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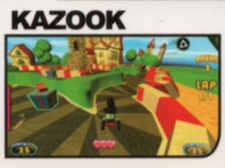
WHY ARE WE WAITING?
AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE PS3 DELAY

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ONLINE DISC!
THE LATEST PS3 TRAILERS!
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INSIDE ON PSP!




KAZOOK


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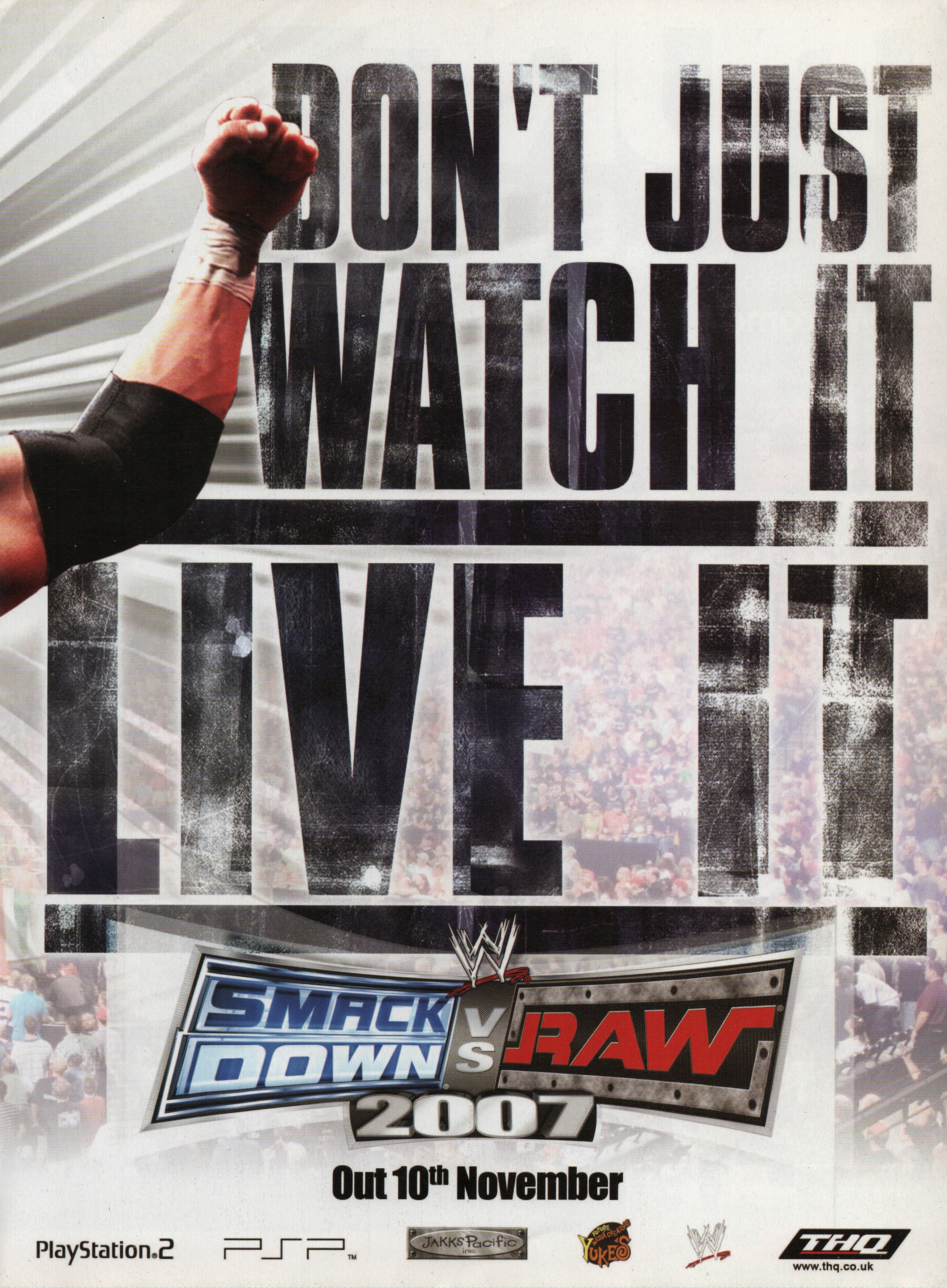


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Welcome

So Sony managed to ruin a number of people's Christmases and give their rivals a clear run at the festive games market. Are we surprised? Not really. Never mind, we still have our PSP's to keep us warm and filled with gaming goodness until the PS3 fianlly surfaces on our shores early next year. Rest assured we will still be bringing you all the latest news and info on the upcoming PS3 games and of course our usual excellent coverage of all things PS3. With the likes of Kazook, Mortal Kombat and of course FIFA there is plenty to keep your thumbs busy this month and with Christmas coming you know the shelves are going to be groaning soon with a whole plethora of new titles to get to grips with. And don't forget to check out our exclusive look at the latest action packed shooter from Eidos, sadly no well stacked Lara from the Eidos boys this time around.



FEATURES

024 WHY ARE WE WAITING

We take a closer look at why the PS3 has been delayed for release in Europe. Has Sony simply lived up to its previous form?

072 MYSTERY SHOPPER

Our mystery man takes to the streets to find out who knows what and where to get it when it comes to a nice shiny PS3.

108 10 USES FOR YOUR PS3 MONEY

Why waste your saved up PS3 money when you can spend it on all these wonderful things?

LOADING

Previews of all-new games

Chili Con Carnage	32
Sonic The Hedgehog	38
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	42
Blazing Angels: Sqaudrons of WWII	43
Gun Showdown	44
Metro 2033: The Last Refuge	48
The Darkness	50
Blade Storm	52
Family Guy	54
Turok	56
Heavenly Sword	58
Brothers in Arms: Hells Highway	60
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories	62
Football Manager Handheld 2007	64
EA Replay	64
Medal of Honor: Heroes	65
Death Jr 2: Root of all Evil	66
Cannon Fodder	66
Toca Race Driver 3 Challenge	67
Ace Combat X: Skies of Deception	68
LA Rush	69

FILTER

Every UK release reviewed

Mortal Kombat: Unchained	76
FIFA 07	78
Power Stone Collection	79
Metal Slug Anthology	80
Ford Street Racing: LA Duel	80
Moto GP	83
50 Cent Bulletproof G-Unit Edition	84
KAZook	85
NBA Live 07	86
Taito Legends Power Up	86
Passport To... London/Paris	87

90 HARDWARE If you can strap it onto or slap it around your PSP, we review it right here. Everything to pimp your console. Check out PS3 goodies from next issue.

97 MMI

Music, Movies and the Internet - all the portable and PS3 entertainment your brain can handle!

REGULARS

In every issue of PURE

Focus: The latest Playstation News	06
US and Japanese Release Schedules	18
Last Writes	20
UK Release Schedule	22
Back Issues	82
Subscriptions	88
Access All Areas	92
Next Issue	114

COMPETITIONS

Win! Win! Win! Win! Win! Win!

KAZooK	13
Warrior King	17
FIFA 07	20

SUBSCRIBE TO PURE TODAY!
Turn to Page 88 Now!

On The Online Disc

Why bother with a disc on the cover when we can bring you a continually evolving and updating disc that will give you all the latest footage as soon as it's available? Don't forget to check back throughout the month for updates.

STAR WARS FORCE PRE-VIS

See the footage that convinced Lucasarts to go next generation with this amazing look at internal tech footage.



NINJA GAIDEN: SIGMA

The world's slickest NInja game makes it way to PS3 with this polished trailer kicking off the action



NEED FOR SPEED CARBON

See gameplay footage of the new canyon racing then take to the track and witness some insane drifting action.



DEVIL MAY CRY 4

Dante's back and we've got not only a trailer but also the chance to see the game in action with stunning gameplay footage.



Also Available

See all the latest footage and trailers from both PS3 and now with added PSP goodness:

- L.A. Noire
- Monster Kingdom
- Rainbow Six: Vegas-Dante's Hotel
- Exit 2
- The Hustle
- Motorstorm
- Marvel Ultimate Alliance
- Virtua Fighter 5

And much more!

How to View

Visit www.pure-magazine.co.uk, click on the online disc logo, answer the simple question to prove you are an honest-to-goodness PURE reader and enjoy.

Online Disc

38 SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

The aging blue erinaceine gets a new leaseof next-gen life.

FOCUS

HANDHELD AND HOT OFF THE PRESSES

LIKE A GIANT POLARISED LENS GAZING INTO THE TROUT LAKE OF GAMING... OR SOMETHING

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NO PS3 PRICE CUT IN EUROPE

BUT HDMI PORT FOR BOTH MODELS

Sony has announced a price cut of the 20 GB version of the PlayStation 3 in Japan, a reduction of just over 20%. However, Sony has insisted that no changes will be made to prices in other territories, including the US and Europe.

Sony Worldwide Studios president Phil Harrison commented: "We started by calculating the price for the US and European territories by looking at what consumers considered the 'magic price points'. In these territories, the prices we announced were very well accepted. We then converted that price to yen without giving consideration to 'magic price points'. The feedback was not supportive, so we lowered the price."

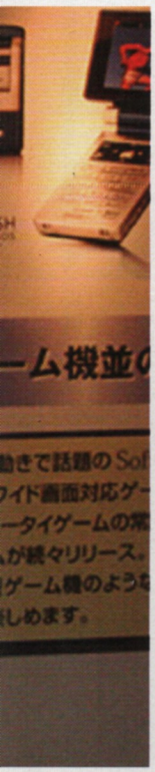
"THE JAPANESE USERS WOULD NOT STOP SAYING A PRICE TAG OF OVER ¥60,000, INCLUDING TAX, WAS TOO EXPENSIVE."

The Japanese re-pricing was first revealed by Sony Computer Entertainment CEO Ken Kutaragi in his rambling keynote speech at this year's Tokyo Game Show. The price was slashed from ¥62,790 (£284) to ¥49,980 (£226). Kutaragi explained, "The Japanese users and media would not stop saying a price tag of over ¥60,000, including tax, was too expensive." Not surprising, since this was over twice as expensive as the now reduced Xbox 360 at ¥29,800 and the Nintendo Wii at just ¥25,000.

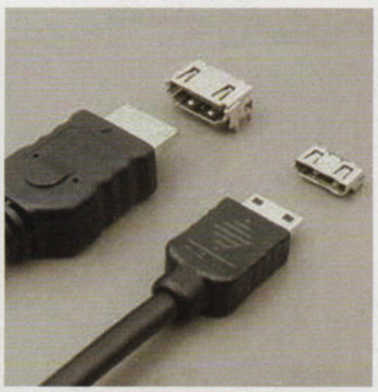
Disappointingly, there were no major game announcements in Kutaragi's TGS speech, but one very good piece of news is that the HDMI port will now be included on both models of the PS3 worldwide. Formerly, back at the E3 show in May, Sony had announced that this digital output for High-Definition televisions would only be present on the 60 GB model. However, it appears that an HDMI cable won't be bundled with the PS3 - at least if Sony Europe follows SCEA's lead in North America. As well as keeping Sony's costs down, the omission may be due to the fact that most PS3 purchasers won't



"We're not going to ask the consumers to suddenly buy another PlayStation console in five years"
Kaz Hirai SCEA President Page 16











own an HDMI-compatible TV, and those that do will already have a cable.

Kutaragi also confirmed that the PS3 owners will be able to play emulated PSone and PS2 games directly via the online service, starting with a limited selection of games that place a relatively small burden on the network but with plans to expand the range as the technology progresses. However, a claim that the service will also offer Mega Drive titles has been denied by SEGA - it appears to have been a mistranslation. Kutaragi also revealed that the PS3 will offer a Global Mapping System (GMS) which will enable users to upload photos and information about their surroundings, creating a detailed view of the world around them. He added that through this system, and interaction with developers, consumers would be able to play an active role in future game development.

Although Kutaragi made no mention of PS3 game prices, it has since been confirmed that the launch games will be priced at $59.99 in the US - the same as Xbox 360 titles. This snuffs the rumours that games could cost anywhere between $75 and $90. It would also suggest a price point of £49.99 in the UK (although expect many retailers to discount them to £39.99).

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

66%

of secondary pupils in England and Wales back the idea of using computer games in lessons

OUT OF FOCUS

Stuff you need to know about this month



23 OCT
Robbie Williams releases his new Rudebox album featuring 17 tracks including 'Dickhead'. There's also a special edition with bonus DVD.

3 NOV
Please, you look... Borat the movie is released in cinemas, starring everyone's favourite Kazakhstani reporter on a road trip across the US.

6 NOV
Catch up with another day in the life of agent Jack Bauer as he comes out of retirement for 24 Season Five on DVD.



BITESIZE

Ten-second stories

PSP GPS RECEIVER

REVEALED AT TOKYO GAME SHOW

The much anticipated GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) receiver for the PSP was shown to the public for the first time at this year's Tokyo Game Show.



Able to detect your exact position on the planet to within five metres, the system will be launched in Japan on 7 December for ¥6,000 (£27). No launch date or pricing details have yet been announced for Europe or North America.

Disappointingly, there was no demonstration of the device in use, but it looks fairly compact and weighs a mere 16 grams (just over half an ounce). There were also no new software announcements - currently four titles are slated to use the system: *Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops, Minna no Golf-jou (Everybody's Golf), Planetarium Creator: Homestar Portable* (which will use the PSP's location to produced an accurate map of the stars from that position) and *Navigation Soft* (a standard satellite navigation system for your car or while walking, complete with updateable maps and a database of nearby shops and facilities).

The GPS receiver's specifications are as follows:

- **Reception Frequency:** 1575.42MHz (L1 ban, C/A code)
- **Reception System:** 20 Channels
- **Reception Sensitivity:** Following: -153dBm, Captured: -140dBm
- **Position Update Interval:** Approximately 1 second
- **Position Precision:** 5m (2DRAMS, -130dBm)
- **Hardware size:** 45mm x 41mm x 17mm (Width x Height x Depth)
- **Weight:** Approximately 16 grams







NINJA GAIDEN SNEAKS ONTO PS3

NEW FEATURES INCLUDE PLAYING AS RACHEL

The formerly Xbox-exclusive *Ninja Gaiden combat* game is on its way to the PlayStation 3 next year. Tecmo development studio Team Ninja is working on *Ninja Gaiden Sigma* for Sony's next-gen console.

Although it bears a lot of similarities to the old Xbox games, and even incorporates a complete version of the original *Ninja Gaiden* with enhanced graphics, *Sigma* will also feature brand-new content including the chance to play as voluptuous demon hunter Rachel, armed with her trusty warhammer. There are changes to the gameplay too, including the ability for ninja Ryu Hayabusa to double-wield blades to really slice up the enemies. As before, Ryu can run on water and uses this technique in one scene to avoid giant piranha fish while fighting helicopter drones. He also gets to play with new weapons such as a 'Musoushingetsukon' which looks like a long pike. Among the mixture of old and new environments, there are new enemies to watch out for - including thugs on motorbikes and Gamov, the sly investigator only seen previously in cut-scenes, as a boss wielding twin pistols.



Ken Kutaragi
CEO Sony Computer Entertainment
"Only when systems are open do we have innovation"



PSP CAMERA IN FOCUS

SWIVELS THROUGH 180 DEGREES

The long-awaited PSP camera was finally demonstrated at this year's Tokyo Game Show.

Fitting on top of the PSP, and attached to the USB port, the chrome 1.3 megapixel camera swivels through 180 degrees to face forward or backwards - to point at a subject or yourself - with the screen acting as a large viewfinder. Photos can be taken at either 480x272 or 640x480 resolution, while videos can be captured at full PSP resolution (480x272) at 30 frames per second for up to 15 seconds. There's also a digital zoom.

An editing application comes with the camera, enabling you to alter your photos and videos with any of 72 effects, such as adding captions and borders and even background music. Videos can also be exported to AVI format for playback on a PC. So far there's no mention of any games that will use the camera, although Sony's London Studio - creator of the EyeToy Play series - is said to have been working on ideas for compatible games.

Dubbed 'Chotto Shotto' (Quick Snap), the PSP camera is launched in Japan on 2 November for ¥5,000 (£23). Sony is yet to announce details of the European launch.

BITESIZE

Ten-second stories

GUITAR HERO FOR PS3

With downloadable songs

Activision has confirmed that it is set to bring the popular axe-thrashing music game *Guitar Hero* to other formats in 2007. In his keynote speech at a recent business conference, CEO and chairman Robert Kotick revealed the news: "You can expect next calendar year launches of *Guitar Hero* on every significant new format." So expect it to be hitting all three next-gen consoles, including PS3. Kotick also mentioned the possibility of offering music downloads for the franchise, so we can probably expect a similar online store to the one used in Sony's own *SingStar* PS3 karaoke game. Meanwhile, for those with twitchy plectrum fingers, Guitar Hero II is due for release on PS2 on 7 November.



SEGA GETS DEEP FRIED

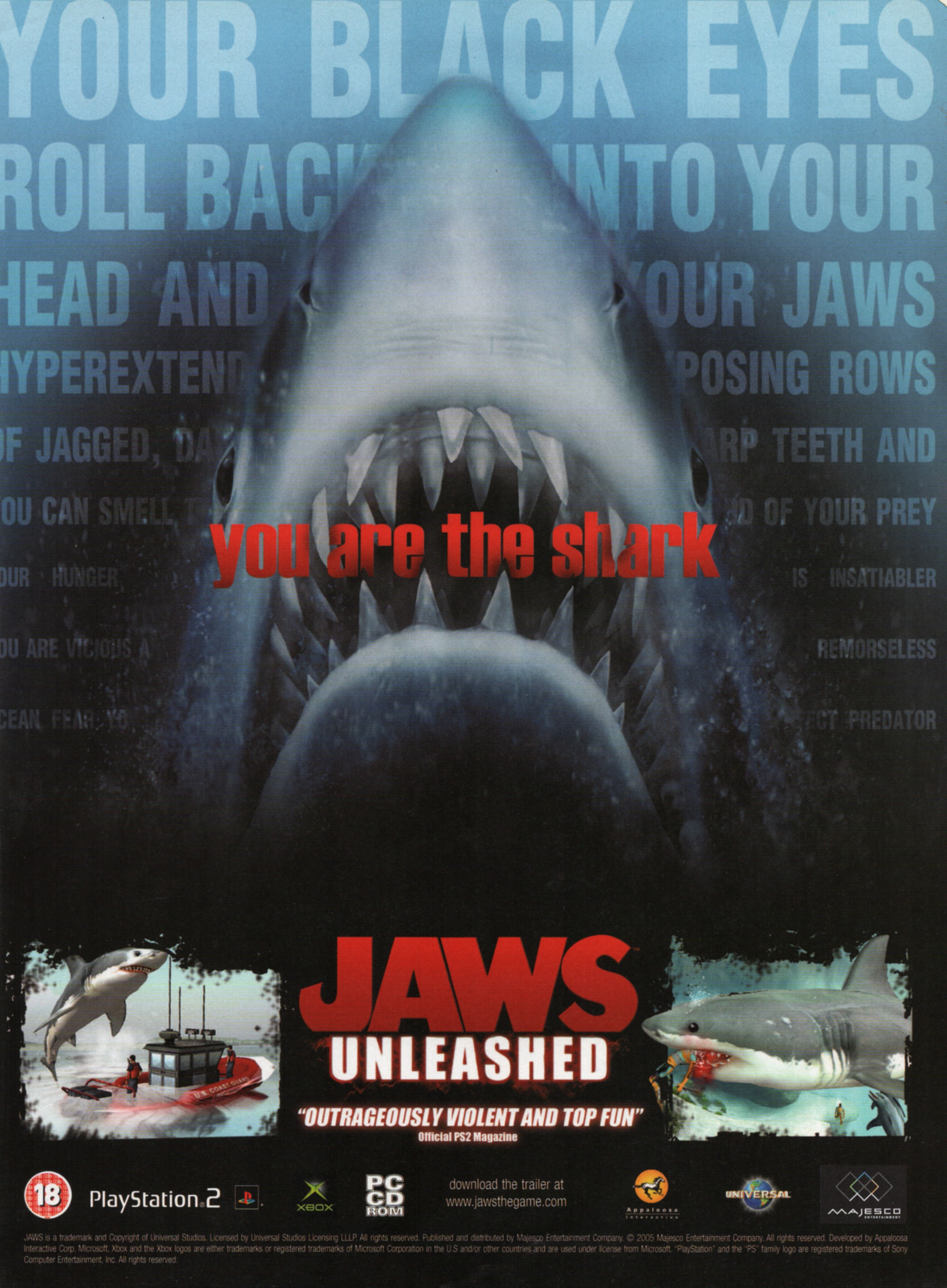
Handheld developer signed up

SEGA has signed a deal with Deep Fried Entertainment to develop new game content for the PSP. Based in Vancouver, Deep Fried was founded in August 2005 by five industry veterans, with the intention of focusing on handheld gaming platforms. The firm is a licensed PSP and Nintendo DS developer.



"SEGA understands the handheld market like few other publishers," commented Deep Fried Entertainment CEO Brenda Bailey. "This understanding of the market, coupled with SEGA's deep respect for creativity and innovation, makes the company an ideal partner for our team."

The deal is the latest in a string of similar announcements from SEGA that underscore the company's increased emphasis on Western content development, including partnerships with developers such as Silicon Knights, Bizarre Creations, Planet Moon Studios and Pseudo Interactive.



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LET IT POUR

RAIN FALLS ONTO PS3

Not to be confused with the similarly named *Heavy Rain* (an adventure by Quantic Dream), *Rain* is a completely different kettle of water.

Developed by Artoon, it's a far cry from their cutesy *Blinx games*, as the playable demo at the Tokyo Game Show revealed. Formerly known as Vampire's Rain, this is a far darker affair: a stealth action game with a scary horror storyline. You play a rookie special operative in rain-soaked Los Angeles (eh?), where face-eating vampires with phenomenal strength and agility roam the streets. Trouble is, they look like normal humans so you have to use a mini-radar or night vision to spot them and creep stealthily past in your black suit. Get spotted and they'll quickly go for your jugular unless you're dead handy with a pistol. The game is highly reminiscent of *Splinter Cell* but with the gory horror aspect and, naturally, lots of rain - it's pissing it down. Looks very impressive though. *Rain* is due out in Japan at the end of this year. No news on a European release yet.







FATAL INERTIA UPGRADE

NEW FEATURES FOR EUROPE

The postponement of the PlayStation 3's European launch till next March is obviously disappointing, but every cloud has a silver lining.

One good bit of news is that Koei is adding extra features to the European version of its *Fatal Inertia* game, all thanks to the extended development time offered by the delayed launch. Details are yet to be confirmed, but new features include compatibility with the PS3 controller's tilt function to steer your futuristic craft in this *Wipeout*-style racer.

Koei's UK sales manager Will Curley commented, "The PS3 delay will actually enable UK gamers to get the best possible iteration of *Fatal Inertia*. More time for the developers is always a good thing. They will have much more time to further familiarise themselves with the intricacies of the PS3 and make *Fatal Inertia* as slick and polished as it can possibly be. There are always cool ideas that have to be left out of the final game due to deadline constraints but now they will have more time to add additional features."









NO PS3 ONLINE PLAY

FOR *TONY HAWK'S* AND *VIRTUA TENNIS*

Activision and SEGA have confirmed that their launch titles *Tony Hawk's Project 8* and *Virtua Tennis 3*, respectively, will not include any online features (such as a multiplayer mode) on the PlayStation 3.

In the case of *Tony Hawk's*, it is thought that developer Neversoft received the final software libraries too late to implement online features in time for the November launch in North America. As it had no idea of how the online elements would work on the PS3, it decided to drop them. Meanwhile the Xbox 360 version of the game will allow up to eight players to skate it out online and compete on permanent leaderboards, with the possibility of future downloadable content.

No explanation has been given for the dropping of online play from *Virtua Tennis 3*. A statement from SEGA merely read: "*Virtua Tennis 3* PS3 does not have an online mode confirmed at this time." Again, the Xbox 360 version will feature online play via Xbox Live. Neither company has yet commented on the possibility of adding online features to the European versions of the games for the PS3 launch here in March.





ENTER THE LAIR

DRAGONS UNLEASHED ON PS3

Debuting in playable form at this year's Tokyo Game Show was *Lair*, a PS3-exclusive game from Sony where you play a dragon rider in a fantasy shoot-em-up.

The game makes use of the PS3 controller's tilt function, so you just need to tilt left and right to steer your flying dragon, while moving the controller up or down affects its height. There are also special 'gestures' you can perform, such as pulling the controller back to do a 180° turn, and moving it quickly in a direction to dash towards an enemy. You can even shake the controller madly to smash certain objects you grab hold of.

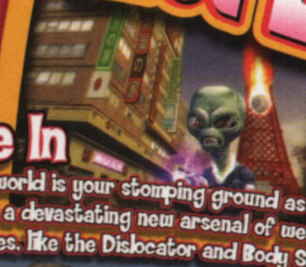
Locking onto foes, you can shoot fireballs at them or fight them via a multi-phase melee system. The latter sees you flying alongside so that you can ram them. The next phase pits you in head-on combat, pressing button combos to claw and maul your enemy. Finally, you get to perform a finishing move by following on-screen directions, *God of War* style. You can also land your dragon on terra firma to indulge in some ground-based fighting on the battlefield, trampling and frazzling enemy troops.

Developed by Factor 5, best known for its Star Wars shoot-em-up games such as Rogue Squadron, *Lair* is due for release on PS3 next year.

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!® 2

SEQUEL TO THE SMASH HIT OF 2005

Make War, Not Love!



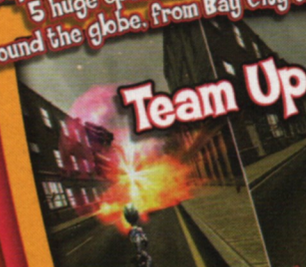
Tune In

The world is your stomping ground as you unleash a devastating new arsenal of weapons and abilities, like the Dislocator and Body Snatching



Turn On

Drop into the Swinging 60's and explore 5 huge open world environments around the globe, from Bay City to Tunguska



Team Up

Play with a friend and wreak havoc as you vaporise the human race together

OUT OCTOBER 27TH

15

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GAMES GOB

THE VOICE OF UNREASON

MEDIA BASHING, AGAIN?

Well it's getting towards the time of year when the shelves are stacked with new games and wouldn't you know it, the press are lining up once again to deride the 'evil' that is gaming. A recent and completely one-sided report on *Tonight With Trevor McDonald* would have you believe that games playing was something close to being a member of some sort of satanic virgin-slaughtering cult. After parading a bunch of 'cases', in which most of the kids just needed a good talking to and maybe some parental guidance, the programme then proceeded to blame games for everything from anti-social behaviour to suicide. As gamers we've all spent many years hearing from an ill-informed press that our hobby is somehow wrong, but who is actually here to defend us? Shaun Woodward the Minister for Creative Industries and Tourism, or the 'Games Minister'

"OUR HOBBY IS SOMEHOW WRONG, BUT WHO IS ACTUALLY HERE TO DEFEND US?"

as many have nicknamed him, recently gave a statement that the government up to a very high level, even intimating that the Prime Minister himself, feels the press gives a very raw deal to the games industry. Now did he give this statement to Paxman on *Newsnight*? Did he hold a press conference to give the government's stance on these regular media witch hunts? No, he gave it to an industry-only magazine that does not see widespread readership outside of the actual games industry itself. The time has come for the enjoyment of gaming to be accepted and no longer an easy target of ill-informed tabloids and TV shows looking to make a quick headline. There are many more ills out there to hurt people than a simple bit of gaming, I agree it shouldn't be taken to extremes but, much like anything in life, everything is good in moderation. Maybe the tabloids and programme producers should be concentrating on the continual diet of sleaze, violence and celebrity obsession they feed everyone as possibly a major factor in the attitude of society today. And as a final point, does anyone remember when Trevor McDonald used to report on real news?



OBLIVION FOR PS3 & PSP

Elder Scrolls RPG coming to Sony machines

Bethesda's epic RPG *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* is heading to both the PlayStation 3 and PSP.

The PS3 version of the game will feature new content, including a new faction called the Knights of the Nine, who are on the side of good. Executive producer Todd Howard explained, "Oblivion has these really good character archetypes for evil. It has the Dark Brotherhood: you get your outfit, you feel like an assassin, you feel like an evil guy, you role-play like an evil guy. We [didn't] have the opposite end of that. There [was] very little reward for being a goody two-shoes." We can also expect new weapons, armour, items, characters and even locations. Meanwhile the PSP version will have similar gameplay but take place in a completely different setting. No release dates have been set for the two games.

Originally released on PC and Xbox 360 in March, *Oblivion* won many plaudits for its open-ended, freeform gameplay in a truly massive world. It has no multiplayer mode and is an entirely offline adventure where you take on quests, join a guild, engage in gladiatorial combat or just potter around at your own pace.



GT PSP NOT CANNED

But development on hold

Developer Polyphony Digital has denied that it has cancelled *Gran Turismo 4* Mobile on the PSP.

However, it has put the project on hold while finishing off *Gran Turismo HD* for the PlayStation 3. A company statement read: "We can categorically deny all speculation which suggests that PDI is not developing a GT franchise game for the PSP. In fact, we've reached the stage where a *GT4* equivalent runs on the PSP hardware. However, our main focus at present is the development and release of a GT title for the PS3 platform. Once this has been completed, we can return to, and jump-start, development for the PSP version. In regards to release dates and details, we'll be making further announcements at a later date."

Polyphony is also developing *Gran Turismo 5* for PS3, due for release in 2008, while the PS2 will get *Gran Turismo* for Boys which is aimed at younger players.



■ The internet gossip-mongers are claiming that a new version of the PSP will be released next spring, featuring a slimmer design, built-in camera and possibly 8 GB of flash memory. However, it's highly unlikely to have twin analogue sticks, as some have reported.

■ We've heard word that *Grand Theft Auto* might be hitting the Nintendo Wii (in addition to the PS3 and Xbox 360). This follows interview comments from Nintendo of America president Reggie Fils-Aime that he was discussing support of the machine with Take-Two and wanted the Wii to have more adult-oriented content than the GameCube did. EA has already announced that it's bringing *The Godfather* to the Wii, so who knows?

Situations vacant

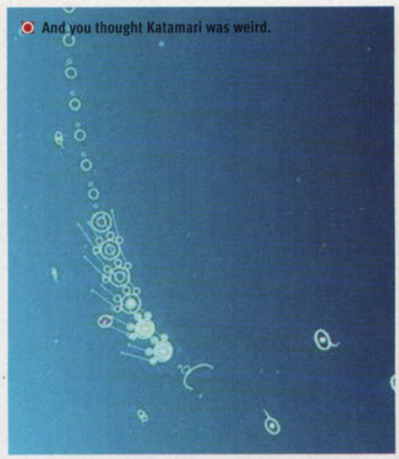
WANT TO WORK FOR EVOLVE?

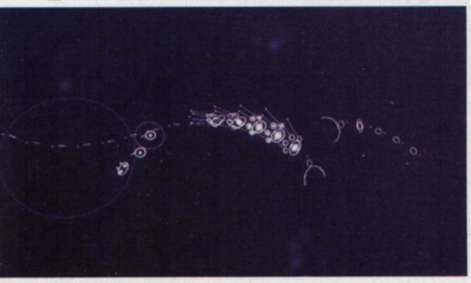
2006 promises to be an exciting year for the publishers of PURE magazine and as such we are always on the look out for new talent to join our teams on future launches and projects.

If you are an editor, writer, designer or programmer and think that you have what it takes to work for a dynamic young publishing company, then we would love to hear from you. Just send a CV and recent examples of work to the magazine address on page 97.

We look forward to hearing from you.

evolve PUBLISHING





GO WITH THE FLOW

Strange PS3 game surfaces

The oddest game demonstrated at the Tokyo Game Show must surely be *flOw*. You tilt the PS3 controller to make your creature swim around, eating other life forms to make it grow longer and more complex - it's almost like a 3D version of *Snake*.

When you 'attack' another organism it breaks up into segments which you must then gobble up. There are different types of organisms to eat, some of which make your creature longer, while others alter your existing segments. Although no instructions are offered, it appears that the aim is to dive deeper and deeper, with your creature evolving into a more complex life form as it eats more. With an ambient soundtrack, it's all very weird and hypnotic. Based on a Flash game of the same name (a masters thesis project by Jenova Chen) and under development by Sony's Santa Monica studio, *flOw* will be downloadable from the PS3's online hub.



L.A. NOIRE

Next-gen crime thriller signed by Rockstar

Rockstar Games has signed up Australian studio Team Bondi to develop a "ground-breaking next-generation crime thriller" titled *LA Noire*.

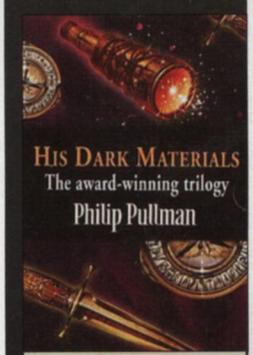
Set in the late 1940s, the game is an interactive detective story in the style of classic films *noirs* such as *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Big Sleep*. According to Rockstar, "*LA Noire* blends action, detection and complex storytelling and draws players into an open-ended challenge to solve a series of gruesome murders. Set in a perfectly recreated Los Angeles before freeways, with a post-war backdrop of corruption, drugs and jazz, *LA Noire* will truly blend cinema and gaming."

Interestingly, the project brings together Rockstar co-founder Sam Houser, of *GTA* fame, and Team Bondi founder Brendan McNamara, creator of *The Getaway*. "The longstanding mutual respect and the combined experience between the two of us make this a great partnership," commented McNamara. *LA Noire* will be published on next-generation formats, including PlayStation 3.

SEGA'S DARK MATERIALS

Games based on movies of Philip Pulman books

SEGA has announced a deal with New Line Cinema and Scholastic Media to create video games based on the upcoming movies of Philip Pulman's His *Dark Materials* trilogy of books. The first film, *The Golden Compass* (aka Northern Lights in the UK) is a $150 million-budgeted blockbuster starring Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig (the new James Bond) and set for release in November 2007. So we can probably expect the game to arrive at about the same time on all the major formats. The story revolves around a young girl named Lyra as she sets out to find her missing friend Roger. Lyra's quest leads her to the beautiful splendour of the icy North, where giant armoured bears rule a kingdom, witch queens fly through the frozen skies and the secret of another universe is waiting to be uncovered.



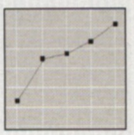
BITESIZE

Ten-second stories

HUGE GAMES GROWTH FORECAST

Market worth $44 billion by 2011

A series of reports by market research firm DFC Intelligence forecasts that video games revenue, from both hardware and software, will be $44 billion in 2011. This compares with $29 billion for the year 2005. However, there is major uncertainty over which console will be dominant. "Uncertainty is truly the keyword going forward," commented DFC analyst David Cole. "Three solid video game systems are competing for market share and it will probably be two-to-three years before a true leader is determined." He also thinks that none of the systems is likely to have the same dominance as the PS2: "At its peak PlayStation 2 software alone accounted for about 30% of worldwide interactive entertainment revenue. By 2011 we forecast that all console software combined will only account for about a third of worldwide sales." With multiple console platforms, a growing portable market and online game market, Cole argues that platform diversity is the key to success.



MEDIA MOLECULE HITS PS3

Sony signs up Rag Doll Kung Fu creator

Media Molecule, the independent developer behind Rag Doll Kung Fu, has signed a deal with Sony to develop an "original and innovative" new game for the PlayStation 3. Mark Healey, creative director at Media Molecule said, "Working together on Rag Doll convinced us that a focused and efficient team had the ability to deliver exciting and innovative content. The ambition for Media Molecule is to take that a step further and prove that a small (20 plus) and passionate team can deliver a world-class, triple-A, next-generation product."



The beat-em-up Rag Doll Kung Fu became a cult hit on the PC, featuring innovative use of physics-based fighters with no preset animation routines. Originally released via Valve's Steam network last year, the boxed version was released this August.

SWAGBAG

GRAB YOURSELF SOME FREE GOODIES COURTESY OF PURE





IT'S MADNESS

If shooting zombies, abducting civilians in a stolen UFO, using parrots as hockey pucks and operating a bleep machine on a rather ripe rap talk radio station is your kind of thing then KAZook is definitely for you. Thanks to the crazy folks at Xplosiv 10 lucky PURE readers will have the chance to each win a copy of the game.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question:

How many mini-games will KAZooK have?

A: 30
B: 3
C: 3,000,000,000

Please mark your entry **'Madness I Tell You'**.
Closing date 7th November 2006. For address details and terms and conditions please see page 97



New decor at the White House went down well.

FALL OF LIBERTY

What if the Nazis had won?

Codemasters is to publish *Fall of Liberty* (working title), a next-generation first-person shooter set in an alternate outcome to World War II.

Promising an explosive action experience, it imagines what would have happened if the Germans had conquered Europe and went on to launch an assault on 1950s America, starting with a mass invasion of New York city. Much of the country is soon under the Nazi jackboot, with the Swastika flying from the White House, and a nuclear attack on Manhattan is being planned as a show of force to put an end to any rebellion.

This is the strange and frightening scenario being developed by Spark Unlimited, the Californian studio previously responsible for *Call of Duty: Finest Hour*.

"Spark is very excited to be working with Codemasters to bring to life an event gaming experience that will dramatise what might have happened if history had taken a different course," said Craig Allen, CEO of Spark Unlimited. "We share a desire to immerse players in an incredible and intensely realistic vision of an alternative world history that will uniquely define *Fall of Liberty* in the FPS genre. Codemasters is providing Spark the opportunity to present something radically different than typical WWII scenarios as the player is not cast as a liberator of Europe but as a defender of freedom in enemy-occupied America."

Fall of Liberty is due for release in the fourth quarter of 2007 for the PlayStation 3, Xbox 360 and PC.



WII WILL LAUNCH IN DECEMBER

New console priced at £179

Nintendo has announced that its next-generation Wii console will launch in Europe on 8 December and cost £179 (€249), significantly cheaper than the Xbox 360 and postponed PS3.

Released nearly three weeks after the Wii's North American launch, the bundle will be the same with one Wii remote, one Nunchuk and a copy of Wii Sports. Around 15 to 20 games are predicted to be available at launch, including *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, Wii Play, Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz, Need for Speed Carbon, Tony Hawk's Downhill and Red Steel*, priced between £34 and £39. Retro games, such as *Super Mario World and Donkey Kong*, will also be available via the Virtual Console download service, with 15 titles ready at launch and five to ten added each month.

Nintendo UK's general manager David Yarnton is promising more stock than for any previous launch in the company's history, but is still warning that shortages are inevitable. "We're looking at about four million units before the end of the year globally and Europe will get a reasonable proportion of that," he commented.

However, Nintendo has confirmed that Wii games will be region-locked - unlike those on PS3. The firm has also ruled out including a DVD playback function for the Wii.



■ The rumour going round that *Resident Evil 5* would be an Xbox 360 exclusive has been squashed. Capcom has confirmed that the game will also appear on the PS3, with both versions launched simultaneously. The rumour was sparked when the game failed to appear at September's Tokyo Game Show.

■ Ubisoft is planning PSP versions of Rocky and Far Cry, at least according to a leaked list of titles which also included new Splinter Cell and Prince of Persia games. Meanwhile, chief executive Yves Guillemot let slip some details about a new game called Alive in a recent interview. According to Guillemot, it's being designed to also appeal to female players: "It's more oriented toward drama, more life in characters, more depth. It's still about surviving, but you can't resolve things by shooting only."

BITESIZE

Ten-second stories

BURNOUT 5 CRASHES ONTO PS3

More motoring mayhem from EA

Electronic Arts has announced that *Burnout 5* will be released for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 in 2007. Developed by Guildford-based Criterion Games, the game will see a complete revamp of the popular racing franchise according to director of game design Alex Ward: "*Burnout 5* is a complete reinvention of the series, built from the ground up... To create truly next-generation gameplay, we needed to create a truly next-generation game, from top to bottom."



Even more destruction than usual is promised, with cars being ripped in half and the most explosive pile-ups in the series' history. Players will be able to wreak havoc in Paradise City, the ultimate seamless racing battleground. There's now no need to jump in and out of menus: instead, every inch of the free-roaming world is built to deliver *Burnout*-style gameplay. Every intersection is a potential crash junction and every alleyway is an opportunity to rack up moving violations. Players will be given a driving licence that records all their reckless and destructive exploits on the road; as they progress, they will draw the attention of the city's most infamous burners for head-to-head confrontations.

BROTHERS IN HANDS

PSP Brothers in Arms game announced

The PSP will be getting its own special version of the hit World War II game *Brothers in Arms*. Ubisoft has announced that *Brothers is Arms D-Day* is being developed exclusively for the Sony handheld. The game will feature an all-new storyline involving both Sergeants Baker and Hartsock and encompassing the entire Normandy campaign. New team-mate capabilities will be included: for the first time, players will also be able to lead a bazooka team, order their squad on an MG42, or fire mortar rounds. An enhanced co-op mode (Skirmish) offers players a 12-mission campaign and Ubisoft is also promising improved enemy AI, new weapons and destroyable cover. Developed by Ubisoft Shanghai in collaboration with Gearbox Software, the game is due for release in November.



PSP™
PlayStation®Portable



12+ www.pegi.info

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PS3 TO LAST TEN YEARS

And PlayStation 4 over five years away

Sony Computer Entertainment America president Kaz Hirai has forecast that the PlayStation 3's life span will be ten years.

"We look at our products having a ten-year life cycle, which we've proven with the PlayStation," commented Hirai. "Therefore, the PlayStation 3 is going to be a console that's going to be with you again for ten years."

He added that a successor to the console is some time away: "We're not going to ask the consumers to suddenly buy another PlayStation console in five years' time and basically have their investment go by the wayside." Hirai wouldn't say any more about plans for the PlayStation 4, however: "I can't speculate on when we might come out with a new console after PlayStation 3. But my message is that once you become a family in the PlayStation family of products, you become a family member. We make sure that we take care of you."

Hirai also defended the high price point for the PlayStation 3: "I think that we are offering a very good value for the consumers... I don't think price is the only determining factor when consumers make a choice in looking at their console purchase decisions."



PS3 AIDS MEDICAL SCIENCE

Sony teams up with US biologists

The spare processing power on your PlayStation 3 could be used to research the causes of diseases such as Alzheimer's, cystic fibrosis and Huntingdon's. Sony has teamed up with biologists at Stanford University who operate the Folding@Home project which harnesses the processing power of thousands of PCs (and now also PS3s) to run simulations of protein folding. PS3 owners will be able to download special software which lets the project use their machine's processing power - during which the PS3's GPU provides a real-time visual representation of the protein folding on screen, which you can explore in 3D using the controller. Folding@Home claims that a network of 10,000 machines would be able to perform a thousand trillion calculations per second, making it nearly four times as fast as the world's most powerful supercomputer.



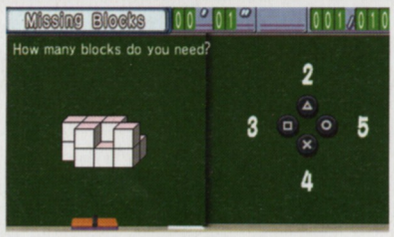
PS2 TITLES FOR UNDER A TENNER

Bargain games for Christmas

Blast! Entertainment is set to launch an original PlayStation 2 range of games for £9.99.

Aimed at younger players, the previously unreleased games will be based on strong brands and characters including Casper the Friendly Ghost, Babe, Dr Doolittle the Movie, Jumanji the Movie, The Flintstones, Home Alone, Thomas the Tank Engine, Captain Scarlet, Bob the Builder, Beverly Hills Cop and ATOM (Alpha Teens on Machines).

Repeated price reductions for the PS2 means that the console now appeals to a younger audience. The PS2 budget market has also grown to 54.1% in terms of units. According to a Blast! statement, "New formats will be great for early adopters but these consumers make up a small percentage of the Christmas-present-buying public and new technology may have limited hardware availability over this period. New affordable PS2 titles for children will provide the mass market choice and provide fantastic, branded games at stocking filler prices."



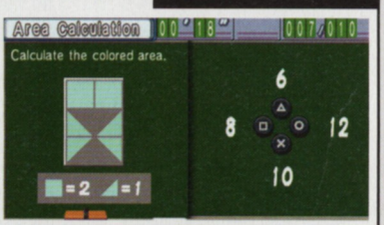
MIND YOUR HEAD

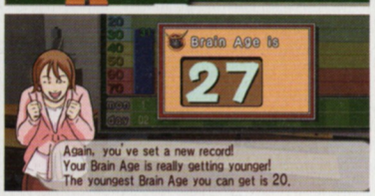
First brain-training PSP game hits Europe

Why should Nintendo DS owners get all the brain training?

Now it's time for us PSP owners to exercise our grey matter as Ubisoft is set to release *Mind Quiz* in Europe. Created by SEGA, the game has already been a huge hit in Japan.

Endorsed by Functional Brain Imaging expert Dr Kawashima himself, it is claimed to train and stimulate the brain with its questions which test your memory, judgement, reflexes and mental arithmetic. It includes a challenge mode, online play, mock exams and even a 'Brain Age Checking Mode' to calculate your brain age from the daily questions you solve. See if you're getting any smarter (or not) when *Mind Quiz* is released over here in November.





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Ten-second stories

BUENA VISTA HAS CLIMAX

Major new racing franchise predicted

Buena Vista Games has acquired Climax Racing Studio, the Brighton-based developer of racing games such as *MotoGP '06* and *ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails*. "The acquisition of Climax Racing aligns perfectly with our strategic and geographic goals by allowing us to reach both new genres and new markets," said Graham Hopper, senior vice president and general manager at BVG. "Adding Climax Racing to our creative family will provide an additional catalyst for our continued growth in the video games market."



"As a premier, award-winning studio that has created some of the best racing titles of all time, Climax Racing is an ideal component of BVG's expanding portfolio of development talent," said Karl Jeffery, founder and chief executive officer of Climax. Specialising in the racing genre, it's highly likely that the studio will work on a new racing franchise for Buena Vista, although no details have yet been revealed.

E.A. SKATES AHEAD

Next-gen skating game on the way

Electronic Arts is set to take on Activision's *Tony Hawk's* series with its own skating game. Called simply SKATE, it's in development by EA Black Box for the PS3 and Xbox 360 and due for release in 2007. EA is promising innovative controls, authentic cameras and a fully reactive skateboarding city. The game will also feature professional skaters such as Danny Way and PJ Ladd. According to EA, players will have a unique gaming experience every time since no two tricks will ever be the same.



"Our game offers a skate mecca for both skaters and gamers in search of the definitive authentic skating video game experience," said Scott Blackwood, executive producer at EA Black Box. "We're focused on capturing the actual feeling of skating with the innovative control system, the physics-driven animations, the intelligent cameras working together to really deliver the closest thing to being on a board."





'HL' PSP GAME SHELVED

Too busy making PS3 *WarHawk*

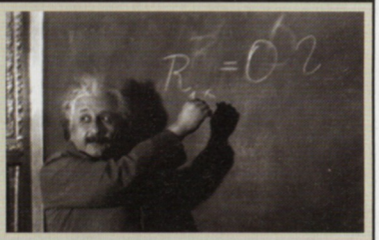
Incognito Entertainment has put development of its PSP project, code-named 'HL', on hold. The reason given is that the Salt Lake City-based studio is too busy working on *WarHawk* for the PlayStation 3 - now rescheduled for a summer 2007 release.

The news was revealed in the blog of David Jaffe, creative director of Sony's Santa Monica studio group (incorporating Incognito). He wrote, "[HL] is - for the moment - on the shelf. The core reason is that it was very ambitious and so is *WarHawk*. The same developer is making both games, with some key members shared between them, so Scott [Campbell, president of Incognito] and I said, 'f*** it: we'll do HL later... maybe.'" He had previously stated that his ambition for 'HL' was to make gamers cry - they might well be doing that now.

Meanwhile Jaffe, best known for God of War on the PS2, is working on an as yet unannounced PS3 title for Sony (with similarities to *Twisted Metal* and *Bomberman*) which is due "between November and January."

HISTORY LESSON 2

Amazing facts about the history of video games





■ *Pac-Man* is the most successful arcade coin-op of all time, bringing in revenues of over $100 million. Namco estimates that it has been played over ten billion times. Created in 1980 by Toru Iwatani, he was inspired to create the main character when he spotted a pizza with a slice missing. The game was known as *Puck-Man* in Japan, but the makers were concerned that when it was released overseas, vandals might turn the 'P' into an 'F'! In July 1999, Florida's Billy Mitchell achieved the first perfect *Pac-Man* score of 3,333,360 after playing for a solid six hours.



■ The first video-game-related death is said to be that of Jeff Dailey. The 19-year-old suffered a fatal heart attack shortly after playing the arcade game *Berzerk* in January 1981. Bizarrely, the game claimed another victim in October 1982 when 18-year-old Peter Burkowski also died of a heart attack after playing it for just 15 minutes. Made by Stern Electronics, *Berzerk* amazed arcade fans of the time with its ground-breaking use of digitised speech, including such phrases as 'Destroy the humanoid!'. The speech was done using LPC coding and cost $1,000 per word to compress.



■ The name 'SEGA' comes from a shortening of 'Service Games' which was stamped on the games produced by the company. Starting out as Standard Games in 1940 in Honolulu, Hawaii, the company moved to Tokyo in 1951, changing its name to Service Games. Initially supplying mechanical coin-operated games to US units based in Japan, it soon branched out to the domestic Japanese market. The company merged with Rosen Enterprises, Inc in 1965 and a year later produced the hit submarine simulator, *Periscope*.



ALL THAI'D UP

To celebrate the release of the action packed jaw-dropping action filled Warrior King, we've got together with the martial art maniacs over at Premier Asia to offer one lucky reader the chance to win some exclusive high quality Tony Jaa goodies. The winner will receive a very smart Tony Jaa hoody, bag and T-shirt as well as copies of Warrior King and Ong Bak on DVD as well as a copy of Ong Bak on UMD. Two runners up will also receive a disc package of both films.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question:

What country does Warrior King and Ong Bak star Tony Jaa come from?

A: Japan
B: Thailand
C: Mongolia

Please mark your entry **'Only Tony'**.
Closing date 14 November 2006. For address details and terms and conditions please see page 97

BITESIZE

Ten-second stories

WEBSITE OFFERS PS3 FOR EXPORT

Priced at £368 or £526

For those of us who don't live in North America or Japan, the only way to get hold of a PlayStation 3 console this year is to import one. Japanese gadget exporter Audio Cubes is the first internet retailer to offer the PS3 for pre-order - although at the time of writing it has suspended this service until new stock is secured, due to extremely high demand. Nevertheless, its pricing of the console makes interesting reading: the basic 20 GB model is listed at $699 (£368) while the 60 GB version



would set you back $999 (£526). Not too extortionate. But although international shipping is included in the price, you'd still have to pay VAT and possibly import duty on top. Another factor to consider is that while games will be region free, Blu-ray movies aren't and so you'll have to import US or Japanese versions to watch on your imported PS3.

NCSOFT TO GO MULTIFORMAT

MMO publisher announces plans

PC game publisher NCsoft has revealed that it is exploring the possibility of developing titles for multiple formats. The firm, which specialises in massively multiplayer online games such as *City of Heroes*, wants to take advantage of the online capabilities of both handheld and home consoles. European director of products Thomas Bidaux commented, "The holy grail of gaming is a game that



plays across as many platforms as possible. It's not about making a great game on PC and a great game on console. It's about making a great game that you can play on PC or console, and then incorporate your mobile phone to expand the whole universe - the longer the player can keep the world with him, the more he'll stay in the game universe."



Focus: >America

Gee, you got game! Have a nice day y'all...

VIDEO-GAMES KILLERS GET DEATH

Sentenced for Xbox murders

Two men have been sentenced to death in Daytona Beach, Florida, for the murder of six people over an Xbox. Troy Victorino and Jerone Hunter were convicted in July of first-degree murder for the brutal beatings at a Deltona home in August 2004. Collaborators Michael Salas and Robert Anthony Cannon received sentences of life without parole. The jury had recommended the death sentence, and Chief Circuit Judge Bill Parsons made the final decision, commenting: "The victims were not only killed, they were brutalised." The six victims suffered blows to the head causing severe skull fractures and brain injury, and some of them were mutilated after death and were missing most of their teeth.



Victorino organised the attack with three other men to retrieve his Xbox from victim Erin Belanger who kept some of his property after having him evicted from her grandmother's empty house where he'd been squatting.

Release schedule

Games worth having a yank over!

Title and Publisher	Release Date
Ace Combat X: Skies of Deception *Namco*	17/10/06
ATV Offroad Fury Pro *Sony*	17/10/06
Warhammer: Warcry *Namco*	17/10/06
WTF: Work Time Fun *D3*	17/10/06
Dungeon Siege: Throne of Agony *2K*	23/10/06
Family Guy *2K*	23/10/06
Medal of Honor Heroes *EA*	23/10/06
BattleZone *Atari*	24/10/06
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded *Capcom*	24/10/06
Dynasty Warriors: Vol. 2 *Koei*	24/10/06
Snoopy vs the Red Baron *Namco Bandai*	24/10/06
Dave Mirra BMX Challenge *Crave*	30/10/06
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories *Rockstar*	30/10/06
Activision Hits Remixed *Activision*	31/10/06
Killzone: Liberation *Sony*	31/10/06
Need for Speed Carbon: Own the City *EA*	31/10/06
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts *Activision*	31/10/06
Power Stone Collection *Capcom*	31/10/06
Shrek Smash and Crash Racing *Activision*	31/10/06
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas *Ubisoft*	31/10/06

US TOP 10 (Multiformat)

1	1. New Super Mario Bros *Nintendo*	DS
2	2. Madden NFL 07 *EA*	PS2
3	3. Madden NFL 07 *EA*	Xbox 360
4	4. Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day *Nintendo*	DS
5	5. Saints Row *THQ*	Xbox 360
6	6. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass *Nintendo*	DS
7	7. NASCAR 07 *EA*	PS2
8	8. Mario Kart DS *Nintendo*	DS
9	9. Star Fox Command *Nintendo*	DS
10	10. LEGO: Star Wars II - The Original Trilogy *LucasArts*	PS2

All dates are correct at the time of going to press, but are subject to change

SONY DOWNPLAYS 360 VIDEO UPGRADE

Not true High-Definition, they claim

Following Microsoft's announcement of an autumn software update for the Xbox 360 to enable 1080p resolution output for games



and videos, Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) has insisted is it not true High-Definition. SCEA's Dave Karraker commented, "Microsoft's announced HD games patch is really just a compatibility feature - upscaling lower-resolution content does not make it Full HD (1080p), something that PS3 can do out of the box." While the PlayStation 3 can output at the maximum 1080p resolution (1,080 picture lines, progressive scan), the Xbox 360 can only manage 720p or 1080i (interlaced) and lacks an HDMI output to send a digital video signal to HD televisions.

Karraker also pooh-poohed the upcoming HD DVD drive for the Xbox 360: "It's unfortunate that Microsoft's external HD DVD drive will not enhance the experience at all for the gamer. Sony realises that to truly take gaming into the next generation requires a larger data format for both games and movies. PS3 uses the Blu-ray format for gaming, giving developers 50 GB of high-definition storage on a single disc, while Microsoft's 9 GB DVD gaming format is an obstacle for storing HD content."

GUITAR WARS

Legal battle over third-party *Guitar Hero* controller

Guitar Hero publisher RedOctane and parent company Activision have filed a lawsuit against a manufacturer of third-party controllers for the PS2 game. They allege that The Ant Commandos' controllers infringe on their copyright and don't always work properly with *Guitar Hero*, citing faults with the tilt system.

However, The Ant Commandos (TAC) has since issued a counter claim accusing RedOctane of lifting the guitar design from TAC part-owner, Topway Electrical Appliance, Co. A company statement claimed, "Activision and RedOctane copied the identifiable trade dress of the controller. RedOctane allegedly copied the colour, shape and placement of the five fret buttons located on the controller." According to TAC, Topway designed and released a PlayStation peripheral back in 1999 called the Magical Guitar, which looks very similar to the official Guitar Hero



controller. It also alleges that top management from RedOctane visited the Topway factory on numerous occasions and "specifically inquired about Topway's trade dress design." TAC is also asking the court to grant an injunction to prohibit RedOctane and Activision from selling Guitar Hero in a game/controller bundle.

80 / 20 PS3 SPLIT

Majority of Sony's units will be 60 GB model

Sony Computer Entertainment of America has stated that 80% of the launch period shipment of PlayStation 3s will be the premium 60 GB model. Although Sony has since announced that the HMDI digital video output will now be on both models, the 60 GB machine's extra features include a built-in memory card reader (for SD standard/mini, CompactFlash and Memory Stick standard/Duo Pro),



IEEE 802.11 b/g Wi-Fi connection (compatible with PSP), bigger hard drive and silver trim on the clear black case. The models will cost $499 (20 GB) and $599 (60 GB) - at the time of writing there is no news on whether the announced Japanese price cut will be replicated in North America.

Focus: Japan

We say 'Konichiwa' to the Land of Rising Fun

PAY TO RACE

Micropayments for PS3 *Gran Turismo*

Famitsu magazine has reported that Sony is planning to release two different versions of *Gran Turismo HD* for the PlayStation 3. While the Premium game will come with just two courses and 30 cars (with an additional two tracks and 30 cars supplied online later), the Classic version won't include any cars or courses at all. Instead you'll have to download any that you want from Sony's online store. Famitsu reports that the cars will cost between ¥50 and ¥100 (23p to 45p) while courses will set you back anything from ¥200 to ¥500 (90p to £2.26). Bearing in mind that there will be around 750 cars and 50 tracks to choose from, it could be an expensive business: anything up to £450 if you wanted every vehicle and course. It's just as well that the Classic version should be cheap and may even be bundled free with the PS3.



LOCOROCO: THE BOOK

All stages mapped

An official playing guide for *LocoRoco* has gone on sale in Japan. The guide book features hints and tips (if you can read Japanese, that is) for all five worlds and 40 stages of the portable puzzler where you roll a yellow blob around stages, eating flowers to make him fatter. The book also features colourful maps with pointers telling you the locations of all the secrets areas and pick-ups, along with a section detailing all the characters and enemies in the game. Best of all, however, is the inclusion of two pages of cool stickers. There's no word yet on whether an English version of the book will ever be made available.







MIND YOUR MANNERS

New training game teaches etiquette

Not content that its *Brain Training* games have taken the world by storm, possibly saving a whole generation from senile dementia, Nintendo is releasing a new DS game to help you learn some manners. *Common Sense DS Adult Training* will teach players how to behave properly in all sorts of social and business situations, including ceremonial occasions. Apparently your common sense power is diagnosed by answering ten questions, then you're meant to do ten every day to gradually improve your ranking, and your common sense. Get one wrong and the game explains the correct answer in detail. The 1,800 tasks in the game include deciding who should sit where in a taxi when four company employees of various ranks get in. Assuming you have enough common sense to be able to find a shop, the game is released on 26 October for ¥3,800 (£17).



TOKYO GAME SHOW BREAKS RECORD

Over 570 games on display

Celebrating its tenth anniversary, the annual Tokyo Game Show took place at the International Conference Hall in Makuhari Messe between 22 and 24 September. A record-breaking total of 573 games were showcased, compared with 516 last year. These included 62 PlayStation 3 titles, 27 of them playable - including *Gran Turismo HD, Resistance: Fall of Man, Devil May Cry 4, Warhawk and Fatal Inertia*. Sony also revealed the first compatible games for its new GPS device for the PSP: *Metal Gear Solid Portable* (Konami), *Homestar Portable* (SEGA) and *Everybody's Golf*. For more details, see our special Tokyo Game Show feature in this issue.





Release schedule

What's coming out in the orient?

Title and Publisher	Release Date
Princess Maker 4 Portable *GeneX*	12/10/06
Planetarium Creator *Sega*	19/10/06
Tenchi no Mon 2 Busouden *Sony*	19/10/06
Ace Combat X Skies of Deception *Namco*	26/10/06
Heaven's Will *Taito*	26/10/06
Shinobi Homura *Sony*	26/10/06
Spider-Man 2 *Konami*	26/10/06
Spectral VS Generation *Idea Factory*	10/2006
Vulcanus Online *Zeppeto*	16/11/06
Plus Plum 2 Again *Takuyo*	16/11/06
Sudoku *Sting*	16/11/06
Riviera Yakusoku no Chi *Sting*	22/11/06
Jeanne d'Arc *Sony*	22/11/06
Ore no Dungeon *SEGA*	30/11/06
Makai Senki Disgaea Portable *Nippon Ichi*	30/11/06
Intelligent License 2 *NowPro*	30/11/06
Metal Slug SNK *Playmore*	11/06
TOCA Race Driver 2 *NEC Interchannel*	14/12/06
NBA Live 07 *EA*	14/12/06
Gran Turismo 4 Mobile *Sony*	12/06

JAPANESE TOP 10 (Multiformat)

1	Tales Of Phantasia: Full Voice Edition *Bandai*	PSP
2	New Super Mario Bros *Nintendo*	DS
3	Final Fantasy III *Square Enix*	DS
4	Tingle RPG *Nintendo*	DS
5	Kahashima Ryuuta Kyouju Kanshuu: Motto Nouo Kitaeru Otona DS Training *Nintendo*	DS
6	Shaberu! DS Oryouri Navi *Nintendo*	DS
7	Rhythm Tengoku *Nintendo*	GBA
8	Animal Crossing: Wild World *Nintendo*	DS
9	Phantasy Star Universe *SEGA*	PS2
10	Mario Hoops 3 on 3 *Nintendo*	DS

All dates are correct at the time of going to press, but are subject to change

LAST WRITES

"THERE HAVE BEEN RUMOURS FROM UNNAMED SOURCES AT SONY THAT WE COULD SEE PHONE FUNCTIONALITY BEING ADDED EARLY NEXT YEAR, BUT OBVIOUSLY SONY ARE FOCUSED ON THE PS3 FOR THE TIME BEING."

★ LETTER OF THE MONTH

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

With Sony having finally given us the details on the PSP camera and GPS add-ons I was wondering if you could tell me if they have any other plans to release useful add-ons for the PSP. With them having already released a headset with *SOCOM* and a microphone with *Talkman*, do you think with them already producing phones with Ericsson there is a chance we will be getting a phone add-on for the PSP?

Bill Davis, Lancaster

Good idea Bill. Way back in January of last year, SCE president Ken Kutaragi did say that Sony planned to add mobile phone functionality to the PSP "in the near future". As we all know by now, Sony don't exactly stick to dates or timeframes when they make announcements. There have been rumours from unnamed sources at Sony that we could see phone functionality being added early next year, but obviously Sony are focused on the PS3 for the time being. With the PSP's wireless capabilities and the upcoming camera, this could be a chance for Sony to make a huge leap and actually offer video calling; this is, of course, just conjecture on our part. Whatever Sony decide to do when it comes to the phone, we reckon it will probably be an extra add-on to accommodate sim-cards rather than using existing peripherals.

TIMES ARE CHANGING

Having just received my new issue of PURE I was surprised but also happy to see that you have now changed to a PS3 magazine as well as PSP. This saves me having to buy a separate magazine when the PS3 eventually comes out after yet another delay, but I hope you don't ignore the PSP when it does?

Vince, Email

We're glad you like the new look PURE. We thought it was time to reflect the changing face of the games world and offer our readers the best in coverage across the new formats. Rest assured, we will still be bringing you the best and most entertaining in PSP coverage as well as turning our talents to the newest baby from Sony. We have a lot of exciting new plans for forthcoming issues. You'll notice with this latest issue, the return of the Buyers Bible to help new and existing owners select the best games for their system. This is just one of the many things we have lined up to help you, the readers, get the most from your gaming time.

CHEERY WORDS OF WISDOM

"If Pandas won't just get on and do it with each other. Isn't it time we just let the lazy buggers die out?"

EXITS ARE HERE, HERE AND HERE

Hi guys, hope you are all well? I saw in the news section of issue 8 that there is to be a new *Exit* game for the PSP. This is a real bonus for me as I still can't stop playing the first one. I was wondering if you could give me any more details on the release etc?

David Richards, Durham

Thinking Exit, the sequel to the original *Exit*, is due to hit our shores later this year. It promises more puzzle-based gameplay and will give the main character 110 new levels and a new range of movements. It has recently hit Japanese shores and our sources tell us we will be able to get our hands on it here before Christmas.



GET OFF MY CASE

Having just bought a PSP Power Sound Station due to your glowing review in an early edition of PURE, I was hoping you could point me in the direction of a good case, as I still only have the bog-standard Sony effort.

Gavin, Sussex

There are so many good cases out there, Gavin. so it's hard to recommend just one. We would recommend you go for a solid case that offers plenty of protection for your investment. Blaze offers an excellent package called the Protector that gives you a solid metal case as well as UMD cases and cleaner, a screen protector and Xploder music software. It's a matter of personal choice, but protection is the key in our book.

STAR LETTER PRIZE!

The Star Letter every month will receive one of the most vital pieces of kit for their PSP. Thanks to our friends over at SanDisk, a bright shiny 1GB Pro Duo Memory stick can be yours simply by writing into us and being lucky enough to be selected as our Star Letter of the month. So put your pen to paper or your mouse to e-mail and tell us whatever you want.



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WIN! FIFA 07

With the new football season comes a new FIFA game, and this year's is the best yet with much improved gameplay. Thanks to those sporting people at EA we have managed to get five copies of FIFA 07 on the PSP to give away to lucky PURE readers.

To be in with a chance of winning simply answer the following question:

Who scored Arsenal's goal in last season's Champions League Final?

A: Thierry Henry
B: The Soul Man
C: Sol Campbell



Put your answer on a postcard or sealed down envelope, along with your name, address and telephone number, and send it to the following address, to reach us no later than 14 November 2006. FIFA Fun, PURE PS3 / PSP Magazine, Evolve Publishing Ltd, 2 Monks Road, Mount Pleasant, Exeter, Devon, EX4 7AY.

Cybergeeks can also enter by sending an email to pure@evolvepublishing.co.uk. Don't forget to put "FIFA Fun" and your answer in the subject line.

★ CONTACT

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pure@evolvepublishing.co.uk



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UK Release schedule

Your Guide to PS3 and PSP Gaming Goodness Lurking Just Over the Horizon









PS3 IMPORT GAMES

Keeping an eye on releases from both the U.S and Japan.

17/11/2006

Fatal Inertia	Koei	US
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years War	Koei	US
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	Bandai	JP
EA Sports Fight Night Round 3	EA	US
Call of Duty 3	Activision	US
College Hoops 2K7	2K Sports	US
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas	Ubisoft	US
Sonic The Hedgehog	Sega	US
Warhawk	Sony	US
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	EA	US
F.E.A.R	Vivendi Games	US
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Activision	US
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	Sega	US
Resistance: Fall of Man	Sony	US
Eye of Judegement: Conquerors of 9 Fields	Sony	JP
NBA Live 07	EA	US
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	Sony	US
Ridge Racer 7	Namco Bandai Group	JP
Mahjong Fight Club	Konami	JP
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII	Ubisoft	US
Need For Speed Carbon	EA	US
Genji: Days of the Blade	Sony	JP
NHL 2K	2K Sports	US
NBA 2K	2K Sports	US
Madden NFL 07	EA	US
Sega Golf Club	Sega	US

NOVEMBER

Marvel Ulitimate Alliance	Activision	US
Mahjong TaiKai IV	Koei	JP

FEBRUARY

Monster Madness	SouthPeak Interactive	US
Heavenly Sword	Sony	US

DECEMBER

Rain	AQ Interactive	JP
Enchanted Arms	FromSoftware	JP
Fifth Phantom Saga	Sega	JP

Q1 2007

Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	Bandai	US
Alone in the Dark	Atari	US
Brothers in Arms: Hells Highway	Ubisoft	US
The Darkness	2K Games	US
Half-Life 2	EA	US
Medal of Honor: Airborne	EA	US
Assassins Creed	Ubisoft	US
John Woo Presents Stranglehold	Midway Games	US
Unreal Tournament 2007	Midway Games	US

MAY 2007

Spider Man 3	Activision	US

SPRING 2007

Armoured Core 4	Sega	US

PS3

TITLE	PUBLISHER	RELEASED
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years War	Koei	17/03/2007
Sonic the Hedgehog	Sega	17/03/2007
Call of Duty 3	Activision	17/03/2007
Fatal Inertia	Koei	17/03/2007
Blazing Angels: Squandrons of WWII	Ubisoft	17/03/2007
Fight Night Round 3	EA	17/03/2007
Formula One 06	SCEE	17/03/2007
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	Sega	17/03/2007
Genji 2	SCEE	17/03/2007
Heavenly Sword	SCEE	17/03/2007
Madden NFL 07	EA	17/03/2007
Motorstorm	SCEE	17/03/2007
NBA Live 07	EA	17/03/2007
Need For Speed Carbon	EA	17/03/2007
Resistance: Fall of Man	SCEE	17/03/2007
Ridge Racer 7	Namco	17/03/2007
SingStar	SCEE	17/03/2007
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2007	EA	17/03/2007
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas	Ubisoft	17/03/2007
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Activision	17/03/2007
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	SCEE	17/03/2007
Warhawk	SCEE	17/03/2007
WWE SmackDown! vs RAW 2007	THQ	17/03/2007
World Snooker Championship 2007	Sega	17/03/2007
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	Activision	03/2007
Haze	Ubisoft	03/2007
Half-Life 2	EA	05/2007
Alone in the Dark	Atari	Spring 2007
Virtua Fighter 5	Sega	Spring 2007
Virtua Tennis 3	Sega	Spring 2007
Sega Rally	Sega	Spring 2007
John Woo Presents Stranglehold	Midway	Spring 2007
Spider-Man 3	Activision	Summer 2007
Medal of Honor: Airborne	EA	Q1 2007
Frontlines: Fuel of War	THQ	Q3 2007
Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots	Konami	Q4 2007
Age of Conan	Eidos	2007
Army of Two	EA	2007
Assassin's Creed	Ubisoft	2007
Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway	Ubisoft	2007
Clive Barker's Jericho	Codemasters	2007
Club	Sega	2007
Coded Arms: Assault	TBA	2007
Colin McRae Rally	Codemasters	2007
Devil May Cry 4	Capcom	2007



IMPORTANT DATE
15 November
ISSUE 12 OF PURE MAGAZINE ON SALE!

TITLE	PUBLISHER	RELEASED
Eight Days	SCEE	2007
Eyedentify	SCEE	2007
Fifth Phantom Saga	Sega	2007
Final Fantasy XIII	Square Enix	2007
Getaway	SCEE	2007
Golden Axe	Sega	2007
Gradius	Konami	2007
Grand Theft Auto IV	Rockstar	2007
Hellboy	Konami	2007
Indiana Jones	Lucas Arts	2007
Jak and Daxter: The Lost Frontier	SCEE	2007
Killing Day	Ubisoft	2007
Killzone	SCEE	2007
Lair	SCEE	2007
Lord of the Rings: The White Council	EA	2007
Lost	Ubisoft	2007
Mercenaries 2: World in Flames	TBA	2007
Project Delta	Playlogic	2007
Ratchet and Clank	SCEE	2007
The Simpsons	EA	2007
Splinter Cell Double Agent	Ubisoft	2007
Stuntman 2	THQ	2007
Tekken 6	SCEE	2007
Transformers	Activision	2007
The Darkness	2K Games	2007
Turok	Buena Vista Games	2007
Unreal Tournament 2007	Midway	2007
Vision Gran Turismo	SCEE	2007
Wheelman	Midway	2007
Burnout 5	EA	2007
Battlefield: Bad Company	EA	2007
Metro 2033. The Last Refuge	TBA	2008

PSP

Power Stone Collection	Capcom	13/10/2006
Ridge Racer 2	Sony	13/10/2006
Warlords Champions	D3	13/10/2006
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories	Rockstar	17/10/2006
Bomberman	Konami	20/10/2006
Kazook	Xplosiv	20/10/2006
Pro Evolution Soccer 6	Konami	20/10/2006
Rengoku 2	Konami	20/10/2006
Metal Slug Anthology	Ignition	27/10/2006
Brothers In Arms	Ubisoft	27/10/2006
50 Cent Bulletproof: G-Unit Edition	Vivendi	27/10/2006

TITLE	PUBLISHER	RELEASED
Dungeons and Dragons: Tactics	Atari	27/10/2006
Ford Street Racing: LA Duel	Xplosiv	27/10/2006
Legend of the Dragon	The Games Factory	27/10/2006
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Activision	27/10/2006
Scarface: Money.Power.Respect	Vivendi	27/10/2006
Blade Dancer: Lineage of Light	Ignition	27/10/2006
MotoGP	Sony	27/10/2006
ATV Offroad Fury Pro	Sony	10/2006
Dave Mirra BMX Challenge	Crave	10/2006
Dungeon Siege: Throne of Agony	2K Games	10/2006
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	Bethesda	10/2006
NHL 07	EA	10/2006
Death Jr 2: Root of all Evil	Konami	10/2006
Hot PXL	Atari	03/11/2006
FIFA 07	EA	03/11/2006
Need For Speed Carbon	EA	03/11/2006
Scooby Doo! Who's Watching Who	THQ	03/11/2006
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	Activision	06/11/2006
WWE SmackDown vs RAW 2007	THQ	10/11/2006
Mortal Kombat: Unchained	Midway	10/11/2006
Capcom Classics Reloaded	Capcom	13/11/2006
Asterix and Obelix XXL2	Atari	17/11/2006
Battlezone	Atari	17/11/2006
Football Manager 2007	Sega	17/11/2006
Sonic Rivals	Sega	17/11/2006
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas	Ubisoft	17/11/2006
Arthur and the Minimoys	Atari	24/11/2006
Eragon	Vivendi	24/11/2006
Test Drive Unlimited	Atari	24/11/2006
Killzone: Liberation	Sony	11/2006
The Sims 2: Pets	EA	11/2006
Family Guy	2k Games	11/2006
Toca Race Driver 3 Challenge	Codemasters	11/2006
Ace Combat X: Skies of Deception	Sony	11/2006
LA Rush	Midway	11/2006
Metal Gear Solid	Konami	12/12/2006
Thrillville	Atari	12/2006
Sega Mega Drive Collection	Sega	12/2006
Lumines II	Buena Vista	Autumn 2006
Avatar: The Last Air Bender	THQ	Autumn 2006
Call of Duty 3	Activision	Autumn 2006
Justice League Heroes	Eidos	Autumn 2006
Traxion	LucasArts	Autumn 2006
Silent Hill: Origins	Konami	Winter 2006

All dates are correct at the time of going to press, but are subject to change.

Why are we waiting?

On 6 September, Sony dropped a bombshell: the PlayStation 3 would not be launched in Europe until March 2007. The dream of a simultaneous worldwide launch was over. PURE examines the factors that led to this situation and what effects it will have on the console's future.



"A completely simultaneous launch is physically impossible, but we believe we'll be able ship to users throughout the world around this time [November]." So said Ken Kutaragi, CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment, on 14 March 2006. It was a bold statement and, ultimately, one that has been proved erroneous. At the time, Kutaragi was having to explain why the PlayStation 3 had been postponed from its original Spring 2006 launch date. Bearing in mind that Sony had never before attempted a worldwide console launch, this was certainly ambitious. Only Microsoft had achieved such a feat, in 2005 with its Xbox 360 (although staggering the release slightly, so Europe was ten days after North America), and even then there were massive shortages. Yet, perhaps spurred on by Microsoft's predictions of having ten million 360s shipped before the PS3's arrival, Sony restated its global launch plan for PS3 at the E3 trade show in May 2006. The CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA), Kaz Hirai, stood on the stage at the Sony pre-show press conference and confirmed that there was no delay and the PS3 would have a worldwide launch in November. He even came up with a firm date: 17 November for both Europe and North America (11 November for Japan). For once it appeared that Europeans would no longer be treated as second-class citizens of the gaming world.

Despite constant rumours of manufacturing problems over the last few months, Sony stuck to its guns and even reiterated as recently as August that there would be a total of two million PS3s ready for launch worldwide, with four million manufactured by the end of the year. At the time, despite mentioning that full-scale production still hadn't begun, SCEA's Kaz Hirai commented: "Everything's pretty much on track. We're internally really getting geared up to go to market with this beautiful console in three months' time, and at this point in time all signs are good to go." Then, all of a sudden, Sony pulled the plug on the European launch. On 6 September – just one day after launching the official European PlayStation 3 website – the company announced that, due to manufacturing difficulties, the PS3 would only launch this year in North America and Japan, while Europe (along with Russia and other territories such as Australasia, Africa and the Middle East) would have to wait till next March. "I am very sorry. I think there are many people who are looking forward to PS3, so I really regret the delay," commented Ken Kutaragi.

"For once it appeared that Europeans would no longer be treated as second-class citizens of the gaming world"

The main cause of the delay is a shortage of the blue laser diodes needed for the PS3's Blu-ray disc drive. Manufacturers of the diodes – also used in Blu-ray and HD DVD stand-alone players, along with the equivalent computer disc drives – had been unable to improve yield rates and supply is not expected to be back on track until spring 2007. Back in July, Sony had even postponed the European launch of stand-alone Blu-ray players until October, reportedly due to a shortage of diodes, so this was a known issue. However, Sony had banked on an increase in production efficiencies to enable the manufacture of enough diodes for the PS3 launch. Unfortunately, this hasn't happened in time, bringing a candid response from Ken Kutaragi: "If you asked me if Sony's strength in hardware was in decline, right now I guess I would have to say that might be true."

The number of PS3s available for the other territories has also been slashed. In total, only 500,000 units will now be ready for November, with reportedly 400,000 heading to North America and a mere100,000 allocated for Japan. This is a dramatic drop from the two million which Sony planned to have ready for November. With so few units to go round, a global launch was quite clearly impossible as the allocations would have to be spread too thin, so it was perfectly understandable that Sony would need to postpone the launch in one of the regions. But why Europe? Well, for a start, Europe (along with the other PAL territories) is the most complex of the regions in which to coordinate a launch due to its various countries, languages, power supplies and currencies. So it's unsurprising (although obviously also massively disappointing) that we should bear the brunt of the shortage.

PlayStation 3 timeline

We trace the history of key events in the development of the PlayStation 3 over the past few years.

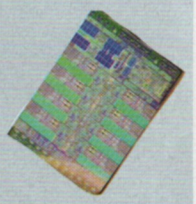
6 October 1999
In a presentation about the forthcoming PS2 by Sony Computer Entertainment CEO Ken Kutaragi, he states that the Emotion Engine 2 CPU is scheduled to ship in 2002 and will be hosted by the PS2's successor – thus implying that the PlayStation 3 will arrive in 2002.

March 2001

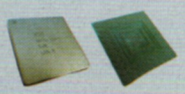
Set up by the alliance of Sony, Toshiba and IBM, the STI Design Center (in Austin, Texas) starts developing the Cell microprocessor in a five-year project costing $400 million. It is announced that the new chip will be used in the PS3.

August 2002
Sony starts talks with software companies, giving them details of the PlayStation 3 specifications and possible launch date.

26 September 2002
Sony files a US patent for the PlayStation 3. This mentions that it will use a Cell architecture with a main processing unit and eight attached processing units.

April 2003

Sony sinks $1.6 billion into building a plant in Nagasaki to manufacture the Cell processor. Sony admits that the Cell chip will be delayed and predicts that 2007 is now more likely for a machine based around it.

12 July 2004
Sony Computer Entertainment CEO, Ken Kutaragi confirms that a playable version of the PS3 will be ready by spring 2005 and be shown at the E3 show in May.

7 December 2004

Sony and Nvidia make a joint announcement that the PS3 (along with other Sony products) will use an Nvidia graphics chip based on its new GeForce technology.

16 May 2005
Sony gives the world its first look at the PlayStation 3 (in silver, with a boomerang-shaped controller) and reveals that the system will launch in spring 2006 in Japan. It is confirmed that the PS3 will use the Blu-ray disc format and will boast backwards compatibility with the PS2 and PSone.



15 August 2005
Analysts at Wedbush Morgan Securities predict that the PS3 may not launch in the UK until 2007 if the Xbox 360 launch doesn't go well, as Sony could then clean up with its slimline PS2.

1 September 2005
Sony starts taking orders for PS3 development kits from software companies, charging €25,000 (£16,900) a piece.

"The day one allocation of PS3s in North America will still be greater than that achieved by Microsoft for the Xbox 360 launch"

key battleground with Microsoft's Xbox 360. In particular, it pointed out that while the global number of units was reduced, the day one allocation of PS3s in North America will still be greater than that achieved by Microsoft for the Xbox 360 launch. SCEA's head of corporate communications, Dave Karraker stated: "*The supply we have at launch is comparable to what was available for the PlayStation 2, not Xbox 360.*" *He added that* 1 to 1.2 million units would be available in North America by the end of the year; and a total of between 2 and 2.4 million units available in North American and Japan. Even so, as with virtually every console launch in history, shortages are still likely due to the high level of demand anticipated.

Another reason for focusing on the North American market is that Sony is keen to launch as many Blu-ray players there as possible in the battle against Toshiba's rival HD DVD format to be the successor to standard DVD. According to market analyst Michael Pachter, of Wedbush Morgan, "The allocation to the US – 80 per cent of initial shipments – is shocking, and it is clear that they intend to ship as many PS3s here till they crush Toshiba. I really think it's unfortunate for European consumers, but the delay makes clear that Sony intends to fight the Blu-Ray – HD DVD battle on US soil." SCEA's Dave Karraker added, "We will have a larger installed base than the original DVD format had at launch. The PS3 will have a tremendous impact on the advancement of the Blu-ray format." The US home-video market is huge, with DVD sales and rentals accounting for over $22 billion in revenue in 2005. As Sony will earn royalties for every Blu-ray disc sold (as Time Warner and Toshiba do for standard DVD), it stands to rake in the cash – so long as the format fends off the rival HD DVD technology.

Ironically, it's Blu-ray which has been the cause of the PS3's launch problems – and not for the first time. The console's original delay, from spring 2006 (in Japan at least) was due to the late development of the copy protection system (AACS) for the new disc format. And now it's a shortage of blue laser diodes needed for Blu-ray which has reduced the number of PS3s that can be manufactured by November. With all these problems, Sony could easily have dropped the new format and gone with a standard DVD drive for the PS3, which would have reduced the manufacturing costs (and headaches) considerably, and thus also the retail price. An add-on Blu-ray drive could even have been made available later, akin to the new optional HD DVD drive for the Xbox 360. Yet Sony has stuck with its new high-capacity disc format through thick and thin. Despite jibes from Microsoft, which claimed Sony is "forcing consumers to upgrade to an unproven technology", Sony has insisted that the PS3's Blu-ray drive will be a key part of the system. This is because, unlike the Xbox 360's optional HD DVD drive which will only play movies, the PS3's Blu-ray drive will also be used for games. This will provide vast storage (50 GB on a dual-layer disc) for developers, offering the potential to create even more detailed and complex game worlds – just as the PS2's DVD drive did, enabling games that simply wouldn't have been possible on a CD-based system.



Xbox 360 launch



Microsoft just about pulled off its ambitious worldwide launch of the Xbox 360, but retailers still suffered massive shortages and there must have been many a disappointed games fan on Christmas Day, even those who had pre-ordered months in advance. The launch wasn't quite simultaneous either, as North America got its first allocation of consoles on 22 November, while Europe had to wait until 2 December, and Japan until 10 December. The shortages in North America led to rampant profiteering on eBay with premium bundles fetching over $1,000. Meanwhile, stock was languishing on Japanese store shelves as only hardcore gamers there were remotely interested. Some pundits even questioned whether Microsoft was deliberately creating shortages in North America and Europe for publicity purposes. The launch line-up of games also came in for some criticism, with lots of conversions and only a handful of really impressive titles.





So it appears that Blu-ray is a double-edged sword and that, despite being the cause of the current manufacturing problems, it could well give the PS3 the edge over the Xbox 360 in the long term. It also makes the ($499 / $599) PS3 look like a bargain compared with the prices of stand-alone Blu-ray players, currently retailing in the US for around $1,000 – including Sony's BDP-S1 model. And given that the combined cost of an Xbox 360 (20 GB version) plus HD DVD drive would be almost £480 (although a Christmas bundle is rumoured), the PS3 – with 60 GB hard drive – doesn't seem overly expensive at £425 to £450. There's certainly still a long way to go in the next-generation hardware battle and a July report by market analyst firm The Yankee Group forecast that the PS3 would capture 44% (30 million units) of the US console market by 2011 – compared to 40% for the Xbox 360. A lot will depend on the success of the Blu-ray format, but the outcome is unlikely to be affected by a blip in the PS3's launch plans.

But where does all this leave Europe? Well, Microsoft will certainly make hay while the sun shines with its Xbox 360 dominating the Christmas next-generation hardware sales. The firm's European boss Chris Lewis commented, "Europe remains a priority for us and that is why gamers have been able to experience Xbox 360 from day one and why we're confident we're going to have a great Christmas, regardless of what competitors are or are not in the market." However, it won't have the next-generation market all to itself as Nintendo is planning to launch the Wii here on 8 December, for a mere £179. Meanwhile Sony is still set for strong sales of the PSP and PS2. Retailers have expressed surprise at the PS3 delay, but in a way it's made life easier for them as they can concentrate on the existing consoles for the crowded Christmas market and still expect to sell out of PS3s come March, a traditionally quiet period. "The delay means we now have a major sales opportunity to look forward to next spring instead, and hopefully this means there will be plenty of hardware produced to go round, so there will be no shortages," said Tim Ellis, head of games at HMV. Don McCabe, joint MD of Chips, added: "In many respects it will give a really good boost to the spring period. It's going to be like the second coming and it will make this Easter an extremely good one for retail." The only problem is placating disappointed PS3 pre-order customers, as Action Replay and Gameshop MD Steve O'Brien pointed out: "With the absence of any concrete pre-order scheme in place for the UK from Sony, many retailers have taken it upon themselves to be proactive in this area. Now it's a case of managing the aftermath."

The new March date could even be good news for (at least the more patient) European consumers. Sony and the third-party software companies will have more time to gear up for the launch. By then, the PS3 should have a far more impressive line-up of games than for the November launches in North America and Japan, with additional titles such as *Medal of Honor: Airborne*, *Sega Rally*, *Alone in the Dark* and *Virtua Fighter 5*. Some titles may even boast extra features: for instance, Koei said it is planning to do so for *Fatal Inertia*, including adding tilt control. Also, barring any further manufacturing problems we should now be guaranteed a decent number of PS3s allocated for the launch here, as Sony is still predicting it will ship six million units worldwide by the end of March. So there should be fewer problems with retail shortages and the console should hit the ground running in Europe. This also applies to Sony's PlayStation Network Platform online services, which should be long past any possible teething troubles.

Managing director of Sony Computer Entertainment UK, Ray Maguire commented: "We can truly empathise with everyone who was looking forward to PS3's imminent release. We will, however, be working tirelessly to ensure that the March 2007 launch is the biggest and best in the company's history." Sony has also vowed to continue with its £40 million European marketing campaign and stated that the newly launched official PS3 website (eu.playstation.com/ps3/) will be updated with new 'PS3 stories', short films made to promote the console. A Sony spokesperson said, "Now more than ever is it necessary to promote the key USPs of PlayStation 3 and we believe the 'Stories' campaign is an excellent way of doing this."

"The PSP launch was delayed, both in Europe and North America, and yet that has gone on to be the fastest-selling console in Sony history"

So yes, the delayed European launch is disappointing for those of us eager to get our hands on a PS3 (unless we have wads of cash to spend on importing one), but does it really matter in the long term? The PSP launch was delayed, both in Europe and North America, and yet that has gone on to be the fastest-selling console in Sony history. Virtually every other games console has been launched several months later in Europe too – including the PS2, and that didn't do too badly. At the end of the day, the PlayStation 3 will still be a stunning system with some amazing games, superior technical capabilities (if developers make use of them), plus proper High-Definition TV support (via HDMI) and that brilliant Blu-ray drive. It's just that we'll just have to wait that little bit longer for it. ■

How to get hold of a PS3



If you don't fancy waiting until March for a PlayStation 3, it may still be possible to obtain one from North America or Japan, but you're going to need deep pockets. When the Xbox 360 was launched last December, units were fetching over double the retail price on eBay. And on top of that, if you import a machine from North America or Japan, you can expect to pay VAT and possibly customs duty on top. So you're looking at well over £1,000, at a conservative estimate. Alternatively, to save all the hassle, you may be able to find an independent games shop selling imported PS3s, although Sony may well clamp down on the grey market as it did last year when it took legal action against retailers who imported PSPs. However, if you do manage to get hold of a PS3, at least the games will be region free (as on the PSP), so you could still play UK games on your machine when they appear next year.

PlayStation 3 timeline

2 December 2005

Following its 22 November launch in North America, the Xbox 360 is released just ten days later in Europe. There are considerable shortages at retail, resulting in a frenzy of activity on eBay with bids of up to £550 for the basic £210 model.



14 March 2006

At a hastily arranged Tokyo press conference, Sony Computer Entertainment CEO Ken Kutaragi confirms that the PS3's spring 2006 launch in Japan has been delayed until November. However, he states that this will now be a worldwide launch date and that six million units will be shipped by March 2007.



8 May 2006

Taking the stage at the pre-E3 show Sony press conference, SCEA CEO Kaz Hirai confirms that there is no delay to the PS3 worldwide launch and even reveals the exact dates: 11 November in Japan and 17 November for North America and Europe. He also states that the PS3 will come in two configurations and that US prices will be $499 (20 GB model) and $599 (60 GB).



12 June 2006

Sony Electronics announces that its BDP-S1 Blu-ray movie player will now be launching in mid August in Europe rather than at the end of June. Other manufacturers also postpone the European launch of their Blu-ray players.



22 June 2006

Sony puts back the launch date of its BDP-S1 Blu-ray player again, this time until 25 October, only weeks before the planned PS3 launch.

21 August 2006

Kaz Hirai states that Sony hasn't started manufacturing the PS3 yet and no date has been set, but promises to meet the target of two millions units for launch – although he predicts retail shortages due to high demand. He also confirms that Sony is still on track for the November launch.

30 August 2006

A report on the DigiTimes website claims that manufacturers of blue laser diodes have been unable to improve their yield rates, leading to a shortage of diodes. It is reported that the manufacturing arm of Sony has suspended shipments of diodes to manufacturers of Blu-ray drives in order to use them in the PS3. Even so, there is industry speculation that Sony may have to cut its shipments drastically for the PS3 launch.

6 September 2006

A press release on the official PlayStation website announces that the PS3 launch has been postponed until March in Europe. It cites "production issues with the blue laser diodes needed for the Blu-ray disc drive" as the cause of the delay.



Blu-ray is the high-def way



Developed by Sony and its allied companies as a successor to the DVD movie format, Blu-ray is designed to produce high-resolution pictures for the new High-Definition TVs (as DVD is limited to standard-definition pictures). Blu-ray has the support of most of the major movie companies, although Universal has recently come out in favour of the rival HD DVD standard.

The Blu-ray system features a blue-violet laser which operates at a shorter wavelength (405 nm) than a standard red laser (650 nm) and thus more accurately. This, together with a larger numerical aperture, enables far more data to be crammed onto a disc – 20 GB per layer (compared with 15 GB for HD DVD). The upshot of this is that it can reproduce a proper high-definition picture (on a compatible HDTV) with five times the amount of detail than standard definition. It works with all the HD standards, right up to the maximum 1080p (unlike HD DVD which will only support up to 1080i). There should be no need for multi-disc movies either, as up to nine hours of high-definition video footage can be stored on a single 50 GB disc.

While PS3 games will be region free, Blu-ray features a region coding system for movies, although it differs from the DVD one:

Region A – North America, South America, East Asia (not China)

Region B – Europe and Africa

Region C – China, Russia and other countries

Blu-ray will be backwards compatible with DVD and CD, so you won't need several different players. And Blu-ray recorders will be launched, enabling you to record High-Definition broadcasts in all their glory, so this format could well replace the DVD recorder and standard VCR as HDTV takes off.

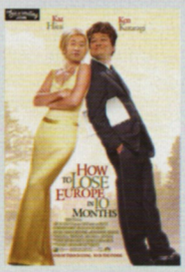
This is joking

Almost as soon as the PlayStation 3's European launch delay was announced, a website had appeared called thisiswaiting.com – a pun on Sony's 'This is living' slogan for the PS3. Set up by the guys behind Wii60.com (surprise, surprise), the site features user-submitted images and videos taking the mickey out of Sony and its dashed plans for a worldwide launch. At least it should raise a smile for disappointed PlayStation fans, not to mention Xbox 360 and Wii aficionados.

















Images reproduced courtesy of www.thisiswaiting.com


Ken Kutaragi


Ray Maguire


Don McCabe


Chris Lewis

What they all say

Sony executives, third-party games companies and retailers react to the news of the PS3 postponement in Europe.

Sony Computer Entertainment – Ken Kutaragi, CEO
"I am very sorry. I think there are many people who are looking forward to PS3, so I really regret the delay."

Sony Computer Entertainment UK – Ray Maguire, Managing Director
"We can truly empathise with everyone who was looking forward to PS3's imminent release. We will, however, be working tirelessly to ensure that the March 2007 launch is the biggest and best in the company's history."

Electronic Arts – Simon Smith-Wright, UK Head of Specialist PR
"EA will have a great portfolio of games ready when the console arrives in Europe, and we're looking forward to bringing our PS3 line up to gamers in the region this March."

Konami Europe – Jon Murphy, UK PR and Marketing Manager
"I don't think it's unexpected but I must admit I'm disappointed. Microsoft managed a global launch and the same is expected with the Wii so it's a shame that Sony will not manage to do the same. By the time PS3 comes out in Europe there will already be two very established next-gen consoles: the Xbox 360 as a serious games-playing machine and the Wii as a great-value, family-friendly console, so it'll be interesting to see where the PS3 fits into that."

Koei – UK Sales Manager, Will Curley
"The PS3 delay will actually enable UK gamers to get the best possible iteration of *Fatal Inertia*. More time for the developers is always a good thing. They will have much more time to further familiarise themselves with the intricacies of the PS3 and make *Fatal Inertia* as slick and polished as it can possibly be. There are always cool ideas that have to be left out of the final game due to deadline constraints but now they will have more time to add additional features. And with the tilt controller only being announced at E3 the team now have much more time to implement this cool new feature into the game, making the most of its unique capabilities."

HMV – Tim Ellis, Head of Games
"I have to admit this is pretty disappointing news as we've been gearing up for the launch for some time now. It also presents a major opportunity for Microsoft to consolidate Xbox [360]'s position in the market, while Nintendo has a great chance to launch and firmly establish Wii. The delay means we now have a major sales opportunity to look forward to next spring instead, and hopefully this means there will be plenty of hardware produced to go round, so there will be no shortages."

CHIPS – Don McCabe, Joint Managing Director
"We've got a substantial amount of orders for the PS3, so from a consumer point of view they're going to be gutted. All the other hardware manufacturers are going to benefit from this delay. And that's without a doubt. But I don't think it's going to affect PlayStation 3. The PS3 is going to sell in significant quantities, but it gives Microsoft longer to grow its installed base and maximise its abilities."

Action Replay & Gameshop – Steve O'Brien, Managing Director
"This will be all about managing the consumers' expectations. With the absence of any concrete pre-order scheme in place for the UK from Sony, many retailers have taken it upon themselves to be proactive in this area. Now it's a case of managing the aftermath. Ultimately, it will have very little financial impact for retail this Christmas as the consumer has very attractive alternatives. I'm sure Microsoft and Nintendo will grab onto this opportunity with both hands."

Woolworths – Gerry Berkley, Trading Manager for Games
"I think it's a blow for anyone who budgeted and forecasted for PS3. Everybody's got to refocus but I think there was always a danger of this happening."

Sainsbury's – Brian Foote, Games Buyer
"The delay is a surprise but if you don't go into these things with the expectation of change we'd be the bigger fools."

Microsoft Europe – Chris Lewis, Regional Vice President of Home Entertainment Division
"We know how challenging it is to pull off a global launch, so it's not surprising that Sony has backed away from their previously announced launch plan due to the unproven technology they are trying to pack in to their console. Europe remains a priority for us and that is why gamers have been able to experience Xbox 360 from day one and why we're confident we're going to have a great Christmas, regardless of what competitors are or are not in the market."

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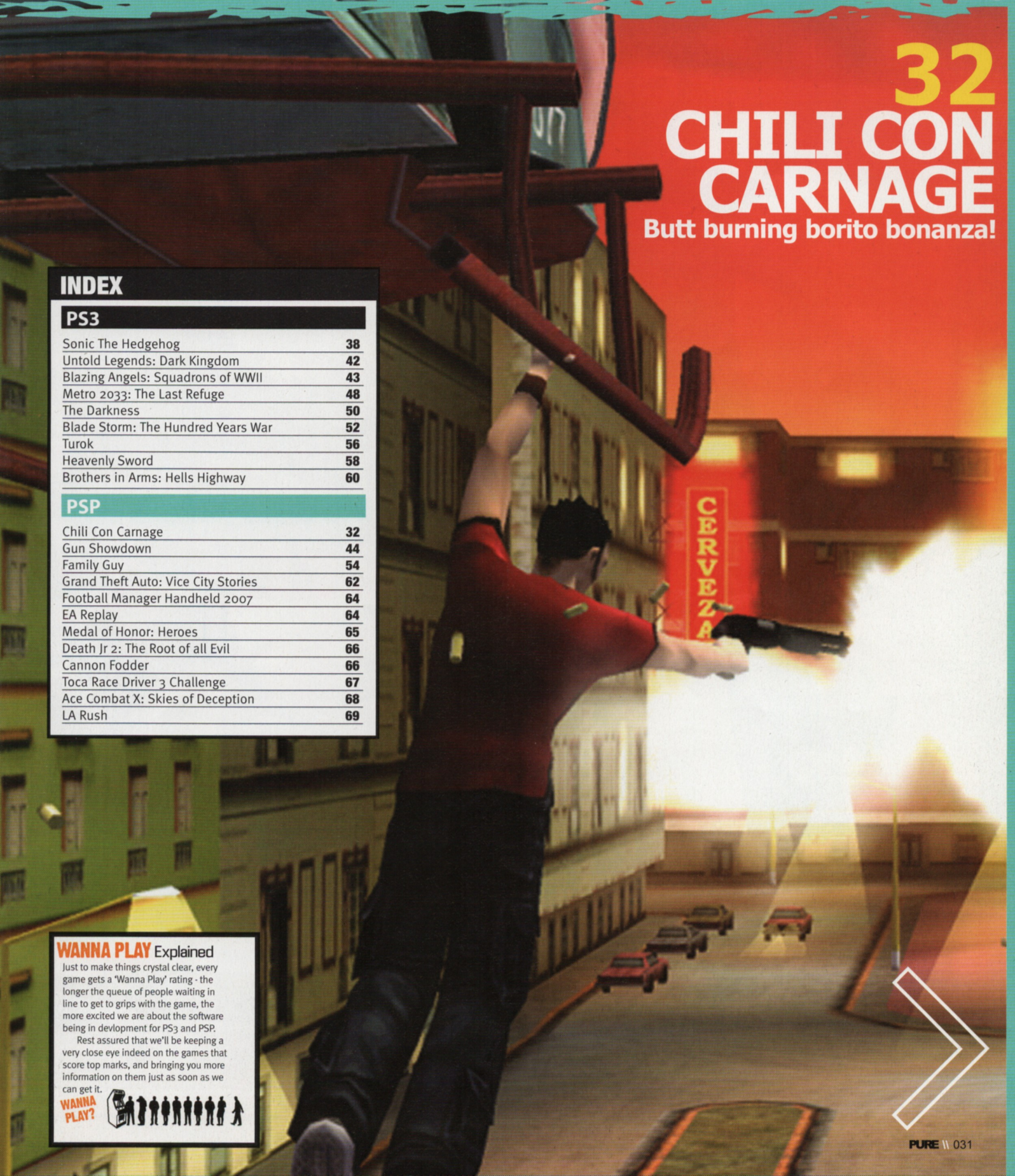
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TOMORROW'S GAMES TODAY...

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32 CHILI CON CARNAGE

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INDEX

PS3

Sonic The Hedgehog	38
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	42
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII	43
Metro 2033: The Last Refuge	48
The Darkness	50
Blade Storm: The Hundred Years War	52
Turok	56
Heavenly Sword	58
Brothers in Arms: Hells Highway	60

PSP

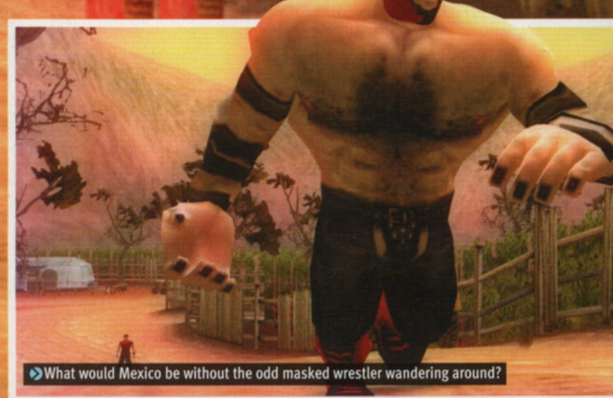
Chili Con Carnage	32
Gun Showdown	44
Family Guy	54
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories	62
Football Manager Handheld 2007	64
EA Replay	64
Medal of Honor: Heroes	65
Death Jr 2: The Root of all Evil	66
Cannon Fodder	66
Toca Race Driver 3 Challenge	67
Ace Combat X: Skies of Deception	68
LA Rush	69

WANNA PLAY Explained

Just to make things crystal clear, every game gets a 'Wanna Play' rating - the longer the queue of people waiting in line to get to grips with the game, the more excited we are about the software being in devlopment for PS3 and PSP.

Rest assured that we'll be keeping a very close eye indeed on the games that score top marks, and bringing you more information on them just as soon as we can get it.

"O.K. Passport, travellers cheques, sunglasses, bloody big shotgun..."



What would Mexico be without the odd masked wrestler wandering around?



ETA FEB

Chili Con Carnage

Going loco down in Mexico

Publisher: Eidos **Genre:** Action **Website:** n/a





DEVELOPER HISTORY

DEADLINE GAMES

Founded in 1996, Deadline started out as a TV production company but by 1997 was focused completely on interactive entertainment. Based in an old submarine dry dock in Copenhagen, Denmark, the firm offers many benefits to its staff including an in-house chef to cook all their meals. In addition to *Chili Con Carne*, the team is currently developing *Total Overdose 2* for the major consoles and PC.

2005 TOTAL OVERDOSE
1999 ENGLEN (THE ANGEL)
2004 BLACKOUT



What happens if you take a *Tony Hawk*'s-style combo scoring system and apply it to the shoot-em-up genre and put it all in a Mexican scenario? You're about to find out in *Chili Con Carnage*, which Eidos claims will be the spiciest handheld action game ever. Although based on *Total Carnage*, a sleeper hit on the major consoles last year, the game has been completely restructured for the PSP with an all-new story mode and lots of new features. The emphasis here is on fun, with all the blood and gore removed, as you try to kill the baddies in the most stylish way possible.

The wacky humour is prevalent right from the start, when the opening cut-scene shows the cocky hero Ramiro Cruz delivering a present – a box of kittens – to his police-chief father, only seconds before the latter is mown down by a combine harvester smashing through his office window and turned into several hay bales. The scene switches to his funeral, where he's being been buried in three separate mini coffins. Naturally, Ramiro sets out avenge his father's death

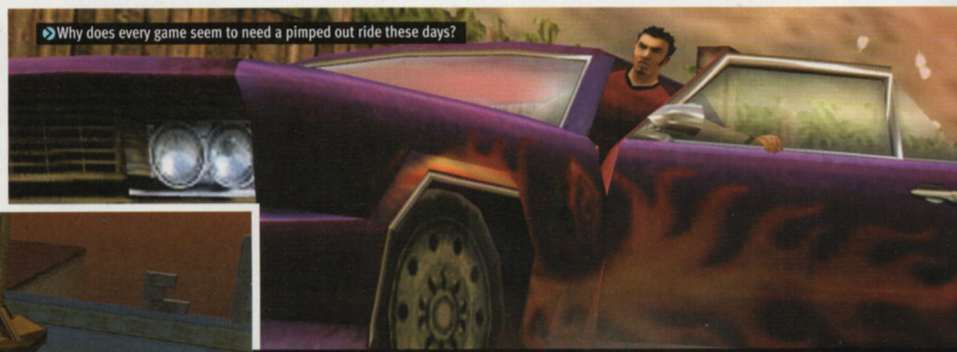
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which was apparently ordered by the drugs baron Elvez, who appears later on wearing purple swimming trunks and a rubber ring.

First stop is the Virgillo ranch where the first stage is really a training level to get you used to the controls – not that they take long to pick up. In the absence of a right analogue stick, the camera rotation has been mapped to the left stick – there's no need to look up and down as the baddies are all at about the same height as you. Enemies are targeted automatically when within your aiming cone, while you can score extra points by going for head shots – you need to hold the R button to lock on and then time your shot perfectly. You can also target scenery such as barrels, to explosive effect. Weapon selection is done via the D-pad, with a choice of pistols, shotguns and, later on, more powerful armaments such as rocket and grenade launchers. There's also an overdrive pick-up that lets you dual-wield weapons.

As in *Total Overdose*, one of the key elements to the gameplay is the use of a Bullet Time-style 'shoot-dodge' function which is unlimited and can be activated at any time. This makes everything move in slow motion, enabling you to pull off some impressive gravity-defying moves as you dive and spin gracefully through the air, blasting several enemies before landing. You can also use it to 'wall-walk' and perform cartwheels and somersaults off walls and other scenery. A new 180° instant spin also comes into play here, enabling you to shoot baddies sneaking up behind. Get close enough to an enemy and you might even catch his hat on your head and then continue wearing it until the end of the level (unless you die) for a score bonus.

The more stylish the kill, the more points you earn and the more your combo timer goes up. Situated on the right edge of the screen, the latter gradually runs down and to keep your combo going, you need to rack up another kill before it hits zero. Thus there's a tactical element



Why does every game seem to need a pimped out ride these days?



// THE MORE STYLISH THE KILL, THE MORE POINTS YOU EARN AND THE MORE YOUR COMBO TIMER GOES UP//



GOIN' LOCO

To help you out of a tight spot, the collectable loco moves come in very handy. Here's just a taste of the ones available.

Tornado
Ramiro jumps and spins in slow motion, twin machine guns blazing, to wipe out any enemies around.

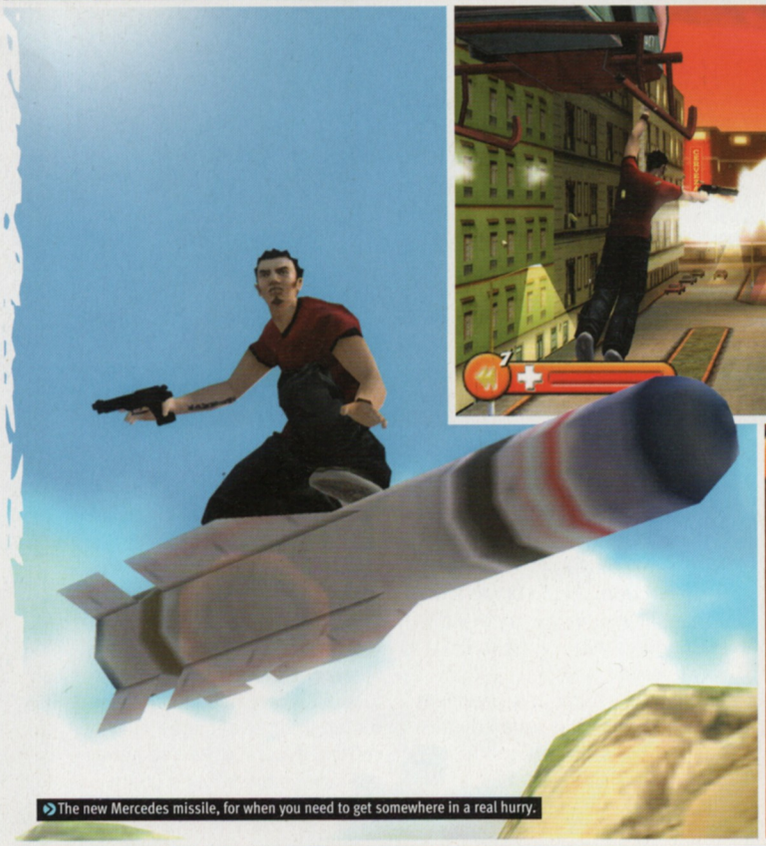
El Toro
The screen borders go red and you can now charge around like a bull, killing anyone in your path.

Piñata
Mexicans love a piñata, so just throw the straw donkey and they'll flock to it... for an explosive surprise!

Golden Gun
Gives you six guaranteed head shots on enemies, the camera switching to a view from the speeding bullet.

El Gimpo
A huge Mexican wrestler is summoned to help you, yelling profanities as he bashes any baddies in the area.

El Mariachi
Ramiro carries two guitar cases packed with machine guns spewing hot lead in a near endless stream.



The new Mercedes missile, for when you need to get somewhere in a real hurry.





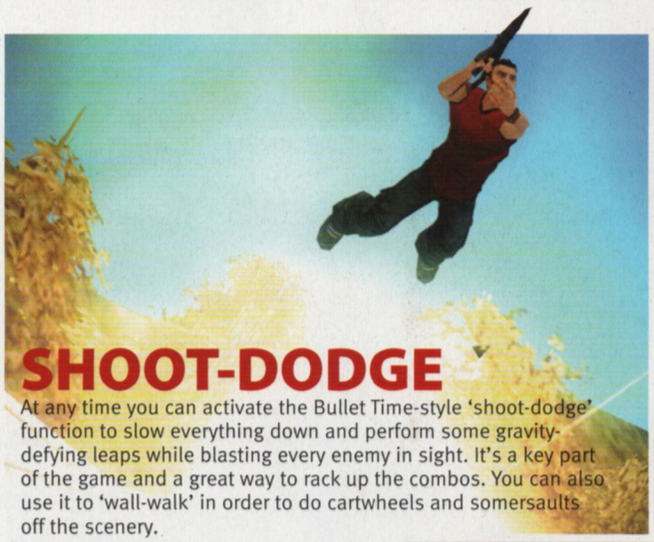
and you may even choose to leave certain enemies till later in order to keep a run of kills going. Theoretically it's possible to maintain a single combo for an entire level, but you'll need to learn the map and enemy locations by heart.

For times when you're on your last legs, or surrounded by enemies, the powerful loco moves are a godsend. These are gained by collecting icons, although unlike *Total Overdose* you can only hold one at a time. There are around ten different loco moves, including the Tornado where you spin through the air with guns blazing, and El Toro where you charge bull-like at enemies. Even if you wind up dead, however, that's no problem – so long as you've collected a rewind which lets you turn back time for several seconds for another try. You can use this at any time too, for example to try to re-establish a combo that ran out.

Throughout, the high level of visual detail is very impressive and there's often a hell of a lot of action happening on screen – with, amazingly, double the number of enemies attacking at once than on the PS2 version of *Total Carnage*. This is all accompanied by a suitably Latin soundtrack by Mexican hip-hop acts such as Control Machete, Molotov and Delinquent Habit. It's context-sensitive too, with more instruments being added to the mix as the action hots up.

In the next stage of the Virgillo ranch, you encounter vehicles for the first time, such as trucks and tractors. Just hop in/on and you can drive around the level, running over or shooting enemies. Vehicles can also be used to ram into special targets, in this case fertiliser silos – just remember to jump off before it hits, at which point you can shoot some more baddies as you fly through the air during the massive explosion for a super combo. The destruction of silos also causes the local chickens to mutate into killer beasts with bulging eyes – naturally, great fun can be had slaughtering them.

Later levels take you through seven varied environments, from the harbour where you board a ship, to a meat-packing factory, town rooftops by night and the jungle where you're chased by a helicopter. Along the way you'll encounter several boss battles, including one in a bull ring where you have to lure a huge snorting bull into charging the ringside window several times to get at the villain Cesar Morales. You then have to fight him and his mini-Morales sidekick in the ring, both of them charging at you,



SHOOT-DODGE

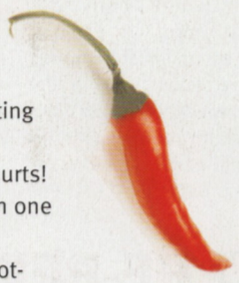
At any time you can activate the Bullet Time-style 'shoot-dodge' function to slow everything down and perform some gravity-defying leaps while blasting every enemy in sight. It's a key part of the game and a great way to rack up the combos. You can also use it to 'wall-walk' in order to do cartwheels and somersaults off the scenery.



SPICY MOVES

There are a large number of combos that can be created from stringing together the basic attack moves to earn bonus points and release pick-ups. Here's just a small selection of spicy moves and combos.





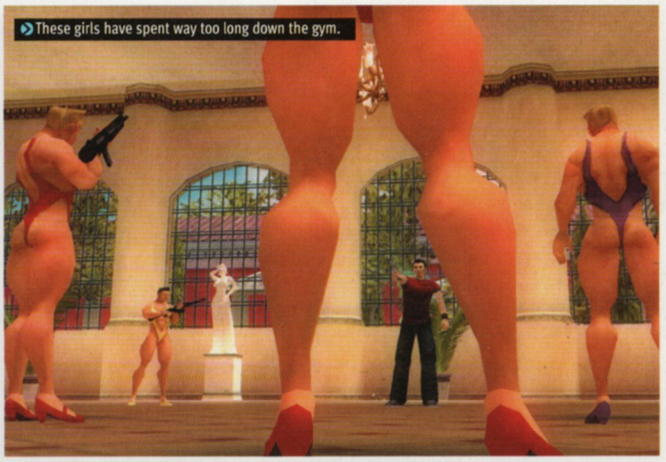
Twister: Perform a shoot-dodge, twisting one way then the other.
Ball Buster: Kick an enemy where it hurts!
Rampage: Kill two or more enemies in one combo.
Reverse Bullseye: Reverse jump, shoot-dodge and do a successful head-shot.
Bird of a Wire: Slide down a zipline and kill an enemy with a head-shot.
Big Foot: Stomp on an enemy lying on the ground.
Flying Head Split: Do a point-blank head-shot, then exit vehicle and shoot-dodge.
Bouncing Bomb: Bounce off a wall, shoot-dodge and blow up an object to kill enemies.
Angry Sunday Drive: Leap from a moving vehicle, shoot-dodge and do a head-shot.



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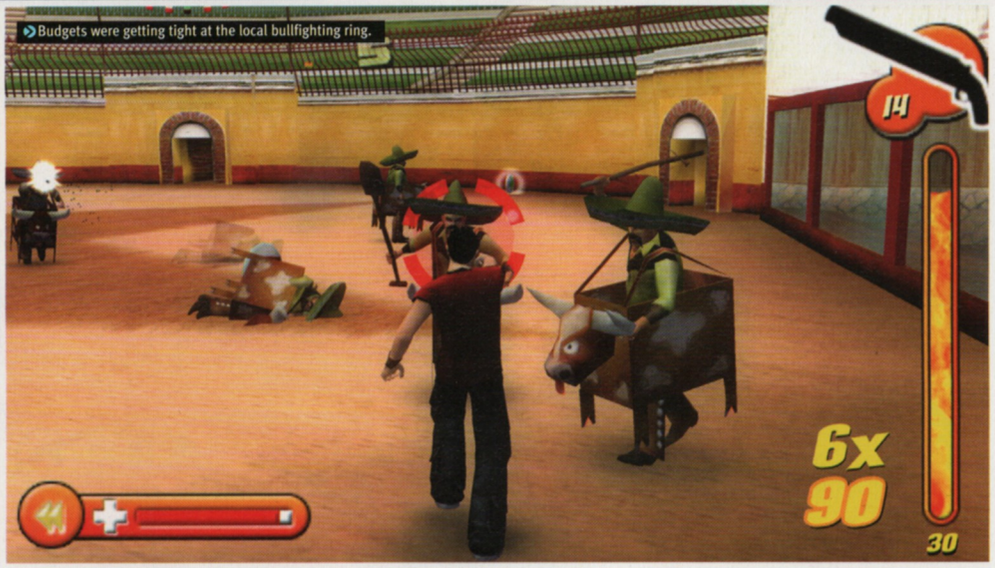


// THE DESTRUCTION OF SILOS CAUSES THE LOCAL CHICKENS TO MUTATE INTO KILLER BEASTS WITH BULGING EYES//









and Morales knocking you off your feet with his explosive earthquake move. It's tough stuff and the story mode should certainly offer a good challenge with its 19 lengthy levels along with about a dozen optional challenge missions. There's lots of replay value, too, in trying to get bronze, silver and gold awards for points earned in levels – and thus unlock extra multiplayer skins and new levels for El Macho mode. The latter offers a quick-play option where you try to rack up a high score on a single level, by blasting enemies dressed in chicken suits.

There are two multiplayer modes. Fiesta lets up to four players compete via Ad Hoc wireless. However, instead of the standard deathmatch, you each fight lots of CPU enemies and try to rack up big combos to send a wave of extra enemies over to your opponents – similar to the system used in puzzle games such as *Tetris* and *Puzzle Bobble*. The Donkey multiplayer mode, on the other hand, is played by passing one PSP between up to four friends, each trying to beat each others' scores on confined stages containing a set number of enemies. As ever, the aim is to kill them as stylishly as possible, including by driving vehicles up ramps.

With its spicy mix of humour, pick-up-and-play action and high-score challenges, *Chili Con Carne* seems ideal for the PSP. Technically it's amazing, particularly considering that it's the first PSP title from developer Deadline Games. You might not be able to take the storyline seriously, but the addictive gameplay should keep you coming back for more. The potential replay value for the story mode is huge and, along with the other new game modes, ensures that there's plenty of meat in this tasty Mexican beanfeast.

WANNA PLAY?



RE-REWIND

Pick up a rewind icon and you'll be able to turn back time whenever you get into real trouble, thus resurrecting Ramiro if he's just been killed. You can elect to rewind at any time, so you may want to use it to have another go at a missed combo.



PUREinterview

TWO AMIGOS

Tucking into a plate of fajitas, we chatted to *Chili Con Carnage* designer Russell Kerrison and producer Steve Morris of Eidos.





PURE: Why the new name?
Russell Kerrison: It was a fun kind of tag line for the original [*Total Overdose*]. People liked it and we thought it could work very well. And it is a different game. We didn't want it to be seen as a sequel – it's something uniquely made for the PSP.

PURE: How long has the game been in development?
Steve Morris: Since last October. Pre-production started just after *Total Overdose* came out. There were so many lessons learnt from the latter that we wanted to do a *Total Overdose 1.5* but there was no real platform for it. PSP comes along and we were able to fine-tune it and use all the lessons that we've learned, but we needed to come up with a new concept for it. It's a different game. We've taken out the free-roaming aspect and made the combos and action the focus of the game, which leads to a much tighter title. So we decided to rebrand it and call it something different. It's still got the same characters and themes, but it is a totally souped-up, chili-powered version of the original.

RK: It was working off all the things that people really liked about *Total Overdose* – the combo system and the main arcade shooting – and getting rid of a lot of things that people didn't like, such as the free-roaming aspect. We've made it tighter and a lot more accessible. It's still set in the same world, but doesn't follow the same events. It has its own unique story.

SM: One of the things we had to explain is that this is the second time that Ram's father has died! We've taken such liberties with the story... and that emphasises what we're trying to do with this game. It's really over the top and we're trying to put the emphasis on fun.

PURE: It's less of a gory, hardcore shooter then?
RK: I was always uncomfortable with the gore aspects of the first game, because you had all the comedy and the fun stuff, then you had all this really quite gory stuff with body parts flying everywhere, blood all over the place, and it's not what the game's about.

PURE: Did you have to alter the basic gameplay at all for PSP?
RK: We had to make it a lot easier to control the main character. We've refined the combat controls and mechanism. On the original you used the right stick for aiming; obviously we haven't got that so all the levels have been worked to fit on one plane, so you don't need to be looking up or down. There are a few enemies that are higher, but the auto-targeting system picks them up. We've tried to streamline the controls and interface to make everything a lot more immediate and easy to access. We didn't want players to be fighting with the controls – it's got to be easy to pick up and play.

PURE: What have you done to take advantage of the handheld format?
RK: What we have managed to do, which is quite surprising, is to double the number of on-screen enemies compared with the PlayStation 2 version. So it's a lot more relentless. There's no other game on PSP with so many on-screen enemies attacking you at once. We've got lots of extra effects and the frame rate is really solid. So we're pretty happy with the end result.

SM: There are other things we did during the design phase of the game. There are different game modes and different unlockables in the game. And these, players can play depending on their time constraints. So if you've only got a five-minute bus journey, some of the game levels will fit that criterion. It's basically made for an interruptible gameplay basis, so it's ideal for handheld.

RK: El Macho mode is new, that's something made for handheld. So if you just want to sit and have a quick blast and try to beat your combo score, you can do that. Or even just play the Donkey [multiplayer] mode and hand it around to your mates.

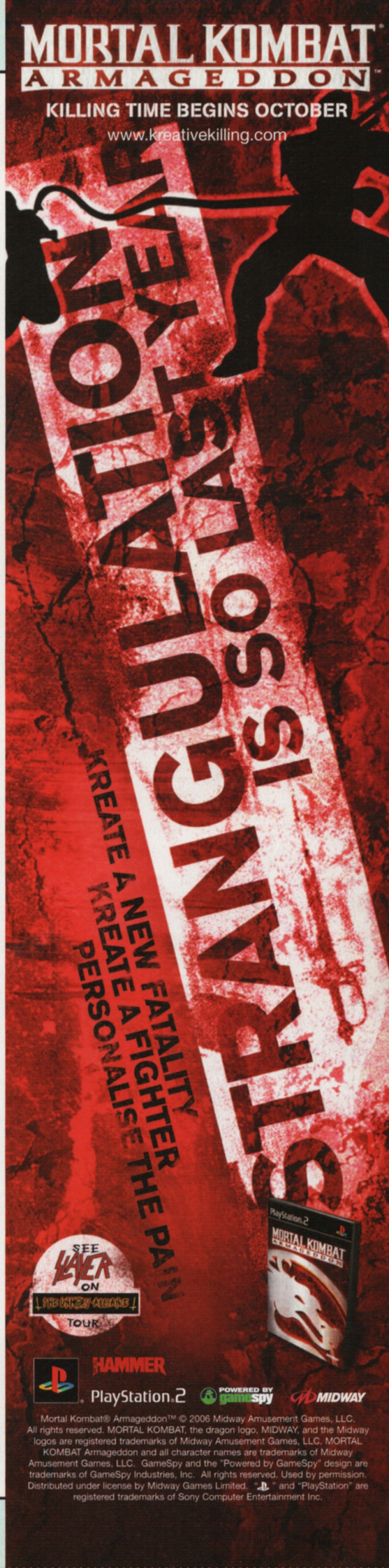
PURE: Did you have any problems with loading times from UMD?
SM: Absolutely none. Loading times are phenomenal. We hold a surprising amount in resident memory. The access to the UMD is absolutely minimal, so you get great battery life.

PURE: Is this the first PSP title from Deadline Games?
SM: Yes, it's the first. Technically it's brilliant.

RK: The guys have got a really good set of tools, a really good team. The lead level designer is Junichi Yamada, who was a level design director on *Super Monkey Ball* and *F-Zero* for SEGA Amusement Vision.

PURE: Finally, do you like Mexican food? And what's your favourite dish?
RK: I love Mexican food. And my favourite dish is chili con carne with lots of red wine and lots of jalapenos because I like it spicy. In fact, my wife's making chili tonight.





Sonic the Hedgehog

He gets faster with age

Publisher: SEGA **Genre:** Platform **WWW.** sega.com/gamesite/sonicnext/

launch title






Things are certainly heating up for old Sonic.


Life's full of surprises when you're a blue hedgehog.


Every game needs a monster that looks like it was made out of snot.

The year 1991 was an eventful one. The Soviet Union broke up. The first Gulf War began. A reunified Germany regained full independence. Freddie Mercury died. Michael Schumacher made his Formula One debut. And a small blue hedgehog also made his first appearance. Starring in the self-titled *Sonic the Hedgehog* platform game on the newly launched SEGA Mega Drive console, he was a runaway hit with games fans all over the world thanks to his supersonic speed and incredibly addictive adventures.

15 years later, and with over 44 million games sold, Sonic is back with a vengeance on the next-generation consoles, delivering even more blistering speed and intense 3D action. Aptly, he and his friends look more grown-up now too, boasting longer arms and legs as they explore a human world for the first time. The game is set in the water kingdom of Soleanna, where Sonic meets and befriends the beautiful Princess Elise, who also happens to be in possession of a chaos emerald. Unsurprisingly, she's soon abducted by the evil Dr Robotnik (aka Eggman) who is trying to destroy the kingdom. So yet again it's up to Sonic, with the help of his friends, to save the day via a series of adventures.

One of SEGA's key aims with the new game is a return to the speed and intuitive character controls seen in the early Sonic games. A camera position slightly lower to the ground than in previous 3D Sonic titles improves the sense of speed, along with the next-generation hardware's power to create highly detailed yet fast-moving scenery – which features shadows caused by the sun or moon in a real-time day-night cycle. Simple arcade-style controls are used to manoeuvre Sonic through the lush landscapes. As well as running and jumping, he can do his supersonic sprint, run along walls and even hitch a ride on an eagle. He can also lock onto enemies to do his standard homing jump attack – which can be chained to defeat groups of foes – or use his new sliding attack, also handy for breaking open crates. Sonic Team has hinted that you'll even be able to customise Sonic's abilities to some extent throughout the game, thus choosing which powers to use.

Familiar features found throughout the levels include the usual collectable rings to protect Sonic's health which also now increase his top speed, along with pinball-style bumpers to bounce off and dash pads to boost his speed. There are also springs and elastic ropes for bigger jumps, rainbow-coloured hoops for short cuts and air currents to surf along. As in the original Sonic games you'll be able to complete each stage in multiple ways: unlike the largely linear previous 3D Sonic games, this time there are branching paths to follow.

You'll also get to play some stages as a new

"Unlike the largely linear previous 3D Sonic games, this time there are branching paths to follow"





DEVELOPER HISTORY

Sonic Team

Originally known as AM8, and founded in 1988, this internal SEGA development studio has produced a plethora of Sonic-related games for various formats since 1991, along with a few other projects. Sonic Team was led by legendary game designer (and creator of the original *Sonic* game) Yuji Naka until his departure in May to form new developer PROPE.

2004 **PROJECT RUB**

1999 **SONIC ADVENTURE**

1991 **SONIC THE HEDGEHOG**

PURE POINTERS

- Sonic moves faster than ever, thanks to the power of the next-gen hardware.
- Play as new character Silver with telekinetic powers to combat foes.
- Highly detailed 3D environments to explore, featuring a day-night cycle.
- Multiplayer fun for up to four players, plus possible online support.

playable character called Silver, who resembles a silver version of Sonic. However, rather than supersonic speed he boasts telekinetic powers to use in his more combat-oriented levels. With his power meter charged up by collecting rings, Silver can psychically lift up objects such as giant crates, boulders and cars and then throw them at enemies. Other neat tricks include hovering in mid jump, destroying bridges to create ramps and using special glowing power spots to perform huge leaps. It's also understood that you'll play some stages as Shadow, driving vehicles and launching projectile attacks.









In addition to the various action levels, there are town stages to explore – akin to the Adventure Fields in *Sonic Adventure* but far larger and with more to do. Roaming freely around each vast bustling town (there will be several in the game), you can interact with human characters, some of whom will offer the opportunity to take on sub-missions.

With its high-speed intuitive gameplay and stunning visuals, along with the promise of a multiplayer mode for up to four players and mooted online support, *Sonic the Hedgehog* is already looking like a dramatic return to form for the fastest blue hedgehog in the universe.



WANNA PLAY?

Sonic Team Talk

To find out more about Sonic and his new adventure, we spoke to Akinori Nishiyama of SEGA's Sonic Team.



PURE: Do you have a lot of blue hedgehogs in Japan? Why *is* Sonic blue?

Akinori Nishiyama: Unfortunately, we do not see any real blue hedgehogs here in Japan, but our blue hedgehog is well known around the world! The reason we chose blue was because it was SEGA's main corporate colour.

PURE: Sonic's arms and legs seem to have grown? What's that all about?

AN: Characters keep growing according to time. For this title, we tried to make sure Sonic was in proportion to the rest of the world and the human characters around him.

PURE: What's the idea behind the new PS3 game? Are you aiming to re-create the simple platform fun from the old Mega Drive days?

AN: In this title, we included a sense of speed unique to Sonic that could be found when playing *Sonic* on Mega Drive, or *Sonic ADV* on Dreamcast. We wanted to include features that allow players to feel familiar with the adventure. This game will allow players to enjoy Sonic's back to basics approach in terms of speed.

PURE: How do you come up with new ideas for such a long-running franchise?

AN: We always like to keep surprising people in a very positive way. We would always like to have Sonic as a character.

PURE: Are there any clever new tricks you've been able to implement on the next-generation machines that were not possible before?

AN: It's not a technique, but I think Silver is a new character unique to the next-gen console. [The new technology] allows us to easily accomplish physics simulation which was quite difficult on existing consoles. Moreover, Sonic also has Supersonic Mode which allows the space to stretch out; this was also limited on existing consoles due to polygon value.

PURE: How has the departure of Yuji Naka affected the team? What was he like to work with?

AN: The fact that we no longer work with a very big person of the team is true, but we are trying to take over his ideas and thoughts into our titles. Working with him was a very exciting experience for all of us.

PURE: Working on the Sonic games, do you ever go to sleep and have dreams about being a supersonic blue hedgehog?

AN: I am afraid I have not had any experiences of becoming supersonic in my dreams!

PURE: What is the future of video games? What will they be like in ten years' time?

AN: Scale-wise I am not sure, but I think the video game industry as an entertainment will keep existing in the future. However, I think it may be that video games combine with different types of media.

PURE: Will Sonic still be around then or will he ever hang up his running shoes?

AN: I think Sonic will always be running around the world.

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Next-gen lightning sure looks pretty.





launch title

Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom

Anyone for goblins?

Publisher: Sony Online Entertainment **Genre:** RPG **WWW.** darkkingdom.station.sony.com

DEVELOPER HISTORY

Sony Online Entertainment

A major force in the creation of massively multiplayer online games, SOE has its headquarters in San Diego, with satellite studios in Austin, Seattle and Taiwan. The company is most famous for its long-running *EverQuest* series of games for the PC (and PS2). Among its other titles, it has also developed two Untold Legends games for the PSP.

2005 **UNTOLD LEGENDS: BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLADE**
2003 **STAR WARS GALAXIES**
1999 **EVERQUEST**



Previous *Untold Legends* outings have been a bit of a letdown with limited character creation as well as a number of control issues. As the first RPG to hit the new PS3, *Dark Kingdom* has a lot to prove if it's not to be seen as simply a filler title in the launch line-up.

So what does *Dark Kingdom* promise to make it worth your time on launch day? Sony is promising not only rather spiffy 7.1 sound but also online play allowing you to go adventuring with your friends from around the world. Fully destructible environments promise a variety of uses, from creating new routes to pounding your enemies in all new and interesting ways. Such is the interaction promised by the big S, that even NPCs can be used as weapons in your quest to aid a king who may have become corrupted by dark forces. Living in an RPG universe does seem to carry a number of perils, it seems: if it's not dragons trying to take a bite out of you then it's either a corrupt family member or 'Dark Forces' intent on ruining your day. With three character classes to choose from, as well as the obligatory upgradeable weapons and magical powers, *Dark Kingdom* is certainly looking to be a run-of-the-mill game. We are hoping that it won't fall into the same trap as its previous incarnations and end up as just another dull dungeon crawler.

If you are an RPG fan, this may well satiate your needs. But we think there are going to be a lot better, and a lot bigger, titles hitting the PS3. We'd love to be proved wrong on this one but somehow we get the feeling the whole thing is going to end up as a pretty-to-look-at but rather dull experience at the end of the day.



"Yeah? You and whose army?"

PURE POINTERS

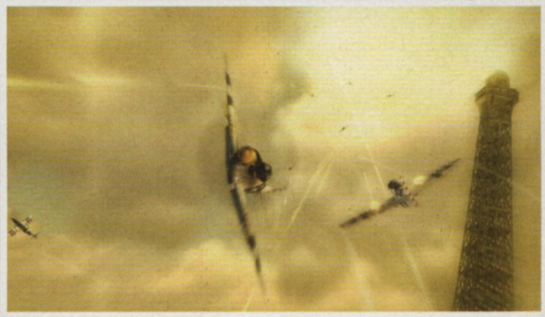
- Physics-based mechanics will give the heroes chance to grab creatures and use them as living, unwilling weapons.
- Take complete control of every battle by using chained melee attacks, or an array of spells and special abilities.
- Choose from three unique heroes and unlock new spells and abilities as you progress
- Next-gen graphics create vibrant environments, beautifully rendered characters, highly-detailed creatures.

WANNA PLAY?





The chance to scream down the Thames in a dogfight makes for a great experience.



launch title

DEVELOPER HISTORY

Ubisoft Romania

This was Ubisoft's first studio outside France, established in 1992 to convert a number of company's console titles to the PC. It has since also got to develop its own original games such as POD: *Speedzone* on the SEGA Dreamcast. Starting out with a handful of staff, Ubisoft Romania now employs around 180 people.

2006 **SILENT HUNTER III**
2005 **PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG (PC)**
2000 **POD: SPEEDZONE**

Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII

Ready to take to the skies

Publisher: Ubisoft **Genre:** Action **WWW.** blazing-angels.com

Blazing Angels tells the story of four brave American pilots who enrol in the Royal Air Force at the start of World War II and go on to fly in the Battle of Britain and save Blighty (unless you believe it was all down to the Royal Navy). Hang on a minute, are those damn Yanks rewriting history again? Apparently not, as there really were quite a few American RAF pilots. Anyhow, throughout 18 missions the pilots progress to the American Air Force and take part in all the major operations of the war, including the Dunkirk Evacuation, Pearl Harbor, Midway, Berlin, Rabaul Raids and D-Day. Busy boys.



You can't bring down the tower, sadly.

The game features innovative squadron-based gameplay which lets you command AI wingmen while piloting your own plane. Although adapted from the Xbox 360 and PC game released earlier this year, the PS3 version boasts a hangar full of enhancements. For a start, there are some new missions consisting of simultaneous objectives that you have to prioritise in order to minimise losses. The game also makes use of the PS3 controller's tilt function for totally intuitive flying, and adds a new cockpit view. Looking down towards the ground, the graphics have been greatly enhanced with far more detailed scenery featuring complex animations and a 3D water effect, so everything looks a whole lot more realistic.

There are ten extra planes (seven Allied, three Axis) in the PS3 version, including the British Mosquito and German Komet. So you get to fly over 30 authentic WWII aircraft in total, among them the Spitfire, B-17 Flying Fortress, P-38 Lightning and P-51 Mustang. Best of all, however, is the inclusion of an online multiplayer mode for up to 16 players. This offers head-to-head dogfights and co-operative and squadron modes featuring new highly tactical team-based play to improve the experience. With so many improvements, including a reworked storyline and more varied missions, *Blazing Angels* is all set to fly a lot higher on the PS3.

PURE POINTERS

- Ten extra World War II aircraft (seven Allied, three Axis) to play around with.
- Enhanced graphics compared to previous versions, for much more realistic scenery.
- Use of the PS3 controller's tilt function, along with customisable controls.
- New 16-player multiplayer mode with highly tactical team-based play.

WANNA PLAY?

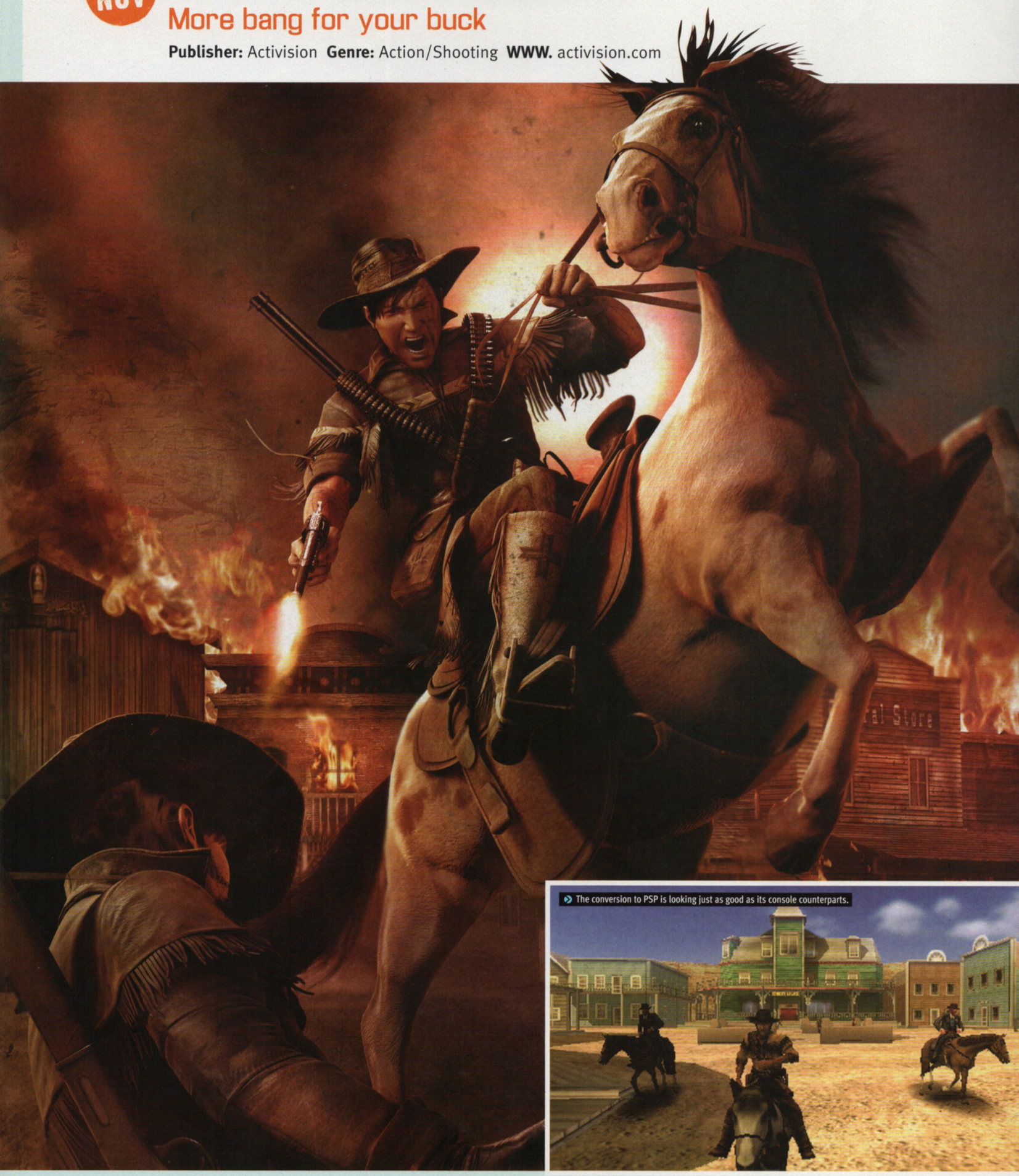


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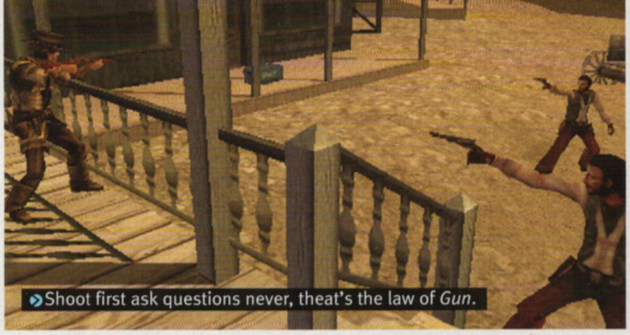
GUN: Showdown

More bang for your buck

Publisher: Activision **Genre:** Action/Shooting **WWW.** activision.com



The conversion to PSP is looking just as good as its console counterparts.







Shoot first ask questions never, theat's the law of *Gun*.

Get your six-shooters ready, because *GUN* is coming back to town. If you think the 'Wild West' refers to a night out in Bristol, think again – believe or not, this is an even rougher and more lawless world. As in the original PS2 and other console versions released late last year, you play Colton White, a gun-toting hero who seeks vengeance for the death of his father and so embarks on an adventure involving horse riding, gambling and, of course, plenty of shootouts. However, far from being a straight conversion of the original game, *Showdown* boasts a ten-gallon hatful of extra features to enjoy.

The main single-player mode is based on the same storyline as the original and includes all its missions, such as escorting a coach full of whores, ambushing a train, attacking a fort and escaping from jail. Set in a free-roaming world, it allows you to explore various Wild West towns, deserts, canyons and mountain wildernesses, encountering a rich cast of characters including a crazy preacher, corrupt lawmen and Apache Indians. As before, in addition to the main story missions there are side missions where you can earn extra gold (for buying and upgrading weapons) and increase Colton's stats.

In a bid to flesh out certain areas of the game, the PSP version includes an extra five story missions. While two of these are former side missions now made compulsory, the other three are completely new stages which were omitted from the original due to time constraints. The latter are all based in the formerly short 'law and order' section of the game where you work as a lawman for Hoodoo Brown, the mayor of Empire City. One new mission we played involved tracking a villain called Kragen and his gang back to their hideout on the edge of town. Here, you have to throw dynamite up and into the hideout to blow up the Ned Kelly-style helmet-wearing Kragen.

As usual, Colton's health bar can be restored by drinking whiskey. And judicious use of the game's Quickdraw function comes in useful during shootouts, enabling you to slow down the action in a Bullet Time-style effect. Due to the lack of a right analogue stick, the face buttons now control the camera while other functions have been remapped onto other buttons. For instance, you can now use the D-pad to access menus such as one to switch between weapons. Holding the L button lets you jump, roll or crouch with the analogue stick, while melee knife attacks are automatically activated when close to an enemy. No functions have been omitted and, in fact, there are even extra ones such as the ability to do an instant 180-degree turn – very handy for shooting any baddies sneaking up behind you. Due to the imprecise nature of the PSP's analogue stick, targeting has also been made slightly easier with the crosshairs

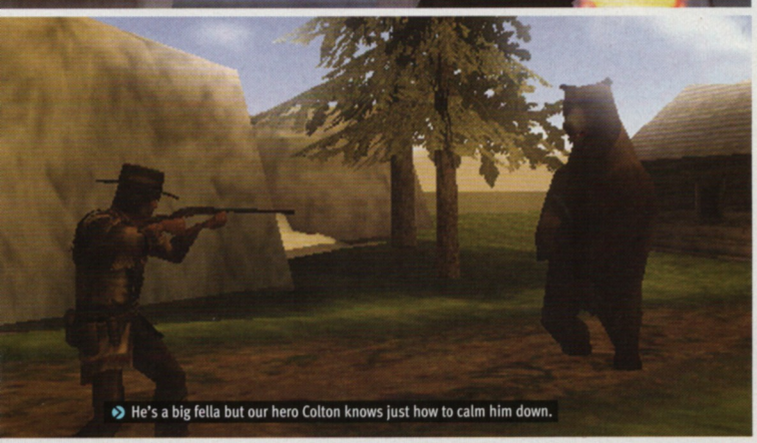


DEVELOPER HISTORY

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS

Established by brothers Jason and Chris Kingsley in 1991, Rebellion is now the largest independent European development studio, having recently acquired Core Design and Strangelight. Based in Oxford, the company also publishes comics and books. Rebellion has already produced several PSP conversions including *Miami Vice, From Russia With Love* and *Dead To Rights: Reckoning*.

2006 MIAMI VICE
2005 SNIPER ELITE
2000 THE MUMMY



He's a big fella but our hero Colton knows just how to calm him down.



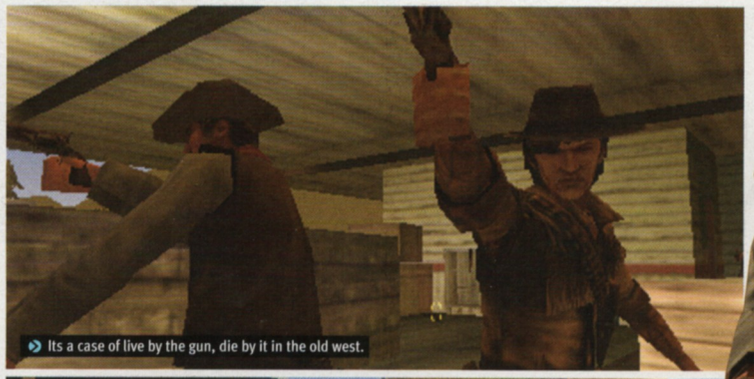




locking onto baddies subtly when aimed near enough. Colton even gets a couple of new weapons to play with: throwing knives and primitive clay mines – try planting one and then grabbing and pushing an enemy onto it.

Another major part of the game is the horse riding. As before, you can jump onto any horse, including those vacated by enemies, and ride it. However, this time, rather than having to wait ages for your own horse, you get given one near the beginning of the game. Called Rogue, he'll be your partner throughout the adventure, even gaining his own stat upgrades. Another advantage is that Rogue can't be killed – when his health bar is fully depleted, he'll simply buck you off. You'll then have to wait for his health to recharge before calling him back. That's right, you now have a new whistle ability to call your horse over. This all means that you'll never be stuck without a horse and have to embark on a long foot trek back to town – as happened occasionally in the original.

A common problem with PSP games is the long loading times between sections, so you'll be glad to know that *GUN* uses an intelligent system to stream data for the next area from the UMD as you approach, thus maintaining a seamless free-roaming environment. Elsewhere, load times are mercifully short. Visually, it's all very impressive too. As you can see from the screenshots, the graphics look virtually identical to the original and now even boast proper rag-doll physics so that characters' limbs will flail and can even be blown off. There are now also more night-time missions to add variety.

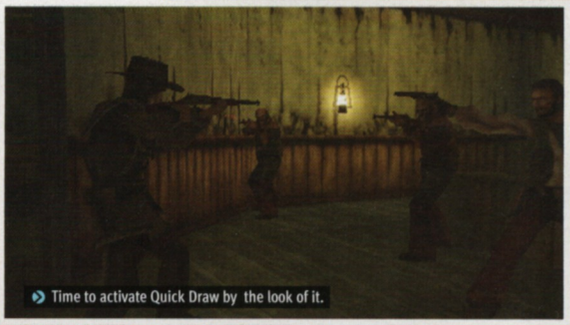


Its a case of live by the gun, die by it in the old west.





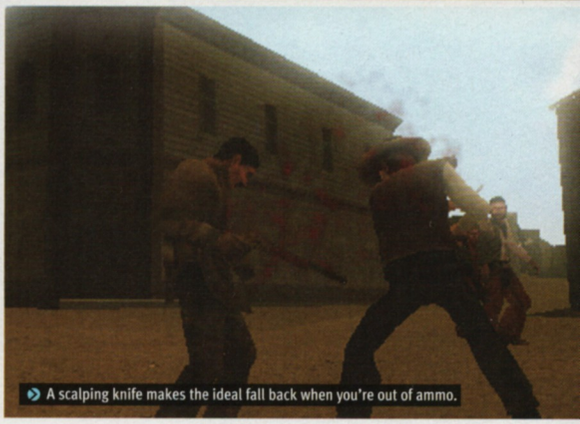
Nerves of steel and a steady trigger finger are needed throughout Colton's world.



Time to activate Quick Draw by the look of it.



Shootouts are all well and good, but make sure you protect your horse.



A scalping knife makes the ideal fall back when you're out of ammo.

As well as beefing up the main story mode, the developers have added several Quick-Play mini-games to address the 'pick up and play' nature of the PSP. These are great for a short bus or car journey, as they only have a five-minute time limit in which to rack up a high score. Based on sections in the game, they include hunting bears, defending a besieged fort with a cannon and fending off dynamite-wielding suicide bombers. You can also enjoy playing Texas Hold 'Em poker, as featured in the story mode.

Best of all, there's now a multiplayer mode in which up to six players can shoot it out. A neat touch here is that if you don't have enough friends, any of the players can be assigned as CPU bots, so you could even play multiplayer on your own. After choosing from a range of 16 character models, you get to battle it out on any of eight maps based on locations from the game such as Dodge City, West and East parts of Empire City and the Badlands. Along with standard deathmatches, there's a Golden Cross mode which is a variation on the capture the flag concept as you try to hang onto the cross to earn extra points from shooting enemies. And if you fancy a game of cards, you can even play multiplayer poker.

It's been a long time coming, but with a stack of new features, enhanced gameplay, impressive visuals and longer story mode, *GUN: Showdown* is on target to deliver a unique and enjoyable handheld experience. So keep your PSP holstered and ready for some quick-draw action soon.

WANNA PLAY?

Mini Gun Games

One of the key new features is the inclusion of seven mini-games: Texas Hold 'Em poker and six challenges where the aim is to get a high score within the time limit.

Quail Hunt



Shoot the quails which arrive in ever bigger waves. Every one you hit will increase your Quickdraw meter.

Hold The Fort



Man the cannon and fire at the enemies (some on horseback) besieging the fort before they reach the gate.

Suppress The Outlaws



Shoot the outlaws in town, or grab and drag them back alive (others will fire at them) to the sheriff for ten bonus points.

Bear Hunt



Shoot the bears which charge at you in the woods. More and more appear, including tougher black bears.

Fire Fight



Throw firebombs at the targets on the buildings to set them alight while fending off the angry townsfolk who appear.

Hollister's Dynamite Run



Crazy guys strapped with dynamite charge towards you. Shoot them dead before they blow you sky high.

Texas Hold 'Em Poker



Play your cards right to earn big money. Wait for the nuts or just bluff your way through. No cheatin', mister.

PURE Interview

Son of a Gun

Strolling into the Activision saloon, we chatted to associate producer Ross 'Ozzie' Douglas about all things *GUN*.



PURE: *GUN* was described by some as '*GTA* in the Wild West', due to its free-roaming design. What do you reckon?

Ross Douglas: I think I can understand where that's coming from. It's very much an open-play, slightly violent game. But unlike *GTA*, it's more focused on the strong story rather than people having a completely free rein, running off and doing their own thing. There are some strong characters in *GUN* which drive it a little bit more.

PURE: Why has it taken so long for the PSP version to appear?

RD: A lot of time was spent thinking what we could do to make it unique. We didn't want to do a straight port of the console version. We sat around and thought what made the original version so cool, why do people like it and what can we add to that to make it not *GUN* cut down for the PSP but *GUN* plus – so more stuff than you've got on the original console, which I think we've done.

PURE: How much did you collaborate with Neversoft on the design?

RD: Neversoft had a lot of input early on in the design and we ran a lot of ideas by them and they still had a lot of ideas from the original such as the new missions which we've integrated. A lot of the assets in this game are taken directly from the original console version, so we wanted it to look as much like the 'big brother' version as we could.

PURE: Did you take into account criticism of the original version?

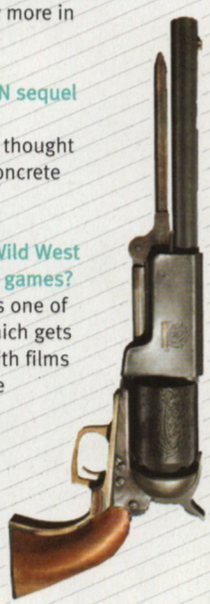
RD: Yes, one of the main criticisms was the game was too short, so one of the main things was to make it longer and concentrate on the things people thought were really cool, such as the law and order missions and stretch that out longer.

PURE: What have you done to take advantage of the handheld format?

RD: The main thing we've done is looking at the burst play thing of people wanting to play stuff quickly. That's one of the main areas we really wanted to focus on, finding short fun mini-games set in the Wild West such as shooting bears and that kind of thing.

PURE: Why have you taken out the scalping? Is the game less gory in general?

RD: There were multiple reasons behind that. There were some issues with the Native American audience in the US. The second main reason is that it served no real purpose in the original game. You didn't get anything for it. We tried to work out if there was any way of putting it into the game without it just being a gimmick, but in the end we decided it was probably best to just remove it. The gore is exactly the same as the original versions – in fact, with the removable limbs and rag-doll physics it's probably more in your face.



PURE: Will there be a GUN sequel (on any platform)?

RD: It's something we've thought about but there are no concrete plans for one yet.

PURE: Do you think the Wild West scenario is underused in games?

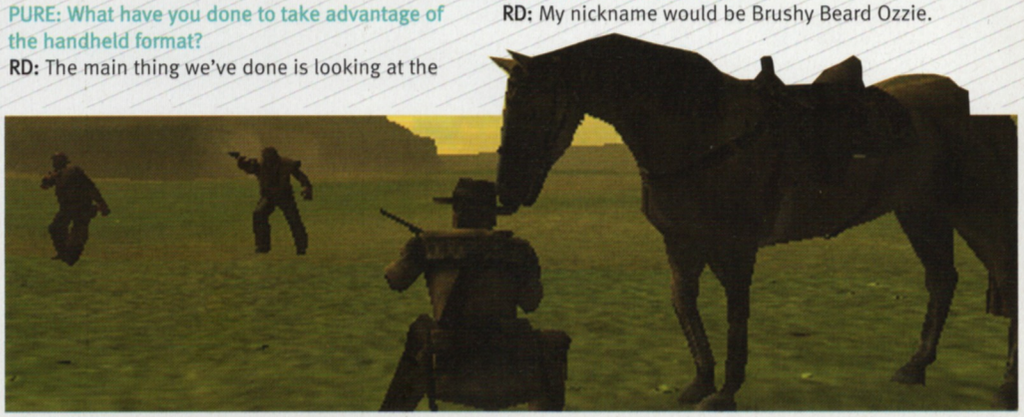
RD: I do. The Wild West is one of the big film scenarios which gets used a lot, even today with films like *Tombstone*. For some reason it's never really taken off in the gaming world. People have tried doing it before, but nothing's ever really succeeded so we think *GUN*'s put the Wild West on the map.

PURE: Are you a fan of movie westerns? What's your favourite?

RD: I am a big fan of westerns. My favourite one would probably be *Tombstone* because Val Kilmer rocks in it.

PURE: If you were a Wild West character, what nickname would you have?

RD: My nickname would be Brushy Beard Ozzie.





Metro 2033. The Last Refuge

ETA 2008



We're going underground

Publisher: TBA **Genre:** First-Person Shooter **WWW.** 4a-games.com

Based on a novel by Russian author Dmitriy Glukhovskiy, *Metro 2033* has a post-apocalyptic scenario where the whole world lies in ruins and humanity has almost been annihilated by a nuclear catastrophe. The only survivors have taken refuge in the Moscow Metro (underground railway). The largest anti-nuclear shelter ever constructed, its hermetic locks protect them from the high levels of radiation while filters purify the air and water, and dynamos produce electricity.

In the 20 years since the apocalypse, the survivors have built an underground civilisation, cultivating mushrooms and rearing pigs for food (not the healthiest of diets but they could still make a nice bacon and mushroom sandwich). The Metro stations now act as miniature city states, each with its own government and army. While life continues underground for around 40,000 humans here, the only life on the planet's surface is in the form of mutated creatures. However, some of these have begun attacking VDNH, a northern outpost of the Metro (maybe they got a sniff of those bacon sarnies). The station has held out so far, but it's only a matter of time before the creatures, nicknamed 'The Darkness' (perhaps due to their high-pitched vocal shrieks?), breach the defences and invade the Metro. It's up to a young hero called Artem to venture through the dark tunnels to reach the heart of the Metro, the legenday Polis, to warn the other humans of this terrible threat.

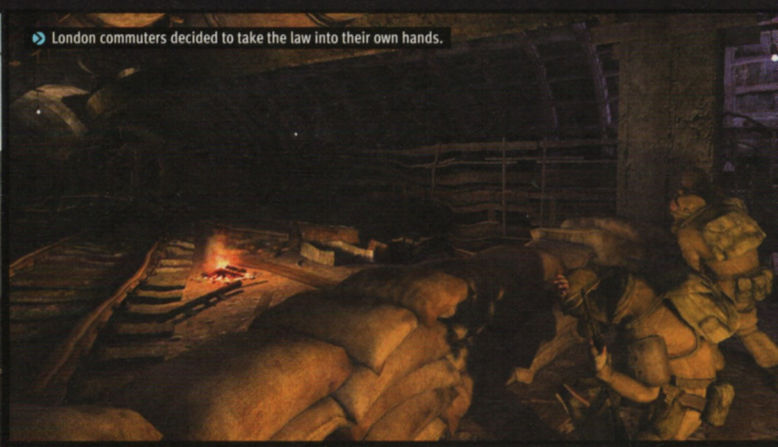
It all sounds a bit grim and the graphics look suitably dark and moody. Using the developer 4A Games' own original graphics engine, they will feature dynamic lighting (including sun and skies, whenever you get to see them) with thousands of light sources at a time in frame and regular soft shadows. Realistic physics and gamma-corrected deferred shading are also promised, with various

PURE POINTERS

- Unusual and spooky scenario based in post-apocalyptic Russia.
- Intelligent enemies who will hide in the darkness ready to ambush you.
- Next-generation graphical effects using the developer's own engine.
- RPG elements with non-player characters leading independent lives.

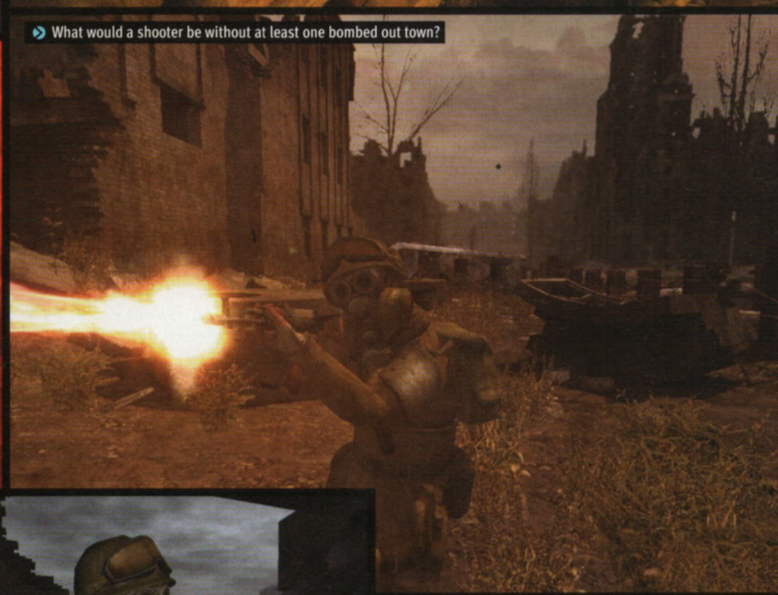
"One of the most interesting aspects is that you will be able to vary your style of play"





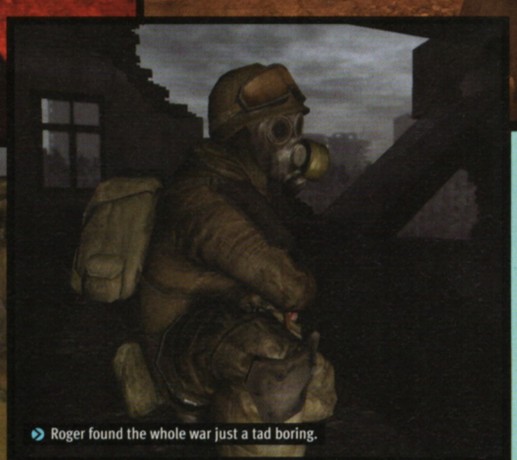
London commuters decided to take the law into their own hands.





What would a shooter be without at least one bombed out town?





Roger found the whole war just a tad boring.

DEVELOPER HISTORY

4A Games

Based in Kiev, Ukraine, 4A Games is a new development studio whose strategic goals include the creation of captivating computer and video games, promotion of computer games as a modern culture product and escalation of the domestic game development industry. In addition to licensing Dmitriy Glukhovskiy's *Metro 2033* novel, the studio is working closely with the author who is helping to create the scenario and concept.

effects including ocular adaptation and motion blur. So we should be able to look forward to proper next-generation visuals.

Described by Ukraine-based developer 4A as a '3D action-oriented horror/action/survival FPS' with RPG elements (blimey), *Metro 2033* promises a variety of gameplay styles, including some mini-games, although it appears to centre on first-person shooting action. The combat features intelligent enemies who can perform simple and aimed fire, hide in cover, ambush you from the shadows, call for help and alert their comrades when they spot you. It sounds fairly promising, particularly as you get to handle a range of weapons and use armoured railcars and other machines. One of the most interesting aspects is that you will be able to vary your style of play from 'heavy strike fighter' to 'inconspicuous killer'. Be careful with that ammo though: it also serves as currency down here.

The game's RPG elements will come into play when you reach the various Metro station-cities which are populated by intelligent non-player characters leading independent lives: children run and play among the dwellings, adults runs various businesses, women cook and sew, men have discussions, clean weapons and drink tea, while old people apparently sit near tents. Branching storylines, optional side-quests and multiple endings are also promised, along with a multiplayer mode for up to 32 players.

It's an unusual scenario and an ambitious project, but we'll have to wait till late 2008 to see if the developers can really pull it off.

WANNA PLAY?

"This is going to be an interesting twist on the usual horror-based games. Why? Because this time you are the horror"



Use the power of The Darkness to consume all.





Jackie's 21st Birthday brings more than just cards.



DEVELOPER HISTORY

Starbreeze Studios

Based in Uppsala, Sweden, Starbreeze Studios started life in 1998 under the name 03 Games. 2001 saw the takeover of smaller firm Starbreeze and the company as we know it today was born. Its first release under the new title was *Enclave* for the Xbox – sadly, underwhelming sales of the title led to a cancellation of a PS2 conversion as well as a sequel. A huge critical and retail hit was not far away though with the release in 2004 of *Chronicles of Riddick* based on the movie franchise starring Vin Diesel which started with *Pitch Black*.

2004 **CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY**
2002 **ENCLAVE**
2000 **THE OUTFORCE**

ETA 2007

The Darkness

Take a trip to the dark side

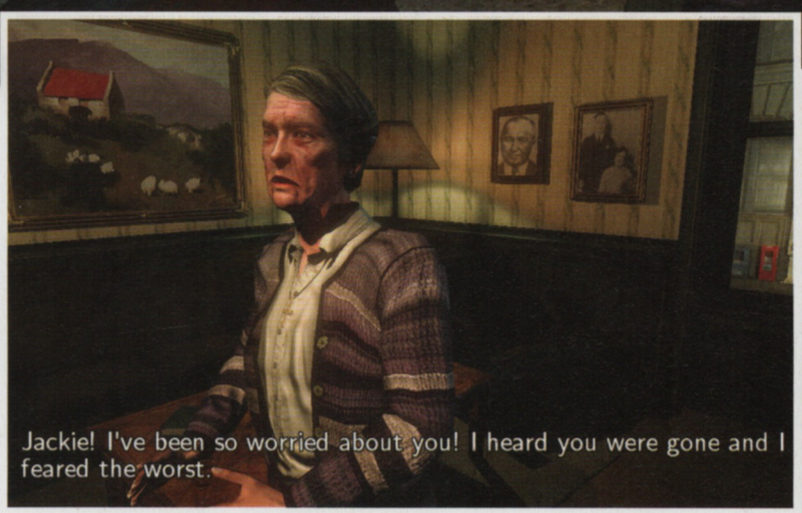
Publisher: 2K Games **Genre:** First-Person Shooter **WWW.** 2kgames.com

No, it's not a game based on the dodgily dental led Queen tribute band, but actually a conversion of the successful cult comic from Top Cow.

When Mafia hitman Jackie Estacado reaches his 21st birthday, the awesome powers of The Darkness manifest themselves. These mystical powers are passed down through the family line and allow the holder to create almost anything they wish from The Darkness, including sentient beings as well as calling forth minions known as Darklings. Even though the powers are almost limitless they do have a downside: anything created will turn to dust once exposed to daylight. With his newfound powers, Jackie vows to bring down the Mafia family he works for and put an end to the reign of its universally despised boss, who also happens to be his uncle.

Currently under development by Starbreeze Studios, previously known for its well-received *Chronicles of Riddick*, the game promises to offer intense cinematic action in a seedy underbelly of New York as well as taking you into the realm of The Darkness itself. The special powers will allow you to slay, implode and even feed upon your targets as well as transforming your victims' corpses into Darklings to do your nefarious bidding with sick but often comical attacks.

Super Gran had hit hard times!





An interesting twist promised is the use of light and dark. As the powers are drained by daylight, you will have to tactically use the shadows to replenish your powers if you wish to see your way through to the end. A number of online play options are also promised as players take on the role of Darklings themselves in a number of traditional multiplayer matches as well as some all-new specific game modes that can only be found in this title.

Respected comic scribe Paul Jenkins is on board to handle the storyline. He has worked not only on *The Darkness* comic book itself, but also the likes of *The Incredible Hulk* and *Wolverine*, so the title looks to be in safe hands. With a film also currently in production by Dimension Films, be prepared to hear a lot more from *The Darkness* in the near future. Face it, this is going to be an interesting twist on the usual horror-based games. Why? Because this time around, you are the horror.

PURE POINTERS

- Interesting use of light and shade to activate your powers.
- The chance to make almost anything with your powers opens an array of gameplay options.
- Ability to re-animate your victims to do your bidding should make for some different gameplay.
- Numerous online modes using Darklings should make a nice change from the usual deathmatch and capture the flag modes.

WANNA PLAY?



launch title

Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War

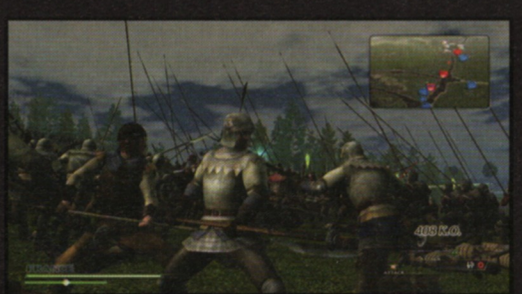
The age of chivalry is over

Publisher: KOEI **Genre:** Strategy **WWW.** n/a

After re-creating countless feudal wars in China and Japan with the long-running *Dynasty Warriors* and *Samurai Warriors* series, KOEI is set to bring its strategic battle action to Europe with *Bladestorm*. The full title gives the game away as this is set during the Hundred Years' War, a medieval conflict between England and France that actually lasted 116 years. It was primarily about the English kings claiming succession to the French throne and involved such famous historical figures as Joan of Arc, Henry V and the Black Prince. It ended when the English were expelled from France, but history could now be rewritten.

In the midst of this seemingly never-ending conflict, you take the role of a leader of a band of mercenaries. A free mission system enables you to fight for either the English or the French, whoever is the highest bidder, so you can choose to be a loyal soldier or a turncoat. You get to lead your forces in massive battles between hundreds upon hundreds of soldiers – if you thought the battles in the *Dynasty Warriors* games were huge, you'll be amazed by the sheer scale of it all. The level of conflict is stunning, with clashes between gargantuan armour-clad armies and battlefields strewn with skirmishes and flashing blades as far as the eye can see – unlike the faded false horizons seen in the *Dynasty Warriors* series, *Bladestorm* features an infinite draw distance thanks to the power of the next-generation hardware.

You get to order around your forces strategically in real time, using a number of battle commands easily accessed by button presses. The heat is on and it's all up to you to decide quickly whether they plough head-on into the fray, try a sneaky flanking manoeuvre or retreat to safety. You'll be able to switch command between various groups of soldiers – the currently controlled ones indicated by the icons above their heads. There are over 50 different soldier ranks and types in the game, including archers, infantry and cavalry, and sophisticated algorithms mean that these units will link up intelligently. For instance, a group of archers will fire off a





Combos on horses, whatever next?

PURE POINTERS

- Massive real-time battles between hundreds and hundreds of soldiers.
- Novel medieval European scenario rather than the Far East.
- Intelligent units will give each other automatic support on the battlefield.
- Ability to learn new commands and upgrade your forces' weapons and armour.



812 Knockouts and still going strong, god love 'em.



Now if only they'd made it football fans at the World Cup.







volley in preparation for the cavalry unit's charge on the enemy. As you gain more leadership experience you'll learn new commands to use on the battlefield. You'll also be able to level up your forces' weapons and armour, as well as recruiting new troops to replace the ones inevitably killed in battle.

It's all looking very interesting for strategy fans, although the emphasis in *Bladestorm* is on making quick decisions during the real-time battles rather than thinking long and hard over complex tactics. The unusual setting of 14th century Europe makes a pleasant change and the massive battle scenes certainly look impressive. Hopefully an online multiplayer mode will also be included, although this is still under consideration by KOEI.

DEVELOPER HISTORY

Omega Force

This in-house development studio at KOEI specialises mainly in tactical action/combat titles and is most famous for the long-running *Dynasty Warriors* series set in ancient China, along with the *Samurai Warriors* games set in feudal Japan. A rare departure from historical war scenarios was the secret-agent action game *WinBack Covert Operations*.

2005 **DYNASTY WARRIORS 5**
2004 **SAMURAI WARRIORS**
1997 **DYNASTY WARRIORS**

WANNA PLAY?

PURE Interview
Storm Maker

To find out more about the thinking behind the *Bladestorm* concept, PURE talked to producer Akihiro Suzuki.



PURE: Why do you specialise in combat strategy games? Do you ever feel like lightening up and doing a cute platform game instead?

Akihiro Suzuki: KOEI does have extensive experience in strategy games. However, within KOEI the Omega Force team has been primarily action-focused, developing titles such as *Dynasty Warriors*, *Destrega* and *Winback*. With *Bladestorm*, our aim is to make a game that utilises a historical setting but that anyone (including casual users) will be able to pick up and play.
KOEI is always open to considering new opportunities and genres as they arise.

PURE: Why did you choose *Bladestorm* to debut on PS3 rather than another *Dynasty Warriors* or *Samurai Warriors* title? Will either of those franchises be coming to the PS3?

AS: We were looking to develop a game that would really utilise the new level of potential that PS3 offered us... we considered a number of possible ideas, but in the end we decided that the concept we had in mind for *Bladestorm* best fit this description.
KOEI has not made any announcements regarding bringing the *Warriors* franchise to the PS3 at this time.

PURE: How does *Bladestorm* differ compare to your previous games?

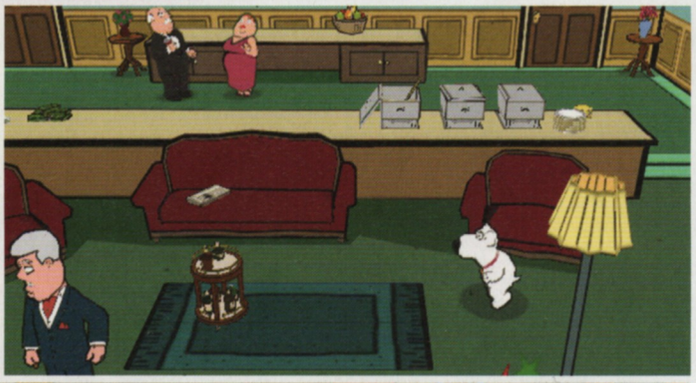
AS: *Bladestorm* will be new type of action game, differing from our previous releases significantly. As the leader of the mercenaries, you will be able to freely select from the various troop types present on the battlefield and take command of those units. We're really putting an emphasis on the sheer power that comes when two forces collide with each other... think of a battle scene from your favourite historical war movie and you'll have an idea of what we're going for.

PURE: How much more can you achieve on next-generation systems compared to the previous generation?

AS: The Xbox 360 has already proven the difference in quality that is possible with the next generation of machines, but the full potential of these machines has yet to be met. I expect that we'll continue to see better and better quality games as we move forward. Just how far we can advance is of course the big question, and to be honest, I don't know yet where the end limit will be. But it's exciting as it offers new possibilities.









ETA NOV

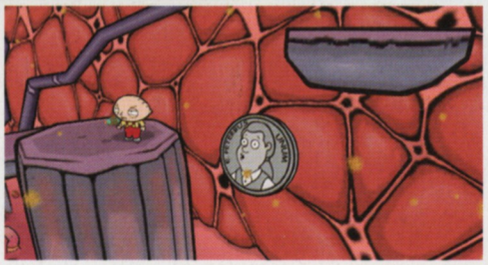
Family Guy

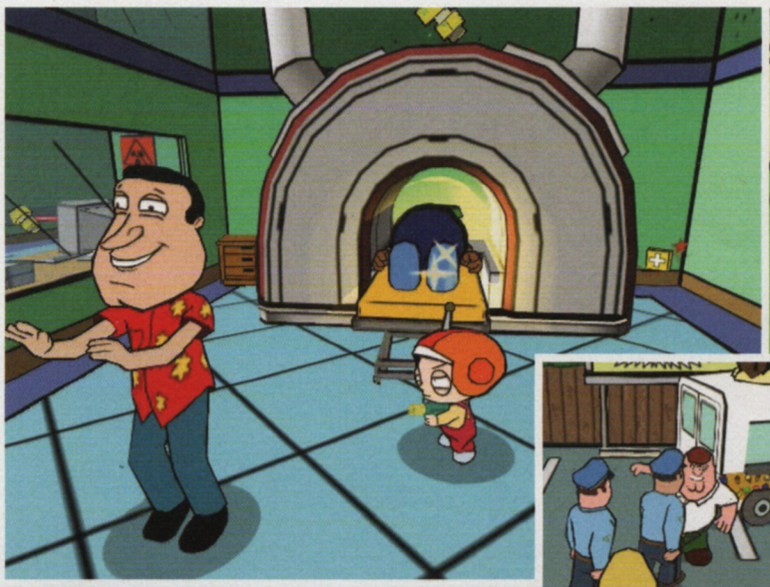
Freakin' sweet

Publisher: 2K Games **Genre:** Action **WWW.** familyguy.com

Finally making its way to the world of gaming, this is the TV cartoon show that proves the power of the audience. After originally being cancelled by makers Fox, such was the outcry and internet backlash by fans that Fox actually brought the series back. Whereas *The Simpsons* has, over the years, headed towards a much more family-orientated comedy, *Family Guy* has always kept its adult sensibilities. With its frequently near-the-knuckle humour, pop culture references and downright silliness it was a title that was just crying out to be made into a game.

Now, thanks to the folks over at 2K Games, the dream of many *Family Guy* fans to enter the world of Quahog for themselves is soon to become a reality. The game will take the risky move of trying to intertwine three stories at once, with you jumping between characters to keep the whole thing moving along. We have megalomaniac baby Stewie attempting to take over the world, that is of course assuming he can outwit his half brother Bertram. Meanwhile Peter Griffin, the patriarch of the family, will be trying to foil American sitcom character Mr Belvedere, who he believes has his own plans for world domination. And finally we have the smooth-talking, Martini-sipping dog Brian who is trying to clear his name in a wrongful puppy paternity suit. Expect to see and control many of the other characters from the show as well. With Stewie being armed with his mind







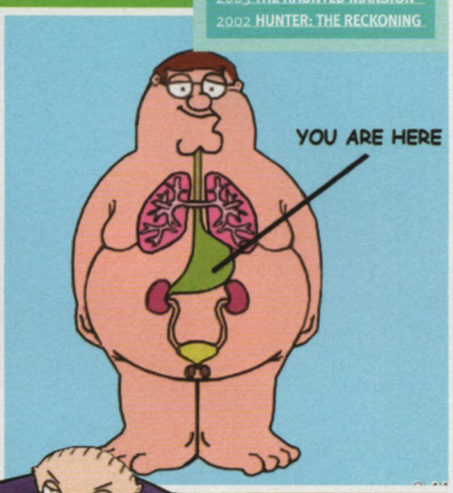
DEVELOPER HISTORY

High Voltage Games

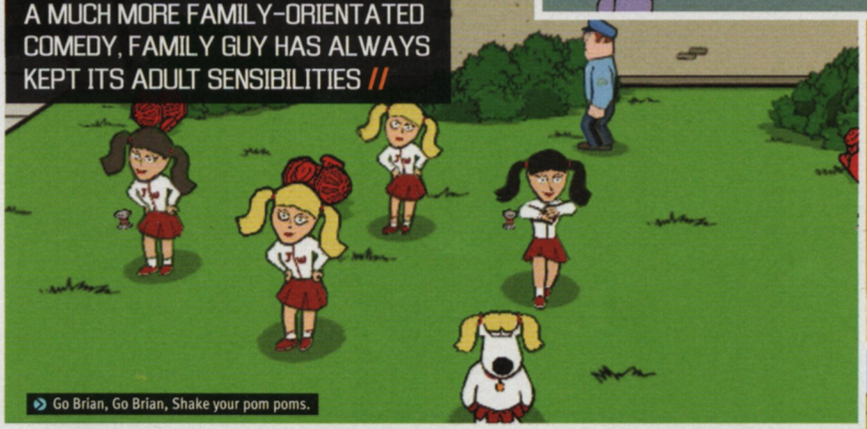
Founded in 1993, the Chicago-based developer employs over 100 staff and has produced numerous games across all the major formats, including many conversions such *50 Cent: Bulletproof* on PSP. High Voltage also developed all the main console versions of movie licence *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

2005 CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
2003 THE HAUNTED MANSION
2002 HUNTER: THE RECKONING

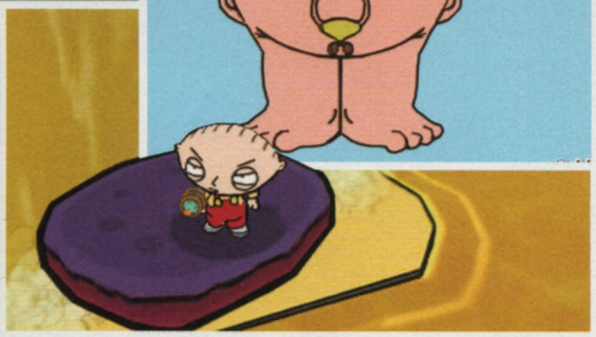


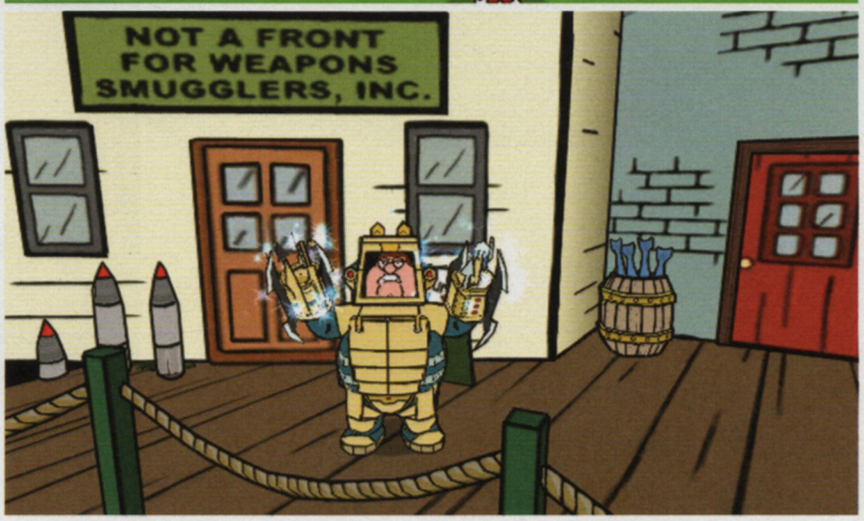


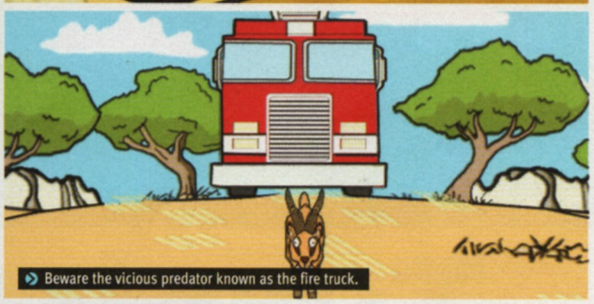
// WHEREAS THE SIMPSONS HAS, OVER THE YEARS, HEADED TOWARDS A MUCH MORE FAMILY-ORIENTATED COMEDY, FAMILY GUY HAS ALWAYS KEPT ITS ADULT SENSIBILITIES //



Go Brian, Go Brian, Shake your pom poms.







Beware the vicious predator known as the fire truck.



Poor Peter, locked in his car again.

control weapon, he can actually possess the town's residents to do his bidding, so the chance to get sleazed up and misbehave as Quagmire is now finally possible.

Of course, it wouldn't be *Family Guy* without its rather strange diversions form the story into Peter's flashbacks and other oddities. These too will form part of the gameplay which is promising a mix between stealth and puzzle solving as just a few of the disciplines that are going to be on offer. With the less than straight down the line nature of *Family Guy*, the gameplay opportunities look to be endless. And with all the show's voice talent showing up to handle the vocal duties, coupled with the screens we've already seen, they've got the look of the show down so perfect that this seems to be the closest thing to actually playing an episode of the TV series you are ever likely to get.

We here at PURE are huge *Family Guy* fans despite the fact we have to make regular trips to the States to get our hands on DVD box sets due to UK networks' obsession with a certain yellow family pushing out this innovative and hilarious series that knocks *The Simpsons* into a cocked hat every time. To say we can't wait to get our hands on the greased up deaf guy, have wheelchair races with Peter's neighbour Joe and, who knows, even get to meet the evil monkey in Chris's closet is putting it mildly. We'll bring you more news on this excellent-looking title as soon as we get it. Giggity giggity!





Don't just stand there watching, shoot you pillock!



ETA 2007

Turok

Of course there are dinosaurs in it!

Publisher: Buena Vista Games **Genre:** First-Person Shooter **WWW.** n/a

The Turok franchise has a chequered history. The original *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* game was a big hit on the Nintendo 64 in 1997, a first-person shooter offering open environments, impressive 3D graphics (for the time), dinosaurs and an unusual set of weapons ranging from knife and bow to grenade launcher and particle accelerator. The second game was even better and its success resulted in two more N64 sequels. However, the series came a cropper with the release of *Turok Evolution* on the PS2, Xbox and other major platforms in 2002: weak graphics, long loading times and a disjointed storyline were a huge disappointment for fans.

Now Buena Vista has picked up the Turok licence from Acclaim, it's hoping to turn things around. Developer Propaganda Games says it is aiming to reinvent the series and get back to its roots. The new *Turok* game features an original storyline that doesn't seem to really follow on from the previous games. Set a couple of hundred years into the future, it centres on Joseph Turok, a former Black Ops commando who is now part of an elite Special Forces squad tasked with bringing down war criminal Roland Cain, who also happens to be Joseph's former boss. When the team's ship is shot down approaching the genetically altered planet, Joseph must use his military training to lead his squad and evade an army of enemy soldiers and ravenous creatures – including dinosaurs, naturally – that inhabit this jungle world.

The deadly dinosaurs are completely wild and feature advanced AI to make them behave in an instinctive fashion. This means that they will attack anything when hungry, including each other. As you start the game with few weapons, you may spend a lot of time legging it away from these monsters, including raptors and huge T-Rexes. The human enemy soldiers are your main

PURE POINTERS

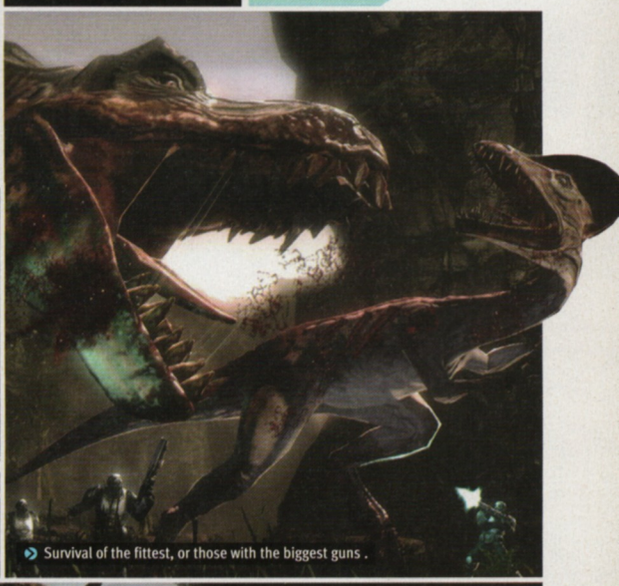
- Advanced real-time physics and full interaction with the environment.
- A vast and highly realistic world to explore featuring destructible scenery.
- Weapons range from the humble bow and arrow to rail guns and grenade launchers.
- Online multiplayer support with randomly spawning dinosaurs.

"Weapons range from the humble bow and arrow to rail guns and grenade launchers"





Those are some weird looking dinosaurs.



Survival of the fittest, or those with the biggest guns .





Jurassic Park was never like this.

DEVELOPER HISTORY

Propaganda Games

Based in Vancouver, Canada, Propaganda Games was founded in January 2005 by four former Electronic Arts employees who worked on such games as the *Def Jam* series and *NBA Street*. Other Propaganda recruits have worked on *Quake IV*, *Prince of Persia*, *Metroid Prime: Echoes* and *Need for Speed Underground*. Part of Buena Vista Games, the studio cites 'creativity', 'risk-taking' and 'work-life balance' as its core values.

enemy, though, and you'll soon learn how to lure dinosaurs into attacking them – for instance, by using a flare gun to attract some raptors close to them, in which case they'll attempt to pin them to the ground and rip their limbs off. By the way, if you are attacked in this fashion, the camera pans out to a third-person perspective and you'll need to quickly stab away at the raptor with your knife to survive.

The enemy soldiers feature sophisticated AI and advanced tactics – as do your squad comrades, luckily. Although you can use stealth weapons such as the bow and knife, the main emphasis is on fast action, so instead of the need to creep around slowly you can quickly sneak up behind enemies and take them out; this involves the view switching to third-person to show Joseph kicking the enemy in the knee and then stabbing him in the face. Nice. Alternatively, you can use the bow to fire an arrow at full power to impale your victim on the surface behind. As you progress through the game, you'll also get your hands on more powerful weaponry, such as an automatic rail gun, shredder, flame-thrower and grenade launcher, with which to cause some serious destruction. According to Buena Vista you'll even get to operate a fleet of high-tech military vehicles.

"You can lure dinosaurs to attack each other and enemy soldiers"

Using a modified version of the ubiquitous Unreal Engine 3 engine, the game is set to provide a highly realistic and vast world to explore, featuring destructible scenery and seamless transitions between locations. In addition to the jungle setting, you'll get to explore other places such as underground caverns inhabited by giant eels. Online multiplayer support is also promised, including Team Deathmatch, although other game modes are yet to be announced. Multiplayer will also feature randomly spawning dinosaurs to keep teams on their toes.

WANNA PLAY?



Never stand between a woman and new shoes.

launch title

Heavenly Sword

A gaming goddess is born

Publisher: Sony **Genre:** Fighting/Action **WWW.** heavenlyswordgame.com

Billed by its creators Ninja Theory as a 'blockbuster action-movie experience', *Heavenly Sword* is a martial-arts game with a difference. The aim is to make you feel like you're playing through a movie, with amazing fight scenes that look like they could have been choreographed for the big screen. Naturally, there's an epic storyline too, involving the ancient Heavenly Sword which will drain the life-force of any mortal using it, killing them within hours.



When an invading king's army destroys the warrior clan guarding this weapon, red-haired heroine Nariko takes up the Heavenly Sword and sets out to destroy the king (played by Andy Serkis of Gollum fame) and his army.

As Nariko only has a few hours left to live, there's a real sense of urgency to the mission. Luckily, she has superb combat skills and can instantly switch between three combat stances when using the sword, enabling you to create your own combos and fighting style. The default Speed stance has the sword split into two blades and enables the nimble Nariko to perform rapid swiping attacks and counters as she spins, rolls and leaps around the arena. She's so agile and powerful, she can take on dozens of enemies at a time – although, in classic martial-arts movie style, most of them wait on the sidelines for their turn to attack, cheering on their comrades. However, the enemies do boast advanced AI and will often team up intelligently in battle, co-ordinating their attacks and even adapting to your style of play.

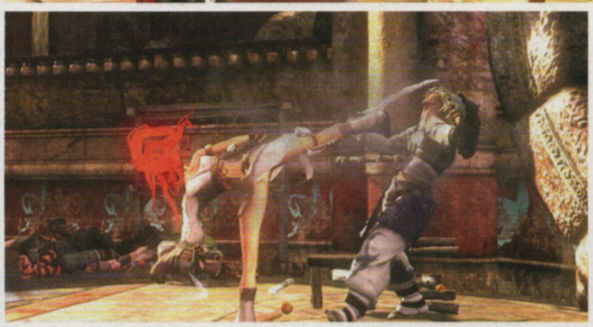
Against tougher enemies, you might want to switch to Power stance which joins the blades together into one long, powerful sword – great for breaking down enemy armour. Alternatively, the Range stance sees the twin blades extend via chains, good for taking down a horde of enemies or knocking them into the air for aerial combos. You can even attach the chained blades to an enemy and swing him around to knock over his

"Thrown items can be made to ricochet off one enemy and into another"





Nariko shows she's not a woman to be messed with, by anybody.











Graphically the game is looking gorgeous.

"Eye-watering finishing moves include using the blades to force an enemy's legs apart, then stabbing him in the crotch"

DEVELOPER HISTORY

Ninja Theory

Just Add Monsters Ltd was founded in 2000 by three former Sony Computer Entertainment employees and acquired by Argonaut in the same year. Its debut game was the fun multiplayer *Kung Fu Chaos* for the Xbox. Rescued from the ashes of Argonaut in 2004, the Cambridge-based studio was transformed into Ninja Theory. Development on *Heavenly Sword* had already begun in 2003, before most developers had started experimenting with next-generation technology.

2003 **KUNG FU CHAOS**

comrades like skittles. The scantily clad Nariko may look pretty sexy, but you really wouldn't to meet her in a dark alley: her eye-watering finishing moves include using the chained blades to force an enemy's legs apart, then stab him in the crotch. Yowch.

The combat options seem endless. Nariko can pick up furniture, objects and enemy weapons and throw them around. Using the aftertouch controls, thrown items can be made to ricochet off one enemy and into another, shown via a cinematic close-up view of the item. The realistic physics system means that objects such as vases can be smashed and then the pieces swept into enemies using the extended chain blades. Enemies can be smashed into scenery and even skewered on spears. One of the most impressive aspects is when the characters jump and climb up via the scenery to engage in classic martial-arts movie-style aerial combat. Very impressive.

As you perform successful attacks and combos, a meter will fill up at the bottom-left of the screen. Once full, it enables Nariko to perform a special combo where you have to press the buttons and D-pad directions shown on screen (*God of War* style) to unleash a devastating attack – perfect when battling large bosses. In addition to fighting hand-to-hand, Nariko can get hold of a portable cannon to take out whole waves of enemies with one shot.

Not only is the hectic combat engaging, the game is a visual feast. As you can see from the screenshots, the attention to detail is stunning and is matched by the fluid character movement. Nariko herself moves fluently and acrobatically around the screen, her hair and clothes blowing in the breeze. The huge amount of motion-capture animation in the game also enables the enemies to behave more realistically, offering a large range of possible movements for their advanced AI.

Although combat makes up the bulk of the gameplay, *Heavenly Sword* will also involve exploration and adventuring aspects. While details of the latter are yet to be revealed, this PS3-exclusive game is already looking like one of the killer titles for the new system. We can't wait to get our hands on it, even it does drain our life-force by making us play into the small hours.

PURE POINTERS

- Visually impressive with highly detailed characters coupled with extremely fluid animation.
- Interactive environment enables you to throw and smash objects and furniture and scenery.
- In-depth combat system with three sword stances and countless attack options.
- Advanced enemy AI including co-ordinated group attacks.

WANNA PLAY?

Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway

These brothers look out for one another

Publisher: Ubisoft **Genre:** First-Person Shooter **WWW.** brothersinarmsgame.com

The third game in the multimillion-selling *Brothers in Arms* series, *Hell's Highway* follows Joe 'Red' Hartsock, Matt Baker and their 101st Airborne Division buddies as they take part in Operation Market Garden, the largest airborne operation of World War II (culminating in the Battle of Arnhem where the Germans just held out). The 'Hell's Highway' of the title is Highway 69 in Holland which the Allies are trying to open up in a daring bid to invade Germany and end the war quickly.

With the new instalment in the series only available on next-generation platforms (including Xbox 360 and PC), the developers haven't had to compromise on anything. The whole game has been built from the ground up to make it a more realistic experience. For starters, a new 'bro-mos' (brotherhood moments) system is designed to emphasise the comradeship of the soldiers. So for instance, if a soldier falls down, one of his chums will rush over and help him up. There are numerous such context-sensitive scenes occurring randomly throughout the game.



›Sometimes only a bloody big gun will get the job done.



The squad-based shooting action will be familiar to players of the previous games, but now you get to control not two but three teams. In addition to the standard assault and suppression units, the third team is more flexible and can be assigned to various duties depending on the situation, such as firing heavy machine guns, bazookas or mortars. Another change is that you can now control two teams at a time, using extra controls to make them jump over walls, take cover, lie down (a first for the series) and commandeer enemy guns and vehicles such as tanks. A greater level of tactical planning and freedom is also enabled by the way each team won't automatically attack a discovered target if you've ordered them to operate in stealth mode.

This time the scenery is more destructible too, so you can blow out windows and send bricks and other debris flying. The game uses the ubiquitous Unreal Engine 3, enabling genuine physics and visual effects such as depth of field and motion blur, along with realistic smoke and dust. The attention to detail is impressive – including in the characters' faces – and for total authenticity the developers even used aerial photographs of the real operation to re-create the cities (such as Eindhoven) and terrain.

With its stunning graphics, improved gameplay with more tactical freedom and an emphasis on realism, along with the promise of online cooperative play with more human players than the previous games, *Hell's Highway* is definitely one to watch.

DEVELOPER HISTORY

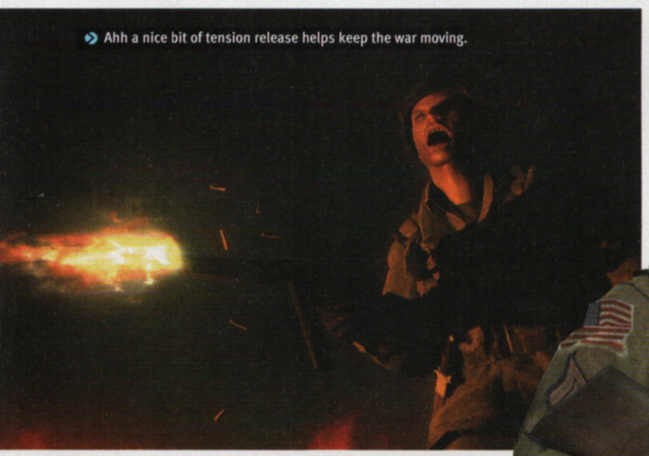
Gearbox Software

An independent studio located in Dallas, Texas, Gearbox has developed games for many top franchises including *Half-Life* (PS2 version), *Halo* (PC and Mac versions), *Counter-Strike*, *James Bond* and *Tony Hawk's*. However, it is best known for creating the *Brothers in Arms* games for Ubisoft and is currently developing a PSP version.

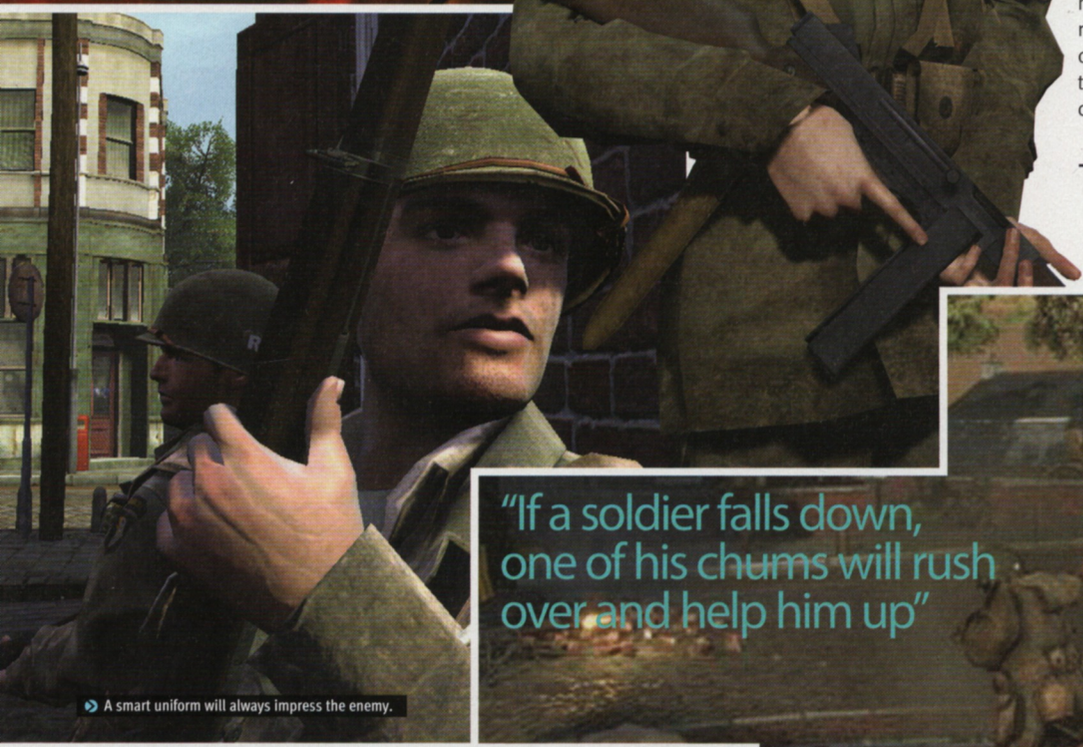
2005 **BROTHERS IN ARMS: EARNED IN BLOOD**

2005 **BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30**

2001 **HALF-LIFE**



Ahh a nice bit of tension release helps keep the war moving.



A smart uniform will always impress the enemy.

WANNA PLAY?

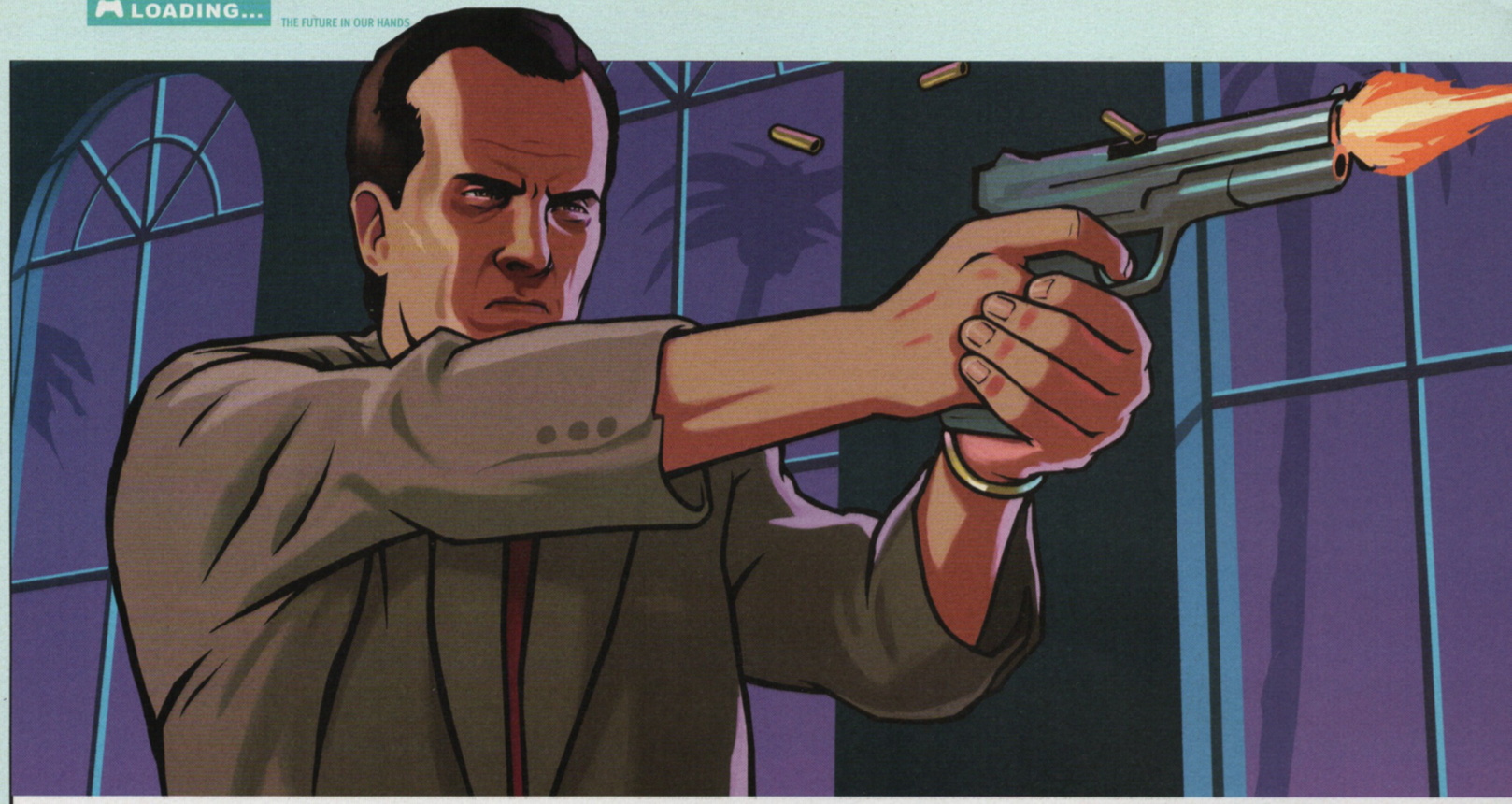


"If a soldier falls down, one of his chums will rush over and help him up"



PURE POINTERS

- Control of three teams and greater flexibility makes for more tactical depth.
- Use of Unreal Engine 3 for impressive visual effects and realistic physics.
- Lots of destructible scenery with flying debris, smoke and dust.
- 'Bro-mos' comradeship system means soldiers will help each other out.

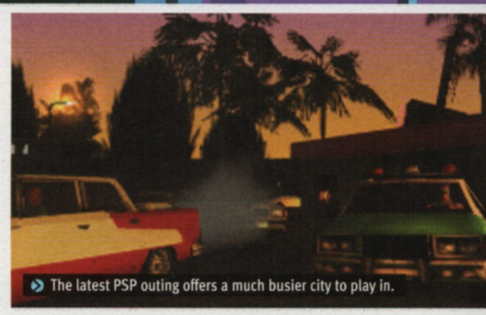


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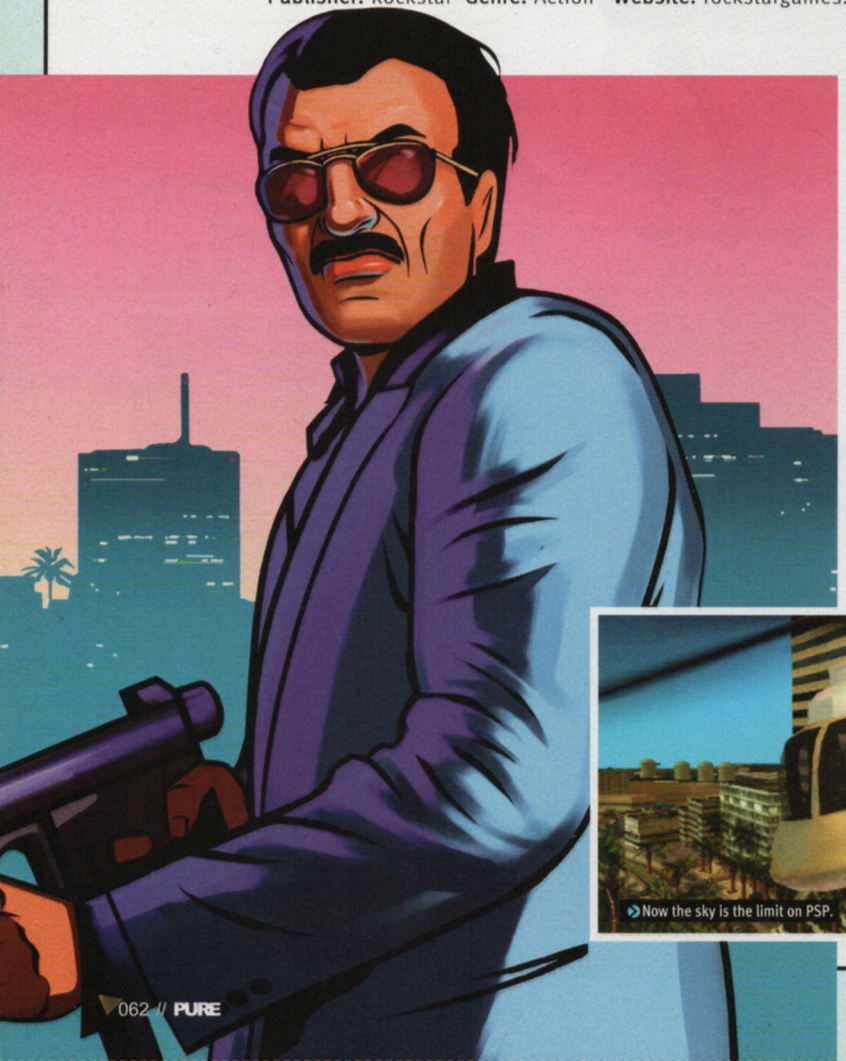
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories

Vice is twice as nice

Publisher: Rockstar **Genre:** Action **Website:** rockstargames.com/vicecitystories

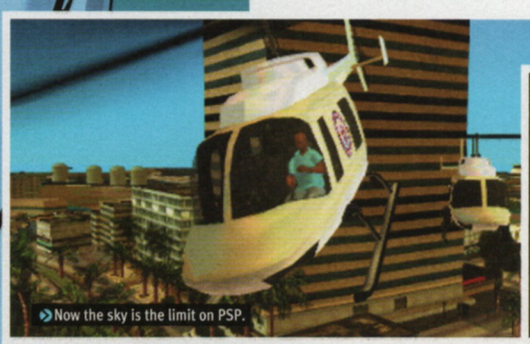


The latest PSP outing offers a much busier city to play in.

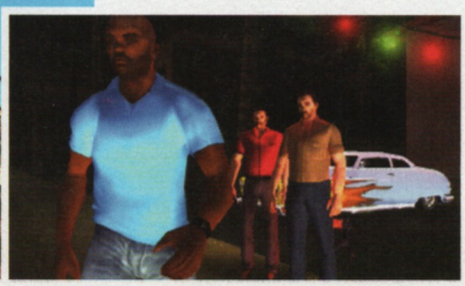


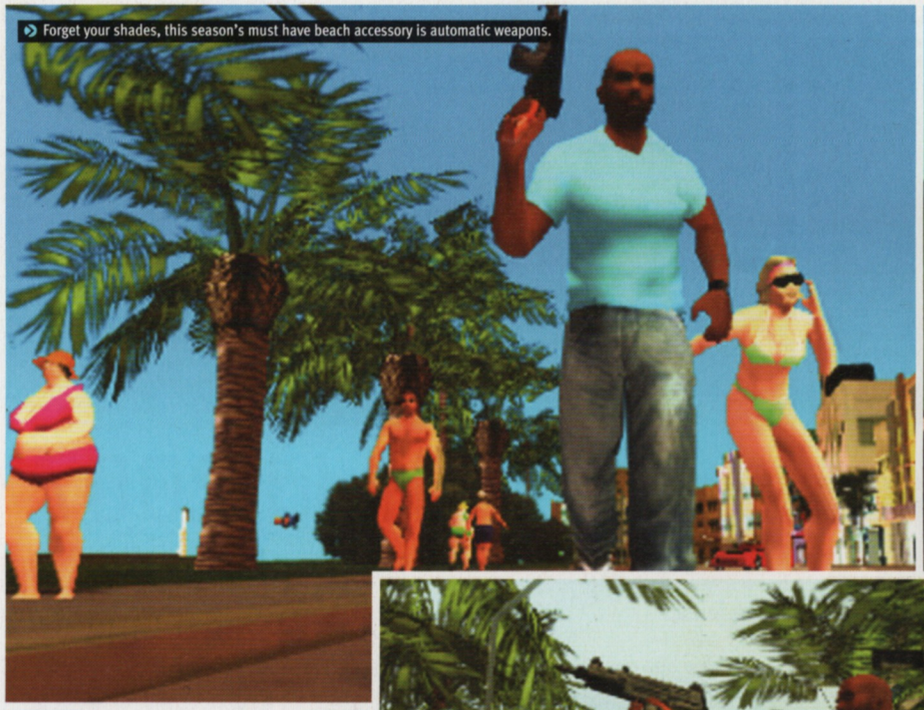
Get that mullet combed and dig out your natty white suit with the rolled-up sleeves. It's time to take a trip back in time to the Eighties again. *Vice City Stories* is set in 1984, two years before the events in the original *GTA Vice City* on PS2. Remember the sleazy Lance Vance, Tommy Vercetti's double-crossing sidekick? Well here you get to play his big brother Vic, a 28-year-old ex-marine (who was killed by Diaz's men in the opening drug deal cut-scene of *Vice City*). Voiced by Ving Rhames (*Mission Impossible II*, *Dawn of the Dead*), Vic aims to build a crime empire by going into the narcotics business with his unreliable, drug-addled brother.

As was the case in *Liberty City Stories*, it's a prequel with a new storyline in a familiar city which looks slightly different due to some landmarks still being under construction. However, that's where the similarities with the PSP's debut *GTA* game end. For a start, the animation has been improved dramatically so that characters move more realistically and can show more emotion. The scenery looks better too with much improved draw distances which are said to be better than in any previous *GTA* game. The place looks a lot busier with an increased number of cars, foliage, and items and pedestrians. In the case of the latter, there's less 'clumping' of the same character type so you won't see crowds of identical people. Other

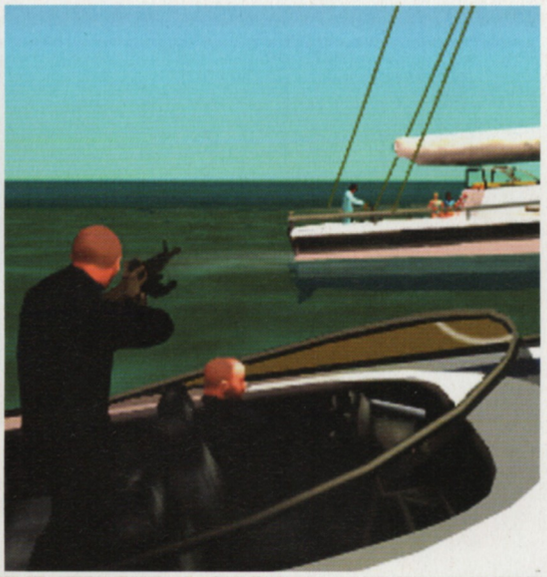


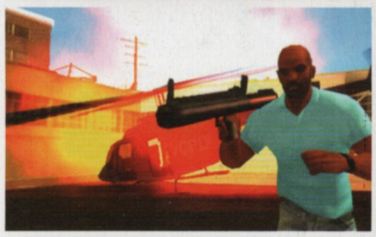
Now the sky is the limit on PSP.





Forget your shades, this season's must have beach accessory is automatic weapons.





// NEW VEHICLES INCLUDE HELICOPTERS – YES, FLIGHT IS NOW POSSIBLE AGAIN //



What's a bit of cruising without the odd drive-by?

DEVELOPER HISTORY

ROCKSTAR GAMES

Owned by Take-Two Interactive, Rockstar comprises several studios around the world - including the Edinburgh-based Rockstar North, formerly known as DMA Design. The creator of the *Grand Theft Auto* series, the latter has co-developed the PSP versions with Rockstar Leeds (formerly Mobius Entertainment).

2005 GTA:LCS
2001 MAX PAYNE
1998 SHELLSHOCK: 'NAM 67

changes to the city include a brand-new theme park on Ocean Beach featuring a large Ferris wheel, known as the Chunder Wheel, on which you can take a first-person view ride.

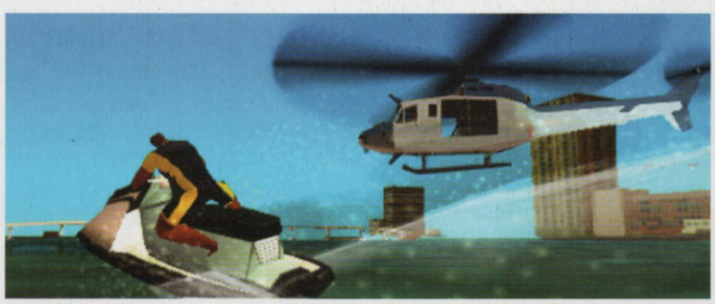
As well as more weather types such as hurricanes, new graphical effects include water-spray from your jet-ski. That's right, you can now whizz around the water on one of these nifty devices. And if you fall off, you can also swim. Numerous new vehicles are promised, the most significant being the helicopters that you can pilot – yes, flight is now possible again. Another noticeable improvement is in the radical shortening of loading times, so there are no long pauses before the start of missions. Unfortunately there's now a few seconds of loading whenever you enter and exit buildings – however, the upside is that there are far more interiors that you can explore. Even the notoriously fiddly control method for targeting enemies has been addressed. Once locked onto a target, you can now easily use the D-pad to switch between enemies as passers-by are no longer targeted. You can also slow down the cross-hair by holding the L button.

When it comes to the missions, there's more variety with a shift to long and multi-tiered ones rather than simple one-off tasks. For example, in the Jump Ship mission, the Vance brothers discover that one of their associates is an undercover cop and so Lance kidnaps and interrogates him. It turns out there's a drug deal happening down at the docks. But when the brothers head down there, Lance somehow manages to get himself kidnapped and taken away in a speedboat. So Victor has to use a sports car to follow the boat all the way to a large moored tanker ship, then use a ramp to propel the car onto the deck, bailing out just in time. He then makes his way through the ship's many corridors to eventually find and rescue Lance. On the way back through the ship, there are narcotics to collect before using a motorbike to leap back to terra firma.

Other missions include piloting a helicopter while Lance shoots at a biker gang below, acting as a film stuntman to ride a jet-ski and motorbike around a preset course, and using a rocket launcher to take out radio masts at police stations around the city. There should be plenty to do as the game is said to be twice the size of the original *GTA Vice City*. And the return of the 'trip skip' feature seen in *San Andreas* will enable you to skip long, monotonous journeys.

With the usual array of radio stations playing classic Eighties music to get us into the mood, along with a similar multiplayer game to *Liberty City Stories* to enjoy with friends, we can't wait to turn back time.

WANNA PLAY?





// THE NEW GAME WILL ALLOW YOU TO TAKE CHARGE OF ANY COUNTRY YOU LIKE //





All images for Football Manager 2007 are multi format

DEVELOPER HISTORY
SEGA

From its beginning making one-armed bandits in the 1940s, SEGA has become one of the biggest names in the video games business - from arcade machines to home consoles to software. Leaving the hardware battlefield in 2001 when the Dreamcast console was discontinued, SEGA now concentrates on creating games for the home market.

2001 SUPER MONKEY BALL
1993 VIRTUA FIGHTER
1991 SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

ETA NOV

Football Manager Handheld 2007

Can you avoid being the first managerial casualty of the season?

Publisher: Sega **Genre:** Sports **WWW.** sega.com/games/

With the new season now well under way, for many football game fans it brings about the same difficult decisions. *Pro Evo* or *FIFA*? *Football Manager* or *Championship Manager*? Football or women? Well at least the last decision's easy...

Due to the smaller size of the PSP database it will mean that yet again *Football Manager* is likely to fall some way short of the more widely popular PC version in terms of content. This doesn't mean that it will be any less enjoyable however, because the simplified handheld version should be a easier to just pick up and play.

As well as having an up-to-date database, the 2007 version will include at least eight new divisions. Set to be included are the Australian A-League, Portuguese one and two divisions and the extra leagues from Italy, France, Germany and Spain. This will help give you a bigger variety of clubs to choose from as well as over 290,000 players.

But wait, there's more. Most importantly, the new game will allow you to take charge of any country you like. While this is something that the father version has almost always had, it's a big step in the right direction for the PSP game.

WANNA PLAY?

// SOMETIMES ITS EASY TO BE CONVINCED YOU HAVE SOME SORT OF MYSTICAL POWER OVER THE GAMES COMPANIES //

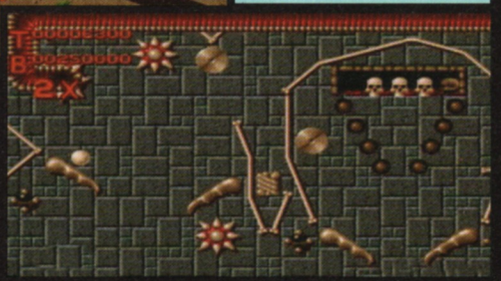




DEVELOPER HISTORY
Electronic Arts

Established in 1982 by industry stalwart Trip Hawkins. EA was initialy a publisher but began in-house development in the late eighties. They have since gon on to be one of the largest producers and publishers in the industry with many successful franchises to their name including both the FIFA and Madden series of sports games.

1999 MEDAL OF HONOR
1992 STRIKE SERIES
1987 SKATE OR DIE



ETA NOV

EA Replay

Strike now to get a Rash

Publisher: Electronic Arts **Genre:** Action **WWW.** electronicarts.co.uk

Sometimes it's easy to be convinced that you have some sort of mystical powers over the games companies. Only the other day a couple of us in the office were reminiscing over great games from the past that we'd love to see again. The two main ones that came out of the conversation were a return of the classic bike combat game *Road Rash* and the amazingly playable *Desert Strike*. Lo and behold what do you know? A few days later EA goes and announces it's planning to do a retro collection of some of its greatest games for the PSP. Amongst the gems will be all three *Road Rash* games and both *Desert Strike* and its sequel *Jungle Strike*. As if those five alone aren't enough, chuck in the completely mental *Mutant League Football* that uses flatulence as a defensive option, while space fans are taken care of with two *Wing Commander* games. With a total of 14 games, including *Syndicate*, *B.O.B* and *Ultima: Black Gate*, the *EA Replay* collection looks set to supply an eagerly awaited slice of retro gaming that might actually be worth buying.

WANNA PLAY?

// EA IS GOING THE EXTRA MILE TO MAKE THE GAME WORK REALLY WELL ON THE PSP //

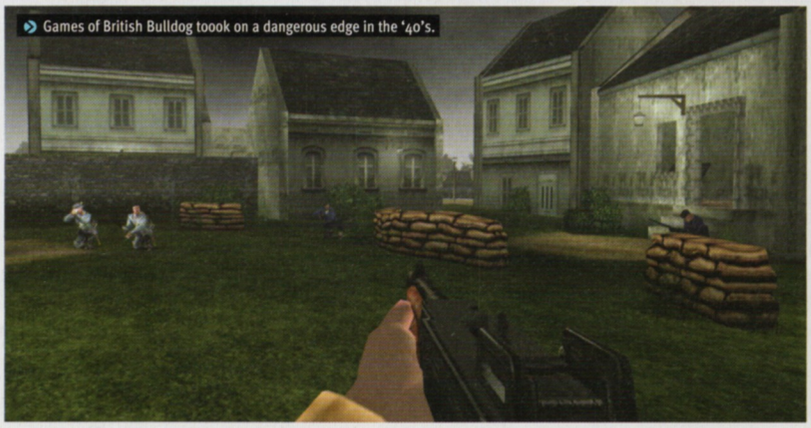


DEVELOPER HISTORY

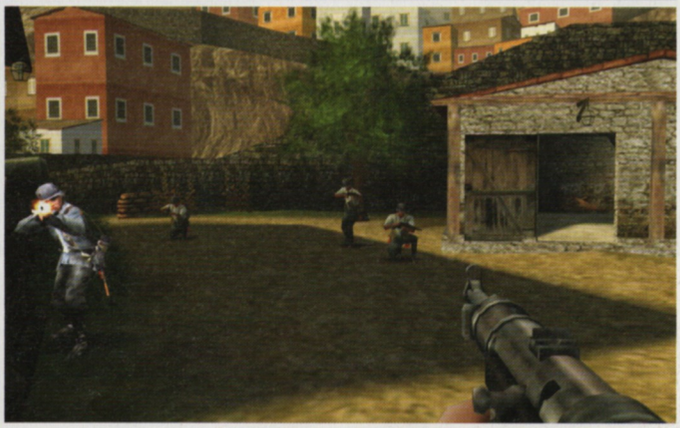
EA Canada (Team Fusion)

Electronic Arts set up Team Fusion, comprising over150 staff within EA Canada (Vancouver) and other studios, to work exclusively on PSP titles. As such, it is responsible for the handheld versions of key franchises such as *Need for Speed*, *Tiger Woods*, *FIFA*, *Madden* and NBA. *Medal of Honor Heroes* has been developed in conjunction with EA Los Angeles.

2005 **TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006**
2005 **FIFA 06**
2005 **NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND RIVALS**



Games of British Bulldog toook on a dangerous edge in the '40's.



ETA NOV

Medal of Honor Heroes

A whole war in your pocket

Publisher: Electronic Arts **Genre:** FPS **WWW.** .com/psp/medalofhonor_heroes/

At last, EA's bestselling WWII franchise is coming to the PSP. Not only that, but *Medal of Honor Heroes* is exclusive to the Sony handheld and thus being designed specifically for it. Featuring a unique new storyline, the game's single-player mode sees you playing through three campaigns, each comprising five missions, using characters from previous *MoH* games in untold chapters from their adventures. So you get to play Lt Jimmy Patterson (from the original *Medal of Honor* and *Frontline*) in the rainy streets of Holland during Operation Market Garden, Sgt John Baker (*Allied Assault*) sabotaging German defences on the rocky Italian coastline, and Lt William Holt (*European Assault*) in the snowy Ardennes Forest during the Battle of the Bulge.

You'll be glad to know that the game plays similarly to its big console predecessors, with nothing left out. Context-sensitive actions enable you to take cover, crouch, sprint and whack nearby enemies with your rifle butt. The various battle environments (all 12 of them) are highly detailed, including the buildings and vehicles. And as the action hots up, with numerous soldiers running around and fighting it out, there appears to be hardly any slowdown. Sound is impressive too, with huge explosions, bullets whizzing past and your comrades alerting you to danger.

EA is going the extra mile to make the game work really well on the PSP. For a start, there are no long loading times. There's the addition of Quickplay Skirmish missions to jump straight into the battle action (against up to 16 CPU bots) or create custom scenarios. You can also customise the controls and turn on auto-aim and strafe-assist options. While the analogue stick is used for movement, the face buttons let you look around, and the D-pad is used to switch between weapons and items – you can double-tap it to quickly select certain items instead of cycling through them.

The icing on the cake is the multiplayer game. 15 maps and six play modes are offered, among them



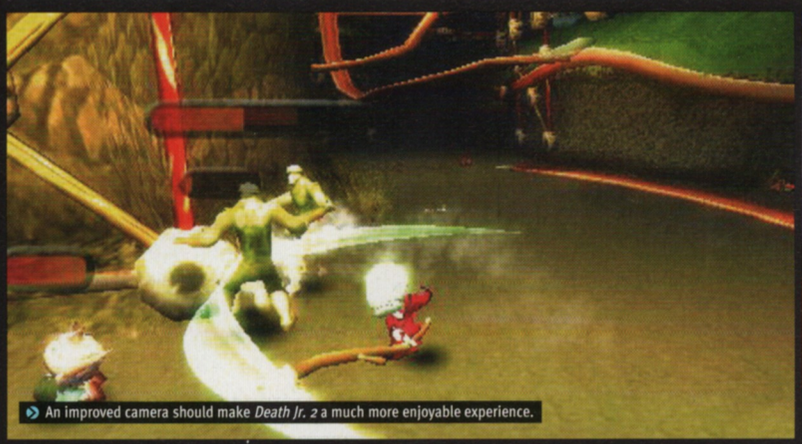
Decisions, decisions.

Hold the Line (defend your territory), Demolition (place explosive to destroy targets) and Infiltration (penetrate enemy lines). As well as an Ad Hoc mode for up to eight players in the same room, there's an Infrastructure mode for up to 32 players online. One cool feature is that players can join and leave games already in progress, and you'll even be able to download special software to run your own dedicated game server.

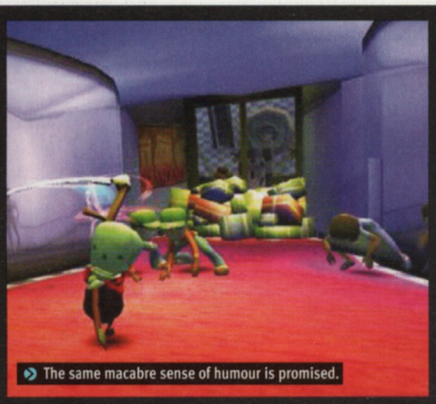
WANNA PLAY?



// THE ROWDY LITTLE REAPER RETURNS WITH HIS BAND OF CREEPY COHORTS //



An improved camera should make *Death Jr. 2* a much more enjoyable experience.



The same macabre sense of humour is promised.

DEVELOPER HISTORY
Backbone Entertainment

Backbone entertainment have been in existence since 1992, previously known as Digital Eclipse. They boast studios in California as well as a number of premises across Canada. As well as the Death Jr. franchise they hav also worked on the Age of Empires conversion to DS and are responsible for the upcoming Sonic Rivals.

2006 **SONIC RIVALS**
2006 **DEATH JR.**
2005 **AGE OF EMPIRES**



ETA OCT

Death Jr 2: Root of Evil

A reaping we will go

Publisher: Konami **Genre:** Platform **WWW.** konami.com/gs/gameinfo.php?id=188

Death Jr was a popular and somewhat darkly twisted character on his first outing. Although the first game was fun it did suffer from some camera issues that somewhat tainted the enjoyment. With the forthcoming release of the sequel, Konami has promised not only an enhanced camera system but also a number of AI and graphical improvements.

The rowdy little reaper returns with his band of creepy cohorts to take on all manner of oddities everywhere from a Toy Graveyard to the River Styx. Upgradeable weapons include an improved C4 Hamster and a flaming toilet paper launcher to name but two. Also returning, in a larger role this time around, is Death Jr's girlfriend Pandora. She is now a playable character with some unique attacks and this also enables you to play co-operatively with a friend via wireless link.

We enjoyed the dark humour and rather silly approach to platforming and blasting of the first game and if Konami can fix the camera this should be an enjoyable romp down the darker side of an everyday kid's life. An everyday kid assuming your father is the Grim Reaper, that is.

WANNA PLAY?

// AS THE MAKERS SAY, 'PUTS THE FUN BACK INTO WAR' //



Little soldiers and little tanks, its like being a kid again.

DEVELOPER HISTORY
Codemasters

Founded in 1985 by Richard and David Darling, formerlyof Mastertronic. Codemasters has produced some of the most successful multi-platform franchises including Dizzy and Micro Machines, as well as numerous popular racing titles.

2005 **COLIN MCCRAE RALLY**
2004 SECOND SIGHT
2003 **WORLD CHAMP SNOOKER**





ETA MAR

Cannon Fodder

Heigh ho, heigh ho, it's off to war we go

Publisher: Codemasters **Genre:** Strategy **WWW.** codemasters.com

The days of Amiga gaming spawned a number of now all but forgotten classics such as *Speedball*, *James Pond* and *Another World*. Also amongst these was a tactical war game that not only set new levels in playability, but also added a sense of humour to the proceedings. *Cannon Fodder* saw you leading a squad of up to four soldiers through multi-phase missions, controlling them either as a team or individually.

Cannon Fodder will soon be returning to the world of gaming in a new PSP version from Codemasters which will see you commanding your troops in a variety of both on-foot and vehicle-based missions. In addition to a graphical overhaul with more detailed landscapes, the new version builds on the classic gameplay. You'll now have the ability to call in air strikes, carry out radar scans for enemies and generally cause much more mayhem than ever before by unleashing your new range of weaponry including sniper rifles and flame-throwers. The game will also feature wireless play for up to four players, in deathmatch and co-operative modes.

The pick up and play nature of *Cannon Fodder* makes it ideal for release on PSP and we can't wait to get our hands on a game that, as the makers say, 'puts the fun back into war'.

WANNA PLAY?

//NO MENTION YET AS TO WHETHER EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE GRUMPY SCOTTISH RACE MANAGER WILL BE BACK//


TOCA always offers a variety of racing vehicles and disciplines.

DEVELOPER HISTORY

Codemasters

Founded in 1985 by Richard and David Darling, formerly of Mastertronic, Codemasters started out producing predominantly budget-priced games for the 8-bit computers such as the Sinclair Spectrum. Since then the company has grown into a major publisher on all formats and has produced some of the most successful multi-platform franchises including *Micro Machines* and *Colin McRae Rally*.

2005 **COLIN MCRAE RALLY**
2004 **SECOND SIGHT**
2003 **WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER**





ETA NOV

TOCA Race Driver 3 Challenge

Worldwide wheel fun

Publisher: Codemasters **Genre:** Racing **WWW.** codemasters.co.uk/toca3psp

With still no sign of *Gran Turismo* showing up any time soon on the PSP it's up to the TOCA series to take up the reins of realistic racer for the time being. *TOCA Race Driver 2* managed to take a strong storyline and mix it with some highly realistic racing in a variety of vehicles that ranged from souped-up sports cars to thumping great trucks and provide a pretty engrossing and enjoyable race experience.

The latest incarnation is set to be a PSP-only edition and also exclusive to Europe. Whereas the previous title saw the majority of the action taking place in dear old Blighty, *TOCA Race Driver 3 Challenge* takes the action worldwide with its new World Challenge design. This pits players against varying tiers of challenges that range across a variety of race styles and difficulties. As you progress through the tiers, your driving skill will improve. After mastering the initial basics in the first tier that see you managing crash damage, cornering, overtaking and many of the other basics needed to succeed, you'll soon find yourself up against the best in the world.

Each world location will boast its own unique style of racing. A trip to Britain will see you racing the British Grand Prix, while Australia will be offering up its heavyweight V8 supercar season to test your skills and Germany will see you take part in the DTM series. These are but a few of the locations and driving disciplines that will see you reaching the final tier and taking on the world's best of the best. As before, damage management will play a key part in your success or failure and Codemasters promises an upgraded graphical engine for much more realistic damage to your vehicle.

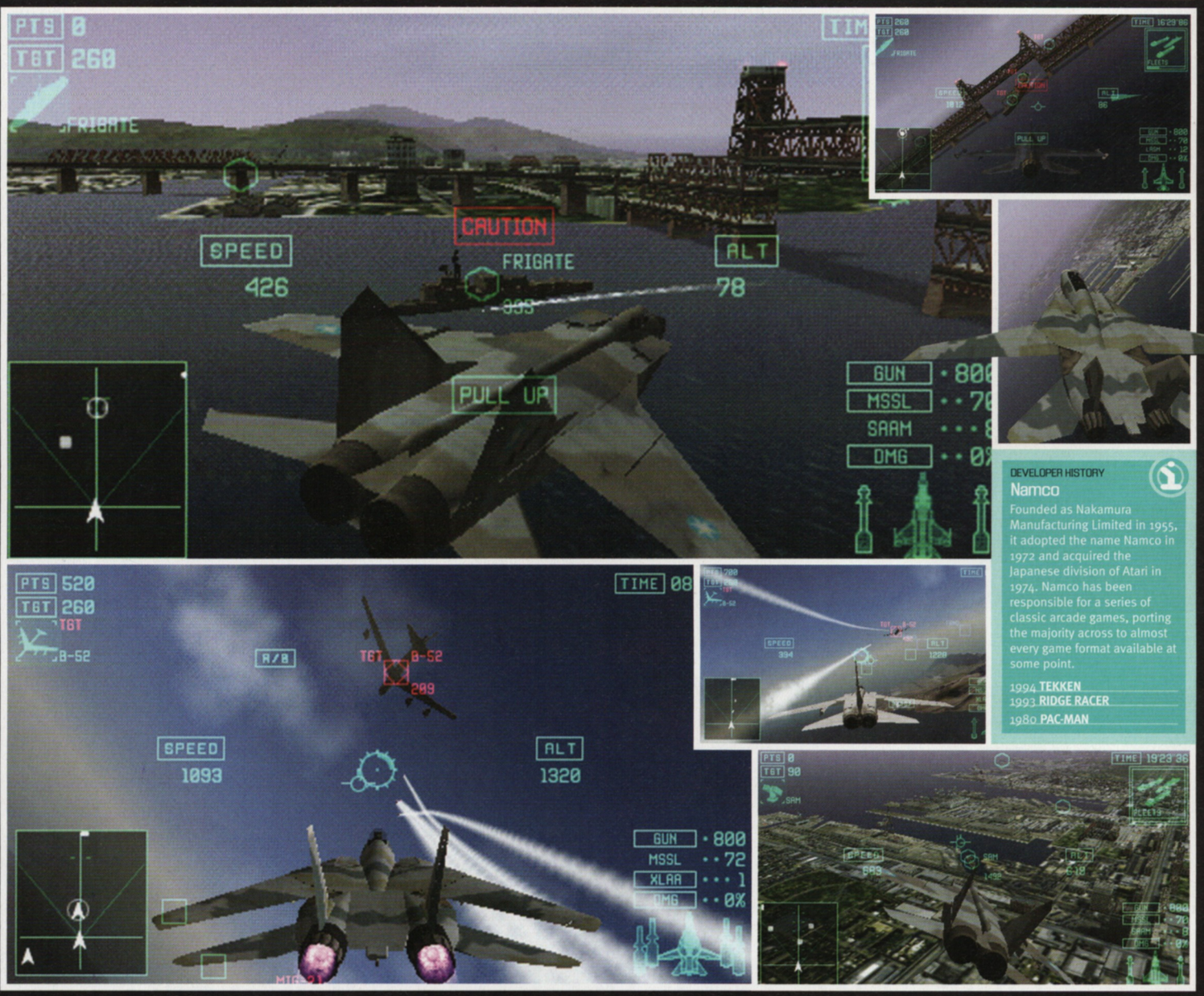
A whopping 12 players will be able to compete via the PSP's wireless abilities. Those helpful folks over at Codies have even taken into consideration that all your pals may not own the game and are offering four-player wireless game-sharing races using just a single UMD. If taking your vehicle round the world proves too tiresome, you will also be able to take a break by spending some time in the Free Race and Time Trial modes. No mention yet as to whether everyone's favourite grumpy Scottish race manager will be back to give you grief but we hope he will as a great deal of fun was provided in the previous title by watching the miserable old sod get upset with you when you didn't perform so well.


Audi owners can get a little feisty on the track.

We're already cleaning off our race suits and preparing to strap into our harness for a worldwide trip, so stay with PURE for more information as soon as it becomes available.

WANNA PLAY?

//LANDSCAPES WILL RANGE FROM SPRAWLING CITIES TO RURAL LANDSCAPES//



DEVELOPER HISTORY

Namco

Founded as Nakamura Manufacturing Limited in 1955, it adopted the name Namco in 1972 and acquired the Japanese division of Atari in 1974. Namco has been responsible for a series of classic arcade games, porting the majority across to almost every game format available at some point.

1994 **TEKKEN**
1993 **RIDGE RACER**
1980 **PAC-MAN**

ETA NOV

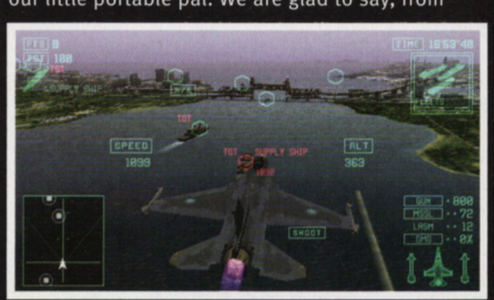
Ace Combat X: Skies of Deception

Fly like an eagle, with missiles

Publisher: Sony **Genre:** Action **WWW.** namcobandaigames.com

Over the years the Ace Combat series has become something of the *Gran Turismo* of the skies, with ultra-realistic battle zones, a huge array of aircraft and realism you'd expect from a full-on '20 key presses to take-off' PC flight sim.

Now the series is about to make its debut on our little portable pal. We are glad to say, from what we've seen so far, that the pocket air combat simulator brings over everything you loved about its bigger brothers as well as a few new tricks exclusive to our pocket-sized box of tricks. Alongside the range of licensed aircraft, a whole new slew of missions and storylines will be included in the PSP version. This is coupled with what Sony is dubbing 'Strategic AI', meaning missions will be tuned depending on previous decisions made, which makes for almost endless replayability options. These little extras alone should go some way to allaying fears that many fans had that the PSP game would simply be a 'lite' version of what we've already seen before. If you are an *Ace Combat* fan you've probably already got your eye on the latest console offering, *The Belkan War*. You'll be glad to know that the portable version contains a different range of craft as well as a whole new storyline created specifically for it.



With the wireless capabilities of the PSP, multiplayer combat and co-operation amongst pilots is now possible. Up to four players will be able to link up through Ad Hoc mode to take on missions such as escorting craft through enemy territory and, of course, head-to-head dogfights. Landscapes will range from sprawling cities to rural landscapes. You can also tune your plane with parts won during missions as well as upgrade your weaponry, allowing you to create a more manoeuvrable and deadly craft. Flight fans should have plenty to see and do for quite a while to come.

WANNA PLAY?

//EVEN AT THIS EARLY STAGE THIS LOOKS SET TO TAKE THE CROWN AS TOP STREET RACER ON THE PSP//



There's always an SUV driver looking for a quick insurance claim.

Construction on the road. Like a red rag to a bull in the world of street racing.









DEVELOPER HISTORY

Midway Games

Founded in 1958, Midway Games originally produced mechanical games machines. In 1973 it was one of the first companies to begin production of electronic games. A close relationship with Japanese producers Taito flourished throughout the Seventies with both companies cross-licensing their products to each other. Midway's big break came in 1978 with the licensing and distribution across American territories of the massive hit *Space Invaders*. This was quickly followed by *Pac-Man* and the company went from strength to strength. Its work in the home games market has produced such landmark titles as *Spy Hunter*, *Defender* and *Rampage* to name but a few.

1993 **NBA JAM**
1992 **MORTAL KOMBAT**
1980 **DEFENDER**

ETA NOV

LA Rush

Pimpin' ain't easy

Publisher: Midway **Genre:** Racing **WWW.** midway.com

It must be hard being a street racer if the games we play are anything to go by. Take, for example, the life of our hero Trix. After battling his way up from the streets by pink-slipping, drifting and generally being a bit of a blight on the roads as far as the boys in blue are concerned, it looks like he's got it made. That is until he manages to piss off someone with more money. Lo and behold, upon returning to his tricked out mansion he finds not only the pool emptied of ho's in thongs, but also his precious garage gutted and all of his belongings taken. What's a guy to do? Well, start all over again, of course, and regain what was originally his by taking to the streets once more.



This is the basic premise behind Midway's conversion of their successful *Rush* series to PSP. To be honest, in titles like this story is secondary to actually being able to get out there and race and pimp up your ride. When it comes to the pimping side Midway looks to have it pretty well sewn up, with the guys from West Coast Customs (of *Pimp My Ride* TV fame) along for the ride with an official licence, so get ready for LCD screens where you don't need them and all manner of weird and wonderful add-ons heading your way.

We've had our hands on a very early build of the forthcoming titles due to hit our shelves soon and the whole thing is looking pretty solid. Well-rendered city streets, plenty of traffic and cars that actually carry some weight to them are still in need of some graphical and gameplay tweaks, but even at this early stage this looks set to take the crown as top street racer on the PSP. The free-roaming city in which you'll challenge opponents is looking very well laid out and will allow you to travel the highways and byways from Donwntown LA through South Central, Hollywood and right round to Santa Monica.

It's not just a port of previous *Rush* games either. With the developers taking note of complaints about how hard it is to earn cash in the game, 30 new missions based purely around making money should sort that out. Other interesting missions see you out purely to cause damage or re-acquire cars, to help add a little spice to the usual time trials and races.

Another exclusive PSP feature is the stunt arena that has some of the most insane jumps ever that allow you to flip, roll and generally perform gravity-defying tricks. Chuck in a battle arena that is sure to become a firm favourite with multiplayer fans and *Rush* is shaping up to be an all-rounder with plenty of stuff away from the 'hood to keep you occupied.

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Mystery Shopper

PURE goes shopping to find out how much retailers really know about the **PlayStation 3**

Woolworths

Location: Boscombe high street
Store Type: General retailer

Boscombe is best known for its junkies, dossers and prostitutes. However, it seems quite pleasant by day and there's a market in the pedestrianised high street. If you want two watches for a fiver, this is the place to come. To avoid the stench of hot dogs, I venture inside Woolies. There's a good selection of games including the top 22 titles for the PSP.



When I ask the lady behind the counter about the PS3, she knows all about the delayed launch (announced yesterday). She's pleasant and helpful, although she claims that if I order a PS3 they'll be able to guarantee I'll get one at launch. She then calls over her male colleague who appears to contradict her, saying they have no idea how many units they'll get. Regarding the machine's capabilities, he says his female colleague went on a course about it. She has trouble remembering the names of Blu-ray and HD DVD, although she insists the former is better. She also claims the PS3 will come in two versions with different-size memory (not hard disk space then?). She adds that the only bonus with the PS3 is that "it'll play special Sony discs" (eh?)... ah, she's talking about backwards compatibility.

The bloke adds that they've had three or four release dates in the last couple of months - strange, since the original November 17 date has been set since May.

RATINGS
SELECTION: 4
SERVICE: 4
INFORMATION: 2
OVERALL: 3
Summary: Better service than the Poole branch, but very muddled information.

Argos

Location: Opposite Boscombe Crescent
Store Type: General retailer

Walking through Boscombe, past a closed Game Exchange shop, I notice an old bloke apparently talking to himself (I look in vain for a hands-free phone set). The Argos store is situated opposite Boscombe Crescent, a notorious area for junkies. Perhaps that's why there don't seem to be any 'pick up and buy' items which might be pilfered.



After browsing the special offers leaflets and catalogue (with its limited selection of games), I head over to the customer services desk. The blonde Liverpudlian lady knows about the delayed PS3 launch, adding that it was on the TV news last night. She has no idea of the price though. On the subject of its capabilities, she asks her female colleague, "Do you know anything about it?... You've got a boyfriend." But she knows nothing, although it reminds her that they've got some posters to put out about it.

When asked about the PSP camera, the Scouser says she doesn't know and proceeds to look it up in the catalogue! Erm, I could that myself. She then points to the Datel X2 battery, thinking for some reason that it might be a camera. Finally, she suggests I give Sony a ring, but she can't find the number, so maybe I could look on the internet. Yeah, maybe.

RATINGS
SELECTION: 2
SERVICE: 3
INFORMATION: 1
OVERALL: 2
Summary: Not the best place to come for games and they don't know anything.

GAME

Location: In a small shopping centre
Store Type: Specialist video games store

When I head for the GAME store I know, I discover that it's being transformed into a Lush shop - great for bath bombs, no good for Bomberman. However, there's still another GAME in town, in a small shopping centre. Naturally, as a specialist retailer, the store is packed with games for all the major formats. They're still trying to shift some pre-owned titles with a '3 for 2' offer in the bargain bins. It's not quite as bright and airy as the Poole branch, but surely they'll know plenty about the PS3? The chap tells me that it's been delayed till March at the earliest, due to a problem with the manufacturing. As for the price, he reckons it will be at least "four fifty" - I take it he means £450. He then suggests that I buy an Xbox 360 instead, saying that the PS3 will be twice as expensive, games will be around £20 more and "graphically it'll be exactly the same, mate", adding that the games will be straight ports. He then says he doesn't even think the PS3 will launch in March and rambles on about the delays to the PSP launch in Europe. He seems very keen to sell me that 360.



He's heard about the PSP camera and GPS receiver and says they'll be coming out in October/November. He also mentions that he's going to a Sony retail event next week, so he'll get a lot more information then. How exciting.

RATINGS
SELECTION: 5
SERVICE: 4
INFORMATION: 4
OVERALL: 4
Summary: Great games selection and okay info, although they'll probably try to sell you a 360.



Following last month's debut shopping trip around Poole, the mystery shopper heads to the adjacent town of Bournemouth to check out the knowledge and service of its games retailers...

HMV

Location: In a small shopping centre
Store Type: Music, DVDs and games retailer

Next door to GAME, inside the shopping centre, this HMV is a large store with a decent games section in one corner. After tearing myself away from ogling the Girls Aloud Cd's and wondering if any of them would be more interesting to get to grips with than a mtion sensing joypad, I ask the bloke behind the counter if they'll be stocking the PS3. "Will do, whenever it actually comes out." When's that then? "Next year some time!" (with a chuckle in his voice). He thinks it'll be out around April and mentions that it was "on the news and everything last night".



Will it be better than the 360? "It may be... it's meant to be this all-singing and dancing thing". A bit like Girls Aloud then? He then tells me that Microsoft will probably cash in now, but seems very sure that the PS3 has better graphics and reassures me that of course, Sony have got the games "which is their strength".

He knows nothing at all about the PSP camera, nor the GPS receiver. And neither does his colleague. However, he thinks "someone downstairs might know about it" as they have a PSP, so he goes and phones them. A couple of minutes later he returns to tell me that no, they don't know anything either.

RATINGS
SELECTION: 3
SERVICE: 3
INFORMATION: 1
OVERALL: 3
Summary: Not a bad games section but they know virtually nothing about games.

Currys Digital

Location: In a pedestrianised street
Store Type: High-street electrical retailer

There's hardly anyone in the shop, yet there's no one at the counter either. The phone's ringing too, yet no-one bothers to answer it. To occupy myself I decide to take a look at the small games section in the corner. Needless to say, the meagre selection doesn't hold my attention for long so I return to the empty counter. The phone's still ringing and finally one of the assistants answers it, yet he ignores me - not even an "I'll be with you shortly". After several minutes of waiting, another assistant finally decides he'd better come out from behind the back and serve me.



He knows that the PS3 launch has been put back to March. How much will it cost? "No idea." Do you know how many you're likely to get in? "Don't have a clue." He explains that they will have some sort of pre-order scheme where if I pay a deposit of around £10 I'll be assured one. Is it better than the 360? "We haven't seen anything about it. It's meant to be as good as if not better. All right?"

He doesn't know anything about the PSP camera either: "Sony keep everything so cloak and dagger." With that, I decide there's no point asking any other questions and leave. At least he didn't try to flog me a warranty.

RATINGS
SELECTION: 2
SERVICE: 1
INFORMATION: 1
OVERALL: 1
Summary: Hardly any games, hardly any service and hardly any info.

Gamestation

Location: In a pedestrianised street
Store Type: Specialist video games store

Tearing myself away from the lingerie window display in the Anne Summers shop opposite (I think better of questioning them about the PS3, just in case they ask if I want the double-ended version), I head into Gamestation. It doesn't seem as dark and dingy as the Poole branch and there's a good selection of games, including lots of bargains such as four pre-owned games for £20. Some bloke in a suit is playing on the Xbox 360 pod.

I talk to a friendly young chap behind the counter who immediately tells me about the PS3 delay. He explains that they took some pre-orders back in May, but had stopped taking them when they reached the number of their allocated machines. He says it'll cost £425 - at least that's a guaranteed maximum price for pre-order customers. But the games will cost between £50 and £70. Compared with the 360 he says, "It's not any better," and tells me about Sony running demos on PCs at E3 2005 and that the stuff they showed this year was only on a par with the 360. He mentions the advantage of Blu-ray movies but adds that the downside is that if they don't take off, the game and movie prices will never come down. He doesn't seem too keen on the PS3, but at least he doesn't try to sell me a 360. He knows all about the PSP camera and GPS too.



RATINGS
SELECTION: 5
SERVICE: 5
INFORMATION: 4
OVERALL: 5
Summary: Great games selection and friendly staff who seem pretty clued up.

conclusion...

So what have we learned from this experiment? Well, as previously, the specialist game stores come out on top, although neither was keen on the PS3. Currys Digital scores poorly again, while HMV, Argos and Woolies know hardly anything about games. Oh, and look out for cheap watches and nutters in Boscombe.

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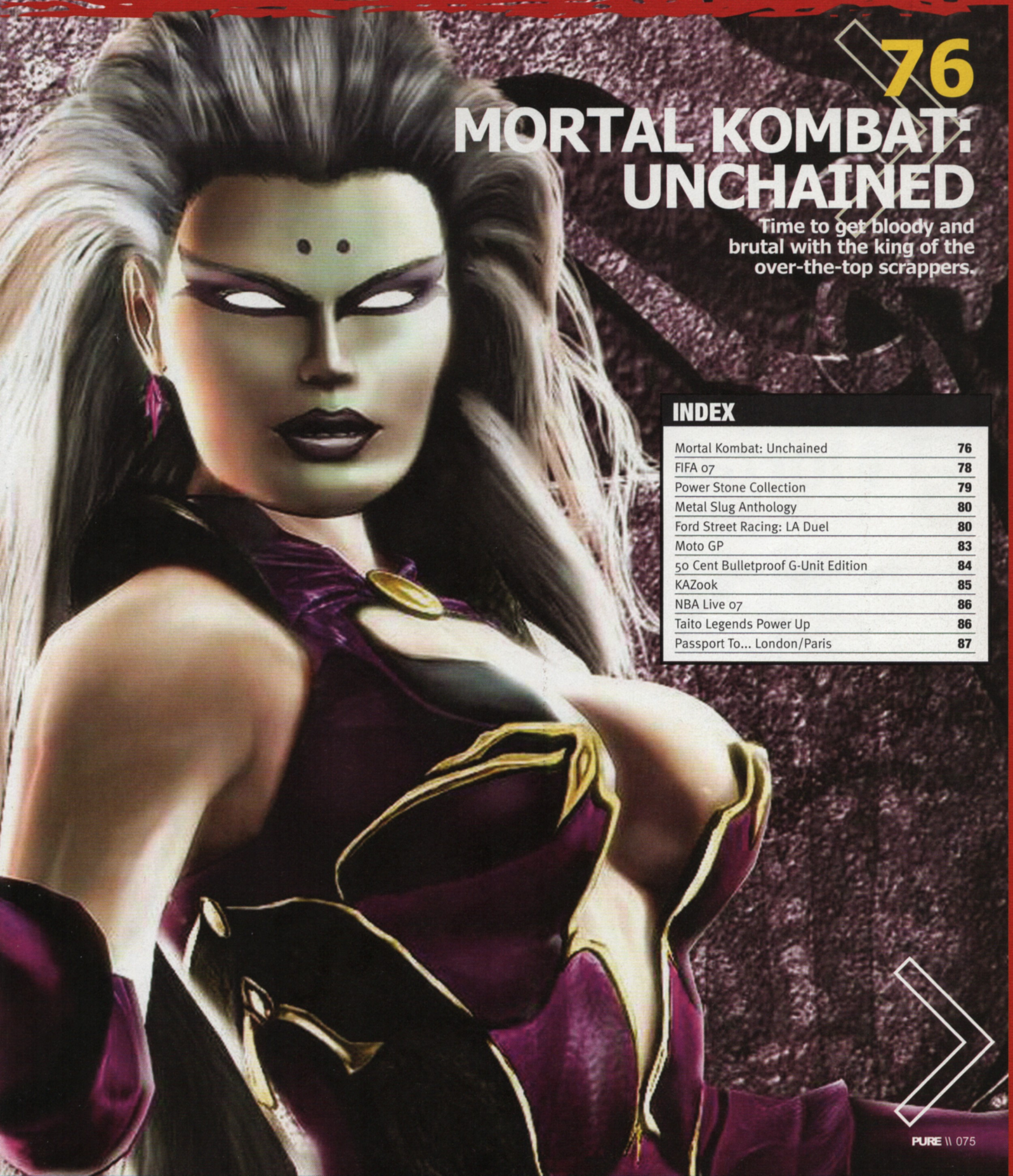
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FILTER

YOUR BUFFER BETWEEN HYPE AND TRIPE



76 MORTAL KOMBAT: UNCHAINED

Time to get bloody and brutal with the king of the over-the-top scrappers.

INDEX

Mortal Kombat: Unchained	76
FIFA 07	78
Power Stone Collection	79
Metal Slug Anthology	80
Ford Street Racing: LA Duel	80
Moto GP	83
50 Cent Bulletproof G-Unit Edition	84
KAZook	85
NBA Live 07	86
Taito Legends Power Up	86
Passport To... London/Paris	87



The gang's all here... to kick your ass.

GENRE: Fighting **PLAYERS:** 1-2 **PRICE:** £29.99 **PUBLISHER:** Midway **AVAILABLE:** 10 Nov **WWW.** mortalkombat.com



Mortal Kombat: Unchained

Get over here... now here... and here

PURE GENIUS! AWARD

AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	9/10
LOOKS	9/10
SOUND	8/10
CHALLENGE	8/10
LIFESPAN	8/10

KOMBAT: Plenty of options outside main game, smooth graphics, excellent gameplay.

WOMBAT: Non-fans may find it a little repetitive, can be too easy to master.

18+

You can't beat a bit of brutal bloodletting. Almost since games began, players have had the urge to beat seven shades of sugar out of each other and their computer-controlled compatriots. When it comes to completely over-the-top blood and snot fighting, *Mortal Kombat* has always taken it to the limit. Long before the days of *GTA* being blamed for corrupting the youth of the world, *Mortal Kombat* was out there causing controversy and complaints. Now it's the PSP's turn to get its dose of the claret-filled craziness. Whereas *Tekken* gave us little more than a rehash of an already released game, *Mortal Kombat* has gone ahead and created a whole new title specifically for our portable pal. Based on the *Deception* storyline, it still retains all the things that make the battles with the members of Outworld great, but also manages to throw in a few new tricks to keep things interesting.

An impressive 30 playable characters are selectable from the start, with many old favourites making a showing as well as previous boss characters such as that multi-armed monstrosity Goro and the armour-clad Shao Kahn. Getting into the action itself reveals a beautiful-looking game that not only moves smoother than a greased up otter but also plays like a real dream. With each of the characters having multiple fighting styles as well as a weapon style, it's a doddle to switch between them with just a flick of the shoulder button. This multiple combat style means that if you find one type of attack isn't working, it's easy to switch to something that does. It also works the other way, though, as the new style you choose may well have openings for attack by your opponent that you never considered.

Of course, *Mortal Kombat* wouldn't be the same without the over-the-top finishing moves and interactive environments. Part of the joy of playing *MK* is now figuring out which environments can be used to crush, mutilate and generally damage your opponent in the most gruesome ways possible. Taking a leaf out of the *Dead or Alive* school of fighting, you also have multiple level arenas that, unlike *DOA*, don't just drop you down to new areas. As an example, fighting in one of the levels allows



IN THE SAME VEIN



Tekken: Dark Resurrection
A polished and professional outing, although something new would have been nice 8/10



Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max
A classic fighter that may be beginning to show its age somewhat 8/10





Puzzle Kombat provides a nice break from all the blood and fists.






Hold on, surely two ladies kissing should be a nice thing to see?




Popping out for a quick slash takes on a whole new meaning.

you to thump your opponent out of the area and to the next patio down; the fight continues, but knocking them out of the arena again doesn't send them to yet another level but actually plunging to their death many floors below.

Where *MK* scores over its rivals in the portable fighting genre is in its execution of special moves. Rather than relying on being able to pull off smooth arcs on the controls, *MK* relies more on combinations of button presses and directions, allowing many more executable attacks with the limited controls of the PSP. And yes, all the fatalities we've come to know and love are in there in all their gory glory.

One of the joys of this title, and something that makes it ideal for gaming on the move, is the inclusion of the Chess Kombat and Puzzle Kombat modes as well as the Konquest game. Chess Kombat, as it suggests, is *MK*'s own take on the age-old board game with a few twists that allow you to set traps and cast spells, as well as each encounter between pieces being a one-round traditional *MK* battle. *Puzzle Kombat* takes the old *Super Puzzle Fighter / Tetris* type game of falling blocks that need activators dropped on them to destroy them and adds in special moves to make your opponent's life just that little bit harder, such as making their play field invisible or dropping bombs on pieces to destroy them. Konquest pits you in a single-player adventure-style game that also acts as a training mode for the main game while still providing plenty of fun itself.

Add to that little lot The Krypt that lets you spend your game rewards on all manner of extra costumes, video clips and extra arenas and basically, instead of just a fight-based game, you are essentially being given four games in one. How's that for value?

Wireless multiplayer extends beyond just one-on-one matches too, with both the Puzzle Kombat and Chess Kombat modes being available for you to take on your friends. Sadly, unlike *Tekken* there is no game sharing option, so if you want to kick the crap out of your friends you're both going to have to shell out for a copy.

Mortal Kombat: Unchained is an extremely polished fighter that offers so much extra content, it just proves that PSP games don't just have to be ports of existing titles.

Marc Powell

CONCLUSION

An awesome fighter with plenty of extra options to satisfy outside of the main ring.

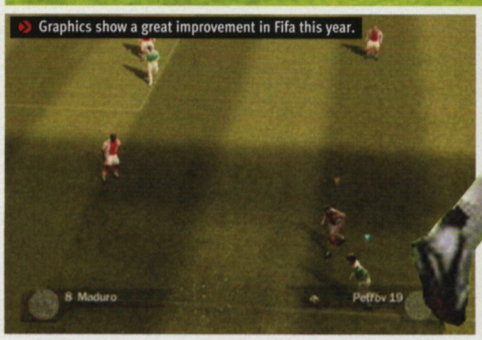
SCORE **9**/10



// AN EXTREMELY POLISHED FIGHTER THAT OFFERS SO MUCH EXTRA CONTENT //




Anti-gravity stadiums soon caught on in the Premiership.


Graphics show a great improvement in Fifa this year.



GENRE: Sports **PLAYERS:** 1-4 **PRICE:** £34.99 **PUBLISHER:** EA **AVAILABLE:** Out Now **WWW.** fifa07.ea.com



FIFA 07

PURE GENIUS! AWARD

A crunching challenge on Pro Evolution Soccer!

AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	9/10
LOOKS	9/10
SOUND	7/10
CHALLENGE	9/10
LIFESPAN	8/10

30 YARD SCREAMER: FIFA has now matched Pro Evo with its gameplay.

ROW Z: Some of the extra leagues are pointless.

3+

For years people have been hoping that one day *Pro Evolution Soccer* would buy all the licences for players' names, leagues and cup competitions so that it could become the ultimate in computer football gaming. Unfortunately it has never happened and now an even bigger problem has occurred, because the new *FIFA 07* has managed to match *Pro Evo* with its gameplay. With so much improvement in the game you have to take your hats off the developers who have managed to enhance the gameplay while retaining the trademark *FIFA* content.

Once you go through team selection and formalities you finally get to pitch side and at a glance it looks like very little has changed. But once that whistle blows, the game is transformed. Players now have brains (yes that's right, footballers with brains, a scary thought I know) and will attempt to find space to make the pass easier for the man on the ball. Off-the-ball movement has improved and players will now make a run before you deliver the pass. Defenders can also clearly be seen nudging attackers in the back while the ball is in flight, with attackers trying to back into the defender in a fight for the space.

Like a Tiger Woods iron shot, you can now put topspin and backspin on set-pieces which allows more creativity with the Wimbledon-style long ball or little clip in behind the last man. Also gone are the days where every shot flies into the top corner with more swerve than a Beckham free-kick. Now composure is the order of the day with the ability to cleverly chip the goalie in a one-on-one situation or rocket a shot into the roof of the net from a tight angle.

With so much improvement on the gameplay side it's easy to overlook the other improvements. New leagues have been added, albeit minor ones such as the American MLS and Mexican first division, and the managerial side has been given an upgrade with more detail and options for you to dwell over.

With this game likely to outsell *Pro Evolution Soccer* again, few people will disagree that this time they probably deserve it. **Pete Darke**



IN THE SAME VEIN



FIFA World Cup Germany 2006
The most polished World Cup game ever; a must-have for footy fans. 9/10



Pro Evolution Soccer 5
Still the best gameplay in the genre, but let down by lack of content. 7/10

CONCLUSION

A really smart improvement that puts this game top of the football league.

SCORE 9/10



What could be better in a fighting game than ship mounted cannons?





Always watch what all of your opponents are doing.





GENRE: Action » **PLAYERS:** 1-4 » **PRICE:** £29.99 » **PUBLISHER:** Capcom » **AVAILABLE:** Out Now » **WWW.** capcom.com



Power Stone Collection

Retro gaming as it should be

AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	9/10
LOOKS	8/10
SOUND	8/10
CHALLENGE	7/10
LIFESPAN	8/10

POWER HOUR: Varied levels, fast action, pick-up-and-play gaming.

FLOWER POWER: May be a little too frantic for some

12+



The good old Dreamcast was a machine before its time that sadly never got the crack of the whip it so richly deserved. Many of the titles released for it still stand the test of time and look and play as good as anything on the current-gen machines. Upon its release, one of the most impressive titles was *Power Stone*, a frantic multiplayer combat game that saw destructible environments and usable scenery long before it ever reached the other machines. With the PSP becoming home to something of a retro revival, it was with great pleasure we received news of Capcom's plans to release the two titles in the series on our portable pal.

The *Power Stone* games pitch you into a frantic four-way battle to be the last man standing, using a variety of weapons as well as anything you can find lying around. These items can vary from tables and chairs, right through to entire stone pillars. To add a boost to the proceedings, players also fight to obtain possession of the three power stones that drop randomly around the level. Obtaining all three enables you to unleash massively damaging power attacks specific to each character. Get knocked on your ass before obtaining all three and you'll find your pals ransacking your fallen corpse for all your stolen treasure.

While the original title had levels that featured platforms and ledges on which to leap around, the sequel took things to a new level with scrolling environments that see you fighting on huge airships, complete with usable cannons, and even scaling the walls of great buildings while keeping up the frantic battling action. In fact, surviving the levels themselves without getting injured is half the fun. With playable characters ranging from pirates and Native American braves to harem girls and adventurers, there's someone here for everyone. Chuck in Ad Hoc support for up to four players - and game sharing even allowing battles with just the one game disc - and you have a recipe for hours of multiplayer mayhem. That's not to say that the single player game doesn't hold just as much fun and frantic fighting to be had, though.

IN THE SAME VEIN



Tekken: Dark Resurrection
A polished and professional fighter that sticks to the tried and tested.
8/10



KAZooK
Madcap multiplayer action at an amazing budget price.
8/10

Forget rolling out and sprucing up arcade titles from 20 odd years ago. This is what retro gaming should be: the breathing of new life into highly playable titles that never got the respect they originally deserved. **Kelly Petrucci**

A collection of games you may have missed originally that you must play now.

SCORE 8/10



The artistic graphics have always been a fan favourite.





Manic shooting action is the name of the game.

GENRE: Arcade **PLAYERS:** 1-2 **PRICE:** £34.99 **PUBLISHER:** Ignition **AVAILABLE:** 27 Oct **WWW.** ignitionent.com



Metal Slug Anthology

Guns, guns, guns

AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	7/10
LOOKS	8/10
SOUND	6/10
CHALLENGE	7/10
LIFESPAN	6/10

⊕ **BIG FAT SLUG:** Collection of all the titles, retro blasting action

⊖ **SQUASHED BUG:** Can become repetitive, infuriating deaths mean lots of restarts

12+

In the 'good' old days before the FPS ruled the roost, if you wanted some gun-based action it was either side scroller or top scroller as your choice. Great days of oversized characters, insane weaponry and dying in a crumpled heap only to repeat the level was all par for the course. Amongst the many titles, and believe us there were tons of them, *Metal Slug* was one of the big favourites amongst aficionados. Featuring the first six games from the series, Slug fans will be overjoyed to know that the original Japanese source code has been used for the conversion from Neo Geo, meaning a much more blood-soaked edition of the game than has previously been released on these shores.

With beautifully drawn scenery and characters, these titles are a real blast-fest that see you legging it from left to right unleashing death on a seemingly unending supply of foes, while weapon upgrades and vehicles help keep the action rolling along at a frantic pace. Slug fans are going to love having their favourite games in the palm of their hand, while casual observers may well enjoy the frantic action and overblown characters and locations. Granted, the games are a little short and with diligent play you may well finish each in just over an hour. But with multiplayer co-op over the wireless connection and some seriously addictive gameplay, you'll find yourself returning to this one again and again when that need for a bit of blasting gets just too much to ignore. **Kelly Petrucci**

CONCLUSION

A well presented slice of retro blasting fun that fans will adore.

SCORE 7/10


Ford fans will be in heaven, others may well be left cold.





GENRE: Racing **PLAYERS:** 1-2 **PRICE:** £19.99 **PUBLISHER:** Xplosiv **AVAILABLE:** 20 Oct **WWW.** xplosiv.net



Ford Street Racing: LA Duel

Vroom, vroom, yawn

AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	3/10
LOOKS	5/10
SOUND	6/10
CHALLENGE	3/10
LIFESPAN	4/10

⊕ **FORD:** Large range of Ford branded vehicles to drive

⊖ **BORED:** Sluggish control, bland race tracks, repetitive gameplay

3+

Sometimes a budget game can be a godsend of great gameplay, amazing graphics and offer a challenge that makes you glad you've spent your money on the title instead of Haribo. Unfortunately, *Ford Street Racing* is one that will make you wish you'd bought those bags of Starmix instead. With the ability to get behind the wheel of a wide range of licensed Ford vehicles you'd think there'd be plenty here to love, from tricked-out Fiestas to road-tearing GT40s. Sadly, despite some aesthetic changes, no matter which vehicle you drive they all seem to respond exactly the same. In fact, it would be easy to say that it wouldn't really matter what sort of vehicle graphic was slapped on top of this driving engine, you'd still be thinking chimps on roller-skates would handle better.

The turns are sluggish and you often find yourself wrestling just to get safely round the corner let alone actually trying to race. And while we're on the subject of the tracks, could they be any blander? This is supposed to be a vibrant street duel around the highways and byways of sunny Los Angeles; instead what you get is a traffic-free set of roads that make the streets of Milton Keynes look fascinating. If you are thinking of adding this to your collection we recommend you hand in your driving licence and get some serious help now. **Mike Aldrich**

CONCLUSION

To bland to be fun, too sluggish to be exciting. Made for die-hard Ford fans only.

SCORE 3/10

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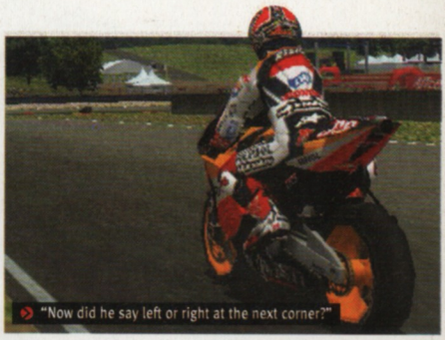
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As slick as its console counterpart, just lacking the extreme levels.




"Now did he say left or right at the next corner?"






One on One races add a whole new challenge.



GENRE: Racing **PLAYERS:** 1-8 **PRICE:** £34.99 **PUBLISHER:** SONY **AVAILABLE:** 27 Oct **WWW.** motogp-game.com

Moto GP

Is that grit between your cheeks?

AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	9/10
LOOKS	8/10
SOUND	7/10
CHALLENGE	8/10
LIFESPAN	7/10

SILVER DREAM MACHINE: Great feeling of speed, highly controllable, competitive racing.

CLAPPED-OUT MOPED: Load times can be a little long, rider balance control is sorely missed.

3+

If haring round on two wheels dressed in leather is your thing, you have two options in this life: either join a rather suspect biker gang and be forced to grow a huge beard and on occasion wear a German army helmet with horns on, or strap yourself onto a superbike and throw yourself around tracks across the world with like-minded people. Luckily the social stigma attached to wearing so much leather when you are not actually a professional sports person can be eased by getting hold of the PSP conversion of arguably the best bike-based game ever to hit the world of gaming.

Moto GP has finally surfaced on PSP and after racing fans have been force-fed a diet of four-wheeled shenanigans for many years now it comes as something of a breath of fresh air. Fans of the series will be glad to know that you can now take an almost perfect conversion of the title's larger console cousin on the road with you. We say 'almost' because there are a couple of little niggles that stop it from being an exact conversion, but we'll come to those later.

The title features all the riders, tracks and teams from the 2005 and 2006 seasons and plays like an absolute dream, with the emphasis being on competent riding rather than all-out speed. This means that screaming into corners without sensible braking will often see your poor rider picking gravel out of his ass after a rather nasty spill. The usual arcade mode is featured for those wanting a quick dip in and out racing experience, while the career mode offers a huge amount of depth and unlockable extras to keep you coming back for more time and again. Also new to this iteration of the series is the one-on-one mode which, as the title suggests, allows you to take on your favourite racing stars head to head. Winning races, completing time trials and coming first in one-on-one events opens up the 80 rewards in the game. These give access to new bikes, helmets and the like and help stop the game becoming just a battle for points.

It was something of a concern of ours that the control and, above all, feeling of speed might be sacrificed somewhat to fit the title onto the PSP. Visually we are glad to say it is spot on with hardly any noticeable scenery tearing and a negligible amount of pixellating along the edges of the tracks. Control-wise the loss of the second stick means that one of the great features of the game's bigger brother, that of being able to adjust the balance of your rider on the bike, has been removed. This means that sitting up to slow yourself into corners is no longer an option and the entire process becomes a braking exercise. This is a sad loss but one that you soon compensate for. Overall *Moto GP* is a well-polished racing title and possesses that all-important 'one more go' quality in spades. A real must-own for a nice change of pace from four-wheeled frolics. **Noel Monk**





IN THE SAME VEIN



MX Vs ATV: On The Edge
Challenging opponents and well-designed tracks make this a joy to play 8/10

ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails
This off-road racer is more frustrating than furious, although multiplayer is good 5/10



CONCLUSION

A highly polished and playable game, a shame the extreme street levels are missing.

SCORE 7/10


"Respect me or I'll make another record!"





GENRE: Action **PLAYERS:** 1 **PRICE:** £34.99 **PUBLISHER:** VIVENDI UNIVERSAL **AVAILABLE:** 27 Oct **WWW.** 50centbulletproof.com



50 Cent: Bulletproof G Unit Edition

Definitely doesn't stand for Games Unit

AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	5/10
LOOKS	4/10
SOUND	4/10
CHALLENGE	4/10
LIFESPAN	4/10

50 CENT: Plenty of Fiddy content to keep his fans happy

25 PENCE: Terrible camera, repetitive gameplay, useless disarming techniques

18+

He may well have been shot numerous times (as he is so fond of reminding people) and he may well have dropped lucky by coming under the Eminem/Dr Dre banner and securing himself a record deal, but these things do not a great video game character make. When you're met with a title that seems to have actually thought of gameplay as something of a secondary concern and busies itself more with presenting as many of the featured artist's music and video tracks, you begin to hear alarm bells ringing.

The game pits you as Fiddy in a top-down shooter, taking our 'hero' through all manner of urban sprawls in an attempt to find out who put the famous nine bullets in him and, according to the storyline, also killed his friend. In fact, the cut-scenes and storyline actually make you think the guy may well be just a touch paranoid as the foes that seem to be hunting down this average rapper seem to be more tooled up and professional than a Rainbow Six team.

But enough about a mediocre rapper trying to make himself into a video game star and let's look at the game itself. The top-down approach works well on the PSP for shooters as we've already seen Killzone take this stance to overcome the lack of the second stick. However, the problem with Bulletproof comes in the fact that the camera is so tight in on the character that it becomes hard to navigate with stopping every so often to press the left shoulder button to rotate the camera so you can see what's coming next. Not that this helps much and you soon find yourself being leapt upon by your enemies with irritating regularity, simply because the screen does not give enough viewing distance to make any sort of tactical plans. Couple this with levels that are so dull and repetitive and lack any kind of overview map other than a highly inaccurate mini-map and the whole thing becomes a matter of trial and error as to whether you are headed in the right direction in the first place. Yes, there are a range of flashy disarming techniques, but these become little more than window dressing to what is a dull, plodding game that could in all honesty have put any character in the lead role and still delivered the same experience. If you are after a disc filled with Fiddy's aural and video output you may well find plenty to love here, but then if that's what attracts you to this title you may as well go and buy a DVD and spend your money on a decent game instead of this wannabe effort that reflects its title character amazingly well: dull, uninspiring and a strange odour of 'me too'. **Marc Powell**



Fiddy sticks and moves!

IN THE SAME VEIN



Killzone
Plenty of action and lots of options for destruction but whole thing feels a little cramped.
7/10

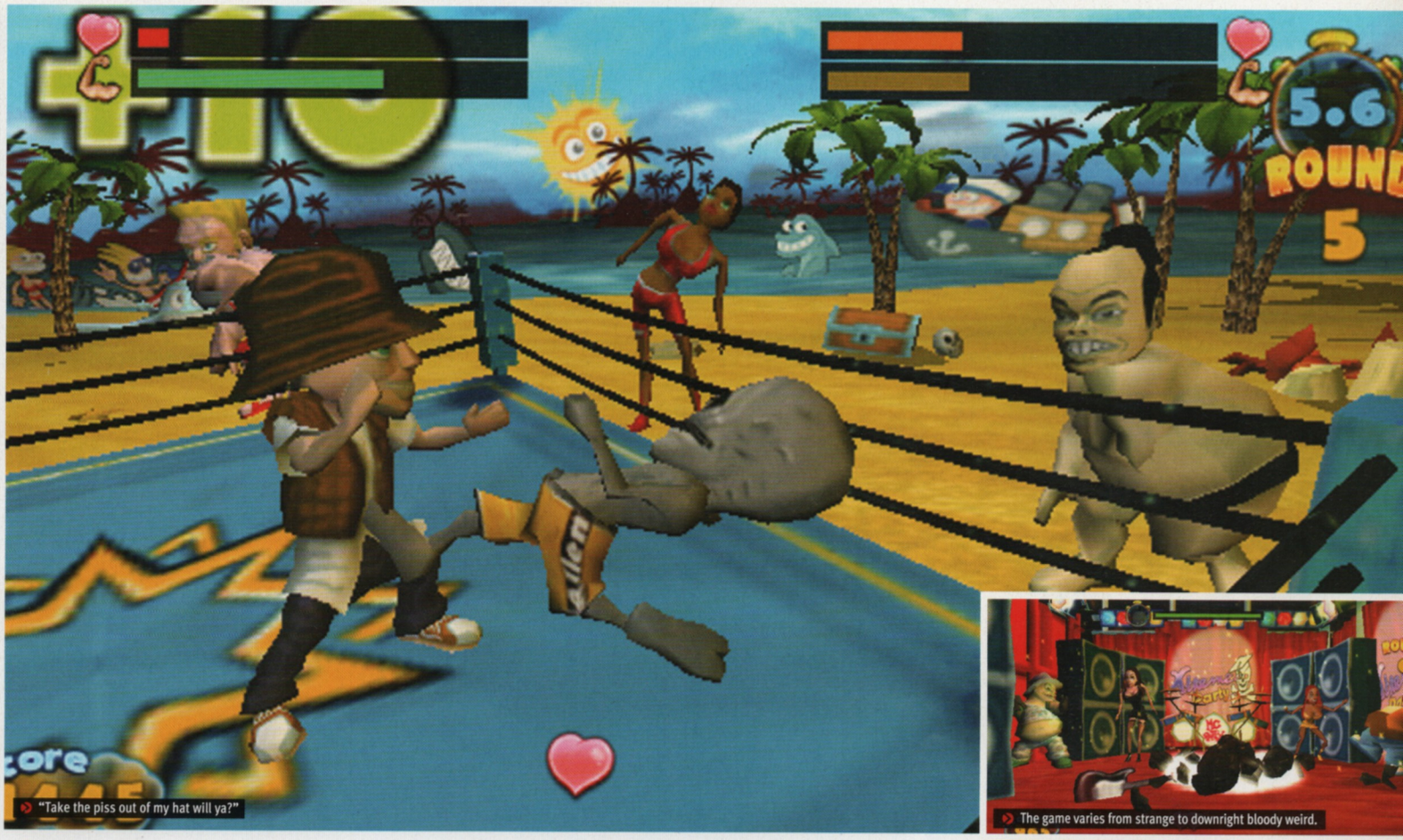
Untold Legends: The Warriors Code
More playable characters and options but let down by linear gameplay
6/10



CONCLUSION

A dull game that is only made less interesting by the inclusion of 'rapper' Fiddy.

SCORE 4/10



"Take the piss out of my hat will ya?"

The game varies from strange to downright bloody weird.

GENRE: Arcade » **PLAYERS:** 1-2 » **PRICE:** £19.99 » **PUBLISHER:** XPLOSIV » **AVAILABLE:** 20 Oct » **WWW.** xplosiv.net



KAZooK

PURE GENIUS! AWARD

Mad name, great game





AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	9/10
LOOKS	8/10
SOUND	8/10
CHALLENGE	8/10
LIFESPAN	8/10

PARTY ON: Varied gameplay, budget price, many multiplayer options

PARTY POOPER: Some may find the gameplay simplistic

12+

Party games are ideally suited to the pick up and play nature of the PSP, offering short blasts of gameplay across a variety of gaming genres. *KAZooK* mixes mad characters with 30 mini-games as you attempt to become a KAZooK superstar.

These aren't your usual twee happy happy mini-games either. In keeping with the rather mad stylised design of the title, the mini-games will find you (amongst other things) shooting zombies, abducting civilians in a stolen UFO, using parrots as hockey pucks and (our personal favourite) operating the bleep machine on a rather ripe rap talk radio station.

Winning games earns you cash to buy characters and more mini-games to add to your roster. There is no progression round a board or other device such as found in other party game titles. Instead you pick the game and it's all about scoring as highly as you can to earn more cash. Playing solo gives you the option of playing as long as you can in Survival mode as you try to top the scores, a Practice mode and – once you've opened all the mini-games – a chance to compete in every one to become a KAZooK Superstar. Party games are always more fun when another human player is around to up the challenge. *KAZooK* has this taken care of as well with game sharing, wireless multiplayer for you and a friend and even two players on one PSP in a 'pass the machine' gameplay mode.

As well as offering plenty of challenge, where *KAZooK* beats many other party titles is in the variety of mini-games available. The use of zombies, rappers and skate kids along with the chance to ride rodeo bulls, play game shows and even take part in dance games helps to keep the action fun and fresh and always throws something a little different at you when you least expect it. All of these elements boil down into a excellent title to add to your PSP collection. And when you realise that the budget price means you'll be shelling out less than 20 quid for a pocketful of fun, how can you not add this to your UMD case?

Marc Powell



A Penguin as a puck, what next?

IN THE SAME VEIN



Ape Academy 2 Monkey and mini-games, what's not to love? May be too simplistic for hardened gamers. 7/10

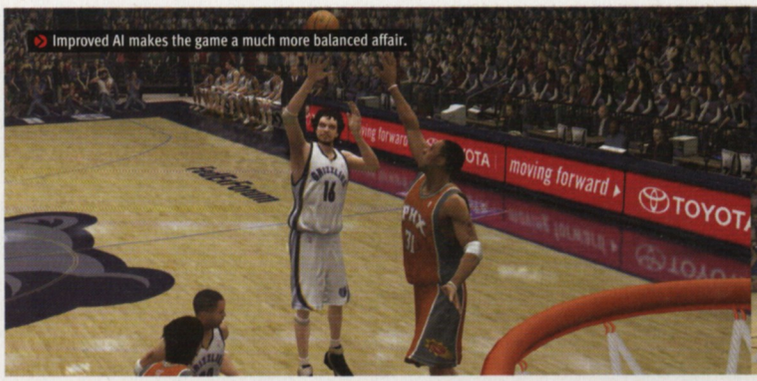
Super Monkey Ball Adventure The silly simians and their spherical shenanigans find their ideal home on the PSP. 9/10



CONCLUSION

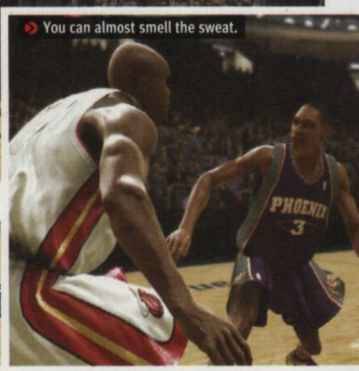
An excellent and varied collection of mini-games at a price that's right.

SCORE 8/10



Improved AI makes the game a much more balanced affair.




You can almost smell the sweat.

GENRE: Sports **PLAYERS:** 1-2 **PRICE:** £34.99 **PUBLISHER:** EA Sports **AVAILABLE:** Out Now **WWW.** easports.com



NBA Live 07

Pass, dunk, slam, you da man

AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	7/10
LOOKS	7/10
SOUND	6/10
CHALLENGE	7/10
LIFESPAN	8/10

DUNK: Beautifully sharp graphics, plenty of game options

JUNK: Can be tricky to control at points, computer is a little too easy to beat

3+

When the PSP was released, the initial wave of sports games was somewhat underwhelming in their play mechanics, making the sports genre seem like it might be the ignored child of the PSP family. However, EA has been busy in the last year and its latest slew of releases see responsiveness, graphics and even game depth of a level comparable with their larger console cousins.

The last incarnation of *NBA Live* for the PSP suffered in many fans' eyes because of the ability to pick one player to dominate a game and ignore his team-mates. Improved AI for this latest outing makes the chance for a player to force his way down court a much more taxing endeavour. This time you'll face a lot more blocks and close-outs from defenders, making a much more balanced and playable game on the whole.

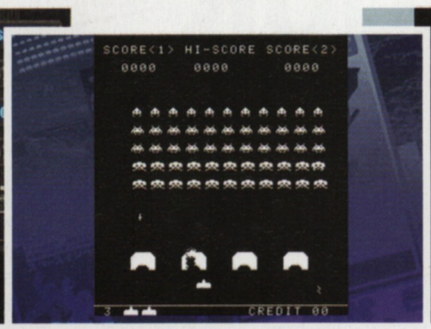
With new mini-games and a Dynasty Mode to help you manage your team all the way to the top, there's plenty to do outside of a standard game. Graphically the title is spot on and so realistic you can almost smell the sweat on the court. With the added bonus of being able to link up with your PS2 and take your Dynasty team on the road, you won't go far wrong with this highly polished and extremely playable entry into the EA Sports pantheon. **Noel Monk**

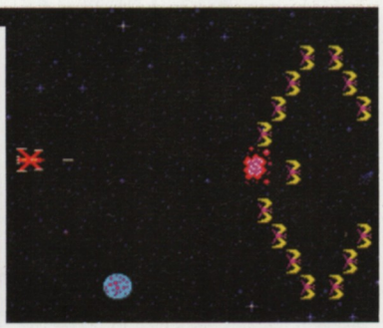
CONCLUSION

EA smoothes out previous problems and presents a winner.

SCORE 7/10


An upgraded Space Invaders would have been more welcome.





GENRE: Arcade **PLAYERS:** 1 **PRICE:** £19.99 **PUBLISHER:** Xplosiv **AVAILABLE:** Out Now **WWW.** xplosiv.net

Taito Legends: Power Up

Rose-tinted gaming

AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	7/10
LOOKS	5/10
SOUND	5/10
CHALLENGE	5/10
LIFESPAN	6/10

TAITO: Space Invaders on your PSP and that's about it

TA-TA: Titles are little on the dull side, greatest games removed from collection

7+

Retro games are something of an odd bag. If you're old enough to remember the original, you tend to have fond rose-tinted memories of "how much better games used to be". If you ever run into a retro head giving you this line, simply stick a copy of *Taito Legends* in front of him. We guarantee that after a couple of games of any of these titles he'll soon change his tune. In fact, despite the 21 games on offer, ranging from the seminal *Space Invaders* to the likes of *New Zealand Story*, *Phoenix*, *Rastan Saga* and *Qix*, the majority are worth little more than a cursory look and maybe a few minutes of play before you are hankering to get your hands back on more modern fare. The lack of *Bubble Bobble* and *Operation Wolf*, both of which featured in the larger console versions, is particularly disappointing and even sprucing up four of the games with more modern graphics doesn't help to pull this out of the depths. Retro heads will probably lap this stuff up, but with so many other classic compilations around offering more playable fare, this is one title that is solely for collectors. **Mike Aldrich**



CONCLUSION

Not enough great titles here to make this release a must have.

SCORE 5/10



GENRE: Guide » **PLAYERS:** 1 » **PRICE:** £19.99 » **PUBLISHER:** SONY » **AVAILABLE:** Out Now » **WWW.** yourpsp.com

Passport to... London/Paris

So that was a left then a right, right?



AT A GLANCE

PLAYABILITY	5/10
LOOKS	7/10
SOUND	4/10
CHALLENGE	0/10
LIFESPAN	5/10

TRAVEL SLICK: Nice presentation, varied options

TRAVEL SICK: Lack of actual content, maps pretty unusable, all style no content

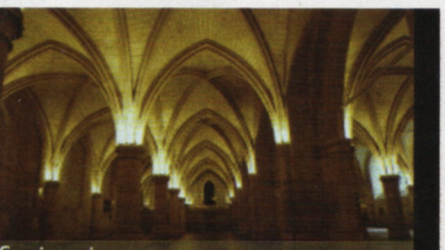
3+

At first glance the new *Passport To...* series from Sony looks to be a traveller's dream offering everything from maps and guides to points of interest such as museums, restaurants, bars and all manner of tourist traps that should keep any visitor happy. Particularly as they don't have to lug a hefty, and often out-of-date, guide book with them to enjoy their stay.

With guides to Amsterdam and Prague planned, we're taking a look at the first two off the block, featuring our dear old capital city and that home to all things French and artistic, Paris. The initial menu system promises much, with maps, images, videos and audio tours as well as a phrase book. However, when you start to dig your way past the slick presentation you begin to realise that these titles are actually the UMD equivalent of a Page 3 model: very easy on the eye but not exactly a huge amount of depth once you get past the superficial visual treat.

By tying up with the Lonely Planet organisation you'd think this would be heaving with info, but you soon realise that even a cursory internet search would yield much more interesting and useful information than provided here. For example, why are there only three pubs listed? Surely Londoners can't all fit into these three rather small drinking establishments? The audio tours actually only offer three walking tours for the entirety of London and surely there are many more options that could have been included. The maps themselves, while useful, become almost unusable in their zoomed-out state and suffer from not showing enough distance when zoomed in due to the size of the PSP's screen. They also would have benefited much more if they'd made use of the forthcoming GPS system to guide you from point A to point B rather than having to scroll the map every few paces. The video section included on the main tab is somewhat redundant too, offering little more than a montage of 'day in the life'-style footage that is excellent for a promotional video but pointless as a usable tool.

The whole thing lacks any real punch and although there's a download option it's hard to see Lonely Planet handing over all of their content to go into these titles and make them more workable. The *Passport To...* series has great potential and who knows? If Sony get their finger out and back it up with GPS and plenty of download content, these could become essential travelling companions. But as they currently stand you'd be better off with either a well-informed guide book or even a very knowledgeable cabbie to show you around. **Mike Aldrich**





CONCLUSION

A nice idea that is just a little too sparse on content to make it worthwhile.

SCORE 4/10

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HARDWARE

Enhance your gaming experience with these components

DETAILS

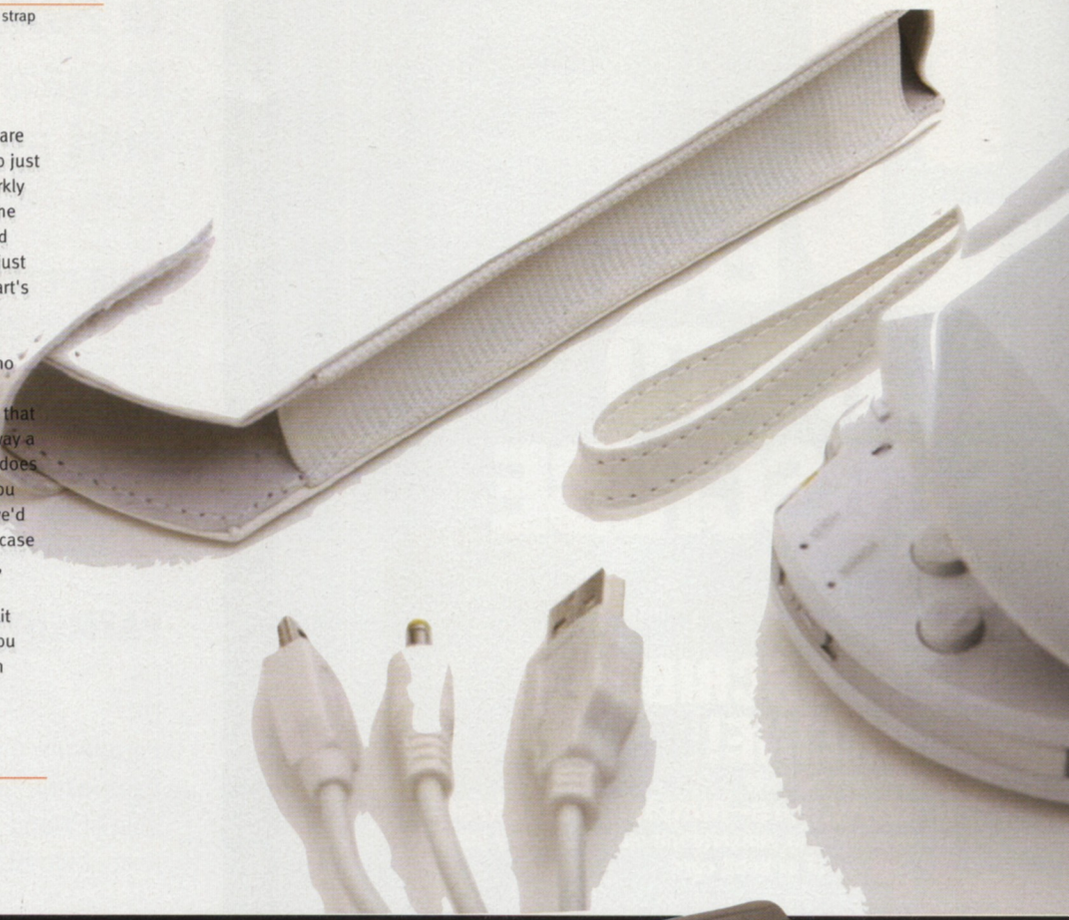
TRAVEL PACK

Manufacturer: 4Gamers **Price:** £14.99

Features: Leather case, screen cover, USB cable, wrist strap

While many of us are happy with our standard black PSPs, we know there are some fashion monkeys out there who just couldn't resist getting their hands on the sparkly white number. But what are you to do when the majority of accessories stick with the tried and tested black theme? Well fear no more as for just under 15 quid you can co-ordinate to your heart's content. With a snug-fitting fluff-lined leather case, wrist strap, USB connection cable and attachable screen cover all in white, there is no reason for your equipment not to match any longer. The only complaints we would have is that the attachable cover does tend to get in the way a little when the machine is in use, although it does double as something of a glare protector. If you are using the case without the screen cover we'd recommend a decent screen protector as the case is extremely snug and, despite the soft lining, could well scratch your screen if not careful. Overall, it's a well-put-together collection of kit that does the job it's meant to. For those of you itching to get those new pink PSPs that are on their way, 4Gamers also tell us they will be bringing out a set to match.

Score ★★★☆☆



DETAILS

HOME THEATRE SYSTEM

Manufacturer: 4Gamers **Price:** £39.99

Features: Recharge facility, remote control, mains powered, external line-in socket

We've seen many systems that claim to add more bang to the sound of your PSP and while many of them deliver in the sound department they tend be either battery suckers, or mains-powered monstrosities, with little else on offer. The Home Theatre System from 4Gamers arrives as a rather plastic-feeling lump that echoes the styling of the PSP itself when closed. Don't let the somewhat cheap feel to the whole casing put you off though. Folding out the two main speakers and mini sub reveals a well-put-together unit that delivers a competent, if not really mind blowing, sound output that delivers enough depth and sound quality to be enjoyable. You're not going to be hosting your own house party with the volume, but for home use you'll be more than happy. As well as an adjustable stand to make viewing easier, it also offers something many sound units don't: a recharge facility. Plop your PSP in the unit and enjoy your music or films, safe in the knowledge when you pop that little sucker back out it will be charged enough to get on with some mobile gaming. This dual-function unit may put some off with its build quality but delivers decent sound and just enough extras, such as being able to whack an iPod in as well, to make it worth a look.

Score ★★★★☆



HOMEPLUG

Manufacturer: Solwise **Price:** £74.99

Features: Works with any power socket, 200 metre range, speeds up to 200 Mbps

Not so much a PSP accessory but mighty handy for those wanting to connect their PS2s for online gaming is the HomePlug from Solwise. If you don't want to pay out for wireless and just don't fancy having network cables trailing around your house, these are a godsend. Basically the set consists of two plugs that connect into a normal wall power socket, one near your PC or router and the other anywhere you want. Plug a standard network lead between the plug and your equipment and away you go. The possibilities for this set are almost endless. No longer are you tied to one room for connection; in fact, any room that has a power socket will allow you to connect you kit up. The large TV in the lounge needed for Coronation Street? No worries, just take the plug to another room. They are a little pricey, but with a 200 metre range and speeds of up to 200 Mbps you can't really go wrong. It's a lot cheaper that having to drill holes and feed cables all over your home and it means you won't have anyone piggybacking your wireless signal and slowing things down when trying to play your console. Well worth a look.



Score ★★★★☆



RECHARGEABLE POWER GRIP

Manufacturer: Joytech **Price:** £19.99

Features: Five hours battery extender, screen protector when not in use, solid construction

We've looked at a number of accessories that help to extend the battery life of your PSP, and out of all them this has to be the most ergonomic. Attaching firmly to the top of your PSP with a pair of meaty screws, the unit not only gives up to an extra five hours of gameplay, but thanks to its twist-and-turn fixing plate also does extra duty as a rather solid screen protector when not in use. The ribbed handgrips provide extra grip to the rear of the PSP, which should help alleviate hand cramps although it would have been nicer if these had more depth to them to provide a firmer grip to those of us with slabs of meat for hands. Although the makers also claim that the unit can be used as a sun shield and a stand into the bargain, these seem much like superfluous additions as the unit functions perfectly well when doing its intended job: that of making grip more comfortable while adding those vital extra hours of battery life. Ignore the pointless extra use claims and just use it for exactly what it says on the tin and you won't go far wrong.

Score ★★★★☆

PLAYERS KIT

Manufacturer: 4Gamers **Price:** £12.99

Features: Replacement sticks, USB connection cable, screen protector, UMD cases

Sometimes you look at an accessories pack and wonder why a company would put together such a strange collection of add-ons. Then you get a pack like the Players Kit and wonder why someone hasn't put it together before. A black wrist strap to replace that frankly laughable white one from the box, a USB connection cable, screen protector, cleaning cloth, four solid UMD cases and possibly the best part of the package, three replacement analogue sticks. These little beauties are a godsend. We've been using similar ones at PURE since we first got our PSPs and to say they make a difference is an understatement: more control, more comfort for your gaming, what more could you want? This is a pack in which almost everything is of use (does anyone use a wrist strap?), so you should definitely get your money's worth. And like many of the company's products, the whole thing is also available in white.

Score ★★★★★





ACCESS ALL AREAS

We like to live the Rock 'n' Roll lifestyle here at PURE, so in true hedonistic fashion, we thought you'd like to share our VIP pass to the backstage party of the game of your choice



LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

Hit Start on the Gretzky Challenge Unlockables screen to make the Cheat Entry menu appear, then enter the appropriate code.



UCK868	= Beach Trooper	CVT125	= Imperial Spy
BEN917	= Ben Kenobi's ghost	UUB319	= Lobot
VHY832	= Bespin Guard	SGE549	= Palace Guard
WTY721	= Bib Fortuna	CYG336	= Rebel Pilot
HLP221	= Boba Fett	EKU849	= Rebel Trooper
BNC332	= Death Star Trooper	GBU888	= Skiff Guard
TTT289	= Ewok	NYU989	= Snow Trooper
YZF999	= Gamorean Guard	PTR345	= Stormtrooper
NFX582	= Gonk Droid	HHY382	= The Emperor
SMG219	= Grand Moff Tarkin	HDY739	= TIE Fighter
YWM840	= Han Solo with hood	NNZ316	= TIE Fighter Pilot
NXL973	= IG-88	QYA828	= TIE Interceptor
MMM111	= Imperial Guard	UGN694	= Ugnaught
BBV889	= Imperial Officer		
VAP664	= Imperial Shuttle Pilot		



THE POWER OF ONE

Want to play *WipEout* against your friends but have only one copy of the game? Well, fear no more because our sleuths have been on the case and we've found there are many games out there that don't support game-sharing but can still allow multiplayer fun.

For this demonstration, we'll be using *WipEout Pure*, although it can be done with any game that completely loads a level and does not access the UMD during gameplay.

Start the game on the host machine and start a multiplayer Ad Hoc game. Load through to the multiplayer lobby

Eject the disc and pass to a friend. You will now be asked the standard question of whether you want to quit back to the main menu. Choose no to return to the lobby screen

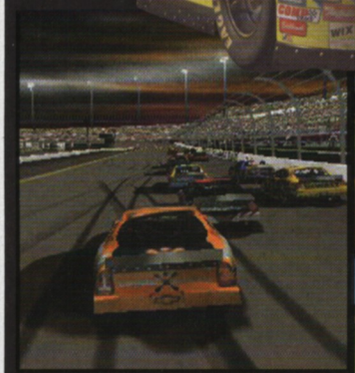
Player Two should now load in the game as usual and make their way to the multiplayer menu and choose Join Game. The host machine should now offer the chance of pressing ✖ to continue. Select this option. The PSP with the UMD will now load into the start grid and hold

Switch the disc back to the host machine and that will now load into the start grid and you can let the racing begin

To add more players, repeat step three for each player. This can be done for up to five players (or the limit of the game in question)

A few words of warning to help you. At the end of a game you may well find your PSP locks up. This is easily remedied by opening your PSP and inserting another disc to reboot the machine.





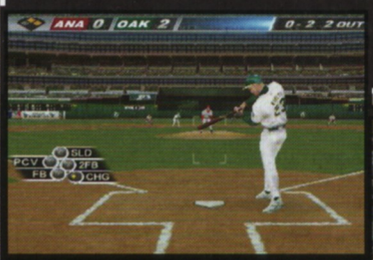




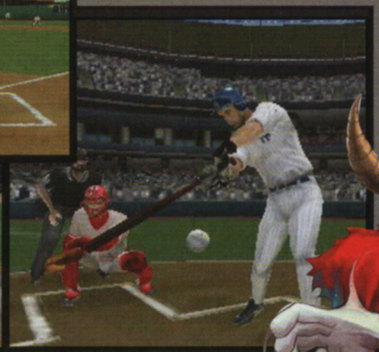
NASCAR

Select Fight To The Top mode. Edit the driver's first and last name to enter these case-sensitive codes.

GiveMe More	- $10,000,000
AllBow ToMe	- 10,000,000 fans
ItsAll ForMeAll	- Chase Plates Unlocked
KeepCool SmellGreat	- This will unlock the Old Spice fantasy track and all the cars and drivers in all four series







MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2K6

Enter the following codes at the cheat entry screen for the corresponding effect.

crazy hops	= Bouncy Ball
Unhittable	= Crazy pitches
Gotcha	= Rocket arms
Last Chance	= Super wall climbs
Dream Team	= Topps 2K6 all-stars
Derek Jeter	= Unlocks everything except Topps 2K6 all-stars



DJ MAX PORTABLE

In either Rookie DJing, Pro DJing, or Master DJing mode, pass all four songs with an average of 95% or higher (A+), and you'll get to play CnP as an extra stage while the credits play. This is the only way to play this song, as you cannot unlock it.



THE SIMS 2

Perk Cheat

In the Buy Perks screen, in the info menu hold L + R + Square simultaneously. A cheat perk will appear showing a Woo-Hoo icon, which is free. If you buy it you'll get a money boost, add some skills, clean your urgencies and completely fill your Sanity level.







ULTIMATE GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS

Unlimited lives

Amass over 30 lives. Your lives will then become unlimited.

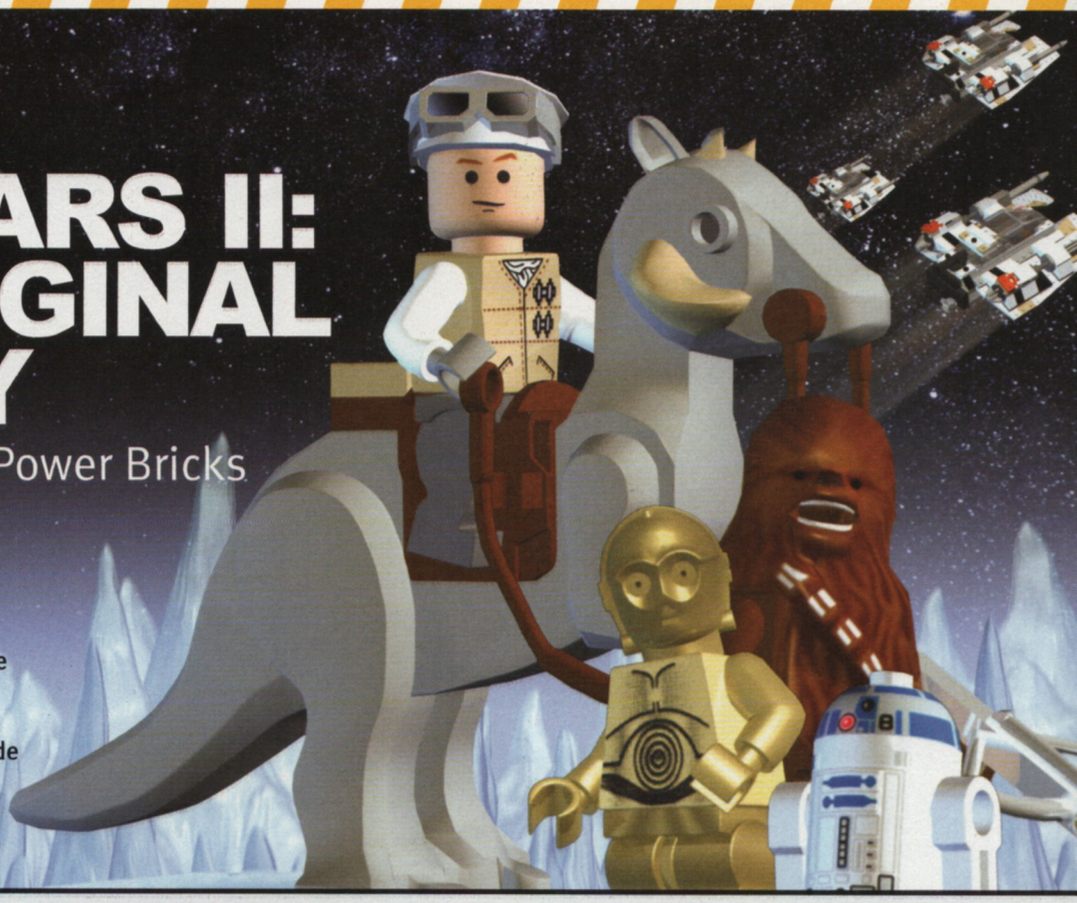




LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

Reward Yourself With Power Bricks

Those dastardly little red power bricks are some of the most infuriating parts of this excellent game. You will need to collect them all in order to achieve 100% in the game as well as open up goodies like more powerful weapons, score multipliers and even invincibility. For all of you needing to feel the power, we provide a complete guide to the location of every piece and exactly how to get your hands on it.



EPISODE IV

Chapter 1: Secret Plans

Super Blasters Power Brick

Increase the power of your blasters to double their usual power

Go to the Bounty Hunter only room (you'll find this to the right of the next room after you have battled Vader for the first time). Travel to the end of the hallway. You should now be in a shower room. Use Force powers to activate the showers and grow the flowers. Destroy all the nice flowers in the room to reveal the hidden power brick.

Chapter 2: Through The Jundland Wastes

Super Blasters Power Brick

Make Force powers activate items at twice the usual speed

Before crossing the first ravine in the level, use a Bounty Hunter to blow up the metal items to the right of the ravine. Use R2-D2 to boost across to this new area and stack the blocks you find on the right using your Force power. Jump up to the rock and boost across to the next using R2. Push the mine cart of the top of the rock and follow it to get the power brick.



Chapter 3: Mos Eisley Spaceport

Super Lightsabers

Make Lightsabers faster and more dangerous

Just before you get to the stairs that need the Force power to move them (the piece with all the Stormtroopers shooting at you), to the left you should see three small bins with another just to the side. Use your Force powers twice on each of these bins to make them throw out some Lego pieces. Use the new pieces you've found to construct a doorway in the alcove to reach the power brick.

Chapter 4: Rescue The Princess

Tractor Beam

Drag all attacking ships behind you and into each other during flight levels

Go through the door on the left in the second hallway after the first control room (only R2 has access to this area). Once out on the ledge, use R2 to fly to your left then grapple up to the next level to grab the brick.



Chapter 5: Death Star Escape

Invincibility

Pretty self-explanatory

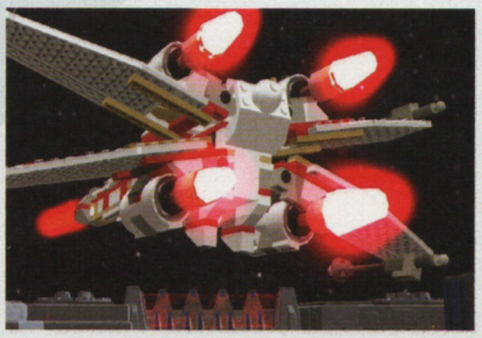
A simple one, this. At the beginning of the level, use C-3PO to enter the door on the left that only he can activate. Construct the Lego pieces you find on the floor into a large box, use Force powers to open the newly made item and grab one of the most useful power bricks in the game.

Chapter 6: Rebel Attack

2x Multiplier

Multiply all of your stud collection by two

In the final zone, before you destroy the exhaust port, crash your ship into the top right-hand corner of the area. This will throw you into a hidden passage that contains the brick.



EPISODE V

Chapter 1: Hoth Battle
Self Destruct
Make your droids destroy themselves

Enter the second TIE Fighter only area (where you first meet the AT-ATs in the level). Break apart the white wall outside the small cavern and the all-important power brick will be yours.

Chapter 2: Escape From Echo Base
Fast Build
Build items at double speed

When you reach the icy slope outside the hangar bay, use a Dark Force character to construct a walkway from the items on the right. At the top of the walkway, head into the rooms either side and spin the wheels to open up the rooms in the main hangar. Simply walk into the newly opened room and grab the brick.



Chapter 3: Falcon Flight
4x Multiplier
Multiply all of your stud collection by four

This little gem is tucked behind the Star Destroyer furthest from your start point. Head for the Destroyer to the middle right of your starting point and grab the block from just above the engines on the rear.

Chapter 4: Dagobah
Heart Regenerator
Fill up missing health hearts automatically

After you've built the two small bridges at the start, head up and look right. Use a Dark Force character to break apart the black plants with the red sparkles. Jump into the new area and you'll find yourself on a small race track. Break open the box on the track and construct the vehicle. Drive it around the track hitting all the red lights to reveal the block on the track.

Chapter 5: Cloud City Trap
Minikit Detector
Item for hunting down minikit parts

Simply head around to the right-hand wing of your X-Wing on the landing pad at the start to find this handy brick tucked under there.

Chapter 6: Betrayal over Bespin
6x Multiplier
Multiply all of your stud collecting by six

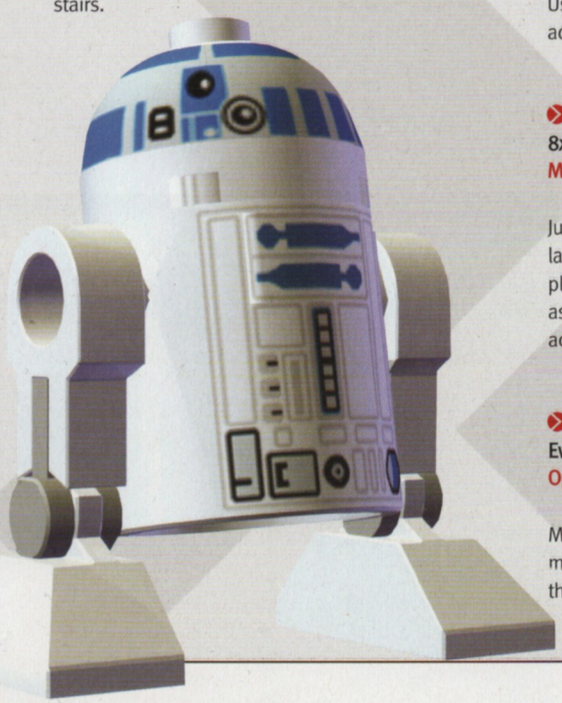
Head over to the launch pad and jump your way up to the top of Boba Fett's ship Slave I. The brick is balanced on the top of the craft.



EPISODE VI

Chapter 1: Jabba's Palace
Super Zapper
Disable droids and increased power Jawa weapon

When you are in the large room at the end of the first hallway (the part where the Gamorrean Guards come after you), build the pushable crate to your right. Use a Jedi to double-jump up to the next area above you and travel up the stairs. Grab the brick from the top of the stairs.



Chapter 2: Great Pit of Carkoon
Bounty Hunter Rockets
Equip Created Characters with rocket launcher for Free Play mode

At the top of the barge, make your way to the second platform where you'll be able to see the brick above you. Destroy the crate below the opposite pillar and create a grapple point from the newly exposed parts. Use the grapple to get up to the platform then hover across using R2-D2 and grab the brick.

Chapter 3: Speeder Showdown
8x Multiplier
Multiply all of your stud collecting by eight

Just before you confront the walker, head over to the large structure and push the small grey block into place below the left strut. Using a small character such as a Jawa or Ewok, crawl into the revealed vent to access the power brick.

Chapter 4: The Battle for Endor
Ewok Catapult
Open the Ewok catapult for use in Free Play mode

Make your way to the room inside the main base that makes you extend three platforms. Shoot the crate to the right of the Stormtrooper camera. Using Dark Force powers, reveal the crate. Push the newly found crate into the small hole you created next to the Stormtrooper camera. Using R2-D2, roll up the ramp and boost over to the next platform that contains a C-3PO control unit. Use 3PO to activate a bomb that drops onto the Stormtrooper in the room next door, exposing a vent in the process. Use the shaft to enter the next room and push the crate you used earlier along the walkway, powering up the generators and revealing the brick.

Chapter 5: Jedi Destiny
Infinite Torpedoes
For use during flight levels, no need to collect during game

At the beginning of the level, use Dark Force powers change all the squares around the Emperor's throne red. Once you have done this, the Power Brick will be revealed.

Chapter 6: Into the Death Star
10x Multiplier
Multiply all of your stud collecting by ten

The main room that has you destroying the power generator contains a torpedo firing area. Fire two torpedoes into this wall to destroy it and reveal the final power brick.

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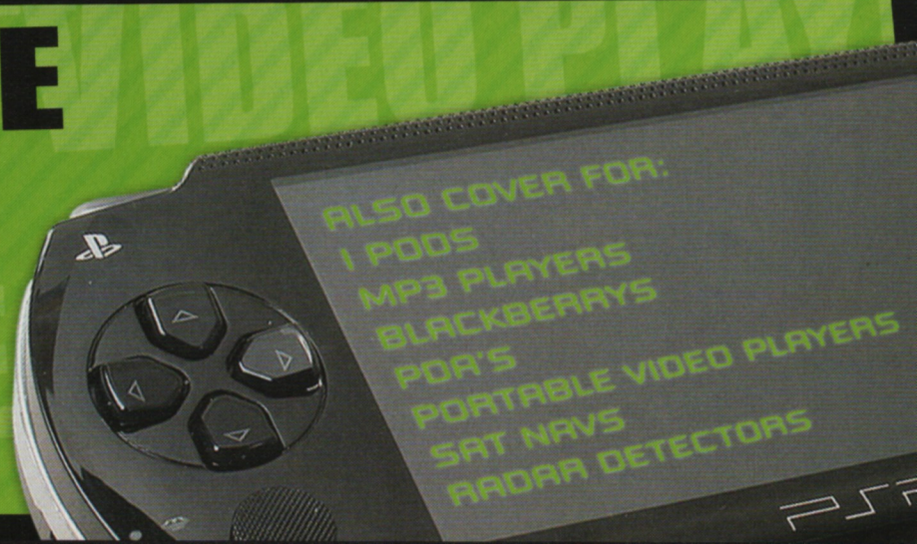
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MOVIES

Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	98
Fearless	98
Warner's Iconic Films Collection Box Set	98
Mission Impossible III	99
Warrior King	100
Poseidon	100
Family Guy Season 5	100
The Da Vinci Code	101

MUSIC

Scissor Sisters	102
The Offspring	102
Busta Ryhmes: Everything Remains Raw	102

INTERNET	103
RELEASE SCHEDULE DVD & UMD	104
HOW TO... Get on-line, Download Music, Convert Video	105
HOMEBREW	107



98

ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN

Chilled out animated shenanigans as the *Ice Age* gang return.

ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN U

One for the kids, no more, no less.

Starring: Ray Romano, John Leguizamo, Dennis Leary, Queen Latifah



The original movie felt like something of a 'me too' cash-in attempt to jump on the Pixar CGI-based cute animal films bandwagon, but it was a hit with the kids so there's no accounting for taste. After saving a baby in the first film, our heroic band of mismatched characters – Diego the sabre tooth, Manny the mammoth and, of course, Sid the sloth – have made it from the impending ice age of the original and now face the big thaw that threatens to engulf their valley. Will they warn everyone in time? Will they find more jokes other than a sloth with a funny voice? Or will it all be just another thinly veiled moralistic story about how everyone should get along despite the differences in their looks and attitudes? Well, yes on the first, not really on the second and a definite huge yes on the last one. If you are after a decent story mixed with some great sight gags and humour, head for Pixar. If you are after a way to keep the kids quiet for a couple of hours then *Ice Age 2* s for you as It sadly lacks the broad family appeal you'd expect and plays directly to the younger members of the audience. **Noel Monk**



INFORMATION



Release Date: 23 Oct
Director: Carlos Saldanha
Distributor: 20th Century Fox
Original Release: 2006
Running Time: 90 mins

SCORE 7/10

FEARLESS 15

The final hurrah for a martial arts master.

Starring: Jet Li, Collin Chou, Nathan Jones



Reported to be Jet Li's last film, Fearless tells the true story of Chinese martial arts master Huo Yuan Jia, the founder and spiritual guru of the Jin Wu sports federation. In order to restore belief – not only in his fighting style but also in the country of China as a whole after being subjugated by the westerners and Japanese for many years – Huo Yuan Jia takes on fighters from all corners of the globe before a final showdown with a Japanese Samurai. Many Li fans feel his Hollywood efforts have been too commercial and toned down for western audiences. Fearless sees Li in a return to form in not only skills but also in storytelling abilities. The usual comedic side plot found in many martial arts films has been dumped in favour of an extremely reverential and amazingly watchable film that follows Huo Yuan Jia from his early days and his personal mission to become an invincible fighter that, along the way, led to the death of his mother and daughter. Even if you are not exactly a fan of the chop sockey genre, Fearless is worth seeing if only to learn the true story of a truly amazing person and, of course, to see Li's final film performance. Well worth a watch. **Marc Powell**

INFORMATION



Release Date: 23 Oct
Director: Ronny Yu
Distributor: Universal
Original Release: 2006
Running Time: 105 mins

SCORE 8/10





WARNER'S ICONIC FILMS COLLECTION BOX SET 18

A classic slice of cinema.

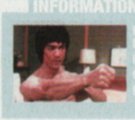
Starring: Michael Caine, Bruce Lee, Al Pacino, Christian Slater, Malcolm McDowell



Warner are planning to release what is essentially a film collection in a box for those of you who want to be able to see some of the most iconic and well-respected films of the Seventies (with one rather out-of-place entry from the Nineties, of course). Sit back and wallow in the joys of Michael Caine as a man on a mission in *Get Carter*, see what all the fuss was about with *A Clockwork Orange* and who can forget that bit of banjo action from the Burt Reynolds film *Deliverance*? As if that wasn't enough you'll also get to see Al Pacino in a botched bank job in *Dog Day Afternoon* and let's not forget the stand-out classic *Enter the Dragon*. Rather out of place but still a great film is the Tarantino-penned *True Romance*. All of them are filled with classic moments and quotable lines and all for under £30. For a weekend of gangster-filled violence and uncompromising mayhem, you could either head down to you local JJB and make loud comments about chavs or pop over to your DVD store and get your hands on this bargain box that deserves a place on everyone's shelf. **Noel Monk**



INFORMATION



Release Date: Out Now
Director: Various
Distributor: Warner
Original Release: 1971-1993
Running Time: N/A

SCORE 8/10





MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE III 12A

They said it was 'impossible' the last two times

Starring: Tom Cruise, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Ving Rhames, Laurence Fishburne



Between his shameless self-publicity, chair-jumping, bizarre and controversial statement-making, baby-having media storm that has been the last 12 months, you may not have noticed that Tom Cruise actually had a film out this year.

Moving away from his desperate quest for an Oscar with the likes of *War of the Worlds* and *Minority Report*, Cruise has gone back to that good old money-spinner franchise *Mission: Impossible*. This year's director *de jour* is none other than *Lost* creator JJ Abrams (cue more shameless self-publicity).

Now, the original TV series was a clever mix of con-trick, double agent spy action and make-up effects mixed with gadgets to get the job done. Cruise's take on the series, however, has become increasingly closer to someone who seems to own a book called 'so you want to make a James Bond movie'.

This time around the story sees hero Ethan Hunt married and attempting to protect his newfound belle as he tries to put a stop to the nefarious deeds of arms dealer Owen Davian (Phillips Seymour Hoffman in a criminally underused turn as a villain).

Even though the movie is full of action and set-pieces that are the staple of any decent action film, you can't help but be left with the feeling that this is all being done not to actually tell a story but more to make Tom Cruise himself look good. At no point do you ever have the feeling "ooh how is Ethan going to get out of this?" Instead it is much more a case of "I wonder how many people had to do that stunt to make Tom look good?" The story is laughable and has more holes than a blow-up doll. In fact, its possible to sit back and play something of an action movie I-spy game: take a dash of Bond, mix in a smidgen of *Truè Lies*, bake under a cash-filled budget for way too long and you have a new *Mission: Impossible* film.

IF YOU CAN COMPLETELY TURN YOUR BRAIN OFF, AND WE MEAN MORE THAN YOU WOULD FOR A STANDARD ACTION FILM, YOU MAY WELL FIND SOME ENTERTAINMENT HERE

If you can completely turn your brain off, and we mean more than you would for a standard action film, you may well find some entertainment here. Don't go looking for story as that pretty much disappears up its own jacksie quite quickly. Instead sit back and marvel at the CGI and stunt work and wonder how Tom is going to make *Mission: Impossible 4* when even the famous signature tune has been relegated to some incidental tinkling over the opening and closing titles. **Mike Aldrich**





INFORMATION



Release Date: 06 Nov
Director: JJ Abrams
Distributer: Paramount
Original Release: 2006
Running Time: 124 mins

SCORE 6/10

WARRIOR KING U

The continued rise of the next big thing.

Starring: Tony Jaa, Petchtai Wongkamlao, Nathan Jones, Johnny Nguyen



Warrior King, as it's known over here – or *Tom Yum Goong/Honour of the Beast* to give it its true title (or if you prefer, *The Protector* in the United States) – is Thai star Tony Jaa's second film to see a wide release in the West. With the same team behind him that produced the amazing *Ong Bak*, Jaa stars as Kham, a young villager who is preparing his beloved elephants to be presented as a gift to be given to the king. When a mob of villains get involved and kill his father before stealing the elephants for their ivory, Kham must travel to Australia to retrieve his beloved beasts and, of course, give the mobsters a kicking.

Basically the film gives Jaa a chance to showcase his amazing fighting abilities that are all the more impressive when you know that no wires or effects are used to achieve the high-speed, high-flying moves. Jaw-dropping fight scenes ensue, including a climactic battle that uses some great sequences to show bones shattering and the sheer impact of the attacks.



This film is a must-see. As Jaa's star continues to rise it's only a matter of time before Hollywood starts paying attention and we see this young chap entering the world of big-budget action, hopefully not sacrificing any of the elements that make him so watchable.

Marc Powell

INFORMATION



Release Date: 30 Oct
Director: Prachya Pinkaew
Distributor: Contender Entertainment Group
Original Release: 2005
Running Time: 109 mins

SCORE 9/10

POSEIDON 12A

Deserves to sink like the Titanic.

Also available on UMD

Starring: Kurt Russell, Richard Dreyfus, Kevin Dillon



The cinema of the Seventies seemed to be dominated by disaster films. In fact, looking back it didn't seem safe to enter a building, get on a plane or even board a ship. Even more so if there were every type of cliché passenger around you. With Hollywood on a new idea drought and currently wallowing in remake heaven it was only a matter of time before they reached this era of cinema. When a luxury liner is swamped by a tidal wave and capsizes, it's up to the passengers to face all manner of peril and find their way out. Whereas the original had a certain kitsch appeal, this latest remake uses much more CGI and explosions and has plot holes so large it's a wonder the ship wasn't taking on water from the moment it was launched. Lead actors Kurt Russell and Richard Dreyfus look out of place in a film that focuses more on flashy effects than actually attempting to tell a story. *Poseidon* may seem an enjoyable time waster in theory, but to be honest the whole thing is a rather dull over-flashy affair that deserves to be left on the bottom of the briny where it belongs. **Marc Powell**

INFORMATION



Release Date: Out Now
Director: Wolfgang Petersen
Distributor: Warner Brothers
Original Release: 2006
Running Time: 99 mins

SCORE 4/10





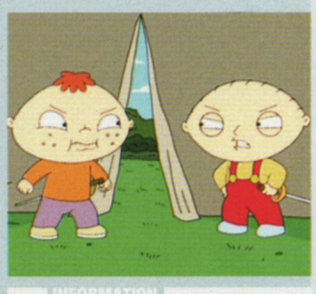
FAMILY GUY SEASON 5 15

Giggity, Giggity 'nuff said.

Starring: Seth MacFarlane, Alex Borstein, Seth Green, Mila Kunis



We are huge fans of *Family Guy* here at PURE and are absolutely overjoyed that the power of the fans saw the series resurrected after originally being cancelled. Unfortunately British TV has preferred to give more exposure to that other famous animated family and for the most part ignored this much more adult-focused and truly hilarious offering. This season sees such great offerings as a complete turnaround for baby Stewie as he falls in love with his nemesis and mother Lois, Peter buying himself a tank and Stewie's search for his missing bear Rupert. On the surface these don't sound too funny, but throw in plenty of pop-culture references, sick and silly flights of fantasy that have nothing to do with the main story and, of course, lots of 'giggity-giggity' and you know you are in for a real side-splitting time. If you haven't experienced *Family Guy* yet, you don't know what you've been missing. Fans should make sure they have this on pre-order now as it's going to be a cold day in hell before you see it on terrestrial telly. **Mike Aldrich**



INFORMATION



Release Date: 30 Oct
Director: Various
Distributor: Fox Home Entertainment
Original Release: 2006
Running Time: 600 mins

SCORE 8/10





THE DA VINCI CODE 12A

3, 5, 7, 9, don't waste your time

Starring: Tom Hanks, Audrey Tautou, Ian McKellen, Jean Reno, Paul Bettany



Well we've had the book, the court case, the game and now it's finally time for the film. If you haven't read *The Da Vinci Code* then to save you wasting your time with the amazingly overrated tome we'll give you a brief rundown of what's going on.

Old man found dead in The Louvre, lying in strange position to point to hidden message hidden on Da Vinci painting. American symbolism expert fingered for crime and needs to prove innocence. With aid of dead old guy's granddaughter (who happens to be code breaker for police), sets off on trip through Paris to prove existence of secret society who have been hiding truth behind Jesus' child and importance of Mary Magdalene in whole shebang. Meanwhile albino monk under control of sinister member of Vatican tries to kill all and sundry to gain the power of the information for himself. Sinister figure controlling all in background turns out to be who you thought it was all along. Whole thing builds to what should be monumental climax that ends up as something of a damp squib. Reader left wondering why he wasted money on book.

There's the basics and if you substitute the last word of the previous paragraph with the word film you won't go far wrong. To say the film sticks solidly to the book is an understatement; it's just as poorly written and lacking in tension as its paper counterpart. Despite lead man Hanks's best efforts, even he can't make the wooden and frankly dull dialogue even the slightest bit interesting and you find yourself very quickly letting your mind wander. Back-up is provided by Ian McKellen and Paul Bettany in roles that seem to have been written with just these two in mind and McKellen steals the show every time he appears. Sadly, however, there is just nothing for the cast to work with and when you sit back and think the whole 'Jesus has a child' thing was handled with much more wit, humour and insight in the Kevin Smith film *Dogma*, you start to realise how a well-planned and executed media machine can make any book a bestseller, never mind how crap its content is. A dull and rather plodding thriller that may fill a rainy afternoon, but only if you are desperate. **Noel Monk**

// A WELL-PLANNED AND EXECUTED MEDIA MACHINE CAN MAKE ANY BOOK A BESTSELLER, NEVER MIND HOW CRAP ITS CONTENT IS //



INFORMATION



Release Date: 16 Oct
Director: Ron Howard
Distributor: Sony Pictures
Original Release: 2006
Running Time: 149 mins

SCORE 4/10

SCISSOR SISTERS - WE ARE SCISSOR SISTERS AND SO ARE YOU 15

Loud, proud, filthy and gorgeous

Starring: Jake Shears, Babydaddy, Ana Matronic, Del Marquis, Paddy Boom



The Scissor Sisters aren't about to lend themselves to any pigeonholes. Heavily influenced by the New York gay club scene, their glam electro-pop sound is inspired by a host of dance, rock and funk influences. This live show from the Brighton Dome is a great showcase for their energetic stage presence, with all the hits from their top-selling eponymous debut album, from funky favourite 'Take Your Mama' to wistful ballad 'Mary' and, of course, the cover of Pink Floyd's 'Comfortably Numb' that kick-started their meteoric rise to stardom.

As well as 14 live tracks, the UMD is packed to the gills with all of the extras from the DVD version. There are five videos, including the rare original version of the 'Laura' video, the 'Return to Oz' documentary about the birth of the band, and various other weird and wonderful delights, including such unmissable sights as the band dressed up as Wizard of Oz characters and singer Jake Shears performing in nothing but a towel.



This is a release as inimitable as the Scissor Sisters themselves, and it's great to see a music UMD that's so stuffed full of extras. **Kelly Petrucci**

INFORMATION



Release Date: Out Now
Director: Various
Distributor: Universal
Original Release: 2004
Running Time: 138 mins

SCORE 9/10



THE OFFSPRING - THE COMPLETE MUSIC VIDEO COLLECTION E

All the hits and much more

Starring: Dexter Holland, Greg K, Noodles, Ron Welty



Rebellious, raucous, and that bit goofier than Green Day, The Offspring have been keeping themselves pretty busy ever since 1996's Smash album put them on the map. The punk-rockers have racked up quite a collection of hits, although their move towards a more mainstream sound has brought them criticism from some quarters. However, this collection proves that they still have plenty to offer.

The Complete Music Video Collection rampages right through the band's career. There are 17 videos in total, from early favourites like 'Self Esteem' and the heart-rending 'Gone Away' to 2005's 'Can't Repeat' and, of course, the much-loved parody that is 'Pretty Fly (For a White Guy)'. The UMD is also stuffed full of extras, including two bonus videos, audio commentaries, 'The Making of Da Hui' featurette and no less than 11 live performances (mostly of songs that also appear in the main video collection). The bonus material alone comprises more than the entire contents of all too many UMD music releases, making this a great buy. **Noel Monk**

INFORMATION



Release Date: Out Now
Director: Various
Distributor: Sony BMG
Original Release: 2005
Running Time: 120 mins

SCORE 9/10

BUSTA RHYMES - EVERYTHING REMAINS RAW 15

It'll make you clap

Starring: Busta Rhymes, Spliff Star, DJ Scratchator



This live concert UMD shows the motormouth rapper in full flow in 2003, before he cut off his dreads. Filmed at the Celebrity Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona, Busta and his Flipside Squad deliver an impressive 20-song set to a wildly enthusiastic crowd. All the old favourites are here, including 'Woo Ha! Got You All In Check', 'Never Leave You', 'Give Me Some More', 'Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Can See' and 'I Know What You Want'.

There's a really great vibe to the gig. Doing a great comedic double act with Spliff Star, Busta really knows how to work the crowd, getting them to dance and sing along - not that they need much encouragement. He even gets the laydeez to turn about face so he can talk to their rear for 'Light Your Ass On Fire'.

Sound quality is excellent throughout, although DJ Scratchator's bass-pumping grooves will make you want to plug your PSP into a sound system to turn it up louder than the standard earphones will allow.

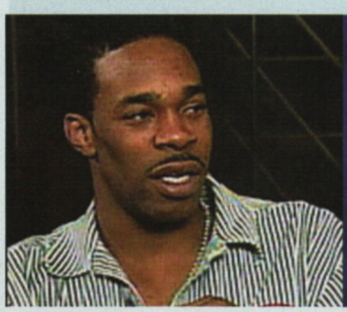
Occasional breaks in the concert footage enable Busta to talk about CLAMP, check out a new ride and have a smoke break (we're not talking Marlboro), while bonus material introduces the Flipmode Squad and takes a look at Busta's flashy motors and luxury tour bus. **Phil King**

INFORMATION



Release Date: Out Now
Director: J Kevin Swain
Distributor: Eagle Rock
Original Release: 2004
Running Time: 100 mins

SCORE 9/10





click!

The interweb is a wonderful place full of facts, information, up-to-the-second news reporting and serious tomes on the life we have lived and are living. Then, of course, there's the side of the net that gives us dancing hamsters, monkeys doing things they shouldn't with poop and all other kinds of lunacy. It's to this side we cast our roving eye to bring you a break from gaming and shine a little silliness into your lives. Here we will be showing you the weird, the wonderful and, who knows, maybe sometimes even informative side of the world wide interweb. Click on.

Hmmm Pot Noodle and Hula Hoops

www.snacksby.com/



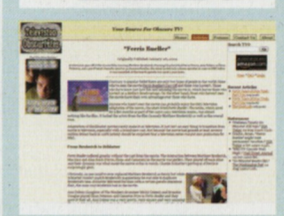


Ever looked in the cupboard and seen a load of ingredients but have no idea what to make with them? Well, students and the other culinary challenged amongst you may have just found something of a life saver here (literally). Snacksby allows you to search by either recipe or ingredients, with the latter allowing you to enter the contents of your cupboard and see a plethora of goodies to be made using it. Genius for those late night stumbles from the pub.

A talking monkey? Whatever next?

www.tvobscurities.com/articles/10outlandish.php





See some of the most worrying TV series ever made, gasp in horror at titles such as *My Mother The Car* and *The Ugliest Girls in Town*. Then gawp in amazement when you realise that many of these series actually got made and shown in the good old US of A. If you are a bit of a TV nut like us here at PURE, this site is a goldmine for some of the crappest, most ill thought out and sometimes just downright bad television programmes ever to hit that box in the corner of your lounge.

Fancy a muffin?

www.muffinfilms.com



A collection of films made by various users featuring muffins as the main stars. Everything from action films to art house to cautionary tales for children is covered in this celebration of all things muffin. No matter how you eat them, though, at the end of the day aren't they just cakes with a fancy name?

Did you take my P?

www.lunchtimers.com/games/letters/

Take the magnetic letters most people have stuck to their fridge, slap them on a huge worldwide fridge, then have fun as people from all over the world come together to drag the letters around and make messages, rude phrases and just generally be silly. With everyone dragging letters anonymously it becomes fun to watch others stealing letters form each other to make their own magnetic opus.



THE BUSH BOX



No one person has managed to provide so many opportunities for humour on the net as President Bush. Each month we'll bring you some of the better Bush-bashing moments on the net. This time we enjoy more of Bush's musical abilities as well as watching him take a good-natured ribbing from a lookalike.

Bush and Blair's Endless Love

politicalhumor.about.com/library/multimedia/bushblair_endlesslove.mov

Bush meets Bush

video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1921276117304287501

Sensible Sidebar

The best places to get music, movie trailers and the more useful information from the domain of the web monkeys.

Angelina Jolie is my Mum

www.myheritage.com



Ever look at famous stars and think you may have been born into the wrong family? Now you can prove your lineage or even just take a poke and find out which stars you may be able to tap up for overdue parental payments. Simply upload your picture and the in-depth analysis system uses a facial matching program to find out which stars you most share your looks with. Just don't get upset when your list doesn't contain Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie.

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lala.com



Got a pile of CDs at home you want rid of but can't find anywhere that will let you get some new, or for that matter old, music in exchange for them? Visit the folks over in lala land and for a mere 60p per transaction you can swap away to your heart's content from their absolutely huge database of CDs.

Wardrobe of the Stars

asos.com



If a celebrity has worn it on screen or in a photo there's a good chance you can find it here. Want a shirt like Becks's? Would like to see your lady in a Paris Hilton dress? Visit As Seen On Screen and live like a superstar... clothes-wise that is, of course.

DVD AND UMD RELEASE SCHEDULE

DVDs

OCTOBER	
The Da Vinci Code	16/10/2006
Slither	16/10/2006
Dracula (1979)	16/10/2006
The Mangler Reborn	16/10/2006
Night Of The Living Dead: Special Edition	16/10/2006
The Alibi	16/10/2006
The Grudge: Director's Cut (2004)	16/10/2006
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	23/10/2006
Fearless (Jet Li)	23/10/2006
Harry Potter 1 - 4 Box Set	23/10/2006
SpongeBob SquarePants: Season 2	23/10/2006
Don't Look Now	23/10/2006
I'll Always Know What You Did Last Summer	23/10/2006
Aatma The Ghost	23/10/2006
Boo	23/10/2006
House Of The Dead 2: Dead Aim	23/10/2006
Little Fish	23/10/2006
The Big Boss: Platinum Edition (2 Discs)	23/10/2006
The Omen (2006)	23/10/2006
Ultraviolet (2006)	30/10/2006
The Fast And The Furious: Tokyo Drift	30/10/2006
Family Guy: Series 5	30/10/2006
The Catherine Tate Show: Series 2	30/10/2006
Hard Candy	30/10/2006
Spirited Warrior: Platinum Edition	30/10/2006
Futurama - Complete Seasons 1 - 4 Collection Box Set	30/10/2006
Shadow Man	30/10/2006
Wilderness	30/10/2006
Jethro: In The Madhouse	30/10/2006
School For Scoundrels	30/10/2006

NOVEMBER	
Mission Impossible 3	06/11/2006
Warrior King	27/11/2006

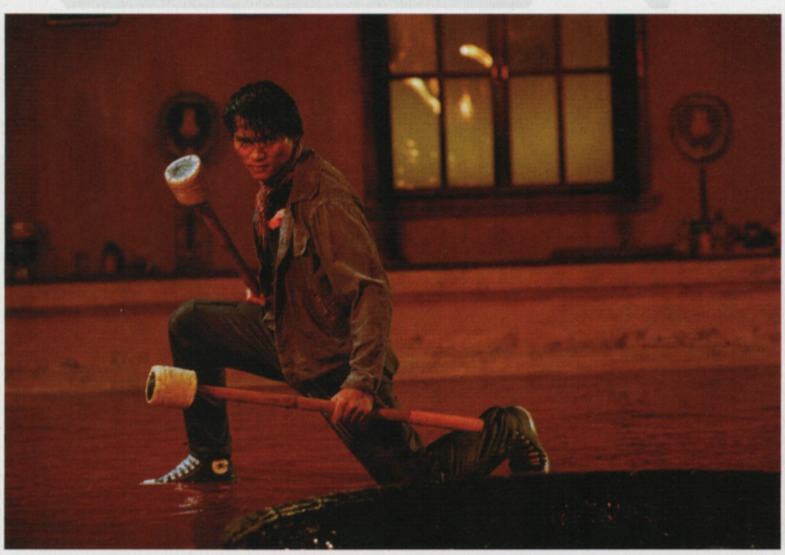
DECEMBER	
Superman Returns	04/12/2006
Monster House	11/12/2006

UMDs

OCTOBER	
Big Fish	16/10/2006
Heathers	16/10/2006
Hellraiser II: Hellbound	16/10/2006
Hellraiser III: Hell On Earth	16/10/2006
Kalifornia	16/10/2006
Ninja Dragon	16/10/2006
The Offspring: The Complete Music Video Collection	16/10/2006
Spider-Man: The New Animated Series	16/10/2006
Trial of the Incredible Hulk	16/10/2006
Warrior King	16/10/2006
House Of The Dead 2	23/10/2006
I'll Always Know What You Did Last Summer	23/10/2006
Doctor Who (New Series 2): Vol.1	23/10/2006
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	23/10/2006
Tony Jaa Box Set: Ong Bak/ Warrior King	30/10/2006

NOVEMBER	
The Bounty	04/12/2006
Superman Returns	04/12/2006
Born To Boogie: The Motion Picture	11/12/2006
Daddy Day Care	26/12/2006

All dates are correct at the time of going to press, but are subject to change







GET YOUR PSP ONLINE

Open up the worldwide web in the palm of your hand today!

You'll need a correctly configured Wireless Access Point, or a wireless router that is connected to the internet and is enabled as a Wireless Access Point, or alternatively one of the useful WiFi Max add-ons from Datel. Make sure the PSP's WiFi switch (left side of unit, directly above the Memory Stick port) is set to the active (up) position.

STEP 1

From the PSP's main menu, go to 'Settings' and scroll down to 'Network Settings'; go to 'Infrastructure Mode'.

STEP 2

Select 'New Connection' and give it any name you choose.

STEP 3

Choose 'Scan' and hit right on the D-pad, then select the appropriate wireless access point from the list.
OR:
3b. If you'd like to enter the info manually, choose that option and you'll be prompted for the SSID (Secure Session Identification) name of the server and the type of encryption it is using. This information is configurable in your router's configuration menu.

STEP 4

Having accepted the SSID (do not rename it) and the encryption type, hit right on the D-pad and enter the encryption key if applicable. Remember that the WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy) key is a 'hash' made up of the pass-phrase you give the router, not the pass-phrase itself.

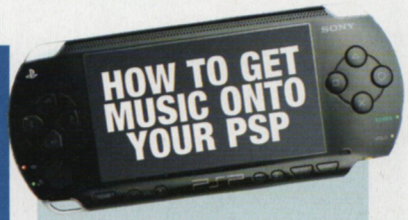
STEP 5

Select Easy address settings if your router has DHCP and its DNS correctly configured.
OR:

5b. If you are unable to have the Wireless Access Point configure your connection correctly, choose 'Custom.' From that menu, pick 'automatic' IP Address Setting if your router correctly assigns an IP from DHCP.
Choose 'PPPoE' if you have a Wireless Access Point but no router; it will ask you for your ISP's user and login details.
Choose 'manual' to enter the details yourself if your router is not correctly assigning an IP address.

5c. Select the Automatic DNS Setting if your router correctly forwards DNS information. Otherwise, choose manual and enter the gateway's (router's) IP address as the primary DNS server. Choose your ISP's DNS server as the secondary address (either contact them, or take the information from your router's configuration screen).

5d. Choose 'Do Not Use' unless you need to access the Internet via a Proxy Server. Otherwise, select that and enter details.
5e. Choose 'Do Not Start' the Internet Browser, unless your ISP has a post-connection login requirement.



With the PSP already living in your pocket, it would be a criminal waste not to cram your memory stick with MP3s when it's so easy. Here's how:

To get your CDs converted to mp3 tunes, we recommend you use your PC to download the iTunes software from www.apple.com/itunes/download/ to your PC or Apple Mac.

Run the file from the folder you downloaded it to, and proceed with the installation process as advised onscreen.

Once the software is installed and running, go to 'Edit' then 'Preferences'. From there, go to the 'Advanced' tab, then the 'Importing' sub-tab.

Set 'Import using' to 'MP3 Encoder' and 'Setting' to 'Good Quality (128 kbps)'. If you find the music sounds a bit flat or tinny, you can set it to 'Higher Quality (192 kbps)' instead. Click 'OK' to save your preferences.

Under the 'Source menu', select your album. You can then right-click the track you desire, and choose 'Convert selection to MP3'.

Alternatively, you can tick any combination of tracks, and click Import CD to convert them as a batch. They are now ready to be copied to your memory stick.

The Transfer Market

To transfer MP3s from your PC to your PSP, hook them up using a USB Mini-B cable. Once they are plugged in, start the PSP and go to 'USB Connection' from the 'Settings' menu. Your PSP will then appear as a removable drive on your PC.

You can now drag and drop files directly to the MUSIC folder on the memory stick. There is also support for one more level of sub-folders under MUSIC, but you cannot have folders within these. So you could have 'X:\PSP\MUSIC\ROCK\' or 'X:\PSP\MUSIC\METALLICA\' but you could not have 'X:\PSP\MUSIC\ROCK\METALLICA\'

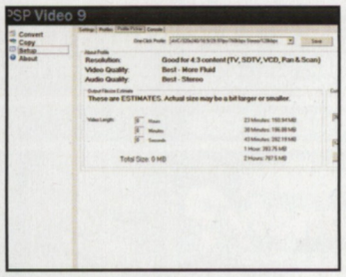
Also, if you select 'shuffle', your PSP will only play random tunes from the current 'group' folder. If you separate songs by artist, you'll only be able to play that artist's song in a random order.

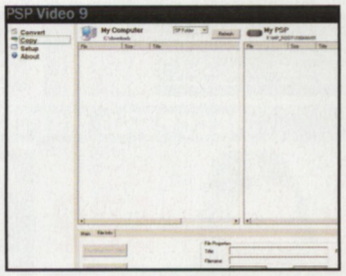
LOOK AT ME!

How to convert video to your PSP

Want to get your favourite video clips, trailers and home movies onto your portable pal who's fun to be with? The simplest to use piece of kit out there is a handy program known as *PSP Video 9* that will convert, rename and transfer your video for you in a few simple steps.

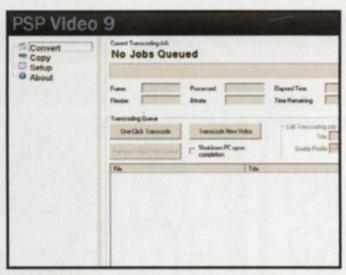
A simple trip onto the web will procure this freeware program for you by visiting: www.psp video9.com. Download and install as normal then connect your PSP using your USB lead and start the program.

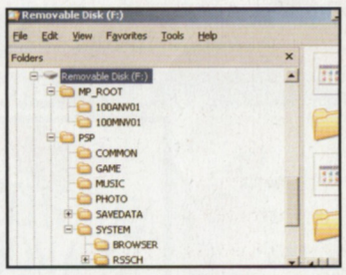




Step 1: After choosing 'Convert' from the menu on the left hand side you will be presented with a new screen. Select the 'Transcode New Video' button from the upper portion of this new window. This will bring prompt you to select the source file. Select your chosen file from your PC.

Step 2: With your source clip loaded, you will need to enter a file name in the 'Title' box below the 'Edit Transcoding Job' on the right hand side of your screen. Be aware that this is the title that the file will be known as in your PSP and cannot be changed once the file is complete.





Step 3: Use the box below the 'Title' you just completed to select your video quality see main feature to decide the quality you require. Once you have set your quality its time to click 'Start' and sit back and let the program do its job. NOTE: Don't be alarmed if the progress bar appears to do nothing, this is normal.

Step 4: Once the conversion is complete, select 'Copy' from the left hand menu. The program will now copy your video to the correct location on your PSP via your USB connection. Go to the PSP home menu and the file will be available for viewing through the 'Video' menu. And that's it!

NOTE: The PSP Video 9 Program will only read the following files types, so make sure your source video is in one of these formats. File Types Used: AVI, MPEG, WMV, Quick Time, VOB, TivoToGo



TEXT CHAT

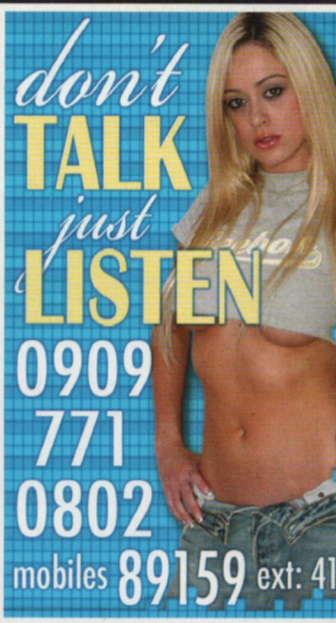






RECORDED PHONE SERVICES







LIVE MOBILE SERVICES









RECORDED MOBILE SERVICES















LIVE 1-2-1 CHAT





















Chaos Network, PO Box 384, Cambs, CB2 5LR. Helpline 08704 541000 (national rate) T&C's www.thechaosnetwork.com Over 18's only, callers must be the bill payer or have their permission. All live calls are recorded. Text initiated call back service to 89990 is charged at £7.50 for 25 minutes and will be billed from 89885. 0909 calls cost £1.50/min unless otherwise specified on the advert. Text chat (89885) is charged at £1.50/msg rcvd. 89159 calls cost £1.50/min. Credit is charged at £2.99/min.

FREE PSP FLASH GAMES

PURE takes a look at the hottest free Flash games for your PSP



Although the latest v2.70 and v2.71 PSP firmware doesn't permit you to play standard homebrew, it can run Macromedia Flash games and applications. Lack of speed and internal memory mean these are unlikely to rival some of the more complex traditional homebrew games and emulators, but you can still have some fun.

As well as playing Flash games on websites via the Web Browser, you can install most of them on your memory stick for offline play. To do this, just put the game file (or folder) to the root of your memory stick and then direct the PSP's Web browser to it (ie file://gamename.swf).

Alternatively, you can use a special PC or Mac auto-installer program available from homebrew sites.

Here are just a few of the best Flash applications available for the PSP...

Bowman 2



Test your archery skills by setting the angle and power for each shot, aiming to hit a CPU or human opponent off screen. Settings enable you to add a wall and wind to make things more difficult. Hunting birds is also fun.

Car Madness



Created specially for the PSP, this rather primitive-looking game has you racing your tiny car around one of several tracks trying to set the lowest time. Still, it's strangely addictive and you can take it in turns with a friend.

Chopper Drop



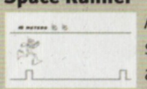
This is a version of the classic computer game where you have to drop bombs to destroy buildings so your chopper doesn't hit them as it flies ever lower with each left-to-right pass. It looks simple but is pretty addictive.

Flash Monsters



Send your monster into battle with another and it'll grow stronger and evolve, adding new attacks depending on its morality (decided by how you teach it). It's all a bit simplistic, but the makers have plans to add more features.

Space Runner



As your wireframe spaceman runs along, you just have to make him jump, roll or dive to avoid the obstacles. It starts off easy enough but soon gets tricky with lots of obstacles together and even moving ones.

Tricked Out



Designed for the PSP, this features some slick menus and options. Sadly, the overhead-view skateboarding action is all a bit slow as you try to perform tricks. Still, it's a nice effort and the makers plan to add a park editor.

Witch Coare



This is a strange mix of side-scrolling adventure and simple turn-based combat, triggered when you collide with unshootable enemies (such as mummies and witches). It's still a work in progress but is worth a look.

Hangaroo



This is a fun version of the classic Hangman game with a talking kangaroo, although it's tempting to let the cheeky varmint hang - which is fairly likely when the category is 'Canadian Presidents' or 'Governors of the USA'.

Monkey Lander



It runs on the slow side but is still a playable version of the classic Lunar Lander game. Use the D-pad to fire the rockets and steer the monkey's spaceship to collect the fruit and then land safely before the coconut fuel runs out.

Bullseye



No, it's not a version of the classic TV gameshow, but you do get to play darts. The control method of stopping a horizontal and then a vertical bar makes aiming very challenging - particularly when it comes to the doubles.

Proximity



This is an excellent strategy game where you take it in turns with the CPU to place numbered counters to strengthen adjacent allied ones or convert lower-numbered enemy ones to your side. It's simple to learn but highly tactical.

Ping Pong 3D



This one works well on the PSP with no slowdown. Playing against the CPU, you aim your bat and press X to hit the ball. It's possible to do drop shots and smashes, although it's tricky enough getting it back over the net.

How To Run Flash Homebrew

To run Flash games on the PSP, you must have v2.70 firmware or later and have enabled the Flash Player via the System Settings menu (and going online via a wireless access point). As well as playing Flash games on websites via the PSP's browser, it's possible to download them via a PC and transfer them onto the Memory Stick to play offline.

Downloading Flash Games

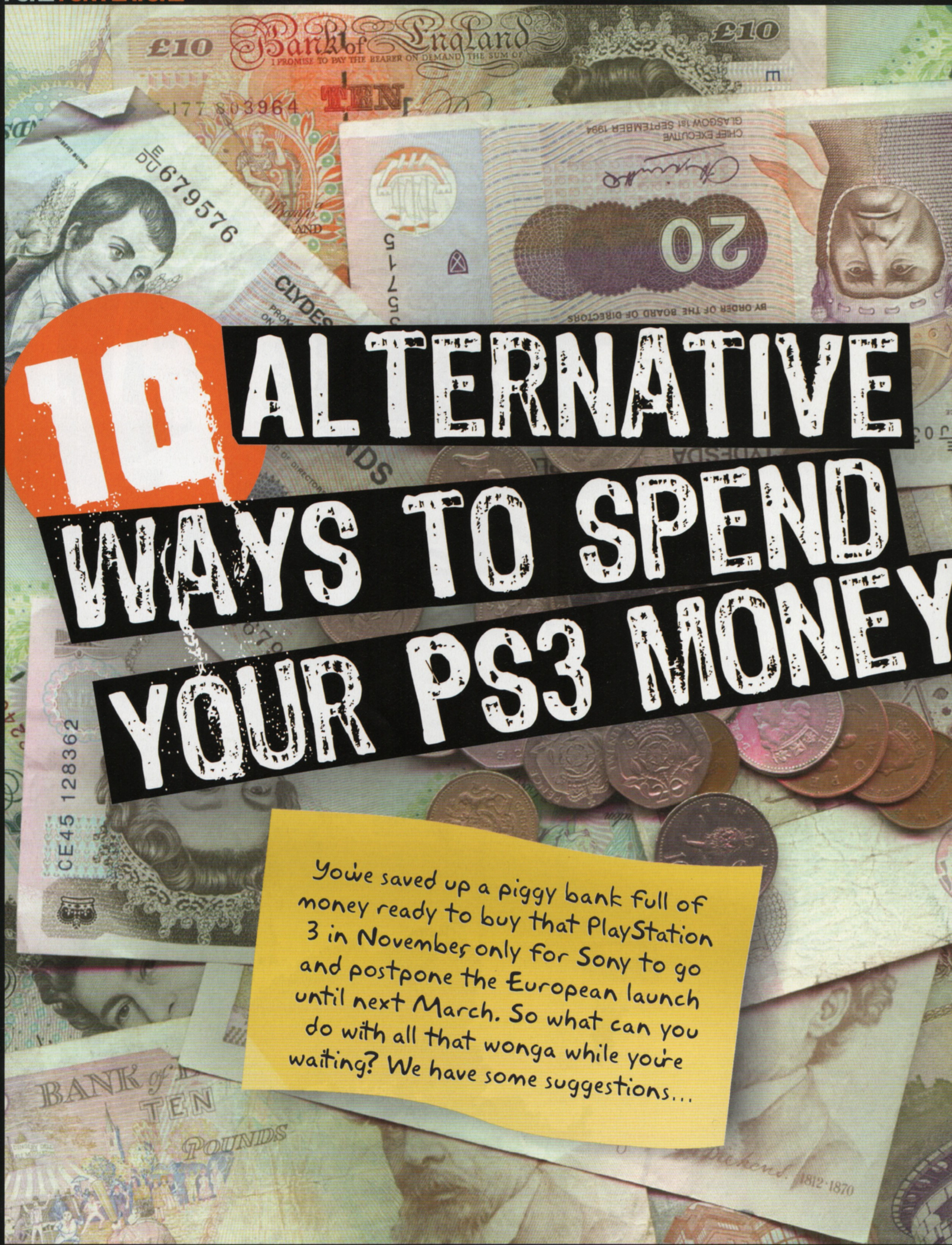
Even if a website doesn't have an option to download its Flash games, it's usually possible to do so – either using software such as *Flash Hunter*, or the following method. With the Flash game playing in your PC's web browser, view the source code (right-click and View Source in *Explorer*), then find the .swf file and its full address (if there) and copy the latter. In a text editor, create a simple HTML web page...

‹a href= “”›Download‹/a›

Paste the Flash game's full address between the quote marks, then load this web page in your PC browser, right-click on the link and save the file (Download To Disk in *Explorer*). You can now transfer it to your PSP's Memory Stick, then direct your PSP's browser to the file ('file://*gamename*.swf') and store it as a bookmark.

Flash Game Compatibility

Compatibility depends on the amount of memory needed, the version of Flash required (PSP has Flash Player 6) and the lack of any keyboard controls (apart from arrow keys which are the same as the D-pad).



10 ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO SPEND YOUR PS3 MONEY

You've saved up a piggy bank full of money ready to buy that PlayStation 3 in November only for Sony to go and postpone the European launch until next March. So what can you do with all that wonga while you're waiting? We have some suggestions...

1 Get some wheels

Buy yourself a cheap motor. We spotted an N-reg Skoda Felicia for sale for just £385. Low mileage, taxed and MOTed, but no service history. Hint: Pimp it up with a spoiler and blinging rims to impress the ladies.



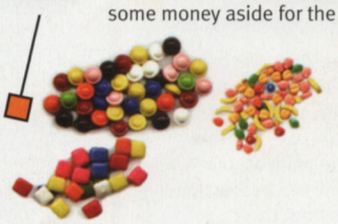
2 Go retro

Forget all this next-generation malarkey and treat yourself to a selection of old consoles and computers. Then squint your eyes to convince yourself that playing Warhawk on PSone is just as good as on PS3.



3 Be sweet

At 65p per 100g, £425 buys you over 65 kilograms of pick 'n' mix at Woolies - enough to keep you chomping away till March. Even so, you might want to keep some money aside for the dentist's bill.



4 Invest in Sony

The Sony share price has taken a bit of a knock lately thanks to the postponed PS3 launch and some exploding laptop batteries. So buy now and you may even earn enough profit to buy an extra PS3 game come March.

SONY

5 Even better than that!

Buy yourself a U2 special edition iPod, engraved with the band's signatures, for £229. Then download their complete library of 446 songs from iTunes for £119.99 and still have change for some Bono-style shades.



6 Count the hours

Fork out around £400 for a posh watch such as Tag Heuer Formula 1 and then watch it count down the hours till the PS3 launch - then realise you can't afford one as you blew all your money on a watch.



7 Buy some new clothes...

...For your pet pooch. Visit www.dogmcuk.co.uk and spend your cash on all sorts of jumpers, coats, beds and accessories. Your dog'll be the mutt's nuts. We particularly like the Noel Edmonds-style sweater.



8 Clear the top shelf

Be the envy of all your friends with this prize collection of porn mags. You could even hire them out for £1 a night to make a profit - just make sure they are returned in non-soiled condition.



9 Treat the missus

Buy your beloved a pair of Jimmy Choo shoes (well, at least the cheaper ones) and she'll love you for ever... that is until she discovers your stash of porn mags and uses her new shoes to kick you where it hurts.



10 Fool your friends

Go down the craft shop and invest in a piece of strong card and some silver paint. Carefully cut out a PlayStation 3 logo and spray the paint through it onto your old PS2... hey presto, an instant PS3 to show off to your friends! And you've still got all that cash.





BEST OF BREED

Down the sides of the pages we have compiled the hottest games on PSP in every genre...

ACTION



SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR

Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror **looks good, sounds good and plays like a dream. It is, in essence, a full-sized console shooter in the palm of your hand. Possibly the best action-based shooter out there.**

PURE SCORE 10 /10

ADVENTURE



MEDIEVIL RESURRECTION

Another dose of surreal skeletal hack 'n' slash. We're glad to see a return to form for the cowardly one, Sir Dan, with sumptuous visuals and chuckling voiceover antics from Tom Baker.

PURE SCORE 9 /10

IMPORT



MLB 06 THE SHOW

An extremely well-rounded, polished title that shows off the PSP's capabilities to the max, with crystal sharp graphics, super smooth animation and a thoroughly absorbing career mode.

PURE SCORE 8 /10

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE CHAPTER AND VERSE ACCORDING TO PURE

BUYER'S BIBLE

Your guide to better living through PSP gaming

So, you've missed a copy of PURE? That's alright; we forgive you just this once, but make sure you don't do it again. Like beating up the smart kid in class and nicking his homework, we've got you covered. We'll keep you out of the naughty corner when your mates ask you what's hot and what's snot. Chapter and verse, this is all you need to study of the holy scriptures of PSP gaming.

GAME TITLE	PUBLISHER	GENRE	ISSUE		SCORE
Ape Academy	SCEE	Platform	1		6
Ape Escape escapees in mini-game collection form - it's cute but just that bit too simple					
Ape Academy 2	SCEE	Arcade	10		7
Ape Escape escapees in mini-game collection form - it's cute but just that bit too simple					
Ape Escape P	SCEA	Platform	4		6
Vintage platformer stages a far from glorious comeback due to poorly-implemented controls					
Archer MacLean's Mercury	Ignition	Puzzle	1	GENIUS!	9
Ridiculously addictive, this stylish puzzler is the Marble Madness of the 21st Century					
Armoured Core: Formula Front – Extreme Battle	505 Gamestreet	Simulation	3		8
Build your own unbeatable robot in what may become something of a sleeper hit					
Astonishia Story	Ubisoft	RPG	8		4
This classic looking SNES game is a real let down for game and RPG fans alike					
ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails	SCEA	Racing	1		5
This off-road racer is more frustrating than furious, although multiplayer is good					
B-Boy	Sony	Arcade	10		7
Unless you're a fan this may become a little dull and repetative					
Blade Dancer: Lineage of Light	Ignition	RPG	10		6
The negatives outway the positives and make this more of a so-so game					
Boku No Watashi No Katamari Damacy	Namco	Puzzle	2	GENIUS!	9
One of those weird titles, that will for some reason keep you coming back for more					
Breath of Fire III	Capcom	RPG	2		4
A disappointingly poor port that fails to add anything new to this aging PSOne relic					
Burnout Legends	EA	Racing	1	GENIUS!	9
With out doubt the arcade racer for the PSP that shows where all the others have gone wrong					
Bust-a-MoveGhost	505 Gamestreet	Puzzle	4		8
More bubble-blasting antics from dinky dinosaurs Bub and Bob. Simple and addictive					
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	Capcom	Retro	6		6
Retro gems that are sure to provoke nostalgia and keep you playing for hours.					
Carol Vorderman's Sudoku	Xplosiv	Puzzle	8		8
Addictive to those who enjoy the craze but a headache to those who don't					
Cars	THQ	Racing	9		7
An enjoyable romp for those new to the genre and old hands alike					
Championship Manager	Eidos	Sports	1	GENIUS!	9
There's more than enough here to keep any would-be boardroom big cheese satisfied					
Coded Arms	Konami	FPS	1		5
The PSP's first FPS may look the part, but it's let down by monotonous gameplay					
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	Codemasters	Racing	1		8
A slick and challenging racer, marred by flawed controls and a steep learning curve					
Con, The	Sony	Fighting	2		5
Attempts to overhaul the fighting genre but is let down by poor controls					
Crash Tag Team Racing	Vivendi	Racing	1		6
Crash Bandicoot is back in a racing/platform combo that's fun, but it's no *Mario Kart*					
Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower	Capcom	Fighting	1		5
Zany animé-style 2D beat 'em up that suffers from poor controls, crippling gameplay					
Daxter	SCEE	Platform	5		8
Fairly predictable but a thoroughly playable platformer					
Dead to Rights: Reckoning	Namco	Action	1		2
It promises hardboiled action adventure, but only manages to deliver monotony					
Death Jr.	Konami	Action	2		6
A quirky platformer with plenty of character, but camera issues let it down					
Def Jam Fight for NY: The Takeover	EA	Fighting	8	GENIUS!	10
An amazingly in-depth yet accessible fighting game that is a definite must have!					
Dragon-Ball Z: Shin Budokai	Atari	Fighting	4		4
Aerial battles don't make up for the fact that the characters all feel the same					
Dynasty Warriors	Koei	Fighting	1		7
Lead warring factions to imperial glory in this enjoyable oriental hack and slash					
Everybody's Golf	SCEE	Sports	1		7
With charming, colourful graphics and simple gameplay, this is relaxing and addictive					
Exit	Ubisoft	Puzzle	2		8
The unique graphics and tricky obstacles will keep you pinned to your PSP					

PSP

GAME TITLE	PUBLISHER	GENRE	ISSUE		SCORE
F1 Grand Prix	SCEE	Racing	1		7
It has all of the drivers, teams and tracks, but there's no real sense of speed					
Field Commander	Ubisoft	Strategy	6	GENIUS!	9
Well presented and seriously addictive turn-based treat					
FIFA 2006	EA Sports	Sports	1		8
Stunning graphics and great gameplay prove the *FIFA* franchise isn't just a pretty face					
FIFA World Cup Germany 2006	EA Sports	Sports	5	GENIUS!	9
The most polished World Cup game ever. A must have for footy fans.					
FIFA Street 2	EA Sports BIG	Sports	3		7
Rule the streets and take down world-class players, with plenty of game modes					
Fight Night Round 3	EA Sports	Sports	3	GENIUS!	9
An outstanding technical boxing game that will keep you coming back					
Fired Up	SCEE	Action	1		6
Repetitive and lacks replay value but game-sharing makes for multiplayer fun					
Football Manager Handheld 2006	Sega	Sports	4		8
Offers everything that you'd expect from a new footie management title					
Formula One 06	SCEE	Racing	9	GENIUS!	9
Without doubt the best Formula One game we've played to date					
Frantix	Ubisoft	Puzzle	1		4
Great graphics can't compensate for the lack of challenge or variety in this sub-par puzzler					
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	Konami	Platform	2		7
The classic arcade amphibian gets a passable 3D makeover but lacks that "Wow!" factor					
From Russia With Love	EA	Action	4	GENIUS!	9
One of the best all-round games on the PSP. A must have!					
Gangs of London	Sony	Action	10		6
Despite plenty to do, is let down by repetitive gameplay and terrible controls					
Generation of Chaos	Idea Factory	Strategy, RPG	5		6
Once you're familiar with it, Generation of Chaos does make for an amazing game					
Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex	Bandai	Action	1		6
This futuristic shooter is lacking in polish and fails to do justice to its animé inspiration					
Gitaroo Man Lives	Koei	Arcade	9		8
Completely mental but more addictive than a large house full of bubble wrap					
Go! Sudoku	SCEE	Puzzle	1	GENIUS!	9
The most addictive number puzzler since *Minesweeper*.					
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	Rockstar	Genre	1	GENIUS!	9
Addictive car-jacking action from the ever-popular GTA series, with plenty of variety					
Gripshift	Ubisoft	Puzzle/Racing	1		4
An attempt to fuse several genres that fails to execute any of its ideas successfully					
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	Platform Action	1		6
An authentic slice of Potter magic, this looks good but is lacking in longevity and challenge					
Juiced: Eliminator	THQ	Racing	7	GENIUS!	9
A slickly presented update that makes the game a must-have					
Infected	Majesco	Action	1		5
Zombie splatterfest allows you to 'infect' other PSPs over Infrastructure, but it's limited					
Kao Challengers	Atari	Platform	1		7
Kao the Kangaroo hops onto another console for a colourful but unexceptional adventure					
Karakuri	Tecmo	Platform	2		7
This novel platform-come-puzzler is endearing and enjoyable, but only one game mode					
Key of Heaven	SCEE	RPG	2		9
Customisable combat and a deep storyline make for the first decent RPG					
Koloomn	505 Gamestreet	Puzzle	4		6
Another *Tetris* wannabe with more than a passing nod to *Lumines* – fun but not fantastic					
Legend of Heroes, The: A Tear of Vermillion	Namco	RPG	2		2
Possibly the first torture device for a handheld games machine. Avoid like the plague					
Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy	Lucas Arts	Action	9	GENIUS!	10
Even better than the first game, this handheld masterpiece is an essential purchase					
Lemmings	SCEE	Puzzle	2		8
Hideously addictive, this is classic Lemmings with no pretentions of 21st Century grandeur					
Loco Roco	Sony	Platform	8		6
weirdly addictive game that never really challenges but keeps you entertained					
Lord of the Rings: Tactics	EA	Adventure	1		5
Turn-based Middle Earth, but the characters are lacking and the RPG elements disappoint					
Lumines: Puzzle Fusion	Ubisoft	Puzzle	1		7
One of those simple-but-tricky falling shapes games that always work on handhelds					
Madden NFL 2006	EA Sports	Sports	1		4
The best-selling American Football franchise fails to score a touchdown on the PSP					
Madden NFL 2007	EA Sports	Sports	9	GENIUS!	9
Much better than the disappointing Madden NFL 06, this is a must for gridiron fans					
Me and My Katamari	EA	Puzzle	5	GENIUS!	9
Roly-poly sticky silly fun! Fact: you need to play this game					
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	EA	Action	1		6
Marvel and EA release a sub-standard button masher with poor collision detection					
MediEvil Resurrection	SCEE	Action	1		8
The cowardly Dan Fortescue is back for more comical hack and slash fun					

BEST OF BREED...

SHOOTER



SOCOM FIRETEAM BRAVO

One of the most impressive games we've played on the PSP and the only one to recieve 10 out of 10. With multiplayer support for no less than 16 players and a headset accessory to boot.

PURE SCORE 10 /10

FIGHTING

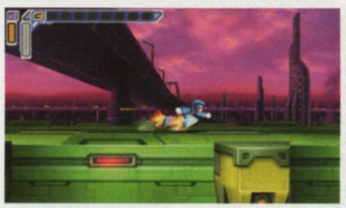


DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY: THE TAKEOVER

An amazingly in-depth yet accessible fighting game! The new kid on the block has shown the older hands how it should be done with one of the most grueling hardcore fighting games ever.

PURE SCORE 10 /10

PLATFORM



MEGA MAN MAVERICK HUNTER X

One of the most enduring characters of all time returns in this addictive mixture of blasting and platforming. This will give your gaming skills a thorough workout even by today's standards.

PURE SCORE 8 /10

PUZZLE



ARCHER MACLEAN'S MERCURY

A truly addictive puzzle game that is at turns simple and infuriatingly difficult, but blessed with that essential addictive quality that seperates a good puzzler from a truly great one.

PURE SCORE 9 /10

BEST OF BREED...

RACING



WIPEOUT PURE

WipEout Pure **is a credible conversion with very few flaws and should be in any futuristic racer's library. The first title to take full advantage of the machine's wireless capabilities.**

PURE SCORE 9 /10

RPG



KEY OF HEAVEN

Finally, a fully-fledged RPG for the PSP. Beautiful graphics complete with a customisable combat system give this title some amazing depth, after a long wait now finally available in the UK.

PURE SCORE 9 /10

SPORTS



VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR

Games are fast and never less than fun. And nothing is more satisfying than winning a 20-stroke rally. Simple controls make even a beginner feel like a real chalk line pro.

PURE SCORE 9 /10

STRATEGY



FIELD COMMANDER

The first military strategy title for the PSP, *Field Commander* utilises your brain, not brute force. Addictive in the extreme, plan your actions and watch soldiers carry out your bidding in gorgeous three-dimensions.

PURE SCORE 9 /10

BUYER'S BIBLE

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE CHAPTER AND VERSE ACCORDING TO PURE

GAME TITLE	PUBLISHER	GENRE	ISSUE	SCORE
Mega Man Maverick Hunter X	Capcom	Platform	2	8
A slick slice of old school gaming given a new lease of life				
Mega Man Powered Up	Capcom	Platform	3	8
Mega Man gets a 21st century makeover, with old and new stages and a level editor				
Metal Gear Ac!d	Konami	Strategy	1	8
A welcome twist to the Metal Gear arsenal you will probably appreciate				
Metal Gear Ac!d 2	Konami	Strategy	6	5
Chess with guns that really doesn't live up to the hype.				
Miami Vice: The Game	Vivendi Games	Action	8	8
A really good action game that's more hide and seek than run and shoot				
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Rockstar	Racing	1	7
A decent portable port with crisp controls and plenty of vehicles and customisation options				
Midway Arcade Treasures	Midway	Arcade	3	8
A great collection of timeless arcade classics brought up to date for some multiplayer fun				
Micro Machines V4	Codemasters	Racing	7	8
A classic racer with a modern update that's a real gem to play.				
MLB 06 The Show	SCEA	Sports	4	8
Highly-polished baseball game that shows just what the PSP can do				
Monster Hunter Freedom	Capcom	Adventure	5	7
This popular sequel might frighten off newbies, making it one for experienced hunters				
MX Vs. ATV: On the Edge	THQ	Racing	4	8
Well designed tracks aand talented opponents make this a joy to play				
Namco Museum Battle	Namco	Arcade	1	7
A collection of much-loved retro classics in authentic form, with four new arrangements				
NBA Ballers Rebound	Midway	Sports	4	8
A nice change from team games, with an engaging TV tournament mode				
NBA Live '06	EA Sports	Sports	1	8
If you enjoy the genre then worth forking out for, if not then stay clear				
NBA Street: Showdown	EA Sports BIG	Sports	1	7
This is basketball, with the *Street* series' usual emphasis on showing off to the max				
Need For Speed Most Wanted 5-1-0	EA	Racing	1	5
Illicit street racing may sound like fun, but you're better off giving this a miss				
Need For Speed Underground Rivals	EA	Racing	1	6
Better than *Most Wanted*, but still one of the more average racing offerings on the PSP				
NFL Street 2: Unleashed	EA Sports BIG	Sports	1	7
A satisfying arcade take on the game that the Americans like to call football				
NHL 07	EA Sports	Sports	10	8
Fast paced and extremely well presented, NHL 07 is a must for hckey fans				
Outrun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	Sega	Racing	4	6
Looks nice, but the mushy controls and lack of variety make it far from perfect				
Pac-Man World 3	EA	Platform	7	7
An enjoyable and accomplished platformer that doesn't really innovate.				
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	Action	1	8
Fun initially, but the more we play it, the less we like it. Bad monkey. Lose two points				
Pilot Academy	Rising Star Games	Action	10	8
A beautifully realised flight sim that will take a lot of practice to master				
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Buena Vista Games	Action	7	8
An enjoyable romp that really draws you into the film world on which it is based.				
Pocket Racers	Konami	Racing	10	5
Been there done that. Not a game that has anything that to excite you				
PoPoLoCrois	Agetec	RPG	2	7
As a cute and colourful RPG, this is fun enough but unfortunately lacks lasting appeal				
Puyo Pop Fever	Ignition	Puzzle	6	6
A very playable game, but not one that will blow you away with excitement				
PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient	D3 Publisher	Puzzle	4	6
No multiplayer and lacks character, but it'll give your grey matter a thorough workout				
Prince of Persia Revelations	Ubisoft	Adventure	1	8
Sadly a missed opportunity but fun for anyone not familiar with the Warrior Within				
Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Konami	Sports	1	7
Still the best gameplay in the genre, but it's let down by the lack of content				
Pursuit Force	SCEE	Action	1	7
This is like a more linear *GTA*, except that you're fighting crime, not committing it				
Rengoku: The Tower of Purgatory	Konami	Action	2	3
Bland, boring and handles like a haddock on a rollerskate. Watch some drying paint instead				
Ridge Racer	SCEE	Racing	1	8
Fine for fans of the series, but newcomers may wonder what the fuss is all about				
Ridge Racer 2	Sony	Racing	10	8
Not a game that makes you go crazy with excitement				
Samurai Warriors: State of War	Koei	Fighting	3	7
The neat story can't offset the lack of challenge or variety – it's just *Dynasty Warriors* again				
Smart Bomb	Eidos	Puzzle	1	6
Not the best puzzle game on the console, but it's challenging and well-presented				
Socom U.S. Navy Seals Fireteam Bravo	SCEA	FPS	4	GENIUS! 10
Engrossing levels and spot on gameplay make this an absolute winner				

PSP

GAME TITLE	PUBLISHER	GENRE	ISSUE		SCORE
Spider-Man 2	Activision	Action	1		6
An average game-movie tie-in with awkward controls and little in the way of replay value					
Splinter Cell Essentials	Ubisoft	Action	4	GENIUS!	9
This is the game to get your hands on for a bit of on the move stealth					
SSX On Tour	EA Sports BIG	Sports	1		8
It's worth getting past the learning curve for the great graphics and satisfying tricks					
Star Wars Battlefront II	Activision	Action	1		8
Would have benefited from Infrastructure mode, but the force is still strong in this one					
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	Capcom	Fighting	2		8
The classic beat 'em-up series returns in authentic -Ism style with 17 different game modes					
Street Riders	Ubisoft	Racing	5		5
A dull, repetitive street racer that isn't even spiced up by adding guns to the mix					
Street Supremacy	Konami	Racing	4		4
This street racer suffers from sluggish controls, with no real sense of speed					
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	Sega	Puzzle	7	GENIUS!	9
Breathing life into an old franchise has really paid off, a classic in the making					
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	SCEE	Action	6	GENIUS!	10
A stunningly executed title that is a pure joy to play					
Tales of Eternia	Ubisoft	RPG	3		5
A genuinely educational offering aimed at language learners and travellers, not gamers.					
Talkman	SCEE	Translator	7		6
A genuinely educational offering aimed at language learners and travellers, not gamers.					
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	SCEE	Fighting	9		8
A polished and professional outing, but something new would have been nice					
The Godfather: Mob Wars	EA	Action	10		9
Can be repetitive but an enjoyable ride all the same. An offer you can't refuse					
The Sims 2	EA	Simulation	1		8
The weird and wonderful world of the Sims is back with some quirky new features					
Tiger Woods PGA Golf 2006	EA Sports	Sports	1	GENIUS!	8
A good conversion with instinctive controls and a sophisticated character creation system					
Tiger Woods PGA Golf 2007	EA Sports	Sports	10		7
A nice looking game with plenty to do, but let down by less than perfect controls					
Tokobot	Take 2	Puzzle	3		5
This is a cute little puzzler based on an ingenious concept. Shame it's so poorly executed					
TOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters	Racing	1	GENIUS!	9
This is a cute little puzzler based on an ingenious concept. Shame it's so poorly executed					
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	Adventure	6		6
On first impressions it looks pretty but just doesn't live up to the hype.					
Tony Hawk's Underground Remix 2	Activision	Sports	1	GENIUS!	9
The level of control is inspirational, a trick-tastic skate game.					
Twisted Metal: Head-On	SCEE	Racing	1		8
The slick, intense action makes this just as impressive as its PS1 and PS2 incarnations					
Ultimate Block Party	Conspiracy	Puzzle	3		7
Nothing particularly groundbreaking, but it might just give *Lumines* a run for its money					
Ultimate Ghost 'n' Goblins	Capcom	Platform	9		7
A classic game brought bang up to date, although some may find it a touch difficult					
Untold Legends: Brotherhood of the Blade	Activision	RPG	1		5
Limited customisation options, slow loading times and camera problems disappoint					
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	Ubisoft	RPG	5		6
More playable characters, but it's let down by the linear gameplay					
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Capcom	Action	5		7
A fast, furious explosion of colour, although the controls are just that bit too simple					
Virtua Tenis World Tour	Sega	Sports	1	GENIUS!	9
Virtua Tennis is every bit as enjoyable and intuitive on the PSP as it's ever been					
Wipeout Pure	SCEE	Racing	1	GENIUS!	9
Wipeout is an incredible conversion with very little flaws					
World Rally Championship	SCEE	Racing	1		6
All you'd expect from a licensed rally sim, but the gameplay is shallow and disappointing					
World Poker Tour	2K Sports	Sports	5	GENIUS!	9
An enjoyable poker outing with the character customisation adding that extra something					
World Series of Poker	Activision	Puzzle	2		8
A step above your average card game that is well presented and easy to play					
World Snooker Challenge	Sega	Sports	1		6
Offers a variety of modes and players but the Aiming Aid is lacking in precision					
World Tour Soccer	SCEE	Sports	1		5
Feels like it's been rushed out and too many of the basic options are locked					
World Tour Soccer 2	SCEE	Sports	8		6
A poor effort that will see the game struggle to avoid relegation, yet again					
Worms: Open Warfare	THQ	Action	3		8
Turn-based worm warfare still makes for a winning formula					
WWE Smackdown! Vs. Raw 2006	THQ	Sports	1		6
Boasts slick presentation and some great features, but ultimately suffers due poor controls					
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	Activision	RPG	1		7
Offers an impressive collection of heroes to choose from and has plenty of replay value					

PURE
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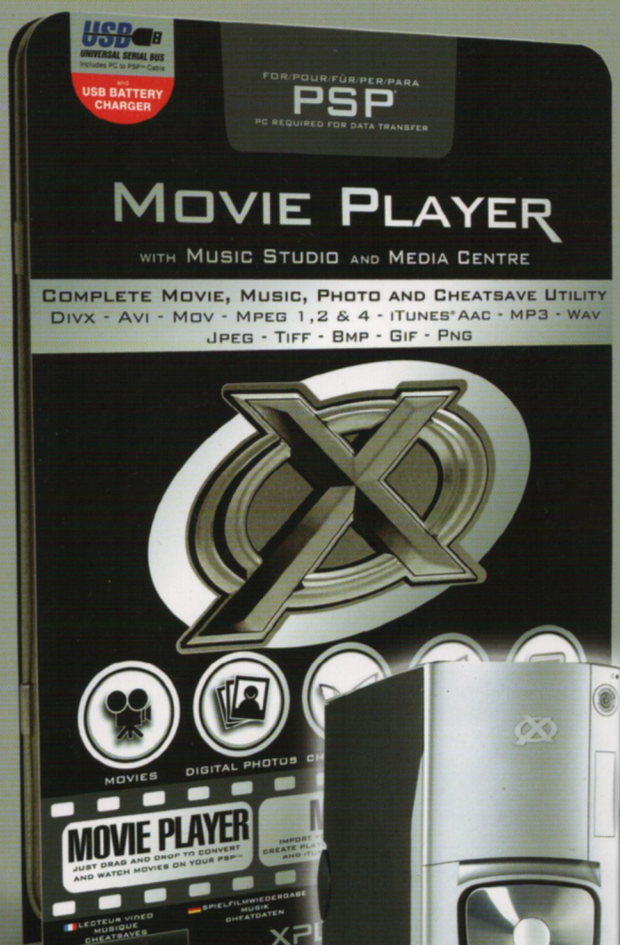
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