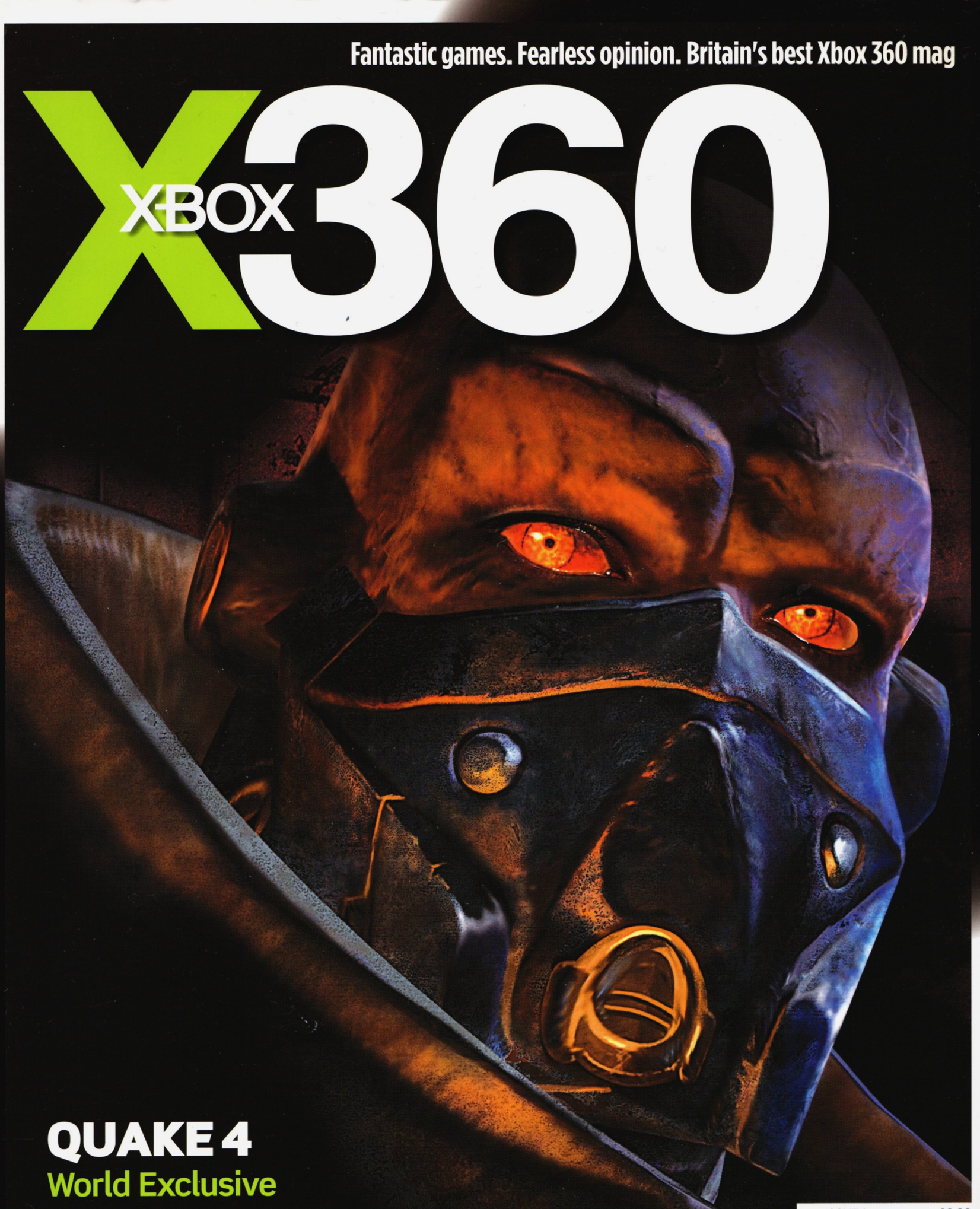
Fantastic games. Fearless opinion. Britain's best Xbox 360 mag

XBOX 360



QUAKE 4
World Exclusive

ISSUE 1 £3.99

9 771747 683009 01

PLAY MORE SAVE MORE



500 FREE WELCOME POINTS REGISTER TODAY!

FREE WITH ANY GAMES PURCHASE

+ EXTRA SAVINGS AND OFFERS
+ GAMES E-NEWSLETTERS
+ COMPETITIONS AND PRIZES
+ EXCLUSIVE IN-STORE EVENTS

THE NEW HMV GAMES REWARDS CARD - VISIT YOUR LOCAL STORE NOW!

Terms and conditions apply. See card carrier in-store for details or visit hmv.co.uk/games.

top dog for music·dvd·games HMV

Welcome to X360...



The excitement of a new console launch is undeniable. Seriously, industry folk who are usually calm visibly wilt when they begin discussing their newest Xbox 360 masterpiece. Phone calls roll in from PRs and developers start listing off the games they want at launch – it's at this point that company loyalty vanishes. The buzz at the moment is so great I imagine Microsoft execs are excitedly pulling pictures from their wallets to show off their new baby boy… Xbox 360.

At the centre of this need to exercise such enthusiasm is yours truly, and my new team of equally excitable writers. The morning that news of the X360 price broke, we were all on the internet pre-ordering hardware and reeling off our preferred launch-day games to buy – Jay needs *Dead Or Alive 4*, Ryan can't live without *Project Gotham Racing 3* and Keith just wants to get old-school with *Quake 4*. Me? I'm simply looking forward to a country break in *Elder Scrolls*, sitting in the local alehouse larking about with a medieval wench.

So what will you be doing at X360's launch this December? Well, hopefully that's where we'll help you out. Every month we'll make it our priority to deliver the latest news, exclusive screens and first-hand coverage of Xbox 360's biggest games – this issue we've been to see *Project Gotham Racing 3* in action, experienced *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* and flown to Poland to play *Call Of Duty 2*. Plus, the fanboy in us tracked down *Sonic The Hedgehog* and *NiGHTS* creator Yuji Naka to get the scoop on *Sonic Next-Gen* – turn to page 96 for the first screens.

Now that's enough chatter, it's time to get down to the serious business of pawing through our first issue, go on, skip over the page…

Ian Dean
Editor

PS **Microsoft has got it right this time. This is the overriding opinion of everyone who has seen the Xbox 360 in action and paid close attention to Microsoft's plans for its new super console.**

The UK's best-value Xbox 360 magazine



X360 MAGAZINE
Every month we bring you fantastic games and fearless opinion



X360 DVD
The best free disc on the shelves, packed with exclusive features



X360 BOOK
Read the definitive history of *Halo*, from *Marathon* to *Halo 3*

XBOX 360! UK ON SALE DATE! 2 DECEMBER GET YOUR PRE-ORDERS IN FIRST! » more on prices page 18

+++ STOP PRESS +++ STOP PRESS +++

Xbox 360 Release dates revealed!

Just before we went to print Microsoft announced the release dates of the Xbox 360 hardware, here are the dates you need to circle in your calendar: **UK release, 2 December;** US release, 22 November; Japanese release 10 December. Remember where you read it first! For news on the prices and peripheral costs, turn to page 18.

+++ STOP PRESS +++ STOP PRESS +++ STOP PRESS



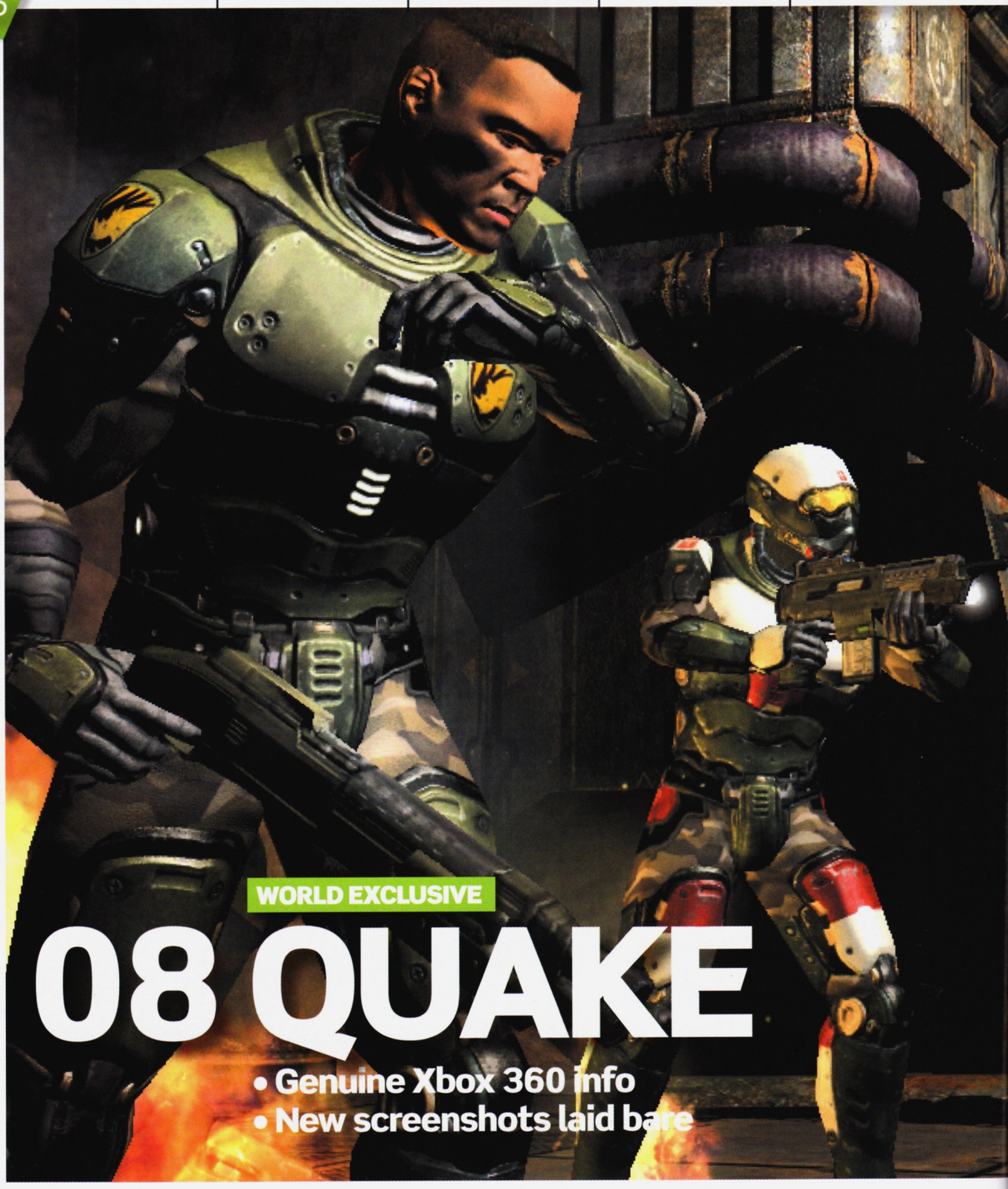
CONTENTS

X360 REGULARS

08 COVER	16 LETTERS	18 NETWORK	51 PREVIEWS	44 FEATURES
Quake 4 World Exclusive	Your rants and worries	Every known Xbox 360 game	Scorching new DOA 4 screens	Inside the Xbox 360 and Sega exposed

40 NEW GAMES

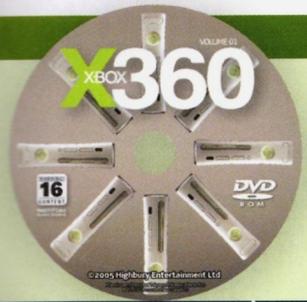
Alan Wake	36
Amped 3	41
Dead Rising	37
Demonik	37
Call Of Duty 2	60
Chrome Hounds	22
Condemned	100
Dead Or Alive 4	78
Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	82
Final Fantasy XI	68
Frame City Killer	88
Full Auto	99
Football Manager 2006	23
Gears Of War	90
Ghost Recon: AW	30
Gun	62
Halo 3	28
Kameo	24
Killing Day	39
LMA Manager 2006	23
Prey	72
Perfect Dark Zero	80
NBA 2K6	93
Need For Speed Most Wanted	92
Marvel Universe	109
Ninety-Nine Nights	40
Ridge Racer 6	108
Resident Evil 5	58
Rumble Roses XX	27
Quake 4	08
Saint's Row	41
Sonic Next-Gen	96
Test Drive Unlimited	70
The Godfather	93
The Outfit	41
Tiger Woods PGA	92
TimeShift	41
Top Spin 2	93
Unreal 2007	24
Virtua Fighter 5	29



WORLD EXCLUSIVE

08 QUAKE

- Genuine Xbox 360 info
- New screenshots laid bare



129 ON THE DVD
Quake 4, and *PGR3*, plus an exclusive virtual tour of the X360

107 COMMUNITY
Dedicated Xbox Live coverage

127 NEXT MONTH
Next issue's killer running list





NETWORK

018 XBOX 360 PRICES REVEALED
Pre-order yours now!

030 GHOST RECON 3
New screenshots and info on Ubisoft's thrilling shooter

036 IN THE WORKS
Every known or rumoured game in one easy to use listing

FEATURES

044 XBOX 360: BEHIND THE SPIN
The Xbox 360 hardware analysed

096 SEGA: THE NEW AGE
One of the biggest developers in the business opens its doors to **X360**

114 LIVE EXPLAINED
Everything you need to know about Xbox Live on X360

COMMUNITY

108 NEWS: RIDGE RACER 6
Namco releases details of its flagship racer's online modes

110 CLANS: PMS
The girls chat to **X360** about gaming, Live and irritating men

122 REVIEWS
DVD, music, book and hardware releases are rated



60 CALL OF DUTY 2
The best WWII shooter yet?

SUBSCRIBE! UNMISSABLE OFFER
RUSH TO SIGN UP NOW! Page 95



PREVIEWS

08 Quake 4 exclusive

52 PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3
Our man visits Bizarre Creations to see the best racer in the world up close

58 Resident Evil 5
60 Call Of Duty 2



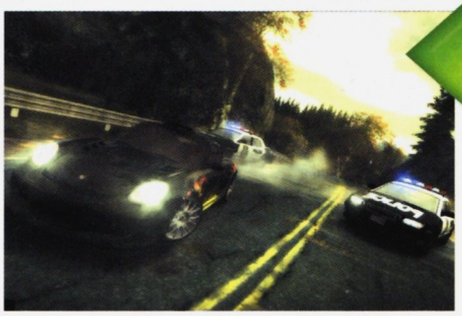
62 GUN
First-hand impressions of Neversoft's expansive Western adventure

68 Final Fantasy
70 Test Drive Unlimited
72 Prey



78 DEAD OR ALIVE 4
Stunning new screens of Tecmo's beautiful launch game

80 Perfect Dark Zero
82 Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion
88 Frame City Killer
90 Gears Of War



92 NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED
Street racing comes of age on X360

92 Tiger Woods PGA 06
93 Top Spin 2
93 NBA 2K6
93 The Godfather

Meet the team



IAN DEAN
GROUP EDITOR

Editing a launch issue of any magazine is a tough job for anyone, but for someone who used to take naps in between getting home from school and having dinner, it's a struggle.

FAVOURITE GAME / Elder Scrolls

ian@x360magazine.com



JAY FILMER
DEPUTY EDITOR

Being constantly at odds with the world ensures Jay is the most sarcastic member of the team. Full of cynicism and bitterness, only Kasumi's Xbox outfit raises a smile.

FAVOURITE GAME / Dead Or Alive 4

jay@x360magazine.com



KEITH HENNESSEY
NEWS EDITOR

Keith is one of those people who is always pleasant and happy. Even when recounting irritating recent events he's joking. Sometimes we see him just starring and smiling. Weird.

FAVOURITE GAME / Call Of Duty 2

keith@x360magazine.com



RYAN KING
COMMUNITY EDITOR

As Community Editor, Ryan gets to chat on *Street Fighter 3* forums all day and buy pointless Japanese merchandise from import websites. We envy Ryan, we envy him a lot.

FAVOURITE GAME / PGR3

ryan@x360magazine.com



KAREN RUTHERFORD
SENIOR SUB EDITOR

Being new to the team we don't know Karen very well. Well, not enough to use this small space to cruelly attack elements of her personality, anyway. Maybe next month.

FAVOURITE GAME / Final Fantasy XI

karen@x360magazine.com



ANDREW DOWNES
ART EDITOR

Always quiet, the best way to get a reaction from Andy is to just stand behind him and watch him work. Five seconds is all it takes for him to turn violent. Art types are so testy.

FAVOURITE GAME / Perfect Dark Zero

andyd@x360magazine.com

Contributors



Iain Lee

If you watch any TV at all, you've probably seen funnyman Iain Lee quite a bit. With an impressive career spanning comedy and gaming TV, he's now writing a column for us. Every month. Find Iain on page 32.



John Tynes

Living in Seattle, John is a game designer, writer and opinionated wise guy. So, who better then to offer regular insights into America's gaming conscious? Read his Xbox Live feature on page 114.

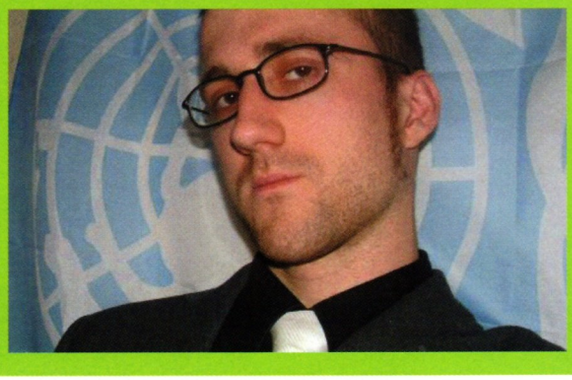


Andy Hartup

Deputy Editor on our sister mag **XBM**, Andy has been writing about Xbox ever since the original console shipped, you might say he's a bit of an expert on the subject. This month he visited Bizarre Creations for us.

Kieron Gillen

Freelance journalist and New Games Journalism enthusiast, Kieron seemed a natural choice for our first issue of the mag. Primarily a PC gamer, he's the ideal man to tackle crossover title *Elder Scrolls* this month. Read his impressions on page 82.



X360

Highbury Entertainment Ltd, Paragon House
St Peters Road, Bournemouth,
Dorset. BH1 2JS

Tel: +44 (0) 1202 299900
Fax: +44 (0) 1202 299955
Website www.paragon.co.uk

CUSTOMER SERVICES
If you have a query regarding a subscription please contact the subscription hotline on 0870 444 8682 or email paragon@cisubs.co.uk. For all other queries including missing covermounts, please contact our Customer Services Department on 01202 200200 or email subs@paragon.co.uk.

MAGAZINE TEAM
Group Editor Ian Dean
ian@paragon.co.uk

Deputy Editor Jay Filmer

News Editor Keith Hennessey

Community Editor Ryan King

Senior Sub Editor Karen Rutherford

Art Editor Andy Downes

Group Senior Editor Steve Bradley

Group Art Editor Paul Ridley

Consultant Editor Matt Bielby

Contributors
Kieron Gillen, Andy Hartup, Iain Lee, John Tynes, Will Johnston, Ian Collen

ADVERTISING
Commercial Manager
Nick Roberts
01202 200242
nickr@paragon.co.uk

Advertising Director
David Dumville
020 7608 6508
david.dumville@highburygroup.com

Group Advertising Manager
Mandy Critchley
020 7608 6515
mandy.critchley@highburygroup.com

Classified Sales Executive
Caroline Sanyare
01202 209308
caroline.sanyare@paragon.co.uk

Ad Production Co-ordinator
Lorraine Troughton
Production Controller
Caroline Bradford
Ad Copy Controller
Caroline Bradford

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION
Production Co-ordinator Jo Spick
Production Manager Dave Osborne
Bureau Manager Chris Rees
Circulation Manager Tim Harris
Tel: +44 (0) 1202 200200
Fax: +44 (0) 1202 200217

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING
X360 is available for licensing overseas.
For details, please contact...
International Sales Manager Leylah Honeybourne
Tel: +44 (0) 1202 200205
Fax: + 44 (0) 1202 200217
leylah@paragon.co.uk

DIRECTORS
Chairman Kelvin MacKenzie
CEO Mike Frey
Publishing Director Dave Taylor
Editorial Director Dan Hutchinson
Creative Director Trevor Gilham

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Subscription Rates
(13 issues) UK £34.99 UK direct debit £7.99 every three issues
Subscription Hotline: 0870 444 8682

Printed by Wyndeham Heron Ltd, The Bentall Complex, Colchester Road, Haybridge, Maldon, Essex
Tel: 01621 877777

Distributed by Seymour Ltd, 1st Floor, 86 Newman Street, London W1P 3LD Tel: 0207 3968000

Xbox is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and other countries. **X360** is an independent publication not affiliated with Microsoft Corporation. The views expressed within are not necessarily the opinions of Microsoft, its software partners or third party software publishers. All copyrights and trademarks are recognised. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher.

HIGHBURY ENTERTAINMENT

©2005 Highbury Entertainment Ltd
Highbury Entertainment Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Highbury House Communications PLC, Registered Office: The Publishing House, 1-3 Highbury Station Road, Islington, London N1 1SE ISSN 1471-1192

When machines learn to feel, who decides what is human?

"... one of the most visually ravishing and thought-provoking future fantasies to ever hit the cinema screen." Hotdog

GHOST IN THE SHELL 2: INNOCENCE

15 CONTAINS STRONG FANTASY VIOLENCE

IN CINEMA'S 28TH OCTOBER 2005

www.manga.co.uk/ghostintheshell2



GHOST IN THE SHELL
[STAND ALONE COMPLEX]

"ONE OF THE MORE 'MEATY' SERIES ON THE UK SHELVES AT THE MOMENT AND ONE WHERE ALL THE VOLUMES CONTINUES TO BE CONSISTENTLY IN THE TOP 10 ANIME BEST SELLERS CHART - AND RIGHTLY SO TOO." EYEONANIME.COM

VOLUMES 1 - 5 OUT NOW
VOLUME 6 OUT 17TH OCTOBER 2005

MANGA

www.manga.co.uk

HMV
top dog for music·dvd·games



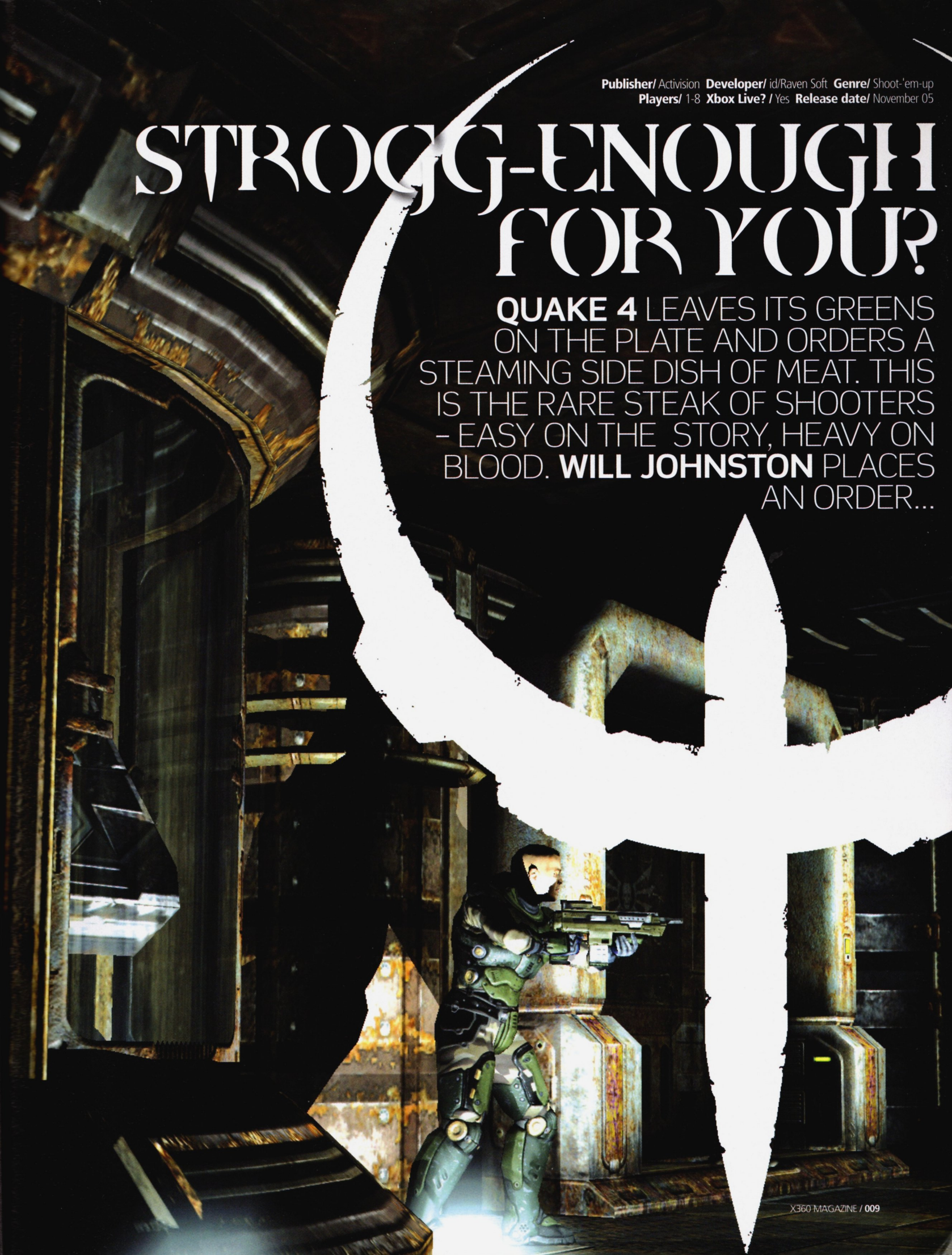
ON THE X360 DISC

- MTV Teaser trailer
- Gameplay trailer
- Full trailer (commentary)
- Screenshot montage

Publisher/ Activision **Developer/** id/Raven Soft **Genre/** Shoot-'em-up
Players/ 1-8 **Xbox Live? /** Yes **Release date/** November 05

STROGG-ENOUGH FOR YOU?

QUAKE 4 LEAVES ITS GREENS ON THE PLATE AND ORDERS A STEAMING SIDE DISH OF MEAT. THIS IS THE RARE STEAK OF SHOOTERS – EASY ON THE STORY, HEAVY ON BLOOD. **WILL JOHNSTON** PLACES AN ORDER...





Turn the lights off, start trying to repeat your junior school headmaster's name backwards , and things already get a bit scary. See, we're all wimps. *Doom* was scary because its very premise was a nightmare. One guy, limited weapons and a Mars station overrun with demons of large amount and variety; dark corridors, flickering lights and hulking great beasts pounding out of the shadows and there's your game. Scary.

Games are products that adapt to survive, and are susceptible to being infected by the ideas of others. Narrative structures are no longer just the hooks that hold it together; they have to be part of the reason the game is played, and are often a big suspect when trying to work out why a game kinda sucked. *Doom* didn't have a story worthy of study, but was designed from the bottom up as a shooting game set in a maze, and excelled at being so. The fact that the enemy were beasts from another dimension and plentiful was one reason, and reason enough, why you would be happy to kill them for a few hours. Get the key card. Kill the enemy. Get out. Get spooked.

id Software's *Quake* was an evolution of *Doom*'s premise through technology. It used surface caching on light-mapped polygons to create its characters, and it used as much power as it could scavenge from the hardware it was running on to create fewer of them than you would get if relying on *Doom*'s basic bitmaps. There were fewer enemies. It was caged by its own polygonal requirements. But it managed to make partially lit corridors, trembling lights, Nine Inch Nails' audio and encounters with small numbers of agile and deadly evils suitable ingredients for an intense experience.

This ability to adapt to new grounds, while retaining the strength of its basic, violently passionate heart, serves you *Quake 4* on Xbox 360. New Technology and time to cock a leg at the dogmatic design principles of the past. It's time to see what happens when id's most iconic product, and its history of quality adaptation, hook onto the possibilities of the now.

"The *Doom 3* technology is a natural fit for the development of *Quake 4*," explains Tim Willits, id Software's game designer charged with resurrecting one of gaming's most cherished shooters. "The power of the technology has allowed the level designers and artists at Raven to really explore and realise the Strogg universe and characters like never before."

When discussing the X360 hardware, there seems to be a real love affair between id and Microsoft: "The great thing about developing for the Xbox 360 is that it has the raw horsepower needed to run *Quake 4* exactly as it has been created." So often

LOFTY CONVERSIONS

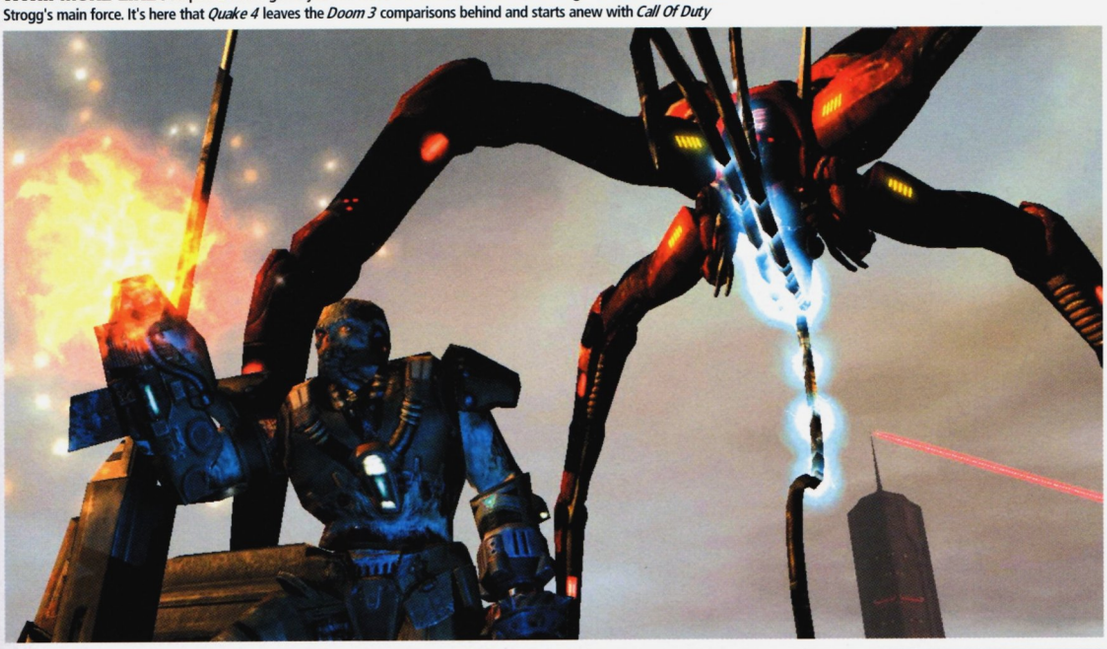
And Quake cried "nevermore"

While full props go out to John Carmack (he worked on *Doom*, created *Quake*) and id Software, we'd like to take the time to mention the little guy. Raven Software is the studio behind *Quake 4*'s development, and has no small experience of creating first-person shooters. They've been working with id since the early Nineties, when both companies were in their infancy. As id's Tim Willits says: "They've been working with our technology for many years, and have proven themselves to be one of the premier FPS developers in the industry."

If you still don't know the name, perhaps you'll recognise the games. Raven are the folks who, through no small level of benevolence, gave you *Star Trek: Elite Force*, *Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix* and... *Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy*. As you can see, *Quake 4* is their biggest profile game to date. If they pull it off (which they pretty much have) they will enter our circle of trust.

www.ravensoft.com is your first point of call for Flash intros and Quake 4 information

WWIII MORE LIKE / At points in the game you will leave the corridors and trenches to go head-to-head with the Strogg's main force. It's here that *Quake 4* leaves the *Doom 3* comparisons behind and starts anew with *Call Of Duty*





when developing a title for the PC and console, a developer such as id would be forced to scale down the console version to accommodate the comparably lower system specs. But with *Quake 4*, the development of the PC and Xbox 360 versions are locked tightly together, with no compromises being made whatsoever for our new games machine.

THE EVOLUTION OF QUAKE

The use of technology to create a believable world from a franchise founded on the principle of blowing shit away is where the jump from *Quake II* to *4* will begin to rear its head, so we'll save any tension by divulging a fact early on: there is a point in the game where you get horrifically mutilated and cast into the miserable biomechanical horror of a Strogg. Please imagine the sound of a cathedral organ slamming out some power chords… now. Perfect timing.

This 'transtroggmifacation' is placed amid a story set directly after the events of *Quake II*. This fact will rightly give you the inkling that there must, therefore, be a story. There is, and it's not one that's going for tension. You already know the twist, as does everybody who's heard about the game in any detail. Of course great games don't rely on twists: they rely on having a fluid relationship between you, them, and the worlds they describe. Quake is the name of the evil god that you heartily ruined at the end of the first game. *Quake II* took some weapons and the name (because Quake sounds tough, and licensing new names is a nightmare) and threw you into a new story, and situations that made more sense. Quake the god was dead, Quake the sci-fi shooter was born, and gothic cathedrals had been swapped for alien installations. There was now an enemy (Yes, The Strogg – they'd attacked first, apparently) and behind them a leader, the Macron. An explosive plot device left you the only survivor of a crack assault team, and the keys you'd be collecting will do more than open doors. They'd power up doors, and activate terminals and stuff. There was a story, and the great thing stories can do is explain exactly why it was so important to fight your way to a particular button.

The tale of the nameless soldier that ended with the death of the Makron and the destruction of planet Stroggo's defence system starts again in *Quake 4,* with Matthew Kane, an elite member of the Rhino Squad, taking part in another deadly assault on the alien home world. He's a new guy, but the situation is familiar. Kane and his fellow troopers rocket towards the planet in drop ships as a space battle rages on. They get hit by missiles, and go in hard. This time you're not the only survivor: there are marines shouting everywhere, Strogg pouring

QUAKE IN TIME

The original *Quake* ran quite happily on the sort of PC they now give free to Third World countries pre-loaded with a rather decent version of Solitaire. It was a technical marvel at the time, one that kept the action based more on death than performing tasks. *Quake II* changed all this and added mission-based gameplay, which meant that instead of keys you'd have to find… other things. By *Quake III*, all idea of a strong narrative had been dropped in favour of multiplayer death dealing, no keys, and lots of gibbing. The game's engine was farmed out to other developers, and became the backbone of Raven Software's *Soldier Of Fortune II*. And now Raven is making *Quake 4* under id's close guidance. (We're not making this up! Check the boxout on Raven Software on the opposite page.)



QUAKE / Behold the mighty Quake at the end of the first game. Luckily, pure evil has a problem moving out of its pit



QUAKE II / Started a new story (it actually had one!) and made you work hard for your killing. Plenty of it, mind



QUAKE III / Screw stories, this is Quake III Arena, and it's all about multiplayer matches – in arenas. Quake at its purest, perhaps



QUAKE 4 / It's part Quake II, part Quake III, and held together with a Doom III binder

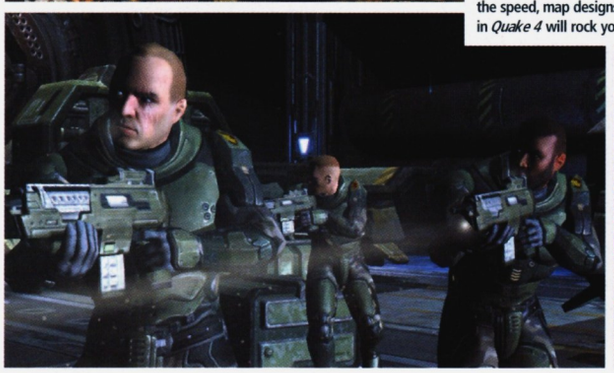
VOYEURISTIC TENDENCIES

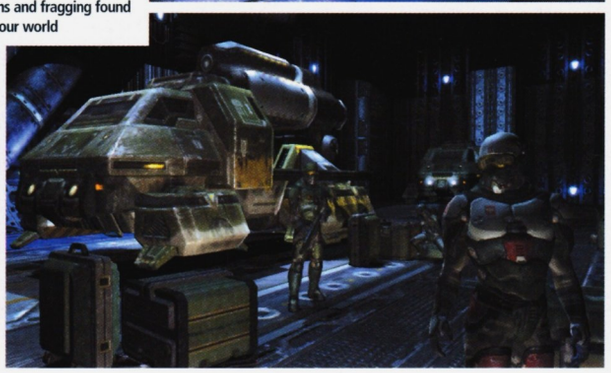
You like to watch, don't you?

Quake 4 keeps its multiplayer modes down to basic games of murder. This means that multiplayer options are kept to the classical Deathmatch and Capture The Flag variants, while Tourney mode enables you to take part in a match and then watch how it plays out. This is the first time you'll see Tourney in an official *Quake* release, as before number 4 it was only available as a mod pack









STROGG ON / *Quake III* fans rest easy: the speed, map designs and fragging found in *Quake 4* will rock your world



in on the crash site are giving as good as they're getting. And you? You've got to start this invasion with a pistol.

THE PROMISE OF QUAKE 4

"From the beginning, *Quake 4* has been designed to deliver an action-packed, diverse and epic gaming experience," states id's Tim Willits, before excitedly expanding on the aftermath of Kane's chaotic landing and what you, the player, will get to do. "Throughout the course of the game you fight alongside your squad mates, pilot mechanised walkers and hover tanks, and battle through larger outdoor areas as well as in nasty firefights inside incredible portions of the Strogg facilities."

As you can tell, once the action kicks off, that little pistol that served you so well at the crash site will be forgotten in an instant. "The Strogg versus Earth war, which was first introduced in *Quake II*, is a very rich universe, with great characters, interesting opportunities for plot twists and some of the coolest weapons id has ever created. So, ultimately, we set out to create a non-stop roller-coaster ride of action that at every turn offers a new challenge, a unique gameplay experience, or new insight into this massive war that rages across the Strogg planet."

What separates *Quake II* and *4*'s openings is that a plot hasn't killed your team to serve the needs of the technology: the X360 and *Doom 3*'s engine are happy bedfellows. Thus, your men are alive – and they are talking to you and each other like characters rather than props. They'll use their newly discovered brains and trigger fingers to tell you where to go and what to do, but they most certainly aren't up for taking orders.

Their presence in the game isn't to drag it more toward *Rainbow Six 3* or *Republic Commando*, as Willits explains: "We never intended *Quake 4* to be a tactical squad game. First and foremost, *Quake 4* is a first-person action game. The story revolves around you and your experiences with the members of Rhino Squad. Each of the team members has a very unique personality, and it has been incredibly important to incorporate your relationships with your squad mates, as well as large segments of squad combat, into the game."

But those marauding troopers aren't there to help you. They are there to make you feel as if you're one of many in an assault team. It's a move intended to keep combat as fast as possible, and to create a more intense future war, and it works.

"As players move through the game, we want them to feel like they're part of a larger war and not just a lone gunman, so the interactions and combat with your squad, and the many other characters and squads that you encounter, really deliver the feeling that you're part of a massive operation," says Willits.

Consequently, *Quake* now feels more like a movie than before, but without relying on ponderous cut-scenes of TV sci-fi



ON GUARD / Quake 4 keeps to the twitchy gameplay ethic that makes both reactions and marksmanship much more important than teamwork. That counts too, mind



> "Pilot a hovertank in battles with flying Strogg gunships"
>
> **TIM WILLITS, LEAD DESIGNER, ID SOFTWARE**

GET MECHANICAL / As with Halo, you will now be able to use vehicles. Woo-hoo!

storytelling. It's still about you, your guns and how you both work your way around a map looking for keys and triggers – but this time it's war. Sprawling battlefields beautifully lit, mechanised troops stomping their resilient exoskeletons into platoons of squishy flesh – noise, blood and carnage. It'll take more than closing your eyes and imagining to bring you close to the new chaos. It'll take Xbox 360.

A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES

Ironically, it's adherence to the story and not the power of the new technology that makes the game look familiar. Evidently The Strogg's architectural style, being so perfectly designed to sustain beings bent on assimilation, hasn't needed to vary that much. Combat will take place in open areas (where vehicles like tanks and walkers can be utilised), as well as across ruins, in rooms and corridors – it all has a familiar feel that's confident in the knowledge that it's merely a backdrop for violence. The Strogg are as subtle as Space Invaders in their motives for being in the game, and so it should come as no surprise that, being basic videogame meanies, they haven't built many beautiful cathedrals or have ever exhibited an unmade bed clattered with condoms.

Halo's Covenant builds towards a religious ideal, but the Strogg just want to kill you – and then go to work on you. They haven't slipped out of a novel. They're very much game constructs. If their home looks prettier it's not because they've taken Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen's severed head and impaled it on the rusted data spike of a robotic engineering droid, but because *Doom 3*'s engine is still state-of-the-art. Seeing *Quake 4* on the move is to witness a graphical spectacle that these screenshots fail to convey.

"When it releases," enthuses Willits, "*Quake 4* on Xbox 360 will immediately demonstrate the benefits of having a next-gen gaming platform. The real-time lighting and shadowing, bump mapping, vehicle and world physics, scripting and animations systems all work together to create an unbelievably cinematic experience for the player."

With developers making bold claims about how new breakthroughs in game design change how we play, it's heartening to note that, visuals aside, there's no pretence with *Quake 4*. The single-player game is unashamedly like *Quake II* – but faster, more intense, and with the squad of *Call Of Duty* and the ability to use vehicles. The multiplayer mode answers a question you have to ask about a game numbered four in a series that follows on from part two: what happened to *Quake III*'s glory? Well, it's been expanded on in *Quake 4*.

Quake III was designed as an online experience, and is still regarded as a favourite among the online elite. "It is still widely considered the best pure first-person competition game ever made," attests Willits. It works, and doesn't need fixing, as

IN HIS OWN WORDS: ID'S TIM WILLITS

The Quake game designer shares his excitement

"You'll play through everything from outdoor scenes, where you pilot a walker or hovertank in battles with flying Strogg gunships or massive Strogg Harvesters, to squad missions that take you into the inner recesses of the Strogg bases, or into intense combat through trenches dug into the surface of the Strogg planet. You'll man a turret on the bed of a truck during a convoy mission, and even see the inner workings of the Strogg processing facilities as you're captured and partially converted to Strogg in a horrific transformation sequence. These aren't individual maps, but a story that moves you through a vast range of areas during a war that is taking place across the entire planet."





WIMP / The new squad system will take some getting used to for regular Quakers



TIM WILLITS: STILL EXCITED

id's lead designer shares his fave Quake power-ups

"The multiplayer arenas are designed and balanced for competitive gaming. *Quake 4* offers several Deathmatch and team-based multiplayer modes, including DM, team DM, Capture The Flag, Tournament, and Arena CTF, which incorporates our popular *Quake III: Team Arena* power-ups into the *Quake 4* Capture The Flag matches. These power-ups, like Guard (armour and health boost/regeneration), or Doubler (constant double damage), to name just a couple, really change the dynamics of a capture the flag match. There is only one power-up per team, and it takes a lot of strategy and communication for a team to effectively use the power-ups and co-ordinate the offence and defence of each map. I'd have to say Arena CTF is probably one of my favourites – particularly if I have the Guard."



THE BIT IN THE MIDDLE

Strogg! Strogg! Strogg! Strogg!

Hey, guess what? You get transformed into a Strogg halfway through the game, and gain special Strogg abilities – like being tougher. And more violent! But you knew that (everybody knows that). Still, the inclusion of a human/Strogg bastard warrior will mean that not all characters will feel the same, while adding some strategic choice to your skin. Better still is the chance to steal some gigantic robotic armour, so you can carve your name with pride using heavy firepower that cuts through grunts with more violence than a U.S peacekeeping force. *Quake 4* is bloody to the point of satirising itself. It won't be seen as that, however. Expect this one to be the new poster boy for videogame violence.

HAND ON THE NINE

There are nine weapons available in *Quake 4*, and the mainstays are favourites from *Quake* of old, re-imagined for a new generation of gamers. Among this number are your standard Gauntlet (for smacking people), Shotgun, Grenade and Rocket launchers, Hyper Blaster, Rail Gun, and the Dark Matter Gun. This last beast only comes with a single shot, but that can destroy anything, no matter how much armour it has – even if it's a mechanised walker.

Despite being old tech, these guns can be used in a 21st Century way: we're talking Dual-Wielding. The blaster and machine gun both have flashlights fixed under the barrel (*Doom 3* critics, take note), and used in tandem with a secondary weapon – say, a rail gun – will offer a three-fold advantage. The quick action of the blaster, the power of the rail gun and the light of the torch.

Where *Quake 4* steps up a gear is in the flow of the upgrades. Throughout the game, your Strogg side will enable the weapons you hold to be enhanced by technicians found in the game. These techs will grant you with new mods, and enhanced or alternate firing options depending on the gun and technician – they will vary from the simple, such as a new rate of fire or clip capacity, to the sublime, such as projectiles that home in on targets.

Of course, enhanced old-school weapons wouldn't be enough for a ravenous Quake community used to the best-of-the-best in terms of FPS arsenals. So, id has kindly created a few new weapons for *Quake 4*, including a lightning gun that emits a massive blast of sustained electricity that can arc from enemy to enemy – is that a combo hit counter we hear coming?



ETCH-A-SKETCH / Back when we were young we'd draw images much like this all over our French exercise books when we got bored of Eddie from Iron Maiden



POWER LIVING / *Being a Strogg has its upside, such as gaining access to new kit*

any areas in need of addressing have been vocalised by the game's legion of fans. Thanks to modding, *Quake* has always enjoyed a two-way relationship between those who make it and those who forgo human relationships to become deadly at it – as well as understand what makes it work. Thousands of the most vocal (and mobile) of this community were among the first to play *Quake 4* at this year's Quakecon in Dallas, Texas. Few games are probed by such numerous and fervent testers, and few games treat the community that makes them so great with as much respect as id.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE GAMEPLAY

Multiplayer *Quake 4* is a conflict of speed and destruction on a large scale. The immediacy of the combat, and quickness of death, make it a blisteringly frantic detonation of pure gaming that takes place in claustrophobic installations, as well as across undulating battlescapes.

"We've really been excited to get back to the speed, feel, and style of *Quake III Arena*," reassures Willits, aiming to dampen speculation Xbox Live won't be an integral part of the new bloodbath. "With *Quake 4* multiplayer, we've brought all the action, speed and precision of *Quake III Arena* into the *Quake 4* universe and technology, and created something that again is going to excite not only fans of the *Quake III Arena* style of play, but anyone that wants the excitement of fast-paced, competitive multiplayer gaming."

Adding in controls perfected over time, constant aggression, and particularly "gamey" inclusions like jump pads, gives the game an arcade sensibility, while the graphical power and understanding of how to make mechanised hell on an open field gives a deeper and more operatic feel. It's an old idea running on new technology. It works. This really is gaming at its purest.

Again, Willits is at pains to ensure all *Quake* lovers that, when they load up *Quake 4* on Xbox 360, that old purist's experience will still be there. "At the end of the day, gameplay is what makes the difference in whether or not people want to play your game online, so we're focusing a great deal of effort to make sure that the *Quake 4* multiplayer gameplay is well balanced, accessible, and most importantly fun for the X360 audience."

With that in mind, who better to deliver the perfect Live blast at Xbox 360's launch than the developer responsible for *Doom 3* and *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*... as well as *Quake III*. Just look at what Willits says *Quake 4* should be supporting on Xbox 360 Live: "Matchmaking, communication, friends, Live Aware, downloadable content, and other features are all elements that we're continually evaluating for *Quake 4*, and how we can best utilise them to make connecting and competing online both easy and fun."

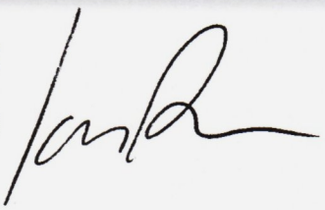
Quake 4 is product. Say that about a film and you're probably criticising *Titanic* or *Star Wars*. Say it about a game and you're probably mocking a title from a global giant that shoves a number on its butt and goes around clucking that it's new because the way you intercept a football is slightly different or that the shotgun takes a quarter of a second less to rack. *Quake 4*'s product status is, however, not a negative one. Indeed, it is on course for being The Best Of Quake.

Games are built on a technology that's constantly evolving, but that doesn't mean that they themselves have to evolve to remain valid. If you want to cut something, you don't need to develop a million megavolt laser: you need a sharp knife. *Quake 4* is the sharpening of the existing *Quake* toolbox. It's about providing the cleanest slices of the most uncluttered of all the first-person shooters currently available. It's built from, as well as on, what has always made *Quake* stand above the competition, so its similarities should be celebrated in much the same way the gun lover bows in the presence of a new and shiny assault rifle that has a new grip, new bullets and a fancy new scope, but still works on the same principle of expanding gases that have been blowing apart people's heads for years.

If you knew the plot twist to a movie, you'd ruin much of the reason to watch. With a product of this quality, though, the selling points aren't revelations of relationships between evil wizard and hero, for example. The revelation is in the quality of the workmanship that holds the game world together, drives the enemy toward you, and makes stopping him such an ancient pleasure. It's not trying to be a film, or even a new invention. *Quake 4* is just quality first-person shooting of the highest order, and the perfect product for the X360 to prove its mettle with. Game on. ■

POSTAL

Our first letters page, and handily we've swiped some post from our sister mag XBM, so what you're reading are the real concerns of real Xbox owners. From here on in, though it's down to you, so pick up the baton and start running with *your* X360 queries, for *your* new console. Or just tell us how awesome we are...



CONTACT US

LETTERS
We prefer letters – it makes us feel popular in the office. Send your letters, sweets and freebies to:

X360 Magazine,
Paragon House,
St Peters Road,
Bournemouth,
Dorset
BH1 2JS

EMAIL
Send your email letters to:
letters@x360magazine.com

PHONE
Call the **X360** team and chat about games and your social problems, on 01202 209301 between the hours of 4pm and 6pm

SMS TEXT
Feel free to text us with rants, proposals or praise on:
07813 297947

FAX
If you're posh or an angry lawyer looking to complain about review scor... then please fax on:
01202 299955

ABOUT THAT PS3 THING...

❑ I'm writing with concern regarding the Xbox 360's chances against the PS3. I fail to see how it's going to compete against the graphics shown by Sony at E3 because they were, quite frankly, out of this world. Xbox 360 games just look like slightly updated Xbox games.
James Keaton, Devon

Believe it or not, nothing shown at E3 by Sony was actually real. It was all rendered trickery running to an ideal that's impossible for Sony's new hardware to reach, even at the high price the company will probably put the console out at. £400 is what we've heard so far...

HD DILEMMA

❑ I just want to ask one question: am I the only person who's worried about Microsoft keeping on about high-definition TVs all the time? I can't afford to buy a new console and a new TV all at once. Does it really make that much of a difference? And how much am I missing exactly by sticking to my normal TV? If it's too much I might just wait for Nintendo's Revolution, as I heard somewhere that they aren't making their games for high definition.
Paul Goater, Sunderland

Firstly, that's not one question – it's three. Secondly, don't worry too much about high-definition. While HD is a massive improvement, offering far more clarity and detail, Xbox 360 games still look magnificent on standard TVs, easily eclipsing current-gen games. Oh, and don't wait for Revolution. You'll get extremely bored – it's not going to be here until at least 2007.

A YOKEL WRITES

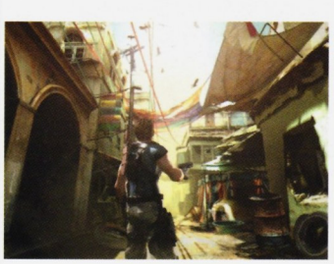
❑ Well done, Microsoft – in your quest to monitor the world and have everyone hooked up to your central brain, you've forgotten one thing – some people, like me, who are unfortunate enough to live in remote parts of the British Isles where tractors and horses are the most common form of transport, don't have broadband and feel quite alienated by the importance being put on Xbox Live.

Don't you think it's perhaps too soon to be treating Xbox Live connectivity with such a large degree of importance when loads of people still can't play it? This is what killed the Dreamcast. With every game supposedly always connected, I'm going to be made to feel inferior, and as though I'm constantly missing out every time I spot yet another greyed-out option in the game menus that further reinforce the notion that Xbox 360 isn't made for yokels like me.
Martin, email

We sympathise, Martin, we really do, but keep in mind that as you prepare for another morning milking cows and hosing down pigs, more people than ever are using broadband. In fact, it's now more popular than dial-up, meaning this is the perfect climate for Xbox Live. Analysts predict that 80 per cent of European households will have broadband by 2010, so it shouldn't be long before you can get it and start playing the wonders of Live too.

RESURRECTING EVIL

❑ First off, I am really excited that the new *Resident Evil* will be coming out for Xbox 360. It's about time Capcom released good games on the big 'X'. (Well, *Dino Crisis 3* was a bit boring – maybe more than a bit). Anyways, I think Capcom should release more *Resident Evil* games on Xbox 360: if *Resident Evil 4* can move from GameCube to PlayStation2, then why not X360? In fact, I think Capcom should remake *Resident Evil 2* and *3* for X360 (just like they did to the original PSone classic for GameCube).
Suneil Barkat, email



FIGHT THE POWER

Star letter

I CAN'T BELIEVE people are taken in by Sony's hype and lies. I remember when the PS2 was being hyped and Sony said the CPU of the machine could display emotion, naming it the Emotion Engine in the process. This turned out to be an over-exaggeration of the machine's power and, as such, makes me extremely suspicious of what the PS3 will actually be capable of compared to the fake videos and screenshots released from E3.

Sony is also focusing too much on hardware. Sony keeps on about the graphical capabilities, but Microsoft has developed an amazing operating system that has made Xbox Live even better and is providing tools and middleware for programmers.

Sony is once again letting developers get on with it, even though the system is really hard to develop for.
Colin Morris, Leeds

The developers we've recently spoken to all say there's very little difference between the two consoles, with both being very capable machines. However, you're right to be suspicious of Sony – the company's PS3 graphics chip wasn't even finished at the time of those E3 demos. Further to this, Microsoft's commitment to software will be the defining difference between the two systems. Fundamentally, software can be upgraded through patches over the next eight years, enabling X360 to develop with the market, while the PS3's chip will remain the same.

THE SPOT
"Don't anger him"

Remember, everybody – we want your reasoned, sensible letters on gaming, and not letters like the one to the left. Here're a few other topics we don't want to have to read about: the likelihood of Microsoft buying Nintendo; which is best out of PS3 or Xbox 360; the probability of us sending you free games. And no, we don't want to cyber – but thanks for asking.

❑ Dude, what's going on with *Halo 3*? Why do us loyal 'box owners have to wait for Sony to pull its finger out and release the PS3 before we can play *Halo 3*? C'mon Microsoft, aren't we worth some *Halo 3* magic? Forget Sony, they don't know shit.
Matt, email

"Oh, you've done it now, sunshine. *Halo 3*? *Halo* bloody *3* – what's wrong with *Halo 2*? True, Xbox owners are more than happy to spend days installed in Xbox Live playing Bungie's last classic. Arsehole. You, sir, are going straight to hell – and my boot up your whiny pale anus is going to drive you there."

We're more than happy *Resident Evil 5* will be coming to Xbox 360, even if we are going to have to wait well over a year. But do we really want a slew of old games remade? Let's just be happy that Capcom has finally seen sense and will be publishing its biggest franchises on Xbox.

A BACKWARDS REQUEST

❑ I need you to put the record straight. Is the X360 going to be fully backwards compatible with Xbox games? The reason I ask is that on page four of your **X360** pull-out magazine [given away free with sister mag *XBM*] you state that the X360 will be backwards compatible, but in the August 2005 issue of *Personal Computer World*, on page 40 they rabbit on in a paragraph on the X360 that (I quote): "it will be backwards compatible with some 'top-selling' Xbox games, which will be re-released on a demand-driven basis."

Now I know that you wouldn't print anything without being aware of your facts, and do believe that *PCW* are reporting on old rumour-based information, but please do me the justice of putting my mind at rest and confirm what you have printed. Then please advise the rest of the games media world to print the true facts, as they are undermining the X360's credentials already by getting things half-right. I believe that quite a few Xbox owners may base their decision on buying an X360 on whether their current software selection will play on it or not, irrespective of the fact that there will be a lot of titles out for it at launch. So for these so-called highbrow publications to report on things half-cock is not on.

Also, all the whingers going on about the name of the Xbox 360: I couldn't care less what it's called, as long as the games kick arse and Xbox Live has no time-lag.
Meticulous, email

BURNING ISSUE

This month, the hot topic on the **Totalgames.net** forum has been the Xbox 360's price

I've got stylus
"Just toddled over to **simplygames** and saw that they have listed the X360 at £399.99! Even though this is an estimate, I still think that it will be around that point."

Rancid
"360 will flop hard at that price."

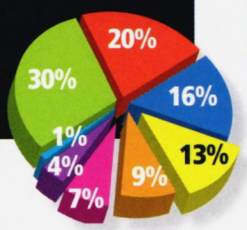
The Dark One
"You may as well just buy a budget PC and buy PC games."

BioYoshi
"Aw my god! £400? That's pap! £250 max I say (or at least I hope)"

MAILBAG BREAKDOWN

People's hopes, dreams and fears...

- PS3 sucks
- Xbox 360 rules
- Nintendo will win this time
- I can't afford HD TV
- When will *Halo 3* be out?
- I can't get Xbox Live
- Can I play you at *Pro Evo*?
- Can I have a free Xbox 360?



The Xbox 360 backwards compatibility is based on emulation, and therefore Microsoft cannot guarantee that all games will work initially. When the machine launches, the most popular games will work and Microsoft will add further compatibility over time. So, the totality of the statement was, in fact, true, although it now appears that only the best-selling Xbox games will actually work. Seriously though, do you really want to play *Miami Vice* on your spanking new Xbox 360? Wouldn't you rather play something like *Project Gotham Racer 3*?

RANT

❑ You know, if Sony and Microsoft stopped hurling insults at each other and worked more on their new consoles, we would have them by now.
Christopher McGrillen, Co. Donegal

If only it was that simple...

WARNING: RAVING FANBOY OF THE MONTH

DOING MARIO PROUD

❑ So you're releasing a new Xbox 360 mag, are you? Well, you might as well not bother, because as soon as Nintendo comes out with the Revolution, your precious X360 is going to die.

Nintendo has Miyamoto – the best designer in the business. Nintendo has Mario – the best games character ever. Nintendo will have the best joypad, as they always make the best and most innovative joypads! You hear that Microsoft – 'innovative'. It's a word you don't understand and you will die!
Miles, Bournemouth

Not only are your points irrelevant, but you're also forgetting about Xbox 360's head start, its Xbox Live service, its superior games line-up and the fact that the Revolution doesn't exist (yet).

TEXTS

HOW MUCH WILL X360 COST?
ANON
Turn the page to this month's news.

I WANT DEAD OR ALIVE 5 SO MUCH. THE GIRLS ARE MUCH PRETTIER THAN MY GIRLFRIEND
JAMES P
They may well be, but at least your girlfriend is REAL. (Or is she?)

WHAT GAMES DO YOU PLAY ON LIVE? CAN I ADD YOU TO MY FRIENDS LIST?
DEAN
We'll think about it

WILL I HAVE TO PUT A PICTURE OF MYSELF ON LIVE 360? I'M NOT VERY GOOD LOOKING
TOM, MANCHESTER
If you are incredibly ugly, we'd suggest putting a fake picture up of someone better looking. Like, say, Dean Gaffney

HAHAAA XBOX IS DEAD IN JAPAN AND X360 WILL LOSE!!!!
ANON
Yeah right, because winning over Japan was always high on Bill's Christmas list. Perhaps one billion Americans might have more cash?

I WANT TO ADD YOU TO MY FRIENDS LIST!
DEAN
Easy, tiger. We're still thinking.

DOES THE 360 HAVE THREE OR FOUR CORES? WHAT IS A CORE?
SAM
It has three, and they're the console's processors

WILL THE XBOX BE AVAILABLE IN BLACK? I THINK BLACK LOOKS QUEER.
ANON
We've seen a black machine, but its likely a debug kit

XBOX 360 ONLY £209.99

Microsoft delivers next-gen gaming for all

After keeping gamers guessing for months, Microsoft finally revealed how much we'll all be paying for next-generation gaming. The Xbox 360 will be released in two packages – one appealing to affluent hardcore gamers with a strong desire for media convergence and online gaming (that's us, then), the other geared towards cost-conscious gamers that either plan to upgrade their system gradually, or who want to start playing next-gen games and don't care about having frivolous extras.

The cut-down package, labelled the 'Xbox 360 Core System', carries an RRP of just £209.99 and consists of the Xbox 360 console, one wired controller, an Ethernet cable and a standard composite TV connection. This includes out-of-the box Xbox Live Silver service, so long as the user also buys a memory card in which to store their account details. This compares well with the upcoming PS3, where Sony is threatening a reassuringly expensive price tag – it has claimed you will joyfully work longer hours to be able to afford their next offering.

The full X360 package has an RRP of £279.99, and comes bundled with one wireless controller, a 20Gb hard drive, an Xbox Live headset, HD component cables (plus »



HAPPY CHAPPIES / Microsoft's Chris Lewis with Martin Bachmayer (left) and Stephan Brechtmann (right) at the announcement of Xbox 360's price



WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

TWO PACKAGES FOR TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF GAMER. HERE'S WHAT YOU GET FOR YOUR MONEY



CORE SYSTEM £209.99

- Xbox 360 Console
- Power Lead
- Wired Controller
- Ethernet Cable
- Composite Lead

FULL PACKAGE £279.99



- Xbox 360 Console
- Power Lead
- Wireless Controller
- High Definition Component Lead (includes composite scart adaptor for standard definition play)
- Hard Drive
- Xbox Live Headset
- Ethernet Cable
- Remote Control (for a limited period after launch)

EXTRA BITS...













YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

Two packages and a host of accessories means the Xbox 360 promises something for everyone...



IAN

Oddly, Ian seems to be worrying more about backwards compatibility than anything else, so he's going for the full pack (£279.99), as it contains the hard drive that makes backwards compatibility possible. Usefully for Ian, who owns an HD TV, the full pack also has the HD component cables in the box, meaning he doesn't need to buy an extra lead. Ian is also keen on playing online, so will be going for an Xbox Live Gold (£39.99) subscription. Lastly, due to his home entertainment centre being mostly silver, Ian wants a matching faceplate (£14.99) so his X360 won't look out of place.

A respectable **£334.97**



JAY

Being the geek of the group Jay wants to do everything with his X360. He wants to play on Live and video chat with his equally geeky mates, he wants to stream movies and music from his PC and he wants to connect his X360 to his home wireless network. He also plans to hide his pornography on his Xbox 360 hard drive where his girlfriend won't think to look. In addition to the full pack (£279.99), he needs an Xbox Live Gold subscription (likely to cost £39.99) and a wireless networking adaptor (£59.99). He doesn't have an HD TV yet, so an RGB scart lead (£17.99) is an essential addition.

A sizeable **£397.96**



RYAN

Ryan wants everything and he's going to be very poor this Christmas because of it. If you're a member of Ryan's family, don't expect any presents this year – he's spending all he has on himself. He wants the full pack (£279.99) and because he shares a flat needs two extra wireless controllers (£65.98) to make the most of his live-in opponents. He also wants Xbox Live Gold (probably £39.99), a wireless network adaptor (£59.99) and an RGB scart cable (£17.99). In addition he would like a faceplate (£14.99) as he feels it will allow him to "stand out as an individual" in his house of men. Greedy.

A meaty **£478.93**



» a scart adaptor for standard definition output), and for a limited period pre-Christmas, the Xbox 360 media remote. An Ethernet cable for instant connection to Xbox Live Silver is also supplied, and thanks to the inclusion of a hard drive, a memory card isn't required to store account details.

Despite sighs of relief from UK journalists, the US attendees were less jubilant. Expecting a price point of around $300 for the full pack thanks to a previous price suggestion from Xbox figurehead J Allard, US press were quite taken aback to learn that the premium pack will retail in the US for $399.99.

Traditionally the US dollar price gets converted directly into pounds, as happened with the original Xbox, which launched at $299 and £299 respectively. However, Microsoft is a company that learns from its mistakes – the original Xbox at £299.99 met with consumer apathy in the UK, leading to the price quickly being dropped and 'free' games being offered to early adopters who had been stung for the full cost.

Other concerns are being levelled at the decision to sell the console without a hard drive. With a large portion of gamers lacking the hard drive, it will be impossible for developers to use it effectively in their games.

In reality, very few games for the first Xbox used the hard drive in any dramatic way, and according to some developers, the large amount of RAM (512Mb) inside the X360 is an adequate substitute. "Developers already got our big Xbox 360 gift – we got 512Mb of RAM," says Mark Rein, vice president of Epic Games. "That was a huge win for developers and customers alike and there was no way we were going to get that and a hard drive on every machine. The RAM is more important and will make a bigger difference than the hard drive."

EXTRA BITS...

















KEITH

Being a busy news editor, Keith doesn't have time to exchange pleasantries with petulant American youths and is therefore not interested in playing Xbox Live. He is also without a PC at home, and lacks any desire to stream music to his X360. Add in the fact he's quite thrifty and it's easy to work out he's going to be buying the Xbox 360 Core package (£209.99). He does have an HD TV, though (it was probably free), so will be forced to shell out extra for component cables (£19.99) that aren't included in his cheapo Core pack. The only other thing he needs is a memory card (£22.99) to store game saves. Sorted.

A cheap 'n' cheerful **£252.97**

Rein is also keen to point out that the decision is not entirely an unexpected one and therefore, it should have no detrimental effect to anyone's development for the console itself. "Developers were always told not to expect a hard drive on every machine, which means that nobody has developed with the assumption that it will be there," he assures.

Backwards compatibility for the previous generation of console was seen as a major factor in the success of the PS2, though, so there is a bit of a gamble here as the hard drive will be required for original Xbox games to play on the X360. Core bundle purchasers won't have this feature, and so would have to shell out more. In addition, it may also prove difficult to push the Xbox 360's extensive multimedia features to an audience that has chosen to embrace the console purely as a gaming device. We'll have to wait and see . ■



HOW MUCH? / When the price was announced, many UK gamers at the show couldn't believe their ears – Microsoft had passed up the opportunity to rip us off!

"ALL I CAN SAY TO YOU IS THAT WHICH WE'VE SEEN, AND THAT WHICH IS STILL TO COME IS INCREDIBLE"



QUOTE UNQUOTE / CHRIS LEWIS

Following Microsoft's press conference, we took Chris Lewis, European vice president of Home and Entertainment Division EMEA, to one side to talk exclusively about Xbox 360

X360: WHY ARE YOU OFFERING TWO DIFFERENT PACKAGES?
LEWIS: It's about offering choice and flexibility… People want scalability and to be able to customise… People want to do different things with the console at different speeds in terms of the way they want to build that experience. The reaction from the publishers and the retailers and the consumers is one that totally reinforces that. They just love the fact that it scales and for those people that want to jump straight in to the full, integrated experience that is the Xbox 360 system, but for those that just want to jump into playing high-definition games, etc. they have the opportunity to do that straight away with the Xbox 360 core.

X360: ARE THE PUBLISHERS WORRIED ABOUT A SPLIT IN THE XBOX 360 MARKET?
LEWIS: We work very closely with the publishers… They've known for some time what our plans are and I met with a number of them again and they're all very comfortable and very enthusiastic about what we're doing, and in terms of them writing games to it – they're not the least bit concerned and they love the choices. The mere fact we're about to offer a choice is going to give us a greater adoption and a faster acceleration of the platform.

X360: WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH BACKWARDS COMPATIBILITY?
LEWIS: The machine will be backwards compatible… The most popular games will be compatible.

X360: DOES THAT MEAN NOT ALL GAMES WILL WORK?
LEWIS: It's about emulation as I'm sure you're aware… we'll continue to work on that compatibility consistently, but we will make sure that the key titles will be backwards compatible.

X360: SO YOU NEED A HARD DRIVE FOR BACKWARDS COMPATIBILITY?
LEWIS: Yes, absolutely.

X360: BUT CUSTOMERS CAN BUY THE HARD DRIVE LATER IF THEY WANT TO?
LEWIS: The hard drive will be available in retail as an accessory, as indeed will all of the accessories that will allow the consumer to scale and build their Xbox 360. Certainly there will be the ability to scale and buy some or all of the elements that go to make up the Xbox 360 system. But you can do it at your own speed. You may want to get straight in to high-definition gaming, you might just want to play games, you might want to play music through your Xbox 360 system, but you may not immediately know whether you want to expand that experience. And that's what's fantastic about the X360.

X360: HOW WILL RETAIL HANDLE THIS? WON'T IT LEAD TO BLOATED, COSTLY BUNDLES?
LEWIS: That's a tricky one. Retail – particularly in Europe – will be looking to do what they're good at and come up with their own unique proposition that makes sense for their customers. In terms of what they're specifically likely to do, I'm not certain. I will tell you that they're excited about the accessories market – it's an important one for them as it gives them the ability to customise their offerings to their customers, that is the specialists and the mass market audiences.

X360: WILL RETAILERS STICK TO YOUR RECOMMENDED PRICES?
LEWIS: The retailers determine the price that the consumers pay. [At the press conference] we talked about the fact that these are estimated retail prices. In terms of the way retailers choose to go to market… that's their decision. If I think back to existing platforms, consistently the price does get established and people stay reasonably close to that. With retailers though, there are companies that will package a bundle and add various things to create a unique proposition on the high street. I'm very comfortable that will work well. I think what we're trying to do is establish the price point in the market and establish the all-important choice aspect.

X360: LOOKING AT THE HARD DRIVE, WILL 20GB BE ENOUGH?
LEWIS: At the moment 20Gb is the right level of storage. However, we're flexible, if there is a need to scale that then I'm sure you'll see that happen.

X360: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SILVER AND GOLD XBOX LIVE MEMBERSHIPS?
LEWIS: The Silver level membership that comes with Xbox 360 gives you access to the voice and text messaging [as well as] access to the Xbox Live Marketplace where you can start to trade with other people and work with other people to design skins or driving suits for racing games, etc. The Gold level gives you immediate access to the multiplayer online gameplay. You have voice and video chat and you have access to online tournaments.

X360: SO YOU NEED GOLD TO PLAY ONLINE GAMES?
LEWIS: You do for multiplayer, yes.

X360: SOME DEVELOPERS HAVE SAID THAT DVDS AREN'T LARGE ENOUGH FOR THEIR GAMES. DOES THIS WORRY YOU?
LEWIS: I wasn't aware people felt they were at capacity. In terms of needing more space, we would need to act accordingly, but that's the first time I've heard that.

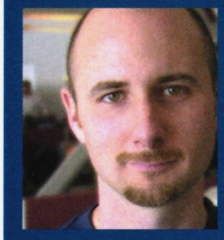
X360: WHAT DOES XBOX 360 GAMING OFFER THE GAMER?
LEWIS: I think the experience and the huge step in terms of the gaming experience that's offered with Xbox 360 is very compelling, very immersive; I think the gameplay will be a lot deeper and broader. All I can say to you is that which we've seen, and that which is still to come is incredible. We're very confident we will have the right line-up of first-party, third-party, exclusive and cross-platform games.

INTERVIEW

The brain behind epic RPG *Sudeki* from Climax ponders all things Xbox 360...

JASON AVENT

GAME DIRECTOR, CLIMAX



X360: WHY IS MICROSOFT SO SURE IT CAN PLACE A CONSOLE AT THE HEART OF THE HOME?
AVENT: Microsoft has as much or more direct experience with this than anyone else. Xbox 360 will be much more configurable than anything we've seen before. It can be turned to more purposes than other consoles because it's got a user friendly operating system. Accessibility is key when you're trying to get people to use new features, and thereby generate new markets.

AVENT: HOW WILL MICROSOFT'S PUSH FOR CONNECTIVITY CHANGE THE WAY YOU MAKE GAMES?
AVENT: User-created content will be shared between gamers. People will help one another outside of the game more, as well as inside, and we'll need to make an effort to drive community with clans and persistent online player personas and worlds.

AVENT: DO YOU THINK ONLINE GAMING WILL BE AT THE HEART OF THE NEXT-GEN CONSOLES?
AVENT: I'm sure that games will still be released with little or no online play and still be successful. I'm not convinced that we'll see online-only console games yet, either.

X360: CAN WE EXPECT DEEPER GAMING EXPERIENCES, OR JUST PRETTIER GAMES, FROM XBOX 360?
AVENT: To begin with, we'll just see prettier games. Then we'll see games with more of everything in them. More doesn't necessarily mean better, though. Finally, when they are comfortable with the new hardware, developers will begin to innovate.

X360: HOW DO YOU FORSEE GAMING EVOLVING IN THE NEAR FUTURE?
AVENT: Online will definitely become more important. We might see some unsuccessful, uninspired ports at first, but when someone finds the magic recipe for making a console-centric Massively Multiplayer Online Game, our business will never be the same again. I also believe that this generation could be when we truly open the media up to a wider audience.

SEGA MECH'S OUR DAY

A NEW LEASH OF LIFE

Sega panders to old-school gamers with Chrome Hounds

It was becoming a close-run thing: the Xbox 360 was almost the first console not to feature a mech game. Luckily, to save tradition, Sega has stepped in with the From Software developed *Chrome Hounds*. This is the latest tactical robo sim from the developer behind *Armored Core*, and as such comes with all the punch that a mech heavyweight developer can deliver.

Rather than set you alone against an army of walking tanks, *Chrome Hounds* puts you into squads of six mechs. Each will have unique abilities and custom options that will enable you to build a balanced team from scratch.

A detailed finance system will be in place, to ensure creating the best mech is a goal that needs to be worked for, as producer Klayton Vorlick explains: " You earn money for completing missions, and can spend the money you earn in between missions to buy upgrade parts."

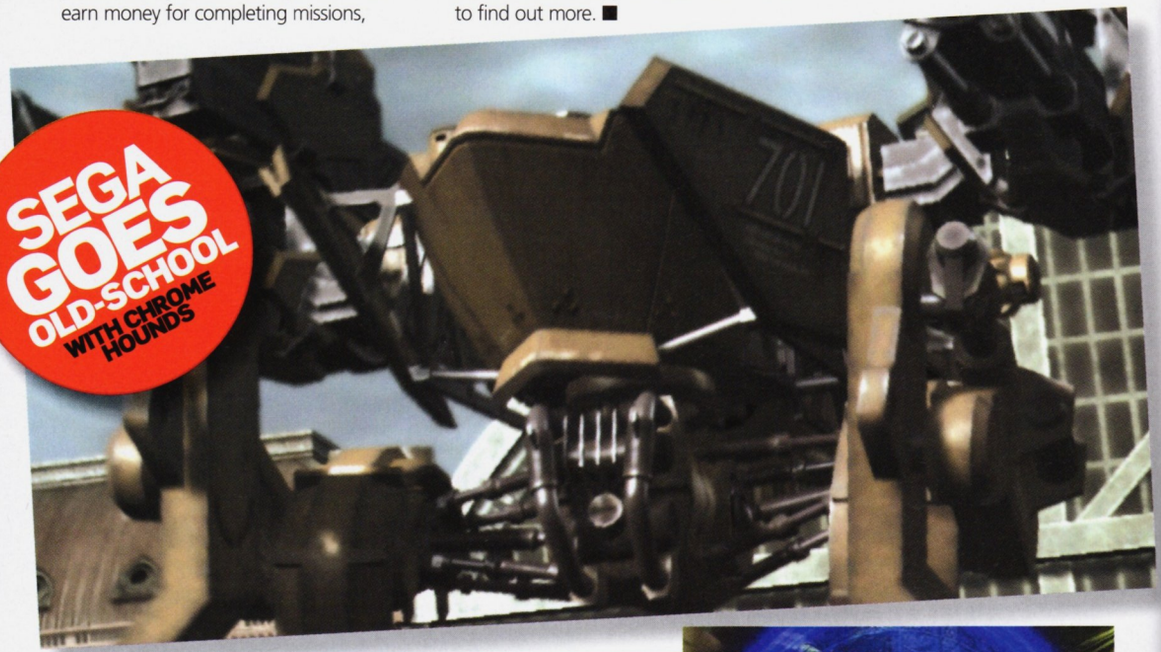
The physics engine powering *Chrome Hounds* will demand that a bit of thought goes into each mech design. If you load a walker with a hefty 50ft cannon on its left side, you'll need to counteract the balance on the right. Put tracks on a misaligned mech and the only place you'll be going in round in circles. As for game modes, *Chrome Hounds* will be a Live must-buy as, along with the offline story, a twelve-player team skirmish mode will get the oil flowing, while a mission based squad mode will require more skill.

It's been a while since a decent mech game made the headlines, so we hope Sega can polish this one up ready for launch. Grab a copy of **X360** next month to find out more. ■





HEAVY METAL / With any luck this mech shooter should have some bite to add to its very impressive graphics



DOUBLE VALUE

Perfect package

MICROSOFT TEASED us with details of the *Perfect Dark Zero* Collector's Edition this month. The two-disc set will include a bundle of freebies and collectables that delve deeper into Joanna Dark's world of futuristic espionage. As well as the full game of Rare's long-awaited next-gen FPS, you will also get a disc packed with unusual media. This will include the art of *Perfect Dark Zero* featurette, the Kepi & Kat music track from the game, Gamer Tiles to customise your identity on Xbox Live, the *PDZ* HUD to customise your X360 dashboard and the first chapter of the *PDZ* novel, *Initial Vector*. The package will also come with a *PDZ* Glyph Card as well as a special-edition comic, *Hong Kong Sunrise*.



To find out more about *Perfect Dark Zero*, skip over to our exclusive preview interview on **page 80**

GAME ON

Clash of the Titans: Games of a similar ilk come together to fight it out...



FOOTBALL MANAGER 2006 VS. LMA MANAGER 2006

Two of gaming's biggest football manager franchises go head-to-head

March 2006 will see two classic franchises going toe-to-toe on Xbox 360. *LMA* is a stalwart of the console scene, while *Football Manager* is the best a PC gamer could want. From the revealed features it would seem that *LMA* is remaining close to its console roots, offering friendly, quick gameplay, while *Football Manager* will be a straight port of the PC version, delivering unrivalled depths and sophistication.

We're promised new menus and stats, plus new commentary to liven the matches further, and specific gamer form and stats screens to get under the skin of a player. You'll even be able to berate the team at full time, as well as half-time, to affect players' performances – something Sven could definitely do with.

New features aside, the promise is that *Football Manager* on Xbox 360 will take full advantage of the console's power, using the High Definition mode to display more info on screen, and even utilising a new split-screen option.

Though *FM* is certainly shaping into a serious next-gen sim, *LMA*'s improvements shouldn't be overlooked. We know the commitment to delivering an easy playing experience will remain, but an improved interface, a new database engine that will allow for complex transfer negotiations and a detailed 3D match mode will be some of the features planned to utilise the X360's power. There will also be the added value of playing a full 20 seasons, watching young hotshots come through the ranks, court the headlines and retire disgracefully to the third division: all the highs and lows of the real game are here.

Also, in something escalating into a war of promises, Codemasters has come back at Sega's claims of pushing the X360's power, by stating *LMA 2006* will feature normal mapping and enhanced lighting effects on the players and stadiums in the 3D matches and post-game match reports.

It could be argued that, from initial promises, *LMA 2006* and *FM 2006* are matching each other shot for shot. The winner could depend on a preference for *LMA*'s console ease or *Football Manager*'s PC heritage – or it could depend on each game's Live options.

> "IN A SUDDEN DEATH FACE-OFF BOTH ARE LOOKING TO LIVE TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE"

Just like a sudden death extra time face-off, both are looking to Live to make the difference. It's here that Codemasters could slip up, as *LMA* is only promising transfer downloads and gamer points, earned from tallying wins and awards.

Over to *Football Manager* for one final attack on goal, and it's a beauty. Sports Interactive is throwing itself headlong into Live, with a Versus mode that will test player's tactics. They shoot! They score! ■



SIDE BY SIDE

Here's how the two games stats match up next to one another...

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2006

- Negotiate wages and contracts
- Motivate players with team talks
- Manage players at a personal level
- Improved training routines and back room staff commands
- Revamped tactics screens
- Detailed match commentary
- New player stats and form screens
- Detailed High Definition menus
- Xbox Live features, including Versus challenges and downloads

VERDICT

Football Manager has the depth and legacy to take Xbox 360 to the top

VS

LMA MANAGER 2006

- Improved database engine
- New transfer system will offer more detailed negotiations
- Normal mapped 3D match engine for next-gen appeal
- Intuitive pad based controls
- Over 1,000 teams to manage
- More than 20 consecutive seasons
- Player database downloads via Live
- In-depth post-match reports
- Detailed High Definition displays

VERDICT

LMA could struggle to win over *Football Manager*'s installed fanbase

SMALL Print

PS2 DEVELOPER JUMPS SHIP

» Cavia, the developer behind *Drakengard* and *Drakengard 2* on PlayStation2, has revealed to Japanese magazine *Famitsu Xbox* that it has begun work on several fantasy games primarily for Xbox 360. Apparently, next-gen console conversions will not be far behind either.



MICROSOFT HACKED OFF

» Microsoft is hoping to shake off the Xbox's image as a hacker's heaven by building security directly into the hardware of the X360. "We've taken security to the hardware level, and built it from the ground up," says Chris Satchell from the Xbox Advanced Technology Group. "There are going to be levels of security in this box that the hacker community has never seen before."

That would be a public challenge to the world's modders, then.

The small stories you have time to read between meals (or heartbeats)

5 IN 5 SECONDS

MARVEL UNIVERSE...
An MMORPG developed by Microsoft

SPLINTER CELL 4...
Coming in early 2006, apparently

HI-REZ STUDIOS...
License Unreal Engine 3 for new MMORPG

UNREAL ENGINE 4 ...
It's in the works, says Epic

OBLIVION ...
Linda Carter joins the A-list cast

"JUST £210 FOR ALL THAT POWER? THAT'S EXCELLENT VALUE – IT'S ONLY £30 MORE THAN A PSP!"

THE HOT SEAT / MARK REIN, EPIC GAMES

With so many Xbox 360 games using Epic's Unreal Engine 3 technology, we raid the studio for the inside story



Without a doubt, Epic Games is one of the most exciting creative talents in the videogames industry right now. The developer has come a long way since vice president Mark Rein co-founded the company back in 1991, having established its *Unreal* series of games as one of the key first-person franchises around today. However, despite a past littered with successes, it's the future that now holds the most in store for the developer.

"Some of the other games on the format look good, but there's nothing as good as *UT 2007*," Mark Rein proudly boasts, deservedly pleased with the progress of his upcoming PC shooter *Unreal 2007* and the amazing Unreal Engine 3 powering it.

While *Unreal 2007* is yet to be 'officially' confirmed for Xbox 360 (we're expecting confirmation any day now), Epic is fully committed to the platform, with the benefits of its Unreal Engine 3 already being put to great use with the company's first Xbox 360 title, *Gears of War*. Indeed, the quality of Epic's Unreal Engine 3 has the industry so excited, more companies are licensing the engine for their own next-gen games.

"The main advantage you get with Unreal Engine 3 is the extremely high level of productivity for content development," Rein explains, citing the ever-increasing costs associated with videogame development. "You listen to developers talking about next-gen games and saying how difficult it's going to be to create content, and it's true... creating content and building believable lighting and environments is much more complex. Plus, content isn't just about artwork: it's about scripting and using that CPU horsepower to make worlds believable." According to Rein, Unreal Engine 3 is the perfect solution: "It really helps to control costs and makes this generation of games not five or ten times as much [to make] as everyone's been saying, but only a jump of around 30-40 per cent in cost over previous generations."

Developers are able to get great results for a fraction of the headaches and development costs – it's little wonder the engine is being used to power many Xbox 360 games.

And what of the Xbox 360 itself? Rein is keen on the platform, enthusing about its power, ease of development and extra features, but the price impresses him the most: "Just £210 for all that power? That's excellent value – it's only £30 more than a PSP!" ■



BIOG

NAME / Mark Rein
COMPANY/ Epic Games
JOB TITLE / Vice President and Co-Founder
CURRENTLY WORKING ON / Gears of War, Unreal 2007
DID YOU KNOW? / Epic is already developing the Unreal Engine 4

Check out *Gears Of War*... P90

Rare treat

Kameo's taken forever to get here, but it's looking worth the wait...

It's been passed about more times than a baby at a baptism, but somehow Rare's *Kameo: Elements Of Power* will finally be launched this November with the Xbox 360. Originally a GameCube platformer, it was then earmarked as an Xbox adventure. Now an X360 fantasy epic, *Kameo* would be forgiven if it turned out to be a bit confused. *Kameo* features platforming, free-roaming adventure, RPG development, and it also has the look – exotic lighting, vast environments and more enemies on screen than Man United has fans.

"All the models in the game now use complex shaders to mimic real materials; this is basically similar to the techniques used to render computer graphics for films," says Mark Stevenson, the Lead Artist on *Kameo*.

Parallax mapping is also included, offering a feeling of 3D without the memory sapping textures of bump mapping, plus screen effects to mimic how bright light flares on film, heat haze and depth of vision.

Expect a hands-on play test of *Kameo* in next month's **X360** as we build up to the game's November launch.



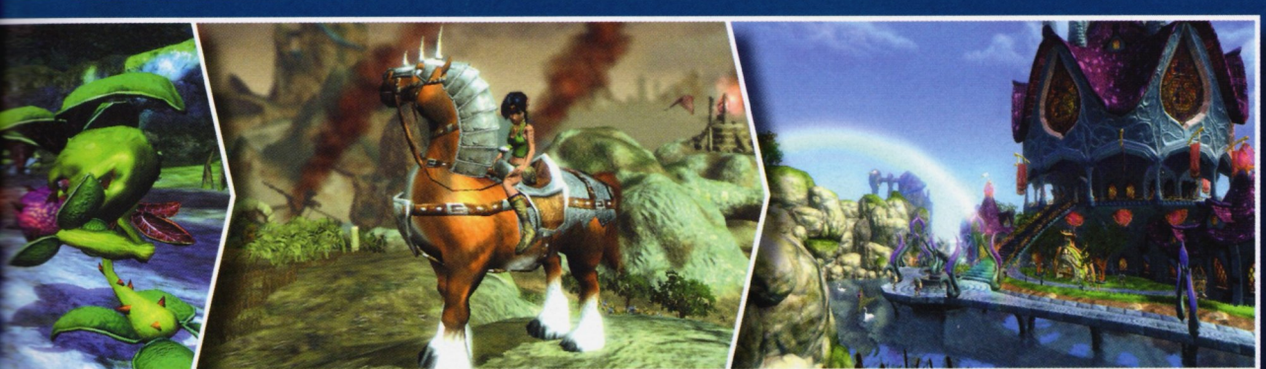
FLOWER POWER / *This plant is one of the many weird creatures Kameo can become*

COMING SOON
It's not yet confirmed for Xbox 360, but Epic's *Unreal 2007* is a shoo-in for conversion

LIGHT UP
The Unreal Engine 3 is one of the most powerful middleware tools around, and can produce cutting edge effects easy as pie

IN THE DETAIL
Great looking textures are just a hint at what this burgeoning technology can achieve

IF YOU LIKE THIS... PREY READ THE PREVIEW » Page 72

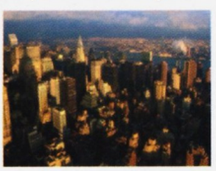


SMALL Print

ROCKY RIDE
» French developer Asobo Studios has thrown its hat into the ring with the rally game *Grand Raid Off Road*. Despite the strange name, the game is shaping into a traditional racer set in a free-roaming environment.



TIME TO BUY
» A report in the *Seattle Times* speculates that Microsoft is planning to open a dedicated Xbox 360 store in Times Square to promote and sell the new super console at launch. A second boutique is rumoured to be planned for Tokyo.



PAY TV ON X360
» As we went to press, details were emerging of a deal between Microsoft and Nagrovision to deliver Pay TV (securely encrypted programmes) to the X360 via Windows Media Center PCs. Full details of this new media feature next month.

XBOX 360 KEYBOARD
» Despite refusing to develop a keyboard for the original Xbox, so as to distance it from its PC heritage, a recent presentation in Spain revealed the existence of a first-party QWERTY keyboard for the X360, similar to those found on Blackberry handheld devices. The keypad will slot into the bottom of the controller, allowing gamers to send text messages and chat during Live play.

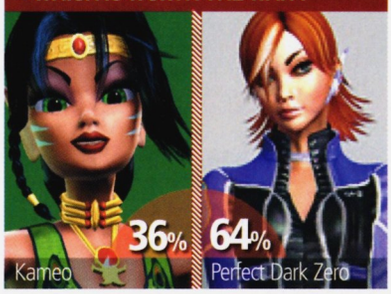


burningissue@x360magazine.com

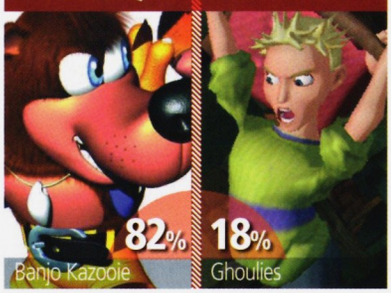
BURNING ISSUE!

Rare has been in hibernation on Xbox since Microsoft paid a fortune for the studio, but the fans don't care. We posed Xbox owners some questions...

» WHICH IS WORTH THE WAIT?



» WHICH SEQUEL FOR XBOX 360?



» WHO GETS MORE LOVING?



» WOULD YOU RATHER...



LOG ON TO
www.xbox360magazine/forum
to vote on next month's big burning issue question:
Is the hard drive important?



THE HACK

X360'S BAR FLY HUNTS OUT HOT NEWS

Trawling the gaming gutters for salacious gossip and rumour...

Have I got some juice for you. Sega has been topping the conversation down the Dog and Whistle with rumours rife of a next-gen version of **Shenmue** getting people worked up. Basically, despite all of the stories to the contrary, your old pal Yu Suzuki isn't working on a new **Shenmue**. He is in fact hard at work in Sega's arcade department, hammering away on new next-gen coin-ops. As witnessed when he recently reared his head with footage of next-gen arcade versions of **Afterburner** and **Virtua Fighter** (read more about this on page 29 – Ed). On a related matter, a quick nip over to the patents' office and I discovered Sega has bought the name **OutRun: Coast To Coast**. Does this mean a new racer is scheduled for release next year?

Once the furore over Sega's offerings dimmed, the mood turned to something Capcom producer Kenji Inafune let slip at the recent Tokyo Xbox Summit. When asked what he was working on besides **Dead Rising**, Kenji stated he was busy developing a game based on a franchise 'older fans would remember him best for'. What could this be? The other big franchise connected to Inafune, **Resident Evil 5**, was already on the cards. So what could this secret project be? A trawl through the files shows Kenji as creator of **Megaman**, so does this really mean there's an Xbox 360 version of **Megaman** in the works? I'll dig a little deeper into this and get back to you with the full scoop soon.

Well, with the hardcore gamers sated, I'll just leave you with one final tasty morsel: EA's launch line-up. The big gossip circulating outside the gents was that **FIFA 2006** won't see the light of day on Xbox 360. There, that's stunned you into silence. But it's not as bad as it seems – in fact, it's better, as the American games giant is toying with the idea of ditching an Xbox port for a stand alone Xbox 360 **FIFA**. If this is true, then we would get a next-gen **FIFA** proper, no Xbox upgrade. Best of all, this new tidy little number will go under the name **FIFA: Road To The World Cup**. That's right, we can expect a **World Cup** special edition that FIFA designed specifically for the Xbox 360 as early as this November. Things are looking even better for EA, too, as news that **PGR 3** may slip to December means **NFS Most Wanted** will be the only X360 racer at launch. On that bombshell, I'll sign off for this month. Your pal, The Hack. ■

DEVELOPERS GET DIRTY

America's talent queue up to work on X360



THE FUTURE looks brighter by the day, as industry big shot Foundation 9 (home of The Collective, Pipeworks and Backbone) threw its weight behind Xbox 360. In the past the group has developed games for all the major publishers, including Activision, EA and Vivendi Universal, and is considered the third largest development group in America. The group has around 30 games currently in development for Xbox 360. The first release from the group will be next year's action game based on the *Dirty Harry* films, starring Clint Eastwood. More on this next issue.

"AN ALL-GIRL WRESTLING GAME STARRING A BEVY OF BEAUTIFUL COMBATANTS" Konami

X360 Hot Prospect

RUMBLE ROSES XX

The DOA girls have some competition

THE ORIGINAL

Rumble Roses was released on PS2 earlier this year and went down a storm in Japan, which we're guessing is why Konami has plumped to launch into the next-gen whirlwind with its saucy new franchise.

Another obvious reason is that girls rendered on next-gen hardware look great, and will sell a game: just look at the success of *Dead Or Alive*. With this in mind, *Rumble Roses XX* is looking to catch the eye by rendering the game's 20 girls perfectly to showcase X360's visual capabilities. More so, Konami promises personality to match the polygon counts; we're betting mischievous schoolgirl Reiko and that Daisy Duke wannabe Dixie will grab the attention of many male gamers.

Glamour girls aside, the game will play out like any other fighter, with a tournament mode allowing you to meet and bitch-slap the other girls on the road to the Championship title.

It may not have the true finesse of *DOA 4*, but if wrestling is your thing you shouldn't miss this date.



SMALL Print

BLUE JAM

» EA and Def Jam Enterprises have a new contract that allows EA to create multi-platform games. The first game will be *Def Jam 3*, and will continue the beat-'em-up series' knack for delivering glossy multi-discipline combat. The X360 version will be released first, and action movie production values are promised.



IN CONTROL

» Microsoft is asking third-party peripheral manufacturers to sign binding royalty licences, so only sanctioned companies can release pads, light-guns, dance mats and steering wheels for the Xbox 360. Does this spell the end for cheap unofficial pads?



DO YOU GET THE MESSAGE?

» The new *Perfect Dark Zero* website has opened, and some titbits of info are leaking out for gamers wanting to break the site's codes... head to **www.perfectdark.com**



MADNESS?

» Artifirial Studio's *Monster Madness* is aming to deliver old-fashioned gaming with four-player Live arcade action reminscent of old coin-op *Gauntlet*.



RUMOUR MILL Cutting through the internet gossip and whispers of Master Chief's return to bring you the real news... Trust us, we're professionals!

HALO 3



RED HOT RUMOUR

Halo 3 will support 50 players online.

YOU SAY:

There will be an online Co-operative component for the campaign supporting more than two players at once.

WE SAY:

It's an interesting concept from a multiplayer perspective, but ultimately pointless. How many people played through the Co-op campaign in the previous games? Also, even if you do manage to get four bullet-spitting buddies together, it will only be a matter of time before the urge to shoot your mates overpowers your desire to help them.

RUMOUR RATING: ★★★☆☆

YOU SAY:

Halo 3 will have a darker, grittier storyline than previous instalments.

WE SAY:

What's with the need to make every game dark and gritty all of a sudden? *Halo*'s tone has always been fairly sinister, and just how do they intend to make it more 'gritty'? Perhaps Master Chief will remove his helmet to reveal a head of long unkempt hair and designer stubble. He'll forgo Dual-Wielding and opt for stealth kills instead – there'll be blood and gore aplenty. SlipKnot are said to be providing the soundtrack.

RUMOUR RATING: ★★★☆☆

YOU SAY:

Halo 3 will support 50 players online.

WE SAY:

The thought of up to 50 players duking it out over Xbox Live is a mind-blowing prospect. Games like *Black Hawk Down* are already proving that it is achievable, so we reckon this is a dead cert, but will there be 50 Master Chiefs on offer or just the one? What's that? Six of us, 50 of you...

RUMOUR RATING: ★★★☆☆



YOU SAY:

The game will contain a multiplayer mode which pits players against bots in scenarios that are directly connected to the story

WE SAY:

A pretty easy one to deliver, and we relish the opportunity to annihilate more whiny Grunts in any context, be it connected to the story or not.

RUMOUR RATING: ★★★★☆

WE SAY:

Please, please, please say it isn't so. The last thing we need is some two-bit action Jackson like The Rock or Vin Diesel turning up to spoil the party.

RUMOUR RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆

It will feature voice acting from the stars of the upcoming movie.

YOU SAY:

CORTANA TURNS OUT TO BE MASTER CHIEF'S MOTHER

WE SAY:

Hmm, maybe, picture the scene...
Cortana: If you only knew the power of *Halo*. Dr Halsey never told you what happened to your mother.
Master Chief: He told me enough! He told me you killed her.
Cortana: No. I am your mother.
Master Chief: No, no. That's impossible!
Cortana: You know it to be true.
Master Chief: No, nooooooooo!
Cortana: Son, you can destroy the Covenant. It is your destiny. Join me, it is the only way.

RUMOUR RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

YOU SAY:

The opening sequence will be very cinematic and take place thousands of years before the timeline of the original.

WE SAY:

Of course it's going to be cinematic – it's set to be a stunning new chapter in one of the greatest game franchises ever created. As for the new timeline, if it's set thousands of years before the original story we'd be missing a little guy called Master Chief. We think not.

RUMOUR RATING: ★★☆☆☆

YOU SAY:

Zanzibar Sidewinder and Hang Em High are said to return to the multiplayer mode Completely reworked Zanzibar will be mangled and torn apart after the battle and the sky will be dark red Sidewinder will have four legs instead of just two. with bases at each end Hang Em High will have a massive tree at its centre and the structure will be deteriorating

WE SAY:

When *Halo 3* makes it to Xbox 360, we're hoping that it will contain a planet-load of NEW environments for us to explore. While we look forward to the prospect of returning to much-travelled maps, let's hope we see some innovation first.

RUMOUR RATING: ★★★☆☆



A new map and movie editor will be created by a dedicated team, and will be provided separately from the game. These utilities will apparently work seamlessly with Xbox Live

WE SAY:

At last we can make that long-awaited movie about the blue team versus the red team – we won't spoil the ending, but needless to say someone ends up getting punished. Seriously, though, we think it's likely that some form of map editor or moviemaker has a good chance of making it into the final game, as maps and movies would be a great addition to the Live Marketplace.

RUMOUR RATING: ★★★★☆

WANT MORE ON HALO 3? Check the *Halo Evolved* book, free with this issue!



SEGA LAUNCHES AN ARCADE ASSAULT

Next-Gen titles heading for Xbox 360?

At the recent JAMMA show in Japan, the arcade aficionados over at Sega finally flicked the switch on the Xbox 360 hype machine by revealing fresh details on its next-gen arcade titles. The list of games announced included a host of usual suspects, such as *Virtua Tennis*, *Afterburner* and *Virtua Fighter 5*, and though some of these game trailers were shown at E3 a few months back, this was the first time the public could get in on the action.

Though we're obviously very excited about jumping into the cockpit of a pimped plane and scorching the skies, or donning our whites to serve up a few aces, by far the most exciting prospect has got to be *Virtua Fighter 5*. Despite the fact the new trailer lasted all of one minute, it contained enough surprises to have us jumping and screeching like crazed gibbons. For those yet to see the footage, it features Akira sparring in a temple and then cuts to the likes of Aoi, Sarah and Lei Fei all showing off new moves and stages. However, what really got the juices flowing was the trailer's climax, which introduces two new characters. The first is a young girl whose spinning around on the floor busting a street-style break dancing move, while the second is a masked wrestler who looks suspiciously like the WWE's Rey Mysterio.

So the old cast is back with some new faces chucked into the mix – but why should we care? These games are only for the arcade, right? Well, that's true for now, but Sega also revealed the specs to its new Lindbergh arcade hardware, which made interesting reading. The specifications for this arcade board are very close to that of Xbox 360, and though the board may boast a little more memory, the X360 has a more powerful processor. We fully expect all three of these stunning next-gen titles to make it to Microsoft's new machine.

While we were swooning over the likes of *Virtua Fighter* and *Afterburner* we came up with a few old-school Sega superstars (below) that we wouldn't mind seeing on Xbox 360 in the future... ■

SEGA TALKS TO X360... P96

STREETS OF RAGE



AFTER their city had fallen into the hands of a secret criminal organisation, Adam Hunter, Axel Stone and Blaze Fielding decide to forego their careers in legal law enforcement and put their lives on the line. Without weapons they were forced to make use of their awesome hand-to-hand combat skills to fight brutal bad guys, and once again make the city a place where people no longer had to walk the Streets of Rage.

SPACE HARRIER



SUPER Scaler technology was born of *Hang-On* and put to excellent use in such titles as *OutRun*, *Afterburner* and *Space Harrier*. All these titles were the early work of Yu Suzuki, one of Sega's top boys who, before the days of model boards with their polygons and texture mapping, used big scaling sprites to create a sense of 3D visuals like never before. *Space Harrier* has a special place in gamers' hearts.

VIRTUA COP



OKAY, *Virtua Cop 3* wasn't much to speak of, but with the Xbox 360's enhanced wireless technology, a decent light gun shooter must be pencilled in somewhere. What better way to prove you're a man than to go diving around your living room floor shooting bad guys, saving innocents and getting carpet burn? These games were a joy on the Saturn and Dreamcast, so why not a new crime caper for all gun-toting gamers?

MULTIFORMAT

Behind Enemy Lines

What's happening in the rest of the games world?

Let's be serious: we're all gamers, and some of us have more than one system. The Xbox 360 may be the big boy on the block nicking your pocket money, but there are some nice things appearing elsewhere – and here at **X360**, we're big enough to tell you about them.

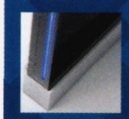
SONY PSP



SONY'S MINI

This little marvel has been threatening to launch all year, after making it to stores in America last April. Yes, it's been *that* long. The handheld is undoubtedly the most advanced palm games system on the market, and with movie playback, *Pro Evo Soccer* and *Ridge Racer* in the bank, it's no wonder this has been the fastest selling console of the year (so far). That's even with a hefty £180 price tag – just £30 shy of the Xbox 360 Core pack! The PSP can connect to your X360 as a USB device for sharing images and music, etc, but Sony's big pull to get you off your X360 for 20 minutes this November will be *GTA: Liberty City Stories* which will be exclusive to the format.

NINTENDO REVOLUTION



REVOLTING?

Speaking of connectivity, we need to talk about the Nintendo Revolution controller. This beast of a peripheral is supposedly going to 'change the way we play' and 'break down the barriers of gaming'. Is it? Is it really going to revolutionise how we play? Well, only if you can connect to the X360 and hammer through a round of *Quake 4*. Seriously, though, the day Nintendo unveils its secret controller, the curtain will raise and Gates and Kutaragi will slump back into their executive chairs, hit the massage button and slip quietly into a power nap, safe in the knowledge that Nintendo has dropped another clanger.

IN THE SPIN

WE CUT THROUGH THE CRAP OF THE PR MACHINE

GHOST RECON ADVANCED WAR FIGHTER

The brief: In 2013, following an uprising in Mexico City that threatened the lives of the world's leaders gathered there to discuss global issues, the US sends in the Ghosts, a team of specialist marines equipped with the Integrated Warfighter System, a combination of weapons and communications devices that will offer one lone squad the edge over overwhelming odds.

"BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP FOR NEXT-GEN CONSOLES"

We're told the game will take full advantage of the X360's impressive lighting and physics capabilities, and though we're not talking free-roaming gameplay, the solidity and style of *Advanced Warfighter* cannot be denied. Each time we see this game in action it impresses more and more. A recent demo illustrated the use of team commands to develop the squad-based gameplay that has made the series a success. The X360's multi-windowing techniques really push this style of gameplay to the limits.

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔✔✔●

"BE THE SOLDIER OF THE FUTURE"

Advanced Warfighter is based on near-future military technology. Many of the weapons and gadgets used in the game are based on real hardware in development now. How much flexibility this will offer in-game is unclear: offline *Ghost Recon* has always been a little on-rails, relying on using the correct gadget/tactic at the right time. However, with the X360's power, a little imagination and Ubisoft's knack for researching near-future warfare, it's fair to say that this is how the US army will be going to war in the next decade. After all, military experts say the next big challenge is to make the best use of men on the ground.

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔✔✔✔



IWS EXPLAINED

Inside the helmet of a kick-ass near-future US Marine

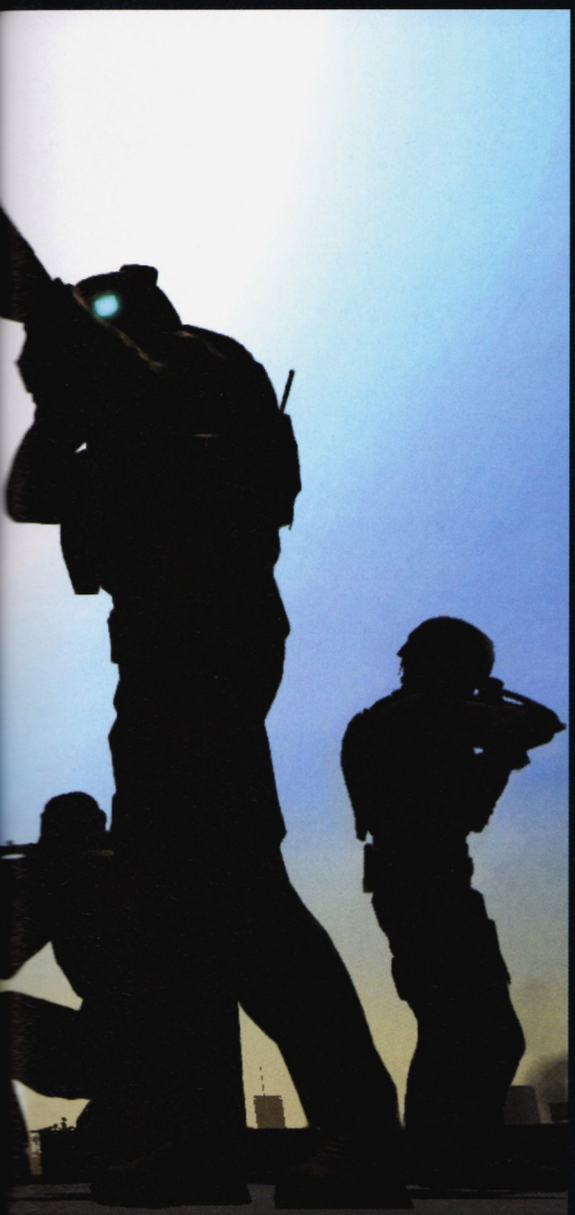
PAY PER VIEW
This is your hub of information. Every tactical stat and snippet of battlefield intelligence will be beamed into your helmet and eyepiece. From here you can access your team's cameras, their health and positions, as well as receive updates from your central command and TV reports on the battle.

TAKE THE HITS
This is your near-future body armour. The outfit is moulded to your trooper's body for better movement. Handily for gameplay, this means you can now jump walls and duck and lay behind cover for the first time in a *Ghost Recon* game. We saw this in action recently, and the animation was faultless.

PACKING HEAT
This is the state-of-the-art peashooter that will keep you alive in the middle of Mexico City. This Modular Caseless Rifle fires high-powered bullets that, devoid of case and propelled by air, are faster and more accurate than more conventional bullets.

GOOD INTELLIGENCE
The Ghosts are an elite squad of US Marines sent into high-tension areas to operate silently behind enemy lines. Though you will only command a team of four, you will have access to superior communications and firepower – a helicopter gunship is only a phone call away.

TAKE COVER / Played in third-person, your on screen soldier will wince and duck from explosions realistically



"USE THE REVOLUTIONARY CROSS-COM"

Ubisoft is pushing the Cross-Com function of *Advanced Warfighter* – this is, after all, a gimmick no other launch game will have, and illustrates the X360's capabilities in a gameplay setting. Using the picture-in-picture mode, you will be able to see what your squad members are looking at, as well as streaming footage from support units such as helicopter gunships and spies. In theory you will get a total picture of the battlefield from these nuggets of video. How useful much of this footage will be remains to be seen.

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔✔✔●

"INDUSTRY-LEADING MULTIPLAYER AND COOPERATIVE GAMEPLAY"

The *Ghost Recon* series was really born from online gameplay. Offline the series is decent, but online, and on Live, the games come into their own. No surprises, then, to discover *Advanced Warfighter* will heavily feature Live gameplay. The multi-window feature will certainly demand teamwork, using each squad member to build a picture of the battle. If Ubisoft converts over the permanent career features of the recent *Rainbow Six: Lockdown* then this could be *the* Live game at launch.

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔✔✔✔

"A METICULOUSLY DETAILED UNIVERSE WILL PROVIDE COMPLETE IMMERSION"

The *Advanced Warfighter* team has been over in Mexico City for months at a time, mapping and cataloguing the sixth largest city in the world. The belief is that Mexico City offers every conceivable tactical environment in one area – urban, industrial and rural patches divide the city. We're being promised a "stunning urban environment", though how free you will be to explore at will is yet to be discovered, as is the level of interaction within the environment itself.

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔✔●●

"MULTI-WINDOWING TECHNIQUES PUSH THIS STYLE OF PLAY TO THE LIMITS"





TRENDS: Fantasy Shooters

This month's three-of-a-kind sit in the unusual genre of Fantasy Shooter

1. WAREDEVIL



This shooter has been in development for two years. The game will use the RTE 1080 custom-built graphics engine to power the action. According to Digi-Guys, this has been developed to create high-definition CGI, in order to deliver a game that looks pretty much identical to a movie-effects sequence.

2. THE DARKNESS

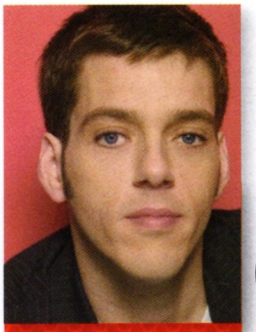


Based on the comic and forthcoming film of the same name, *The Darkness* places you in the shoes of an assassin/gangster with the power to control demonic shadows. Coming from the developer behind *The Chronicles Of Riddick*, you can expect plenty of shocks as well as a healthy body count.

3. PROJECT OFFSET



Team Offset is a bunch of newbies making waves with its first game, the oddly named *Project Offset*. It's a fantasy shooter in every sense, as guns are ditched for crossbows, and jeeps for dragons. It's unusual approach has earned it the tag of a medieval *Battlefield 1942*.



THE BRIT
Iain Lee

ON THE BLAG...

'What's the earliest I can get one of these 490 boxes then?'

The first thing I ever managed to blag was a Dreamcast. I remember hearing that Richard Bacon had got one for free by calling Sega and offering the line (make your own jokes there) 'I'm Richard Bacon, can I get a free Dreamcast?' Amazingly, it worked. This was years ago when I was doing a programme called *The 11 O'Clock Show*, and I spent ages agonizing about whether I was equally as famous, nowhere near as famous or, and this really was fancy thinking in those days, more famous than The Richard Bacon.

Well, the entire office brought me crashing down to earth by coming to the conclusion that I was nowhere near as famous as Bacon, but it would still be worth trying to get a free games machine. I made the call and was put through to some woman in publicity. 'I'm Iain Lee, can I get a free Dreamcast?' 'Sorry, you're who?' came the reply. Disappointing, but I carried on. 'I'm Iain Lee, I present a comedy programme called *The 11 O'Clock Show*, I just wondered if I could get a free Dreamcast?' 'Er, no, sorry, I don't think so. Who is this?' This wasn't going well and the crowd of office staff that were gathering around me started laughing as they realised I was failing miserably to even get any recognition, let alone a free piece of computer wizardry. I had to pull out all the stops. 'I work with Ali G and he was wondering if you would send him a free Dreamcast, care of Iain Lee at Channel 4 please'. Well, this was the magic phrase that pays – 'It's for Ali G? Oh sir, allow us to bike one over to you immediately'.

I was reminded of this whole incident when I was in a games shop the other day and I was stuck behind some fat dude who had obviously heard there were changes afoot in the world of games. He was desperately trying to get the guy behind the counter to give him the latest technology before anyone else got their filthy, fat, sweaty hands on it. I think he blew it the moment he asked 'what's the earliest I can get one of those 490 Boxes then?'. Christ, just sell the twat an Acorn Electron and tell him that it's the new '490 Box', then laugh as you sell him copies of *Dare Devil Dennis* for forty quid.

You've probably guessed from my anger this month that I have been unable to get a free Xbox 360. Microsoft completely busted me when I called up and did my best Jimmy Carr impression. They nearly bought it, but then I managed to say something funny in the conversation and that gave the game away. I have got a fella in Finchley who reckons he can get me a machine two or three days early, but really, what's the point of that? Looks like I'll be standing next to you in Oxford Street on release day handing over my cash. Still, I won't be one of those sad buggers that queues up at midnight. I do have some dignity. ■

Iain is off the telly



> "I WORK WITH ALI G, AND HE WAS WONDERING IF YOU WOULD SEND HIM A FREE DREAMCAST"


BEST SELLING UNOFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE
MORE THAN 500 XBOX GAMES INSIDE
FIRST FOR XBOX 360
XBOX
XBM
50th issue
EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW
PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3
VROOM! WE'VE SEEN EVERYTHING UNDER TH
THE UK'S BEST MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO XBOX 360
NEW!!
X360
EVERY XBOX 360 GAME REVEALED AND RATED
MAGAZINE
EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!
CONDEMNED
SCARE YOURSELF STUPID
Sega puts the frighteners on the Xbox 360...
4 FREE GIFTS!
ISSUE 50
HIGHBURY
9 771475 142038
EVERY LEVEL FULLY SOLVED INSIDE!
RAINBOW SIX LOCKDOWN
COMPLETE GUIDE
PLUS
A-Z XBOX CHEATS
FREE WITH XBM
XBM PRESENTS
TOP 50
xbox games
XBM
FIRST FOR DEMOS
DVD
EXCLUSIVE FOOTAGE
QUAKE 4
ON SALE 15.09.05
FIND OUT WHY WE'RE THE UK'S BEST INDEPENDENT UNOFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE.
AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS.
OR CALL FOR A COPY DIRECT ON 01202 200200



THE YANK
John Tynes

ON THE COUCH...

Look inside the mind of an American gamer – if you dare

As the standard-bearer for a nation of colonials gone wildly amok, it is my patriotic duty to inform you of something that may be shocking: when you apply the cheat codes to unlock the pig-humping mini-game in the next *Grand Theft Auto*, it's going to be pretty much the same on the Xbox 360 as on the PlayStation3. Both systems sport enough graphics power to make your eyes bleed, and the big cross-platform games from the big publishers are going to look identical. Our glory days of asking PlayStation2 owners, "Hey gimp, how's that new *Splinter Cell* game look on your system? Haw! Haw!" are over. And it's a shame, because we so loved to bellow "Haw! Haw!" at them.

Our smug sense of superiority has not entirely dissipated, however. While Sam Fisher will be equally normal-mapped on both consoles, there are still innovations on the X360 that make Sony look like a chump. I believe my status as an American gamer gives me special insights into those innovations. For as you may have already guessed, I, just like every American on the planet other than Brad Pitt, am a grotesquely overweight fundamentalist Wal-Mart employee. When I settle my bulk onto the couch each evening, it takes enormous discipline to make those exhausting disc-changing moments coincide with trips to the bathroom. For the most part, I prefer to play the same game for several weeks straight. Not because I'm hardcore, but because then I don't have to get up. Which brings us to the principal innovation of the X360: you can turn it on and off with the controller.

Finally, while those PlayStation3 owners are sweating and puffing as they stagger endlessly between the couch and the console, we Xbox 360 gamers can contentedly slide ever deeper into the cushions. Our shambling forms need not rise to face the day. We may simply sprawl, turning the Xbox 360 on and off as often as desired, not dead but dreaming. Slowly the molecules of our flesh shall interweave themselves with the fibres of the couch and we shall become one with sloth itself. Once in a great while, one of our fat-sodden pod-mates across the country will fire up *Perfect Dark Zero* for the eleventy-eth time and invite us for a game, and our Xbox 360's light will flash, and we will perhaps deign to raise one great piggy hand and mash the power button to see who it is that disturbs our slumber, precious, and then we shall perhaps tell that person that he is a monkey-spanker. Finally we shall show him how we do things downtown, and then resume our nap.

So boggle at those screenshots and drool at those technical specs. Then remember why the X360 is going to own the PS3: because Americans know that it's all about staying on the couch. Haw! Haw! ■

John Tynes is a writer and game designer, currently living in Seattle



> "OUR SENSE OF SUPERIORITY HAS NOT DISSIPATED :THERE ARE STILL INNOVATIONS ON THE X360 THAT MAKE SONY LOOK LIKE A CHUMP"



Bringing videogames into focus



- **180 pages of essential gaming**
- Written by gamers for gamers
- **32 pages dedicated to retro games every month**

Issue 37, on sale 6 October

The multi award-winning multiformat magazine – available from WHSmith and other good newsagents or call for a copy direct on 01202 200200.

Every X360 game revealed!

IN THE WORKS

Your concise, no bull guide to every known and rumoured Xbox 360 game in development

ESSENTIAL X360 GAME GUIDE

2 DAYS TO VEGAS

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Steel Monkeys
GENRE / Adventure

Set over a 48-hour period across a series of American cities, this action adventure takes many of its cues from *24*. To maintain the interest, this modern day gangster epic will throw every Hollywood convention at the screen, including car chases, casino shoot-outs and convoluted plot twists.

AMPED 3

PUBLISHER / 2k Games
DEVELOPER / Indie Design
GENRE / Sport

Formerly published by Microsoft, this left-field snowboarding sim has found a new home at 2K Games following the big M's decision to suspend its sports label. This game promises to bring the snowboarding culture to life with a mountain four times the size of *Amped 2*, limitless customisation and innovative Live gameplay.



APB

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Real Time Worlds
GENRE / Adventure

Dave Jones, one of the creators of the original *Grand Theft Auto*, has been busy developing for Xbox 360, and one of the first to come to light is *APB*. This ambitious adventure aims to take the *GTA* gameplay online into the realm of the MMORPG, and those huge open cities will now be populated by real people.

AVALON

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Climax
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

This multi-vehicle shooter was one of the first games to be announced for the next-gen consoles when Climax revealed its hand last year. Though arena-based vehicle combat games have never really caught on, *Avalon* will use the Xbox 360's new Live capabilities to deliver 100-player tournaments.

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

PUBLISHER / Digital Illusions DE
DEVELOPER / EA
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

The PC version of this online squad-based shooter is already getting gunplay fanatics slavering, so an Xbox 360 conversion should be a no-brainer. With the power of the X360 and the proposed expansion to the Live service, this has the makings of a killer shooter.

BLUE DRAGON

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Mistwalker
GENRE / RPG

This game represented the first true coup for Microsoft at this year's E3. The announcement of a new studio founded by two of Japan's leading RPG designers, Square-Enix's Hironobu Sakaguchi and *Digimon*'s creature creator, Akira Toriyama, sent gamers wild with expectation. Whether this take on a boy and a mythical blue dragon meets those high demands remains to be seen. However, with *Pokemon* still drawing the crowds, this could be an underground success.

CALL OF DUTY 2

PUBLISHER / Activision
DEVELOPER / Infinity Ward
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

ON THE DISC DVD ON THE DISC

This epic WWII shoot-'em-up is actually looking better than the planned PC version. Making full use of the X360's three-core processor, this game will shape opinions of Xbox 360 at launch, proving just how groundbreaking next-gen gaming will be.

Preview page 60

CHROME HOUNDS

PUBLISHER / Sega
DEVELOPER / From Software
GENRE / Strategy

A console without a mech game fails in Japan, right? Well, luckily Microsoft has got Sega on board its team in order to bring us the most realistic mech game to date. The developer behind *Armoured Core* is planning on featuring team-based Xbox Live gameplay as well as classic single-player tactical campaigns.

CONDEMNED

PUBLISHER / Sega
DEVELOPER / Monolith
GENRE / Adventure

ON THE DISC DVD ON THE DISC

Already making the headlines in many tabloids, Sega's first X360 adventure is a unique adult horror that steps inside the world of the serial killer. Using every next-gen trick in the book, including *Havoc 3* physics, advanced bump mapping and lighting techniques, this adventure is one that will definitely catch the eye.

Feature page 96

CONDOR TRILOGY ONLINE

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / InterServe International
GENRE / Adventure

The developer behind the yet-to-be-released-in-the-UK Xbox game *Iron Phoenix* is planning a new online experience for Xbox 360. Details are scarce right now, but given the developer's history, an anime influenced action-RPG could be on the cards.

DARK SECTOR

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Digital Extremes
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Coming off the back of major critical acclaim for *Pariah*, Digital Extremes is a developer in form.

ONE TO WATCH POTENTIAL 10/10

THE PERFECT REMEDY



ALAN WAKE

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Remedy
GENRE / Adventure

Remedy, the developer behind the *Max Payne* series, is planning something a little more cerebral for its X360 debut. This horror adventure looks to *Twin Peaks*, *Silent Hill* and *Insomnia* for inspiration as, playing writer Alan Wake, you search frantically for your missing wife in the city of Pride Falls, all the while escaping his all-too-real demons.

Combining FPS and *Splinter Cell* gameplay, and a suit that allows your character to 'morph' into the scenery, this shooter could offer something totally new.

DEAD OR ALIVE 4

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Tecmo
GENRE / Beat-'em-up

Tecmo, the long-time Xbox collaborator, is pulling out all the stops to deliver a fan-favourite for launch. With three new fighters, stunning animation and exotic interactive locations, this is a certified X360 hit.
Preview page 78

DIRTY HARRY

PUBLISHER / Warner Bros. Interactive
DEVELOPER / The Collective
GENRE / Adventure

A bit of a mystery, this one. Warner has kept silent about the direction of the game, other than it will be a mish-mash of all the movies. The appointment of The Collective to develop is an assured sign of quality, and hints at a third-person adventure. A unique 'dead-eye' shooting technique is being planned too, something that suggests more of an arcade root than first thought. Whatever the outcome, this unique licence should offer something new.

DOA XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL 2

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Tecmo
GENRE / Sports

The original *Xtreme Beach Volleyball* divided opinion like no other Xbox game. However, love it or hate it, a X360 sequel is a very interesting prospect. With the next-gen power available, Tomonubu Itagaki and his team can make the tanned bodies look incredibly real.

ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

PUBLISHER / 2K Games
DEVELOPER / Bethesda
GENRE / RPG

After three years of development, hopes are high that Bethesda will finally realise its dream of a free-roaming virtual role-playing world on console. However, you will need a hard drive to play it properly.
Preview page 82

ENCHANT ARM

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / From Software
GENRE / RPG

Not the most elegant looking RPG, this title from Japanese developer From Software is geared towards Live users, with potentially seamless transitions from offline to online gameplay.

FIFA RTTWC

PUBLISHER / EA
DEVELOPER / In-house
GENRE / Sports

With the World Cup next year, EA's next-gen specific *FIFA Road To The World Cup* could well be an essential buy for any football fan wanting to play out their dreams.

FINAL FANTASY XI

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Square-Enix
GENRE / RPG

Though this is in effect a three-year-old game, Square-Enix is planning tweaks to visuals and play to bring it up to date.It's the only confirmed fantasy MMORPG on X360 'til *World of Warcraft* shows.
Preview page 68

FRAME CITY KILLER

PUBLISHER / Namco
DEVELOPER / In-house
GENRE / Adventure

This promises to be a Japanese *Hitman*. Set in the year 2042, you will play a special agent on the trail of a terrorist gang threatening to kill the population. A unique scan mode and *GTA*-style open world suggests this could be a bit tasty.
Preview page 88

FULL AUTO

PUBLISHER / Sega
DEVELOPER / Pseudo Interactive
GENRE / Racing

One of the most complete X360 games seen to date, this action-racer from Sega promises to feature simple action, novelty 'rewind time' effects, and explosions – lots and lots of explosions.
Feature page 96

GEARS OF WAR

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Epic Games
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

This shooter is a *tour de force* of next-gen effects and uses Epic's latest Unreal Engine (see page 24). Though gameplay remains proudly old-school, with its fast-paced shoot-outs against giant alien invaders, the detailed visuals and frantic action should pull in the punters looking for a new *Halo*.
Preview page 90

GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER

PUBLISHER / Ubisoft
DEVELOPER / In-house
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Ubisoft knows how to make real-world tactical combat games better than any other developer, so the news of a new *Ghost Recon* title for the launch of Xbox 360 is very welcome. Pre-order now.

GUN

PUBLISHER / Activision
DEVELOPER / Neversoft
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

With a name like *Gun*, Neversoft is promising a lot. By all accounts this Western *GTA*

ONE TO WATCH POTENTIAL 10/10

BLOODY GOOD

DEAD RISING

PUBLISHER / Capcom
DEVELOPER / In-house
GENRE / Adventure

Capcom has its leading zombie development team working on this adventure, including Keiji Inafune who has *Onimusha* to his production credits. You will play as a photographer trapped in a shopping mall surrounded by zombies, and your task is to escape. This lack of originality merely leaves more time for you to be stunned by the hundreds of zombies that swarm the stores and food courts hunting for your blood.



ONE TO WATCH POTENTIAL 10/10

THE HORROR!

DEMONIK

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Terminal Reality
GENRE / Adventure

With Clive Barker directly involved, this third-person adventure should at the very least offer some surprises. In fact, *Demonik* is being developed alongside Barker's new movie of the same name, the idea being that both game and film cross-over to develop a wider story – an ambitious development technique. We're just looking forward to creating havoc as a wronged demon...



ALL THE GAMES

- 211
- 2 Days To Vegas
- 6Gun II
- Afterburner
- Alan Wake
- Amped 3
- A-Train X
- Avalon
- Banjo Kazooie
- Battle Angel
- Battlefield 2: MC
- Blue Dragon
- Burnout 360
- Burnout 4
- Call Of Duty 2
- Capital City High Battle
- Chambara Beauty X
- Crazy Taxi Next-Gen
- Chrome Hounds
- Clint Eastwood Trilogy
- Colin McRae 360
- Condemned
- Condor Trilogy Online
- Crackdown
- Dark Sector
- Dead Or Alive 4
- Dead Rising
- Demonik
- Deus Ex
- Dirty Harry
- Driver 4
- DOA Xtreme Beach Volley Ball 2
- DOA Code: Chronos
- Dragon Age
- Duke Nukem Forever
- Dynasty Warriors 5
- E-D-FX
- Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion
- Elveon
- Enchanted Arm
- Everyparty
- Fable 2
- Far East Of Eden: Zaria
- FIFA RTTWC
- FIFA Street 2
- Fight Night 3
- Final Fantasy XI
- Final Fantasy XII
- Frame City Killer
- Football Manager 2006
- Forza Motorsport 2
- Full Auto
- Gears Of War
- Ghost Recon AW
- Grand Theft Auto 4
- Grand Raid Off Road
- Gun
- Halo 3
- Hitman 360
- House Of The Dead 4
- Huxley
- Infraworld
- Interview With A Made Man
- Indiana Jones
- Iron Man
- Jade Empire 2
- Jason Bourne
- Justice League of America RPG
- Juiced 2
- Kameo: Elements Of Power
- King Kong
- King Of Fighters Maximum Impact 2
- Kill Bill
- Killing Day
- Killer Instinct III
- LOST
- KOTOR III
- LMA Manager 2006

ONE TO WATCH

POTENTIAL 10/10

ALL HAIL THE CHIEF

HALO 3

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Bungie
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Not actually confirmed by Bungie, but the cat was not so much let out of the bag, as it was grabbed by the collar and hurled at a hungry pack of fanboys by a buoyant Bill Gates. The Microsoft head boy has stated *Halo 3* will launch day and date with the PS3 to scupper Sony's US launch. Insiders also hint that *Halo 3* won't take off from *Halo 2*, but rather act as a prequel to the original game and so ushers in the plotline for the 2007 movie. Let's hope not. The bottom line is Microsoft can't drop the ball on this one, and that means delivering an ending this time.



from the developer of *Tony Hawks* is shaping into something special. Whether it can find an identity at launch among the established franchises is anyone's guess, but we're backing this one all the way.
Preview page 62

INDIANA JONES

PUBLISHER / Activison
DEVELOPER / LucasArts
GENRE / Adventure

Due for release in the summer of 2007, to coincide with the new film, this action-adventure is being touted as the most ambitious internally developed game from LucasArts – which is no small boast for the developer that brought us *Republic Commando*.

KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Rare
GENRE / Adventure

Beginning life as a Cube title before switching to Xbox, Rare then decided to upgrade the game to X360 – a conversion that took less than three weeks (!). The result is a game that combines the same evolutionary gameplay (you can turn into other creatures) with stunning High Definition graphics.
Screens page 24

KING KONG

PUBLISHER / Ubisoft
DEVELOPER / In-house
GENRE / Adventure

ON THE DISC DVD

One of the first 'dual format' titles to land on Xbox 360, *King Kong* should offer a template as to what to expect from Xbox games converting up to next-gen. The game itself is shaping into an atmospheric adventure that combines third- and first-person modes to great effect, as you switch from human to Kong himself.

LMA MANAGER 2006

PUBLISHER / Codemasters
DEVELOPER / In-house
GENRE / Strategy

News of a *Football Manager* release on X360 seems to have spurred on the Codies to push their console friendly brand of football management to next-gen. Improved graphics, a new transfer system and regular downloads are all par for the course, and will be featured.

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

PUBLISHER / EA
DEVELOPER / In-house
GENRE / Racing

This new racer in the *Need For Speed* series combines the customisation of *Underground* with the chases of *Hot Pursuit*, and sets the whole thing in an evolving open-ended world. How many of EA's promises – such as unrivalled modding and cinema quality cutscenes – come to life remains to be seen, and compared to *PGR3* this doesn't look truly 'next-gen'. Still, the licence-heavy gloss and definite launch day release will ensure this rises through the charts.
Preview page 92

NINETY-NINE NIGHTS

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Q Entertainment
GENRE / Adventure

ON THE DISC DVD

If you can image Michael Bay making a *Dynasty Warriors* game, it would look something like this. Expect to see glossy visuals, filters, and hundreds upon hundreds of knights slaughtering each other across vast battlefields.

PERFECT DARK ZERO

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Rare
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Again, this is another Rare game that has been in development limbo until technology caught up with aspiration. This prequel to the N64 classic promises next-gen graphics, groundbreaking Live gameplay and endless customisation.
Preview page 80

POSSESSION

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Blitz Games
GENRE / Strategy

One of the many zombie games in development is unique in as much as this time around you have to create a zombie army and overtake a 48-kilometre square city using traditional strategy skills. There will be five categories of zombie, a variety of military opponents and a planned Live mode.



PREY

PUBLISHER / 2K Games
DEVELOPER / Human Head Studios
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

ON THE DISC DVD

Already a must-own game. Next to every other FPS in development *Prey* shines like a beacon of originality. Created using the *Doom 3* engine, Human Head has let its imagination run riot as you struggle to escape an alien vessel.
Preview page 72

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Bizarre Creations
GENRE / Racing

ON THE DISC DVD

This is the big one, the reason why every right-minded gamer will buy into Xbox 360. The *Project Gotham Racing* series is possibly the best racing franchise ever created, and from our recent visit to Bizarre Creations we can testify that this game actually looks *better* than the screenshots that have been steadily leaking out since June.
Preview page 52

ONE TO WATCH

POTENTIAL 10/10

KILLING DAY

PUBLISHER / Ubisoft
DEVELOPER / In-house
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Details are thin on the ground for this next-gen shooter, though the game's name and early screens showing *everything* getting blown up suggest this is going to be another blood soaked FPS from Ubisoft. We are promised stunning High Definition graphics and a novel twist on the FPS genre, which will naturally be taken online.

UBISOFT ON TARGET AGAIN



PROJECT OFFSET

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Team Offset
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Little is really known about this title, other than it looks stunning and will feature epic FPS combat that combines vehicles and siege engines alongside standard crossbows and fantasy weapons. The vehicles in question are actually flying dragons, and once the action starts to get personal, you can hack at enemies with your trusty gleaming broadsword.

QUAKE 4

PUBLISHER / Activision
DEVELOPER / id Software/Raven
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Another must-have launch game, *Quake 4* has been in development for nearly three years and it shows. Don't take our word for it: check out the exclusive gameplay footage on the cover disc.

Feature page 08

RIDGE RACER 6

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Namco
GENRE / Racing

Another one of Sony's core franchises is making the leap across to Xbox. This X360 version has reportedly been in development for the past two years, but no details are available. Given the series has been away since the lacklustre *Ridge Racer V*, it will be interesting to see how Namco's flagship racer sits alongside the stunning *Gotham Racing 3*.

SAINT'S ROW

PUBLISHER / THQ
DEVELOPER / Volition
GENRE / Adventure

Not one to court controversy, *The Punisher* developer Volition has come all guns blazing with *Saint's Row*, claiming to have the *GTA* for the next-generation on its hands. On first look there is a certain *GTA* whiff about this one, but the realistic look and city boundaries may put hardened *GTA* fans off. The jury is still out on *Saint's Row*.

STRANGLEHOLD

PUBLISHER / Midway
DEVELOPER / Tiger Studios/In-house
GENRE / Adventure

Notable for being the first game from John Woo's Tiger Studios, this action-adventure is still an unknown quantity. Not scheduled for release until 2007, and featuring the likeness and voice acting of Chow Yun-Fat, *Stranglehold* could be a cult favourite. It's worth noting this is being developed by Midway's internal studio responsible for Psi-Ops, which adds a stamp of quality to the package.

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED

PUBLISHER / Atari
DEVELOPER / Eden Games
GENRE / Racing

If you can ignore the poor associations the *Test Drive* brand currently has, then there is a lot to get excited about with *Test Drive Unlimited*. If *PGR3* is for the arcade racer, then this is here for the hardcore sim fanatic.

Preview page 70

THE DARKNESS

PUBLISHER / Majesco
DEVELOPER / Starbreeze
GENRE / Adventure

Starbreeze put itself on the map with the atmospheric and original *Chronicles Of Riddick* on Xbox. In respect of this, *The Darkness* has courted a lot of attention, not least as the subject matter of an assassin who can control shadows suggests *Starbreeze* is about to hit us with another dark and tense adventure filled with the kind of light sourcing that made *Doom 3* such a success.



THE GODFATHER

PUBLISHER / EA
DEVELOPER / In-house
GENRE / Adventure

This 'dual format' release could make or break EA's reputation as a next-gen developer in the first wave of releases. The early screens of *The Godfather* suggest there will be little to differentiate between the X360 and Xbox versions, but here's hoping the world's biggest publisher won't let the side down.

Preview page 93

THE OUTFIT

PUBLISHER / THQ
DEVELOPER / Relic
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Mixing the free-roaming gameplay of *Mercenaries* and the squad-based tactics of *Ghost Recon*, this WWII shooter from RPG developer Relic is looking good.

TOMB RAIDER

PUBLISHER / Eidos
DEVELOPER / Crystal Dynamics
GENRE / Adventure

Lara has only just jumped ship to the Xbox and she is already planning her anticpated X360 debut. That gasping you can hear isn't the sound of stunned PS2 owners coming to terms with their betrayal, but rather the exhalation of an icon being resuscitated on a better console.

TOO HUMAN TRILOGY

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Silicon Knights
GENRE / Adventure

This trilogy has been in the works for nearly seven years. The *Eternal Darkness* developer has released little information other than to stress it will be an Xbox 360 exclusive series and utilise the Unreal Engine 3.



TRUE CRIME 2

PUBLISHER / Activision
DEVELOPER / Luxoflux
GENRE / Adventure

The sequel to 2003's *True Crime Streets Of L.A.* has already be announced for Xbox, and rumours are that an X360 version will be released early in 2006 with a graphics overhaul.

TUROK NEXT-GEN

PUBLISHER / Buena Vista Games
DEVELOPER / Avalanche
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Following the collapse of Acclaim, Buena Vista swooped in for this prehistoric FPS franchise with plans to release an X360 version in 2006.

UNREAL 2007

PUBLISHER / Midway
DEVELOPER / Epic
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up

Midway and Epic are yet to confirm the development of this game, but with Epic's Mark Rein singing the praises of Xbox 360 and a distant PC release date of 2007, we'd guess there was a conversion on the cards.

WARDEVIL

PUBLISHER / TBC
DEVELOPER / Digi-Guys
GENRE / Adventure

One of the earliest X360 games announced in development, this adventure is being put together at Pinewood Studios by former movie effects wizards.

ALL THE GAMES

- Lost Odyssey
- Love Football
- Madden NFL 2006
- Marvel Universe
- Metronome
- Mobile Suit Gundam
- Monster Madness
- MotoGP 4
- Mortal Kombat 7
- NBA 2K6
- NBA Live 2006
- NFS Most Wanted
- Neon
- NHL 2K6
- Ninety-Nine Nights
- Ninja Gaiden 2
- Omikron 2
- Operation Darkness
- OutRun Next-Gen
- Perfect Dark Zero
- Pirates Of The Caribbean 2
- Possession
- Prey
- Pro Evolution Soccer 5
- Pro Yakyu Spirits
- Project Progressive
- Project Delta
- Project Gotham Racing 3
- Project New Jersey
- Project Nightmare
- Project Offset
- Psychopath
- Quake 4
- Quake Wars
- Rainbow Six 360
- Reseviour Dogs
- Resident Evil 5
- Ridge Racer 6
- Rumble Rose XX
- Saint's Row
- Scarface
- Section 8
- Secret Service
- Sega Rally Next-Gen
- ShadowClan
- Shadowrun
- Shenmue III
- Sonic Next-Gen
- Soul Calibre Next-Gen
- Splinter Cell 4
- Spore
- SSX 4
- Stranglehold
- Sudeki 2
- Super Train Taisen
- Test Drive Unlimited
- Tetris
- Theseis
- The Darkness
- The Godfather
- The Fixer
- The Outfit
- The Urbz 2
- Tiger Woods PGA 06
- TimeShift
- Tony Hawk's American Wasteland
- Tomb Raider
- Too Human Trilogy
- Top Spin 2
- Tracer
- True Crime 2
- Turok Next-Gen
- Unreal 2007
- Versus Tactical Action
- Virtua Fighter Next-Gen
- Voodoo Nights
- WarDevil
- World Air Force
- Wrestle Kingdom
- Zoids
- Zookeeper

HORIZON

ICONS CUTE, AND USEFUL

SHOOTER · FIGHTER · PUZZLE · ADVENTURE · RACING · UK · JAPAN · USA · BEARDY · SLEEPER
CUTE · GIRLY · SCARY · BORING · MANLY · AMBITIOUS · CASH-IN · CONFUSING · DEAD CERT · ADULT



NINETY-NINE NIGHTS

We predict a hard day's night of gaming...

SMALL DETAILS

RELEASE / December 05
PUBLISHER / Microsoft
DEVELOPER / Q Entertainment/Phantagram
GENRE / Adventure
LIVE / TBC

With an acclaimed series in *Kingdom Under Fire* tucked snugly in the closet, hopes are high that Phantagram and Q Entertainment's Xbox 360 debut will be a fantasy stunner.

From the footage and demos shown already, there can be few who will doubt the impact of *Ninety-Nine Nights* when launched this Christmas. For one thing, nothing quite impresses more than stats, and with this game boasting hundreds of enemies on screen at any one time, jaws will drop come December.

Details on how the game plays have been pretty thin on the ground, though coming from Phantagram we would anticipate a brawling fantasy epic with a touch of real-time tactics thrown in for good measure. With *Rez* creator Tetsuya Mizuguchi and his studio in charge of the production, we should see some originality too. This is evident in the game's promise to place you in the boots of a cursed warrior, forced to live for 99 nights. The twist is, though, that while you can't die in the game, those close to you can. Friendly characters will be directly affected by your actions too. Flip a friend off and they may turn evil and face you on the battlefield.

With a strong pedigree in Mizuguchi and Phantagram, this is a sure-fire hit for the Japanese market. And with any luck, the sheer scale of the battles should see *Ninety-Nine Nights* muscle its way onto the UK charts come the end of the year too.



BATTLING BRILLIANCE / With so much slaughter going on, it's virtually impossible not to be impressed by *Ninety-Nine Nights*. It's like *Troy* or something...



AMPED 3

The coolest game at launch

SMALL DETAILS
RELEASE / November 05
PUBLISHER / 2K Games
DEVELOPER / Indie Design
GENRE / Sports
LIVE / Yes

A popular franchise on Xbox, *Amped 3* moves up a gear for its next-gen debut by putting style centre stage of the experience.

Along with the usual game modes, such as freestyle, downhill and slalom, *Amped 3* will offer a full sandbox experience. You will be able to go anywhere and do anything on the real-life resorts found in the game. This will include setting up personalised competitions, taking photos of rival boarders and even designing your own resort to take onto Xbox Live. This game seems ideally built to make the most of the promised Live Marketplace, with new boards, decals and outfits set to appear in the months following release. We'll bet this approach will give the snowboarding genre a new lease of life. Catch you on the slopes.

EXPERIENCE THE EXTREME
Advanced physics technology means the packed snow, powder and ice will greatly affect the way you ski

TIMESHIFT

Atari rattles its sabre

SMALL DETAILS
RELEASE / March 06
PUBLISHER / Atari
DEVELOPER / Sabre Interactive
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up
LIVE / Yes

Planned as an Xbox release, Sabre's ambition for its time-travelling shooter has reached further than current-gen technology would allow, and so we have another FPS to add to the X360's catalogue. To distance itself from the pack of men-with-guns games, *TimeShift* will offer the unique option to freeze, reverse and fast-forward time. This will allow you to dodge bullets, get the jump on enemy positions and escape formerly fatal run-ins with a hail of bullets. If Sabre can get the balance right, and compete technically with the likes of id and 3DRealms, then Atari could have a strong shooter in the making.



SAINT'S ROW

Getting in line to beat GTA

SMALL DETAILS
RELEASE / November 05
PUBLISHER / THQ
DEVELOPER / Volition
GENRE / Adventure
LIVE / Yes

The developer behind *The Punisher* is moving in on *GTA*'s manor, or that's what THQ hopes for. In all but name, *Saint's Row* is *GTA III* glammed-up and running on next-gen hardware, or at least that's the surface impression. Sure, it has the sandbox gameplay, the open city and myriad game modes to get sucked into, but it also has Live versus gameplay based around gang warfare, full customisation and an impressive physics engine to make every explosion a pyrotechnic masterpiece. Of course its riding *GTA*'s coat-tails, but *Saint's Row*'s extra depths could be worth digging into.



THE OUTFIT

Fingers at the ready

SMALL DETAILS
RELEASE / March 06
PUBLISHER / THQ
DEVELOPER / Relic
GENRE / Shoot-'em-up
LIVE / Yes

Better known for its RTS games such as *Warhammer 40,000*, Relic's first Xbox 360 title is a slight departure. We say 'slight', as although *The Outfit* is a free-roaming shooter in the mould of *Mercenaries*, it does feature a deeper tactical edge.

You will be placed in control of a WWII squad, swapping between the differently skilled troops as needed in order to overpower the enemy. From what we've seen, the action is fast and explosive. Every element of the terrain can be destroyed, and the swift character select menu places tactical thought at the heart of the action.

Slick graphics, full-on action and some deeper ideas point to *The Outfit* being THQ's surprise hit for 2006.



PROFILE

Bethesda

Currently hammering the final touches into *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*, this respected PC developer, forged from a collective of artists, designers, programmers and directors sitting under the ZeniMax umbrella, has been pounding the game streets for more than 12 years. The developer is best known for the ground-breaking free-roaming *Elder Scrolls* series.



WORKING ON
Oblivion

KEY TITLES
- Elder Scrolls
- Pirates Of The Caribbean

PLAN AHEAD, THE ESSENTIAL...
SHOOT-'EM-UPS



1 GHOST RECON AWF
Shaping into the perfect squad-based shooter

2 QUAKE 4
No one knows the FPS genre as well as id

3 PERFECT DARK ZERO
Rare never fails to deliver on its promises

4 PREY
After nine years of development, this can't fail

5 CALL OF DUTY 2
So realistic you'll suffer shellshock. Possibly

HORIZON

CHANCES OF...

Perfect Dark Zero making its launch date

64%

Getting an Xbox 360 before Christmas

88%

Selling a kidney to pay for a High Definition TV

74%

Saying, "great news, *FIFA Street 2* is coming to Xbox 360!"

0%

ONE MINUTE ROAST

"The extra tenner"

Why price the Xbox 360 at £209.99, and not a straight two hundred notes? We like to keep life simple and deal in round numbers. Microsoft wouldn't have us buy the Xbox 359.99, so why tack on the extra wallet-damaging digits?

LET'S FACE IT – Mr Gates already has more green than a Welsh meadow, but he could always do with that little bit more.

The great and the good coming your way in the next year

RELEASELIST

THE SURE THING



CALL OF DUTY 2

Activision's PC conversion of this WWII shooter is set to dominate the charts come November, and by all accounts it plays superbly. Our man in the trenches has just returned from Poland with a first-hand account. Read about it next issue

Preview, p62

Featured, p96

NOVEMBER

Amped 3	2K Games
Call Of Duty 2	Activision
Condemned	Sega
Dead Rising	Capcom
Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	2K Games
Frame City Killer	Namco
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter	Ubisoft
Gun	Activision
Kameo: Elements Of Power	Microsoft
King Kong	Ubisoft
Madden NFL 2006	EA
NBA 2K6	2K Games
NBA Live 2006	EA
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	EA
NHL 2K6	2K Games
Project Gotham Racing 3	Microsoft
Quake 4	Activision
Ridge Racer 6	Namco
Saint's Row	THQ
Tiger Woods PGA 2006	EA
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision
Top Spin 2	2K Games

DECEMBER

Dark Sector	TBC
Dead Or Alive 4	Microsoft
Demonik	TBC
Enchanted Arm	TBC
Everparty	Microsoft
Final Fantasy XI	Microsoft
Ninety-Nine Nights	Microsoft
Perfect Dark Zero	Microsoft
Rumble Rose XX	Konami
The Darkness	Majesco
True Crime 2	Activision



Dead Or Alive 4 — *Microsoft December*

Studio Exclusive, p52

Cover Exclusive, p08

QUARTER 1 2006

Alan Wake	TBC
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat	EA
Burnout 360	EA
Chrome Hounds	Sega
Far East Of Eden: Zaria	Square
FIFA Road To The World Cup	EA
FIFA Street 2	EA
Fight Night 3	EA
Full Auto	Sega
Football Manager 2006	Sega
LMA Manager 2006	Codemasters
Lost Odyssey	Microsoft
Love Football	Namco
Possession	TBC
Prey	2K Games
Stranglehold	Midway
Scarface: The World Is Yours	Vivendi
Test Drive Unlimited	Atari
TimeShift	Atari
The Godfather	EA
The Outfit	THQ
Turok Next-Gen	Buena Vista
Wrestle Kingdom	TBC

2006

2 Days To Vegas	TBC
Avalon	TBC
Banjo Kazooie	Microsoft
Blue Dragon	Microsoft
Colin McRae 360	Codemasters
Condor Trilogy Online	TBC
Dirty Harry	Warner Bros. Interactive
Driver 4	Atari
DOA Xtreme Beach Volley Ball 2	Microsoft
DOA Code: Chronos	Microsoft
Duke Nukem Forever	TBC
Elveon	TBC
Fable 2	Microsoft
Final Fantasy XII	Microsoft
Forza Motorsport 2	Microsoft
Gears Of War	Microsoft
Halo 3	Microsoft
Huxley	TBC
Infraworld	TBC
Indiana Jones	Activision
Jade Empire 2	Microsoft
Jason Bourne	Vivendi
Justice League of America	Warner Bros. Interactive
Juiced 2	THQ
King Of Fighters Maximum Impact 2	Ignition
Killing Day	Ubisoft
Metronome	TBC
Monster Madness	TBC
MotoGP 4	THQ
Mortal Kombat 7	Midway
Ninja Gaiden 2	Microsoft
Omikron 2	TBC
Pirates Of The Caribbean 2	Buena Vista
Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Konami
Resident Evil 5	Capcom
Sonic Next-Gen	Sega
Splinter Cell 4	Ubisoft



Lost Odyssey — *Microsoft 2006*

Only on Xbox 360

Sudeki 2	Microsoft
Tomb Raider Next-Gen	SCi
Too Human Trilogy	TBC
Unreal Tournament 2007	Midway
Wardevil	TBC
World Airforce	TBC
Zoids	TBC



CIRCLE OF TRUST

What's getting the X360 team excited this month?

KING KONG

We know it's an Xbox port, but the recent New York levels seen running on Xbox 360 look spectacular. Check out issue two for the first look at the new X360 version.

FORWARD PLANNER
OCTOBER

Whether it's games, film or music, don't miss a thing this month – just use the **X360** diary

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						01 **GET IN EARLY:** Don't dawdle! Pre-order an Xbox 360 immediately to ensure you're part of the party in November
02 **MORE THAN GAMES:** Microsoft will demonstrate exactly how the lifestyle functionalities of the Xbox 360 will work, including Media Centre connectivity and media downloading		**04** **FAST TIMES:** We're off to X05 to bring you the official launch line-up and our hands-on play-test of the Xbox 360		**06** "If opportunity calls, answer the phone"	**07** **XBOX RELEASES:** *Brothers In Arms 2, Mortal Kombat: Shaolin Monks, Spartan: Total Warrior, Kingdom Under Fire: Heroes*	**08** **HEADLINE NEWS:** "Two convicts escape noose, jury hung"
						JUMP IN / Mortal Kombat *makes a return to Xbox*
12					**21** **EON FLUX:** The latest Keanu Reeves movie might be the biggest thing since *The Matrix*. Then again, it might not…	**22**
23 **HAPPY THOUGHTS:** A month from today you will be sitting down to a game of *PGR 3*. Can you wait?				**27** **PICK A MANTRA:** "The key to success is often buried in a pile of crap"	**28** **XBOX RELEASES:** *Battlefield 2, Serious Sam II, True Crime 2, X-Men Legends II, The Warriors*	**29**
30 **COSPLAY:** The annual London Music, Comic and Media Expo will be at London's ExCeL convention centre						

"Don't go wired, never go wired" – Jay

"Subscribe now or miss out on the biggest games, first" – Ian!





WE'RE ON SALE

Be sure to buy issue two of **X360** without delay to read an exclusive preview of the X360's 'perfect' launch game!

HARDWARE TEST

XBOX 360: BEHIND THE SPIN

There's no doubt about it. The Xbox 360 is going to change your life. **Jay Filmer** explains why and how







"We are going to reach one billion people," chimed the spooky-yet-charismatic J Allard to an excitable crowd at Microsoft's pre-E3 Xbox 360 unveiling. A stunning proclamation, signifying the high hopes and ambition that the Xbox figurehead has for what is now being called the 'HD era'.

But what does this really mean? Was it simply pep talk cunningly designed to weave unrestrained enthusiasm through the air of May's Xbox 360 unveiling? Or is Microsoft genuinely aiming to be an instrumental force in pushing the industry past one billion console owners with its high-definition wonder gaming machine that's always connected? Does Microsoft see this as an achievable goal within the next five or six-year time frame? And how are this many people going to be attracted?

When you break it down, this is a phenomenally difficult goal to achieve. Just look at the current numbers: this generation Microsoft has sold over 20 million consoles and has been bested by Sony's PS2, which, thanks to a stunning combination of crucial factors (most notably its ability to surf the wave of success generated by the first PlayStation console, and its long head start over both Xbox and GameCube) has now topped 90 million. How exactly does J Allard see the follow-up to a 20 million-selling machine being a central force in pushing the industry as a whole through one billion?

Put simply, Microsoft sees the realisation of this goal being in the company's ability to not just create a massively powerful games machine that appeals to core gamers, but attract newcomers to whom gaming isn't a central element of life through media convergence, communication and simplicity.

ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Obviously, pleasing the core existing user is Microsoft's first consideration – it is primarily a games machine after all – and to do this it has created a hugely powerful console and expanded Xbox Live immeasurably.

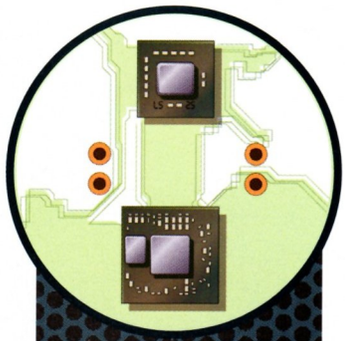
Xbox Live is without argument the best service for online play currently available; encompassing all games you play within one single identity, allowing gamers to view friends and communicate no matter what titles »p48



"We are going to deliver the Zen of gaming"
PETER MOORE

THE LIFESTYLE EXPOSED

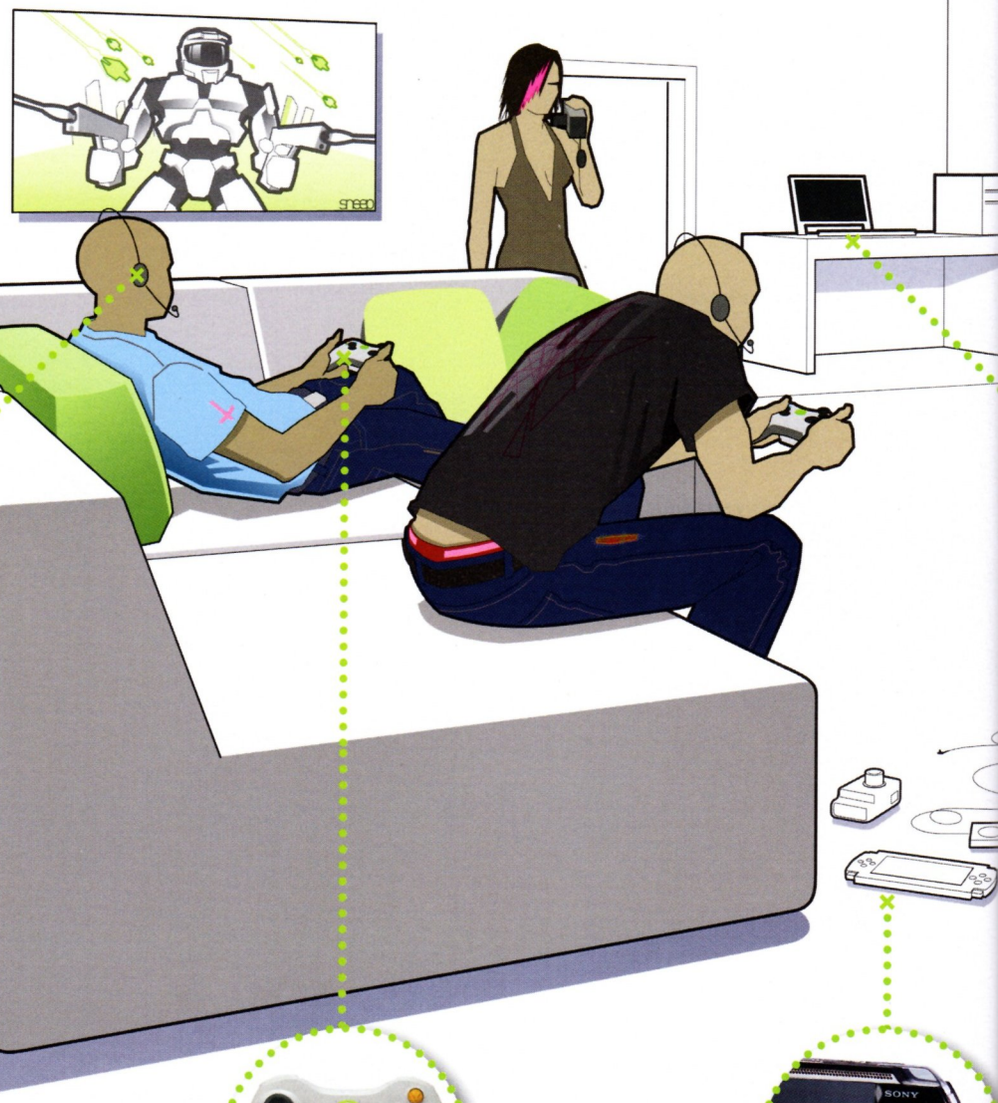
What life will be like when Xbox 360 unifies your living room (and the lottery does you a favour)



UNPARALLELED POWER

Featuring three cores with its scarily powerful CPU and boasting a terabyte of overall performance, the Xbox 360 is the most powerful gaming device you can buy this Christmas and will hold its own for many years yet, as developers manage to get their heads around the unique architecture of the machine (Microsoft estimates it has an eight to ten year lifespan).

You're probably hearing a lot about PS3 right now, but ignore the hype – the developers we've spoken to all say there's little difference between the two consoles in terms of raw technical ability. The only real factor separating them is online capability – which Xbox wins hands down, thanks to the wonder of Xbox Live.









COMMUNICATION

Using a combination of the Xbox 360's Live camera, headset and your TV's speakers, you can video chat with similarly equipped chums for no extra cost. When Xbox 360 takes off, millions of people will be making national and international video calls over their broadband connection. Businessmen will use Xbox 360 for conference calls, as it's possible to talk to more than one person at a time. And imagine what it will do for couples fond of cyber sex! Basically, it will be like those video-telephone systems in futuristic films such as *Total Recall*, except it will be in your house for no extra money.

WIRELESS CONTROLLER

Based on the current Xbox Controller S design, the Xbox 360's pad is lighter and moves the black and white buttons to just in front of the analogue triggers. The main addition is the 'X' button in the centre, which pauses any current activity and opens up the operating system. You can then access new music to stream behind the game, contact a friend over Live or check the progress of your downloads.

Finally, the controller is wireless (unless you're buying the Core package). This removes messy wires but also creates an opportunity to lose the controller down the back of the sofa. Beware.

PORTABLE DEVICES

The Xbox 360 is going to be the centre of your media world, so it's only right it should work with your impressive collection of portable devices. It will work with MP3 players, allowing you to stream music from the device and through the Xbox 360, providing a much easier way to listen to music during gameplay than ripping CDs to the hard drive as with the original Xbox. Also, expect to be able to hook up digital cameras and other USB storage devices, such as Sony's PSP file access. It doesn't matter that you have a range of products from rival companies – they will work with Xbox 360.

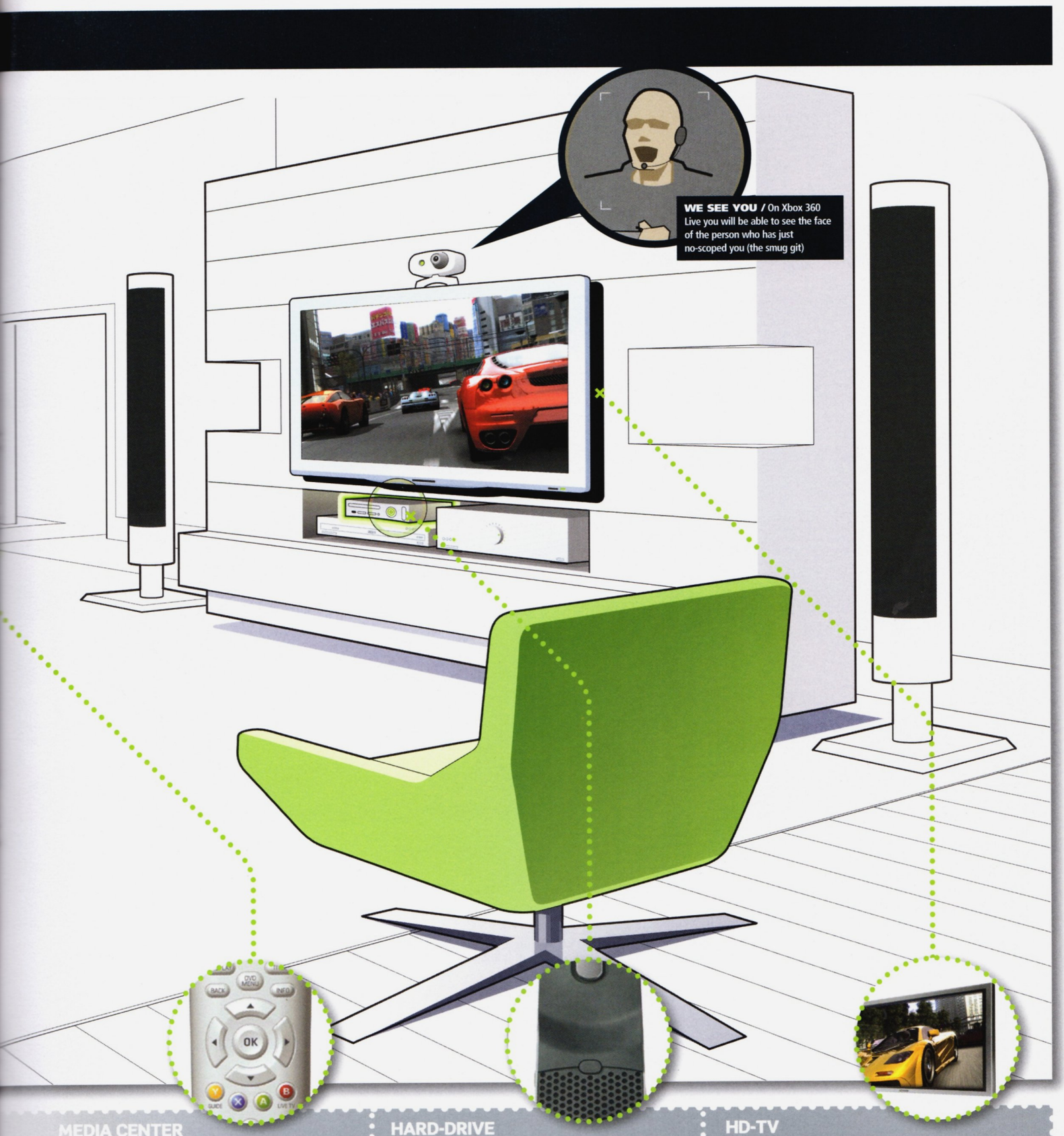


Illustration by Jamie Sneddon

MEDIA CENTER

Using Windows Media Center extender, the Xbox 360 can communicate with your Media Center PC by playing movies and recorded TV programmes over your home network. This is great if you happen to use your PC to receive and record TV programmes. Also, instead of watching your impressive-yet-scary collection of downloaded 'movie clips' hunched over your PC desk in the dark as usual, you can even view them from the comfort of your sofa on a much bigger TV with not very much effort. Xbox 360 and Windows Media Center will change the way people masturbate, forever!

HARD-DRIVE

Integral to just about everything Xbox 360 does is the optional 20Gb hard drive that comes in the more expensive configuration. As well as being a simple cost-effective solution for game saves and downloadable content, in the same manner as the original Xbox's hard drive, it can also be used to store media that you've (legally) downloaded from the internet, as well as pictures from a digital camera. In addition, due to the way you can detach it from the console, the Xbox 360 gives you an effective method of transporting large files not suited for email between physical locations.

HD-TV

The emphasis that's been placed on high-definition TVs by both Microsoft and Sony has been as worrying as it is exciting, especially for us Brits who live in a country where HD-TVs are still slightly too expensive for the average working person to buy without feeling guilty. Still, HD-TV is definitely the future, and should be supported. Games will look fantastic on normal TV sets, but when you finally get around to treating yourself to that 42-inch HD-TV at the expense of meals for your family, you will see what all the fuss is about. The added clarity and detail is astounding.



PROFILE

This is you. It shows all of the important information pertaining to your gaming experience, such as how many points you have, how many friends are online, how many messages you've received and what picture you're currently using to represent yourself online.



MEDIA

Xbox 360 will do more than simply play games. Listen to music, watch movies, look at pictures and stream video files from your Media Center PC all from this screen. The 360 will undoubtedly be the centre of your world.



MARKETPLACE

This is where Microsoft provides you with a mixture of free and priced downloadable content that you won't be able to refuse. Microsoft will give you all the latest trailers and demos and will sell new maps and cars and anything else that breathes new life into old games.



VIDEO CHAT

If you're keen to dodge phone charges and like watching people as you chat, here's the answer. And if you can't detach from *Halo 2* for five minutes, this will be the perfect ice-breaker when female gamers come to pound your arse.

» are being played. This system creates a feeling of unity and community and easily outshines the singular, one-dimensional experience you get from the PS2.

Considering the idea for Xbox 360 is for it to be always connected, Xbox Live is central to Microsoft's entire next-gen experience. Usefully, the world is now prepared for online connectivity to finally take a leading role. Recently, broadband usage in the UK exceeded old-fashioned dial-up, becoming the most popular way people connect to the internet. The number of broadband connections has soared by 80 per cent over the last year alone, resulting in a current figure of over 8.1 million broadband households in the UK alone.

Xbox 360 is ready to capitalise on the rise of broadband and is offering the fundamental Live service for free straight out of the box. There's nothing standing in the way of broadband-enabled households from getting connected to Live with their X360 straight from the off and making use of free voice chat, messaging and downloading new content.

And the Xbox 360 is the machine for the entire household (mum, dad, kid sister, Autie Doris…), not just the traditional hardcore gameplayer. Everyone in a family will find some use or other for the local Xbox 360, whether it's watching DVDs, looking at digital pictures, playing games or chatting to friends. The machine is designed to work with every single media device in your home and will even replace some of them. You can stream music and video from your Windows Media Center PC; you can download films and music via Xbox Live to the Xbox 360's supplied 20Gb hard drive; you can plug in digital cameras and camcorders; you can watch DVDs, play video and music files burned to every type of writeable CD or DVD; and you can even hook up a PSP and play and view any music or pictures you happen to keep on there. Anything that stores media, Xbox 360 can browse and play. Looking to the more sinister end, you could even use the Xbox 360's wireless network adaptor to tap into someone else's Media Center network and stream all the films they have shared over their own network from the comfort of your own home – with their permission, of course…

The only question against all this media convergence is, do people really want it? Critics are quick to point out that previously, convergence products haven't sold well. However, Adrian Crook, producer for Relic Entertainment, believes in the future they will: "The last time this kind of talk was in vogue was during the previous console transition – four to five years ago. A lot has changed since then. Now you're seeing plenty of PCs in the living room: PVRs (Personal Video Recorders) and Media Center PCs, but also game consoles hacked to function like a home Media Center. The market has all but told console makers it's ready for this sort of convergence, now."

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

In addition to bringing together the different elements of hi-tech multimedia households, the Xbox 360 is a convenient communication device that allows anyone to send messages and video chat with other X360 owners. You don't have to log in to your profile area to check for new messages, either; if you get a message or a request for video chat while watching a DVD, the Xbox 360's power button will flash to alert you of this. It is always connected, so effectively it works in a similar way to a telephone. Except you're communicating through your TV while sat on your couch in your pants.

Upgrading your Xbox Live subscription from Silver to Gold will open up your experiences to such luxuries as the Xbox 360 camera (due for release in 2006),



CUTTING EDGE / It's only on Xbox 360 that you will be able to see state-of-the-art visuals, effects and online play this Christmas. One of the best examples of X360's power will be *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter*. The game will push the technology and gameplay to deliver a unique experience

allowing for not just game-related features, but video chat with multiple recipients. You don't have to just chat either – should you enjoy starting conversations with random strangers (girls), like we do when our girlfriends are out shopping, then you have the option to play a simple game of checkers or poker to break down the ice wall that invariably builds itself in such situations. And before you dismiss the idea that girls will actually be there for you to talk to, consider how popular instant messaging and simple online puzzle-related games are to girls who have access to a PC. Girlfriends and sisters all over the world will get hooked on Xbox 360, 'innocently' video chatting with 58-year-old music teachers and playing simple games that lack the complexity that tends to accompany online gaming.

Best of all, it won't cost you more money – just the standard price of your broadband and the yearly subscription cost of Xbox Live for those using a camera.

> "The Xbox 360 machine is designed to work with every single media device in your home"

THE COMPETITION

While Microsoft talks about the one billion-strong HD era, it won't be there alone. Expected a year after Xbox 360 is Sony's PlayStation3 – a games console similarly pitched in terms of the way it is intended to fit within home media set-ups. It is X360's direct competitor, but will it be better?

Just hours before Microsoft's pre-E3 presentation, Sony held its own unveiling and wowed all with impressive tech and game demos. The problem is, everything was fake – later it was revealed the graphics processor hadn't even been finished, the tech demos mere 'estimations' of the final power.

Despite the continuous and foolishly phrased insistence from Sony's Ken Kutaragi that the PS3 is far more powerful, every developer we speak to tells us there's actually little difference between the two consoles technically. "On paper both machines seem fairly evenly matched," confirms Alan Lawrence, technical director at Relic. "They are both very powerful machines, and I believe games on the next generation are going to blow people away. It's not the hardware that matters, it's all about the games."

Being an Xbox 360 magazine we're not going to be recommending that anyone waits for the PS3, but even if we weren't writing this feature, we'd be hard pressed to work out why anyone would want to do this. Sony is fighting this battle on hardware, not software. Sony is struggling to convince people the PS3 is superior to the X360, because it has nothing to boast about on the software front. Microsoft on the other hand is a software-developing monster, responsible for the world's most used PC operating system, Windows. For Xbox 360, Microsoft has developed amazing easy-to-use software that brings together multimedia functions, communication and online gaming in one package. Sony doesn't have Xbox Live and it won't have as good software support either.

Importantly, Xbox 360 will have a good head start on the PS3, especially in Europe where Sony's machine isn't expected until a year after the X360. And when it does show up, it's doubtful its games will look any better than the Xbox 360 can muster. Factor in the PS3's high cost (it's expected to launch at £400), and its little-described online and media functionality, and it's not looking good for Sony.

Still, don't take our word for it. See the X360's glory for yourself in these very pages and on our exclusive DVD that's jam-packed full of quality movies of all the games you need to see. In our opinion, the future of games machines has never been brighter or filled with so much potential. The industry really could be about to go anywhere – and that includes to the heady heights of one billion players...

NEXT ISSUE: We take you through the finer details of the HD era, and why you need to take a deep breath, then level-up to a better TV...

INSIDE THE XBOX 360

CUSTOM IBM POWERPC-BASED CPU
- Three symmetrical cores running at 3.2GHz each
- Two hardware threads per core; six hardware threads total
- VMX-128 vector unit per core; three total
- 128 VMX-128 registers per hardware thread
- 1Mb L2 cache

CPU GAME MATH PERFORMANCE
- 9 billion dot product operations per second

CUSTOM ATI GRAPHICS PROCESSOR
- 500MHz processor
- 10Mb of embedded DRAM
- 48-way parallel floating-point dynamically scheduled shader pipelines
- Unified shader architecture

POLYGON PERFORMANCE
- 500 million triangles per second

PIXEL FILL RATE
- 16 gigasamples-per-second fill rate using 4 x MSAA

SHADER PERFORMANCE
- 48 billion shader operations per second

MEMORY
- 512Mb of GDDR3 RAM
- 700MHz of DDR
- Unified memory architecture

MEMORY BANDWIDTH
- 22.4Gb/s memory interface bus bandwidth
- 256Gb/s memory bandwidth to EDRAM
- 21.6Gb/s front-side bus

OVERALL SYSTEM FLOATING-POINT PERFORMANCE
- 1 teraflop

STORAGE
- Detachable and upgradable 20Gb hard drive
- 12x dual-layer DVD-ROM
- Memory Unit support starting at 64Mb

I/O
- Support for up to four wireless game controllers
- Three USB 2.0 ports
- Two memory unit slots

OPTIMIZED FOR ONLINE
- Instant, out-of-the-box access to Xbox Live features with broadband service, including Xbox Live Marketplace for downloadable content, gamer profile for digital identity, and voice chat to talk to friends while playing games, watching movies or listening to music
- Built-in Ethernet port
- Wi-Fi ready: 802.11a, 802.11b and 802.11g
- Video camera ready

DIGITAL MEDIA SUPPORT
- Support for DVD-Video, DVD-ROM, DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW, CD-DA, CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-RW, WMA CD, MP3 CD, JPEG Photo CD
- Ability to stream media from portable music devices, digital cameras and Windows XP-based PCs
- Ability to rip music to the Xbox 360 hard drive
- Custom playlists in every game
- Built-in Media Center Extender for Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005
- Interactive, full-screen 3-D visualizers

HIGH-DEFINITION GAME SUPPORT
- All games supported at 16:9, 720p and 1080i, anti-aliasing
- Standard-definition and high-definition video output supported

AUDIO
- Multichannel surround sound output
- Supports 48KHz 16-bit audio
- 320 independent decompression channels
- 32-bit audio processing
- Over 256 audio channels

SYSTEM ORIENTATION
- Stands vertically or horizontally

CUSTOMISABLE FACEPLATES
- Interchangeable to personalise the console

PICS4FONES™

- NO CATCH
- LIVE HELP LINE
- NO UNWANTED SUBSCRIPTIONS
- GENUINE SERVICE

WWW.PICS4FONES.COM

WALLPAPERS


59389


56132


56127



56135


56552


56200


56293


56553



56554


59021


59024


59078



59784



59071



56448



59357


59366



56444


59793



59796



59908



59005



56692



56799

2 RUDE 2 SHOW WALLPAPERS


56343 FISHNISTS SHOW ALL


56319 NAKED & SPREAD


56329 RUBBING FUN


59351 SEE MY PINK BITS


59512 WHITE STOCKINGS


56349 LOOK INSIDE


56362 TEASING FUN


56333 LICK & RUB


56579 SELF PLEASURE


59349 PLUMP REAR VIEW


56546 SPREAD FOR YOU


56358 SPREAD REAR VIEW

VIDEO



59833 TREADMILL BREAKER


56401 BABY DRIVER


59467 FERRARI TEST DRIVE


59468 MCLAREN VS SKYLINE

56302 KICKBOXER BREAK

56317 TRUCK SURFER

59839 RICH IDIOT

56306 MOUNTAIN BIKE JUMP

56307 SKATER ROOF JUMP

56308 SKATE JUMP GO'S BAD

59844 JEEP BIG CLIMB

56313 RALLY SMASH

59846 MOTO X STUNT

56310 MOTORBIKE PILEUP

56304 MOTO X BIG CRASH

56390 FUNNY FROG

59465 SWEDISH BLONDE

56078 BLONDE BENT OVER

56106 STRIPPING BRUNETTE

56167 HOT BRUNETTE

56234 TASTY BIKINI BABE

59815 NAUGHTY ANNA

2 RUDE 2 SHOW VIDEOS

59820 GIRLIE THREESOME

59821 FILTHY LUCY

59823 POOLSIDE STRIPPER

59984 BATHTIME FUN

56043 DIRTY GIRL NEXT DOOR

56091 FRANTIC RUBBING

2 RUDE 2 SHOW

56090 - RUBBING HERSELF INTO A FRENZY
56088 - FILTHY SPANISH BEDROOM BABE
56095 - BRUNETTE MOIST FINGER FUN
56103 - GET DOWN AND DIRTY ON THE FLOOR
56097 - JUICY BLONDE GETS TOTALLY DIRTY
56117 - LINDA SHARES HER TIME WITH YOU
56114 - CLIMAXING LOUD FOR YOU TO HEAR
56174 - A MATES SISTER IS HORNY FOR YOU
56076 - SELF PLEASURE KNOW HOW
56262 - HOT HORNY BABE IN PINK
59479 - RUBBING FROM EVERY ANGLE
56265 - NAKED BUT FOR PINK HIGH HEELS
59588 - LUCIE REVEALS EVERYTHING TO YOU
59594 - FINGER TEASE, LOUD CLIMAX
59611 - NAKED GIRLS GET IT ON
59617 - MYA HAVING LOTS OF FUN
59758 - EVA GETS HORNY AT WORK
59759 - KRISTINA ON THE BED TEASES YOU
56057 - HORNY AS HELL, EASY TO PLEASE
56059 - VERY NAUGHTY STOCKING THRILLER

ANIMATION

56367 CARTOON BJ

59308 SINGLE FUN

59540 REESE ROMP

56018 STONED COLD KILLER

56370 SEXY SIGN

56374 FLASHING SYMBOL

56192 EROTIC DANCER

56371 MUFFIN MAN

59535 POLE DANCER RUB

59539 PARIS ROMP

56372 VIPER LIGHTS

56369 ALIEN SPLAT!

56223 BOOB POUNCER

FOOTY BABE STRIPPERS

56528 ARSENAL

56523 CELTIC

56524 CHARLTON

56526 CHELSEA

56527 ENGLAND

59837 RANGERS

56531 LIVERPOOL

56532 REAL MADRID

56533 MAN UTD

56535 SCOTLAND

ANIMATION

TOP TUNES

Get two of the latest Mono's, Poly's, Realsounds or Real Music twice a week from just 50p*

TO JOIN MONO TWICE A WEEK FOR £1.00:
TXT SUB MUSICM TO 80010

TO JOIN POLY TWICE A WEEK FOR £1.00:
TXT SUB MUSIC TO 80010

TO JOIN REAL TWICE A WEEK FOR £1.50:
TXT SUB REAL TO 80010

GAMES

COMPATABILITY: A: NOKIA B: MOTOROLA C: SAGEM D: SAMSUNG E: SHARF F: SIEMENS G: SONY ERICSSON

BRUCE LEE
Control a furious Bruce Lee, taking maximum advantage of his self-developed fighting technique – Jeet Kune Do – to decimate anything and everything that stands in his way.
ABCDEG 56501

BUFFY
Drusilla has captured Oz, and is using him as bait to lure Buffy. Play as Buffy and kick demon butt! Walk, run, climb, and jump through 5 levels of a spooky castle on your way to rescue Oz!
ABCDEG 56502

PREDATOR
The Predators have scoured the galaxy in search of big-game, and in humans, they have found an end to their quest. You have been given the honor of being the first to hunt the humans. You land in the jungle near a secret military base. The hunt is on!
ABCDEG 56513

KAMASUTRA SPECIAL
With Kamasutra Special Edition, the ultimate resource of the art of lovemaking is now available on the palm of your hand! The knowledge contained within the Kamasutra is treated here in a plain, simple, matter of fact way.
ABCDEFG 56480

DOUGIE LAMPKIN
Ride a trial bike and complete increasingly difficult obstacle courses. 4 tutorial levels will help you to control the bike in no time! Once you get the hang of it you're ready to take on 18 breathtaking levels in the Championship mode! Good luck!
A 56812

KAMASUTRA
Fantasies about having sex in public are extremely common. The feeling of doing something "naughty" enhances sexual arousal. Usually this fear can make the soenario of sex outside of the very exciting.
ABDEFG 56804

JUDGE DREDD
You are the Law! The streets of Mega City One are overflowing with criminals, and two judges have gone missing! As Judge Dredd, bust your way through multiple areas and past the dangerous sector bosses.
ABCEG 56460

COBRA
You fly a Cobra gunship helicopter. Your enemy has a powerful defense system, you must break through it at any cost. You are armed to the max with missiles and guns to blast your way through the enemy
AB 56457

POOL CHALLENGE
You have complete control over the cue ball enabling dazzling positional shots and precise long pots. A realistic game where physics is combined with a high level of opponent intelligence.
A 56818

SENSIBLE SOCCER
Sensible Soccer is a brilliant conversion of the most popular, most playable, best selling 2D football game of all time. 15 million users worldwide...follow the crowd.
ABCEG 56514

COLIN MCRAE '04
The top console/PC rally game is finally mobile. Colin McRae Rally 04 stays true to the series by offering the same quality and feel as the original.
ABCEG 56503

GUINESS RECORDS
Enter Las Vegas and try your luck on the good old slot machines. Use your skills to second guess the machine and win those big bucks!
ABCDEFG 56461

MOAN TONES

Hear Me Climax!	58156
Yeah Dropping Loads Baby!	58148
You Like That Ass Baby?	58150
Get Your F***ing C*** In My P***y	58158
Never Let This Guy Get Hold Of You're Lass!!	58152
Make This P***y Climax.. Multiples??	58153
Oh Yeah F*** That P***y	58151
Don't STOP!!	58154
Oh F*** Me!!	58155
Climax Big Baby!!	58159
Ooh Yeah!!	58147
F*** Me, Make Me Climax!!	58157

TOP GAME

CONFLICT VIETNAM
Conflict: Vietnam follows the progress of four US soldiers, cut off from their unit during the 1968 Tet Offensive and tasked with fighting their way back to friendly lines.
ABCEG 56505

DIRTY TXT JOKES

RUDE, CRUDE & VERY FUNNY!

RUDE JOKES >>
TXT SUB FUN TO 80010

CAN'T FIND

WHAT YOU LOOKING FOR?

TXT 5WANT (SPACE) YOUR MESSAGE TO 80010

EG: TXT 5WANT ALIEN REALSOUNDS TO 80010

XXX & SEXY MOVIES

Get totally filthy films or saucy stripper movies on your mobile now, for the discount price of £1.50 each!

XXX MOVIES >>
TXT FILM12 TO 69011

SEXY MOVIES >>
TXT FILM12 TO 80010

OVER 65% OFF!

XXX & SEXY IMAGES

Horny babes or action shots sent direct to your mobile for only 50p each! Make sure you get it twice a week!

XXX PICS >>
TXT BABE12 TO 69011

SEXY PICS >>
TXT BABE12 TO 80010

OVER 85% OFF!

HOW TO ORDER

FOR JUST 1 ITEM

TXT PICS4 FOLLOWED BY A SPACE THEN THE CODE TO 80010

EG: SEND PICS4 59894 TO 80010
TO ORDER 2 RUDE 2 SHOW SEND TO 69011

P4CLUB - 4 FOR £4.50

TO JOIN P4CLUB FOR £4.50 MONTHLY WHICH INCLUDES 5 ITEMS

TXT P4CLUB FOLLOWED BY A SPACE THEN ANY CODE TO 80010

THEN ORDER ANOTHER 4 ITEMS IN THE SAME WAY FOR FREE!

EG: SEND P4CLUB 59894 TO 80010
TO ORDER 2 RUDE 2 SHOW SEND TO 69011

*GAMES NOT INCLUDED

Standard pictures, packs, video, animation, football strippers and moan tones cost £4.50. Games cost £6.00. Charge messages sent in denominations of £1.50. You will be sent a link to collect your item and a small additional network charge may be incurred. SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES: Daily services are: FUN to 80010 (£1.50 per day), BABE12 to 69011 (50p* per day), FILM12 TO 69011 (£1.50 per day). Twice weekly services are: BABE12 to 80010 (50p* twice a week), FILM12 to 80010 (£1.50 twice a week), MUSIC & MUSICM to 80010 (50p* twice a week), REAL to 80010 (£1.50 twice a week). *50p subscriptions are charged at £1.00 with every 2nd item free = 50p each. To unsubscribe text STOP to the number you used to join or email unsubscribe@pics4fones.com. PICS4CLUB: This is a monthly notification service which entitles consumers to purchase 5 items for the price of one from the following categories Wallpapers, Ringtones, Animation and Videos. EG: 5 Ringtones for £4.50. To end Pics4club send "P4club" followed by "stop" to 80010 Alternatively text STOP to 80010. All XXX or 2Rude 2Show items are for over 18s only. Pre-pay users without enough credit will not receive items. Responsibility cannot be accepted for content ordered that is not supported by the handset. TUNES: MCPS & PRS Payments paid. PICTURES: Images compatible with colour picture/wallpaper and WAP enabled mobiles. All images are full colour. Responsibility cannot be accepted for delayed or distorted content delivery. Due to phone screen sizes/resolutions images downloaded may differ slightly from shown. CANT FIND IT: This initial service is not charged apart from the usual network message charge, with located content sent to you at our normal rate eg: Ringtone £4.50. Pics4fones is a product of K2 Media Ltd, PO Box 162, Kendal, LA8 8WW. Support line available between 10-12am and 1-4pm, Mon to Fri - 0871 200 3193.

+++ RARE INTERVIEWED +++ LAS VEGAS REVEALED IN PGR3 +++ CALL OF DUTY PLAYED +++ GUN TESTED

PREVIEWS

X360
We cover games in five unique ways. Here's how...

SCREENSHOT	INTERVIEWED	PLAY TEST	FULL ACCESS	ROUND-UP
One screen, blown up big to show all the next-gen detail and goodness	The developer talks openly about the game	Hands-on with the game for first impressions	Exclusive screens, info and interviews direct from the development studio	Unique games, updates and dual-format releases that you should keep an eye on



ELDER SCROLLS

"BETHESDA ISN'T SELLING YOU A GAME... IT'S SELLING YOU A WORLD"
Kieron Gillen

X360 PREVIEW GAMES
CONTENTS

52 **PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3**
Our man visits Bizarre to see the hottest racer in action

58 **RESIDENT EVIL 5**
Capcom finally shows Xbox some respect

60 **CALL OF DUTY 2**
So good looking it'll date your sister

62 **GUN**
For a few dollars more... we'd take this home

68 **FINAL FANTASY XI**
Classic men-being-girls-online action

70 **TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED**
More finesse than Henry's right foot

72 **PREY**
Not a Take That tribute, but the best shooter since *Halo*

78 **DEAD OR ALIVE 4**
Tecmo threatens *Virtua Fighter*'s hardcore rep

80 **PERFECT DARK ZERO**
Rare spills the beans on its anticipated shooter

82 **ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION**
Hands-on with the most ambitious RPG ever put to silicon

88 **FRAME CITY KILLER**
Namco prepares to make us all an offer

90 **GEARS OF WAR**
The cogs are turning

92 **ROUND-UP**
Need For Speed Most Wanted, Amped 3, Tiger Woods PGA 2006, Top Spin 2, The Godfather

Exclusive
STUDIO VISIT
New screens and details



ON THE X360 DISC

- Teaser trailer
- Gameplay trailer
- Extended trailer
- Screenshot montage
- Alternative audio track

Release date/ November 05

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

The future of console gaming is coming into view – and it's moving at some speed...

Ask any Xbox owner to name the killer IP for Xbox 360 and they're bound to say *Halo 3*. Ask them again, this time telling them to quit the rabid fanboy nonsense and talk about something that has already been announced, and nine times out of ten they'll say the words *Project Gotham Racing 3*. Bizarre Creation's respected racing series has reached its fourth incarnation, and such is its pedigree that Microsoft will be looking to the game to sell their brand new console to the Xbox faithful. It's a massive gamble to launch into the next-generation without even a sniff of the company's platform-selling *Halo* franchise, but having seen the beauty that is *PGR 3* in motion, the smart money has to be on Xbox 360 being a massive, 170 mph success...

Let's step back in time to October 2003. Saddam was still hiding in his dusty little pit, the *Lord Of The Rings* trilogy was not yet complete, petrol was affordable, and oh yeah, Bizarre Creations was »

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Microsoft
Developer/ Bizarre Creations
Genre/ Racing
Players/ 1-8
Xbox Live? / Yes

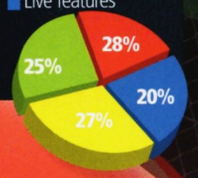
Briefly

The finest street-racing experience money can buy becomes the must-have launch title for the Xbox 360

IN THE PIE

What *PGR3* is adding into the mix

- Ferraris
- Photo-realism
- Smooth controls
- Live features



about to revolutionise the way people played Xbox Live. Putting politics aside, the world has definitely been a better place since that year for Xbox owners, as the console has gone from strength to strength in almost every way. *Halo 2* took the Live ball from *Gotham 2* and ran with it, creating a community of over two million users worldwide. Microsoft also announced that it had another console on the way, which would be more powerful than any entertainment device that the world had ever seen. To show it off, it needed a game that had served well in the past, so the boys at Bizarre Creations were called upon to cook up some of the old-fashioned Brit magic to make the world take notice. The rest is history, and now *Project Gotham 3* is lurking ominously on the horizon.

Too good to be true?

Fast forward to the here and now, and Bizarre Creations is once again looking forward to changing the face of the Xbox and Live again. Work is frantically continuing on the new project and the world is waiting patiently. Much has been made of the scenery shots that have been posted on official community site **BizarreOnline.net**, and chatter still envelops the forums discussing the latest screenshots or movies. Is that really in the game, or is Microsoft trying to pull the wool over our eyes long enough to pocket the £210 for a basic package X360? Well, the doubters can stop doom mongering right now, because *Project Gotham Racing 3* is the real deal. It really does look that good, and yes, if you stop and stare at the buildings, they are as detailed as the tech screens. That is, if you have the chance to, because *PGR 3* is a whole new level in the *Gotham* series that sees speed and style taking preference over sitting around and admiring how pretty the cities are. What the Xbox 360 does, is take every game and crank it right up to 11, and in some cases 12. *PGR 3* is a trophy title, and the casual fools will swoon and stand wide-eyed over how damn gorgeous it looks, but the real power here is under the bonnet.

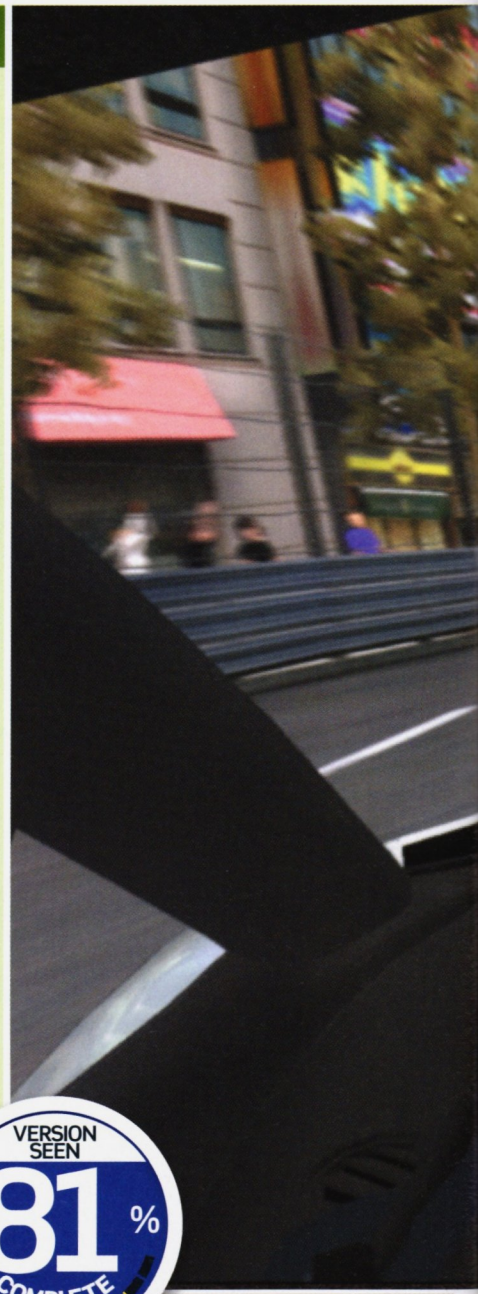
> "Vehicles are able to achieve a minimum of 170 mph"

Bizarre has been making plenty of noise about the fact that all the vehicles in the game are able to achieve a minimum of 170 mph, and that the majority will be unlocked from the start. Well, from first impressions this is a terrific idea, and really puts the game into a whole new bracket as far as structure is concerned. Why spend hours unlocking a Ferrari F55 only to use it in one race and then move on to a different class? That's not what *Project Gotham* has become. Bizarre Creations has been given access to the most coveted cars in the world, and it wants you to use them and drive them into the ground both on and offline. Gone are the days of moaning that some hillbilly in the US has spent his life unlocking the finest cars just to humiliate you in a Live game. Want to beat his Saleen S7? Turn up in the brand new TVR Sagaris and out-race his whiny ass all around New York on day one. Each vehicle has a real-world value, and is available from the beginning for immediate purchase and street racing. Oh, and don't they look pretty… every car has a total of 80,000 polygons lavished on them, and all 80 have been at least six weeks in the making. That makes for a stack of man-hours in car-coding…

REAL-LIFE RACING

Streets ahead

There are a number of real-world cities that have been painstakingly mapped into *Project Gotham Racing 3*. However, the one city that gets the palms sweating is Las Vegas; imagine the neon, the lights dazzling off the wet tarmac and, in the distance, Caesar's Palace teasing us…



VERSION SEEN 81% COMPLETE







IN BLOOM / The lighting effects are truly stunning in *PGR 3*, and our hot tip is to watch out for Las Vegas at dusk, baby



LIVE ADDICTION

Living Live

PGR 3 to reinvent Live again

Remember how *PGR 2* showed the world what Live could achieve? Well, new game, new console, new standards to be set... *Project Gotham Racing 3* will feature Gotham TV, which is a service that will keep players constantly updated with what is happening in *Gotham*'s world of slick street-racing. This will be done by allowing players to jump in and watch friends race, or by using the ticker-tape that runs along the bottom of the screen, which constantly updates the player with different facts about friends, personal statistics, and how they stack up against the best in the world.

The spectator mode in *PGR 3* will no doubt become a popular forum for car nuts, as well as Yanks who insist that they can drive faster than "those losers"!





Liveaware

■ Customise tracks, cars and game modes ■ Downloadable content ■ Gotham TV will host sponsored tournaments with real prizes

WORTHY OF THE X360?

Only the world's finest cars make the cut

The idea behind the *PGR 3* tagline 'Life Begins at 170' is to guarantee that every car in the game reaches speeds of 170mph. Here are three that will surely proove popular…

The all-new TVR Sagaris will make it into the game, and the signs seem to be pointing towards it becoming a favourite amongst fans. Its speed is guaranteed, but what you also get is a sweet looking motor that easily wins the 'how big is your schlong' sizing contest.

A big favourite in the **X360** office, the Saleen is back in the game and ready and waiting to take on the big boys. This car packs speed and mobility in one saucy little package, even John Terry would look good driving this one to the shops.

The Enzo is still a king amongst Ferraris, but will it be phased by the latest models in *PGR 3*? We'll be guessing this will remain a classic on Xbox Live, you can't beat a good Enz to the finish line.





However, if the cars weren't up to scratch then they would look seriously out of place in the game's wonderfully detailed cities. New York, London, Tokyo, Las Vegas and the Nurburgring are all present and correct, and each looks even more stunning than the tech-screens that have appeared on **BizarreOnline.net.** There are quite literally no tiled or repeated textures, making each environment utterly unique. Even the trees, which sway lightly in the Las Vegas breeze, have 8,000 polygons each. Read it and weep for joy, stat-fans. Players will be totally aghast when they actually see the environments in which they find themselves, as the detail is nothing short of breathtaking. Perhaps they'll even be too gobsmacked to start racking up the Kudos, which is a much more important part of *Project Gotham Racing* this time around. Now these special points are rewarded for all manner of crazy moves, each of which will be indicated

> "The trees, which sway lightly in th breeze, have 8,00 polys each"





BIG IN JAPAN / Once again the Americans are showing their muscle in a foreign country, only without the possibility of war

RED IS THE COLOUR

Licensed beauty

The *Gotham* series is renowned for its cars, and more importantly its immaculately designed Ferraris. If you want glossy, fast supercars then this is the only game you will ever need.







on the screen as in previous versions. Pull off a particularly crowd-pleasing manoeuvre and not only will the individually animated crowd members cheer and take photos, but you'll also earn yourself a Badge of Honour, which can be collected and put towards unlocking some of the prototype vehicles hidden away in *PGR 3*. However, even without the rarer cars the game will run at a blistering pace. The developer has already hit 60 frames-per-second, but is still concentrating on reaching this goal with all the visual tricks and illusions actually turned on…

New additions

PGR 3 is introducing plenty of fresh features into the mix to take the game beyond what many may think is nothing more than a visually stunning update of *PGR 2*. Bizarre is hoping that its new game will feel more like a real sport, and one that will bring together players all over the world into more of a community than any other racing title. The 30,000 spectators in any given Live race via Gotham TV should help, along with the 15 different types of online championships. The game also has plenty of other tricks up its sleeve, such as the addition of a new mode known as Play Time. This will allow players to simply mess about within the confines of the *Project Gotham* worlds, making up the rules and routes as they go along. Play Time, when used via Live, creates a sort of lobby where one player uses the game's Route Creator to design a fresh course through a city, which players can then race through, with whatever weather effects, rules, or stipulations they choose. It could be an Eliminator race, which removes the last placed player after every lap, or maybe a point-to-point race through the length of the city. Perhaps Kudos could be the main focus, and players will race to stack up style rather than lap times; during Play Time – both on and offline – you really are the boss. Even if you're not connected to Live, you'll be able to define the AI behaviour and vehicles.

THE CLASSICS / A spot of Lamborghini action at the Nurburgring for you, sir? What could be better?



The serious racers will be chuffed to hear that the good old career mode is back, online as well as off. Now, though, players will compete in each of the three main categories: Style, Time, and Racing. These will include old favourites such as Cone Challenges, Speed Cameras and Overtaking, as well as introducing new modes such as Drift Challenge, Break Through and Time Versus Kudos laps, where the player uses fancy moves to stop the countdown timer, and does a lap in a seemingly impossible time. Quite simply, *Project Gotham Racing 3* isn't just cashing in – it's the fresh-faced future of console gaming, and easily the best prospect for Xbox 360 so far.

Andy Hartup

FACT: Those fancy dashboards you can see in the screenshots featured here all work: push a button and stuff happens!

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

PGR 3 not only looks the business, but it has innovation and new features bursting from every seam. It epitomises Microsoft's vision of the next-generation.

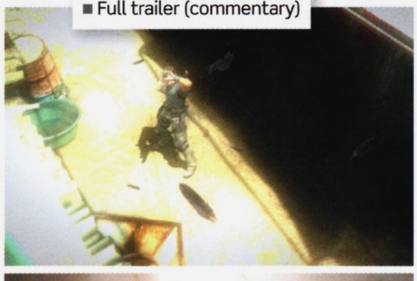
Thriller?

Exclusive SCREENS
Shocking new features



Excited?
The horror / New setting, story and gamplay features make this essential
Are you kidding? / You'd be insane not to pre-order this killer title

ON THE X360 DISC
■ Full trailer (commentary)





DEAD HUNGRY / Capcom has yet to confirm whether *Resident Evil 5* will feature zombies proper or 'infected' humans

Release date/ October 06

NEED TO KNOW

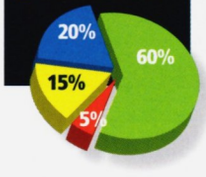
Publisher/ Capcom
Developer/ In-house
Genre/ Adventure
Players/ 1
Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly

The genre-defining horror series finally comes to Xbox – and it could even land before the PS3 version!

IN THE PIE

Resident Evil 5 will be stuffed with...
- Affective weather
- Rendered stubble
- Zombies
- All-american hero



RESIDENT EVIL 5

New platform, new look, new game...

You read that right: after years of being ignored, Capcom is bringing *Resident Evil* to the Xbox, and it could even be here before the PS3 sees the shelves. After months of wining and dining the biggest Japanese developers, Microsoft's Xbox 360 line-up is really starting to look good. This is good news for us gamers, and these first details of *Resident Evil 5* are proof that a bit of corporate snuggling can go a long way.

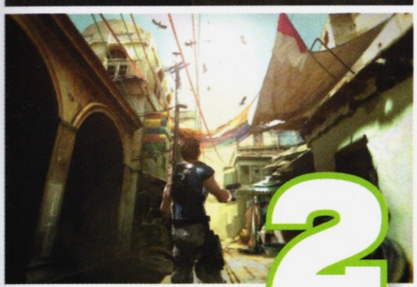
Onto the game itself, and *Resident Evil 5* is shaping into the definitive game in the series. Taking off from where *Resident Evil 4* left us, with the new over-the-shoulder third-person perspective in full use, the game aims to offer a similar mixed bag of action, puzzles and running scared that made number four such a breath of fresh air.

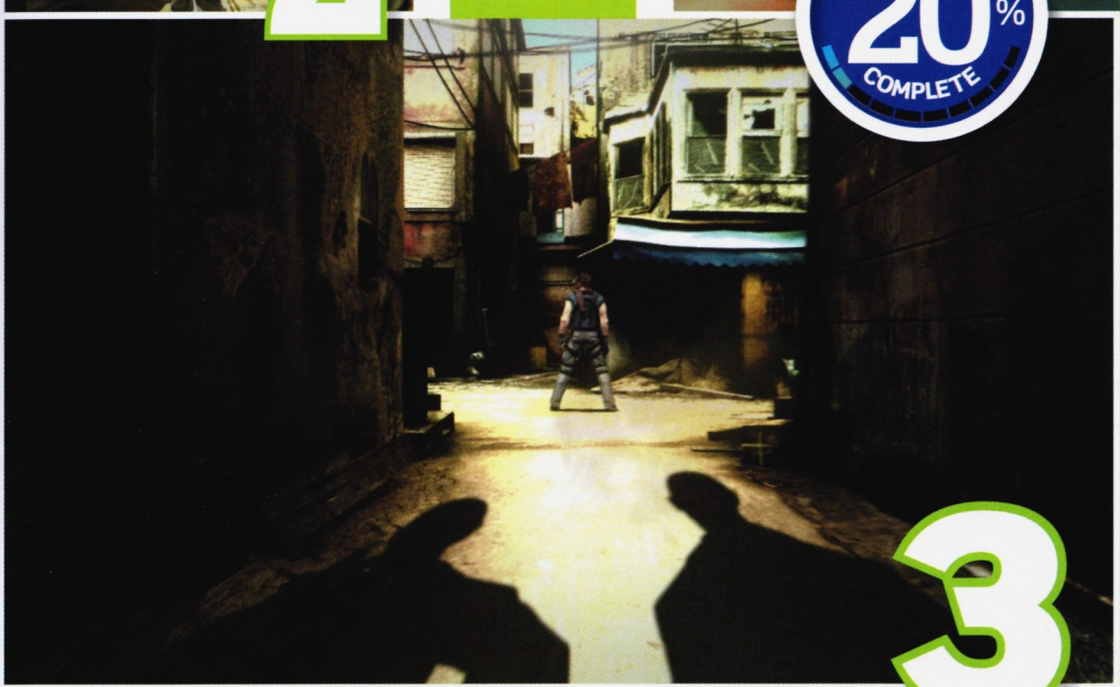
The colour palette has now changed, and the dreary brown muddied colours of *Resident Evil 4*'s European setting have been replaced by the stark bright environs of the Middle East. This offers Capcom a good excuse to indulge itself with the X360's lighting and shadow rendering technology, in turn creating a very realistic game world.

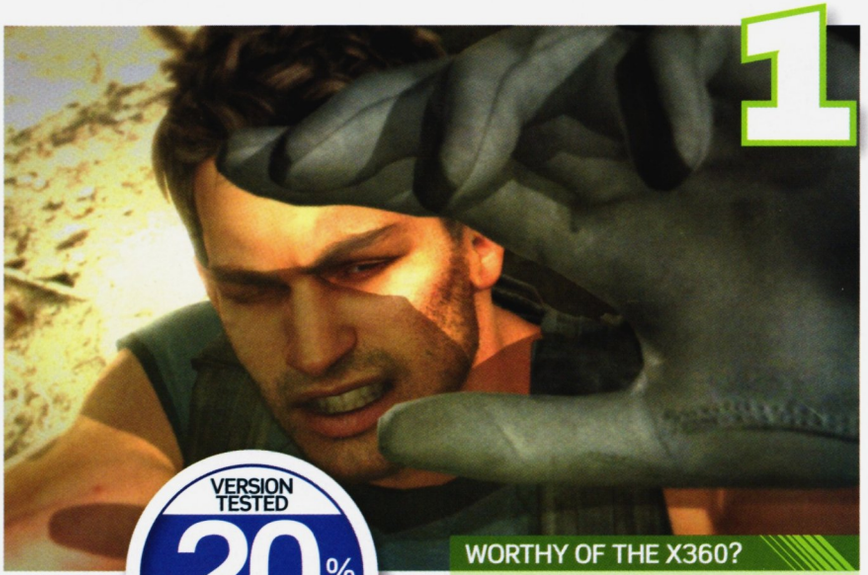
As well as allowing the developer the opportunity to make a game that looks stunning, the use of the harsh lighting also adds to the gameplay. *Resident Evil 5* will place gamers into living, changing environments. The heat, for example, affects the lead character. If you've been running around in the midday sun for too long, the on-screen hero will overheat. Taking time to cool off in the shade of a building or cave will restore his energy – but do this and your character runs the risk of being stalked by the many slavering zombies

> "Watch beads of sweat trickle down our hero's forehead..."









IT'S GETTING HOT IN HERE

Apply the lotion

Capcom is using the X360's visual tricks to create a world where light actually affects the characters. Heat stroke, blurred vision and the recharge qualities of a cooling breeze will all play a role in surviving this *Resident Evil*.

VERSION TESTED 20% COMPLETE

WORTHY OF THE X360?

High Definition ain't just about crisp graphics...

The power of the Xbox 360 (and High Definition output) is being used in *Resident Evil 5* to conjure up some new gameplay ideas. First on the list is the game's impressive polygon count, meaning muscles in a character's face can be animated individually.

Then of course you have the intricately detailed environments, complete with an as-yet-unspecified next-gen physics engine to create a living world.

And finally we have the use of light in HD mode to illustrate changes in temperature. Using this the player knows when he must escape to a shaded area and cool down.

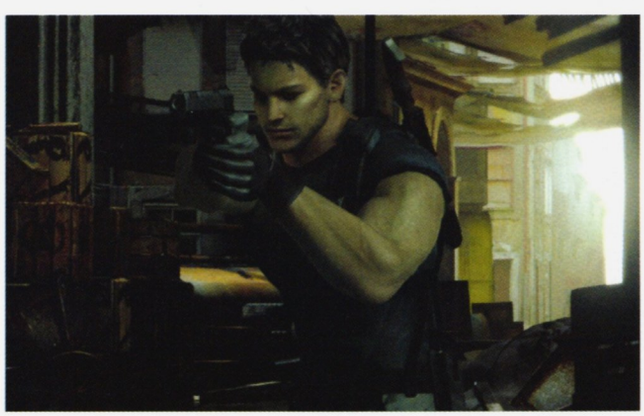
that want his blood. This sense of temperature change, created by using advanced lighting effects and filters, wouldn't be possible on standard definition output, but due to the Xbox 360's high-definition graphics, you'll be able to watch beads of sweat trickle down our hero's forehead.

If that doesn't shout next-gen enough for you, Capcom has put out some impressive stats concerning the visuals. The game character has an unprecedented number of polygons to create his features, right down to polygon-rendered stubble. That's right: this stubble isn't textured, but rendered with polys. This has meant that the artists can set parameters for individual muscles on the hero's face, offering lifelike animation and reactions.

Speed kills

The game will also run at a smooth and constant 60 frames per second, allowing the designers to express themselves in more ways than the 30fps *Resident Evil 4*. This not only means the animation and character movement will feel more realistic, but such a fast speed points toward an unusually action-orientated horror adventure, where speed of movement and reaction times will be crucial to keeping your head.

As with many next-gen games, a realistic physics engine will power the game. Capcom is toying with using a middleware solution for *Resident Evil 5*, such as Epic Games' Unreal Engine 3, as this works out cheaper than developing an engine from scratch. The use of physics technology like this will mean items can be shot and smashed, while kicking and pushing larger objects will see them topple onto your foes – this one new addition should put the survival back into the survival horror genre. **Ian Dean**



DRESSED TO THRILL / Small vest, floppy hair, as well as designer stubble... Is Capcom too fixated on bad Eighties fashion?

FACT: The producers of the duff *Resident Evil* movies are working on a third film in the series, and as a bonus for gamers they are also putting the finishing touches to the *DOA* movie. Nice.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

The cynics would say it's about bloody time, but let's not dwell on that. Let's look to the future, and what will surely be one of the defining games of the next-gen era.

Thriller?

Release date/ November 05

ON THE X360 DISC
- Teaser trailer
- Gameplay trailer
- Full trailer
- Alternate audio
- Screenshot montage
- Screenshots

Exclusive SCREEN
Incredible in-game shot

CALL OF DUTY 2

When duty calls and looks this good, it's best to answer

NEED TO KNOW

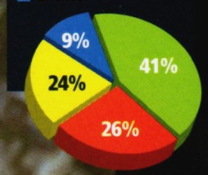
Publisher/ Activision
Developer/ Infinity Ward
Genre/ Shoot-'em-up
Players/ 1-16
Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly

The ultimate WWII shooter is coming to Xbox 360 at launch and even your PC owning friends will swoon over the console version

IN THE PIE

Call Of Duty 2 is packed with...
- Real war
- Sneaky Germans
- Epic scale
- Chatter



Those still sporting 14"-television sets with the polished wood panels passed down through the family, beware! *Call Of Duty 2* will kill sub-par televisions. The weather effects, the visual expressions, even the smoke effects from grenades: everything here manages to justify tedious developer shorthand such as "normal mapping" and "volumetric fogging". Cynics, be damned. This has smacked the graphics versus gameplay debate firmly on its raw backside by proving the two are forever entwined, as *Call Of Duty 2* aims to relive the three Cs of war – confusion, camaraderie and conflict – through its clever use of Xbox 360's muscle.

Those rooting out gameplay details will find the one significant advancement being touted over *Call Of Duty* for this sequel is 'Battle Chatter'. The aim is to add to the atmosphere by having your soldiers constantly talking and reacting to what's happening, therefore relaying information to you through what they're saying. If they see a small ominous green object flying towards you, rather than using the power of silence and jerky animation to leg it to safe distance, you'll hear screams of "GRENADE!", allowing you time to run. Your men will serve as a primitive radar, informing you of ambushes they've spotted or snipers lurking in the distance. Basically, you have a team of armed housewives constantly nattering away, rather than hardened troops.

That's the theory anyway. In practice, given this is now a post-*Brothers In Arms* era, Battle Chatter could well turn out to be nothing more than a guise to cover for the fact that you won't be able to order your men around. It's a fine line to walk, and a damn risky one at that. It's a good job that *Call Of Duty 2* has got such a great back-up plan waiting in the visuals department... **Ryan King**

FACT: Though it's a sequel, you will get to revisit battles from the first *Call Of Duty*, including the bloody streets of Stalingrad. Now that's an offer you can't refuse...

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

COD2 has great graphics... But does it have the deep gameplay to match the deep pockets required to do justice to this presentation? The jury's still out...

Thriller?

Liveaware

■ Exclusive downloads ■ New online multiplayer maps ■ Co-op play ■ Custom multiplayer modes and game maps



"This has smacked the graphics versus gameplay debate firmly on its raw backside"

ON THE X360 DISC

- Kingdom Come trailer
- Teaser trailer (comm.)
- Story trailer
- Screenshot montage
- Screenshots

Exclusive SCREENS

Neversoft locks 'n' loads



Excited?

Yee-ha / The *GTA* meets *The Wild Bunch* approach feels fresh

360-lite / Spruced up visuals aside, this is an old flavour Xbox game at heart

Release date/ November 06

GUN

The Wild West gets wilder. And nastier. John Wayne wouldn't approve...

Something horrible happens on screen. It may have involved someone's head having a little falling out with a revolver bullet. There's sympathetic winces around the room of hardened games journos.

One word gets hastily scrawled in the official **X360** notebook: brutal.

We get back to watching the game and something equally horrible happens. Only one word really comes to mind. Checking our notes, we discover that we've already written it.

Brutal gets underlined a few more times. And there it is, in black and white. *Gun* is bloody brutal.

As the top 'Lovejoy-says-bastard-a-lot' show *Deadwood* is to high-calibre invective, so *Gun* is to high-calibre firearm wounds. Disarm a stale booze-drenched cowhand by shooting their gun clear from their hand. Or disarm said stale boozed-up cowhand by shooting their arm clear from their shoulder. It's your call.

The line that the PRs and Producers mention time and time again when chatting about *Gun* is that "it's a western, but we're not talking about spaghetti westerns here". Which is a little unfair to *The Man With No Name* and his easy-to-whistle soundtracks. In their time, they were as harsh a cowboy-flick as the world had ever seen. To those brought up on John Wayne, they were scary as hell. And to those brought up on Eastwood, the modern *Deadwood* on TV or *Gun* on console is just about as terrifying as you can get too.

Yes, it's set over a hundred years ago, but in terms of its approach, this is as modern as you could wish for. In fact, it's probably even too »

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Activision
Developer/ Neversoft
Genre/ Adventure
Players/ 1
Xbox Live? / Yes

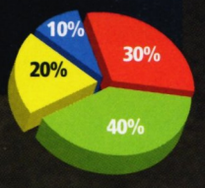
Briefly

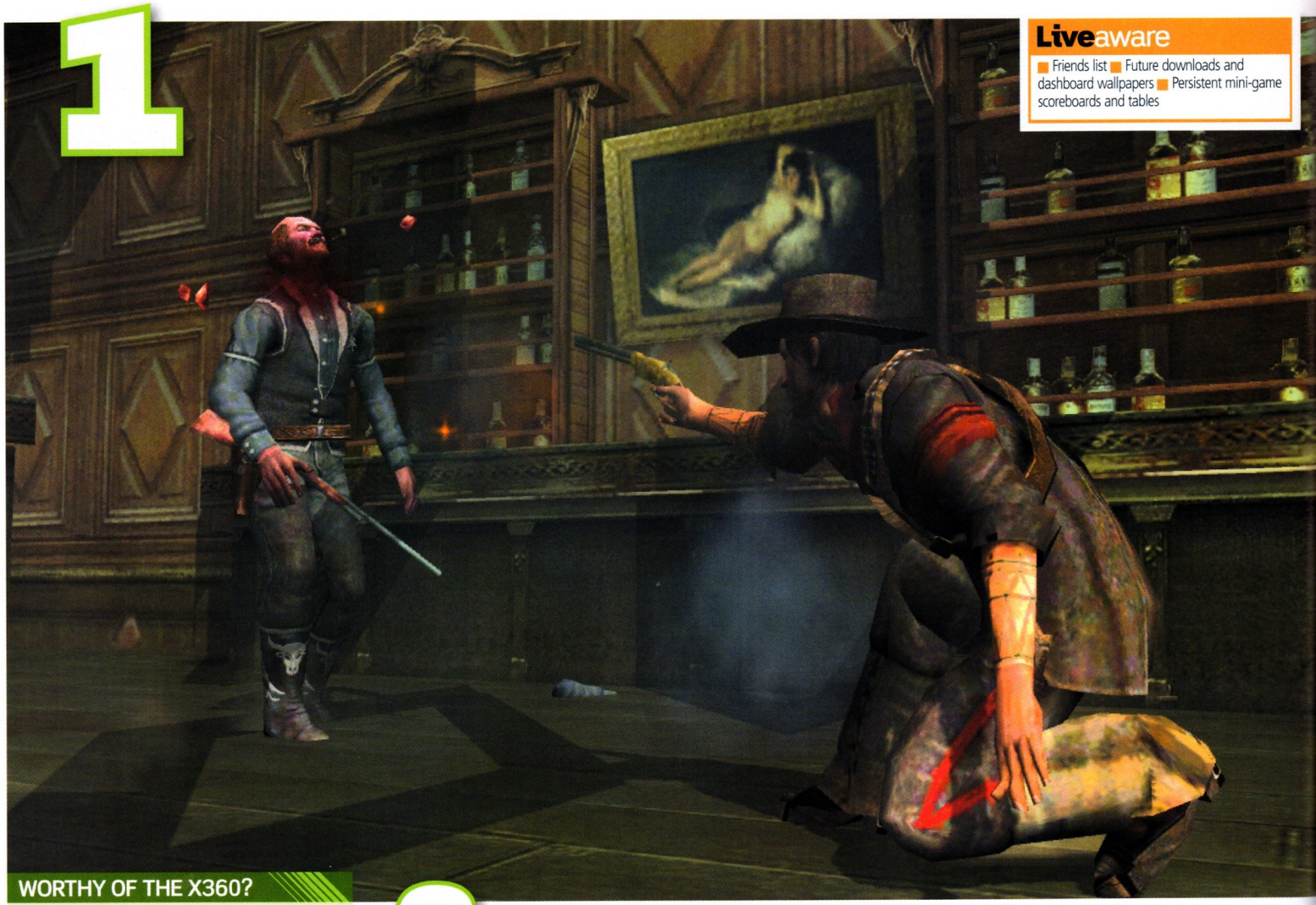
Tame the West and find your father, killing a hell of a lot of cowboys and indians along the way. Yee-haw!

IN THE PIE

Gun is loaded with...

- Original concept
- The big country
- Strong visuals
- Brutal sound





Liveaware

■ Friends list ■ Future downloads and dashboard wallpapers ■ Persistent mini-game scoreboards and tables

WORTHY OF THE X360?

Welcome to the shoot-out at the OK Corral...

The Quick-draw in action. Along with knife fighting and bare fists, the six-shooter is This is your standard form of attack. As with *Red Dead Revolver* when you enter the Quick-draw mode you will be able to see the trajectories of bullets fired and being shot at you, making dodging death more than a little easier.

Alternatively, sit back with your trusty Winchester rifle, lean around corners and put a piece of lead through the back of an enemy's head from distance. This mode of attack delivers the best 'James Stewart' moments in the all of the game.

Finally, learning to shoot whilst bucking on the back of a nag is another of the game's skills that you will need to be able to master. As with *GTA* there will be many missions in the game that will require you to chase someone down, but this is far more rewarding than bikes.



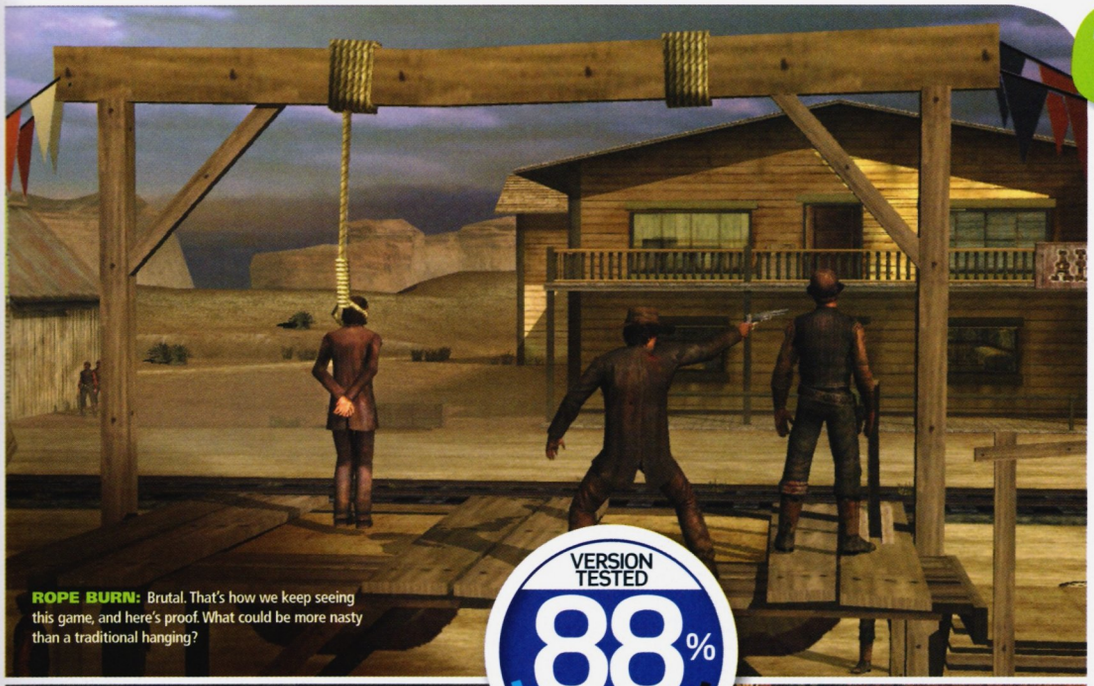


» modern for some people today. This ain't the Sunday afternoon cowboy movie version of the heroes and villains of the period.

It's easy to get the basics across: it's *GTA* with cowboys. It swaps Uzis for revolvers, pimped-out cars for trusty stallions and prostitutes for (er) prostitutes. There's an expansive world full of ruffians in chaps to travel through, with genuine epic views moonlighting from their day-jobs as backdrops to the Marlboro man adverts. All popular cowboy pursuits are open to you. Hunt animals to get back a little health. Collect scalps with your trusty Bowie knife. Eat a ludicrous amount of beans around the campfire and suffer amusing bouts of flatulence. Er... well, not that, but you get the idea.

However, rather than *GTA*'s missions, which tend to take place in the game world itself with a task added to it, the twenty-plus missions that make up the core of *Gun*'s story are more

> "You can cut off the top of someone's head to sell it later"



ROPE BURN: Brutal. That's how we keep seeing this game, and here's proof. What could be more nasty than a traditional hanging?

VERSION TESTED 88% COMPLETE





BAR FLY / What's a cowboy tale without a good old fashioned bar brawl?

like traditional levels. Play essentially comprises of larking around in the world, perhaps playing a little poker, before you decide to continue on the main story arc's defined and elaborately constructed tasks.

Weapons of destruction

So why is *Gun* so brutal? Well, you can cut off the top of someone's head in the middle of combat, with intent to sell it later. But mainly it comes down to what happens when triggers get pulled. While *GTA*'s gunplay has never been its strongest feature, it's here that *Gun* absolutely excels.

Your main advantage over your opposition is what the team describes as "Quick-draw mode", but everyone else will inevitably describe as "Bullet-time". Like *Max Payne*, you have a limited amount of this to use, which dramatically slows the speed of action to allow you to take down large groups of opponents. Also like *Max Payne*, you recharge the bullet by making skilled shots in normal play. But unlike *Max Payne*, you won't be doing much diving around while shooting. It's a little more dignified than that. Lean commands enable you to sneak around an obstruction and put neat holes between the eyes of three varmints who looked at your rye whiskey funny.

Unlike in *Max Payne*, this is Quick-draw's best feature, and is the thing that actually makes it feel just like quick-drawing. In play, it zooms in a little, to allow you to choose your targets more accurately. Since this removes your peripheral vision, arrows on either side of the screen show you where other targets are. And this is where the Cowboy-Science comes in and makes everything better. By tapping right or left on the stick, your aim will jump immediately to the next target. With practice, you're able to skip between a row of Stetson-hatted targets and drop each one with a carefully chosen shot. It really lets you duplicate the sort of Samurai-warrior-with-a-six-gun levels of professionalism we like to imagine that »



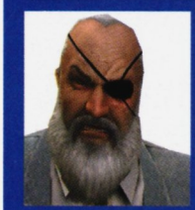
YOU ASKED FOR GUNS...

Chain reaction

No videogame would be complete without the opportunity to gain bigger and better guns, so here's one for the scrapbook: the Gatling gun. Other weapons in the game include flaming arrows, hatchets and dynamite.

> "THE HORSE IS NOT JUST AN INSTRUMENT OF CONVEYANCE, BUT ALSO A WEAPON. YOU CAN USE IT TO TRAMPLE YOUR ENEMIES"

TALKING TO DAVID FARKAS



X360 chews the fat with David Farkas, Activision's Production Coordinator, to find out what he thought of its latest production

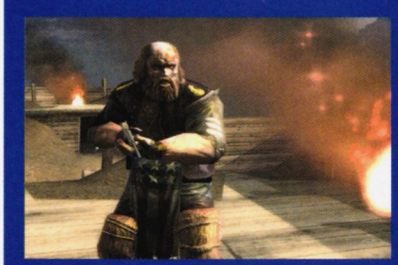
X360: WHAT WAS THE MAIN INSPIRATION BEHIND GUN?
FARKAS: They [Neversoft] did a lot of research. The more research they did into this violent, brutal part of America's past, the more they realised they could make an amazing, incredibly epic free-roaming adventure.

X360: POST-DEADWOOD, IT'S SOMETHING PEOPLE ARE VERY MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN.
FARKAS: Definitely. It's not your Granpappy's spaghetti western. This is realistic, and how the West really was. The scalping...

X360: IT'S VERY ATMOSPHERIC, ISN'T IT?
FARKAS: I really think NeverSoft did an amazing job conveying the feel of the era, with some incredible models and atmosphere. From the rugged Montana wilderness to the desert barrens of New Mexico, it's all in there and faithfully recreated. Especially the horses. The way the horses play is really awesome.

X360: THE HORSES ARE REALLY VISCERAL, AREN'T THEY?
FARKAS: They're not just an instrument of conveyance, but also a weapon. You can use one to trample enemies, for example.

X360: THE STREAMING WORLD ENABLES GREATER FREEDOM. DO YOU THINK IT'S A NATURAL IDEA FOR A GAME?
FARKAS: The free-roaming aspect complements the era so well. Hopping on your horse and riding through the Montana deserts and all that... it's just so perfect.



BEHIND THE MASK

I met the girl on Gunday

So why are these people all shooting each other anyway?

You take the role of Colton White, who returns from the Civil War to find his father slaughtered. Cue a serious hunt for revenge, taking in all the sights of the Old West. A woman will become involved somewhere, inevitably. And since this is a 'realistic' western, she'll probably be a saloon whore. *Gun* is also one of the games that, rather than using some nonsense the game designer's sister has scribbled on the back of a fag packet, has hired a scriptwriter to create the story. The man himself is Randall Jahnson, best known for writing *The Mask Of Zorro* and *The Doors* biopic.





"I'm giving you some plot exposition now"

"That's fancy writer talk for 'Who you should shoot next' "

» pro-gunfighters possessed. It's a little bit on the awesome side. It's also at this point you realise that Neversoft's protestations about making a game that's deeply faithful to the period only really apply to the nice ideas of gentlemanly cowboys, rather than macho ones like these.

Combat isn't all about the revolver. You're also given the option of pulling out your rifle, which gives you a little more range, power, and the option of a zoom – at the price of limited ammunition and being unable to use your Quick-draw abilities with it. (But when you're kicking down doors in a whorehouse to blow some poor guy away with a nasty gunshot that sends him slamming against the wall, Quick-draw isn't exactly a priority.) You're also able to quickly swap to a knife for a close-range take-down, and sip from your water container

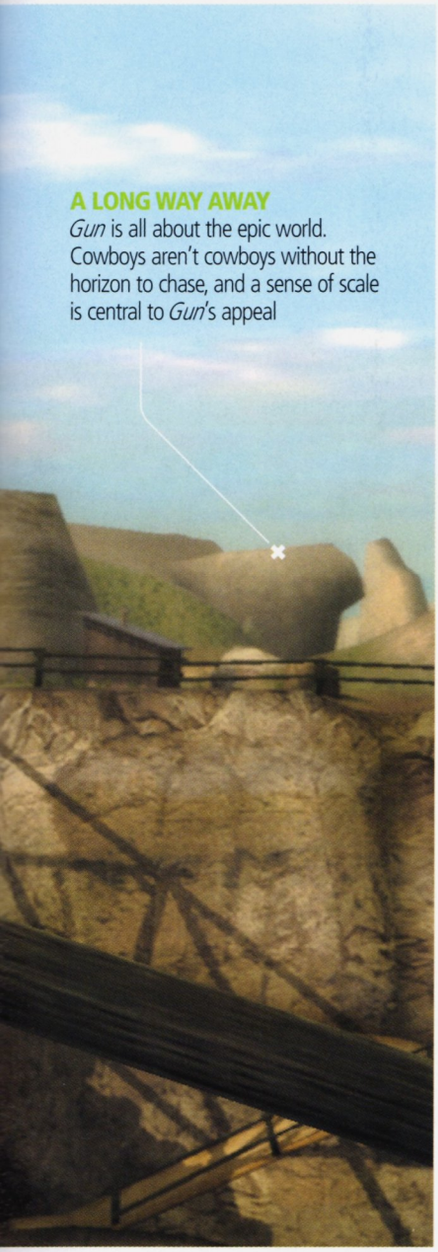
GUN
As the title suggests, you'll be seeing a lot of these fellas in the game world. This is the ever-trusty shotgun, which we like to keep handy for close encounters

A HAT
Probably means he's a cowboy. You're able to shoot it off in a form of harsh sartorial justice

to top up the health bar, which some terribly impolite bullets have had the audacity to remove. (We do suspect it contains something distinctly more potent than water, however.)

On the attack

But what makes the combat feel so violent isn't just your firing. It's what happens when bullets connect. The opposition is divided into twelve separate zones, each of which can be individually targeted. While we're not quite back to the level of *Soldier Of Fortune II*'s famed horror, it's a return to the free-form pornography of violence that has actually been on the decrease in the last few years (since EA decided that gaping head wounds really weren't needed for their World War II games, thank you very much). This is freeform violence in that it's about modelling violence, rather than just showing its results. While (say) *Manhunt*'s *Pacman*-goes-Snuff plays the same boring old cut-scenes as you do something unpleasant to someone's testicles with a rabbit hutch, if you model the effects of bullets, get to choose your mark, and have the advanced physics interpret things, you get a far better sense of the kinetic nature of hurtage. Or at least, that's how we're explaining why we're wincing at the wounds on screen. This precision targeting also adds to the game – veterans of old arcade game *Operation Wolf* will yelp with recognition when they realise they can blow up the Molotov cocktails being lobbed at their head in mid-air.

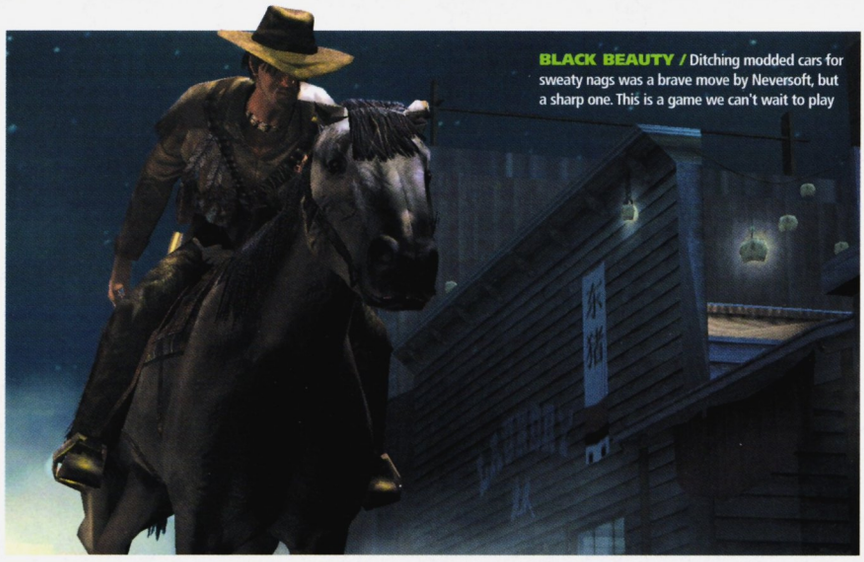


A LONG WAY AWAY
Gun is all about the epic world. Cowboys aren't cowboys without the horizon to chase, and a sense of scale is central to *Gun*'s appeal

THE WILD, WILD WEST

Cattle rustling 101

As with *GTA*, varied missions will make up the bulk of *Gun*'s gameplay. However, unlike *GTA* these missions don't involve pimping cars, but rather puma hunts, poker parties and a bit of good ol' fashioned cattle rustling.



BLACK BEAUTY / Ditching modded cars for sweaty nags was a brave move by Neversoft, but a sharp one. This is a game we can't wait to play

Horsepower

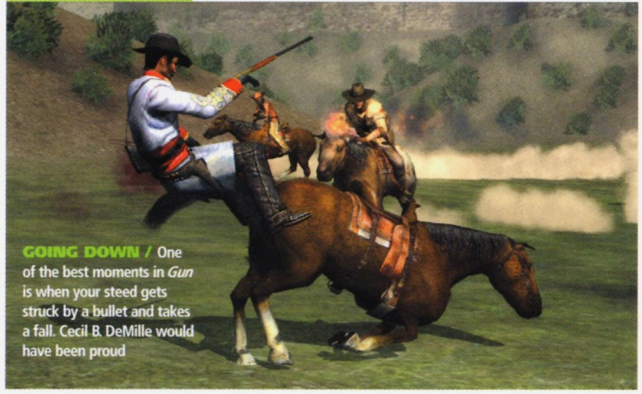
In our time with the game, the physics actually found their most poetic use with the horses. Seeing such a beautiful animal being taken down, collapsing in an utterly convincing manner, is more atmospheric than many games ever manage. Get in the saddle to either just get about or engage in horseback firefights, and it works just as well. Horses are hard to pull off, but *Gun*'s move with realistic weight. And engaging in a shoot-out between bandits and ("Native American" – Ed) braves, with everyone on their own steed, is as wild and chaotic as you could ever wish. There's a smattering of role-playing elements throughout the game too, with you being able to gather better weapons and spend your profits on upgrading to a better steed. There're also subtle statistics that can be improved, allowing you to develop your abilities in areas such as Melee, Accuracy or Quick-draw.

> "It's a return to the free-form pornography of violence"

The pay-off of having a functionally better gunslinger is more motivation to engage in the sub-missions, or simple cash-gathering tasks, in the world. Sitting down to play a fully functional game of poker is one thing when you're playing for just imaginary money. If you're playing for imaginary money that you're going to use to make you able to shoot flies off a horse's tail, there's a little more motivation.

Promising all round then. Unique enough to be interesting, yet familiar enough to not alienate. The only real problem is that in terms of the actual gameplay, it appears to be identical to how *Gun* would have played on the last generation of hardware. The improvements are purely aesthetic.

Overall, however, *Gun* is looking to be exciting, big, atmospheric and, most of all, brutal. But that's okay. They didn't call it the "Well Mannered West", did they? We look forward to riding off into the sunset come its release this November. **KIERON GILLEN**



GOING DOWN / One of the best moments in *Gun* is when your steed gets struck by a bullet and takes a fall. Cecil B. DeMille would have been proud

FACT: The game features vast real world locations that include the Montana plains, Kansas City and the deserts of Mexico.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Shame that, bar looks, it's identical to the older console... but you do get to brag to your mates by having something more attractive than their old nags can manage.

Thriller?



Excited?

Huge world / Connect to both PC and PS2 players to share a massive universe

Cheapskate / To play *FFXI* you will need a hard drive. (Better start saving!)

ON THE X360 DISC

- Teaser trailers

Release date/ January 06





PINK PARADISE / Does the real world look this nice? Of course not (at least, not where we live). Best to stay indoors, then

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Microsoft
Developer/ Square Enix
Genre/ RPG
Players/ Unlimited
Xbox Live? / Yes

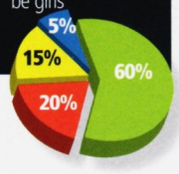
Briefly

Let the moth leave the cocoon and start a new life online. Or, less poetically: this is probably console's largest persistent RPG world

IN THE PIE

All the good stuff *FFXI* will deliver

- Quests
- Rare weapons
- People chatting
- Men pretending to be girls



Liveaware

Gameplay access for Silver users willing to pay to play ■ A large persistent world ■ The biggest installed user base on console

FINAL FANTASY XI

Why go outside when you have an X360?

With online gaming taking a much more leading role on the Xbox 360, massively multiplayer online role-playing games were always going to factor in Microsoft's strategy. They are 'massively' popular, you see. While some people may still consider MMORPGs to be games played by social retards who hate leaving the house and normally smell of pasties, this is not the case – girls love them and everything.

For those of you who have never played an MMORPG, they're basically constantly populated worlds – just like what's outside your window, except on your computer. People from all over the world meet, chat, trade rare items and team up to embark on any number of quests. *Final Fantasy XI* is such a game, featuring multiple classes of character and the ability to create your own unique-looking identity before journeying into the world.

At the last count, 500,000 personalised characters are active in the *Final Fantasy XI* world, and due to sterling work from Microsoft – which has done a deal with Square Enix to not just bring the game to X360, but to share the existing Play Online servers – you can potentially play against every one of them.

We say potentially for two reasons: one, it's unlikely you'll meet all 500,000, no matter how much of your life you lose to living this alternate existence; and two, a few hurdles stand in your way.

Firstly, you need a hard drive. In order to store your character information and updates from Square Enix, you need this level of memory – the 64Mb memory card won't hack it. Secondly, you need to pay a subscription fee in addition to anything you might already be

> "The most social videogame experience ever created"

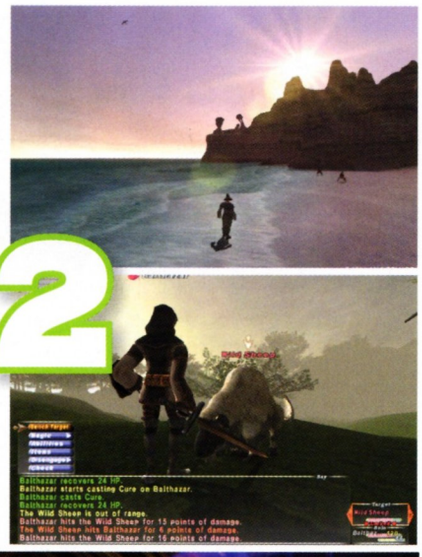


WORTHY OF THE X360?

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Friends united

This will be the first game to test the waters of cross-platform gameplay, as Xbox 360 gamers hook up with existing PS2 and PC players around the world. Can we all get along?



VERSION TESTED 78% COMPLETE

It's a whole new way of life, and it's your own...

As with other MMORPGs, *Final Fantasy XI* requires you to create your own unique character. In addition to selecting your race, of which there are five initial types, you must also select a job.

This isn't quite what it sounds like – jobs define your skill set, and thus decide your role within teams, but also affect your appearance. You level up based on your job too, so if at any point you wish to switch to something else, you start back at level one, regardless of any experience you may previously have.

Still, if you have the time, being a jack of all trades will no doubt make you very useful in battle.



paying to Microsoft for Xbox Live Gold. While this initially seems like a deal-breaker, consider for a moment that this is the only game you can play without actually signing up for the Gold service, so you don't need to pay two subs prices if you don't want to.

Okay, okay, so that's a bit weak – anyone who wants to play this will more than likely be paying for Gold as well. But seriously, it can't be helped. It's Square Enix that has to be paid for the creation and use of character accounts – not Microsoft – and there was no way the game could have come over to X360 without some kind of compromise. Surely it's better to have it than not? Especially considering that, for the money you spend, you're getting one of the most expansive, involving and social videogame experiences ever created, with over 500,000 players currently online.

As for improvements, there are some, but due to reasons we shall delve into in a moment, it's not some massive overhaul. As with all X360 games, widescreen and 720p high-definition resolution is supported, and as such, the graphic textures are more detailed. Other effects, such as lighting, are also a bit prettier, but that's it. Square Enix has to keep the X360 game fairly similar to the other versions, because improving the graphics too much could be unfair. Eh? Well, this could be the case with draw distance – the developers decided against improving this for the X360 as it would mean we guys would have the advantage of greater line of sight.

Essentially, graphical improvements need to be subtle to keep the game fair across all formats. Without balance, the joy of playing a decent game with PC and PS2 players is lost, and no amount of graphical wonder is worth sacrificing gameplay for.

Jay Filmer

ONE BIG FLOATER
/ Some areas are less straightforward than others – it'll take more than a pair of Clark's Attackers to get out of this



FACT: ***Final Fantasy XI*** **character accounts are not restricted by hardware, meaning X360 players have the option to continue their games on a PC, should the need ever arise.**

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

If you like the idea of being able to play *Final Fantasy XI* without being hunched at a PC desk, then this is for you. But only if you buy the hard drive.

Thriller?

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED

Will Test Drive's first next-gen incarnation be able to claim pole position once again?

For its upcoming massively multiplayer online racing game, *Test Drive Unlimited,* developer Eden Games has big plans, especially with regard to ongoing content and community activity. We catch up with Eden Games' head of studio Stéphane Baudet to find out more.

X360: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN MAKING THE THING?
BAUDET: Approximately 18 months. The game will be complete by about January. In all, we'll have invested more than 24 months in it.

X360: HOW FAR ALONG IS THE GAME COMPLETE?
BAUDET: It's difficult as you've got quality and content… The content is probably 50 per cent, but quality is… well, we don't know. We still haven't got the game working with final hardware, so we don't know how many improvements we can do on the graphic quality and game design. So I'd say it's about 50 per cent. We're on track, as it takes longer to do the first 50 per cent than to do the rest.

X360: WHO WILL SPONSOR YOUR COMPETITIONS?
BAUDET: We have a lot of partners in *Test Drive*, but the most important ones are the car manufacturers. With some we just have a licensing agreement and we pay them so we can feature their cars. For other ones it's more like a partnership where we do something specific, such as organising joint competitions with them, which are advertised on their websites and in car dealerships.

X360: AND HOW OFTEN WILL YOU HAVE THESE COMPETITIONS?
BAUDET: Competitions will be weekly. We want the *Test Drive* community to be alive, so we want to hold a load of events. We have a small team dedicated to keeping *Test Drive* alive for 12 months after the release of the game. Also, we will continue to introduce new cars into the game. Alfa Romeo is bringing its new GT car out in March and we will feature it at the same time as they show it off in real life.

X360: HOW MUCH EXTRA CONTENT CAN YOU FEASIBLY PROVIDE BEFORE MOVING STAFF ONTO NEW PROJECTS?
BAUDET: If the player is not willing to pay for it, then it's going to be limited. We have the budget for it, but once the budget is spent, it's over. So it's more like we're going to provide a service, an extra for the player, but after a while we will need to find a way that works economically. Either we have partners that will be willing to pay for that content, so that it can remain free for the player, or we will ask the player to pay for the additional content.

X360: SO WHAT IF A PLAYER PAYS FOR EXTRA CONTENT AND WANTS TO EVENTUALLY SELL THIS ON TO SOMEONE WITHIN THE GAME'S TRADING STRUCTURE?
BAUDET: You should be able to do it, whether it's a good thing or not, because it's like second-hand games – you get the money once [but not from additional sales], which is a bit annoying as you have multiple players who can use the content.

> "We want the Test Drive community to be alive, so we want to hold a load of events"

X360: DO YOU ANTICIPATE REAL-WORLD CASH EXCHANGES FOR VIRTUAL CARS AND RARE MODIFICATIONS?
BAUDET: We don't encourage that, we try to discourage it by not being able to trade something at any price in the game – you can't give away stuff in the game, you have to trade it for credits. The biggest discount is 40 per cent.

FACT: As well as licensed cars *Test Drive Unlimited* will feature real life clothes. Bored of racing? Then why not spend half an hour in the local Armani store searching for a shirt.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

With ongoing support and Live at its heart, *Test Drive Unlimited* is a whole new type of game. Let's just hope the actual racing lives up to the effort placed elsewhere.

Thriller?

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Atari
Developer/ Eden Studios
Genre/ Racing
Players/ 1-16
Xbox Live? / Yes

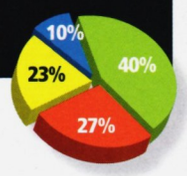
Briefly

Atari aims to reinvent its ageing franchise with great style and ambition

IN THE PIE

Lining up in *Test Drive*'s showroom…

- New online ideas
- Licensed cars
- Real world maps
- Designer clothes



Excited?

Live cruising / Eden has some great new ideas for Xbox Live on the way

Understeer / It has the looks and ideas, but the handling is under scrutiny



OPEN PLANNING
The team has spent months languishing in Hawaii to accurately map the islands, to create a realistic racing experience where every turn and building actually exists



CAR PORN / Car fanatics will be drooling at the thought of driving a replica Merc rendered at this incredible detail

Exclusive INTERVIEW

Behind the wheel at Eden

Release date/ March05

TAILGATER
With competitions, downloadable cars and item packs, and permanent leader boards, this game is being developed around the Live community

CLOCKED
Test Drive features some of the most realistic car interiors in a game. Normal mapping enhances the look, with wood finishes to most surfaces

VERSION TESTED 50% COMPLETE





SPECTATOR / Sure, the interiors look amazing, but you won't see this in-game, right? Wrong! *Test Drive* offers a unique FPS view to scope out your ride from inside, as well as a muted 'passenger mode'



GOOD LOOKIN' / The car models in *Test Drive* look so stunning, so showroom fresh, so still-got-plastic-on-the-seats, it's hard to imagine jaggies will soon be a distant memory – unless you still own a PS2



ON THE X360 DISC

- Full trailer (comm.)
- Teaser trailer
- Screenshot montage
- Screenshots

Exclusive INTERVIEW

Scott Miller talks Xbox 360



PREY

It's like having the worst hangover of your life while tied to a roundabout hitting 50mph

The first time you see *Prey* in action with someone else at the controls you'll be forgiven for having only a vague idea of what's going on. "What the f...?" is a common response.

It was certainly in our minds when we were treated to a demonstration in 2K Games' press offices recently. It started simply enough, as the on-screen hero strolled along a metal walkway through a pulsing organic environment. Aliens jumped out and were suitably put down. "It's just like *Doom*! This is easy!" We knew what was coming, but then you can't truly prepare yourself for the *Prey* experience, as everything gets turned upside down and thrown around the room – not least our stomachs.

The walkway that was once part of the floor suddenly became part of the wall as the world flipped through 90 degrees and things tumbled into place, as gravity took a grip on a different side of the room. "What the f...?" The guns were still blazing because those aliens weren't going anywhere, but it took a second or two while our heads tried to figure out what just happened and adjusted to the new perspective. A sense of nausea pounded through our eyeballs as we thought about what we had for lunch and the distinct possibility of seeing it again. Then the game did it again, and again. We figured the guy from Human Head playing the game was taking the piss; he could see the glazed look in our eyes and the lump in our throat, but he'd made his point. Big time.

Then a portal appeared. It wasn't just a swirling gateway to another dimension »

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ 2K Games
Developer/ Human Head Studios
Genre/ Shoot-'em-up
Players/ 1
Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly

Nine years in the making and it's almost finished, and ready to release on Xbox 360 too.

IN THE PIE

What *Prey* has in its ammunition...

- Nausea
- Gravity sickness
- Brains *and* beauty
- Freaky alien worlds

because we could actually see through it to the stark contrasts of the shiny interior of what looked like a human spaceship. Suddenly more aliens appeared on the other side of this portal, firing weapons in our direction instantly bypassing what should be two distant worlds. Our heads were spun through 90 degrees and passed through the portal, walking along what was once the ceiling, now the floor. We were guided past the dead bodies that were shot from an organic alien craft and set off across this new smooth and shiny man-made corridor. These portals remained open as well, keeping the entire environment alive for the whole game, and we watched as the worlds continued to collide as we jumped through another portal just a couple of minutes later.

You may have seen part of this journey already – it's on this month's cover disc – but this doesn't truly show the whole experience. When you get your hands on the controls, it takes a while to get your head round and your stomach back to something you can love.

The development team at Human Head, supported by the guys at 3DRealms, has taken Xbox 360 and worked on something that not only looks fantastic but also builds on the expanded gameplay potential that the next-generation consoles can provide. The likes of *Project Gotham Racing 3* and *Gears Of War* have awesome visuals that can push the limits of realism in Xbox 360 gaming, but the question is, will they be able to provide something new? Maybe not. We're not saying *Prey* is a revolution that other action/adventure games will have to follow, because the core of it is still a standard first-person shooter. However, it shows that Xbox 360 can usher in new gameplay experiences that may have previously been left on the drawing board.

> "Everything gets thrown around, not least our stomachs"

Background chatter

It's a tale that has been 10 years in the making, starting life as a 3DRealms engine with early demos of a *Prey* game in 1997. These were the days that 3DRealms had put Duke Nukem on the gaming community's hero list – that's how long ago it has been. Scheduled for a 1998 release, *Prey* soon slipped into development hell as the members of the team left or were moved around, and by 2000 the game had pretty much been dropped. That is until Human Head picked it up in 2001 and rebuilt the project from scratch. In a massively understated comment when the game was officially announced as being back in development, 3DRealms president, George Broussard said: "The initial concept for *Prey* had been incubating for a while." No shit, but now we can see the benefits of putting together the right team and waiting for the right time to put *Prey* back in the public arena.

Steeped in spiritualism and mythology, *Prey* tells the story of Tommy, a Cherokee Indian living on a reservation he desperately wants to leave. He just hadn't really banked on alien abduction as his way out as the whole area gets sucked up into space. Then it's all about survival as he sets about saving himself, his girlfriend (bless) and maybe just the whole damn planet. Not bad for a mechanic.

Along with the wise words of your grandfather, you'll be guided by Talon, the spirit

"GAME OVER MAN"

Alien was a wimp

If you thought the chest busting scenes in *Aliens* were gruesome then stay clear of *Prey*. Whether they are running up slime-walls or dropping in from alternate world portals, this game has the weirdest alien life yet seen in a videogame. *Star Wars* this ain't...

Excited?

- **Totally alien /** *Prey* is easily the first game to offer a genuinely alien world
- **Nervous nature /** The only excuse not to like *Prey* should be medically related



VERSION TESTED 67% COMPLETE







DE-FORMIDABLE / This was the worst ride he'd been on since the donkey on Blackpool beach got rickets



SPIRITED AWAY...

Hero's Journey

The blueprint for saving the galaxy

The story behind *Prey* is actually based on a well-defined structure known as 'The Hero's Journey', defined by Joseph Campbell way back in 1949, which outlines a 17-point blueprint that a heroic tale needs to use. Campbell's other interests in mythology and spiritual worlds also feature heavily in the script. The hero needs a mentor, featured in *Prey* as Talon, the spirit of a hawk, and a set quest drawing on 17 other mythological elements, such as two contrasting worlds. George Lucas openly admitted to using this blueprint for the role of Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars,* and the Wachowski brothers also nabbed it for Neo in *The Matrix*. So Tommy, the hero in *Prey*, is undoubtedly in very good company.

We're holding out for a hero



"WE SEE MORE INNOVATION IN THE LATER YEARS OF A CONSOLE, AS GRAPHICS ARE ALL TO A HIGH STANDARD" Scott Miller



TALKING TO SCOTT MILLER

3DRealms' CEO Scott Miller takes time out from his busy schedule to tell us what he thinks of Xbox 360, and what he foresees in the future of gaming

X360: THE DREAM IS FOR A DO-ALL ENTERTAINMENT MACHINE IN THE HEART OF THE HOME. DO YOU THINK IT CAN WORK?
MILLER: Not sure what you mean by "heart of the home" but, in general, if Microsoft has hopes that their new Xbox will be anything more than a game console, they will be dashed away. Had Microsoft's executives taken the time to understand human nature they'd know that people rarely buy convergence oriented products. Instead it's the focused, divergent products that succeed. A great book that covers this in detail is *The Origin of Brands* by Al Ries.

X360: HOW WILL XBOX 360 AND MICROSOFT'S PUSH FOR CONNECTIVITY CHANGE THE WAY YOU MAKE GAMES?
MILLER: It's not going to change what we do very much at all, because we already have multiplayer modes designed into our coming games (*Prey* and *Duke*). Frankly, I think this is a good idea by Microsoft.

X360: DO YOU THINK ONLINE GAMING WILL BE AT THE HEART OF THE NEXT-GEN CONSOLES?
MILLER: It won't be the heart, but it will be the legs, giving titles a much longer life and adding greatly to their value for gamers. The heart will still be the single player experience for the vast majority of games.

X360: CAN WE EXPECT DEEPER EXPERIENCES OR JUST PRETTIER GAMES?
MILLER: Publishers are generally too short-sighted to invest in deeper gameplay, which can add up to a year to the development time of most triple A games, and so we'll see truckloads of prettier games that unfortunately give us the feeling of been there, done that. A few remaining gameplay-focused studios still give me hope, though.

X360: WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL GAME FOR THE NEXT-GEN CONSOLES?
MILLER: From the publisher's perspective it boils down to aesthetics. For the most part this will sell a lot of games, especially during the honeymoon period (first year) of a console's life. After this period it's going to take actual innovation. We generally see a lot more innovation in the later years of a console's life, as everyone by that time has graphics to the highest standards that the platform can support.

X360: HOW DO YOU FORESEE GAMING EVOLVING IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS?
MILLER: I really do not expect much evolution, with the obvious exception of graphics, but the one area that I do expect remarkable improvement is in physics, which I think is the next great frontier for games. Physics is particularly exciting because it has the potential to offer new gameplay innovations, much more so than just an improvement in graphics.

X360: WHERE DO YOU BEGIN WHEN FACED WITH A NEW TECHNOLOGY LIKE XBOX 360 – ARE THERE PROBLEMS WITH CONVERTING FROM DEVELOPMENT PCS TO 360 BETA KITS?
MILLER: Generally, there should be few problems, except that consoles are always maddeningly short on RAM versus PCs, and so art content is down-sampled – and levels are chopped into much smaller chunks. PCs are almost always the superior platform for gamers from a technical standpoint, except for the small edge that a new console might have – but that only lasts for a few months. Porting to a console most often results in an inferior game.

X360: FROM WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN IS THE HD ERA ALL IT IS CRACKED UP TO BE?
MILLER: It can be, if downloadable content and games catches on.

X360: WILL SMALLER DEVELOPERS BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO MAKE GAMES THAT TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF XBOX 360, BOTH IN TERMS OF MONEY AND TIME? OR ARE THEY STUFFED?
MILLER: Development costs keep on going up so, unless we see downloadable games on consoles, allowing for small studios that make games like *Bejeweled* to get a piece of the action, then the next-gen platforms will be the playground for the rich and mighty alone.



GRAND MASTER / Your grandad is a wise old Indian, but he's rubbish down the arcade

» of a hawk Tommy had as a child that will help out in certain situations and provide warnings of what lies ahead. It's a strange scenario being able to just kick back with a huge gun while an alien is having its face attacked by a ghostly bird. No, not strange: make that very, very cool.

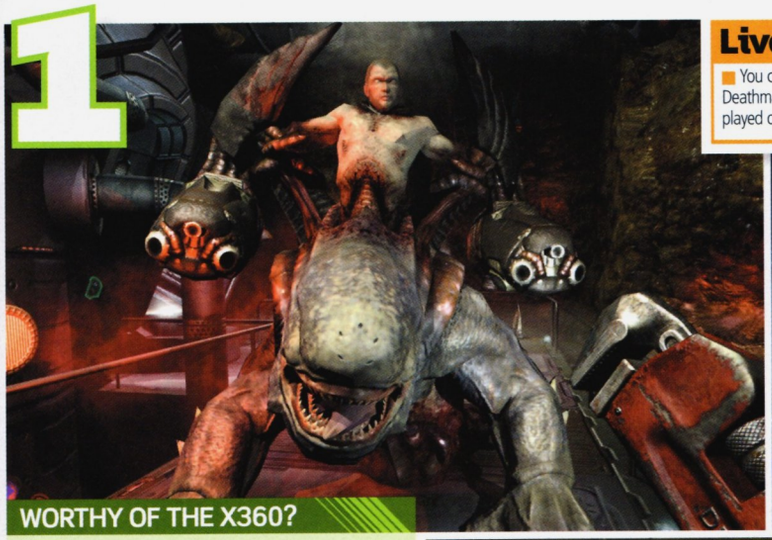
Never say die

The spiritual theme isn't lost on the lead character either and *Prey* gives you the power to control the spirit within Tommy and leave his body as an invincible, invisible entity that can pass through walls. This is ideal for reaching areas previously out of bounds, to unlock doors and, armed with a glowing bow and arrow, your spirit can also take out totally oblivious enemies. The downside is that all this time Tommy's body is immobile and still vulnerable to attack, and while you're floating around in one room, Tommy can be torn to shreds next door – so you don't want to be away for too long. Dying needn't be the end of it all, though, and instead of having to return to the last checkpoint or start over, you'll instead be transported to another spiritual world where you can restore your health and return to resurrect your body and get back into the fight.

As you can tell, there is nothing generic about *Prey*. The game will place you in a strange world where nothing is what it seems, and even the organic alien surrounds are living and breathing landscapes that can attack you throughout the adventure. The scope for a deep, absorbing tale offers great potential, but it is still a strong guns and bombs bonanza at heart, where explosions and huge smatterings



GOOD SHIP / You don't always need portals to travel between planets, as you can often fight your way through space instead



Liveaware

- You can expect classic online modes like Deathmatch, Capture The Flag and Assault, all played out in real time zero gravity.





WORTHY OF THE X360?

It's time to put a wrench in the works...

It has that *Doom 3* look about it, but *Prey* isn't your standard first-person shooter, as the upside-down gameplay shows, with your armoury featuring a strange assortment of weapons.

You start with a simple wrench (well, you are a mechanic), but soon move onto bigger and better things that owe more to *Oddworld* than *Doom*, such as guns that can fire living creatures to rip enemies to shreds. Your spirit hawk is a mean fighter, too.

Backed up by the glowing bow and arrow you have when Spirit Walking, this is something far removed from a shotgun and frag grenade assault.

of blood are on the menu. And we're as hungry for death as we are for a reason to be gloriously savage.

The list of weapons at your disposal in human form is an impressive and equally surreal collection. The guns seem pretty straightforward to begin with, but then you'll start to notice that many of these alien weapons are far from ordinary. What feels like a shotgun isn't, as shells are replaced by acid that makes a mess of everything it burns through. Or how about a living creature that attaches to your arm, becoming a set of projectile teeth?

The whisperings of *Doom 3* are obvious, and *Prey* has a very similar blend of stunning visuals and comfortable gameplay – well, comfortable on the hands, if not on your insides. This isn't surprising, because *Prey* has been built on a much-enhanced version of id Software's original *Doom 3* engine. The extra kick from Xbox 360 allows for much greater detail to the characters, down to individual fibres and skin tones. Textures, ambience and blurring distortion effects have also been improved, in order to create an atmosphere that has that lifelike feel that *Gotham* and *Gears Of War* both aspire to.

Taking into account how early our demonstration was, before Microsoft began to release increasingly powerful development machines, we can't wait to see more of what Human Head has added to this game. Every new batch of screenshots that filtered through after we first saw the game in action has tended to outdo the previous ones, as new creatures emerge and more detailed environments are displayed. It looked awesome on our visit, and it's clear that there have been no laurels rested on since the plaudits rained in following a triumphant E3 months ago. *Prey* just seems to be getting bigger and better. Despite its years of development though, it's not going to make it as a launch title, but hopefully we'll be able to get our hands on the latest playable version soon. We've ordered the paracetamol, now bring it on. **Ian Collen**



MECH ASSAULT / Today was not a good day to complain about the scratch on the bodywork of your car

FACT: 3DRealms has a habit of working up games over a great length of time, and *Prey* has taken nine years to get to where it is. And then there's *Duke Nukem Forever*...

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

It's visually stunning, but innovation and originality go beyond the simple addition of better graphics. It seems that 2006 can't come quick enough.

Thriller?

Exclusive SCREENS

Tecmo turns on the style



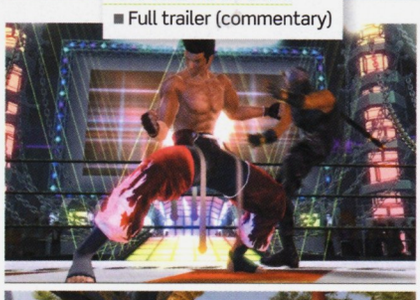
Excited?

Oh yeah / *DOA Ultimate* is still lodged in our Xbox, so we can't wait for this

Old-school / The gameplay could feel old fashioned for some gamers

ON THE X360 DISC

- Full trailer (commentary)





HARSH BUT FAIR / The new guy in town shows us just how effective a reversal can be against the cheapest characters

Release date/ November 05

DEAD OR ALIVE 4

The most beautiful game in the world

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Microsoft
Developer/ Tecmo
Genre/ Beat-'em-up
Players/ 1-8
Xbox Live? / Yes

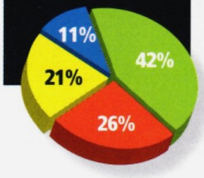
Briefly

A beautiful new episode in the ongoing *DOA* series, exclusive to Xbox 360. This time three new characters join the party

IN THE PIE

What *Dead Or Alive 4* will impress with...

- Beauty
- Violence
- Interactivity
- Sinister costumes



One of the most important opinions you can proffer as a videogames writer is that gameplay is more important than fancy graphics. However, when a game that looks this wonderful comes along, it's hard to restrain yourself from getting more than a little worked up.

Screenshots fail to do *Dead Or Alive 4* justice. To see the game in motion is to really appreciate it. Luckily for you, there's a stunning new movie of the game on this issue's DVD. If you haven't already, watch it right now. Marvel at the grace and fluidity of the animation, the beauty and detail of the backgrounds, and then consider that when this video was made the game was, by its creator's admission, just 15 per cent complete...

This will be the most beautiful game you've ever seen. It will be so beautiful that every time you play it you'll find yourself pausing to wipe away the tears of joy clouding your vision. When you're away from the game you will feel sick because you're not at home playing it and the real world will seem ugly in comparison.

Dead Or Alive 4 is not just about increased graphical performance. Though sure, we (really) want to spend the next four hundred words or so talking about how the trees have the prettiest blossom, how amazing the monkeys on Elliot's stage look, and how all the ladies have the cutest little noses – but we won't. Tecmo is putting just as much effort into the fundamental mechanics of the fighting engine as it is those achingly beautiful graphics.

While pleasantly accessible for those who normally get wasted at more complicated beat-'em-ups, *Dead Or Alive* has often been criticised for its loose-play style that can reward

> "The real world will seem ugly in comparison"

Liveaware

- Online tournaments, complete with use of the Spectator mode
- Updated leaderboards
- Supports the web camera for video chat



WORTHY OF THE X360?

Three fighters, all of a different and very brutal kind

So far Tecmo has revealed three new combatants. First up is Elliot, the sword-bearing girl-man who fights using 1 the Keiken fighting style, which apparently consists of five fighting forms based on 12 different types of animal.

Next is the stunning Kokoro, Tecmo's prettier answer to *Virtua Fighter*'s Akira. She practices the same Hakkyokuken style, and according 2 to creator Tomonobu Itagaki will be much more realistic than Sega's leading fighter.

The mysterious final character is yet to be given a name, but we have been 3 informed that she uses the Mexican Lucha Libre wrestling style.

BEAUTIFUL BRUISES

Prepare for pain

Since its unveiling back in May, *Dead Or Alive 4* has been wowing all who see it thanks to its solid, bone-crunching combat – and it's still being improved. Tecmo is currently adding effects such as blurring to moves, to make sure everything looks that little bit more impressive.





VERSION TESTED 81% COMPLETE



simple button mashes as opposed to tactical play. Tecmo has assured us that gameplay will be tighter and more complex than ever before. Will it still remain accessible though? Focus will undoubtedly be on what made the game great before: the ability to make a mockery of your opponent with reversals, should you put in the required time and effort to get to know each character's attack pattern.

One area *Dead Or Alive* has continually excelled at is with regards to its undulating, interactive arenas that go far beyond the scope of those found in most other fighting games. In recent times we've been treated to stages that progress from rooftops to the roads below, via violent drops against flashing neon signs; we've battled in deep, glowing, icy caves; and we've been amused greatly by smashing our opponents into a mess of roaring hippos. *Dead Or Alive* arenas are the best around, and, believe us, they are getting even better – smack an opponent into a pack of monkeys and they become your allies, nipping at your adversary's ankles. It's hilarious.

Again, gaze at the movie on your DVD and observe the depth, detail and the amount of scenery elements that you'll be cheerily smashing your friends through when the game is released with the Xbox 360 this Christmas. You'll be able to go pretty much anywhere – any restriction you normally feel from beat-'em-up arenas will be a thing of the past.

YOU'RE NICKED/ Even the threat of police action won't stop the Tecmo girls from clobbering one another



As you can probably tell from all this gushing, we're looking forward to this – as should you. This will be the perfect game to show off your Xbox 360 this winter. That is, of course, if you don't just want to lock yourself away in a room and keep the sweet *Dead Or Alive 4* ladies all to yourself…

Jay Filmer

FACT: You may want to stop reading now… as we reveal Holly Valance has signed on to star in the new *Dead Or Alive* film, due for release next summer. (Told you not to read.)

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

We want this game, if only to sit and gaze at it. We still play *DOA Ultimate* on Xbox Live, and can't wait to see what improvements the next-gen of Live makes.

Thriller?

PERFECT DARK ZERO

It could well be the perfect next-gen FPS. We speak to Rare to find out why...

Planned as a prequel to the original *Perfect Dark Zero*, Joanna's Xbox debut has come a long way in the last five years. To dig deeper into *PDZ*, we spoke with Rare's Duncan Botwood, lead multiplayer designer for the game.

X360: WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN YOU BEGAN WORK ON PDZ?
BOTWOOD: At the time, it was "there's so much more we can do on this new machine!" – that machine being the Nintendo GameCube. Then Rare became part of Microsoft Game Studios, and we got to work on the Xbox, where there was even more we could do.

X360: IS IT HARD TO DEVELOP THE FRANCHISE FIVE YEARS ON?
BOTWOOD: There's so much more to consider in terms of the way the *PD* universe can reach people now than there was five years ago. At the time we had the promo websites and that was about it. Now we've got loads more ideas on the table for expanding and developing *Perfect Dark*. It's going to be a lot more work, but we think it's worthwhile.

X360: ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT UPSETTING THE FANS?
BOTWOOD: It's tough sometimes, since you could end up worrying about every innovation you're trying to put in that changes the game slightly from what the fans were used to. But we think they'll embrace the changes and revel in the familiarity of the things that haven't.

X360: HOW DIFFERENT IS JOANNA AS A PREQUEL CHARACTER?
BOTWOOD: Joanna is younger and less in control of herself. She's got lessons to learn.

X360: IS IT HARD TO MELD THIRD- AND FIRST-PERSON GAMEPLAY?
BOTWOOD: The third-person elements were designed not to be too intrusive. We experimented early on with a player-switchable camera, first- to third-person whenever you wanted. In the end, we decided to go with the first-person camera as the primary view, but some of the third-person elements were too good to let go so we kept them in...

X360: HOW WILL THE ONLINE SIDE OF THE GAME DEVELOP?
BOTWOOD: Players will be able to join matches in progress, but only Unranked matches, and only if the game owner has allowed it. In an Unranked match any set-up can be played, but the Ranked matches will be based off the default options. This means that there will be *PDZ* games for everyone online.

X360: CAN YOU EXPLAIN SOME OF THE CUSTOMISATION OPTIONS?
BOTWOOD: In a typical unranked game, anything goes. In an unranked DeathMatch, for example, you'd be able to set up a two-team game where everyone starts in a random location with a shotgun, and the only weapons on the map are rocket launchers, and where other players on Live could join in whenever they wanted; or you could set up a match where the only weapons are grenades, the teams spawn in their safe rooms and teleport out to the team base areas on the main map.

X360: DO YOU SEE A PROBLEM WITH LICENSING OR CENSORSHIP?
BOTWOOD: You'll have to ask Microsoft specifically, but they have lots of experience with the Xbox Live service and have taken steps to ensure it's a safe and secure community.

> "Joanna is less in control. She's got lessons to learn"

X360: FINALLY, WILL WE SEE JOANNA AT LAUNCH?
BOTWOOD: She'll arrive this Christmas 2005! That's all I can say...

FACT: There's been a lot of speculation over the use of the Live camera in *PDZ*. It now seems Microsoft has snuffed the idea, as it doesn't want players shooting "real" people.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

With Live play at the heart of the action and a clever use of first- and third-person perspectives, *Perfect Dark Zero* will undoubtedly be the FPS to own this Christmas.

Thriller?

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Microsoft
Developer/ Rare
Genre/ Shoot-'em-up
Players/ 1-16
Xbox Live? / Yes

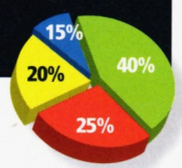
Briefly

Five years in development, Rare can't afford to let its ambitious futuristic shooter slip up

IN THE PIE

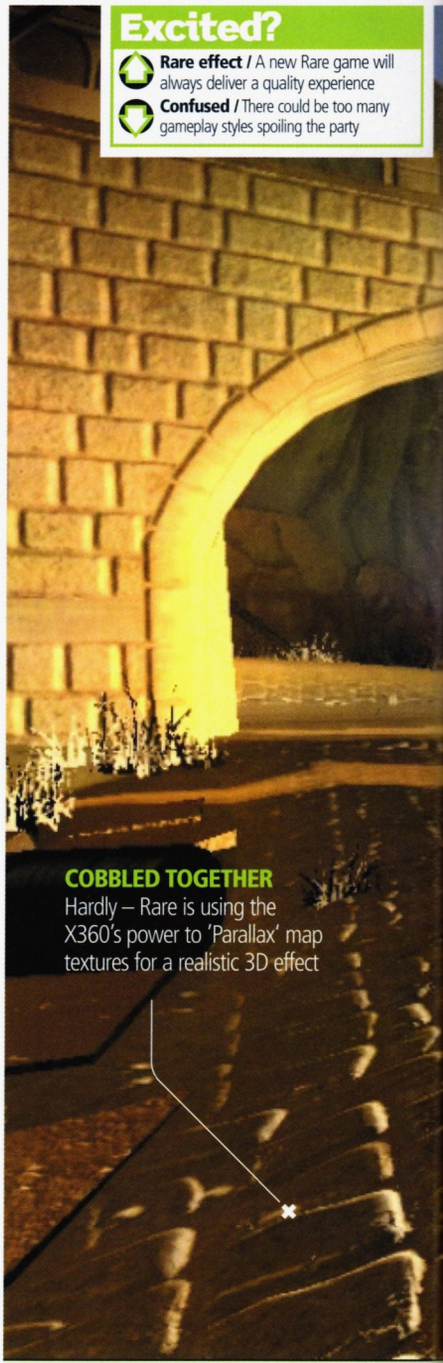
Why Joanna will rock your world

- Huge Live mode
- Strong character
- Slick graphics
- Nostalgia



Excited?

Rare effect / A new Rare game will always deliver a quality experience
Confused / There could be too many gameplay styles spoiling the party



COBBLED TOGETHER
Hardly – Rare is using the X360's power to 'Parallax' map textures for a realistic 3D effect



RING WORLD / As you can see from this screen, the multiplayer action resembles *Halo*'s frantic fragging

Release date/ December 05

MECH ASSAULT
As in *Halo*, vehicle combat will play a big part in the game modes on Live. These mech suits allow you to fly and grapple at close range

TOOLED UP
The game's weapons will generally have three different uses: a main shot, an alternative shot and a gadget such as X-ray vision

Essential INTERVIEW

New info direct from Rare

VERSION TESTED 86% COMPLETE





LAID BARE / Some new ideas are being implemented in the game, such as this X-ray visor. Impressively, every bone in a character is animated separately for heightened realism



TAKE COVER / A third-person perspective will allow you to gain a wider view of the action, handy for playing with some serious stealth, rather than going for all-out (and possibly suicidal) guts 'n' glory

Exclusive SCREENS
Awesome new locations

ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

This is the final word in fantasy

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ 2K Games
Developer/ Bethesda
Genre/ RPG
Players/ 1
Xbox Live? / No

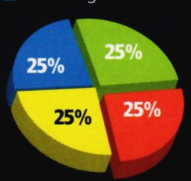
Briefly

Do anything, go anywhere and be anyone in Bethesda's stunning follow-up to the RPG classic *Morrowind*

IN THE PIE

Elder Scrolls offers...

- Unrivalled freedom
- Great looks
- Incredible depth
- No ending



Morrowind was one of the Xbox's most unlikely successes. A free-form fantasy game where you were let loose to do whatever you want. While most veterans of PC role-playing games were fretting over how to best make their ideas work on consoles, and making all manner of compromises, Bethesda just lobbed the whole thing on there, sat back and prayed. And it worked. It's a game which even now, years after release, is still on Blockbuster's US Xbox rental charts.

Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion is the sequel and, in terms of the Xbox 360 world, it occupies the same position. That is, it's nothing like anything else and about eight hundred times as large. In a "My Dad Is Bigger Than Your Dad" competition, *Oblivion* is ten feet tall, ten feet wide and has fists the size of sofas. It's big.

However, while the game's undiluted nature was most of its appeal, a few of the accepted conventions seemed insane when transferred to the world of consoles. Hell, they seemed insane even on PC, if you stopped to even think about them for a second. They've been corrected this time. For example, in *Morrowind*'s combat, when you pressed the button to swing your sword, whether you actually hit or damaged the target wasn't related to whether the sword passed through the opposition. Instead, the little computer brain rolled little imaginary computer dice, compared it to your statistics and decided whether or not the blow connected. However, no matter the result, the animation of the sword passed through the monster. Which, for people trained by the *Soul Calibur*s of this world, just looked odd. In fact, most folk just assumed that the game was broken in some way: "My sword just went straight through him and nothing happened!".

Things are a bit more naturalistic now. Put simply, if the sword hits, the blow hits. The effect of the statistics is moved from whether you hit to how hard you hit, with the strength or lack of your skills leading to more or less damage. Use a weapon type that you have »

Release date/ November 05



virtually no knowledge of, and you could be hacking all day. It's far better to pick up something you have more of a clue about, then show 'em who's king bad-ass in this mythical kingdom. In terms of melee, there's also blocking with swords and shields to prevent you dying embarrassingly when some uncouth orc tries to put his axe in your brain.

Also, Power Moves. Four of these are available, linked to the direction you're pressing when you're activating the attack. As well as having a primary Very Hard Whack use, each different one has a secondary effect, such as trying to break an opponent's shield to leave them, erm, without a shield. Obviously.

But while it's these mechanics that will make *Oblivion* work, it's not why we come over terribly flustered whenever we hear its name. If you wanted to pick a single element of *Oblivion* that separates it from all the competition, it would be its ground-breaking use of artificial intelligence. Rather than making computer characters just react to a player's actions, each has their own desires and aims that they want to satisfy, and then works out the best way to achieve them.

When asked, Bethesda demonstrated a condensed version of what could happen in the game. We see a woman, living alone in a house. She gets her bow and starts to practice, wanting to improve her skills. That is, she wants to hit the target. That's her first aim. Sadly, that aim isn't true; her skills are not up to scratch.

Frustrated, she goes and gets one of her magical potions and drinks it, improving her skills to the point where she's able to send those shafts slamming home. Happier, she sits down and starts to read – her next objective. However, she can't concentrate as her dog's making an absolute racket. Having had enough, she heads to her third objective. That is, going to bed… but that damn dog just won't shut up. She gets up and lobs a fireball at the poor hound, sending it yelping away. Finally – sweet, sweet sleep.

Talking tactics

In terms of how this will actually work in the game, Bethesda gives the example of you receiving a mission from the Thieves' Guild to steal a valuable diamond, currently in the possession of someone else. Now, how to do this? Well, if you watch, you see that your target regularly leaves the house to complete certain goals, like shopping or going to church. Timing it correctly, you get into his house to see if he's left the diamond there. However, if it's really that valuable to him, he may have taken it with him. Now, a mugging is one option – but another is to steal everything else in his house. Left without worldly wealth, he'll likely head down the shops, and sell the diamond to a merchant, just to survive. Then you could change your target to the easier merchant…

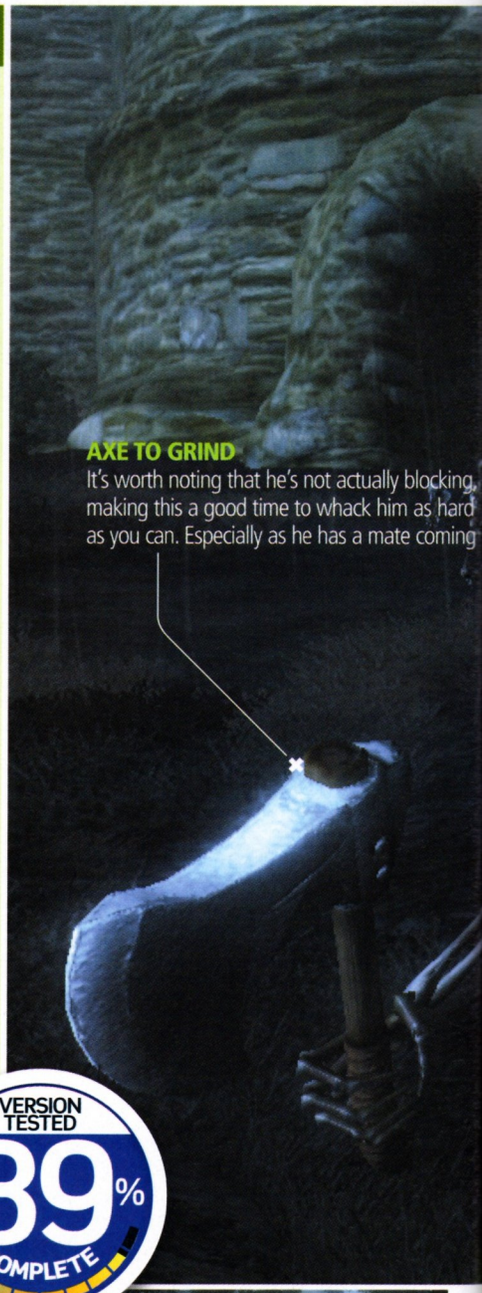
The possibilities are dizzying. As is the potential for it to go entirely wrong. To this end, Bethesda claims that rather than doing the industry-standard method of concentrating on the bug-testing as the game approaches completion, they've been having QA staff and bug-fixers running the game through its complicated paces for the last two years. This is entirely necessary if you want to release a

> "It's like nothing else, and about eight hundred times as large"

DUNGEON MASTER

A life sentence

Don't be fooled by the first-person viewpoint: this isn't a new *Hexen*. Every attack you launch will be calculated by the computer, and your hit rated, just like it would in a table-top RPG. This means you will have to spend a huge amount of time in the game developing your warrior in order to beat foes like those to your left.



AXE TO GRIND It's worth noting that he's not actually blocking, making this a good time to whack him as hard as you can. Especially as he has a mate coming







CHIT-CHAT / Every character you meet in the game will have something to say for themselves, so it's always worth being social

VERSION TESTED 89% COMPLETE

Excited?

Walkabout / Unrivalled freedom to do what you want to, and when

Employed? / If you play this you risk losing your job, girlfriend, flat…

TIME TO STRIKE
And if fighting three skeletons wasn't bad enough, you're pounding him in the pouring rain. You rarely saw Gandalf having to work in conditions like this. (That's it, the warrior guild is striking!)

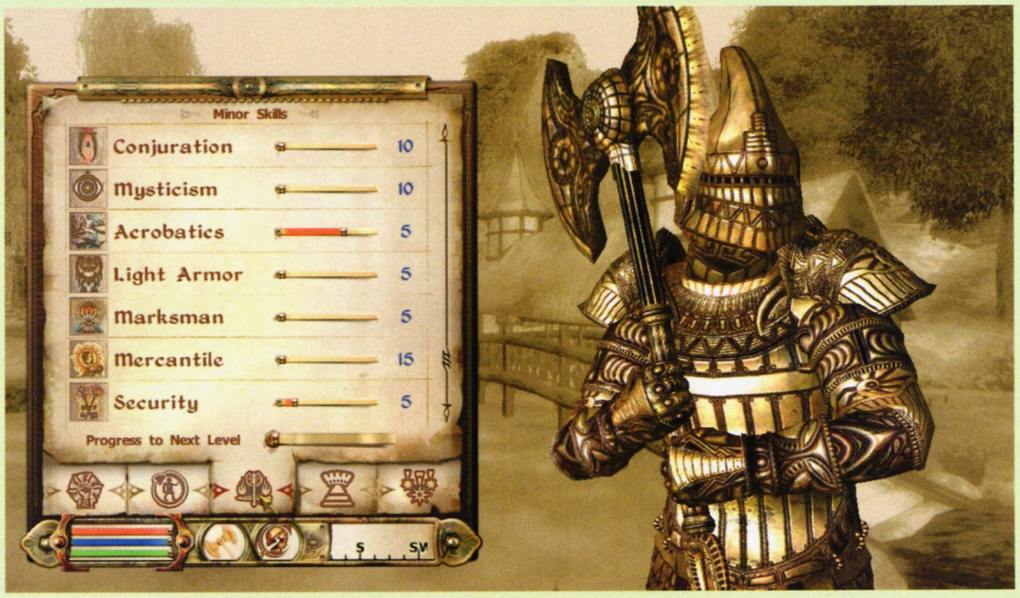
MOVIE MAGIC
Jason And The Argonauts remains a powerful influence on videogame design, which we're all obviously very pleased about

FASHION GETS DANGEROUS

The Oblivion collection

Is mithril the new black?

It's not just saving the world – it's looking good while doing it that really matters. This is a game that's set on having your character explore the world, and there's all the expected character design functions needed to allow exactly the look you want for monster-bashing. However, you'll find that as you actually play, you'll want to get yourself a seasonal wardrobe. Ideally, a magical one too. The very best armours in the game have a highly distinctive look, and the owning of a complete set secures bragging rights among your ex-*Morrowind* mates.



The Dwarven armour is a relic from this lost race. It's utterly bizarre.



WORTHY OF THE X360?

You can't go anywhere without a union card...

While Warriors get first dibs in dressing like double-hard bastards, everyone else can eventually join in the joys of chainmail chaffing, since there are no real class limitations. However, only the Warrior cast will be able to perfect using chainmail, and will manage this quicker than an amateur.

To become a Mage you will need to enlist in college and undertake a series of exams. It's studious work, but the end results enable you to control the elements via big hulks of rock, like the one pictured.

You'd imagine the Dark Brotherhood would live in a place like this. Maybe you're right, but if we told you, we'd have to kill you. Clearly, by living in the middle of nowhere and putting the frighteners on wandering travellers, these characters are hard to get in with. But persistence is rewarded by being evil in a fight and getting to dress in black leather.





game of this complexity in a solid state, as even small errors can extrapolate out into large, unwanted consequences. For example, at one stage in playtesting there was an area where the humble deer that trotted about the place weren't flagged as animals, leading to any player that killed one for food being hunted as a murderer!

Even without the ambitious nature of this game's Artificial Intelligence, there's still a phenomenal amount for the developers to worry about going wrong. You know how some games are simple, linear things, which you're forced to play through in one way? Well, *Oblivion* is as far from that as it's possible to get. It's not just that it's an enormous world where you're free to explore and be adventurous. It's not even that you can explore it in any order. What it is, like *Morrowind*, is that the person that you become in these adventures can vary quite phenomenally.

> "With Oblivion, Bethesda isn't selling a game, but an entire world"

STONE COLD / Every inch of the *Elder Scrolls* universe has been painstakingly mapped out. Even the bits you'll never visit





HOME, SWEET HOME

House and garden

As we said earlier, and will continue to say, playing *Elder Scrolls* is an experience like no other. As you set about developing your on-screen hero, the strangest things can turn to your advantage. Even a spot of gardening will train you in some deadly skill or other – violent weeding, perhaps.







While you're given an array of character classes to choose from to begin with – from Thief to Warrior to Mage, as well as some less classical options – this doesn't really hint at the expanse of options available. Rather than being actual classes, these are just sets of skills, and you're free to edit what each character starts with. For example, with the basic Thief set-up, you may decide that rather than having lock-picking as one of his major skills, he'll have magical talents that enable him to do similar feats. And even then, as the game progresses, you're able to gain skills in any area. While only practising the originally chosen seven skills will allow you to increase level, and so get points to spend on your physical statistics, it doesn't stop you grinding away on lesser talents. It's worth noting that "practising" means exactly that. As in *Morrowind*, rather than gaining skills via artificial skill points to be distributed once you go up a level, you improve with practice.

Thrills and skills

As your skills climb from zero to 100, you pass through the five stages of novice, apprentice, journeyman, expert and master. The higher ones unlock the best of the abilities, even in seemingly innocuous choices. So, while a novice merchant is limited to being scammed by the penny-pinching shop-keepers, a master is able to wander up to literally any NPC in the game and trade with them, like walking up to someone in the street and offering them £15 for their shoes.

Another good example is Alchemy. Ingredients litter the landscape and can be scavenged from certain monsters. Each has four possible uses, but when you first start to study, you'll probably only know one. As your experience increases – by studying and consuming bits of what you find (er… don't try this one at home, please) – you learn increasingly more. This is an advantage, as to make a potion you need two ingredients with an identical effect. The more options you have, the quicker you can make them. If you know all four, you're a MacGyver of the *Elder Scrolls*' world's assorted detritus, able to make anti-troll poison-potion from just a bit of mud and six inches of string.

And… oh, six pages are over already? *Oblivion* is a game of such scope that we could have almost devoted the entire issue to examining its various aspects and still not have exhausted its possibilities. With *Oblivion*, Bethesda isn't really selling you a game, it's selling you an entire world. And writing about it doesn't need an article in a magazine, but a whole tourist's guide-book. We'll be booking our flight today – via Virgin's new Dragon Air service, natch. **KIERON GILLEN**

POND LIFE / You can walk anywhere around here. (Just over that bridge is a great little pub)



FACT: Hollywood is queuing up to appear in this game – top of the A-list is *Star Trek* and *X-Men* slaphead superstar Patrick Stewart

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Awesome, basically. It offers more game-per-pound than anything else. Even after completing the main quest, there are still masses of dungeons to explore…

Thriller?



Exclusive SCREENS
Namco's hitman arrives

Excited?
- **Freedom /** A free-roaming city allows you to plan the perfect kill
- **It's Namco /** This arcade developer has a poor track record with adventures

ON THE X360 DISC
- Full trailer (commentary)





SUIT YOU / Crow may dress like a banker, but he has all the skills of Jet Li when it comes to tackling the enemy head on

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Namco
Developer/ In-house
Genre/ Adventure
Players/ 1
Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly

If the idea of playing Eidos' *Hitman* in a near future setting gets your goat, then keep an eye on this anime inspired adventure.

IN THE PIE

What *Frame City Killer* is stuffed with...



Release date/ December 05

FRAME CITY KILLER

Namco has something to crow about...

At this year's Los Angeles E3 trade show we had all but given this one the kiss-off. It looked unremarkable. Current-gen even. Its lead character ambled through the streets of Frame City with all the finesse of a speed-walking Johnny Vegas.

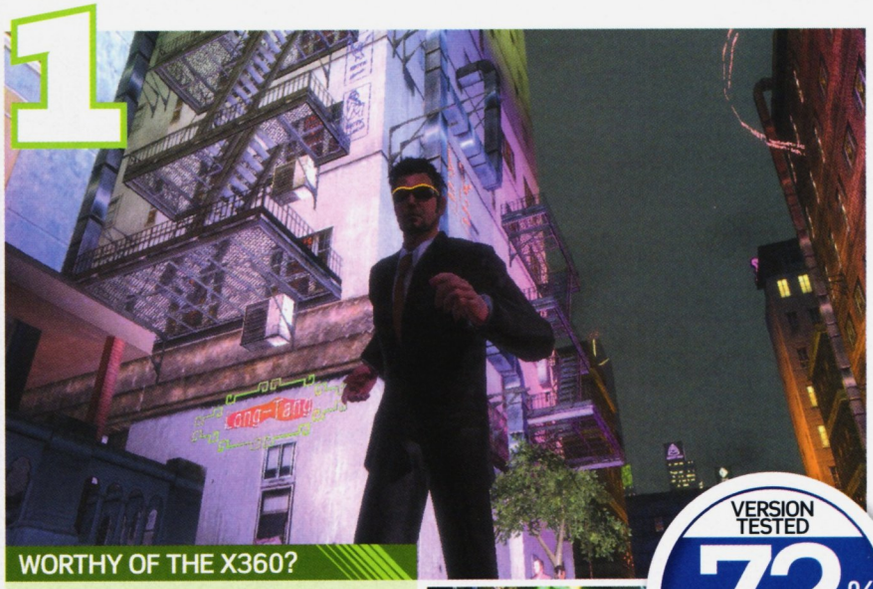
This all changed recently, when Namco offered up some new images of the game in action and we were impressed. The city now looks alive. Not alive in an every-character-has-the-same-shirt kind of way, but in the sense of being truly varied. The streets are now seething with shoppers, and the casinos and bars packed with innocents unaware of the war to come.

The shouldn't come as much of a surprise, since Namco revealed the game is running on the Unreal Engine 3, and is pushing the technology's normal mapping and physics capabilities to the limits.

There is a need for such detail. As the lead character Crow (a futuristic cross between Patrick Swayze and Don Johnson), you will be on the trail of members of well-guarded crime families. Your job is to assassinate these heavies while remaining on the 'down low'. The fact the *Frame City* crowds are genuinely unique, and the streets rammed with people, will affect the gameplay in many ways. Searching for targets should be a real challenge, while using the crowds for cover will work to your advantage. This will clearly make the game's age-old *GTA* mission structure feel fresh, as tailing targets in a real milling throng will become a greater challenge.

As this is next-gen, you are able to go anywhere, do anything and at any time in order to make your hits. The skies will cloud

> "Crow has all the brutal moves of a Japanese anti-hero"



WORTHY OF THE X360?

Multi-windowing is the new anti-aliasing

Xbox 360's unique windowing technology allows you to access information vital to a mission's success.

1 A crowded room or street can be parted in seconds as Crow looks out for targets.

A second function of the scan allows you to identify security systems laying in wait to snare Crow. The FPS mode highlights any beam traps in the area and will light them up.

Finally, functions aside, the technique just looks damn good. The multi-windowing may not be as extravagant as seen in *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter*, but it will become invaluable when planning a hit on a guarded boss.

3

VERSION TESTED 72% COMPLETE

SILENCE THE LAMBS

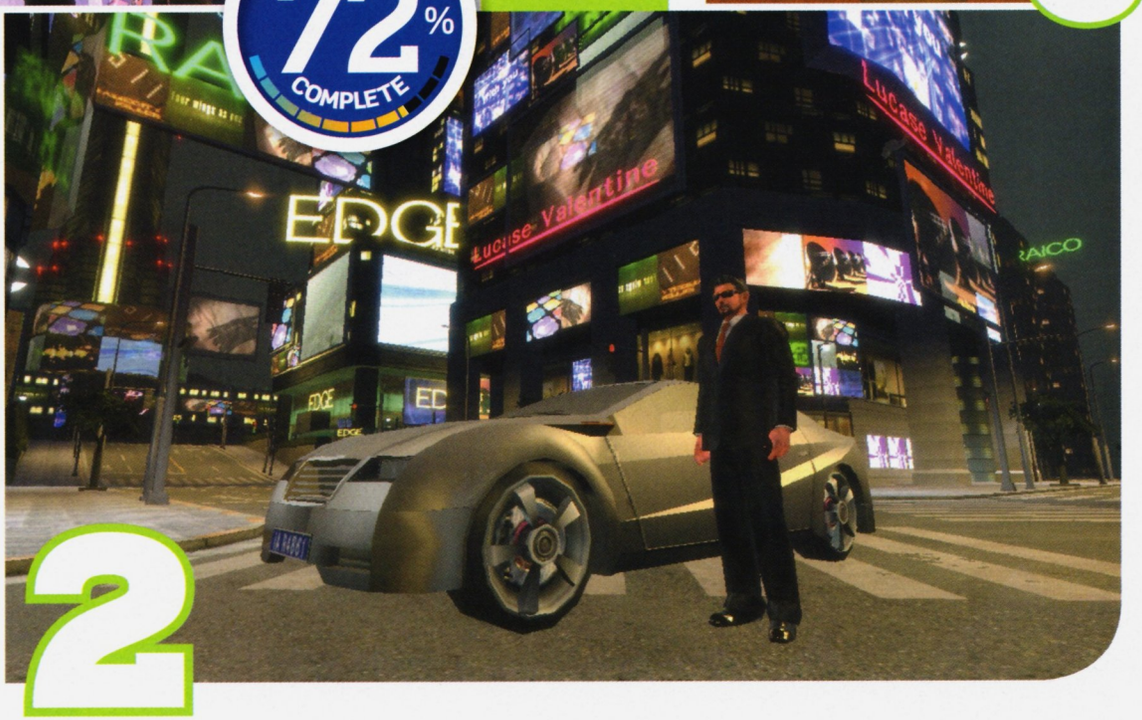
Make the best hit

The free-roaming nature of *Frame City Killer* is there for one simple purpose: to make each hit a personal mission. You will need to track a target through the city streets, using any vehicle that comes to hand, in a game of cat and mouse with the unlucky soon-to-be dead sap.





3



2

and rain, part and spread sunshine; day will turn to night; and the streets will clear of pedestrians and traffic at particular times. Unlike many other free-roaming adventures, *GTA* included, this is all relevant to the gameplay, as you will be able to take out your mark at the time of your choosing, tailing them to discover the appropriate moment to strike.

In order to gather information on a target, you will need to scan the crowds for clues as to who is armed and dangerous and who is just nipping out for a quick fag. This is where the game picks up some style points and comes into its own, the screen flicks to over-the-shoulder mode and you get the chance to scan a crowd, zooming in on highlighted targets before accessing a database of mugshots and character profiles. The more you know about the mark, the easier it will be to find their weak-spot – that regular trip to the unguarded lav after a hefty pasta lunch will be the death of many a mob boss.

If you are spotted, of course, things will get more difficult. Whether Namco is building in a strong AI system to respond to the assassinations is unclear – will the opposing gangs and criminal families, for example, think their rivals are behind your surgical work with a sniper rifle? Rest assured, though: when Crow does get caught out he has all of the brutal moves you'd associate with a Japanese anti-hero, including limb-snapping martial arts and a dual-wielding stance whipped straight from Chow Yun Fat's textbook of film clichés.

Though this side of the game suggests Namco may not steer too far from its traditions, these are minor concerns for a game that has bucked the trend and emerged from being a minor player at this year's E3 to one of the more exciting Japanese launch releases.

Ian Dean

LOCK ON / As with *Resident Evil 4*, this game features an over-the-shoulder camera for when you want to let rip at the desired target



FACT: Namco started life making mechanical rocking horses for Disney rides. Then, in 1974, it bought the Japanese arm of Atari and entered into videogame development.

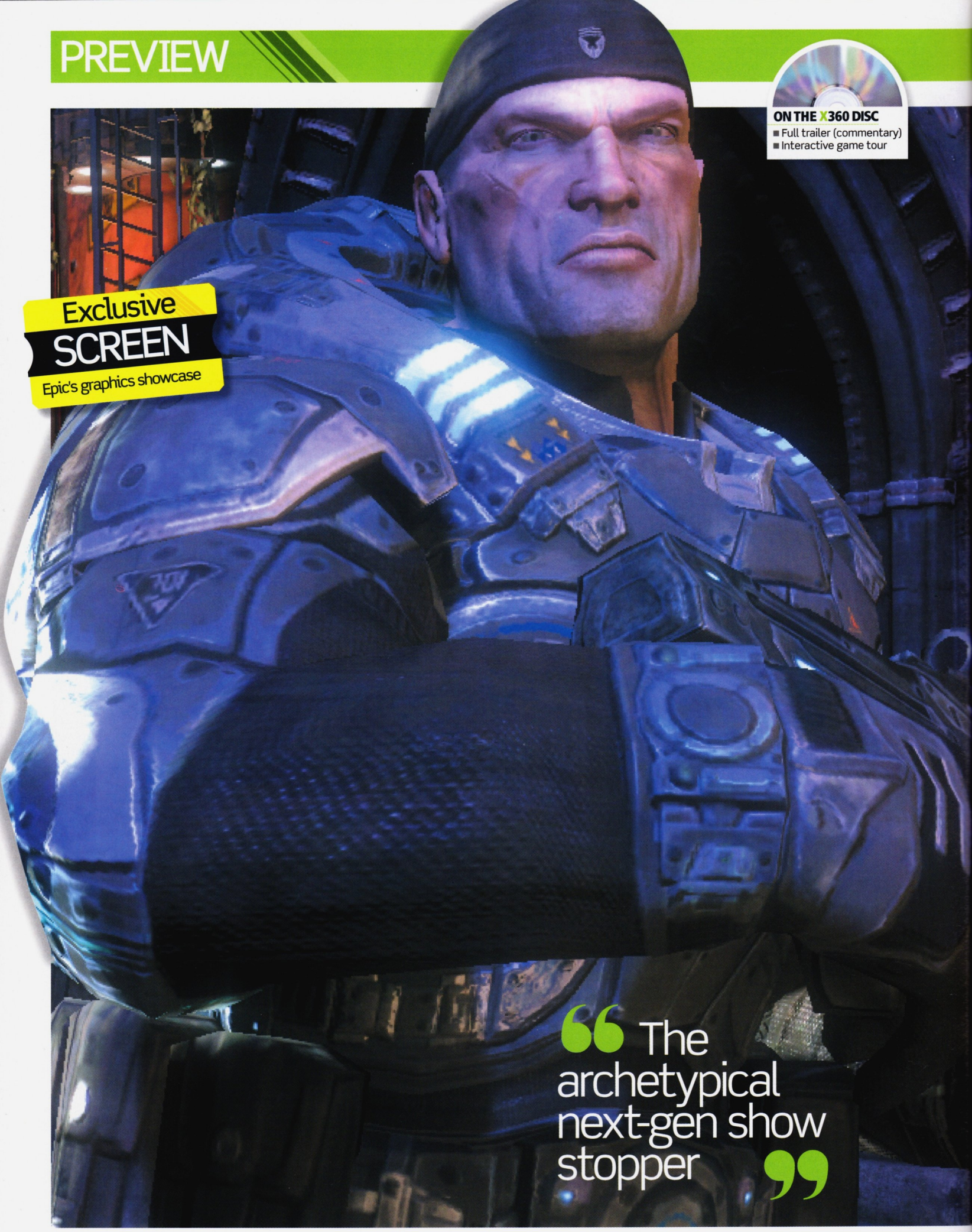
HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Frame City Killer was left for dead after E3, but with some polish and promising depths the game has developed nicely. *Hitman* for the next generation?

Thriller?

ON THE X360 DISC
- Full trailer (commentary)
- Interactive game tour

Exclusive SCREEN
Epic's graphics showcase



> "The archetypical next-gen show stopper"

Liveaware

■ Online Co-op play ■ Possible use of the Spectator mode ■ Dashboard wallpapers and extras to customise your console

GEARS OF WAR

It's style over substance. But with style this good, who cares?

Being labelled with the tag of '*Halo* beater' so early on in a game's development suggests a number of things: firstly that the game in question looks stunning, and secondly that some people are all too eager to overturn Bungie's classic.

So, whilst the tag is misguided, and *Gears Of War* is in no way similar to *Halo*, we feel the need to continue to emphasise the differences. Epic's game is a substantial, world-stopping sci-fi shooter, sure, but it's not an FPS and it doesn't rely on Live gameplay to turn heads.

In many ways, *Gears Of War* is shaping up to be the archetypical next-gen show stopper, as blistering visuals hide what could be a very simple experience. Though walls and buildings can be destroyed to create covering positions from which to launch attacks, not all walls and buildings can be destroyed. Likewise, the squad mechanic seems very limited when compared with the forthcoming *Ghost Recon 3*.

But that's not what *Gears Of War* is about. This game is about the thrill of the ride, blasting a three-storey monster as it crashes through a house, saving team-mates from swarms of enemies, and playing the hero against the odds. Above all, though, it's about looking good – looking very good – while saving the world. **Ian Dean**

FACT: Though *Gears Of War* and *Unreal 2007* aren't due for release until late next year, Epic has already begun development of the Unreal Engine 4 for the second wave of 360 titles.

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Microsoft
Developer/ Epic Games
Genre/ Shoot-'em-up
Players/ 1
Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly

The Unreal Engine 3 creator turns up the heat with this internally developed shooter. (It is in no way similar to *Halo*.)

IN THE PIE

GOW is destined for greatness because...

- Sweet visuals
- Explosions
- Sci-fi nonsense
- Don't think, shoot



HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Epic knows its own engine like no other developer... and it certainly shows. *Gears Of War* is a guaranteed Xbox 360 super-hit for 2006.

Thriller?



Release date/ November 05

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

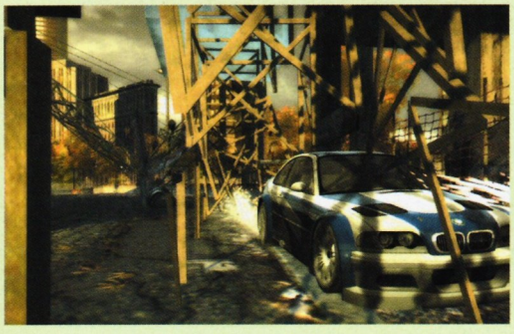
'Mildly interested' would perhaps be a bit more accurate

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?
This is the next-gen debut for EA's revitalised *Need For Speed* franchise, and continues to cruise down the street-racing road of the past two games. This time around the idea is to become the best street racer on the circuit, racing up the police 'most wanted' list to earn yourself kudos. By the time you've finished breaking speed limits in this game, every cop in the virtual city will want a piece of you.

SO, HOW DOES IT PLAY?
The free-roaming idea behind *Underground 2* is continued, with an open city and makeshift races entered as and when you feel like challenging a fellow speed bandit. The separate disciplines of the past series – drag, circuit and open races – have been combined together, for example. To get a good start you will need the swift clutch changes found in the drag discipline.

IS EA'S USUAL POLISH RUBBED INTO THIS RACER?
Not quite. While the game looks solid and stylish, it really doesn't have the same kind of next-gen looks we've recently been privy to with *Gotham Racing 3*. However, given that you are able to drive anywhere within the city, the slightly shady visuals can be overlooked.

IS IT ALL ABOUT THE CHASE?
Racing illegally will catch the eye of the local constabulary, until eventually there will be up to 12 police cars at a time looking to bust you. However, the game features more influences than past *Need For Speed* titles. A quick play of the demo this summer revealed touches of *Burnout 3* creeping into the races as you will need to make use of obstacles – such as tanker lorries – to sucker the chasing cars into crashing.



NEED TO KNOW

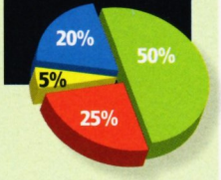
Publisher/ EA
Developer/ In-house
Genre/ Racing
Players/ 1-8
Xbox Live? / Yes

Briefly

Anyone for more free-roaming illegal street racing? (Thought so)

IN THE PIE

Under *NFS Most Wanted*'s bonnet...



HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Fans of the series will lap this up, but with games like *Gotham 3* on the radar, there will be stiff competition for EA's boy racer come launch.

TIGER WOODS PGA 2006

Proud to have small balls

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ November 2005 **Publisher/** EA **Developer/** In-house **Genre/** Sports **Players/** 1-4 **Xbox Live? /** Yes

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM PGA 2005?
The most noticeable difference is with the graphics; watching this game is truly breathtaking. We saw the Saw Grass Island Hole map being swung through, and it was stunning. The leaves and grass sway in the breeze, the pond water ripples as fish jump and swim. The light diffuses through the tree branches making everything on screen feel solid and real to the touch.

SO IT'S JUST PRETTIER?
Not quite. We're constantly being told the next step forward isn't in graphics but in physics, and this is where *Tiger Woods* proves the programmers right. The game's characters and maps have been created down to the smallest bones in a golfer's hands to allow for accurate grip and movement. Place an advanced physics engine into this world and you will have near-limitless scope to develop your own swing and stance, or try to imitate Tiger's new moves.

HOW IS GAMEPLAY DIFFERENT?
In *Tiger 06*, both left and right analogue sticks will be used to create the swing. The left controls the swing and the right the impact on the ball: swing governs the tempo and power of a shot, while impact dictates the spin of the ball. All of these are determined by an increased number of physics calculations spun on the fly by Xbox 360's powerful processor.

CAN IT TAKE THE PARTY ONLINE?
Tiger 06 will support four-player Live game modes, including persistent scoreboards to record your performances, a feature that should also be available to Live Silver users.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

A new control system and amazing graphics will have fans drooling, and may even entice a few non-swingers into the fun.





TOP SPIN 2

Now with added nipples

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ November 2005
Publisher/ 2K Games **Developer/** PAM Development **Genre/** Sports **Players/** 1-4
Xbox Live? / Yes

IT HAS NIPPLES?
It's true. *Top Spin 2* has the first next-gen nipples. Well, that's the story doing the rounds from a developer busily trying to ratchet up interest in a game many overlooked on the Xbox. The character models have been created with such detail as to have even rendered Sharapova's nipples beneath her shirt. Of course, the freckles and fine hairs on other players have been rendered too.

ARE THEY TRYING TO HIDE SOMETHING THEN?
Why, of course. In fact next-gen nips aside, *Top Spin 2* doesn't outperform the forthcoming Xbox version in too many ways. Both games will be running at 30 frames per second – when we would expect 60fps from the port – and both play identically to the original *Top Spin*. It could be argued that the nipples are the only thrills to be expected.

BUT THE ORIGINAL WAS PRETTY GOOD, THOUGH?
Well yes. In fact, it was the best tennis game this side of *Virtua Tennis 2*, and for many it even surpassed Sega's classic. The balance of player styles and total control over shots proved too addictive for many old-school gamers. With this in mind, *Top Spin 2* will feature the same controls, giving full access to lobs, drops, drives and chip shots. 2K Games is promising to implement a new 'high risk shot' feature, though, to spice up the traditional action.

HOW DOES IT USE XBOX 360?
Though on the court this plays very traditionally, off court there will be a number of X360 specific features, including the ability to totally customise your hard hitter. Whether you want to alter hairstyles, create shirts, shorts and sweatbands or design new courts, *Top Spin 2* will enable you to do it. Then, of course, you can take your creations online.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

The series' track record suggests this will be a playable tennis sim. We'd just like to see a little more next-gen oomph…

NBA 2K6

Let's bounce…

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ Dec 2005 **Publisher/** 2K Games
Developer/ Visual Concepts **Genre/** Sports **Players/** 1-2
Xbox Live?/ Yes

WHY SHOULD I CARE?
Yes, it's basketball and yes, it's true that you probably don't like basketball. However, rather than dismiss this particular basketball game simply because it's based on a sport that generates as much excitement on these shores as a plate of cold chips, there's some good news. Ever since the dawn of time (read: since *NBA Jam*), basketball games have gone with the now expected 'hold shoot to jump, release to shoot' technique. Instead of going down this route, *NBA 2K6* will use the right analogue stick, allowing you to push the stick to jump and release to shoot the ball. Hence the reason the right analogue stick has been renamed 'Shot Stick'.

AND?
Admittedly, it doesn't sound like the most impressive feature, ranking alongside "it has unlockable artwork!" in the general arousal stakes. However, what this feature will do is allow you to play the type of shot you want just by the way you point the analogue stick. For example, you can perform lay-ups from the left or right side of the basket, replicating the NBA when players decide where to shoot at the last minute. Basically, it lets you show off. As we all know, showing off is good.

HOW ELSE CAN YOU SHOW OFF?
By dunking. There's also an Aggressive button and, when used in conjunction with the Shot Stick, it means you can create your own dunks. The most obvious example is an X360 twirl on the Shot Stick translates to an X360 dunk. You can experiment with different presses and see how it changes depending on where you are positioned on the court.

AND THE MUSIC?
The soundtrack for *NBA 2K6* will be composed of the usual hip-hop nonsense, which is great news if you're a fan of The Roots (who?), Common (what?) and RJD2 (why?). Still, every track here is original and exclusive to *NBA 2K6*, and there's an apparent tour in the works as well. Cute, if you like that sort of thing.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

The best basketball series out there looks set to continue its good form. Just leave your preconceptions at home.





THE GODFATHER

You too can be a wise guy

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ March 2006 **Publisher/** EA
Developer/ In-house **Genre/** Adventure
Players/ 1 **Xbox Live? /** No

IS THIS THE MOST AMBITIOUS XBOX 360 GAME?
To be blunt, no. It is, however, EA's most ambitious game to date. The US mega-publisher has seen the success of *GTA* and wants a piece of the non-linear adventure pie. Tag a hefty licence onto the *GTA* gameplay and you have a winner, or so EA has assumed. The problem is, *The Godfather* licence comes with a lot of baggage, which has meant this offer won't be made until Spring 2006.

WHAT'S THIS BAGGAGE ABOUT?
The Godfather is possibly the biggest cultural licence you could imagine. Even if you haven't seen Coppola's films or read Mario Puzo's book, you will be familiar with the sayings and mythos of the series. So to create a non-linear game inside this strict licence would require some serious game design – every action you take affects the three families in different ways, and so changes how the game plays and ends.

SO IT'S ALL ABOUT FREEDOM?
Definitely. The basic principal of the game is to develop your character as you strive to rise through the ranks of the Mafia to become the Godfather. You can choose your side, make and break deals, date family members and assassinate rivals. We're promised different ways to complete each mission, suggesting violent and diplomatic routes to success.

HOW DIFFERENT WILL IT BE TO THE XBOX VERSION?
So far, EA has only stated how the look of the game will change, with higher definition models and graphical effects, such as diffused lighting, which are used to create more realistic events. The aim is to create characters with believable emotional responses to your actions – pummel a guy and you will believe he has been scared into giving up the juice on a rival.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

There's some question over how this will stand up to proper X360 games like *Elder Scrolls*, but we're willing to give it a shot.

GAMES ON THE VERGE OF THE BIG TIME. COULD THEY CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER?

X360 PREDICTS

TOP TEN PRE-ORDERED LAUNCH GAMES

01 Quake 4
02 Project Gotham Racing 3
03 Call Of Duty 2
04 Dead Or Alive 4
05 Ghost Recon 3
06 Need For Speed Most Wanted
07 Perfect Dark Zero
08 King Kong
09 Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion
10 Condemned

UNSIGNED

Killer next-gen developer seeks publisher for fun and frolics...

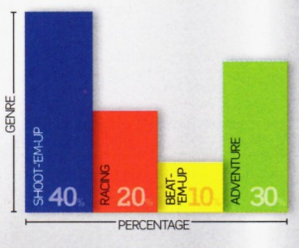
2 DAYS TO VEGAS

LOWDOWN: Rumoured to be in talks with Sega to publish this *24*-inspired adventure, Steel Monkeys' past games include *Master Rallye* and *Rocky*. Packed with car chases, free roaming gameplay across America's Midwest, and parking attendants, this is one crime adventure that could truly rival *GTA*.



FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

What will the world be like in three months? (What? You're asking us? We don't know what we're having for tea tonight! But we can predict the make up of your games collection from current pre-orders.)





VIRTUA FIGHTER NEXT-GEN

MOST WANTED

If you've ever played *Virtua Fighter*, you'll know this series is more than a holiday romance. But like a quick fumble in a rusty rowboat, the teaser trailer from this year's E3 has left a lasting impression. The trailer showed incredibly detailed and lifelike character models, with accurately flowing hair and draped dresses. Though the moves each character went through didn't appear to be theirs from previous games, the fanboy in us just gawped – and assumed that there was a deeper purpose behind mixing up the fighter's styles.

EXPECT RELEASE: NOVEMBER 06

UNDER THE RADAR

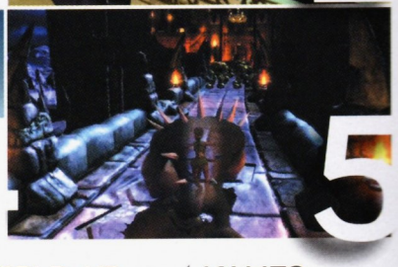
Five sleeper hits











CONDEMNED

1 Sega's debut next-gen bloodfest is shaping up nicely, and could be one of the forgotten greats in the launch-day melee.

SCARFACE

2 Delayed until next summer to spruce things up, Vivendi's Pacino *Driver*-wannabe could offer relief from the pack of shooters on offer.

FULL AUTO

3 Sega's guns 'n' cars modding racer may be as cynical as you like, but from early play tests, it's damn good fun (in a curled lip kind of way).

WORLD AIR FORCE

4 Namco keeps on giving, and this hotshot aerial sim has the potential to make us all feel like Iceman.

KAMEO

5 She's been running from her release date for nearly five years, but now Kameo needs to show her face. Finally, we get to play *Kameo*.



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

SAVE 33%

THAT'S 4 FREE ISSUES WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE!

Or pay just £7.99 for 3 issues – today!



www.X360magazine.com

Yes, I'd like to subscribe to X360 as indicated below:

- ❑ **ONE YEAR** (13 issues) for £34.99 – SAVE 30%
- ❑ **BEST DEAL!** Spread my payments with Direct Debit (only £7.99 every three issues)

YOUR DETAILS

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____

Email _____

Please tick the box if you DO NOT wish your details to be used for internal promotions by Highbury Entertainment ❑ Please tick the box if you DO NOT wish to receive information about products and services from other carefully selected companies ❑

MEDIA CODE XB20501

YOUR PAYMENT DETAILS

❑ Cheque enclosed (made payable to Highbury Entertainment Ltd)

❑ Visa ❑ Mastercard ❑ Switch ❑ Delta

Card number _____

Expiry Date _____ Issue No _____

Signed _____ Date _____

HIGHBURY ENTERTAINMENT

INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

DIRECT Debit

Name and full postal address of bank or building society

To: The Manager Bank/Building Society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Branch sort code

Bank/building society account number

Originator's identification number: 8 5 1 4 1 2

Reference number

Instructions to your bank or building society

Please pay Highbury Entertainment Ltd Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Highbury Entertainment Limited and, if so, details will be passed on electronically to my bank/building society

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

SEND THIS CARD TO: HIGHBURY ENTERTAINMENT LTD, FREEPOST NATW1809, SOMERTON, TA11 6ZA

CALL 0870 444 8682 OR FAX 01458 271146

Offer valid in the UK only. Call 44870 444 8682 for international prices. THIS OFFER EXPIRES WITHOUT NOTICE



SEGA



THE NEW AGE



WHAT WILL THE INDUSTRY'S LEADING HARDCORE GAME PUBLISHER HAVE IN STORE FOR XBOX 360? **RYAN KING** SPEAKS WITH YUJI NAKA AND MATT WOODLEY ON SEGA'S NEXT-GEN PLANS

> "Sega is changing, and Xbox 360 owners will be the first to see the transformation take place"

GET REAL / This looks so real (or, at least, about as real as a giant blue hedgehog *can* look...)

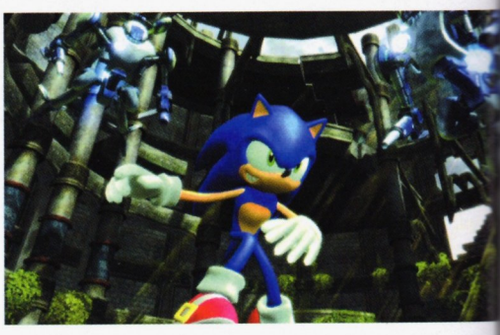
Exclusive SCREENS

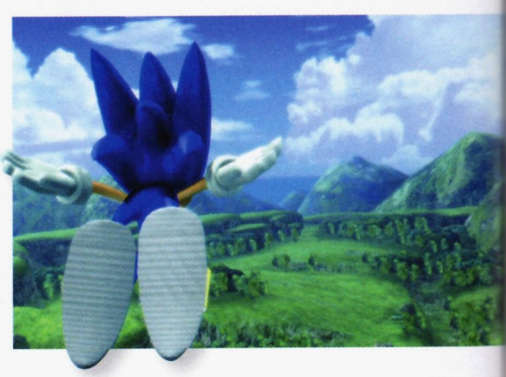
Sonic gets up to speed

There's more to Sega than *Sonic*. That's the message coming loud and clear from gaming's famous blue corner. It's not an overblown declaration designed to whip the rabid fanbase into delirium. Rather, it's a statement of intent, as Sega reloads and realigns itself for the Xbox 360 launch, getting ready to put right some past wrongs, leaving behind its last-gen naval-gazing, and shaking up its image in the process. While the next generation of consoles will still be treated to the classic image of a cheery blue hedgehog tapping his foot impatiently waiting for your next move, Xbox 360 also has blood-splattered thugs trying to carve you up in slash-horror *Condemned*, not giving you the luxury of a next move. From collecting rings to collecting players for your Dream Team in *Football Manager 2006*, from racing through levels to racing through cities in *Full Auto*, blowing up a petrol station or two on the way, Sega is changing – and Xbox 360 owners will be the first to see the transformation take place...

Rewind. Quick history lesson. Sega's past has been repeated ad nauseam to the point where it's almost common gaming knowledge, but to summarise the chewed-up clichés in a bite-size sentence: Sega battled with Nintendo during the mid-Nineties, but subsequent consoles flopped, and Sega took a deep breath and withdrew from the hardware race to lick its wounds. An awkward transitional phase followed, as Sega had to learn how to make games for hardware babies other than its own. For every *Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution*, there was a *SpikeOut: Battle Street*. For every *Panzer Dragoon Saga*, there was a *Sonic Heroes*. Then Sammy merged with Sega and squashed its subsidiary companies, such as AM2 and Amusement Vision, into one whole. Miserable internet cynics predicted doom and gloom.

Fast forward to the present. The Sammy merger wasn't to be Sega's epitaph, merely a thorny ending to one of the toughest chapters in the company's history. Now, finally having adapted to making toys for hardware babies other than its own, Sega is ready for Xbox 360. Those familiar with Sega will know that its games are typically those that wouldn't look out of place in the arcade – rammed with sugary colour, noisier than X-Factor auditions and built with an extra credit mentality in mind. Enter, stage left: *Condemned*, a survival horror game featuring blood, bleached colours and a downbeat, sombre mood. This is as far away from Sega's roots as it can possibly »







RUMOUR MILL

SEGA RALLY, CRAZY TAXI

Sega has created a new development studio focusing on racing games, and the fact that it is *Sega Rally* undergoing the next-gen knife seems to be an open secret. Look at Sega's past racing games – *Daytona USA* had a stronger presence in the arcade than on console, *Virtua Racing* will soon be re-released on PlayStation2 as part of the Sega Classics Collection, and the *Crazy Taxi* series ran itself into the ground on Xbox. That leaves *Sega Rally*. However, it's possible that Sega will still give the *Crazy Taxi* series one last roll of the dice.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 5



Sega has already stated this isn't planned for console release. The problem is that no one actually believes it. The only *Virtua Fighter* game Sega hasn't released on console is Japan's arcade-only *Virtua Fighter 4: Final Tuned*, and as an update of an update, releasing that wouldn't have made much financial sense. Holding back a console release of *Virtua Fighter 5* makes even less financial sense. It's just a question of what console. As both *Virtua Fighter 5* arcade and PlayStation3 are powered by Nvidia GPU, that would seem to make the most sense for an initial conversion, but Sega will make money now by converting to Xbox 360's ATI GPU board and releasing the game earlier. We smell a bidding war behind closed doors at Sony and Microsoft.

SHENMUE III



Ever since the credits rolled for *Shenmue II*, Ryo and Shenhua have been frozen in limbo at the Stone Pit, as the series trailed off into half-rumours, internet gossip and hearsay. So it's no surprise to see that half-rumours, internet gossip and hearsay are at the forefront of the latest *Shenmue III* news. Gaming website Kikizo claims *Shenmue III* is "close to finished", and Sega is awaiting a deal that will bring the entire series – all 16 chapters of *Shenmue* – onto at least one next-gen console, most likely Xbox 360. However, despite Kikizo repeatedly stating this story is true, cynics have been quick to dismiss the news, given the number of false dawns regarding the series over the years. If the rumour does hold water, it seems that next year's E3 would be the apt place for Sega to make such an announcement.

VIRTUA TENNIS 3, AFTERBURNER, HOUSE OF THE DEAD 4



These games have all been confirmed for arcade, and have been shown off by Sega in recent weeks. Again, it's a question of when they come to console rather than if, and what console they eventually show up on. If Sega acts anything like it did during the last generation of consoles, Xbox 360 owners can almost certainly expect *House Of The Dead 4*, but *Virtua Tennis 3* will probably go to PlayStation3. *Afterburner*'s eventual console destination is anyone's guess right now. Let's hope Microsoft can talk Sega into sharing the good stuff.

YUJI NAKA



Yuji Naka. *Sonic The Hedgehog. NiGHTS Into Dreams. Phantasy Star Online*. It's not a bad gaming CV by any means, and with Xbox 360 on the way, Yuji Naka is working overtime to add more games to it...

In fact, he's adding *Sonic The Hedgehog Next-Gen* to his long list of achievements. The new game will be released later next year to coincide with *Sonic*'s 15th anniversary. The aim of the project is simple: make it fast. Make it the fastest game anyone has ever seen. This will be achieved using the latest technology, courtesy of Microsoft, and Naka's gift for combining art, physics and cutting edge game design.

So, with a new next-gen *Sonic* just around the corner we thought it only fair to ask the man in the know what's what. Here's Yuji Naka...

X360: What is your philosophy on gaming, and how do you see this translating to this next-generation of consoles?
Naka: With each new generation of console, I strive to achieve technical innovation. I am always excited by the opportunity to match the level of quality that each one introduces.

X360: What can we expect from yourself and Sega for this new generation of games?
Naka: I expect new consoles to have new features such as graphics and new operational techniques, but we are always looking to create new gaming styles, which is very important.

X360: What direction do you see games and gameplaying going in the HD era?
Naka: I believe most of the games and gameplay techniques are moving towards creating a more realistic gaming world. However, we're still interested in creating more fantasy worlds as well.

X360: Do you think it is easy to get caught up in the technology and forget the gameplay?
Naka: No, I don't think so. It is not like the developers should have to focus on either story or technology, separately. We should focus on what will best present the game, and that's about using the technology or a story as an advantage. It just depends on the game.

X360: Did you anticipate the excitement that the new version of *Sonic* would cause amongst the gaming community?
Naka: No. I am surprised and pleased that it caused such excitement. I hope many people are looking forward to seeing the quality we've been able to achieve.

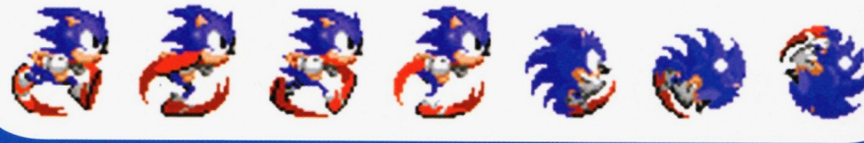
X360: How do you think Japan will take to Xbox this time around?
Naka: I believe it is capable of success in Japan as well. I'm well aware that other publishers have also great software for the console, not just Sega.

X360: What do you think of online gaming?
Naka: Online gaming is fun – we've realised this through working with *Phantasy Star Online* for five years. On the other hand, games like the new *Phantasy Star* game, *Phantasy Star Universe*, illustrate that this kind of game can be fascinating in single-player, too. Regarding Xbox Live games, I am looking forward to the future.

X360: Do you welcome the new direction of gaming? Placing consoles at the heart of a family's entertainment?
Naka: I don't think the direction has changed dramatically. Overall, I think the direction of gaming is more of a focus on the visual, but I hope developers will look at progression of control methods as well. It is nice that games are being considered as being at the heart of family entertainment. I hope everyone can enjoy games like they do movies.

X360: Are there any limitations to developing for this next-generation, such as cost and time?
Naka: Yes. Generally speaking, cost and time is a big factor. We do have the benefit of size that enables us to pool resources by creating our own library of tools to allow us to be efficient in this area.

X360: Finally, if you could make one game for the next-generation of consoles, what would it be?
Naka: It is always my wish to create something that doesn't take time or cost too much, but if I were to create something irrespective of time and cost, I would say I would like to create a new type of game that needs to have new peripherals.



NOT FOR THE FAINT-HEARTED

Condemned

Exclusive
HANDS-ON
First-hand impressions

It's a rare thing for a videogame to make you jump, but this grisly little beast from Monolith does just that. We visited Sega this month to play the game, entering the home of Sonic feeling confident, and leaving questioning many things, including the capacity of the human heart to take the stress of being stalked in dark corridors for hours on end. Yeah, that's right, we jumped out of our 'GAMER' T-shirts, but we're comfortable with our limits.

It's in its ability to make players freak like horny dogs that *Condemned* will succeed. Let's make no mistakes here: this game is shocking. The plot alone places you on the edge – you stand in the off-the-rail suit of an FBI veteran on the hunt for a serial killer who has warped the minds of fellow dropouts to form an underground army of sadistic thugs. To capture the killer you will need to venture deep into his world, collect clues using FBI gadgetry and bounce attackers off the walls with anything that comes to hand. It's like *Silence Of The Lambs* sharing career advice with *Fight Club*.

The next reason why *Condemned* will have you reaching for a light switch is the graphics. Visually, this game pushes the boundaries of taste, as blood splatters from every swing of a pipe or plank, and teeth tear from a thug's face and scatter across the room. The shadows don't help either – *Doom 3* has nothing on the stark rooms of *Condemned*. The fear factor is raised as we're now fighting for our lives in realistic, urban environments as enemies attack from the most mundane of hiding places – literally, from behind the sofa.

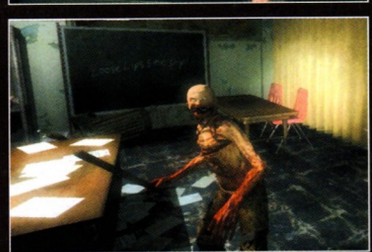
The tension isn't simply racked up by the forbidding visual style, though, as however unnerving being chased through rooms and alleys that have a real-life familiarity is, it's the intelligence of the pursuers that makes events scary as hell. A stand-out moment from our play of *Condemned* came when we were busily examining an apartment kitchen for clues – we spied a thug marching past the window, and seconds later he returned and peered in. Spotting us rifling through the cutlery draw he ran off, presumably to find the kitchen door and come in.

Well, don't presume anything in *Condemned*. We waited, meat clever in hand, for the thug to enter; for him to run at us and fall right into our blade. However, he didn't come. Silence. Nothing was moving. We gingerly peeked through the doorway, walked out and poked around for our victim. Unknown to us, the AI character had been lurking behind the doorway all along, waiting for us to come to him and consequently run into *his* waiting blade. Clever.

The tension is further ramped up when you try to defend yourself. Everything in the game has a sell-by date, meaning a plank will eventually break, and a shotgun will only have the ammo in its chamber: no bonus bullet packs in this game. This affects gameplay greatly, as you will snap a pipe over a killer's head and need to quickly scour the shadows for a new weapon – an axe, a book shelf, a spade, anything. The result is a constant need to defend oneself using the objects to hand. You will never feel comfortable in *Condemned* – the game just won't let you rest.

So: creepy story, claustrophobic graphics, nasty AI and realistic weapon degradation. *Condemned* has all the ingredients of a killer game, and we mean that quite literally… Don't let your gran play this one!









SPOOKED / *Condemned* has to be the most terrifying game we've played on Xbox 360, bar none

STUDIO FOCUS

Monolith

Sega's new stablemate is a PC veteran immersed in the FPS genre. The studio began as a Microsoft partner, developing DOS-based games using its own LithTech propriety engine back in 1994. After expanding, the studio was then bought by Warner Bros. in 2004 and started focusing on developing third-party games for the likes of Sega, Vivendi and Microsoft.

KEY TITLES

- No One Lives Forever
- Alien Vs Predator 2
- The Matrix Online

STUDIO FOCUS

Sega dons its Union Jack underpants as the Japanese über-company scours the British Isles for the latest talent...



Name: **Creative Assembly**
Game: **Spartan: Total Warrior**
Location: **West Sussex, England**

Creative Assembly is best known for its huge PC strategy title, *Rome: Total War*, a game released to critical acclaim and used to power the historical scraps seen in BBC program *Time Commanders*. *Spartan: Total Warrior* for Xbox will be its first title published under Sega.



Name: **Sports Interactive**
Game: **Football Manager 2006**
Location: **North London, England**

Known for the PC *Championship Manager* sims that sold more than the Bible, Sports Interactive was snapped up by Sega in February 2004 and started work on the *Football Manager* series. Sports Interactive is planning to expand into more sports management sims under Sega.



Name: **Sega Racing Studio**
Game: **Sega Rally 3**
Location: **Midlands**

Sega has constructed a new UK development studio to focus on racing titles, in a location to attract talent from "studios in the south and north of England." Current job vacancy descriptions (and the *Colin McRae* past of Head of Senior Product Development Guy Wilday) point to a next-gen *Sega Rally*.



BLUE MAGIC / *Look how blue he is! Sonic on Xbox 360 will be awesome*

go, eschewing bright, bold visuals for a grimy look that takes full advantage of Xbox 360's muscle. If that weren't enough, enter stage right: *Full Auto*, a vehicle combat game featuring huge explosions and a gentle whiff of car modding about its person. No Magical Sound Shower here, just the noise of rockets fired and resulting explosions. In the middle: a confused audience.

A NEW CHAPTER

It's a surprise, but this change of emphasis makes sense. Sega is turning over a new leaf, and alongside its own IP, it will be using Xbox 360 as the platform to launch the next chapters in its history and broaden its horizons.

Matt Woodley, European Marketing Director of Sega, explains: "We've been expanding our product line-up for the last few years. We want to create a well-rounded portfolio of quality games in each genre and on every platform. *Condemned* and *Full Auto* are examples of this. Their mature direction is just an indication that we're not restricting ourselves, and gives us the content we need to appeal to the western market and mature gamers."

Matt continues: "Sega has always stood for excellence and innovation in gaming. We're in a privileged position where we have a wealth of classic IP that we can draw upon when we feel the time is right. Whether it's all-new titles, or titles inspired by past Sega games, we'll be working with the best development talent in the world to bring the best of what Sega has to offer to the gaming world."

ULTIMATE BURNOUT / *The thought of* Afterburner *on Xbox 360 is just too cool. Even with old-school gameplay, this will rule the skies*



MONEY TALKS

It hasn't gone unnoticed that Sega has recently gone British, snapping up UK developers to boost its output. The reason for this is that the Japanese economy has been suffering for some time, and without getting all *Time* magazine and boring you with technical beanpole explanations, the knock-on effect is that the Japanese videogame market is suffering along with it. Less money sloshing around the economy, fewer Japanese games bought, and so fewer games are being made solely for the Japanese market. So Sega has been looking overseas to developers outside of Japan in an attempt to sell more games abroad, and so keep its war chest topped up.

"The UK is just one of our markets that we are focusing on, along with the rest of Europe and America," Woodley explains. "Sega historically released a lot of Japanese-influenced titles, which may not have necessarily appealed to the western market. We are now growing our portfolio of western-style games to appeal to European and US consumers and will continue to do so moving forward. We've got lots more to announce in the future."

The result has been the acquisition of Sports Interactive and Creative Assembly, two of the UK's finest developers. Sports Interactive guided *Championship Manager* to the top of the PC football management pile, while Creative Assembly set retail tills ringing with *Rome: Total War*. Monolith also falls under the Sega banner now, with its first-person-shooter expertise bringing another angle to the publisher's changing line-up. But why is Sega now dealing with football management, historical war and FPS games? Apparently, it's all about going with whatever works.

"When we're working with much-loved local developers like Sports Interactive and Creative Assembly, the consumers are already familiar with these teams. Monolith is also a worldwide respected developer, which again can only help our standing as a publisher as we strive to work with the best in the business."

SUMO STUDIO



Since 2004's universally acclaimed *OutRun2* coin-op conversion, Sumo Studio has grown even closer to Sega. The two companies are working tightly on a new secret project due for release next year that is in no way a new *OutRun* game. Honest. We pinned down Carl Cavers, COO of Sumo, and asked him some burning questions about Sega, Xbox 360 and fanboys…

X360: Where do you see yourselves fitting into the Sega family of developers?
Cavers: Starting with the easy questions! We value our relationship with Sega very highly, as any developer would, and we feel really at home working on IP most of us have grown up with.

X360: How are your interpretations going to differ from the originals?
Cavers: This really has to be taken on a case-by-case basis, and we assess everything on its own merits. We don't have a standard formula for predicting what we're going to do – it's more a case of working with the guys at Sega Europe and Sega Japan to develop a direction for the product.

X360: What are the constraints when developing games based around Sega IPs?
Cavers: We're not given a list of constraints and told these are the boundaries for the product. It's more about looking at and reviewing the IP to work out where the natural constraints exist, and then working with these to develop something that takes the IP on to the next level for the chosen platform. We certainly don't say "let's reinvent this or that"; it's more a case of what are the IP's strengths and how can we leverage these on the target platform?

X360: Are you ever concerned you will alienate the die-hard fans?
Cavers: Obviously we're concerned that we could do this, which is why we try very hard to ensure that the products we develop fit in with the Sega culture and ethos for creating games. If we fail in this respect, then that means we've failed in achieving one of our aims.

X360: How do you foresee some of Sega's classic brands, such as *Afterburner* and *Sonic*, making the step-up on the next-gen consoles?
Cavers: We've not really given this much thought, as we've been far too busy working with Sega on other things.

X360: Is there one Sega game you would love to bring to Xbox 360?
Cavers: It would be totally unfair to single out any one game. Sega has lots of great IP, most of which would work great on the Xbox 360.

X360: In real terms, how much of a leap is Xbox to Xbox 360, and what expectations do you have for the hardware?
Cavers: Xbox 360 is going to be the technology leader in the console field by a significant margin when it makes its debut, and therefore expectations of the products are rightly very high. Compared to Xbox, the development approach will be quite different because of the multi-processor architecture of the X360.

X360: Sega games have a particular feel and old-school nature to them. How do you see this transferring to next-gen? At the end of the day, aren't people really just after great gameplay?
Cavers: Well yes, people want great gameplay, but they also want to know that the game they're buying for their Xbox 360 makes use of all the technical advancements on the console. Else why wouldn't you stick with old tech and great gameplay? Personally, I think gamers buying an Xbox 360 will want both great gameplay and great technology from their games – and rightly so! We'll aim to provide both.

X360: *OutRun2* was a great conversion. Can we expect a new *OutRun* from your team on Xbox 360? Or is there a new racer in the works?
Cavers: We really enjoyed working on *OutRun2* and I think that came through in the end result, but as for plans for the Xbox 360, you'd have to ask that question to Sega...



OUTRUNNER / Sumo made it big with the excellent *OutRun 2* coin-op conversion. Time for a sequel?

FULL AUTO

Sega's first next-gen racer doesn't even need first gear...

If there's one word that springs to mind with *Full Auto* (after the words chaotic, noisy and explosive have all been and gone), that word is *Burnout*. While there are plenty of worse comparisons to throw about, there's always a danger that the staff at Pseudo Interactive won't take kindly to having its baby so casually compared to Criterion's racer, so let's amend the comparison. *Full Auto* is like *Burnout*... with weapons.

That doesn't mean *Full Auto* has an identity crisis. Quite frankly, there's no such thing as an identity crisis when you're being compared to *Burnout*. In any case, *Full Auto* is a far more brutal game, putting the emphasis on weapons, with machine guns, rockets, shotguns and grenades making up a small part of the armoury. The press release cliché of "fully destructible environments!" may make you sigh, but this is one of those rare games that actually means what it says. Slam an errant rocket into a petrol station and watch the debris fly. Just to let you revel in those many pornographic explosions, there's even an instant replay button included. Perfect.

The hook of the racing revolves around an Unwreck meter, allowing you to rewind time if you screw up a corner or, perhaps more appropriately, find yourself on the wrong end of a grenade. Wind back 15 seconds, start again and give yourself a second chance to avoid making the same mistake. The Unwreck meter is built up by scraping the paintwork off other cars, either by slamming into them or using your weapons. If you haven't already noticed, this game will be all about car combat. Essentially, *Full Auto* is like *Burnout*. With weapons. And if that doesn't excite you, then nothing will.



GUN RUNNER / Burnout *with guns, anyone? Of course you want it. We've played it, and we still want more*



HIGH ROLLER / *Shenmue II* is rumoured to have cost between 40 and 70 million dollars to make, so it's little wonder Sega is shying away from a third game

It's a sign of the times that the company that once specialised in bringing Japanese games over to western audiences is now looking to take western games over to Japanese audiences. "If we find that in a developer like Creative Assembly we have titles with potential crossover to Japan, then we will work closely with our Japanese teams to realise that potential," Woodley admits. "Each new market requires a different focus. From my experience, Sega has a unique global way of working. We collaborate on all projects."

A FAITHFUL FOLLOWING

Sega's last console was Dreamcast, a machine that failed to stay afloat when PlayStation2 started making waves, and was effectively dead in the water by the time Xbox hit the shelves. Yet despite withdrawing from the console race in March 2001, Sega still commands a zealous fan base matched only by Nintendo, typically ranging from late teens to older gamers – basically, anyone around to see its glory years. These core fans have already raised concerns that Sega is moving away from its arcade roots. However, this isn't the case.

"No matter what format, it's still about good games with relevant content," says Woodley. "We've worked hard to be innovators in software in the past. New formats dictate that we're required to consistently adapt our focus, which keeps our approach fresh." That will be of some comfort to the hardcore fans, and it's also good to know that following in the tentative footsteps of *OutRun2* and *Phantasy Star Online*, Xbox Live will also be part of the masterplan for future games. "We see Live as a key part of many of our future games," affirms Woodley.

The mixture of old and new can be seen in Sega's current projected line-up. While *Condemned*, *Full Auto* and *Football Manager 2006* stick out as being 'non-Sega' titles in the traditional sense, there are also arcade versions of *Virtua Fighter 5*, *Afterburner*, *House Of The Dead 4* and *Virtua Tennis 3* on the horizon. Those games are built around simple, easy-to-understand concepts that Sega has become known for and these games could well end up on console (see Sega Rumour Mill). However, *Condemned* hasn't just been controversial because it distances itself from Sega's roots. More, the levels of violence have provoked raised eyebrows. Sega insist this isn't a problem: "We know what the boundaries of entertainment and good taste are, so we won't be crossing any lines. *Condemned* is an adult game for a mature market – we are entertaining in the same way that the film business does."

This leaves Sega in an unusually strong position. The company never quite managed to get its head together in time for the Xbox launch, as it was trying to find its feet making games for other consoles while mourning the Dreamcast. This time, Sega is ready for the challenge of the Xbox 360. As Matt Woodley points out, the key is to adjust to the technology: "The secret of succeeding in today's changing industry is the ability to adapt and push the boundaries of the latest technology. The reason we're still around and still growing is that we're firmly committed to being represented well on each new format, with strong games from the best developers in the world. Gaming hardware should be about emulating the best technology that is currently available, and providing the best base for developers, and that's as much of a motivator as any. Finally I'll say that next-gen is most definitely not just about better graphics..."

That's a line of thought shared by Microsoft, as Xbox 360 will serve as a central entertainment system rather than an out-and-out games console. It's something Sega and Microsoft see eye-to-eye on. "We're very excited to be working with Microsoft on this concept," Woodley gushes. "It's a vision we share, and will be pushing the boundaries of in the coming years." In *Condemned* and *Full Auto*, Sega has set out its stall as doing something different. This time around, Sega is adapting to gamers rather than waiting for gamers to adapt to them. This is how the Japanese giants managed to find success in the mid-Nineties, and Xbox 360 could be the partner Sega needs to burrow its way towards mainstream success once more.

Welcome back, Sega. ■

TEN OF THE BEST "NEXT-GEN QUOTES"

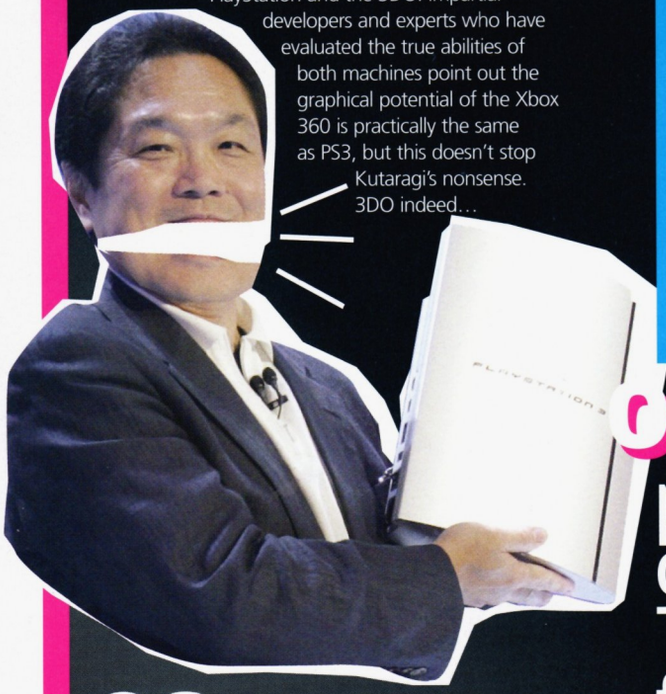
We pick ten of the most notable comments made by company figureheads in the still-raging war of the words

01 "Microsoft is trailing behind us and is not a threat"

KEN KUTARAGI, SONY

PlayStation daddy Ken Kutaragi easily wins the prize for talking the most nonsense, delivering exceptionally catty lines with stunning regularity.

This man is a menace, and is ceaseless in his quest to generate propaganda capable of tricking people into believing there's actually a massive technological gap between the Xbox 360 and PS3. He even suggested the difference between Xbox 360 and PS3 is the same as the difference between the first PlayStation and the 3DO. Impartial developers and experts who have evaluated the true abilities of both machines point out the graphical potential of the Xbox 360 is practically the same as PS3, but this doesn't stop Kutaragi's nonsense. 3DO indeed...



02 "The day Sony launches, they walk right into Halo 3"

BILL GATES, MICROSOFT

Speaking to *Time* magazine, moneybags himself revealed that Microsoft intends to release *Halo 3* against PS3, a move genuinely capable of hurting PS3's first-day sales.

Sony has already seen the devastating result of such a tactic. In the US, Microsoft launched *Halo 2* against Sony's new slimline PS2 hardware and went on to achieve the biggest retail day in entertainment.

Sure, PS3 will be harder to crack, but imagine if Microsoft dropped the Xbox 360's price while releasing the US' most popular franchise.

03 "It's how we're going to use the technology that separates us"

SHIGERU MIYAMOTO, NINTENDO

"There's not a lot I want to play now," the legendary Nintendo designer continues, citing a lack of innovation in the industry. "A lot of the games out there are just too long... I want to make more unique products." Cleverly, Miyamoto is twisting Nintendo's thrifty stance and making it seem like the move to make smaller games is something to do with innovation, rather than Nintendo's reluctance to put its hand in its pockets and make the large, epic games (such as *Halo*) that people want to play.

04 "Sony's plan for PSX did not work. The strategy failed"

REGGIE FILS-AIME, NINTENDO

The ever-evangelical Nintendo executive vice president of sales and marketing is no stranger to shooting his mouth off in the press, to much hilarity.

His point makes a tenuous link between the PSX and PS3's chances of success, based on their ability to deliver extra multimedia functions. The problem is that the PSX failed not because people didn't want multimedia functions, but because they didn't want to pay a high price for existing PS2 hardware.

If the PS3 fails, it won't be because of the same reasons as the PSX, and the whole world understands this, causing everyone to, once again, point and laugh at the infamous Mr Fils-Aime.



05 "Game consoles are not an essential product in life"

SATORU IWATA, NINTENDO



While probably the oddest quote on the list, this perfectly (and tragically) highlights Nintendo's underlying problem: it just doesn't aim high enough, thanks to this belief that videogames aren't that important.

Where Sony and Microsoft believe their multimedia consoles are so desirable they will take over the world and become essential living room devices, Nintendo boss Iwata is convinced consoles are "viewed with hostility by family members" and, as such, he expects Nintendo will have to struggle in order to overcome some kind of resistance.

Such low self-esteem... Nintendo could probably be a dangerous opponent if the company actually believed in itself a bit more.

06 "Xbox Live is the world's leading online gaming service"

SHANE KIM, MICROSOFT



Microsoft Game Studios boss Shane Kim is not shy in singing his company's praises. He was keen to point out that the Xbox "outsold PlayStation2 in the US during Christmas 2004," believing the Xbox to have "incredible momentum right now" and is "well positioned heading into the next generation of consoles." He makes a good point: with the future looking to be online, Microsoft has a definite advantage by being the current leader in this arena. Also, with the current "momentum" of which he speaks, Microsoft is in a great position to make the most of the Xbox 360's position as first into the market.

07 "We expect to win"

YOSHIHIRO MARUYAMA, MICROSOFT

This is the bold claim of ex-Squaresoft senior vice president and current Microsoft Japan boss Yoshihiro Maruyama when talking about how the Xbox 360 will do in Japan. He expects to win. Despite the fact that Xbox is currently being outsold by pretty much every other system on the shelf.

So how does he think it's going to happen? "This time, as well as launching first, we have focused on designing the machine and the games for the Japanese market," he points out. And he's not wrong. The smaller, sexier design of the Xbox 360, compared with the beast that was the original Xbox, should ensure space-conscious Japanese gamers accept it into their little homes.

08 "Revolution will have no real problem [competing]"

GEORGE HARRISON, NINTENDO

Really, Mr Harrison? Are you sure? He could be right, of course – no one yet knows what to make of Revolution, but the way the company seems to always want to veer away from the topic of power and talk about the "revolutionary" controller it still has under wraps, does suggest raw power won't be Revolution's strong point.

09 "It's indicative of a very deep soul inside the machine"

J ALLARD, MICROSOFT



"Oh dear" were the words we muttered as Allard delivered this prized and now infamous quote. With our heads in our hands and our teeth gritting through the veil of our sour grimace, we didn't know whether to laugh or cry. A soul? Really? Because of a simple inhaled design gesture? No. Just… no. Let's never speak of this again. J – promise you'll stop this kind of thing. You're not doing anyone any favours.

10 "We are going to deliver the Zen of gaming"

PETER MOORE, MICROSOFT

Again, sat in the crowded venue of Microsoft's pre-E3 Xbox 360 conference, we were forced to tut and grimace as Peter Moore came out with a relentless barrage of nonsensical wonder-lines.

"Next-generation games will combine unprecedented audio and visual experiences to create worlds that are beyond real, and they'll deliver storylines and gameplay so compelling that it will feel like living a lucid dream," he told a gobsmacked crowd. "The result is a state where you achieve the perfect mind-body equilibrium as you forget your physical surroundings," he exclaimed, "and you become completely immersed in the game itself… This controller becomes an extension of your body, it becomes the gateway to the Zen of gaming." He actually said all this.



BACK CHAT

Have your say on this month's Ten Of The Best

Now, being our first issue and all, there wasn't the chance to get your thoughts on this month's list of the worst things said by corporate heads at the launch of their hardware. So, to kick-off, the X360 team are here to offer their views, starting at the top with Ian…

"Well, there are no excuses for coming out and saying we'll all be sucked into the Zen of gaming come November. Sure, Xbox 360 is going to be a serious leap forward, but to proclaim it will alter our state of consciousness is a big promise. "

Until we poached him, Ryan had recently been a key staffer on our sister GameCube magazine *Cube*, so as you might expect he had some words to say about Iwata. "Game consoles are an integral part of life, huh? What, like eating and being polite to waiters? Come on, I'm as hardcore as the next guy, but occasionally I like a break from 24 hour *Street Fighter II* tournies."

Keith, too, has a shady past. Despite putting in the hours on our other sister mag *XBM*, he also wrote for a PS2 mag. Here are his thoughts: "It was a little disappointing that Ken and the boys had to come out so bullish. They are, after all, the current Empire in videogaming and hold all the cards. So what if they're second to enter the next-gen market?"

Finally, Jay has his say. "Things are getting a bit too school playground for my liking. I expected a little more from everyone involved. There, I've had my say: all involved should bow their heads, show a little humility and perhaps count to 10 before saying anything else."

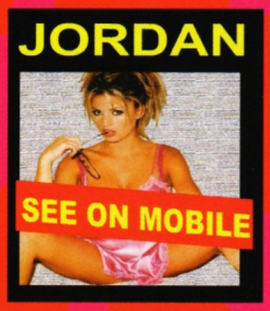
Next Month Have your say on this month's Ten Of The Best and we'll print them in the next issue. Don't hold back.

Send your rants to:
backchat@x360magazine.com

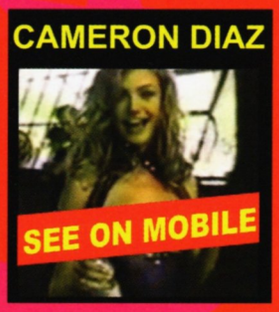
50 FREE Celebrity Strippers Videos

when you join our unlimited downloads mobile picture offer we will give you a free link to our mobile babe videos

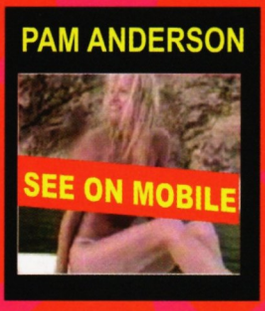


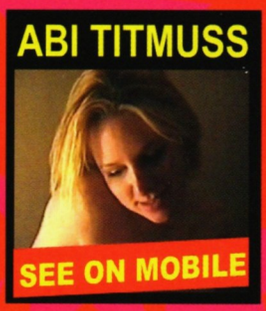












SEE THEIR DIRTY SECRE
HOME MADE VIDEOS
ALSO ACCESS TO 1000s of OTHER PICTURES + VID

TEXT: LADY TO: 8985
or if that number is blocked on your phone tr
TEXT: LADY TO: 8099

You must be over 18 to use the 89850 adult service and 16 to use the 80990 glamour service. adult images are only available on the 89850 service. Compatible with colour wap enabled phones nokia, ericsson, motorola, samsung, alcatel, nec, sagem, siem panasonic, trium, LG, samsung, semans philips, *free items are only available when you join as a member. 6 txt are sent at £1.50, msg sent every six days. When you join as a member you get full unlimited access to all of our content on your mobile, free items remain free and will be accessible after you unsubscribe. To end services text stop to 80990 or stop to 89850. You will incur wap gprs charges when connecting to our wapsite on phone, you must have permission from the bill payer. bcm mobiles London wc1

WIND UP CALLS!

THE ORIGINAL & BEST LISTEN-IN WIND UPS!

CHOOSE FROM -
1. TV Escort
2. Stammering Caller
3. Telephone Date Reply
4. Recruited For Army
5. Madam's Unpaid Bill
6. Date With Male Star
7. You've Scratched My Car
8. Irritating Lost Friend
9. Daughter's Pregnant
10. Escaped Vulture
11. Irate Delivery Driver



The computer will dial your victim and then you can listen in on the line as they get wound up!

Listen to samples on the internet at windupcalls.com



09067 555 153

NEW - WIND UP TEXTS!

Choose from:
"fancy" - text from a secret admirer
"celebrity date" - won a date with a celeb
"last night" - met last night had a gr8 time
"pizza" - ordered a pizza
"porky" - ordered a pot belly pig
"taxi" - ordered a taxi

Wind up your mates with a wind up text! We'll send you a copy of the text wind up + replies!

Send "wind up", then mobile no., then wind up to 87101
e.g. send "wind up 07712345678 taxi" to 87101

WINDUPCALLS.COM, Box 220, M27 0WR. Calls cost 75p / min. Texts cost £1.50



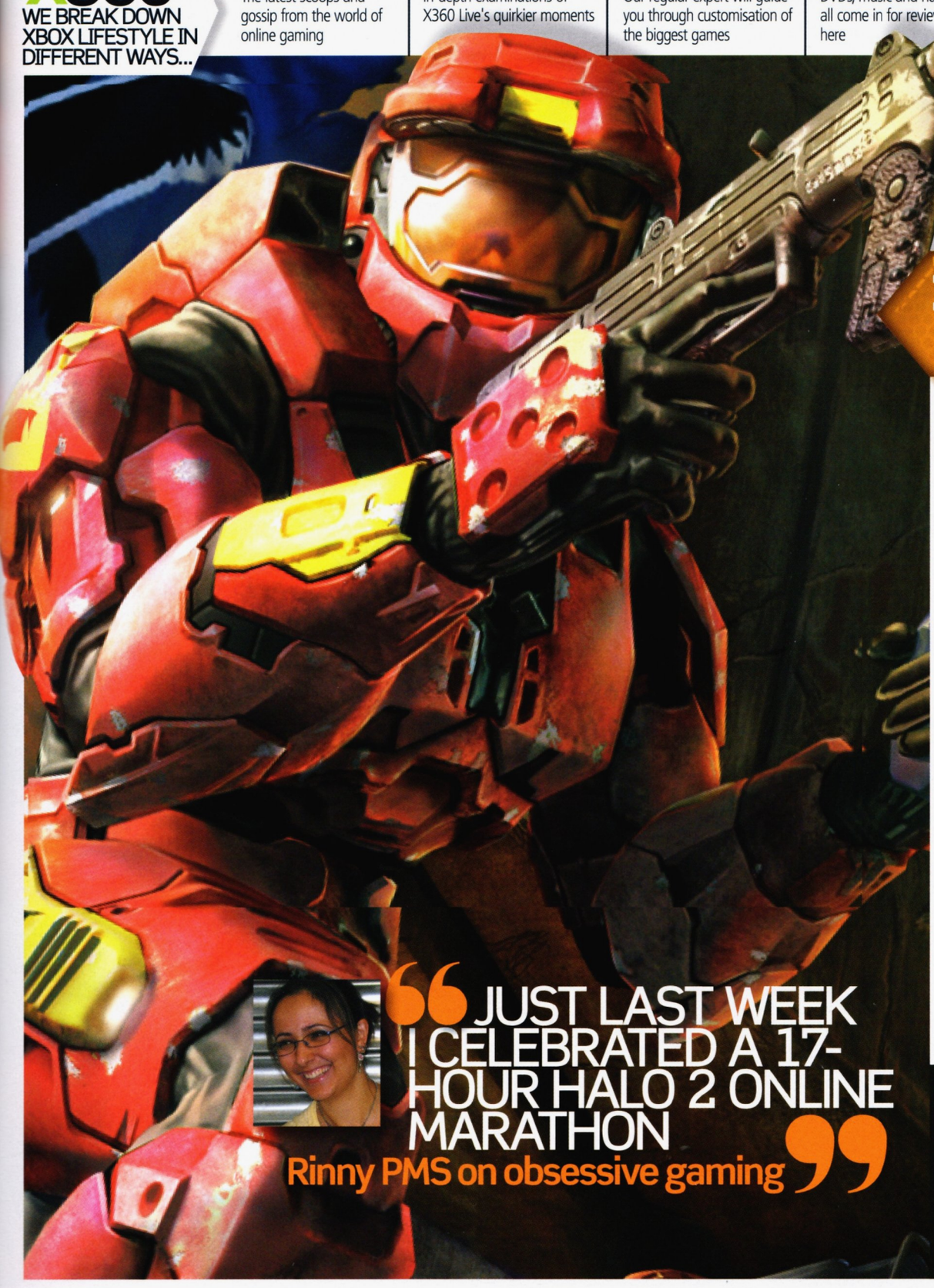


+++ RIDGE RACER 6 REVEALED +++ PERFECT DARK ONLINE DETAILS +++ XBOX 360 LIVE EXPLAINED +++

COMMUNITY

X360
WE BREAK DOWN XBOX LIFESTYLE IN DIFFERENT WAYS...

NEWS	FEATURE	CUSTOMISE	LIFESTYLE	THE MARKET
The latest scoops and gossip from the world of online gaming	In-depth examinations of X360 Live's quirkier moments	Our regular expert will guide you through customisation of the biggest games	DVDs, music and hardware all come in for review here	All the latest downloads, game releases and tournaments



"JUST LAST WEEK I CELEBRATED A 17-HOUR HALO 2 ONLINE MARATHON"
Rinny PMS on obsessive gaming

X360 COMMUNITY CONTENTS

108 NEWS
Ridge Racer 6, Xbox 360 Live prices and *Perfect Dark Zero* make the headlines

110 RESIDENT EXPERT
PMS' Rinny will guide you through the quirks of Live gaming every month

111 CLANS
An established clan explains the appeal of playing together

114 FEATURE: LIVE TIME
John Tynes takes a closer look at how Xbox 360 Live will change your life, including videochat, Gold and Silver deals and the Marketplace explained in full

120 THE MARKET
The best Live downloads, uploads, games modes and whatever else takes our fancy

122 LIFESTYLE
The month's latest DVD, music, book and hardware releases reviewed, including *Sin City*, *Transformers Reconstructed* and *Malevolence*. Plus, Ridley Scott pops in for a chat about the pressure of making *Kingdom Of Heaven*, his latest epic to be released on DVD later this month.

LIVE
RECOMMENDED DOWNLOAD
HALO 2 MAPS
Halo 2 is finally offering Terminal, Backwash, Relic, Elongation and Gemini as a free download. So far, Relic is the most popular.



COMMUNITY EDITORIAL

No more droppers, no more corpse humpers, no more potty-mouthed French *Halo 2* players screaming at you for dropping the flag. Microsoft has implemented a reputation system into Xbox 360's Live service, so you should never run into game-ruining pond-life ever again. It might even see a rise of Xbox Live vigilantes, hunting down cheaters and making them cry with *Dead Or Alive 4*'s Kokoro. It's safe to say we love them already.

Just to make sure there's no aggro when Xbox 360 hits the shelves, we'll be setting up regular angst-free matches with all of you anyway. Sim racers, 2D fighters, first-person shooters, whatever takes your fancy, let us know and we'll do it. An entire tournament of *Kokoro* players to decide the best *Kokoro* player of them all? We've already got it all worked out. That's still a few months away. In the meantime, whatever you do, don't drop that damn flag…



Ryan,
Community Editor
EMAIL ME!: live@x360magazine.com



RIDGE RACER 6 SHIFTS GEAR

Namco's racer screeches into the online arena

MAIN STORY
RIDGE RACER 6
Update

Ridiculous-looking ninety-degree powerslides, shiny cars that could blind if the sun caught the bonnet at the right angle, and impossibly cute pit-stop models serving no purpose whatsoever. *Ridge Racer* undoubtedly rocks. Now, for the first time in its 10-year history, *Ridge Racer 6* will bring its brand of tyre shredding online. This is obviously great news for petrol-heads who stuck with the *Ridge Racer* series after its ill-advised left turn in *R: Racing Evolution*; their faith now paying off handsomely. *Ridge Racer 6* is certain to rock even harder than its predecessors did.

In fact, Worldwide Online Multiplayer Battles is considered so important for this sixth addition to the long-running series that Namco has even capitalised it, in the same way that you can also make something sound more exciting simply by adding an exclamation mark! What these Worldwide Online Multiplayer Battles (check the acronym to see why we're not using it) allow you to do is face-off against anyone anywhere in the world. This means you can stick to UK players to avoid potential cross-Atlantic lag. Along with that is a Leader Board option that allows you to upload your scores from Time Attack mode, sag your shoulders in depression at the fastest times set, then make yourself feel better by ranting on internet forums about how everyone else must be cheating. You can also download Ghost Cars of the best times, so even when you're not hooked up to Xbox Live, you can still find ways of depressing yourself.

There's been no word on what the downloadable content will be, but given *Ridge Racer 5*, *Ridge Racer DS* and *Ridge Racer PSP* let you unlock a Pacman car, we're guessing you'll probably be able to download a Pacman car. Those who fear Xbox Live don't necessarily have to take a pit stop. Instead, they can take reassurance from the fact that System Link options will still be included as compensation and traditional split-screen options will play their part.

Expect more news on the online options available as soon as we think of some suitably embarrassing racing puns… ■

VIBEOLOGY

Lag tactics
Tactics that would normally be ineffective, but tend to work when the frame-rate goes all *Steamboat Willie* and no one knows what's going on.

Frag
Scoring a kill, typically in FPS games. Term originates from Vietnam War, where soldiers would 'accidentally' kill incompetent officers with a grenade.

Scrub hunter
A player who deliberately looks for low-ranked players to almost guarantee a win, and so bump up his own statistics in the process.

THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE

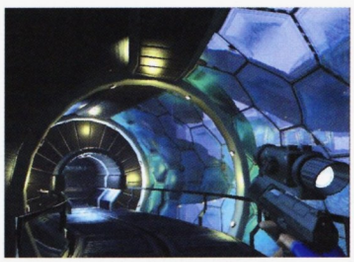
Identity Crisis?

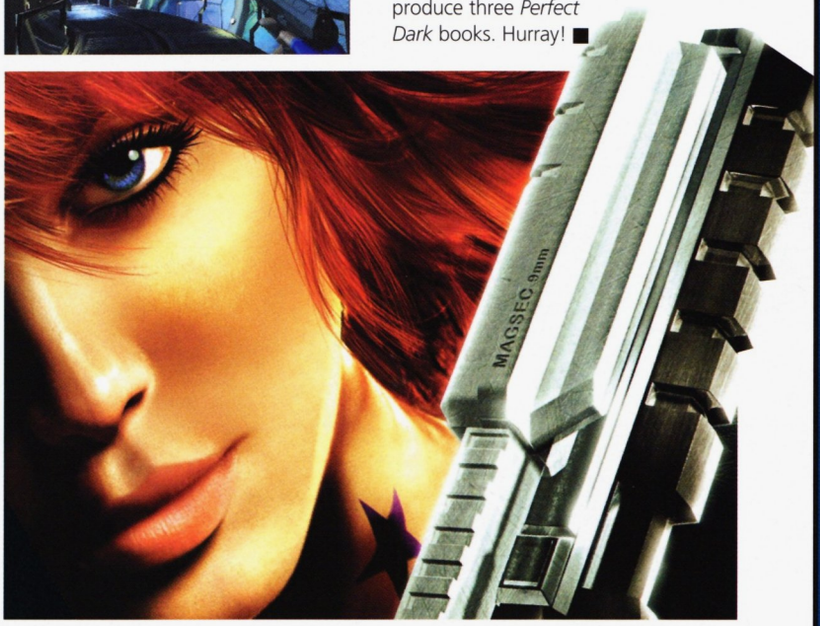
Online rankings determine Perfect Dark Zero appearance

THERE WAS A bit of a fuss made in the *Perfect Dark Zero* camp recently after it discovered that your character's skin will be predetermined by online rankings. Every player on each team will have a different 'skin' so there can be no two Joanna Darks on one team.

However, it's the news that your appearance will be determined by your online ranking that's set the cat amongst the pigeons, as only the highest ranking player will get to play as Joanna Dark and lower ranking players are likely to fill the shoes of the generic character models. On one hand, having appearance determined by rank allows players to instantly spot the better players and allow for more tactical elements. Conversely, players don't like having choice taken away from them. "This is gonna be a pain," moaned one fan on the *Perfect Dark* forums. "Even if we play for extra hours and play hard, there will always be someone better than us more often than not. This ranking system thing is messed up. I think our character should be a choice."

Still, it's not all bad news for gamers lamenting the chance to ogle their virtual breasts, as it's also been announced that Tor Books has signed a licensing deal with Microsoft to produce three *Perfect Dark* books. Hurray! ■





ONLINE HEROICS ONLY ON X360

MARVELLOUS NEWS

Marvel and Microsoft join forces for MMOG

FANS OF MEN in tights will be glad to learn of a licensing agreement between Marvel and Microsoft that will see Xbox 360 become the exclusive home of online Marvel gaming.

The deal allows Microsoft Game Studios to develop Massively Multiplayer Online Games just for X360, a position underscored by worldwide president of the Consumer Media Group at Marvel Enterprises, Tim Rothwell. He recently stated that the agreement with Microsoft was the 'one and only' for Marvel in MMO gaming.

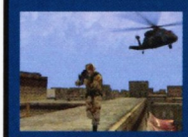
Details are still thin on the ground, except for confirmation by Microsoft's Peter Moore that the game will hit the shelves in 2008 and will use every Marvel character that can be crammed into the game. ■

GUILTY GAMING

The games you know you shouldn't like, but you do

DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN

Draw-in distance is a dirty phrase in ***Black Hawk Down***, which means this is an ideal game for bedroom snipers, as you can see for miles around. Watching yanks panic as an errant round kicks up sand by their feet is genius, matched only by their anger as the next round cracks their skull!



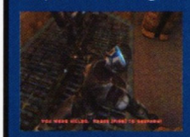
STREET FIGHTER: ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Yes, everyone raves about *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike*, but everyone forgets about its B-side, packed with the original *Street Fighter II* games. And you know what? Sometimes, it's fun to play a game once renowned for being balanced, then cry as Balrog's headbutt throw takes off half your head.



STAR WARS REPUBLIC COMMANDO

Republic Commando is the Essex chip-shop girl of videogames – rough, choppy, not nearly as popular as it thinks, but fun. Probably because the grenades in *RC* are stupidly overpowered, and aimlessly throwing them can lead to random kills. Doesn't have a sexy chip smell, though.



THE COST OF LIVE

Microsoft's pricing strategy in detail

MICROSOFT IS SET to offer four packages to gamers wishing to sign-up for the Xbox Live service. At the lowest end, surely designed as a taster package, is the £4.99 one month's subscription. Conversely at the other extreme is the do-all 12 month £39.99 offer.

The idea here to get as many people on Xbox Live as possible by picking how and when you want to play, which is why you won't need a credit card to enjoy the spoils of online gaming. Rather than pay for the Gold service online you will be able to buy credits from a retailer, for cash. Once paid up, the service will be free and running until your account runs out, and a parental control means no one can sneak on your account without permission.

Further to this, Microsoft has revealed a variety of packages designed to offer extra value. The £39.99 deal will, in America at least, offer a full year's subscription, plus headset, free Live Arcade game, 200 free Live Market Place points, plus the equivalent to £10 off an Xbox 360 game (other packages are listed below).

The structure of the deals means we can now have full control over how we play, whether its with pre-paid sessions or monthly top-ups.

THE DEALS IN FULL

12 Month Value Pack — £39.99

- 12 month subscription
- Headset
- Live Arcade game *Billiards*
- £10 game discount
- 200 free Live Market Place points

12 Month Gold Card — £29.99

- 12 month subscription
- One month free subscription

Three Month Value Pack — £19.99

- Three month subscription
- Headset
- Live Arcade game *Joust*
- £7 discount on a game
- 100 free Market Place points

One Month Gold Card — £4.99

- One month's subscription

LIVE LIFER RINNY

A glimpse into the secret life of the PMS clan's first lady of Live gaming...



In today's world of online gaming it is relatively safe to say that I, as a female, am considered an almost mythical character.

There is indeed no doubt that 'girl gamers' are in the minority, and what our clan, PMS (Pandora's Mighty Soldiers) aims to do is provide a new standard for girl gamers. And we do. Night or day, you will always find one of our number within the realms of the Live service, baring heart and soul in the form of a precision-driven Subaru Impreza Sti, a well-timed Renko-Tenshu, or simply a downright lethal Spartan/Battle rifle combo. So, with the online clan forum boards buzzing with talk of the Xbox 360 release, the enhanced Live Gold service has been playing on my mind: Streamed music videos? Picture tags? Online auctions? The option to fly-on-the-wall your fave players, live? Yes, please!

So in my quest for more Xbox 360 info, I recently encountered an article snappily entitled: "China takes unique steps to combat web addiction." This wonderfully chirpy read informed me that, in response to seeing its 14-24 year olds dropping out of education, and even society, to feed their online gaming addictions, the Chinese government set up a Betty Ford-style clinic to aid their separation from the drug that is massively multiplayer online gaming.

While remaining vaguely amused by the concept of a check-in clinic for the socially desperate, I couldn't help but notice scary similarities between their lives and my own: their reluctance to eat meals away from their games, their 24-hour online stints, and a restrictive inability to concentrate on regular tasks because their minds kept wandering back to their games. All of these symptoms are ones I have had at some (recent) point in my life. Only this evening I ate my dinner while chatting away on *Halo 2*, and just last week I celebrated a 17-hour *Halo 2* online marathon...

I can only hope that Microsoft has secured *EverQuest*-style online sponsors, involving pop-up access to food delivery services and reminders to go to bed from 'EZ-Sleep'. Without them, goodness knows what could happen to me once *Final Fantasy XI* arrives.

Rin, PMS Clan

A quick guide to gaming customisation

DESIGN FOR LIVE

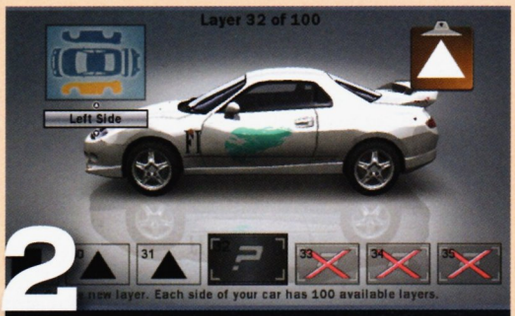
OKAY, SO YOU'VE just bought *Forza*, you've played a few races and now you're ready to go online, but there's a small problem – you need your own identity, which means you need to create your own custom design. While this may initially seem daunting, and far too complicated to do properly, it's really not. Rinny PMS shows you how...

NO.1 CREATING A DECALS IN FORZA



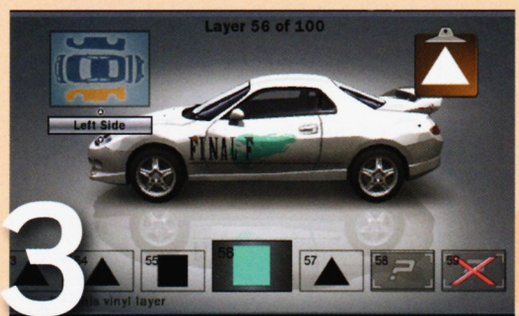
1

First things first. Find a design to copy. It's no good attempting some artistic masterpiece without inspiration. Replicate posters or cover art, as these will have already had designers plan the image for best spatial impact. Also, add things like body kits before starting your design. Adding them later often reveals imperfections.



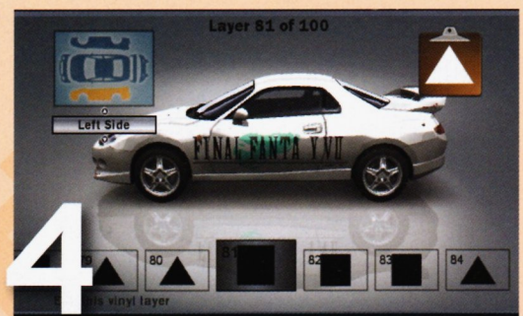
2

Forza's car editor uses shapes and layers to achieve patterns. Most things can actually be created from a basic three shapes – circles, squares and triangles. Use the re-size tools to manipulate shapes and suitably replicate the 2D image you're copying. Remember, squares squash down into straight lines if you reduce one axis' value enough.



3

Don't be tempted to make a tiny piece for every part of the shape you want to create. Plan ahead and you will find that often the best way to create a lot of the shapes isn't necessarily to continuously lay shape over shape, but to add one big shape and then cut into it by adding on shapes in the same colour as the background.



4

Using this technique, letters and words can be created. Simply lay down a basic shape, such as a circle, and then blank out parts of it using the straight edges of squashed squares and the curves of circles and ellipses that are the same colour as the background. It's time consuming, but the possibilities with shapes are infinite.



5

When making a design, keep things big and bold. My *Final Fantasy VII* car is very simple and iconic but works well on the racecourse. Small details are all well and good, but can easily get lost in the heated frenzy of a twisting track. People will respond best to something they easily see as it flashes by them on a tight corner.



6

And there we have it. With a little time, patience and experimentation, anything is possible – and you'd be surprised at what can be achieved with a bit of effort. However, always remember each side has a 100-layer limit. This may sound like a lot, but it soon vanishes as you start to add small details, such as fades on colours, etc.

Keep it in the Clan

With online gaming significantly on the rise, we've decided to dedicate a portion of **X360** to one of the driving forces behind this trend – clans. And where better than with...

GET YOUR CLAN IN THE MAG... EMAIL US AT: live@x360magazine.com



Rinny (left) and Violexxx (right) enthusiastically grope the large statue. They did this for about 15 minutes. And yes, this was taken in a toilet...



Rinny takes on all-comers on EA's *Burnout Revenge* at the recent GameStation tour in Southampton. Eat my dust, suckers!

PMS CLAN

X360: How did PMS start?
Mistletoe: PMS started as an antidote to the sort of environment you typically get in competitive online games like *Counter-Strike* and *Wolfenstein*. It's a place for girl gamers to come together and play without harassment, and the frustration that you can get when you're playing with people more concerned with what you look like than your strategy and skill.

X360: Do you hold 'events'?
Mistletoe: We've been hosting Girls Night In for Xbox, which is a monthly event on Xbox Live where challengers can come and play with us. We also recently took part in a girls versus boys tournament, and we've made appearances at gaming parties as well.
Rinny: If you see the PMS logo on the Xbox.com Live Calendar, or on your Dashboard, that means we're ready to challenge you. Also keep an eye out on our community site (**www.pmsclan.com/uk**), as we shall post about every event we'll be seen at.

X360: How did the GameStation tour come about?
Rinny: The GameStation tour was a great opportunity for us. I work at GameStation full-time and happened to find out that they are very interested in supporting local teams. When I asked them about supporting a girl-gaming team they were so enthusiastic. We got the support to plan a ten-date tour in GameStation stores across the UK, where we held *Burnout 3* tournaments.

X360: Are you just recruiting or are you making cash too?
Mistletoe: No cash! We're trying to raise the profile of PMS, and of gamers in the UK generally, and we're giving away free t-shirts to new recruits.
Violexxx: Only in my dreams... only in my dreams.
Rinny: NEVER! We don't sell our t-shirts here in the UK. We do have a Cafépress store that allows people to buy PMS merchandise, even PMS thongs! But that's for the US girls really, and it doesn't generate any real cash.

X360: How are you treated by male gamers?
Mistletoe: It ranges from sheer profanity and obscene comments as soon as I open my mouth, to stalker-type behaviour. For some reason guys seem to become more macho around girls. In my experience, the trash talking and post-game boasting seems a lot worse when I play guys who don't know me.
Violexxx: I've had a range of reactions: guys who wish their girlfriends were as 'cool' as me and would play *Halo* 'till the early hours, and others who are overly interested in how I style my nether regions. The funniest is when you're being slagged off in-game, then we get to the post-game lobby and they realise I'm a girl and send me a friend request!
LittleMissHalo: Harassment comes thick and fast, although not all male gamers are like that! Some are very respectful of the clan. For instance, the H2o clan are big supporters of PMS, and help out a great deal.

X360: What's the oddest thing a man has 'requested' from you online?
Mistletoe: Marriage.
Violexxx: I've had requests for oral sex. I think it's probably my own fault for having XXX in my name!
LittleMissHalo: I have been offered MSN addresses so we can talk "out of hours". Needless to say, I've never accepted them!

X360: So, do you like chatting to random males on Live?
Rinny: Of course! How else do you meet people?
Mistletoe: It's definitely fun to meet new people, but I have to be a bit careful.
Violexxx: I love it, but that goes for chatting to people in general. It just so happens that 95 per cent of the people I play are male.
LittleMissHalo: I love the online community; I have some great friends online and frequently sign-in just to chat!

X360: Will you get Xbox 360s?
Mistletoe: Not immediately. There's no way I can afford it on launch!
Violexxx: Definitely. I'm already pimping my arse to get one.
LittleMissHalo: I will be putting it on my Christmas list... I hope Father Christmas is reading this, as it will save me a stamp!
Rinny: Of course! I have no idea how I'll pay for it, mind.

X360: Which games are you most looking forward to?
Mistletoe: *Quake 4*, *Perfect Dark Zero*, *Halo 3*!
Violexxx: *Gears Of War*, *Prey*.
LittleMissHalo: I am really looking forward to *Prey*.
Rinny: *Project Gotham Racing 3*, and my most anticipated life-eater – *Final Fantasy XI*.

X360: Any of you plan on getting the video camera?
Mistletoe: I'd probably use it to talk to the clan, mainly. I'm way too scared of what would happen if guys realise, "that's a girl with a webcam". It's bad enough as it is.
LittleMissHalo: We will have to be selective about who we chat to.
Violexxx: I'll definitely use it.
Rinny: Of course I'll get the camera. I'll chat to ANYONE! I love social interaction and I can't wait to get to know more girls on Live!

X360: Will you wear special costumes?
LittleMissHalo: Spandex, leather... Who knows?
Violexxx: Maybe... Any suggestions?

X360: Yes, plenty... Ahem. Anyway, what plans are there on the horizon for PMS?
Mistletoe: We hope to get to some more gaming events, as well as launch our Xbox 360 division in the next couple of months. We've got more of the Girls Night In evenings coming, too!

X360: Anything you'd like to say to any potential PMSers?

LittleMissHalo: PMS rocks!

VISIT: WWW.PMSCLAN.COM/UK



And when the gaming's done, it's off to the pub. Violexxx and Rinny settle down to enjoy a pleasingly Xbox-themed drink. Yummy!

Top 10 U.K Games





Chaos

Asphalt Urban GT



Urban

You are taken out on 8 tracks inspired by genuine places. Each track is part of a specific graphic universe and includes different tunnels and elevations that enable you to perform impressive jumps,among other things ...

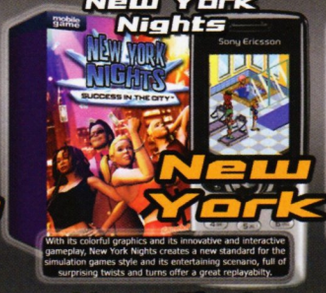
Prince of Persia Warrior Within



Prince

You enter a totally original universe, with 10 levels, on board a pirate ship and within ancient palaces that are swarming with evil forces. You'll have to confront pitiless enemies who each have different combat skills (life points, parade, aggressiveness).

New York Nights



New York

With its colorful graphics and its innovative and interactive gameplay, New York Nights creates a new standard for the simulation games style and its entertaining scenario, full of surprising twists and turns offer a great replayabilty.

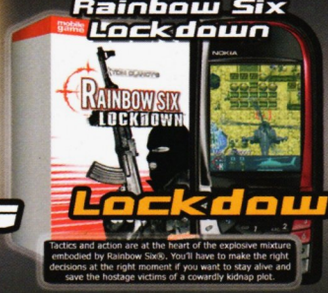
Midnight Pool



Pool

Whether you're a beginner or an experienced pool player, the intuitive gameplay and realistic graphics will make for rapid and total immersion, allowing you to enjoy the game right from the break! Don't miss out.

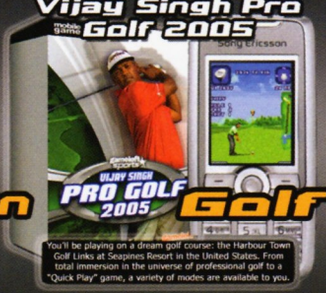
Rainbow Six Lockdown



Lockdown

Tactics and action are at the heart of the explosive mixture embodied by Rainbow Six®. You'll have to make the right decisions at the right moment if you want to stay alive and save the hostage victims of a cowardly kidnap plot.

Vijay Singh Pro Golf 2005



Golf

You'll be playing on a dream golf course: the Harbour Town Golf Links at Seapines Resort in the United States. From total immersion in the universe of professional golf to a "Quick Play" game, a variety of modes are available to you.

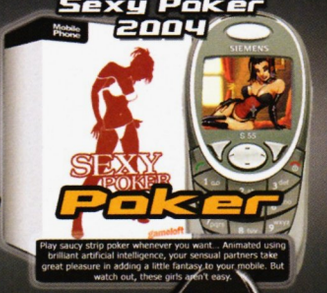
Vans Skate & Slam



Skate

You're Geoff Rowley, the coolest, classiest skateboarder of his generation. Your objective is to become a real pro and join the highly respected Vans team. To do this, you'll have to accept all challenges - by day and by night.

Sexy Poker 2004



Poker

Play saucy strip poker whenever you want... Animated using brilliant artificial intelligence, your sensual partners take great pleasure in adding a little fantasy to your mobile. But watch out, these girls aren't easy.

ONLY £1.50

XPUZZLE

Text Play 232



Siberian Strike 2



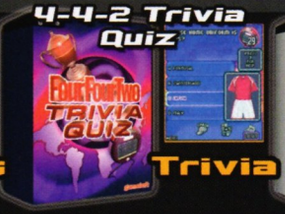
Strike2

Chessmaster



Chess

4-4-2 Trivia Quiz



Trivia

2005 Real Football



Soccer

To subscribe text your game choice to 60111 eg. text **urban to 60111**

powered by gameloft

To check if your phone is compatible, we send you a preview video for NO CHARGE

To subscribe to the video club text **xvid to 89095**

If you have problems with a content locked phone text xvid to 81313



To subscribe to the babes gallery text

sexy to 81313

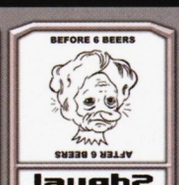
Nokia Samsung Panasonic Siemens Sony Ericsson LG Motorola Sharp

Animations

£1.50 Each



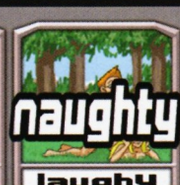
laugh1



laugh2



laugh3



laugh4



laugh5



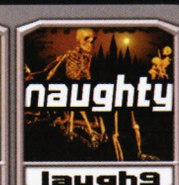
laugh6



laugh7



laugh8



laugh9

To subscribe to the animations club just text the keyword under the picture to 81313 eg. text **laugh6 to 81313**

Need help? Call our customer support line on 0870 8554194 Mon - Fri 10-5

You must be 18 years old or over to use these services. By selecting any item you are agreeing to download and view that item. You will be billed the amount shown via reverse SMS. All phones must be colour and WAP enabled. Standard GPRS or GMS data transfer costs apply. No liability is accepted for any delay omissions or damage or loss of data incurred by any party. Wallpapers cost £1.50. Action & Sexy services *1 wallpaper or video is sent at no charge to customers to check compatibility. Subsequent images or videos cost £1.50 each. You receive 3 videos or wallpapers p/week. Text xvid stop or sexy stop or stop to opt out. The pole dancing service is a subscription service costing £4.50 p/week. You get 2 dances p/week. To opt out text pole stop or stop. The anime girls service is a subscription service. Each animation costs £1.50. You get 3 animations p/week. To opt out text anime stop or stop.

mobilesexshop

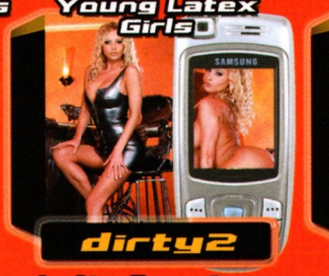
The only Specialist Adult Mobile Content Company.

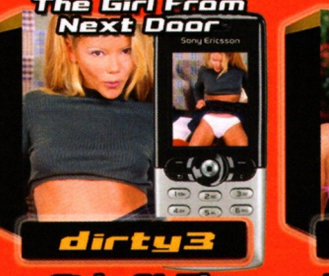
Top UK Mobile Videos

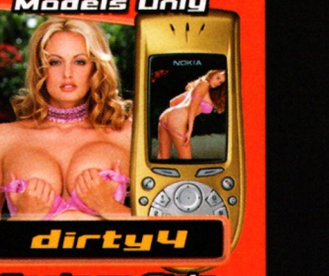


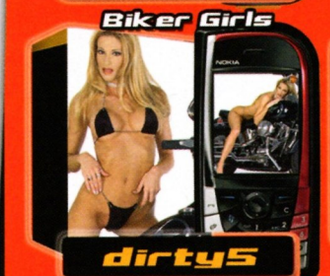
VIDEOS COST £1.50 Each

















To subscribe text your video choice to 89095 eg. text dirty7 to 89095

If you experience problems with content lock on your phone, please text to 81313

Manga Girls



Join the SEXY Manga Girls club now! To subscribe text ANIME to 83535

£1.50 Each

To order a manga girl animation just text anime to 83535

Lapdancing



Join the Lap Dancing Club & let our sexy girls entertain you

To Subscribe text POLE to 83535

For a limited time only £1.50 each

Wallpapers £1.50 EACH



wall 7211

To order a wallpaper just text the keyword under the picture to 81313
eg. to order wall 7201 text: wall 7201 to 81313

Weather Girls



Available in high quality videos

Join the HOT Weather Girls Club

To Subscribe text SUNNY to 83535

WEATHER LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT

£1.50 Each

The weather girls service is a subscription service costing £1.50 each. You get 3 weather reports/week. Text sunny stop or stop to opt out. The Top UK Mobile Videos is a subscription service. Each video costs £1.50. You receive 3 videos/week. To opt out text back the keyword you used to opt in with followed by out or just send stop.The Top 10 UK games is a subscription service. Each game costs £4.50. You receive 1 game/week. To opt out text back the keyword you used to join followed by stop or just send stop. The animations is a subscription service. Each animation costs £1.50. You receive 3 animations/week. To opt out text laugh stop or stop. © 2004 Gameloft. All Rights Reserved. Please see website for full details on copyrights and trademarks. For customer support please email customerservices@mobilesexshop.com or call our helpline on 0870 8554194.


fab!
smashing!
super!

Live TIME

Xbox Live on X360 is set to redefine online gaming. **John Tynes** discovers why we'll all want to indulge in a little matchmaking, while keeping our reputations intact...

nice!

Live Time

THE EARLY DAYS OF XBOX LIVE

were like the Wild West of *Deadwood*: a filthy ghetto of backstabbing, foul-mouthed, inbred cretins with delusions of competency. As I sat in the lobby for my first game of *MechAssault*, I listened to two different players light up spliffs and compare notes on snack foods. ("Man, I can't reach the Doritos.") The roll-out of Xbox Live appeared to coincide with the arrival of broadband internet in hemp-friendly trailer parks worldwide.



What happened next, however, proved to be the salvation of Xbox Live: we left the lobby and discovered that *MechAssault* online was addictive joy. The intensely satisfying whomp when another player's mech detonated spectacularly was followed by the delicious power-ups left behind, like the gold dust trickling downstream from a dead prospector. Once the Stone Cold map was released for download, I discovered a Team Destruction nirvana I'd never known.

Jump-cut three years, and a couple of million players have signed up for the online gaming experience. Now, with the imminent launch of Xbox 360, the Wild West days are over and good players are everywhere. Civilization has arrived and the law has ridden up just in the nick of time.

THE SECRET FORMULA

Xbox Live on the X360 has a lot of features, so many that it's hard to figure it all out. But there's a secret formula that makes sense of everything, and here it is: Xbox 360 Live = *Halo 2* + Windows Media Center.

Halo 2 transformed Live by introducing real, ability-based matchmaking. Bungie also gave us great party play, a feature innovated by *MechAssault* late in its reign. You could form a group of friends and ►

> "Live is always on and instantly accessible in every single game"

PGR 3'S GOTHAM TV IS SET TO REVOLUTIONISE THE WAY WE PLAY ONLINE GAMES



Silver and Gold

There's no prize for second place

You've heard there are two types of Xbox Live subscriptions, right? Both are always on, both allow voice chat and rankings, and both give access to the Marketplace. So what's the difference?

You can't play competitive online games or use video chat with Silver, which is free to everyone with an X360. The interesting word here is 'competitive', as Microsoft has struck a deal with Square to allow Silver users to play *Final Fantasy XI*, so it would seem a life-sapping world of MMORPGs is up for grabs. However, you are gonna need a hard drive to get the most from Live, which is an addition that will set you back a mere £69.99.

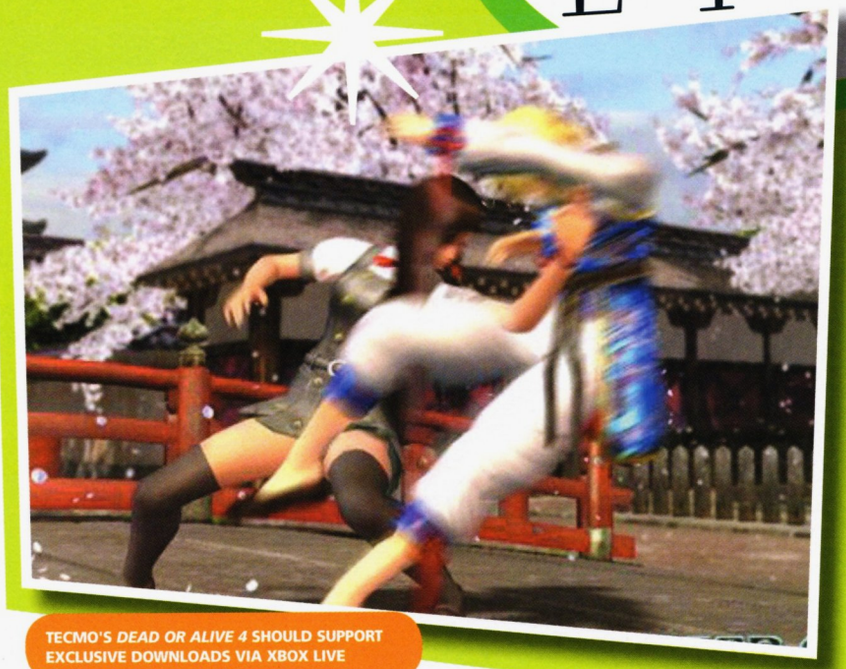
Chris Lewis, the European vice president of Home and Entertainment Division EMEA, sheds some light on the deal: "Basically, the Silver level membership that comes with Xbox 360 gives you access to the voice and text messaging [as well as] access to the all-important Xbox Live Marketplace, where you can start to trade with other people and work with other people to design skins or driving suits for racing games, etc." He continues to explain the premium deal: "And then there's Gold level. This gives you immediate access to the multiplayer online gameplay. You have voice and video chat, and you also have full access to online tournaments."

Basically, if you want to play on Live and you want to see your friend's face after you totally busted him in *PGR3*, you gotta lay down the ducats to get the Gold. It's that simple.

players you just met, then stick together through game after game. Clan support was even there for organised play. But *Halo 2* was a closed system. All those great innovations meant nothing when you trotted out another Live game with old-school matchmaking. With Live on the X360, all those *Halo 2* features and a lot more are available to every game, all the time.

What about the media? Right out of the box, the X360 connects to your networked PCs and can access their content. You can play your music, check out your photographs, and watch your Windows Media Center movies. But this is Live, not just a dumb box: you can actually stream this stuff online to your friends. It's your own pirate radio station, with music and slideshows sent right over the internet to your buddies across the world.

Your PC isn't the only thing the X360 hooks up. When a friend comes over with their iPod or even a PSP, you can plug it into the X360 and jam their tunes right on the spot. The ultra-trippy interactive music visualizer will surely please all those hemp-friendly trailer-park gamers. And because Live is always on and instantly accessible in every single game, you can also chat with friends by voice or even by video. It works anytime your Xbox 360 is turned on, so you can play *Gears Of War* while chatting with your buddy who is watching a DVD.



TECMO'S *DEAD OR ALIVE 4* SHOULD SUPPORT EXCLUSIVE DOWNLOADS VIA XBOX LIVE

WHO ARE YOU?

But let's get back to the games. On the new Live, your gamertag isn't everything anymore. You have a Gamer Card, which includes your tag, your photo, and some great new stuff that takes *Halo 2*'s matchmaking and ratchets it way, way up.

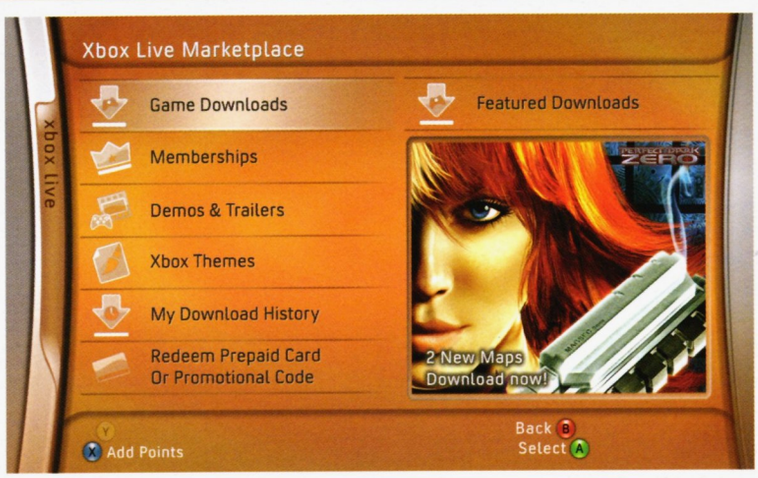
First off is your Reputation. Microsoft doesn't like to name names but we will: its R&D guys ripped this feature off from eBay, and thank God they did. Everyone you play with can give you a quick thumbs-up/thumbs-down rating, and the average score is your Reputation. If you didn't like somebody, the matchmaking will try to avoid pairing you up again – and if you did think a player was cool, there's a good chance you'll play together later on.



Then there's the Gamerscore. The Gamerscore doesn't care if you're a jerk or not: it just cares how good you are. Every game you play, even offline games, adds to your Gamerscore, whether you're a *Perfect Dark Zero* elite sniper or you've put fifty hours into the new *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*. You can also examine all the numbers behind it, showing all the games you've played and all the special medals you've earned.

Finally, you pick a Gamerzone. This is a loose description of your style of play, and there are four options: R&R gamers are recreational players looking for some online rest & relaxation; Pro gamers are hardcore competitive video athletes; Family gamers are into casual games or have young children; and Underground gamers are presumably ub3r masterb8ter10.

What does Microsoft do with all that? Matchmaking, to the nth level. If I'm an R&R gamer with a positive reputation and a modest gamerscore, I should end up playing with other reasonable, friendly gamers. Meanwhile, the Pro gamers don't have to put up with us novices, the jerks will play with other jerks, and we'll all be happy.



Money for nothing?

Virtual goods bought for cold hard cash

The Xbox Live Marketplace is where you pay cash for virtual goods, such as new levels or cars for racing games. It works on a debit system, where you pay Microsoft money for a fat stack of "points," then spend those points to buy stuff. This means companies can sell you a new flame decal for your virtual Maserati at a cost of ten pence, because Microsoft adds all those little purchases together and cuts one fat cheque. Will it be cool? What definitely would be cool is if Microsoft lets gamers sell stuff to each other, like maxed-out characters or rare weapons in RPGs. It made some early noise about this idea, but has since thrown that kitten in the river. If Sony's Station Exchange auction house works out for its PC MMORPGs, however, look for more developers to turn virtual bits into hard cash.



THE DOWNSIDE

For all of this matchmaking to work, Microsoft needs tons of players smacking away on a lot of different games – and doing it all the time. But with so many games on the market, it's tough for a non-blockbuster title to maintain an online community – not every game is *Halo 3*, and six weeks after an also-ran shooter hits the market, you'll be lucky to find anyone playing it.

To mitigate this risk, the boys of Redmond have two aces up their sleeves. The first is persistence: Xbox Live is always on, every minute that your X360 is, and even if you're watching a movie, somebody on your friends' list can invite you to a game. The more people that use their Xboxes as entertainment centres, the bigger the pool of connected, available players.

Microsoft's second ace is growth. If its estimate of a new Live gamer every thirty seconds holds true, there are 2.2 million of us right now. But almost half of that number has joined since *Halo 2* shipped, and they sure didn't sign up to play *Fight Club*. If the early adopters of Xbox 360 are mostly existing Live gamers, that growth curve is going to flatline for a while.

What if there aren't enough players? Imagine a hardcore deathmatch game with R&R, Pro, and Family gamers all at once, and half the players are using racist profanity. Hmm. ►



Message Center

Deuces wild

The Message Center is where you manage your friends list, send audio and video messages, and chat. Microsoft says it'll support continuous video chat during Live Arcade casual games like checkers or Texas Hold 'Em, so you can yak, look, and play at the same time. Finally, an online poker game where you can watch your opponents sweat!





Back to Back

XBOX LIVE SILVER LEVEL

- Create an online Gamer Profile
- Access the Xbox Live Marketplace
- Engage in voice and text messaging
- Talk to a single friend at a time using voice chat
- Receive video messages from Gold level members
- An additional fee to a third-party will allow you to play an MMORPG, *Final Fantasy XI* anyone?

XBOX LIVE GOLD LEVEL

All the features of Silver level, and additionally:

- Play multiplayer games online
- Video chat
- Multiplayer online tournaments
- Participate in regular Microsoft sponsored Xbox Live online programming, such as Game With Fame, Play And Win, and other 'prime time' activities

If only there were some big online games coming for Xbox 360 that could keep those subscriber numbers rising. Like, say, *Perfect Dark Zero*, *Project Gotham Racing 3*, *Dead Or Alive 4*, *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter*, *Gears Of War*, and that little game from Bungie that the richest man in the world intends to use as a pimp stick upside Sony's crack-ho head.

Yeah, that might help.

THE BIG GUNS

Microsoft says – quietly – that Rare's *Perfect Dark Zero* is the *Halo* of this generation's launch window. It could be right. *PDZ*'s online matches have 50+ players, who can be grouped into teams and sub-grouped into squads. Players can place waypoints for their team-mates to co-ordinate tactics. Spawn points are teleport chambers that double as weapons caches, and you'll fight to claim the best ones for your team. Maps are huge and get even bigger, opening up more areas as more players parachute in. As for your online avatar, the higher your ranking in the game, the cooler your character looks.

Project Gotham Racing 3 is going to show the world why Xbox Live is the ultimate gaming network. This title supports everything. Create your own racecourses and upload them to Live; share screenshots taken in-game with your buddies to show off how cool you are; watch live races between top-ranked gamers via Gotham TV; buy new cars at the Marketplace; and some more crazy stuff they won't even talk about yet. Microsoft wants to turn *PGR3* into a true virtual sport, and Live is the only place this can happen.

> "More than its technology, the Xbox experience has been defined by Live"

Fighting-game fans know that *Dead Or Alive* is the Xbox's premier beat-'em-up franchise. When it went online with *Dead Or Alive Ultimate*, it introduced the idea of Arcade Lounges, where eight players would join a lobby and cycle through two-on-two matches, while players not in the current match could watch the action. With *Dead Or Alive 4* on the X360, those lounges are going to hold a couple of dozen people cycling through a wide variety of fight modes and literally watching the competition's every move. Could this be the beginning of *DOA* TV?



FINAL FANTASY XI WILL ALLOW GAMERS FROM PC, PS2 AND XBOX TO PLAY TOGETHER

Squad-based shooters have come on strong, and Live on the X360 has two amazing ones: *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter* and *Gears Of War*. The new *Ghost Recon* pushes command-and-control into new territory, with picture-in-picture views from your squadmates and extensive communications and tactics support. But Epic's 2006 title *Gears Of War* has something way cooler: a full-length co-operative campaign that other players can jump into at any time. Imagine you're in the middle of a big battle with one of *Gears*' trademark five-story monstrosities that has just smashed through a building. You're crouching behind cover, wounded, desperate, and then there he is: your new pal Draknord23, charging in fresh and full of hate for all monsters. *Splinter Cell* innovated true co-operative multiplayer, but *Gears Of War* is going to redefine it.

Then there's *Halo 3*. Check back on that one in 2006, because Microsoft isn't saying jack until it's got the PlayStation3 launch date dead in its sights.



MICROSOFT HAS AN UNRIVALLED SET OF DEVELOPERS LINED-UP TO SUPPORT LIVE

ALL LIVE ALL THE TIME

Even more than its great technology, the Xbox experience has been defined by Live. Without it, the Xbox 360 is in fact just a PlayStation2.5 with a smaller library.

Sony is a late arrival to the online gaming party and it still hasn't got it right. Nintendo doesn't even take it seriously. But half the planet is on the internet, because connecting with people across the globe to chat, play, and hang out is damn good fun. Xbox Live on the X360 is going to be like Y2K all over again: a global party that will rock the world one gamer at a time. ■

THE MARKET

FIVE LIVE GAMES

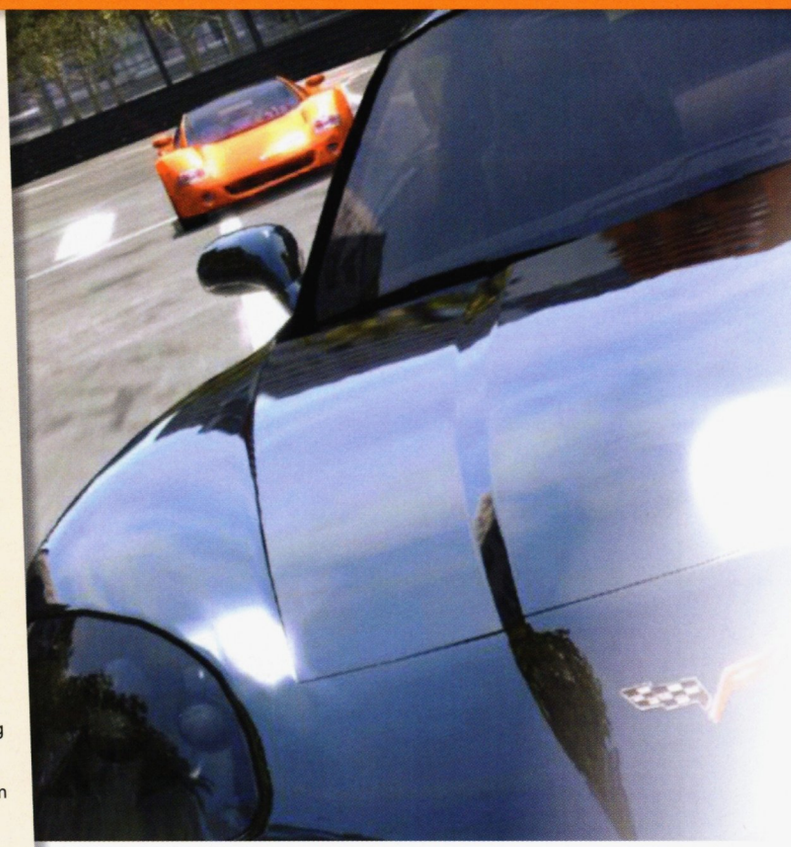
1 HALO 2
Halo 2 is the Chelsea of Xbox – hated by elitists, swamped with weird accents, takes top spot every time. Shame there's no room for an 'and Bungie is Abramovich!' analogy.

2 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4
Our only gripe with this is that you can't skip your opponent's goal replays. Cue the sound of gnashing teeth and a million S-pads pressing Start in misery, anger and frustration.

3 PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2
Forza Motorsport is too shiny. *Burnout 3* is a fireworks show, nice for swooning ladies but not for proper MAN racers. That leaves *Project Gotham Racer 2* to clean up in this genre.

4 SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY
It takes dedication and weeks of training before you can even look this mode in the eye without blubbing, but the cat-and-mouse play is a thrilling detour from the main adventure.

5 CONKER: LIVE AND RELOADED
It's messy, it's chaotic, it's fun. Ask someone to explain what's happening. They can't. It really confuses them. (Note: don't try this on Americans! For some reason, they actually know!)



X360 LOVES...

GOTHAM TV

AS DEVELOPERS work their medieval magic on Xbox Live, it's the aptly named Bizarre Creations that has come up with the most interesting feature yet – Gotham TV. This feature will allow *Project Gotham Racing 3* players to choose from six channels, such as The Friends Channel that lets you watch your friends race. Likewise, The Gotham Heroes Channel might sound like something that Batman looks forward to on weekday nights, but in fact it lets you watch the top-ranked players in action. Today's Highlights, Hall of Fame, Gotham Heroes Archive and Gotham TV round off the set. It just makes the wait for Microsoft's racer even more painful.

X360 ALSO LOVES: ***Perfect Dark Zero's*** **50 players online, Kokoro from** ***Dead Or Alive 4*****, X-Cam.**

NEED TO KNOW...

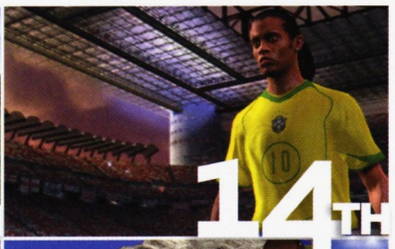
LIVE CHECKLIST: **BLACK HAWK DOWN**

- You get to play as a sniper? ✓
- You get to play as a medic? ✓
- Anyone actually play as a medic? ✗
- Those playing as a medic hilariously branded "gay" by team-mates? ✓
- Deluded American shouting "Cover me!"? ✓
- Deluded American runs into a hail of bullets before you can react, gets shot, then calls you a noob? ✓

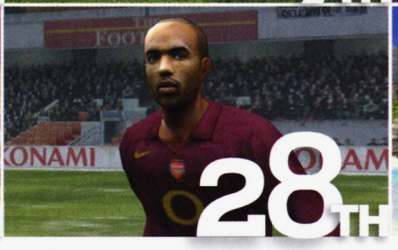
LIVE CALENDAR OCTOBER













5TH Community Gaming Night over at **GamerTag.com**. Get yourself registered and see what the 6,000 other XBL Brits here are playing (it's not *Capcom Fighting Jam*!).

7TH Xbox gets Tiger's *PGA Tour 2006*, with EA including online tournaments and features actually supported in-game, rather than via clumsy websites. Good move.

14TH This date will mark two weeks since *FIFA 2006*'s release, so the smart money says this is when to check back on **Xbox.com** for the first UK FIFA tournament.

18TH UK forum **GreenHillZone.com** has set-up a weekly Fight Night, every Tuesday from 8pm until midnight. The main game of choice right now is *Street Fighter: Anniversary Edition*.

28TH *Pro Evolution Soccer 5*, *Star Wars: Battlefront II* and *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat* are all released today. Hat trick! Assuming you can afford them all.

30TH Want to battle Americans through flick-book lag in *Dead Or Alive: Ultimate*? Then head to **DOACentral.com** for a US Xbox Live tournament held on this date.

TXT UK

TO ORDER CALL: 0906 664 0819

OR TEXT: MICRO+CODE to 88066

VISIT OUR WEBSITE ON YOUR PHONE OR PC: WWW.TXTUK.CO.UK

ANIMATIONS

To order simply send: MICRO + CODE to 88066 | OR | Call: 0906 664 0819

Irish users can call 1580 444 552 or text their order to 57767

PAGE3 XCLUSIVE SOPHIE HOWARD — 23144

PAGE3 XCLUSIVE LUCY PINDER — 23283

BABES!! + — 13203, 14157, 11811, 15206

MICHELLE MARSH — 23284

NATASHA MEELEY — 22631

BLONDE BABE! — 22716

WHATSUP! — 15964

GETTIN STONED — 23486

BUNGEE DAWG! — 14449

HAND RUB — 13486

LELANNI — 20157

DANNI — 23282

HOMER X — 12337

DEMON SWOOP — 17247

FAMILY GUY — 17771

GAMES

To order simply send: MICRO + CODE to 88066 | OR | Call: 0906 664 0819

Irish users can call 1580 444 552 or text their order to 57767

KAMASUTRIS — 13089

Strip 4 You — 13176

Get Sex Kamasutra — 19960

LEISURE SUIT LARRY — 20224

BANJO-KAZOOIE — 23236

MONOPOLY TYCOON — 22760

DIRTY SANCHEZ — 23214

SOUTH PARK — 15888

PREDATOR — 15662

DRIV3R — 12665

POOL Challenge — 12564

MIAMI VICE — 17609

MARIO MAN — 15889

Strip 4 You — 13188

Mr Bean mini Racer — 22353

WICKED FOOTBALL — 17622

TONES

To order polyphonic tones send: MICRO + CODE to 88066

To order mono tones send: MICRO + CODE + MONO to 88066

Call: 0906 664 0819

Irish users can call 1580 444 552 or text their order to 57767

TXT UK Top 10

1.	20207	BABYSHAMBLES	FU Forever
2.	22608	IRON MAIDEN	Trooper
3.	23114	BRITISH WHALE	This Town Aint Big...
4.	22968	GOLDFRAPP	Ooh La La
5.	11058	2 PAC/ELTON	Ghetto Gospel
6.	22606	JAMIROQUAI	Seven Days In...
7.	22969	MATTAFIX	Big City Life
8.	20036	MAGIC NUMBERS	Love Me Like You
9.	22609	DADDY YANKEE	Gasolina
10.	22971	NINE BLACK ALPS	Unsatisfied

R'N'B Top 10

1.	20208	AKON	Bonanza Belly Da...
2.	16244	M V P	Roc Ya Body
3.	14485	EMINEM	Ass Like That
4.	20028	THE GAME	Dreams
5.	22729	50 CENT	Outta control
6.	22730	BODYROCKERS	Round and round
7.	20039	LETHAL BIZZLE	Uh Oh I m Back
8.	22607	GORILLAZ	Dare
9.	22328	SNOOP DOGG	Ups and Downs
10.	14756	BIZARRE	Rockstar

Fart Top 10

1.	14082	SOUTH PARK FART SONG
2.	14079	LOUD BURP!
3.	13120	BLOW RASPBERRY
4.	12362	SLIPPERY FART
5.	12351	PUKE
6.	12247	SIZZLE FART
7.	12492	BURP-TASTIC!
8.	13846	GO PEE
9.	15186	ON FART FOR MAN
10.	12385	FART & BURP MAN

REAL Top 10

1.	23410	DAVID GRAY	The One I Love
2.	23413	PAUL MCCARTNEY	Fine Line
3.	23354	OASIS	The Importance..
4.	23359	ROLLING STONES	Streets Of Love
5.	23357	THE WHITE STRIPES	My Doorbell
6.	23130	BABYSHAMBLES	FU Forever
7.	23131	IRON MAIDEN	Trooper Rock
8.	20069	M V P	Roc Ya Body
9.	20107	EMINEM	Ass Like That
10.	22985	MATTAFIX	Big City Life

*Cover Artists only

Have a real voice and backing track as your ringtone!

Whacky tones

Top 3: 15416 Crazy Frog, 15417 Mad Cow, 15982 Disco Chick

Celeb Tones		Crazy Tones	
14826	Dirty Sanchez	15417	Mad Cow
11146	Jordan	15416	Crazy Frog
12389	Peter Kay	12492	Burp
11106	Avid Merrion	15467	Dog Eats Frog
11071	Bear (Bo)	15565	Kill All Phones
12381	Barat (Ali G)	15982	Disco Chick
11150	Frodo and Gollum	12518	Creepy Door
11143	Kat Slater (Bo)	15095	Scary Voice
11069	Mel b (Bo)	15563	Torture Tone
11067	Michael Jackson	12507	Alien Talk
11159	Ozzy Osbourne	12510	Baby Sound
11151	Alan Partridge	12487	Ambulance
11102	Ali G	12518	Creepy Door
19035	Kenny Craig	12537	Godzilla
19038	Marjorie Dawes	12504	Crazy Cat

19064 Vicky Pollard, 11088 Lou and Andy, 18515 Bitty, 18537 Daffyd, 19052 Michael And Pm, 19062 Ray McCooney, 13012 Molly Sugdon, 13013 Des Kay

*These celeb tones are impressions performed by a professional voice artist it does not carry the approval or endorsement of the personality impersonated

CRAZY VIDEO

To order simply send: MICRO+ CODE to 88066

Human Cannon — 16177

Sexy Shower — 12842

Play Time! — 15406

Bad Driver! — 16252

Pg3 Blonde — 15989

Girlie Fun! — 15493

Christina — 14106

Sk8er Stunt — 16235

Never Trust a Woman — 17155

Spring Boobs — 15398

SEE VIDEO ON UR MOBILE!

To order simply send: MICRO + COVER to 88066

Get the UK's Hottest Glamour Girls on your mobile every week!

uk glamour girls

COLOUR WALLPAPERS

To order simply send: MICRO+ CODE to 88066 | OR | Call: 0906 664 0819

Irish users can call 1580 444 552 or text their order to 57767

23403 — SORE STATION 16066 — DARK SIDE 15159 — 23285 — STAFFY 20044 — ENGLAND 19857

23370 — 23402 — 23076 — SUPERGRASS 23036 — GANGSTER 23049

HALO 16034 — Wasted 17004

23072 — 20083

PITY DA FOOL 11972 — ARSENAL 23071 — HULK SMASHED!! 23050

20272 — 15246 — 23346

NICE HORN! 23260 — 22627 — 11718

GANGSTA NO. 1 23297 — HOW DO U LIKE YOURS? 18349 — 22623

13302 — 23347

3D CHARACTERS

To order simply send: GAME+ CODE to 88066

GET 3D CHARACTERS ON YOUR PHONE!

CODE	
14020	SPIDERMAN
23170	Bowser
23172	Pikachu
23171	Lara Croft
16031	GTA Ceejay
16036	Halo

TXT UK BESTSELLERS

14222 — 18872 — 16638 — 14199

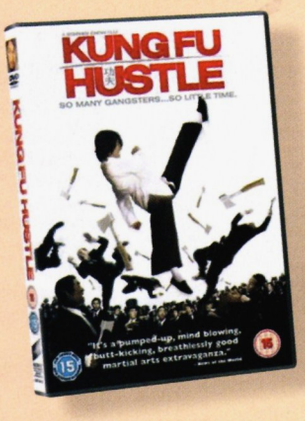
Calls cost £1.50 from landline phones. Calls made from Mobiles may cost more. Callers must be 16 or over. Standard Tones cost £3. Polyphonic Tones, Real Tones, Video & Wallpapers and Animations cost £4.50 charged as 3 x £1.50 reverse billed messages. Java Games charged as £6. Glamour Girls costs only £4.50 per week for unlimited access. Unsub: send STOP or STOP COVER to 89331. You will incur stantard SMS, WAP and GPRS chrges where applicable. Please check billpayers permission before you call. Please check the website to ensure your phone is compatible. Please allow 24 hours for delivery in extreme cases due to network traffic. You may be contacted by TXTUK with Offers and Info. To unsubscribe call our Customer Care Line. Customer Care Numbers UK: 0871 872 1813 IRL: 01 248 9871. Address PO Box 51727, London NW1 8ZF. Thank You. (c) DRIV3R, DRIVER 3 - All rights reserved, Atarilnteractive. All rights reserved.All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.



X360 DVD OF THE MONTH

KUNG FU HUSTLE

Kicking up a storm with action movie fans



INFORMATION

Sony • £19.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 5.1
DIRECTOR / Stephen Chow
STARRING / Stephen Chow and friends

RATING / ●●●●○

EXTRAS RATING / ●●●○○

Loud. That's what *Kung Fu Hustle* is. Stephen Chow's flick has been wooing cinemagoers and import audiences for some time and this ear-clattering film has the potential to make your speakers bleed like no other.

Mouthy gangster wannabe Sing, played by Stephen Chow, is desperate to join the Axe Gang and goes to a quiet housing complex in an effort to get noticed. He accidentally starts a war between the landlords of the housing complex and the Axe Gang, basically because he's loud. The landlady who takes offence to Sing is also loud. Buildings getting destroyed with one hand, again is loud. From the harp assassins who use ghostly swords to the *Matrix*- inspired courtyard brawl to The Beast – yep, you guessed it – everything here is loud.

The noisy chaos is almost to be expected. Anyone who's seen previous Stephen Chow films will recognise *Kung Fu Hustle*'s template straight from the off – physical comedy, elastic violence, pained grimaces – but rather than kicking footballs around, it's gangsters who are being kicked through rooftops, onto balconies and across patios. The 1940's Chicago gangster chic gives it the style, Chow provides the laughs and the many fight scenes provide the volume.

While *Kung Fu Hustle*'s pace occasionally sags in order to allow room for some rather sickly romantic sub-plots, it's not long before the anarchy catches up with the film again and ushers it back towards action that doesn't disappoint.

Anyone looking for over-the-top, exaggerated comic book-style action will lap this up. Just make sure you have your remote control's volume button at the ready.

DVD EXTRAS: Without descending into spoiler territory, when anyone puts their hand through an entire building, it's always going to be a spilt-beer-on-the-screen moment... RYAN KING

REPLAY

COMMENTARY
» You can hear Stephen Chow and his mates chuckling away in Mandarin on the commentary track but thankfully, it's subtitled

INTERVIEW
» The interview with Stephen Chow is insightful, revealing his good-natured side

OUTTAKES
» The usual set of "ho ho, I messed up a stunt!" larks. Still entertaining though.

DVDS

TRANSFORMERS – THE MOVIE RECONSTRUCTED

Metrodrome • £15.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 5.1
DIRECTOR / Nelson Shin
STARRING / Voices of Orson Welles, Leonard Nimoy, Eric Idle

RATING / ●●●○○

EXTRAS RATING / ●●●○○

THIS RECONSTRUCTED FEATURE-length movie of the Eighties' toy franchise will drop a veil of nostalgia over anyone old enough to remember drainpipe jeans and rock music played like God intended, with perms flying to the strum of a power chord.

The metal-mutating action sees the death of Optimus Prime, the resurrection of Megatron and the appearance of a planet-munching monstrosity know as, Unicron. Twin all of this with some stellar voice acting and a guitar-whaling, hair-metal soundtrack and you'll find yourself with a pretty enjoyable animated adventure on your hands.

Nonetheless, while it may be a passable movie, after some consideration we're still left wondering why anyone but die-hard fans would pay over 15 quid for something that can picked up in any retailer for a third of that price. On the plus side, the picture and audio have received an upgrade and the extras have been fleshed out, but this disc certainly won't entice any fan already in possession of the original.
Keith Hennessey



ROCK ON / Retro fans will lap up the Eighties soft-rock action, the rest of us will stare on in confusion

THE KUNG FU MASTER

Tai-Seng Ent. • £17.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 5.1
DIRECTOR / Benny Chan
STARRING / Donnie Yen

RATING / ●●○○○

EXTRAS RATING / ●●○○○

AFTER BLEEDING HONG Kong's back catalogue of kung-fu flicks dry, DVD companies are now turning to the Far East's kung-fu TV archives. Tai-Seng has done a commendable job of crunching this hefty television series down to DVD

size but sadly, there's nothing that can be done to disguise the meagre budget. The choreography isn't as punchy as it should be, with quick editing trying to disguise that few of the actors here are martial artists. What saves this is the solid story, which develops throughout the epic three-hour running time, and Bey Logan's encyclopaedic kung-fu knowledge on the commentary track.

As a footnote to classic martial arts entertainment this an interesting TV series, well worth a look if you're into The Logan's work. However, the quality isn't really there for causal fans.

Ryan King

PREY FOR ROCK & ROLL

Black Horse • £15.99 • 4:3 • Dolby 2.0
DIRECTOR / Alex Steyermark
STARRING / Gina Gershon, Drea De Matteo Lori Petty

RATING / ●●○○○

EXTRAS RATING / ●○○○○

WITH AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL script penned by punk rocker Cheri Lovedog, *Prey For Rock & Roll* looks to provide us with an insight into the troubles of an all-girl grunge band.

The spotlight falls on the band's lead singer Jacki, who, having turned 40, is beginning to question her devotion to the band and to music as a whole.

Far from being an interesting peek behind the rock world's velvet curtain, this is more a sociological examination of female exploitation – short-changing any rockers looking for a good time.

Unfortunately, the rookie director has also tried to shoehorn in too many themes – rape, domestic violence and drug abuse to name but a few – which means that the story completely loses any credibility it may have had.

Prey For Rock & Roll... You'll be praying for the credits to roll.

Keith Hennessey

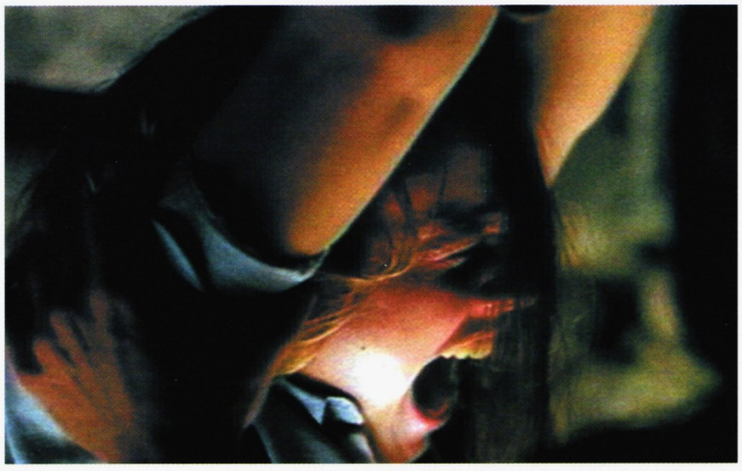
MALEVOLENCE

Anchor Bay • £16.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 2.0
DIRECTOR / Steven Mena
STARRING / Samantha Dark, Richard Glover, R.Brandon Johnson

RATING / ●●●○○

EXTRAS RATING / ●●○○○

WHEN A YOUNG boy is kidnapped and forced to witness the unspeakable crimes of a deranged madman there can only really be one outcome, and we're not talking about devoted life to social services.



TERROR TACTIC / Malevolence is good but not as good as it thinks it is

The boy grows up to fill his kidnappers shoes and is now hell bent on running his knife through anything with a pulse. So when a bank robbery goes wrong and a group of desperate felons end up in his dilapidated house of horrors, the slashing begins.

Though perhaps not breaking any new ground, this low budget offering pays fitting homage to classic horror titles such as *Psycho* and *Halloween*. With its mix of spine-tingling tones, masked maniac and sinister slaughterhouse this makes an adequate addition to any horror collection.

Keith Hennessey

XXX THE NEXT LEVEL

Universal • £16.99 • 16:9 • Dolby 5.1
DIRECTOR / Steven Mena
STARRING / Samuel L. Jackson, Ice Cube

RATING / ●●○○○

EXTRAS RATING / ●●○○○

ICE CUBE REPLACES Vin Diesel in Rob Cohen's street-style *James Bond* franchise, with mixed results.

If you want to empty your head of any kind of deep thoughts, then *xXx The Next Level* is the movie for you. »

NEWS IN QUOTES

"*STAR WARS EPISODE III* TWO DISC BOXSET WILL BE HITTING THE SHELVES 12 NOVEMBER, WITH UNSEEN FOOTAGE"

FOX PRESS RELEASE

"*BATMAN BEGINS* TWO-DISC COLLECTOR'S EDITION WILL BE ON SALE 21 OCTOBER, FEATURING EXCLUSIVE OUTTAKES"

WARNER BROS.

WE3

Watership down meets Gundam

INFORMATION

Titan Books • Price: £7.99
AUTHOR / Grant Morrison
ARTIST / Frank Quitely

RATING / ●●●●●

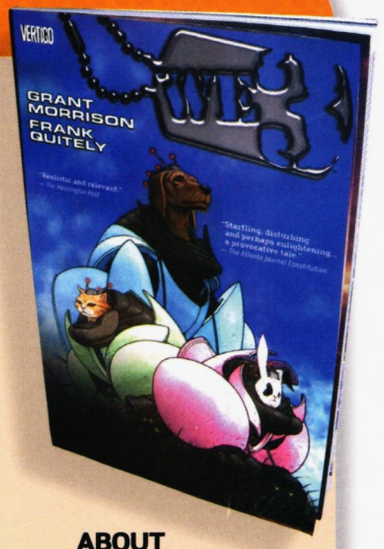
X360 BOOK OF THE MONTH

Bandit (a dog) Pirate (a rabbit) and Tinker (a cat) go on a journey to find their long-lost owners and so the story is set for an enchanting adventure as our heroes discover the meaning of love and belonging. This is no candy-coloured tale of sweetness, however, since these three have escaped from a military laboratory. They've been experimented on and can speak in single syllables. They wear power armour and are heavily armed. They are being hunted by men with guns.

Morrison's tale is a hauntingly beautiful one perfectly detailed by Quitely's simultaneously unflinchingly violent and serene graphical style. Managing to be both romantic and painfully realistic and without pandering to anthropomorphism, *We3* is a work of depth that depicts our world from an animal-world view without resting on *Watership Down*'s spirituality or *Tarka The Otter*'s pathos. *Zenith* and *The Invisibles* showed that the author was easily one of the planet's most important superhero writers and *We3* proves that he's not corralled by genre and is a masterful storyteller even when his main characters can barely speak and all they want is shelter, food and, in the case of the wonderful Bandit - to know that they are a "gud dog".

HARD COPY: Think of it as *Homeward Bound* with the animals in mech suits. *We3* has already been optioned for movie treatment and we reckon it would be perfect for CGI.

Will Johnston



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

» Grant Morrison has been writing comics for 25 years for American and British publications. His more notable efforts include *Arkham Asylum*, *The Invisibles*, *Zenith*, *X-Men* and *Fantastic Four*. He lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland.

» Opening with a cartoonish escape from a military prison. Cube then proceeds to recruit his boyz from the hood in an effort to save the president of America, race against a bullet train and explode almost everything in sight.

Cube does a decent job in a role that requires no more than to look threatening, rap a bit and shoot people, which really sums up the whole film.

Ian Dean



ON THE EDGE / Ice Cube acts tougjh for the cameras in this lame sequel to *xXx*

BOOKS

THE RING COMPANION

Titan Books • PRICE: 17.99
AUTHOR: Denis Meikle

RATING / ●●●●○

EVERYTHING YOU EVER wanted to know about *Ring* is covered in this hefty tome. Everything. The ghost tradition that lies behind long-haired Sadako, the female journalist that replaced the male lead from the original books, director Hideo Nakata's influences for this film. This book serves as much more than an in-depth analysis of *Ring* as Denis Meikle frequently flies off on all sorts of tangents to talk about subjects ranging from Japanese myths that formed the backbone of the film, to the history of ghost stories. It's fair to say the book is more of a vehicle for Meikle to indulge himself on a general overview of ghost films and Japanese horror. Towards the end of the book, Meikle does overcompensate and lets his enthusiasm for *Ring* get away from him without providing the same insight found elsewhere, but in general, an essential read for fans.

Ryan King

FOWLER: MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Macmillan • PRICE: 18.99
AUTHOR: Robbie Fowler

RATING / ●●○○○

THIS "EXPLOSIVE AND controversial" autobiography, as it turns out, simply treads over old ground that cheap tabloids have covered many times before. It often feels like the writing is dragged along with it too, as the book hastily lurches from one incident to the next. Nor does it help that this is released about five years too late. There's a certain poignancy as Fowler looks to the future at a time when he can't even keep Darius Vassell out of the starting line-up, but certainly not one that justifies the asking price.

Ryan King

VIERA TH37PV500CAB

One of the best HD TV's out there



INFORMATION

Panasonic • Price: £2199 • 37 inch
www.panasonic.co.uk/plasma-tv/th37pv500cab/index.htm

RATING / ●●●●●

While it may be out of the price range of many, Panasonic's Viera TH37PV500CAB is a stunning TV. And with a pleasing, minimalist design it is undoubtedly capable of blending into any front-room media set-up.

The Viera boasts Panasonic's new and much touted G8 brand of plasma panels that through cunning use of Panasonic's Deep Black Filter and an anti-reflection costing on the panel's surface, produces richer, deeper blacks and improved brightness levels. G8 plasma panels also optimise the gas composition ratio to increase lighting by 10 per cent, further improving the overall quality of the picture.

X360 GEAR OF THE MONTH

This TV also uses the Viera Colour Management System, which, according to the manufacturer, displays more on-screen colours than any other Plasma TV. Apparently, not that we can identify this with any precision using our normal eyesight, the Viera uses up to 2048 levels of gradation and produces the equivalent of 8.6 million colours – it certainly sounds impressive.

Importantly, this rather fancy talk does mean that the TV is at the leading edge of plasma technology, boasting definition and clarity of the like that cheaper models can only dream of but unfortunately will never achieve. This is a perfect TV to partner with your new Xbox 360 this Christmas – well, as long as you have that sort of money laying around, that is.

EXTRAS: In addition to displaying rich and clear images, this TV has another couple of tricks up its sleeve. Firstly, it has a Freeview tuner built in, allowing you 40 odd channels straight out of the box. Secondly, it accepts SD and PC cards, allowing you to view images and video stored on the cards as well as record TV programmes back onto them. Bye bye VHS.

IAN DEAN

BREAK IT DOWN

» 94cm 'VIERA' 16:9 Widescreen Panel
Viera Colour Management System
HD Panel
SD Card Slot
Freeview DVB – Built-in Digital Terrestrial Tuner
1024x720 VGA Resolution
1080i and 720p Compatible
3 x SCART Connections
HDMI Compatible
Smart Sound Speaker System

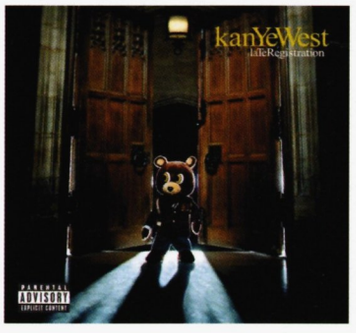
MUSIC

'LATE REGISTRATION' KANYE WEST

Roc-A-Fella • Price: £8.99

RATING / ●●●●○

IN SHORT, IT'S GOOD news. *Late Registration* is 22 more tracks that fit the Kanye West template established by his debut, with the 28-year-old rapper wisely decided not to tamper with the formula that made *College Dropout* a surprise success. Diamonds From Sierra Leone is the first single that shows while he relies on the same old tricks – sluggish bass-lines tied to sped-up samples, in this case Shirley Bassey's Diamonds Are Forever – they're every



bit as engaging and infectious as ever. And so *Late Registration* plays it safe throughout, sticking to what Kanye West knows best, as tracks such as Crack Music brings the noise while Heard 'Em Say shows a sensitive side rarely seen in this genre. People who didn't understand his appeal the first time around won't find anything here to change their minds, but for his fans, *Late Registration* almost dispels the myth that the second album is tricky. Kanye West has made it look effortlessly easy.

Ryan King

A BREATH OF FRESH ATTIRE' THE MITCHELL BROTHERS

The Beats • 8.99

www.themitchellbrothers.co.uk

RATING /

THE MITCHELL BROTHERS are nothing to do with *Eastenders* and everything to do with Mike Skinner from The Streets, as this debut album is the first release from his new label. Skinner's fingerprints are everywhere for all to see – cockney geezer accents, minimalist production and lyrics about being stopped by the police on the way to the chip shop. This is much angrier than The Streets as seen with Routine Check and Harvey Nicks but sadly, this debut is nowhere near as consistent either, with a few too many bum-notes to really win you over.

Ryan King

GAME MUSIC ROUND-UP

Sumthing Else • 8.99

ROBOTECH INVASION /
HITMAN CONTRACTS /
HITMAN /
HITMAN 2 /

SINCE UBISOFT MANAGED to rope Amon Tobin into twiddling the dials to give Chaos Theory frenzied drum clattering, gaming soundtracks have become popular again. Which is fortunate because *Robotech: Invasion OST* shows why they fell out of favour to begin with – what works as a soundtrack doesn't always work as a standalone album and the bland techno piddling here minus the game's explosions just doesn't stir the blood. *Hitman: Contracts* is in less danger of sending you to sleep as its moody paranoiac ambience doesn't need Agent 47's chrome dome to shine. Best of all is the *Hitman/Hitman 2* double album. It's every bit as good as *Contracts* but with two albums, you get to pick your poison. Very cool.

Ryan King

HARDWARE

ACER AT3201W

Acer • £799 • 32 inch LCD

http://www.acer.co.uk/acereuro

RATING /

OK, SO ACER isn't normally a brand you think of when upgrading to superior audiovisual equipment, but for the price, this 32-inch LCD is a wonder.

Sure, £800 isn't exactly cheap, but when you consider the picture quality and wealth of connection options, this holds its own admirably against HD TVs costing hundreds more.

Importantly, 1080i and 720p are supported, and the TV has component connectivity, RGB Scart, S-Video and DVI along with D-Sub for connecting to a PC, making this a highly accommodating and able machine.

Jay Filmer



COMPETITION

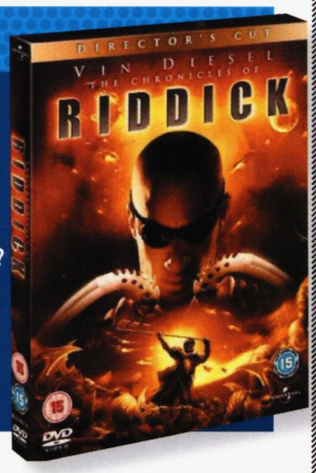
WIN 5 COPIES OF THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK

The Chronides Of Riddick Director's Cut DVD from Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd is out now. To win one of five copies, just answer this question:

WHICH GAME TO FILM WILL STAR VIN DIESEL?

- Hitman
- Dead Or Alive
- Sonic

Riddick Giveaway, Magazine and Issue No, 117 South Way, Southwell Business Park, Portland, Dorset, DT5 2NJ



"ON THIS FILM WE HAD 1,700 PEOPLE FOR BREAKFAST, 2,000 FOR LUNCH AND 60 PER CENT WERE MUSLIM"

INTERVIEW

RIDLEY SCOTT



The man behind the **Kingdom Of Heaven** settles down to tell **X360** all about his new DVD

X360: WHY WAS THIS SUBJECT SO EXCITING?
SCOTT: It was a massive adventure. I think as filmmakers we are the last of the explorers. We are allowed to go to these amazing places, set up with our crews and tell these stories. I see the knights of that period as the cowboys of their era. The knight represents someone on the leading edge of his culture at that time. The film was interesting because there is a powerful subtext about this period of The Crusades that frankly hasn't been told before.

X360: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE REACTION WILL BE FROM THE ISLAM COMMUNITY?
SCOTT: I think the reaction is going to be pretty good actually, I think I'll be able to go on holiday in the Lebanon any time I want. The way we portray Muslims feels accurate to me. I know it is accurate because I cast guys who are Muslim. For the last six years I was dealing with Muslims doing three big movies in Morocco, so I know a lot of Muslim people there who work with me. On this film we had 1,700 people for breakfast, 2,000 for lunch and 60 per cent were Muslim. I think we give a very good balanced view of what may have happened at that particular time. Some Historians say that the film has been badly researched. But 99 per cent of those people haven't seen anything of the film or read the script, so they are basing their opinions on speculation.

X360: WHAT ABOUT THE MASSACRE OF CHRISTIANS AT THE BATTLE OF HATTIN BY MUSLIM KING SALADIN?
SCOTT: We dealt with the aftermath of the massacre at the Battle of Hattin, but I decided I didn't want to show another huge bloodbath. This was the most famous battle of the Muslim dominance over the Christians ever, where the Christian army really was foolhardy to go out and fight in that climate and at that time of year. I think they lost because they were simply not as strong and powerful as the Muslim army. But I didn't want to have a massacre on top of the battle portrayed on screen. So it was my choice.

X360: DO WE LEARN ANYTHING FROM HISTORY AND THE CRUSADES IN PARTICULAR?
SCOTT: Of course, though we keep repeating bad behaviour, don't we? But you watch and you learn and you study. Hopefully the majority of the world is getting better. I think what has really happened very clearly of course is that there is no colonialisation as it was anymore, we lost the British Empire ages ago. And of course we used and abused that power, didn't we, basically getting something for nothing? We paid the price for that. So hopefully if anyone tries it again they will be stopped and prevented. We won't be able to impose our will on other people. That went down with the Cold War. Actually I am going to do a film about that subject called *The Company*. It's about the CIA in Russia and The Iron Curtain.

X360: DO YOU EVER GET INTIMIDATED BY THE HUGE BUDGETS OF A FILM?
SCOTT: No, not at all, I never get intimidated, it is just experience. I have always got lost in my own fantasy. I learned to trust my intuition. Even when I was younger doing commercials, I was like that. I did all the Chanel commercials for years and had to meet the owner and creative director of Chanel. I was good at selling my ideas and fantasies. I really enjoyed creating worlds. When I started my company at 27 years old making commercials, it was so successful and we were doing so well financially that I didn't even think about making films for 13 years. By running a business, you learn about art and commerce, you can't separate them.

HEY! HEY! IT'S THE MONKEY!

OUT NOW



AVAILABLE FROM WHSMITH AND ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS

NEXT MONTH

» More fantastic games
» More fearless opinion

ONLY £3.99 MAG + DVD + BOOK



WORLD'S FIRST GAME REVIEW!

CONDEMNED

Read the world's first Xbox 360 review, only in **X360**

PLUS!

PERFECT DARK ZERO
Read the first play test of Rare's next-gen shooter

DEAD OR ALIVE 4
The first ladies of Xbox 360 show us their secrets

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED
Free-roaming law breaking in next month's mag

FIFA ROAD TO THE WORLD CUP
Hands-on with Xbox 360's exclusive FIFA game

SUBSCRIBE NOW! TURN TO PAGE 95

ON SALE 29 OCTOBER

FIRST FOR GAMES

TOKYO GAME SHOW
The definitive coverage, including new screens of *Resident Evil 5*, *Dead Rising* and *Ridge Racer 6*

UNRIVALLED FEATURES

HIGH DEFINITION EXPLAINED
Why you need to upgrade, straight away!

EXCLSUIVE ACCESS

ALL THIS AND NEW INFO ON THESE KILLER GAMES...
Football Manager 06 / The Outfit / Gears Of War / Kameo / King Kong / Splinter Cell / Frame City Killer / Lost Odyssey / Ninety-Nine Nights / The Godfather / Superman Returns / Saint's Row / NBA Live 06 / Madden 06 / Ghost Recon 3

Ringtone Charts

Txt to 84888*

	polyphonic	monophonic
1) J. Blunt - You're Beautiful	Ring5000	Ring5010
2) 2Pac - Ghetto Gospel	Ring5001	Ring5011
3) Eminem - Ass Like That	Ring5002	Ring5012
4) Crazy Frog - Axel F	Ring5003	Ring5013
5) M.V.P. - Roc Ya Body	Ring5004	Ring5014
6) Akon - Lonely	Ring5005	Ring5015
7) Rihanna - Pon De Replay	Ring5006	Ring5016
8) 50 Cent - Just A Lil Bit	Ring5007	Ring5017
9) Pussycat Dolls - Don't Cha	Ring5008	Ring5018
10) Akon - Belly Dancer (Bananza)	Ring5009	Ring5019

Named artists may have no connection with the featured ringtones & may not be the only artists who have recorded the song.

The Frog Rules!

Ringtones	poly	mono	real
Popcorn Mix	Ring5040	Ring5041	Real5430
Pump Up The Jam	Ring5042	Ring5043	Real5431

Videoringtones

Video1671 — Crazy Frog **Axel F**



Get The Album NOW!



84888* Ringtoneking

© Erik Wernquist/Turboforce3D

Crazy Frog

Videos: Play685 — Games: Game715 — Animated Screensavers: Ani1698

Ringtones	poly	mono	real
Crazy DJ	Star3612	Star3613	Star3614

Wallpapers: Pic5300

Videoringtones: View1190 — DJ Crazy Frog **Don't Eat Me**; View1191 — DJ Crazy Frog **Rock Me**

Themes



Theme1388

Crazy Sound Effects

Crazy Frog Original	Fun7770
The Frog Gets Shot	Fun7771
Crazy Frog Is High	Fun7772
Frog Is Puking	Fun7773
Frog & Girlfriend	Fun7774
Goooooaal	Fun7775

Animated Screensavers - Txt to 84888*



Ani1692 — Ani1693 — Ani1694 — Ani1695 — Ani1696 — Ani1697

Chartbreakers

Txt to 84888*

	polyphonic	monophonic
Black Eyed Peas - Don't Lie	Ring5020	Ring5030
Crazy Frog - Popcorn	Ring5021	Ring5031
Daniel Powter - Bad Day	Ring5022	Ring5032
Freemasons - Love On My Mind	Ring5023	Ring5033
Girls Aloud - Long Hot Summer	Ring5024	Ring5034
Kaiser Chiefs - I Predict A Riot	Ring5025	Ring5035
K. Clarkson - Since U Been Gone	Ring5026	Ring5036
McFly - I'll be OK	Ring5027	Ring5037
Simon Webbe - Lay Your Hands	Ring5028	Ring5038
White Stripes - My Doorbell	Ring5029	Ring5039

Realtone Charts

Txt to 84888*

1) Pussycat Dolls - Don't Cha	Real5420
2) 2Pac - Ghetto Gospel	Real5421
3) Akon - Bananza (Belly Dancer)	Real5422
4) Crazy Frog - Pump Up The Jam	Real5423
5) James Blunt - You're Beautiful	Real5424
6) Eminem - Ass Like That	Real5425
7) Daniel Powter - Bad Day	Real5426
8) 50 Cent - Just A Lil Bit	Real5427
9) Faithless - Insomnia	Real5428
10) Rhianna - Pon De Replay	Real5429

Sound Effects

Txt to 84888*

Angry Phone	Fun7760
Best Of Britain**	Fun7761
Bonecrusher - Answer It	Fun7762
Captain Abu Dai-Air	Fun7763
Fred Elliot**	Fun7764
From Hell	Fun7765
Girls Girls	Fun7766
Indian Outraged	Fun7767
Old Telephone	Fun7768
Peter Kay**	Fun7769

**Celeb sound effects are performed by voice artists.

Ringtoneking Stars

Ringtones	poly	mono	real
Dirty Turtles	Star3600	Star3601	Star3602
Nessie The Dragon	Star3603	Star3604	Star3605
Sweety Remix	Star3606	Star3607	Star3608
Little Birds Rock	Star3609	Star3610	Star3611

Videoringtones

View1188 — Bounce — Booty — View1189

Videoringtones

Txt to 84888*

Video1668 — Dana Rayne **Obj. Of My Desire**

Eric Prydz **Call On Me** — Video1669

Video1670 — Stereophonics **Dakota**

Top Games - Txt to 84888*

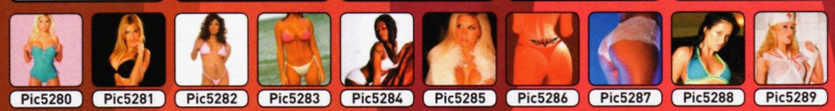


Game715 — Game716 — Game717 — Game718 — Game719

Wallpapers - Txt to 84888*



Pic5275 — Pic5276 — Pic5277 — Pic5278 — Pic5279



Pic5280 — Pic5281 — Pic5282 — Pic5283 — Pic5284 — Pic5285 — Pic5286 — Pic5287 — Pic5288 — Pic5289



Pic5290 — Pic5291 — Pic5292 — Pic5293 — Pic5294 — Pic5295 — Pic5296 — Pic5297 — Pic5298 — Pic5299

To order Sound Effects and more, i.e.

"The Frog Gets Shot"

simply txt **"Fun7771"**

to this number: **84888***



T-Mobile · 3 · vodafone · O2

Join Ringtoneking Clubs for just £3 per week and get up to 10 downloads! That's from just 30p per download.

For full terms and conditions visit www.ringtoneking.co.uk

Call 0870 121 73 97 or email us at support@ringtoneking.co.uk.

16+ & bill payers permission

* This is a subscription service, each club entitles you to loads of download credits and costs just £3 per week until you send stop to 84888. Callers must be 16+ and have bill payer's permission. The Ringtoneking Clubs entitle you to receive music news and the following credits each week redeemable at www.ringtoneking.co.uk - Silver Club:- 3 mono or poly ringtones and 7 Logos! Stars Club:- 5 Star Ringtones! Stars Platinum Club:- 2 Star Videoringtones! Gold Club:- 2 Realtones! Sound Effects Club:- 6 Sound Effects! Platinum Club:- 2 Video Ringtones! Wallpapers/Picture Messages/Logos Club:- 6 Pictures! Screensaver Club:- 6 Screensavers! Video Club:- 3 Videos! Games Club:- 2 Games! Software Club:- 2 Applications! The Theme Club:- 2 Mobile Themes! Java Games/Applications not available for "3" customers. Unused credits will be rolled over to next period. Related offers sent via SMS. Compatible handsets required. Check www.ringtoneking.co.uk for handset compatibility. Sent texts and WAP/GPRS/UMTS downloads charged at standard operator rate. PrePay users must have sufficient credit to receive orders. Service provided by Jamster International Sarl. Full T&Cs available at www.ringtoneking.co.uk. Helpline 0870 121 7397.

Offers Subject to Alterations, Errors and Ommissions Excepted.

+++ THE BEST MOVIES +++ IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS +++ BONUS FEATURES +++ EXCLUSIVE COMMENTARIES

ON THE DVD

BONUS DVD-ROM CONTENT
Wallpapers + Gears Of War eBook

EASTER EGGS CAN YOU FIND 'EM?

UNMISSABLE

QUAKE 4

You've read the feature, now watch the movie! (It rocks!)

EXCLUSIVE GAMEPLAY FOOTAGE / LAUNCH TRAILER / MTV TEASER TRAILER / SCREENSHOT MONTAGE / GALLERY

X360 DVD-ROM CONTENTS

CALL OF DUTY 2
CONDEMNED
DEAD OR ALIVE 4



DEAD RISING
ENCHANT ARM
FINAL FANTASY XI
FRAME CITY KILLER
GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER
GUN
KING KONG
NINETY-NINE NIGHTS
PREY



PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3
QUAKE 4
RESIDENT EVIL 5
RUMBLE ROSES XX

FEATURES

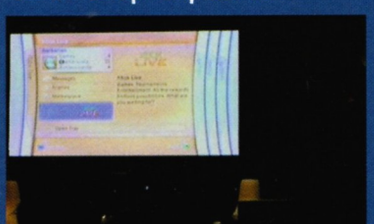
INTRODUCING XBOX 360
Xbox 360 broken down, as Microsoft explains every awesome detail



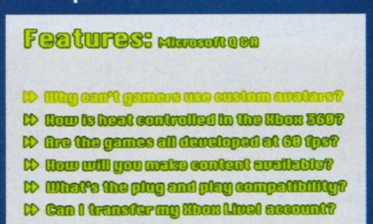
XBOX 360 LAUNCH AT E3
Watch Microsoft's unveiling of its brand new baby, Xbox 360



XBOX 360 DASHBOARD
Guided tour of Xbox 360's dashboard, with each step explained



Q & A WITH MICROSOFT
Interactive Q & A panel, where you get to choose the questions!





X360 AUDIO COMMENTARIES

Listen to the alternative commentary to hear what we have to say about the games



PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

"PGR 3 is a trophy title, and the casual fools will indeed swoon and stand wide-eyed"

TEASER TRAILER / GAMEPLAY TRAILER WITH COMMENTARY / FULL TRAILER / SCREENSHOTS MONTAGE / GALLERY



KING KONG

KING KONG VS T-REX FOOTAGE / CHASE T-REX FOOTAGE WITH COMMENTARY / RAFT ESCAPE FOOTAGE



CONDEMNED

TEASER TRAILER WITH COMMENTARY / LAUNCH TRAILER / GAMEPLAY FOOTAGE / SCREENSHOTS MONTAGE / GALLERY



PREY

FULL TRAILER WITH COMMENTARY / TEASER TRAILER / SCREENSHOT MONTAGE / GALLERY

FULL TRAILER 11 MINUTES LONG!



Step-by-step guide on how to use your DVD-ROM

1 Insert the DVD and, using your Xbox DVD Movie Playback controller, press the directional buttons to navigate the menu.

2 Press Select to choose the option you want, and then use Back or Menu once you're done. Now sit back and watch your feature of choice.

3 To listen to our alternate audio on selected trailers, press Display. Press right twice for audio, then press Select for the commentary track.



1

PREVIEW PAGE 60

CALL OF DUTY 2

"HDTVs all over the land will crackle with joy"

TEASER TRAILER WITH COMMENTARY / LAUNCH TRAILER GAMEPLAY FOOTAGE / SCREENSHOTS MONTAGE / GALLERY

BONUS FEATURE! TOKYO SPECIAL

ALL THE JAPANESE DEVELOPED XBOX 360 GAMES

Final Fantasy XI / Dead Rising / Ninety-Nine Nights / Frame City Killer / Dead Or Alive 4 / Enchant Arm / Resident Evil 5 / Rumble Roses XX

BONUS DVD-ROM CONTENT

Wallpapers + Gears Of War game tour

DISCLAIMER

If no disc is here call: 01202 200 200
Faulty disc? Please return it to: X360, Highbury Entertainment, Paragon House, St Peters Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS
Email: subs@paragon.co.uk

2



NEWS PAGE 30

GHOST RECON 3

"Every time we see this game, it impresses us more and more"

LAUNCH TRAILER / FULL TRAILER WITH COMMENTARY / GEAR TRAILER / SCREENSHOTS MONTAGE / GALLERY

3



PREVIEW PAGE 62

GUN

"A fine-looking horse that even now is great in the saddle"

KINGDOM COME TRAILER / TEASER TRAILER WITH COMMENTARY / STORY TRAILER / SCREENSHOTS MONTAGE / GALLERY

50 PLAYERS
through Xbox Live™
Regular 50 Player online tournaments
See Xbox.com and vagusnet.com for details







THE No. 1 BEST SELLER

'If you've ever enjoyed an online shooter then this is a must buy.' **Xbox World**

'This is the freshest online shooting experience since Halo 2. Our advice is simple – don't miss out on it.' **Xbox World**

DELTA FORCE
BLACK HAWK DOWN



LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND!

Somalia 1993. A nation devastated by a brutal civil war. Mohammad Farah Aidid, the most powerful of War Lords has declared war on UN Peacekeeping troops. Preventing food aid from getting to a starving nation his militia kill whoever get in their way. Using all your skills as a Special Forces Operator, you are thrust into the most intense battle situations. Your mission: Remove Aidid, Restore Order, and Restore Hope. Based on actual events, play 16 intense single player missions or be part of a 50 player game on Xbox *Live*™!

OUT NOW!

NOVALOGIC®
www.novalogic.com

CLIMAX

XBOX

XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED

16+ www.pegi.info

© 2005 NovaLogic, Inc. NovaLogic, the NovaLogic logo, Delta Force, Black Hawk Down and the Delta Force - Black Hawk Down logo are registered trademarks of NovaLogic, Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox *Live*, and the Xbox and Xbox *Live* logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and logos are property of their respective owners.

For your full mission briefing visit:
www.BlackHawkDownTheGame.com