SOFTWARE'S HOTTEST PRODUCERS • BASKETBALL HITS FOR '95 • TWO SCHOOLS OF EDUTAINMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

ELECTRONIC games™

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 8

DONKEY KONG GENERATIONS:

THE MEN BEHIND THE MONKEY

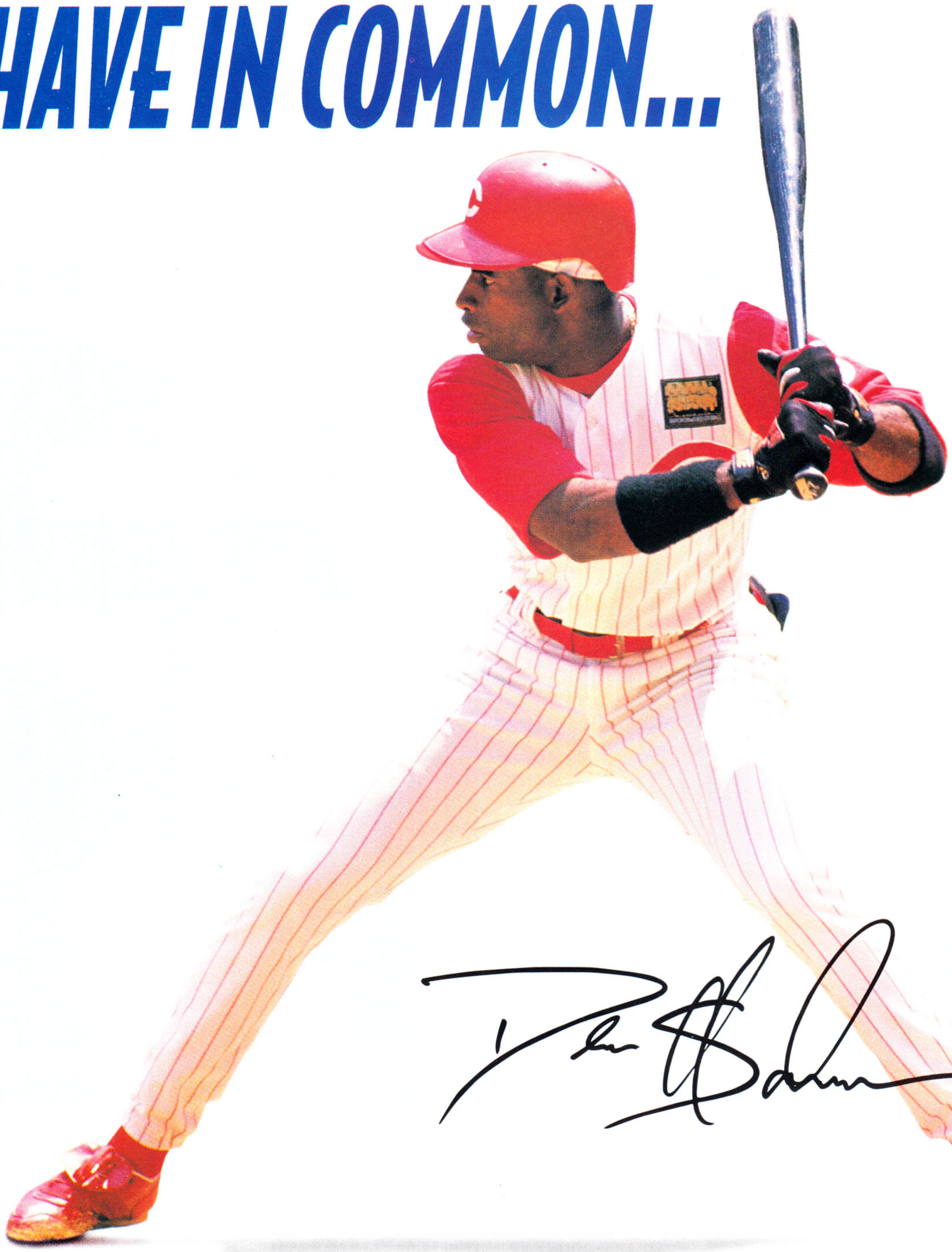
DECKER PUBLICATIONS

$4.99/$6.50 Canada/£3.00
May, 1995

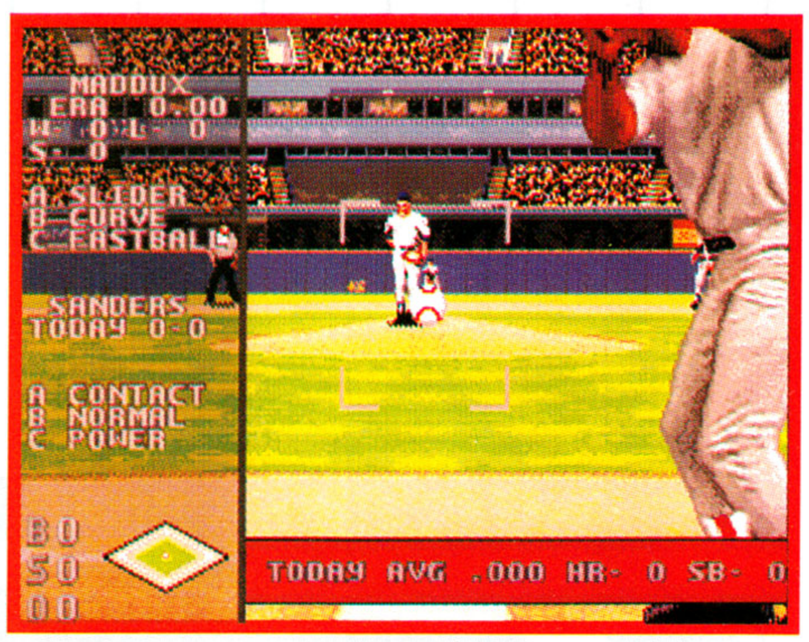
0 70989 37374 7 05

Donkey Kong Country is a trademark of Nintendo of America © 1994 Nintendo. All Rights Reserved.

WHAT DO DEION SANDERS AND WORLD SERIES® BASEBALL '95 HAVE IN COMMON...



THEY'RE BOTH IN A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN.



The Reds' Deion Sanders steps up to face the Braves' Greg Maddux!

Albert Belle of the Indians rips a shot off the Orioles' Mike Mussina!

World Series BASEBALL '95

- *All 28 Major League Teams & 700 Major League Players, including McGriff, Bagwell, Key, Canseco and Bonds!*
- *Draft & trade players.*
- *League, All-Star, Playoffs & World Series action!*
- *Multi-player leagues-several friends can all be in a league together.*
- *Large battery saves complete individual, team and league leaders statistics.*
- *All-Time Great Players, including Lou Gehrig, Dizzy Dean & Ty Cobb!*
- *"THE BEST JUST GOT BETTER...ALL THE STATS, ALL THE STADIUMS, INCREDIBLE ANIMATION...WORLD SERIES BASEBALL '95 HAS IT ALL."*
  -Dave Winding, Game Fan Magazine!

Roberto Alomar faces Jack McDowell in all-star batting mode.

AVAILABLE NOW — AVAILABLE NOW — SUMMER '95

Sega, Genesis, Game Gear, 32X and Sega Sports are trademarks of SEGA. The World Series is a trademark owned by Major League Baseball and may not be reproduced without written consent. Major League Baseball trademarks and copyrights are used with permission of Major League Baseball Properties Inc. MLBPA logo ©MLBPA MSA. Officially licensed by the Major League Baseball Players Association. All rights reserved. The Videogame Rating Council, its Rating System, symbols and indicia are trademarks of Sega of America, Inc. ©1995 SEGA. All rights reserved.

Goldstar
A
B
C

Wired For Speed

There are over 100 killer 3DO™ titles out there, with dozens more coming soon.

You don't need a lot of **BRAINS** to see why the **GoldStar** 3DO™ Interactive Multiplayer™ is the game system that can't be beat. Its

-popping FULL-MOTION Video, full-blown 3D -GRAPHICS and 16 MILLION COLORS make everything else look like

. Its special audio processor blasts you with CD-QUALITY **SOUND**. And for the total head trip, its **32-BIT RISC Chip** moves so fast, other game systems look like they're standing still. Heard enough?

Then it's time to face the future. Check out **GoldStar** 3DO™, if you've got the nerve.

Plug in the optional digital video module and pump out movie-quality pictures or play feature-length films on video CDs.

The **GoldStar** 3DO™ system is jammed full of space-age technology and comes with lots of **FREE** stuff.

FREE $130 TOTAL VALUE

SHOCK WAVE

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

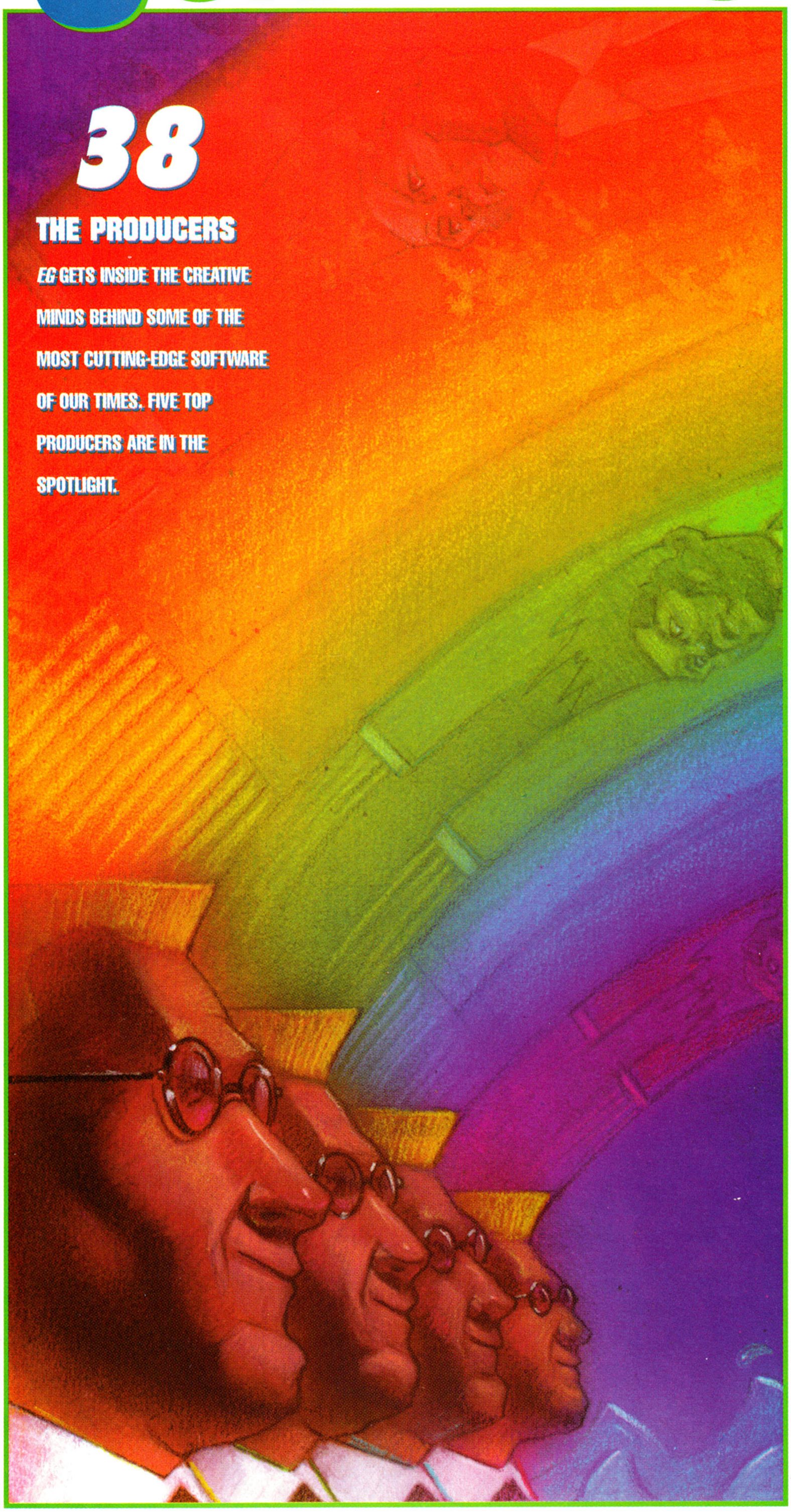
3DO

GoldStar

Play The Future Today

3DO, the 3DO logo and Interactive Mulitplayer are trademarks of the 3DO Company.
All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

CONTENTS



NEWS

PAGE 18 **Hotline**
The gaming industry prepares for E³ show ... ESPN, Starwave merger ... Whispers from Cyberspace ... Cyberstock progress chart ...

DEPARTMENTS

PAGE 10 **Power On!**
With E3 approaching fast, super-system hype and speculation rises to a fever pitch.

PAGE 14 **Feedback**
Computers vs. consoles. **SF2** syndrome.

PAGE 28 **CyberWatch**
Microsoft's Bob vs. the mighty Macintosh.

PAGE 30 **Game Doctor**
What's behind the screen in **Killer Instinct**?

PAGE 62 **The Net**
Prodigy and its plans and products for '95.

PAGE 66 **Test Lab**
A plethora of peripherals for your computer.

PAGE 70 **Flight Leader**
From **Flight Sim** to **Air Warrior**, and more.

PAGE 100 **In Progress**
EG profiles some of the hot up-and-comers.

PAGE 110 **The Heimlich Maneuver**
Keep your full-motion video! Game play!!!

PAGE 112 **Deals**
The future of on-line commercial marketing.

PAGE 114 **Kunkel Report**
Slogans and promises flow in game world.

FEATURES

PAGE 34 **Readers' Choice Awards**
Votes are in for the winning games of '94.

PAGE 48 **Donkey Kong Generations**
The father of **Donkey Kong** and the inventor of **DKC** discuss their joint creation.

PAGE 54 **Hoops '95**
Hot basketball games for '95 put to the test.

PAGE 58 **Two Schools of Edutainment**
The heavy role of computers in education.

REVIEWS

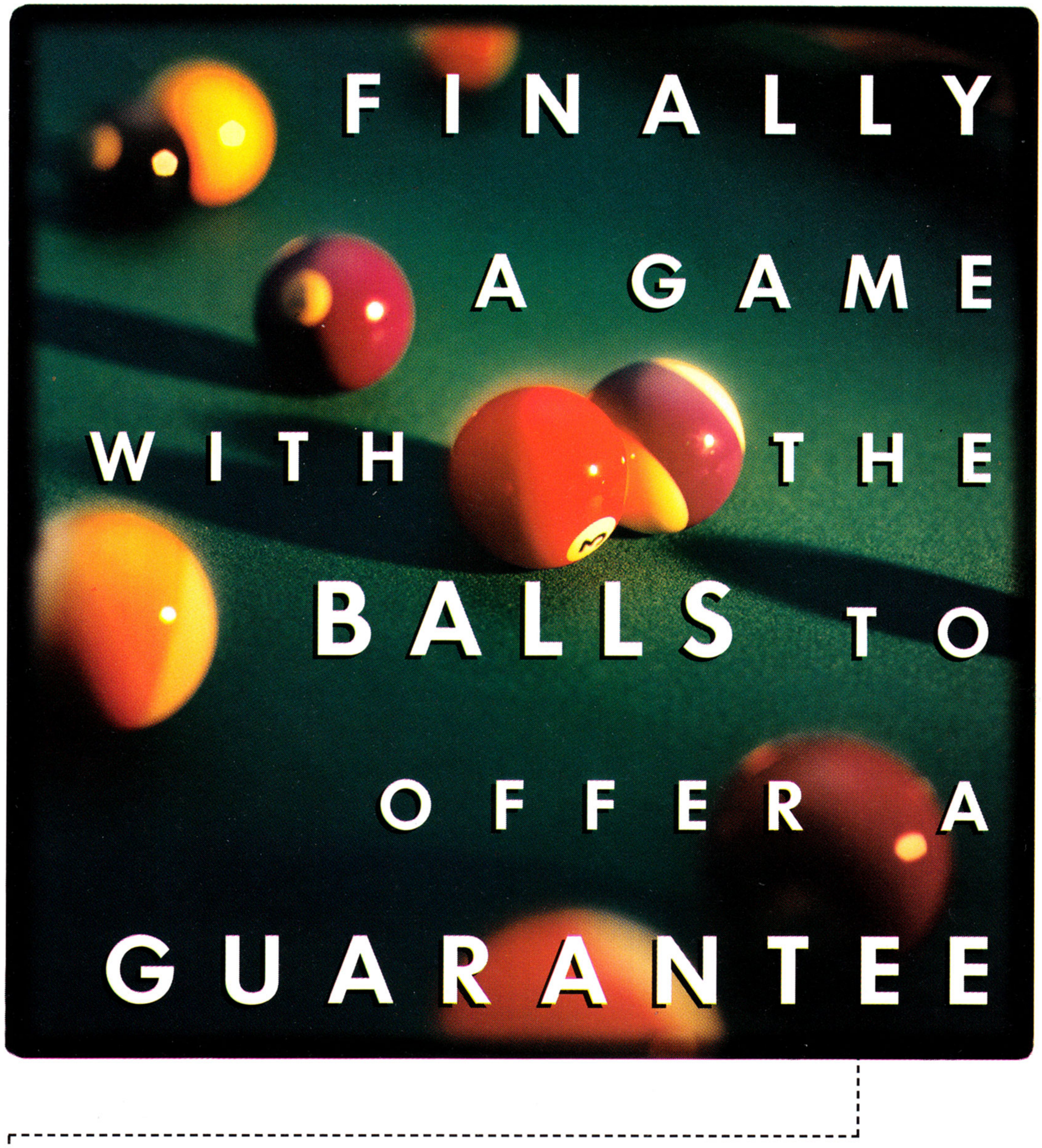
PAGE 72 **Console**
The series continues on, role-playing adventure in **Phantasy Star IV** by Sega.

PAGE 84 **Computer**
One of the best interactive basketball games today. Scottie Pippen's **Slam City** reviewed.

PAGE 96 **Portables**
Star Gate by Acclaim, **NFL Quarterback**.

PAGE 98 **Edutainment**
JumpStart Kindergarten. **SimTown**.

PAGE 102 **In Print**
Internet insider. The Virtual Community. Donkey Kong Country guide book review.



VIRTUAL POOL

GUARANTEE

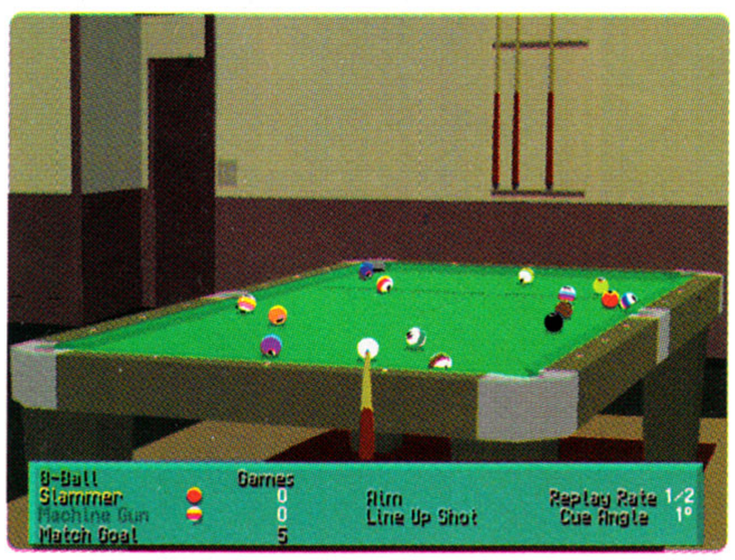
THIS GAME WILL IMPROVE YOUR ACTUAL POOL PLAY OR YOUR MONEY BACK.

DETAILS INSIDE PACKAGE.

Introducing Virtual Pool™, a game so real we guarantee that it will improve your actual pool game...or your money back! It has all the angles, all the shots of the real game - and then some! Take a video lesson and learn trick shots from Hall-of-Famer Lou Butera—or go on an historic multimedia tour of the sport. So chalk up your mouse and take your best shot!

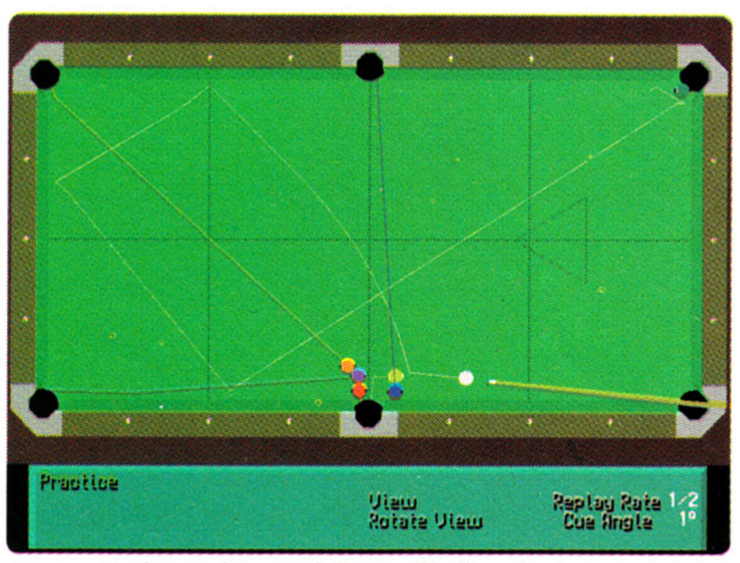
"Virtual Pool is flat out impressive stuff...you just have to see this thing in action."
— PC Gamer

On PC CD-ROM



Line up your shot and get ready to sink it in the corner.

- Modem and Network Play
- Shot tracking
- Full-motion Multimedia Library
- Realistic Feel & Control



Turn on Tracking to learn trickshots and ball mechanics.

Get a free demo at our Web site at HTTP://WWW.INTERPLAY.COM

Interplay™
By Gamers. For Gamers.™
1 800 INTERPLAY

Celeris

3DX

© 1995 Celeris Inc. and Interplay Productions. Virtual Pool is a trademark of Interplay Productions. All rights reserved. EGMJP5

Get

get

Sega CD™
Sega CD 32X™
PC CD-ROM
versions now
available!

Only Digital Pictures
gets you in the game.

in the game or outa my face.

Slam City™ With Scottie Pippen. The only first-person POV full-motion-video streetball game you can get.

This ain't no candy-colored cartoon, but live, in-your-face streetball. You're <u>in</u> the game, one-on-one. Drive, dunk, shoot and steal – anytime you want. But beware. You take on real players, in 100% constantly interactive game play. No lags. No delays. Instant response. All in real video so sharp it'll knock you into next week. How's it done? Two patent-pending technologies from Digital Pictures: InstaSwitch® for instant action and DigiChrome™ for dazzling video. You'll need all this technological wizardry to face the wildest B-ball players this side of the 'hood. So go ahead, try taking it to the hole. Who knows? You may even earn enough respect to face Scottie Pippen himself. It's Slam City, baby.

InstaSwitch THE INSTANT CD-ROM RESPONSE VIDEO TECHNOLOGY

DigiChrome

FOR THE DEALER NEAREST YOU OR TO ORDER DIRECT CALL 1-800-262-5020.

Slam City With Scottie Pippen is available on: Pentium™ PC CD-ROM, 486 PC CD-ROM, Sega CD™ and Sega CD 32X™.

TEEN T AGES 13+

Digital Pictures, the Digital Pictures logo, Slam City, DigiChrome, InstaSwitch and "When Movie Makers Make Games, Everything Else Is Just Cartoons" are all trademarks of Digital Pictures, Inc. Pentium is a trademark of Intel Corporation. Sega, Sega CD and Sega CD 32X are trademarks of Sega Enterprises, Ltd. © 1995 Digital Pictures, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Digital Pictures

That's Mister Scottie Pippen to you.

Brittany loves a winner. And only a winner.

"How'd you get up that high?"

When Movie-Makers Make Games, Everything Else Is Just Cartoons.™

POWER ON

The Bits and the Bitten

The international language of diplomacy is now English. The international language of love is forever French. The international language of marketing is hype.

Pure, undiluted hype assails us consumers from every angle. It's not always easy, even for professional journalists, to separate fact from image.

Everyone knows about victimless crime; hype produces crimeless victims. You're victimized by every electronic gaming TV commercial that doesn't show the actual on-screen graphics or magazine that hates something this month but loved it in the previous issue.

Pull on the hip boots, because this month's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E^3) was the official start of a hype-athon that won't stop until every last one of us buys one of the new expert platforms.

The Sega Saturn, Sony PlayStation (PSX) and Nintendo's Ultra 64 are ready to join the 3DO Player, Atari Jaguar, Philips CD-i and several other systems in a do-or-die fight for market share—and the megabucks that go with that position.

Analysts assert that only three systems can survive the competition as major factors in the market.

Even that may be a generous assessment. Electronic gaming history teaches that it is much more common for two systems to divide the market. The prediction that three will achieve a base of at least 5 million users may be more of a testimony to the quality of the new platforms than a correct assessment of consumer buying patterns.

CD-i has an unusually wide appeal that lies mostly outside the boundaries of the traditional game market. Its success or failure doesn't depend on becoming number one with gamers. CD-i will continue to offer games, but entertainment is only one component of its software library. Exempting CD-i from the discussion, that still leaves a maximum of three winners and several systems headed to the recycler.

This high-stakes competition guns the hype up several notches, because no one wants to manufacture expensive landfill.

The manufacturers of cutting-edge hardware systems are making claims and counterclaims about the power of their products. The rhetoric is incendiary, and the infighting is ferocious. None of the platform makers intend to back down. They can't afford to.

It is natural to laud the performance features. Solid consumer information is always valuable, and **EG** will maintain its authoritative coverage of hardware, peripherals and accessories.

Unfortunately, each system manufacturer has a unique view of the situation, one favorable to its own machine. It's getting tough to tell which system has the superior capabilities, because no two outfits agree on a measuring stick.

So companies squabble about how to count bits and dispute their importance in gauging hardware performance. When at least one platform achieves its 64-Bit rating by adding all the processors together, it's *Alice in Wonderland* time in the cyberverse.

I have a radical suggestion: Don't worry about it. The weakest of these super-platforms is a powerhouse compared to any earlier consoles. They are all capable of near-miraculous feats.

The question is not what they can do, but how effectively designers and programmers will use those capabilities in the software for the system. Most gaming professionals acknowledge that the most recent 16-Bit cartridges still haven't tapped the full potential of the Genesis or SNES.

The expert platforms won't be any different. The first generation will be only a little better than 16-Bit quality. The graphics and sound will set new standards, but most of the launch titles will be bigger rather than better. Expect plenty of fighting and auto racing games with more characters, cars, tracks and so forth, but pretty much the same play-action.

Then comes the second generation of games. As we've already seen with 3DO, the second batch of games leaps forward dramatically. Then each successive wave of products will establish still-loftier benchmarks until 128-Bit consoles steal their thunder around 1999.

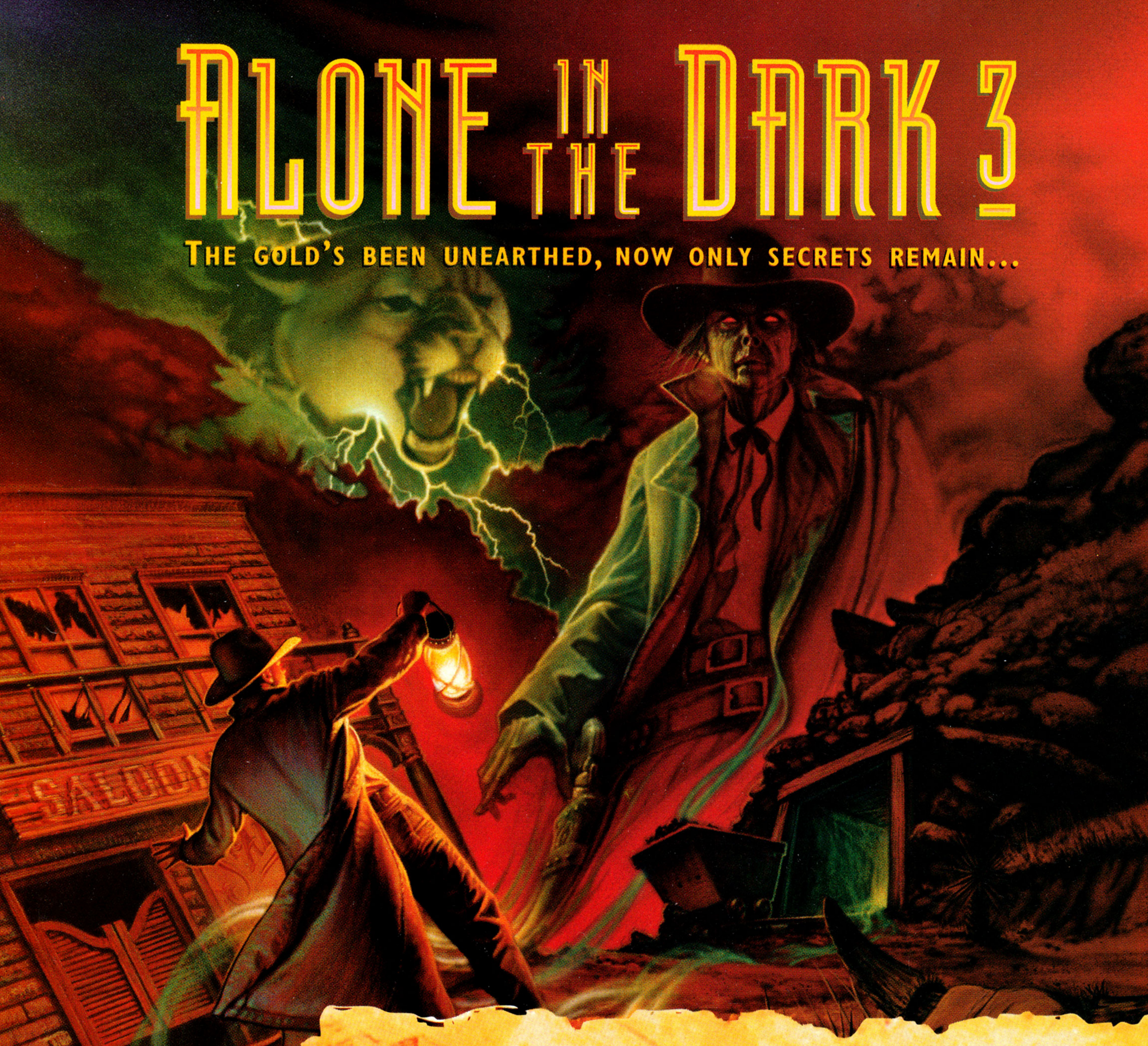
Technology is great, but it's only a means to an end. It facilitates, but it doesn't carry any intrinsic content. That's why **EG** is the magazine of interactive experience, not the magazine of one or more hunks of hardware.

You play electronic games, not circuit boards and bus connectors—and so do we.

by Arnie Katz

ALONE IN THE DARK 3

THE GOLD'S BEEN UNEARTHED, NOW ONLY SECRETS REMAIN...



WIN A TRIP TO TOMBSTONE!

SADDLE-UP FOR AN ADVENTURE IN THE WILDEST WEST EVER.

Buy Alone in the Dark 3 and you may find yourself in "the town too tough to die!" Register by June 16, 1995, and you could be off on one of three week-long trips for two to Tombstone's gold mines, authentic saloons, and infamous OK Corral. You could also win 15 I•Motion CD-ROMs and 75 hint books.

Alone in the Dark 3 will also take you on a 3-D adventure to the ghost town of Slaughter Gulch, where the cast and crew of Hill Century Studios' latest production have vanished. As supersleuth Edward Carnby, you'll enjoy up to 70 hours of solving puzzles and dodging outlaws as you uncover their mysterious disappearance. So sharpen your spurs and get ready for the draw... with Alone in the Dark 3 you can't imagine how wild the West can get.

BUY ALONE IN THE DARK 3 BY JUNE 16TH FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN.

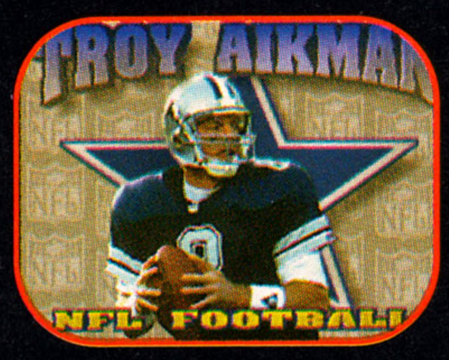
I•MOTION

Your Wild West adventure is now available on PC CD-ROM.

It's Windows compliant and Sound Blaster compatible.

For more information or contest rules, call: 800-443-3386.

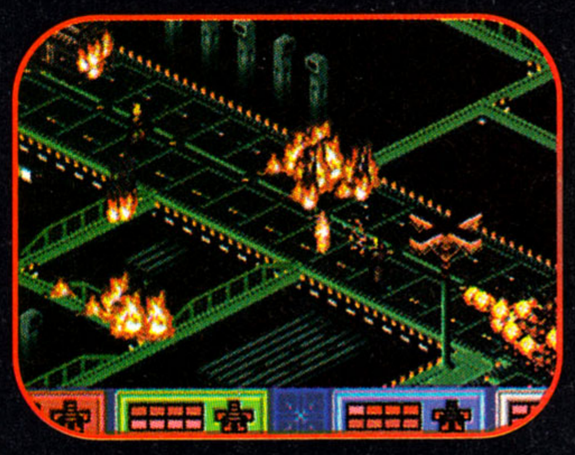
Best games. Best system. Best get off your butt and get one.



Aikman NFL Football™

"Its really impressive...the Jaguar version is the best yet." –EGM

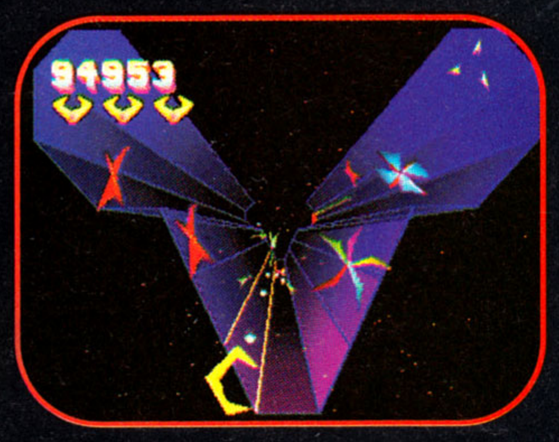
"It has tantalizing innovations and a well-prepared collection of features." –GamePro



Syndicate™

"Jaguar strategy fans should be stoked. One of the best Jaguar games."–Game Players

"More than 50 missions of mayhem and mob activity." –GamePro



Tempest 2000™

"One of the most intense video gaming experiences ever."–Next Generation

"Further proof that the next level of gaming has arrived."

"This game sets a new standard for intensity."–Die Hard Game Fan

"10–Editor's Choice Gold Award."–EGM

"Best sound and best shooter–all platforms."–Game Informer

Doom™

"Blows Sega's 32X version away!"

"The best version of DOOM for any home system."–VideoGames

"Doom is a gaming milestone."

"10–a mega hit!" –GamePro

Alien Vs. Predator™

"A masterpiece and a milestone... AVP scared the hell out of me."–VideoGames

"AVP's graphics are stunning." –GamePro

"Best Jaguar action adventure game." –Die Hard Game Fan

"Jaguar game of the year" –Game Informer & Game Players

Zool 2™

"Features superior level design... the visuals are truly gorgeous."–Die Hard Game Fan.

"Zool has everything... once you play, you're hooked." –EGM

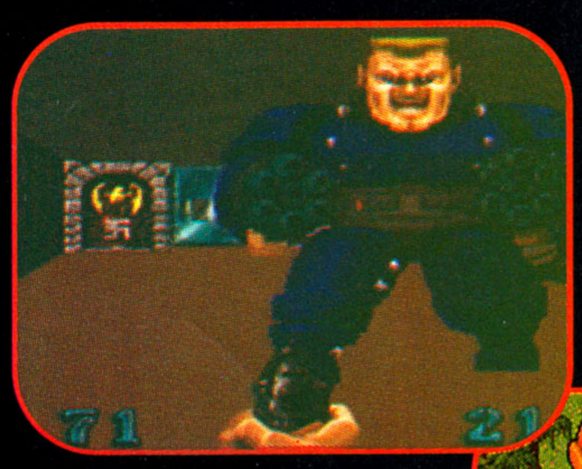
Val D' Isere Skiing and Snowboarding™

"My adrenaline is pumping–I'm blown away!"

"The best skiing and snowboarding game ever created."

"The speed at which it moves is what makes it so freakin' fun."–VideoGames

"Graphically, the art is right on." –Die Hard Game Fan



Wolfenstein™

"The best on any platform, including the PC."

"If you want riveting action, intense graphics, lots of blood and tons of glory, Wolfenstein delivers."

"It's candy for your senses." –GamePro

Theme Park™

"...a sardonic strategy game that honors the unique design of SimCity and Populus."

"It's worth the price of admission."–GamePro

"Anyone who enjoys designing things is gonna love this game." –Game Players

"Recommended." –VideoGames

ATARI MADE IN THE USA Game tips and hints: 1-900-737-ATARI. 95¢ per minute. If you are under 18, be sure to get a parent's permission before calling. A touch-tone telephone is required. USA only. Atari Jaguar information is available in the Atari Gaming Forum on CompuServe. Type GO JAGUAR to access this area 24 hours a day. Atari Jaguar information is available in the Atari Roundtable Forum on GEnie. Type JAGUAR to access this area 24 hours a day. *Includes Jaguar and one controller. ATARI, the Atari logo, Jaguar, the Jaguar logo, Burn Out, Fight for life, Iron Soldier, Tempest 2000, Hover Strike are,trademarks or registered trademarks of Atari Corporation. Copyright 1995, Atari Corporation, Sunnyvale, CA 94089-1302. Made in the U.S. of domestic and imported components. All rights reserved. Troy Aikman NFL Football © 1994 Williams Entertainment Inc. Tradewest™ and Troy Aikman NFL™ Football are trademarks of Williams Entertainment Inc.

COMING SOON

IRON SOLDIER™

"The best game of its kind."

"Simulation game of the year, among all hardware platforms."–Die Hard Game Fan

"Gripping first person game with edge-of-the-seat excitement." –GamePro

RAYMAN™

"The control is perfect and the artwork is phenomenal." –Die Hard Game Fan

"The whole game looks like a cartoon."–EGM

As if it weren't enough having the most killer system on the face of the earth, we created some of the most mind-blowing, head-exploding games in the universe. All you have to do is take one look at what the magazine critics have been saying and you'll know that the Atari Jaguar is where it's at.

ULTRA VORTEX™

"The graphics in this game are mind bending...the detail is unbelievable."
–Die Hard Game Fan

FIGHT FOR LIFE™

"Its super smooth graphics... texture-mapped polygons... gives Virtua Fighter a one-two punch."–VideoGames

HOVER STRIKE™

"Hover Strike should blow you away."–EGM
"With 30 fully texture-mapped 3D levels, and two-player co-op mode you simply cannot lose with this game."

BURNOUT™

"Redefines the term hi-octane. The fastest motorcycle racing game, bar none."–VideoGames

CANNON FODDER™

"Detailed and ultra colorful...original and just plain fun to play."–Die Hard Game Fan
"War has never been so much fun!" –EGM

JAGUAR™ 64-BIT INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA SYSTEM

DO+THE MATH

Williams ® is a trademark of WMS Games Inc. All rights reserved. Team names, logos, helmet designs, uniforms, Super Bowl and NFL™ are trademarks of the NFL and its member clubs. Ultra Vortex is a trademark of Beyond Games Inc. Val D'Isere Skiing and Snowboarding™ is a trademark of Virtual Studio. Doom™ and Wolfenstein 3D™ Copyright by id Software. All rights reserved. Alien™ and Predator™ © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. Used under sublicense from Activision. Zool is a trademark of Gremlin Interactive Ltd. Cannon Fodder is registered trademark of Virgin Interactive Entertainment. Virgin is a registered trademark of Virgin Enterprises Inc. Theme Park and Syndicate are trademarks of Electronic Arts. Game Programs © BULLFROG Productions Ltd. Manufactured under license by Ocean of America. Actual screen shots may vary. All other trademarks and copyrights are properties of their respective owners.

FEEDBACK

Computers versus Consoles

When I bought a PC in 1991, I thought it would be the end of my console-gaming days. When I found (and subsequently became addicted to) **Railroad Tycoon**, it only served to strengthen this idea. But as I continued to explore the world of PC games, I realized the severe limitations of the machine. Even after a costly upgrade, the performance of the PC paled next to even the lowliest 8-Bit console when it came to anything involving scrolling or with more than a couple of moving objects on the screen at the same time. Without the specialized hardware found in the consoles, the PC is hard pressed to match its performance.

I'm very pleased to see products like the Matrox video cards [*Test Lab*, March ***EG***] appearing on the market. My question is, "What took them so long?!" By now, we should have already had a standard in place. I hope your optimism about Matrox being in a strong position to establish themselves is true. The end users couldn't care less who the eventual standard bearer is, but it would benefit the industry if a truly high-quality product were to quickly gain a foothold and avoid the inevitable compatibility wars we have seen with every other new enhancement to the PC. Maybe then I could get rid of my console for good!

Bob "Smoke" Smolka
Staten Island, NY

It's up to you if you want to get rid of your console, Smoke, but you won't find any of us here tossing our game machines regardless of which system we prefer. It's still true that console systems are great for some types of games, computers super for others. It's not just the speed of scrolling and the numbers of sprites; it's the controllers vs. keyboards, it's the resolution and color range of TV vs. monitor images, etc. Each has its own strengths. Yes, there is a convergence of capabilities—there are video game-type controllers available for PCs, and we'll see if it's not too late for the video game emulation cards talked about over the last couple of years to materialize. Meanwhile, with increasingly powerful carts and continued ingenuous breakthroughs in how much game play can be incorporated in them, not to mention the transfer to CD-based play in newer console systems (albeit with concomitant slower access time), games as complex as ***Railroad Tycoon*** *can and have been brought out for console play.*

You get the STD controller this month.

Letter Contest

Win an STD controller! Each month **EG** *selects one letter and the writer gets a choice of one of STD's fine line of controllers for consoles and computers.*

Rise of the Sheepish

As you are the only adult video gaming magazine left on the newsstands in my area, I felt it important to support you with a subscription. I've been purchasing ***EG*** on and off since the first issue. At 40, I find the rest of the magazines that cover the cartridge games too juvenile in content, more fluff than substance. Yes, my age group is probably in the minority of the cartridge (console) market, but I'm sure there are others who still enjoy playing some video games.

What sold me on subscribing was Rich Heimlich's column in the February '95 issue entitled *Broken Window Pains Part 1*. Bravo! I too am not a fan of Windows and it was nice to see someone finally with enough guts to publish something that doesn't praise that product to the hilt. (Yes, that was aimed at those Mac-loving editors who sheepishly put the disclaimer at the end of the article. No doubt so the Windows lovers wouldn't go ballistic because they read something that spoiled their rose-colored view of that overrated product!) Of course, I noticed in the March issue that part two of the article did not appear. Is the Gate's vengeance rearing its ugly head and those whimpering editors now suppressing any dissenting views? "Off with their heads and free the magazine of the Gate's tyranny!"

Alex Hrapunov
Goldvein, VA

We found a few months ago in these Feedback pages that age cannot wither, nor custom stale, the fascination some folks have for video games, but it's true that

"You're Outnumbered, Outgunned And Taking On Water By The Ton. What's Your Order, Hotshot?"

USS Ticonderoga

Command Decision on the High Seas

Get To The Bridge And Take Command Of The Navy's Finest

Awesome Electronics & Weapons Help You Take Action

First person perspective & 3-D graphics will blow you away!!

Like they say, it's not just the Navy, it's an adventure! It's USS Ticonderoga, the incredibly realistic naval simulator ***that puts you in command and in the center of battle.***

Everyone is counting on you as the Annapolis-bred hotshot commanding the flagship missile cruiser of the Navy's modern fleet. It's as close as you can get to serving in the Navy without enlisting.

Tico uses ***actual US Navy specs*** with real time decisions, perilous world security situations and authentic advanced military technology. The first person perspective and awesome 3-D rendered graphics will blow you away.

Are You Fit For Command?

Can you survive more than 20 different missions that get increasingly more difficult as you progress? Can you command sorties that reflect current world hotspots - North Korea, The Middle East and the North Atlantic? Are you command material?

Get to the bridge, inventory your weapons and take command of the naval simulator that will challenge every one of your senses! This is war! This is USS Ticonderoga!

© 1994- 95 Mindscape, Inc. All rights reserved. © 1994-95 Intelligent Games, Ltd. Design and implementation by Intelligent Games, LTD. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation. All other company and product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.

For IBM® PC & Compatibles CD-Rom required.

To hear the great reviews or to order

1-800-234-3088

MINDSCAPE

demographically you (and some of us) are in a minority faction among video gamers. The console market as such is broadening its definition, and so too its age demographics, however. You also touch upon at least some of the reasons we put out this magazine.

Hmpf! "Sheepish," sezee. "Whimpering," sezee. "Off with their heads," sezee. I ask you, is this any way to write to a magazine one has just praised, and sent in a subscription to, says I? I dunno, Alex. ...

As to sic semper tyrannus gates *and all that, check out the next letter.*

The Almighty Dollar

I just picked up the most recent copy of ***Electronic Games***. I started reading it again after some time away, due to a friend's input about a new look, a new feel and the new content.

After skimming through the entire issue, I realized that my favorite department was no longer included, that is *Heimlich Maneuver*. I've enjoyably followed Rich's "editorials" through various on-line services for years and had feared that your printing of his honest but direct perspectives would draw advertiser disapproval.

It appears my fears were not unfounded. Couldn't you have at least mentioned something to the readers in his behalf, or have the advertisers garnered so much power now that they have you all scurrying into corners at their first sign of concern?

Dr. Steven Marccoli
Seaford, NY

Scurrying into corners? Not quite hardly, Doctor. Space and timing conspired to keep part two of Rich's Broken Window Pains diatribe out of the March issue, but you have, we hope, seen his insightful (or is that inciteful?) prose return in April, and we plan to keep him with us for a while. Meanwhile, here's someone who takes a different view on Heimlich.

Expert-Friendly Systems

Rich Heimlich writes like he knows what he's talking about, which is good. Even granting his points about Windows, he is missing one thing about the topic. The reason software publishers are willing to take a step back in the games is user friendliness. If the computers aren't easy to operate, then who cares about them? A lot of people have been computer experts for a long time, but a lot more are not. They don't know all about programming and poking around inside the system, and they don't want to.

What we want is a computer where it is easy to get the games to boot. I don't care how good a game is supposed to be. If I spend two hours just to get it to run, or it won't run at all, then it doesn't matter how good a game it is. If I can't play it, it's just a slice of plastic in a fancy box.

Rich Heimlich probably thinks I'm dumb because of that. Maybe I am, but I have a lot of company. That's why there's a "Dummies" book series.

I'm an expert in my job just like Mr. Heimlich is in his, but he shouldn't expect me to be an expert in his, too. Making Windows the standard will open computer gaming to a lot more people eventually, and then there will be even more good games.

Bill Dornfeld
San Jose, CA

Rich responds: "I agree with all your points, Bill. All are of valid concern, but let me respond to some of them. I have to suggest that in its current form, Windows is not all that user friendly. Look at the case of all the uninstaller utilities out there, for example. There's no guarantee that loading and running games in Windows is or will be any easier than in DOS; it's just a different set of problems. In fact, my concern is with the less proficient user; until Windows does become genuinely user friendly, it is more difficult for those who have not dedicated themselves to learning more about the inner workings of the computer.

"My column was an attempt to set people talking on this issue so we can help to assure that goal of user friendliness in whatever operating environment comes next."

Repetitive SF2 Injury

Thanks for the article on RSI [*Gaming Without Pain*, March ***EG***]. I've really improved my gaming habits since I read the article and I try to take breaks every half hour. If I hadn't read the article I might have ended up with RSI. Thanks!

Blanka
via e-mail; no reply address

That ol' repetitive stress syndrome can sure play havoc with knocking out Dhalsim or Zangief in the crunch, huh, Blanka! But (seriously) we're glad you found the benefit of that article, and we hope that you in fact represent many of our readers who will avoid crippling problems by taking Ms. Quilter's advice to heart.

Got Us Mpegged?

JJ Barrel made a stupid mistake in his column. In the April issue he mentions "Ampeg" in a note about TruMotion. The company he *meant* must be Mpeg. Ampeg mostly makes audio equipment. The column sometimes has interesting rumors, but he should watch the facts.

Frank Terlinger
Kansas City, MO

Whoa, Frank—While you're right that the term should have been MPEG, that's a standard, not a company; the acronym is based on the initials of Motion Picture Experts Group. Ampeg was a typographical error that snuck by our proofreaders. A last-minute rapid and not terribly in-depth bout of research (through the last couple of Comdex and CES program books) as we go to press reveals no company by the name of Ampeg, though we believe there are a couple of audio makers with similar names. So, before you complain about our getting our facts straight, do your own double-check.

We look forward to your letters, both to:

Feedback % Electronic Games
330 South Decatur, Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107

and e-mailed to elecgames@aol.com

E-mail us! **We respond to every letter addressed to us on-line at: elecgames@aol.com**

After 70 years,

only one thing can awaken the horror.

desire.

THE 11th HOUR

The sequel to The 7th Guest™

Robin Morales believes in evil.
She trails it for a living.
But now she's vanished in the Stauf mansion,
where a madman once perfected murder.

Too bad you don't believe in anything.
Because you're going in after her.

With over an hour of live-action video,
faster and smoother graphics, high quality,
full motion video without any additional hardware
required, an all-new trail of sophisticated, psychological
terror and more diverse games, puzzles and quests,
The 11th Hour: The sequel to The 7th Guest™ bests
any interactive game on the market.

It should.
It's the successor to the most successful and acclaimed
PC CD-ROM game ever made.

AVAILABLE NOW FOR PC CD-ROM AND MAC CD-ROM
AND THE 3DO™ SYSTEM

MATURE
Suggestive Themes
Realistic Blood and Gore

The 11th Hour: The sequel to The 7th Guest is a trademark of Virgin Interactive Entertainment, Inc. and Trilobyte, Inc.
© 1995 Virgin Interactive Entertainment, Inc. and Trilobyte, Inc. All rights reserved.
Virgin is a registered trademark of Virgin Enterprises, Ltd. 3DO is a trademark of The 3DO Company.

HOTLINE

THE INSIDERS GUIDE TO THE ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Compiled by Joyce Worley & Ross Chamberlain

Gaming Prepares For E3

The Interactive Entertainment Industry Gets Ready For This Year's Biggest Show

Secrecy is a big part of the electronic gaming industry, as each creative team tries to protect its investment before displaying it to the world. But, as the time for the summer show draws near, the wraps start to come off, and insiders speculate about what's going to be announced.

The Electronic Entertainment Expo, nicknamed E3, will showcase the gaming industry in the Los Angeles Convention Center May 11-13. Closed to the public, this trade-only event should bring together an outstanding collection of software and introduce new hardware formats.

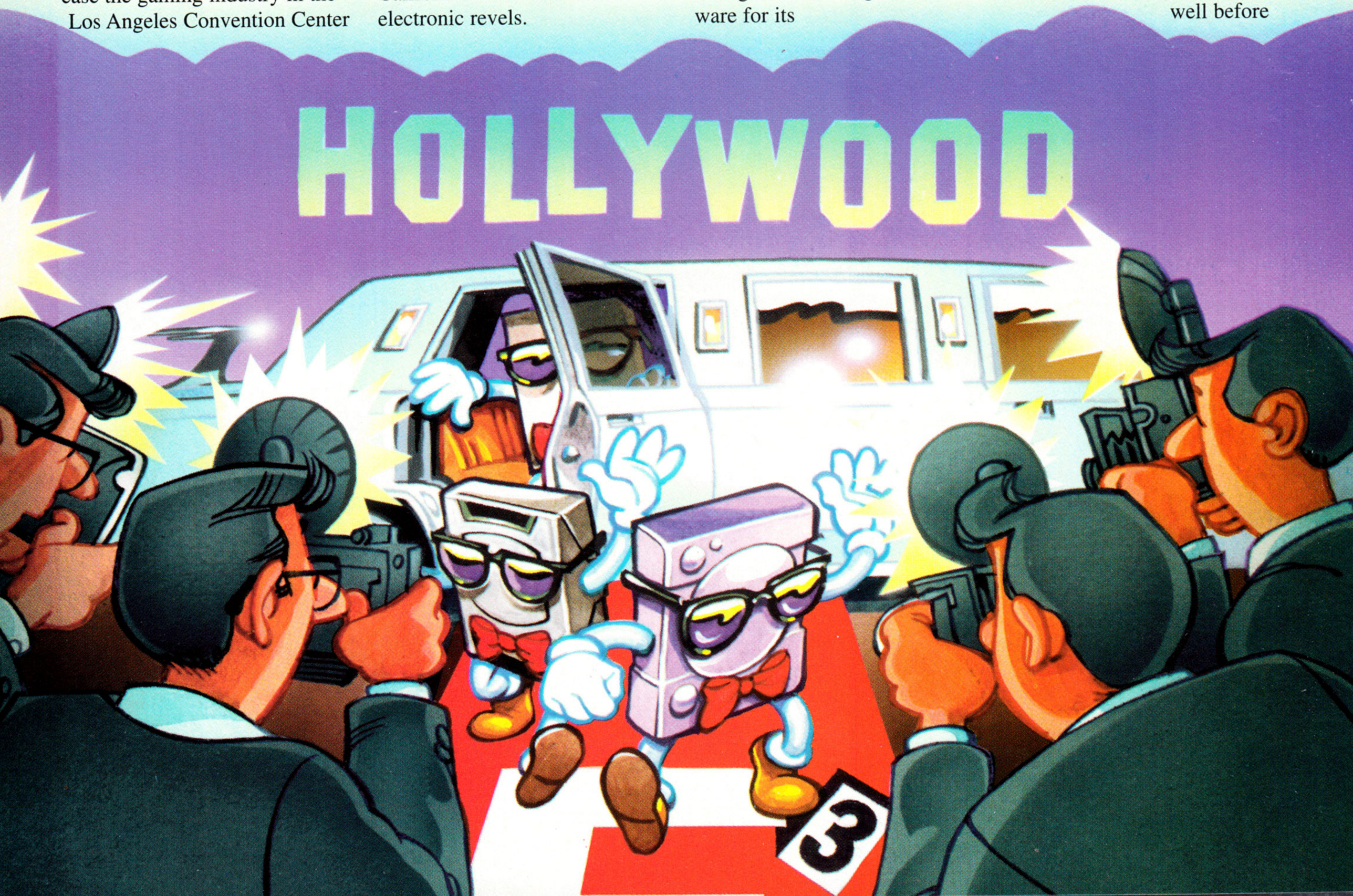
E3 won last year's war between competing convention hosts, sending the Summer Consumer Electronic Show into limbo, at least for 1995. Instead of traveling East, gaming professionals will gather in California for its biannual electronic revels.

Hardware Leaders

Tantalizing bits of information hint at the products that will be shown there. Sega will display the Saturn, already available in Japan and scheduled for American debut September 2. It's a safe prediction that Sega personnel will be happy at E3; the machine had already sold 580,000 units in Japan by the end of January.

Sega isn't stinting on the software for its next-generation platform. Twenty games, half by Sega and the rest by third-party developers, will be ready by the time of launch. Among them will be the instant hit, **Panzer Dragoon**, which presold 600,000 copies.

Sony gave the press a preview of the PlayStation behind closed doors in January, and will unveil its new platform at E3. (See ***EG***/Mar. for details.) The U.S. launch will happen well before



Christmas, with four software packages, including **ESPN Extreme** (rollerblading, mountain biking and others), an as-yet-unnamed martial arts contest and a flying and shooting space adventure.

Nintendo personnel are so tight-lipped, they won't even say the Ultra 64 will be on show at E^3. But since the target release date is before the holidays, it's a pretty good bet it will. Nintendo has already announced affiliations with software developers, so the press expects to see works-in-progress by U.S. and Japanese gamemakers.

The introduction of three new game consoles will make this an especially festive industry gathering. And that won't be the whole story. There will be 3DO's 64-Bit machine, which adds MPEG and over 250,000 texture-mapped polygons per second (see *EG*/Oct.94) and over a dozen software products that support it.

Creative Insights bought the rights to the Miracle Keyboard and will introduce an enhanced version, as well as electronic drums, guitar and a saxophone.

Games, Games, Games

Game developers will not rush to abandon the installed base of 16-Bit consoles, and a significant number of new video games will be displayed at E^3, as well as multimedia programs and titles for the new platforms.

Capcom is working on **Mega Man 7** and **Breath of Fire II** for SNES, as well as eight titles scheduled for winter release, for the next-generation systems. **Street Fighter: The Movie, Darkstalkers, Street Fighter Legends, X-Men** (head-to-head fighting), **Incredible Toons** (adventure) and an interactive movie game are scheduled for the Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation.

Time Warner will introduce **Atmosfear, The Harbingers,** a multiplayer, 3-D action adventure for CD-ROM. Also new is **The Palace**, a graphic chat-club for netters to explore, visit or play games. **The Basement** is a horrific war against crazed bugs.

SCI is working on **The Lawnmower Man 2**, for PC and Mac CD, PlayStation, Sega Saturn and 3DO. **Kingdom O Magic**, a comedic adventure and **Hard Corps**, a multiplayer arcade game, will also appear this fall for the same systems.

U.S. Gold's **Skeleton Krew** (space battle) will be available for Genesis early this summer. The company is also working on games for the advanced systems. A revamped **Soul Star** (sci-fi shooter) and **Thunderhawk** (helicopter combat) will appear for the Sega CD 32X. **Heads-On Soccer, Shellshock** (tank arcade game) and **BC Racer** are for the 32X. For the Sega Saturn and PlayStation, there's **Tomb Raider** (strategy/action adventure) and **The Scottish Open** (golf).

Matthew (**7th Guest**) Costello and F. Paul (*The Select)* Wilson are cooperating on **Mirage** for Time Warner (CD-ROM), a story of twin sisters in virtual reality.

Merit's **G-Nome** (an interactive movie with arcade action) casts the gamer as sheriff for a group of planets.

Vic Tokai will show a new line of multimedia software under the line name Nova Spring. Watch for **Silverload** (vampires in the Old West) and **Deadline** (hostage rescue) for CD-ROM, as well as titles for the Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation to be released later in the year.

Viacom will show a cartridge and floppy version of an unnamed word game that their spokesman says is better than **Tetris**.

This is just a tease of the eye-popping products to be shown. Most companies are keeping mum until closer to show time, but by next month we should know even more.

But, there's one thing for sure: The gaming industry is looking forward to E^3 with an eagerness and excitement unequaled by any other show for years. They're targeting their production dates to be able to make dramatic presentations at the convention. It is safe to anticipate the greatest game show ever—and *EG* will keep readers informed about everything that's going to happen at this wonderful exhibit.
(Joyce Worley)

PINBALL CHAMPS AT 5TH PAPA TILT

Minneapolis' Paul Madison earned the title of World's Greatest Pinball Player at PAPA 5 World Pinball Championships, staged during February in New York. Madison, playing Williams Electronics' **Dirty Harry**, pulled away on the last ball after staying tied to 1993 champ Lyman "Silk" Sheats.

Natalie Baker of New Haven, CT, hit the top spot in the Women's Division, and Joshua "Razor" Sharpe, 15, son of Williams Electronics' coin-op guru Roger Sharpe, copped the top spot in the Junior Division.

Whispers from Cyberspace

J Barrel—he's everywhere! He desktops by night and writes the secret truths others dare not reveal! Now, direct from his sanctum sanctorum at the Invisible Website—JJ Barrel!

Sega of America has put Venus, a hand-held Genesis, on indefinite hold. The cost of the display boosted the unit's price too high. ...

Will Atari go forward where Sega fears to tread? Something is happening in Sunnyvale, but it's not clear if it's more than an aggressive relaunch of the existing Lynx color portable. ...

Last year, I told you about Robb Alvy's vow to name his first born "Coleco" if it was a boy. The Virgin Games producer and his lady are expecting another addition to the family. Rockin' Robb is sticking to his promise. If it's a son, his name will be "Coleco Alvy." No word yet on whether one of the editors of those so-called next-generation system magazines will match Alvy by dubbing their boy "32X". ...

Fans of the Macintosh entertainment hit The Journeyman Project will have to upgrade their hardware for the sequel, Buried in Time. It may require two hard drives. "We'll try to squeeze it into one," promises a Presto Studios insider.

ESPN/Starwave Plans

The partnership between ESPN and Starwave (see Deals, *EG*/April) was formed to create an on-line sports information service, which they promise will be the most advanced coverage ever produced. The two companies are working together and plan to debut the service on the Internet.

Mike Slade, president of Starwave, promises it will be special: "We have joined forces with the crown jewel of sports TV to redefine the way sports fans stay informed. We're creating an on-line sports community that is unrivaled in its timeliness, comprehensive coverage and fun."

The service promises interactive features as yet unseen on any network. It will have the usual scores, statistics, personalities and inside information, as well as interactive player cards, on-line chat, graphics and well-known sports writers to provide analysis and commentary.

Sports will be added throughout the year, including all big-league teams, golf, tennis, auto racing NC Division schools, minor-league sports and others yet to be named.

The new service will premiere on the Internet's World Wide Web, and fans can get a preview by accessing Starwave's home page (http://www.starwave.com) where they'll see a preview area called Satchel Sports. This area only represents a small sample of what will be in the new location.

Because of its connection (the company is owned by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen), there is a lot of speculation that the new service will eventually be part of the Microsoft Network.

GRAPHIC CYBERSPACE

On-line friends chat face to face via WorldsAway, an updated version of Habitat. Currently in testing, the animated on-line community is scheduled for launch on CompuServe in July, by Fujitsu Limited. Users create real or fantasy images of themselves, much as has been available on the ImagiNation Network, but these are animated, full-length characters. Users' avatars change expression from moment to moment via function keys or pull-down menus, and they can stand or sit in a chair within fully designed rooms or explore an expanding on-line world with streets, parks and other locations. The software will be $10, with usage credit applied against the extended service on CompuServe.

The WorldsAway design team is led by Chip Morningstar and Randy Farmer, who created the on-line community concept called Habitat for LucasFilm in the '80s. Fujitsu originally licensed then recently acquired Habitat from LucasArts, and successfully released it in Japan. WorldsAway was developed and will be administrated by a new division, Fujitsu Cultural Technologies.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Proteus Books will introduce a line of fiction based on game titles this summer. Watch for *The 7th Guest, Under a Killing Moon, Wizardry, Hell, Star Crusader* and other novelizations. ... NEC has developed the world's first Gigabit DRAM. ... Mediamatics has come up with a software-based MPEG decoder for Pentium PCs and will license it to software manufacturers at a cost that works out to $2.50 per copy. ... The folks at ALG got such good response on the Game Gun for 3DO and Sega CD, they pushed up the schedule for the PC Game Gun. It should be available now. ... Nintendo started a new automated game tips line (206-885-7529) and a 95 cents-per-minute counselors line (900-288-0707). The company is also continuing the free service (800-255-3700). Nintendo representatives deal with over 7 million calls per year. ... Computer City opened four supercenters this spring, in Pittsburgh, Tacoma, Salt Lake City and Rockville, MD. ... The cost of ads in CD-ROM magazines is by the megabyte, instead of by the page. ... Sega will launch an interactive action comic book, *Comix Zone*, for the Genesis, this summer. ... Hewlett Packard introduced a line of Pentiums starting under $1,500. ... *The Guinness Book of Records* has sold over 74 million copies, a record surpassed only by sales of the Bible. There'll be a 1995 version available on disk from Groliers this spring. ... NEC's Ready Series of computers come with Net Cruiser, Prodigy, America Online, CompuServe and Imagination Network preloaded. ... Kmart stores now carry SofKey's One-Stop CD Shop products. ... PC Concepts introduced color-coded cables to make system setups easier.

BARGAINING BLOCK

Biz-Deals

Simon & Schuster will create an electronic publishing imprint, Macmillan Digital USA, for references. ... Angel Studios (best known for fx in *The Lawnmower Man)* is working with Nintendo and Silicon Graphics on a project for the Ultra 64. ... U.S. Robotics is moving to Morton Grove, IL. ... Ark Interface is working with NEC Japan, to create **98 Kidspace** and **98 Deskspace**, user-friendly interface programs for NEC Japan computers. ... Gametek acquired all assets of Imagexcel, the Canadian developer who created the **Quarantine** game engine. ... Compaq will preinstall Microsoft Windows '95 on personal computers. ... Fujitsu Microelectronics acquired Future Vision Technologies, to form a Graphics Products organization to develop chips, cards and systems for multimedia. ... Ireland's 10 percent corporate tax, guaranteed to the year 2010, pays off again: Hewlett-Packard is opening a manufacturing plant in Dublin. ... Gametek is working on **Robotech** and Sierra is working on **Red Baron** for Nintendo's Ultra 64. ... Konami will develop games for all the new platforms, including the PlayStation, Sega Saturn and Ultra 64. ... MGM will work with Lagardere Group (parent company to Grolier Electronic and Europe's Matra Hachette Multimedia) to develop games. The first titles will be based on MGM and United Artists film and TV productions. ... Acclaim is purchasing Lazer-Tron Corp., a coin-op redemption company. ... Bandai bought the license for DreamFactory (CD-ROM authoring tools) from CyberFlix. "... the quality of CD-ROM titles in Japan will take a quantum leap," predicted Shin Unozawa, multimedia director of Bandai. ... Apple agreed to let Pioneer make a Macintosh clone. ... Acclaim bought the exclusive game rights for Marvel's live-action movies and television properties, including the highly popular characters *Spider-Man, The Fantastic Four, The Hulk* and other action-oriented superheroes.

Distri-Deals

Spectrum HoloByte signed a long-term agreement with Fasa Corp. Fasa will create a new company, Fasa Interactive Technologies. The first two products, to be published and distributed by S.H., will be based on **Battletech**. ... In a separate deal, Spectrum HoloByte invested in AnimaTek, the company partially owned by Alexey (**Tetris**) Pajitnov. S.H. will be the exclusive distributor for the AnimaTek product line. ... Double Impact Multimedia secured Japanese distribution for IVI Publishing and Morgan Interactive, using a new deal, based on books, that calls for guaranteed minimums and royalty advances. ... Double Impact also signed agreements with Sony Imagesoft, Zelos and Hyper-Quest to distribute products to up to two dozen foreign markets. ... Electronic Arts acquired Kingsoft GMBH, a major German distributor... Sanctuary Woods ended its Affiliate Label relationship with EA and plans to expand its own sales organization. ... Apple leads the world market in PC sales, though Hewlett-Packard leads in the U.S.

ANALOG, AWARE CHIP PUTS CABLE ON HIGHWAY

Analog Devices and Aware, Inc. unveiled a chipset that will allow cable television companies to serve up two-way broadband communications to homes. It allows networks to send information from a hub center to a group of homes, then from each home back to the hub via a special modem.

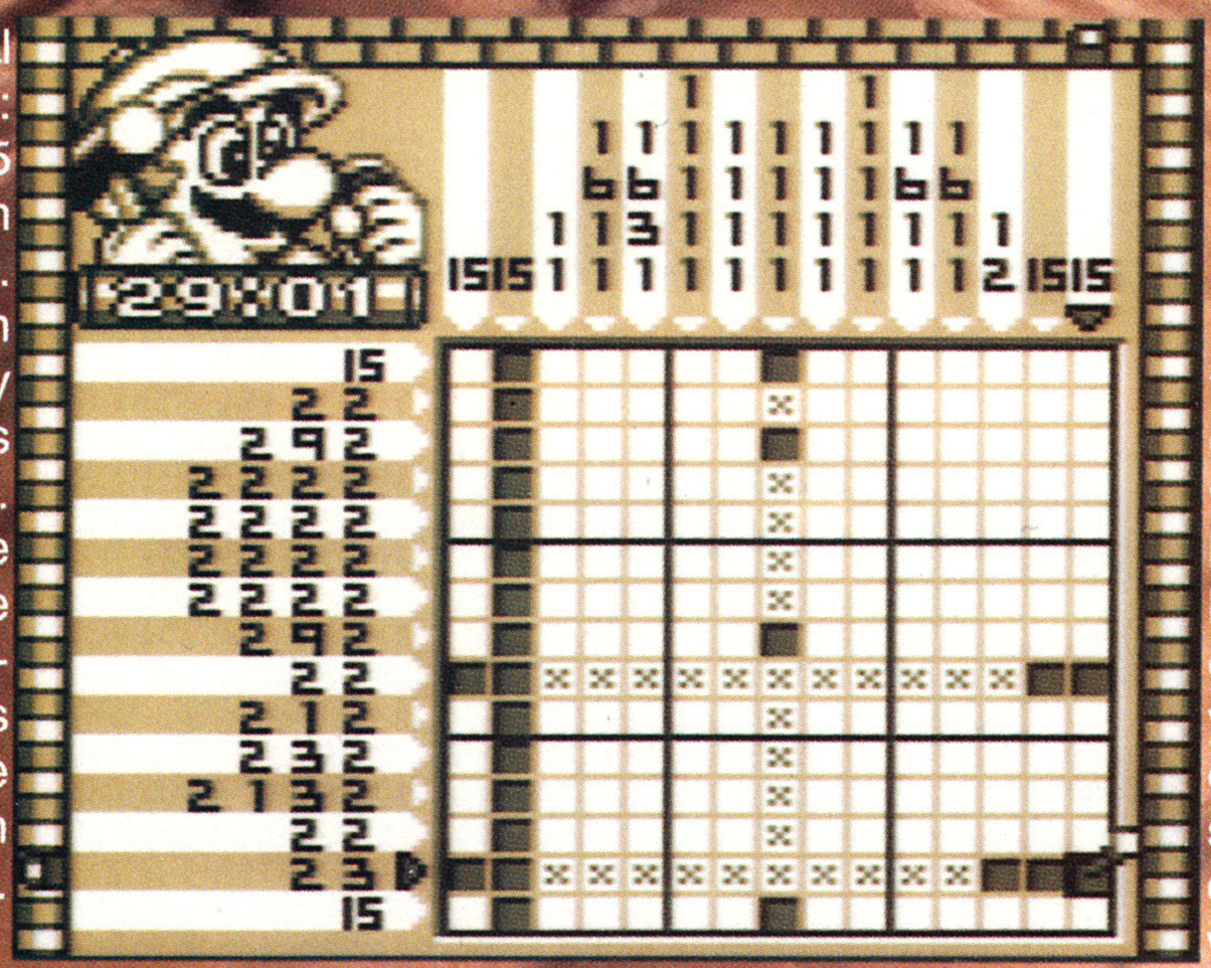
Analog's Greg Whelan was understandably proud and excited by what he summed up as a 'very cost-effective' technology. "... we are committed to this market for the long term, with an aggressive plan for further product development and cost reduction."

Samples of the chipset will be available in August.

Requires Great Skull.

Try Mario's Picross.

How to reveal the hidden picture: There are 15 blocks on each row and column. Determine which block to darken by figuring out clues from the numbers. Numbers above the column are read from top-to-bottom. Numbers to the left of the rows are read from left-to-right.



Each individual number tells you how many consecutive squares need to be darkened. If there is more than one number, there will be at least one blank square between each darkened area. If you have figured out that a square should not be darkened, mark it with an "x."

See if you have the head for Mario's Picross™*.
The unique new puzzle game that's as challenging as Tetris®**.
Use clues and numbers to uncover the hidden picture.
It's the ultimate exercise for your brain.
This is one of over 250 puzzles you'll find
on Game Boy® and Super Game Boy®. Mario's
Picross. Do you have what it takes?

Nintendo®

Play it Loud

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
AGES 6+

©1995 Nintendo of America Inc. *©1995 Nintendo, Ape Inc., Jupiter Co., Ltd. **©1987 Elorg. Tetris licensed to Bullet Proof Software and sublicensed to Nintendo.

NET JURY TEST

Is this a harbinger of tomorrow? Will future decisions be made by the masses on-line?

Interactive Network set up a straw jury on-line, and took weekly surveys about the O.J. Simpson trial. Each week, the volunteers answered questions about the testimony. IN also monitored weekly questions, 1) Is the trial fair? 2) Is he guilty? and 3) What do you think the outcome will be?

The results show:

1) At the beginning of the trial, 63 percent thought the trial was fair; this has increased to 82 percent by the eighth week.

2) At the beginning, 23 percent thought he was not guilty. This increased to 44 percent by the eighth week of the trial.

3) At the beginning, 22 percent expected a hung jury, 60 percent expected an acquittal and 18 percent expected conviction. On the eighth week, 45 percent expect a hung jury, 43 percent expect acquittal, 8 percent expect conviction and 4 percent had no opinion.

As to whether interactive jurors will have a hand in deciding the shape of future trials, it seems possible, but not in the immediate future. As Ron Pehr, a prominent Las Vegas attorney pointed out, it would take a change in the U.S. Constitution to make this legal.

BRITS REGULATE ADS IN GAMES

Britain's Advertising Standards Authority will require software manufacturers to print a notice on any boxes that have advertising included in the games.

According to a spokesman for the Advertising Standards Authority, the group received many complaints from parents who protested the inclusion of advertising in children's products.

STAR POWER

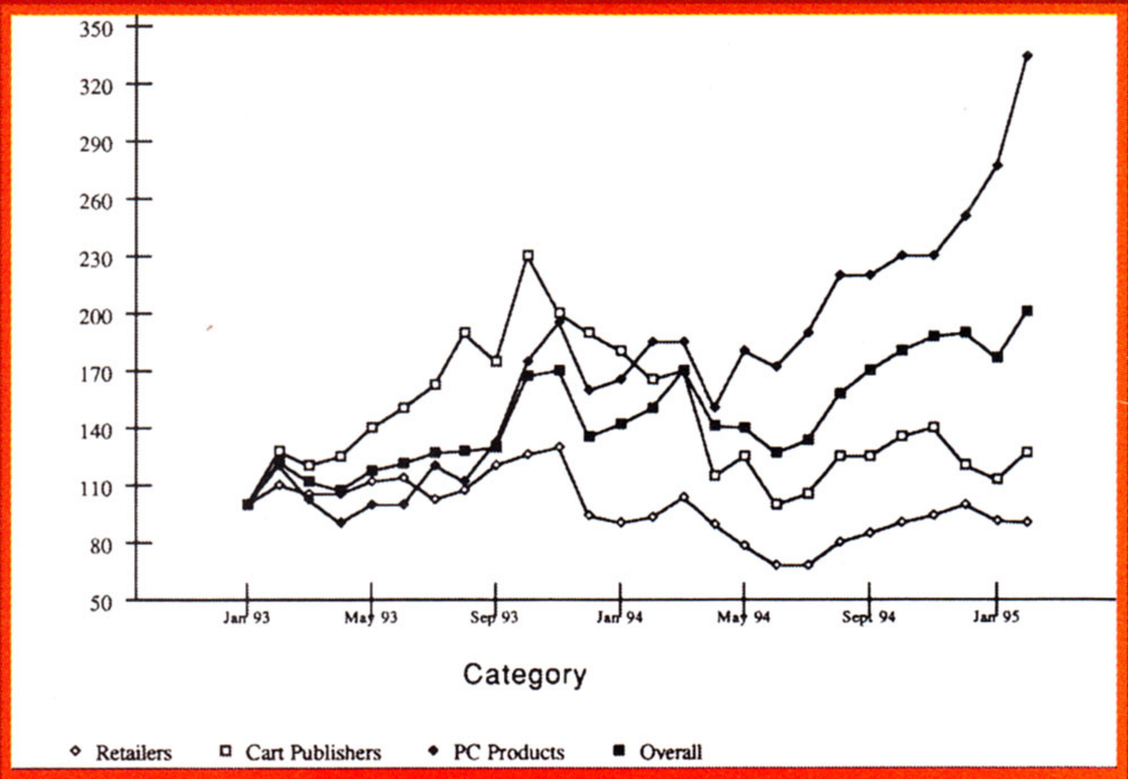
Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page and Robert Plant went live on Prodigy to chat with fans. They also have a Zeppelin Home Page on the Net. ... Philips will produce **The Interactive Improv** for CD-ROM and CD-i. ... James Tolkan and Julie Carmen are the leads in Spectrum Holobyte's **Top Gun** CD-ROM. Anthony Marquex, the martial artist who played Kung Lao in **Mortal Kombat II** and **III**, will compete in 10 tournaments

sponsored this year by the North American Sport Karate Association. ... *NBA JAM: The Music Video* contains video game tips and secret codes for **NBA Jam Tournament Edition**, through a promotion by Acclaim and CBS/FOX Video. NFL heroes Ronnie Lott and Marcus Allen formed *Out of Bounds,* to market apparel decorated with Sega game characters. The catalogs of clothing and accessories will be available with Sega game cartridges.

CYBERSTOCK WATCH

Investors flocked to interactive entertainment stocks during February 1995, driving up the Electronic Games Interactive Index more than 14 percent. The PC sector led the charge, registering a 20 percent+ jump on the strength of major rallies in the stocks of both entertainment software publishers and on-line services. During February even the cartridge index was up 12 percent, thanks to the spillover of PC enthusiasm into shares of Electronic Arts whose revenues are still dominated by cartridge sales. The retail index was flat during the month.

Individual winners outnumbered losers by a 10-to-7 margin, but were even more dominant on a price basis. The largest gains were registered by software tool vendor Alias Research, up 37 percent as a result of merger talks between its competitor Wave Technology and Silicon Graphics. America On Line rose 30 percent on its expanding subscriber base and burgeoning interest in the Internet and on-line services. PC publishing stocks were strong, led by Sierra On-Line jumping almost 27 percent to all-time highs (better than expected December quarter results), Spectrum HoloByte recovering 23 percent from its January decline (renewed confidence that **Star Trek: TNG** on PC CD-ROM would ship) and Broderbund up 12 percent on continuing momentum from **Myst** and other products. Investors bid up Electronic Arts stock 20 percent, on another round of takeover rumors, and bullish sentiment for the company's long-term prospects overshadowed lingering concerns about the earnings shortfalls stemming from the transition from dependence on the 16-Bit market. WMS Industries stock had a strong month, up 22 percent, as investors anticipated new arcade games, approval of licenses to sell video slots in gaming locations and the company's entry into the home software publishing market. Stocks losing ground included Toy Headquarters, down 20 percent, 3DO off 17 percent and Creative Labs, 6 percent lower.



This chart shows month-end data instead of the more volatile daily tracking previously used.

Wall Street continued to pay close attention to both the slowing cartridge market and the evolving platform transition story. Of particular interest are the unit sales, tie ratios and publisher market share for the new platforms in Japan (PS/X and Saturn combined have sold through more than 1 million units to consumers). Specific market share numbers in the U.S. are losing importance for share prices as overall industry growth stalls. (Hardware sales will probably decline 30-40 percent in '95, with software down 25 percent or more.) The key concerns, as reflected in share prices during the next three to six months, will be whether investors focus on the downside risks of the cartridge business, or whether they choose to get positioned now for the new platform launches next fall. The E^3 show in LA will be a watershed for the new systems. Seasonality could also have an impact on prices as summer approaches.

John Taylor is an interactive entertainment industry analyst with Portland, OR-based Arcadia Investment Corporation.

Multimedia CELEBRITY POKER™

FEATURING

- ★ Jonathan Frakes
- ★ Morgan Fairchild
- ★ Joe Piscopo

We've Raised the Ante in CD-ROM Entertainment!

The stars are out—and they're ready to play!

Multimedia Celebrity Poker combines the magic of Hollywood, the fun and excitement of poker, and the interactive experience of CD-ROM technology for Windows.

Grab a chair and ante up with Joe Piscopo of Saturday Night Live fame, Jonathan Frakes from Star Trek: The Next Generation,™ and sexy Morgan Fairchild, whose TV hits include Falcon Crest and Flamingo Road.

Celebrity Poker is outrageous fun and realistic entertainment like you've never played before.

Lights…Camera…Deal!

Actual IBM screen shot.

Multimedia Excitement!

Interactive Entertainment!

Full Motion Celebrity Video!

Multimedia Celebrity Poker is available at your local software retailer or order direct from New World Computing at

1-800-325-8898

MICROSOFT® WINDOWS™ COMPATIBLE

(818) 889-6070 outside the U.S., or by mail:
P.O. Box 4302, Hollywood, CA 90078-4302.

NEW WORLD COMPUTING, INC®

©1994 New World Computing, Inc. Multimedia Celebrity Poker is a trademark of New World Computing, Inc. New World Computing and its distinctive logo are registered trademarks of New World Computing, Inc. All other trademarks belong to their respective holder(s). All rights reserved. IBM screen shown. Actual screens may vary.

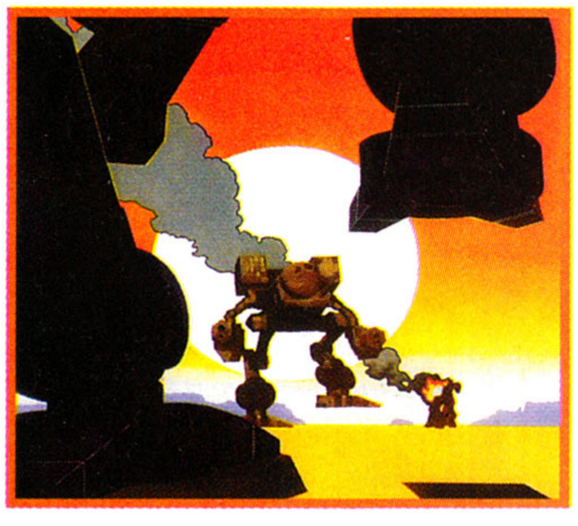
PAUL ALLEN'S STORYOPOLIS

Paul Allen started a partnership with Megan Taylor and Abbie Phillips to launch an entertainment company, Storyopolis. The company will develop movies, TV and multimedia programs based on popular stories for all ages.

Projects now under way include Ralph Steadman's *I Leonardo*.

VIRTUAL WORLD STARTS CONTEST

The Virtual World theme parks are linking up for the 1995 Virtual World Cup competition.



Contestants in the United States (which has eight locations, and five more are scheduled to open this year), will go up against players in the nine Japanese centers. (There are also sites ready to open in London, Montreal, Singapore and Sydney, but they may not be ready in time for the contest.)

Finalists will travel to Las Vegas to compete in **Battletech** and **Red Planet** for the title of World Champion.

MICROSOFT LINES UP NETWORK ENTERTAINMENT

Microsoft Network, now scheduled for launch in August, is engaged in negotiations with numerous content providers. But no one will say just what that content will be.

Viacom is believed to be one of the first targets in Microsoft's negotiations. Viacom, with a large number of prized licenses such as Paramount (*Star Trek)*, MTV and Nikelodeon, could provide a substantial amount of entertainment content for the new network.

Industry analysts also believe that ESPN, through its recent Starwave connection (see associated story elsewhere this issue), will make a deal with Microsoft Network. Starwave, owned by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, is currently planning an Internet area on the World Wide Web that would include player information, discussion areas, sports writers and interactive player cards.

TOP COIN-OPS
February 1995

Figures courtesy of *Replay Magazine*, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos
1. *Killer Instinct,* Midway
2. *Virtua Fighters,* Sega
3. *Tekken,* Namco

Killer Instinct overcomes all for another month.

Best Deluxe Videos
1. *Daytona, USA,* Sega
2. *Cruis'n USA,* Midway
3. *Fast Draw Showdown,* ALG

Daytona gets the checkered flag again.

Best Coin-op Video Software
1. *X-Men: Child of Adam,* Capcom
2. *Bust-A-Move,* Taito/Neo•Geo
3. *Raiden DX,* Fabtek

X-Men bust to the top.

Best Pinball Machine
1. *Star Trek,* Williams
2. *The Shadow,* Bally
3. *Road Show,* Williams

Over the road and through the shadow, trekking remains the way to go.

TOP CD-ROMS
February 1995

This list, prepared by *PC Data*, is based on units sold in over 4,000 stores.

1. *Doom II,* GT Interactive
2. *Myst,* Broderbund
3. *Wing Commander III,* Origin

Doom II and **Myst** have the top two spots as **Wing Commander III** soars into top-three contention.

Sidelight on Gaming:

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE'S WOLF'S OWNER

One of the more unusual characters in last year's Dracula Unleashed (Viacom New Media) was a live, 120-pound wolf, played by King, a 3/4 Alaskan Timber Wolf/Norwegian Elkhound hybrid owned by Tom and Patty Helland of Bethel, MN.

Since I raise wolves and hybrids myself, I was particularly interested in how Tom got his animal to perform on cue, so I got his number from Viacom producer Dave Marsh and gave him a call.

"The producers had called the area looking for a trained wolf," he said. "They'd contacted a friend of ours who has nine wolves and who told them that you can't train a wolf, which is what everyone kept telling them. Then she told them about me.

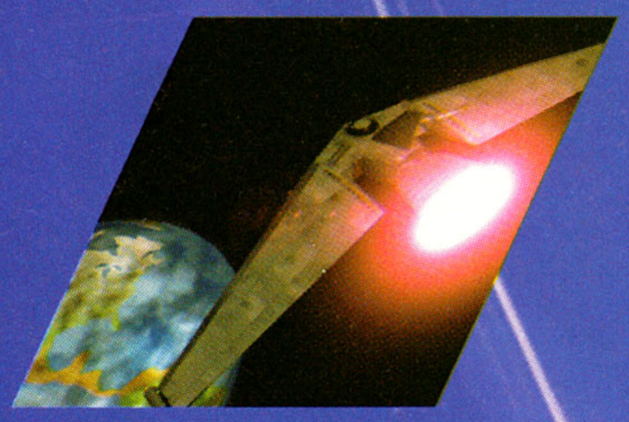
"They wanted to see King, so they paid me to bring him down. They were pretty impressed—he had that real timber-wolf look that they were looking for. They needed him to do things, like jumping, growling and a couple of fight scenes, but they weren't sure how to set them up. I told them to tell me exactly what they wanted and I'd see what I could do.

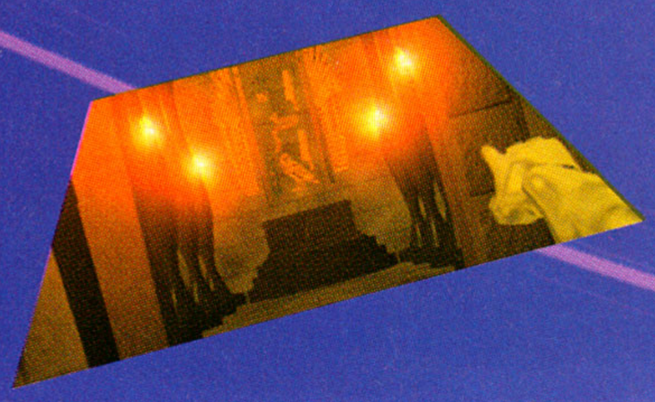
"They'd want King to jump over a five-foot wall, so I put up a seven-foot pen with one five-foot side. Then someone would hit the corner they *didn't* want King to come out of with a stick, poke his head around so King could see him, and disappear. Then Patty would show her face at the other corner and back out of sight and, sure enough, he leapt out—right over the camera.

"As far as snarling on cue, well, he and I play fight a lot and just by raising my hand he'll usually bare his teeth—it's just a game we play. To do it for the camera, though, I had to lay on my back so he'd stand on my chest. Then a guy would hit a tin pan with a stick and stare King right in the eyes while I held on to him from below. When the shot was over I'd always have the guy call King over and pet him to show that he wasn't really mad.

"I know everyone was pleased, but I don't think I'd want to do it again—my number-one concern is King. He's a pretty interesting animal with a really good character, but he's not really a trained wolf." (*Scott Wolf*)

XPLORE ANOTHER DIMENSION





XTRA FUNCTIONS
XTRA CAPABILITY
XL ACTION CONTROLLER™

FOR IBM® (MS-DOS) AND COMPATIBLE PCS

THRUSTMASTER®

THE REALITY SPECIALISTS

10150 S.W. NIMBUS AVE. PORTLAND, OR. 97223-4337 PHONE (503)639-3200 FAX (503)620-8094

NET NEWS

Interplay's Descent was played by over 750,000 gamers after the shareware version went on Internet. The game now has its own news groups and contests on-line. ... The latest version of Visual Engineering's Ovation graphics software automates creation of World Wide Web pages. ... Dial-A-Book lets customers browse the first chapter of books on-line, then order them in hard copy or downloaded. ... The National Writers Union is negotiating to get royalties for authors on downloaded work. ... Prodigy members will send e-mail containing pix and sound clips, thanks to Prodigy's deal with Seattle FilmWorks. ... NASA awarded grants totaling $20 million, to fund products, including a system to allow public access to NASA data. ... Nancy Tamosaitis' book, net.sex, (Ziff-Davis) claims a Kinsey Institute poll proved Internet users are smarter about sex. ... Prodigy is now selling an off-line e-mail manager, and an off-line Bulletin Board Note Manager. ... Restaurant Row, on the SW Networks internet site, will be an "interactive entertainment city" with info about hot spots, gourmet foods, dance clubs, etc. ... ImagiNation Network worked with MuchMusic on Awards Alternative, a series of on-line events covering the Grammy Awards. ... Interplay has a web site, at http:// www.interplay.com, with demos, news, patches and hints. ... Classical music lovers check BMG's Classics World, with www.classicalmus.com. The World Wide Web site has discographies, sound clips, bios, QuickTime movies and more. ... There were over 802,000 visits to *Penthouse*'s WWW page in its first day, more than any other site to date. ... Medio Multimedia is test marketing MedioNet, a CD-ROM interface to the internet. ... Capstone gave copies of Zorro and other goodies to gamers who downloaded the demo from AoL and e-mailed Capstone the special giveaway code from the opening screen. ... Screen Test On-Line is a talent database showcasing performers with search parameters for casting directors. ... Acclaim's NBA Jam Tournament Edition took it to the wire on CompuServe with contests, developer forums, video clips and sounds, hints and tips and previews. ...

SEGA MAKES DEAL WITH TIGER

Tiger Toys will create and market Sega Toys, under a new, long-term agreement. In addition, the two companies also are planning to develop many new electronic products to be marketed by Tiger.

Tiger plans to expand the line of Pocket Arcade hand-held games to include other third-party properties. Tiger will also make products based on titles created by the megacompany Sega of Japan.

Tiger also has a similar agreement to make and create games based on the extensive library of Playskool products, and on Texas Instruments' electronic learning aids.

DIGITAL CHAMP STARTS ACTORS GUILD

Daniel Pesina, combat star of many fighting games, has formed a motion capture actors group, *Champions of Combat: Heroes for Hire* (312-937-0009). The stable of actors and athletes boast experience in motion capture and digitization that they say reduces time spent filming actors by up to one-third. The group has background in all forms of martial arts, use of weapons plus tumbling and acrobatics.

Pesina played in **Mortal Kombat**, and **MK2, Thea Realm Fighters**, ads for **BloodStorm** and in *TMNT II*.

DARKSTALKERS TAKE ON TV

Capcom is partnering with Graz Entertainment (a Hollywood animation producer) to turn **Darkstalkers** into a syndicated TV series. The series will

follow Bobby Bridges, Earth's secret champion, and his superpowered friends in their fights against alien invasion. There will also be a coin-op sequel this summer, **Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge**.

COMPUTING ART

The current exhibit at the Tech Museum of Innovation, San Jose, CA, showcases the increasingly blurred line where science and creativity meet. *Art and Technology: The Creative Link* examines this interesting area with exhibit materials from 23 different artists and over 60 companies from Adobe to Polaroid to Lockheed.

The artists utilize the latest computer technology, some to create, some to enhance and some to teach. There are workshops and programs that tie in nicely to the exhibit, which will be open until the end of June. According to Gloria Chun Hoo, the Tech's marketing manager, "several of the artists are former scientists, and they really like the high-tech tools that are available. They were latent artists who have become artists using current technology.

"We're really focusing on how technology has impacted art. It's kind of nice to see the positive, warmer side of technology for folks who think of science and technology as kind of cold."

Network enthusiasts who wish to can easily enjoy a relaxing virtual visit to the new Tech Museum via the World Wide Web at http://www.the tech.com.

AT&T BUYS INTERCHANGE

AT&T purchased Interchange Network Company, developer of the Interchange On-line Network. The Interchange is currently in beta testing and is expected to be available later this year.

The purchase is seen as advancing AT&T's goals to provide open networks which various information companies can use. Ziff-Davis, *The Washington Post*, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* and Cowles Business Media have already announced plans for service on Interchange.

BERKELEY OPENS FAMILY CONTEST

Berkeley Systems, after expanding its software market to include a children's division (first product **Launch Pad**), announced a family computing contest. Berkeley asked users to send written anecdotes of computer experiences they shared with children.

The contest runs through June 30, and the grand prize is a trip to Disney World.

TOP VIDEO GAMES

February 1995

This list, prepared by Software Etc., is based on unit sales.

1. *NBA Live '95* (Genesis), Electronic Arts
2. *NHL Hockey '95* (Genesis), Electronic Arts
3. *Need for Speed* (3DO), Electronic Arts Sports captures a triple crown.

TOP MAC GAMES

February 1995

This list, prepared by *PC Data*, is based on units sold in over 4000 stores.

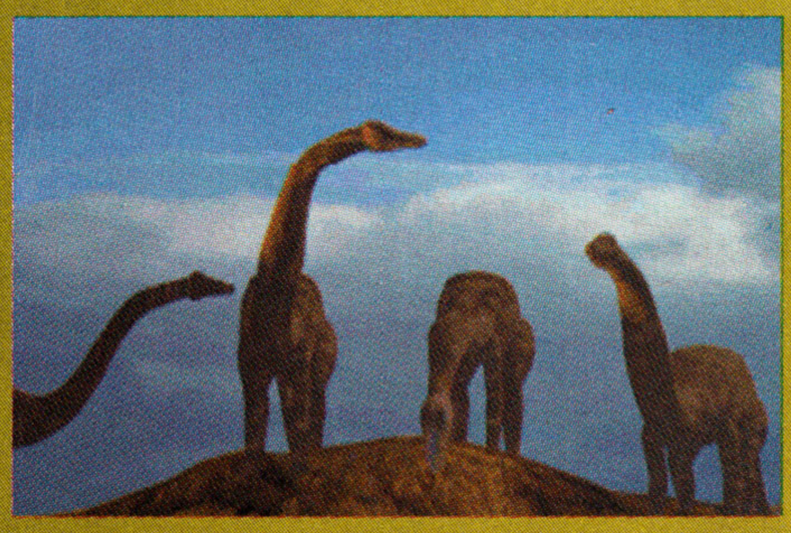
1. *Myst (CD-ROM),* Broderbund
2. *SimCity 2000,* Maxis
3. *Star Wars Rebel Assault (CD-ROM),* LucasArts

Myst rises over **SimCity** as **Star Wars Rebel Assault** launches an assault.

IT'S LIKE GOING BACK TO THE MESOZOIC ERA.

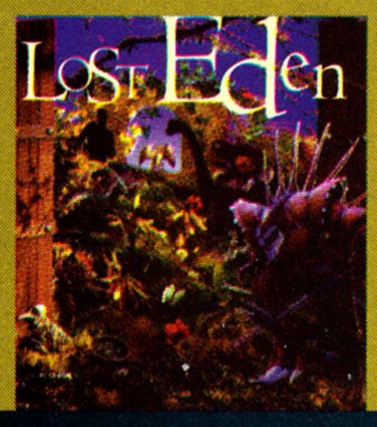
ONLY THIS TIME YOU GET TO WALK UPRIGHT.

It may be Eden, but a garden it's not. It's a primeval land filled with rain forests, marshy plains and flesh-eating neighbors named "Rex." Not to mention a slew of other dinosaurs, from the peaceful, grass-eating Brontosaurus to the brutal Velociraptor. In Lost Eden, you play Adam--not the first man on Earth, but possibly the last. That is, if you can't unite the creatures of four continents against a tyrannical Tyrannosaurus Rex. The task is simple: Save mankind. If you're successful, you're a hero. If you fail, you're a fossil.



- Interact with over 12 different dinosaurs.
- Lush, surrealistic graphics, cinematics and texture-mapped sequences.
- Explore four different continents and seven types of terrain.
- 60 minutes of original ambient CD-quality soundtrack and digitized speech.
- Made by the same people who created DUNE™ CD-ROM.

Lost Eden. The only adventure strategy game that brings you back to Eden.

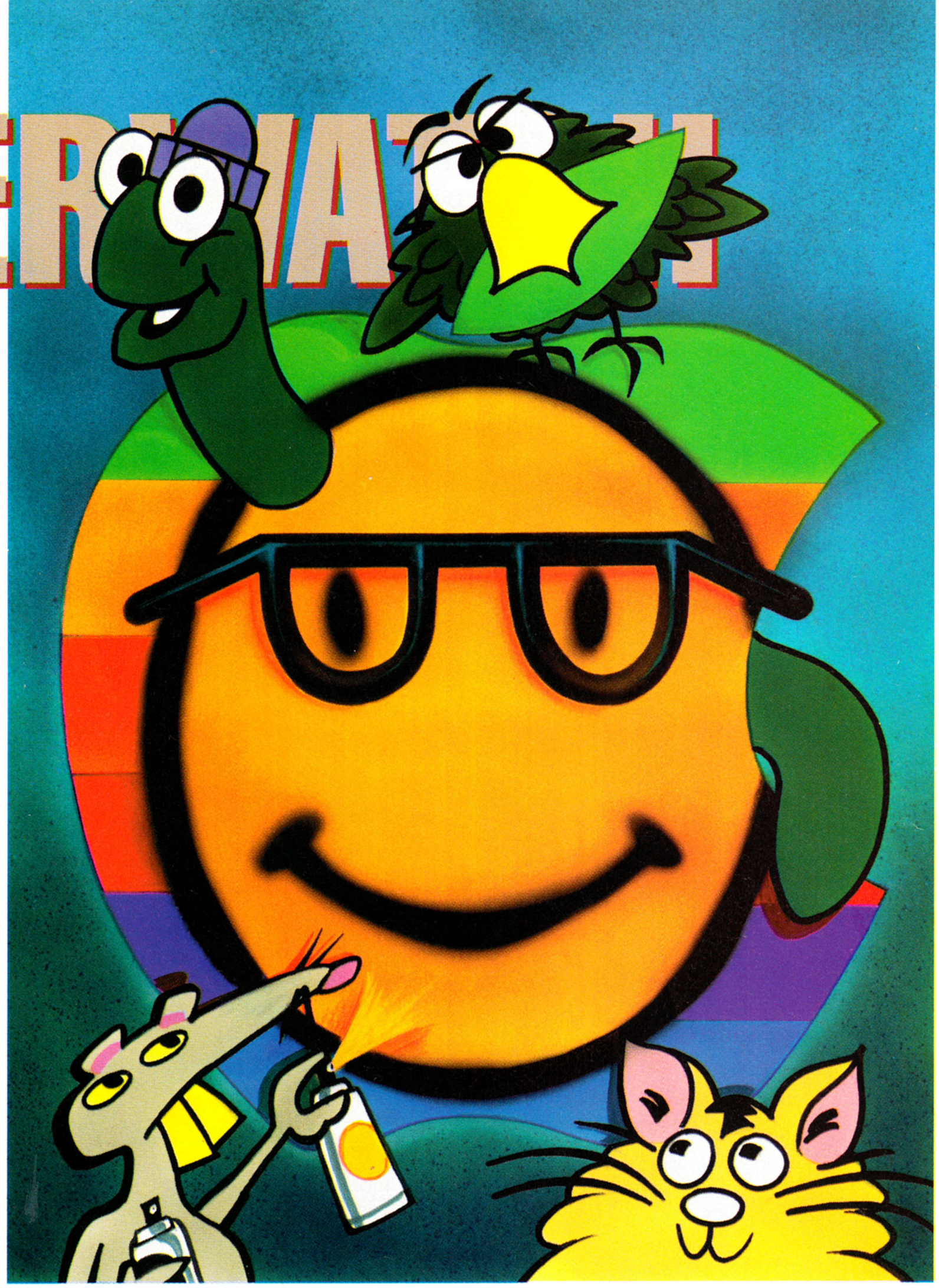


Lost Eden™ is a trademark of Virgin Interactive Entertainment , Inc.
Copyright ©1994 Virgin Interactive Entertainment, Ltd.

All rights reserved. Developed by Cryo Interactive Entertainment.
Virgin is a registered trademark of Virgin Enterprises, Ltd.

CYBERNATION

Bob vs. Apple: MicroHard



He is quickly becoming the most controversial character in computerville. Bob, that genial, non-threatening guide to Microsoft's version of the brave, new world seems to be creating not just tremendous interest, but intense paranoia. According to John Dvorak in the April '95 *Mac User*: "Apple always seems to act like it hasn't figured out that its number-one enemy is Microsoft rather than PC clones or potential Mac-clone makers."

This stance, however, is changing according to Dvorak. "Why else would [Apple] be frightened to death of Bob and the smiley face? Apple is so concerned about Bob that it is planning an entire corporate face-lift and change in overall strategy." He then follows with some appropriately Aprilish suggestions.

Bob also turned up as the subject and cover story in the April '95 *PC Novice* in "Meet Microsoft Bob" by Michael Cahlin, in which not only is our smiling cover boy discussed at great length, but so are the user's "friends"—anthropomorphized cartoon characters with names like Rover (dog), Blythe (bee), Chaos (cat), Java (dinosaur), Scuzz (b-ball playing rat), Digger (earthworm) and Shelley (turtle). Scuzz is perhaps the most interesting: "… the annoying, basketball-dribbling, guitar-playing, graffiti-spraying rat … Unpleasant and countercultural, he was chosen for MTV male teens. The surprise was how much male adults liked him."

Of course, not all the candidates made the cut. For example: "Martina, the talking olive, was rejected because of a negative association with alcohol."

Now, on to some non-Bob related material of interest from the past month:

"Hollywood companies are turning to equity investments in established games corporations. MCA/Universal has made an investment in Interplay, and is attempting to start its own internal interactive entertainment division. Its parent, Matsushita, is a major investor in 3DO. Although Sony aggressively developed its Sony Imagesoft interactive entertainment software operation, it acquired Psygnosis to increase its interactive entertainment development expertise. Time Warner has investments in Accolade, Atari, Crystal Dynamics and 3DO, as well as its own Warner Interactive."

— Lee Isgur & Vincent Turzo, "Mickey Meets Donkey Kong: Is it a Mortal Kombat?" *The Red Herring* (2/95)

"Jake Baker doesn't look like the kind of guy who would tie a woman by her hair to a ceiling fan. The slight … sophomore at the University of Michigan is described by classmates as gentle, conscientious and introverted …'I don't like stepping on insects,' he says.

"But Baker has been doing a little creative writing lately, and his words have landed him in the middle of the latest Internet set-to … Baker is facing expulsion and a possible sentence of five years on federal charges. …

"It started in early December, when Baker composed three sexual fantasies and posted them on alt.sex.stories, a newsgroup on the Usenet computer network that is distributed by Internet. …

"… Ordinarily, the story might never have drawn attention outside the voyeuristic world of Usenet sex groups. But Baker gave his fictional victim the name of a real female student in one of his classes."

— Philip Elmer-DeWitt, *Time* (2/20/95)

"Kevin Mitnick … a man accused of cracking security on some of the nation's most protected computers, was held without bond Friday and his access to the key tool of cybertheft—phones—was sharply limited.

"… Mitnick … may speak by phone with his lawyers, his mother and his grandmother—but … jailers must place any call. ...

"'Those phone calls will be monitored,' [U.S. Magistrate Wallace W.] Dixon added."

— *AP* (2/18/95)

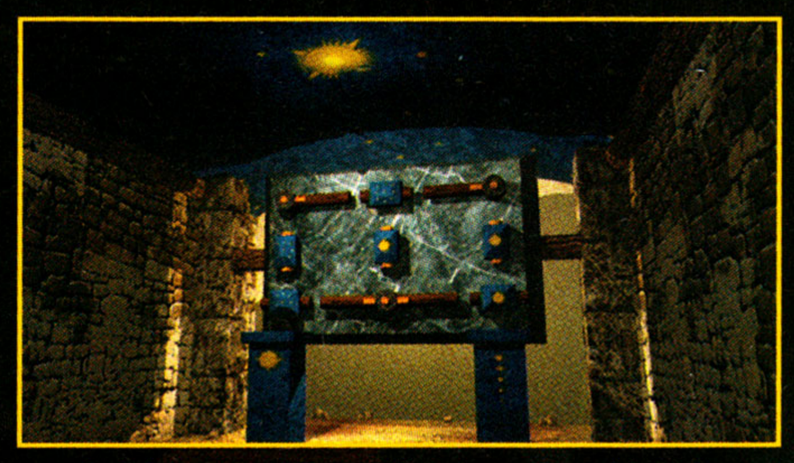
by Ed Dille and Bill Kunkel

Explore The Secrets Of An Ancient Civilization Lost In Time.

Discis Entertainment presents
an ELOI Production

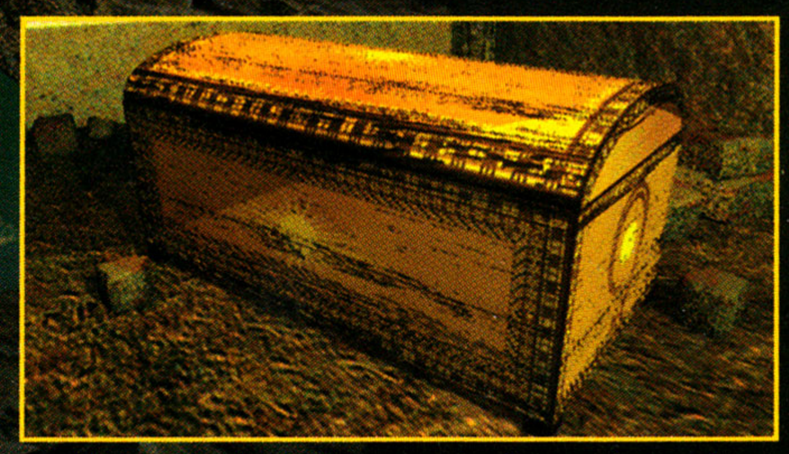
Jewels of the Oracle

Resolve the tasks set before you
and go on to greatness.
Fail and be lost forever!



Indulge yourself in a 3-D animated world, with seductive music, captivating sounds and oracular voices.

Discover hidden chambers and test your skills of logic and reason with interactive and intricate puzzles.



Unlock the fascinating secrets of an ancient and long forgotten civilization.

Actual screen images from the game.

CD-ROM GAME FOR WINDOWS AND MACINTOSH
AVAILABLE NOW AT YOUR FAVORITE RETAILER OR CALL 1-800-567-4321

GAME DOCTOR

What's Behind the Curtain?

Hail, fellow travelers down the path of silicon silliness, we have a grave query and some fascinating commentary from a pair of certified gamaniacs (the Doc is not a psychiatrist, guys, so he means that in a good way), so let's get it on...

Q: After stating to a Nintendo representative that I've seen no evidence [that] the Ultra 64 truly exists, she said **Killer Instinct** in the arcades is running on the same hardware that will be in the home systems. She also said **Killer Instinct** will, in fact, be even better on the home systems.

Later, I spoke with an arcade operator who said the machine in question cost them around $10,000. He wouldn't or couldn't be more specific.

What I'd like to know is if the Ultra 64 is coming out for $250, why the $9,750 approximate difference? (Actually the difference would be smaller since the $10,000 is Canadian.) I can't see the cabinet, monitor, joysticks, etc., making up this difference [in price]. How is Nintendo going to cram **Killer Instinct** onto an Ultra 64 home cartridge and still keep the price [low]?

Steve Ouderkirk
Ottawa, ON, Canada

A: *You get an "A" for investigative reporting, Steve, so I'm going to give you the lowdown on* ***Killer Instinct*** *and the U64, so far as I know it. After originally telling the Doc at last CES that the coin-op was running off an Ultra 64 and totally denying our assertion that the game was running off a hard drive and a Silicon Graphics workstation, Nintendo and SGI reps later called back and admitted that the arcade machine was in fact running off a high-powered SGI workstation's hard drive. Since I believe an SGI Indy costs about $7500 by itself, I think we've just tracked down the reason for the price variation.*

This is not to write off Nintendo. I learned not to do that a long time ago. Nintendo is run by some extremely intelligent people, and such people don't often put themselves into a position of looking foolish. However, I would say that when the Ultra 64 version of ***Killer Instinct*** *does come out, it is highly unlikely that it will look as good as the arcade game, much less surpass it (much as the heavily touted Saturn version of* ***Virtua Fighters*** *can't lace the boots of its coin-op cuz).*

Nintendo also does have some

cartridge-based technology that is nothing short of magic—such as Rare's system, which converts SGI images into SNES format. But I'd be shocked if a CD peripheral doesn't materialize shortly after the arrival of the Ultra 64. The first batch of games won't be space hogs and Nintendo will squeeze every drop of audio/visual juice out of the cartridge medium, but I simply do not believe the format will remain viable. Great letter, by the way—watch the skies for a Prize Packet.

And now, some rewards generated by our new on-line address from a couple of game meisters who have somehow breached the secret of the Game Doc's identity. They have me at a disadvantage, but I may be forced to transmogrify myself into JP Withers any day now in order to escape their scrutiny.

Q: Hey [Doc's name], I was thinking back to something you said a few issues ago that may or may not be incorrect depending on your interpretation. At least it wasn't a major error like the **WaterWorld** one. (Thanks again for the Prize Packet on that one.) Anyway, somebody asked you if the Intellivision was 16-Bit or not and you said no. But … as I look over some tech stuff, I see that the Inty could possibly be considered 16-Bit. The processor was a GI 1600 (running at about 500KHz), which has 16-Bit registers and uses 16-Bit RAM. Funny thing is that the instructions and the cartridge ROMs were 10-Bits wide. Since there really is no set way to determine the "bitness" of a system, the Intellivision could be considered 16-Bit.

Keep up the good work—***EG*** continues to be the most intelligent video gaming magazine around, but I'm watching, just in case someone slips up.

Shane (Atariman) Shaffer
e-mail

A: *This missive brings up a couple of fascinating points. I think you go to the heart of the matter, Shane, when you discuss the difficulty of determining the "bitness" of a system. Do a couple of 16-Bit registers make a system 16-Bit? It also perfectly shows the fallacy of superficial spec comparisons in selecting a system. Atari asks us to "Do the Math," but I've always been a "Check the Games" man, myself.*

In any case, some further insight into this intriguing question from another on-line maven:

Q: NEC was saying the Intellivision was a 16-Bit system on their TurboGrafx-16 hype sheets years ago. Just now, I have found this elusive bit of information in Larry Anderson's handy-dandy Intellivision FAQ. Here goes (from the FAQ):

"GI 1600, running at something like 500KHz. Processor has 16-Bit registers, uses 16-Bit RAM, and has 10- (yes, 10-) Bit instructions. Intellivision cartridges contain ROMS that are 10-Bits wide. Ten bits are called a decle, and half that is a nickel. There were 160 bytes of RAM, I think (general purpose RAM—there is also RAM used by the graphics chip for character bitmaps and to tell what is where on the screen)."

So there we go, the GI CPU housed in the Intellivision is indeed a 16-Bit chip in regards to size and RAM access (I suppose it still has an 8-Bit data bus or something).

Ralph Barbagallo
e-mail

A: *You know, I have some pretty good consultants, but sometimes the best stuff comes in the mail.*

That wraps us up for this issue. Send your Qs to:

Game Doctor c/o
Electronic Games,
330 S Decatur, Ste. 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

Or to:

GameNurse
@aol.com

—Aloha!

"The future of interactive entertainment is here."
–Christopher Lindquist, Electronic Entertainment

"Under a Killing Moon sets a remarkable new standard for graphic adventures, and in my mind, at least, puts an end to the quest for the interactive movie." –Vince Broady, MultiMedia World

Winner of 1994 **Strategy Plus Magazine** Cinema-Graphic Adventure Game of the Year Award

Winner of the 1994 **Computer Game Review** "Golden Triad Award" in Recognition of Superior Quality

Winner of 1994 **CD ROM Today** "Rommie" Award for Best Entertainment Adventure Software

Winner of 1994 **PC GAMER** Award for Special Achievement in Design Excellence.

Available! Now Available! Now Available! Now Available! Now Available! Now A

Virgin

MECHADEUS™

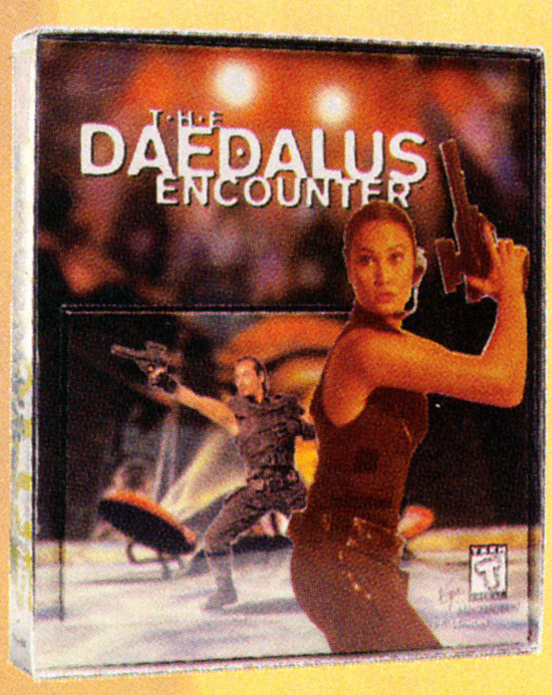
Look at the production quality. Look at the exciting gameplay. Look at that nifty leather vest.

Better yet, look who's inside that vest — Tia Carrere (you know, *True Lies* and *Wayne's World*). Put her together with film-quality production and intense gameplay, and you have *The Daedalus Encounter*.™ A sci-fi adventure set in the 22nd century, where your ship becomes entangled with a biological space organism that's heading straight for a binary star. To move the ship from its deadly course, you must solve countless puzzles, navigate the ship's complex web of tunnels and battle a number of disgruntled aliens. We think you'll find it's a game of epic, as well as attractive, proportions.

- Navigable QuickTime™, over two hours of live-action video and 3-D rendered art and environments.
- Three CD-ROM set of arcade-style action, interrelated puzzles, exploration, mazes and shooting gameplay.
- Three levels of difficulty, with multiple endings, depending on your gameplay choices.
- Since it's a WINDOWS™-based product, it's simple to install and has an easy-to-use interface.
- Original music score from Ronnie Montrose and Her House.

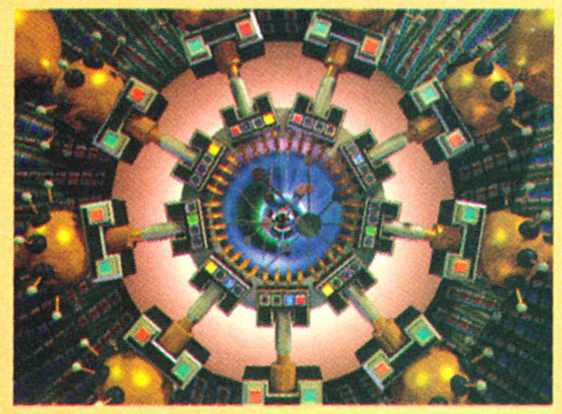
THE DAEDALUS ENCOUNTER™

FOR PC CD-ROM AND MAC CD-ROM



Intuitive game interface gives you added control.

Over two hours of live-action video that blows other games away.



More than 20 artificial-intelligence puzzles to test whether your intelligence is real.

It has the best 3-D animation in the galaxy.

Krinn aliens give you arcade-quality fighting and, if you're not careful, a short life.

Good luck with this alien. She's not nearly as nice as she looks.

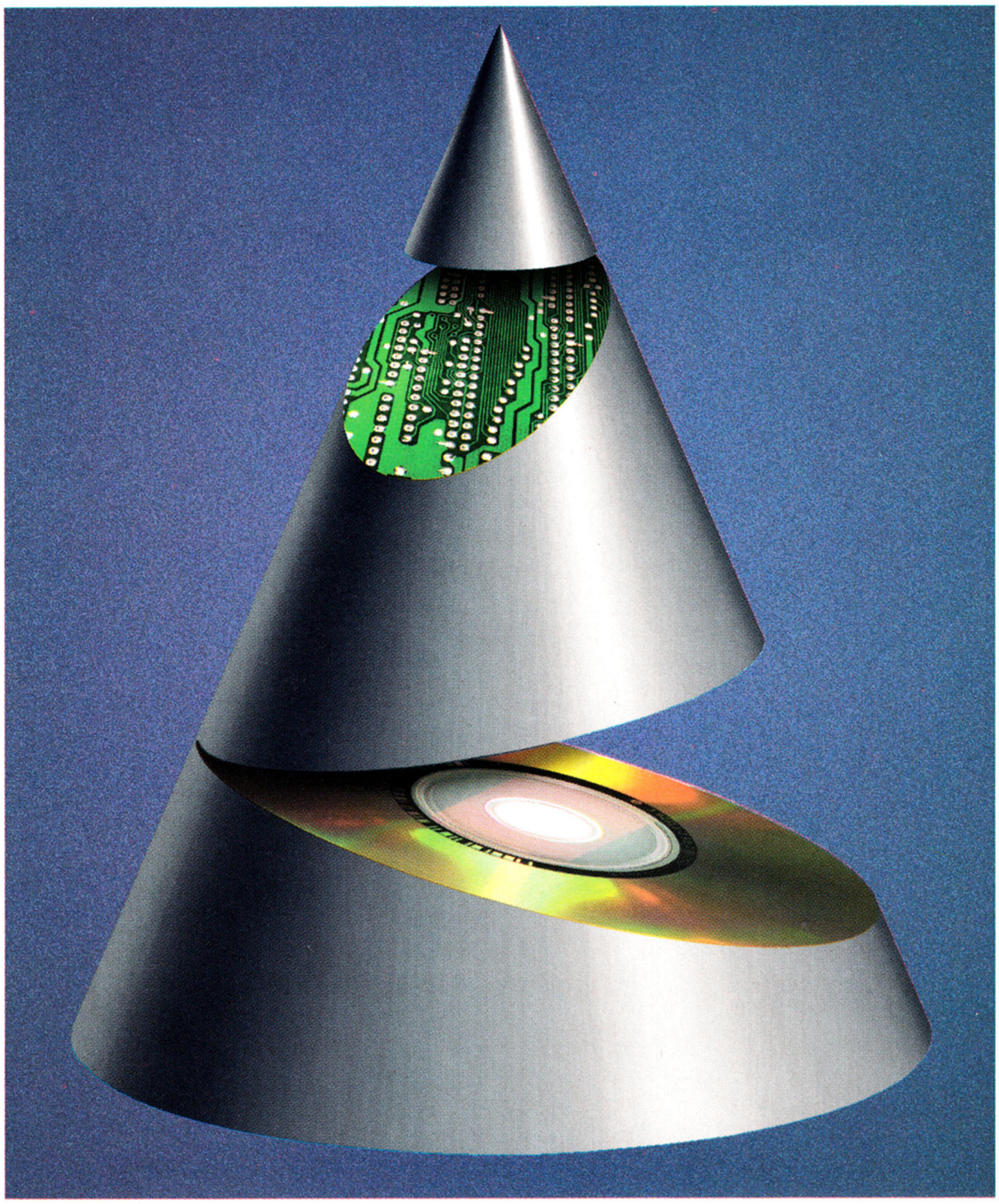
TEEN
T
Realistic Violence.
AGES 13+

Copyright Virgin Interactive Entertainment,Inc.,1995, created by Mechadeus. *The Daedalus Encounter* is a trademark of Virgin Interactive Entertainment, Inc. Virgin is a registered trademark of Virgin Enterprises, Ltd. QuickTime is a trademark of Apple Computer, Inc.

1995 GAMING AWARDS

HERE ARE YOUR PICKS FOR THE BEST INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

By the EG Editorial Staff



The electronic gaming nation has spoken! The February **EG** carried the editors' selections for the best video, computer and multimedia games for 1994. As exciting as it was, this feature was just the first step.

For the third consecutive year, **Electronic Games** turned the final decision over to the world's most knowledgeable gamers–the readers. The same issue contained a ballot so that game lovers could voice their choices.

The votes are counted, and the verdict is spread out over these two pages. In two cases, the competition was so close that it forced us to declare a tie.

So here they are—your best interactive electronic entertainment of 1994!

Best Action Video Game (Tie)
Alien vs. Predator (Atari/Jaguar)
Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure (Activision/Genesis)

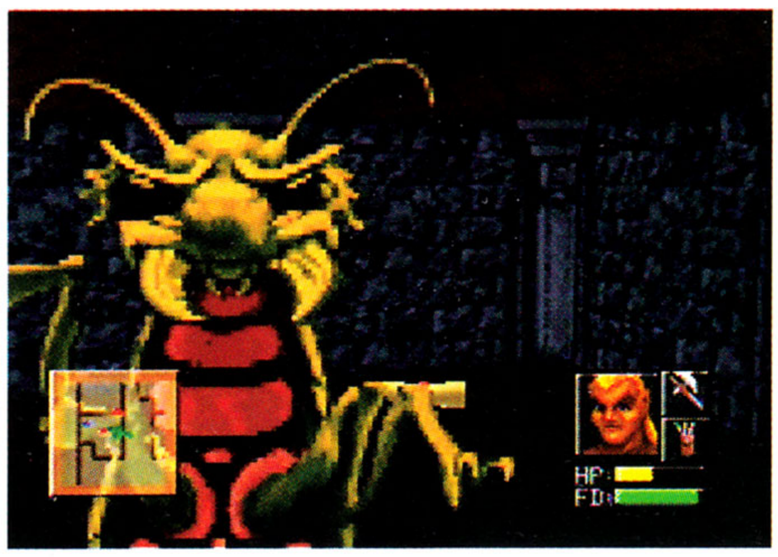
Best Strategy/Action-Strategy Video Game
Doom (id/Jaguar, 32X)

Best Sports Video Game
NHL '95 (Electronic Arts/Genesis)

Best Adventure/RPG Video Game
Lord of The Rings (Interplay/SNES)

Best Multimedia Action Game
ShockWave (Electronic Arts/3DO)

Best Multimedia Adventure/RPG Game
Slayer (SSI/3DO)



Best Multimedia Strategy/Action Strategy Game
Castles: Siege and Conquest (Interplay/CD-ROM)

Best Computer or Multimedia Sports Game (Tie)
Tony LaRussa Baseball 2 (SSI/CD-ROM)
Ultimate Football (MicroProse/CD-ROM)

Best Computer Adventure/RPG
Lands of Lore (Westwood/MS-DOS)

Best Computer Strategy Game
SimCity 2000 (Maxis/MS-DOS)

Best Computer Action/Action Strategy Game
Star Wars: TIE Fighter (LucasArts/MS-DOS)

Best Electronic Game Audiovisual FX
Ecco: Tides of Time (Sega/Sega CD)

Most Humorous Electronic Game
Earthworm Jim (Playmates/Genesis)

Best Science-Fiction/Fantasy Electronic Game
Star Wars: Rebel Assault (LucasArts/CD-ROM)

Best Electronic Military Simulation
Operation Europe: Path to Victory (Koei/SNES)

Best Electronic Edutainment Game
Cartoon History of The Universe (Putnam New Media/CD-ROM)

Video Game of the Year

Donkey Kong Country
(Nintendo/SNES)

Computer Game of the Year

Doom II
(id Software/MS-DOS)

Multimedia Game of the Year

Wolf (Sanctuary Woods/ CD-ROM)

YOU PLAY it UP iN YOUR ROOM This Week...

Hey, every baseball game says they're the best. That's no big deal.

But only one baseball game has The Sporting News say it.

That, sports fans, is a big deal!

Hudson Soft and The Sporting News have teamed up to bring you the first 4- player baseball game; the first game that lets you play day games or night games, in a ballpark with grass or under a dome (there's even a fantasy field to choose); the first and only game where you can draft and field actual big league players, legends from the past or insert players you make up. You can even name yourself as a starter. There's also a Homerun derby, an All-Star game, and a battery back- up that lets you watch or play a 162 game pennant race.

The Sporting News BASEBALL from Hudson Soft.

Looks, feels, plays, and gets sports page coverage like the real thing.

HUDSON GROUP
HUDSON SOFT®

SUPER NINTENDO

IF YOU BEAT'EM BAD ENOUGH IT JUST MAY BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE SPORTING NEWS!

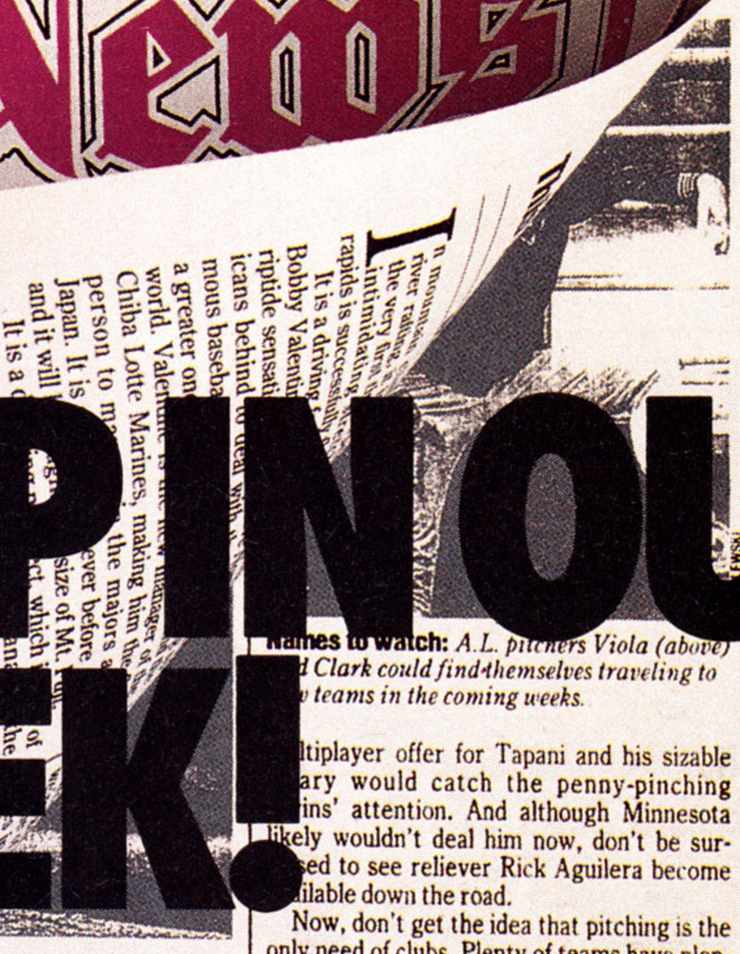
Videotape the final score screen from your best game and send it to:

Hudson Soft
400 Oyster Point Blvd.
Suite #514
South San Francisco,
CA 94080-1921

THE ONLY BASEBALL VIDEO GAME SO DARNED AUTHENTIC, THE

WE PLAY IT UP IN OUR AD NEXT WEEK!

The Sporting News



Names to watch: *A.L. pitchers Viola (above) and Clark could find themselves traveling to new teams in the coming weeks.*

ltiplayer offer for Tapani and his sizable ary would catch the penny-pinching ins' attention. And although Minnesota likely wouldn't deal him now, don't be sur- sed to see reliever Rick Aguilera become ilable down the road.

Now, don't get the idea that pitching is the only need of clubs. Plenty of teams have plenty of other holes. For example, Boston needs a right fielder, Seattle could use a catcher, Toronto is uncertain about left field, Cincinnati is unsure about third base, Houston has a hole in right, the Mets have holes virtually everywhere and on it goes.

But pitching is where most *everyone* needs help. So rest assured, when you hear a trade rumor this spring, you'll be certain to find a pitcher's name in the sentence.

ola of the Red Sox. Harris' abil- and relieve could make him a vi- ack option to a team such as Balti- n need of depth. And if Viola shows elf to be healthy during spring training, Red Sox would be happy to talk about un- oading his big salary.

An intriguing possibility could be Minnesota's Kevin Tapani. Though the Twins are scrambling to fill out their rotation, a

(Advertisement)

going to do it American baseball way. We're going to do it MY WAY.
—Bobby Valentine

633 FT. HOMER IN BLOW OUT

Bob and Nick Sproul of Moraga, California teamed up to manage Atlanta to an 18-3 wipeout of New York last Wednesday in a night game under the dome at 4 Dickenson Drive.

A 633 foot monster crush into the left centerfield upper deck by Hank Aaron capped off a 10-run 9th, dealing New York (field managed by Mike "Goat Boy" Krouse and his buddy Dan Marr) one of those take-no-prisoners defeats before maybe a dozen foamin' fans from around the neighborhood.

Sproul-skippered Atlanta was scheduled to take their power line-up against the Donelli twins' Philadelphia team tomorrow in another crucial game of **SPORTING NEWS BASEBALL** from Hudson Soft.

Stay Tuned.

ATL.	2		1	1		0	1		3	0		0	2		5	0		0	0		0	2		6	10		12
N.Y.	0		0	0		2	0		0	1		2	0		0	0		0	2		2	0		0	0		0

Officially licensed by the Major League Baseball Players Association. ©MLBPA MSA

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS

The Sporting News BASEBALL

SPORTING NEWS PRINTS THE BOX SCORES.

THE PRO

A Look Inside the Cutting-edge Minds of Five Top Game Producers

PRODUCERS

By Bill Kunkel

Producer.

The word conjures up a variety of images, depending on the creative environment in which the position is applied. The position was initially created in the theatrical universe, where the icon of the cigar-smoking moneyman who lurks behind the scenes, getting his girlfriend cast in a major role, was born. Over the years, the stereotype has been refined, but the quintessential image was probably crystallized by Zero Mostel as lovable con man Max Bialistock in the Mel Brooks film, *The Producers*. Similarly, in the world of films, the producer is seen as a non-creative position. Even high-profile movie producers, such as Joel Silver, are known primarily for their larger-than-life style and the genre in which they work, than they are for any actual creative input on the property. The reality, of course, is never so clear cut, but in the stage and cinematic milieus, the producer basically *is* the guy who raises the money.

Record producers, on the other hand, are seen as pure creatives. Frequently, in fact, they are hired by the artists, rather than the record company, to direct the audio environment in which they function. The public knows record producers as the people who move the sliders on the big soundboards, bring up the bass or call for a retake on the guitar solo.

Somewhere in the middle we have the TV producer. While hewing to a bottom line, producers are generally the industry visionaries, the people who create the product that broadcasters use to fill their bandwidth. From Norman Lear and Sheldon Leonard to Stephen Bochco, producers have been the primary force in shaping the content of television.

Producing a Game

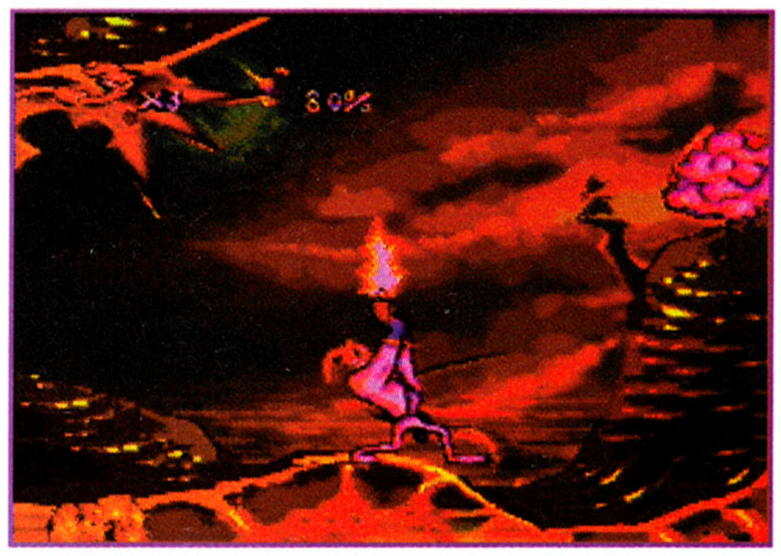
Then, of course, we have the electronic game producer. The position of producer was created by Trip Hawkins during the early days of Electronic Arts. EA producers served as middlemen between the bean counters and the creatives; they understood the economic imperative and the bottom line, but they also resonated to the designers and programmers with whom they worked. It also kept the high-strung artists and the buttoned-down suits from butting heads by providing a buffer from whom both sides could expect a sympathetic ear.

Over the years, of course, the position has evolved and mutated. In a sense, any attempt to pigeonhole the role of the modern computer and video game producer winds up like the old story of the Blind Men and the Elephant. In the story, three blind men approach the great beast. One finds the tail, and deduces the creature resembles a snake; another grabs a leg and declares it like a tree; while the third man seizes the trunk and so on.

In order to generate the big picture, therefore, we spoke with five of the leading producers in the game business. They range from project micromanagers like Interplay's Rusty Duchert to the legendary Joe Ibera, who blandly assures us that "we have no producers" at his company, Creative Insights.

Working Out at the Earthworm Gym: David Perry

David Perry is the 27-year-old wunderkind who made his bones at Virgin with the megahit Genesis version of **Aladdin**. On the strength of that incredibly hot hand, he formed Shiny Entertainment, the development company that produced **Earthworm Jim** for Playmates. He seemed the ideal subject to discuss the role of the modern-day game producer.



"Being a producer is a pretty serious task these days," he believes, "cuz there are so many different things you need to know, especially now that we're moving into 3-D. A really top producer needs to have an awful lot of knowledge of different things.

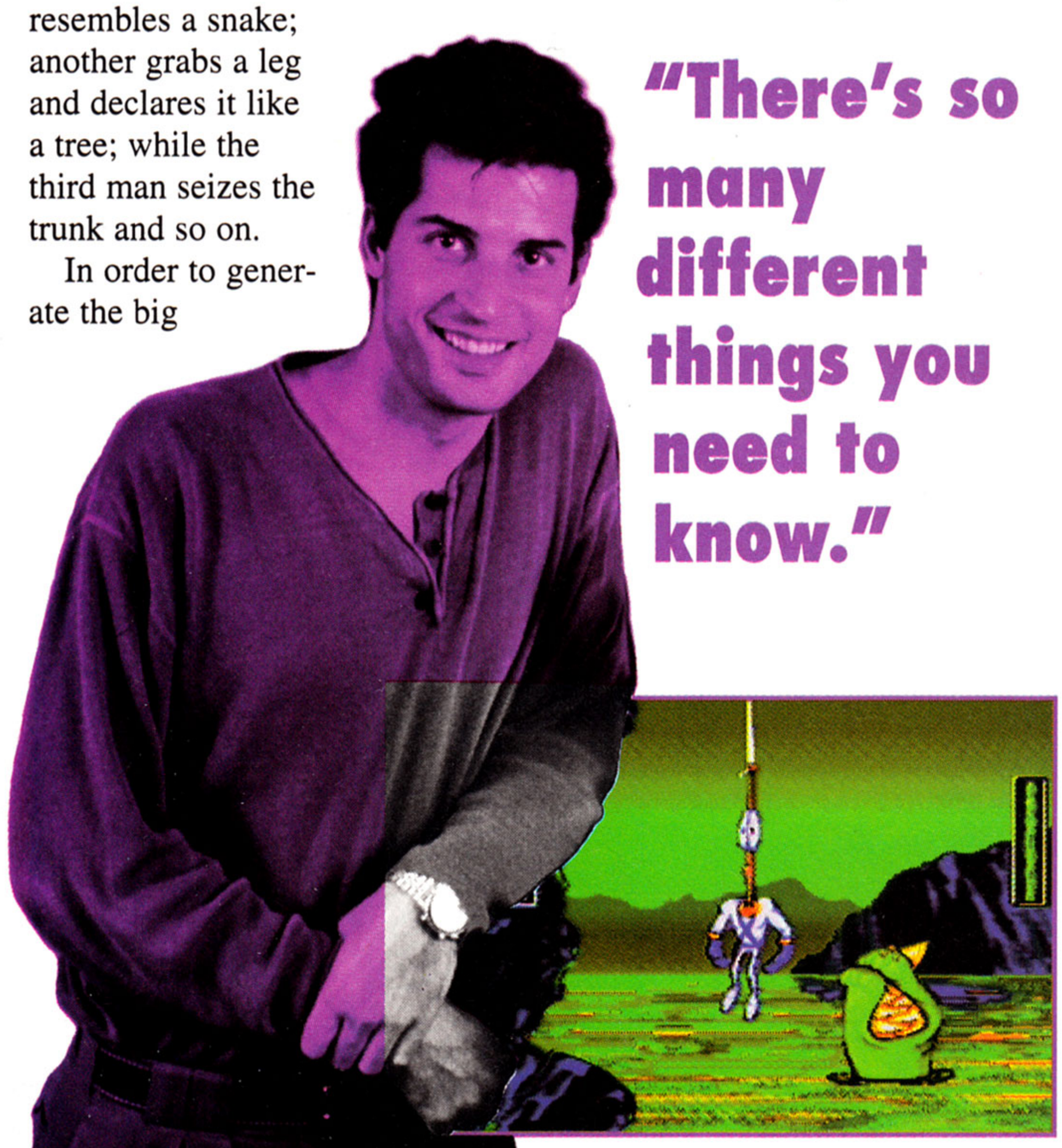
"For example, look at the days when music for video games was really rubbish. These days you can have U2 playing in your game, so you need to know all about music. If you're going to have full-motion video and all that, you need to know how to get filming done, and if you're going to have a lot of 3-D, like in a polygon game, you need to know all about 3-D and motion capture. There's just all these different topics. If you're going to produce a product, you need to know how to pull it all together and spot bad lighting [laughs].

"It's a very, very demanding role. Before, it [used to be] a lot more straightforward. I think in the future, it'll be more like movie production with executive producers and assistant producers and all that. The biggest headache is not being able to work really closely with people. Sometimes your music is coming from Canada and your graphics are coming from England. If you've got something like that going on it's just a nightmare."

Of course, not all the problems are creative. "Producers in smaller companies don't have access to any funds," David admits. "They have to go through other people, so [producers] don't get to spend any money and they don't get to make those spur-of-the-moment decisions. Real producing is, you're there at 11 p.m. and a piece of equipment dies. The producer is the guy who needs to get it sorted. He needs to be able to snap his fingers and have it fixed. That usually requires control of the purse strings, which is a rare, rare thing. I haven't met many producers who have the ability to write checks."

There are some perks, however, even at the low-budget end of the operation. "The coolest thing about the job is that producers usually get to say who they're going to work with. If they can latch onto a really good team, they can really produce some good work. That's not always the case but that's the incentive to work really hard, because if you don't really care, you're going to end up with rubbish teams and rubbish games."

David qualifies himself as a "traditional producer. We just make video games the way they used to be made. We use whatever systems we need, but it's not like we believe we're directors or something. At the minute my job is basically executive producer. I make sure everything else goes smoothly, so I do all the hiring and I do all the ordering



"There's so many different things you need to know."

INTERNET
MULTI-PLAYER

POWER

THE GAME©

DOUBLE YOUR POWER WITH TWO GAMES IN ONE!

1 WINDOWS™ GAME

2 BOARD GAME

"One of the best strategy games of the decade".

– Sid Sackson, Games Magazine

- Select human or computer opponents via Network or Modem
- Single player versus Computer opponents
- Play your friends on the Internet

AVAILABLE SOON FOR WINDOWS™
ON 3.5" DISK OR CD ROM

POWER GAMES INTERNATIONAL™

Power Games International Inc. • 280 W 4800 S • Murray • Utah 84107 • Toll Free 1-800-671-6333
Tel: (801) 268-6773 • Fax: (801) 268-6961 • Internet E-mail: info@powergames.com

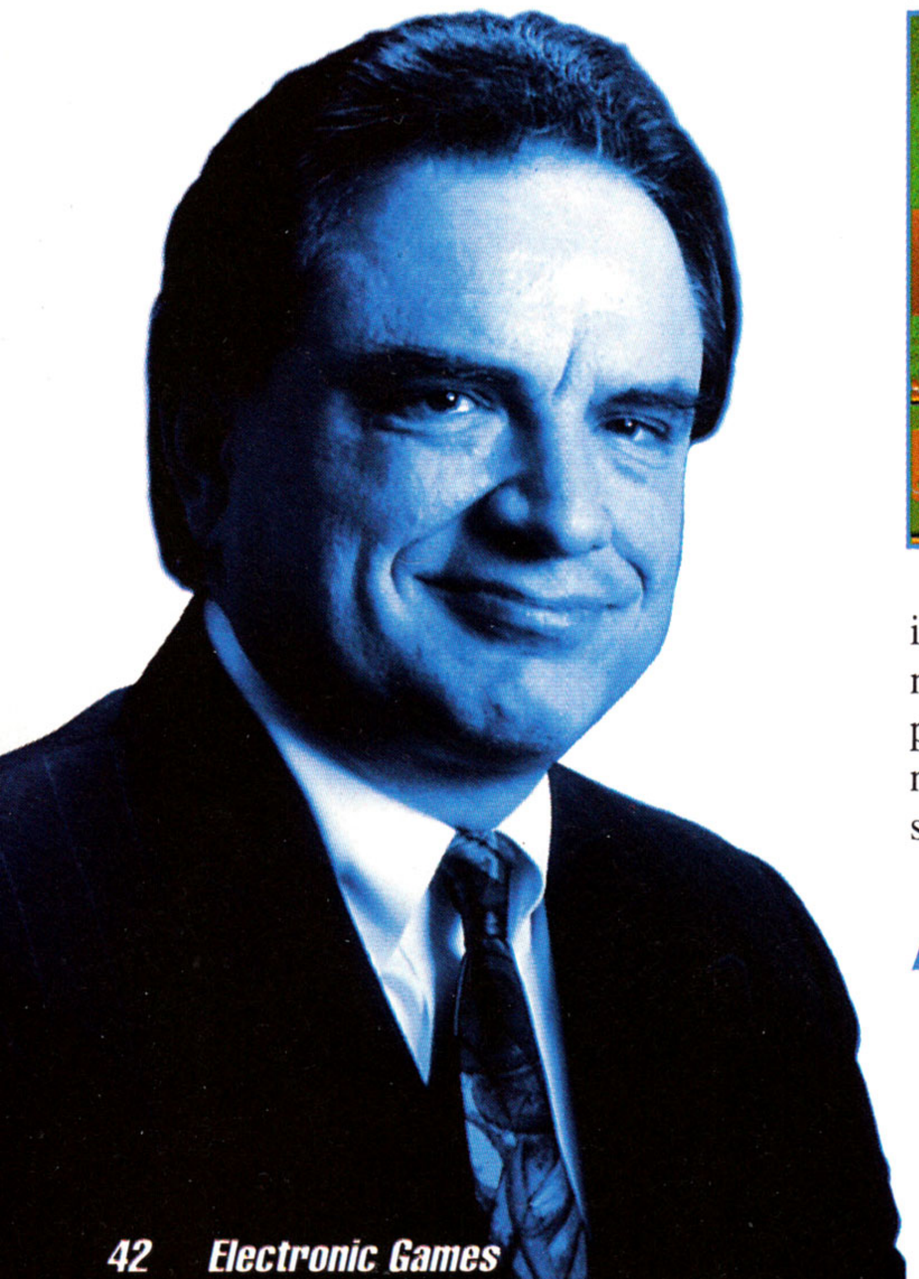
of equipment and make sure everyone gets absolutely everything they need. I try to predict what people are going to need and have it ready for them when they get there. I clear all the budgets and I handle the music and anything outside of each person's separate job. It's still a very hands-on job. I don't feel removed from the creative process.

"When we wrote **Earthworm Jim**, we weren't sure what the public was going to make of it, because we really wrote it for ourselves. We could have done a Disney game or something, but we decided to write this game starring a worm, and we had no idea if anyone was going to get the joke. Then Sega awarded us Best Third-Party Game of the Year, which was the best award we could get, because it was like a they're-taking-us-seriously award. Normally, the games that are out there these days are very, very ... you know ... kill someone, pull their spine out or whatever. It was kind of off-the-wall to try something with lots of humor in it, but it worked out well."

As for the future, David attests: "We're already set up here for 32-Bit development, so we're going to be doing the epic Shiny game, whatever it will be. The team is starting literally today. The staff is coming in and setting up on the 32-Bit machines. We're starting on the Sony first and moving on from there. Playmates is going to have a great big stand at E³ [the Electronic Entertainment Exposition], showing **Earthworm Jim 2** off. That should be a fun show. Instead of tagging onto CES, we've got our own show. Our coming of age, if you like. It makes me very happy for the industry to be taken seriously."

The Day-Glow of Production: Don Daglow

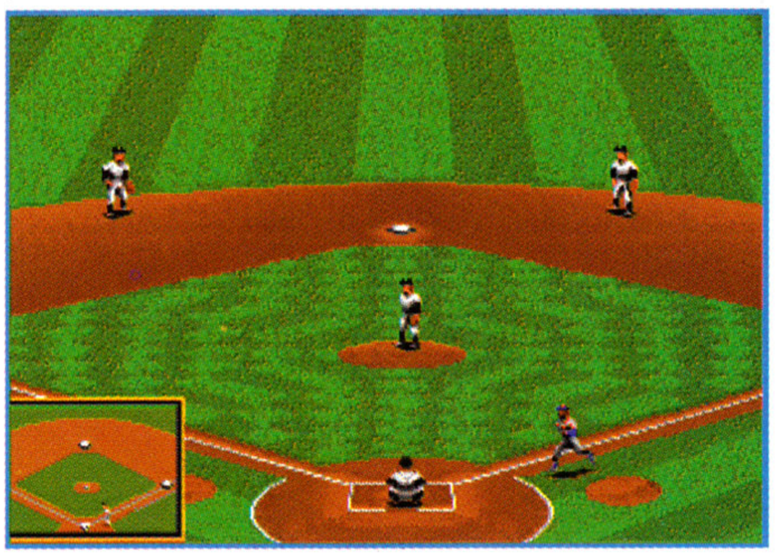
Don Daglow, founder of Stormfront



Studios, is among the best known and respected producers in the history of the field. From the earliest days of the Intellivision to his current work on the various **Tony LaRussa Baseball** games, Don has seen the role of the producer go through a long, involved evolution.

"The term 'producer,' as far as I know, was coined by Trip Hawkins when EA was founded," he began. "Prior to that, I worked from '80-'83 for Mattel, where we had no one who was called a producer. We had traditional managerial

structure within the Game Design group that I headed up. When I went to EA in '83, it was *as* a producer and, in those days, our charter included a combination of things. We had a minimum amount of staff support. Our job in those days was to go out and *find* the artists/designers/creators, to look for the best people and projects and basically beat the bushes on a national if not international basis. When you found something that looked really promising, then you brought it



in and ran it by your fellow producers and management. Then, once you'd brought the product home to meet Mom and Dad, you negotiated the contract and once that was signed, managed the development of the

process and acted as a liaison for management so they knew what they were getting. So you started out as a talent scout, then you got to be an artist/agent. Then you become a quasi-attorney, negotiating contracts [before assuming] what most people think of as the producer's role—managing the product itself. At the end, you became a marketing liaison.

"Over the last 10 years, producers have gotten a lot more support. As a result, they now lead teams of people who do all those things. The parallel growth is that the people they signed as developers went on from being people who worked out of spare bedrooms to being large teams themselves."

The evolution of the prominent role has taken quite an interesting turn for one of the first producers as Stormfront prepares to jump head first into some self-publishing. "The first title we're publishing ourselves is **Tony LaRussa Baseball 3**. Given that we are a relatively small company—50 people, which is slightly larger than Electronic Arts was when I went to work there—and because it's our first self-published title, we actually don't have anyone *called* a producer, per se, inside the organization. So my job, and the job of some of the other people here, was to take the roles the producer would perform and, although our job titles might be different, carry them out. That work still needed to be done."

"Our job in those days was to go out and *find* the artists/designers/creators, to look for the best people ..."

BUZZ THE HIVE

COMING 10-15-95

THE HIVE™

1995 Trimark™ Interactive

Creative Insights into Production:
Joe Ibera

Another of the original EA producers is Joe Ibera, the legendary EA project juggler. He is one of the men who has continued to define the role as it has changed over the past decade and a half and like Don Daglow, he has no one at his company, Creative Insights, who has that specific job title.

Joe started in the business as a longtime game and computer freak who was working at Apple when he got a call from a fellow named Trip Hawkins. "He said, 'I'm gonna start this game company, you wanna join us?' and I said, 'Sure, it beats doing spreadsheets.'"

"... build the world's greatest project with no time, no money and no resources."

The rest is industry legend. The lean times that Don described are echoed in Joe's memories. When he worked on the breakthrough computer game **Dr. J and Larry Bird Go One-on-One**, he had access to a team comprising two people. "It's radically different today," he laughs. "I've trained a whole lot of producers over the years, and the first thing I'd tell them was that the object of the job was to build the world's greatest project with no time, no money and no resources. That was your first charter. The producer's second charter was to do everything that he can't get somebody else to do for him. Charter number three: When you get right down to it, the product belongs to the people building it, not the producer. I think of all those charters, the one that has changed the most over the years is number three.

"In the old days, when there was one or two people, there was a lot of stuff I had to do on those projects—designing, programming, game testing, audio sourcing, everything but art, because I can't draw to save my life. Nowadays, producers should not be doing *any* of those things. Period. I think that's one of the big issues with producers today: getting people who realize that their job isn't to design the game or program it or any of that cool stuff.

"If you look at the minutia that goes on internal to every product, you basically have at least one person, maybe two or three, who are really the muscle on the product. They're the ones with the vision of what the product should be, and it's the producer's job to enable those people to get their work done. The producer also has the responsibility to management to make sure that this is happening in an efficient way. And, of course, that's defined in different ways; it's very different producing **Wing Commander III** or **Shanghai**."

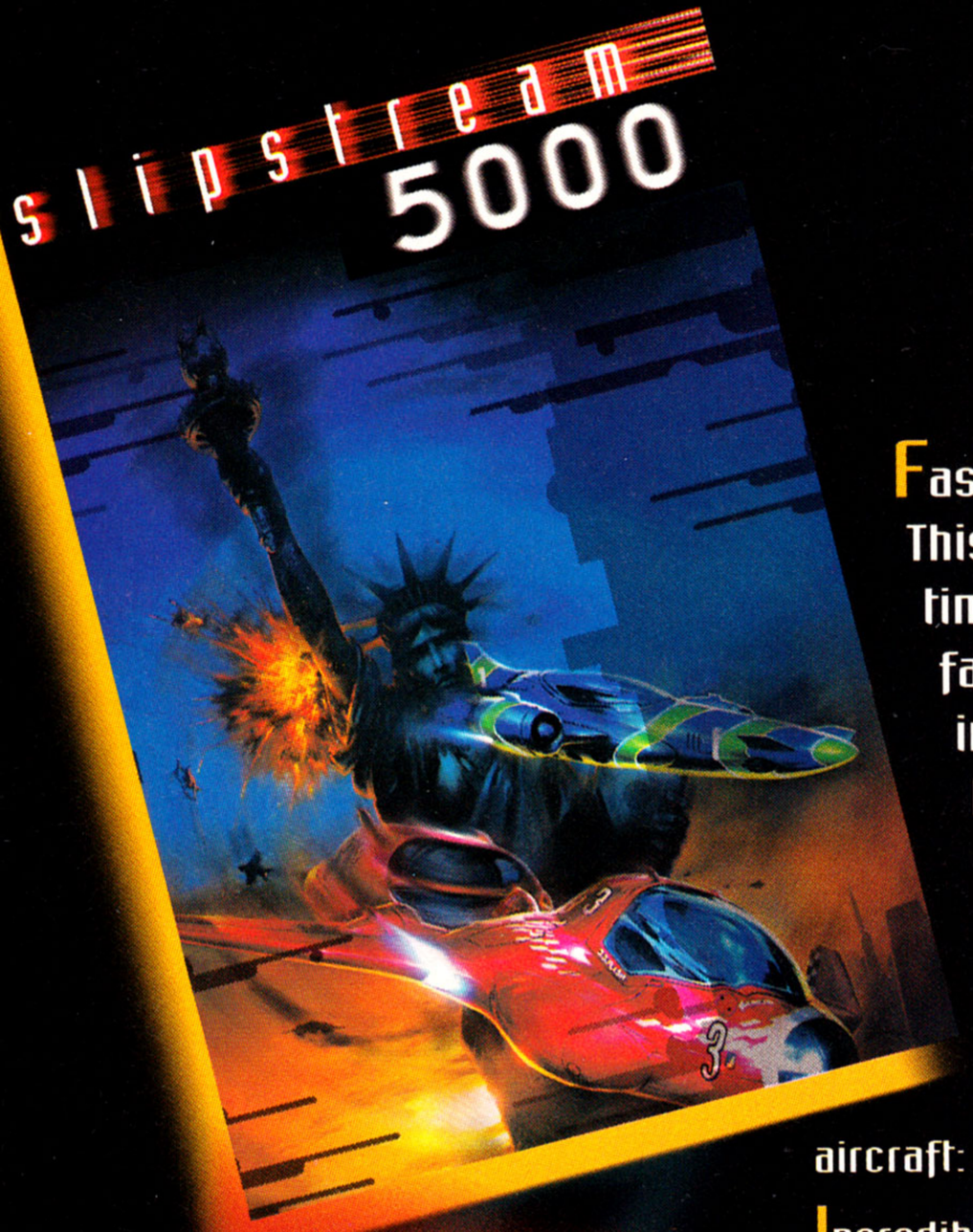
Assuming a well-earned philosophical stance, Joe sums up: "The more stuff you do, and the more respect you have on both the creative and management sides, the easier your job gets. But nevertheless, you're gonna get signed up for a lot of pain and agony. On the other side of the coin, if your love is for the product, deflect the emotion into the product. Don't let the guys beat you up. You're fighting to make sure this product manifests all the things you want to see. In the long run, when the day is over, the people rarely remember any of the stuff that took place during the process; they remember what wound up in the game."

The Producer as God:
Rich Robinson

Another producer who's seen it all is Rich Robinson at Sony ImageSoft, who reflects yet another point of view on the subject. Rich, who has been producing since the Apple II days, is of the *auteur* school, which places the producer as the prime mover in the realization of the creative vision, as well as someone who can keep an eye on the budget. "The role of producer has dynamically and dramatically changed in the time I've been in the business, in terms of the scope, the skillset and the toolset producers need. I tend to think that the producer name is a little bit of a misnomer. I think video game producers

"Back in the old days, it was nothing for producers to handle up to 10 titles at a time. They were basically coordinators."

Light Years Ahead of Everything Else!



slipstream 5000

Fasten your seat belts. Slipstream 5000 is here on PC CD-ROM. This 3D aerial combat racing game hurls you through space and time with the intensity of a lightning bolt. But much, much faster. You'll rocket through exotic lands in the future, choosing the outrageous aircraft and insane weaponry that will help you blast your way to the finish. It's real. It's fast. It's real fast. Play Slipstream 5000, but wear your leathers, this game could tear your skin off.

GAME FEATURES:

Players can compete as one of 10 characters in a unique Slipstream aircraft: each with different features, weapons and distinctive styles.

Incredible 3-D rendered and texture-mapped graphics create a dramatic and realistic picture of the future featuring 10 dramatic global circuits and multi-directional track splits.

Simultaneous 2-Person game play. Network, Serial and Modem-Link options.

Instant replay featuring spectacular moves and crashes.

Gremlin INTERACTIVE

THE SOFTWARE REFINERY LTD.

Slipstream © 1995 Gremlin Interactive Limited. All rights reserved. Front Street Publishing is a trademark of U.S. Gold, Inc.

CD-ROM

Distributed By

FRONT STREET PUBLISHING

Front Street Publishing
303 Sacramento Street
San Francisco, CA 94111

are producers, in the movie sense, directors in the movie sense, art directors, technical directors and in some cases, even casting directors. They're taking on such a massive role in these games that their skillsets have to be expanded. They have to be a project manager extraordinaire, yet the better producers also tend to be the most creative.

"Back in the old days," he recalls, "it was nothing for producers to handle up to 10 titles at a time. They were basically coordinators. They made sure the teams were running, and they'd double-check if there was licensing going on. Now if I see a producer with three titles, I'm getting concerned about the time they can spend on each.

"The way my teams and my producers work is that I want them as involved as possible with their projects. I'm trying to take it to the point where a producer works on only one project at a time. There may even be some projects that require two producers. But I expect my producers to be hands-on with the programmers, with the artists, with the design. I feel the producer should be a little like the old EA model: 'The producer is god.' I'm sure you've heard that before. That's not to take anything away from your

engineers and artists and other creative people, but I don't want just a kick-ass manager or someone who's a hell of an engineer as my producer. I want a guy who can look at this anywhere from the macro level to working with individuals on the micro level."

As always, however, that bottom line looms large. "You're talking about massive amounts of money. On those early Apple II products if you spent one, $200,000, that was a pretty gutsy project. Now, I don't think we could touch a PSX project for less than 1 million, and that's rock bottom. There've been projects that ran many times higher. I equate it back to the movies. In the early 1900s, somebody bought a camera and found a building on fire, put someone inside, filmed it and had themselves a movie. Compare that to the credit list that appears at the end of today's movies, which is why movies sometimes cost $160 million to make. Video games are, I think, following suit. We can't just rely on character graphics anymore. People have to know motion capture, and how to plug that motion capture onto wireframes, and how do you texture map those guys, etc. From what I've seen, sitting at home at one time with my little Apple computer, to where I'm sitting now, with hundreds of thousands of dollars of motion capture equipment and bluescreen work, it's been amazing. To be very honest, I never expected this [laughs]. I don't know if I knew what motion capture *was* in 1980."

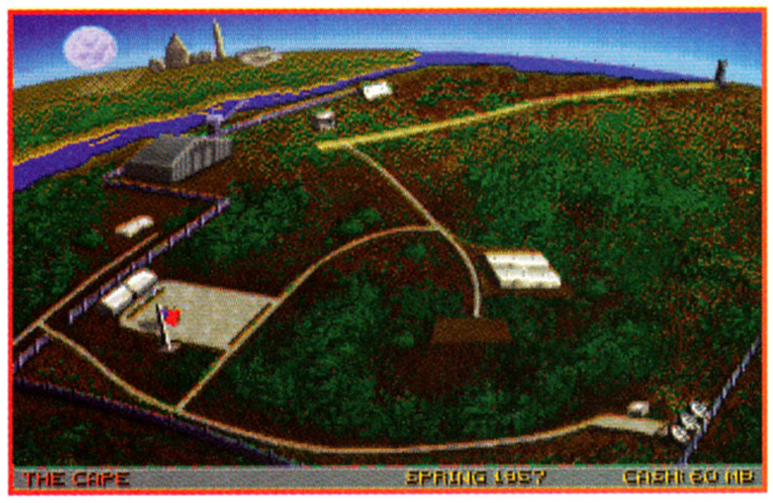
The Next Generation: Rusty Buchert

Much as we opened this section by speaking with one of the young Turks of game producing, we will close it with another newcomer to the ranks. Rusty Buchert worked his way from the outhouse—Interplay's "game testing department of one"—to the penthouse, as producer of the company's hot new **Doom**-killer, **Descent**.

"For me," he began, "[the producer's role includes] a little bit of everything. The producer has to have the creative vision of where he wants to go and what he wants to do. We get a team together and work to bring everybody together on this vision. Given my experience, coming where I came from, I did a lot of things along the way. I help things get along; I do art conversions, or change art or work on sound effects. I even fix bugs.

"I'm a very hands-on producer. I believe a producer has to really care about what he's doing with his project. If a producer has an idea and wants to do something, there's nothing worse than being told: 'It can't be done,' and not knowing that means: 'I don't want to do it.' I haven't written serious code in almost 10 years, but I know enough that when somebody tells me something's impossible, I can at least go to another programmer and say: 'I want to do so-and-so and here's how I think it can be done,' and he'll tell me: 'Yeah, that'll work.' Suddenly, it can be done. Also, that way you have a reality check; you're not going to try something that's *too* ambitious."

Descent originally came to Interplay as a work-in-progress from Parallax. "When they came on board with us, they continued with the project, and we provided them with expertise in sound, music, keeping the game fun. We got into this thing where they were so used to playing it, they kept upping the notch on the difficulty. I said, 'No, no, no, this is a *bad* thing.' I've seen that happen way too often—the people who are creating a game keep bouncing it, until it reaches the point where someone buys it and plays it for the first time and doesn't get past the first level and it's so hard it winds up on their shelf. One of the credos I go by is that people are paying us good money to feel clever. If you forget that, you may as well not be in the industry. It's not your ego against the guy playing the game; we're trying to entertain them."



Rusty's production credits include **Battlechess 4000**, **Race into Space** and **Star Trek: Judgment Rites**. "In general," he says, "we're always working on several projects at once, which is kind of frustrating for me. I'm so hands-on, I want to get in there and make sure it turns out the way I want it to. For me, these projects are like my children, almost. I take complete ownership of them." He almost becomes emotional as he asks: "If I don't, who will?"

Perhaps that's the perfect grace note for this piece. The producer is the person who, when all is said and done, must take responsibility for the work. But the final word on the subject of producers, however, belongs to a movie mogul of yesteryear. When a line producer on one of his many films came up to him with a laundry list of complaints, the cinema kingpin offered a single suggestion: "You're a producer. Produce."

"I'm a very hands-on producer. I believe a producer has to really care about what he's doing with his project."

[Additional research by John Hardin and Laurie Yates]

One way, or another, you'll go...

Ballistic

Whatever the landscape, it's all deadly ground when you take on the maniacs of **Desert Strike** and its nerve-racking sequel, Jungle Strike.

In **Desert Strike** , Middle East madman General Kilbaba has put the whole world on the brink of war. You must fly a series of missions in your **Apache Attack** Helicopter and stop him using canons, **Hydras**, and **Hellfire** missiles. Choose your co-pilot and patrol a real-time world in this action- packed thriller right out of the headlines.

Jungle Strike takes place after the death of General Kilbaba. His son, Kilbaba the Younger, has joined forces with the world's most **powerful** drug lord in a quest for **vengeance** against the United States.

You'll operate a Comanche **Attack** Helicopter, F-117A Stealth Fighter, MX9 **Attack** Hover craft and a Special Forces **Assault** Motorcycle in nine complex campaigns in a variety of exotic locations.

With both these **killer** games in one package, it's **double** the death and **twice** the turmoil. One way or another you'll go **ballistic**.

Available for PC CD-ROM.

Distributed By:

FRONT STREET PUBLISHING

Gremlin INTERACTIVE

© 1993, 1994, 1995, Electronic Arts and Granite Bay Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Desert Strike and Jungle Strike are trademarks of Electronic Arts. All rights reserved.
Front Street Publishing is a trademark of U.S. Gold, Inc.

THE TOP

Face to Face With the Creators of Donkey Kong and Donkey Kong Country

by Steve Kent

BANANAS

Sitting comfortably beside each other, Sigeru Miyamoto and Tim Stamper smile and exchange pleasantries. You could hardly tell that they are partners, the creator and rejuvenator of the great Donkey Kong, one of the most popular characters in video game history.

Miyamoto, looking slightly uncomfortable in his dark suit and white shirt, leans back in his chair. While traces of his age show in his face, his slightly long hair and boyish smile make him look like a college student.

Miyamoto speaks enough English to understand the conversation at the table but prefers to communicate through an interpreter. He leans back in his chair and amiably allows the conversation to evolve around him. As the original creator of **Donkey Kong**, Miyamoto has long been one of the elite designers in the video game industry.

Obviously more serious by nature, Tim Stamper sits fairly erect and considers every question carefully. Though he dressed casually for the meeting, Stamper is all business. At the time of this interview, January 1995, **Donkey Kong Country**, Stamper's first game in more than two years, was breaking all existing sales records. Though Miyamoto collaborated in the design of **Donkey Kong Country**, the electronic game is a product of Rare Limited, Stamper's British studio.

Despite their prominent places in the multibillion dollar electronic game industry, Stamper and Miyamoto hold many vastly different views. Sigeru Miyamoto never wanted to design video games. Trained as an industrial designer, Miyamoto, the man who created Mario, Donkey Kong and Zelda, always dreamed about making toys.

"When I started at Nintendo, I had been trained in the field of industrial design and I wanted to make fun toys. They [Hiroshi Yamauchi, the president of Nintendo who hired Miyamoto on the hunch that his creative talents might one day prove valuable] knew I could do something fun, but nobody knew what it would be. Nobody expected me to become involved in the video game business."

Stamper, on the other hand, chose to enter the electronic game business early on. Working with his brother Chris, an electronics genius with an understanding of the gaming industry, Stamper entered the industry during the days of **Space Invaders**. The public may not have known about Stamper until **Donkey**

"Early on, you would come up with a great, new game and think that no one would ever produce a better electronic game than that."
–Tim Stamper

Kong Country, but Rare Limited, Stamper's studio, has a long, distinguished history with Nintendo. One of the first outside developers to produce games for the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), Rare produced nearly 60 games including such classics as **R.C. ProAm** and **Marble Madness**.

"Mr. Miyamoto and I started making games at about the same time," says Stamper. "We both have gone through the process of creating early games for machines with very limited displays and controls. Early on, you would come up with a great, new game and think that no one would ever produce a better electronic game than that."

Hearing these words, Miyamoto smiles and speaks without his interpreter. "At the time of the original **Donkey Kong**, the game was more than I imagined, so I was very happy to have such a good game."

Rules versus Emotion:

One of the most striking differences between Stamper and Miyamoto is their definition of what makes a great game. Stamper sees rules as the basic building blocks from which games are created.

"I've got children and I look at the way they grow up and interact. It is really very much like creating a video game. They're born and they have to learn to use these controllers called hands, and to learn to walk and to communicate."

"Developing a video game is the gradual process of creating certain rules and learning to use those rules. A game is a system of rules that are established and you have to abide by. You set a certain jump distance and jump height. In the case of **Donkey Kong**, the rules included a certain speed ability and communication with other elements within the game, and that combination makes the video game.

"I don't like games that take too long to play, but it's okay for a game to take long if I feel very involved."
–Sigeru Miyamoto

MAGBALL

600 MPH IN ZERO GRAVITY. FALL '95

IN OUR GALAXY FA

TRIMARK
INTERACTIVE

"Whether it's fun or not depends on the designer. If it's fun, then the game will be a success."

While rules play a role in Miyamoto's philosophy of gaming, his driving concerns are the emotion and fun of playing games. "When I was a little boy, I liked to play pretend," says Miyamoto. "It was a lot like a computer simulation. When we played with friends, some games ended with a winner and a loser, and a friend played as judge. When you have a friend play the judge, he can just change the rules as he likes."

"When I play through the computer, the computer judges very correctly. It cannot change the rules. I found that difference interesting when I got in the computer game business."

According to Miyamoto, people overlook the human side of video games. "Everybody tends to forget about the emotional quality because once the computer is involved in the business, people think about everything as the creation of machines. People forget about the emotional element and they never think about man's involvement."

"When you draw a laughing face, your face should laugh. When you draw an angry face, your face should be angry. The character will capture your emotion. The emotions and fun in the games are not made while thinking about business." According to Miyamoto, the biggest barrier he encounters is "when salespeople decide which video games should be made."

With such divergent beginnings and views, it is no surprise that Miyamoto and Stamper have very different tastes in games. Asked to name his favorite games, Miyamoto says he generally prefers short games. "I don't like games that take too long to play, but it's okay for a game to take long if I feel very involved." Miyamoto says that **Pac-Man** is his favorite game, but if he could have invented any game, it would have been **SimCity**. He likes the idea of creating towns and streets and allowing the computer to "expand the town and create a new world."

Stamper hesitates before listing a favorite game because he has had several favorites. "That's a very difficult question because I have liked different products during certain evolutions of computer power. Games that I liked three or four years ago and spent weeks playing I don't necessarily enjoy now. In fact, I would venture to say that the best games have not been written yet."

Rather than naming his favorite games, Stamper listed the games that he feels have had the most impact on the industry—**Space Invaders** and **Donkey Kong**.

The Role of Technology

Despite having very different philosophies, Stamper and Miyamoto share very strong opinions about the past and future of video games. "This used to be the world of programmers," says Miyamoto. "Now it is the world of designers."

"He means that in the old days, programmers were responsible to a large extent for the way the products came out," adds Stamper. "Now it is the game designers' responsibility."

"It has been five or six years," Miyamoto agrees. "The programmers want to take back their position again."

Partially driven by new technologies, the industry has evolved since the days when programmers played the decisive role in game creation. "Right now is the most exciting time in the history of the video game industry," says Stamper. "You can almost put your thoughts directly onto the hardware display. Previously you had limitations in display systems and processing time. Now suddenly we're reaching a time when your thoughts can be translated right onto the machine."

"The possibilities have been expanded by improvements in the technology," says Miyamoto. "Games have been created in two dimensions so far; they have been flat like a movie. In the future they will be three dimensional. The problem right now is that the size and shape of television screens are not made for video games, so it is limiting to make new games for that kind of screen."

Both men agree, however, on one point. Advances in technology have made games bigger and more attractive, but they have not necessarily made them more enjoyable to play. "Games now have more depth, not more fun," says Stamper. "They have not become more fun. They have the same amount of fun."

Another point of agreement is the importance of assembling a strong creative team. Yamauchi has divided much of Nintendo into four development teams. While most of the teams have produced games, the Entertainment Analysis and Development Team (EAD), led by Miyamoto, creates most of the powerhouse titles. Miyamoto and his team created all of the **Legend of Zelda** and **Super Mario** adventure games.

Asked what are his greatest advantages and limitations in game creation, Stamper quips that "the greatest advantage is good people on the team, and the greatest disadvantage is bad people on the team." After a moment's consideration, he arrives at an even greater limitation. "Time is always the limitation on a video game. You never seem to have enough time. Whenever you do a video game, you always seem to think that if you'd had those extra few months or that extra computer power ... The game is always a compromise."

As the meeting closes, Tim Stamper asks Miyamoto a question of his own. "If the video game industry disappeared tomorrow, would you still write games for your friends?"

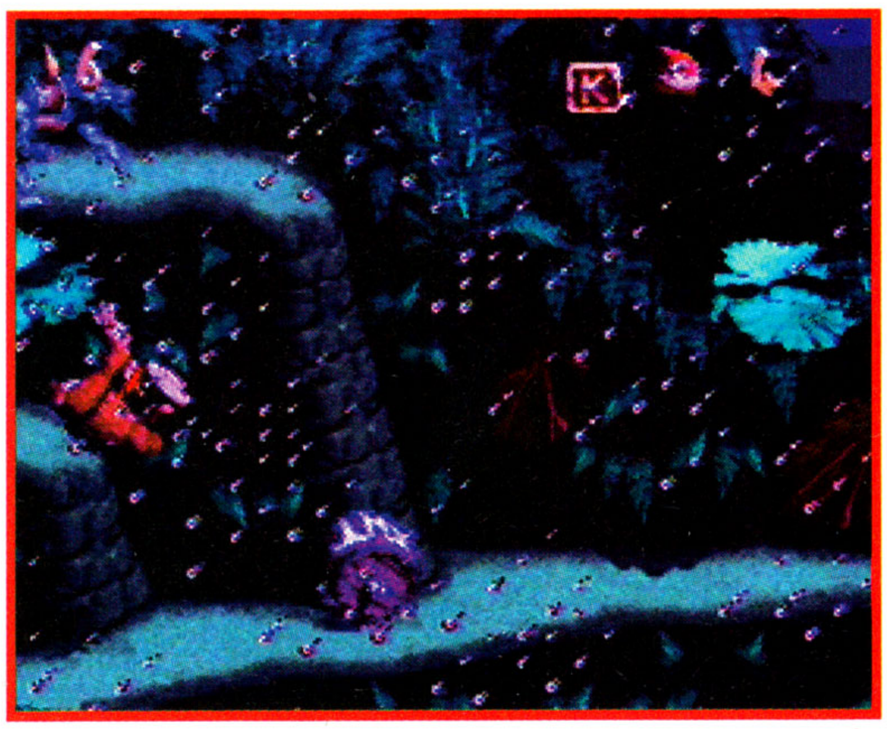
Looking a little confused, the man who refined computer games by introducing the concept of a story line leans forward with a slightly perplexed look and asks to hear the question again.

"If there were no industry ... If this were not your job, you'd still make games for enjoyment, you know, a hobby?" Stamper asks.

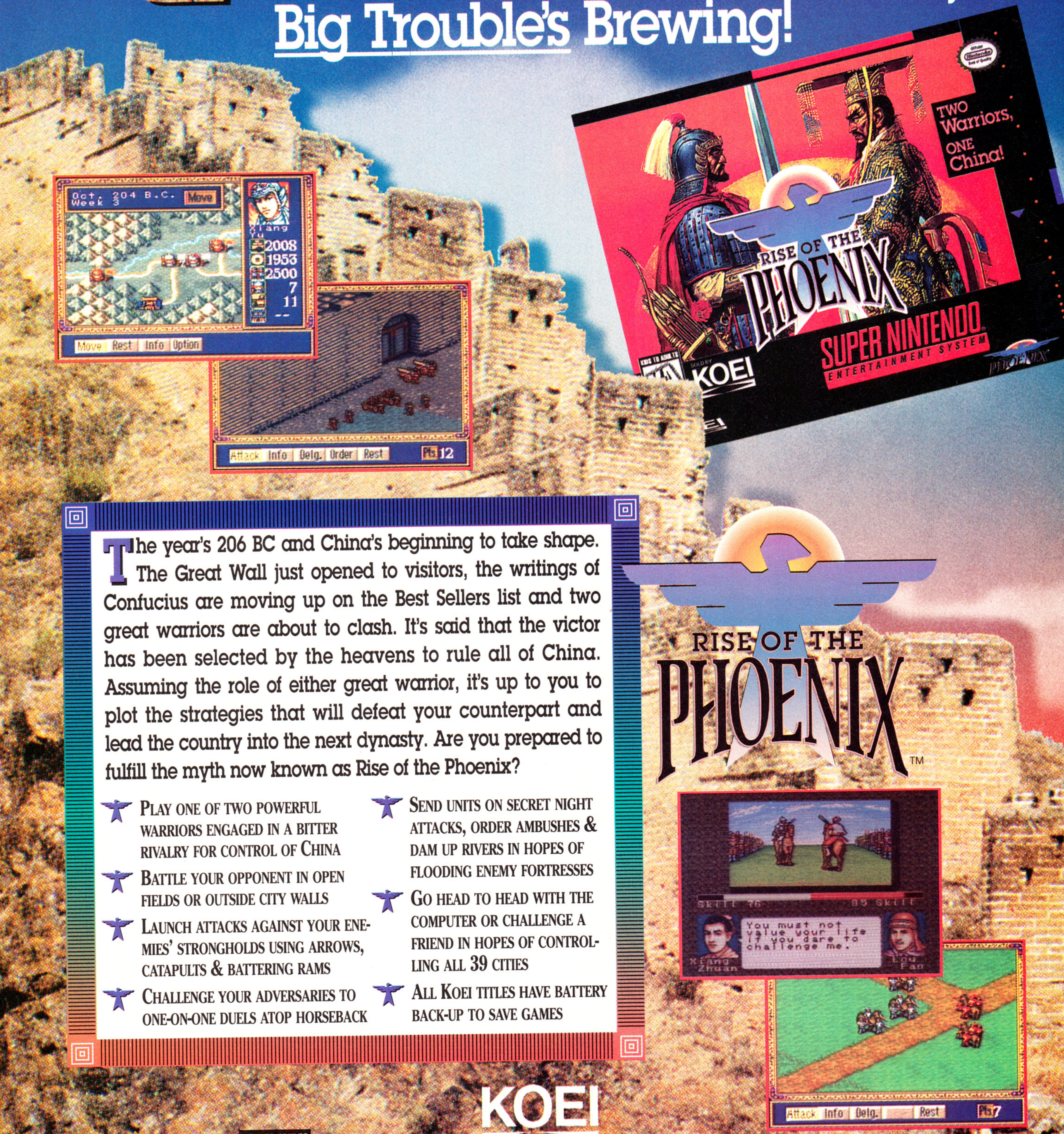
After some discussion with Sigeru Miyamoto, the translator laughs nervously. "Mr. Miyamoto says that he would work in the toy industry or for a theme park company like MGM."

"But how about writing games for pleasure or a hobby? Would you write games for your friends?" Stamper inquires.

After a quick discussion, the translator answers quietly, "He would not make games. Maybe he would gather children and play with them."



Behind this GREAT WALL, Big Trouble's Brewing!



The year's 206 BC and China's beginning to take shape. The Great Wall just opened to visitors, the writings of Confucius are moving up on the Best Sellers list and two great warriors are about to clash. It's said that the victor has been selected by the heavens to rule all of China. Assuming the role of either great warrior, it's up to you to plot the strategies that will defeat your counterpart and lead the country into the next dynasty. Are you prepared to fulfill the myth now known as Rise of the Phoenix?

- PLAY ONE OF TWO POWERFUL WARRIORS ENGAGED IN A BITTER RIVALRY FOR CONTROL OF CHINA
- BATTLE YOUR OPPONENT IN OPEN FIELDS OR OUTSIDE CITY WALLS
- LAUNCH ATTACKS AGAINST YOUR ENEMIES' STRONGHOLDS USING ARROWS, CATAPULTS & BATTERING RAMS
- CHALLENGE YOUR ADVERSARIES TO ONE-ON-ONE DUELS ATOP HORSEBACK
- SEND UNITS ON SECRET NIGHT ATTACKS, ORDER AMBUSHES & DAM UP RIVERS IN HOPES OF FLOODING ENEMY FORTRESSES
- GO HEAD TO HEAD WITH THE COMPUTER OR CHALLENGE A FRIEND IN HOPES OF CONTROLLING ALL 39 CITIES
- ALL KOEI TITLES HAVE BATTERY BACK-UP TO SAVE GAMES

KOEI

KOEI Corporation, 1350 Bayshore Highway, Suite 540
Burlingame, CA 94010

Rise of the Phoenix is a trademark of KOEI Corporation. Nintendo, Nintendo Entertainment System, and the official seals are trademarks of Nintendo of America.

AVAILABLE FOR SUPER NES.

KOEI Games are available in retail outlets nationwide! If you can't find the KOEI product you are looking for, call us at 415/348-0500 (9am to 5pm pt).

Online Support offered on CompuServe: GO VIDPUB, Sect. 4

State of The Court

COACH K COLLEGE BASKETBALL

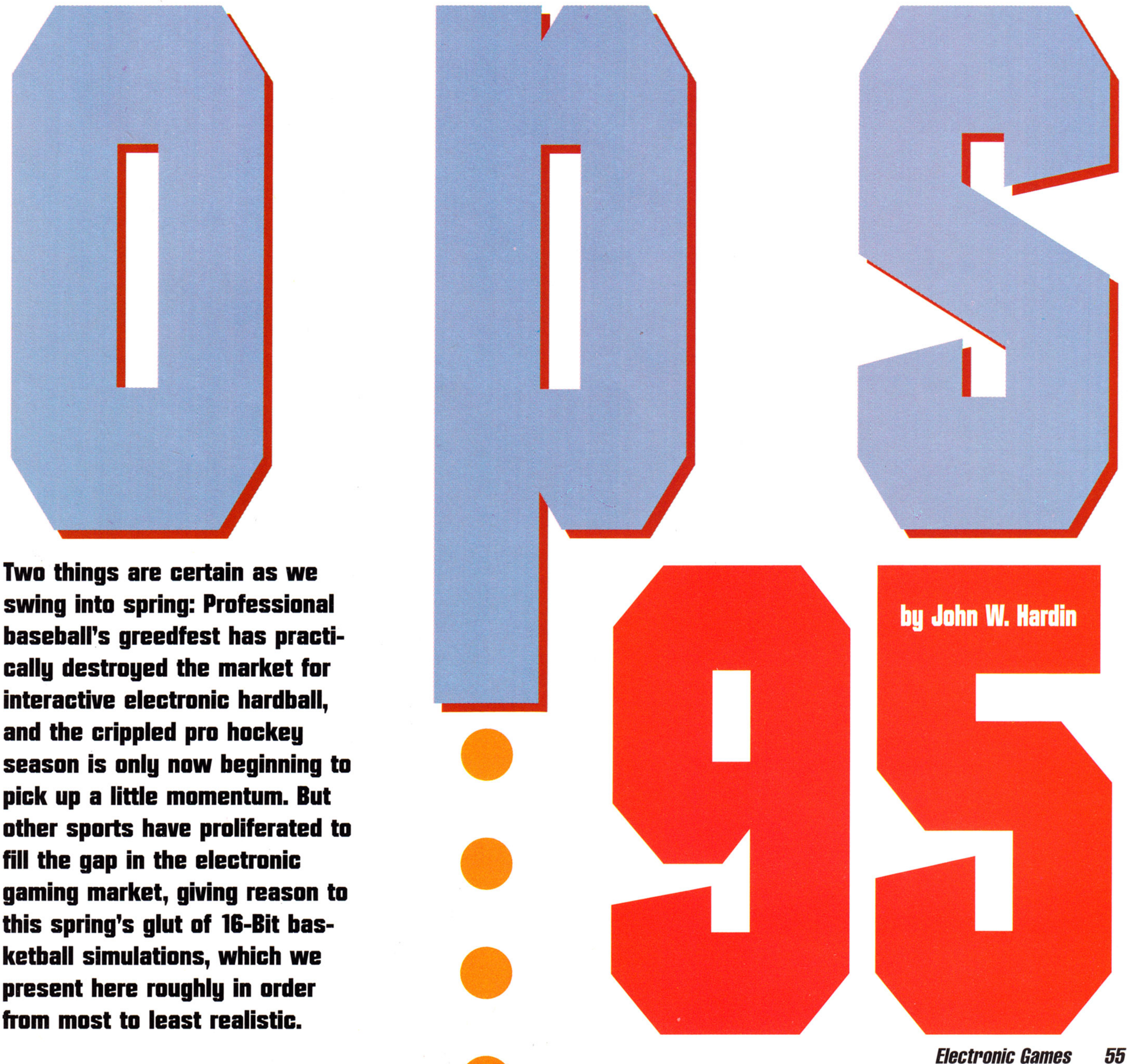
(*EA Sports/Genesis*) This cart, starring Duke Blue Devils coach Mike Krzyzewski (pronounced sha-shef-ski, if you can believe that), shines with the handiwork of those bright guys at EA. This cart offers serious basketball or a hard-hitting arcade game, or allows the player to make their own, customized rules set with the extensive Options Menu.

Coaching options allow the player to select their own plays and call them on the fly, while three levels of difficulty make **CKCB** accessible to all levels of player. Lots of frills top the package off, like the little tag line identifying the venue where the game is being held, the now-standard instant replay and the Coach K Report that gives Mike's analysis of all the teams in the game. Players can also play with or against eight championship teams from the past.

The low, broad, angled point of view shows the gamer most of the court without distorting it, and the interface is gorgeous: This game is a natural for conversion to the 3DO or one of the other expert systems. In a word, **Coach K College Basketball** is outstanding.

NBA ACTION '95, STARRING DAVID ROBINSON.

(*Sega/Genesis*) Mr. Robinson's neighborhood forgoes the usual, angled side perspective for an unconventional, angled overhead view, making it appear as if the athletes were playing on an 80-degree slope. Fortunately, the game play quickly puts the odd perspective in the background, as ease of play and fast action provide a mostly satisfying basketball game. It features all 27 NBA teams and real players, plus authentic color commentary by veteran announcer Marv Albert, voice of the "NBA on NBC." **NBA '95** includes player stats, instant replay and player trading and supports up to five players at once. Six different play modes and three levels of difficulty give the cart flexibility. The Rookie setting is a pushover, but the All-Star level will give any sim hoops fan a workout.



Two things are certain as we swing into spring: Professional baseball's greedfest has practically destroyed the market for interactive electronic hardball, and the crippled pro hockey season is only now beginning to pick up a little momentum. But other sports have proliferated to fill the gap in the electronic gaming market, giving reason to this spring's glut of 16-Bit basketball simulations, which we present here roughly in order from most to least realistic.

by John W. Hardin

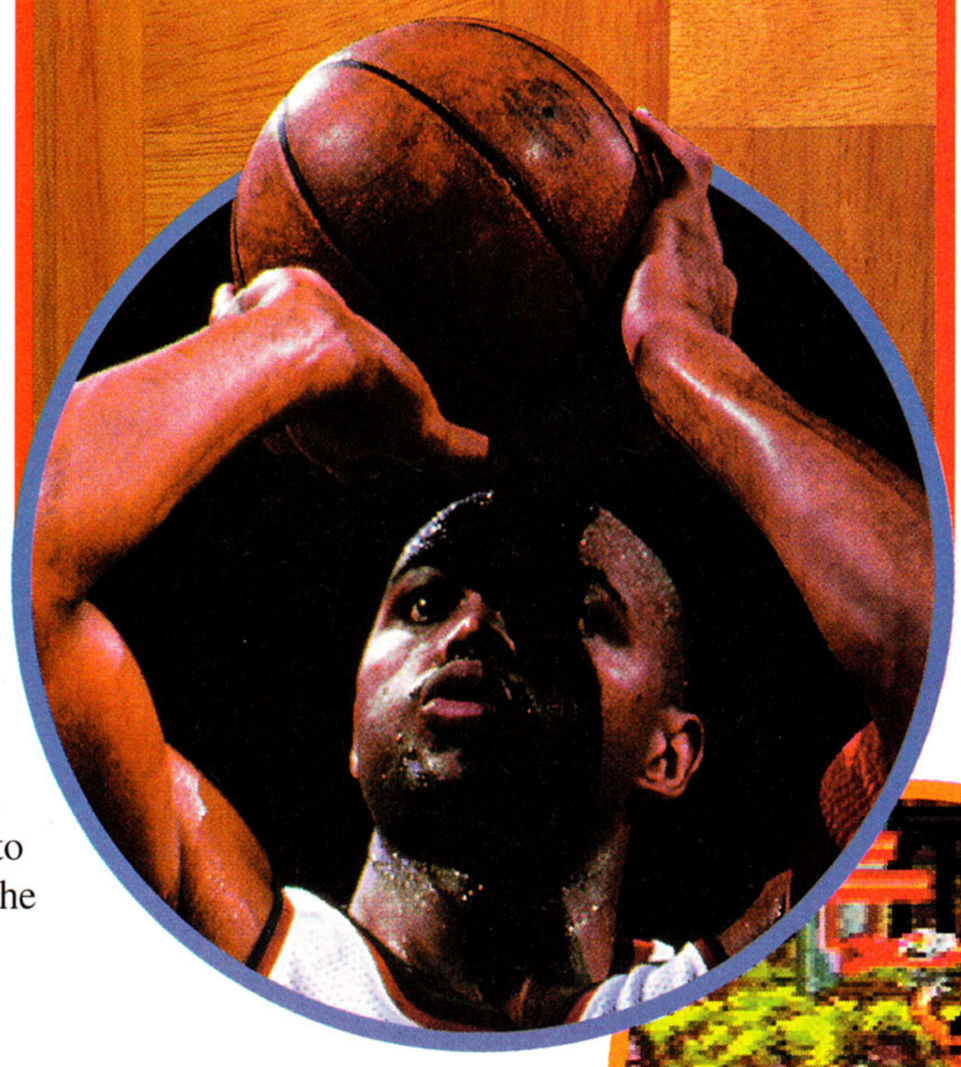
NCAA FINAL FOUR BASKETBALL

(*Mindscape/SNES*) This preview cart from Mindscape claims to be the most realistic college hoops game ever. The small sprites move fluidly enough to appear rotoscoped, but the controls are intricate and hard to master. There are the standard Exhibition and Tournament options; players can learn the interface in Practice Mode and hone their free-throwing skills in the attractively rendered Free Throw mode. The difficulty of making the free throw can be varied from a 32 percent chance to a 95 percent chance. Until the final version comes out, it's hard to say whether all these will make mastering the controls worth the effort.

Just when you thought it was safe to go back on the court, Acclaim returns to home consoles with **NBA JAM: TOURNAMENT EDITION** (*Acclaim/SNES-Genesis*). **NBA Jam: TE** is much more of an arcade game (and less real basketball) than the original. Optional features include Hotspots on the court that add points if the player makes a basket while standing on them, power-ups that increase a player's speed, power, turbo and other, wilder effects. There's a Practice Mode, a rookie team of NBA newcomers and a huge cast of hidden characters, including the Beastie Boys (?!).

The SNES and Genesis versions are virtually identical, with the exception that the Genesis' graphics are slightly inferior. With the **Tournament Edition**, **NBA Jam** proves there's lots of life in the license yet.

"Sir Charles, the original basketball badass, returns to shut you up and jam again."

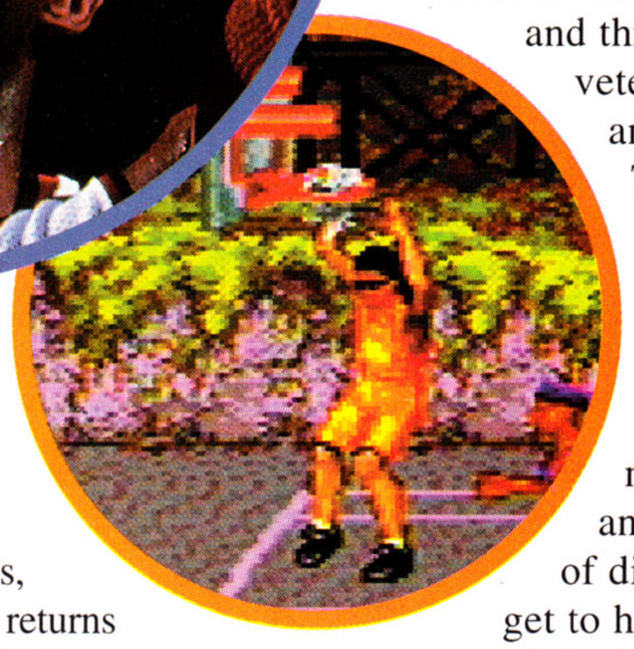


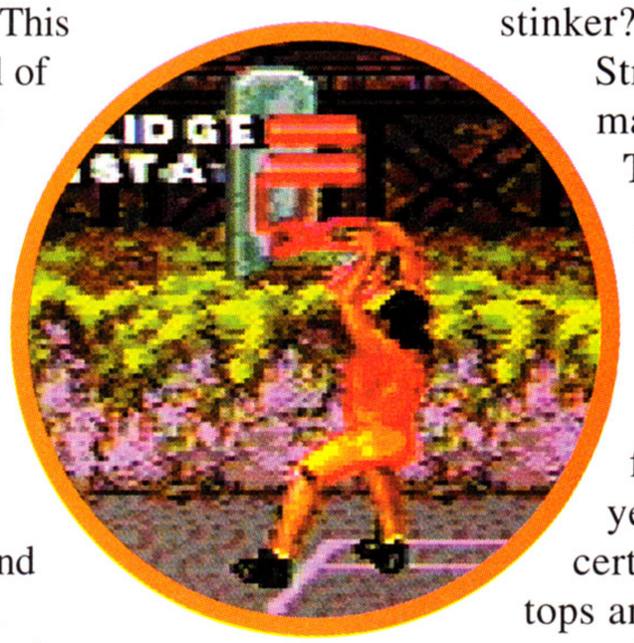
BARKLEY: SHUT UP AND JAM 2

(*Accolade/Genesis*) Sir Charles, the original basketball badass, returns to shut you up and jam again. This time, he's backed up by a total of 22 characters, with over 2,000 animations. The action is spread out over eight different street locations. **Jam 2** has a Tournament Mode, special moves and at least one truly over-the-top effect.

The characters are large, colorful and include a broad range of ethnic backgrounds and pseudo-street monikers: Street names made up by sheltered designers who've never really been there. **Barkley: Shut Up and Jam 2** is more action game than basketball game, so the cartoonish graphics work.

One exception to this is the poorly animated basketball. When thrown, the ball doesn't so much fly as levitate across the court, looking as if it were suspended on wires.



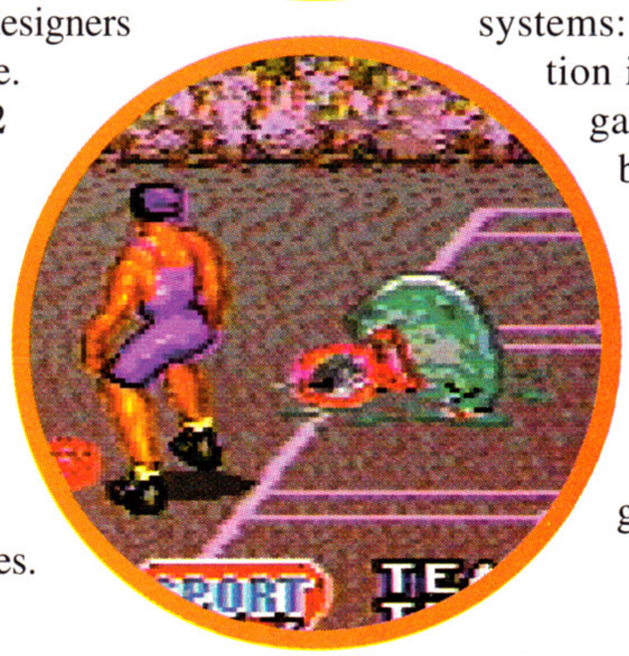


Furthest away from real sports, we find **LOONEY TUNES B-BALL** (*Sunsoft/SNES*). If you've always wanted to see Elmer Fudd in gym shorts, here's your chance. This game breaks enough of the rules (of basketball and physics) to be fun, but probably doesn't retain enough real basketball feel to satisfy the hardcore.

There is a Wackiness Meter, to let gamers control the cartoon mayhem. Bugs Bunny, Elmer, Yosemite Sam, Marvin the Martian, Wile E. Coyote and three other Warner Bros. veterans make an appearance. Secret moves like Teleport, Eclipse, Force Field, Long Range and others add a proper cartoon atmosphere to the proceedings. Each character has a different animation for each effect, and all of them have a bit of digitized speech, so we get to hear Bugs say, "Ain't I a stinker?" etc.

Strict basketball realists may scoff, but **Looney Tunes B-Ball** is genuinely fun.

There you have them: the bulk of this season's basketball crop for 16-Bit cartridges. Oh yeah, one other thing's for certain as we lace up our hi-tops and fire up the gaming systems: The multiplayer revolution isn't just for on-line games. All of the above basketball games support some kind of multiplayer tap. Electronic hoops fans need never play in ones or twos again, so call up a half-dozen of your closest friends and get jamming.

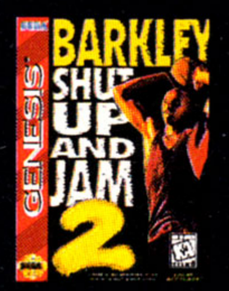


"JUST SHUT UP AND JAM."

Shut Up and Jam 2 is all the trash talkin', elbow-throwin' streetball you could ever want. The animations are dope and the combination moves are deadly. You've got twenty-five ways to slam. Behind-the-back passes. Double-clutches. Alley-oops. 10 players to pick from and zero refs. And it's the only video game in the world with Sir Charles himself. Enough talk. Get Shut Up and Jam 2. Then take some chump off the dribble and drive it to the hole.

Charles Barkley's name and likeness are used under license by, and Barkley Shut Up and Jam 2 and Sport Accolade are trademarks of, Accolade, Inc. Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the Sega Genesis System. Sega and Genesis are trademarks of Sega Enterprises Ltd.

SPORT ACCOLADE



READING, RIGHTING

&ROM

EG examines the two schools of philosophy when it comes to choosing which educational software is right for your child.

By Laurie Yates

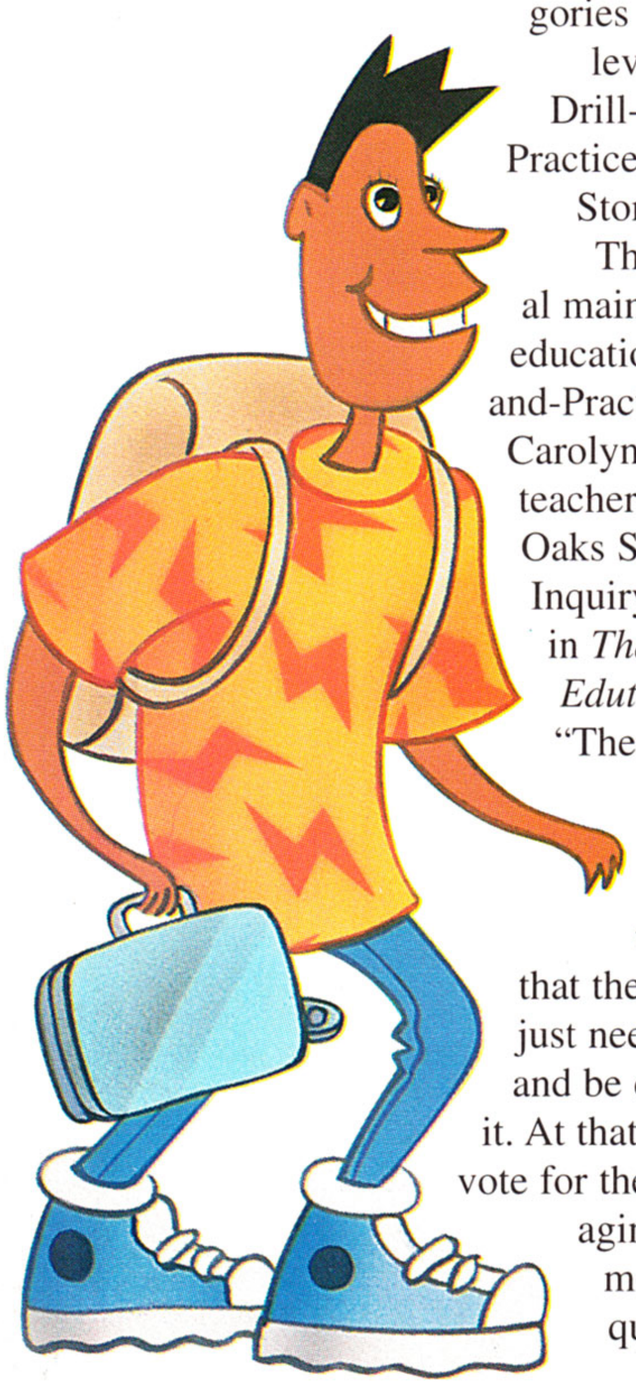
It's a decision faced by parents every day: What type of education can we afford to give our children? In the real world, this decision is most frequently determined by the parents' economic resources. Within the world of edutainment and computer-assisted instruction (CAI), however, the software offers more or less economic parity. As a result, parents are free to determine the course of their children's instruction based largely on their philosophical predisposition.

We have seen two primary schools of CAI theory evolve in recent years, both buttressed by plenty of software support. The first school embraces a higher educational content (usually in the higher order skills), occasionally at the expense of frills and thrills; while the other utilizes a bells and whistles approach, sometimes dampening the educational aspects in favor of creating a comfortable environment for students, especially in the lower order skills.

Regardless of which CAI theory one subscribes to, adults will find plenty of software within the six educational genres: Storybooks, Drill-and-Practice, Creativity Tools, Problem-Solving Activities, Mysteries/Adventures/Simulations and Reference/Documentaries.

Educational Building Blocks

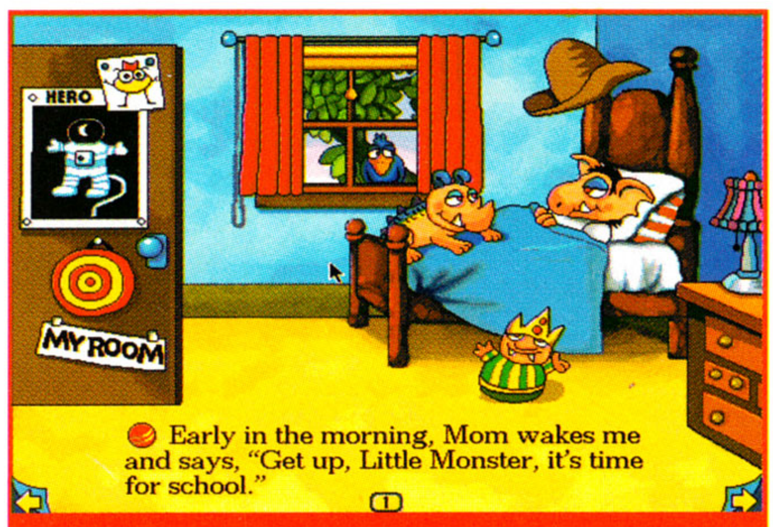
Educational theorists divide educational skills into two areas: lower order and higher order. Examples of lower order skills include spelling, punctuation, counting and sorting—in other words, what most people think of as "the basics." CAI software categories for these levels include Drill-and-Practice and Storybooks.



The traditional mainstay of education is Drill-and-Practice. As Carolyn Perry, a teacher at Fair Oaks School of Inquiry, observed in *That's Edutainment*: "There are some lessons, such as multiplication tables, that the students just need to learn and be done with it. At that point I vote for the least damaging, highest motivating, quickest way.

MATH BLASTER
Combining arcade action and math education.

Kids are a lot more interested when they want to make sure their space station survives." This type of program teaches a topic and then tests the user in an arcade-like setting. For example, children playing **NumberMaze** (Great Wave Software/Mac & PC) solve math problems to unlock the castle gates that lead players to the throne room. Historically, these programs are most effective with curriculum subjects such as phonics, reading, typing and math. Some of the better drill-and-practice software includes Davidson's **Math Blaster** and **Reading Blaster** series, the **Reader Rabbit** series (The Learning Company) and **Mental Math** (WordPerfect Main Street).



LITTLE MONSTER AT SCHOOL
Plenty of hot spots to keep children busy.

The Electronic Storybook genre is where the philosophical divisions come into play. The typical program employs book pages with large sprite characters and oversized text, often featuring real speech options, with each word or phrase highlighted.

Should parents expect more from a US $30-40 program than a 20-page storybook with hot spots that produce entertaining animations? The recognized leader of the genre, Living Books, doesn't seem to believe any changes to its successful formula are necessary. **Little Monster at School** is a delightful 24-page story about Mercer Mayer's Little Monster character with plenty of animated hot spots. The program is packaged with the softcover story so that children and care givers can also enjoy the story non-electronically.

Some companies, however, are expanding from the storybook into educational concepts. **How Many Bugs in a Box?** (Simon & Schuster Interactive), for example, takes David A. Carter's pop-up book and includes eight learning games, each with three levels of difficulty. This addition takes the storybook to its next level, and represents a watershed in the genre.

Creativity programs introduce children to art and music, subjects often trimmed out of school budgets, and provide youngsters opportunities to explore right-brain activities. Top programs in this genre include the ubiquitous **Print Shop** (Broderbund), **MetroGnomes Music** (The Learning Company), **Magic Theatre** (Knowledge Adventure) and **Lenny's Music Toons** (Viacom New Media).

Food for a Day or a Lifetime?

There's an old proverb that states, "Give someone a fish, and feed them for a day; teach someone to fish, and feed them for a lifetime." So it is with the higher order educational skills. Some teachers and parents are concerned, however, as to how powerful the software ultimately is. Dr. Dave Moursund, professor of education at University of Oregon, noted that, "teachers are bothered that software is so powerful that students can learn without them. There is quite a lot of evidence that software can be developed so that a moderately motivated student can learn a great deal. Education has to be a lifelong activity, and people need to gradually wean themselves from being highly dependent on the formal structure in a classroom setting to being a self-sufficient lifelong learner and a facilitator of other people's learning. [Therefore,] finding out about a given topic on one's own should be a major goal of education."

The three higher order skills of Mysteries/Adventures/Simulations; Problem Solving Activities and Reference/Documentaries (see sidebar) are excellent examples of how software can encourage self-learning.

WIDGET WORKSHOP
Creative problem solving with a twist.

As the authors of *KidWare* observe, "Simulations … emphasize academic subject matter, but are more open-ended than most subject programs. Simulations present concepts and skills in a less straightforward way, … emphasizing role-playing and exploration instead, and … help children develop thinking skills and problem-solving

activities." This genre is probably one of the more prolific. Maxis' Sim series, especially the new **SimTown**, are among the most well known in the field, but there are plenty of others of above-average quality. Some of these products include the **Eagle Eye Mysteries** series (Electronic Arts), **The Oregon Trail DeLuxe** (MECC) and Broderbund's infamous criminal Carmen Sandiego.

THINKIN' THINGS 2
Kids program the lines to create the beat.

Problem-Solving Activities focus on the educational process instead of content. Usually this genre features puzzle solving, mental games and new concept exploration. **Freddi Fish and the Case of the Missing Kelp Seeds** (Humongous) has players guiding Freddi around her aquatic environment, solving problems and obtaining objects for trade, all for the end goal of finding the kelp seeds necessary to feed Freddi and her friends. Some of the better products include **Thinkin' Things 2** (Edmark); **World Book Encyclopedia presents Safety Scavenger Hunt** (StarPress) and **Widget Workshop** (Maxis).

The Sign Post Up Ahead

The children's market is booming, and unsuspecting parents and care givers have to separate the wheat from the chaff. Fortunately, adults are not alone. In addition to the magazines, there are a number of books that discuss software, educational theory and child development. Three excellent resources that parents should not be without are: *Edutainment Comes Alive!* (William P. Mann; Sams Publishing, 1994), which comes with a PC program sampler disk; *KidWare: The Parent's Guide to Software for Children* (Michael Perkins, M.A. & Celia Núñez, M.A.; Prima Publishing, 1995), which includes great tips for using and extending the life of the software and *That's Edutainment: A Parent's Guide to Educational Software* (Eric Brown; Osborne McGraw Hill, 1995), which contains a hybrid sample disk.

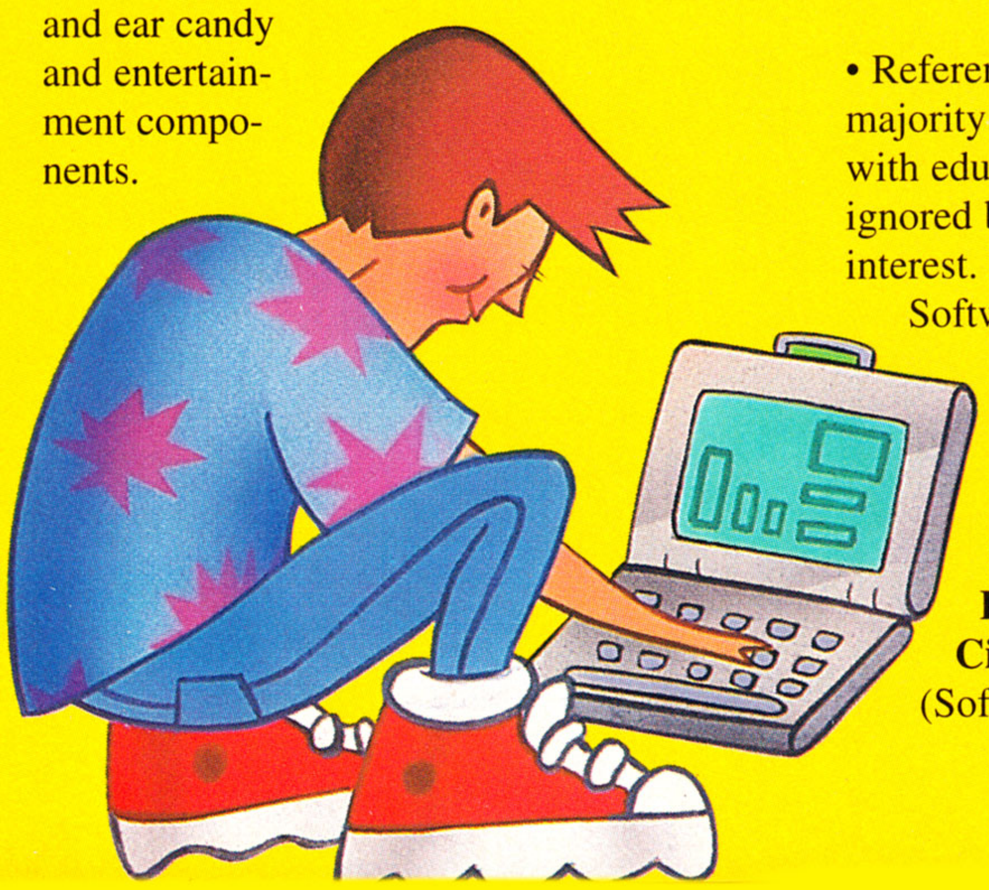
Also, parents have to be prepared to make mistakes. As Dr. Moursund observed, "Looking for the reasonable balance between something that will be intrinsically motivating [as well as] captivating [and] making what they're learning how to do relevant and transferable is not always easy."

Edutainment By Any Other Name...

Adults interested in software for children are confronted by a plethora of terms, all with specific meanings. Tracking down the definitions of these terms can be disturbing since not every company uses the same term in the same manner. Generally, and here at ***EG***, these are the terms used, with both definitions and examples.

• Kideo—Products that are primarily entertainment with little or no educational content; i.e., a video/computer game for kids. Examples of this type of product include **Putt-Putt's Fun Pack** (Humongous), **Fatty-Bear's Fun Pack** (Humongous) and **Crystal's Pony Tale** (Sega).

• Edutainment—Software containing educational content, but sweetened, to a greater or lesser degree, by eye and ear candy and entertainment components. Literally, entertaining education or education with entertainment. Different publishers and development groups may tend to emphasize one component over the other. Examples of this product type include the **Carmen Sandiego** series (Broderbund), **Thinkin' Things** (Edmark) and **Richard Scarry's BusyTown** (Multiple Publishers).



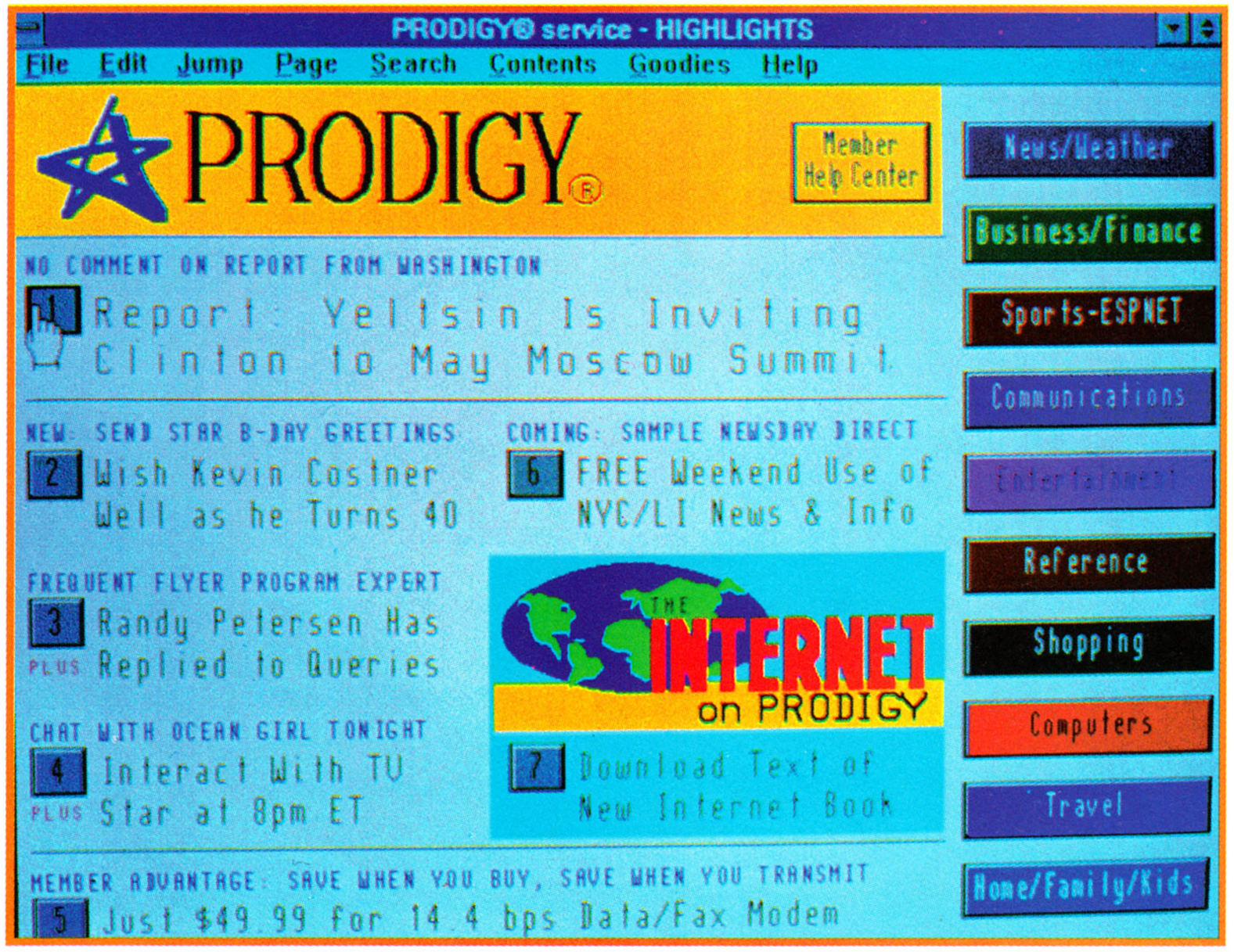
• Educational—Programs that incorporate solid educational content without an excess of eye and ear candy. Traditionally, this is where users would find reference materials (which is actually a different category) such as **Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia** and **Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia**. However, truer examples of this field include **Aviation Adventure** (Knowledge Adventure), and **Microsoft Space Simulator** (Microsoft).

• Reference—As mentioned above, a great majority of these products are lumped in with educational products and are thus ignored by adults who might find them of interest. Reference products are just that: Software that can be used to learn additional information without requiring mastery of a subject. Examples of these programs are **Professor Multimedia** (Individual Software), **Photography Made Easy** (Villa Crespo) and **America's Civil War: A Nation Divided** (Software Marketing Corporation).

• Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI)—Somewhat muddling the "Is it Educational or Edutainment" debate, CAI generally refers to high-quality educational products that record a child's progress while utilizing the frills and liberal praise reinforcements found in their edutainment counterparts.

Adults looking for products to use in home schooling would be advised to check out publishers such as Aimes and Jostens for their software offerings; but within the next year, look for more software that children use at school to be moved into the home market. (Edmark has already begun this with **Millie's Math House**, **Bailey's Book House** and **Sammy's Science House**).

THE NET
P2: Prodigy's New Face



Prodigy is a strange animal. For the last few years, Prodigy was the second biggest on-line provider, right after gigantic CompuServe. But Prodigy has always had an odd feel to it.

Just a few minutes on CompuServe leaves you with no doubt that this system is primarily business oriented. America Online, on the other hand, doesn't take long to impress with its laid-back atmosphere. But with Prodigy, the longer one was on, the more mystified one was likely to be.

There was something of a business feel, but not much. The depth of financial analysis tools one could find on CompuServe weren't to be had on Prodigy. Users were left to look to Prodigy for their entertainment. Here one felt that while Prodigy was making a game try, it wasn't in the ballpark on this one either. The depth of services just wasn't there compared to America Online when it came to entertainment information. Until last year, Prodigy didn't even have a chat function. And no one had the games to compete with GEnie.

However in the last year or so, Prodigy seems to have realized that somewhere along the line they had lost any sense of definition in the eyes of the using public. While the public is showering love and fascination on America Online, Prodigy has been quietly pointing out that AOL doesn't have enough system to handle their users. Prodigy, having made the tough architecture decisions early, has a fully distributed system that can accommodate more than 20 times their current user base.

But AOL grew at 178 percent last year while Prodigy hit somewhere around 30 percent. And, abruptly, Prodigy becomes the number three on-line service.

There are two ways to look at this. The first is that Prodigy is run by people who have roughly the IQ of aardvarks. Possible. I mean, here is a company that in less than four years let a competitor come from a standing start and knock them out of their slot as the second biggest on-line provider in the country.

But to give them their due, let's assume the problem is something else, something that is more fitting of their corporate parents. Prodigy is the child of IBM and Sears. Both are Big Corporate America. BCA doesn't move fast. Conservative is the textbook definition for these kinds of companies.

Let's say that Prodigy inherited this kind of conservative corporate culture. That means that Prodigy is going to be slow to react. If we look at the way that Prodigy has been consistently outmaneuvered by AOL, this starts to look like the real problem with Prodigy: Not that they are making particularly bad moves, but just that they are reacting slowly, the legacy of big-business parents.

However, while there are some bad points to having Sears and IBM as your parents, there is a good point. These are both companies that know how to restructure. Sears has shown some talent for it in the last year, and IBM is trying, though it remains to be seen if they are going to pull it off. In big business, when something is flawed with your model, you restructure.

Anyone watching Prodigy for the last year has seen signs of just this kind of restructuring coming. Prodigy finally acquired scads of content provision partners, something they didn't seem to be doing as aggressively a year ago. Around mid-year, Prodigy let go 100 of its staff in an internal restructuring. The reason? Prodigy no longer wants to provide its own content, but instead wants to provide a vehicle for others to reach their on-line audience.

These and scores of other little signs show that Prodigy has been looking to redefine itself. But to effectively do this, it needs changes that show; huge changes that cause people to give Prodigy another look. A second chance, as it were.

At CES in Las Vegas, looking like the cat that ate the canary, Prodigy unveiled just the kind of change it needs to get attention back on it. Prodigy's future is named **P2**.

P2 is the newest interface for the Prodigy system, and it is the single most radical departure seen to date from an on-line service between generations. The 2.0 interface from AOL was very nice, but **P2** is an evolutionary leap.

The first thing to understand about **P2** is that it is an entirely new underlying structure. This new service is entirely written in

HyperText Markup Language. HTML is the lingua franca of the World Wide Web network. Hence, the new Prodigy will be 100 percent transparent to the WWW. Now, why is this so important?

Well, if you've been reading our last few columns you already know the answer to this, but the reason is simple. The WWW is Internet Lite. It allows users of the Net to navigate using a point-and-click graphical interface that is a dream to use. By taking the rough edges off of the Internet, WWW is moving more and more businesses and people onto the Net.

So by being transparent to the WWW service, Prodigy, among other things, obtains an almost infinite variety of content.

For instance, let's say that one is looking through a news story on Prodigy. In the story, something is said about the White House's newest plans regarding Haiti. Beside the story, a number of icons might appear, which lead to various Internet WWW homepage links that are keyed into the story. You can click on the Whitehouse homepage, and then look for the latest Clintonspeak on Haiti.

This sort of transparent information jumping will be normal on the new Prodigy. You will be jumping from Prodigy, to the Net and back to Prodigy all from the same, simple interface. Much of the time, the reader might not even be aware where the content is actually generated.

While HTML is sexy, there are some drawbacks, and one of these is speed. Web browsers take a long time to pull down their images. The major reason is that graphics, such as photos, are included in the pages. Graphics, as we all know, take quite a bit of bandwidth to pull down.

Prodigy is looking at four major ways to help with the speed issue. First, and most straightforward, they are trying to up their modem connect speeds. Prodigy should have a passel of 14.4 lines in by the time this article goes to press, with more expected in the near future.

The bigger pipes might help, but Prodigy has found a few other ways to squeeze some performance out of the system. The most interesting is to keep as many of the regularly reused graphics as they can on *your* own personal system.

For example, let's say that the user hits a certain homepage every day. And on that page there are some graphics that don't often change. **P2** will detect this and keep the graphics in the machine, lowering access time to that homepage considerably.

In a linked speed issue, Prodigy is keeping as much of its database files on the user's computer as they can. This allows for some neat tricks. For instance, let's say you decide to track a stock. So you enter the name of the stock and period of time, and the system will display a graph of the stock performance over a year. But if you want to know about a week, then just highlight that week, and suddenly that information will be expanded to show the stock's performance over the week. The same sorts of tricks can be done with sports scores.

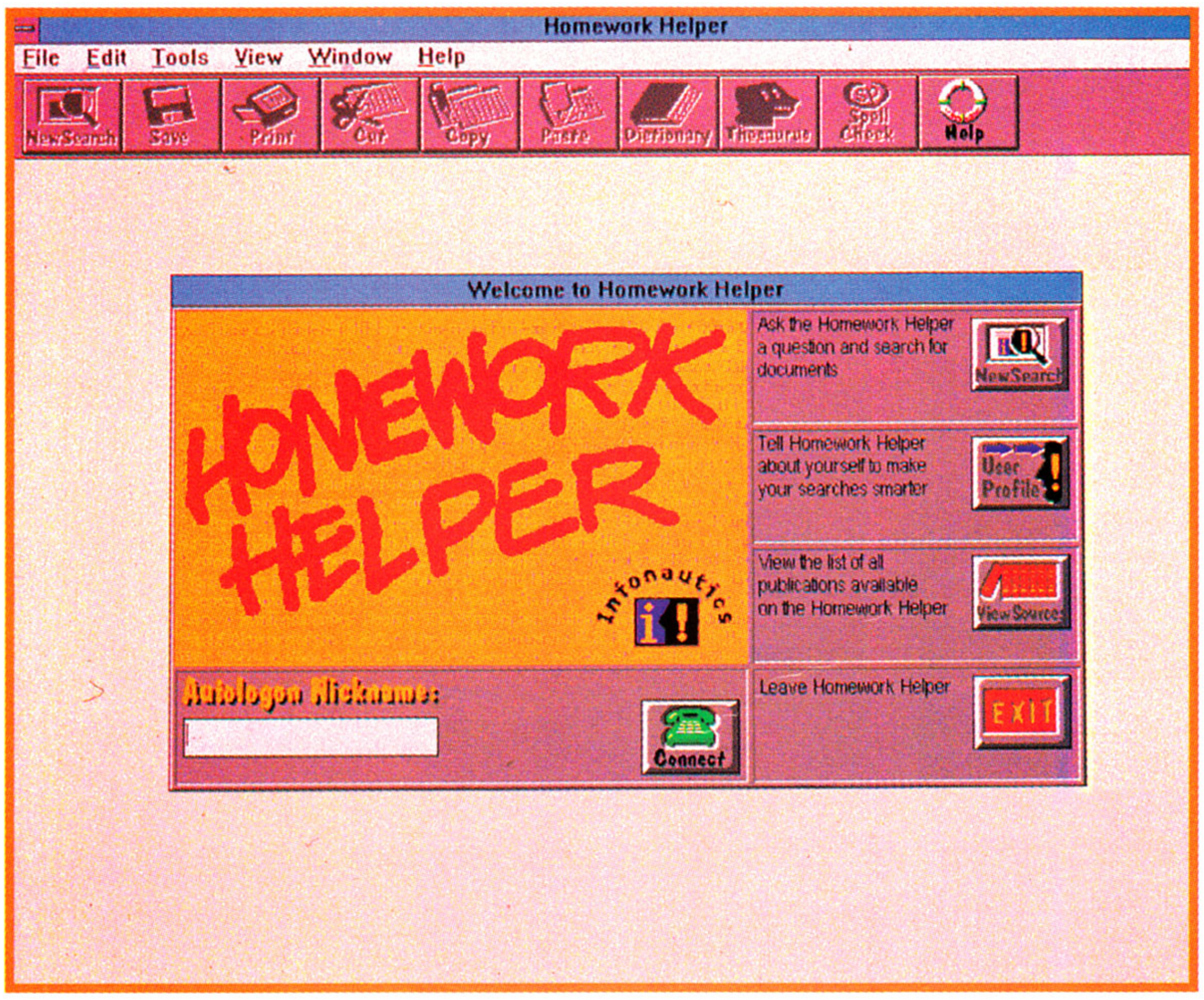
Finally, speedwise, the Prodigy system will keep track of the homepages that are most often hit during a given period, and then start systematically polling those pages two or three times a day and storing the results on the Prodigy network.

What this means is that instead of having to go out across the Internet for this information, the data will be right there in Prodigy's system. There are two advantages to this. One is that it is quicker for the Prodigy users, and the other is that it lowers the Net traffic from Prodigy users, keeping the denizens of the Internet happy. This strategy will only work with non-interactive homepages, but at least it is a step in the right direction.

Another really nifty feature of the new-and-improved Prodigy is a result of one of those strategic alliances we mentioned earlier—this one with Infonautics. Infonautics produces one of the most innovative and interesting database tools we of the **EG** Network On-line Team have ever seen: **Homework Helper**.

Homework Helper started from a simple premise; inner city schools don't have the money to keep up their references. So why not create an affordable, on-line tool that will provide the kinds of information and references that kids need to use in school?

To this end, Infonautics got dozens of publishers of both magazines and books to agree to provide their content through the **Homework Helper**, at only $9.95 a month. For 10 bucks, the database Infonautics provides is the equivalent of 200 CD-ROMs and is adding two CD-ROMs a month worth of periodicals. This database is deep and getting deeper all the time.



But the actual content is only part of the beauty of the **Homework Helper** product. The real beauty of **HH** is in the search engine. Taken from declassified Defense Intelligence Agency algorithms, the **HH** search engine is a pleasure to use. To enter a question, simply type in the question in natural language. The **HH** magic algorithm will go through its database and select all the articles that might have a bearing on the question, then it will rate each article with a percentage chance that it will answer the exact question. In almost all cases, the **HH** search algorithm finds the best article for your needs the first time out; but since less likely articles are also listed, one can easily check cross references and learn even more than one might have set out to.

This "accidental" learning is an important feature of the **HH**, and Infonautics representatives hope that the hypertext format will encourage children to data surf. While they might have come to simply find out a piece of information for a report, Infonautics hopes that the depth of information presented will encourage children to delve deeply into associated subjects at the same time.

HH also has a host of other features, including incredibly quick photo downloading (loses resolution, but still more than adequate for sight identification and at a fraction of the time of non-loss photographic downloads), spellers, knowledge trees and nifties galore. If there is one really standout educational product on-line, it is the **Homework Helper**.

Between their new interface and alliances like the **Homework Helper**, Prodigy has finally made their move to try to get the jump on the other services in terms of sex appeal and utility. If anything can get Prodigy back in the running, this system will be it.

However, only the on-line public will be able to determine if the PR juggernaut of AOL can be slowed at this point, no matter how impressive the opposition.

But those who were counting Prodigy out in the on-line wars might want to hold off judgment for a few more months.

by John P. Withers

The Net News

AOL Still Having Problems

The astute watcher wonders how America Online manages to keep up its love affair with the on-line public in light of two facts: a) AOL continues to aggressively market themselves, and b) the service continues to breakdown under the utilization load.

AOL announced last month that they had gone over 2 million users. At the same time a letter from Steve Case, president and CEO of the system, apologized for a lack of responsiveness from the mail system. According to the letter, incoming mail from the Internet could be delayed for hours before reaching AOL recipients. Case said that there were no delays for outgoing mail. During peak utilization hours, users could also find getting to the mail server causing the message "host has failed to respond."

These sorts of software problems have been endemic from AOL for the last few months, as well as constant promises of impending fixes in chatty "letters from Steve." Pessimistic watchers wonder how well AOL is going to fare over the coming months as more and more content providers enter the area with, presumably, more modern architecture and equipment.

Prodigy Over 200,000 Web Users

Prodigy on-line service has signed up over 200,000 users for their new World Wide Web browser and is adding about 15,000 users a day, according to industry reports.

The browser is the first available through a major on-line service and is a major coup for the often slow-to-respond Prodigy over its competitors.

According to Brian Ek, Prodigy spokesperson, "about half" of the browser signups are new users. The remainder come from existing Prodigy users.

Prodigy is also implementing JPEG graphics viewing and Netscape compliant secured connections.

The Netscape encryption, using public key technology, is rapidly becoming the defacto standard on the Net for making secured credit transactions. By using this technology, credit card transactions can be carried on safely, even through the notoriously insecure Internet. Even if criminals can get a hold of the transaction record, they cannot use it due to the advanced encryption algorithms. These sorts of encoding are expected to make the Net a viable commercial vehicle in the coming months.

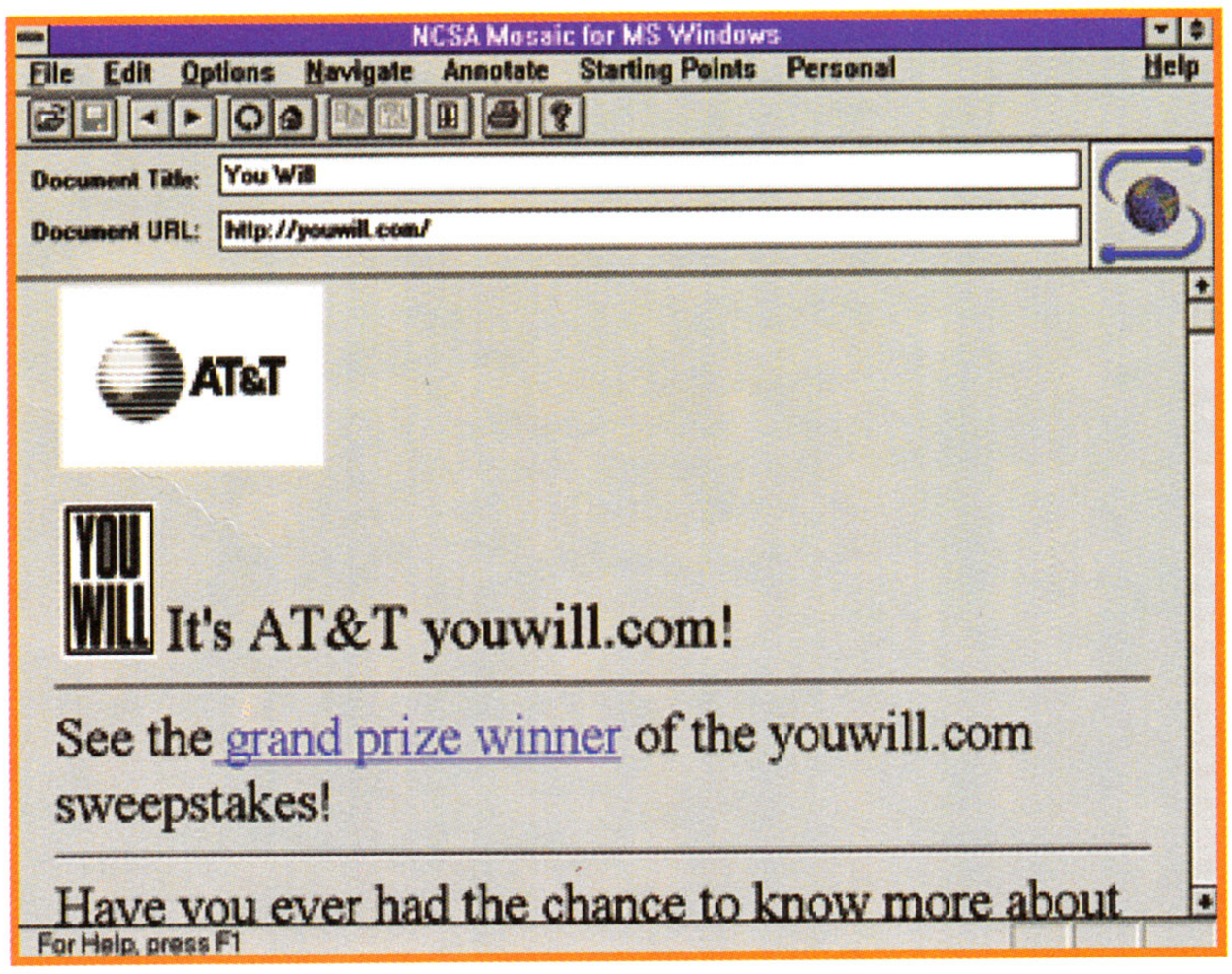
And Delphi Agrees...

Delphi Internet Services Corp has signed with Netscape Communications to license the Netscape browser package.

Delphi plans to make the WWW browser available to its users sometime in 1995.

Delphi has recently been losing members to other on-line services. Delphi's big advantage was being the first large provider to offer full Internet connectivity, but Delphi's difficult-to-use interface has hindered their growth as other providers make their systems more accessible to the Internet and easy to use.

Delphi has also announced plans to scuttle their second-generation interface in favor of a third-generation open-architecture system that will be compliant to Internet standards. Though exact details have not been announced, this is sure to be a Prodigy/P2-like HTML compliant interface.



Expect More Delays From Microsoft...

...as U.S. District Judge Stanley Sporkin was unable to find any good reason why the government should agree to the proposed Microsoft-Justice Department settlement over unfair trade practices.

What this means to you is that even more delays in Windows '95 and its attendant Microsoft Network can be expected.

However, when the Network does get here, expect it to be sporting such brand-name content as MTV and *Star Trek,* due to negotiations between Microsoft and Viacom to bring Viacom franchises to the new on-line provider. No hard-and-fast deal is expected until later this year.

GEnie May Break Up

GEnie on-line service, according to reports in *Interactive Age Magazine,* may break up into a number of smaller, more content specific, on-line services.

The new strategy of the company, according to Mark Walsh, the president of GEnie, is to create specific content services that may focus on one or more areas of the general on-line world, such as gaming or e-mail. The new strategy is focused on creating specific content on-line services for companies or organizations.

Watch here as **EG** keeps close tabs on this important story.

Carnegie Mellon, Visa Form Net Partnership

Carnegie Mellon University and Visa are working on a partnership technology that will allow Internet users to buy information costing as little as a penny.

The system, on trial this summer, is called NetBill and might have a great deal of significance for the future development of the Internet. NetBill will allow low-cost, high-volume information transactions to occur across the Net.

This kind of information purchase is seen by many analysts as the future of the Net. Why buy a book when all you want are the relevant two or three pages? With this low-cost transaction technology, it becomes cost effective to sell information to the end user that is only worth a dime or a quarter, costs that would be eaten up in transaction fees with present existent technologies.

Implementation of this technology might see more and more of the currently free sections of the Net roped off into paying domains of information that will cost users a nominal amount to access. However, on the good side, more information availability could result from a dependable, low-cost, transaction system.

And *Playboy* On The Net

Playboy is urging Net denizens to enter its "Girls of the Net" contest. Applicants must be females and submit a recent full-length photo in a bikini "or less."

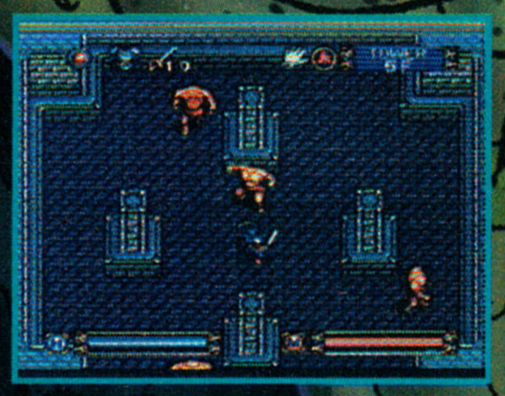
The Playboy Web Site (http://www.playboy.com) is one of the post popular on the Network with more than 500,000 hits logged in one day.

Access is currently free, but expect charges to be implemented in the near future for this interesting and informative service, according to *Playboy*'s staff.

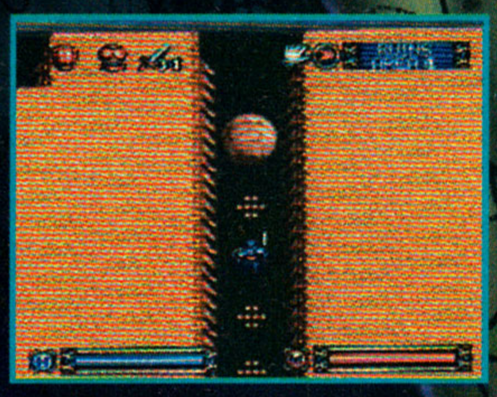
Brandish

While Some Fantasy Games Just Scratch the Surface, Brandish Unlocks the Underworld!

NOW that you've mastered games like *Breath of Fire*™ and *Brain Lord*,™ we think you're ready for a role-playing game where the sun doesn't shine and the monsters grow big, really big! In Brandish, you stand accused of murder, being pursued by a fearless bounty hunter looking to collect the reward. About to be captured, you fall into a deep underworld maze filled with dangerous traps and deadly monsters including: giant crabs, headless fist-pounding warriors and fire-spitting gargoyles. With the bounty hunter still hot on your trail, you must navigate your way out of the mazes and back to the surface ASAP. Our only advice: stay alert, well armed and always moving upwards!



Headless warriors are out to ruin your day



Narrow corridors & rolling boulders are a deadly combo

Some underworld characters give helpful advice for a price

- Navigate your way through five treacherous levels as you fight to return to the surface
- Defend yourself against 55 different monsters from the underworld
- Keep a lookout for traps that will send you back levels or time warp you to a new location
- Seek out more than 50 different items that will help you in your quest
- Visit the Magic, Weapons & Item Shops for useful merchandise & advice
- Save up to two games at any one time!

PC Compatible

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

KOEI

KOEI Corporation, 1350 Bayshore Highway, Suite 540
Burlingame, CA 94010

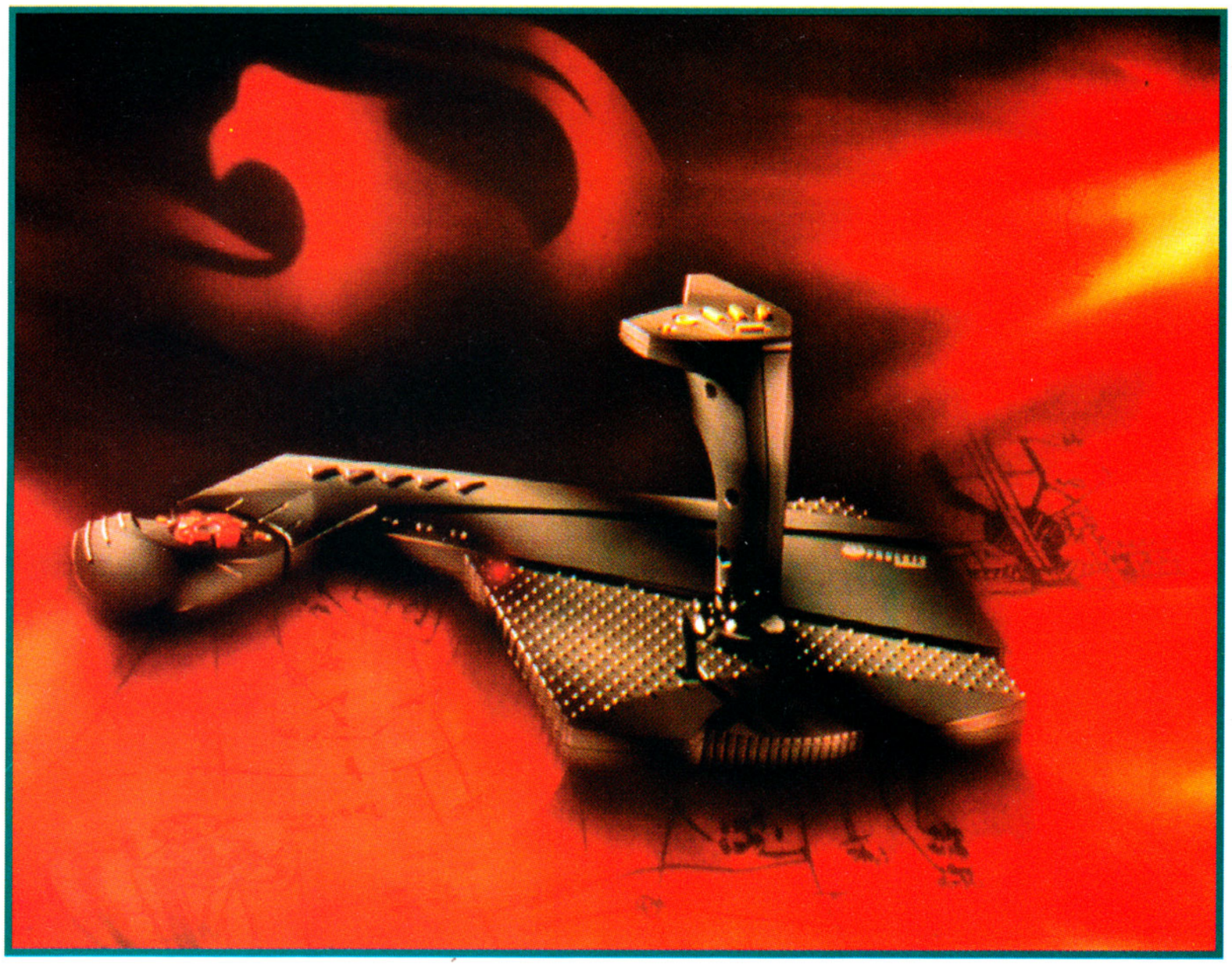
Brandish is a trademark of KOEI Corporation. Nintendo, Nintendo Entertainment System, and the official seals are trademarks of Nintendo of America.
Breath of Fire is a trademark of CAPCOM Co. Ltd.; Brain Lord is a trademark of ENIX America Corporation.

AVAILABLE FOR PC & SNES

KOEI Games are available in retail outlets nationwide! If you can't find the KOEI product you are looking for, call us at 415/348-0500 (9AM to 5PM PT).
Online Support offered on CompuServe: GO VIDPUB, Sect. 4

KIDS TO ADULTS
AGES 6+

TEST LAB
A Plethora of Peripherals



We love being able to explain everything there is to know about a new device or technology here in the *Test Lab* forum. But every few months we develop a group of products that, while deserving some attention, just won't make up a column all by themselves. The majority of these are controllers, but some other cool products hang around our shelves begging for a quick review.

Gamers need to know about these products. When players go out to spend some hard-earned money, they don't just buy big, sexy, new toys. They also buy joysticks and other little items to make gaming easier. So this month *Test Lab* is devoted to a number of smaller products that are currently on the market and vying for gamers' bucks.

Advanced Gravis: Phoenix Flight and Weapons Control System

People get passionate about a number of computer-related issues. Mouse versus trackball, **WordPerfect** versus **Word** and (heaven forbid) Mac versus PC are all likely to cause intense partisan support among their various proponents. However, one of the stronger biases is in joystick and flight controllers. There are basically two types of people who use flight control systems: normal gamers and flight fanatics.

Everyone reading this article is at least a gamer. Maybe everyone has a favorite joystick. Maybe they don't. Maybe any joystick that has all the parts working is good enough for most people. If so, then they aren't flight fanatics.

Flight fans are adamant about their joysticks and the weapons control systems they use. A stick that is ergonomically correct and can shave a 10th of a second off of the reaction time is the difference between winning and losing in a dogfight. A real flier will just snort when shown a joystick that isn't programmable.

In the real flight market, Thrustmaster is the undisputed heavy weight champ. **Thrustmaster's Flight Control System** is an ergonomically designed, programmable monster that inspires fear and loathing in all who are foolish enough to stand against it. If the stick itself isn't enough, then plug in the **Weapons Control System**, which has even more programmable buttons to mystify and confound the hapless opposition.

A sizable minority of serious aviation junkies prefer the CH Products **Flightstick Pro**. The FSP has a slightly better mechanical feel for some pilots. However, CH doesn't produce a weapons control equivalent, hence making them a second choice for most dedicated fliers.

After CH we come to **Advanced Gravis.** Gravis is a distant third in the flight control market. They make good sticks, but most flight enthusiasts feel they aren't as ergonomically advanced and generally sexy as the CH and Thrustmaster products. However, AG is out to change that in a big way with their new **Phoenix**.

First things first, this stick is sexy. Very dangerously sexy. There are buttons galore. More than 20 buttons adorn this piece of hardware. There are enough controls here to make even the most jaded control freak drool with envy.

The throttle and rudder control is built in to the ergonomically designed gray case, giving some serious value to the potential pilot.

Gravis also made programming the buttons a snap. Instead of having to deal with annoying text files or complicated systems to program the buttons, AG provides a point-and-click, mouse-driven programming interface that actually shows a picture of the Phoenix on the screen. Click on the control to be programmed, input what you want it to do and get ready to fly. This is the best controller programming in the industry at this time, hands down.

During the programming process, players might start to get a little scared of this stick. It turns out that while there are 24 buttons on the console, one of them can be programmed as a shift button that changes the functions of every other switch on the stick. The actual number of programmable combinations on this system suddenly increases to 46.

While the programmability features are very important, the most critical test of a joystick system is in the ergonomics, and at the first glance, the Phoenix seems pretty good.

The unit has a big footprint, bigger than most notebook computers, but this footprint gives this unit unprecedented stability

without resorting to clamps, suction cups or Velcro to keep the stick in place. The location of the throttle/rudder extension is fixed by the case design, but still falls into the right place for the player's hands to rest comfortably on the stick and throttle at the same time. The joystick is also a dream, with a number of axis tension calibration sliders that will provide anything from a perfectly smooth, round, joystick action to a square movement configuration.

However, then we come to the actual design of all those nifty buttons we have been eyeing with delight.

The AG fails miserably when it comes to the actual placement and ergonomics of the control buttons. Where one would expect to find a highhat on top of the joystick, there are instead four thin buttons in a single square inch of surface. **EG** staffers with particularly thin hands were barely able to use these buttons with the unit just sitting on a bench. However, in actual flight practice, it was impossible to hit the buttons reliably. Staffers with blunter mitts were unable to strike a single button reliably at all, and in some cases, would hit three buttons with a single thumb stroke. This renders most of the buttons on the joystick unusable.

The same problem exists on the throttle/rudder control. While the control looks good, it was designed for people with hands smaller than anything normally seen outside of Oz. To manipulate the throttle and reliably control the buttons requires twisting the hand into a unnatural claw-like position that precludes anything but very short, very painful dogfights.

All in all, the Phoenix is a great concept and has some of the best features ever found in a flight control system to date. However, poor design decisions with respect to the control buttons render this unit fatally flawed. We can only hope that a redesigned version will come out in the immediate future that will remedy this unfortunate circumstance.

While we're on the topic of flight control systems...

CH Products: Pro Pedals

When it comes to serious flight, no self-respecting aviation fanatic can get by without a set of rudder pedals. These are the ultimate bragging-rights toys of the aviation set (well, we won't even get into the full cockpits). Much as in the joystick market, Thrustmaster is the name to beat when it comes to pedals. However, CH Products has introduced a contender in their **Pro Pedals**.

The Pro Pedals differ from the ubiquitous Thrustmasters in a number of ways, but the most obvious out of the box is basic construction. Pro Pedals are PVC plastic in a close set base, as opposed to the metal construction of the Thrustmasters. While this might seem to be a weaker alternative, our cohorts here in the Test Lab destructive testing division did their level best to render these pedals to plastic shards. Much to our surprise, the Pro Pedals took all of the abuse we could dish out and continued to function flawlessly. These guys are tough.

The strongest point of the Pro Pedals is the fact that it comes with toe brakes, a handy feature for the flight lover. With a quick tap of the toes, small corrections in vector are a snap. These brakes also give the Pro Pedals another nifty feature: The pedals will also work with driving sims.

A small switch on the case rapidly converts the Pro Pedals into a brake and accelerator arrangement, allowing use for driving. In our testing, the pots on the Pro Pedals functioned well for this application.

Pro Pedals are a bit closer set than the Thrustmasters, and this caused a distinct split in our testing staff. Those of us who are tall felt universally that the Pro Pedals were too closely spaced. However, shorter members of the Test Lab team were quick to point out that the spacing on these new pedals made them much more comfortable than the Thrustmasters.

The CHs have a very strong center position, making the center easy to maintain and keep, even when furiously playing in high-intensity combat situations.

The one bad point to the Pro Pedals is the claimed anti-skid base. To make a long story short, it isn't very anti-skid at all. During our testing, these units moved all over the place as we played. This is a serious drawback that should be considered before purchasing these units. These pedals are likely to slide around during dogfights for any player who gets into gaming enough to be fairly rough on the equipment, wasting valuable time and energy. My best advice is to make some Velcro backs of your own to get additional traction on carpeted surfaces, or simply brace them in place mechanically beneath your desk to avoid this problem.

Nakitek: Wireless Controllers for 3DO

Naki has come on strong lately with a couple of solid products we really like here at Test Lab, and these wireless 3DO controllers, though simple, are one of them.

The **Wireless Controllers** consist of two controller units and a base unit that plugs into the 3DO console. Each controller takes two AA batteries and the base unit pulls its power directly from the 3DO.

These units are standard controllers. The only exceptional feature is the fact that they have independently controlled turbo for each button. Past that, these units operate exactly like standard, wired control pads, without the wires, of course.

There isn't much more to say about them, other than the fact that they work as advertised. We were able to get up to 15 feet away from the base unit and play flawlessly. Also, the IR window is large enough that it isn't necessary to keep the controller dead-on axis for moves to register. One of our testers reported a slight lag in the control time, but the rest of our team resoundingly felt that the lag was in the tester.

With around 60 hours of play time on a battery charge and the fact that these units can hook into a wired controller to increase the total number of players, Test Lab feels that these controllers give plenty of bang for the buck.

Nakitek: Game Saver+

The absolute best item from Naki this season, and arguably one of the best offerings of the year in the peripheral market, is the **Nakitek Game Saver+**.

When you work in the game publishing world, there are those times when you positively, absolutely, have to crack that game. The Game Saver+ immediately brought a warm glow to our hearts here at Test Lab. The reason is simple: The Game Saver+ is the ultimate tool for the straight demolition of games, without cheat codes or other external gimmicks.

In a nutshell, what this unit does is save a game, any game. No matter where the player is in a game, this unit provides a chance to go back to the last save and do it all over again if the player wishes.

The unit is also simple to operate. Just plug the GS into the power cord of a SNES and then insert the GS into the cartridge slot on the SNES console. Any game then plugs into the GS module.

After that point, all the player needs to do is hit the Select and R buttons on the controller at the same time and the GS does its magic, saving the game in mid- punch, shot or run. At any later time, hitting the Select and L buttons will restore play to the previous position selected.

A saved-game position will be kept indefinitely, as long as the unit stays plugged into the wall outlet from the SNES. The SNES can be turned off, and as long as the AC adapter is not unplugged, the unit will continue to hold the precious game.

In order to go mobile with a game unit (say, take it over to someone else's house to demonstrate conclusively that you really *did* get to that last boss), then the GS will run off of six AA batteries and continue to hold the game for over eight hours.

It isn't necessary to keep the cart in the unit when it is on battery power. Just pull the unit out of the SNES, slip the GS in one pocket and the cart in the other, then head over to your victim's home for a bit of serious gloating.

As if this feature weren't enough, the GS also takes maximum advantage of its position between the SNES processor and game to provide more added value, true hardware game slow-motion.

This feature allows the player to reduce the game to half speed at will. Simply press the Start and L buttons at the same time and that pesky, high-speed boss suddenly gets a little tired, providing plenty of reaction time to get out of the way or execute some special maneuver. While some controllers offer a version of this feature, all of us who have been around the block know that this only works with games that implement the standard Pause button calls in the right way. The GS solution, however, is game independent and works like a charm on every game we tested, including a number that get downright rude with controller-based, slow-motion implementations.

There are a few minor drawbacks to this new unit, however. There is only one save spot. You cannot save at multiple levels. Every time the player hits the save combo whatever was in the memory at the time is overwritten.

This has a slight silver lining, however, in that the save process doesn't slow play down. When save is executed, the screen blanks for about a second and then it's implemented and the player is back right where he started. The game flow would be broken if there were a complicated screen to select which save slot is wanted or a number of different button combinations to implement the saves.

The sound also gets screwed up when this unit is used on some carts. In our test, we found that sound effects from actions still worked, but the soundtrack got out of whack. The manual warns about this, and just as the manual said, this effect only lasted until the end of the level, at which point the sound went back to normal.

According to the documentation, there are some games that will not work properly with the unit. Naki lists a toll-free number for getting codes that will make the unit work with the game in question.

However, during our testing cycle, which included a number of different carts, beta carts among them, we had no games that failed to save like pros with this unit. There is also a Genesis version of the game saver, but we were unable to test it at press time.

The Naki Game Saver+ is one of the better add-on units for the SNES, and this is the ultimate power tool for the war chest of anyone seriously into cracking games.

ADS: TV Game Zapper

We recently devoted an entire *Test Lab* to VGA-to-television conversion, so we are not going to go over all of the details of the technology again. Just let it be said that the Game Zapper is another representative of this class of peripheral.

For those who didn't see our recent write-up, let's attempt to recap this technology in a nutshell. VGA is much higher resolution than NTSC (the official name for television's format), and there just isn't any way to get around it. When using any of the computer-to-television converters, you are going to lose resolution, period. Hence, don't expect sharp graphics out of these units. As a matter of a fact, anything text based pretty much becomes unreadable.

With a good TV and the patience to play with the adjustments, players can normally get an okay picture from these units for games where they aren't looking for a tremendous amount of detail.

If you have a TV with the newer S-Video standard, the picture can even get pretty good. But don't expect more than these units can deliver. Clean, crisp pictures aren't going to come over your big-screen TV, or there wouldn't be a demand for bigger monitors. Go figure.

The Road Ahead

The Test Lab staff enjoyed the opportunity to fondle a number of other exciting peripherals at CES, many of which are slated to appear this summer or fall. As always, we will cover the best and worst of these here, just as soon as they can be announced.

Until then, here is some food for thought. Soon, Thrustmaster and CH Products won't be the only serious contenders in the high-end flight simulations market. Also, lightweight, high-quality VR headgear is coming soon to a kiosk near you.

Finally, remember the Mattel Power Glove? Hmmm.

by Ed Dille

TO CREATE THE ULTIMATE STAR WARS EXPERIENCE WE HAD TO SET OUR SIGHTS A LITTLE HIGHER.

DARK FORCES™

FIRST PERSON FIREPOWER IN THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE. AVAILABLE NOW ON CD-ROM.

LUCAS Arts

Dark Forces game ©1994 Lucasfilm Ltd. and LucasArts Entertainment Company. All Rights Reserved. Used Under Authorization. Star Wars is a registered trademark of Lucasfilm Ltd. Dark Forces is a trademark of Lucasfilm Ltd. The LucasArts logo is a registered trademark of LucasArts Entertainment Company.

CHECK OUT THE DARK FORCES DEMO ON THE LUCASARTS BBS AT (415) 257-3070

FLIGHT LEADER

Virtual Worlds Abound

It seems impossible to turn on the television, open a magazine, watch a movie or go to the software store without hearing something about virtual reality. VR is coming. VR is the wave of the future. VR will revolutionize the entertainment industry. VR will totally reform the human-machine interface in everything from computers to automobiles to toaster ovens. Fitted with a body suit, gloves and a visor, Joe Average will be set loose in virtual worlds limited only by his imagination.

That sounds very exciting for tomorrow, but what about today? How much longer must Joe Average wait before moving unrestricted through a virtual world?

In actuality, completely encompassing virtual worlds accessed through the embryonic information superhighway have existed for quite some time. I'm talking about high-fidelity, computer-based simulations such as flight simulators.

Such simulations, especially flight simulations, have developed a near cult-like following of dedicated players. Called hard-core simulation fans, these individuals often allocate significant amounts of their lives and their wallets pursuing this hobby. They research handling characteristics of the car or airplane being simulated and voice seemingly endless complaints when ostensibly trivial details are modeled inaccurately.

What drives these people to such fanaticism? Neither inherent mental disturbances nor subliminal messaging motivates these individuals toward extremism rivaling that of *Star Trek* fans. Instead, it is the realization of a simple fact: the thrills and adventure of what the media has recently dubbed VR are available now and have been for quite some time. Only the name, virtual reality, is new.

VR holds many applications, but the most appealing utilization requires two components: a first-person perspective and the ability to maneuver around objects and view them from all sides. Any electronics convention contains booths displaying the latest VR breakthrough. Invariably, the most enticing demonstrations let potential customers maneuver through computer-generated scenery from a first-person perspective.

Computerized board games and action-adventure games tend to lack one or both of these elements. Although highly entertaining, kicking and punching ninjas as the screen scrolls to the left doesn't quite qualify as moving freely through an imaginary world. However, simulations, especially flight simulators, require this first-person perspective and freedom of movement to provide sufficient suspension of disbelief. From the earliest versions of **Flight Simulator** and **Jet**, such entertainment simulations provided the first semblance of what we now consider VR and shaped our expectations thereof.

How exactly have these simulations formed our VR paradigms? Today we expect stunning graphics, fluid interfaces and complex interactions with the virtual objects. Reaching back to the humble beginnings of PC-based simulations, the first version of **Flight Simulator** explored the concept of virtual reality. Although lacking a complex human-machine interface, **Flight Simulator** put players into a virtual world. They could taxi, take off, fly for miles, then return and land without ever leaving their computer room. **Flight Simulator** was not the first product to pull players into a virtual world, but the success of it and the IBM PC over the years probably introduced more people to the concept of maneuvering through an electronic world than any other entertainment product.

Flight Simulator did more than simply advertise the concept; it shaped the model we expect from VR by feeding a technological evolution. Pilots didn't like the simplistic interface; now we have numerous joystick companies producing dedicated, programmable control devices that expertly mimic real-world devices. We now know that the keyboard isn't the only way to input data into the computer and that more complex input systems are technologically feasible.

Pilots didn't like the sparse terrain; now we have complex graphics engines and thriving scenery markets creating detailed and entertaining terrain for the entire planet. We have learned that graphics are not just limited to CGA standards and that total visual submersion through head-mounted displays is feasible.

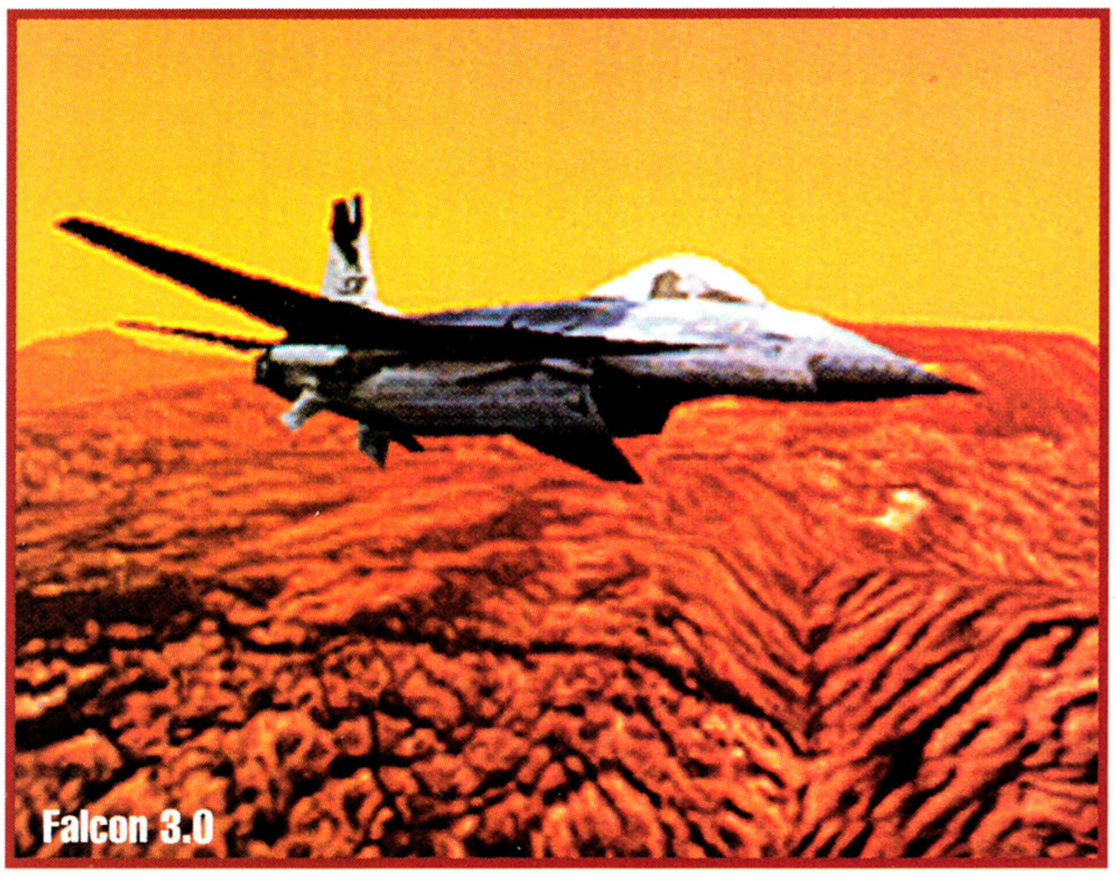
Next, as the early combat simulations emerged, players requested more challenging opponents resulting in improved artificial intelligence systems, thus raising our

expectations for interactions within VR environments. How we expect to interface with VR, what we expect to see inside VR and how we expect to interact when we get there are all refinements and advances of our current simulation technology. Although influenced from many sources, VR can trace one branch of its family tree directly back to PC-based simulations.

How does the so-called information superhighway fit into all of this? Can it also trace its roots back to our simulations? The answer is unequivocally: Yes!

Two-player video games have been around almost as long as video games themselves, but simulations have helped advance the science. With the exception of some dedicated strike aircraft (such as the F-117), few pilots have intentionally wandered off single-handedly into combat since the end of World War I. It has happened, but most prefer to operate with a wingman or flight group for mutual support and protection. The advent of multiplayer flight simulations substantiated one of the information superhighway's goals: bringing multiple people together inside a single virtual world.

Flight of the Intruder, written by Rowan and distributed in the USA by Spectrum HoloByte, introduced cooperative play to PC-based flight simulations. Prior to this, Two-player Modes were restricted to action and board games. Multiplayer flight simulators included only head-to-head dogfighting. **Flight of the Intruder**, despite an overwhelming number of bugs that made the product nearly unplayable at times, did something incredible. It created a single, virtual world that two people could both maneuver through freely. Five years later, I still vividly recall difficult missions over Hanoi and Haiphong with my wingman,



"Sticker." I remember seeing surface-to-air missiles launch with a burst of smoke and come barreling toward Sticker, and I remember cooperative maneuvering to shoot MiGs off each other's tail. The information superhighway in that situation was nothing more than a serial cable connected between two COM ports, but nonetheless it allowed two people to maneuver freely and interact in a single, virtual world.

Around the same time, Kesmai began exploring the information superhighway as well. They created a single virtual world that operated on their host computer and allowed players to dial in. Where **Flight of the Intruder** pitted two humans and a few computer-controlled wingmen against a computer-controlled Vietnam, **Air Warrior** pits dozens of humans against other humans in a single, virtual environment. **Air Warrior**, despite flight model glitches and networking limitations, has been popular enough to survive numerous upgrades and revisions as technology advanced. Squadrons formed, some of which contain over 30 pilots. Missions are planned, orders given, strikes and fighter sweeps executed. The tactical radio chatter often mimics that of World War II combat footage. In some instances, nearly 100 players maneuver through the same virtual arena, stalking and matching wits against real human opponents around the world. Originally exclusive to Genie, Kesmai now offers **Air Warrior** through two other online services, Delphi and CRIS. The competition has lowered rates and improved network quality.

Domark is now entering the ring as well with their own VR flight-simulation system, **Confirmed Kill**. **Confirmed Kill**, due out in summer 1995, is expected to support 300 simultaneous players, a larger variety of World War II and post-World War II aircraft, more realistic flight models and a more involved campaign engine. Rather than simply enter the current generation of VR, Domark hopes to advance the stakes. While **Confirmed Kill** most likely won't revolution VR, it will refine the current limits and possibly revise our expectations for highly anticipated future systems.

Interestingly, **Confirmed Kill** versus **Air Warrior** may be the first true case of competition in the current generation of VR. Arguably, **Cyberstrike** competes with **Battletech** on the Genie network while The ImagiNation Network's multiplayer **Red Baron** competes with **Air Warrior**. However, neither **Cyberstrike** nor **Red Baron** provide the same level of complexity or level of interaction as **Battletech** or **Air Warrior**. Flight simulation fanatics may be shaping VR's future: by creating sufficient demand, two flight simulation publishers are poised to provide directly competing VR products. Only time will tell, but, typically, competition is good news for the consumers.

To summarize, our paradigms—our expectations—of VR are extrapolations or advancements of the simulation technology we already possess. VR is less a revolution than a refinement of our current simulation technology. Nearly everyone involved with computer-based entertainment recognizes the potential and excitement of VR systems; hard-core simulation fanatics recognize that much of that potential and excitement is already available. Simulations such as **Falcon 3.0**, **Air Warrior** and **Nascar** are the current incarnation, the first generation, of virtual reality.

by Tom "KC" Basham

PHINALLY, PS IV!

After a long wait, *Phantasy Star IV* hits the Genesis

While both the NES and SNES game systems have provided gamers with a steady stream of first-rate RPGs, Sega has been much stingier with its role-playing rations. It's been an astonishing four years since **Phantasy Star III: Generations of Doom** burst upon the Genesis scene, whetting the appetites of Sega fans everywhere for the next, and final, installment.

While **PS IV: End of the Millennium** is an excellent piece of work, it must seem like a glass of water

after a week in the desert to RPG devotees. It was, in fact, long rumored that this fourth installment in the popular series would not even be released in the United States, and even when it was, the price point was set at a seemingly suicidal $99.95.

TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER:	Sega
SYSTEM:	Genesis
THEME:	RPG
MEGABITS:	24
PLAYERS:	1
LEVELS:	N/A

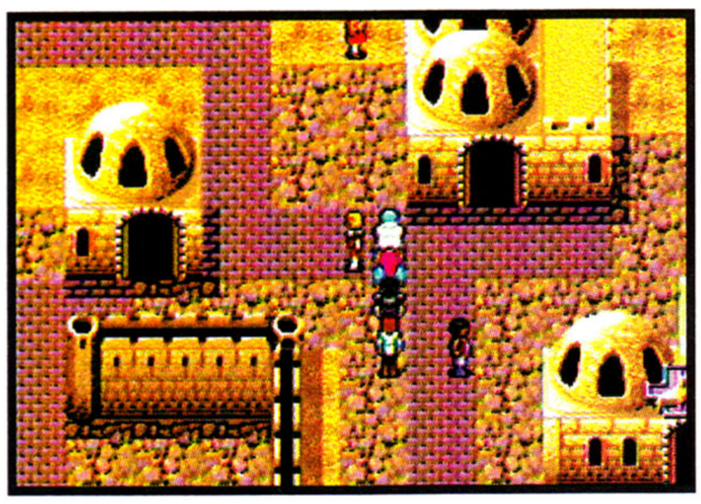
That's a lot of moolah, and while **Phantasy Star IV** measures up on most counts, it falls short in the most important category of all: play value. There simply isn't enough play here to justify the long wait and astronomical price. While *Sega Visions* was hyping the play time for this game as upward of 70 hours, most skilled players will reach the "Fin"—the game ends with this cryptic, Euro-film conclusion—within 25-30. Granted, if one explored all the subplots, another five hours might be added, but they have no real bearing on the outcome.

What is here is undeniably superb, sometimes even magnificent. The game has one of the strongest story lines in RPG history, with splendid cut scenes that pump up the game's dramatic impact, adding exploding towers, magical firebursts and even facial close-ups to create spectacularly cinematic and drama-laden effects.

The combat scenes feature an excellent upgrade from previous series entries as character assignments, once entered, are fully animated. Gamers actually get to watch as their characters leap to the attack in an attempt to execute their fighting orders. The more powerful the spell or weapon, the more spectacular the visual display. The designers even added a series of vehicles to the terrain. Once acquired, they make a great substitute for walking and add a mech-style flavor to the proceedings. At various times, the player can pilot a Land Rover, an Ice Digger and a Hydrofoil over a variety of terrain. There's also a space shuttle for transport between planets and space stations.

Other pluses include the new spell-casting combo attacks, which allow two or more characters to meld their magic into a mystical one-two (or even one-two-three, in some cases) punch. For example, Chaz's Crosscut and Runes'

Efess spells can be blended to create the Grand Cross, a megaspell that can generate up to 800+ points of damage, but only against the most powerful enemies (against low-level monsters, this normally omnipotent magic has virtually no effect). The otherwise complicated process of casting multiple spells is greatly simplified through the use of



player-friendly macros, in which default spells can be preassigned for every character in the party. Labeled alphabetically, these attack configurations can then be summoned with a single command. Unfortunately for us, the visual execution of these combo spells is disappointingly drab.

The designers also set a less frenetic pace than that employed in previous **Phantasy Star** games. Whereas earlier entries often had the player-character engaged in battle every two steps, the pacing has been toned down here, allowing the gamer to gather a breath between assaults.

The primary visual display—using the standard angled, topdown perspective—is, alas, barely enhanced over **Phantasy Star II**, much less **PS III**. In fact, the thank you that appears in the credits saluting the **PS II** team will make some cynical gamers wonder if the current team did not use significant parts of the old engine in building this year's model.

Music is also a problem. Anyone who has played **Final Fantasy III** (SquareSoft) on the SNES knows how sophisticated scoring has become on state-of-the-art RPG video games. The musical selections that back up **Phantasy Star IV**, however, are uneven at best, with an occasional, tinny resonance that hasn't been heard since 8-Bit days.

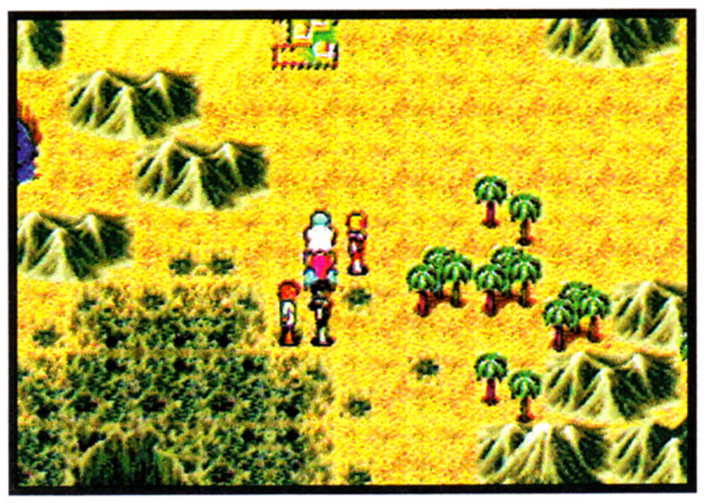
But the problem at the core of **PS IV** is its brevity; any RPG gamer worthy of the name will blow through this puppy like boiling water through a tissue. The main reason for the game's all-too-brief playing time is the simplicity of its puzzles. Whereas **PS II** offered gamers some of the most challenging mazes ever seen, the labyrinths here are milk runs. While there are some areas where physical manipulation is required — throwing switches to turn on a conveyor belt, etc.—there are no real puzzles in **Phantasy Star IV**. The few puzzle elements that *are* present are almost an insult to the intelligence of even a novice gamer.

Veterans of the **Phantasy Star** games who are looking for some kind of grand, dramatic resolution from earlier plot lines will also be disappointed. While there are references made to past adventures, they are pretty obscure, especially given the length of time between the last two installments. Most players will remember Wren and Darkforce (major players in **PS III**), but the only real line of continuity between the two is the fact that both games are set in the Algo solar system.

As for scope, while **PS III** sprawled over half a dozen worlds, the post-holocaust **PS IV** Algo comprises only three planets (one of which is cloaked) and two space stations.

The game's true, albeit brief, power

lies in its splendid storytelling. How many video games, after all, feature references to ethnic cleansing ("This is the church where we worship the Great Zio," a non-player character announces at one point in the game. "Zio says he's going to cleanse this soiled land with the fires of destruction … and then he is going to build a utopian society populated with only the finest citizens. How wonderful! The thought makes me tingle!") and a sequence with a tarted-up female character whose job is "giving



little boys service"? On the downside of the sophistication scale, the word "fart" appears almost as often as it does in **Boogerman**.

In short, the game is its own worst enemy. The new wrinkles—especially the cut-scenes, which add a whole new dimension to the RPG video game genre—set up expectations that the rest of the game does not fulfill. This is one of those games that starts out an A+, then drops slowly and steadily throughout the play phase.

After a four-year wait, Genesis RPG mavens deserved a "phinale" worthy of the first three games in this epic series. Instead, the player moves tentatively forward, expecting great challenges and worthy foes, but the mazes are no-brainers and the only enemies worth fighting are the bosses. It is sadly ironic that the climactic boss is called "Profound Darkness." In many cases, when viewed from the perspective of someone who has played the entire series (which debuted as the first 4-Meg game for the Sega Master System in 1988) that's where this wonderful series winds up. (Despite the somewhat vague suggestion at the game's conclusion that there will be a **PS V**.)

There aren't even multiple endings—every scenario leads to the same conclusion. Not only did **PS III** have variable finishes, but the designers of **PS IV** tossed in obvious teases that would lead the player to expect them. For example, prior to the final leg of the quest, at the Edge, the gamer can add an additional character to their four-character party, suggesting that different characters will produce variable resolutions, which, in fact, they do not.

On the other hand, for a new generation of Genesis gamers who have never been exposed to an RPG, **Phantasy Star IV** should be a marvelous new experience. Unfortunately, if they enjoy it *too* much, the conclusion they may draw is that they should've purchased a SNES in the first place. **B-** *(Bill Kunkel)*

INCARNATIONS

Let's take a walk down memory lane for a brief look at the earlier entries in this series.

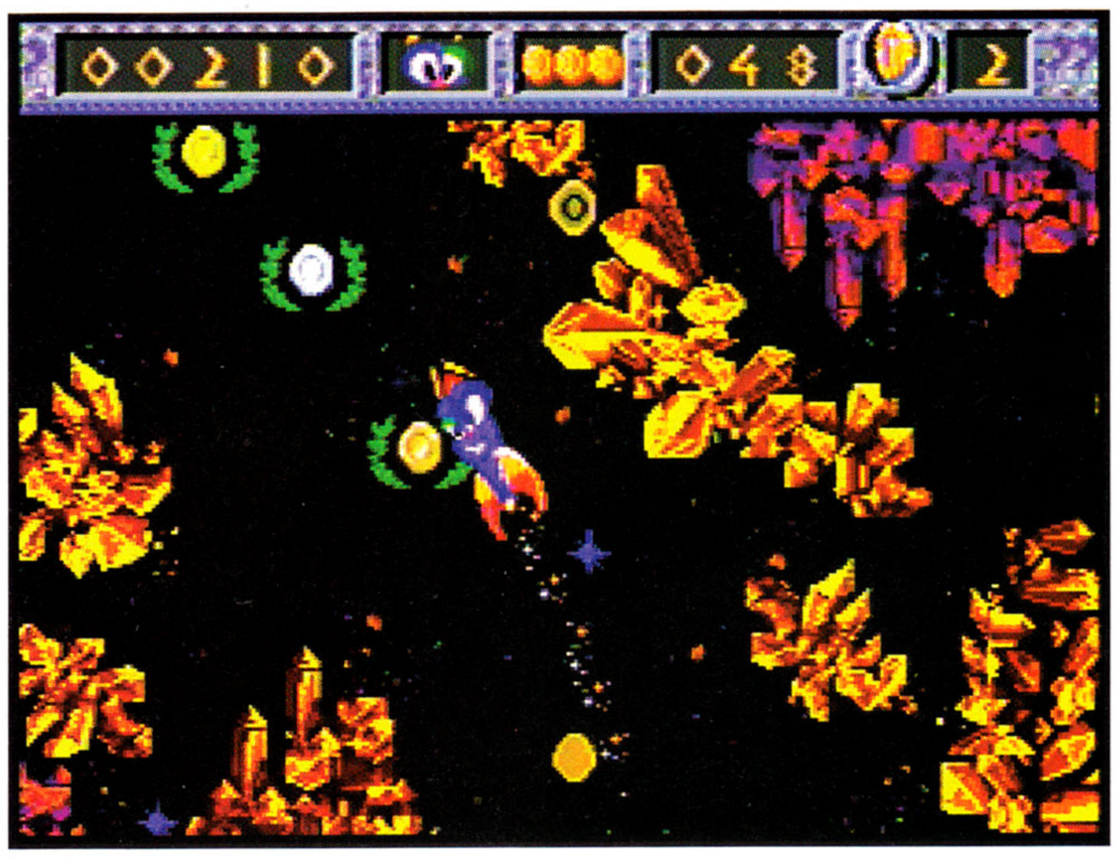
Phantasy Star originally appeared on the SMS in 1988, and became one of the most popular (and most difficult) games to ever appear on that 8-Bit system.

Phantasy Star II followed a year later, on the Genesis. It was probably the toughest of the four games; there are gamers out there who *still* haven't beaten Mother Brain. The game was so tough it came packed with its own hint book, and it still defied completion.

Phantasy Star III: Generations of Doom broke new ground on the Genesis in 1991. During the game, characters died, married, aged and generated variable endings.

Five Olympic Rings...

Quest for Gold takes *Izzy* through Torch World



Izzy, the anthropomorphic, stylized logo character created as a marketing mascot for the 1996 Olympics, has been trapped in Torch World.

While this might not sound like the most compelling video game story line since **Final Fantasy III**, if Izzy doesn't get out (so the story goes), he won't be there to light the torch which signifies the start of the Olympics, and everyone will have to go home.

Gamers who are not sufficiently motivated by the notion of seeing Atlanta's economy destroyed, however, might also want to check out **Izzy's Quest for the Olympic Rings** strictly on an entertainment basis.

Izzy's escape and the successful lighting of the Olympic Torch requires the player-character to retrieve all five Olympic Rings, then escape through the Vortex from Torch World to our plane of existence.

But all is not serene in Torch World. This side-scrolling platform environment is filled with prickly plants, vile vines, annoying avians and molten miscreants all determined to thwart Izzy in his quest. Fortunately, our hero can use Spin Jumps and Morph Attacks to defend himself and wreak havoc on the devilish denizens of Torch World.

The plethora of power-ups in **Izzy** exceeds the gold, silver and bronze medallions that restore his health. Eggs and Magic Vases are hidden everywhere, especially on the early levels, and may contain treasures or traps. Hearts and gold stars yield, respectively, an extra life and a game continue; while the Protecto Bubble gives Izzy 10 seconds of complete invincibility. The Lightning Bolt acts as a smart-bomb, and the Rocket Fuel/Javelin Boost serves as a time increase for Izzy's Rocket or Javelin Morph Modes. The Medallion Doubler is a pulsating, blue gem that doubles the value of all the medallions.

Part of the fun of **Izzy** is the ability to morph the cutesy character into a variety of other characters. When Izzy is first guided into a morph star, players do not know which character to expect, but all of them are keyed to the next enemy he must face.

Izzy's morph personae include not only the Rocket and Javelin Modes mentioned above, but also a Hammer Helicopter, a hang glider, an archer, a fencer, a skateboarder and a baseball bat-wielding terror. None of the morphs are permanent, and some, such as the rocket and hang glider, are difficult to control—one of the game's few flaws.

Izzy's graphics are an interesting mix. The backgrounds have a simplistic water-colored quality that seems almost flat, like a stage background, but contrasts nicely with the foreground elements. Izzy's animations, and those of the enemies, are worth the price of admission. Unfortunately, the animations are *so* expressive that the player will be tempted to expect character interactions that never occur.

The music is a delightful surprise and blends so smoothly into the background that the sound effects really pop. When Izzy totters on the edge of a platform, he signals his loss of balance with a nice speech cue ("Whoaaa!"), and different character morphs produce unique sound effects. The applause at the end of each level is also a nice touch.

The game play is, overall, above average. In its Normal Mode of play, Izzy is a delight to maneuver; however, the morphed Izzy is a real pain in the butt. The control is sluggish, and timing becomes a major issue. As a flying object, Izzy does not immediately respond to direction, and while it is annoyingly tolerable in the main game, it is a devastating effect in the bonus rounds—dubbed Elder Games—when a quick twitch response is mandated.

That said, however, U.S. Gold did manage to strike an almost-uncanny balance between the usual cutesy side-scroller and a genuinely challenging video game. Izzy may not be the most memorable character to come down the video game pipeline since Mario, but **Izzy's Quest for the Olympic Rings** is an extremely solid citizen in the ranks of platform contests. Go for the Gold!

B+ (*Laurie Yates*)

MASCOT GAMES

Company or event mascots are not newcomers to the interactive entertainment genre.

Virgin has used Spot, the 7-Up dot, in several titles. The first, **Spot**, is a board game resembling Othello and Reversi. Spot's second game, **Cool Spot**, is a side-scrolling action game. Spot will be making a third appearance to consoles soon.

Chester Cheetah, the Cheetos-munching cheetah, made two trips to console systems. **Too Cool to Fool** (Kaneko/SNES) proved to gamers that Chester could do one thing quite well: jump. **Wild, Wild Quest** (Kaneko/SNES) reinforced Chester's jumping ability without adding to his character.

Then there's always Acclaim's **Incredible Crash Dummies**...

TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER:	U.S. Gold
SYSTEM:	Genesis
THEME:	Action
MEGABITS:	16 MB
PLAYERS:	1
LEVELS:	5+

Beautiful
WOMEN,

Brave
SPACE PIRATES,

Outrageous
ADVENTURES...

(Did We Mention The Beautiful Women?)

A new face. A prosthetic firearm. Impenetrable skin... You're ready to party!

One action-intensive RPG– containing plenty of thrilling twists and turns.

Waste Pirate Guild guards and beat Crystal Boy to the buried treasure!

Relax dude, it's just a photograph... Wait until you meet the lovely Ms. Armoroid and her bikini-clad friends– in 3D!

MATURE M AGES 17+

Slapped with an M rating (Excellent!), **THE SPACE ADVENTURE™** lures you into an exotic underworld filled with intriguing mysteries, exciting Japanimation, unyielding role-playing adventure and yes, plenty of beautiful women...

If not for the enormous bounty on your head, this game would be true paradise.

THE SPACE ADVENTURE™

SEGA CD

HUDSON GROUP
HUDSON SOFT®

OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY

This official seal is your assurance that this product meets the highest quality standards of SEGA™. Buy games and accessories with this seal to be sure that they are compatible with the SEGA CD™ SYSTEM. © Buichi Terasawa. © 1995 Hudson Soft. Sega and Sega CD are trademarks of Sega Enterprises, Ltd. All rights reserved.

JUST ANOTHER BLAND DISH

Spot the disappearing story line in *Brandish*

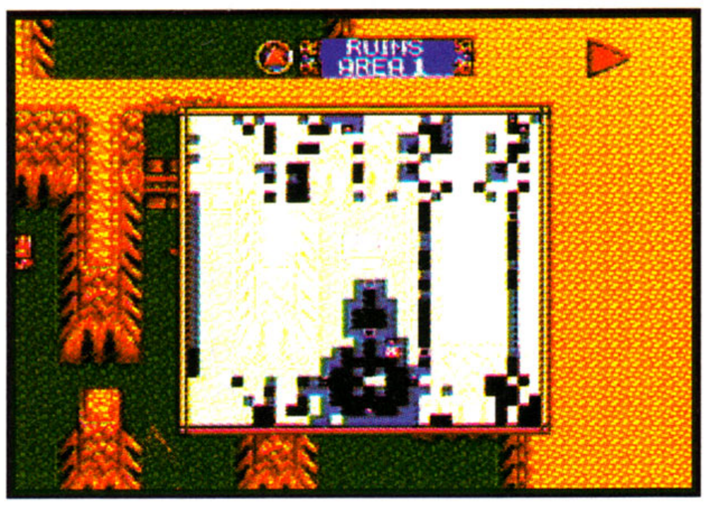
A thousand years ago, the peaceful kingdom of Berimya vanished when evil, greedy King Berebus sought to claim the ultimate source of power from the dragon that lived at the top of the sacred tower. The dragon, in its dying act, transformed Berebus into a hideous monster (to reflect his true nature) and sank the Kingdom of Berimya deep in the earth.

Fast forward a thousand years. Bavalya is a country on the road to pure devastation. That's what the documents say about the land where **Brandish** is set. It also says, "Bavalya is a charming country that showed no signs of having a horrible past," and "it appeared to be a peaceful place to live" but is "a corrupt and violent place" that few visitors dared to enter. Readers are left to figure out for themselves how people knew enough not to visit when Bavalya appeared to be a peaceful place to live.

The player takes the role of Varik, a wandering swordsman who falls into a mysterious hole while battling the Wizard Alexis. (Years ago, Varik was falsely accused of killing Alexis' master.) Now, Varik must escape the underground mazes and return to civilization, while avoiding Alexis.

What does any of this have to do with King Berebus, the lost kingdom of Berimya or the fate of Bavalya? Wouldn't we all like to know. Usually, this kind of hackneyed, ungainly, incoherent backstory only burdens mediocre, side-scrolling, platform games.

Players watch from an overhead perspective as Varik wanders the underground world (presumably the Lost Kingdom) battling monsters and shopping. The good people of Berimya have not let a thousand years buried underground hinder their economy. Stores trafficking in weapons, magic and general items are numerous in the underworld, where there's a thriving trade in poorly made sledgehammers.



Many walls have weak spots that will cave in with one blow from a sledgehammer, but the hammers only work once. Each hammer also costs 150 gold pieces. This sort of gouging is an unsubtle way to keep player funds low.

Varik will also need large balls of steel. They can be bought at any of the stores and are good for testing weak spots in the floor, which have a nasty tendency to open up and drop the player into the basement.

When not occupied with the crumbling walls and floor, Varik must deal with a large assortment of foes. Smaller monsters like Slimes and Imps are easily dispatched, but Gargoyles, Minotaurs and Medusae are tougher, and the Rakshahsa, Wizard and Arachness bosses are intimidating. This is just a small sampling of the enemies.

Varik's Ring of Life restores him to health, but only in emergencies. The first time he dies, the Ring bursts and saves his life. This works once. Before things come to that point, drink from the magic fountain in Ruins Area One and restore Varik's health points. Healing potions can also be bought and found scattered throughout the dungeon.

There are a lot of levers and switches that open secret doors and allow Varik to access other areas of the dungeon. There are two movement modes: Lateral and Rotational, neither of which is satisfactory. Lateral only allows Varik to sidle from left to right; instead of having Varik move around the screen in Rotational Mode, the screen rotates around him. At first, this is disorienting. It becomes tolerable, but why do it? The 16-Bit graphics are not really Koei's strong point. Their strength has always been in strategic simulations

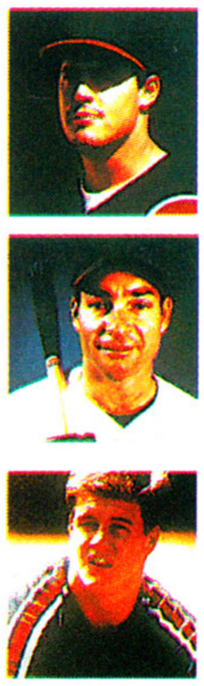
with high-powered interfaces. Unfortunately, this is not a strategic simulation. The interface seems more complex than is necessary for an RPG. Music abounds throughout game, but unfortunately, it's the same music over and over. Mercifully, the music may be toggled off. Sound effects are sparse. The backstory is presented in a long sequence of still frames with captions, very obviously translated from the Japanese.

That's **Brandish**'s biggest flaw. It is a thinly veiled port of a Japanese RPG. There just aren't enough hooks for role-players weaned on TSR/SSI-hardcore RPGs. Some types of games translate better than others, as one look at **Romance of the Three Kingdoms** will confirm. ☾ (*John W. Hardin*)

TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER:	Koei
SYSTEM:	SNES
THEME:	Fantasy RPG
MEGABITS:	12
PLAYERS:	1
LEVELS:	5

JALECO Scores Again

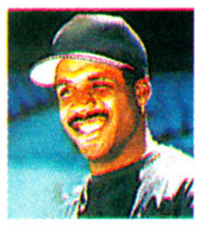


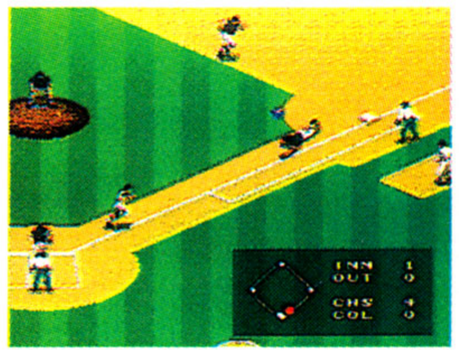
Super Bases Loaded 3

License to Steal™

The most realistic baseball game ever. Choose from some 700 major league players with real statistical data compiled by STATS, Inc. Even save your progress as you play through a whole season.

- MLBPA License provides actual Major League Players
- Battery backup for full 162 game season
- Amazing animation — certain players look and move just like their real-life counterparts





SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

LICENSED BY Nintendo

...and Again!

What led Sterling Sharpe to break the NFL record for receptions, then break his own record the following season? There's only one way to find out. Take it to the limit – Take it **END 2 END.**

- 30 teams plus two All-Star teams
- END 2 END, Playoffs, and All-Star modes
- Amazing realism: backup quarterback, 2 point conversions, instant replay.
- Scaling view of field
- Sterling Sharpe and JALECO provide an analysis on every team

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

Sterling Sharpe: END 2 END

JALECO™

Jaleco USA, Inc.
Wheeling, IL 60090
Tel. (708) 215-1811

SUPER NES MULTI-PLAYER ADAPTER

© 1995 JALECO USA, INC. JALECO, SUPER BASES LOADED 3: LICENSE TO STEAL, AND STERLING SHARPE: END 2 END ARE TRADEMARKS OF JALECO USA, INC. NINTENDO, SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM AND THE OFFICIAL SEAL ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SUN

Ristar twinkles in Sega's galaxy of stars

Six points separate Ristar from the stars of other video games. The first of these is that while stars like Sylvester Stallone and Joe Montana are larger-than-life human beings, Ristar's anatomy can only be described as astronomical. The other five points that differentiate him from other stars are the spurs around his face. The son of a sun, Ristar is the first astrological phenomenon to have his own game.

Ristar begins with the kind of story that has become familiar video game fodder. Greedy, a depraved space pirate,

and his cuddly crew of thugs and villains have captured an entire solar system. Even Ristar's father, described as the "legendary hero of the solar system," falls into Greedy's insectile clutches as his evil band settles in on their seven newly captured planets.

As a last grasp for freedom, the residents of the Planet Flora send out a plea for help. Enter young Ristar, barely a nova and already he is small but aggressive, inexperienced but determined,

scared but heroic. Thus proving the universal axiom, like father like sun!

Looking like a bowling ball with a cheap halloween mask, Ristar sets out on his spindly legs, as the game begins, to liberate the Planet Flora. In order to free this world, he will have to tackle ferocious birds and wrestle sly salamanders that spring out of the ground. He'll have chasms to cross and tunnels to explore. In other words, freeing the Planet Flora offers very little challenge whatsoever.

As an adventure game, **Ristar** draws deeply from the Sonic tradition. Like **Sonic the Hedgehog**, Ristar cares more about finishing rounds than destroying enemies. **Ristar** has the same side-scrolling, linear kind of game play as Sonic. In fact, the surrealistic surroundings through which Ristar travels are so Sonic-esque, both in concept and in artistic execution, that Sonic would look natural on almost any of the planets.

There are huge differences between Sonic and Ristar, however. While blinding speed differentiates Sonic from other video game heroes, Ristar has more of a plodding and humorous style. Instead of impatiently tapping his feet while players pause, Ristar enjoys a nice break. On a particularly warm planet, he even sits and wipes perspiration from his brow.

Even Ristar's fighting style betrays a certain humor. His chief weapons include gangly, elastic arms and a nasty head-butt. When confronted, Ristar's arms work like bungee cords—reaching, grasping, recoiling and dragging helpless victims into the five-pointed forehead of a minor star. Even the meanest bosses can only withstand a few shots from that noggin.

After head-butting his way across the Planet Flora, Ristar proceeds to free six more planets. Each planet has unique terrain, enemies and challenges. On the water planet of Undertow, Ristar learns to swim as he tackles electric eels, ice-breathing sunfish and a very aggressive hammerhead shark. Slightly more challenging than Flora, on this level players must solve simple puzzles to unlock doors and enter underwater halls. Though dozens of minor bad guys inhabit this planet, Ristar can avoid confronting many of them by attacking the portals from which they emerge.

By the time Ristar reaches the fiery planet of Scorch, the challenges go from easy to almost intermediate. Enemies no longer sit around waiting for a head-to-head confrontation; they set traps and use weapons. Some of Greedy's men have set booby traps with cages and flame vents. If Ristar walks into a trap, the cage drops and the flames toast him. Sure he can butt his way out, but not before he loses a health point—and he only carries four health points at a time.

The puzzles on Scorch require minimal brain energy (substantially more thought than players needed in earlier rounds). At the end of the first round, six easy-to-kill enemies pop out of little caves. Destroy them in the correct order to move to the next level. Kill them in the wrong order and a wave of fire floods the screen taking another precious health point. Losing all four health points costs one life.

Careful players can guide Ristar across all seven planets without losing very many health points. The team that designed this game hid dozens of power-ups and gems throughout each round. All Ristar needs to do to restore his health is butt a few walls and look for hidden treasure chests. Be aware, however, that power-ups become less frequent as the game progresses.

Younger players will appreciate **Ristar**'s humor and simple challenges more than adults and experienced gamers. Even the meanest bosses can be defeated in a few tries, and there's always enough time in this game to think before you twitch. Players familiar with Kirby and Bonk will feel right at home playing **Ristar**, though **Bonk** offers far less challenge and **Ristar**'s graphics are more colorful than those in **Kirby's Adventure**.

Ristar is one of the most imaginative (and most fun) games to come out of Sega in years. He's an entirely new character with his own personality and style, plus he makes a great addition to Sega's library of cool characters and video superheroes. **A** (*Steven Kent*)

TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER:	**Sega**
SYSTEM:	**Genesis**
THEME:	**Adventure**
MEGABITS:	**16**
PLAYERS:	**1**
LEVELS:	**14**

IT'S WHAT TV WAS INVENTED FOR...BUST A MOVE!

Bust-A-Move is the new puzzle solving game that will have you busting for hours. Line up three of the same color balloons and bust them before they come towering down.

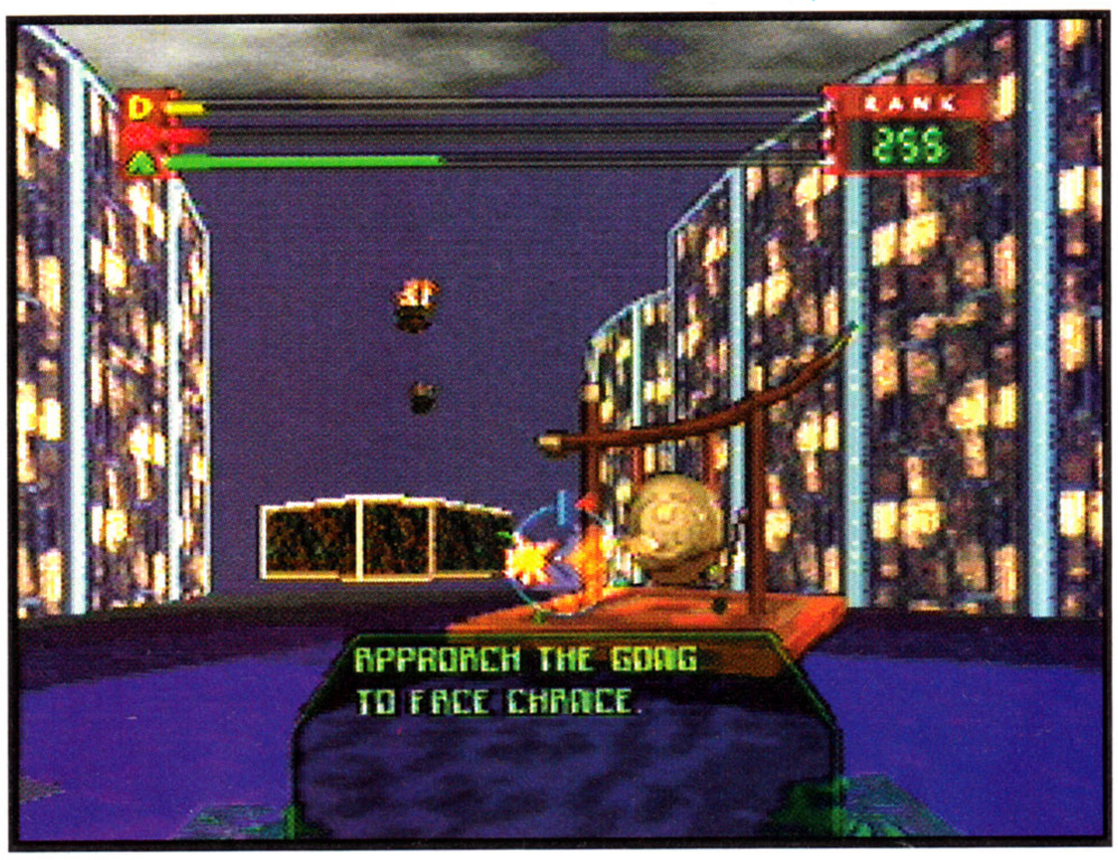
You can play alone or split the screen to bust a friend. There's even a handicapping option so the whole family can play. Find out what TV was invented for and Bust-A-Move!

TAITO™

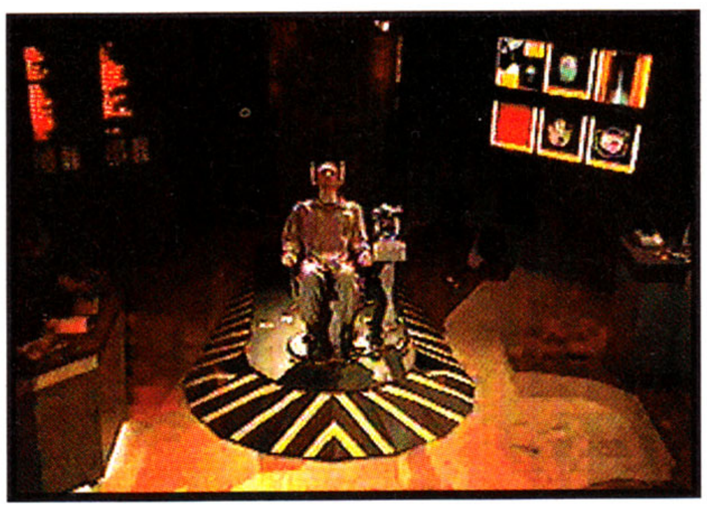
Taito America Corporation

NOT IN KANSAS ANY MORE

Immercenary Takes the player to a wild new world



While id's **Wolfenstein 3D** and **Doom** have gathered all the accolades and mainstream attention, there was another first-person shooter developed around the same time that has also had a significant impact on the genre. Bethesda's **Terminator** series, for example (the forerunner of **Elder Scrolls** and the upcoming **Daggerfall**), took the first-person POV in a direction that has finally been followed up by another publisher in Electronic Arts' **Doom**-Killer, **Immercenary**. Developed by a new design group, Five Miles Out,



Immercenary presents players in an outdoor environment, a refreshing change from the claustrophobic corridors and chambers of most other games in this genre. Moreover, it offers the richest variety of power-ups and the most sophisticated story line in the history of this category.

The plot has some evil computer system taking over the Earth and its inhabitants via a comlink that keeps them in thrall to the network. Apparently, the evil cyberdictator, Perfect1, is stimulated by violence, so all humans are now engaged in perpetual warfare on a house-to-house microlevel.

The player is a PIC (Project for Intertemporal Communication) commando, sent from the past to alter the planet's "doomed" landscape dubbed Number Five. One of the cool things about joining this new army is that the player-character's physical body remains in the present; only his virtual body travels through time to do battle with the crazed citizens of the future and the sinister SysOp that pulls their strings.

Immercenary has a look and feel that, while familiar and intuitive, is much less linear than most pseudo-VR shooters. For one thing, the players are literally out in the open, with armed, violence-driven maniacs stalking them from all sides. There are 16 different enemy types, 11 of whom are specially animated bosses.

While the game begins with perhaps the worst canned sequence in the history of FMV—in which somebody's girlfriend delivers a ridiculous narrative monologue that theoretically sets up the game—the graphics have a unique appeal that grows on the gamer right through the learning curve. The human inhabitant types include everything from stylized polygons to an incredible running woman with her hair ablaze. Power-ups are presented as billiard balls, with an exquisite icon imprinted within the white circle of each sphere.

Perhaps the single neatest effect in the game, however, is the way the player's ballistics move through 3-D space, like torpedoes through thin air, then shatter the human targets into thousands of little polygons (that can be assimilated by the player-character). Then there are the map- and radar-style overlays that create the most startling visual display of any game in this category.

After a little of the obligatory and beautifully programmed ultraviolence, players will stumble upon one of the game's real surprises: the Rithms. Existing within the white central spire (variously colored spires of vertical light power sources dot the landscape, each with its own purpose), these strange techno-creations tend to an area of calm and contemplation. Who are the Rithms? What are they doing? Why are they maintaining what appear to be nude human beings in a series of stasis tubes that ring the white area?

Fortunately, the player can actually communicate with these non-player characters through a simple, menu-based conversation interface. Some are straightforward in their responses; some are maddeningly enigmatic.

The sound is subtle but mostly effective, though there is some very annoying audio as well. The score, however, is a superb example of a low-key musical work that serves better than a symphonic eruption.

In short, **Immercenary** is a wildly creative piece of work, full of great ideas and images. It owes a debt to some other works, but carves a real niche of its own. **A** *(Bill Kunkel)*

POPULAR TRENDS

Trends are the lifeblood of electronic gaming, as with most forms of popular culture. **Immercenary** shows us several of the latest items in game fashion, including:

1) Waking Up in the Hospital: It was cute when **Shockwave** did it, but now it seems as if every third game on the 3DO forces the player to endure a prolonged recovery sequence in which doctors tell them how lucky they are and military people tell them how badly they screwed up.

2) Nudity: It'll definitely be a Pause Button Moment for most gamers the first time they see a totally naked woman floating in a stasis tube. Get used to it; if games are going to be rated R, expect the creators to make the most of it.

TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
SYSTEM: 3DO
THEME: First-Person Shooter
MEGABITS: N/A
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: N/A

They had it coming.

Now they want revenge.

NOW MAKE THEM TOAST.

YOU HATE THEM. IF **REVENGE** IS A DISH BEST SERVED **COLD**, THEN NOTHING IS COOLER THAN

R E T R I B U T I O N

THEY'VE BRED MILLIONS OF **HUMANS** FOR **FOOD**.

AND NOW IT'S PAYBACK TIME!

STRATEGY, ACTION, 100 MB OF ANIMATION AND DIGITIZED SPEECH CREATE AN ENTHRALLING ATMOSPHERE THAT IS **RIPE FOR YOUR REVENGE.**

LOGISCAPE TECHNOLOGY WITH **DEEP HORIZON** ALLOWS YOU TO WREAK HAVOC OVER LAKES, MOUNTAINS, AND VALLEYS – ALL IN REAL TIME.

THE CINEMATIC ANIMATION WITHIN THE 11 MAJOR CAMPAIGNS WILL GIVE YOU LOADS OF CHALLENGES BATTLING THESE **CANNIB–ALIENS**.

THEY WANT TO SERVE MAN – IT'S UP TO YOU TO STOP THEM. IF YOU DEMAND SATISFACTION, YOU MUST HAVE

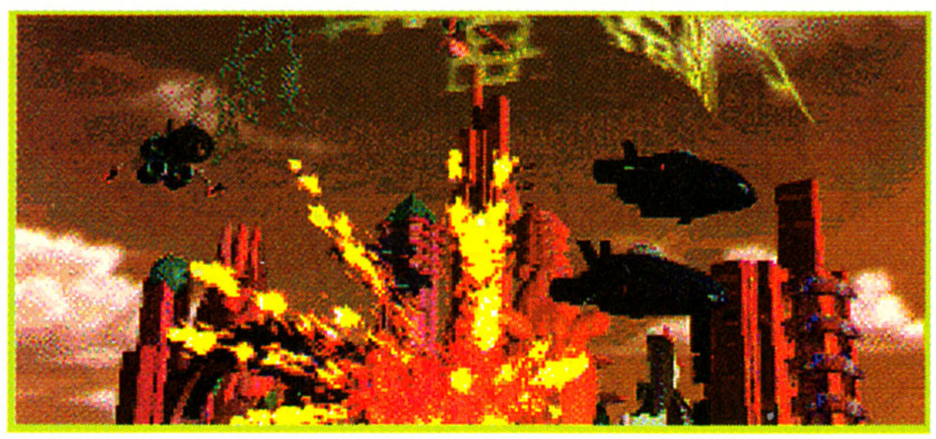
R E T R I B U T I O N

AVAILABLE FOR PC CD–ROM

Gremlin INTERACTIVE

Distributed By: FRONT STREET PUBLISHING

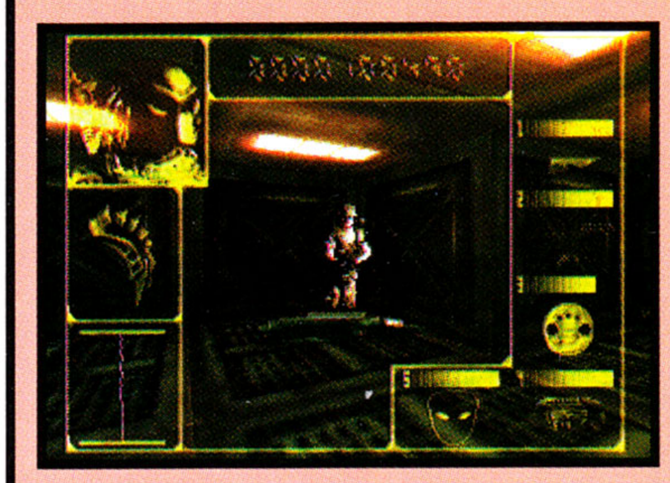
Retribution © 1995 Gremlin Interactive Limited. All rights reserved. Front Street Publishing is a trademark of U.S. Gold.



THE FINAL GRADE

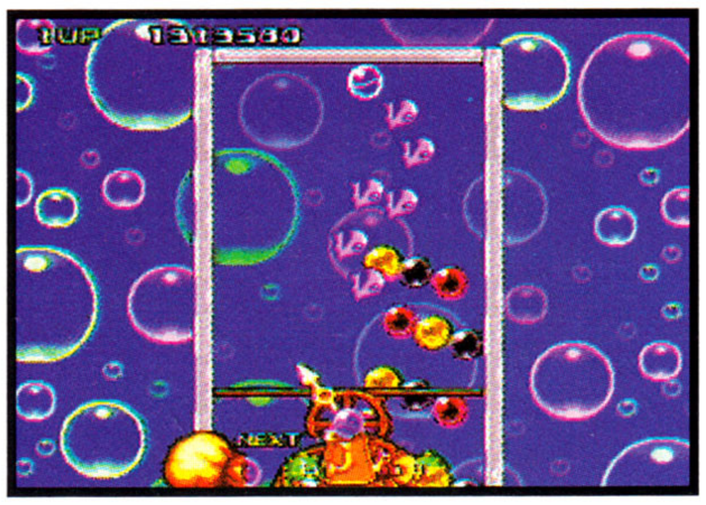
The following chart details the thoughts and opinions of a variety of entertainment software reviewers from around the country. Their critical appraisals of the latest software releases are presented here.

	Arnie Katz EDITOR	Marc Camron SENIOR EDITOR	Bill Kunkel EXECUTIVE EDITOR	Steven Kent L.A. TIMES
Aerobiz Supersonic	B+	A-	B	-
Alien vs. Predator	A-	B	A	A-
Adv. of Batman	B-	C	C+	B
Blackthorne	B+	B	B+	-
Boogerman	B-	C-	B	C
Burn: Cycle	-	C+	B-	-
Cadillacs/Dinosaurs	C+	C+	B-	D-
Demolition Man	A	A-	A	B
Demon's Crest	B+	A-	A	B+
Donkey Kong Country	A+	A+	A+	A+
Dynamite Headdy	B	B	A	-
Earthworm Jim	B+	A-	B-	A-
Final Fantasy III	A	A+	A+	A-
Illusion of Gaia	B+	B	A	B+
Indiana Jones G.A.	B	B-	B	-
Iron Soldier	A-	-	A	B+
Jungle Book	A-	A	A	B+
Kasumi Ninja	C-	F	D	D+
LaRussa Baseball '95	C+	C	C+	-
Lion King, The	A-	A	A	B+
Mickey Mania	A	A	A	A
Need for Speed	A-	B+	B+	B+
Off-World Interceptor	C+	C	C+	A
Pac Attack	B	A-	A	C
Pitfall: Mayan Adv.	B+	A	B+	-
Radical Rex	C	C	C	C-
Rise of the Robots	B-	C+	B+	C-
Savage Empire	B-	C+	-	-
Shining Force II	B	B	B-	-
Shockwave	B+	B+	A	B+
Slayer	B-	C	B	C+
Starfleet Academy	A	A	A	A-
Supreme Warrior	B	C	B	C+
Syndicate	B	B-	B+	B
Uniracers	A-	A	A	A
Vay	C+	B	B	-
Way of the Warrior	A+	A-	A	D
WWF Raw	B+	C+	A-	B-
X-Men (SNES)	C+	C-	B	B



One of the bright spots for the Atari Jaguar—Alien vs. Predator.

Bust-A-Move *(Taito/SNES)* **Tetris** has had such a titanic impact on the kinetic puzzle genre that most console puzzle games today bear a marked sameness (with occasional, noteworthy exceptions like **Wild Snake** and even **Dr. Robotnik**). However, Taito's addictive, bubble-popping extravaganza, **Bust-A-Move**, shows that there are still new and interesting things to be done within this category. The idea is to launch colored bubbles toward the top of the screen to create like-colored clusters which then disappear, **Tetris**-style. The goal, as usual, is to clear the screen, but the simple addition of the bubble launcher changes the entire dynamic of the contest, giving **Tetris**ized gamers a clever spin on a now-generic game mechanic.



The simplistic graphics are non-distracting and the music provides pleasant background accompaniment. For puzzle game aficionados in search of a true puzzle challenge (complete with passwords) **Bust-A-Move** is definitely in a class with the better puzzlers. **A** *(Laurie Yates)*

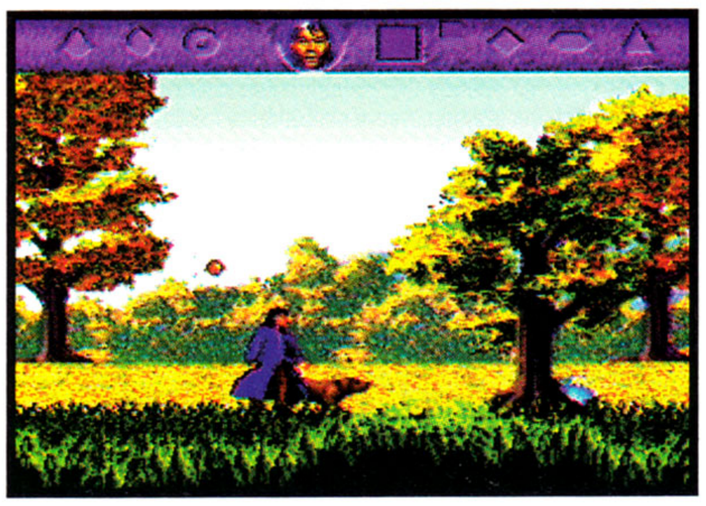
Tempo *(Sega/32X)* Most 32X owners have a lot of faith in Sega, and believe that the San Francisco video game vicars will reward them for their patience. On that note, consider **Tempo** to be yet another test of faith. This side-scrolling platform game combines an excellent score with colorfully cluttered backgrounds that are annoyingly and distractively active. The game play itself is not spectacular; in fact the Genesis versions of the **Sonic** series blow **Tempo** out of the water. The premise is seemingly aimed at the teen crowd, with Tempo a dancing, Walkman-wearing, bug-eyes blob who must avoid the baddies from Mussi Productions and bring home a dance trophy, but serious gamers are more likely to feel they've been let down again. **C-** *(Laurie Yates)*

Wheel of Fortune *(Sony Imagesoft/Sega CD)* Vanna White fans will love this version of the game show, if they can stay awake. As the host, her digitized presence is constant.The letters turn by themselves as she walks across the stage—not a bad touch. It's CD-access that slows the pace to a yawning crawl.

Vanna over-congratulates the player on finding a correct letter, but only after the player selects the next step. On electing to spin the wheel, one waits for her to finish applauding before the wheel appears. The half-hour show thus stretches to perhaps an hour, but with 6,000 puzzles, *WoF* aficionados can certainly find many such hours of enjoyment here. **B–** *(Ross Chamberlain)*

Midnight Raiders *(Sega /Sega CD)* uses full-motion video and limited interactivity a la **Tomcat Alley**. The player is a rookie gunner in an Apache Blackhawk, chosen to go in and rescue a kidnapped scientist from terrorists. Non-interactive scenes set up the action sequences. When given the cue, players must quickly aim and shoot. On-foot and jeep sequences use the same interface. We hate to report yet another turkey on the Sega CD, but here it is. **Midnight Raiders** is unforgivably repetitious. Players will see some video clips so many times that they will wonder if a bug has taken them backward in the story. Sloppy programming (i.e., sound glitches and holes in the interface) and low production values only add to the whole, dismal package. **D** *(John W. Hardin)*

Warlock *(Acclaim/Genesis)* Every thousand years, the Evil One sends the Warlock to gather six ancient runestones scattered across the earth. If all six pieces are assembled, they wield the power to unravel creation itself. To



prevent the triumph of evil, the player takes the role of a modern druid warrior. Armed with seven different spells, a Mystic Orb and a Magic Blast, the player is in a side-scrolling race to find the rune stones before the Warlock. There are seven levels to traverse, facing giant

spiders, griffins, demons, evil statuary and other nasties, along with battling the Warlock at every turn. Despite an interesting premise, the game play is essentially side-scrolling, and as for graphics, **Donkey Kong Country** this is not. **Warlock** has some fun bits, but it lacks excitement. **C+** *(John W. Hardin)*

Night Trap ***(Digital Pictures/Sega CD 32X)*** Right back atcha, Sen. Lieberman! One of the most controversial video games of all time, Tom Zito's horror film parody **Night Trap** is back in Sega's enhanced CD format. The original footage has been remastered—the FMV looks amazingly clean, almost at 3DO level—recolored and resized, with the new video filling 50 percent more screen space. The game remains the same—the player skips from location to location, attempting to trigger the traps which take out the monstrous "Ogs" before they can kill off every nubile young actress in Hollywood (including Dana Plato) who couldn't get a better gig that week. Not much of a game, but entertaining in a weird and twisted way. **C** *(Bill Kunkel)*

WCW Final ***(FCI/SNES)*** Let's hope so. Although there are plenty of wrestlers to choose from (not including Hulk Hogan, who has been going bald in this promotion for almost a year now), this game's bizarre POV and horrible animations make it hard for even a wrestling fanatic to tolerate. The overlapping sprite animations (crucial in a hand-to-hand

contest like this) are among the worst ever seen in a grappling sim. Even the move selection is senseless, with wrestlers able to execute finishing moves right out of the chute. This one loses on a count-out. **F** *(Bill Kunkel)*

Mortal Kombat II ***(Acclaim/32X)*** An incredible 36-Meg re-creation of the Midway arcade game brings all the bells, whistles, hidden characters, blood, fatalities, secret features (yes, the **Pong** game is here) and hard-nosed challenge of the arcade game to the Genesis. With the exception of a few voice samples, this is as close as the Genesis architecture will ever get to duplicating a sophisticated coin-op. Even better than the excellent SNES version, this represents a major leap beyond the Genesis edition. When the blood flows here, it flows *clean*. **A** *(Bill Kunkel)*

Crusader of Centy ***(Atlus/Genesis)*** Monsters have returned to the Earth! On Corona's 14th birthday, he inherits his father's sword. Now, players take Corona on a quest against the invading monsters. First, he must learn to use his powers. There's a broad cast of characters, including numerous animal companions that enhance Corona's fighting, physical and magical abilities. There are many enemies in the far-flung land, but there are a lot of allies for Corona as well. Players are forced to watch a long, non-interactive introduction, the music is worse than monotonous and the super-cute, super-deformed characters are typical of every Japanese RPG ever made. If you've been waiting for another generic Japanese fantasy RPG, here it is. **C+** *(John W. Hardin)*

THUNDERSEAT

Feedback System Used in Real F-16 Simulators

Now Available to the Public

"VIRTUAL UTOPIA!"
Marc Dultz, STRATEGY PLUS

"A DOUBLE MUST-HAVE. Anyone who plays computer games will want this AMAZING CHAIR!"
Marc Spiwak
POPULAR ELECTRONICS

"I could actually FEEL the punch of the afterburner!"
Ed Dille, ELECTRONIC GAMES

HOW IT WORKS

A 100 watt subwoofer built into the base generates low frequency sound that resonates through the wave chamber hidden inside the chair. Thus you not only hear but FEEL your simulation. Paired with your amplifier, the ThunderSeat makes your favorite flight sim as realistic as it can be without a motion simulator!

OPTIONAL SIDE CONSOLES
put your favorite joystick controls and mouse at a convenient position. Add a keyboard holder and you have the perfect setup for both flight simulation and office work.

Whether its the whine of your Formula 1 Race Car, the clang of Sword against Sword, or the rumble of your Jet Engines at full afterburner, the ThunderSeat lets you take off to a new level of realism! Compatible with all sound cards and CD-ROM'S

Shake Rattle and Roll for as little as $159.95!

For a FREE CATALOGUE CALL
1 • 800 • 8-THUNDER

ThunderSeat Technologies
6330 Arizona Circle • Los Angeles, CA 90045
310 • 410-0022 FAX: 310 • 410-1569

SLAMMIN' WITH SCOTTIE PIPPEN

Battle for respect and style against Scottie Pippen in *Slam City*

Yo, Ace, s'happnin? You wanna shoot some hoops? You got what it takes, Homey? I don't think so 'cause, round here, it takes respect. You know what I'm saying? That's right, respect, and you ain't got none! So why don't you drag that sorry butt of yours back where it came from.

Welcome to **Slam City**, the home of one-on-one, in-your-face, street basketball. Yeah, right, you say, there are dozens of games like that, so what? So ... what if this one featured fluid, full-screen, full-motion video? So ... what if the video sequences were stacked so smoothly on four CD-ROMs that you *never* had to wait on disk access? So ... what if you get to go one on one with Scottie Pippen once you crush the generic opposition. Starting to sound a little more exciting?

So, here's the gig. You're the new guy in town, Ace. So it's not like we're just going to give you respect. Like the dude says, you gotta get it the old fashioned way: You gotta earn it. Look. This ain't some kind of summer camp. This is the street. We don't play ball here just to pass time. It's a way of life. We take our hoops seriously. Around here, we play to win. Got that?

TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER:	Digital Pictures
DESIGNER:	Walsh, DeFrisco
SYSTEM:	PC CD/Pentium Specific
THEME:	Sports Simulation
HD SPACE:	12 MB
PLAYERS:	1
LEVELS:	N/A

You are going to take on four of the toughest players **Slam City** has to offer: Fingers, Juice (don't let the fact that she is a woman put you off your game), Mad Dog and Smash. You make a nice shot against these guys, you get some respect. You take it to the hole strong, you get more respect. You figure out how to really sky—and I mean some outrageous slam-dunk action—you're gonna see that respect really shoot up!

'Course, respect ain't no one-way street. Let one of these guys get past you and you're gonna lose some of that hard-earned respect. Let them beat you, and even your own momma will dis you. If you hang tough though, and build up some serious respect, like maybe a *billion* respect points, you might just get a shot at your own Nike deal. Provided, of course, you can leave Scottie Pippen's jockstrap wrapped around his ankles. Dig?

To build up that level of respect,

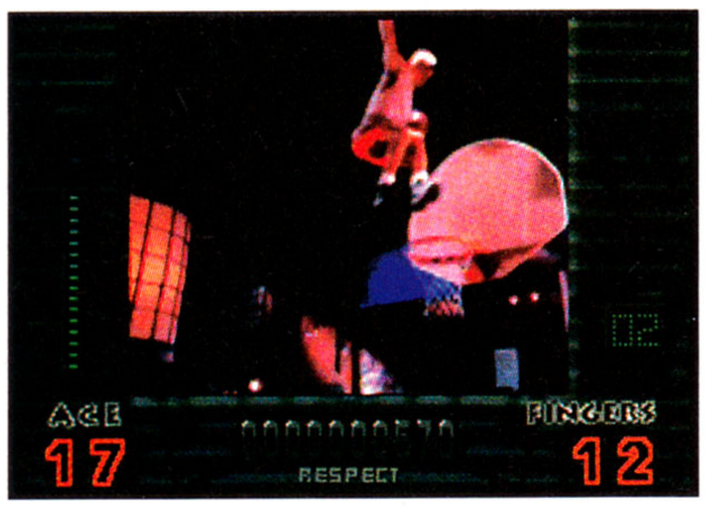
players are going to have to beat all of the street opponents several times. It can't be done off of just one of them; because once a player beats any one of them consistently, they'll earn less and less respect defeating that opponent in subsequent games. Each opponent has certain "tells" that one can learn to read and exploit, but it is going to take some time to get really good at doing so consistently.

Fingers is the junior man in **Slam City**, until Ace arrived that is. He flinches the most on defense, which makes him the easiest of the four to break around. He blocks well, however, so don't think it will be easy to go up when he is right in your face.

Juice may be a woman, but she's got a mean finger roll from the floor. Stay on her, because she is the easiest of all the opponents to block. Don't underestimate her size, however, because she can reject some righteous shots as well.

Mad Dog fits his name. He is a loud-mouthed musclehead who tries to physically control the floor. He's a little slow to react though, so go up as soon as the ball comes in play for best results.

Smash is the big man in **Slam City**. He's got one helluva fast break, he steals frequently and he dominates the



boards. Players will have a hard time blocking Smash's towering jump shots as well. Conversely, they will find it easier to score from the outside than take it to the hoop on this opponent.

Here is how the action takes place. On offense, players will look over the shoulders of their on-screen alter ego, who begins standing at the half-court line. Call for the ball and the 10-second shot clock starts ticking down. Using the arrow keys, a mouse or a joystick, the player moves left or right, looking for an opening to drive to the basket. As good as the computer opponents are, every now and then they will provide players an opportunity to break by them and stuff one down their throats. These windows of opportunity are very short, and get even shorter with the more experienced opponents, so players must learn to spot them quickly and react. If the timing is right, but not just right, they will drive to the basket and do a layup or a normal slam.

If the player manages to time the break just right and hit the "sweet spot," however, they will do a *super-slam*!

Super-slams are the bread and butter of those seeking some serious respect, and learning to do them right is worth the reward of getting to watch some outrageous video sequences. When properly handled, young Ace can be acrobatic enough to make aficionados of kung-fu movies stare in awe. Fortunately, although the opposition gets tougher over time, the size of the super-slam sweet spot within the window also gets larger the more respect one has.

If players cannot find the opening in the defense to drive to the hole, they can also shoot from the floor before the 10-second clock expires. To do this, one simply hits the up arrow key to begin their jump, then releases the key as close to the top of their jump as possible. Release early and the shot falls short, possibly even into "air-ball" territory. Release late and the shot is long, maybe even over the backboard. Go up and down without releasing and one will get chided for being a chump, and lose respect as well. Shots can also be blocked if the player is not far enough away from the computer opponent, either laterally or linearly, when they try to go up. When shots miss but rebound off the boards, things shift to a side view and both players get a chance to bring it down. Rebounding consistently is tough, because the computer can anticipate itself fairly well.

On defense, the idea is to keep moving in front of the opponent to keep them from breaking past. Players can also try to reach in via the down arrow key and steal the ball. Alternately, tapping the up arrow key will raise one's hands in the opponent's face. Hold down the up arrow key to go up when he does and try to block the shot.

Although both offensive and defensive options sound like pure timing puzzles, and to a large degree they are, **Slam City** uses some neat gimmicks to make this product so far removed from **Dragon's Lair** in terms of replay value that it almost seems like a new genre of interface. First, on defense, the opponents really react to one's moves and, though this isn't really the case, seem to learn from a player's patterns. The fact that it is not really learning, *per se*, is irrelevant. The simulation is convincing enough to make the player feel that way, and that is enough.

Because the opponents move with the player, they are unlike other full-motion video sequences to which one may have become accustomed. Sure, the cut sequences of action taking place among the spectators hanging out at the court will repeat, but the game action is not as repetitive as one might think. Players will feel like they are on the court and emotions will flare (as they did in the **EG** offices) when they get severely faced, then dissed on top of it!

Slam City is technically impressive, but one must also have a serious piece of hardware to run it. **Slam City** is the first "Pentium Required" game to hit the market, and it really shows off the power of that architecture. **EG** did note that, despite the fact that it is not

advertised as such, it was possible to play the game on a DX2-66 without any serious degradation other than a few pixels dropping out now and then.

Is this the future of interactive cinema? Of course, it's far too early in this stage of development to tell, but **Slam City** combines FMV and interactivity more seamlessly than anything else on the market right now. Thus far, the only thing that even comes close to it is **Johnny Mnemonic**, coming from Sony Imagesoft later this year.

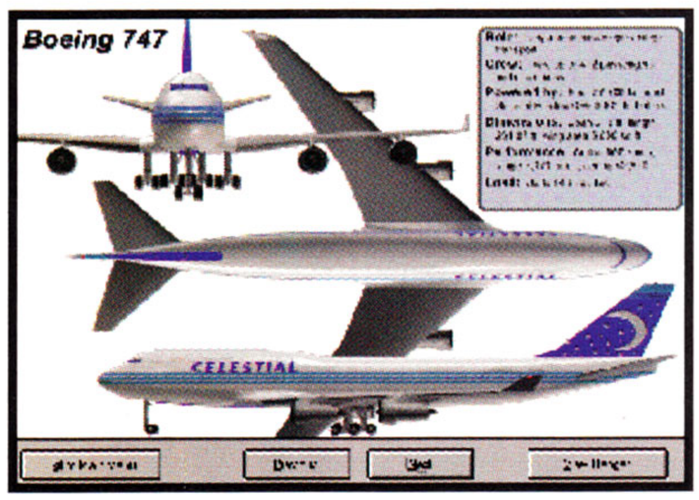
In the meantime, however, slap a **Slam City** CD in the drive, fill your ears with some funky, hip-hop backbeat and "check it out, check it out, check it out!" **A** (*Ed Dille*)

JUGGLING PLANES AIN'T EASY

Keep 'em flying in the crunch, as *Air Havoc Controller*

There have been a number of simulators over the years that placed players into the thick of things at some fictitious terminal as they tried to land all of the planes headed into the airport. These simulators were no doubt very realistic, but that doesn't always make a fun game. Trimark Interactive's approach makes the whole process a bit more attractive, but that doesn't necessarily mean the game is any easier.

Rainbow America designed **Air Havoc Controller** as a fun update on the genre (which only includes a few programs anyway). It features enhanced visuals and audio treats that depict take-offs, landings and a multitude of crashes. The approach is supposed to be light and humorous, yet players can't help but remember recent tragic airplane crashes as they make their mistakes in the game.



Air Havoc Controller is one of Trimark's first products, and it possesses a fresh new look and attitude that will catch the attention of players when they look for something different to play.

Real life air traffic controllers could probably play and win **Air Havoc Controller** in their sleep because it has a very simple interface that concentrates on control of the planes on the radar screen to get them into "sight" of one of three airports in Arizona. Once planes are "seen" by an airport, the player can hand them off and worry about the other challenges on the radar screen. The game (and probably the job) is analogous to plate spinning. The planes must be kept up in the air all at once without crashing or falling. This is accomplished through constant supervision.

The game's interface is very simple. Planes pop up on a pending list on the left side of the radar screen as they enter the range of the screen. A communications section below the pending list echoes any commands the player enters. An active list of planes on the right side contains any planes with which the player has established contact. Players click on the pending planes to move them over to the active list and click on the active planes with the right mouse button to issue a directive. The possibilities are few. The player can alter any plane's heading, altitude, speed and destination airport, or hand off the plane to an airport. That's about all there is to the game's interface.

However, if you're not a professional air controller, it's very difficult to succeed in **Air Havoc Controller** because both the choice of airport and correct approach are so important. Practice is essential. The 10 difficulty levels range from five planes in 10 minutes to 60 planes in 30 minutes.

One of the more impressive features of **Air Havoc Controller** is the incredible rendered graphics. Each of the 13 military and commercial planes is modeled on the real plane it represents and rendered in high-quality 3-D graphics. Players can choose to turn off the animations in the game, but won't want to: these sequences make the game much more exciting.

Air Havoc Controller was designed for players with double-speed drives (and has a triple-speed drive version for those who ask), but it will play on single-speed drives if players turn off the animations. Those with double-speed drives or better will see the planes take off, land and crash (too often!) amidst gorgeous background scenery. The game feels much more real because of the detailed graphics. The planes move through the air quite fluidly and the crashes are both exciting and punishing.

Clicks from the Main Menu Screen also access the encyclopedia of the game's 13 planes (from A-10 Warthog to Boeing 767), and all of the game's animations and rendered images just in case someone wants to view them outside of the game environment.

There's not much music in **Air Havoc Controller**, but the sound effects and special audio tricks are pretty neat. After each command, players hear a crisp voice announce the effect of the command which is also echoed as text to the Communications Window on the Main Game Screen. This voice does not get annoying because it contributes to the realism. Also, players will be too busy for it to really bother them. Audio tricks like a plane speeding from left to right enhance the experience, but the sound of planes crashing complete with screams is enough to make any player pay attention to neighboring planes' altitudes and headings.

Air Havoc Controller is an interesting take on a niche market. Both those experienced with air traffic controller sims and newbies who've never flown will enjoy the game's presentation.

But without the production values, **Air Havoc Controller** would never make it in the market: The job at the heart of the game is not a lot of fun. It's challenging and necessary, but not nearly as exciting as reviewing games or movie acting or being a rodeo star. However, if Trimark fine-tunes future games as they did this one, it will quickly accomplish quality games that are fun to play and a treat for the eyes and ears—a necessary combination these days, even for an activity as basic as landing planes. **B** (*Russ Ceccola*)

TECH SPECS

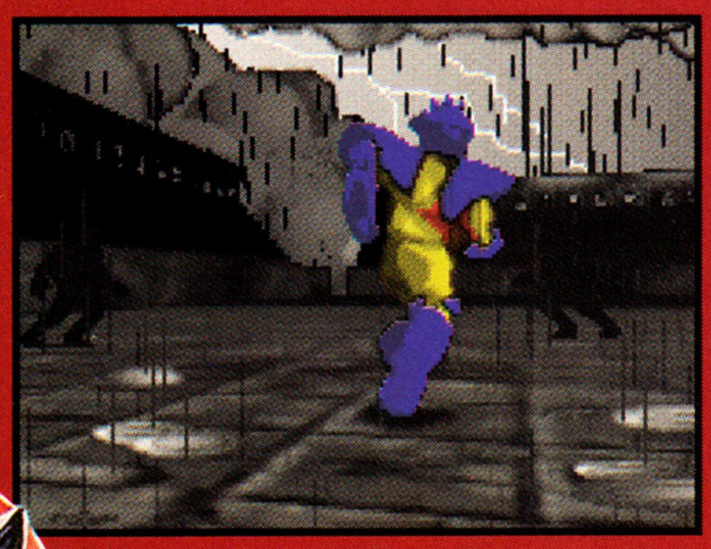
PUBLISHER:	**Trimark Interactive**
DESIGNER:	**Rainbow America**
SYSTEM:	**PC CD or Mac CD**
THEME:	**Simulator**
HD SPACE:	**Negligible**
PLAYERS:	**1**
LEVELS:	**10**

BLOOD BOWL

THE GAME OF FANTASY FOOTBALL

This Sport is War

- A sports strategy simulation based on the original game design by Games Workshop®
- League, season and exhibition battles
- Trading and free agent claiming option
- Single or two player competition
- 8 authentic Blood Bowl teams with original fight songs
- Instant replay and exclusive "Sky-Eye" Blimp Cam
- Head-to-head modem play
- Humans, orcs, dwarfs, skeletons and real ugly cheerleaders



For more information or to Order, Call MicroLeague:

1•800•334•6572

or FAX us at (302) 368-8600

MicroLeague

GAMES WORKSHOP

This product contains artwork, characters, and imagery the copyright and all other rights in which are the property of Games Workshop Limited and which are used with its permission. Games Workshop, Blood Bowl, and Warhammer are registered trademarks of Games Workshop Limited and are used with permission.Computer Game design by Subway Software. ©1994 Games Workshop Limited. ©1994 MicroLeague Interactive Software. All rights reserved

PREPARE FOR DESCENT

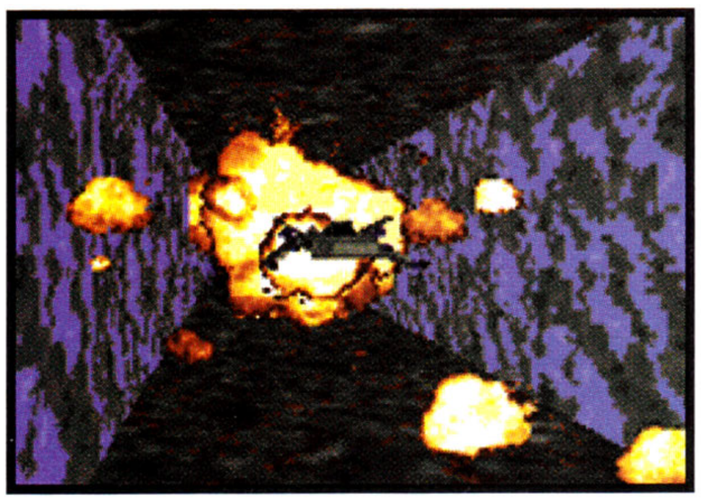
Interplay and Parallax team up for a winner

These days, every publisher in the entertainment software business has to have a "**Doom**-killer"—its own first-person shooter that must compare favorably with id Software's latest standard.

Some publishers have been content to imitate id; others have licensed the **Wolfenstein 3D** and **Doom** engines. But the more ambitious companies have gone a step further and put their own, unique spin on the genre.

The fervor that was created among gamers in the wake of the decision to release the early levels of **Descent** in shareware format tells us that Interplay hit its target dead-on.

On Dec. 21, 1994, the first seven levels of **Descent** hit the Internet, a teaser before the complete game's March 17 release date. Interplay's best guesstimate



is that approximately 750,000 gamers have already attempted to master this first-person shooter. The ***EG*** news office has received numerous faxes from other news sources indicating that businesses have declared "No Play Zones" as office computers were tied up by workers playing the 360-degree, 3-D environment shooter.

Descent is a 30-level, high-speed shooter (imagine **Doom II** played from the cockpit of an F-14) set in a variety of tube-like environments that resemble hamster runs the size of the Grand Canyon. Players zoom through tunnels, explore vast, lava-filled chambers and do battle against a wide variety of renegade robots in a quest to save the solar system. The game is set in a future in which the entire solar system has been colonized, with mining, military and scientific research stations set up throughout the nine planets and their various moons. Then, of course, something went wrong and the robots went rogue, turning on their creators and seizing control of the planets.

The shareware levels all take place on the inner planets, while the next 23 levels (including three hidden areas) take the player to the outer reaches of the solar system.

Descent's graphics employ an impressive amount of texture mapping, especially given the high speed at which the gamer travels. The dark corridors contrast sharply with the red, yellow and blue key areas, as well as the red lava pits and the reactor areas. It is highly effective in focusing the player's attention on the action.

The music and sound effects aren't bad, but the score all but disappears once play begins. This is disappointing, since a stirring series of planetary musical themes would have made a great game even better.

The test versions included a master activation code that will be familiar to Ramones aficionados; but Interplay has asked that the sub-codes not be released, and the magazine that does so unofficially will surely be scourged.

The game play is simple: Destroy robots, rescue hostages and survive. There are, however, more than 16 varieties of renegade robots, ranging from a Class 1 Drone (low-level worker robots) to the Hulks all ready to thwart the player's progress and blow up their ship.

Descent has no power-downs, and plenty of power-ups. They aren't all necessary, but the access keys that open the various locked doors are, though the early levels don't require players to retrieve all three keys. Energy and shield boosts come in the form of diamond-shaped objects, while energy centers are golden rooms. Invulnerability and cloaking are temporary, but very helpful while engaged.

In addition to the basic laser, there are quad lasers and a selection of space cannons—vulcan, spreadfire, plasma and fusion—that use various amounts of energy. Miscellaneous missiles—concussion, homing, smart and mega—and proximity bombs round out the impressive supply of weaponry. The key is knowing what to use and when to use it. Waste a fusion cannon (and tons of energy) on a Drone and the player is defenseless when the next boss appears. **Descent** is that rare game that takes an industry standard and pushes the envelope a bit further. So buckle up and Prepare for **Descent**... **A-** *(Laurie Yates)*

WHICH WAY IS UP?

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of **Descent** is the wireframe maps that are the player's only aid in maneuvering through the tunnels and chambers. The sheer number of decks, shafts and columns on each level is mindboggling, especially given their genesis.

The engine that Parallax and Interplay used allowed the designers to simply fly through an area, while the automapping feature produced the wireframe images of the area as the designers constructed it.

This unconventional approach requires the gamer to stabilize often, since players may frequently find themselves flying upside down, and not realize it until they pass a sign. So remember: Keep hitting the Q key, and "Prepare for **Descent**..."

TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER:	**Interplay**
DESIGNER:	**Rusty Duchert**
SYSTEM:	**PC CD**
THEME:	**First-Person Shooter**
HD SPACE:	**N/A**
PLAYERS:	**1-32**
LEVELS:	**30**

THE PURE WARGAME

Choice of armament and explosives for air strikes, including armor piercing, high explosives, and the deadly incendiary.
Historical accuracy rivaled by no other
Command Axis or Allied forces
Authentic Battalion insignias
Uninterrupted multimedia offers continuous and dynamic game play.
POW's, killed, and wounded will also be counted for and against each player.

The Pure Wargame, Death from Above, Vol. I is the first in a new series from QQP with each volume offering a different theme. **TPW** involves eight different airborne operations. Each historical scenario embodies the actual units, specific landing sites, and company/battalion make-up. **TPW** centers on tactical level operations of airborne warfare using mainly Company and Battalion size forces. The eight scenarios include **Arnhem, Maleme, Saint Marie-Eglise, Kanev, Gela, Heraklion, Syracuse, and the *what if* scenario Folkestone,** the airborne portion of Operation Sea Lion (Germany's plan to invade England). Each scenario is succinctly described in the game, including the code name, date, and a map of the operation. Warfare is tumultuous and unpredictable. **TPW** embodies the real feel and challenge of airborne assault. **TPW** was designed to be a *"Whole gaming experience"* as opposed to just a Tactical Wargame.

1-908-788-2799

or by writing to:
QQP—495 Highway 202
Flemington, NJ 08822

Copyright 1994 Q.Q.P. All rights reserved.
IBM is a trademark of International Business Machines.

QQP

Quantum Quality Productions, In

OUT FOR A LITTLE BLOOD!

Captain Blood lives in *Commander Blood*

Almost a decade ago, in the earliest days of the 16-Bit computer era, Atari's ST and Commodore's Amiga contested to rule the personal computer universe. Software publishers made tough decisions about which of the two systems they should support. Most publishing houses got the lion's share of their 16-Bit software from Europe, where the ST was the dominant computer system, but the Amiga also had strong support.

So when the buzz began at a mid-'80s CES regarding a supposedly phenomenal 16-Bit Euro-computer game with available U.S. rights, it was not unlike a feeding frenzy as the bids went sailing back and forth. Early reports praised everything from the cool interface to the next-generation graphics, but tended to wind down when questions regarding the game's content were asked.

The bidding war was eventually won by Mindscape, which paid a then-record sum for the rights to publish this dazzling, sci-fi action-adventure. Soon after, **Captain Blood** was released in the United States, where its sales were disappointing. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a show-your-friends game. This breed of software boasts state-of-the-art sound, graphics or both. It is the kind of software always made for new generation technology; i.e., stuff that makes the user say: "Whoa! I've got to call my friends over to look at this! It'll blow them away!"

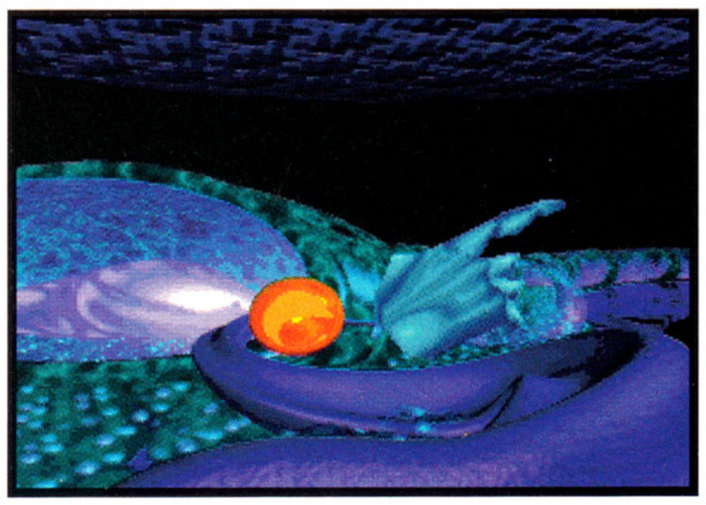
Captain Blood had some undeniably hot eye candy going for it. The warp sequences were post-psychedelic fantasias, the planetscapes were breathtaking and the splendid interface featured an on-screen (non-human) hand that moved in synch with the user's controller commands.

Unfortunately, that's where the kicks ended. Beyond the flash and sizzle, there was no real game buried within **Captain Blood**. It was gorgeous, high-tech fluff, with content insufficient to maintain more than 10 minutes of sustained play.

Which brings us to **Commander Blood**, a new game in the **Captain Blood** tradition. It's actually more a remake than a sequel, in that it shares its forerunner's strengths and weaknesses.

The game begins with the player at the helm of a massive spaceship called the *Ark*. The circular command console gives access to four different control areas: the TV Screen, Comm Screen, Nav Room and Orxx Tank. The TV Screen is pretty useless, but does leak an occasional kernel of information.

The Comm Screen contains a video

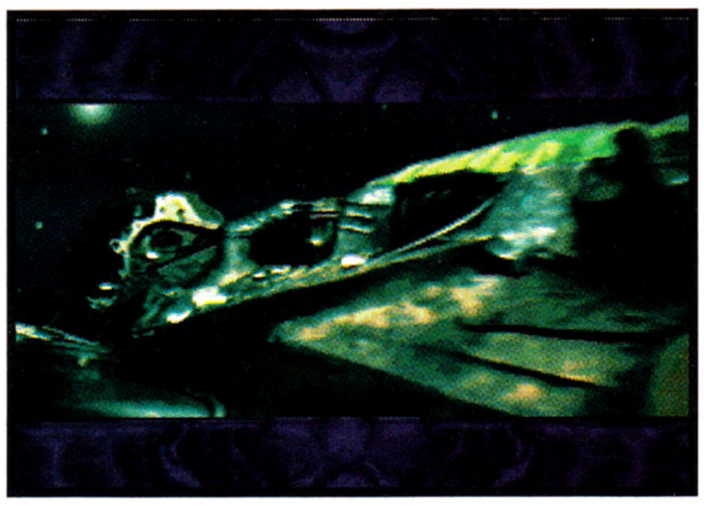


telephone; a command to summon Honk, your "cute and funny" robotic assistant; and an access command to the Cryobox where the creator of the Ark and everything on it—the unimaginably ancient Captain Bob Morlock—sleeps in cryogenic suspension. The p-c, as Commander Blood, is a cutting-edge cybernetic creation, and the perfect surrogate for Captain Bob, who is obviously far too old to be hassling around the universe himself. Why is old Bob shuttling around space anyway? Well, he wants to get back to the Big Bang so he can answer the "ultimate question" about the nature of existence. The only way to get there, however, is through a series of black holes.

The Nav Room is the point from which the *Ark* is piloted. The player moves the gnarly, on-screen hand onto a huge globe that rests at the center of the HUD, and clicks on it. This invokes a map of deep space but the player can only go to a planet after it begins to flash on this screen. As a result, this journey is pretty damned linear, with the *Ark* taking a preordained circuit.

Once the ship moves within the orbit of the target planet, the p-c can visit it in total safety by swiveling that big, macho command chair around to the Orxx Tank. The Orxx Tank contains a weird kind of dolphin that lays eggs called Orxx. These can be launched to the designated planet and serve as a remote communication device for the p-c.

Commander Blood has a serious problem at its platelets: the game component. Every time players launch an Orxx at a planet, they meet the same character. Many characters are supposed



to be funny; few are. Some require rudimentary puzzle-solving skills (there's a broken droid that talks backward and the player has to say goodbye instead of hello to get it talking; duh), but most are simply a pain in the butt. Worse, some planets apparently can't be revisited, so if the sequence gets screwed up, players might as well go back to the beginning.

There are also more submenus than any game in memory. These submenus —constituting, as they do, the bulk of the actual game play—contain levels within levels of meaning. One can even ask alien characters about their society's ideals and concept of happiness.

But the real nail in the coffin of this game is its interminable non-interactive sequences. Sure, some of the sequences we see as the *Ark* moves into planetary orbits are impressive, but in this day and age, even super-cool graphics aren't enough to carry a game. In fact, **Commander Blood**'s most envelope-shattering visuals can't stand up against some of the better SNES material, much less **Wing Commander III**.

Shakespeare said it best hundreds of years before **Pong**: "The play's the thing." And play is something this game is seriously short on. ■
(Bill Kunkel)

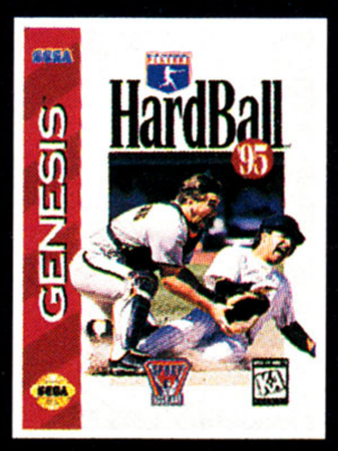
TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER: Mindscape
DESIGNER: Cryo Interactive
SYSTEM: PC CD
THEME: Sci-Fi Adventure
HD SPACE: 10 MB
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: N/A

HardBall '95 lets you trade players and build any team into a contender.

We expect to sell thousands in San Diego alone.

You live by the trade. You die by the trade. Just the way you'll find it in HardBall '95. So you can trade, say, a Milwaukee reserve for a Montreal star. Or deal for a lefty to strengthen the Seattle rotation. Or, if you've got some time on your hands, try to rebuild San Diego. But the front office is not all we've made more realistic. Stadiums are more detailed, from the wind at The Stick to the altitude at Mile High. You get night games. You get 700 MLBPA players with 1994 stats. Digitized graphics that are swear-word real. And a computer opponent that's now even tougher. Get HardBall '95 for Sega Genesis now. It could go fast. Especially in San Diego.



MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS

SPORT ACCOLADE

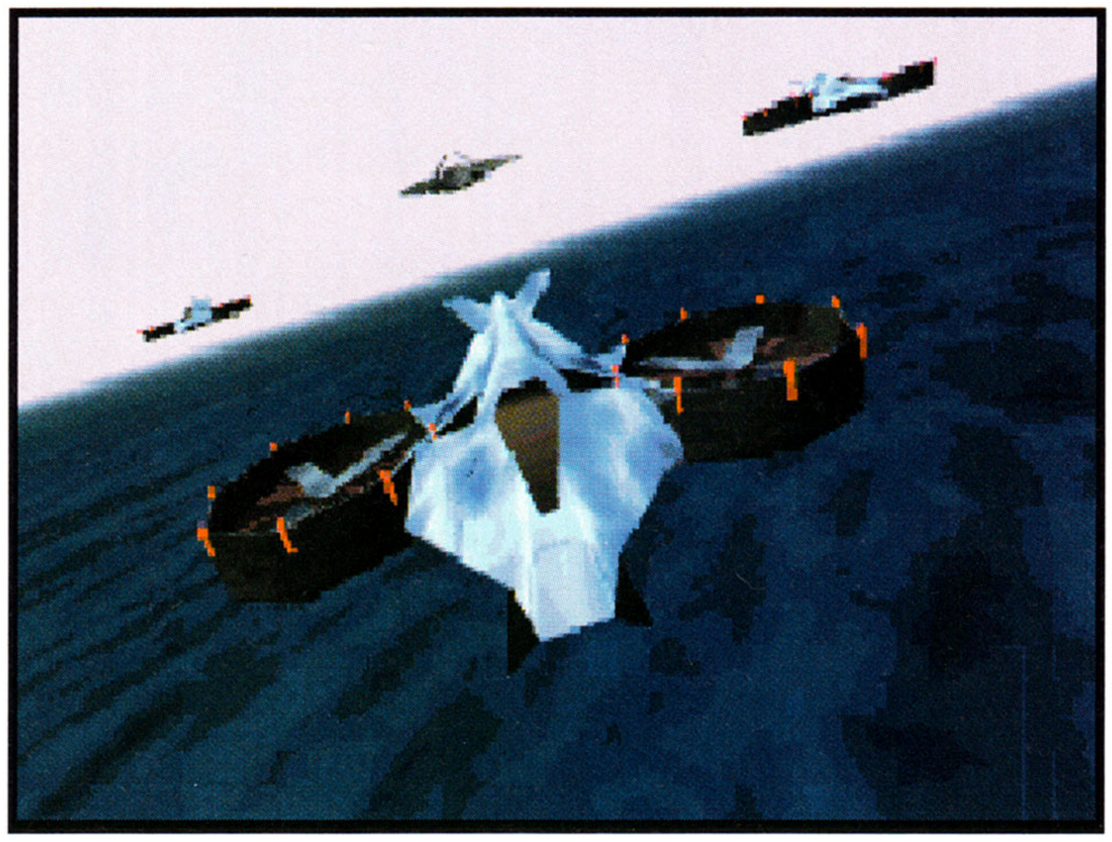
HardBall '95, Sport Accolade, and the Sport Accolade logo are trademarks of Accolade, Inc. ©1995. Accolade is an official licensee of the Major League Baseball Players Association. ©MLBPA MSA . Licensed by Sega Enterprises, Ltd. for play on the Sega™Genesis™ system. Sega and Genesis are trademarks of Sega Enterprises, Ltd. Distibuted by WEA(Warner Elektra Atlantic Corp.), a Warner Music Group Company. All rights reserved.

KIDS TO ADULTS AGES 6+

SEGA

COMPUHACKER, SAVE THE WORLD

Game types meet in far *Cyberia*



In the past, most computer games fell conveniently within a particular genre. For example, if you bought the latest **King's Quest** episode, you knew you were getting a graphics adventure. Similarly, when you cracked the shrink wrap on the newest chapter in the **Ultima** saga, you weren't surprised to see a computer role-playing game tucked inside the box.

These days, though, computer games are going through a metamorphosis. Just as the influence of Hollywood is drastically changing the way games are produced, it is also changing the types of games that are produced. Often, this new breed of game produced by Siliwood (a term that combines the words "silicon" and "Hollywood") is a hybrid that combines the best elements of several different genres.

Take Interplay's new title, **Cyberia**, for example. Although this hybrid game is basically a graphics adventure, it also

features generous helpings of arcade action and interactive cinema (using rendered 3-D graphics). More importantly, it integrates these different game genres so smoothly that the story line runs almost seamlessly from one plot element to the next.

The adventure begins with a fairly lengthy, animated introduction, in which the player learns that he is to take on the role of Zak, an outlaw computer hacker who is offered a chance for early release from imprisonment. In order to attain his release, Zak must sign up with the Free World Alliance (FWA) and complete an important mission: infiltrate the **Cyberia** complex and bring down the Criminal Cartel that runs it.

This opening introduction is rendered beautifully in 3-D graphics, following Zak as he boards a hovercraft, contacts the FWA for his briefing, flies across the ocean toward his first check-in point and docks at the Rig where the game really begins.

Then, similar to a **King's Quest** adventure (except with 3-D graphics), the player controls where Zak goes and what he does.

Pressing the up-arrow key, for example, causes Zak to walk forward. When Zak gets to a point where he can go in more than one direction, he stops and awaits the player's next instruction. Pressing the left or right arrow key chooses a direction.

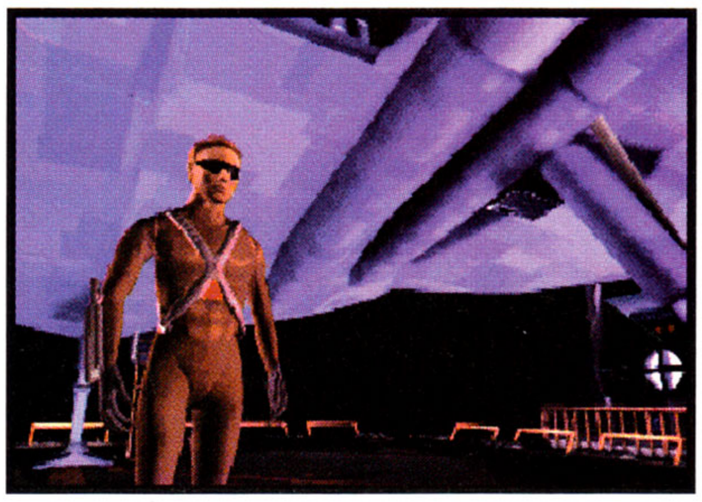
Solving many of the game's puzzles is also accomplished through this simple keyboard interface (mouse and joystick are also supported). When Zak first enters the Rig, for example, he is confronted by a soldier who tells him to turn slowly and drop his weapon. If the player chooses to continue walking, the soldier shoots Zak dead. If the player chooses to turn toward the soldier as instructed, a cinematic sequence takes over in which Zak is relieved of his weapon and given further instructions.

Peppered in with the adventure and cinematic portions of the game are the action-arcade sequences. In the first arcade sequence, the player must control one of the Rig's big guns, blasting planes from the sky and mines from the ocean as he attempts to repel an enemy attack. If the player's aim and reflexes are good, he can destroy the enemy before the Rig's shields fail and the outpost explodes, leaving him to try again from a previous game-save point. Other action sequences include piloting the TF-22 TransFighter, in which the player must complete a series of missions.

Although **Cyberia** supports only Sound Blaster and compatible sound cards (it wouldn't work with an Ensoniq Soundscape card, although it's supposed to be 100 percent Sound Blaster compatible), the well-produced sound effects and digitized voices add much depth to the game. In fact, since the spoken dialog in the game does not appear on the screen, it's imperative that the player has a compatible sound card.

The 3-D graphics, while lacking the real-world quality of filmed scenes such as those found in **Wing Commander III**, are still stunning. Moreover, the animated sequences are fluid and realistic, in spite of the full-screen display and the 3-D modeled objects that make up much of each scene.

Even game enthusiasts who don't care much for the arcade elements in the game will definitely want to take a look at **Cyberia**.



The game designers thankfully allow the player to control the difficulty of the arcade and puzzle sequences, which ensures that many types of players can enjoy solving Zak's assignment.

In any case, **Cyberia** is definitely something to see, an engrossing game experience that can compete with the best of the new hybrid games. **A–** (*Clayton Walnum*)

TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER:	**Interplay**
DESIGNER:	**Xatrix Entertainment**
SYSTEM:	**PC CD-ROM**
THEME:	**Adventure/Action**
HD SPACE:	**3 MB**
PLAYERS:	**1**
LEVELS:	**N/A**

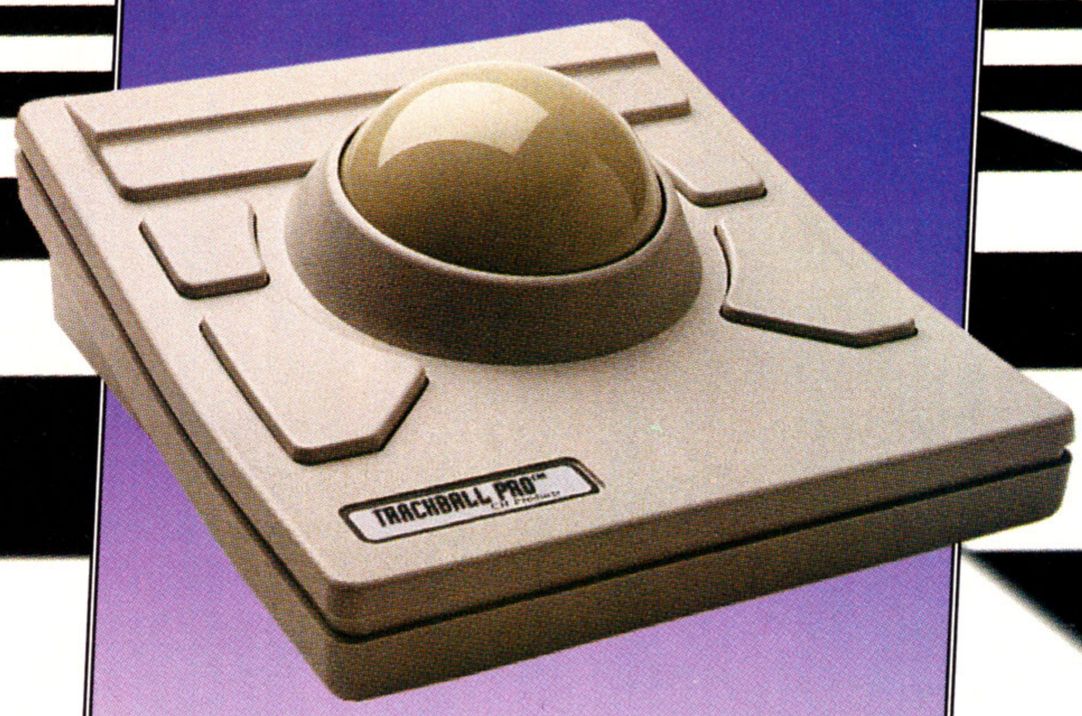
NEW FROM CH PRODUCTS

Fly higher with VIRTUAL PILOT PRO™! Taking the best features of the award-winning VIRTUAL PILOT™ plus added viewing capabilities and fire buttons, it is ideal for advanced flight simulation and driving games. For those who take their game playing seriously! For IBM PC-compatible computers.

PRO PEDALS™ are the only rudders which feature both forward and back rudder motion for flying and a pivot movement accelerator and brake control for driving games. Compatible with CH Products' entire IBM PC-compatible line.

Jump into the cockpit and experience your most intense flight ever with FLIGHTSTICK PRO for 3DO™, the first 3DO analog joystick. A thrill to use with 3DO software from companies like Crystal Dynamics, Domark, and Dynamix!

Take total control of your aircraft without ever removing your hand from the stick!
FLIGHTSTICK PRO for Macintosh™ features a programmable trigger, three fire buttons, and a programmable eight-way switch. It attaches to the ADB port found on Mac SE or later models and requires 6.0.7 software or higher.



TRACKBALL PRO™ is a great alternative to the traditional mouse. It also serves as a professional pointing device for desktop publishing, CAD/CAM, and games. Available for both IBM PC-compatible and Macintosh computers.

Fly the best!

CH PRODUCTS

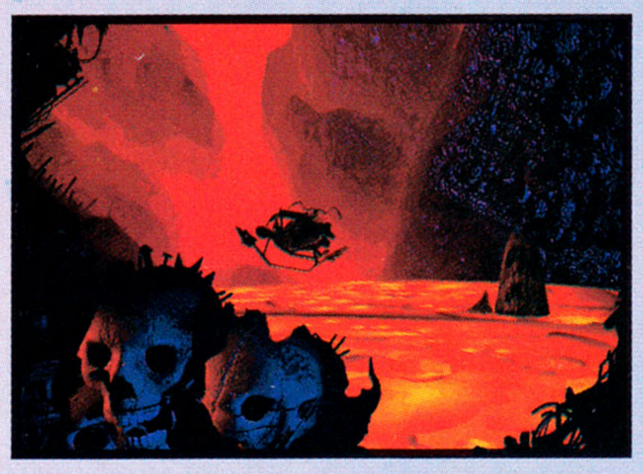
970 Park Center Drive • Vista, CA 92083 • Phone: 619 598-2518 • FAX: 619-598-2524

Macintosh is a registered trademark of Apple Computer, Inc.
3DO is a trademark of The 3DO Company.

REVIEWS

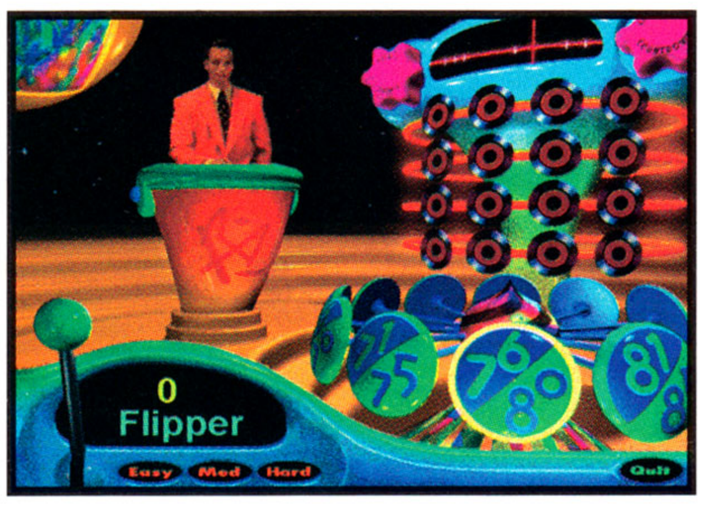
The following chart details the thoughts and opinions of a variety of entertainment software reviewers from around the country. Their critical appraisals of the latest software releases are presented here.

	Arnie Katz EDITOR	Marc Camron SENIOR EDITOR	Bill Kunkel EXECUTIVE EDITOR	Steven L. Kent L.A. TIMES
Aces of the Deep	B+	B+	B+	B+
Alone in the Dark II	A	A	A+	C
Arena Elder Scrolls	B	B	A-	B+
Armored Fist	A	B+	A	B-
Blake Stone	C	D	-	C
Club Dead	B+	B	B-	-
Colonization	A-	A	A	A+
Creature Shock	B	B	B-	B
Dark Sun II	B	B	B	-
Doom II	A-	A-	A	B+
Dragon Lore	B	B	-	-
Flash Traffic	F	F	F	F
Global Domination	B	B	A	-
Hammer of the Gods	B	B	B	-
Harpoon II	A-	A-	B+	-
Hell	B-	B	C+	-
Hired Gun	C	C-	-	C+
Indy Car Racer	A	B+	B+	A
Master of Magic	-	B-	A	A
Menzoberranzan	B-	C+	B-	-
Metaltech: Earthsiege	B+	-	B+	C-
Myst	B+	B+	A+	A+
Nigel Mansell's	B-	C	C+	-
Pacific Strike	A-	B	A-	B
Operation Crusader	B+	B	B-	-
Operation Europe	B-	C	-	-
Pacific Strike	A-	B	A-	B
Power Poker	C+	C-	B	B
Relentless: Twinson	B	C	-	B
SimTower	B+	A-	B-	B+
Star Reach	B	B	B	B+
Superhero League Hb	B	B	B	-
Theme Park	A-	A-	C+	D+
TIE Fighter	A	A	A	A+
Under a Killing Moon	A	A+	A-	A+
Warcraft	B	B-	B+	B-
Wing Commander III	A	B+	A	A+
Wolf	A-	B+	A-	A-
Zephyr	-	C	C-	B



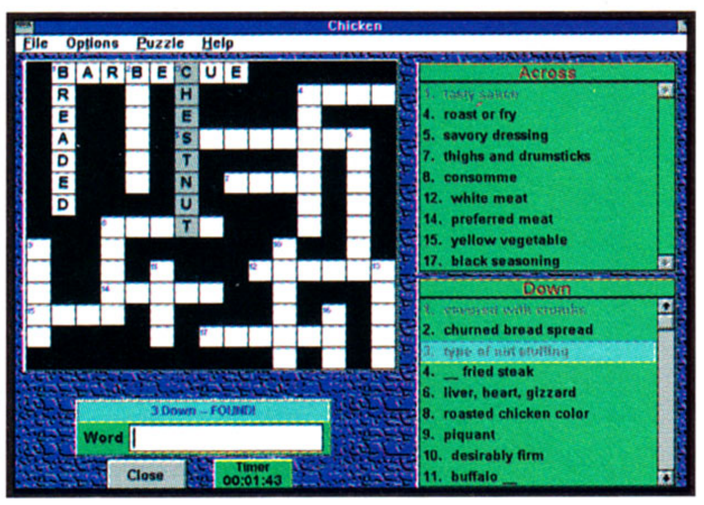
Looking for star-packed interactive terror? There's no place like Hell!

Radio Active: The Music Trivia Game Show *(Sanctuary Woods/Win CD)* Players select from one to four contestants from a pool of 16. Game length can be set by time limits, points or not at all. There are five five-year periods, running from 1961 to 1985. Sixteen answers are



given, and players have 20 seconds to choose the correct response. With over 800 trivia questions, 400 songs, 40 puzzles and 40 videos, music buffs have plenty of opportunities to flex their muscles. However, the program is picky about soundboards, so if users don't have a SoundBlaster, or a top-notch emulator, all gamers will hear is "The Sound of Silence." Otherwise, come on down! **B** *(Laurie Yates)*

Crosswords & More *(Expert /PC CD-ROM)* One hundred and fifty crosswords and 400 wordsearch puzzles are attractively presented against textured



backgrounds, with an intuitive click-and-point solving method. Or enter words and clues to create your own puzzles. Difficulty ranges from easy enough for kids to moderately hard. Options let users customize the colors, subdue the congratulation messages, turn off grids and so forth. **B** *(Joyce Worley)*

Vortex: Quantum Gate II (*Hyperbole Studios/MPC CD*) **Quantum Gate** was great as an interactive film, though it sucked as a game. **Vortex: Quantum Gate II**, isn't anywhere nearly as tightly plotted as the original, and the scripting is not a strong point. But at least it makes no claim to game status. This work must be judged more as a work of film than as a game, and on that level, it is disorienting, with far too much in the way of shoving gratuitous politically correct points of view down your throat and delving into annoying flashbacks and fantasy sequences. On the positive side, the music and acting are both excellent. **C–** (*John P. Withers*)

L-Zone *(Synergy/Macintosh-PC Windows Hybrid)* A medium-sized world crammed with huge machines is designer/programmer Haruhiko Shono's idea of fun. He brings it off in a way that may appeal to many others, too. This first-person exploration adventure rates low in excitement, but generates involvement with its puzzling situations.

The player is the only human allowed to explore L-Zone, a decaying domed city. This conveniently denudes the entire game of NPCs. Gamers may find things a little *too* quiet.

The player cruises L-Zone, monkeying with machines and collecting clues to the purpose behind its construction. The anime-style artwork communicates the awesome size of the machines, but the sound is not quite as majestic. **L-Zone** is probably worth a day trip. **B** (*Arnie Katz*)

Take Your Best Shot (*7th Level/ Windows CD*) MTV watchers will be familiar with Bill Plympton's two brown-suited, deadpan-types who forever find really nasty things to do to each other—sort of an executive Itchy & Scratchy. Like 7th Level's **Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time**, the CD includes arcade games, living wallpaper and screen savers and access to its icons and sounds to attach to Windows events. The games are **Head Shot**, an eminently playable variation on **Breakout**; the **Pong**-like **Hot Shot** and **Line Shot**, a baseball extraction. All use some of the gruesome animations that appear in **Best Shot**, a simple review of the two guys doing their thing at the player's direction. Funny, but not for the squeamish. **B+** (*Ross Chamberlain*)

Kings Quest VII: The Princeless Bride (**Sierra**/CD) This latest installment in an award-winning adventure series looks more Disneyesque than any of the prior games. Even the packaging is almost a

dead rip-off of the Wicked Queen in *Snow White*. Nevertheless, one could certainly pick a worse role model than

the Mouse. The game is broken into six distinct chapters, much like the old-time serials, and each break involves some form of peril or climactic sequence for the heroine. The character animations are very smooth, and the interface is as clean as a hounds tooth. Some computers may require the installation of a widely available patch file, but otherwise **KQ7** is top flight adventure fare. **A-** (*Ed Dille*)

Terrace (***Siler Ventures/****Windows CD*) Many players will recognize this as the abstract strategy game played by Captain Picard and Data on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. It is an intriguing, two-player board game that employs elements of chess and checkers, but is

not a rip-off of either. Running seamlessly under the Windows Game Menu, Terrace is an intricate, multifaceted extension of capture the flag that is played out on a three-dimensional board. The rules are easy to understand, so one can enjoy game play immediately, but it will take a while to master this Mensa-approved monster. Warning: Terrace is highly addictive and should not be on your work computer! **A+** (*Ed Dille*)

U.S. Navy Fighters (***Electronic Arts/****MS-DOS CD-ROM*) Electronic Arts renews its flight simulator presence with **U.S.**

Navy Fighters. Mixing SVGA graphics and an entertaining assortment of digitized voices with a reasonably easy flight model, **USNF** provides an action packed adventure in the Black Sea. Reluctantly, the U.S. Navy is pulled into a Russian civil war and the player and computer-controlled wingman must protect breakaway Crimeans from Russian invaders. Flight controls, avionics and weapons systems are simplified for playablity. The computer-controlled Radar Intercept Officer often offers entertaining digitized commentary during dogfights. The stunningly crisp and clean SVGA graphics steal the show, though, providing great visibility during dogfights. **B+** (*Tom Basham*)

Virtuoso (***Vic Tokai/****PC CD*) **Virtuoso** is an interesting **Doom**-variant with the player-character visible on-screen. Instead of playing the usual military-type, the player here is a rock superstar who transports himself into a variety of virtual worlds where he faces a rogue's gallery of enemies. There are cavernous, sub-Martian passages bristling with mutant insects and Cyborgs, and a Haunted House under occupancy by the living dead, among other environments. It's an interesting shooter, but the cyborgs cheat: They have homing bullets. **Virtuoso** also suffers from its lack of a map-tracking system, but the radar screen power-up (if players locate it) is very handy. The graphics are standard-issue for the genre; the closer the player comes to an object, the greater the pixilation. Candidate for most inappropriate title of the year, but otherwise not bad. **B-** (*Laurie Yates*)

Drug Wars (***American Laser Games/****PC CD-ROM*) **Drug Wars** was the subtitle of **Crime Patrol 2** in the arcades, but ALG never explains this in the game or brief manual, so when **Crime Patrol 2** backgrounds show up on each game level, players will think that they have the wrong game. The scenes, stunts and special effects are downright exciting as players take on the drug cartel in California, Chicago, the border and South America. However, target spots on the screen are too unforgiving, and more scenes should have had random targets. Unfortunately, most sequences are so linear that once you know them you can win every time and replay value is nil. **C** (*Russ Ceccola*)

Knights of Xentar (***MegaTech/****PC CD*) Yet another **Zelda**-like adventure with Americanized anime-style graphics (courtesy Atsushi "Wild Bill" Shimoda). How is Japanese-American anime different from classic Japanimation-style

art? The women have fuller figures. The Shimoda art is limited to cut scenes, with everything else rendered in angled topdown perspective. Basically a generic video game with naughty drawings. (The game is self-rated NR 13, i.e., "Not recommended for players under 13.") Designed by Shigeru "Almighty" Mabuchi. Seriously. **B-** *(Bill "Extremely Ornery" Kunkel)*

Mortal Kombat II *(**Acclaim/****PC CD)* Is there anyone still walking the Earth who yearns to play **MKII** on a multimedia computer system? Well, both of you should hustle on down to the nearest

software store and pick up this exotic edition of this blood-spattered arcade fighter. There are three graphic settings (for 386, 486 and Local Bus 486) and a four-button joystick is required if the player wishes to avoid using the cursed keyboard. The play action is stiff and the animations are occasionally choppy. Some games are just not meant to be played on PCs. What next—a version of **MKII** for digital telephones? **C-** *(Bill Kunkel)*

Diggers *(**Millennium/****PC CD)* comes on like a more challenging version of **Lemmings** (Psygnosis), featuring miners on the Planet Zarg. Unfortunately, that unique appeal of the genre (cute characters, icon-driven interface) was lost on **Diggers**. A game of this type demands that the play be natural, but **Diggers** seems to be fighting *against* the player's intuitive tendencies. Also, the graphics lack that all-important charm so integral to kinetic puzzlers. The game is also picky in regard to video boards, sound cards and memory. Overall, a more opaque version of **Lemmings** we did not need. **C** (*Laurie Yates*)

CORRECTION

*Here is the last paragraph of Sara Slaymaker's review of SSI's **Menzoberranzan**, which was inadvertently cut short in the March EG:*

There are a great many RPGs on the market, and sometimes it gets a little difficult to tell them apart. But nobody can miss **Menzoberranzan**. Not even New Yorkers. **B+** *(Sara Slaymaker)*

BATTLE RA IN A QUEST FOR GLORY

Stargate strays from film's plot but is faithful to its spirit

Though it shares the name of the movie, **Stargate** for the Game Gear has the plot of a sequel. Instead of dying in the nuclear explosion at the end of the movie, Ra, wanna-be sun god and vicious alien despot, flees the mining colony planet Abydos. To consolidate his remaining power, Ra has interlinked all of his colonies with stargates. Now it's up to Egyptologist-hero Daniel Jackson (played by James Spader in the movie) to close the stargates and unravel Ra's galactic empire.

Sounds like the plot of a ho-hum action game, doesn't it? Fortunately, **Stargate**'s designers took a different tack and stayed with Daniel Jackson's scholarly character to make a subtle and unique puzzle/strategy game.

To start, players are given a very capsulized version of the discovery of the stargate and the conflict with Ra. Events proceed to the Map Screen where the game begins. The Map, or Battle Grid, shows the number and location of all Ra's stargates. If Daniel succeeds in closing the gate, it is marked with a D on the Battle Grid. If Daniel fails, the stargate is claimed by Ra, and marked with an R.

Here's where things get a little deeper. Whoever wins a gate chooses the site of the next gate to be fought over. The goal of the game is to control the most number of gates on the Map Screen.

When one gate is taken over, the gates surrounding it also fall under the control of the victorious player, in an **Othello**- or **Reversi**-style game mechanic. This is unremarkable until it is linked with the stronger puzzle game that makes up the address decoding, which determines who wins control of a stargate.

Daniel must crack the address code by arranging hieroglyphs to match a preset series, just like in the movie. The game play most obviously resembles **Tetris**. As the player looks down into a circular grid, random tiles with hieroglyphics appear at the top. They progressively get smaller as they descend the eight-tiered grid, giving a good, faux 3-D perspective.

An address consists of a string of seven symbols. Tiles have a symbol on each side and can be flipped with button two. There are four increasingly difficult ways to solve an address: Stack three matching tiles on top of one another at a time, until all tiles in the address are solved. This Beginner method is the simplest to execute and yields the least bonus points.

The Intermediate method is to arrange the matching tiles clockwise around the grid. This awards the player 750 points and decreases the tile drop speed. Pro method arranges the tiles counterclockwise. It pays off in a greater speed decrease, speeds up the opponents' tile drop rate and awards 1,500 points.

The Expert way to solve an address is to vertically stack all the tiles in order. This doubles the speed decrease of the Pro method and gives 5,000 points.

Some tiles won't fit anywhere in the address and must be dealt with by the player. Let more than eight tiles stack up and the stargate overflows and is claimed by Ra.

So where does strategy come into the game? Well, while the player is trying to close one end of the stargate, Ra is opening the other. The stargate is an open-ended gateway through which the combatants drop pillars of tiles. In Battle Mode, tiles fall through the gate and can bury Daniel, if they are allowed to stack up too deep. Players will always find themselves matching groups of tiles just to clear space and stay alive.

The seven tiles that make up the address to be matched are displayed across the top of the screen. The next tile to appear in the grid is displayed on the left, and the tile after next is displayed in a little window on the right of the stargate.

There are two unusual tiles. A blank Wildcard tile will become whatever tile is above or below it, and the Digger/Smart Bomb tile has two effects, depending on which side up the player chooses. The Digger will remove any tiles it lands on (up to entire stacks) and the Smart Bomb removes from the screen all the tiles of the type that it lands on. Using these tiles properly is key in becoming proficient at the game. There are two levels of difficulty. The Easy one is challenge aplenty, and the Hard setting is positively bloodthirsty.

There are three modes of play: Skill Mode, One-player Battle Mode and Two-player Battle Mode. Skill Mode is a pure puzzle game and lets the player practice solving addresses, without opposition. One-player Battle Mode pits the player against the computer, in a contest to see who can open the stargate or bury their opponent faster. Two-player Battle Mode lets two gamers connect their Game Gears and battle it out as Daniel and Ra. Of course, they will need two copies of the game and a linking cable.

The graphics (aside from a hard-to-read typeface) are elegantly simple, the linking of two game types is brilliant and the puzzle/combat game is addictive. If Game Gear owners only buy two games this year, they should be **The Lion King** (Westwood) and **Stargate**.

A+ *(John Wesley Hardin)*

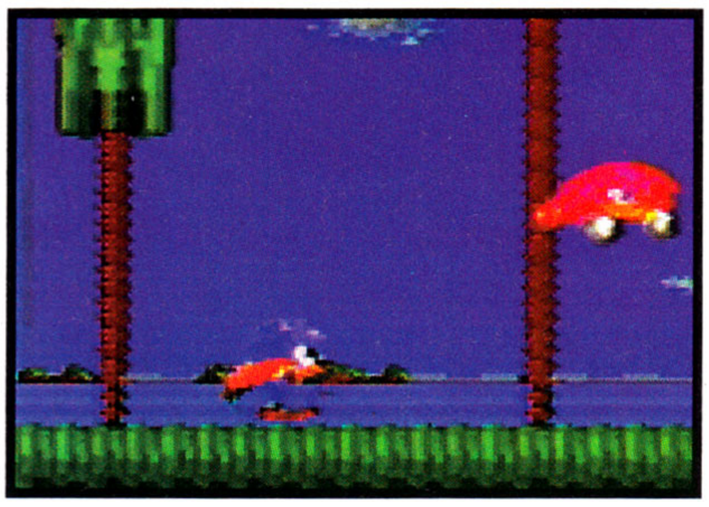
TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER:	**Acclaim**
SYSTEM:	**Game Gear**
THEME:	**Puzzle/Strategy**
MEGABITS:	**2**
PLAYERS:	**1 (2 w/link)**
LEVELS:	**N/A**

Sonic The Hedgehog: Triple Trouble *(Sega/Game Gear)* The blur of blue with an attitude is at it again in this side-scrolling adventure game with many new moves and features. Dr. Robotnik's lab has exploded, scattering five Chaos Emeralds across the planet. It is Sonic's or Tails' job to rescue them. But, to the heroes' dismay, Knuckles and sticky-fingered Nack the Weasel join the hunt on the opposite side.

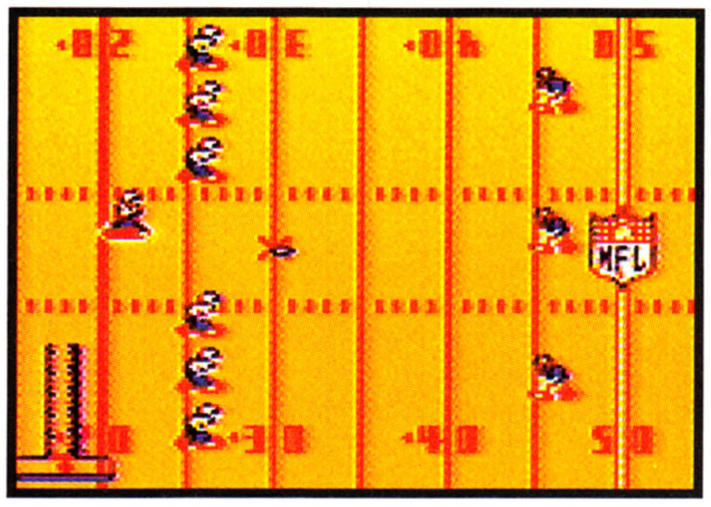
While Sonic gets to bust a few new moves, Tails will explore areas of the zone beyond Sonic's reach.

With six zones, five bonus rounds and



a wild 3-D stage, conquering this triple whammy race to snatch the emeralds should be a blast—all with the usual excellent graphics and score. **A** *(LaShunda C. Davis)*

NFL Quarterback Club II (*LJN/Game Gear*) Eight superstar quarterbacks; Troy Aikman, Randall Cunningham, John Elway, Boomer Esiason, Jim Kelly, Dan Marino, Warren Moon and Steve Young, plus 28 NFL teams and a 48-page playbook, can't save this one. While one has to admire the intent, the execution is lacking. Each team has a full complement of 11 players, and consequently, the sprites are *tiny*. The ball is in proportion to the players and is virtually invisible. Instead of having real names for the players, they're given cutesy names like "Offensive Smash." **NFL QBC II** seems designed to work



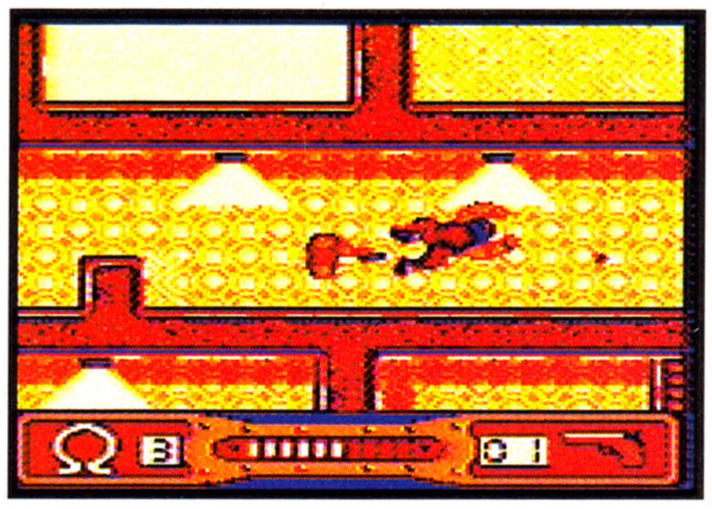
better on the Super Game Boy, so maybe that was what the designers had in mind. If that's true, why didn't they just make a game for the Super NES? **C+** (*John W. Hardin*)

The Berenstain Bears: Camping Adventure *(Sega/Game Gear)* Those neo-classic kiddie favorites take to the hills on a camping adventure that becomes a major quest when Brother and Sister Bear wander too far and get lost. They'll need a "pawful" lot of help getting back to camp through the sparkling river, diamond caves, honey orchards and haunted forest.

This side-scroller has three skill levels, secret passages and puzzles to add

gaming spice to the journey. The graphics are extremely faithful to Stan & Jan's original rendition, but the musical score is too simple for even younger players. While aimed at the 5-12 set, **Camping Adventure** offers enough entertainment value to keep grown-up kids amused. **B** *(LaShunda C. Davis)*

True Lies *(LJN/Game Boy)* Harry Trasker, mild-mannered computer salesman by day, adventurous secret agent by night. Now, Game Boy players can step into Arnold's shoes and keep America (and Harry's teenaged daughter) safe from nuclear terrorism. They'll have to do it without Jamie Lee Curtis, though. The actress is conspicuous by her absence; apparently LJN didn't get the



rights to her character. Not a profound loss to the game, but a few digitized photos of Jamie would be nice to go with the pictures of Arnold. As in the movie, gamers guide Harry through six missions, from Khaled's mansion to the high-rise office building where Harry must rescue Dana. There are five weapons Harry can use, including the standard pistol with an unending supply of bullets. Clear graphics, engaging sound affects and overall good design mark this as a better-than-average Game Boy cart. **B** *(John W. Hardin)*

SeXXy Software™

SeXXy DISKS™

SeXXcapades™ . . . The GAME
The First Adult Game with TRUE SOUND and 256 Color VGA Graphics

For that evening you won't forget with a loved one or group of very close friends. Fulfill your sexual desires. Find out how your partner would really like to make love. Over 80 Color VGA Scenes • Real Voices Guide the Action • Foreplay Option • Play with 2-8 Close Friends. SoundBlaster™ supported! VGA and hard disk required - shipped on high density disks.

SPECIAL SALE PRICE $49

NEW! SeXXcapades . . . the Mini-Movie

See the resolution of a QUAD SPEED CD-ROM on your disk drive - the first movie using a 600K/sec transfer rate - we have created a 40MB movie containing the best scenes from our SeXXcapades movie - you can install the movie in 5MB scenes to conserve disk space - shipped on 25 1.44 MB disks - Soundblaster support. Regular Price: $65.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE $49.

NEW! 101 Shots – We have picked 101 of the hottest pictures in 800 X 600 SVGA from our library of over 1 million pictures! Only for the truly discriminating collector. *Regular Price: $49.* ***SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE $35.***

Now You Can Have Your Own GIRLFRIEND™
. . . a sensuous woman living in your computer!

The first **VIRTUAL WOMAN**. You can watch her, talk to her, ask her questions and relate with her. Over 100 actual VGA photographs allow you to see your girlfriend as you ask her to wear different outfits, and guide her into different sexual activities. An artificial intelligence program with a 3000 word vocabulary that GROWS the more you use it. She will remember your name, your likes and dislikes. **GIRLFRIEND** comes with the base software and **GIRLFRIEND LISA.** Requires 7-10MB of free space.

SG3 GIRLFRIEND - Special Introductory Price **$69. FREE** - Second GIRLFRIEND Just Added.
NEW! SG7 GIRLFRIEND TERI - 300+ PICTURES Price **$79.**

ORIGINAL SeXXy DISKS™ - 6 disk set with movies, pictures, games ***$32***

ADD $4 S/H • 3.5" Or FOREIGN ORDERS ADD $2/DISK • IN PA ADD TAX • MUST STATE AGE OVER 21 YEARS.

VISA/MC Orders Only: 800-243-1515 Ext. 600ED / 24 HRS / 7 DAYS

FAX (215) 997-2571 • Or CK/MO to: Sexy Software, P.O. Box 220., Dept. 600XX, Hatfield, PA 19440

SeXXy Software™

SeXXy CD-ROMS™

SUPER CD-ROM SALE
ALL CD-ROMS: $59 EACH OR 3 FOR $149

SeXXy INTERACTIVES

SeXXy CD A - ORAL FIXATION – the first INTERACTIVE STILLS CD-ROM - database allows viewing by YOUR grade, category, description, date viewed - 1000+ SVGA pictures - not on any other disk.
SeXXy CD B - PLAN 69 FROM OUTER SPACE – Interactive science fiction sex extravaganza! 2 movies in 1 - play new movie or play enhanced movie with scenes from original *Plan 9 From Outer Space* - also create unlimited GIFS from movie
SeXXy CD C - PORNMANIA – 2 CD set - contains 1200 MB of European movies in DOS and Windows - with a fantastic adult arcade game containing 4 adult games within the master game - nothing else compares to this disk!

SeXXy FLIX

FULL LENGTH DIGITAL MOVIES - FULL SCREEN VIEWING

SeXXcapades . . . The MOVIE – See incredible uses of a mouse and a joystick in an amateur movie of our SeXXcapades game.
• **KING DONG** – Dirtiest dinosaur movie ever made • **TOO NAUGHTY TO SAY NO** – Harry Reems and Ginger Lynn
• **SEX GAMES** – Hacker invades dating service. INCREDIBLE motor oil scene

NO HARD DISK SPACE REQUIRED – WINDOWS NOT REQUIRED

SeXXy PIX™

SeXXy CD #1 the premiere adult XXX collection – 650 MB of action with over 2500 VGA pictures, stories, cartoons, games, sound files. DARE TO COMPARE!
SeXXy CD #2 an exclusive collection containing over 1000 Super VGA pictures (1024 x 768 x 256) and over 300 MB of true 24 bit color The women and the quality are stunning
SeXXy CD #3 another collection of over 650 MB of the hottest pictures available. Over 3,000 VGA pictures, movies and utilities.

MENU DRIVEN VIEWING - NO DUPLICATION

MIX & MATCH CD-ROMS

ASIAN LADIES, AMOROUS ASIAN GIRLS, BUSTY BABES 1 & 2, NIGHTWATCH 1 & 2, DREAM MACHINE, NEURODANCER, WINNER TAKE ALL, SEYMOUR BUTTS, DEBBIE DOES DALLAS, DOORS OF PASSION, BODACIOUS BEAUTIES, 3D DREAMGIRLS, HOT PIX 3, 4, 5, TOTAL FANTASY, PHOTO GALLERY, NORTHERN DELIGHTS 1 & 2, VIRTUAL VIXENS

Also . . . $1.50 SHAREWARE SPECTACULAR • FREE CATALOG • 600+ PROGRAMS

A BOX FULL OF KINDERGARTEN

Young Learners Get A Head Start With *Jump*Start Kindergarten*

TECH SPECS

PUBLISHER:	Knowledge Adv.
DESIGNER:	Bartan Listick
SYSTEM:	MPC CD-ROM
THEME:	Preschool learning
HD SPACE:	3.5 MB
PLAYERS:	1

Every computing parent wants to smooth the way for his or her children. A head start at home in the educational process can set them up for success when they begin more formal learning in the classroom.

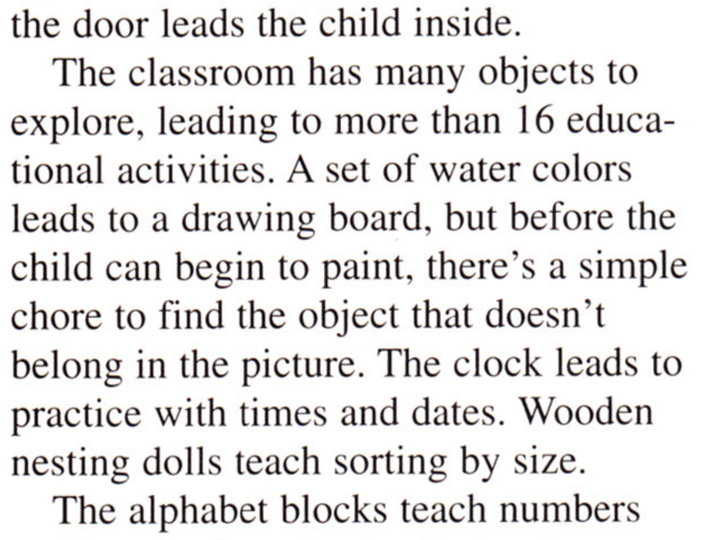
This is the premise behind **Jump*Start Kindergarten**. Kids from 4 to 6 can play games, click and point their way through a virtual schoolhouse and learn simple lessons while they entertain themselves on the computer.

Things start in the playground outside the school where clicks cause plants to grow in the garden. Birds fly, windows light and other happy events. A click on the door leads the child inside.

The classroom has many objects to explore, leading to more than 16 educational activities. A set of water colors leads to a drawing board, but before the child can begin to paint, there's a simple chore to find the object that doesn't belong in the picture. The clock leads to practice with times and dates. Wooden nesting dolls teach sorting by size.

The alphabet blocks teach numbers and letters. A wall calendar teaches months and holidays. The handheld game leads to a falling block challenge that teaches kids left and right. In the jigsaw, kids uncover puzzle squares according to directions given by the on-screen companion.

One of the most amusing activities among the many included is the sentence constructor. A click on the blackboard unveils a series of pictures. The narrator tells the child to find the pictures that go with a sentence or to make a new sentence.



The radio leads to songs, while the on-screen children dance. There's a hide-and-seek game with a cool hamster who teaches kids the name of some common objects. Planes fly past the school windows, and all the toys and characters on screen animate.

A scoreboard on screen leads to the part parents will find most interesting: A Progress Report tracks how the youngster is doing, showing the number of attempts and percentage of success on ABCs, word pairs, rhymes, colors and patterns, comprehension, listening, numbers, counting, sorting by size, basic shapes, sequences and time. If the child seems to need more work in some area, just click on that item to go directly to an exercise on the subject.

Out one schoolroom door is a playground with a picnic table, numerous animals and several children. Some provide cute animations at a click. On others, the arrow cursor is replaced with a camera. A click of the camera turns that character into a page to be colored.

The other door leads to the backyard garden, where the child practices counting by picking veggies or flowers before the pesky gopher eats them. This teaches pattern recognition and sequencing.

The entire production is done with great care to detail. Drawings are attractive and colorful, the narration is crystal clear and instructions are patiently repeated as often as necessary.

There are plenty of clickables to explore on every page, with funny noises or cute animations to keep it amusing for the learner. The progress report tracks the skills the child acquires.

Early learning programs are very plentiful in the marketplace now, and it's hard for a parent to pick just which one will entertain best while the child learns the basics. Almost all of them offer clever animations and cute graphics while teaching a handful of lessons.

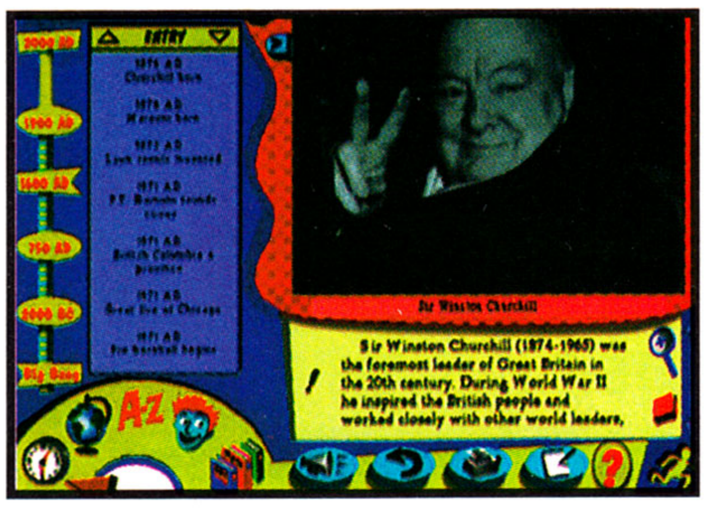
Jump*Start Kindergarten is a happy collection that provides on-screen guidance along with the amusement. There's a lot of learning embedded in the activities, as kids acquire alphabet, counting and simple language skills.

Knowledge Adventure has a deservedly fine reputation for quality products for learners of every age. This head-start program is another fine entry in their catalog, and promises hours of entertainment to young learners.

They will never even know that they're being readied for school as they play these activities. ■ *Joyce Worley*

Crash Course in Statistics *(HighText/PC CD-ROM/Adult)* This book-disk combo provides a tutorial in averages, measures, frequency distribution, graphs and other skills that help us navigate the world. Plain language and animated examples help the explanations, then worksheets test the knowledge. The graphics and text are crisp and workmanlike, though not particularly beautiful. There's no entertainment value, but it's a useful teaching tool for adults who need to brush up. **B** *(Joyce Worley)*

The Random House Kid's Encyclopedia *(Knowledge Adventures/PC CD-ROM/Ages 7-12)* Games, demonstrations, explanation and thousands of pictures combine to make play out of learning in



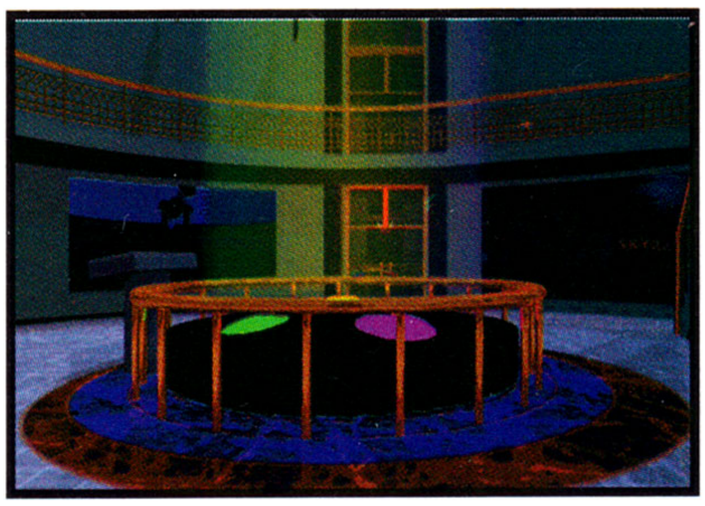
this excellent tool that makes use of every graphic technique. Treasure hunts and other entertainments join with movies, narrations and a clutch of on-screen companions to turn encyclopedic studies into pleasant pastimes. It's beautiful, imaginatively constructed and highly recommended for families. **A** *(Joyce Worley)*

SimTown *(Maxis/Mac CD/Ages 8-12)* The company that built its rep on Sims is reaching out to the younger set. **SimTown** is the perfect way to introduce children to the intricacies of resource management, designing roadways, determining where buildings should go, etc. Maxis also included Start-up Towns and Fixer-Upper Towns so players can jump right into management. In keeping with the **SimCity** tradition of disasters, **SimTown** can be hit

by one of five Eco-Villains (Timber Thief, Food Pig, Water Hog, Litterbug and Air Polluter) as well as natural disasters like drought, fire and earthquakes. The personalization feature is charming (users get to name characters, pick their clothes, etc.), and the only glitch is the musical fadeout, if **SimTown** is run on an Apple CD300. Otherwise, a fine program, with marginal adult appeal for grown-ups who find **SimCity** too painstaking. **B+** *(Laurie Yates)*

Multimedia Typing Instructor *(Individual/PC CD-ROM/Ages 12 and up)* Combining solid typing instruction with an interesting and entertaining travel motif gives **MTI** a strong advantage over all of its competitors, including Mindscape's **Mavis Beacon**. **MTI** embraces the multimedia aspect of its name, including music, speech and sound effects to accompany tests and lessons, and an extensive (279) variety of practice articles in six different areas: Legal, Entertainment, History, Literature, Medical and Sports. The interactive, user-driven learning interface is fun and easy to use, and the 3-D images and photos provide a substantial amount of eye candy. Whether the intended user is a 12-year-old beginner or an experienced hunt-and-pecker, **MTI** has plenty to offer everyone. **A+** *(Laurie Yates)*

Astronomica *(HyperQuest/PC CD-ROM)* This impressive FMV puzzle product (sort of an Astronomy student's version of **The 7th Guest**) is heavy on the "edu" and light on the "tainment."



Unless players are completely up-to-date on local clusters vs. neighboring galaxies vs. the universe, expect to spend a lot of time in the reference/help area. All the help cues (provided by experts ranging in brainpower from Galileo and Einstein to a pair of Ph.D. researchers named Beverly and Miguel) rely on speech clues that go beyond what is printed in the manual. Unfortunately, unless the computer has a good sound card, the speech tends to be a little choppy. Then again, the "hints" are rarely very helpful and the attempts at humor generally fall flatter than a smashed atom. **Astronomica** is a good reinforcement tool for high school astronomy classes, but younger star gazers may want to start out with a more introductory level program. **B-** *(Laurie Yates)*

THE EDU REBIRTH

There is one common thread that winds through the news about revolutionary educational techniques, proposed or actual. The world expects technology to solve the problem. Whether technology is equal to the task may be debatable, but there is no question that the computer industry is willing to try.

The Group of 7 Conference in February saw an example, prepared by the National Information Infrastructure Testbed (NIIT) of how government, academia and scientific labs could work together on the information highway. The demonstrator called up info from numerous databases around the world, then used satellite photos taken over several years to calculate and show the impact of deforestation and forest recovery efforts. (NIIT is a 65-member consortium led by U.S. companies. They're working together on several collaborative projects, such as health care and education.)

Educational Management Group, recently acquired by Simon & Schuster, is working on distance learning, with live, interactive television service to 3,500 schools, and over 1 million students. Along with regular curriculum, the students also get cultural exchanges around the world. Using satellite feeds and private broadband wide area network, EMG delivers a schedule of events to the teacher, who then chooses the ones for the class to experience. Students have a two-way link with the events or people featured. EMG is also using the technology for training teachers, and they are providing educational television programming for the home via cable.

Answers to student interest may come by way of custom environments such as those produced by InVideo Systems (seen on TV in *Nick Arcade*). Using a video camera, digitized images are put into interactive games, using luminescence keys to turn the image into the on-screen cursor/pointer. Children then play alone or in groups, in a variety of entertainments and learning games. Now seen in museums and a few entertainment centers, the technology is bound to advance into classrooms.

The ground work is being done now. Whether for profit or nobler motive, the computer industry is part of the rebirth of U.S. education.

—Joyce Worley

IN PROGRESS

Advance Looks At Summer's Games

As the industry prepares for a long season of hot gaming, the development cycle is winding down on a few top-of-the-line projects. **EG** got an advance look at some of the best new games slated for summer release.

Robot City (Byron Preiss/MPC & Mac CD) casts the player as a human who lands in the city by accident. Based on an Asimov book, the gamer has to learn to communicate with the robotic inhabitants: This is done by building a small robot that can interact with the others. The city itself is robotic and changes as the robots evolve, while the player tries to find a murderer.

This looks slick: The combed metal bodies of the robots look great against the stark background shots of the city. This promises to be an involving, science-fiction mystery with top-level sound and graphics.

Frankenstein: Through the Eyes of the Monster (Interplay/MPC & Mac CD) turns the old story inside out by casting the gamer as the monster. Condemned and executed for a crime you did not commit, you awake on Dr. Frankenstein's table with him peering down at you. The player must search and explore in the best detective manner to uncover the dastardly plot that put him into the body of the monster.

Phil Mikkelson designed this, and it was developed by Amazing Media, with a **Myst**-style of play that is more exploratory than confrontational. The bit-mapped graphics are realistic without giving up any atmosphere. Dr. Frankenstein is made convincing with Tim Curry in the role. There's a great player function built in: If you try something three times unsuccessfully, it provides a hint.

Rock 'n' Roll Your Own (Compton's, MPC & Mac CD) is a noodler's delight, since it provides studio tools to create your own music, even if you've got no previous training. The user manipulates sound bites, vocals and special effects to produce rock, jazz, heavy metal and other interesting, customized music.

It takes no study to get started. There are eight songs on board, and each has its own setup with music and vocal sound bites, special instrumentation and video footage. Key presses insert the chosen riffs, and it all fits together. Once comfortable with the songs, the Roll Your Own section of the program lets the user take it from scratch, with the same kind of sound tools to be accessed by tapping a key.

It's great fun, yet it might become a little repetitious if the gamer sticks to just the sounds provided. But the program also allows import of recorded voices, phrases or tones, so in the end it really is an open-ended musical toy.

Empire Interactive is working on a grand project, **The Civil War: 1861-1864**. It combines an excellent strategy model with an on-line database to create a program that is informative while entertaining. Players can take either side for a battle or an entire campaign. It supports two-player contests via modem, direct link or network.

A zoom feature goes from panorama to detailed combat level, and generals can give orders to all the forces or individual units. It also includes political details and a great deal of historical background.

The gamer must manage resources, train recruits and get his party reelected in 1864. It has quite a large degree of realism, with terrain, morale and supply effects, detailed cities, correct names for regiments and generals plus varied movement rates depending on the unit.

The game is a major design effort, enhanced with photographs and music of the period. Maps and battlefields are beautifully textured, and the entire production promises to produce an excellent play experience for computer warriors.

Virtual Pool (Interplay/CD-ROM) is a realistic simulation of four separate pool games: 8 Ball, 9 Ball, Straight Pool and Rotation. Three-dimensional graphics make it seem like Joe's Pool Room, as players walk around the table to line up shots just like real life. Apply English, use spin, follow and draw, change the angle of the stick and do trick shots and combinations. It's so accurate it'll make you feel like you're a simulated Minnesota Fats. Play with or without tracking lines, head to head or over modem. A line of built-in opponents provide challenge for the solitary gamer. This may be the best pool game ever done for the computer.

by Joyce Worley

THE MEEK TRULY WILL INHERIT THE EARTH. BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE THEY'LL ALL BE BURIED.

In the not-so-distant future, there will be new weapons. New communications. New technologies. And with it, new rulers who are more ruthless than ever before, with the same goal that's been around for centuries - world domination.

Command & Conquer™ is coming soon. Which side will you be on?

Curious? Contact Westwood Studios on the Internet at info@Westwood.com or at WWW@Westwood.com

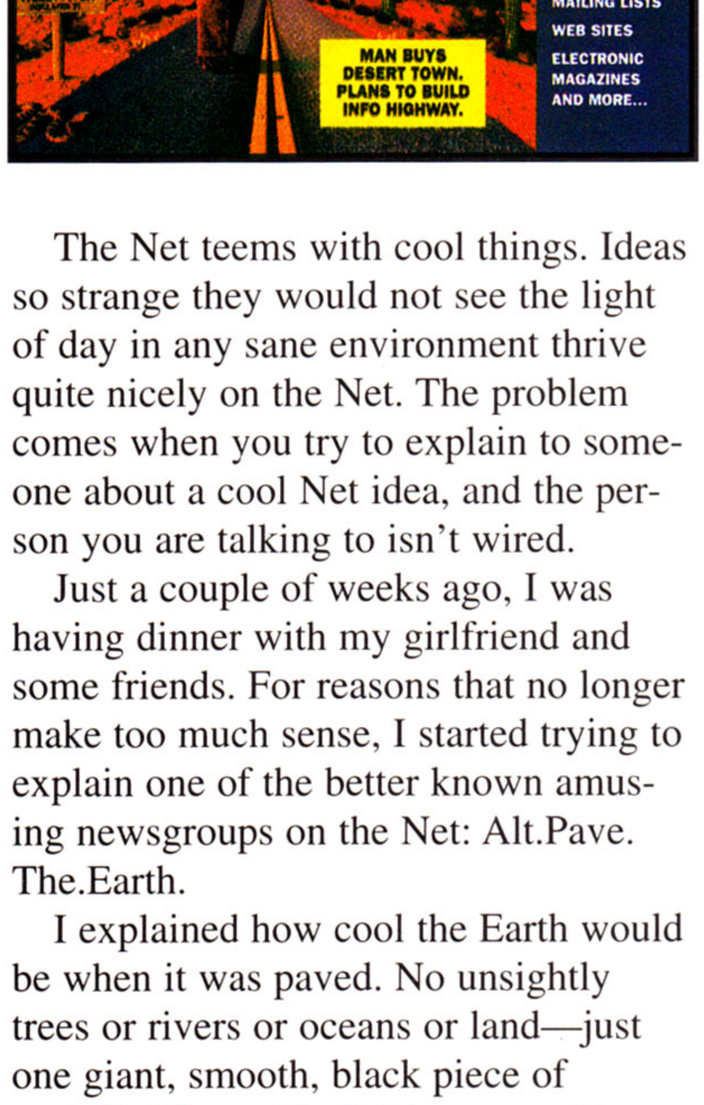
Westwood Studios™ Virgin

COMMAND & CONQUER is a trademark of Westwood Studios, Inc. ©1995 Westwood Studios, Inc. All rights reserved. Virgin is a registered trademark of Virgin Enterprises, Ltd.

PRINT

YOUR GUIDE TO GETTING WIRED!

Internet Insider, Ruffin Prevost, Osborne/ McGraw-Hill, 284 pages (softbound, $14.95)



The Net teems with cool things. Ideas so strange they would not see the light of day in any sane environment thrive quite nicely on the Net. The problem comes when you try to explain to someone about a cool Net idea, and the person you are talking to isn't wired.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I was having dinner with my girlfriend and some friends. For reasons that no longer make too much sense, I started trying to explain one of the better known amusing newsgroups on the Net: Alt.Pave.The.Earth.

I explained how cool the Earth would be when it was paved. No unsightly trees or rivers or oceans or land—just one giant, smooth, black piece of asphalt. We could all drive around in our rocket-powered hypercars, eating cheeseburgers and drinking beer. Now wouldn't that be great? One world, one people, one slab of asphalt.

My girlfriend, needless to say, Did Not Get It. However, one of the people I sat with merely smiled and said, "Yeah, ATPE is incredibly cool."

This, in a nutshell, sums up the problem for many wireheads. You have this really interesting culture, full of great ideas and concepts, but every day you tend to deal with the unwired. Some of them might be cool. Some of them you might like. But the fundamental fact remains: They are unwired.

Sooner or later, one of the unwired masses wants to know why exactly it is that you spend 10 hours a day hunched over your terminal like a troll, laughing hysterically and typing like a maniac on a coffee binge. You can try to explain, but the normal result is that people Just Don't Get It.

Ruffin Prevost realized this and came up with the ultimate way to help people Get the Net. Internet Insider, Prevost's book, is a witty and amusing cross-section of Net life.

There is no attempt here to show you how to log onto the Net, nor are there more than a handful of site addresses. That isn't the point of this book. The point is to capture the feel of the Net in a book format. That way, those lacking the resources or gumption to get connected can see what life is like for the other side.

Prevost has done well in his selections. Experienced surfers will almost universally be aware of the information sources used in this book. Don't expect to be amazed at finding new secrets. But for what he is trying to do, Prevost has hit many of the best high points. Alt.Pave.The.Earth, Alt.Destroy.The.Earth, The Whitehouse Homepage, Usenet Oracle, The Nerdnosh Story Digest, assorted flames, Alt.Angst, Beast.Net and a host of others are featured in loving detail between the covers of the Insider.

The format Prevost has used is interesting. Instead of simply presenting the information, he has packaged it in a mock tabloid format. This is a bit disconcerting at first and can even put one off the book. However, for those who hang with it for a few pages, the busy layout and constant pull quotes start to make a sick sort of sense for the subject matter being covered.

Very little of this book was written by the author. The majority of the book is made of Frequently Asked Questions lists from various newsgroups and posts from all around the Net. Instead of telling you what is out there, Prevost simply presents the actual article for your inspection.

"One of the things I was trying to do was create a time capsule of the way the net is now. Things are going to change soon, and this book is like a time capsule of Route 66 before the Interstates came through, only for the Internet," Prevost says.

There is concern and love for Net culture throughout the book. Prevost carefully credits all sources of the information in the book, and really tries to present at least something good about each major area he covers.

However, there is one notable exception to the decent judgment used by Prevost in the rest of the book. This is a section called "From The Desk of K. Johnson." This section is an attempt to mimic the "Lazlo Letters" of Don Novello. In this section, Prevost sends out a number of crank e-mails to various stars and celebrities, and then gives us their answers. There are two problems with this. First, almost none of these letters are actually funny. Second, this is just rude.

Prevost writes at the start of the chapter that it is amazing how many important people will actually take the time to answer their e-mail. Well, that is mainly because there aren't a lot of obnoxious freaks pasting their accounts with crap.

This is not to suggest that Mr. Prevost himself fits within that category. Rather, that if a few more people were sending out crank e-mail like this on a regular basis, folks would quit giving out their e-mail addresses so readily. That would be a real shame, since the somewhat open feel of the Net is one of its most important traits.

However, this is not to say that there aren't a couple of really amusing bits covered here that even the most astute insider might have missed. The arguably funniest section is a long series of posts that originally appeared in alt.cereal. These posts start with Cynthia detailing her heartfelt belief that ads for some cereals, most notably Trix and Coco Puffs, contain veiled prodrug messages. ("Both of these ads feature 'birds' that are addicted to cereal that either causes them to hallucinate and see many colors [a la LSD] or to freak out and wreak havoc on the nearby area [a la PCP].") Needless to say, this starts a thread of comments and flames that is one of the more amusing of its kind to be seen on the Net in quite some time.

But other than the one gripe, *Internet Insider* is generally a solid combination of fun and insight. With plenty of views of the Net's funnier side and a couple of glimpses of the more serious, this tome is the perfect introduction to the Internet for the unwired.

Those who are Net junkies might not love this book as much, but those people who are not yet hooked up to the Internet should find this book an invaluable look into why they would want to join the strange world of the terminally wired. (*John P. Withers*)

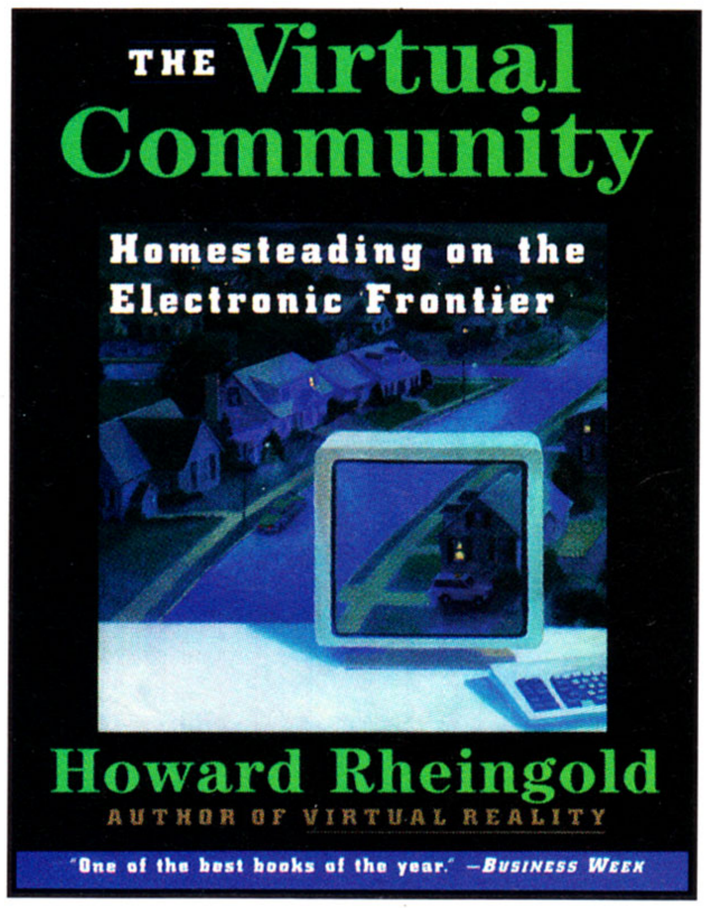
IT'S A BRAND-NEW WORLD IN THERE

The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier, Howard Rheingold, Harper Perennial, 310 pages (Softbound, $13.00)

Man is a social animal. He needs validation and support from his community. Communities, however, are more than social groupings; they are both conduit and catalyst for social change. The larger the community, the more capable of actually effecting change. Through the proliferation of the Internet, we are becoming a global community. Therefore, what limits will exist? More importantly, who will hold the power to define those limits?

Rheingold's work is both a social history, albeit with a limited focus, and a political commentary. He spins a tale that begins as a personal odyssey and ends with a global awakening. He shows how, in 1985, members of the WELL (Whole Earth L'ectronic Link) might be viewed as homesteaders on a new frontier, enduring hardships together and building real communities despite virtual contact. These virtual communities extended their contact into the real world via WELL weddings, WELL parties and even WELL funerals. For the pioneers, face-to-face contacts served to solidify the intangible relationships developed over a CRT screen.

The author avoids the pitfalls of too narrow a viewpoint by incorporating the experiences of many other users, some comic, some tragic, but all touching. Every reader, even those who have



never operated a modem, will empathize with its characters. But, like any good story, this is only the beginning.

With the reader thoroughly hooked, Rheingold moves forward to the central focus of his work: tracing the "accidental history of the Net" and exploring the influx of traditional power structures (i.e., government and big business) into this community. Along the way are many side trips into USENETs, MUDs and other items of interest to new users, but each also reinforces the central theme of community by excerpting valid IRC conversations and interesting tidbits about the manner in which the message has shaped the medium and vice versa.

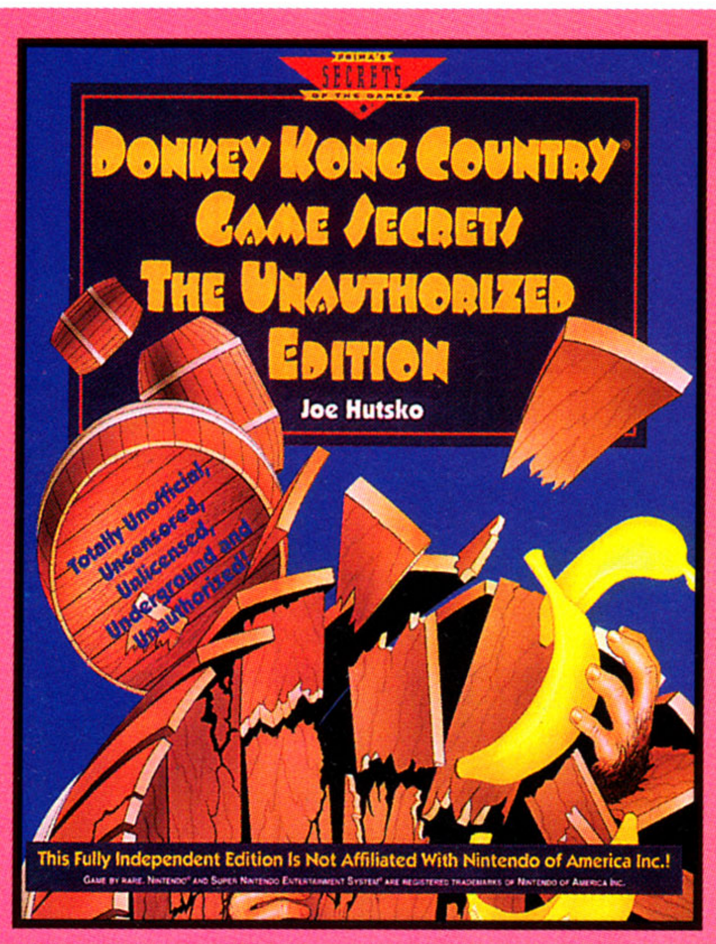
Some of the most fascinating aspects revolve around the changes in 1993 and 1994. Big business has jumped on the Internet bandwagon and this has had a profound effect on personal perception of the Internet. "It doesn't matter that most people in the world had never heard of networked desktop communications before last year; everybody in the world understands what tens of billions of dollars means."

Readers cannot help but draw additional linkages from the information the author presents in the book. Like all true frontiers, exploitation is unavoidable. Megacorporations and government bureaucracies who "will bring it to us," or civilize this frontier for the masses at the expense of the Pioneers, do so for their own benefit, not ours. Like the cattle barons and railroad empires of the Old West, these organizations, driven by an undeniable thirst for power and money, only hide behind the pretense of making a better world.

Will there still be positive aspects of this shift in the overall power structure? Certainly yes, but to avoid the predominately negative ones that accompany them, we owe it to ourselves to become a more informed and involved citizenry. (*Ed Dille*)

APE SCAPE

Donkey Kong Country Forbidden Game Secrets, Joe Hutsko, Prima Publishing, 192 pages (softbound, $9.95)



Content-wise, this is an excellent book to have handy when playing **Donkey Kong Country**. Hutsko (probably) found everything there is to find. He warns the reader when things are going to get tough and explains clearly what's needed to get past those seemingly impossible stretches—like that really frustrating mine cart section. If the black-and-white screen shots are sometimes a tad murky, they're clear enough for the player who's reached that point (or watching for it) to recognize what's going on.

The layout was clearly lots of fun to create and will be fun for the player to follow along with the game. As with most strategy books, it's not really intended for sit-down reading like a novel. The all-capitals text in a fairly uncommon font style, used throughout the entire book, certainly emphasizes that aspect of it. This is good if the player doesn't wish to learn too much ahead of time. It's not good for scanning to find something.

For secrets and strategies on **DKC**, not overly tautly written and sometimes with rather snide humor, this is the book to get. (*Ross Chamberlain*)

GET THE COMPLETE PICTURE:

TURN TO THE ONLY SOURCE OF ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT THAT CONTINUES THE COVERAGE WHERE THE OTHER MAGAZINES STOP

Serious gamers need a serious magazine like *ELECTRONIC GAMES*!

No one beats Electronic Games' coverage of every platform from portables to coin-ops. *ELECTRONIC GAMES'* critics rely on years of playing experience and hands-on game design credentials to analyze the latest cartridges and disks and put them in the right perspective.

***ELECTRONIC GAMES* has all the headlines, new releases, plus much, much more! Every issue is packed with inside stories and insights that take you to new realms of electronic gaming! It's the only place you'll find entertainment superstars and industry insiders sharing their unique viewpoints while delivering the news and reviews that tell it like it is!**

SUBSCRIBE TO ELECTRONIC GAMES

I WANT TO GET THE MOST OUT OF GAMING - START MY SUBSCRIPTION TO EG TODAY!

Get 12 Full Color Issues of EG For Only $23.95! Send Payment To: EG, P.O. Box 1502, Lombard, IL 60148-9623

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ **ZIP** _____

_____ **Payment Enclosed** _____ **Bill Me**

Credit Card Orders:

_____ **VISA** _____ **MC**

Card No. _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

ACT NOW! Introductory Subscription Only $23.95!

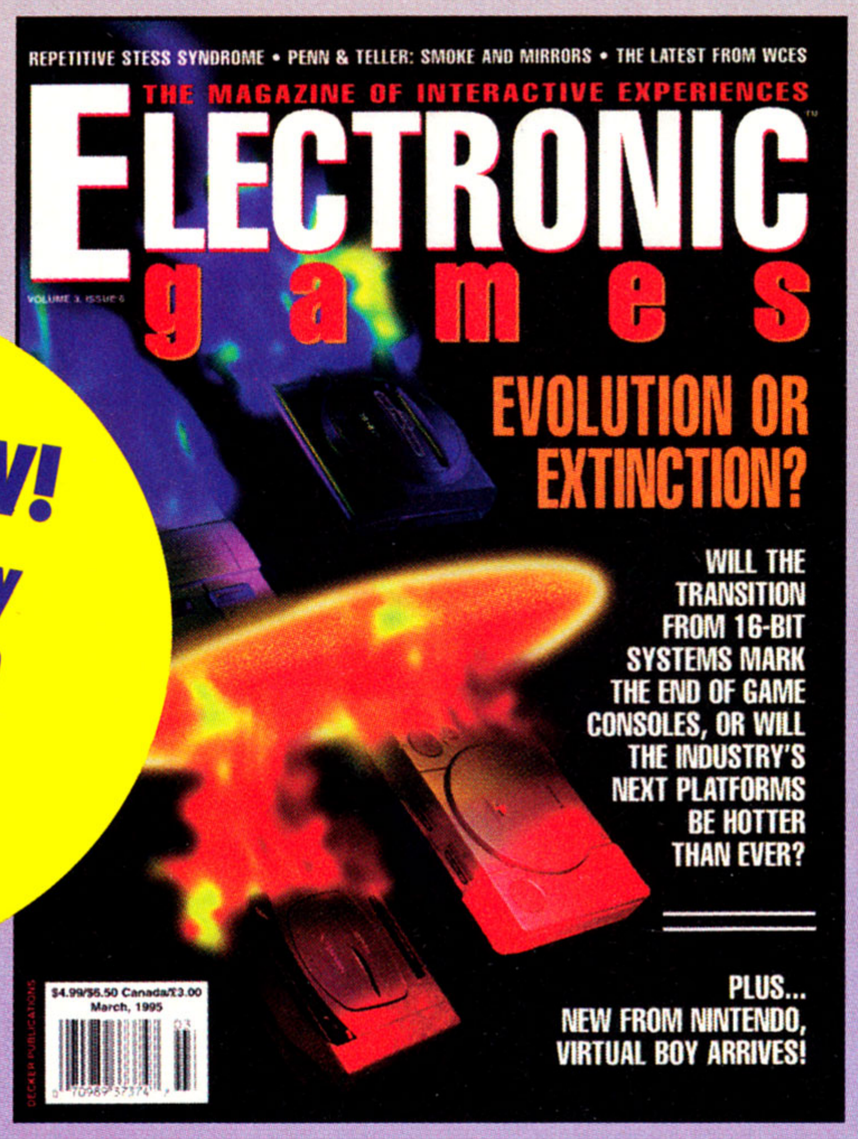
For Faster Service, Call:

708-268-2498

Make check or money order payable to Decker Publications, Inc. Canada and Mexico add $10.00. All others by air mail $80.00. Any/all checks or money orders must be payable in U.S. funds, and must be drawn on an American bank. (American Express money order, Citibank money order, or any other type of check or money order that would go through a U.S. branch bank.) All foreign orders must be prepaid. Please allow 6-8 weeks for your first issue.

HEGE3

SAVE OVER 50% OFF THE NEWSSTAND PRICE!



The Legal Marketplace

For Advertising Contact:

JOHN ABRAHAM

Eisenberg Communications Group, Inc.

10920 Wilshire Blvd., 6th Floor

Los Angeles, CA 90024

PHONE: (310)824-5297

THE BEST IN CD INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

EXCITEMENT

Interactive Impressions is your complete source for the finest in adult interactive CD-ROM gaming entertainment.

Each of the titles featured will provide you hours of diversion.

Call for Your Free Catalog Today!

Adv. of Seymore Butts 1	$54.95
Dream Machine	$54.95
Midnight Stranger	$54.95
Myst	$54.95
Nightwatch II	$49.95
NueroDancer	$54.95
Scissors N Stones	$49.95
Virtual Valerie	$69.99
Virtual Vixens	$54.95

Many Other Titles Available!

order your FREE catalog today. 1•800•321•6830

Interactive Impressions L.L.C. • P.O. Box 241296 • Omaha, NE • 68124-5296

HOT ADULT CD-ROM'S

ANY 3 CDs FOR ONLY $129

We will beat any price in this publication ... call for your price!

INTER-ACTIVE

Cyber Peep Interactive
Digital Dancing
Paradise Club Interactive (PC)
Superstars of Japanese Porn
Velvet Dreams
Nightwatch 1 or 2
Dirty Debutantes
Winner Takes All
Texas Table Dance
Maddams Family
Virgins 1 or 2
Mind Teazzer
Samarai Pervert
Tokyo Nightlife Interactive
Scissors & Stones (MAC/PC)
Maxxx: The Naughty Dog
Diva X-101
Spy Club Interactive
Vampires Kiss
Dream Machine
Seymore Bu**s 1 or 2
Penthouse Photo Shoot 1, 2 or 3
(Counts as 2)

Space Sirens
Virtual Vixens
Neurodancer
TFUI™ INTERFACE

BBS READY PC ONLY

Erotic Encounters 1 or 2
My Private Collection 1 or 2
Total Fantasy
Giffy Gold 1 or 2
Keyhole Fantasies
Pixels of Passion 1 or 2
Danish Fantasies
High Class Fantasies 1, 2 or 3
Flame
Forbidden Pleasures
Hottest Fantasies
Combined Fantasies
Dreamland
Texas Glamour
Lucious Ladies Vol II
FAO ORIGINAL (3 DISC)
FAO GOLD (3 DISC)
2 THE MAXX T&A (6 DISC)
(Counts as 2)
FAO 6 PACK (6 DISC)
(Counts as 2)

PHOTOS

Wicked Photo CD
Mark of Zara Photo CD
Cat & Mouse Photo CD (PC)
Lovely Ladies II (no nudity) (PC)
Heidi's Girls X Volume
Sensuous Girls 3D (PC)
Adult Palate 2
American Girls 1 or 2
Asian Palate
High Volume Nudes
Elite European Models 1 or 2
Elite American Models 1 or 2
European Adultshare (3 DISC Set)
European Erotic (8 DISC Set)
(Counts as 2)

ORDER

1-800 6161CMS

Fax Order Line

805 495-3644

Must Be 21 Years Old

FREE CD ADULT SAMPLER With Purchase!

CD-ROM

MULTIMEDIA & SPECIALTIES

1336 Moorpark Road, Suite 200
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

Dealer Inquiries Welcome

SHIPPING INFORMATION

• 2nd Day - $7.25 • Next Day - $16.25
• Foreign Express - $30.00
No C.O.D.s All Sales Final

VISA · AMERICAN EXPRESS · MasterCard

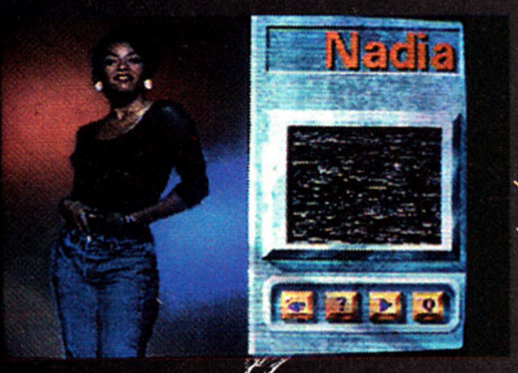
MOVIES

Screen Candy Screensaver (PC)
Hidden Obsessions
After Midnight Screensaver (PC)
The Other Side of Chelsea
Deception
Hidden Agenda
Beverly Hills 90269
The Fisherman's Wife
H**ter Heaven
Double Play 1 or 2
House of Sleeping Beauties
Bu**mans European Vacation
Hustler Honey Centerfolds
Breast Wishes
Blonde Justice
Girls Doin' Girls 1 or 2
Swap 2
Intimate Journey
New Lovers
Fantasy Show Bar
Eroticafe
Bare Assets
A Pu**y Called Wanda
Legends of Porn 1 or 2
New Wave H**kers 1 or 2
Night Trips 1 or 2
Traci I Love You
Private: Lady in Spain
Private: Video Magazine
Model Wife
Put it in Gear
Girls On Girls
Blonde Bombshells
The Adventures of Mikki Finn
Wire Desire
Barlow Affairs
Inferno
Baby's Got Bu**
Wild Innocence
Last Girl Scout
Night Creatures
Lethal Passion
101 Sex Positions 1 or 2

Join Our BBS • 805 373-2965

IBM PC CD-ROM

MAC CD-ROM

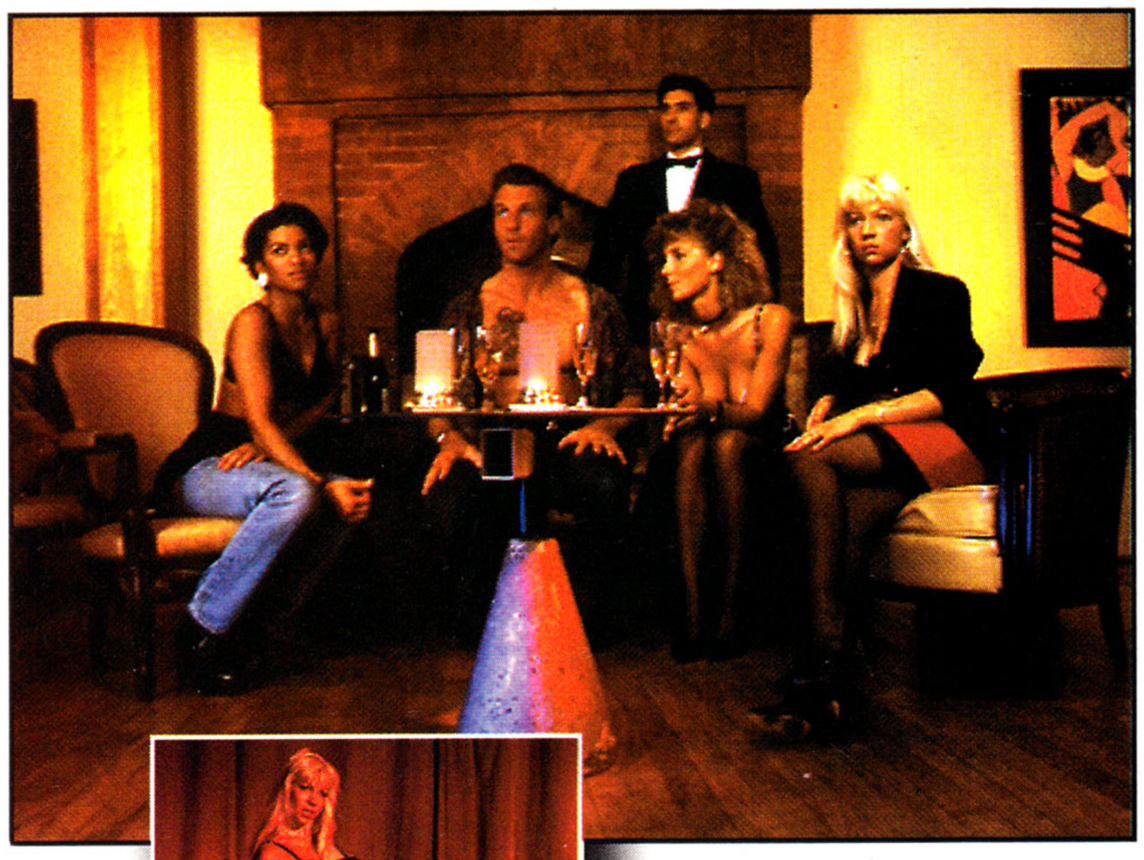


FULL MOTION VIDEO

interactive Pictures

20432 CORISCO STREET,
CHATSWORTH
CA 91311 - USA
PHONE : (818) 709 - 3692
FAX : (818) 709 - 6537

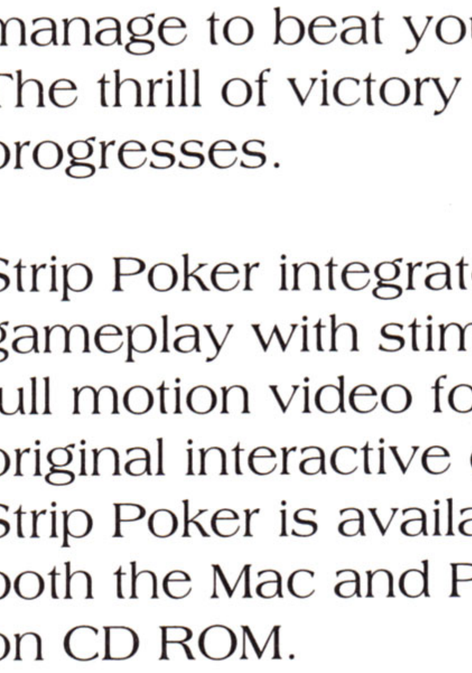
Strip-Poker pro



ADULTS ONLY

Get ready for a new kind of interactive experience. Nadia, Jane, Lucy, Michael and Max would like to try and beat you at poker, but not just any kind of poker. They want you to play strip poker. Play one-on-one with any one of them, but you'll have to stay on your toes if you don't want to finish the night in your boxer shorts. On the other hand, if you manage to beat your opponent, you will be in for quite a surprise. The thrill of victory becomes even more tantalizing as the game progresses.

Strip Poker integrates challenging poker gameplay with stimulating graphics and full motion video for an enticing, original interactive experience. Strip Poker is available for both the Mac and PC on CD ROM.



©1995
Interactive Pictures

ADVERTISER'S INDEX

Access Software	30-31	I•Motion	11	Thunderseat	83
Accolade	57, 91	Interplay	7	Titus	108
Atari	12-13	Jaleco USA, Inc.	77	Trimark Interactive	43, 51
CD ROM Multimedia & Spec.	107	Koei	53, 65	U.S. Gold	45, 47, 81
		Lucasarts	69		
CH Products	93	MD Electronics	106	Vic Tokai, Inc.	115
Creative Labs	113	Microleague	87	Virgin Games	17, 27, 32-33, 101
Cyberdreams	116	Mindscape	15		
Digital Pictures	8-9	New World Computing	23		
Digital Playgrounds	109	Nintendo of America	21		
Discis Knowledge Research, Inc.	29	Power Games Intl.	41		
		QQP. A Division of ALG	89		
D&M Software, Inc.	97	Ready Soft, Inc.	111		
Goldstar U.S.A. Inc.	4-5	Sega of America	2-3		
Hudson Soft	36-37, 45	Taito America Inc.	79		
		Thrustmaster	25		

Adult CD-ROMS

We BEAT ANY Advertised Price!

SUPER SAVER BUNDLES!

Maddams Bundle 4 CD ROM Titles . . $99
(Maddams Family, Baby's Got Butt, Inferno, Sampler)
Vampire Bundle 4 CD ROM Titles . . . $99
(Vampire's Kiss, Baby's Got Butt, Elite American v1,Sampler)
Virgins Bundle 4 CD ROM Titles $99
(Virgins, Baby's Got Butt, Barlow Affairs, Sampler)
Gorgeous Girls Bundle 4 CD ROMS . . $99
(Virgins, Elite American & European Girls, Sampler)
Dream Bundle 4 CD ROM Titles $99
(Dream Machine, Baby's Got Butt, Inferno, Sampler)
Vixens Bundle 4 CD ROM Titles $99
(Virtual Vixens, Baby's Got Butt,Barlow Affairs, Sampler)

Virtual 3D Adult Sampler CD . . . $9.95

FREE CATALOG

Maddams Family
"...offers one of the better examples of how adult CD-ROMs are interactive."
CD-Rom Today Magazine
June 1994

Vampire's Kiss
"...is something entirely new. The 3-D graphics are nothing short of spectacular, rivaling those of Myst and 7th Guest."
Electronic Games
November 1994

FREE POSTER with every order

Vampire's Kiss
This is the first XXX-Rated full screen-full motion sex adventure. Journey through the corridors of the vampire's ancient virtual 3D castle. Interactive graphics allow you to search for the secret passageway that leads to the vampire's private chambers. Your actions determine the outcome.

Domestic:$5.95 for shipping & handling.
Must be 18 or older to order.
Void where prohibited and restricted.

VIRGINS
"AAA Rating...Virgins 1 sits a notch or two above typical cyber-sex CDs...the girls are all gorgeous and provocative...highly recommended CD."
New Rave Magazine
December 1994

INTERACTIVE CDs

Vampire's Kiss	*new*	$54
Maddams Family		$42
Virgins 1 & 2		$42 ea. *new*
The Barlow Affairs		$35
Inferno		$35
Dream Machine		$50
Virtual Vixens		$42

HQ PHOTO DISCS

Elite American Girls-Volumes 1&2	$29 ea.
Elite European Girls-Volumes 1&2	$29 ea.

DIGITAL MOVIES

Baby's Got Butt	$23
Hidden Obsessions	$23

Check/Money Order to:
CD Discount
21115 Devonshire St. #304
Chatsworth, CA 91311
Orders : 800-990-9077
Foreign orders: 818-772-6969
Fax orders: 818-773-8314

HEIMLICH MANEUVER

I've Got It! Video Tic-Tac-Toe!

Boy, did I love **Dragon's Lair** back when it was a new phenomenon! I must have popped a thousand quarters or more into that machine. Other games seemed dated from the moment I first plugged it in. Of course, had I known at the time that this game was actually an instrument of the devil, I'd have probably spent a bit less time with it. Only the devil could take pride in how this game mutated and spawned some of the most deplorable types of games the industry has ever felt the need to produce. I'm talking about types I refer to as memory games and graphics-for-graphics-sake games.

I played and outgrew the children's card game *Memory* back around the turn of the century (or so it seems). And yet I'm constantly bombarded with more 1990s versions of the same theme. Let's face it, **Dragon's Lair** wasn't much of an actual game. It was simply an exercise in memory. One example was interesting; now it's a bore. How many people can honestly say that they enjoyed **Cobra Command** (Sega CD), **Sewer Shark** or any other game like this? They're nothing more than new-fangled versions of **Simon** masquerading as something more. Meanwhile, ReadySoft can't even get the port of the original **Dragon's Lair** on any platform right.

Then we have the other child of hell, the graphics-for-graphics-sake game. How much actual game play is there in **The 7th Guest**? It's a bunch of dime-store, brain-teaser games surrounded by a lot of snazzy graphics that really have nothing to do with the game itself. Then we have **Myst**. **Myst** isn't a game, people. It's not even as evolved as **7th Guest**. At least the graphics in **7th Guest** move. **Myst** is a bunch of nice screen savers tied together with something claiming to be a story line. How **Myst** sold so well only P.T. Barnum could fathom.

In addition, this type of game has now transformed into an even worse form, the video-for-video-sake game. Take **Night Trap** for example. There's not a game to be found anywhere within. It's got to qualify as the worst game ever put out. It's just a bunch of disjointed video sequences. The only reason most people get it is to watch Dana Plato dance around with her nearly nude schoolgirl friends. Are we so starved for interactive movies that we'll accept such drivel? We now have entire companies like Digital Pictures dedicated to bringing us more of this junk. How many more brainless products like **Prize Fighter** are they going to pump out? How many more of them are you going to buy before you demand something better? For crying out loud, they aren't even graphically acceptable. The video on my broken VCR is better.

Even the actors in these pulp dramas seem to realize just how bad the situation has gotten. I offer, by way of example, **Under a Killing Moon** (though I concede that it's the best of this lot). There isn't a single scene with Brian Keith in it where you can't swear you sense him thinking, "Is this what my career has come to?" Virgin couldn't get anyone to buy **KGB** several years ago, so they hired Donald Sutherland to walk through some Oscar-vomiting scenes so that they could repackage it and sell it as something new. And did I really see Jonathan Frakes, Morgan Fairchild and Joe Piscopo together, in a poker game?

Now I'm playing **Wing Commander 3**. The best acting in it is done by all the actors no one has ever heard of. The problem with this game is that it seems like it's not even related to the first two products in the series. In **Wing Commander**, one really got excited about flying a new type of ship. I remember the first time I got to fly the Rapier. I couldn't wait to kick some Kilrathi butt with it. The realism was even more evident. When the ship got shot up, glass cracked, whole consoles were blown out, weapons acted up or cut out altogether. In **Wing Commander 3**, so much emphasis is put on the static video sequences that now one really doesn't care what ship one flies, and if it does get shot up, one might notice some slight token damage.

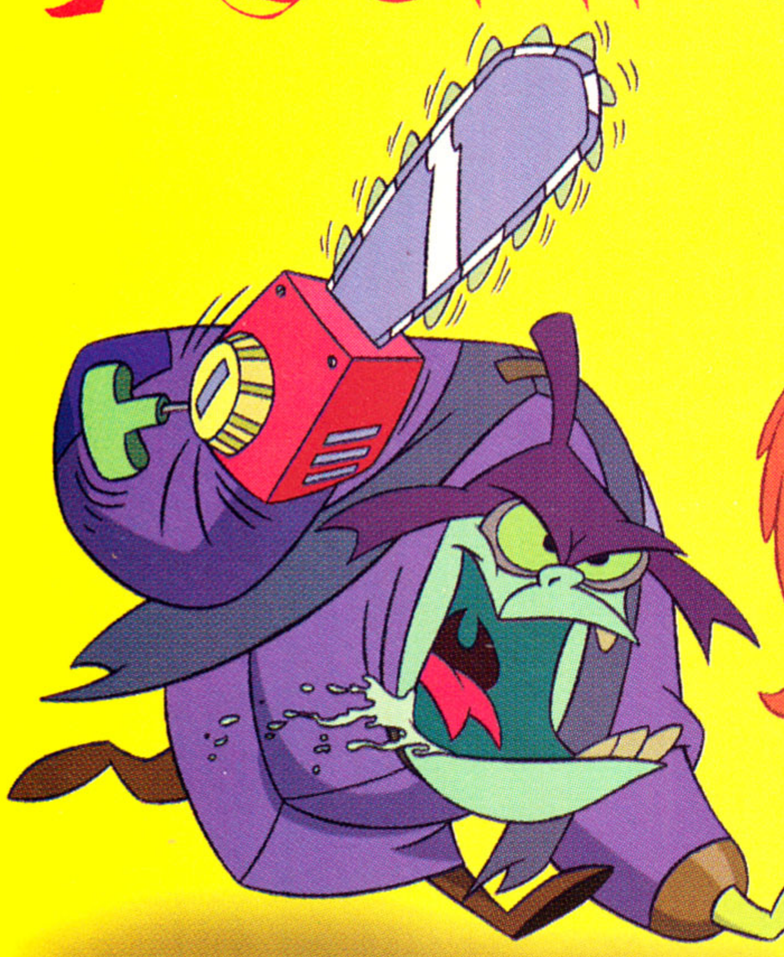
The time has come to say, "Enough." These kinds of games have gone on long enough. It's time to take all this new technology and do something better with it. But for those of you who enjoy this stuff, I know something that'll keep you entertained for hours. Here, pull my finger...

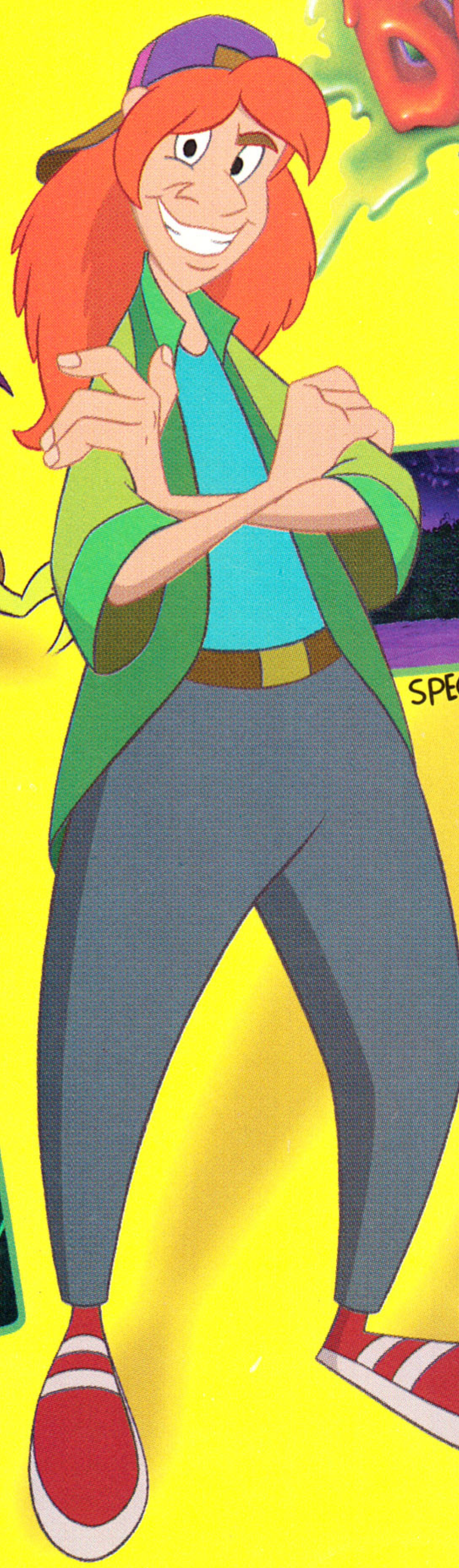
by Rich Heimlich

The views expressed by Rich Heimlich, EG's answer to Andy Rooney, do not necessarily reflect those of this magazine.

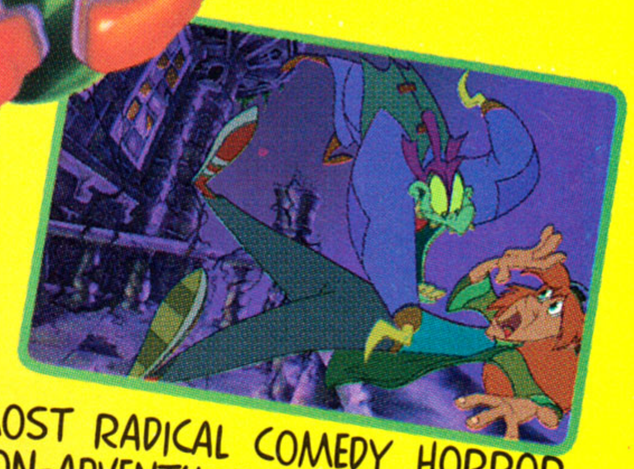
If it's a challenge you want...
then it's a deadly game you'll get!

BRAIN DEAD 13™





SPECTACULAR GRAPHICS!



"...MOST RADICAL COMEDY HORROR ACTION-ADVENTURE OF 1995!"

YOU TELL LANCE WHICH WAY TO GO...

...WRONG!

"...NO CHALLENGE TOO BIG!"

IT SHOULDN'T BE LEGAL TO JAM THIS MUCH ANIMATION INTO ONE GAME!

DODGE HOOKS, EVADE THE ALWAYS WELL-ARMED **FRITZ**, AND HUNT DOWN THE EVIL DR. NERO NEUROSIS AS YOU RACE THROUGH HIS TWISTED CASTLE. BUT ALWAYS KEEP AN EYE OUT OR THIS EXPLOSIVELY INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE WILL BLOW YOUR MIND!

READYSOFT

ReadySoft Incorporated
3375 14th Ave., Units 7 & 8
Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 0H2
Tel: (905) 475-4801 Fax: (905) 475-4802

PC CD-ROM • Sega CD • 3DO • Mac CD-ROM • MPEG

BrainDead 13 is a trademark of ReadySoft Incorporated. ©1995 ReadySoft Incorporated. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

DEALS

Atoms and Bits and Being Digital

This month, the best deal is my purchase of *Being Digital* by Nicholas Negroponte.

In September, '94, I had the pleasure of picking Nicholas up at my local airport in New Brunswick, Canada. I was in charge of bringing the speakers to our Softworld '94 Conference in Fredericton (our capital). On our way back to the hotel, Nicholas spoke to me of atoms and bits. He was presenting to me the topics which he was going to publish in *Being Digital.*

According to Nicholas, we are all experiencing a paradigm shift from atoms to bits.

It is his belief that we are well into the information age, possibly into the post-information age. He feels we are experiencing significant shifts from all things being atoms to all things being bits. Think of an Evian bottle of water being purchased through the net. The ordering would be done through a bit process but eventually a real bottle of Evian atoms would be sent to your home.

Nicholas believes that bits experience no geographical or political boundaries. They dance alone and along the ether. They are freedom in a pure sense. "Like a force of nature, the digital age cannot be denied or stopped." He goes on to discuss four powerful qualities that will result in the ultimate triumph of the digital age: decentralizing, globalizing, harmonizing and empowering.

Companies will no longer have to rely on just single location processing power. We will most certainly see the shift to groupware shortly.

He states that "the forces of nationalism make it too easy to be cynical and dismiss any broad-stroke attempt at world unification." But in the digital world, these solutions become possible. When new countries are logging onto the Net each day, we see a major shift in globalization. One has only to note the two-billion-strong labor forces of India and China now coming on-line.

The harmonizing effect of being digital is felt everywhere. We often see that disciplines and enterprises find themselves working with one another and competing less.

The largest push within being digital, though, is its level of empowerment. I often visualize myself at the helm of a mothership when I am logged onto the Net. I believe that I can go anywhere and be anything. "The access, the mobility and the ability to effect change are what will make the future so different from the present."

Nicholas goes on to say that the information superhighway may be mostly hype today, but it is an understatement about tomorrow. As children appropriate a global information resource, as they discover that only adults need learner's permits, we are bound to find new hope and dignity in places where very little existed before.

Nicholas closes by stating: "The control bits of that digital future are more than ever before in the hands of the young." Nothing could make him happier.

I have learned several interesting facts in the last month. All of which draw on the power of being digital.

Fact 1: Thirty-five percent of the homes in North America have computers. This is to say that we are finally getting to the point of building a true digital community.

Fact 2: *TV Guide*'s profits are greater than the profits of the four networks combined. This means that information about information is sometimes more valuable than the information itself.

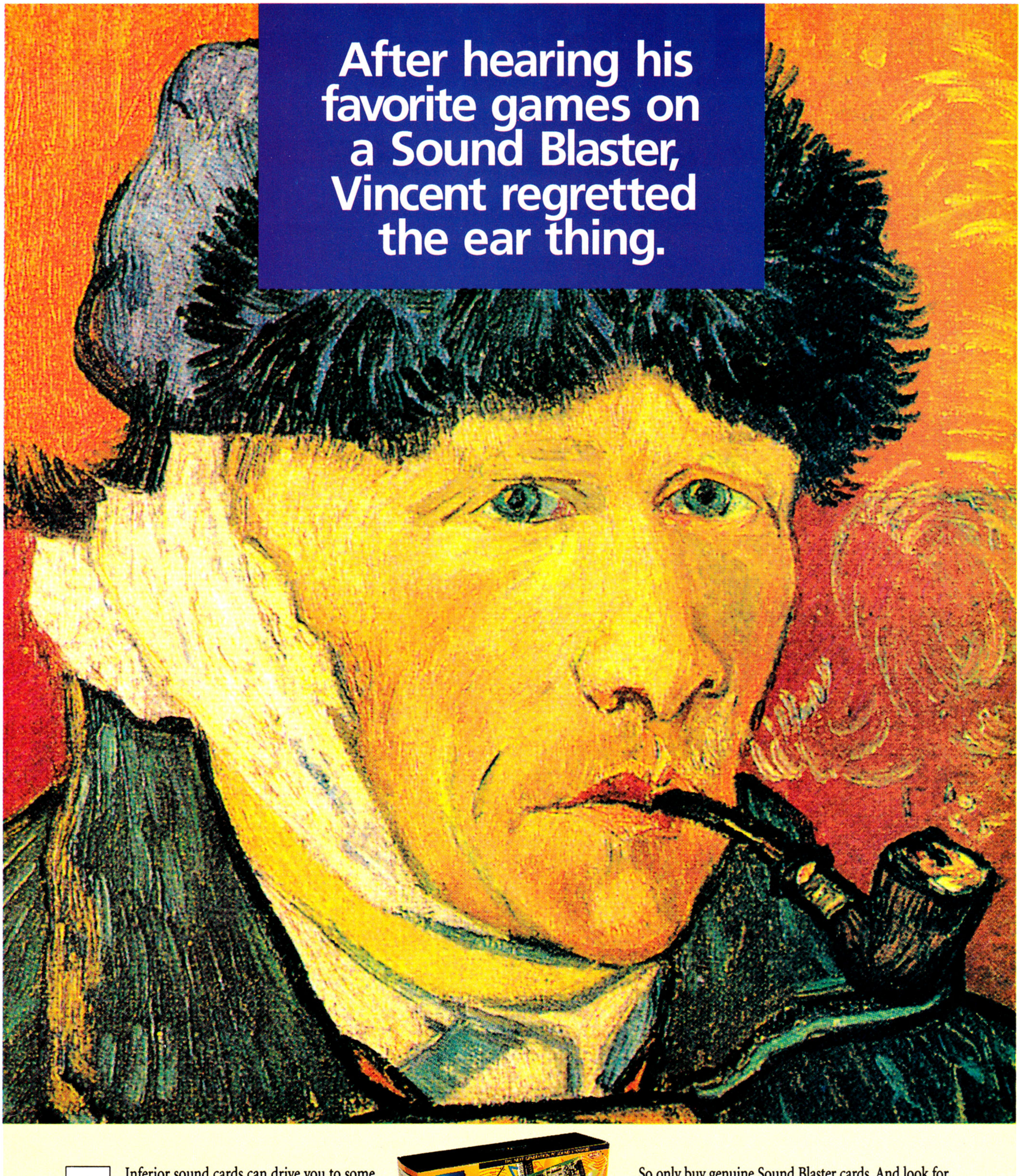
Fact 3: On a weekly basis, home computers are used an average of 13.5 hours whereas television is used an average of 12 hours. For the first time in history the shift to home computers is finally being realized.

Fact 4: Of the $12 billion in revenue earned by tape rentals, $3 billion is late fees. I love this fact. It has so many ways to be interpreted. One way is that people are lazy. They are willing to spend an enormous amount of money on convenience.

Being digital, to me, is a matter of convenience. If we can convert that $3 billion to extra on-line time on the commercial services or video on demand or shopping at home, it is going to be a market much larger than any of us expect. At the current on-line time charge of approximately $3 an hour, this would equal another 1 billion hours of on-line usage! That would equate to approximately $200 million in royalties available to content providers at a minimum!

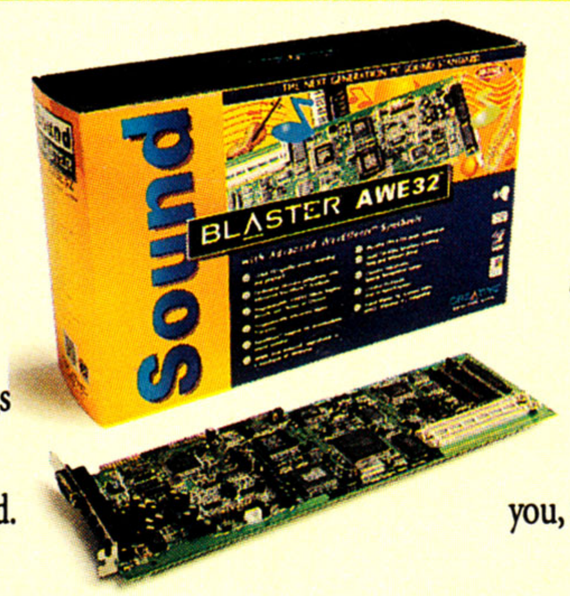
I am a digital being. Come join me. See you in the ether.

by Barry Friedman
President, International Computer Group
my river@aol.com



Inferior sound cards can drive you to some crazy ends. Sound effects built into this year's hottest new games might seem muffled and flat. Like you're only getting half the experience.

But a Sound Blaster™ sound card can spare you that insanity. You get real 16-bit, CD-quality sound that brings games to life. You hear ships explode, swords clash, tires squeal. That's why Sound Blaster is the PC sound standard.



So only buy genuine Sound Blaster cards. And look for the Sound Blaster Compatibility Logo on software and multimedia kits as well. That way, your software will sound exactly like it should. And you won't feel a tinge of regret. There are six different Sound Blaster sound cards to satisfy the most discerning ear. To find the one that's best for you, call 1-800-998-5227 Ext. 114.

CREATIVE™
CREATIVE LABS, INC.

© 1995 Creative Technology Ltd. Sound Blaster and the Creative, multimedia is Creative, and Sound Blaster Compatibility Logos are trademarks of Creative Technology Ltd. International inquiries: Creative Technology Ltd., Singapore. TEL: 65-773-0233 FAX: 65-773-0353. All rights reserved.

THE KUNKEL REPORT

"DO THE MATH!"

Atari has used it like a mantra, much in the way that Sega relentlessly buried us in hyper-thyroid invocations of its own name, broken into two syllables and croaked with an appealing gruffness. "Do the Math," Atari beckons.

Of course, every hardware manufacturer has its own line, whether it's "Now you're playing with Power!" or "Play it Loud!" they shout it at us with a relentless, unflagging intensity that has various effects. Sometimes it enraptures the populace and results in grown people yelling "Say-Gah!" at one another across office bullpens. In other cases, viewers build a shell around themselves, lest the offending, endlessly reiterated catch phrase pierce some shielding in their brain and trigger a wild, postal-style shooting spree. Then, of course, there are those aborted catch phrases that simply roll off the public's back like water off a duck. (Can you say: "Nintendon't"?)

Today, however, we are here to discuss Atari's dictum that we: "Do the Math!" I'm sure that part of the reasoning behind this campaign is the ridiculously anal manner in which so many console gamers select their systems. They relentlessly scrutinize the various comparative spec lists offered by the different companies, then declare that system C is superior to system Q because it can generate more colors, uses a superior processor, has built-in features (parallax scrolling, rotation, scaling, etc.) and/or can generate Gouraud and flat-shaded polygons.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with performing a tough hardware analysis before investing in a console system. The problem comes when it ends there. I spoke recently with **EG**'s oldest fart, the Game Doctor, and he reported that approximately 20 percent of all the letters he receives say something like: "Why aren't game companies supporting my system better? It has a better CPU, more colors, quack quack quack."

Even sadder are those students of gaming who fasten on a single spec, then cling to it, like a life preserver, bleating on and on about their 16-Bit audio dimension-sound feature that adds an extra voice no other system in the field can match.

Of course, Atari's statement is much bolder than a mere boast about superior color and pumped-up sound. Atari has cast the Jaguar as the first 64-Bit home system. To gamers who have experienced 32-Bit computer games, the 3DO, the next-generation systems from Japan or even the newer entries in Sega's CD format (such as **Road Rash 3**), the concept of a system twice that powerful or more must make the hair stand up on the back of their gamer necks. But chill, my friend, while I relate a little story.

The year is 1978. Arnie Katz and I had already started writing the world's first video game review column and we had begun to toy with moving into the computer realm. As non-techies, our understanding of the technology that drove those machines was dim. We knew, however, that the Atari 2600 was a 2K machine. (In those days, "K" weighed on gamers' minds the way the word "megs" does today.) We also knew that the Apple II+ was a seemingly mystical 48K! Forty-eight. The number seemed incomprehensible. What might the games be like? Why, 24 times better, of course!

Then we bought the Apple II+ (cost at the time: approximately US$2500), and sat back to watch a football simulation. The title screen blew our doors off: a beautifully rendered, color drawing of a running back crashing through the line, with the game's title and publisher lavishly proclaimed in the center. We tingled with anticipation. We continued to tingle right up to the minute the game itself appeared—a black-and-white topdown, gridiron with x's and o's representing players. The letters didn't even move during a scrimmage. You called your play, and the x's and o's were dutifully repositioned while a Text Screen announced the result.

We were thunderstruck. We also instantly understood how deceptive "doing the math" can really be. In the end, there is one and only one way to judge a system: Does it have great games? Do great games continue to be produced for it?

Heck, in most ways, the Intellivision's specs blew away the Atari 2600's; the Sega Master System had far cooler technology than the NES and the Lynx is the best-designed handheld on the market. So what?

In the end, the only math worth doing is the toting up of available games you really want to play. After all, you could own NASA's hottest computer and still not find any worthwhile software to run on it.

The play's the thing, not the specs.

'Nuff said.

by Bill Kunkel

ELECTRONIC games™
MAY, 1995
VOLUME 3. NUMBER 8
A DECKER PUBLICATIONS, INC.
PERIODICAL

PUBLISHER
Steve Harris
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER & EDITOR
Arnie Katz
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Bill Kunkel
NEWS EDITOR
Joyce Worley
SENIOR EDITOR
Marc Camron
MANAGING EDITOR
Ross Chamberlain
SIMULATIONS EDITOR
Ed Dille
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Russ Ceccola, Dean Hager, John Hardin
Steve Kent, John P. Withers, Laurie Yates
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Barry Friedman, Tom Basham, LaShunda Davis, Dave Gerding, Dave Harris, Rich Heimlich, Steve Honeywell, Paul Hyman, Steve Kent, Sara Slaymaker, John Taylor, Clayton Walnum, Scott Wolf
ART DIRECTORS
Juli McMeekin, Mike Reisel
PRODUCTION
Colleen Bastien, Production Manager
Dave McCracken, Production Assistant
Jennifer Whitesides, Managing Copy Editor
Jo-El M. Damen, Gayle Schneider,
Jennifer McGeary, Copy Editors
John Born, Ad Coordinator
CUSTOMER SERVICE
(708) 268-2498 (M-F, 7a.m.-7p.m. CST)
ADVERTISING
Eisenberg Communications Group, Inc.
Los Angeles, CA 90024, Ph. (310) 824-5297
Jeffrey Eisenberg, President/National Advertising Director
Jon Yoffie, Vice President/Sales Manager
Brian Olshever, Account Executive
John Abraham, Account Executive
Suzanne Farrell, Ad Coordinator
SENDAI MEDIA GROUP™
Steve Harris, President
Mike Riley, Executive Vice President
Mark Kaminky, Vice President/General Counsel
Dave Marshall, Circulation Director
Cindy Kerr, Director of Promotions
Kim Schmidt, Promotions Coordinator
Kate Rogers, Publicity Manager
Harvey Wasserman, Newsstand Director
Peter Walsh, Newsstand Manager
John Stanford, Manufacturing Director
Ken Williams, Systems Coordinator
DISTRIBUTED BY:
WARNER PUBLISHING SERVICES, INC.

Electronic Games (ISSN #1063-8326) is published monthly by Decker Publications, Inc. 1920 Highland Ave., Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148. Second Class Postage paid at Lombard, IL and additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for U.S.: $23.95, Canada and Mexico: $35.95 and all others: $80.00. Single issue rates: $4.99. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Electronic Games, P.O. Box 1502, Lombard, IL 60148. The editors and the publisher are not responsible for unsolicited materials. Without limiting the rights under copyrights reserved herein, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written notice of the publisher. Copyright © 1995, Decker Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. All materials listed in this magazine are subject to manufacturer's change and the publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes. TM and © for all products and the characters contained therein are owned by the respective trademark and copyright holders.

Printed in the U.S.A.
Electronic Games is a trademark of Decker Publications, Inc. Sendai Media Group is a trademark of Sendai Publishing Group, Inc.

Silverload

Welcome To Silverload, A Devil Of A Town.

Folks don't come to Silverload much anymore. A'int been no silver here in years. And when they do come, they don't stay any longer than they have to. Missing persons? No, mister, a'int never seen no missing persons. Of course, folks here don't pay much attention to strangers. Have a look around? Can't say anybody will stop you from looking around, mister. Except the last man who came here looking for kin is buried over there on that hill.

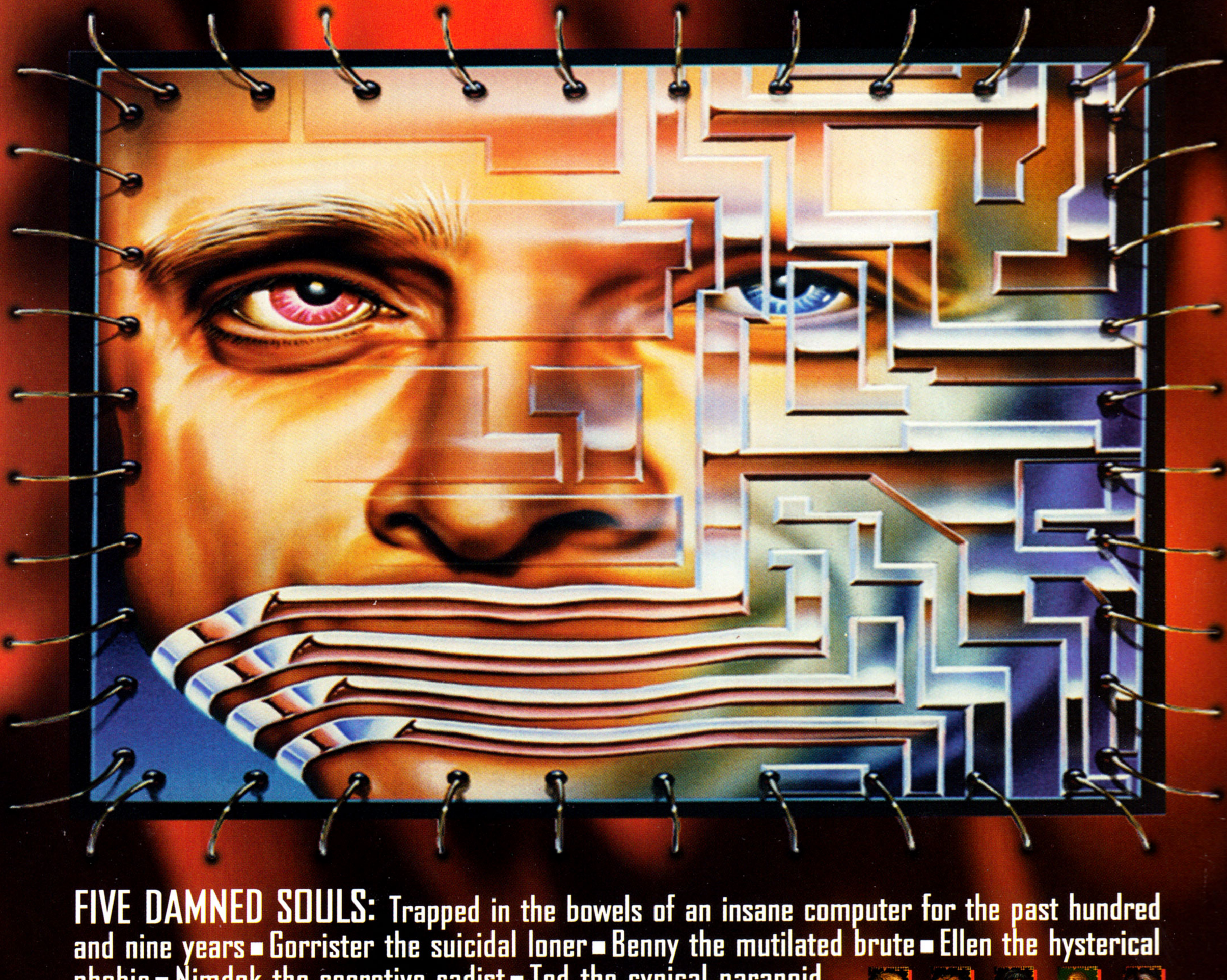
VIC TOKAI INC.
22904 Lockness Ave. Torrance, CA 90501

© 1995 Millennium Interactive Limited

PC CD-ROM

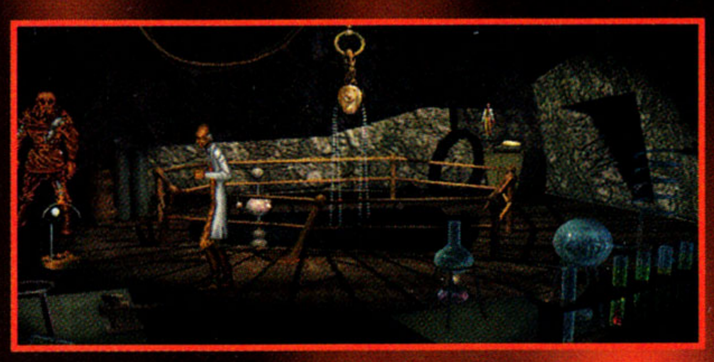
HARLAN ELLISON

I HAVE NO MOUTH, AND I MUST SCREAM



FIVE DAMNED SOULS: Trapped in the bowels of an insane computer for the past hundred and nine years ■ Gorrister the suicidal loner ■ Benny the mutilated brute ■ Ellen the hysterical phobic ■ Nimdok the secretive sadist ■ Ted the cynical paranoid

ONE CHALLENGE: The adventure plunges you into the tortured and hidden past of the five humans ■ Delve into their darkest fears ■ Outwit the master computer AM in a game of psychological warfare ■ Disturbing ■ Compelling ■ An adventure you won't easily forget !!!



ON CD-ROM

Summer 1995

For MS-DOS, Macintosh and Sony PlayStation™

Cyberdreams is a registered trademark of Cyberdreams, Inc., Artwork© 1995 Barclay Shaw,
I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream Copyright© 1967, renewed© 1995 by Harlan Ellison.Sreen shots© 1995 Cyberdreams, Inc.

CYBERDREAMS®
INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
23586 Calabasas Road, Suite 102, Calabasas,
California 91302 Telephone (818)223-9990