "click the mouse where you want to go" control scheme, a huge underwater world and production values that are out of this world, this is quite simply one of the best indie games ever, and a game you must play.

- Gorgeous
- Hypnotising
- A bit expensive

Enchanting **90%**



Sam & Max : Night of the Raving Dead

Publisher : Telltale Games
Developer : Telltale Games
Price : $8.95 (~£4.50)

PCGZine GOLD

We don't know how they do it, but these Sam & Max episodes just keep getting better. The latest candidate for the "Best use of five pounds" award, Raving Dead sees everyone's favourite (and only) dog and rabbit cop combo sent to stop a scourge of zombies. With the same hilarious dialogue, brilliantly written plot, and puzzles that'll have you scratching your head 'til the early hours of the morning, Night of the Raving Dead is yet another must buy from Telltale, a great point-and-click.

- Hilarious
- Brilliant Characterisation
- Great puzzles

To die for **90%**



Knytt Stories

Publisher : http://nifflas.ni2.se/index.php?main=02Knytt_Stories
Developer : Nifflas' Games
Price : Free!

With a cutesy 2D side-scrolling perspective, Knytt Stories is an original little 2D platformer, with an emphasis on creativity. Running in a tiny windowed screen, it's obvious this game isn't about the visuals, but rather about the gameplay, and the creativity of the community. In all honesty, as a game, Knytt Stories is a fairly standard 2D platformer, with the same generic left, right, climb, jump controls we're all used to, but the fact it's free, and the quality of the levels the community output on a daily basis make this well worth a look. Who knows, you may even get so sucked in that you'll be getting involved in level making too.

- Original concept
- Plenty of extra levels
- A bit bland

A Knytt in shining armour **74%**

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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

WORLD IN SLOWDOWN

When I'm playing World in Conflict using the DirectX 9 mode I don't have any performance problems - the benchmark returns about 30FPS with everything on Very High – but when I switch to the DirectX 10 mode the average drops to 13FPS. Is this usual, my system is Vista 64-bit, Intel Q6600, 4MB of memory with 2x 8800GTS?

> *That is a mighty system but we hate to say it, we've seen the same huge drop in frame rates when switching to the DirectX 10 rendering path. You should also be aware that the NVIDIA SLI system only works with games it directly supports. Make sure your driver is up-to-date as otherwise the SLI may not be used. But in general you'll never spot the difference between the DirectX 10 and 9 paths anyway, so don't lose sleep over it.*



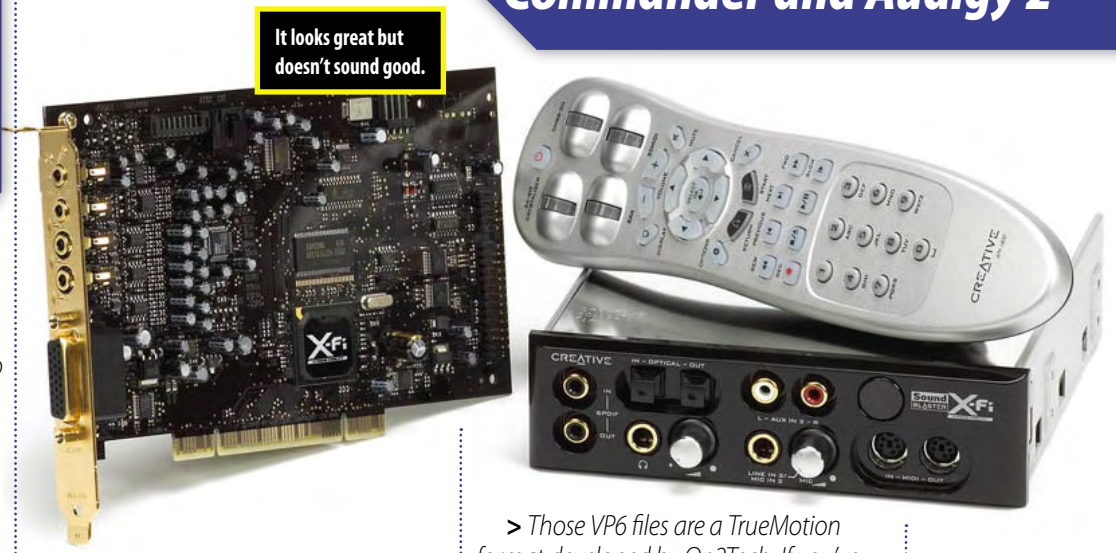
It's not the size of your explosion, it's what you do with it.

SOUND COMMANDER

Having tried and really enjoyed the Supreme Commander demo without any problems, I was somewhat annoyed to find I'm having real performance and sound issues with the full game. With the sounds and music breaking up and crackling. I've tried using both my Audigy 2 and onboard sound with the same result.

> *There seem to be a running issue with the Creative Audigy 2 and Supreme Commander. While there is no direct fix, one suggestion is to open the Creative Audio Console from the Start Menu, select the EAX tab and move the Effects slider to 0. The same problem has been reported for certain onboard sound controllers as well. A combination of motherboard BIOS updates and grabbing the latest drivers have helped. It's also worth trying this: open the Control Panel, selecting Sounds and Audio Devices > Audio Tab > Advanced... button > Performance tab and move the Sample rate to Good and even try reducing the Hardware Acceleration to Basic.*

"There seems to be a running issue with Supreme Commander and Audigy 2"



It looks great but doesn't sound good.

NEED FOR VIDEO

I'm running the 64-bit version of Vista and I've installed NFS Carbon without a problem. The issue is that initially when I ran it the game crashed, but removing the Movies folder from its game folder helped it run without a problem. The files in there all end with .vp6, how can I get these to play without crashing the game?

> *Those VP6 files are a TrueMotion format developed by On2Tech. If you've installed the game correctly these should play, but it sounds like your system is missing the correct Codec. Do a search for VP6 Decoder or download it from www.moviecodec.com/downloads/16d.html this should sort out the problem.*



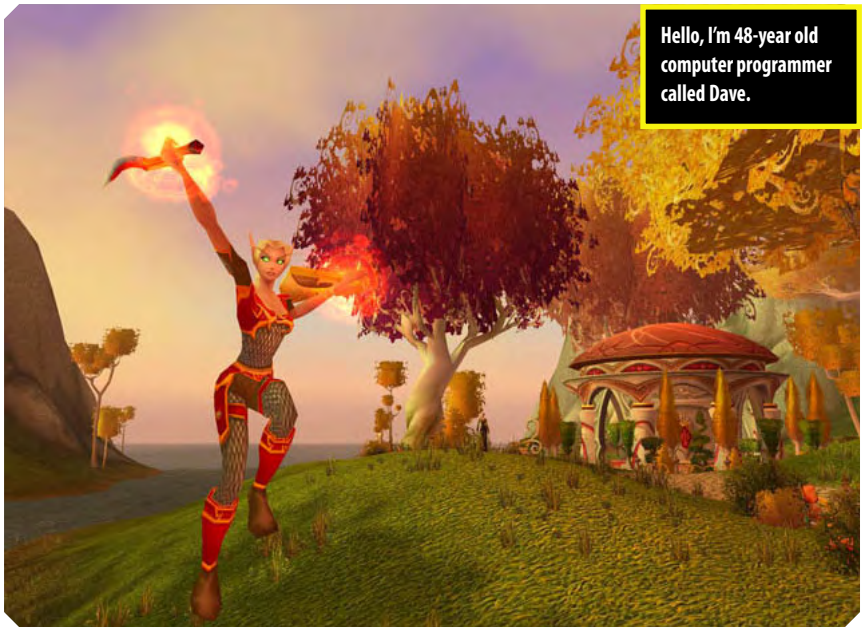
When I tap the dashboard, I'd like you to floor it.

Tech Support


It's a beautiful sight but not if you're busted.

> **PUNK BUSTED**
Having installed Vista Ultimate 32-bit edition when I try and join a ranked server in BF2 I get booted as PunkBuster says it has inadequate privileges. I've tried running it in compatability mode and turning off the firewall but with no success.

> *For most people the solution is very simple, right-click the game's shortcut, select the Compatability tab and check Administrator privileges. This should sort you out. If you're still having problems take a trip to www.evenbalance.com and use the Support link to grab the update tool. We should warn that some people have tried a dual-boot XP & Vista system This can seem like a good idea but it can trigger a cheat alert – as it thinks you're running multiple PCs – which could end up having you banned.*


Hello, I'm 48-year old computer programmer called Dave.

VISUAL WOW
I've just installed WoW and so far every time I try it after three minutes the screen goes blank and comes back with an error message saying the display driver has stopped responding but Windows has successfully recovered. This is my first time using Vista and I'm wondering if there's a patch for this?

> *This sounds like a known problem with the integrated Intel graphics, specifically the 945/950GM for desktops and laptops. You'll need to head off to http://downloadcenter.intel.com, click the Graphics link on the left and choose the correct Desktop or Laptop chipset. You may find it easier to locate an updated driver from the system's manufacturer's support site. If you're having trouble identifying your graphics chipset try GPU-Z from www.techpowerup.com/downloads/SysInfo/GPU-Z*

AN OLD VIEW
I've just got a new Vista PC but I can't seem to get any games to run. All I get is a message that no compatible Direct3D library can be found. Can you provide a link to the files?

> *First off Vista comes with standard DirectX 9 and DirectX 10 files, however more recent DirectX 9 games do require Vista to be updated. Head to www.microsoft.com/downloads and click the DirectX link on the left and grab the End-user Runtime and use this to update Vista. If after this you're still having problems with a specific missing DLL search for this at www.dll-files.com.*

"However, more recent DirectX 9 games do require Vista to be updated"

NO SIM, NO CRY
I recently installed The Sims 2 on my Vista PC, which I thought went perfectly but whenever I try to run it I see The Sims 2 startup picture and then I get a message saying it has stopped working. Any ideas?

> *One possible cause is a dirty CD/DVD which could cause problems with the copy protection. You can also update the copy protection software at www.macrovision.com/promolanding/7352.htm. You should also nab the latest patch from www.thesims2.com, click the Help > Patch links and grab either the CD or DVD patch for your relevant version.*


I've noticed you're playing the Sims, so I've come to take your remaning life from you.

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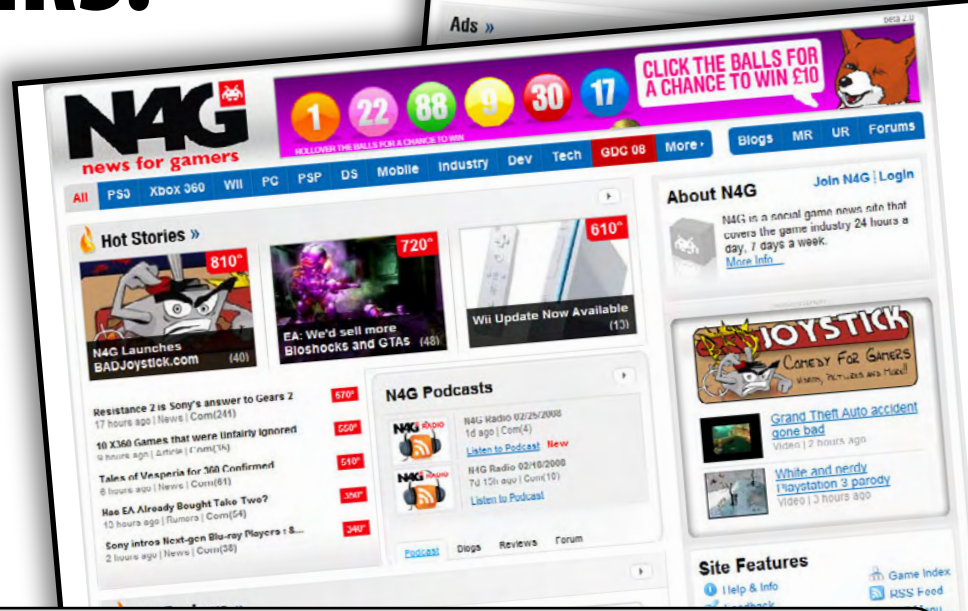
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