

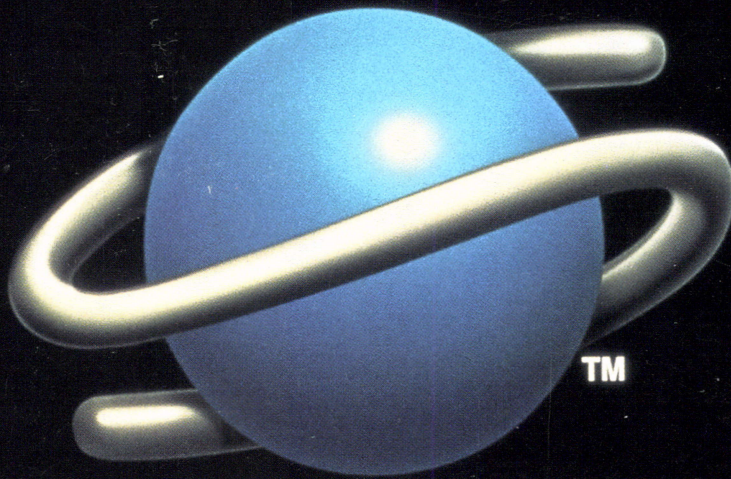
# VIDEOGAME

A D V I S O R

JUNE 1995  
\$7.95 US \$8.95 CAN

*The Interactive Gaming Industry Guide*

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2



SEGA  
SATURN™

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# VIDEOGAME

A D V I S O R

JUNE 1995  
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*The Interactive Gaming Industry Guide*

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

## SNK Officially Throws Their Hat Into THE NEXT 'GEN RING

By: A VGA Staff Reporter

SNK Corporation of America debuted the new Neo•Geo CD system during the past Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles. Retailing for a as yet undetermined amount, (under \$500.00), the system shall include a controller pad and pack-in software.

According to Mr. Bruce Tomiyama, vice president, "The Neo•Geo CD is the only system on the market that has been optimized for game play, as opposed to playing movies or other non-gaming applications. It is the only system that truly gives the player the experience of a professional

arcade in the home." Heh-Kyu Lee, product manager for the system added, "Simply put, the Neo•Geo CD is the best for hardcore gaming. It has a dedicated processor devoted to game play, and it will ship with an immediate library of more than 50 titles."

The suggested retail price for software shall range from \$39 to \$79 whereas in the past their cartridge-based counterparts were out of the average consumers' financial reach. Expect both the hardware and software to become available this fall in the midst of the market share wars. **VGA**

## GTIS Signs Exclusive Deal With Williams Entertainment

By: A VGA Staff Reporter

GT Interactive Software announced that they have signed an agreement with Williams Entertainment which covers all 32 and 64 bit video/CD game platforms and coin-op games released after April 1st. The deal includes the highly anticipated Mortal Kombat III on the Saturn and Ultra 64 platforms.

In the wake of 'strategic alliances' recently announced, GT Interactive has now positioned itself as a formidable force among third party developers. What remains to be seen in the impending release of MK3 is if the product can be marketed as successfully by the new team as has been done by Acclaim in the past. **VGA**

## So Much For SATURNDAY!

By Dave Winding & Hal Halpin

Sega of America made it very clear at the recently concluded Electronic Entertainment Expo that they have no intention of losing market share in the 64-bit hardware wars. With many roadblocks standing in their way, they executed a limited surprise launch of their next generation "Saturn" that caught both their competition, and their third-party partners, by complete surprise.

This promotional blitz that enveloped southern California and the nation was executed with the clear intention of taking the offensive away from Sony Computer Entertainment who, in recent months, had successfully taken all the next generation "buzz" away from the kings of 16-bit. In order to accomplish this goal, SOA reportedly spent over \$50 million dollars in a massive promotional and advertising campaign that had a bald woman

and the sphincter playing huge roles in the kick-off campaign. It worked. After months of preparation geared at making E3 the "coming out" party for the PlayStation, SCE found themselves in a defensive position for the first

time since the product's inception.

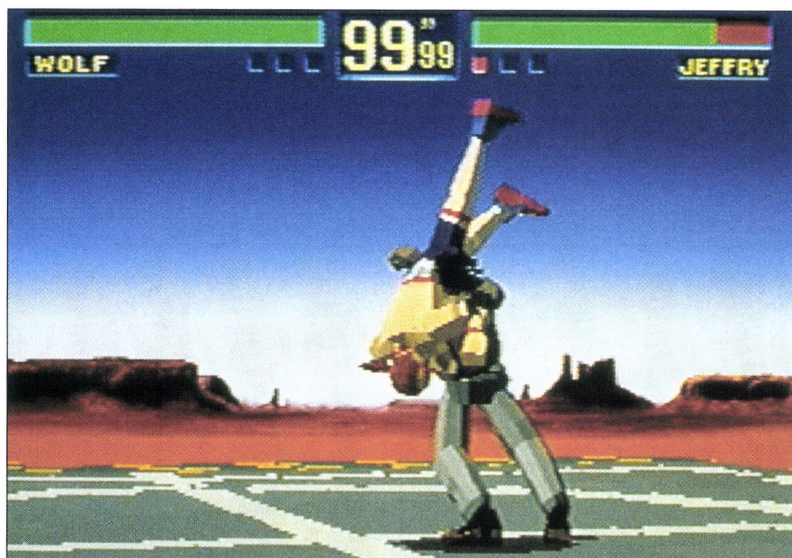
With the thunder clearly gone from their anti-climactic announcement of the PlayStation's September 9th availability, SCE was forced to play a numbers game, and they subsequently announced an MSRP of \$299.95 for the PlayStation, (a number significantly lower than Sega's \$400 machine). To the average interested party, this would simply seem to be a case of "big boys with big toys", but Sega's Tom Kalinske and SCE's Steve Race are gambling their companies' futures (or division's



future as the case may be) on these products and the stakes are high.

Since this essay is focusing on Sega's position in the next generation market, we will concentrate on the tasks that face them in the coming

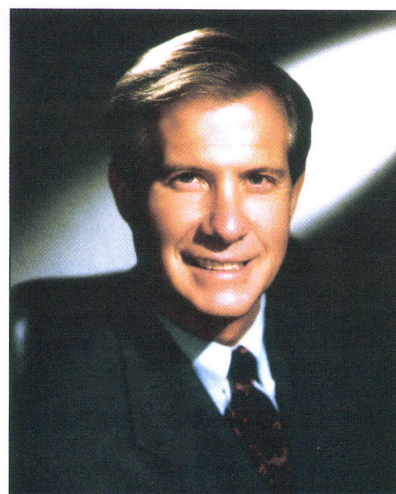
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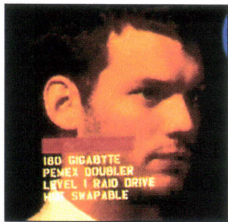
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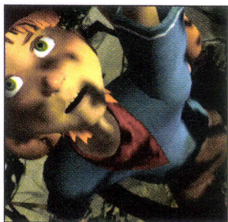
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# Nintendo Power Source Enters The information Super-Highway

By A VGA Staff Reporter

Last month Nintendo of America, Inc. debuted Nintendo Power Source on the nations leading on-line service provider America Online (AOL). Videogamers throughout the country will now have unlimited access

open chat arena; Games, a direct line to the pros where gamers get the latest codes, strategies and reviews; Systems, technical information on hardware systems; Nintendo HQ, "official" news from



to one of the most popular consumer gaming magazines.

On AOL gamers are able to swap information immediately and interact directly with Nintendo's professional game play counselors. The graphic environment is similar to that of a hidden level in Donkey Kong Country. In addition, Nintendo Power Source will also feature a daily chat session with host Paul Hawkins and bulletin boards to post opinions and questions.

Nintendo Power Source offers AOL subscribers an easy to use interface comprised of six categories. Included in these categories are; Play It Loud, an

the corporate office; What's New, the latest additions to the area; Search, an easy access to all Nintendo information.

"Nintendo fans will now have an immediate and direct line to Nintendo Power editors and Nintendo's Game Play Counselors - this gives us the perfect opportunity to interact with them," say Gail Tilden, Editor-in-Chief. In order to enter this area on AOL, use the keyword "NINTENDO". **VGA**

**VIDEOGAME  
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# SEGA of America Spends Over \$50 Million On Marketing Saturn

By A VGA Staff Reporter

Sega of America has announced that their marketing and advertising campaign to support the surprise release of their 'next generation' system, Sega Saturn, will be backed by a fifty-million dollar budget. Coinciding with Sega's announcement from Tom Kalinski, the company's president and Chief Executive Officer, was a flurry of print and television advertisements dumbfounding most buyers and third party manufacturers alike.

The "Theater of the Eye" TV ad campaign was created by Goodby, Silverstein & Partners and leads consumers through the human body 'Sega-style'. "We're constantly going against the grain with what is expected of us in terms of marketing and advertising," stated Michael Ribero, vice president of

marketing for Sega of America. In any event the commercials are generating predictably increased interest in the product, as 'traffic' on on-line services such as America On-line creates more questions than answers.

The Mendick Group created both the new Saturn logo, (pictured on the cover of this issue), as well as the print-advertised 'Head for Saturn'. The latter of which pictures a shaven female head with rings symbolic of the logo and planet. Having multiple tie-ins has allowed the Sega marketing division a wide breadth in which to associate various consumer-targeted images. No doubt the end-users will have a high percentage of product recognition by 'Saturday', (still slated for Saturday, September 2nd). **VGA**



# Maxis Launch into Public Stock Yields Big Success

By A VGA Staff Reporter

Maxis Inc.'s first initial public stock offering, launched May 24, raised \$48 million for the software dynamo, its shareholders, and underwriters.

The company priced its IPO at \$16 a share, well above the \$13 a share the company said it expected when it filed papers in April for the stock sale. Maxis itself raised about \$29.8 million from the IPO, excluding commissions and stock sold by the shareholders.

Orinda, California based Maxis makes entertainment and personal-productivity software, such as *SimCity*, that enables people to create and manage cities, buildings,

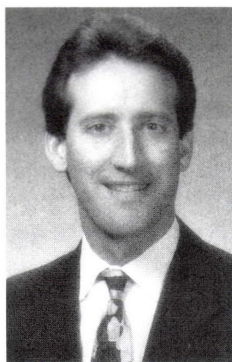
ecosystems, and even entire worlds.

The company's stock began trading in the NASDAQ exchange with a ticker symbol of MXIS. Industry watchers believe Maxis shares will be a hot commodity at the outset.

Although the company has stayed away from the 16-bit videogame cartridge business they will supply a version of *Sim City 2000* for the new disk-based Sega Saturn machine. They are also planning a version of its *A-Train* game for the new highly anticipated Sony PlayStation, said Maxis spokeswoman Suzanne Nelson. **VGA**

# Time Warner Welcomes John Hildebrand To Full Service Network™

By A VGA Staff Reporter



Time Warner Cable, the nation's second largest cable operator, recently hired John Hildebrand as a senior director-application development technology for their Full Service Network. Hildebrand will serve as primary interface with software companies creating interactive applications for the Full Service Network, providing technical consulting services and project management. Hildebrand comes to the Full Service Network from USA Video Corp.,

where he served as chief Officer overseeing sales, marketing, operation, administration and program manager for Digital Equipment Corp.

Time Warner Cable's Full Service Network is a digital, interactive television network that provides subscribers in Orlando, Florida on-demand access to a variety of entertainment and informational services. **VGA**

# Best Selling 'SPAWN' Goes Digital

By A VGA Staff Reporter

Spawn, the number one comic book for two years running, will soon come to life in Acclaim Entertainment's new Super NES videogame. Spawn, created by the enormously popular Todd McFarlane, is based on an ex-government spy who was brought back to life and outfitted with a living symbiotic suit. This comic book hero has recently expanded to a line of action figures, a live action movie and an animated cartoon.

"There is no doubt Spawn is one of the hottest properties today, having achieved top-selling comic book status the last two years," says Sam Goldberg, vice president of Marketing. "We hope to establish it in the top strata of videogames as well."

Acclaim's Spawn side-scroller for the Super NES will be available later this year and previewed in a upcoming issue of VGA. Look out Power Rangers... here comes Spawn. **VGA**

# SEGAWorld Moves To London

By A VGA Staff Reporter

SOA recently received the go-ahead for Segaworld, a giant space-age theme park which will be right in the heart of London's buzzing Piccadilly Circus (the first outside Japan). Segaworld's main attraction will be high-tech interactive rides, which are multimillion dollar machines in which visitors will be "totally immersed in a virtual world" says Leslau, chief executive of Burford.

The owner of the Trocadero entertainment complex said it had planning permission to turn what is already a teen-age mecca full of fast food stalls and cine-

mas into a hi-tech emporium of virtual reality rides and other interactive pleasures. The building which began life as a nineteenth century music and dance hall of some notoriety will become, in the words of its owner, "the largest, indoor urban entertainment center in the world."

Planning permission for Segaworld was the final hurdle in Leslau's plans to revamp the Trocadero and encourage people passing through, (about 16 million a year), mainly teen-agers and tourists. The Trocadero will get a \$31.5 million facelift in addition to changes inside. **VGA**

# Nintendo and Rare Alliance Creates Dynamic Duo

By A VGA Staff Reporter

Nintendo Co., Ltd. announced it would make a multi-million dollar capital investment in Rare, a U.K. based videogame development company. This alliance has created one of the most dynamic teams in the videogame industry. Nintendo's investment will give them a 25% interest in Rare and will ensure that they will continue to be one of the largest and most technically advanced developer.

Under the terms of the agreement, Rare will develop a new series of 16-bit and 64-bit home videogames, as well as software for Nintendo's Game Boy and Virtual Boy systems. All games developed by Rare for Nintendo Ultra 64 will be published under the "Rareware" label.

"With the creative and technical expertise of Nintendo and Rare, we'll not only continue to produce the best videogames in the industry,

but we already have defined the standard of 'next generation'," comments Joel Hochberg, Rare president. "We have searched the world over for top-notch talent and have brought them together in an entity that will, without a doubt, continue to blow the competition away."

Included in Rare's new lineup is the sequel to the world's number 1 smash hit for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, Donkey Kong Country. Rare is also developing a James Bond home videogame, based on the movie "Goldeneye", currently being filmed outside London.

Nintendo's track record with Rare has been exceptional, from the fastest selling videogame Donkey Kong Country to the number one arcade smash hit Killer Instinct. We all look forward to the new possibilities this alliance will bring to the videogame industry. **VGA**

# Lg Electronics U.S.A. Adds Sizzle To A Hot Seller

By A VGA Staff Reporter

LG Electronics U.S.A., Inc., formerly known as GoldStar U.S.A., Inc., has announced a \$50 rebate program to spur on sales throughout the summer season. From Memorial Day through Labor Day GoldStar is offering the consumer a \$50 rebate on the purchase of a complete GoldStar 3DO Multiplayer system, decreasing the price to only \$349.95.

"This is a wonderful one-two-three package for game enthusiasts of all levels who are considering an advanced CD interactive video entertainment system," says Jim Ireton, Vice President for the HiMedia Group at LG Electronics. "You get; one, the technically advanced CD gaming system on the market today; two, 2 top-notch titles; and three, \$50 back!

This an excellent opportunity for people to experience the most powerful system on the market without damaging their pocketbooks." Many buyers have already been shipped the coupons for distribution, according to a 3DO spokesperson, and the system sales have already been impacted positively.

FIFA International Soccer and Shock Wave, two of the top sellers in the videogame market, will come bundled with the GoldStar 3DO Interactive Multiplayer. The software alone, worth \$129 will make this quite an enticing package to consumers. To obtain the \$50 rebate, purchasers of the GoldStar 3DO system simply mail back the attached form along with a proof of purchase. **VGA**

# Electronics Arts Signs Up For Sony Computer Entertainment's Third Party Roster

By A VGA Staff Reporter

Sony Computer Entertainment of America has confirmed the agreement with Electronic Arts, the Silicon Valley-based software giant, for development of titles for use on SCEA's Playstation. This addition to their third-party roster brings the talent of every major player in the videogame industry to team up with the Playstation.

"There will be no com-

promising on the quality of games for the Playstation," said Steve Race, president of SCEA. "And our alliance with a company like Electronic Arts assures Playstation customers will be enjoying games that fully leverage the power of the system."

Electronic Arts currently has a wide range of titles under development for the Playstation, including Wing

Commander III, PGA Tour Golf '96 and Magic Carpet. These games will accentuate the Playstation's advanced capabilities including full screen 3-D graphics, digital lighting, texture mapping, diverse camera angles and audio CD quality sound.

"We're known for creating software that has helped move the category of

videogames from a diversion to a significant form of entertainment," said Larry Probst, chairman and CEO of Electronic Arts. "The unique architecture and advanced technology available in the Playstation will allow the development of dramatically improved interactive entertainment software." **VGA**



# Parker Brothers & Virgin Introduce First Board Game to the Internet

By A VGA Staff Reporter

The world's most popular board game, MONOPOLY®, will be the first CD-ROM game to be played on the Internet. In addition to all the classic features, the Internet has added the possibility of a few more options. These options will allow 23 million users around the world to play against each other in differ-

ent languages and different currency, including translations which are converted in real time. The player has the choice of 10 different opponents and may also create and customize a computer opponent. The 3D game board has its traditionally unique and distinctive properties including Baltic Avenue, Park Place

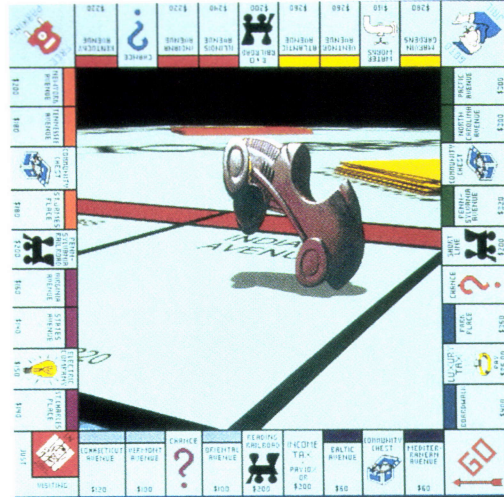
and Marvin Gardens. Each playing token is animated and jumps to 1930s rag-time music.

"The Internet feature of MONOPOLY CD-ROM adds a whole new dimension and scope to the MONOPOLY game. Families from Paris to Omaha can soon compete against each other without leaving there," said

Bob Wahn, senior vice president-marketing for Hasbro Games Group.

The MONOPOLY CD-ROM game will be available in Windows and MAC CD-ROM formats this fall and distributed by Virgin Interactive Entertainment at a suggested retail price of \$39.99.

VGA



# SkyBox International Hopes To Cash In On CD-ROM Market

By A VGA Staff Reporter



SkyBox International, the nation's largest manufacturer of entertainment cards, will officially enter the expanding CD-ROM market this fall. With CD-ROM sales up 40% from last year, and predicted climbing to 8 billion dollars this year - SkyBox is hoping to cash in on their success. Not everyone knows that the trading card market has doubled in size over the last 5 years to create a \$2 billion market annually.

SkyBox International's first CD-ROM product tentatively titled SkyBorg: Into the Vortex, is an adventure game scheduled for release this fall. The CD-ROM game is based on 105

characters created exclusively for SkyBox by five of the top artists from the comics, fantasy, science fiction and gaming industries.

"With SkyBorg CD-ROM, the player must defeat a bad guy and save the universe," said SkyBox Chief Operating Officer Jay Ladd. "Trading cards come into the picture because the characters the CD-ROM game are frozen in a 2-D stasis, or a trading card. SkyBox is releasing a set of trading cards that contains the very same art from the CD-ROM game, so players can collect the characters from a game for the first time." VGA

# Discovering the World Wide Web

By Zach Meston & Aaron Zachlod

**A**ll hail Zach Meston, the 'King of Bad Timing'. Ever since I announced last issue that I was going to do an article on the World Wide Web, I've seen a Web feature in every freaking game magazine in the Western Hemisphere. This left me with two choices: kill my Web feature and hurriedly write something else, or crib all the best info from all the other Web articles and present it here. Being a complete fiend, I chose the latter option.

In case you somehow missed those other three million Web articles, here's a blessedly brief description of the World Wide Web. It is a graphical interface system that makes the Internet a damn sight easier to navigate, and a damn sight prettier as well. Instead of accessing information by typing commands, the Web lets you point and click on what you want to see. To use a feeble metaphor, - if the Internet is like DOS, the Web is like Windows - not quite as powerful, but

much easier to use and much more appealing to non-computer nerds.

The Web also has two fancy attributes known as "interactive multimedia" and "hyperlinks." Inter-

"When In Doubt, Type...www.yahoo.com"

By now, future Web surfer's have a good understanding of what to expect once in the front page of the navigator. But with so many links on one page - it is very easy to get side tracked. If one is not familiar with Web sites or maybe does not have the patience for a 'trial and error' session, then there is a simple, yet very effective alternative. By opening [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com), subjects are listed in alphabetical order. Each click is a link to another related subject. Before long, a home page will reveal itself and it's time to do some browsing and some downloading.

active multimedia simply means that the Web allows you to download graphics, video clips, audio bites, and text documents. Hyperlinks are much more interesting. A hyperlink is an electronic pointer, guiding you

*if the Internet is like  
DOS, the Web is  
like Windows*



WWW.Yahoo.com

from one Web area to another with a minimum of hassle and a maximum of freedom. Hyperlinks are usually displayed as bold-face or highlighted words, called hypertext. Hyperlinks turn the World Wide Web into a wonderfully free-form experience, as you jump from one Web site to the next with the greatest of ease.

As with everything else about the Internet, the Web is a bit overwhelming at first. There are two ways to get comfy with the Web: put your social life on hold and fool around on it for 16 hours straight, (my personal choice), or start out with brief sessions and explore longer as you get more familiar with the way it works.

Video and computer game companies are invading the Web faster than Rush Limbaugh can scarf down a stuffed crust pizza, and it's no surprise why. **The Web allows companies to bombard potential customers with information, screen shots, and playable demos.** Best of all, it only costs the company the price of a computer, the initial development and phone line, - rather cheap by comparison to TV or magazine ads, [except ads in Videogame Advisor, of course (cough)]. It's passive advertising at its best: "If you build a Web site, they will come."

And with that, let's start talking Web pages. I've separated them into two categories: the official sites, which are maintained by game companies, and unofficial sites, which are maintained by hard-core game players, fanzine editors, and college students with way too much free time. **VGA**

**Next issue:** Zach talks to a retailer about how his company has used the Internet to increase his business by a staggering percentage. Zach also tries to scam a free Sega Saturn out of him. Does he succeed? (A hint: the retailer's reply begins with "no..." and ends with "...chance in hell.")

## Official Web Sites

### **Apple Computer, Inc. (<http://www.apple.com>)**

They of the Macintosh computer and the upcoming Pippin game system.

### **Electronic Arts (<http://www.ea.com>)**

An incredibly bland page from an incredibly old game company. Also includes EA's hordes of affiliates, including Origin.

### **Id Software (<http://www.idsoftware.com>)**

The brainiacs behind the smash PC game Doom lurk here.

### **Interplay Productions (<http://www.interplay.com>)**

A very good Web site that includes a number of game hyperlinks and a section explaining how best to enjoy the Web experience.

### **MicroProse (<http://www.microprose.com>)**

MicroProse and Spectrum HoloByte. Right here. On this page. Cool.

### **Microsoft (<http://www.microsoft.com>)**

A company run by some guy named Bill Gates. Never heard of him.

### **Nintendo of America (<http://www.nintendo.com>)**

A recently established site that's almost like an on-line version of Nintendo Power. Previews, reviews, press releases, customer surveys - all the stuff you'd expect to see.

### **Rocket Science (<http://www.rocketsci.com>)**

A truly weird Web site based in San Francisco (of course). Users can send in their resumes or request a free videotape of Rocket Science game footage.

### **Sega of America (<http://www.segaoa.com>)**

One of the best-looking Web pages to be found anywhere, proving that Sega's hip image extends even into cyberspace.

### **Silicon Graphics (<http://www.sgi.com>)**

The purtiest Web site you'll ever see. SG has also begun creating home pages for commercial use selling graphically beautiful sites to businesses willing to pay for excellence.

## Unofficial Web Sites

### **Nintendo Ultra 64**

(<http://www2.ncsu.edu/eos/users/s/sgbooth/www/u64page.html>)

Read all the latest retarded rumors about Nintendo's vaporous next-generation system! Joy!

### **Sony Playstation**

(<http://bert.cs.byu.edu/jaguar/psx.html>) and

(<http://www.algonet.se/jlager/psx.html>)

Not one, but two Web pages on Sony's awesome machine. The ALGONET page is better, with more easily accessed information.

### **The Whole Internet Catalog (<http://narnet.gnn.com/wic/newrescat.toc.html>)**

An extremely helpful Web site that lets you look up other Web sites by searching through well-arranged categories. Fast and friendly.

The 'Unofficial' Jaguar Home Page can be located at:

<http://www.bucknell.edu:80/svensson/>

The 'everything you wanted to know about Mortal Kombat' home page:

<http://198.49.168.5/mkruse/mk3/mk3.html>

The 'Official 3DO WWW Site' can be reached at: <http://www.3do.com/>

The 'Official Sony PlayStation Web Site' in Japan (must have

KanjiTalk7 or the Japanese Language Kit for Mac or Win/V for Windows

to display Japanese text): <http://stanmor.tnova.co.jp:10080/PS/PS.html>

For a newcomer, <http://www.yahoo.com> is a great place to start. Enjoy!

# So Much For SATURNDAY!

(continued from page 1)

months and what position the company finds themselves as they exit E3. By letting the Saturn go only to specific retailers over the E3 weekend (Electronics Boutique, Babbage's, Software Etc., and Toy R Us), **Sega runs the risk of alienating those retailers that were not placed on Sega's "short list" for the product.** With "official" nationwide roll-

everything that has been offered so far for both the Saturn and PlayStation), are more impressed with the technical abilities of Sony's machine. Judged in a head-to-head comparison, the PlayStation has, so far, done a much better job of polygon manipulation and in giving the user a much more detailed and believable 3D environment. The reasons behind this technical difference are far too technical to comment on within the confines of this feature, but the custom architecture employed in the PSX allows for a greater degree of graphic realism.

There may be, however, an upside to the "off-the-shelf" technology used in the Saturn. As with Sega's employment of the widely used M68000 and Z80 CPU's in the Genesis, there should be an economic benefit to creating a more generic architecture for the Saturn. In all likelihood, Sega will be able to quickly drop the MSRP of the Saturn as chip prices fall and the installed user base for the system grows. Yes, Sony has won the initial price war (or so it would seem), but the real consumer battleground won't appear until these systems drop below the \$150 price tag. This is where the war will be waged for the mass-market consumer.

Sega seems to have positioned itself where it will be able to achieve not only initial name recognition while building the Saturn's consumer base, but drawing first blood in that critical final phase of market acceptance for the product. "What is the second phase?", you ask. This is the stage of business development where Sony is going to be

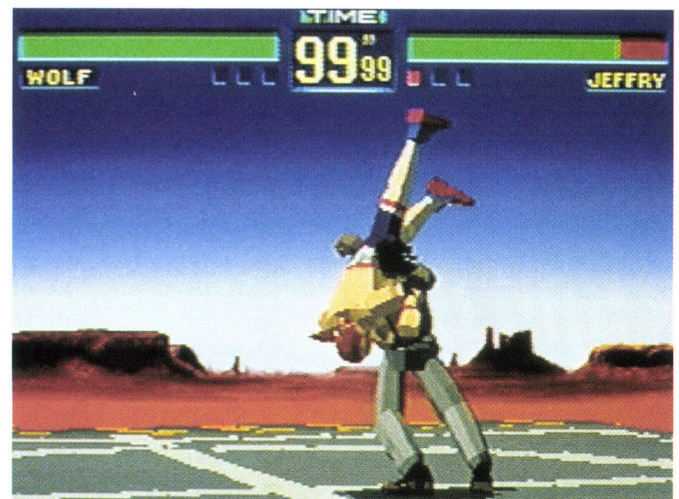
out of the Saturn not scheduled until the first week of September, such major retailers as Kay Bee Toys and K-Mart will have to wait for their piece of the pie. Our sources are saying that Sega shipped over 30,000 units to these key retail accounts during E3 week, with more to follow. So the question becomes: how much of the "first-timer/early adapter" audience is going to be left? This is the foreboding question that these forgotten retailers are asking...and loudly!

It is our contention that Sega probably made the right move. Yes, there is the short term possibility of retailer disenchantment, but the reality is that the first-timer is not going to buy the Saturn at Kay Bee or K-Mart anyway. They have historically done their shopping at the EB's and Babbage's of the world. In fact, we believe that Toys 'R Us is a stretch when addressing the early adapter. It just isn't the right demographic fit. **The launch can certainly be classified as a success, but what about the future and the staying power of the Saturn?**

Most of us on the "inside" of the industry, (those that have played



**Pictured: Sega Ad & Screen Shot of Virtua Fighter**



*SCE found*

*themselves*

*in a defensive*

*position for*

*the first time*

*since the*

*product's*

*inception.*

hard-pressed to compete with Sega; internal software development. Sega has achieved success in the 16-bit world by establishing brand loyalty and recognition in its software titles. The Sonic the Hedgehog and Phantasy Star series' have met with huge consumer and critical success and the Sega Sports lineup is bested only by that of EA Sports when it comes to videogame consumer brand loyalty. Sega knows how to make great games, pure and simple. Sony is going to find themselves in a tough position in challenging Sega's loyal consumer base. The Sony name means very little in the area of electronic entertainment software, and they will have to prove themselves with the consumer.

It is not enough to rely on product from third-party publishers. It has been proven with every new piece of hardware dating back to Atari's Video Computer System - the hardware manufacturer will be the primary supplier of software for the new platform for the first 18 months of the product's life. The manufacturer has the vested interest in the success of the hardware platform. The third party publisher is taking a risk by targeting development dollars at an unproved system with an unknown user base. Sega knows this. They are in the business of making videogames... period. They don't manufacture TV's, stereos, VCR's or other consumer electronic products. If the PlayStation fails,



Sony licks its wounds and focuses on its myriad other consumer interests. If the Saturn does not make it with American consumers, Sega will be challenged to its very existence.

Now that consumers are being 'educated' in regard to the next generation systems, the deluge shall commence upon you, the buyers. What began at E3, with the trinkets and gifts from sales reps, shall explode into a flurry of hype from each manufacturer. Quite simply, that is what their public relations and marketing departments are paid for. We have been encouraging buyers we speak with to begin reserve lists or at least conduct informal surveys at the retail and distribution levels. **The key word for the coming months is prebook.** With the cost of these systems reaching the \$500 level with software, these are not items that you will want to over stock on and you don't want to bet all your money on one or two horses.

At current price points, there will be no known winners and losers for quite some time. We will not really know who will become the dominant player in the next generation videogame world (if there is one at all) until all of the technological salvos have been fired by Nintendo, the 3DO Company and Atari, in addition to Sony and Sega. The VCS lasted for five years, the Colecovision for about three. The NES claimed market superiority for five years and the Genesis and SNES have dominated since 1990. History tells us that Sega, Sony and the other contenders have about five years in which to make their products live or die... and then its on to the "next thing".

**Will this new technology level the playing field and expand that five year window of sales opportunity?...** Probably not. Five years isn't a whole heck-of-a-lot-of time. It will probably take Sega two years to recoup the \$50 million they spent at the show. Make no mistake, the battle is not just being waged to win the next generation consumer, but to win the generation after that. It may all seem like a lot of posturing and pomp and circumstance now, but the corporate positioning that is occurring in the next generation wars is not just being aimed directly at winning the battle over the next three to five years, but the five after that as well. The first shot has been fired... let the games begin! **VGA**

*If the Saturn does  
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sumers, Sega will  
be challenged to its  
very existence.*



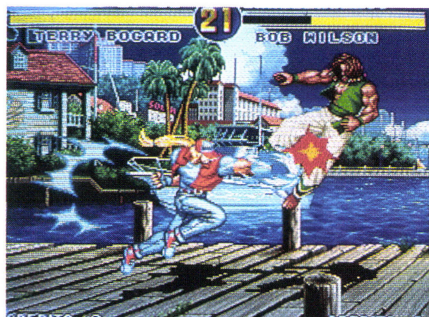
**A** One of the best selling games for that particular platform. Great sound, graphics, playability, etc. This title will literally grow wings and fly off the shelves of any retail/rental store.

**B** A great game that is just lacking in some areas. It will sell well and bring in the masses, but just not to the extent of an "A" title. Retailers should make sure to buy this product deep enough to satisfy their individual store demands with some to spare.

**C** A good game that will sell about 'average' in terms of sales. It is lacking in a few departments, therefore not worthy of a "B" rating. However, this is still a quality product.

**D** A game that is unsupported by the manufacturer, lacking in quality and generally should have stayed in development longer. This category may rent occasionally but will not sell well to anyone other than a 'platform fan'. Poor gameplay, bad plot and just better than an "F" rating.

**F** A product that never should have been considered, much less released. This is a thoroughly unimpressive title that will only become an inventory nightmare. Only at drastically discounted prices could this category sell.



**Title:** Fatal Fury 3  
**Platform:** Neo-Geo CD  
**Genre:** Fighting  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** SNK  
**Developer:** SNK  
**Available:** Now(Import)  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B+

This is actually the fourth installment in the Fatal Fury series. The second most popular series for the Neo-Geo. *Fatal Fury 3* is more than a slight improvement over the previous versions, and definitely deserves to be called a sequel.

The fluidity of the animation is a definite improvement over the others, and is the smoothest yet in a Neo-geo fighter, approaching that of Capcom's *X-Men* currently in the arcades. The music and voice in Neo-Geo games has to be some of the best out there. Now with the CD the sound is unbelievable. *Fatal Fury 3* is no exception. The voice is clear as a bell, and the music is superbly composed. The only drawback of this game is the load time, but with a \$50 price tag it is definitely worth it.

**Bottom Line:** If you currently are a retailer that has done well with Neo-Geo games in the past, it would be a good idea to order enough of these to satisfy your Neo CD population. The fact that there is not an installed base for Neo-Geo CD systems will definitely hurt this games sales.

— Bill Martinson



**Title:** Full Throttle  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** Quest  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** LucasArts  
**Developer:** LucasArts  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**Available:** Now  
**VGA Rating:** A-

*Road Warrior* meets *King's Quest* in this groundbreaking new quest adventure game by LucasArts. Building off a strong reputation for excellent quest titles, *Full Throttle* updates the SCUMM interface with a harrowing tale of a biker whose lost his gang, his freedom, and his keys. The gamer plays the part of Ben, a social deviant with a bad temper. When the president of Corley Motorcycles is murdered by Adrian Ripburger, a subversive associate eager to turn the last American motorcycle manufacturer into a minivan company, Ben must hop on his cherished bike and stop Ripburger from achieving his malevolent goal.

*Full Throttle* is an absolutely brilliant game that pulls players in with fantastic cinematics and keeps them absorbed with ingenious game play. It's even interspersed with the occasional arcade sequence to break up the action. The artwork, music, and storyline are all second to none, making this a guaranteed seller in any store carrying PC software.

**Bottom Line:** Having neither the product license nor the popular game category of LucasArts' recent blockbuster, "Dark Forces," this will not be their biggest seller yet. It will however fall into place among the most successful quest titles ever. Even benchmark products such as "Sierra's King's Quest VII," and "Space Quest V" are dwarfed by "Full Throttle's" mastery of the genre.

— Matt Harding

**FM** The VGA staff has chosen to express all cartridge memory sizes in Megabytes (MB) as opposed to Megabits (Mb). A Megabyte is a standardized quantity representing 1,024 individual bytes, each of which is composed of 8 bits. A bit is simply a 0 or a 1, the basic element of binary code. We have chosen bytes because it is a broader measure of information chunks, similar to gauging the length of a road in kilometers as opposed to meters. In short, a game that claims to be 32 'Megs' in size is probably referring to bits, and is actually only 4 Megs in size.



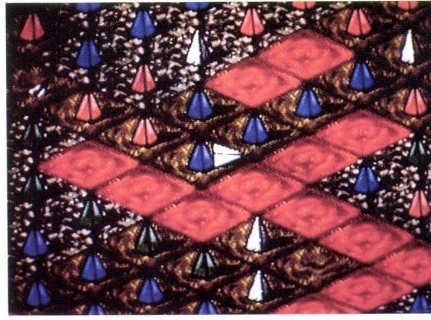
**Title:** H.U.R.L.  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** 3D Shooter/Eduainment  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Deep River Publishing  
**Developer:** Millennium Media Group  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$39.95  
**VGA Rating:** C+

Since the release of *Wolfenstein* several years ago, there have been countless reshapes of the same basic game engine. For the most part, the imitations that managed to add something new were successful and the plain imitations bombed – terribly. *H.U.R.L.* is a plain imitation. At this point, a 3D shooter isn't even worth looking at unless it boasts fancy enhancements like multi-story maze architectures, polygon-mapped characters, or up and down view tilting. *H.U.R.L.*'s saving grace is the fact that it is not competing for the aforementioned market.

*H.U.R.L.* is a very simple game geared at young children. Its only educational feature is its strangely obsessive attempt at teaching cleanliness. The object of the game is to pick up trash lying on the street and clean up all the ducks, pigs, monkeys and so forth that threaten the well being of the community by throwing bars of soap and deodorant at them. Damage is gauged by the dirt meter on the player's status bar and can be lessened by using conveniently located hygienal tools such as toilets and showers spread throughout the game.

**Bottom Line:** This is a truly bizarre game, which may actually interest a lot of younger players. For those gamers not yet ready for the likes of "Doom", this is an entertaining and marginally challenging title. Stock this game in the same quantity as you would any other PC CD edutainment title.

– Matt Harding



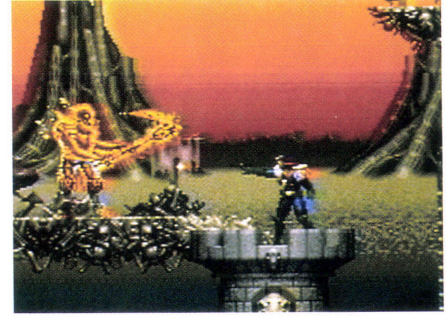
**Title:** Ice Breaker  
**Platform:** 3DO  
**Genre:** Shooter/Strategy  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Panasonic Software  
**Developer:** Magnet Interactive  
**Available:** June  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$59.95  
**VGA Rating:** C

*Ice Breaker* is definitely a unique title. Did you ever imagine running around shooting at pyramids could be fun? It actually is quite entertaining. While many may be skeptical at first, the diversity of the levels improves drastically, by the fifth level there are new enemies and by the 150th level its almost a whole new game. The game is nothing special and doesn't scream 32-Bit, but it is entertaining. The average gamer will probably only give this a passing glance but the smart gamer may actually pick this title up and rent it. Do not on the other hand expect this game to fly off the shelves.

The game play in *Ice Breaker* is not that bad but it is here that the 3DO controller shows its poor design again. The developers took the time to program all eight directions into the game, but using the diagonals is difficult. Besides the lack of decent control, the game is enjoyable.

**Bottom Line:** When "Ice Breaker" hits the shelves, it won't break any sales records. However, a steady following of strategy/shooter fans may spring up out of this original game. The game will probably be a consistent rental, with an occasional sale.

– Sam Hamilton



**Title:** Judge Dredd  
**Platform:** Super NES  
**Genre:** Side-Scroller  
**Size:** 2 MB  
**Publisher:** Acclaim  
**Developer:** Probe  
**Available:** June  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B

Acclaim will bring one of this summer's blockbuster movies to the Super NES. *Judge Dredd* the game, will be another winner for the marketing-intensive Acclaim Entertainment. It combines a huge license with decent game play and good graphics. This title is reminiscent of the great *Alien 3* for the Super Nintendo. In terms of overall sales *Judge Dredd* should do very well, as it is being backed by a huge advertising campaign, including sources like 3,000 movies theater's and marketing efforts on American On-line.

Where the game shows its true colors is in the game play. Each level starts out with pretty simplistic mission objectives. As one plays the game the graphics show players what they're made of, whereby, the animation and colors displayed are quite good. Overall, the game play is nothing revolutionary but it is on the high end in the side-scrolling beat 'em up genre.

**Bottom Line:** Acclaim went to great lengths to make sure that this title wasn't another "dreddful" movie to game translation. This game should be one of the summer's big movers, expect heavy rentals and somewhat above average sales.

– Sam Hamilton



**Title:** Jumping Flash  
**Platform:** PlayStation (Japan)  
**Genre:** 3D Shooter  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Sony Comp. Ent.  
**Developer:** Sony Comp. Ent.  
**Available:** Now (Import)  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B+

**Title:** Pebble Beach Golf Links  
**Platform:** Saturn  
**Genre:** Golf  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Sega  
**Developer:** T & E Soft  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B

**Title:** Penn & Teller's Smoke & Mirrors  
**Platform:** Sega CD  
**Genre:** Side-scroller/Int. Movie  
**Size:** 2 CDs  
**Publisher:** Absolute  
**Developer:** Absolute  
**Available:** June  
**Wholesale:** \$27.00  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$39.95  
**VGA Rating:** C+

*Jumping Flash* is one of the best games so far for the PlayStation. Using the hardware's full potential, *Jumping Flash* inserts the player into a cartoon-like 3D world. You play as a robotic rabbit, bouncing through 18 levels of abstract world designs, in an attempt to put a stop to the malevolent force that is disrupting a once peaceful land.

The graphics are simply some of the most stunning ever seen on the PlayStation. It even beats out the hot selling *Toshiden*. When it comes down to game play watch out *Ridge Racer*, this game has it all. Once comfortable with the controls, this title plays much like a cross between *Donkey Kong Country* and *Doom*. This little bunny rabbit adds a new dimension to the game play. The fact that you can jump twice to reach platforms high above the ground is an added bonus.

**Bottom Line:** When this game hits the shelves in the US it will be during the infancy of the system, this will help its already incredible marketing potential. It will be no surprise if this game took off and sold well. This titles should sell steadily and rent frequently.

— Sam Hamilton

T&E Soft has created another version of *Pebble Beach Golf*, this one is probably the best. The Saturn does the game justice. It has improved speed, better graphics, and great sound. Plus it has a character named Stadler (Kinda of an office joke here!). The control is great, they have really tweaked every area of this game for the Saturn platform.

The Saturn only had a handful of games for its premature launch and *Pebble Beach Golf Links* is one of the better titles. The worst part of this game is that the wind never calms down, making it very hard to get used to the basic controls. The game has a lot of diversity, for example you can play with up to four human players in a skins game or a real game of golf. One player can play in skins, 18 holes, or a Pebble Beach Open against the computer. *Pebble Beach* is really a good, solid title.

**Bottom Line:** Sega Sports has another winner on its hand here. Again good sales should be had with this title. This is one of the first titles for the Saturn and that should be enough to warrant sufficiently high sell-through. Don't order too deeply but have enough in stock to supply demand. The demand should be high with the original Saturns and relatively small software base.

— Sam Hamilton

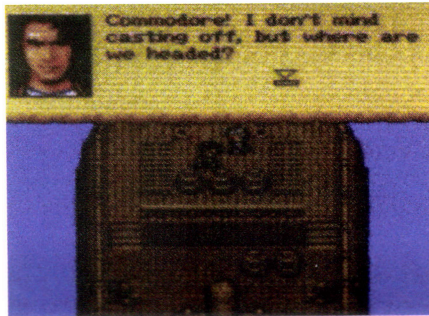
Penn & Teller are a pair of magicians/con artists who've upset people for almost two decades, with an irreverent attitude and an eagerness to reveal how they, (and other magicians), do their tricks. David Copperfield was once quoted as saying that "they should die," a ringing endorsement if I've ever heard one. They've written several best-selling books, and they're a regular fixture on the boob tube, making frequent appearances on *Late Show* with David Letterman.

*Penn & Teller's Smoke and Mirrors* is their entry into the world of multimedia, and it has all the sick and twisted humor you'd expect from these guys. There are several scams to make your friends look stupid, a hysterical parody of simulation games called "Desert Bus," and a side-scrolling game after you've run out of friends to scam.

**Bottom Line:** The only problem with *Smoke and Mirrors* is that it's making its debut on the comatose Sega CD platform. P & T showed the game on their last *Late Show* appearance, but that jolt of publicity may not be enough. I also have a nagging feeling that P & T are a little too hip for the Sega CD user base. Order modestly and wait for the PC and 32-bit versions, which should sell strongly to "mature" users.

— Zach Meston





**Title:** PO'ed  
**Platform:** 3DO  
**Genre:** 3D shooter  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Any Channel  
**Developer:** Any Channel  
**Available:** July  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$59.95  
**VGA Rating:** B

**Title:** New Horizons  
**Platform:** PC CD-ROM  
**Genre:** Simulation  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Koei  
**Developer:** Koei  
**Available:** June  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** C

**Title:** Worldwide Soccer  
**Platform:** Saturn  
**Genre:** Sports  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Sega  
**Developer:** Sega  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B-

The long awaited 3D shooter *PO'ed* is finally approaching completion for the 3DO, and it turned out to be a genuinely fun, albeit confusing departure from most games of its kind. Gamers play as Homer, a member of an elite space commando squad which has been captured and defeated by a destructive alien race. As the only member of the crew that hasn't either been killed or turned into a 'Soul Crystal' one must venture onto the bizarre alien world and try to save the surviving crew. This is all, needless to say, an excuse for the carnage-filled shooter that is the game.

*PO'ed* is one of the most unique *Doom*-clones ever; employing armies of walking butts, mutant pink things, a jet pack and levels reminiscent of some of Salvador Dali's strangest work to maintain a giant question mark hanging over players' heads. The controls are very complicated but can be tackled after a fair amount of practice. The graphics are standard due to the dull colors and poor texture maps, (more a fault in the system than the game). But the game play is very much in place to make this a decent seller.

**Bottom Line:** 3DO owners have been waiting for a decent 3D shooter for a long time. *Doom* will steal much of its sales, given its almost simultaneous release. But "*PO'ed*" is a good enough game to ensure it a good reception among players.

— Matt Harding

*New Horizons* is a relatively new game, (already released for 16-Bit platforms), that will be coming to stores for PC CD-ROMS in June. Unfortunately for KOEI very few people know about this game, as no demos are being produced through consumer magazines or on-line, and marketing and advertising was minimal at best.

On the brighter side, *New Horizons* does have many positive aspects as well. The game runs on a 386 processor, a true rarity with recent PC products, meaning a fairly substantial potential customer base. It also offers SuperVGA graphics, a nice feature - though the game hardly uses this to its full potential. The uniqueness of the game should also aid its sales potential it is best described as a strategically enhanced and less action intensive version of *Pirates*, a game from back in the 80's. The game does a fairly good job at selling itself by giving players six different characters to play as, over 120 ports to discover, in addition to villages that hold secrets for adventurers. The multitude of armor, weapons and items should attract any RPG fan, the combat is intensive enough to warrant a strategy enthusiast, and it also does a good job as a simulation for sailing in the 10th century.

**Bottom Line:** Not many people know this game is coming out. Marketing and consumer reviews are sparse, so sales will have to rely on word-of-mouth. It also does not offer much visually for impulse sales, and is an average product all around. It should, however, have a very long shelf life.

— Brian Dobbins

When Sega decided to release the Saturn early they needed software and they needed it fast. Thus came *Worldwide Soccer*, AKA *Victory Goal*, the game is exact to its Japanese counterpart. The only difference is that the Japanese text has been replaced by English. They were in such a hurry to release this game that they forgot to change the title screen from *Victory Goal* to *Worldwide Soccer*.

The game itself is a decent soccer game, and closely rivals *FIFA Soccer* for the 3DO, the only downfall of the game is that it doesn't look as good as *FIFA*. The control is well tweaked and the graphics are good, but the sound could use a little more work. For the most part *Worldwide Soccer* is a fun game, but doesn't approach the quality of work that was put into *FIFA Soccer*.

**Bottom Line:** Early Sega Saturn owners will need games to play, and will be somewhat forced into buying "*Worldwide Soccer*," those who wait, will probably pick it up just to have something to play, expect good sales. *Worldwide Soccer* should be a consistent seller until a better soccer game makes it way to the "theater of the eye".

— Sam Hamilton



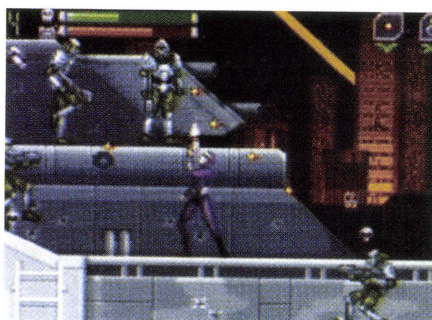
**Title:** Gunner's Heaven  
**Platform:** PlayStation (Japan)  
**Genre:** Action  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Sony Comp. Ent.  
**Developer:** Sony Comp. Ent.  
**Available:** Now (Import)  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** C

Very similar to the awesome *Gunstar Heroes* on the Sega Genesis, *Gunner's Heaven* is a side-scrolling action nightmare. Gamers are bombarded with non-stop enemy fire right from the beginning. As a single player game, (which was a mistake), fans of this genre can assume the role of either a male or female soldier each loaded with some pretty amazing weapons. Confronted with both large, mid and end bosses, this title is sure to please those who enjoy a good thrashing.

The players who enjoyed the Genesis title, will find that the PSX version has a lot to offer in the challenge department. Yet, this title seems to be lacking in a few key areas. First, a difficulty selection would have been nice for those who prefer not to become a memory after a minute of play. Secondly, titles like this need to have simultaneous gameplay.

**Bottom Line:** Granted, *GH* is loaded with great graphics and gameplay, but I must again comment on the simultaneous play being sorely missed. If *GH* is ever considered for a U.S. release, consider it to have a lifespan similar to "Gunstar Heroes." The initial reaction is very positive, but it will probably end up in the discount bins a few months after release. If your customers are already sick of the whole 3D thing, than this title is their best bet.

— Aaron Zachlod



**Title:** Phantom 2040  
**Platform:** Super NES  
**Genre:** Side-Scroller  
**Size:** 2MB  
**Publisher:** Viacom New Media  
**Developer:** Viacom New Media  
**Available:** July  
**Wholesale:** \$49.95  
**S.R.P.:** \$64.95  
**VGA Rating:** C-

Let's peer into that enormous retail bonfire of poor, character licensed videogames and see what's kindling this month. *Phantom 2040* is (you guessed it) a side-scroller that incorporates an eclectic selection of weapons along with a vast array of menacing enemies to create a sparkingly standard game. The dazzling intermissions (I'm lying) draw the player in, propelling them through the 60 levels of action. This is truly the type of average game that makes game-testers twitch.

All glibness aside, this game simply isn't much fun. It probably won't appeal to fans of the show, because it captures virtually none of its essence. The only people who will enjoy this game are those who truly love side-scrollers in and of themselves. Its general design is on the level with most other side-scrollers, and its only real flaw in terms of game play is its similarity to those titles. Conversely, it is being produced by a marketing-intensive company who may have unrevealed plans to hype the product.

**Bottom Line:** This game will not sell because it is very genre-specific and does not create a gameplay value greater than average. As is always the case with licensed games, it will be rented by those who are fans of its namesake. But its loyal following isn't much to speak of in terms of their numbers.

— Matt Harding



**Title:** Johnny Mnemonic  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** Interactive Movie  
**Size:** 2 CDs  
**Publisher:** Sony Imagesoft  
**Developer:** Propaganda Code  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$69.95  
**VGA Rating:** B-

Just in time to catch the brunt of the Mnemonic hype comes Propaganda code's first videogame outing, *Johnny Mnemonic*, based on the William Gibson short story. This game is a very high-concept project, featuring experienced actors, extravagant production values, and a stylish design execution. It follows the plight of poor Johnny Mnemonic, whose head has been filled with too much data and no download code. The player has twelve hours to get the data out of his head before his brain turns into apple sauce, avoiding well-dressed hit men who are determined to eliminate all traces of the sought after information.

The game's pride and joy is its unique interface (or lack thereof). There is no on-screen menu system, forcing players to determine their next move from the constant stream of video clips. Customers who are running this game on anything less than a triple-speed CD drive will not be happy with the video, so expect some returns. The biggest drawback to this title's success is the growing consumer disinterest in Full Motion Video reliant games.

**Bottom Line:** It has close to zero replay value (a trait inherent to most interactive movies), but is certain to sell quite a few copies based on the massive interest surrounding the property, as well as the intriguing concept of the game itself. *Johnny Mnemonic* is a good cyberpunk adventure game, "Burn Cycle" was a better one.

— Matt Harding



**Title:** Ultra Vortex  
**Platform:** Jaguar  
**Genre:** Fighting  
**Size:** 4 MB  
**Publisher:** Beyond Games  
**Developer:** Beyond Games  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B-

At last, a playable fighting game for the Jaguar! After the triple travesties of *Double Dragon V*, *Fight For Life*, and *Kasumi Ninja*, it's refreshing to see *Ultra Vortex*, which has everything a good beat-'em-up is supposed to have; smooth play control, great graphics, and killer moves.

*Ultra Vortex* doesn't have the benefit of a big ad campaign-wishful thinking for a Jaguar third-party company-but it does have a lot of pre-release buzz, since the game's been under development nearly as long as the Jaguar has existed. Beyond Games has a good reputation in the Atari community and Jaguar owners are desperate for titles, so they're certain to give *Ultra Vortex* a look-see even if they normally aren't into fighting games.

**Bottom Line:** "*Ultra Vortex*" is the best Jaguar fighting game to date, and one of the better Jaguar games, period. The hype on this game is almost as big as the low-quality "*Fight For Life*", but Jaguar owners should quickly discover which is the better game and buy accordingly. If your Jaguar sales are decent, this is definitely a game to have on your shelves.

— Zach Meston



**Editorial Correction**  
 This game rated A-

**Title:** Slipstream 5000  
**Platform:** PC CD-ROM  
**Genre:** Racing  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** U.S. Gold  
**Developer:** Gremlin  
**Available:** June  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** A-

The essence of *Slipstream 5000* is that you race against nine competitors, and a series of "drone" vehicles on 10 global race circuits. Players have 11 different weapons and five different turbochargers available to them as you earn championship points and money. The game allows you to simply practice racing on any of the ten circuits, race against the computer or human opponents, or to try your luck at the ten circuit championship mode-where points are given for placing in the top six positions, and money is awarded that can be used to purchase more advanced weapons.

*Slipstream 5000* is an absolute blast to play. It is a game that produces an excellent contest when you are challenging the computer opponents, not to mention the absolute brilliance and entertainment value found in the multi-player game and network/modem play. In fact, it is the courses that make the game so memorable and diverse.

**Bottom Line:** PC CD-ROM owners will seek out and buy "*Slipstream 5000*." Although the title doesn't have a strong license or marketing tie-in, it is one of those games that will have strong word-of-mouth and an extended sales curve. Expect this title to move in a similar vein to Interplay's "*Descent*", but perhaps without the initial punch.

— Dave Winding



**Title:** Strahl  
**Platform:** 3DO  
**Genre:** Interactive Movie  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Panasonic Software  
**Developer:** Media Entertainment  
**Available:** July  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$59.95  
**VGA Rating:** D+

Enter the world of Strahl, where FMV (full motion video) warriors reign supreme. Where one's luck is so bad, that they are in an endless search for a safe ledge to grab hold of, and the evil ones countless minions attack relentlessly. Gamers will have about 3% control over the main character, named Alexis Hawkfield. Just when I thought I had my fill of FMV titles, which was about a year ago, I ran into this one. The Japanimation is very well done; actually circa 1985.

Overall, the game play is very simple; the reason is that all of the controller commands are displayed onscreen when the player needs to press a button. It's almost impossible to make a mistake until later into the game when the action becomes fast and furious. Each level is selectable by the player, so it can be mixed up a bit to break the monotony. Can this title survive if released on our shores? As a rental, possibly.

**Bottom Line:** While these type of games may do well in Japan, there is a cry from gamers here to stop the madness. These games have a very short life, and the reason can be summed up in one word; monotony. After one views the cartoon ten times, it gets old pretty fast. The overall production was superbly executed, but FMV games are a blasphemy. Special orders only!

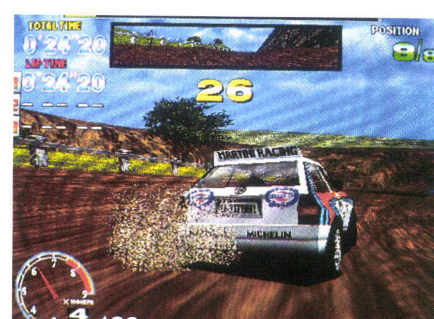
— Aaron Zachlod



**Title:** Braindead 13  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** Interactive Movie  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** ReadySoft  
**Developer:** ReadySoft  
**Available:** September (Delayed)  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$59.95 – \$69.95  
**VGA Rating:** B



**Title:** Daedalus Encounter  
**Platform:** 3DO  
**Genre:** Interactive Movie  
**Size:** 4 CDs  
**Publisher:** Panasonic Software  
**Developer:** Mechadeus  
**Available:** July  
**Wholesale:** \$59.95  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$79.95  
**VGA Rating:** B



**Title:** Sega Rally  
**Platform:** Arcade  
**Genre:** Racing  
**Size:** Arcade  
**Publisher:** Sega  
**Developer:** AM3  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**M.S.R.P.:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B

The folks at ReadySoft have made a healthy living over the past half-decade by releasing various computer and videogame versions of two laserdisc games almost as popular now as they were in the mid-1980s: *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*.

Now, with a large pile of dough and a desire to stretch their creative muscles - not to mention a chance to be known as more than "the *Dragon's Lair* company", ReadySoft is unleashing *Braindead 13*, a game with 100% original animation that plays very much like *Dragon's Lair*. ReadySoft has been pushing this game hard, buying multi-page ads in a smattering of consumer magazines and landing the occasional cover story.

Small companies associated heavily with one or two products have been able to change public perception before - does anyone remember when Sir-tech was known as "the *Wizardry* company"? Then again, ReadySoft's last crack at an original title flopped mightily - does anyone remember *Guy Spy*?

**Bottom Line:** ReadySoft seems to have learned from their previous booboos, because they're doing "*Braindead 13*" right. The game looks great, the advertising was heavy and the pre-release buzz is huge, three factors that will add up to healthy sales on all formats.

- Zach Meston

Being a young man with a more than adequate supply of hormones, I'm sorely tempted to recommend stocking this game solely on the basis of its star, Tia Carrere, but I digress. If you read Videogame Advisor's premiere issue, you already saw David "Dave" Winding's review of the PC version of *The Daedalus Encounter*; the 3DO version isn't much different, except that it looks better, (as well it should), and it comes on four CDs instead of three (yeesh).

To plagiarize... er, paraphrase Dave: "*The Daedalus Encounter* is a science-fiction, action-adventure CD-ROM that mixes a unique blend of puzzle-solving, arcade-style shooting, and over two hours of interactive full-motion video. [It] combines bits and pieces from a few different genres, but relies mainly on *The 7th Guest* style of game play."

**Bottom Line:** "*The Daedalus Encounter*" has smart packaging, (with Ms. Carrere featured prominently on the box), and above-average publicity, (with more than a few on-the-set articles written about the PC version), so the 3DO version should sell quite well indeed. Heck, if I hadn't weaseled a copy from Panasonic, I'd go buy it anyway—the highest praise a scam artist, (free-lancer), like myself can give.

- Zach Meston

Sega has a long history of arcade excellence from the early days with *Out-run*, then on to *Virtua Racing* and *Daytona, USA*. Step aside because *Sega Rally* is here. The realism that is in *Sega Rally* is incredible. Have you ever experienced what a rally feels like? The heart-throbbing, adrenaline rush feeling that you get from this game is one of the best aspects.

The graphics are inspirational. That is the only way to describe them. The attention to detail in *Sega Rally* are some the best ever. The graphics have just about every imaginable detail, everything is here. You've probably heard this one before, but the graphics have to be seen to be believed.

The game play is where it is at. Imagine driving across mud, hitting the gas pedal a touch to hard, and sliding side ways until you let off the gas. The steering wheel gives you tension as you turn. The control is some the highest quality in an arcade game.

**Bottom Line:** *Sega Rally* is the most realistic and best looking arcade game ever made by Sega. The only snag that *Sega Rally* hits is its price tag. Expect arcade goers to play this one over and over again, its that good.

- Sam Hamilton

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# Power Play

## A Translation of Technical Trivia

By: Jeff High

**I**n the Media War of the Gaming Industry, one aspect seems to be of considerable debate between consumers, technicians and the interpreters in-between. Terminology that nobody seems to understand flies freely in every major publication and traps the lay-person in a volley of claims all providing proof positive of the hands-down superiority of a particular system. Just what does it all mean to you? Fact is, people listen closely to the tech-talk with very little idea of what's being said and base opinions solely on how high the numbers are.

An accurate method of selection? Not really, but advertisers have been using it as a lever, and buyers have been relying on it, for years. Today, the public is a little better educated and is less often fooled by big numbers. This is good news since market trends will again force the issue of overall quality, but this makes for a more subtle problem for the buyer. *In today's business, when everything is up-in-the-air, market projection is as important as analysis and suddenly, those numbers have become a necessary evil to buyers for one important reason - potential.*

Who would have thought, when we were all drooling over the first copy of Super Mario World on the Super Nintendo, that we would one day be playing a game like Donkey Kong Country, or when Sega released Altered Beast that we could enjoy visual feasts like Flashback on the same system? Hardware capabilities are determinants of a product's future success, since that potential is a map of a system's probable duration in the mar-



ketplace. We may never know just what its outer limits are, but we can form reasonable judgments based on the information we have. Now the only problem is in understanding it all. Read on...

Here is a sample technical sheet for a fictitious system. We will cover it top to bottom, and explain the important aspects in detail, working from the ground up, and assisting you in separating the gold from the

<b>CPU:</b>	32-Bit RISC, 20 MHz/40 MIPS
<b>Co-processor:</b>	24Bit Motorola 68000
<b>RAM:</b>	10 Megs
<b>Colors:</b>	32,768 palette (True Color)
<b>Sound:</b>	16Bit, 44 channels
<b>Graphics:</b>	10,000 Polygons per second, Gourard Shading, Light Sourcing, Texture Mapping, 100 Sprites, 720 x 576 Resolution, scaling and rotation, custom scrolling, MPEG.

garbage.

Sounds great, doesn't it? Most technical specification sheets look like this and are about as decipherable. But these numbers are like

*Today, the public  
is a little better  
educated and is  
less often fooled  
by big numbers.*

statistics. Unless we all understand exactly what they mean in the proper context, they can be manipulated to say just about anything the manufacturer wants you to believe. Hopefully, the next few paragraphs will give you a basic understanding so you will be able to judge for yourself.

## ••• CPU •••

First, let's cover the heart of the system, the Central Processing Unit. **This CPU is the 'power' upon which everything else relies and the meat of any hardware's capabilities.** The Co-Processor is a secondary unit that is usually dedicated to a specific function, freeing up the main processor for more important tasks.



Left: Atari's Jaguar CD-ROM  
Above: Panasonic's R-E-A-L 3DO Interactive Multiplayer  
Below: Sega's Saturn

## Bits and Megs

There is a significant difference between Bits and Bytes. A bit is the basic unit of measure for information in computer memory, whether active (RAM) or operational (ROM). It represents a segment of eight characters of binary code. A Byte is eight Bits. The term megabit has been used several times in place of megabyte, either in error or in an attempt to impress you. Don't be fooled.

The rest of this family of terms is easy to follow. Bits are rarely referred to in hardware so the standard unit is usually a byte. 1,024 bytes (2 to the 10th power) is a Kilobyte or simply a 'K', as in 64K. A Meg is almost always short for Megabyte which is approximately one-thousand Kilobytes (1024K).

The next level is right around the corner, though you won't see it used much for some time. It is the Gigabyte. 1,024 Megs, or about one-billion Bytes. It represents an enormous amount of memory by today's standards, but keep in mind that a few short years ago, forty Megabyte

hard drives were huge while we are now struggling with 250 Megs of memory!

In describing a processor's power, as in 16-Bit, 32-Bit, etc., the term 'Bit' is referring to the number of bits that are transferred from storage at one time. Like traffic on a freeway, the information travels in lanes, and multiple lanes means higher volume and faster transit, hence the enormous difference between 16- and 32-Bit systems.

## RISC Processors

RISC stands for Reduced Instruction Set Computer. It is a newer, more powerful processor that cuts down on the time it takes for a computer to read and fulfill a program.

## MHz

Short for MegaHertz. No, it's not a really big rental car company. It's a measurement of wave frequency. This is most easily described using the traffic analogy. If Bits are cars and the Processor is the multi-lane highway, the MHz is the speed limit. It describes the rate of transfer of information in the same way Bits describe the volume.

## RAM

This stands for Random Access Memory and it is the active memory in the system. There are many kinds of RAM that perform different functions, but it all describes the available performing space in a computer.

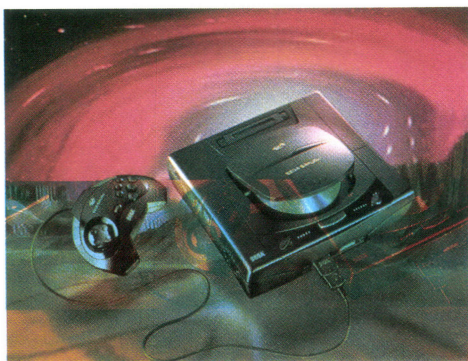
## MIPS

This is an abbreviation for Millions of Instructions Per Second. It is a generic term for defining a systems rate of performance.

## ••• SOUND •••

Most individuals who do not live and breathe videogames have a tendency to ignore a fairly important aspect of the experience. Sound. Everybody has seen video in which sound was not a consideration in production. Even with superb footage, they appear lackluster and unprofessional. Conversely, high quality sound can turn a poorly laid out piece into a perfectly acceptable production. Sound can make up a third or as much as half of the quality of a visual production and games are no exception.

*Sound can make up a third or as much as half of the quality of a visual production and games are no exception.*



*Probably the most targeted specification is a system's ability to produce stunning graphics.*

### Channels

Sound is not produced as a singularity. It comes from a number of sources: the traffic outside, a fly buzzing past, a knock on the door. What we interpret are vibrations distributed between our eardrums giving us a three dimensional effect, just like our eyes register 3D by comparing slightly different images. We rely on this variety to give us a life-like experience and this is addressed by game systems through Channels. Sounds are created by breaking them down in groups, and playing them back as a whole. The end result is greater detail since subtleties are not lost to louder, overlapping noises. Each channel counts for one separation in playback, meaning two channels can produce sound in two individual groups, and so forth. The greater number of channels, the greater detail that will be produced, and the greater realism in the total experience.

### ●●● GRAPHICS ●●●

Probably the most targeted specification is a system's ability to produce stunning graphics. This facet has nothing to do with the overall quality of a game and, has bred a new category of software not-so-fondly called Eye Candy, titles with incredible graphics but not much substance. In spite of this, many a game has been sold on this attribute alone.

### Pixels and Resolution

This is pretty easy for those with any familiarity with computers or

electronic entertainment. A pixel is the smallest visible unit displayed on the computer screen.

**Resolution is the number of pixels displayed on the screen at one time,** usually read in terms of dimension, i.e. 576 (height) X

720 (width) (414,720 pixels). Occasionally, resolution will be read as ppi, pixels per inch.

### Colors

One of the more advertised qualifications of 'cool' graphics is a sys-

tem's Palette and On-Screen Colors. This is the number of individual colors the system is capable of producing. It is also completely meaningless. For years, computers have been capable of palettes consisting of millions of colors; the handicap lies in the number of colors that can be displayed on the screen at once. Not long ago, 256 colors was an exceptional standard, and still is on most personal computers, but new technology has allowed as many as 4,500. The figures are impressive but considering that the human eye is only capable of distinguishing just under 2,500 separate colors, larger numbers tend to fall apart.

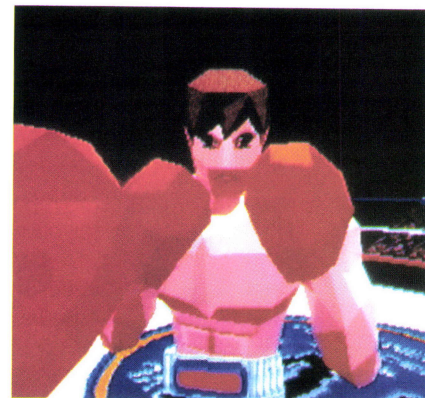
### Sprites

Sprites are pixels that are grouped to simplify animation. Rather than load the processor down by updating the entire screen every time something changes, programmers can

lay a static or scrolling background and move sprites over the top. Generally, sprites are anything that moves independent of the background, such as characters, laser fire, or even UN-moving objects that aren't always a part of the scene. A system's ability to process sprites are often listed in technical specs as 'number of sprites'. This indicates how many sprites the processor can maintain on-screen at any time without a 'flicker'. This number is important to any titles that display a large number of objects at once.

### Polygons

This is a newer statistic tossed around by the high-end systems and are a bit more complicated to explain. Polygons are like sprites in that they are pixels grouped on the screen, however, they are tracked in the processor as three dimensional objects, ranging from as little as four to hundreds of surfaces. This allows





the computer to display them from any angle without having to rely on complex animations. Usually, this is taken a step further and the polygons are grouped to form what works out to be a single sprite, such as a person in a fighting game like Toh Shin Den (PSX). To give these a realistic appearance, there needs to be possibly hundreds of polygons in a single sprite.

Some older titles, like Star Fox, and many newer ones, especially on the new generation of systems, can track these right on the screen and move them in 'real-time' (meaning simply that it can keep up with you). This capability is reflected in the Polygons per Second, the number of polygons the hardware can reposition in a second. Since characters can require even hundreds of polygons those impressive numbers are eaten up fast.

The following features are not represented by numbers or variables. They are features that allow developers to bypass certain aspects of programming by instructing the hardware to fulfill the command independent of the game's program. A system either has these or not.

### **Gourard Shading**

Named for its creator, this process creates lighting to smooth rough edges out of a polygon image. Since polygons are made up of flat surfaces, it is impossible to create a true curve. Gourard Shading uses realistic gradients to create the appearance of smooth, curved images.

### **Light Sourcing**

3-dimensional images would be pretty bland without shadows to accentuate their contours. Programmers have come up with a way to render shadows quickly and easily in real time. The technique is called Light Sourcing. The programmer positions a steady light source within the stationary environment and the computer calculates the spread of illumination from the source. The surfaces that are turned away from the source are darkened in varying shades depending on their distance from the illuminated segments, creating a realistic image.

### **Texture Mapping**

This is a computer 3D modeler's 'cheat-method' of creating realistic

### **graphics with polygon technology.**

When a 3D image is constructed in the computer, a wire-frame model is assembled in a 3-dimensional grid. This model is then fleshed out by applying opaque color over the surface segments, like putting up walls over the frame of a house. For example, a real tree is covered in bark that has complex textures that would have to be contoured into the wire frame, a process that would take weeks. Instead, developers take a flat picture of the texture they desire and map it over a smooth surface, similar to you upholstering your sofa. The pattern gives it the realism the designer is looking for without excessive effort. This technique has been used in games like Virtua Fighter 2 and Tekken to create believable characters.

### **Scaling, Scrolling, and Rotation**

These features are simple perspective commands that act as shortcuts for the developer by performing these actions within the hardware rather than the game program. They mean exactly what they say and serve no purpose relevant to overall performance.

### **MPEG**

This is a compression technique that allows developers to load vast quantities of video data into a small space with a high retrieval rate. Using this, manufacturers like Phillips, (with their CD-i), have produced full feature-length films on five inch CD's. This aids significantly in games with full-motion video.

There are dozens of additional terms that continue to crop up as technology advances, but those above are most common and most misrepresented. You will need to continue to pay attention to reviews and opinions since everything cannot be summed up in numbers, however, this information will help you to keep those figures in perspective while you weigh your options in the months ahead. **VGA**



*Texture Mapping*

*has been used in*

*games like Virtua*

*Fighter 2 and*

*Tekken to create*

*believable*

*characters.*

# The Virtual Reality Report

By: Matt Harding

24

JUNE  
1995

*...the first attempts  
at true consumer  
VR are here...*

**D**efinition-Virtual Reality: The use of stereoscopic display, head tracking, and stereo sound, combined into a head-mounted unit to create a fully-immersive digital simulation of reality.

Imagine opening your eyes and seeing a world made out of binary code. Polygon mountain ranges extend as far as the system's RAM will allow, and trees made out of fractal algorithms cast ray-traced shadows over the textured grass floor. Every detail is simulated in at least a crude attempt at recreating reality. The movements of your head and arms are tracked by sensors, updating your position thirty times each second. Sound is channeled through a speaker on each ear in three-dimensional stereo, and sight is split between two slightly off-set images displayed to each eye providing stereoscopic view. Time is relevant only in respect to your real-world being, and distance is as malleable as you want it to be. **This is high-end Virtual Reality.**

Several years ago, this technology first became attainable only on insanely expensive supercomputers and was pioneered by eccentric computer guru/ experimental musician, Jaron Lanier. The hype for VR burst into the mainstream with the brainless epic *The Lawnmower Man*, and Virtual Reality soon became the end-all-be-all techno buzzword for every software company eager to cash in on the rampant consumer interest. Virtual Reality was used to describe everything from full motion

videogames to the Aura Interactor (a vibrating speaker that you strap onto your chest). At that time, neither PC's nor videogame systems had the processing capability to handle the demands of VR, but with the influx of Pentiums in the marketplace and the introduction of "next generation" platforms, consumer hardware is finally up to speed. Now, after years of misinterpretation and general confusion, the first attempts at true consumer VR are here.

**The current roster of products is surprisingly strong for any first generation technology, especially one as over-glamorized as VR.** The Head Mounted Displays (HMDs), previewed display an enormous margin of price ranges, as well as an equally wide variety of approaches to the concept of VR. Forte is designing their headset strictly as a top of the line gaming interface, whereas Nintendo is pushing their Virtual Boy as the successor to their portable Game Boy system, and Virtual I/O has made an attempt at producing an all-around wonder of wired desktop hipness.

While the prices are still out of the financial range of most consumers, the promise of fully immersive gaming is a tantalizing prospect for many gamers. In upcoming years, headset prices will no doubt be plummeting dramatically and the market will be flooded with products. VGA has tested six virtual reality headsets currently on the market, or in development. **VGA**

# VIRTUAL REALITY REVIEWS



**Title:** 7th Sense  
**Platform:** PC  
**Weight:** 28 oz.  
**Resolution:** N/A  
**Developer:** Virtual Ent. Systems  
**Available:** 4th Quarter  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$399  
**VGA Rating:** C

**Title:** VFX1  
**Platform:** PC  
**Weight:** 2.5 lb.  
**Resolution:** 180,000 pixels  
**Developer:** Forte  
**Available:** Now  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$999  
**VGA Rating:** B-

**Title:** CyberMaxx 180  
**Platform:** PC, TV  
**Weight:** 14 oz.  
**Resolution:** 180,000 pixels  
**Developer:** VictorMaxx  
**Available:** Now  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$799  
**VGA Rating:** C-

At less than half the price of most PC headsets, the 7th sense VR helmet has taken a step in the right direction toward the consumer market. It comes packaged with several CD's worth of games designed for the headset, as well as demos of over a dozen titles that have special drivers for use with the 7th Sense. Unfortunately, the technology it uses is just too raw to appeal to most users.

The headset fits comfortably despite its 28 oz. weight and uses only one LCD screen, thus losing the 3D stereoscopic effect. The single LCD allowed VES to cut the cost dramatically, as well as preventing some of the drop in frame rate that stereoscopic headsets tend to suffer from. One of the focuses of the 7th Sense helmet is in limiting the degree of immersion in the game thereby allowing the gamer to remain aware of the real world while playing. The speakers do not cover the ears entirely, and tinted glass has been placed just under the screen so that the player will be able to see and hear perils which may be occurring in 'reality'.

**Bottom Line:** *The 7th Sense helmet won't fool anyone into thinking they've been transported into a virtual world, but at a retail cost of \$399 it's one of the most consumer-friendly packages on any platform.*

For gamers who truly want to forget where they are in the real world and thrust themselves headlong into the most encompassing simulated environment available, the VFX1 is the hands-down winner. Forte's approach to VR is in no way half-baked, the player cannot hear or see anything that is not a part of the simulation. The stereoscopic LCD resolution is among the best, and the head-tracking is second to none.

The VFX1 is a brilliantly engineered product. It comes packed with its own VIP™ interface card allowing flexibility with a variety of video graphics cards, and the cyberpuck™ controller which acts as a free-floating mouse/joystick. The towering price of the VFX1 is accounted for by its superior quality over the competition, but it is still limited to the range of only the most eager of the 'early adopter' set. Rather than being a stripped down version of what we'll be seeing in the years to come, (as most others are), this is exactly what will be out in a few years, but it will be at a greatly reduced price. The VFX1 is the perfect counterweight to the Virtual I/O in forming the two elite HMD units on the market.

**Bottom Line:** *For users who are uninterested in any desktop applications of VR technology, and want the best gaming VR helmet on the market no matter what the price - this is the one to have.*

In the same price range as the truly high-end headsets, the CyberMaxx helmet is in need of much improvement. Most of the helmet's weight is toward the front, which can put a lot of strain on the wearer after extended use. The head tracking is slow and inaccurate. The hardware price is an outrageous \$799, considering the unfinished nature of the product. The only area where the CyberMaxx really excelled is in its stereoscopic 3D effect. Nearby objects are easily perceivable as being closer than those in the background.

The CyberMaxx is the kind of product you'd expect from a first generation technology like consumer VR, and it would be a fine product were it not dwarfed by more perfected designs. The climate of the VR market is very competitive right now, and unless VictorMaxx is able to drop their retail price into an affordable range, (or improve upon the product with the 240 model), the CyberMaxx should not be considered for even marginal sales. This product is not comfortable to wear, does not display a high frame rate even on a Pentium, does not have head tracking up to the standard set by its competitors, and is nowhere near an appropriate price for its quality.

**Bottom Line:** *The same people who would pay \$799 for the CyberMaxx are likely to be willing to pay \$200 more for the similar but far superior VFX1.*

# VIRTUAL REALITY REVIEWS



**Title:** Virtual Boy  
**Platform:** Virtual Boy  
**Weight:** 28 oz.  
**Resolution:** 100,000 pixels  
**Developer:** Nintendo  
**Available:** August  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$179.95  
**VGA Rating:** B

Nintendo surprised most naysayers of the oddball Virtual Boy system with their strong showing of titles at the E3. The VB is scheduled to hit shelves in August at around \$179.95, with one of two Mario-themed games packed in. The VB runs off of a 32-Bit CPU, and is able to create an amazing 3D effect with very high resolution. Unfortunately, it is limited to the color red for all of its graphics. Nintendo is outspoken in their insistence that their system is not actual Virtual Reality, and noting its lack of head tracking does differentiate it as being less than true VR. But given its amazingly low price point, excellent illusion of depth and head-mounted orientation it is very worthy of mention.

Nintendo showed off a slew of over a dozen titles varying from mediocre to impressive quality. The VB should be able to rely on the strength of a few of its best titles when released, like the Mario-themed side-scroller starring the malevolent Wario, and the Star Fox-ish flying game Red Alarm.

**Bottom Line:** *This is the safest of all the headsets to stock in a retail outlet specializing in videogames, and as it inevitably drops in price it should almost mirror sales of the original Game Boy. The only drawbacks to mass market sales will be general confusion over what it actually is, dissatisfaction in its lack of color, and the possibility of bad word of mouth.*



**Title:** Jaguar VR  
**Platform:** Jaguar  
**Weight:** N/A  
**Resolution:** N/A  
**Developer:** Virtuality  
**Available:** December  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$399  
**VGA Rating:** C+

One of the biggest surprises of the entire E3 was the fact that the Jaguar VR helmet prototype wasn't a disappointment. After nearly two years of below satisfactory software support, (and a growing attitude that Atari may not release the avalanche of titles that they've been promising since the beginning), they pulled-off a highly impressive demo of their VR headset currently scheduled for late this year. It was explained to be one of five prototypes currently in existence, and was assembled at a feverish pace during the months leading up to the show. At the time Virtuality, the HMD's designers, were only able to show off one title in development. But they promised that they would have two in-house titles ready by its release, and would be receiving steady support by third-party production houses.

The game on display was Missile Command 2000, an enhanced version of the original arcade classic. Despite the helmet's unfinished optics system and painful fit, we were able to overlook the bad and find some very promising features. The head tracking uses a unique sensor system, that manages to take a rapid flow of location samples and coordinate them with a high frame rate to create a truly involving VR experience.

**Bottom Line:** *This should make the 150,000 loyal Jaguar owners who bought the system for the promise of high-end game play very happy. But at \$299, more than the Jaguar itself, don't expect the Jaguar VR headset to add any new customers to your base.*



**Title:** i-glasses!  
**Platform:** PC, TV  
**Weight:** 13.5 oz. (w/tracking)  
**Resolution:** 180,000 pixels  
**Developer:** Virtual i-O  
**Available:** Now  
**M.S.R.P.:** \$799 (w/tracking)  
**VGA Rating:** B+

Virtual i-O's i-glasses! is simply the best HMD available on the marketplace. Virtual i-O has used substantial backing and breakthrough R&D to develop a headset that is years ahead of its competition. The two LCD displays are of such high quality that performing tasks, such as operating in Windows, is relatively easy. The screens are transparently displayed through thin sheets of glass, so that the user has the option of removing the rear visor and viewing the outside world through the video overlay. The effect of wearing the i-glasses is as close as one can get to having a TV set imbedded in their head.

The headset is very light weight, about half that of the average competitors even with the head tracking add-on. The image does not need to be focused, (as it does with every other headset on the market), and suffers no resultant quality loss. It is also the only HMD available that can be worn over a pair of regular eye glasses. The basic package comes with stereo A/V cables, allowing it to view TV and videogame signals. At an additional cost, a PC monitor converter can be added and with the addition of optional head tracking the i-glasses it will become a fully functional VR product.

**Bottom Line:** *For console gaming stores, PC retailers, and suppliers of general audio/video equipment, this product would generate enormous interest. Unfortunately, the i-glasses suffer from very low product awareness, which could mean death to something this costly.*

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- Neo Geo
- Import Software
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**4. Total number of retail locations:**

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- 10-24
- 25-49
- 50-99
- 100 or more

**5. Number of employees:**

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- 250 or more

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**7. If yes, what do you base your decision on?**

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**9. Please check your company's gross sales volume:**

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- \$500,000 - \$999,999
- \$1,000,000 - \$4,999,999
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**11. Which of the following publications do you receive personally addressed to you by mail?**

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# Interviewing the Big Guys

By Glenn Rubenstein

At the E<sup>3</sup> in LA, everyone was talking about the new hardware platforms coming into the market, the viability of the platforms currently in the market, and the future of this industry. We got a chance to sit down with the heads of the five companies that, through their hardware platforms, (and the software on those platforms), will shape the future of this industry. (Part 1 & 2 of 5)



Sam Trameil, President Atari Corp.

**VGA: What do you see as Atari's current position in the "next generation" marketplace?**

**ST:** Positioning is a very important point. We're trying to tell the consumer that we have four very important factors. Number one. We have got great 64-bit technology. We've got good software and much more good software coming out. We had a lack of software in 1994, and now in '95 we have a lot of software titles coming out. Third is the price, we are the only affordable machine, it's \$149. I can't see paying 400 bucks for a game machine. Fourth, for us, it's made in the USA.

We were the second ones out there in new technology. 3DO beat us by a few weeks. We have a little bit of a lead in the software right now, but let's face it Sony and Sega will come out with some good software as well, but our price gives us a clear advantage.

**VGA: What do you consider Atari's biggest asset?**

**ST:** The hardware, the Jaguar itself.

**VGA: And what is Atari's biggest challenge?**

**ST:** Getting great software for the consumer, you have to have really, really, great software.

**VGA: Where do you see Atari and the Jaguar being a year from now?**

**ST:** I think we'll be one of the survivors of this war that's being talked about. I think there are 500,000 people who might buy a \$200 game machine, after that you hit a wall because it is just too much money. So as that wall falls apart, we'll just keep on surviving, and we'll be there in 1996.

**VGA: Why should the industry look toward Atari as a leader?**

**ST:** To be successful in the software side, you have to sell to a big installed base. There are about 30 million 16-bit users out there- Sneeze (SNES) and Genesis people who want to upgrade. What can they afford? So you get your (the developer) software on the Jaguar, because there will be a lot of machines out there.

**VGA: What do you see as the Jag's 3 Hot Titles for Christmas?**

**ST:** Primal Rage will be very, very hot. Brett Hull NHL Hockey will also be really great, it's the first of our advanced sports titles. I also think that Ultra Vortex (a head to head Mortal Kombat-esque fighting game) will do very well.

**VGA: Let's talk about your competition, we'll start with Sony.**

**ST:** Sony is a gigantic Japanese company with a lot of money. But it has lost its focus as a corporate entity. There are big fights between the hardware and software sides, they lost 4 billion dollars in the movie business, and right now they are throwing a lot of money at the Playstation and we'll see how they do.

**VGA: Nintendo?**

**ST:** Nintendo is more interesting. Ultra 64 not showing up this year we were very happy with. That was the closest machine to us in price at \$250, not showing up leaves that whole price area wide open to us. I think their Virtual Boy is what the Japanese call it, that's "Virtual Dog." I just get it. As far as Ultra 64 coming out next year, we're going to have Jaguar 2 out, which will be 4 times the power of Playstation, so it should be very interesting.

**VGA: Sega.**

**ST:** Sega I think is a big power, they are in the arcade business, they know software, I think they have lost a bit on the hardware side with 32X floundering and Saturn being 400 bucks, I don't know what's happening in that case. But they are very

strong in the entertainment software side. Their theme parks will do well, their coin-ops will do well, and they will be there in software power.

**VGA: What about 3DO?**

**ST:** Good night.

**VGA: You don't think the M2 is going to help them?**

**ST:** Not at all.

**VGA: Who do you consider your closest competition?**

**ST:** I see all these as competitors, they are all gigantic and all are real threats.

**VGA: What message is Atari trying to send to the buyer?**

**ST:** That we are the only affordable and powerful machine in the marketplace with good software.

**VGA: How would you respond to Atari's critics? A lot of people have come down on Atari about their lack of software and the Jaguar as a whole.**

**ST:** We blew '94 by not having enough software out at the right time. We just didn't get it together right, we and our developers were late. I apologize, we blew it. Thank god we have the time to come back at the right time, with the right software.

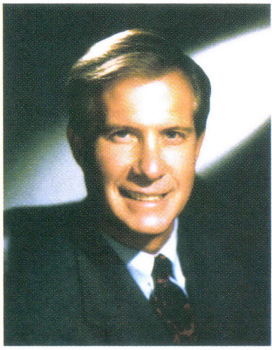
**VGA: If you could, talk a bit about the future with Jaguar 2.**

**ST:** It's backward compatible with Jaguar 1, it has faster polygon rates, more technology, and it's a better, more powerful Jaguar. It will be out Christmas '96, and it will be very affordable.

**VGA: Who do you see as your target audience?**

**ST:** 18-34 year olds right now, but eventually 8-35 and we plan to incorporate more women, and broaden things a bit more. We are adding things like VR and networking to make the game play more dynamic, and get more people into the experience.





**Tom Kalinske, Pres. & CEO, S.O.A.**

**VGA: Please describe Sega's current position in the "next generation" marketplace.**

**TK:** Well I think by launching Saturn 4 months before our competition we are leading the "next generation" and we will lead by Christmas-time too. This gives us a real strategic advantage over Sony or anyone else and of course since Nintendo has delayed their "next generation" system we believe that we won't have to worry about them until sometime next year.

**VGA: What do you feel Sega's biggest asset is?**

**TK:** Our biggest asset is the software we are bringing out. We have a large number of titles that are A+ titles for Saturn. We are fortunate that a number of these are conversions from arcade hits like Virtua Fighter which is a wonderful fighting game. Daytona, etc. So we have a terrific library of hit titles.

**VGA: What do you see as your biggest challenge?**

**TK:** The biggest challenge is convincing consumers that they should spend \$400 for new hardware. That's a lot of money, we understand that. So we have to make certain that people are aware of the value that is inherent in the Saturn machine.

**VGA: Where will Sega be a year from now?**

**TK:** I think we will be leading the videogame industry. The question is whether we will have a 55% or a 60% (share) of the market. I believe we will be leading and have gone past Sony and stayed ahead of Nintendo because of great software we have.

**VGA: What do you see as Sega's strengths in leading the videogame industry?**

**TK:** You have to look at us and say, "these guys do great arcade product and consumer product." "They really understand the mind of the consumer". "They understand how to make software and hardware, that can accommodate the software that gives the game player the kind of experiences they are looking for." Our whole company is made up of game players and that is why the engineers when they are designing the piece of hardware know how to build

the machine that accommodates the long term game playing needs of the public.

**VGA: What do you see as the hot three titles for your home platforms this Christmas?**

**TK:** For Saturn - Daytona, Virtua Fighter 2, and probably a sports title, NFL. 32X (looks at wall) - Virtua Fighter, Kaliguiii, and I think again a sports title, probably Prime Time NFL. Genesis - A harder one, but what we are betting on right now - Vector Man, Comic Zone which we think is a wonderful product, and, um, (pause) will it be sports of a Batman and Robin or something like that? That's a hard one to pick the third. I'd go with a sports title edging out the competition in the latter part of December.

**VGA: What are your thoughts on your competition. We'll start with Sony.**

**TK:** Yeah, they make great television sets. And we love to play our games on their TV sets. And we hope the public will continue to play our games on their TV sets.

**VGA: What about Nintendo?**

**TK:** It looks like history is repeating itself. They are sticking with the current marketplace and not trying to move forward on new technology and I am a bit surprised at that.

**VGA: And 3DO?**

**TK:** A smaller company doing some interesting software. Looks like they are going to have a niche in the marketplace and it looks like they won't have as big a share as Sony, as Sega, or Nintendo.

**VGA: Finally, Atari.**

**TK:** Again, a smaller niche player in the business.

**VGA: What do you see for the future of the industry?**

**TK:** I am very excited about the prospects of the industry. Obviously the 16-bit business is declining a bit but it will still be a very strong business. We see the higher-tech business offsetting a decline that occurs in 16-bit. We see this year as a total marketplace, total volume about the same as last year, but next year we see explosive growth. Eight years ago we were 1 billion dollars, this last year we were 4.5 billion, by the year 2000 we will be 9-10 billion dollars. We are on the verge of explosive growth. On the high-tech systems, not only are they great for today's gamer, but we will be able to devise software that will get more people playing games. We will see a big increase in the number of people playing interactive entertainment.

**VGA: What message is Sega trying to send overall?**

**TK:** Well we are trying to clearly state that we intend to lead the industry by offering better hardware and software than anyone else does.

**VGA: What changes do you see in your target audience?**

**TK:** With Saturn it is an older audience. We are clearly targeting 18-30 year olds with Saturn. At least for the initial year. Later on we'll expand that market, but initially it's an older audience.

**VGA: Who do you see as your main competition?**

**TK:** I think they're all competition. But we're also competing against HBO, the TV networks, MTV, and everything else. We're competing against everything else on the TV set for people's time. But mainly we're competing against Nintendo and Sony.

**VGA: Sega has taken a lot of flak over the past year about 32X and Saturn, how do you respond to all of Sega's critics?**

**TK:** The 32X situation is that 32X is a terrific product. Not just Sega people but developers are saying "that machine is really powerful." Unfortunately, it is taking a longer period of time to get software that matches the hardware. I think critics will be surprised this fall when they see Virtua Fighter on 32X because they will see software that looks almost as good as what can be done on Saturn. And we think it is as good as what can be done on a 3DO or Playstation. So we think we'll quiet the critics on 32X when we have the software out. We understand why people are upset with us because we've been slower getting great software out than we planned to be.

On Saturn I don't know what the critics are saying. All I know is we launched early and reports back from retail for the first day on sale were phenomenal. That speaks to how we were right. How the consumer was saying "get Saturn out as quickly as you can." And we've done it and the audience is responding very favorably. We've got 7 games at retail right now, we'll have ten in another 3 days, we'll have 20 by August, 80 by Christmas. We think it's gonna be a wonderful launch for us.

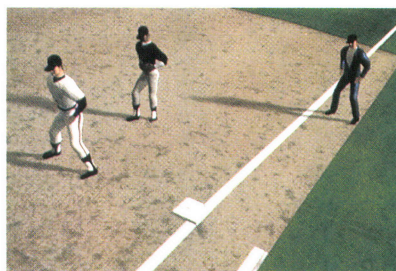
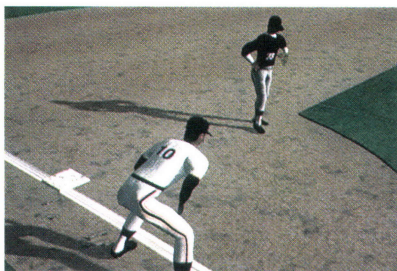
**VGA: Why the quick Saturn launch?**

**TK:** "The Saturn Plan." We had this running for a long time to surprise Sony. We think being out early is very important. Having the dedicated game player looking at Saturn hopefully buying Saturn and talking about it to their friends is a big advantage over waiting until September. In fact, once we were ready we could have done it any time since April. So we're glad to have given the consumers what they were waiting for. **VGA**



# 3D Baseball '95

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** 3D Baseball '95  
**Platform:** Saturn, PlayStation  
**Genre:** Baseball  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** Crystal Dynamics  
**Developer:** Crystal Dynamics  
**Available:** December

When Crystal Dynamics announced that they would be launching a new line of sports titles, there was much speculation as to whether or not there would be a baseball game. The answer is yes, in the form of *3D Baseball '95*. *3D Baseball* will have some of the most realistic players ever seen in a video game. The stadiums are completely rendered, and a MLBPA license is included with over 700 players and their stats. *3D Baseball* should be a great Christmas seller. **VGA**

# Burnout

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Burnout  
**Platform:** Jaguar  
**Genre:** Racing  
**Size:** 2MB

**Publisher:** Atari  
**Developer:** Atari  
**Available:** June

*Burnout* is a new motorcycle racing game for the Jaguar, similar to *Suzuka 8 Hours* in the arcades. It is fast paced and smooth, but suffers from very little roadside detail. The game play is adequate, but also very standard and repetitive. Jaguar devotees will probably express interest in this title due to the extreme lack of decent racing games on the platform. This isn't the incredible racing simulation that Jaguar owners are eagerly awaiting, but it should keep them happy for a while. **VGA**



# M2 Accelerator

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** M2  
**Platform:** 3DO  
**Genre:** Peripheral  
**Manufacturer:** 3DO  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

This May, 3DO unveiled their secret weapon against the onslaught of 'next generation' systems. It's called the M2 accelerator, and it boils down to three chips that slide into the 3DO's expansion port, giving it massively increased 3D manipulation capabilities as well as MPEG compression. The game demos shown at 3DO's press conference were highly impressive, at least paralleling the the level that the PSX has been taken to thus far. These demos however, were not actually running on the system hardware. The accompanying screen shots give an idea as to what can be expected from the add-on when it is released, but as of now the M2 is 'vaporware'.

The key portion of the M2 is its PowerPC 602 chip, which is responsible for enhancing the 3D effect that the (ironically titled) 3DO is lagging behind in. The company claims that the M2 can display over 1,000,000 polygons per second. While this number may seem rather vague and unrevealing, it can be noted that one year ago Sony was boasting about the 360,000 polygons per second that its PSX could handle. In addition to this wonder-chip, 3DO has replaced the long-delayed MPEG compression cartridge that Panasonic has been sitting on for ages by slipping the MPEG chip into its add-on. This will give the 3DO digital video capabilities similar to those of the CD-I,

but with the added ability to display the video image as a moving texture map over curved surfaces.

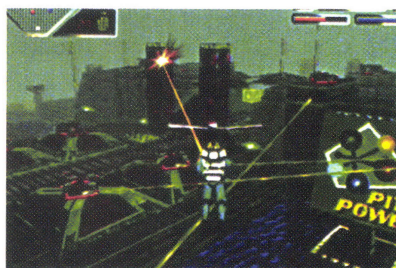
The 3DO system is currently building on an installed base of 500,000 units. The M2 isn't going to sell to anyone who doesn't already own a 3DO, but it is guaranteed to be a hot seller among those that do. **VGA**

*The M2 Accelerator  
is guaranteed to be  
a hot seller among  
3DO owners.*



# Blade Force

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Blade Force  
**Platform:** 3DO  
**Genre:** Flying/Shooter  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** 3DO  
**Developer:** Studio 3DO  
**Available:** June

Studio 3DO, a relative neophyte in the gaming software field, has nearly completed their 3D flying-shooter game called *Blade Force*. In the future, 7 gangs have taken over your city. With a heli-pak fight suit and a blaster, you set out to rid the city of these criminal swine.

Using a heli-pak, you fly through 7 areas of the city, each broken up into 4 sections. The action on screen is seen from behind the character, and stays in synch with his continual swaying left to right (something the developers have dubbed 'bungee-cam'). Another nice feature of this game is the carefully textured-mapped environment. The futuristic buildings that make up the 3D society have a slick metallic sheen. This is a strong game from Studio 3DO. The graphics and gameplay in this title are unique and well done. This is one development team to watch out for in the future. **VGA**

# Wipe Out

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Wipe Out  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Racing  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** Psygnosis  
**Developer:** Psygnosis  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

Yet another Psygnosis title that made everyone look twice. This time the title's name is *Wipe Out* and it is slated for release this fall. This is surely futuristic racing at its' finest. Gamers will control a hovering craft over tracks that incorporate everything from tunnels and hairpin turns to gaps in the road that must be jumped. This title is similar to *Gran Chaser* on the Saturn, also scheduled for release this fall. With one of the most impressive software lineups for the PlayStation, Psygnosis should be watched closely within the next few months for more guaranteed hits. **VGA**

# Donkey Kong Country 2

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Donkey Kong Country  
**Platform:** Super NES  
**Genre:** Side-Scroller  
**Size:** 4 MB  
**Publisher:** Nintendo  
**Developer:** Rare  
**Available:** November

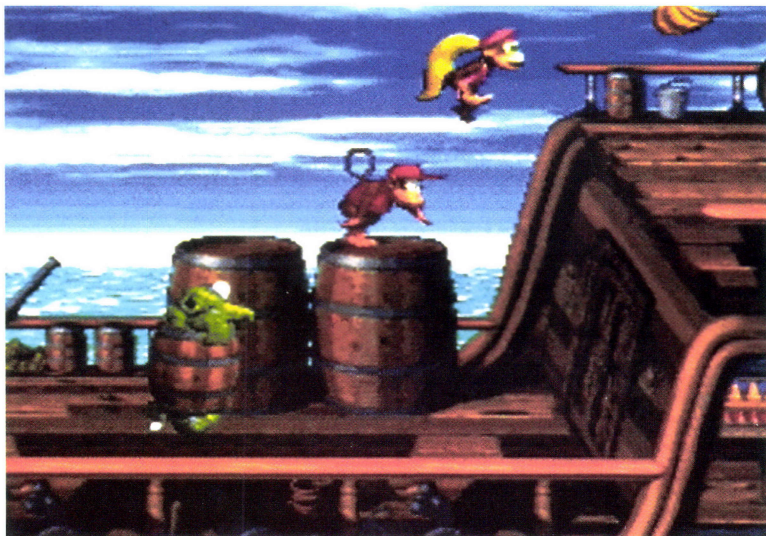


Nintendo is  
expecting this  
to be another  
ape-size seller,  
and will support  
it with another  
marketing blitz.

When Nintendo released *Donkey Kong Country* they revitalized the dying side-scroller market. *Donkey Kong Country 2* is more of the same. Nintendo had a rather lackluster booth at the E3, this title was it for Nintendo with the exception of the amazing *Killer Instinct* and the unproven technology of the Virtual Boy.

DKC 2 starts out where the first one ended. Diddy is out to save his hero, with his own trusty side kick in tow, Dixie Kong. Dixie is an all new character designed exclusively for this game, and is definitely lovable, thereby possessing mass licensing value. Nintendo continues the SGI rendered graphics fest for their "Monkey Crowd". Nintendo proves that their Advanced Computer Modeling, (ACM), is the best way to put breath taking graphics on the 16-bit Super Nintendo. While the graphics may look a little like rendered models, their is enough animation to make the characters look and feel alive.

There is no surprise that Nintendo decided to release *Donkey Kong Country 2*, what was a surprise is that they decided to release it without Donkey Kong as the main character. Diddy even gets the sub-title in this



one, *Diddy Kong's Quest* is easily better than the original *Donkey Kong Country* and will hopefully bring back the same market as its predecessor. Nintendo is expecting this to be another ape-size seller, and will support it with another marketing blitz. Game players know that Nintendo spells quality and are usually anxious to play quality games. **VGA**

# Lunar 2: The Eternal Blue

By VGA Staff Reporter



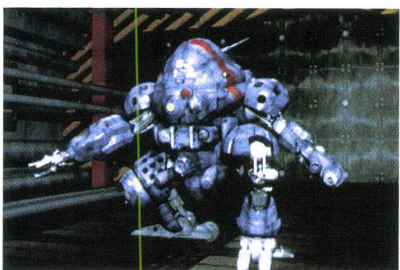
**Title:** Lunar 2: The Eternal Blue  
**Platform:** Sega CD  
**Genre:** RPG  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** Working Designs  
**Developer:** GameArts/Working Designs  
**Available:** July

One of the last titles for the Sega CD should be *Lunar 2: The Eternal Blue*. While Sega has already plotted the Sega CD's destiny, Working Designs will release the sequel to one of the most successful Sega CD's of all time. The graphics are improved over the first, and there is over 50 minutes of animation included. Lunar also promises a wonderful sound track. This game shouldn't break any records, but a steady pace of sales is likely. **VGA**

# Kileak: The DNA Imperative

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Kileak: The DNA Imperative  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** 3D Shooter  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** Sony Comp. Ent.  
**Developer:** Genki  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

Previously only available to PlayStation owners in Japan under the name *Kileak the Blood*, Sony will release this title before the end of 1995. Kileak is a single player first person action game consisting of fifteen increasingly difficult levels. Gamers must destroy robotic enemies to gain power while locating key cards to access elevators to the next level. The main objective is to rescue an undercover agent whose last transmission originated from a base in the South Pole.

The player is challenged with interactive puzzles, like matching levers or lights to provide access to secret rooms. This leads to the ultimate goal of defeating a sinister doctor who has stumbled onto a terrible DNA configuration. *Kileak the Blood* did well in Japan, and as an import here in the States. Sony has taken note of this and hopes to have a hit on their hands later this year. **VGA**

# Killer Instinct

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Killer Instinct  
**Platform:** Super NES  
**Genre:** Fighting  
**Size:** 4 MB  
**Publisher:** Nintendo  
**Developer:** Rare  
**Available:** August



*Graphically, the  
game comes close  
to mimicking its  
arcade counterpart.*

Nintendo is porting over their arcade smash hit, *Killer Instinct*, to the SNES. The 4 meg powerhouse has a tentative release date of August 30th. If the almost complete version of this game at E<sup>3</sup> was any indicator of the final product, fans of the arcade classic will not be disappointed.

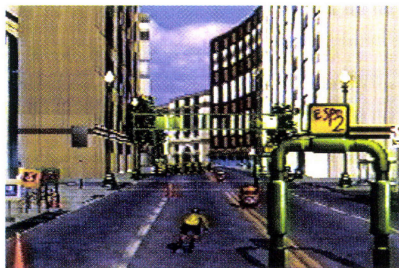
According to Howard Lincoln, CEO of Nintendo of America, the companies installation base of 16-Bit SNES's is too large to abandon now. In addition, he feels that games like *Killer Instinct* will extend his system's life even in the face of Sega and Sony's high-tech next generation home systems. Buyers will have to decide for themselves if this is indeed the case.

The characters and backgrounds are 90% complete. As in the arcade, Nintendo called on Rare for assistance in the advanced computer modeling, (ACM), and rendering of each character through the use of SGI workstations. Thus far, their results look impressive. Graphically, the game comes close to mimicking its arcade counterpart, although the characters' animation seemed a little slower. As far as gameplay is concerned, all of the combos that made this game famous are present. Any title that possesses the arcade following with a great translation and tremendous marketing support is virtually guaranteed success. **VGA**



# ESPN Extreme

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** ESPN Extreme Games  
**Platform:** Playstation  
**Genre:** Racing  
**Size:** CD

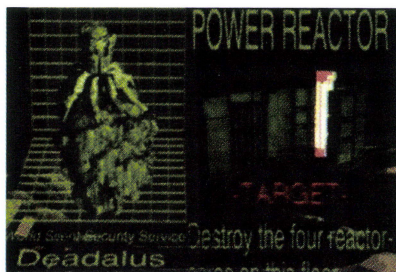
**Publisher:** Sony Imagesoft  
**Developer:** Sony Imagesoft  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

With a graphics engine similar to the one used in Electronic Arts' *Need for Speed*, this is another title that screams mass-market appeal. A challenging racing game that utilizes the *ESPN Extreme* telecasting perspective, whereby players can compete using different equipment while choosing from six treacherous courses from around the world.

Gamers have their choice of using in-line skates, mountain bikes, skateboards, or the street luge. Race against the clock while dodging obstacles or against a friend in the two player split-screen mode. Expect this title to be a best seller among Playstation owners this fall as the overall 'fun-factor' is extremely high. **VGA**

## Robotica

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Robotica  
**Platform:** Saturn (U.S.)  
**Genre:** Action/Strategy  
**Size:** CD

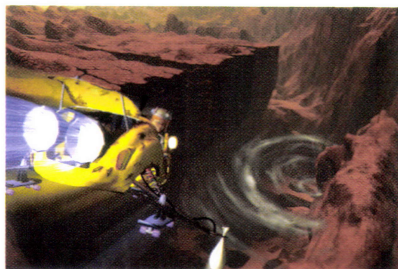
**Publisher:** Acclaim  
**Developer:** Sega of Japan/Micronet  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

When the next generation systems boast thousands of texture mapped polygons on screen at once and 3D graphics processors, two things come to mind. More 3D fighting games; ala Tekken, Virtua Fighter and Toshinden; and more first person quests; ala Kileak, Doom and the title in question: Robotica.

Released in Japan a few months ago under the title 'Deadalus', Robotica tries it's hand at the first person shoot 'em up. Are these types of games becoming passé? Will developers have more to offer than just a shooting frenzy? The answer is yes. Robotica not only offers players with the first person experience, but also challenges them with a new feature: each level is randomly generated. With no save feature and no way to memorize the layout of each level, Robotica is sure to challenge even the more experienced gamers.

# Heart of Darkness

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Heart of Darkness  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** Adventure  
**Size:** 2 CDs  
**Publisher:** Virgin Inter.  
**Developer:** Amazing Studio  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

Paris-based Amazing Studios introduced one of the best new games of the show to the E<sup>3</sup>-going public this May, the incredible fantasy/adventure title *Heart of Darkness*. The player takes control of a young boy named Andy, who suffers from an intense fear of the dark.

The game's frequent intermission sequences are all computer rendered and the levels easily rival the best graphics seen in *Donkey Kong Country*, but the truly amazing aspect of the game is its brilliant story telling. The rousing orchestral score and incredible pacing are reminiscent of films like *E.T.* and *Back to the Future*. Like those movies and the aforementioned DKC, *Heart of Darkness* is geared toward younger audiences but will engage all types of players.

This is one of the few titles that transcends the appeal of pure technological achievement and uses the medium to tell a truly engaging story. This is also one of the few games that we would go out on a limb to recommend in a preview section. For retailers that don't carry PC software yet, this should be an enormously persuasive game. Or if you want to play it safe, you can wait for Saturn and PSX translations in the hopes that it will have stronger sales on platforms where it may be able to reach a wider audience. **VGA**

*This is also one  
of the few games  
that we would go  
out on a limb to  
recommend in a  
preview section.*



# Solar Eclipse

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Solar Eclipse  
**Platform:** Saturn  
**Genre:** Flying/Shooter  
**Size:** CD

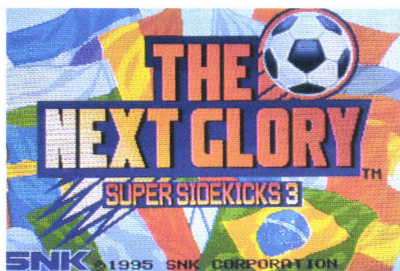
**Publisher:** Crystal Dynamics  
**Developer:** Crystal Dynamics  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

One of the earliest, and most impressive titles for the 3DO is undergoing a makeover, as it will appear on the Sega Saturn later this year. Enhanced graphics and multiple views will appeal to fans of the original *Total Eclipse*. The actual game play relies on it's predecessor, where the pilot must maneuver his/her craft through valleys and canyons while destroying the unrelenting assault of an alien race.

There are the added bonuses of flying through ominous caverns and many new weapon power-ups. This title should prove to be a strong seller at launch. Again, it may be time to refer to those sales records from the past - if only for comparisons sake. Expect yet another solid title from the 'new and improved' Crystal. **VGA**

# Super Sidekicks 3

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Super Sidekicks 3  
**Platform:** NG-CD  
**Genre:** Soccer  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** SNK  
**Developer:** SNK  
**Available:** May

This is SNK's third installment in the Super Sidekicks series. Each one retaining the same basic feel while becoming more graphically impressive as they evolve. Why will this be any different than the previous titles? For one thing, the player animations have been improved while adding some modes. The playing field has also been improved upon.

Where this game shines, beyond soccer titles on other platforms, is that it doesn't get bogged down with the multiple camera angles that, yes, are impressive, but make a confusing game. Instead, *Super Sidekicks 3* relies on the game at hand, soccer. Expect this title to sell better than the average Neo•Geo title and rent well. **VGA**



# Bug!

By VGA Staff Reporter



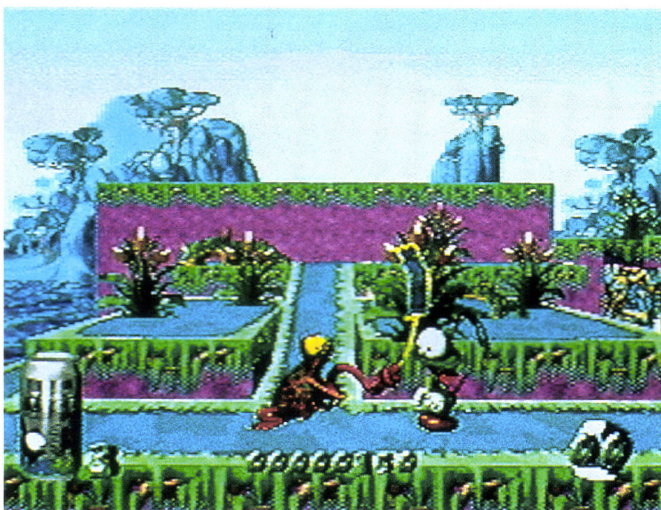
**Title:** Bug!  
**Platform:** Saturn  
**Genre:** Side-Scroller  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Sega  
**Developer:** Sega  
**Available:** Now

Sega surprised many in the industry when it pushed up the Saturn's release by 4 months to May 11th. What is even more surprising is the fact that, unlike the almost-defunct 32X, Sega has a variety of solid titles to support its newest hardware. Notable among these titles is Bug! Simply put, Bug! is a 3D side-scroller in which the player takes control of the title character, and attempts to work their way through 6 stages, containing 3 levels each, in order to save your friends from the evil Queen Cadavera. While the plot line is not ground-breaking, the game play is.

Sega's development team really pushed their creative and technical abilities to the max with Bug! One needs only to see the expertly rendered title character and his over-confident strut to realize this fact. The 3D movements of Bug 'in' and 'out' of the screen are meticulously done, scaling him appropriately and keeping relative perspective true. Given these technical attributes, it is no surprise to see stunning multi-level scrolling that actually

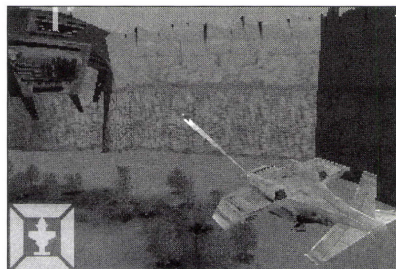
connects the foreground to the background. The final result of this techno-babble is a game that is genuinely fun to play. Shooting across, down, up, into or out of the screen in real time while squashing Queen Cadavera's henchmen and looking for your friends, brings a level of intensity to side-scrolling game play that's rarely been matched by its predecessors.

Sega has done a wonderful job with this title. In addition to creating a great game for the Saturn, they've also created a measuring stick to which all 'next generation' side-scrollers will be compared. Let's hope they can keep these kinds of games coming. **VGA**



# WarHawk

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** WarHawk  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Flying/Shooter  
**Size:** CD

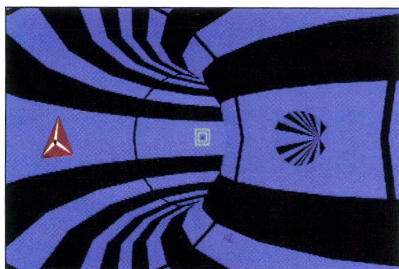
**Publisher:** Sony Imagesoft  
**Developer:** SingleTrac  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

Of the myriad of software being displayed in the halls of the E<sup>3</sup>, one title in particular caught the eyes of many...*WarHawk*. Not just another flying/shooter boasting great graphics, but also incorporating finely tuned play mechanics as well. From what we've seen of this title, PlayStation owners are in for a real treat when launched this fall.

It looks like Sony Imagesoft has developed one of the most advanced arcade-style air combat games ever. Gamers will have the ability to fully maneuver in a 360 degree environment which will include 3D rendered canyon passes, desert encampments and small cities. Very impressive, indeed. What Rare is to Nintendo, Imagesoft shall be for Sony. *Mickey Mania* will not be their best title for long! **VGA**

# Locus

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Locus  
**Platform:** PC CD, PlayStation  
**Genre:** Sports  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** GT Interactive  
**Developer:** Zombie  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

The newly founded software developer, Zombie, is now working on the first PC game engineered for use with VR helmets, titled *Locus*. Despite its rather odd name, the game itself is very intuitive and easy to pick up. It is a futuristic sports title where the player rides around in an equally futuristic vehicle trying to drop a floating ball into the opposing teams goal. Then becoming more complex, gamers do this while navigating through the winding tubes and spheroid complexes of the many different playing fields. The game is of course networkable for up to 8 players and looks like it has the originality and playability to, perhaps, become a *Doom*-ish phenomenon. **VGA**

# Destruction Derby

By VGA Staff Reporter



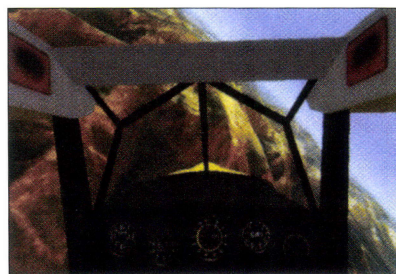
**Title:** Destruction Derby  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Driving/Demolition  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** Psygnosis  
**Developer:** Psygnosis  
**Release:** September

Who is this company behind the mask? Psygnosis has done a complete turn around and started producing some of the best games on the market. *Destruction Derby* was one of the surprises of the Electronic Entertainment Expo. In this unique driving game, the winner is the one that survives, not who finishes first. The players can destroy every piece of the car and if the same part of the car gets hit twice the car gets damaged again. The detail is great and the game play was certainly different. The camera angles change constantly which adds greatly to the realism of the game. When the PlayStation makes its States-side debut on September 9th, *Destruction Derby* will be right behind it and bashing its way in to homes across the U.S.. **VGA**

# Flight Unlimited

By VGA Staff Reporter



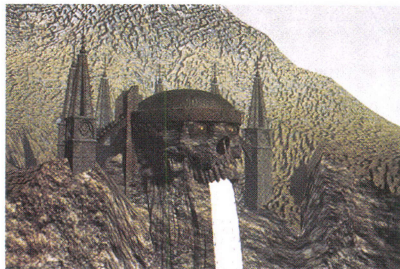
**Title:** Flight Unlimited  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** Flying/Sim.  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** Virgin Inter.  
**Developer:** Looking Glass Tech.  
**Available:** June

Flight simulation games on PCs has long been dominated almost exclusively by Microsoft's Flight Simulator series. With realistic flight controls generated by referencing actual statistical specifications, FS 5.0 seemed to be as close to flight as a PC could get. Looking Glass Technologies is contesting that approach by creating actual models of wind movement over the plane's surface in their new game *Flight Unlimited*. Realizing that the best part of flight simulator games is doing things that the real planes weren't designed to do, and this is where Microsoft's technique fell short. Flight Unlimited increases the fun factor while maintaining the realism. **VGA**

# The Legacy of Kain

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Blood Omen:  
The Legacy of Kain  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Action/RPG

**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Crystal Dynamics  
**Developer:** Crystal Dynamics  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

Crystal Dynamics has successfully conquered the side-scroller area with *Gex*. Now, Crystal moves into the overhead fantasy/quest genre with *The Legacy of Kain*. With the aide of multiple weapons and spells, players assume the role of a vampire seeking vengeance upon his murderer. Character animations are very well done as well as the complexity of regions that are to be explored. This title will generate some interest with action/rpg fans that plan to own the PlayStation this fall. When launched, expect both sales and rentals to be about average as these titles usually appeal to a select group of gamers. **VGA**

# Battle Arena Toshinden

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Battle Arena Toshinden  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Fighting  
**Size:** CD

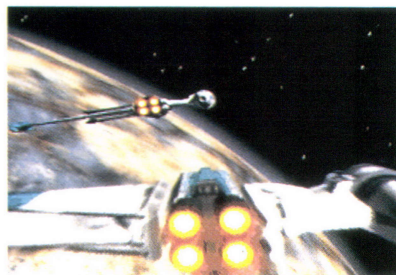
**Publisher:** Takara  
**Developer:** Takara  
**Available:** Fall 1995

This 3D fighter was one of Sony's 'reasons' for consumers to buy a PlayStation when launched in Japan. Known to the Japanese simply as *Toshinden*, this fighter eclipses the mighty *Virtua Fighter* for Sega's Saturn by giving the gamer more than just polygons throwing punches and kicks. Toshinden pushes the envelope not one, but numerous steps further than its competition.

Players can not only block attacks, but actually roll around their opponent which offers a 'true' 3D environment to battle within. All ten combatants are comprised of fully texture mapped, Gourard shaded polygons moving at a decent frame rate. The developers of this title have taken the best aspects of other fighters such as *Samurai Shodown* and *Virtua Fighters* and incorporated them into one of the most realistic one-on-one fighters to date. **VGA**

# Rebel Assault 2

By VGA Staff Reporter



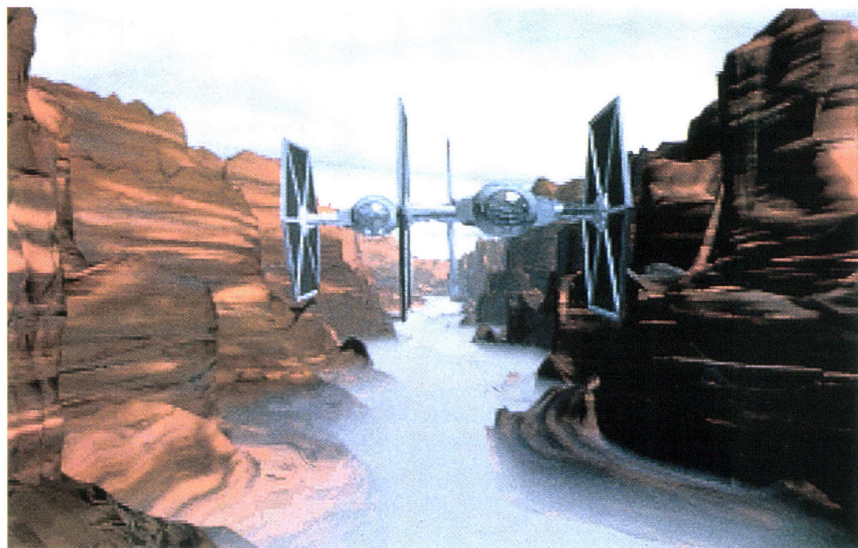
**Title:** Rebel Assault 2  
**Genre:** Flying/Shooter  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Size:** CD  
**Developer:** Lucasarts  
**Publisher:** Lucasarts  
**Available:** November

*Rebel Assault 2 brings with it vastly improved graphics and game play.*

Lucasarts is producing the sequel to one of the most successful PC CD-ROM games of all time. *Rebel Assault 2* brings with it vastly improved graphics and game play. It is still a point and click shooter, but the story and game play should be enough to bring players in for the ride. The version that was available to play at the recent E<sup>3</sup> was very early and only had 6 levels complete, however, it was fully playable and looked as fun as the original. There have been many improvements made to the game including full screen footage, props from the movies, and improved control over the X-Wing Fighter. The overall story and detail is much more thorough than the original.

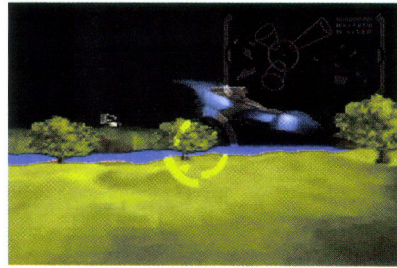
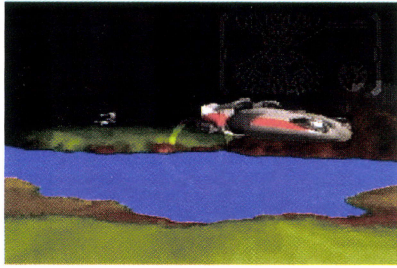
Once again the main character is Rookie One, who stumbles upon an imperial force while responding to a distress signal coming out of a haunted nebula. Once this happens the action really begins, and the "Imperial entanglements" are always happening. This time you get to fly a plethora of rebel star fighters, including the much revered Millennium Falcon. Lucasarts is known industry-wide for their quality products, and Rebel 2 should continue

this trend. One should expect the same, if not better sales than the first time. **VGA**



# Hover Hunter

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Hover Hunter  
**Platform:** Jaguar  
**Genre:** Shooter  
**Size:** N/A

**Publisher:** Atari  
**Developer:** ?  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

*Cybermorph* meets *Comanche* is the best way to create a mental picture of this game in action. Players may navigate in a 3D environment while blasting away at enemy ships. This title will also offer multi-player competition via the soon to be released Cat Box, which will allow up to eight Jaguars, while the Cat Box can handle up to thirty-two gamers to be networked together for great head-to-head action. A Jaguar owner, though very brave, is usually a tad disgruntled. In order to calm the savage beast, let them know that some truly good software is finally on it's way. **VGA**

# The Dig

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** The Dig  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** Quest  
**Size:** CD

**Publisher:** LucasArts  
**Developer:** LucasArts  
**Available:** September

Hot off the release of *Full Throttle*, LucasArts is releasing yet another quest game using their proprietary SCUMM interface. The game is based on an idea by Steven Spielberg, and follows three astronauts on a routine mission in Earth orbit that quickly turns into a treacherous adventure on a distant planet. Taking control of the tiro's commander, the player must explore the planet and learn about the alien species that has abducted them. The ghost-like creatures desperately want something from the crew, and paying that price may be the only way that they can get back home. *The Dig* should be another title in LucasArts' rapidly growing series of blockbuster quest adventure games. **VGA**

# Twisted Metal

By VGA Staff Reporter



**Title:** Twisted Metal  
**Platform:** Playstation, PC CD-ROM  
**Genre:** Shooter/Driving  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Sony Imagesoft  
**Developer:** Sony Imagesoft  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

*"Twisted Metal" is an awesome new title heading for PSX and PC CD-ROM this Christmas from non-other than Sony Imagesoft.*

Headlining one of the biggest overnight turnarounds ever performed by a software developer, *Twisted Metal* is an awesome new title heading for PSX and PC CD-ROM this Christmas from non-other than Sony Imagesoft. It is the year 2004, and people are generally acting the way you would expect them to act in the year 2004. They are driving around in ice cream trucks and taxi cabs shooting at each other with machine guns.

Essentially, *Twisted Metal* is a brutally violent demolition derby game that takes place in exotic settings like a school yard, a bustling city, an active suburb, and an obstacle-ridden arena. The different zones of the game are massive and detailed, containing working city streets, innocent pedestrians, and even a hockey rink. Perhaps the best feature of the game is its multi-player option. At the E<sup>3</sup>, *Twisted Metal* was being displayed on a two player network and the developers are hoping to expand that to as many as eight. This is where the blisteringly violent nature of the game is given the chance to flourish in testosterone-induced, ultra-destructive, kill-all-your-friends, bliss.

*Twisted Metal* exhibits a dark sense of humor that will appeal to every-

one who ripped the hearts out of defeated opponents in *Mortal Kombat* again and again. It is an adult game in which plowing down bystanders is unavoidable, like it or not. There is no doubt that morbid features will draw in more players than it turns off.

VGA







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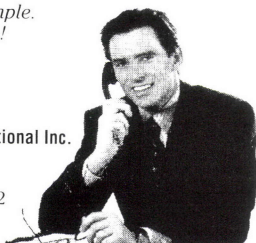
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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: Sega surprised everyone with the release of their U.S. Saturn system, but are the Japanese and U.S. models compatible? Will the U.S. PlayStation be compatible with the Japanese version as well?**

**A:** Neither U.S. system will be compatible with its Japanese counterpart. Games designed for the Japanese Saturn and PlayStation will only play on the Japanese systems, and American-designed games will only play on American systems. It is known that the Japanese Saturn can be converted to be able to read U.S. games, and the converse is likely to be true as well, however this procedure usually requires the unit to be sent out to the person who performs the service. There is no concrete word yet on whether or not plug-in converters are possible for either system, similar to those used to port Japanese Mega Drive and Super Famicom titles. The lack of compatibility between models is an intentional act by the manufacturer to confine the distribution of both the systems and their software to domestic regions.

**Q: The blockbuster movie Forrest Gump has recently been released on Movie-CD. Phillips has released dozens of Movies on CD for their CD-I system, what makes Forrest Gump different?**

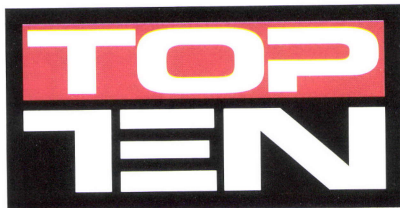
**A:** The release of Forrest Gump on Movie-CD is a precedent-setting venture unto itself. As of its release date, Forrest Gump CDs will only play on CD-I multiplayers, because only they are equipped with MPEG support. But unlike other CD-I movie titles, Forrest Gump will be able to play on any system with an MPEG hook-up, which includes PCs, 3DO, Saturn, and PlayStation.

**Q: Many new PC games allow multi-player games to be played via modem or network. This has become very popular among players, and can be a great way to increase sales of the multi-player software. Will any console systems have the ability to network together in a similar fashion?**

**A:** This is currently a very hot topic in the console industry. Atari has already had a VERY limited release of their Cat Box add-on, which allows Doom and other future titles to be played through a network. Sony claims that the PlayStation will be capable of eight player networks. And Sega is keeping their mouths shut despite a conspicuously titled 'Communication Connector' on the back of the system. Manufacturers realize the potential for enhancing both game play and revenue by allowing multi-player use, and this is likely to be a big feature in upcoming titles. On the modeming end of the question, the only current peripheral is the X-Band modem for Genesis and Super NES.

**Q: My store rents console systems and software, and I recently began carrying PC software. Is it possible to rent this software out?**

**A:** No. Console CD software is very difficult to copy. PC software developers have had to deal with the problem of 'software pirates' for about as long as PC games have been around. Rental of 3.5" disk software is a definite no-no, but the issue of PC CD rental is still very debatable. For now it is safer to stick with only the sale of PC software.



### VGA's List of TOP TENS

#### Top Ten Videogame Titles

1. **Looney Toons B-Ball** (SNS)
2. **Slam N' Jam** (3DO)
3. **Ogre Battle** (SNS)
4. **Wayne Gretsky Hockey** (GEN)
5. **Gex** (3DO)
6. **Road Rash 3** (GEN)
7. **Bass Masters Classic** (SNS)
8. **Barkley 2** (GEN)
9. **Donkey Kong Country** (SNS)
10. **Super RBI Baseball** (SNS)

#### Top Ten PC CD Titles

1. **Full Throttle**
2. **Myst**
3. **Dark Forces**
4. **Doom 2**
5. **X-Com 2**
6. **Rise of the Triad**
7. **Wing Commander 3**
8. **Bio Forge**
9. **Daedulus Encounter**
10. **Alone In The Dark 3**

#### Top Ten Import Titles

1. **Tekken** (PSX)
2. **Toh Shin Den** (PSX)
3. **Gunner's Heaven** (PSX)
4. **Fatal Fury 3** (NCD)
5. **Jumping Flash** (PSX)
6. **Greatest 9 Baseball** (SAT)
7. **Virtua Hydlide** (SAT)
8. **D's Diner** (3DO)
9. **Chrono Trigger** (SFM)
10. **Front Mission** (SFM)

# European Report

By Marcus Irwin

It's been about six months since Sega released its Saturn system in Japan, and its recent surprise U.S. release has sent European interest soaring. The current pricing in England is around £499.99 (\$785), a drop of 40% in a matter of months. This factor is not due to a lack of interest in the machine, but more from the increased competition from major high street stores who have also jumped on the 'next generation' bandwagon. In addition, the lack of 16-Bit sales have meant that they must reduce their losses during the slow summer months, with releases like Panzer Dragoon and Daytona helping them come into the market.

The Saturn has now sold approximately 2000 systems in the UK and 3000 in the rest of Europe, with projections of another 500 units before the official launch date of September 2nd. Things should really take off with Sega's promise of 40 titles for European retailers by the end of '95, with Virtua Fighter 2 being one of the titles that would go in a storm in Europe and should go some way to install a large user base by year's end (price dependent of course). It is said that the system will carry a price tag of around £449.99 (\$706), which doesn't strike as a mass market price, but with Friends of London (a PR agency) handling TV, Cinema, specialist press and mainstream advertising, Sega could well gain a significant foothold. There is still no definite advertising budget and with losses in Europe for the last two years in a row, Sega is walking a tightrope between more losses and regaining their title as Europe's favorite game machine.

*Marcus Irwin is the owner and senior buyer of TORC Computer & Videogames, one of Great Britain's largest wholesale distributors and importers.*



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