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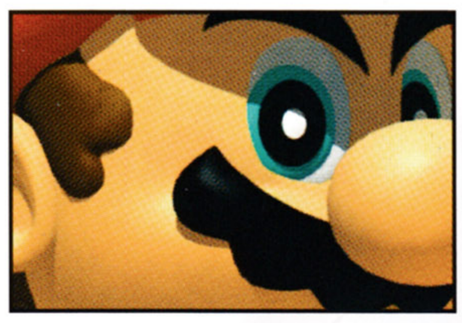

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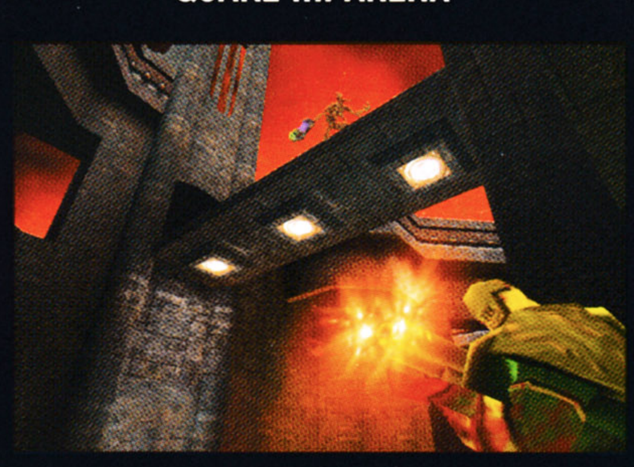

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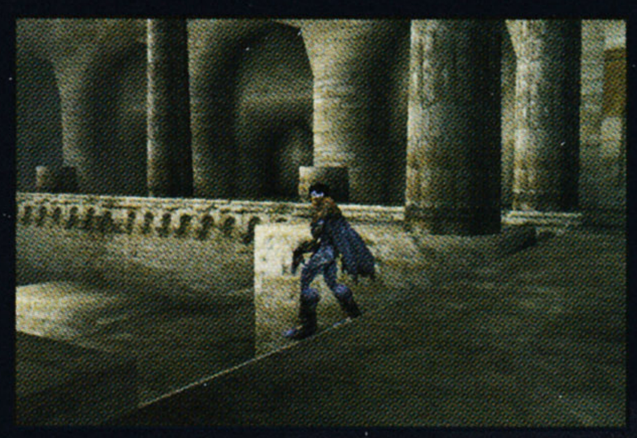

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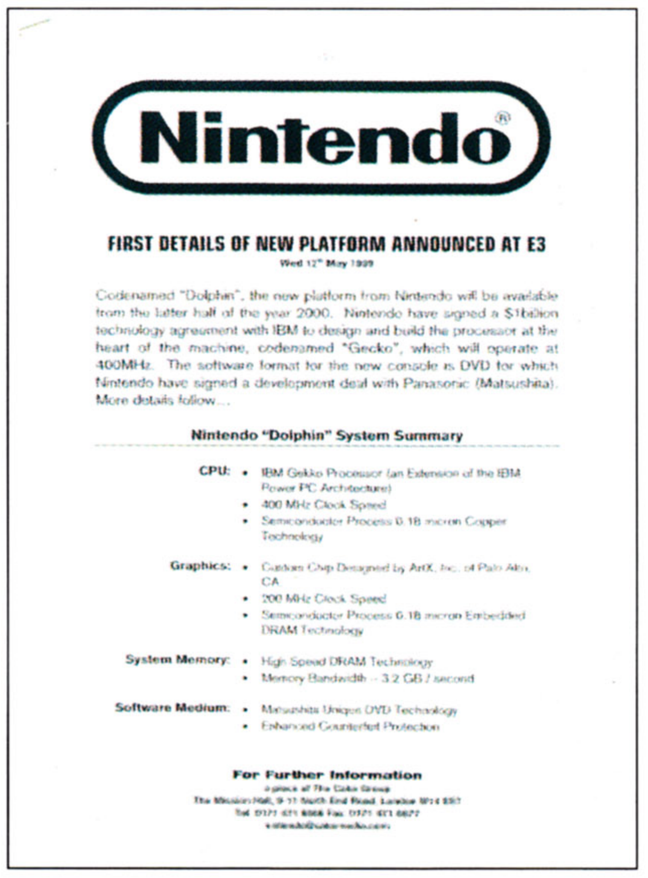

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FIRST DETAILS OF NEW PLATFORM ANNOUNCED AT E3

Wed 12th May 1999

Codenamed "Dolphin", the new platform from Nintendo will be available from the latter half of the year 2000. Nintendo have signed a $1billion technology agreement with IBM to design and build the processor at the heart of the machine, codenamed "Gecko", which will operate at 400MHz. The software format for the new console is DVD for which Nintendo have signed a development deal with Panasonic (Matsushita). More details follow...

Nintendo "Dolphin" System Summary

CPU:
- IBM Gekko Processor (an Extension of the IBM Power PC Architecture)
- 400 MHz Clock Speed
- Semiconductor Process 0.18 micron Copper Technology

Graphics:
- Custom Chip Designed by ArtX, Inc., of Palo Alto, CA
- 200 MHz Clock Speed
- Semiconductor Process 0.18 micron Embedded DRAM Technology

System Memory:
- High Speed DRAM Technology
- Memory Bandwidth – 3.2 GB / second

Software Medium:
- Matsushita Umgen DVD Technology
- Enhanced Counterfeit Protection

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The next, next-generation console war is already well under way. Only one of the machines involved is currently available, Sega's Dreamcast, and even that won't be available outside of Japan until September. It's amazing that the Dreamcast is already facing stiff competition – more amazing still that it comes from two consoles that effectively don't exist and won't be available until some time next year at the earliest.

Sony's announcement of the PSY was an obvious attempt to spoil Sega's Japanese launch, and all credit to them; the next generation PlayStation is now talked about as much as, if not more than, Sega's console amongst games players and the industry alike. Then, at this year's E3, Nintendo surprised us all by entering the arena with early specification of their Dolphin project, sending a shockwave through the entire industry when they also announced a worldwide release date less than eighteen months away. Can they seriously be in a position to go head to head with Sony in time for the supposed European launches of Christmas next year? We'd certainly like to think so, but realistically it sounds an impossible task.

One thing's for sure, whether Nintendo's announcement turns out to be genuine or not, the next eighteen months will be all the more exciting now that they've entered the fray. Miyamoto is rumoured to already be working on a launch title for the new console, and if the truth be known, he probably has been for well over a year in some form or other.

Anybody got their Christmas 2000 wish lists ready yet? TC

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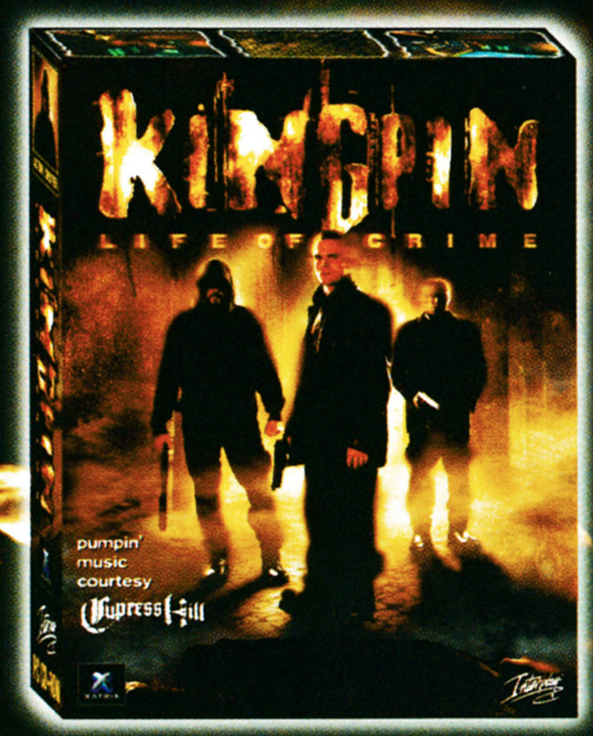

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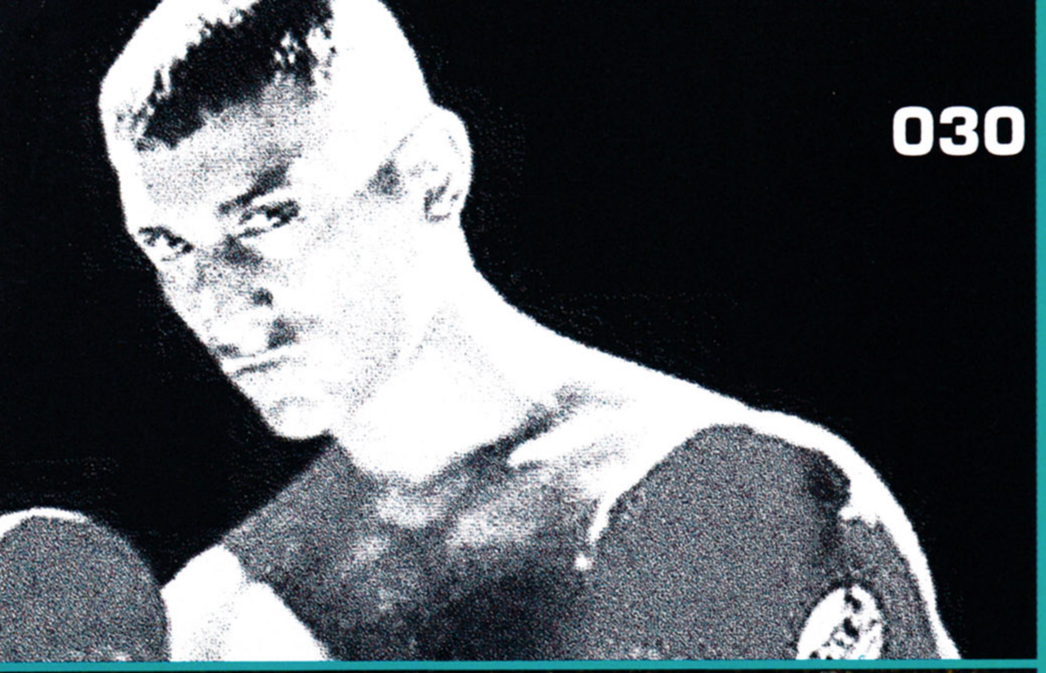

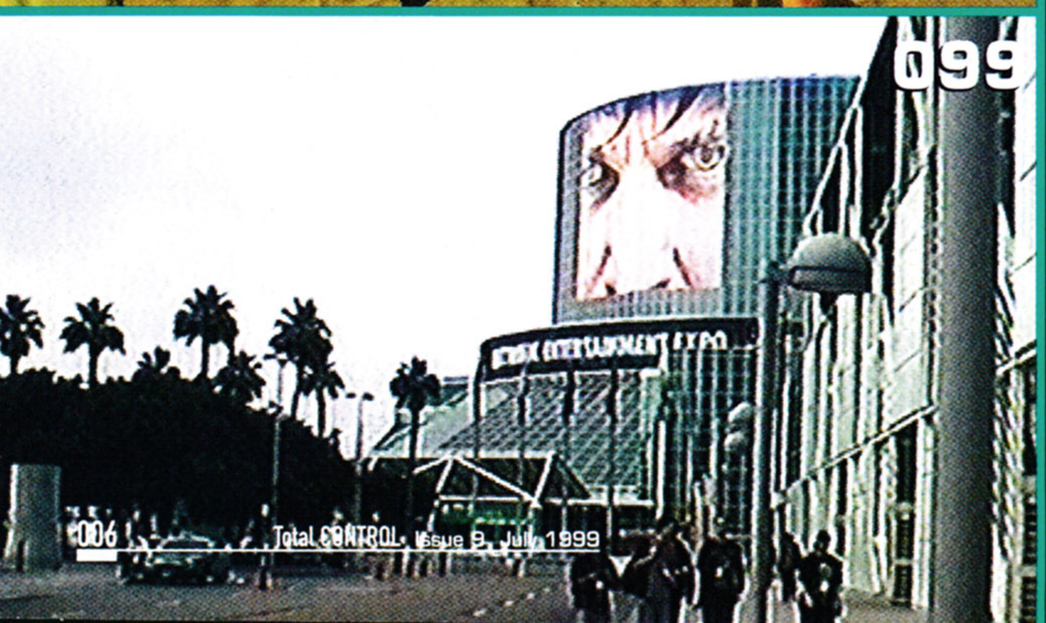

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CONTROLALPHA REPORTS/FEATURES

030 Prince Naseem Boxing

1998 saw Codemasters establishing themselves as one of Britain's leading software houses. Their latest is a boxing game in the best traditions of *Colin McRae*, *TOCA Touring Cars* and *Brian Lara's Cricket*. Total CONTROL went up to see how *Prince Naseem Boxing* was coming along...

048 Suitable for All?

Censorship is everywhere, but it's only recently that there has been a need for any form of policing in the video games industry. We talk to the people responsible for studying the effects of adult material on children, and to the people who classify it as adult in the first place, the BBFC...

090 Home is Where the Heart is

You might think that bedroom programming is a thing of the past, but we're pleased to tell you that it's alive and well and providing a pool of talented young artists and programmers for games companies to fish from. We talk exclusively to teams currently working on total conversions for games such as *Half-Life*...

099 E3 Report

For three days last month, Los Angeles became the centre of the video game universe when the E3 show returned after a two-year affair with Atlanta. Hundreds of games were on show, many for the first time to the European press, so competition for joypads was fierce. Check out what we considered to be some of the most exciting games at the show in this month's report. We'd have liked to cover them all, but we didn't have 200 pages to devote to it...

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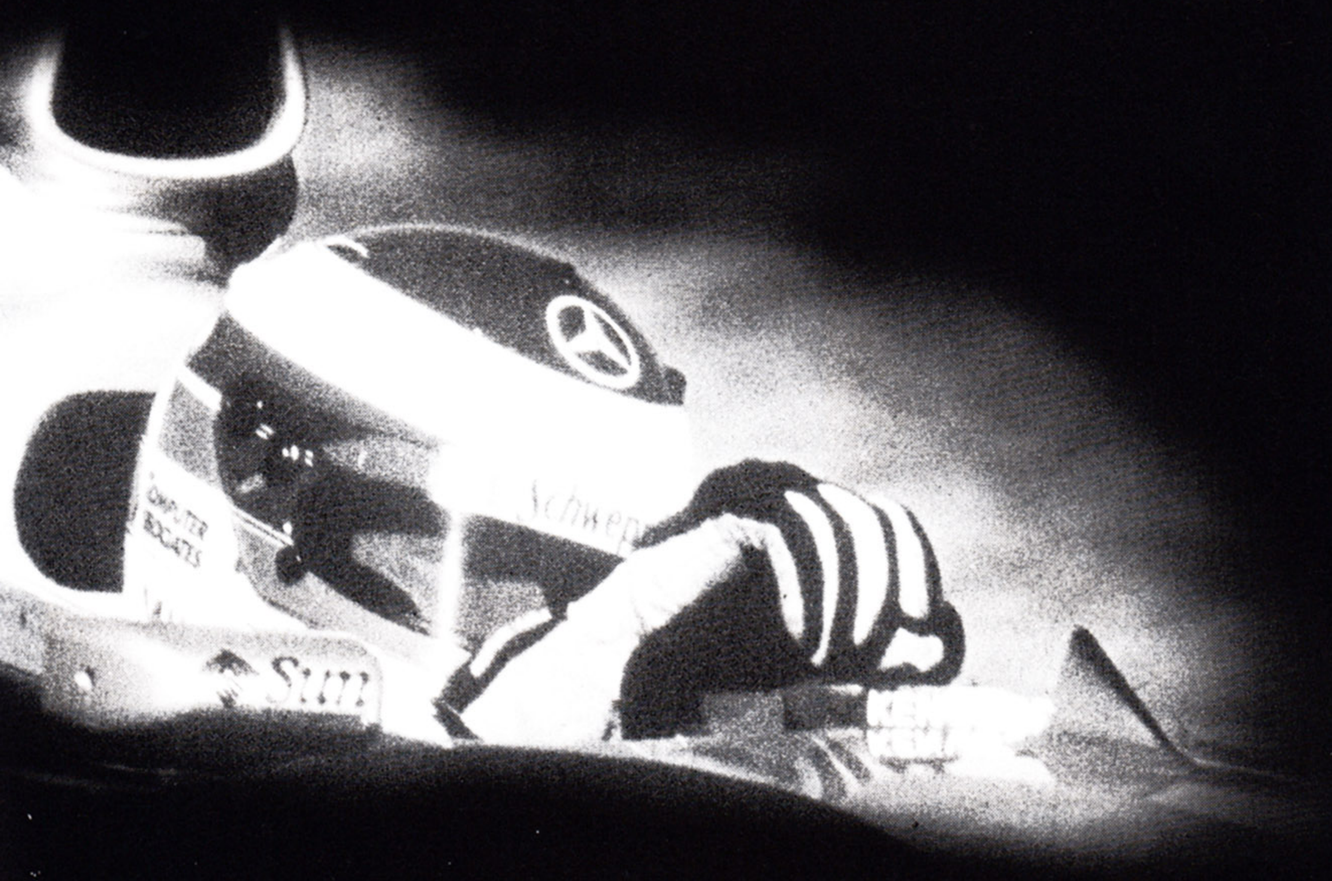

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Air Combat
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Andretti Racing
Apocalypse
Area 51
Armoured Core 1 & 2
Blast Radius
Bloody Roar
Bomberman World
Brian Lara Criket
Bubble - Bobble
Bugs Life
Bubsy 3D
Bushido Blade 1
Bust a Move 1 , 2 & 3
Cardinal Syn
Casper
Cheesy
Circuit Breakers
Colin McRae Rally
Colony Wars
Command and Conquer
C & C: Red Alert
C & C: Retaliation
Constructor
Contra Legacy of Wars
Coolboarders 1, 2 & 3
Courier Crisis
Crash Bandicoot 1, 2 & 3
Crime Killer
Criticom
Croc
D
Dark Forces
Dead Ballzone
Dead or Alive
Death Trap Dungeons
Destruction Derby 1 & 2
Diablo
Die Hard 1, 2 & 3
Doom
Duke Nukem : Time to Kill
Duke Nukem : Total Meltdown
Dynasty Wars
Excalibur 2555 A.D
Fade to Black
Felony 11-79
Fifa '96, '97, '98 & '99
Fighting Force
Final Doom
Final Fantasy VII
Formula 1, '97 & '98
Formula Karts
Forsaken
Frogger
Future Cop: LAPD
Gex, 3D & Enter the Gecko
Ghost in the Shell
G-Police
Gran Turismo
Grand Theft Auto
Gunship
Gu-Sun Oyoyo
Hercules
Hexen
Impact Racing
Independence Day
International Track and Field
J. Mcgarth Supper Cross
Jersey devil
Jonah Lomu Rugby
Knockout Kings
Kula World
Lemmings 3D
Loaded
Lone Soldier
Lucky Luke
Machine Hunter
Magic Carpet
Magic Gathering Battle Mage
Marvel Super Heroes
Max Power RAcing
MDK
Mech Warrior 2
MediEvil
Metal Gear Solid
Micro Machines v3
Mobile Suit Gundam
Monopoly
Mortal Kombat 3 , 4 & Trilogy
Moto Racer 1 & 2
Nagano Winter Olympics '98
Need for Speed 1, 2, 3 & 4
NHL '97, '98 & '99
NHL Breakaway '98
NHL Face-off '97 & '98
Nightmare Creatures
Ninja
Nuclear Strike
Pandemonium 1 & 2
Parappa the Rapper
Pitfall 3D
Porsche Challenge
Power Move Pro Wrestling
Poy Poy
Premier Manager '98
Rage Racer
Rapid Racer
Rascal
Rayman
Rebel Assualt 2
Reboot
Resident Evil 1, 2 & Direct Cut
Ridge Racer Type 4
Rise of the Robots 2: Resurrection
Riven : The Sequel to Myst
Road Rash & 3D
Rockman X3
Rogue Trip
Rugrats
Samuria Showdown 3
Shellshock
Silent Hill
SimCity 2000
Skull Monkey
Small Soldiers
Soul Blade
Soviet Strike
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Spot goes to Hollywood
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Steel Harbinger
Steel Reign
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Street Fighter Alpha 2
Street Fighter Alpha Ex Plus Alpha
Street Racer
Suikoden
Tekken 1, 2 & 3
Tempest X3
Tenchu
Tennis Arena
Test Drive 4, 5 & Off Road
Tetris Plus
The Lost World
The Raiden Project
Theme Hospital
Theme Park
Three Lions
Tiger Shark
Time Comando
Time Crisis
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Tommi Makinen Rally
Top Gun
Total Drivin
Tunnel B1
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Victory Boxing
Vigilante 8
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War Hammer : Dark Omen
Warhawk
WCW Nitro
WCW Thunder
WCW Vs the World
Wing Over
Wipeout & 2097
World Cup '98
World League Soccer '98
Worms
WWF in the House
WWF War Zone
WWF Wrestlemania
X-Men Children of the Atom
Zero Divide 2

N64 GAMES

Aero Fighters Assault
Automobili Lamborghini
Banjo Kazooie
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Blast Corps
Body Harvest
Bomberman 64
Chopper Attack
Cruis'n the World
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Diddy Kong Racing
Doom 64
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ISS '98
Killer Instinct Gold
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Mario Party
Micro Machines 64
Mischief Makers
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Mortal Kombat 4
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Wipeout 64
World Cup '98
WWF War Zone
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Zelda

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Baldur's Gate
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Cannon Fodder
Carmaggedon
Carmageddon 2
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Championship Manager 2
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Colin McRae Rally
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Command & Conquer: Red Alert
Commandos & Behind Enemy Lines
Croc
Deathtrap Dungeon
Descent 1 and 2
Destruction Derby 1 and 2
Doom 1 and 2
Duke Nukem 1, 2 and 3D
Duke Nukem 3D; Atomic Edition
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Final Doom
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Pitfall
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Screamer Rally
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EDITORIALOPINIONS

Words from the wise...

JUSTIN CALVERT
Editor
justice@rapide.co.uk

This year's E3 show in LA was without a doubt the most exciting trade show I've ever attended. Sega, showing off their Western launch titles for the first time, arguably stole the show from previous winners Sony and Nintendo. Although with the PSY demos on show for the first time outside of Japan, and Nintendo making their first announcement concerning the specifications of their Project Dolphin, the competition was unusually fierce.

The Nintendo 64 and PlayStation both showed that they are capable of continuing to support increasingly impressive games, and for this reason I believe that Sega should be more worried about the existing consoles than those of next year. Owners of Sony and Nintendo consoles have no reason to be desperate to get their hands on the next generation machines – even after more than three years with their console, the wealth of titles they have to look forward to verges on the ridiculous.

So what are Sega to do? I believe that to stand any chance at all they need to come up with must-have titles at launch, and although their line-up is definitely impressive, I'm not sure that any one of the titles is significantly better than those already available (at least not enough to convince casual gamers to part with money for a new console). The E3 announcement that the Dreamcast will be bundled with a 56k modem for under £199 is definitely a good move, as is Sega's own free ISP. Soon the Dreamcast may well be the cheapest way to surf the net... hell, maybe they'll install them in classrooms. We'll have to wait and see...

CRAIG VAUGHAN
Contributor

You don't have to travel too far to hear people moaning about the ever-increasing cost of games. You can debate the right and wrongs of the current pricing policy until you're blue in the face, but with a little effort you CAN find value for money. It's easiest on the PC where budget games are sold from £3 – which is great if you can find a £3 game that's worth playing. But there is an area that's often overlooked that does provide a good source of entertainment at a reasonable cost. I'm talking, of course, about expansion disks.

Classics like *Populous 3*, *Sin*, *Incoming*, *GTA* and *Rainbow Six* have all recently had new life breathed

"CLASSICS LIKE POPULOUS 3, SIN, INCOMING, GTA AND RAINBOW SIX HAVE ALL RECENTLY HAD NEW LIFE BREATHED INTO THEM"

into them by clever programmers, and – as long as you enjoyed the original – provide excellent value for money. On the PlayStation there's now a massive collection of Platinum titles, and many of them are great value at £20 (although there's no doubt room in the market for a Super Budget Range). On the N64, the machine's reliance on cartridge as a storage medium prevents dramatic cost cutting but has produced a thriving second-hand market.

So, whatever your format of choice, there's always an affordable way to pursue your hobby. Speaking of value for money, I've spent the best part of the month researching a feature on some talented programmers who'll supply you with PC and PlayStation games for free...

NICK JONES
Deputy Editor

Games don't make people kill. That is the logical answer to the recent court proceedings in Kentucky and the Senate hearings over the recent US high school shootings. Millions of people have been exposed to violent computer games to some degree, yet there isn't an army of *Quake*-inspired maniacs out there randomly gunning people down (not just yet, anyway). Because a few individuals take it upon themselves to go on killing sprees AND play computer games shouldn't mean that the rest of us should be denied the pleasure of virtual killing, torturing,

"IT IS WRONG TO BLAME VIDEO GAMES FOR KILLINGS, BUT GAMES MAY BECOME A SCAPEGOAT"

maiming and all the other disgusting acts that take place on our computer screens without us thinking twice.

Maybe this is what is at the core of the fears of parents and lobbyists who want violence of this kind to be banned – it is the desensitising of people towards violence that makes it so horrific. And in a society like America where violence is everywhere – on TV, in the cinema, on the monitor – whether it's portrayed as comic book or real, you have to expect a small percentage of people exposed to it to lose the plot, to lose the definition between what's right and wrong (especially if that definition isn't clearly defined in the first place). But perhaps it is not correct that we focus on what the media does to children, but what children do with the media...

It is wrong to blame video games for killings that may have taken place anyway (especially when the boys in question had access to firearms in the first place), but games may become a scapegoat, however unlikely. It's a fact of life that art reflects life and life reflects art.

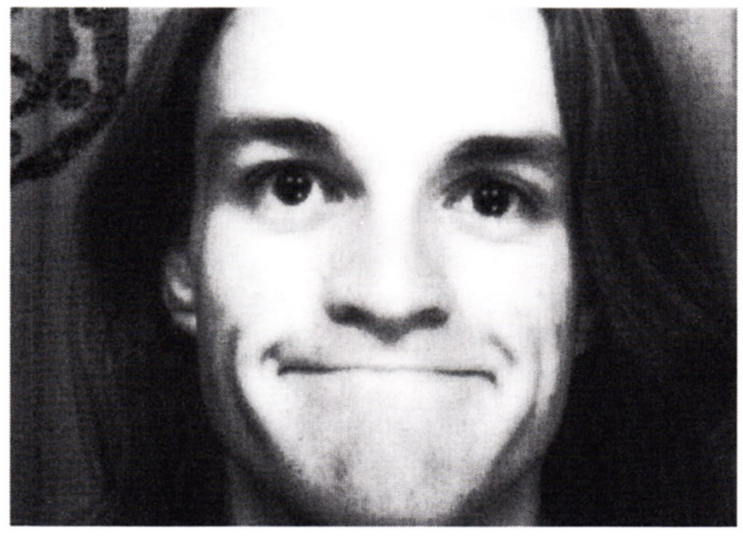
WILL ADKIN
Staff Writer

CLIFF SMITH
Senior Staff Writer

This month Intel announced yet another newer, faster Pentium III (ding, di-da-di-ding) chip. It is only incrementally faster than its predecessor, but it is the fastest, so anyone who wants the best will just have to upgrade again. When will this ever end? Pretty soon, I think.

At the risk of making rash predictions, the increases in the speed and power of computer hardware are rapidly approaching the point of diminishing returns. It would take a trained eye and some sophisticated benchmarking programs to spot the difference in overall performance between a PIII 350 and a PIII 450, so the difference between a PIII 450 and a PIII 550 are going to be even more difficult to detect. There may come a time, and soon I hope, when people just say 'Stop! That's fast enough!' and stop buying these ever-faster machines. This could have enormous benefits for everyone.

Ever since home PCs became available, the entry-level price for a computer system has remained pretty much constant at around a thousand pounds, while the specification has improved steadily. This is the exact opposite of the console market, where the specification of the machine does not change but the price drops steadily over the lifetime of the product. If the entry-level specification for PCs remained fixed for a few years, say at the PIII 450 level, then the price would begin to drop. Manufacturers would be forced to compete on price, quality and style, resulting in a flood of cheap, high quality PCs onto the market. There would be an explosion in PC ownership, and the world would become truly connected. Who knows? Maybe even Microsoft would be forced to produce a decent operating system.



SIMON PHILIPS
Editor – Total N64

I don't know... you go to E3 to check out the new games and then Nintendo stun the world by announcing details of the 'Dolphin'.

This rather spoiled E3 for me. Rather than enjoying the games on offer for the N64, I couldn't help but think of the future of the games industry and Nintendo in particular, who are about to wade into a head on clash with the mighty Sony in what could well be a fight to the death. Sony are no doubt confident that they will continue their all-conquering reign. However, it's not as clear cut as all that.

Given that the Dolphin will be a DVD rather than cartridge-based console, we can expect many more games developed on the new format than the old, many of which will no doubt be released on both the Sony and Nintendo games machines. Bearing in mind that the Dolphin is theoretically more powerful than the PlayStation 2, games players will have to make a simple choice of opting for what is seen as being cool

"DOLPHIN IS THEORETICALLY MORE POWERFUL THAN THE PLAYSTATION 2 – GAMES PLAYERS WILL HAVE TO MAKE A SIMPLE CHOICE"

or choosing the better, more powerful console that will have not only the best looking games but also have some of the best designers creating Nintendo-specific games that millions of people can't get enough of.

One thing is for certain: as long as Nintendo make good their promise of delivering the 'Dolphin' on time then we could be entering into one of the most interesting times in video games history, and I can't wait.

Looking at the games being played by everyone at Total CONTROL over the past few months, it's not hard to see the concerns for the current console generation. Over the last few months the vast majority of quality games that have arrived in the office have been PC titles, with a small scattering of Dreamcast games along for the ride. Are the PlayStation and N64 nearing the end of their prosperous lives?

The last PlayStation game to grab my attention was Psygnosis' *Rollcage*; a fine game, but also one that was outclassed by the PC incarnation. Many of the newer PlayStation games are showing the age of the machine from a technical point of view – the forthcoming triple-A titles for the machine, namely *Dino Crisis*, *GT2* and *FFVIII*, will also have trouble in that area. By the end of the year, the PlayStation won't be able to compete with the rest of the market. Say what you want about the importance of tech specs, but there are reasons why we aren't still playing on our Spectrums.

The N64 is in the process of having what will surely be the worst six months in its history. *Rogue Squadron* was the last big game to hit the shelves, and *Carmageddon* and *Quake II* have taken too long coming. But the next six months look set to be the machine's finest hour. *Pod Racers*, *Jet Force Gemini*, *Twelve Tales*, *Donkey Kong 64*, *Perfect Dark* and *Battlezone* all look likely to be released in quick succession, and at the moment none look graphically dated thanks to good use of the RAM expansion pack. At a mere £50, the N64 will be strong competition for the Dreamcast and should still be selling strong when the PlayStation 2 and Dolphin hit UK soil.

JUSTINCALVERT
e-mail: justice@rapide.co.uk

A good selection of subject matter this month, including a couple of very different opinions on the continuing drama/farce of the American parents Vs. video game violence case. Personally I find it all a bit ridiculous – I've never killed anyone outside of a video game, and the results of the reader survey we conducted back in Issue 3 suggest that at least 99.99% of those of you that are reading this haven't either. But then we don't have access to guns, do we... a small consideration, but one worth mentioning. Other hot topics this month include Nintendo's next generation announcement, the user-unfriendliness of PCs, and the apparently short attention spans of PlayStation owners. Any Bolton Wanderers fans amongst you may notice that I've managed to sneak a photo of Colin Todd into this month's issue as well. What can I say... I'm pathetic. If I didn't mention BWFC at least once an issue I wouldn't feel I was doing my job properly.

MAD FOR IT

These pages are sponsored by Mad Catz. Every letter printed in its entirety will win a joypad, and the 'Mad Letter of the Month' wins a steering wheel plus either a camera, a Walkman, or a Mad Catz Wrist Rumbler. Plus you get to see your name in Total CONTROL.

MAD CATZ

Mad Catz Peripherals – By Any Means Necessary

Now that we have some prizes to give away, please don't forget to indicate your preferred format somewhere on your letter. You'll find that winning an N64 pad doesn't do you a lot of good if your only system is a PC.

If you'd like to comment on this month's issue or raise some issues of your own, please don't hesitate to write to us at the following address:

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CONTROLYOURSELF

You're about to spend **100 pages or so listening** to what we've **got to** say, but what do **you think?** Write to us now, have **an opinion!**

NOT SO PC

Let me put this in simple terms: why are PCs so bloody user-unfriendly? Why does everything you try to do on them turn out to be a bigger task than climbing Everest in huge wellies? I mean, correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't computers supposed to help organise and speed up our working environment and add interest and enjoyment to our social lives? So why does it take a team of 'IT specialists' three months to install a few PCs at work which break down every time two people stand up at the same time?

"WHY DOES IT TAKE A TEAM OF 'IT SPECIALISTS' THREE MONTHS TO INSTALL A FEW PCS AT WORK WHICH BREAK DOWN EVERY TIME TWO PEOPLE STAND UP AT THE SAME TIME?"

And why does it take me, six friends, four people I don't know, a soldering iron, a crate of beer, a trip to the hospital with soldering iron burns and 20 phone calls to Denmark to fit a new piece of hardware to my machine? (Which you have to do every three or four days if you want to keep up with the software!)

Recently I put a new screensaver onto my hard drive, which came free on a magazine cover disk. After a while I decided to remove it, and my machine would not let me! And from then on an error came up every time I booted up my PC! My friend had the same problem and had to find a program on the internet to remove the unwanted files. (Not everyone is on the internet, guys.)

I have been using computers since the merry days of the Speccy, and even then I did not mind waiting five minutes to load a game which two out of three times would probably crash just as it had finished loading. At least then, when you threw those rubber keys against the wall, they would bounce back at you and make you even more determined to play that game of *Attic Attack* you were itching to get at. At least with the Speccy it either worked or it didn't – you didn't get 400 different run time errors! So please PC people, give us software and hardware which is as easy to use as a football. And if we are doing something wrong – e.g. trying to make popcorn with the CD drive – tell us on the screen, and tell us how to solve the problem. Thanks.

Paul Milne – Edinburgh

Cliff: I know what you mean, Paul. Windows 98 is about as user-friendly as a rabid polecat. I am constantly installing and uninstalling new games on my PC, and day by day I watch Windows 98 get slower and slower until it finally loses track of all its .DLL files and stops working altogether. I've had to re-format the hard disk and re-install Windows twice in the past month. The trouble with Windows 98 is that it is a bodge-up, obsolete code written to run on an obsolete processor architecture, and designed with the philosophy that the user is an idiot who should not be meddling with things they don't understand. It is hopelessly clumsy, uses too many system resources, and is so opaque that you never know what it is doing until it's too late. Hopefully the success of the iMac and the threat from web-capable games consoles will give Intel and Microsoft a swift kick up the arse and prompt them to make computers that are easy and fun to use. Like the Amiga, for instance. Now that's how to write an operating system...

Our favourite Game & Watch ever

NINTENDO WORSHIP

Please answer me one question: Why do people keep slagging off Nintendo?

As you, in your infinite wisdom, said in Issue Seven, it is Nintendo who are largely responsible for the stage of gaming we have reached in the past few years.

"ATARI, AMIGA, SONY, SEGA, AND COLECO HAVE HELPED FORWARD GAMING TECHNOLOGY OVER THE YEARS, BUT NINTENDO HAVE BEEN BY FAR THE MOST INFLUENTIAL."

For example, look at the controllers on any of the major consoles at the moment. The D-pad was first introduced by Nintendo for their Game and Watch, and has featured on about every console since – including the PlayStation. Also, when they innovated with the analogue stick and introduced the rumble pack on the N64, Sony promptly snapped both ideas up, renamed and repackaged them, and churned them out as if it were an original idea.

Also, who introduced the first light gun on the market and revitalised interest in home video games in America after the Atari crash and collapse of the market? Yup, you guessed it, Nintendo. Which company has the most talented games developer ever to set foot on Earth? A man who has created masterpiece after masterpiece. This man created the *Mario* and *Zelda* series on NES, GB, SNES and N64. Ask yourself who pioneered and still has a stranglehold on handheld gaming.

I am not trying to say that Nintendo are faultless – the choice of cartridges over CDs for the N64 is a good example of their slight mishaps, and I'm not going to deny that companies like Atari, Amiga, Sony, Sega, and Coleco have helped forward gaming technology over the years – but Nintendo have been by far the most influential.

Before all the Sony die-hards start blurting all that shit about superior games and the movie sequences, I'd like to say that I own a PSX as well as an N64 but just think that the N64 is better.

Now that I've vented my anger, I'd like to say your mag is better then the competition, with better structure and design as well as content, of course.

Sean Malone – Aylesford

Will: While Nintendo have made some of the most influential advances in the video games industry, don't be too quick to deny Sony the praise they deserve for pushing it into the mainstream. The success and popularity of Sony can be put down to good marketing, not just amongst the public but amongst games developers as well. Nintendo have had a serious lack of software support recently, and if the N64 did not have the support of Rare it is difficult to see

MAD LETTER OF THE MONTH

MARKETING MONSTERS

After reading a letter in your magazine by Dave Shaw, I felt I had to respond. I too wish to purchase a Dreamcast. However, I see the future of next generation console gaming a little differently.

Yes, Sega will produce top-notch games while Sony will produce a monotonous range of sequel after sequel after sequel (who can say that Sony won't produce *Tomb Raider IV*, *Resident Evil 4,* as well as the already announced *Gran Turismo 3* and *Final Fantasy VIIII*?). But as to who will become the more dominant, it's easy – Sony will. It doesn't matter if Sega, or Nintendo for that matter, have better or more original games because of Sony's marketing skills on their previous grey box. There are more casual gamers than there are serious gamers. These are the people that will make up the numbers for most units shifted, and these people have the attention span of a cabbage. They don't care about the best, most creative games, they just want games that will entertain them for a few hours. I mean, if you look at the PlayStation's line-up of games, you have to agree that a lot of games are finished early or are just plain crap. Admittedly, there are a few good games such as *Tekken 3*, *Gran Turismo* and *Metal Gear Solid* (all of which I own), but it doesn't compare to Nintendo's line-up. And where is Nintendo in the market, I hear you say? It's nowhere. Sony are the leaders because of their marketing skills. Personally I can't wait for games like *Powerstone* and *Sonic Adventure,* but I just can't see the Dreamcast overpowering Sony's marketing monster.

Brian Connolly – Via email

Justin: One of the most brutally honest and depressing letters we've received for a while. It's true that Sony's marketing machine/monster is a worthy and no doubt terrifying adversary for any company. Sega have learned, however, both from their own mistakes and from Sony, and having seen some of the early American ad campaigns, I think it's safe to say that before long we'll be seeing the Dreamcast swirl in just as many places as the PlayStation symbols. As for Nintendo? Very little is known at the moment, but I'm sure they're not about to let Sony and Sega run a two-horse marketing race.

Sega's new US campaign is looking to make the Dreamcast swirl as recognisable as Sony's PlayStation buttons

the machine ever selling at all. However, I sincerely hope and believe that Nintendo will prevail in the future. Without their source of innovation the market would be a much duller place.

VIOLENCE AND SEX

Looking at TC7, I can see an increase in games like *Kingpin*. If people want to play them, fair enough, that's their choice. Gamers as a whole are supposed to be fairly open-minded, so, with an increase in violent crime, is it responsible to publish explicit games? Many are concerned with human rights, aren't they? So why do the shelves of games shops become littered with games involving beating people up, torturing them and running them over. You may counter that with 'it's only light hearted', but would younger kids recognise that? Also, with the power of the Dreamcast, the PSX2 and the Dolphin, violence and sex will grow steadily more explicit, so, if the games industry wants to grow up and be taken seriously, it's going to have to develop taste.

"VIOLENCE AND SEX WILL GROW STEADILY MORE EXPLICIT, SO, IF THE GAMES INDUSTRY WANTS TO GROW UP AND BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, IT'S GOING TO HAVE TO DEVELOP TASTE"

There will always be a fringe, and censor-wise sometimes it should say ouch, but the mainstream should be okay. I would say the same for magazines – they too will have to grow up. I would say your mag is mature, and hopefully others will follow you with a new look. I am 15 and I have a PSX, but not violent games. I feel graphics are secondary to gameplay, and I would rather play a game with great gameplay like *Total Soccer Yaroze*.

Looking forward to great issues 9 & 10.

Chris Holstein – Mold

Justin: Part of the appeal of games for me has always been getting to do things that I will probably never do for real in my lifetime. Whether it be driving a Formula 1 car, managing a football team, or shooting a bad guy repeatedly through the head with the biggest gun I can find. The point is that having access to these games gives me the opportunity to experience in a very small way what it might be like to do them for real. And just because I managed to get Bolton Wanderers back into the Premiership where Colin Todd failed, it doesn't mean I'll be after his job – CM3 is a game. I've won Grand Prix at Australia on more than one occasion, but if you put me in a Ferrari for real I'm quite sure I'd write it off on the first lap. So, by the same token, just because I happen to be a bit dangerous on* Half-Life *and* Kingpin, *it

CHOICE CUTS

First of all, your magazine is great, but the real reason I'm writing to you is to ask if you have any *Final Fantasy VII* bits and bobs lying around. If so, could you please send me anything, as I am absolutely *FFVII* mad. If you could do this I would be very grateful. Cheers!
Justine Rutlerford – Hungerford
Unfortunately* FFVII *merchandise is like gold dust around the office, but we do have plenty of other ~~crap~~ promotional merchandise lying around, so if anyone else wants to write in begging for stuff, we'll send out whatever we can and, who knows, we might even be able to see our floor again in a couple of months?

I work in a pub not far from Tower Bridge, and every day I am swamped with horrible little Americans who want things not on the menu, they want it yesterday, and when it arrives it's never as good as back home. So I think it's great that they are blowing each other up. In fact I propose we start a trust that provides each inbred one of them with a copy of *Quake II*, a shotgun and a box of ammo…
Geoffrey Potgieter – Via email
Sorry sir, we'll have to stop you there. Attention Americans! If you're on holiday in London and decide to eat near Tower Bridge, order something from the menu – you can't be too careful.

I was wondering if there was a release date for *Command and Conquer: Tiberian Sun,* because I loved *C&C Red Alert*.
Ramsay – Edinburgh
Actually there have been several. The latest is something like 'summer '99'… but don't hold your breath.

I have one question (please answer it as I am racking my brain over this): With Sega sponsoring Arsenal, is Dennis Bergkamp having Dreamcast on his shirt?
Michael Hutt – Via email
Dennis is still at Arsenal, and when they're playing at home, yes. We understand that the away shirt will have Sega printed on it rather than the Dreamcast swirl, though.

ENLARGE IT!?

Firstly, let me congratulate you on a great magazine. I prefer your magazine much more to the others I tend to buy, that's why I got a subscription.

I was stunned by the amazing 'gravestone' front cover of Issue 8. I love the new look – I think it gives the magazine a lot more character – but I think the 'editorial opinions' section looks a bit like something from an Orange mobile phone advert, as do the other pages which are also orange.

That aside, at last, the tips page, or Easy Way Out as you call it, is here. Why not enlarge it a little? At the moment it is just a few lines (okay, three and a half pages) of information. Why not add some pictures or maps?

I think your scoring in the review section is a lot better than in other magazines. For instance, you don't give out the 90% mark to every game. If the game gets a low score, you still give it a good review.

Any chance that you could print more information on the code named N2000 as soon as you get it? I am a loyal Nintendo fan, and can't wait to see that Italian plumber bounce across the screen on another console.
Jonathan Cole Dalton – St. Leonards-On-Sea

Justin: Glad you like our new look, but I'm afraid we've got no plans to enlarge our tips section – it was more or less under protest that it was included in the first place. As for the N2000, you've probably noticed by now that our lead news story is on what we now know to be called Project Dolphin. Another satisfied customer...

doesn't make me think, or even wish, to find out whether or not I could be an effective killing machine in the real world. To blame violence on video games is lazy, and I'm sure most rational people would agree that taking violence out of games altogether would accomplish nothing – except maybe shift the blame onto movies, or magazines, or music, or...

CABBAGE PATCH KIDS

Firstly I would like to congratulate you and your team for producing an interesting, unbiased and great value for money magazine with a 'tell it like it is' attitude. The new look is also a good improvement.

After reading the 'Games to Kill For' report in Issue 8, I was saddened to hear that several schoolkids had been killed. But soon after I read on, I discovered what was being done about it. Games and film companies being sued. What for?!

"IF THERE WAS NO VIOLENCE, SEX OR SWEARING IN VIDEO GAMES AND FILMS, WE WOULD ALL BE WATCHING THE TELETUBBIES PONCE AROUND 24 HOURS A DAY!"

Let's play a little game here:-
1) Who has enjoyed playing a video game that contains any references to violence? e.g. *RE2*, *Doom*, the upcoming *Kingpin* etc. (Just about everyone)
2) Who has enjoyed watching a movie that contains any references to violence? e.g. Scream, Terminator, H20 etc. (Just about everyone)
3) Who, after this, has gone out and shot several schoolkids. (NO ONE)

This really annoyed me. Millions of people play violent video games and watch violent films, but we don't all go out and kill people. Just because some nutter has done this, why should we suffer? We didn't do anything wrong! The video games and movie companies didn't do anything wrong either. All they do is churn out the stuff for us, the public, to gasp at. Hmmm... who does that leave? Oh yes, the nutter who committed the crime. It's his fault! He chose to do what he did on his own accord. If we say that it was video games and films that influenced him, then we are just making excuses for him. So parents, if you want someone to blame, blame him! If there was no violence, sex or swearing in video games and films, we would all be watching the teletubbies ponce around 24 hours a day!

Talking of violent video games that make you feel like killing someone, how about *Thrill Kill*? I, like many others I'm sure, became very excited when I heard about *Thrill Kill*. The ripping off of arms to use as weapons, the bloody settings, and the great characters made this number one on my 'to buy' list. But then, Electronic Arts bought the rights to the game from Virgin Interactive and decided not to release it after all. Worse yet, they decided that they would not sell the rights to a company who would publish the game. WHAT?! I mean, why buy the game and then scrap it? Now I really did feel like killing someone! Please, video games makers, just make exciting games and let us decide if they are good or cak.

I feel a lot better now all of that is off my chest.
ROHIT LAMBA – Via email

Justin: But don't you see, it must be video games – the fact that these kids have access to firearms has nothing to do with it. And hey, if* Thrill Kill *had been released there would almost definitely have been a sudden spate of brutal mutilations in smalltown USA.

A LEAP FORWARD...

Thank you so much for Total CONTROL. It was such a relief to find a gaming magazine that was intelligent, non-biased and objective. I think you have challenged the stereotype that games enthusiasts are either brainless, sad, or up themselves. Total CONTROL proves that there is skill involved in the publishing of a games magazine, and that the writers do not need to be conceited or arrogant. So many games magazines are full of 'laddism' and sexist remarks, which I think insult the intelligence of both men and women. It's patronising, unnecessary, has nothing to do with gaming, and assumes that the general public are so ignorant that they need to be entertained with mindless drivel. I am also sick of reading games magazines that are designed specifically for PlayStation and are totally biased – unrealistically so. Just because I only own a PlayStation, it doesn't mean that I want to hear that Dreamcast will flop, or that the future of Nintendo is over, when these facts are simply untrue. I think that competition in the games market is essential in order for original games to develop. I think many games developers that design for PlayStation in particular have become lazy because they know that the game will sell due to the format of the console it is designed for. Of course, most importantly, it's fun to read! I think that Total CONTROL is a leap forward in the world of games magazines. Thank you!
Laura – Via email

Justin: It's letters like this that make it all worthwhile – even the fact that I'm writing this reply at 8:32pm, when I know there's a PR person buying the drinks down the road, can't hurt me now. Thank you. It's also good to know that our photos haven't scared off all the female readers, and now we know that we have some, or at least one, I'm sure you'll notice the guys making a bit more effort for their photos in future!

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REPORTAGE

NICKJONES
e-mail: nick@rapide.co.uk

News of Nintendo's new console at the recent E3 was hardly a surprise. They had promised us an announcement before the end of the year, and this was it. And the news that the machine would be as powerful, if not more so, than the PlayStation 2 wasn't a surprise either, although it was a relief of sorts. However, this is not the most interesting aspect. What is surprising is that Nintendo are planning a simultaneous world-wide release of the console towards the end of 2000 – the same time as Sony are planning to ship US and European versions of the next generation PlayStation. So apart from the small minority who will no doubt pay upwards of £1000 for a Japanese PlayStation 2, there will be no great advantage to Sony in the ever-increasing 'world market'.

This gives Nintendo a level playing field, so the technology won't be a factor when coming to decide which machine you plump for. Both have DVD drives and will play movies (probably). Both will boast FMV quality graphics. True, PlayStation 2 will be backwards compatible, but then if you already own a PlayStation, what reason would you have to buy another machine that plays the games identically as your old 'Station? It will most likely come down to the software available, and if Nintendo can manage to hit their deadline AND have a library of top quality games on offer from the off then anything could happen...

All of a sudden, we find Nintendo in an excellent position, and reports of their death seem largely exaggerated. The combination of DVD, Panasonic, IBM and Nintendo's unquestionable expertise in video games looks like being a winning one.

NINTENDO SWIMMING WITH THE FISHES? NOT LIKELY!

First we had Project Reality, now we have Project Dolphin – codename for Nintendo's next generation console.

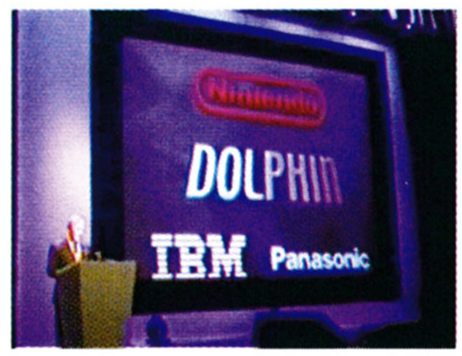
Nintendo have a history of big announcements at E3, and this year's show was no exception. The news of their new console was revealed at their annual pre-E3 press conference, and although specifics weren't forthcoming from Nintendo, the promise was that the new machine's graphics "...will equal or exceed anything our friends at Sony can come up with for PlayStation 2".

Howard Lincoln made the announcement to a packed room: "While our new Dolphin hardware will be extremely powerful, it will not be expensive. It will retail at a mass market price for home video game systems." The prospective release date for the console is for the spring next year, the same time as PlayStation 2.

As reported previously in Total CONTROL, it will use technology developed by ArtX – a breakaway team from Silicon Graphics, the company behind the Reality Processor at the heart of the N64. This chip will take care of all maths needed to calculate the geometry of 3D objects. A figure of 80 million polygons per second has been touted in some areas, although Nintendo have not announced any benchmarks.

A 400MHz CPU will power the Dolphin, and US microchip giant IBM will manufacture this. this custom designed 400 MHz 'Gekko' processor. Based on the IBM PowerPC architecture, the processor is said to be at the advanced stages of design and will be manufactured using 0.18-micron technology at Burlington, Vermont. It will use the company's copper chip technology.

"As customers such as Nintendo develop increasingly sophisticated systems, the complexity of the chips that power them grows dramatically,"



IBM and Nintendo have entered into a $1 billion technology agreement where IBM will make

"WHILE OUR NEW DOLPHIN HARDWARE WILL BE EXTREMELY POWERFUL, IT WILL NOT BE EXPENSIVE. IT WILL RETAIL AT A MASS MARKET PRICE FOR HOME VIDEO GAME SYSTEMS." HOWARD LINCOLN, NINTENDO OF AMERICA

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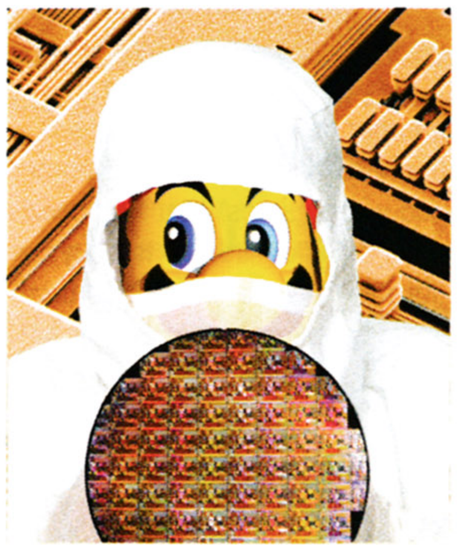
DOLPHIN



says Dr. John Kelly, General Manager, IBM Microelectronics. "Not many companies are able to meet this need. We have the technology, design expertise and manufacturing experience necessary to develop and deliver customised solutions for our customers."

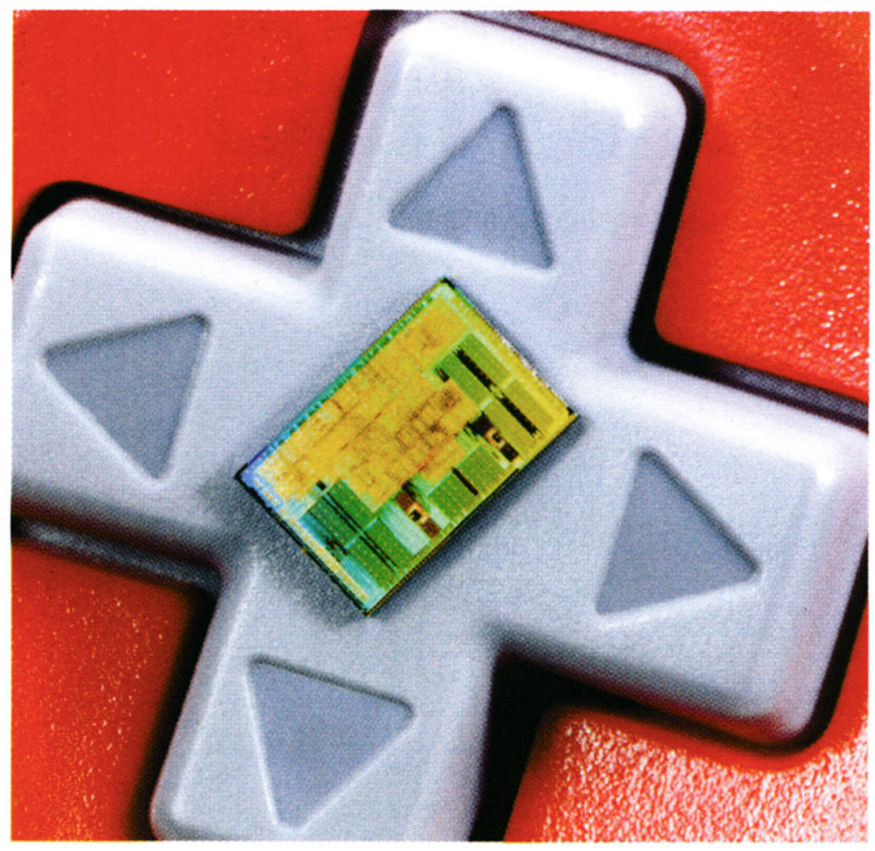
"Dating from our very first home system in 1983, Nintendo's ongoing commitment is to provide game developers with industry-leading technology to create new game experiences for our players," explained Howard Lincoln. "IBM's new copper-based chip delivers on that commitment like never before, and we're jointly committed to a long-term relationship to assure revolutionary results."

The storage medium will NOT be ROM cartridges either. Nintendo have opted for DVD, or at least a slight variation of. The reasons given for this were speed at which it could be manufactured and the cost. Lincoln also stated that it would be important that the medium be counterfeit proof. No specifics were given as to how Nintendo would achieve this, but it reaffirms the company's long standing battle with the pirates.

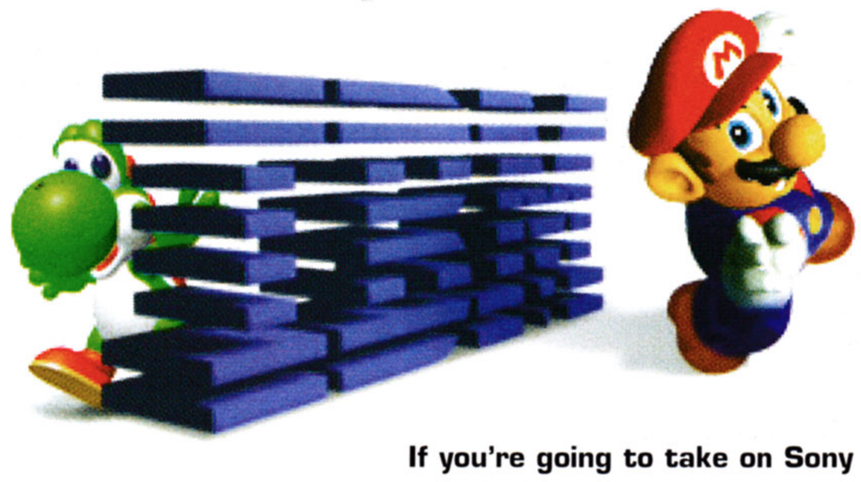
An announcement was made that there would also be an alliance with Matsushita, the Japanese electronics firm that, among other things, market under the consumer brands Panasonic and Technics. To begin with Matsushita will design and supply Nintendo with a DVD drive for the Dolphin. Later on though, the Dolphin technology will be incorporated into Panasonic branded DVD electronic products. The two companies will also explore further marketing opportunities in the future, although nothing specific was mentioned.

Howard Lincoln commented, "I mentioned before that Dolphin's software will be competitively priced at retail. Let me assure you that this is a critical objective for Nintendo – as is the need for flexible and quick manufacturing turn around of Dolphin software and strong and effective counterfeit protection. All of these objectives will be achieved under the Nintendo-Matsushita alliance."

Lincoln ended the statement by saying, "In a nutshell, Dolphin hardware and software will be fast, powerful and inexpensive. Need I say that it will also feature world class video games from people like Mr. Miyamoto and the Stamper brothers? Is there any question about Nintendo's proven track record of mega hit video games spanning the last fifteen years? I don't think so." TC



The actual size of a microchip using 'copper chip technology'



If you're going to take on Sony then you have to think big

PROJECT DOLPHIN SPECIFICATIONS

CPU
IBM Custom Processor (Extension of Power PC Architecture)
400MHz Clock Speed
Semiconductor Process 0.18 micron Copper Technology

GRAPHICS
Full-Custom Chip jointly designed with ArtX, Inc. in the US
200 MHz Clock Speed
Semiconductor Process 0.18 Micron Embedded DRAM Technology

SYSTEM MEMORY
High Speed DRAM Technology
Memory Bandwidth – 3.2GB/second

SOFTWARE MEDIUM
DVD Medium with Matsushita's DVD Technology
Enhanced Counterfeit Protection

NINTENDO TO RETAKE MARKET

Optimistic predictions from NOA's top brass

Nintendo's E3 press conference was also a great show of confidence for the company. Buoyed by the announcement of the Dolphin, Peter Main went on to predict that Nintendo would regain market leadership in 1999. He said, "This is the single best moment in the interactive entertainment industry – we have the single best game library. We are totally confident that we'll retake full market leadership in '99." Apparently, Nintendo has grown 31% over the last twelve months, and they estimate that the company will sell more than 15 million consoles in 1999 and 2000. And with games such as *Star Wars Episode One Racer*, *Donkey Kong 64*, *Perfect Dark* and so on, who would disagree? Not Sony or Sega, surely...?

DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

"In my mind, I'd always envisioned what a game like *Zelda* could look like, and with the N64, I was able to create it," according to Shigeru Miyamoto. "Now, with the Gekko processor, I can see an opportunity to take game designs to a new level."

"Designing games is an ever-changing process, and this chip, with its speed and seamless data flow, will allow us to make even more amazing games," said Chris Stamper, Chairman and Technical Director of Rare. "Consumers will love the end result with the upcoming system."

GAMES IN THE DOCK

'Mass murder simulators' given hearing in the US Senate

The US Senate, Washington, was the scene of the hearing

Small American towns, Littleton, Paducah and now Conyers, have one thing in common: their schools have all been sites of attack from children using firearms. While it has yet to be established if the shootings in Atlanta have been blamed on video games, the shootings in both Littleton and Paducah (and the court case in the latter) have both raised questions about the influence of violence in the media on children.

In the Senate committee hearing titled "Marketing Violence to Children" on May 4th, senators, experts and industry representatives testified on the effect of violent media on children. The hearing was chaired by John McCain, a presidential hopeful from Arizona, and the overall suggestion was that "the Federal Trade Commission or the Department of Justice (be asked) to investigate the marketing practices of the video game, music and movie industry."

The testimony from the panel opened with Retired Lieutenant Colonel David Grossman, a professional witness hired by the plaintiffs in the $180 million Paducah case (see last month's Reportage) against Hollywood, internet companies and video game publishers. Grossman offered his theory that video games are "mass murder simulators," and that they are similar to, if not the very same as, simulators used by military and law enforcement to train personnel to effectively kill. He went on to describe a machine that was used for training the Arkansas National Guard, "The army has a device – I will provide pictures. The last time I trained on that puppy, it had a label on it that said 'Nintendo'." He mentioned *Doom* as a licensed military trainer.

His main point was that video games train children to get into a 'killing mode', where they "mow down every living creature until you run out of ammo or you run out of targets." "What we have before us is a new national video game," Grossman said. "The high score in this video game, instead of getting their three initials in the video arcade, is their picture on Time Magazine and on every television in America." He called for education, legislation and litigation. He wants new regulations similar to those on tobacco, pornography, alcohol and guns to help parents keep them from their children. Grossman suggested that it might be time to say that "anyone who provides this toxic substance to children is a criminal."

"THE HIGH SCORE IN THIS VIDEO GAME, INSTEAD OF GETTING THEIR THREE INITIALS IN THE VIDEO ARCADE, IS THEIR PICTURE ON TIME MAGAZINE AND ON EVERY TELEVISION IN AMERICA"

In response to these allegations against video games, Doug Lowenstein of the IDSA (the Industrial Designers Society of America) and Dr Henry Jenkins of the MIT Media Lab testified.

Prof. Jenkins challenged the focus of the inquiry, stating that, "So far, most of the conversation about Littleton has reflected a desire to understand what the media are doing to our children. Instead, we should be focusing our attention on understanding what our children are doing with media."

He then went on to list a number of the cultural artefacts (namely the films, internet porn and video games) that had been cited as influences on the boys in question. "None of these cultural choices, taken individually or as an aggregate, differentiates Harris and Klebold from a sizeable number of American teenagers who also consumed these same forms of popular culture but have not gone out and gunned down their classmates." "Banning black trenchcoats or violent video games doesn't get us anywhere," Jenkins asserted. "The black trench coats or the song lyrics are only symbols. To be effective in changing the nature of contemporary youth culture, what we want to get at are the meanings that are associated with those symbols, the kinds of affiliations they express and,

Could a FPS really ready troops for war and teach how to kill?

"WE MUST HOLD THESE INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TOXIC SUBSTANCES THEY'RE POURING INTO OUR CHILDREN"

Despite *Resident Evil*'s 'comic book' approach to killing, it has been cited as a "mass murder simulator"

ODD? THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING...

We've already reported that Oddworld Inhabitants, the team responsible for *Abe's Oddysee* and *Exoddus*, are working on the true sequel to the former, *Munch's Oddysee*, for the PlayStation 2. They are already working on another game for PlayStation 2 (and probably PC) – a real-time strategy affair called *Hand of Odd*. The game will pit capitalists against eco-warriors and is due for release in about 18 months.

CIVILIZATION III TO BE MEIER'S BABY

Good news for all *Civ* fans: Sid Meier and his Firaxis team will be developing the hugely anticipated *Civilization III*. Hasbro (the owners of the game franchise) have signed a deal with Firaxis to jointly publish the game, with Firaxis developing the title. We'll bring you details on the actual game when we get them...

Although GT's *NAM* wasn't named in the proceedings, the US Army have allegedly been using such games to train soldiers for years

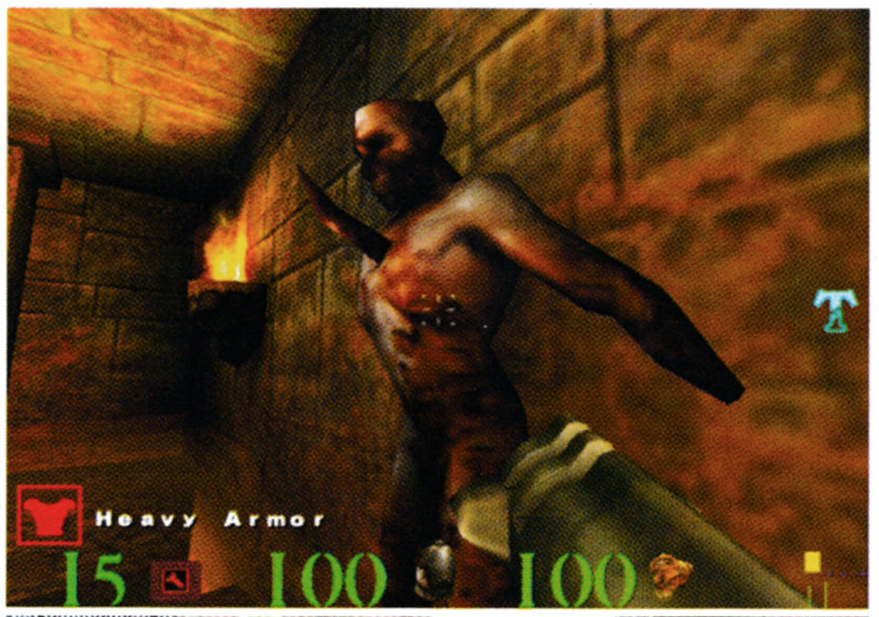
more importantly, the feelings of profound alienation and powerlessness that pushed these games is primarily adult. He also challenged the notion that violent video games beget

"SO FAR, MOST OF THE CONVERSATION ABOUT LITTLETON HAS REFLECTED A DESIRE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE MEDIA ARE DOING TO OUR CHILDREN. INSTEAD, WE SHOULD BE FOCUSING OUR ATTENTION ON UNDERSTANDING WHAT OUR CHILDREN ARE DOING WITH MEDIA"

particular kids (and others like them) over the edge. Consuming popular culture didn't make these boys into killers; rather, the ways they consumed popular culture reflected their drive towards destruction"

Doug Lowenstein pointed out that the industry already had a system of age rating in place, and that the market for violence. He offered this quote from a report in 1995 by Kevin Durkin, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Western Australia. "A small number of experimental studies have been reported. Either no or minimal effects have been obtained. Some very tentative evidence indicates that aggressive play may be cathartic (promote the release of aggressive tensions) for some individuals, though this work is open to methodological criticisms. Overall, evidence is limited, but so far does not lend strong support to the claims that computer game play promotes aggressive behaviour."

The relevance of this hearing for the video games industry will not be known until a conclusion is reached. At the time of going to press there had been no word from the Senate on what action might be taken. However, if it's something that is specific to video games then the repercussions will be felt around the industry in some shape or form. TC

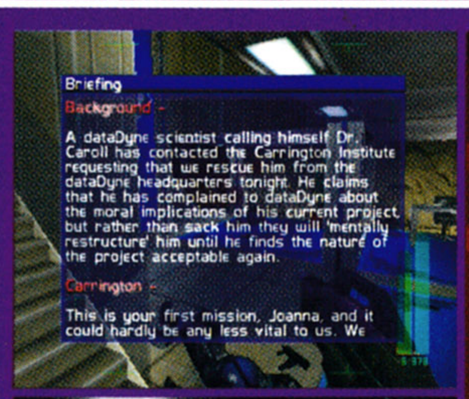


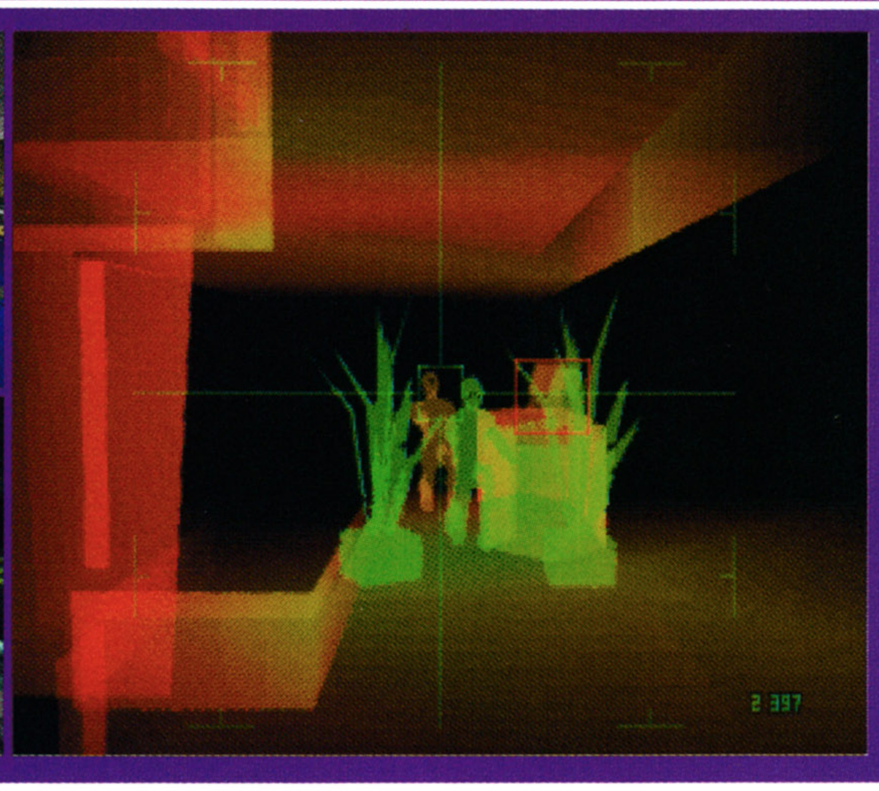
N64 PAST 25,000,000 MARK

Nintendo are happy to announce that world-wide sales of the N64 console has now passed the 25 million mark. The company has sold almost eight million N64s – 1.21M in Japan and 6.75M overseas (fiscal year of '98/'99). Nintendo have also reported that they have sold 13.5 million Game Boys in the same period, taking the total world-wide to nearly 80 million.

UPDATE: PERFECT DARK

With all the talk of Project Dolphin, it would have been easy to overlook some of the more interesting developments on N64. As part of the fallout from the 64DD, *Perfect Dark* will be the first console game (to our knowledge) to allow players to actually enter the game. This is achieved by the ability to texture map faces on the characters in *Perfect Dark*. Images from the Game Boy Camera can be input into the N64 via the 64GB Pak (as yet unreleased in the UK) and mapped onto the enemies or multiplayer characters in the game. We have no idea what the quality will be like, but if you've seen our attempts at mapping ourselves into *Half-Life*, you'll know that we'll be giving this a good go.





SEGA TO BECOME AN INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER

Sega provide subscription-free internet access for Europe

Sega's alignment with BT affirms the company's commitment to Dreamcast online

Following the news that the European Dreamcast will indeed include a 56k modem when it ships on 23rd September, Sega have announced a deal with BT that will ensure that initial customers will HAVE to try the online capabilities of the console.

The deal will provide users with subscription-free internet access through their televisions on a pay-as-you-go basis via BT's network of European partners. Users will only be charged for phone bills, which will be based on local rates. This is the first time that subscription-free internet access has been made available across Europe in this way. John Swingewood, director, BT Internet and Multimedia said: "We're delighted to have been chosen by Sega to provide pan-European dial IP access for Dreamcast games console users. One of our key objectives is to enable more and more people to get on-line, and by working with Sega to introduce simple, low-cost access on games consoles we will take another step towards achieving this.

The free service will be available in the UK, Germany, Spain, France and Italy initially, and BT hopes to expand the service at a later date. Dial-up access based around local call rates will be provided to BT's server hosting facility in the UK via its pan-European network. In addition, BT will be providing e-mail and billing facilities. Similar to BT's BTClick in the UK, the service will be simple to use.

JF Cecillon said: "This is a ground-breaking development for both Sega and our customers. Today's news signals Sega's emergence as an aggressive internet network business as we enter the new millennium. Dreamcast will become the home entertainment product for the whole family." TC

Sega's already strong internet presence will grow further in the near future

METAL GEAR MICROSOFT

Konami and Microsoft sign deal to publish games

A cross-licensing agreement has been signed between Konami and Microsoft that will bring Konami's games to the PC and Microsoft's games to consoles. There are also plans to collaborate on joint projects for all formats. Microsoft said, "This agreement allows us to make our games available to all gamers across multiple platforms for the first time. Konami is one of the largest and most respected console publishers, and we trust its expertise in bringing Microsoft games to the console."

Konami agreed: "We are pleased to be entering into this strategic relationship, as it will allow us to leverage our position as one of the world's largest publishers of console titles and to watch Konami games flourish on the PC platform."

Obviously, the odds are that Konami's biggest game for years, *Metal Gear Solid*, will be quickly ported across the PC – it would be an ideal game for the format. We also expect many of Konami's long-standing, successful console games to make it across before long – *ISS*, *Mystical Ninja* and *Castlevania* spring to mind. But with games like *Outwars* and *Urban Assault* available to Konami, we can't help but feel that Microsoft have got the better of this deal... TC

Microsoft's interest in the game market grows...

PAC BACK

Pac-Man is set to make his return to the video game limelight on PlayStation later this year. Namco have decided to resurrect one of the industry's formative characters as part of the celebrations for Pac-Man's 20th birthday.

The title is set to be a traditional Pac-Man game, with the yellow pill-muncher doing what he does best: eating fruit and ghosts. Namco's Mike Fisher said: "Pac-Man has been alive and well for 20 years, and is now ready to face the next millennium with tougher challenges."

The character was designed by Tohru Iwatani, who was struck with inspiration after seeing the shape he wanted when taking a slice from a pizza at a Tokyo restaurant.

GTA 2
A GANGSTER'S PARADISE

DMA's *Grand Theft Auto* wasn't a game that shied away from controversy; the whole thing was built around the premise of gangsters and joyriding – let's face it, the Daily Mail was bound to get upset. Anyway, the sequel to that brilliant game is well underway at Rockstar Studios in New York – the people who brought you the recent *GTA London* mission pack – and *GTA 2* promises to be quite an improvement over the original. By expanding on the 'open ended' theme from the original, the city has really come to life, and you are far from being the only asshole in town. All inhabitants have their own AI routines and can perform such tasks as catching taxis, starting brawls and even stealing cars from you. Apparently it is quite within the bounds of the game for players to complete it by playing as a taxi driver and charging people for fares.

But keeping on the straight and narrow is not what makes *GTA* so much fun. To become a super crook, you will need to first earn respect from one of the city's three main gangs by pulling your own jobs. One of them will then approach you to work for them, and the game works from there. Your popularity fluctuates during the game, so becoming unpopular with other gangs is not always a good idea.

GTA 2 is due for release in October this year on PC and PlayStation. We'll have more details next month, but until then check out these promotional photos for the game.

MOVING PICTURES

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT PLAYSTATION

Also being referred to as *'Tekken 3.5'*, this is something of a special edition of Namco's hugely popular fighting game. As the name suggests, the game takes a leaf from Capcom's *Marvel Vs Capcom* beat-'em-up, allowing two on two tag action. Apart from this, you will also be able to select from all of the familiar *Tekken* characters. PlayStation *Tekken Tag* is due for release before the end of the year, but for now check out this wonderful rendered intro...

wip3out

WIPEOUT 3

Psygnosis announce third Wipeout game

It's been a long time coming, but Psygnosis have finally officially confirmed the existence of *Wipeout 3*. The company is expecting the game to ship towards the end of 1999, probably as the company's big Christmas game, so expect a November release date.

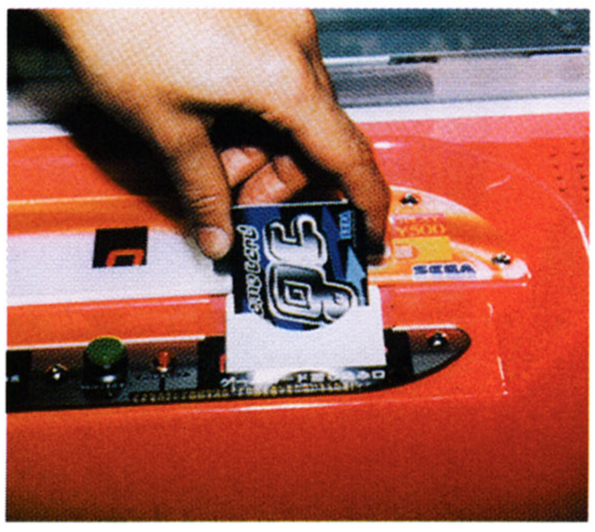
The new *Wipeout* game will feature many improvements over *Wipeout 2097,* including the expected new tracks and two new teams. The full list of improvements is:

- Hi-Res mode utilised throughout
- Split screen two-player modes (either Vertical or Horizontal split)
- All-new craft designs, with three new teams in addition to the five in *Wipeout XL/2097*
- Eight original, highly detailed and polished tracks set in varied areas of a futuristic city
- Improved Progression System allows greater accessibility but keeps it extreme for advanced players.
- Seven new weapons, with additional five of the best retained from *Wipeout XL/2097*
- Analogue/Dual Shock support, with other key peripherals also supported
- New Tournament mode, Challenge mode and Death Match modes
- 5-10 new licensed music tracks with a musical director – Sasha – providing a smoother, progressive mix
- *Wipeout 3* will be appearing on PlayStation at first, although we fully expect the game to be appear on PC soon after.

Faster, smoother and better? *Wip3out*

SEGA'S SMART MOVE

New game card trial already underway in Japan



Sega Computer Entertainment have teamed up with Schlumberger Smart Cards and Terminals in an experimental move allowing them to test the effectiveness of a new smart card concept. The card has been designed for use in amusement centres and arcades around the world, but the test phase is currently taking place in Club SEGA Shibuya, a new futuristic amusement centre that opened in Tokyo in February.

For the customer the game card acts as a membership card combined with an e-cash function. Use of the card gives gamers all the privileges of membership such as offers and discounts etc. The real purpose of the card is on Sega's end: it makes it possible for Sega for obtain real feedback on customer trends, popular games, and the amount of time spent on different games. This allows them to provide more effective pricing plans, off-peak discounts, and help them plan future products.

Of course, the idea behind the card is to save Sega money, not the consumers, so it will be interesting to see just how successful the project is.

CAPCOM SPREAD THEIR WEB OF EVIL

Resident Evil series is in for a good year

Resident Evil 2 never explained what happened to the cast of the original game – PlayStation owners will soon be able to find out in the third game of the trilogy. *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* cast you as Jill, the same character from the first game, as you enter Racoon City at the point where its inhabitants are turning into zombies. Of course, this happens before *Resident Evil 2*, but at about half-way through the game you are rendered unconscious. At this point you take over as a new character, Carlos Oliveira, who must find a cure to save her. When she regains consciousness the time scale has moved to 24 hours after the end of *Resident Evil 2*.

The plot is certainly interesting, though the game is much the same, albeit with a few new minor differences. Zombies will not always be wandering around; some will be slumped around and wake when you approach, and levels are far more open than the linear nature of the first. Loading times are much quicker, and while there are loads of new locations some, such as the police station from *Res. 2*, will be revisited.

Capcom have handled the success of the series very well, and this new instalment looks likely to take the series to epic standards. As always, we'll bring you more news as we get it.

More of the same? *Resident Evil 3* will please fans of the series

FORCE NINE ON THE RICHTER SCALE

id release Windows version of Quake III test

Following last month's announcement of the Mac version of the *Quake III Arena* test code, id Software have now released a Windows version. Seeing as this is the format that most people will play the game, we decided that this was a great opportunity to get some first impressions of what could be one of the best online games ever.

The first thing you'll notice is the incredible look of the game. Viewing it on a high end PC with a Voodoo 3 card, you'll see brilliantly detailed textures, fantastic atmospheric lighting, and those much vaunted curved, organic objects. In short, the *Quake III* test looks amazing if you have a very good PC. However, even with the textures and lighting turned down, playing on a lower end PC the game still looks reasonable – kind of like a spruced-up version of *Quake II*.

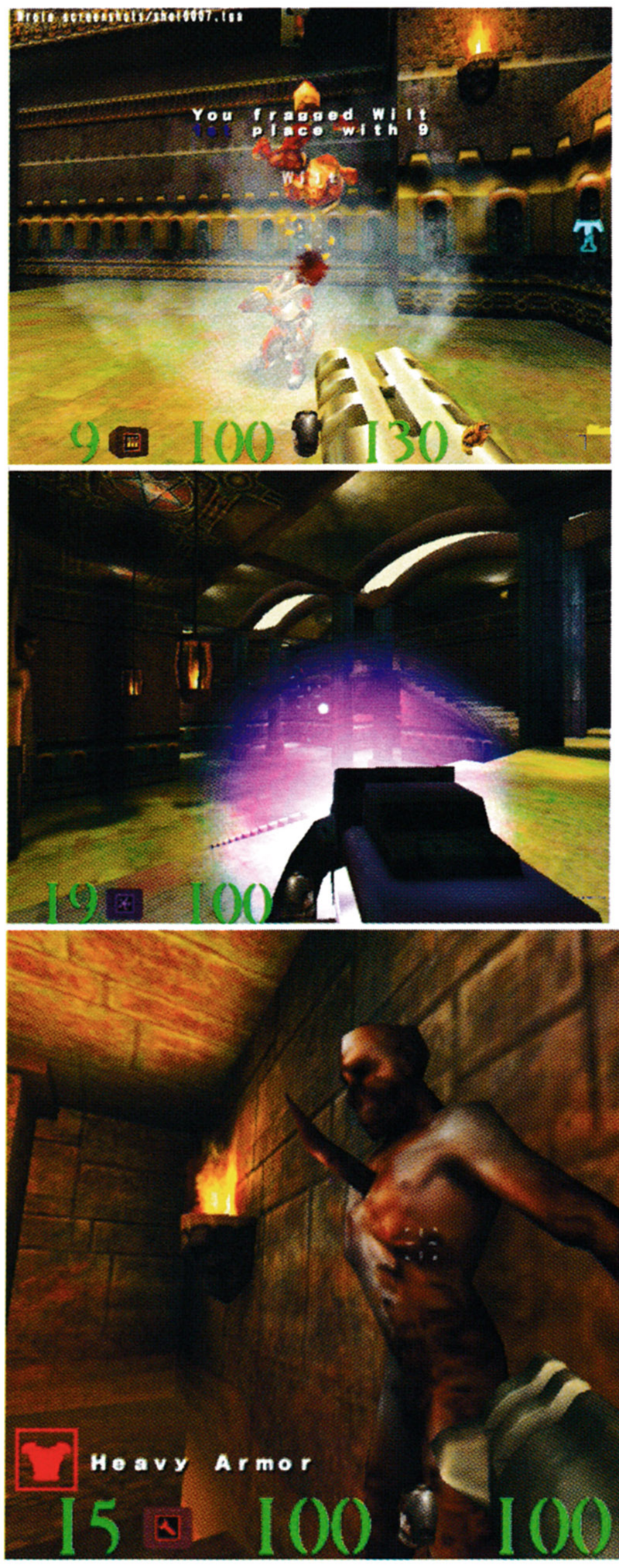
The test features some spectacular effects. Explosions and so forth are both colourful and a little overwhelming, to the point where the pyrotechnics make it very easy for you to lose track of where your opponent is, especially when using the plasma gun.

The real noticeable difference between this and *Quake II* is the speed of the gameplay. It is possible that the two maps to play were designed with this in mind, but the overall impression is that the game has been speeded up significantly. This takes a while to get used to – especially if you are accustomed to *Half-Life* – and for a while *Half-Life* seems infinitely better. That is until you realise that the whole point of *Quake* is that it is an adrenaline pumping experience – *Quake III* takes this to the next level.

Of the two levels to play, the first is in a Gothic setting complete with *Doom/Quake I* styling. The second demonstrates the jump pads to be featured in the game. This feature replaces ladders and lifts and aims to speed up gameplay. This it achieves undoubtedly, and with a level made up entirely of these jump pads, the action is more than a little frantic.

The overall impression of this test release is that *Quake III* is a case of 'more of the same', and this isn't a bad thing by any stretch of the imagination. A few things have been changed here and there, but we think that *Quake III* is heading in the right direction. You just know that any *Quake* fan who sees this is going to absolutely love it.

TC



Detailed textures, fantastic lighting and gore. What more do you want?

DOWNLOAD THIS SUCKER... NOW!

The code is downloadable from www.quake3arena. com (about 22MB), but you'll also need to update your Open GL drivers at http://192.246.40.35/. Some cards are not supported, though all 3DFX based are, and drivers for *Quake III* can be found at their website, or you can follow the links from the *Quake III* homepage. If you have a card other than 3DFX then you will need to check compatibility at the web address above. You can play online at

192.246.40.37: 27960 - q3test1

192.246.40.37: 27961 - q3test1

192.246.40.37: 27962 - q3test1

192.246.40.37: 27963 - q3test2

a STORM is brewing
August 26th
www.storm-online.com

MOVING PICTURES

SHENMUE DREAMCAST

Despite the game's poor showing at the recent E3 show, Yu Suzuki's *Shenmue* is still shaping up to be one of the games of the year. These sequences show how it is taking on a cinematic feel. This, along with the limited showing at E3, has led to fears that the game will be little more than the Dreamcast's own *Dragon's Lair*. We very much hope that this is not the case...

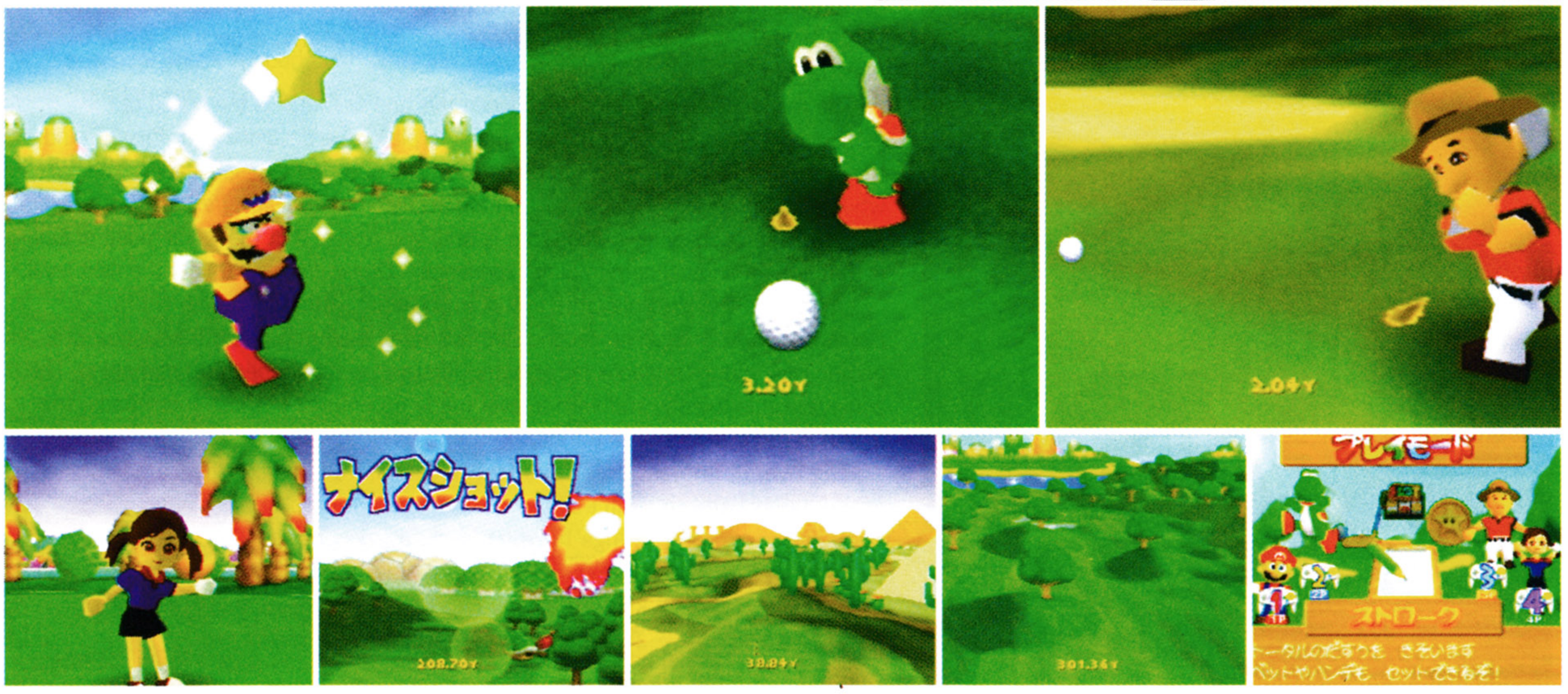
MARIO GOLF

Mario and chums make it onto the golf course

Is there any end to the exploitation of Mario? He's had his Karts, his Party, and now he's about to get his Golf. Nintendo's latest unashamed flogging of Mario, however, is a rather splendid looking golf game and, as you would expect, it promises more than a few twists on the tried and trusted golf game formula.

The game will also boast a realistic physics engine and six courses to play (108 holes). There will also be ten selectable characters from the beginning, each one with his or her strengths and weaknesses. No doubt there will be plenty of bonuses to be earned, and *Mario Golf* looks to do for the golf game what *Smash Bros.* did for the beat-'em-up.

Mario Golf will also be compatible with the 64GB Pak and will allow you to download your characters into your Game Boy and improve them as you play. *Mario Golf* will be out in the autumn in the UK. TC



It looks like *Mario Golf* will be the N64's first decent golf game. The added charm of Mario and co. will appeal to all ages

THE DAWNING OF A NEW AGE?

The sun sets on Quake II

As the age of Quake II comes to a close, one of the better mods for the game is about to be released. *Dawn of Darkness* is a complete conversion of *Quake,* and is so well done it should be seen as a game in its own right. Taking a similar viewpoint to that of Eidos' *Thief*, *Dawn of Darkness* eschews the gung-ho attitude of *Quake II*, instead opting for a more thoughtful approach. Here you will find character interaction, puzzle solving, and an element of stealth. Players are rewarded for thinking rather than shooting, although any experience of *Quake II* will come in handy as well.

The full version of *Dawn of Darkness* will be released online this summer, but in the meantime you can download the demo from www.dawnofdarkness.com. TC

With the *Quake II* engine on its last legs, it's pleasing to see mods of the quality of *Dawn of Darkness*. It's not just a clone, however

GROUND CONTROL TO OMIKRON

David Bowie collaborates with Eidos on their latest adventure

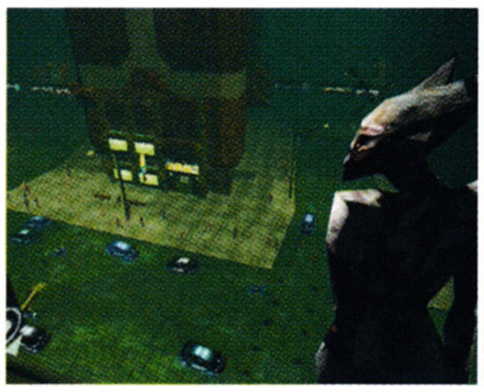
Eidos' big E3 announcement was that David Bowie would be taking a large role in the production of their forthcoming title, *Omikron*. Not only will Bowie voice the lead character in the game, but he will also be providing the soundtrack for the game.

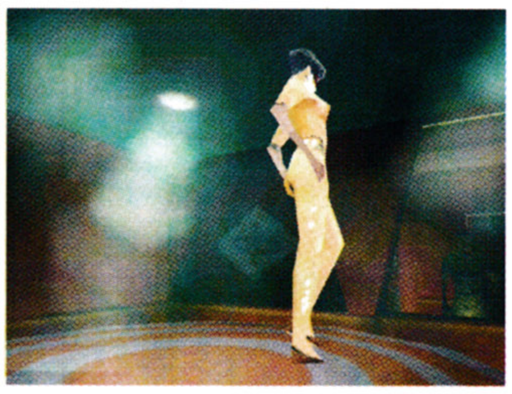
Charles Cornwall, CEO of Eidos, said, "David Bowie's involvement endorses the quality of the game and the fact that worldwide entertainment stars realise the value of the computer games market as an essential ingredient of the entertainment mix."

Omikron is set to be one of the more innovative titles of the year. It promises to be an exciting blend of action, adventure and story, giving the player the entire freedom of a city to explore. The story begins when the player's soul is transported into a body of one of the inhabitants of Omikron. You must then find out who has done this and why. In an interesting twist, your soul cannot 'die' in the game – if your body dies then you will be transported into the body of the next person who touches it.

Omikron: The Nomad Soul is due for release on PC and PlayStation towards the end of the year. We'll have more info closer to that time.

Bowie will provide the soundtrack and voice the main character





SEGA DEVELOP FOR NINTENDO?

Sounds ridiculous, but Sega have confirmed that they will be developing games for both Nintendo Game Boy and Bandai's Wonderswan handheld. This is the first time ever that one games company in direct competition with another has released software on a rival's system. Falling Sega profits have been cited as the reason for this move. Sega have yet to announce any games as yet, but we'll keep you posted.

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

Hairdressing gets revamped for the new millennium

We never thought it would happen, but we've been proven wrong. The worlds of computing and dentistry have collided together, and the result is this: the interactive dentist's chair. Designed by hair stylist Rick Stonell, whose other hobbies include pubic wigs (a worthy news piece in itself), the Victorian dentist's chair has been designed to make wiling the minutes (or hours) at your local hairdressers a much more entertaining experience. Fitted with an I-Mac (yet to be confirmed), a laptop, DVD and speakers, or a games console with plasma screen, the chair is due for its first tour of duty in renowned Soho hairdressers, Archive.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THE LAW

Despite having two court injunctions overturned, Sony remain adamant that bleem!, the PC-PlayStation emulator, will not be allowed to continue to sell. Sony's lawyers, accompanied by E3 officials, demanded that demonstration of the product was halted immediately at the recent E3 show.

Despite the company pointing out that many other companies were displaying Sony's software and that they had signed a contract to exhibit at the show, the management insisted that they remove their product.

Hopefully, these bully boy tactics from Sony will endear bleem! to the public and help them sell more copies.

BREAKING BOND

Sega announce new Goldeneye challenger

Sega Europe have announced a new game being designed by the second of their 1.5 developers, independent companies who are working very close to the global giant. *Take the Bullet* is being designed by Red Lemon Studios and places the player in the shoes of Jack Travis in America of the late sixties. Jack Travis is a bodyguard to new presidential candidate, and alongside the action based nature of the game you must organise fellow bodyguards to maximise his protection, giving it a strong strategic element.

The game has twelve levels and eighteen weapons, four-player single machine multiplayer modes, and sixteen player internet options. Far more excitingly though, we are told that the game will be fully compatible with the light gun device – the first game of its type to attempt it, and a concept with huge potential. We have very limited information on it at the moment, but we'll bring you more as soon as we have it.

REPORTAGE

CHARTANALYSIS

Week ending May 30th

The beginning of summer. The time of year when video games seem at the bottom of your list of your priorities and spending as much time on the nearest beach/in the nearest beer garden is right at the top. This month's charts reflect that fact, and sales have fallen by eight percent. However, sales for May are actually up by ten percent over last year's.

There's a surprise entry at number one this month, especially when you consider the competition from *Gran Turismo* on Platinum, which had been predicted as the number one. The surprise flop has to be Eidos' *Official Formula One Racing*, which you would expect to be a big seller. It seems that you need more than just a lucrative licence to sell a game these days.

Next month should see the charts pick up – the release of two Star Wars games will probably prove enough to drag most of you away from all that sunbathing/real life. It'll probably be raining by then anyway... TC

MOST WANTED

NINTENDO 64
DONKEY KONG 64
Rare

With a playable version at E3, Rare's 64 version of the enduring Nintendo licence is very much like *Banjo-Kazooie*. Only better. Oh, and it's got monkeys in it

PLAYSTATION
RESIDENT EVIL 3
Capcom

Playable code at E3 confirmed that this would be more of the same but takes the theme of 'different points of view' to another level. Should be superb.

PC CD-ROM
KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME **Xatrix**

With the release and controversy just around the corner for this explicit game, we can't wait to get our hands on a final version. Potentially the best first-person game of the year.

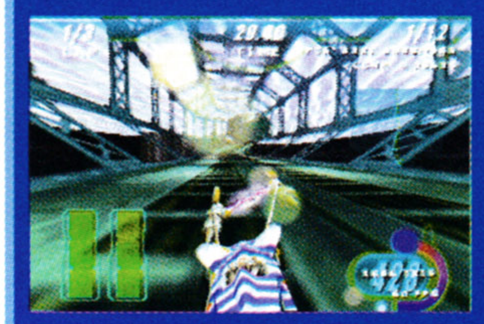
DREAMCAST
RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA
Capcom

Resident Evil in real time? Continues the now classic gameplay from previous games but looks so much better. This Dreamcast-only game could shift the console on its own...

RECOMMENDED

NINTENDO 64
STAR WARS EPISODE ONE: RACER **LucasArts**

You can't really go wrong with Star Wars, especially Episode One stuff, at the moment. Fortunately the licence is attached to this rather smart racing game.



PLAYSTATION
LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER **Eidos**

A brilliant third-person adventure that outdoes *Tomb Raider* in a number of key areas, notably atmosphere and the central character's lack of a jaw bone. Urhh, yucky...

PC CD-ROM
STAR WARS EPISODE ONE: THE PHANTOM MENACE **LucasArts**

Probably released a little bit early, this game follows the story of the film VERY closely, so if you don't want to know, don't buy it. *Phantom Menace* is a competent action game, however.

DREAMCAST
GET BASS **Sega**

Fishing has never been so well done in a video game, and with the addition of the fishing rod controller, it's just like being there. Surprisingly addictive.

TC PLAYLIST

Justin

1 Championship Manager 3
Eidos .....PC

2 Pokémon Blue
Nintendo .....Game Boy

3 Tenchu: Stealth Assassins
Activision .....PlayStation

4 GTA: London 1969
Take 2 Interactive .....PC

5 Episode One: The Phantom Menace
LucasArts .....PC

Nick

1 Sim Cinema
Maxis (shareware) .....Mac

2 Championship Manager 3
Eidos .....PC

3 Episode One: Racer
LucasArts .....Nintendo 64

4 720°
Midway .....Game Boy Color

5 Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver
Eidos .....PlayStation

Cliff

1 Hidden and Dangerous
Take 2 .....PC

2 Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver
Eidos .....PlayStation

3 Aironauts
Red Storm/Take 2 ...PlayStation

4 Team Fortress Classic
Valve Software .....PC

5 Age of Empires
Microsoft .....PC

Will

1 Episode One: Racer
LucasArts .....PC

2 Gran Turismo
Sony .....PlayStation

3 Episode One: The Phantom Menace
LucasArts .....PC

4 Team Fortress Classic
Valve Software .....PC

5 R-Type Delta
Sony .....PlayStation

ALLFORMATS

Produced in association with ELSPA

01 — NE

GTA: LONDON 1969

Take 2 Interactive — PlayStation/PC — **TC Score 91%**

Something of a surprise to see a mission pack at number one in the charts, but if any mission pack deserves it, it's *GTA: London 1969*. By packaging the original along with this Take 2 have had a major success with the game, and with the PlayStation sales yet to make a huge impact on this total, it should go through the roof. Nothing new to the original *GTA*, but it has longer missions and a cool London chic. Roll on *GTA 2*...

02 — NE

GRAN TURISMO

Sony/Platinum — PlayStation — **TC Score 92%**

Arguably the best PlayStation racer available, although some people would say that *Ridge Racer 4* is. Whatever your opinion, you can't deny that this is a triple-A product, and for twenty quid you really can't go wrong. Brilliant value.

03 ↑ 03

GRAND THEFT AUTO

Take 2 Interactive — PlayStation/PC — **TC Score 80%**

A real resurgence of interest in this thanks to the release of *GTA: London 1969*. It begs the question: why wasn't London included first time round? Anyway, the game still stands up to anything that's around today. Good to see it selling so well.

02 ↓ 04

FIFA '99

Electronic Arts — PlayStation/PC/Nintendo 64 — **TC Score 77%**

Not much time left before *FIFA 2000* makes an appearance in this very chart. Will the '99 version still be selling this well? It's possible, but don't forget EA's *Premier League Stars* football game as well. Your appetite for footie is insatiable!

03 ↓ 05

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

Eidos — PC — **TC Score 90%**

Accused of being nothing more than a glorified spreadsheet in some quarters, *CM 3* continues to spark the imagination of football fans everywhere. Quite simply the best management sim ever. We've been playing it for months, and it just keeps getting better and better...

06 ↑ 07	TOMB RAIDER II	Eidos/Platinum	PlayStation/PC
07 ↓ 04	METAL GEAR SOLID	Konami	PlayStation
08 ↓ 05	CRASH BANDICOOT 2	Sony/Platinum	PlayStation
09 ↓ 01	RIDGE RACER TYPE 4	Namco/Sony	PlayStation
10 — NE	CASTLEVANIA	Konami	Nintendo 64
11 — NE	BALDUR'S GATE: TSC	Interplay/Virgin	PC
12 ↓ 06	THE RUGRATS	THQ	PlayStation/Game Boy Color
13 ↑ 17	V-RALLY	Infogrames/Platinum	PlayStation/PC
14 — RE	WWF: WARZONE	Acclaim	PlayStation/Nintendo 64/Game Boy
15 — RE	BRIAN LARA CRICKET	Codemasters	PlayStation/PC
16 — NE	OFFICIAL FORMULA ONE RACING	Eidos	PC
17 — RE	TOMB RAIDER III	Eidos	PlayStation/PC
18 ↓ 15	ROLLER COASTER TYCOON	Microprose	PC
19 ↓ 11	TOCA 2 TOURING CARS	Codemasters	PlayStation/PC
20 — RE	ROGUE SQUADRON	LucasArts/Nintendo	PC/Nintendo 64

FORMATS

PlayStation

01 ↑ 02	Metal Gear Solid	Konami
02 ↓ 01	Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco/Sony
03 ↑ 04	FIFA '99	Electronic Arts
04 — RE	WWF: Warzone	Acclaim
05 — RE	The Rugrats	THQ

Nintendo 64

01 — NE	Castlevania	Konami
02 — 02	Rogue Squadron	LucasArts/Nintendo
03 ↓ 01	FIFA '99	Electronic Arts
04 ↓ 03	Zelda: Ocarina of Time	Nintendo
05 — NE	Mario Party	Nintendo

PC CD-ROM

01 — 01	Championship Manager 3	Eidos
02 — NE	Baldur's Gate: TSC	Interplay/Virgin
03 — NE	Official Formula One Racing	Eidos
04 — 04	Roller Coaster Tycoon	Microprose
05 — RE	Rogue Squadron	LucasArts/Nintendo

Full Price Console

01 ↑ 02	Metal Gear Solid	Konami
02 ↓ 01	Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco/Sony
03 — NE	Castlevania	Konami
04 ↓ 03	FIFA '99	Electronic Arts
05 ↑ 04	The Rugrats	THQ

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Prince Naseem Boxing

Prince Naseem Boxing

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	STYLE	RELEASE
PC/PlayStation	Codemasters	Codemasters	Boxing Sim	Autumn '99

knockout

Boxing hasn't been represented too well as a video game in the past, but bring together one of Britain's best boxers with one of our premier game developers and you could have an almighty rumble in the jungle...

Combination punches play an important part to the fighting. If you manage to pull off a complete combo, the last part will be powerful enough to put your opponent on the canvas

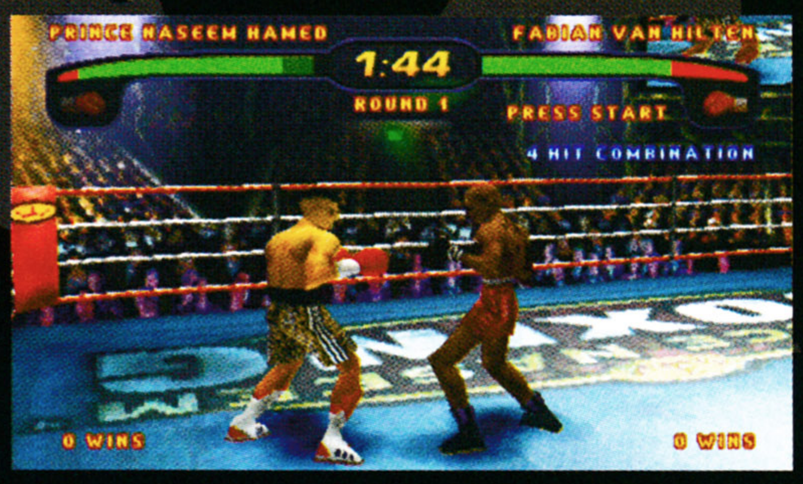
Codemasters are one of the most successful developers/publishers of PlayStation games in the UK. Last year saw them take centre stage on the UK development front with a number of high quality titles – mostly sports-related, but games that all displayed Codemasters' attention to detail and strict quality control. Their motto of 'Pure Gameplay' was not lost on games players who bought (by the tens of thousands of units) the likes of *Colin McRae Rally*, *Brian Lara Cricket* and *TOCA Touring Cars 2*. Obviously a recognisable sports personality or licence goes a long way in selling a game, but all of the above titles brandish the attributes of a company for whom quality is of a premium, and above all that a game is finished when it's finished...

Codemasters' latest sports title was in the bag and ready to go only two months ago. *Prince Naseem Boxing* looked promising: a boxing game that took its cue both from the traditional 'side on' pugilist affairs of the past and more laissez-faire fighting games in general. It was a lot of fun to play, and would undoubtedly have been successful as it was. That was until it came up against Richard Darling and his strict quality control. It was then decided that in its current form *Prince Naseem Boxing* wasn't up to the standard of games like *Colin McRae* and others in the Codemasters library, and it was promptly sent back to the drawing board. Well, not for a complete rethink, but as we speak the game has been pulled apart, and a team of about thirty or so are working frantically on adjustments to several key areas that should see the game fulfilling the potential of its association with a boxer of Prince Naseem's standing.

Go to the body

The first big change for the game is the perspective at which it is played. The original version was a strictly side on affair that stuck to the traditions of '3D' fighting games. Of course, every fight fan will be aware that boxing is a sport where punching isn't everything and using the ring to your advantage is paramount. This point hasn't been lost on the development team, and they are working at great lengths to make the arena as accessible as possible. The obvious way to do this is take a viewpoint that allows such movement, and the one that seems to work best is above the ring, using the analogue control to move around. There are currently two modes being discussed – one that moves your fighter relative to the ring, and another that moves relative to your opponent. It is clear at this stage which works best (relative to the ring), although both modes are likely to be included in the final version. You don't need to be told that this has changed the game completely, and the emphasis has moved from punching and combination moves to one where the positions of the fighters becomes paramount and an advantage can be gained (as in real life) by cornering your opponent or forcing him onto the ropes.

The 3D approach has also allowed the programmers to incorporate head movement into the game. While boxers are moving around the ring, trying to gain that tactical advantage, they will attempt to keep their eyes on one another. This sounds like a small, purely aesthetic thing, but with boxers able to move behind one another, head movement and body movement are linked, and this can severely affect the way that



Although this side on view remains, the best viewpoint is now above the fighters. Ring management and movement has become an important aspect

punches are thrown... but more about that later. Head movement also has the effect of making the game immediately more engaging for the player, and makes the boxers seem to act in a more realistic manner.

Dance like a butterfly, sting like a bee

A great effort has been made to make the player empathise with the fighters. This has been done in a variety of ways. The first and most obvious is that all the fighters have their own distinct personalities. This is not only rendered in their look and actions in the ring (every boxer his own trademark move), but each has his own 'brief history' of boxing. This gives us a quick look at the highs and lows in the career of every boxer via a brief description and video.

The personality is carried over to the ring, where each of the 80+ boxers has his own preferred fighting style. Some will be dancers and move around the ring quickly, while others will be sluggers, moving slowly but with more powerful punches. Some fighters will also fight southpaw – another aspect for you to cope with or use to your advantage. The overall personality thing has been done partly as a reaction to traditional Japanese fighting games, in which fighters tend to be anonymous and their moves are what makes people want to play as them.

ALL THE FIGHTERS HAVE THEIR OWN DISTINCT PERSONALITIES. THIS IS NOT ONLY RENDERED IN THEIR LOOK AND ACTIONS IN THE RING (EVERY BOXER HAS HIS OWN TRADEMARK MOVE), BUT EACH HAS HIS OWN 'BRIEF HISTORY' OF BOXING

With atmosphere being important in the 'experience' of boxing, Codemasters are keen to transfer the excitement (or otherwise) of the sport to the digital screen. The sound has therefore been designed to be interactive and will directly relate to the action in the ring. Background sound will be ever-present, but the reaction of the crowd will change according to the fight situation. The closer one of the boxers comes to winning, the nosier they will become. Likewise, if the fight becomes all hugging (or biting) then boos will resound throughout the arena.

The animation of the fighters is also something of a minor revolution. Codemasters have developed a technique of animation based on kinematics that allows them to move the fighters much quicker than would be possible with conventional motion capture animations. The technique also helps in the compression of data, and whereas a traditional motion-captured animation might take 30 frames, this 'bespoke' animation will only take eight. The overall result is that the fighters' punches are much snappier and convey a feeling of power more economically.

Bare knuckle fighting

The actual fighting itself is naturally limited to punches (obviously), but Codemasters have implemented a system that should see there being plenty of scope for variation. There are two main areas that you can attack – the head and the body. Body work will see a reduction of the fighter's stamina bar, while hitting your opponent's head will result in a reduction of his 'consciousness' bar. To get a knockout you'll have to reduce this bar to zero, but if this is achieved your opponent can still recover his consciousness back up to the level of the stamina bar. Obviously it's necessary to reduce his stamina significantly before you go for the killer blow, just like real life.

Combination punches play a large part in the actual fighting method. A typical combination would be a jab followed by another jab, and a cross finished with an uppercut. Each part of the combination is more powerful that the last, and as a reward for completing the combo the last punch has the potential to knock your opponent off his feet. Single punches are less effective but are also less likely to put you in a situation where you can be counter-attacked. In addition, each of the fighters has at least one special move (some have more) that must be earned by charging up a power bar, and this is done by performing combo punches. You will then have access to a specialist move. Prince Naseem has a couple: an example is where he takes a step back, pulling his opponent in, and then throws a punch that the opponent will walk straight into. Needless to say these moves are the most powerful and rewarding in the game.

Forty pro fights and never been dropped

The most involving aspect of the game will undoubtedly be the career mode. As the name suggests, this allows the player to take a rookie fighter through an entire boxing career, working his way up the ranks to hopefully become the undisputed champ at his weight. As explained earlier, each of the fighters has his good and bad points and a set of unique statistics. These attributes will change as the years go by according to how you use the boxer and the training schedule that he is put through. You will first have

to get yourself a trainer though, and a brief sparring with a fighter in a gym allows the game to asses your ability and experience and allocate statistics accordingly. You will have to perform well to get a trainer interested anyway.

Fights are arranged according to the rankings, and a number of weeks are given to the time of the fight. This time can be used to train your fighter on a number of areas, from sparring to weights, roadwork and the amount food that your boxer eats. This last bit may sound a little unnecessary, but if your boxer eats too much or too little he may not make the weight and thus lose his fight purse. The trainer will pop up from time to time to give you advice on how you are treating your boxer, and he will also give you hints at how to fight.

In a nice touch, Codemasters have included a 'press' section that generates headlines in a newspaper relevant to your status and the status of the boxers around you. There is also an option to watch the fights of your

AS IT STANDS, PRINCE NASEEM BOXING HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE DRAMATIC, SHOWY AND SNAPPY, AND, LIKE THE PRINCE HIMSELF, THE TEAM CAN ALLOW THEMSELVES A LITTLE ARROGANCE, KNOWING THAT WHAT THEY HAVE PRODUCED WILL BE 'THE GREATEST'

opponents to gauge their strengths and weaknesses, and it is also possible to not fight at all, rendering the game entirely managerial (if you're that way inclined). As an added bonus, personalised boxers can also be saved to memory card and loaded into the versus mode, allowing for fights between your boxer and a friend's in a memory card battle.

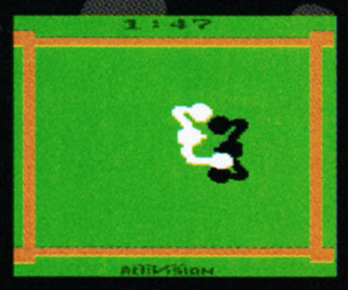
The decision to delay *Prince Naseem Boxing* looks like being an inspired one. The extra time allotted has given the team the chance to put together a title that will do the undoubted talents of Naseem Hamed great justice. And just as the man has lit up British boxing over the last few years, the game that bears his name should have a similarly explosive effect on the digital rendition of the sport. As it stands, *Prince Naseem Boxing* has the potential to be dramatic, showy and snappy, and, like the Prince himself, the team can allow themselves a little arrogance, knowing that what they have produced will be the greatest.

Fighter animation is some of the best yet, giving the game a 'punchy' feel

I AM THE GREATEST:
THE HISTORY OF BOXING (ACCORDING TO THE VIDEO GAME)

Not the best represented sport in the world of video games, nor the most innovative, yet boxing has had its fair share of hits. Here's a rundown of the best over the last few years, and the advancements they have made...

Boxing
Activision (Atari 2600)



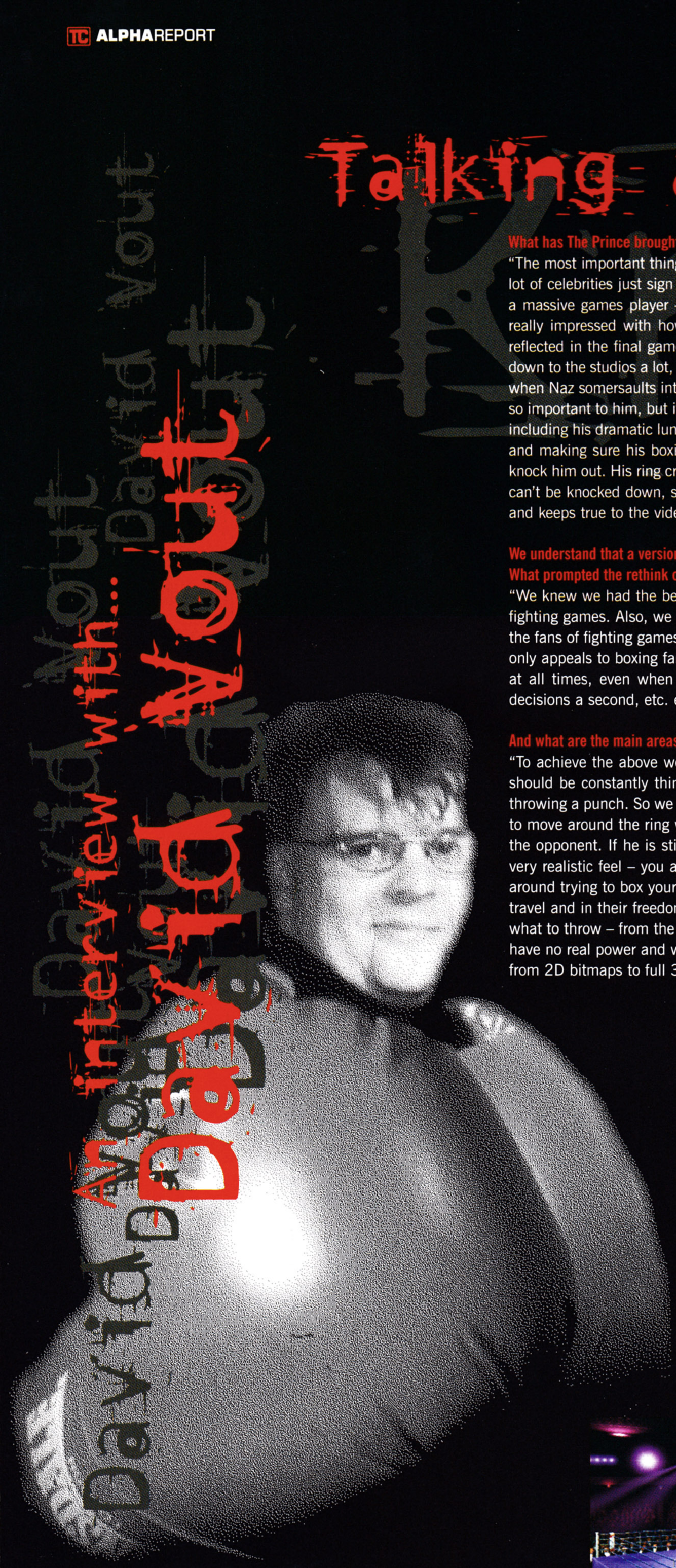
Barry McGuigan's Boxing
Activision (ZX Spectrum)

Punch Out
Nintendo (NES/Arcade)

Victory Boxing
JVC (PlayStation)

Frank Bruno's Boxing
Elite (Spectrum)

Talking a good fight



What has The Prince brought to the production and development of the game?

"The most important thing he's brought to us as a development team is his insight and enthusiasm for boxing. A lot of celebrities just sign a contract, and that's the closest they'll come to being involved in a game. But Naz is a massive games player – he'd played Codemasters' games before we had even approached him, and he was really impressed with how closely Codemasters has worked with world champions, allowing their input to be reflected in the final game.The fact that he's going to star in a game was a real wow-factor for him. He's been down to the studios a lot, and he insists on seeing everything – he's interested in the smallest things. For example, when Naz somersaults into the ring, we had to add his lucky shuffle to it – something which we didn't realise was so important to him, but it's part of his trademark moves. He is also very keen to have his unusual style captured, including his dramatic lunging punches that seem to come from nowhere. Naz is always suggesting improvements and making sure his boxing style is spot on. When he first came down he was a bit concerned that you could knock him out. His ring craft is all about not getting hit, but we couldn't make a game where one of the characters can't be knocked down, so we had to balance it. Now we have a game that looks and plays like Naz in the ring and keeps true to the video game ethic that all characters have a strength and a weakness."

We understand that a version of *Prince Naseem Boxing* was all but complete and ready to go to Sony for approval. What prompted the rethink on the game?

"We knew we had the best boxing game by far, but we didn't really feel it stood out in the crowd of non-boxing fighting games. Also, we have no intention of going head to head with *Tekken*, but if we can interest and excite the fans of fighting games then we will have a much more successful title than we would have with a game that only appeals to boxing fans. To this end we sat down and made up several rules, the game must be fun to play at all times, even when not throwing punches, it must be fast and the player must be forced to make 50 decisions a second, etc. etc."

And what are the main areas of improvement?

"To achieve the above we decided that more emphasis should be placed on movement in the ring; the player should be constantly thinking about his position and how to throw his opponent out of position without even throwing a punch. So we changed the default view and the movement controls, and you now have more freedom to move around the ring with a degree of autofacing (that is, the computer decides to move the head to look at the opponent. If he is still out of range then the upper body will rotate, and eventually the legs). This gives a very realistic feel – you actually believe that one boxer is watching the other. It's also entertaining just running around trying to box your opponent into a corner. Punches are much more ranged in both the distance they can travel and in their freedom to move off-centre. This means that if your punch is going to land you have to think what to throw – from the left or the right, long range or short. A long-range punch up-close will collide too soon, have no real power and will leave you open to a counter punch. We have even changed the menu system going from 2D bitmaps to full 3D. Now when the game is sat in the front end menu it's actually got a full gym as the

As you would expect from Codemasters, the presentation is excellent

The fight introduction sequence. As with the real thing, an MC announces the fighters, only for them to appear in time-honoured showbiz fashion

background with two sparring boxers fighting. You rotate the room to decide which game to go to."

Boxing games aren't renowned for having a huge number of moves. How have you approached this aspect, and how will *Prince Naseem Boxing* compete with *Tekken* and the like?

"*PNB* is much more about positioning and choosing the right punch. However, we have taken the standard range of punches and produced variations on these – long-range lunging uppercuts, for example. We have also made combination punches. These are a sequence of punches that go well together, they execute faster, do more damage, and if a whole combination is successful then a credit is added to a special move. Each boxer has two special moves. These can be defensive or attacking and have some very interesting results. So from a very basic list of punches we have ended up with a great number of moves, and when you add in dodging and moving you start to wonder why you ever needed fireballs! No boxing game has ever achieved this before, so right now I'm a happy man."

What techniques have been brought in to make the animation more, for want of a better phrase, hard-hitting?

"Key to the gameplay was making sure the game moved at the speed of lightning – you've got to get to a stage where the player thinks snappy punches are coming from nowhere, and they must feel like they started the second you pressed the button. To achieve that speed we opted not to use motion capture and had the team create an animation system especially for the game. Where motion capture techniques require the manipulation of massive amounts of data and, if used in boxing, would require up to 30 frames of animation for a straight punch, *Prince Naseem Boxing* creates complex punches in around eight basic frames; the software engine then fills in the gaps as needed. This amount of filling is completely variable, allowing a single animation to run smoothly at any speed. For the new animation system we created 800+ polygon wire frame character models, each having its own movement skeleton and collision skeleton which is then fully skinned and textured. Based on kinematics, the skeleton manipulates the boxers' body from key joints – knee, wrist, neck and so on – and because it's 'skinned' each limb can be manipulated and the body will stay true, unlike with boxed models where you get gaps between the joints."

The atmosphere of a big fight is clearly important. How have you managed to recreate this?

"We have the big fight intro complete with MC announcing the fight to the 'thousands in attendance and the millions around the world'. Each boxer then has his own entrance – of course Naz somersaults over the ropes!"

And then the ring girrrrrls parade...?

"In the fight itself we have an excitement level which increases and decreases depending on the action currently and immediately before. This has effect on the crowd who will, at moments of great excitement, stand up, and their shouts and screams go through nine stages from 'before the fight chat' to 'heat of the action' screams! When you're playing and taking a beating, and you see the crowd stand and the shouting is bursting the speakers, you really feel it's all over!"

The game clearly isn't just a simple one-on-one fighting game. Tell us a bit about the options and the career mode...

"We've created three distinct boxing games within *Prince Naseem Boxing* – plus an additional training section of the game. We've got from world championship showcase boxing to hard and fast arcade boxing, and right through to a management-style world career game. The Showcase game features sixteen individual international boxers, including Naz, and can be played by up to eight players. It's a world tournament with two world organisations, where winning the championship belt allows the player to fight the other world champion to unify the belts. If this fight is against a 'locked boxer' and the player wins, then this 'unlocks' a new opponent to fight with. Versus, the arcade option, is an all-out, one-on-one boxing action game where you can have infinite round lengths – a fight to the KO. Again you have sixteen different boxers, including Naz, as well as some hidden ones, and you can load in your own boxer from the world game. *Prince Naseem Boxing* also features a World Game that offers players a strategic approach to boxing management. It's totally career based with plenty going on. Your short-term objective is to win the world championship belt while breaking a few records along the way. The long-term objective is to defend your title or win it back again to hold the record for the most title wins and have the longest career. In theory you could have a 90-year-old boxer, though I doubt if you'd win anything. We've got 90 individual boxers in the World Game – there are 30 heavyweight, 30 middleweight, and 30 lightweight. You've got to guide your boxer through his entire career, arranging fights against suitable opponents, looking after his training regime including diet (you have to make the weight before a fight). It's turned out to be a very nice balance between stats and action. Finally, you can save your boxer out and take on your friends!"

The game is being developed for PC and PlayStation – will there be much difference between the two versions?

"Yes and no. We have refined the gameplay so much that it is basically the same between the two. The differences come in the resolution of the graphics and special FX, as well as the use of the screen layout."

We assume that you are all big fight fans – any great boxing heroes or boxers that have influenced the characters in *Prince Naseem Boxing*?

"Sugar Ray and Ali – these are the two that spring to mind. Sugar Ray for his multiple title wins – a truly incredible fighter – and Ali for his amazing mental defeat of opponents, especially the Rumble in the Jungle – anyone who's seen the film will remember the 'I'm gonna dance...' Other than that our real influences come from Naz. His ring craft and persona is unlike any other boxer, but at the same time he draws on all the classic champions for his eclectic style. This makes him the most interesting boxer ever."

Looking at the competition – and we're talking about *Knockout Kings*, *Victory Boxing 2* and *Barry McGuigan's Boxing* – what would you say *Prince Naseem* has over them?

"It has similarities to all of them, and *Super Punch Out* as well. It has to – there aren't that many things you can do with boxing. However, our game is fast, looks fantastic, forces the player to use his mind and has lasting appeal – something all of the others lacked – and it has a few twists along the way. It's going to do for the boxing genre what *Colin McRae Rally* did for racing games."

PRINCE NASEEM BOXING will be released by Codemasters this autumn on PlayStation and PC CD-ROM.

PERFECT DARK

'It's dark, very dark. She's perfect. Perfect Dark.' Or so the Rare teaser campaign went for their **follow-up to *Goldeneye*.** Can it possibly **match the brilliance of Bond's finest video game hour?**

You play Joanna Dark, an operative for a secret US agency

Without a doubt, the biggest game for N64 this year will be *Perfect Dark*. The follow-up to *Goldeneye* – one of the 'surprise' hits on the N64 – has its work cut out to match, or even better the original, but developers, Rare, aren't exactly known for rushing out poor sequels. No, quite to the contrary. *Perfect Dark* should be one of the best games of 1999, and will be another reason to buy N64 over PlayStation this Christmas.

Despite the game being heavily based on *Goldeneye* – many of the same animations remain from the Bond game, as does the mission-based gameplay – *Perfect Dark* will have the edge over its predecessor in many respects. Firstly, the multiplayer game will be far more polished and better thought out (the multiplayer game in *Goldeneye*, good as it was, was put in as an 'afterthought' by Rare). Also, there is the news that it will be possible to use the Game Boy Camera and the 64GB Pak to map your (and your friends') faces onto the multiplayer character faces. This should lead to plenty of highly charged personal deathmatches.

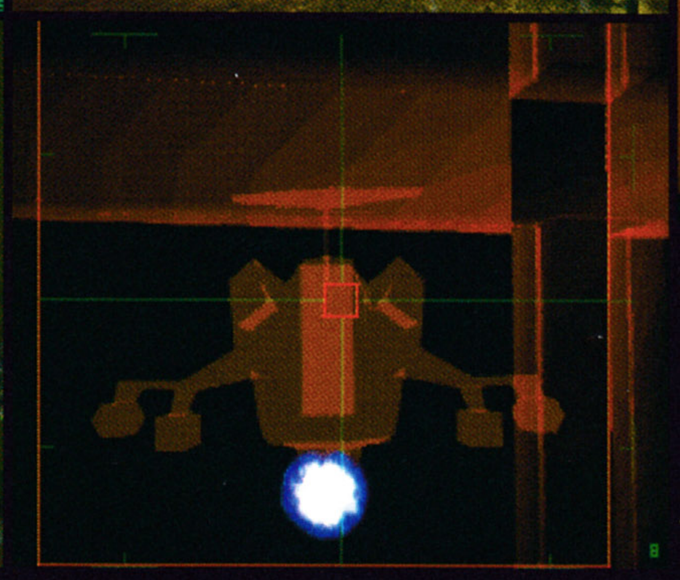
From a graphical point of view, *Perfect Dark* is streets ahead of anything else that Rare have attempted so far (although *Donkey Kong 64* should give it a run for its money) and features all manner of effects that you would only expect to see on a PC. Things like light flares and reflections are commonplace and give the game a special look. The lush texture design and use of dynamic lighting help this; *Perfect Dark* manages to recreate, to some degree, the ambience of Blade Runner, especially in the external locations where rain and neon lights give the game a brilliant atmosphere. There are plenty of other improvements over *Goldeneye*. Enemy AI is one aspect that has been bettered, vehicles have also been added, and the player can now use skills such as 'long-range teamwork', 'cover recognition', and have the ability to assess potential threats.

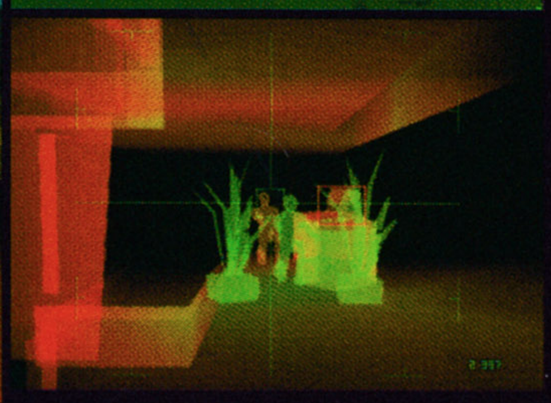
THIS BE ONE OF THE BEST GAMES OF 1999, AND WILL BE ANOTHER REASON TO BUY N64 OVER PLAYSTATION OR DREAMCAST THIS CHRISTMAS

Despite *Goldeneye* being over two years old, it is still ahead of many of the first-person shooters on PC. *Perfect Dark* will be better again; it should be the ultimate first-person adventure, and sales of the N64 over Christmas will be massive. Expect this game to be huge. TC

YOU'RE IN THE DARK?

For the narcissistic among you there is the option of putting your face into *Perfect Dark*. To do this you'll need a Game Boy, a Game Boy Camera, and the as-yet-unreleased 64GB Pak. The latter of these is a device that plugs into the controller where the Rumble Pak goes. You can then insert a Game Boy cartridge, or in this case the Game Boy Camera, and download the data into the N64. In this way you'll be able to scan your face into the game and map it onto one of the characters.





The emphasis has been placed on stealth – the x-ray mode allows you to see through walls

APPARENTLY...

- "Rare has created the ultimate action title the world has been waiting for"
- "The elements of stealth and espionage, combined with the engrossing story line, make *Perfect Dark* a truly engaging game."

Peter Main, NOA Executive Vice-President, Sales and Marketing.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	N64
PUBLISHER	Rare/Nintendo
DEVELOPER	Rare
STYLE	First-Person Shooter
RELEASE	November
PLAYERS	1-4

SUMMING UP

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- It's the sequel to *Goldeneye*.
- Fantastic graphics, improved AI, brilliant story. What more do you want?

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- No Bond. We want Bond.

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Potentially the game of the year.

RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA

With planed ***Resident Evil*** releases on Game Boy, N64, PlayStation and Dreamcast, **'99 could be Capcom's year...**

APPARENTLY...

- "This highly anticipated title will push Sega Dreamcast processing power to deliver stellar graphics, unmatched character detail and sound capabilities"
- "*Code Veronica* once again proves Capcom's ability to develop an engrossing and haunting storyline and spine chilling gameplay"

Capcom press release

INFORMATION

FORMAT	Dreamcast
PUBLISHER	Virgin
DEVELOPER	Capcom
STYLE	Horror
RELEASE	TBA
PLAYERS	TBA

SUMMING UP

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- Amazing 3D real-time game engine displaying some of the best graphical effects yet seen on the Dreamcast.
- Strong story that develops the *Resident Evil* plot line using existing characters and stays true to the original style.

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- Worries over the camera will remain until the last minute, but with the importance of this to the game, it will be difficult to see it being overlooked by Capcom.

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Code Veronica is one of the Dreamcast's dead-cert successes. Capcom are proven masters in their field, and with the new power of the Dreamcast at their disposal, hopes are predictably high.

The animations generally follow suit from the previous titles

Way back before the launch of the Dreamcast in Japan, the announcement that a *Resident Evil* game was coming exclusively to their new system went some way to building up hype for the machine. Recently we've been hearing all about *Resident Evil* coming to N64 and Game Boy, and the development of *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* on the PlayStation, so the excitement over *Code Veronica* has died down a little. But with the new features that this game will offer, expect everyone to be much more excited about *Veronica* than any of the other incarnations when it ships in Japan later this year.

Resident Evil: Code Veronica follows Claire Redfield after she has sworn vengeance against Umbrella approximately three months after the end of *Resident Evil 2*. You begin the game as you travel over to the Umbrella HQ in England. Although only Claire has been announced as a playable character so far, it wouldn't be a *Resident Evil* game without some form of character swapping. *Code Veronica* is not meant to be a sequel to the original story, instead it is a spin-off that will attempt to tie up some of the loose ends left by the first two games and leave some more for future games.

CODE VERONICA IS NOT MEANT TO BE A SEQUEL TO THE ORIGINAL STORY, INSTEAD IT IS A SPIN-OFF THAT WILL ATTEMPT TO TIE UP SOME OF THE LOOSE ENDS LEFT BY THE FIRST TWO GAMES

Pretty pictures

The main difference to the gameplay is the inclusion of real-time polygon-based backgrounds as seen before in *Silent Hill* and *Blue Stinger*. Not only does this mean it will be the most attractive *Resident Evil* game to date, but it will add to the game by creating even more tension. *Code Veronica* will play in a very similar style to *RE* games past. It won't always adopt a *Silent Hill*-style floating camera; occasionally it will follow you from in front, behind or from the side, pan around a room as you move from left to right, and in some places it will still be fixed in the same position as before, to add to the nervous claustrophobic effect that the first games were famous for.

Resident Evil: Code Veronica is one of the most anticipated Dreamcast games in development. As long as Capcom stay clear of the jumpy camera that ruined *Blue Stinger*, there is no reason why this won't outclass every other game in the genre. And with Capcom's distinguished history, that is exactly what we're expecting it to do. TC

PERFECT TIMING

Compared to the screens that Capcom have already released for *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*, *Code Veronica* beats it hands down, and pulls it all off using real-time 3D graphics. The potential for gameplay enhancements and more of those off-your-seat moments is much more real here. As games like these follow their natural evolution, their success will surely be based on the style in which they have been directed instead of their technical merits.

FORCE 21

The **real-time strategy** scene is about to **kick off** again, this time in **3D**. We have a look at the first offering from **Take 2...**

EYES RIGHT

You can have up to sixteen different platoons under your control at any point, which can make the game confusing. Planning your attacks is made much easier by being able to switch between strategic and tactical play modes. Using these you can direct the positions of your units from a top-down map or control a specific group from a third-person view.

The current interface could be more user-friendly. The numerals represent the different groups, but with so many around it's easy to lose track

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Take 2 Interactive
DEVELOPER	Red Storm Entertainment
STYLE	3D Real-Time Strategy
RELEASE	September
PLAYERS	1-4

SUMMING UP

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- An interesting and very tactical twist on the real-time strategy genre.
- Loads of units to play around with, nice graphics and a strong selection of mission structures.

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- The AI of both friendly and aggressive vehicles needs a lot of work.
- It could get too involved in tactics and strategy and miss out the fun.

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If the next few months improve the game as much as they should, this has the potential to be highly impressive.

This time last year the real-time strategy game was at its prime. But as the games seemed to be repeating themselves over and over again in the search for new features, it was the imminent arrival of *Wargames* that looked like providing some much needed direction, pushing the genre into 3D. Judging by the lack of titles since, it wasn't as much of a success as we had hoped. But there have been many new 3D titles in development, and the first to hit the shelves, *Warzone 2100*, certainly did not disappoint.

Force 21 takes a twist on the genre. It's strongly squadron based; units are allocated into groups and then driven around the level from a third-person view. Like *Army Men*, you are never allowed to scroll freely through the level – you can only see the areas that are visible to your units, which means that you need to rely heavily on your radar and spend much more care when distributing your units. Before each level you can move units between squads and allocate squad leaders from a limited selection, all of whom are skilled in different areas. It's important to group squads in similar speeds, otherwise the slower units may lag behind. Some units have special skills; you will be able to fortify positions, camouflage your tanks and do a number of other things.

YOU ARE NEVER ALLOWED TO SCROLL FREELY THROUGH THE LEVEL – YOU CAN ONLY SEE THE AREAS THAT ARE VISIBLE TO YOUR UNITS, WHICH MEANS THAT YOU NEED TO RELY HEAVILY ON YOUR RADAR

Troubled times

Force 21 takes place in the not-so-distant future where China is rapidly expanding and invading nearby countries to support their economic boom – the Allied forces must step in to take control. You can play the game from either side, and although the game is set in the future, many of the vehicles share much in common with modern day machinery common to each side. Missions range from escorting to saving units under attack, to reconnaissance and full-on aggressive missions (no blowing up embassies though).

Take 2 could have a very good real time strategy on their hands here, but early warnings show, with the slow movement of the game and the occasionally problematic nature of unit movement, where they seem to get in each other's way. With several months still to go though, this may turn out to be a surprisingly good game. TC

MESSIAH

Messiah has been **creating a lot of waves** in the industry – taking on the role of a **baby faced cherub** promises to be **simply divine...**

Messiah has already built up a storm of controversy that is unlikely to damage its sales in the slightest. It has been singled out by many as being one of the most spectacular PlayStation games on show at last month's E3, and coupled with a hint of controversy due to its blasphemy, sexism and generally unsavoury behaviour, we can't see Virgin's latest blockbuster falling at the last hurdle.

IT LOOKS FANTASTIC TOO, PUSHING THE PLAYSTATION TO WHAT COULD BE ITS GRAPHICAL PEAK

The main character in the game is Bob, a seemingly harmless little cherub made mortal and sent down against his will by God to find and destroy Satan and set things back to the way they were. Not only can you fly, crawl, climb and fight your way through the levels, but you also have the ability to possess your enemies, effectively taking their physical form. This means that you have access to an impressive 50 unique characters, all of which have different abilities and weapons and take the form of both humans and non-humans.

Another world

The 3D worlds that have been created are amongst the most realistic and complex seen. The level design has been very important, and players have to negotiate through traps and strongholds of enemy opponents. It looks fantastic too, pushing the PlayStation to what could be its graphical peak. Every model has a real bone structure, and by using their RT-DAT (Real Time Deformation and Tessellation), Shiny have overlaid a realistic skin over the top of them, so before they have even begun to animate the models, they know that they are starting from solid beginnings.

The game is shaping up to be very special indeed. The idea of possessing other characters during play could really add a new level of gameplay – hopefully more will be made of this idea than was seen in *Requiem*, where it never really seemed to realise the full potential of such an original concept. We'll be following the progress of this game with very keen eyes.

TC

APPARENTLY...

- "*Messiah* will be a revelation, extending the life of Sony's console and providing true arcade quality graphics on the system for the first time."
  Dave Perry – Shiny Entertainment

- "Not only does *Messiah* run faster and more smoothly than the competition, it delivers the most realistic, most detailed in-game character modelling yet seen,"
  Virgin Interactive Press Release

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Virgin Interactive
DEVELOPER	Shiny Entertainment
STYLE	3D Adventure
RELEASE	November
PLAYERS	One

BITS AND PC'S

Messiah is scheduled for a joint PC and PlayStation release. While the PlayStation version looks to be highly impressive, the PC version is even more stunning. The game uses a tessellation engine to draw the skin around the characters. Between 80 and 8000 can be used, and depending on the graphical power of your PC, you will see the number that is optimised for your system, automatically updating it if you upgrade.

SUMMING UP

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- Fantastic detail in the game world, a great game engine and very nice graphics.
- The possess feature opens up a world of possibilities for the game.

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- Hopefully, using the possess option will be an integral part of the game which will be pulled off to greater effect than the system seen in *Requiem*.

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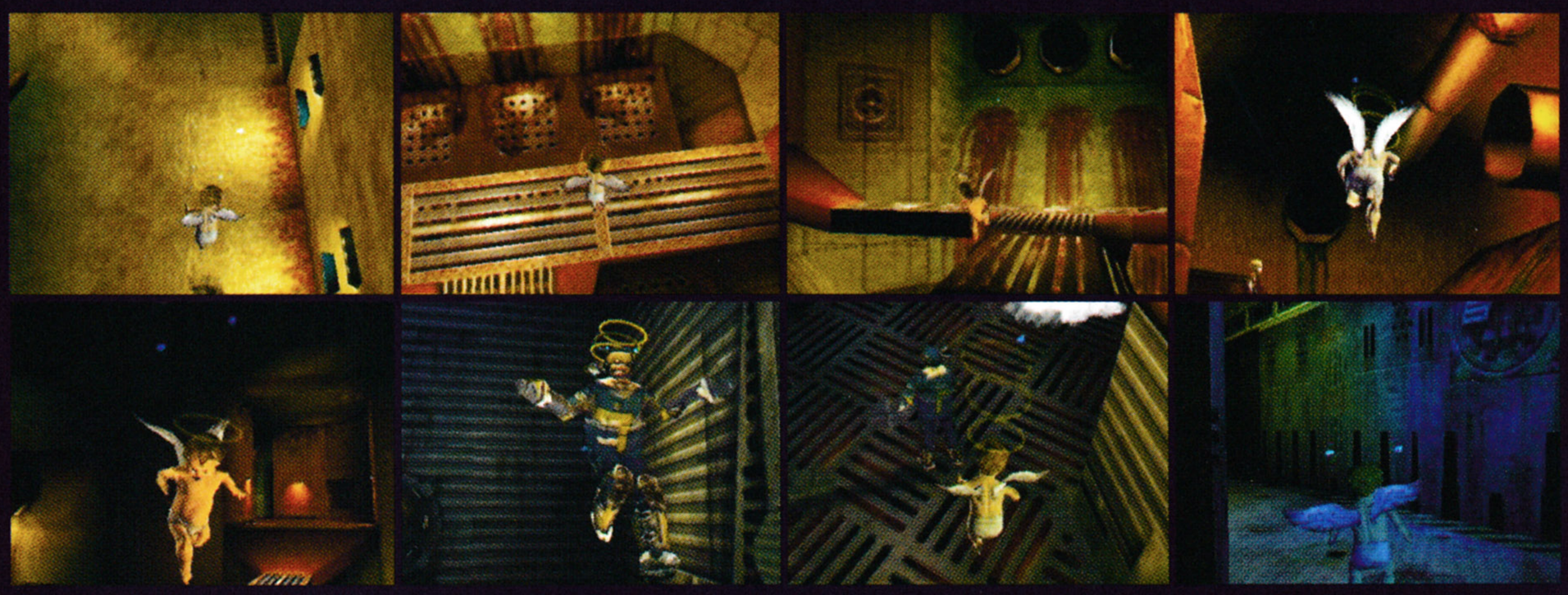
Messiah joins the list of Total CONTROL's most anticipated PlayStation releases. It could be something very special.



Most of the game is played by inhabiting various other characters. Their different abilities allow for multiple routes

FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS

We've already got football games seeping out **from every pore of our bodies**, and to **make matters even worse**, EA have announced that **they will be releasing two football** games per year...

The replay mode, as with everything in *Stars*, been simplified. It does, however, allow you to see the fine detail on the players

The more cynical amongst you may think that an EA game based on and using the Premier League licence would be an attempt at a cash-in. No one can dispute that the English Premiership is something of a cash cow these days, so anything remotely associated with it (especially a computer game) will sell without any problem at all. However, Electronic Arts are keen to point out that while *FA Premier League Stars* builds on the company's highly successful *FIFA* series of footie games, it is not merely an exercise in repackaging a tried and trusted formula.

ELECTRONIC ARTS ARE KEEN TO POINT OUT THAT WHILE FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS BUILDS ON THE COMPANY'S HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL FIFA SERIES OF FOOTIE GAMES, IT IS NOT MERELY AN EXERCISE IN REPACKAGING A TRIED AND TRUSTED FORMULA

Current code features many of the player animations from *FIFA*, but that is where the similarity between the two games ends. The distinction can be seen in the control interface which, although it takes its cue from *FIFA*, is significantly different. A power bar system is now in operation

The 'stars' in the title not only refers to the players in the Premiership (we assume), but also the neat system that EA have employed of rewarding the player for performing well. A certain number of stars are awarded after each match. These awards are made in different categories: for winning the game; number of goals scored; best goal of the game; man of the match and so on. Players can then allocate these stars to team members' individual stats and improve their team. At the moment EA are trying to get the balance between number of stars awarded and the starting 'strength' of the players so that maximum scores are not reached half-way through a season. If they manage to implement it well then it could turn out to be an interesting idea, and one that could increase the longevity of the game. Stars can also be used to purchase players in the transfer market. Also, once you have trained your own team up, it will be possible, via memory card, to play your team against a friend's.

Premier League Stars features everything you would expect from an EA game, from management and tactics, to the highly detailed player strips and accurately modelled stadiums (every one of the Premier League stadiums is here). The question remains though, is there room enough for another football game in PlayStation market? EA seem to think so, and with the official Premiership licence behind them, who would want to argue that fact? TC

Animations from *FIFA* have been adopted, but that's about all

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER	EA Sports
STYLE	Football Sim
RELEASE	August '99
PLAYERS	1-2

SUMMING UP

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- Interesting 'stars' system that rewards the player for performing well.

−

- Only the Premier League is featured – what about the Nationwide League?

=

Another high quality football game from EA.

CAPACITY CROWD

Premier League Stars features every one of the 20 stadiums in the Premiership. The team boast that each one is as accurately rendered as is possible, and they certainly look good. What difference this makes to the gameplay though, is anyone's guess...

APPARENTLY...

- "The best looking, the deepest, fastest and most realistic racing game to grace any platform."
  Gremlin press release
- "Without giving too much away, *Rallymasters* will allow players to experience first-hand why the motor sport's rules were changed in the 80s."
  Gremlin press release

RALLYMASTERS

Gremlin's latest multi-format racer **may turn out to** be a surprise autumn **hit. We take a look** at its progress so far...

No rally game would be complete without a snow level

The background textures are extremely impressive

SPOT EFFECTS

Some of the visual effects in *Rallymasters* take on a different form. The dust trails that blow up behind your car look extremely impressive and will make a big difference to the game when you find it hard to see the track if you are following an opponent. You may also notice the mud sprays, which have a much different, more solid texture to them, and look far more realistic.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation, PC, Dreamcast, N64
PUBLISHER	Gremlin
DEVELOPER	Digital Illusions
STYLE	Rally Driving
RELEASE	September
DREAMCAST RELEASE	TBA
PLAYERS	TBA

SUMMING UP

+

- Very nice looking game engine with impressive effects.
- Loads of different courses, drivers and cars ensure good lastability.

−

- The number of variations is impressive, but there seems to little innovation to the gameplay, which may be a bit routine.

=

Rallymasters has few new features and breaks no barriers, but providing the gameplay is there in full, it should be a big autumn release.

With *V-Rally 2* on the way, rally games could all be facing a serious kick up the arse. The forthcoming *Rallymasters* from Gremlin is likely to hit the shelves shortly after *V-Rally 2*'s dust subsides. In its wake we can expect this new multi-format game to try to pick up the remaining market.

Rallymasters is a licence from the Michelin Race of Champions, a post-season competition that takes place annually in Gran Canaria. As well as authentic portrayal of that course, there are 50 other tracks, all with various different conditions – Gremlin have stated that there are 368 different possible variants. Indeed, the sheer size of the game seems to be playing a very important role in the marketing: there are over 60 varied cars with individual artwork and sponsor schemes; more than 70 different drivers, including all the big names in the rally circuit; and there are many different game modes.

THERE ARE 50 OTHER TRACKS, ALL WITH VARIOUS DIFFERENT CONDITIONS – GREMLIN HAVE SAID THAT THERE ARE 368 DIFFERENT POSSIBLE VARIANTS

Race of Champions

The *Rallymasters* championship mode involves a series of two-lap races through two different championship divisions, with the ultimate aim of qualifying for the race of champions. After winning this a host of new options are unveiled, such as the opportunity to race in classic competitions from history. There are also arcade game modes and multiplayer modes. The multiplayer aspect of *Rallymasters* differs from machine to machine, but you can expect split-screen modes for all of the consoles and a network option for PC versions.

The screens on this page are taken from the PC version. Graphically it looks extremely impressive – especially the smoke effects – and you can expect the Dreamcast to be of identical quality. But while the N64 version is touted to use the expansion pack, there will be a loss in detail, and the PlayStation version will undoubtedly be more blocky. It's going to be interesting to see how it will compare with *V-Rally 2* from a gameplay point of view. There may be a lot of tracks, drivers and cars to choose from, but we won't be making any rash statements about this until we know the gameplay is in there in full. TC

DINO CRISIS

We take a look at one of the **brightest** upcoming PlayStation titles, as ***Resident Evil* meets *Trespasser*** in **Capcom's** latest **survival horror** epic...

The games based around Jurassic Park and its sequel, The Lost World, have been unforgivingly below par. Strangely, it is a game that has no official connection with either film that looks like perfectly capturing, and in many cases exceeding, the tension of those two blockbusters.

Dino Crisis could be described as a spin-off to the *Resident Evil* series. The producer of those two games, Shinji Mikami, has been devoting his many talents towards the production of a game that promises a much more frantic, nervous tension to it than the jumpy horror nature of the previous zombie orientated bloodfests. Set in

RAPTORS WILL HUNT IN PACKS AND ARE SMART ENOUGH TO CHOOSE ALTERNATE ROUTES IN ORDER TO CUT YOU OFF LATER ON

a military complex on an isolated island, you play a female investigator sent there in an effort to find and retrieve a scientific genius believed dead. The professor's research into the principle of clean energy seems to have somehow created a horde of dinosaurs that are now infesting the island, and it's up to you to find the answers.

Clever girl

The obvious difference over *RE* and its ilk can be seen in the enemies. You must evade T-Rex's, Raptors, Pterodactyls and all kinds of other previously extinct species. One of the more striking bonuses of this is the incredibly complex AI that they all have. Raptors will hunt in packs and are smart enough to choose alternate routes in order to cut you off later on. They will also be able to open doors, so leaving the room won't provide you with a safe haven like in *Res 2*. If you get bitten, you will also leave a trail of blood which many of the enemies will be able to follow. The player is then forced to find ways of stopping the blood loss before healing the wound.

Apart from the new form of enemies on the island, the game differs from the *Resident Evil* series in many ways. For starters, the entire game is drawn in real-time, just like *Silent Hill*. There are no fixed viewpoints, and movement around the base is more rapid. Although the game is set on an island complex, the majority of the action takes place indoors to create a claustrophobic atmosphere. *Dino Crisis* is one of the most anticipated PlayStation titles in development. TC

The action grows to frantic climax, but there'll be plenty of jumpy bits along the way

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Capcom
DEVELOPER	In-House
STYLE	Horror Adventure
RELEASE	October
PLAYERS	One

APPARENTLY...

- "*Dino Crisis* is for the millions of fans that loved and played *Resident Evil* and hungered for more. Shinji Mikami and his team have done it again with *Dino Crisis*." *Bill Gardner – President of Capcom Entertainment*

- "In *Dino Crisis*, players should prepare to be scared, startled and ready to face the ultimate terror that lived before man." *Capcom Press Release*

GETTING BETTER

The level of detail in *Dino Crisis* is extremely impressive. There are loads of new features such as being able to hold your weapons in two different modes – hip level for rapid unloading, or shoulder level for accuracy. It will also be possible for enemies to knock the weapon right out of your hands, and you notice other great touches like your character proceeding with much more caution when he thinks there may be danger close-by.

SUMMING UP

+

- Fantastic detail, excellent animation and impressive lighting effects, all portrayed using a real-time graphics engine.
- Promise of superb AI in all of the enemies should make this a much more real experience than any of the previous titles in the genre.

–

- There's a lot to live up to – all of the other games of its type have been extremely impressive.

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The tense, frantic nature of the game and all of the new features should come very close to placing this over *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill* as the best PlayStation horror to date.

MIGHT & MAGIC VII

Return to the **magical medieval** world of **Enroth** in this sequel to an **award-winning series** of **fantasy role-playing** games...

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Ubi Soft
DEVELOPER	3DO/New World Computing
STYLE	RPG
RELEASE	July
PLAYERS	One

APPARENTLY...

- "Lands settled by both humans and elves now lie firmly in human territory – and the elves want them back"
- "Widely viewed as one of the most wicked men in history, Mayor Alan has not set out to do harm"

Might & Magic VII website

The *Might & Magic* series seems to be running at about one title a year, although since the previous one was released last September, the seventh instalment is a little early. The series has built up a solid reputation as one of the best fantasy RPGs, with the emphasis on adventure and character development rather than flashy graphics and special effects (it has won 'Fantasy Role Playing Game of the Year' every year of release). The latest version is no exception, although it is the first to use hardware graphics acceleration. This is perhaps a little unfortunate, as it will inevitably invite comparison with other more sophisticated 3D games, such as Bethesda Softworks' superb *Redguard*, or the excellent *Thief* from Eidos. Against such competition, *Might & Magic VII* is going to look a little crude. If you have seen *Might & Magic VI*, then *VII* is more of the same but with slightly nicer graphics. The characters and monsters you encounter are still animated sprites rather than polygonal 3D models, but they now look smoother. The terrain mesh is slightly more complex than in the previous title, and there is more animation in things like water and fires.

The major improvements to the game are to be found in the character development. There will be more character classes, including Cleric, Druid, Ranger, Archer, Monk, Paladin, Thief, Knight and Sorcerer. There will also be new races to choose from, including Humans (of course), Elves, Dwarves and Goblins.

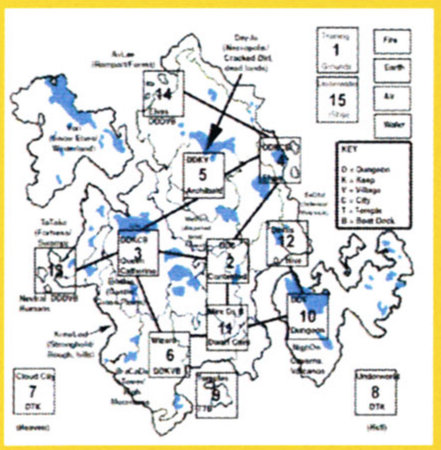
ONE OF THE BEST FANTASY RPGS, WITH THE EMPHASIS ON ADVENTURE AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT RATHER THAN FLASHY GRAPHICS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS

You can also choose to play a character of evil alignment if you wish. Although the system of the nine schools of magic remains unchanged, there will be many new spells for each school. There will also be new monsters, including more than a few from the recent *Heroes of Might & Magic III* game. The system of skills and character points will remain pretty much unchanged from the preceding game, but if it ain't broke, why fix it?

As with the previous game, the adventuring is completely open-ended. Each person that you meet can offer you some piece of information, but also has some small mission for you to undertake. There are dozens, possibly hundreds, of these, some harder than others. As your characters develop and become more capable, you will be able to take on tougher and tougher missions. This constant progression gives the game an unparalleled durability, and ensures that you do at least get your money's worth. TC

MAPPING IT OUT

Ever since the days of J.R.R. Tolkien, no fantasy adventure series has been complete without a map, and the *Might & Magic* series is no exception. The games take place in the land of Enroth, a complex 3D world which has developed a detailed history over the years. Each area of Enroth has its own unique characteristics, and some are definitely more dangerous than others.



The seventh game in the series offers more character classes

SUMMING UP

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- Traditional role-playing adventure, good character development.
- Suitable for all ages, hours and hours of gameplay.

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- Rather lame graphics, monster AI virtually non-existent.
- Little changed or developed from the previous title in the series.

=

The *Might & Magic* series could do with shaking up a bit, but this isn't the game to do it.

DONKEY KONG 64

Donkey Kong Country on the SNES was a highly successful if flawed **game from Rare**, but it put them right into the **spotlight**. Now they look to repeat that game's success with this, **the first N64 incarnation** of the big monkey...

The success of *Donkey Kong Country* came at a time when a lot of games players had finished with their 16-bit systems and were looking forward to the next big thing. *DKC* managed to change all that, and was to be one of the best-selling SNES games ever. It managed to spark off a resurgence of interest in the machine. Not only that, but it was Rare's first successful game on the system, earmarking the company for great things in the future. Which, by anyone's standards, they have fulfilled with style.

It's no surprise then that Donkey Kong is making his debut on the N64, and Rare are at the helm once again. Building on the success of the hugely popular and well-made *Banjo-Kazooie*, *Donkey Kong 64* is a 3D platformer in the best traditions of Nintendo – a fine mix of *Mario*-style platform and mini games – and Rare's unique brand of humour will see this become one of the best games of 1999.

BUILDING ON THE SUCCESS OF BANJO-KAZOOIE, DONKEY KONG 64 IS A PLATFORMER IN THE BEST TRADITIONS OF NINTENDO

The game will not only feature Donkey and Diddy from the original *DKC* SNES game, but there will be three new characters to choose from: Tiny, Chunky and Lanky. Each of the characters has his or her own set of unique abilities, and using these skills is the key to progressing through the game. Only certain characters will be able to complete special tasks and open up new areas of play. This means that each of the characters will have his or her own route through the game, but it is possible to use the characters in turn to help the others progress.

Many aspects make a return from the SNES game, such as the banana collecting, barrel shooting and mine cart racing, but in the 64-bit incarnation there is a lot more emphasis placed on puzzles and sub-games.

Donkey Kong 64 requires the 4MB Expansion Pak, and one look at the game will make you realise why. Not only does it run smoothly in the N64's high resolution mode, but it features some dramatic lighting effects not too dissimilar to those seen in *Perfect Dark*. Animations and the use of the camera is of the high standard that you'd expect from Rare. Graphic aside though, *DK64* should stir up new interest in the N64 this winter, and backed with a $12million marketing budget (the largest ever for a video game), it is a surefire hit for Nintendo.

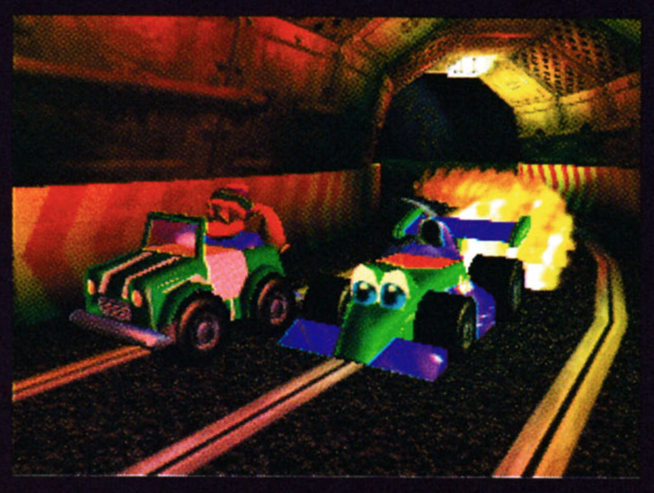
TC

Kremlins make a welcome return (main). Great design and sub-games also feature

APPARENTLY...

- "Gamers all over the world are waiting anxiously for a new addition to the *Donkey Kong* series."
- "We expect to sell more than 2.5 million units of *Donkey Kong 64* in just six weeks, making it the clear winner of the holiday season."

Peter Main, NOA Executive Vice-President, Sales and Marketing.



Rare treat us to Scalextric-style racing

INFORMATION

FORMAT	Nintendo 64
PUBLISHER	Rare/Nintendo
DEVELOPER	Rare
STYLE	3D Platformer
RELEASE	Christmas 1999
PLAYERS	One

SUMMING UP

+

- Brilliant graphics – possibly the best on the N64.
- Five characters, each must be used to open the way for others. Inventive and innovative.

–

- You MUST own an Expansion Pak to play it. Should come bundled with one, though.

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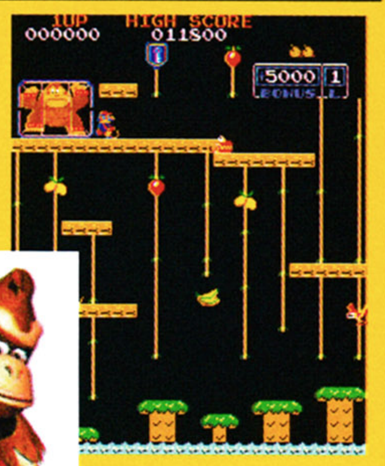
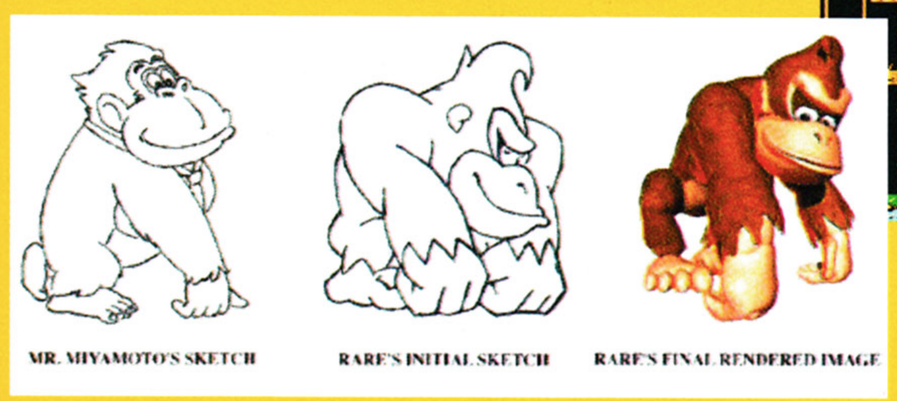
Will be similar but much better than *Banjo-Kazooie*.

MONKEY BUSINESS

Donkey Kong, invented by one Shigeru Miyamoto, has been with Nintendo since the start of their video game business. He has come a long way since his first outing in the classic arcade game *Donkey Kong*, which was also the debut of a certain plumber who went by the name of Mario...





MR. MIYAMOTO'S SKETCH

RARE'S INITIAL SKETCH

RARE'S FINAL RENDERED IMAGE

TOMORROW NEVER DIES

Think you could **ski down mountains**, drive powerful cars, **seduce beautiful spies** and still find time for a **dry martini** before **saving the world?**

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER	MGM Interactive
STYLE	3D Action-Adventure
RELEASE	October 1999
PLAYERS	1-2

All we need now is that famous Union Jack parachute...

APPARENTLY...

- "Everyone loves Bond; everyone will love *James Bond: Tomorrow Never Dies* for the Playstation. It is the ultimate action adventure based on the blockbuster movie. On foot, on skis and behind the wheel of a BMW 750, you will need your wits – and your gadgets – to survive a variety of perilous challenges."

Electronic Arts press release

After the phenomenal success of *Goldeneye* on the N64, it might seem a little odd that the next James Bond game should be released on the PlayStation, but that's what's happening. *Tomorrow Never Dies* is a third-person action-adventure, in a similar style to Rare's magnum opus, but based on the most recent Bond movie, in which the English agent takes on megalomaniac media mogul Elliot Carver, with help from a beautiful and deadly Chinese agent named Wai Lin.

The game follows the plot of the film and features many of the locations, such as the Carver

YOU WILL GET TO PLAY WITH EXPLOSIVE CUFFLINK DETONATORS, LASER DESIGNATORS, SKI-POLE ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND THE MULTI-FUNCTION CELL PHONE

Media Center, the Hotel Atlantic, and the Stealth Boat. There are also new twists in the plot that expand on the original story. There are more than fourteen different missions to complete, and the player can choose which order to do them in. Missions options include third-person combat, a *Tenchu*-like stealth mode, as well as the usual Bond stunts, a fight on skis and a wild car chase. During most of the game you play Bond, but in some sections you also have the opportunity to play Wai Lin, who is a martial arts expert. Expect some beat-'em-up type action in these sections.

No Bond adventure would be complete without the brilliant 'Q' gadgets, and *Tomorrow Never Dies* has more than a dozen of them. You will get to play with explosive cufflink detonators, laser designators, ski-pole rocket launchers and the multi-function cell phone, amongst others. The extensive use of special effects makes the weapons and gadgets more true to the movie. There are infra-red goggles, sniper rifles with zoom sights, and even a working in-game camera.

The stealth-mode operations are made possible by the use of advanced artificial intelligence, which allows enemies to react to audible and visible cues. In this respect the game is probably going to resemble the smash-hit *Metal Gear Solid*.

Unlike the N64 cartridge-based *Goldeneye*, *Tomorrow Never Dies* will use the superior storage capacity of the PlayStation's CD-ROM to good effect. The game will feature cinematic cut-scenes, including footage from the movie. TC

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

Filming is well underway on the nineteenth James Bond film, The World is Not Enough, starring Pierce Brosnan, Denise Richards, Sophie Marceau and Robert Carlyle. The opening sequence takes place on the river Thames, and includes scenes filmed in the real headquarters of MI6 and around the Millennium Dome. Let's hope they don't blow it up...

The film is due for release in December, and will be Pierce Brosnan's last outing as the legendary agent.

SUMMING UP

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- State-of-the-art PlayStation graphics, with plenty of special effects.
- Play two characters, with a wide range of special weapons and those James Bond gadgets.

−

- A bit late for a movie tie-in, as the next Bond film will be released in six months.
- The aging PlayStation may not do it full justice. Might have been better on a PC or Dreamcast.

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If you've got bored with *Goldeneye* (heaven forbid!) then this could be just the thing

CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKE RACING

There **aren't many games** that have **successfully** made the transition from PC to **PlayStation**, but *Castrol Honda* ***SuperBike*** *Racing* looks **like it could be one** of them...

Castrol Honda SuperBike Racing is an adaptation of the successful PC title of almost the same very long name, *Castrol Honda Superbike World Champions 2000*. It retains many of the features of the PC title, but in a smaller, lesser form to fit the restricted capabilities of the PlayStation. The fact that it works at all is proof – if any were needed – that there is still some life left in the ageing Sony console. The graphics are fairly impressive, although the frame rate drops dramatically whenever there are more than four or five bikes on screen at once. For that reason, the preview Beta version is restricted to eight bikes per race, although the finished version is supposed to have twenty-three other racers all controlled by the game AI.

The bike handling appears to use the same very accurate model as the PC version, and the animation and motion capture are every bit as good. *Castrol Honda SuperBike Racing* is a simulator, not an arcade game, and unless your name is Aaron Slight or Colin Edwards, you will need to start off using all the help you can get. All the options from the PC game will be included in the PlayStation version, including assistance with steering and braking, automatic gear changes and little arrows to warn you about upcoming corners. With all the help switched on it handles a bit more like an arcade game, which will help to get you used to the tracks.

There is also an extensive list of bike set-up options, with help and advice from the Castrol Honda team, but if the PC game is anything to go by you don't want to mess around too much until you really know what you are doing.

On the fast track

Since this product is licensed by the Castrol Honda team rather than the FIA, the other team's bikes are not as accurately modelled as Slight's and Edward's machines, and the tracks are not strictly 'official' either. Instead the game uses disguised and renamed versions of the real tracks, thus avoiding litigation. There are also a number of strictly unofficial tracks, including street circuits, and Honda's Japanese test track at Motegi.

Although the game is a little out of date – it is based on the 1997 season – it is a good effort and an interesting cross-platform conversion. I can't help thinking that it should have been converted for the Dreamcast instead, but it isn't at all bad. We're looking forward to the final review code. TC

ALL THE OPTIONS FROM THE PC GAME WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE PLAYSTATION VERSION, INCLUDING ASSISTANCE WITH STEERING AND BRAKING

The graphics are good, although the frame rate drops when the traffic gets busy

POINT OF VIEW

The game offers you multiple camera angles, including a superb over-the-bars viewpoint which adds to the feel of being there. There is also a replay mode which captures the look and feel of being at a race meet. All it needs is a frantic commentary and some enthusiastic cheering to complete the trackside atmosphere.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	THQ
DEVELOPER	Interactive Entertainment
STYLE	Racing Sim
RELEASE	July
PLAYERS	1-2

Hold off the braking until the last moment to get past him

SUMMING UP

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- A good simulation with a nice easy learning curve.
- Graphics surprisingly good considering the difference between the PC and the PlayStation.

–

- Graphics engine chugs a bit when there are more than a few bikes on the screen.
- A bit dry and serious for a PlayStation game. Could do with a few tricks, jokes and Easter Eggs.

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A nice conversion job for one of the best PC bike racing simulators, and not too difficult as to not be fun.

BLACK MOON CHRONICLES

A **fantasy wargame** based on a **popular French comic book** series is the latest offering from **developers Cryo Interactive...**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Cryo Interactive
DEVELOPER	Cryo Interactive
STYLE	Fantasy Wargame
RELEASE	July
PLAYERS	1-8

Careful use of strategy can catch your enemies unprepared. Victory will soon be yours!

I have to admit to a certain sympathy for French games developer Cryo Interactive. Their games have not enjoyed the critical appreciation which they might have hoped for, and they have developed an unenviable reputation on this side of the channel. Apparently their games sell well in France but never do anything in the UK. Nonetheless, they keep trying, and I guess you have to admire their perseverance.

Their latest attempt is *Black Moon Chronicles*, based on a French comic book of the same name. It is a fantasy wargame in which you play Wishmerhill, a warlord attempting to dominate the world of Lhynn. The game is divided into two parts: a strategic map on which you plan your path to glory; and a real-time battle map in which you control your forces in huge battles against your enemies. The four separate campaigns are made up of more than sixty missions.

The battles can be immense, with up to four thousand units involved, including wizards, dragons and huge elephant-like animals. There are over eighty different units and a hundred and twenty buildings. The sprite-based animation of the units is quite nice, and the graphics are bright and colourful. The special effects for the various spells are particularly good. Navigating around the screen can be confusing, as there is no pop-up help on any of the buttons, but the controls are fairly straightforward, and the battles progress quickly.

There is an element of management to the strategy side of the game, as you expand your territory and gather resources and money to fund your army. You can develop your troops and improve your castle to further your plans for conquest.

THE SPRITE-BASED ANIMATION OF THE UNITS IS QUITE NICE, AND THE GRAPHICS ARE BRIGHT AND COLOURFUL

The closest comparison I can think of for *Black Moon Chronicles* is perhaps *Heroes of Might and Magic II*. It has multiplayer options allowing up to eight people to compete over the internet or LAN, and there is also a scenario editor for making your own levels. There are a number of faults in the beta version of the game, such as the aforementioned lack of button help. There are a number of sections that still need to be localised (menus in French etc.), and the game slows down alarmingly when there are a lot of figures on screen. However, these problems may be resolved by the final release.

Could *Black Moon Chronicles* be that most elusive of phenomena, a Cryo game that is actually well worth playing? I don't yet know, and it would be unfair to judge the game from unfinished beta code, but I would like to see the final product. It could be a good one.

TC

SUMMING UP

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- Epic scope, great artwork and big fantasy battles.
- Good combination of real-time strategy and battlefield tactics.

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- Cryo's lousy reputation for making dud games.
- Needs a lot of work yet, and it's due out in a month.

=

Let's wait and see. It's about time Cryo had a winner – they've been trying hard enough.

THE CHRONICLES OF THE BLACK MOON

Although little known in Britain, The Chronicles of the Black Moon is a popular graphic novel series in France, written by Cyril Pontet and Olivier Ledroit. First published in 1989, there are now seven titles in the series. They are available in English translation from most good comic stores.

The battle screen has some nice light effects

APPARENTLY...

- "Some spells have also been designed to comical effect. Typical of them is soldiers turned into pigs"
- "The necromancers are truly vile"

Cryo PR briefing

Uc U PG 12 15 18 RESTRICTED 18

CULTABLE

Censorship, classification, cuts... **call it what you like, to many of us it means the removal of our right** to make up our own minds as to what we want to watch. **Over to our man in the back row,** Paul Ditta...

FOR ALL?

When you next pop to the cinema, rent a video or buy a game, consider this: whatever you play, watch or rent has been watched by someone else first. These people will have scrutinised, judged and possibly altered the film you watch or the game you play. They might even have banned it from these shores altogether. What do they do, why do they do it, and just who are they? They are, of course, the notorious British Board of Film Classification.

The BBFC began life as the British Board of Film Censors way back in 1913 (the 'C' changed to stand for 'Classification' in the eighties). They were introduced to bring some sort of standardised rules of acceptability to cinema releases. At first they had absolutely no powers whatsoever – they simply advised what they believed a film should be classified as and what cuts, if any, needed to be made. The local authorities could, and still can, overrule the decision of the board and decide for themselves if and how a film could be displayed in their area, but this is rare. What the BBFC says (usually) goes.

THE VIDEO RECORDINGS ACT 1984

The biggest new challenge for the BBFC was the arrival of home video. In the eighties a spate of 'video nasties' sparked a concern that home entertainment was lacking the same structure that had been established for films. The BBFC were tasked with the job of classifying the new market. The act made it an offence to sell or distribute videos that had not been classified.

Video games don't need to be classified, unless they feature the following to any significant extent:

1 Human sexual activity or acts of force or restraint associated with sexual activity.

2 Mutilation, torture or gross violence towards humans or animals.

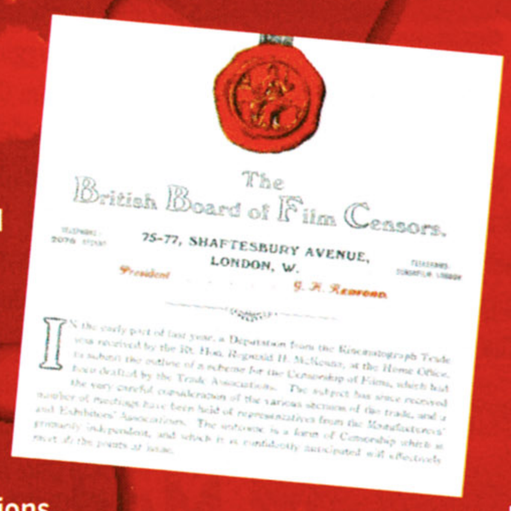
3 Human genitals or toilet functions.

4 Techniques likely to be useful in the commission of offences.

5 To any significant extent it depicts criminal activity which is likely to encourage or stimulate the commission of offences.

6 To any significant extent, it is likely to stimulate or encourage sexual activity or force or restraint with that activity.

7 Anything that is likely, to any extent whatsoever, to encourage cruelty, violence or torture to animals or people.


The British Board of Film Censors.
75-77, SHAFTESBURY AVENUE,
LONDON, W.

The list does raise a few problems when it comes to games; for instance, it's quite obvious in a video when there is violence, but when does a bitmap of a person become realistic enough that it represents a human being? What's the difference between plain "violence" and "gross violence"? When can a game be said to be encouraging the commission of offences, or the use of violence? This is an important matter because if, as a distributor, you release a game or video without a certificate claiming exemption and then are found to be in violation of one of the above clauses, you can be sent to prison for up to two years! The reality of the situation for games publishers is that if there is any doubt whatsoever, they will send the game to the BBFC, just to be on the safe side.

Websites

The following websites may enlighten you further:

The Melon Farmer's Video Hits

www.dtaylor.demon.co.uk./index.htm

Dave Taylor is a man who doesn't care much for the BBFC and has compiled a massive list of films that have been banned. An excellent resource as long as you accept that it's heavily biased. Contains the excellent "Confessions of a Censor", which details why an examiner for the BBFC left after three years.

The BBFC website

www.bbfc.co.uk

The official website now that they are trying to promote openness and accountability. Look at things from their perspective. Includes commentaries.

The National Viewers Association

http://www.nvala.org/

Condemned as nutcases in some quarters, if you want to get all sides of the argument then you should have a look at this. And no, they aren't nutters.

The Movement for Christian Democracy

http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~mcdwest/

Again, people who receive a lot of flak. Give it a chance, then at least if you want to mock, you can do so from a position of authority.

BBFC GUIDELINES

The board have a set procedure; two examiners will look at the work submitted and take detailed notes. Once they have viewed the work the two examiners discuss the matter and, if they agree on a rating, will submit their findings to the principal officer for ratification. The distributor of the game/video/film is informed of the decision and is then free to appeal the decision with either the Video Appeals Committee (for videos and games), or the Local Authorities (in the case of cinema released films).

If the two examiners cannot agree, or if the examiners feel that their decision may cause some outrage or public attention, then the board can involve more examiners, bring in test audiences, engage the services of psychologists and other relevant bodies to come to a decision regarding the work at hand.

ELSPA

There is a voluntary ratings board, set up by the games industry – the European Leisure Software Publishers Association (ELSPA). Most games are rated by this body, unless they are believed to require classification by the BBFC. It's a tricky balancing act. If you as a game producer release a game with an ELSPA rating that is later found to require a certificate because of the reasons above, you could find yourself landed with a huge fine or a prison sentence. This was the bind that SCI found themselves in. They had been advised that *Carmageddon* was an 18+ ELSPA game, not requiring a BBFC certificate. The subsequent press attention about the game's content caused a swift change of heart.

The BBFC don't just dish out certificates, they also give advice at earlier stages of production on how to make films and games fall within specific classifications. Films tend to do better if they fall below the 18 certificate because it allows the distributors to tap into the massive teen market, and the BBFC will provide advice on how to do that. Detractors argue that one of the reasons that the BBFC has to cut fewer films these days – something they're very proud of – is because film makers are just not even bothering to include material that they know for a fact the BBFC will give them a hard time over. This is called pre-censorship and is considered even more insidious than cutting a finished film because it means that creativity is stifled by the need to conform.

THE $64,000 QUESTION

So, what is considered unacceptable? Well, any film, video or game that actually breaks the law cannot be classified. End of story. This includes anything that features sexual activity with, or actual harm to, minors, actual harm to animals, blasphemy or any of a number of other more obscure laws.

Apart from that, the Obscene Publications Act is the main piece of legislation the BBFC invoke. The act states that an article, be it in print, on film or contained on hard disk, is obscene if, taken as a whole it "tends to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely... to read, hear or see the matter contained in it".

ARTICLE 10

European Convention on Human Rights

The law states that "everyone has the right to freedom of expression... to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority." However, there is a catch in that the freedoms carry "duties and responsibilities" and may be restricted in the interests of, "prevention of crime... for the protection of health or morals." However, this is an important piece of legislation the BBFC have to keep in mind when cutting and banning films and games.

Primarily created to tackle pornography, the legislation has far wider ramifications. To quote a common example, a book that glorifies drug use and a drug addict's lifestyle could be considered obscene if the courts found it to fail the standard "deprave and corrupt" test. Anti-censorship bodies take great offence that the test is a subjective one, and one that is rarely challenged, meaning that arguably harmless material is banned as depraved and corrupt when it's actually just offensive, which is a totally different issue.

ARGUABLY HARMLESS MATERIAL IS BANNED AS DEPRAVED AND CORRUPT WHEN IT'S ACTUALLY JUST OFFENSIVE, WHICH IS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT ISSUE

Offending scenes will be cut or re-framed to exclude the offending material (porn films released in this country are regularly re-framed so that no actual acts of penetration etc. are seen). If no amount of cutting can remedy the situation then the film is refused a certificate. If the film is considered bad

Media hysteria

The media likes to bang its drum every so often – usually when a crime has been committed by a teenager and they find out the kid in question has played *Doom* at some time in his life or watched an 18 film. Likewise, the judiciary are quick to point to violent films and videos as the inspiration to horrific offences.

The James Bulger case is an example of this. At the time of the trial the media suggested that the two killers had seen and were inspired by the film Child's Play 3. The response was immediate. Video shops took it off the shelves, people actually burned copies of it, and it re-ignited the whole violence in film debate.

The only fly in the ointment was that it wasn't the cause at all. The real causes remain locked within the minds of the two boys who committed the crime. If only life were so simple that we could protect our children by burning a few videos, I'd be at the front of the cue with the matches and screw freedom of expression.

Media hysteria 2

Michael Carneal was a 14-year-old freshman from Paducah, Kentucky, who, on December 1st 1997, opened fire on 35 of his classmates after a prayer meeting at Heath High School. He killed three students – Jessica James, Kayce Steger and Nicole Hadley – and wounded five others. One of the wounded is paralysed from the waist down as a result of the attack.

When questioned about the incident, he stated that he had, "seen this done in the Basketball Diaries", a film by New Line Cinema starring Leonardo Di Caprio. He pleaded guilty, but claimed to be mentally ill and was sentenced to life in prison with no chance for parole for at least 25 years.

The parents of the three murdered students filed a lawsuit against 45 people. They included Carneal, his parents, and some of the teachers and students at the school. Judge Will Shadon dismissed 24 of the defendants, including 19 administrators and teachers and five students. The lawsuit is still in force against New Line Cinema and games companies that allegedly made Carneal a highly efficient killer.

This stands to be a landmark case. If the corporations named are found guilty, what will this do to the film and games companies? Who will want to put out even slightly contentious games if it means that some lunatic going off the rails anywhere in the world could be blamed on them? Watch the progress of this one.

Research

Dr Kevin Browne and Dr Amanda Pennell conducted a study in 1998 on the effects of video violence on young offenders. Dr Browne has stated that the results can be just as easily translated for games.

122 males between the ages of 15 -21 took part, divided into three groups – 54 violent offenders, 28 non-violent offenders and a control sample of 40 non-offenders (who were school or college students). The group were questioned about their viewing habits and then shown violent video films appropriate to their age group.

The participants were then questioned about their recollections of the film immediately after the film and then at four months and ten months later.

What they found was that, when asked about their preferences, 89% of offenders preferred violent films compared to 11% of non-offenders.

Violent offenders were far more likely to remember the violent scenes in the follow-up interviews. The violent offenders identified with violent characters for far longer than the non-offenders, and the violence excited far more of the violent offenders than the non-offenders.

Violent offenders had a lower level of moral development, were less able to empathise and were more likely to have aggressive temperaments. This might seem obvious, but it underlines the main point of the research; violent films don't make passive people violent, but violent people do prefer to watch violence on the screen and more readily identify with it. 76% of offenders had suffered violence by a parent compared to 24% of non-offenders.

Coming from a violent home doesn't necessarily mean that you will become an offender, but it is a large contributing factor. An individual's own moral standards and high empathy can act against the negative influence of a violent upbringing; suffering or witnessing violence in the home could have the effect of making you even more sympathetic of other people's suffering and therefore less able to inflict it on others.

Dr Browne does suggest that one way that violent imagery does affect the group is that it reinforces the world view of the violent offenders. They see actors that they admire solving problems with violence, getting what they want and earning respect through the use of force, and it gives them something to relate to. Poor upbringing with little moral or empathic development serve to distort how they view violence and the use of violence. This is, in itself, a dangerous combination.

Research 2

Dr Ken Parsons conducted research into the effects of video games at a social level. He conducted research in Dundee and Crewe amongst a test group between the ages of 13-16 years who owned, or had access to, PCs and consoles.

Dr Parsons found that over half the test group played games for up to nine hours a week, with 9% playing for in excess of 30 hours. 23% admitted that they were "addicted" to computer games.

Psychological addiction went hand in hand with other problems – physical symptoms of excessive computer and console use, including neck, wrist, eye and elbow pains, as well as "Nintendinitis" (tenosynovitis).

A third stated that their parents were concerned with the amount of time they spent playing games, and 25% admitted that they would consider stealing games if they lacked the money to buy them. It sounds bad, but as Dr Parsons points out, "Computer video games… are no more addictive than books, TV and videos. Extreme computer use does not turn gregarious, extrovert people into recluses… computers can offer… inspiration, excitement… and can create an environment that is positively therapeutic." He does wonder at the effects of what 30 hours taken out of a person's life might be doing to their educational and social life, though.

Questions were then asked to determine what type of games they preferred. Unsurprisingly, 92% of the females questioned said they liked the less violent games available, whilst the lads went 82% in favour of sex and violence.

The most interesting area of the research was into the effects of video games on the sexual attitudes of the young, and it is here that Dr Parsons comes to some worrying conclusions. The problem lies in the role of women in computer games and its stereotypical nature. He believes that women tend to fall into the "helpless maiden" category or the gun toting Uber babe personified by Lara Croft. Dr Parsons' concern is that, with young people spending so much time playing these games there is a lack of balance in the way that the sexes, and other races, are perceived.

The effect on sexual attitudes is significant because the Video Recordings Act's definition of harm includes the concepts of moral and psychological harm as well as physical; someone's attitudes are so thrown out of whack that they start to treat women like objects, for example.

enough, prosecution can follow. Crash, the film by David Cronenberg about people who get sexually excited at car crash scenes, was threatened with just such action. It was never followed through and, despite the demands of certain areas of the press (i.e. the Daily Mail), the film wasn't banned.

The BBFC also have to monitor current tastes to decide on tolerances that aren't legislated against – nudity, for example. Fifty years ago, Sharon Stone's antics in Basic Instinct would have probably got her thrown in jail. These days, no-one except young boys saddled with the crushing weight of their own virginity would pay a blind bit of notice. Films get shown to test audiences and focus groups, and the board conduct surveys to maintain a feel for current trends.

Recent amendments to the Video Recordings Act have been implemented to create firmer and more constrictive guidelines when it comes to the classification of home entertainment. The main point was to look at: "any harm that may be caused to potential viewers or, through their behaviour, to society…"

In other words, will the game cause you psychological damage; will it desensitise you to suffering, does it excite you to the point that you want to copy it? And does it affect you to the point that you go around causing damage to the people around you? This only applies to videos and games in the home. A potential viewer includes children. In other words, the board pretty much disregard who the video or game is intended for and ask themselves, 'who is the youngest person in the house likely to see this?' This is unlike the situation with cinemas, where there are measures to prevent the under-age from seeing films unsuitable for them.

When deciding if a video or game is harmful, the board are directed to look at the way the work treats:

BACTA Basics

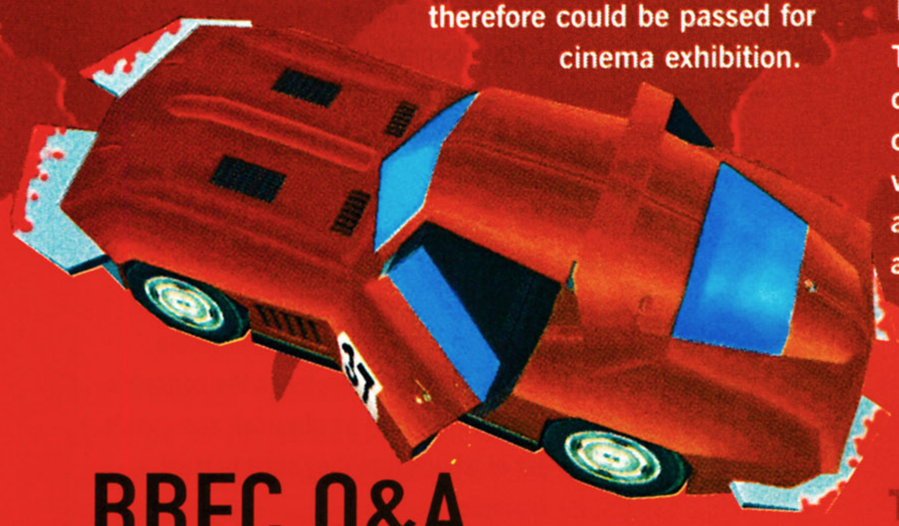
Video and film is covered by the BBFC. They, along with ELSPA, have responsibility for video games used in the home, but what about arcades? This is where BACTA come in. Their view is that video games are a useful and harmless form of entertainment. In their position statement they have declared that they consider arcade games to be acceptable as long as they stick to the following guidelines:

a. That they create a fantasy environment that is totally different from the player's home or school.
b. That the games themselves depict fantasy and not real life.
c. That they shouldn't dwell on violent or gory scenes.
d. That they don't encourage the player to identify him/herself as a perpetrator of violent acts in real life.
e. That they should give an exciting thrill to the player.
f. The game should be entirely based on skill and that the rewards should come through the use of dexterity, mental stimulation and agility.

Which, when you get down to it, is what makes a good game anyway. BACTA's official stance is that there are no proven reasons that support the use of age restrictions or censorship of arcade games.

a. **criminal behaviour**
b. **the use of illegal drugs**
c. **violent behaviour or incidents**
d. **horrific behaviour or incidents**
e. **human sexual activity**

These elements will cause the BBFC's hairs to stand up on end. However, they maintain that there is no such thing as a taboo subject, just taboo treatments. To illustrate; Lolita, the recent film starring Jeremy Irons, concerns a middle aged man and his obsession and sexual relationship with an under-age girl. The BBFC went to great pains to consult psychologists and ensure that the film would not encourage paedophile behaviour. Once this was done, the film was awarded a certificate. The BBFC defend their decision by stating that the film handled a serious issue responsibly and therefore could be passed for cinema exhibition.



Another example: Face/Off, the John Woo directed action movie. An 18 at the cinema, a sequence where John Travolta's character shows his daughter how to use a gravity knife was trimmed for video. The BBFC are concerned when a weapon is used on video, which can be paused and rewound.

These are just a couple of examples. The BBFC are also extremely cautious about sexual violence toward women, or if they feel that a film or video/video game tends to concentrate on sadism or torture, or if scenes could be used to help commit criminal acts, then they tend to cut the offending scenes.

THEY (THE BBFC) MAINTAIN THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A TABOO SUBJECT, JUST TABOO TREATMENTS

THE DIGITAL AGE

The board had spent eighty years classifying films and over a decade taking care of video. Arcade games are out of the BBFC's reach (see BACTA basics), but then video games started to attain a level of sophistication and one game started a ruckus, the results of which are still felt today.

CARMAGEDDON

Developed by SCI in mid-1997, the game caused a furore before its release and was refused a certificate by the BBFC on the grounds that it could be played by small children who might be desensitised to suffering, as well as claiming that it was wrong to have a game where the sole purpose is to engage in mass slaughter. SCI appealed, and the BBFC had to put forward an argument for the Video Appeals Committee.

The report describes *Carmageddon* as a "car racing game" where the "emphasis is less on winning than creating mayhem". You can't fault them so far – very accurate. From there on, however, it all goes a bit Pete Tong. The board makes reference to having to achieve maximum points to win, and that you can only get maximum points by slaughtering pedestrians. This is a minor error – as is the assertion that there are blind, disabled and elderly pedestrians in the game. There aren't.

BBFC Q&A

Gianni Zamo is the man with the responsibility for the classification of digital media at the BBFC. I asked him a few questions regarding their work.

TC: What, for you, is the difference between film/video and home computer games?

GZ: Film and video is a largely passive activity. Digital works, specifically games, depend more on physical dexterity and the more conscious reasoning and puzzle-solving skills in order to achieve the aim of the game. Few games offer the 'hook' readily available in films such as charismatic actor/characters or transgressive themes which might provide inappropriate role-models or inappropriate modes of behaviour to younger viewers. However, many games have been passed at highly restrictive categories because of their level of potential offence or where they lack a context which may act in mitigation of the more contentious elements. Context is normally our primary means of defence for films and videos, but many games lack any meaningful context which means that, had they been made into feature films, they would probably struggle to gain a certificate. Nonetheless, we accept that many games are quite abstract and unreal in what they present, which allows for some mitigation.

TC: What do you see as the difference between console and PC users?

GZ: From the information we have gathered, the highest proportion of PC game users as (opposed to console users) are in the early-twenties to mid-thirties age range, while the highest proportion of console users is generally under eighteen. However, this doesn't immediately suggest that we should be more lenient to PC players because more of them are adults than console users. Many PC games are subsequently converted onto console format, which indirectly makes the more restricted games potentially accessible to children. We could not, therefore, operate a dual system of classification for separate systems, because classification legislation does not make any such distinction. It treats film, video and multimedia as one homogeneous mass.

TC: But you do pass more explicit material for cinema…

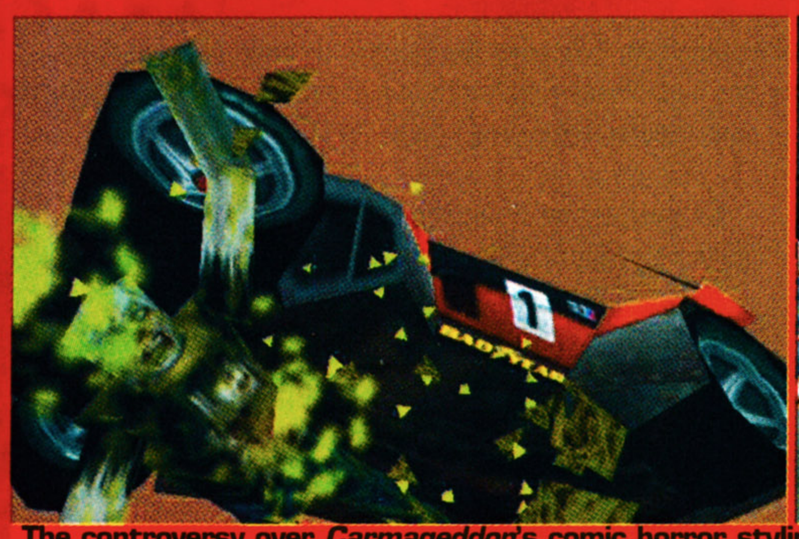
GZ: Fair cop! By and large the majority of videos passed by the Board are exactly the same as the theatrical version save for those odd instances where the Video Recordings Act requires us to consider the "likely audience" and issues of potential "harm". In this, we are required to consider whether a particular video (or, indeed, game) is likely to draw a significantly younger audience than the age restriction placed on the work. If we believe this is likely, than we must consider either watering down the contents by cutting or even rejecting the work. Note that we are not required to prove that a work WILL harm, but MAY harm the likely viewer.

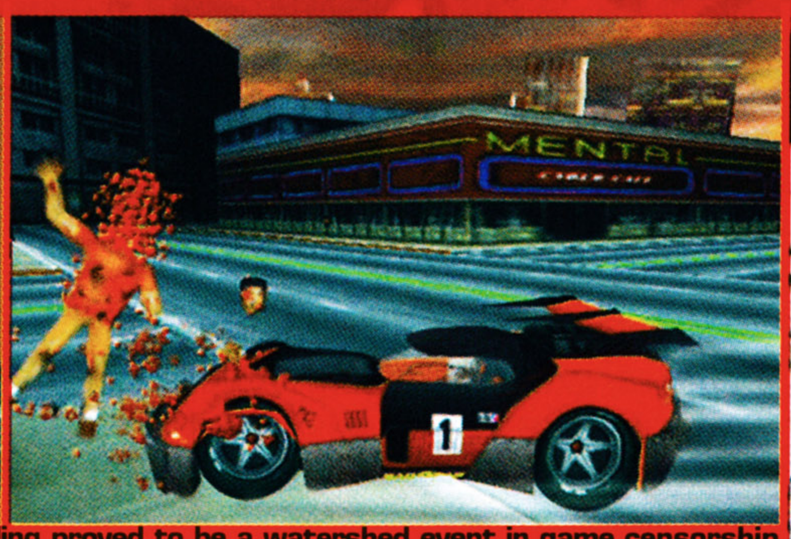
TC: What happened with *Carmageddon*?

GZ: Specifically, our concerns, based around the need to consider the implications of the Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994, was that *Carmageddon*, given its simplicity and ease of use, was very likely to draw the attention of non-adult users to a significant degree. The BBFC had to consider who was likely to see or play a particular video game regardless of the classification, so that if it believed that a particular game was likely to be played by children, despite its classification being for an older group, then the Board had to consider those children as potential users. In this respect, we were quite sure that *Carmageddon* would have significant appeal to users below the age restriction placed on the game. We felt that some children might be harmed by becoming desensitised to the suffering of others, which could affect their behaviour in later life. Whilst the appeal went in favour of the appellant, two of the five members of the appeal committee were in favour of the Board's arguments, and the matter was by no means clear cut.

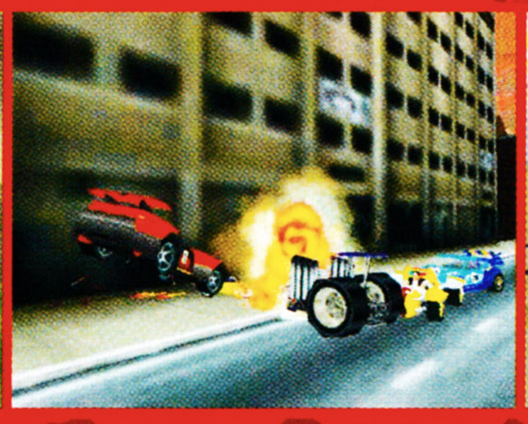
TC: Why were there so many factual errors about *Carmageddon*?

GZ: The Board's reply to the appeal was almost single-handedly dealt with by the ex-director, James Ferman, and you might find it





The controversy over *Carmageddon*'s comic horror styling proved to be a watershed event in game censorship



"The game may be played from a vantage point behind the car... but the more exciting option, and the one likely to be chosen by experienced players, is... as if seated behind the wheel... The blood comes straight at one as the cows are splattered and the wipers smear it from side to side."

It doesn't paint a pretty picture does it? But how did they come to the conclusion that players would prefer the first-person view? Since there was no supporting evidence in the report, we can only assume that this was a purely subjective opinion. An online survey of 1076 people in October 1997 showed that 980 favoured the behind-car view. As for the gory image of blood smeared from side to side? Emotive it may be, but it wasn't in the game.

"We have no doubt that initially the target audience will be made up of well-heeled, laddish young men who will take great delight in the game's savage delinquency. But its ease of use and enticing graphics are sure to attract the attentions of younger users, perhaps as young as twelve."

Apart from not knowing who "well-heeled, laddish young men" is supposed to refer to, you have to question how the board can know how they will respond to the game? And as for the age of children who may see the game, why the age 12? There are no supporting documents to back this theory. Why not age 14 or 8?

"It is always difficult to argue that works of entertainment may have a corrupting influence on behaviour, but it is far more likely that they can have a slow drip-drip effect on attitudes, perhaps desensitising, perhaps offering exciting alternatives. We know that many teenagers indulge in joyriding (that is, reckless high speed driving for kicks), which occasionally results in casualties. And we know that many of these joyriders are of the type who frequent arcades featuring violent (and unregulated) video games."

What we have there is a blatant attempt to link criminal behaviour with playing arcade games. We 'know' that some teenagers joyride. That's a fact. But we also 'know' that many of these joyriders are of the type who frequent arcades? How do we 'know' that? Because teenagers go to arcades and therefore some of them could well be joyriders? Well, some of them could also be boy scouts, but that doesn't mean that you can make sweeping statements about teenagers, arcades and cycling proficiency badges without some evidence to back it up.

The board's main objection to the game was the idea that the killing of the pedestrians was motivated by sheer sadism, as opposed to saving the world or self defence.

useful to speak with him. I think there are one or two factual errors concerning the descriptive content of *Carmageddon*, but I wouldn't say it was highly exaggerated. With regard to the second question, I believe that this comment was based on the research carried out by Dr Kevin Browne of Birmingham University. However, the case is neither proven nor unproven.

TC: What about the delays with certifying *Carmageddon II*?

GZ: *Carmageddon II* was passed 18 without incident. The demo version was held in abeyance in order for us to get some expert opinion, as we are entitled to do, since we had limited opportunity to gain independent opinion on the original game. The experts, a panel of psychologists, mostly agreed that the game could be released with an 18 certificate, but insisted that a parental lock be included with game. On the basis of their opinion, we approved certification of the full game when it was submitted.

TC: Given that you objected so strongly to *Carmageddon*, why did *Blood 2* pass without a problem?

GZ: *Blood 2*, and indeed other similar games, was passed 18 on the basis of the *Carmageddon* appeal decision, which has established a baseline from which we can work. However, *Blood 2* is unlikely to have major appeal to junior users since the first-person perspective shoot-'em-up not only seems to be suffering from major consumer fatigue, but this game is relatively complicated to operate. We also feel that the killing of innocent civilians is not a primary part of the game's winning criteria. Certainly, it is very visceral, hence part of the reason for its 18 certificate.

TC: How do you justify the banning of games when there is no evidence to suggest a link between violence and video games?

GZ: Regrettably, there is limited research into the 'effects' of video game-playing amongst users, though we have made use of what little research material exists. Since we receive so little in the way of digital submissions, it is hard to justify the expense of engaging in a long-term piece of research. The 'effects' debate has become rather stale, with no definite conclusions to support either side of the argument. The BBFC would prefer to canvas games players and gain first-hand opinions of playing games, what it is about the games they play that attracts them, and what sensations they go through as they play.

TC: How do you decide that something falls foul of the Obscene Publications Act?

GZ: The Obscene Publications Act is even more of a minefield (than the Video Recording Act) since it is administered so subjectively throughout the land. One only has to look at the prosecutions of the so-called 'video nasties' to see this. As far as the BBFC is concerned, we have to take a potentially obscene work and show that, on the whole, it would have a tendency to "deprave and corrupt" the viewer. Again, we are not required to prove that such a work would have this effect; that is strictly for a court and jury to decide. If it was just an isolated image then cuts would be made to that image. If it was an issue that ran throughout the entire work – for example an exploitative sex work – it may well be rejected in its entirety. Both context and the "defence of public good" criteria are brought into the equation, which may fully justify the work's classification as was the case with The Idiots.

TC: Shouldn't adults have the right to decide for themselves what they want to see?

GZ: It's not necessarily the adults who are the problem. We are duty bound to consider the vulnerable minority, specifically children, who may be subjected to inappropriate material either by accident or design. Furthermore, we cannot ignore the legislation, however much we may disagree with it. This is legislation drawn up by democratically elected representatives – which we aren't – and for us to ride roughshod over such legislation would be an act of arrogance and an abuse of our role. Even the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees the right to freedom of expression, specifies limits (see Article 10).

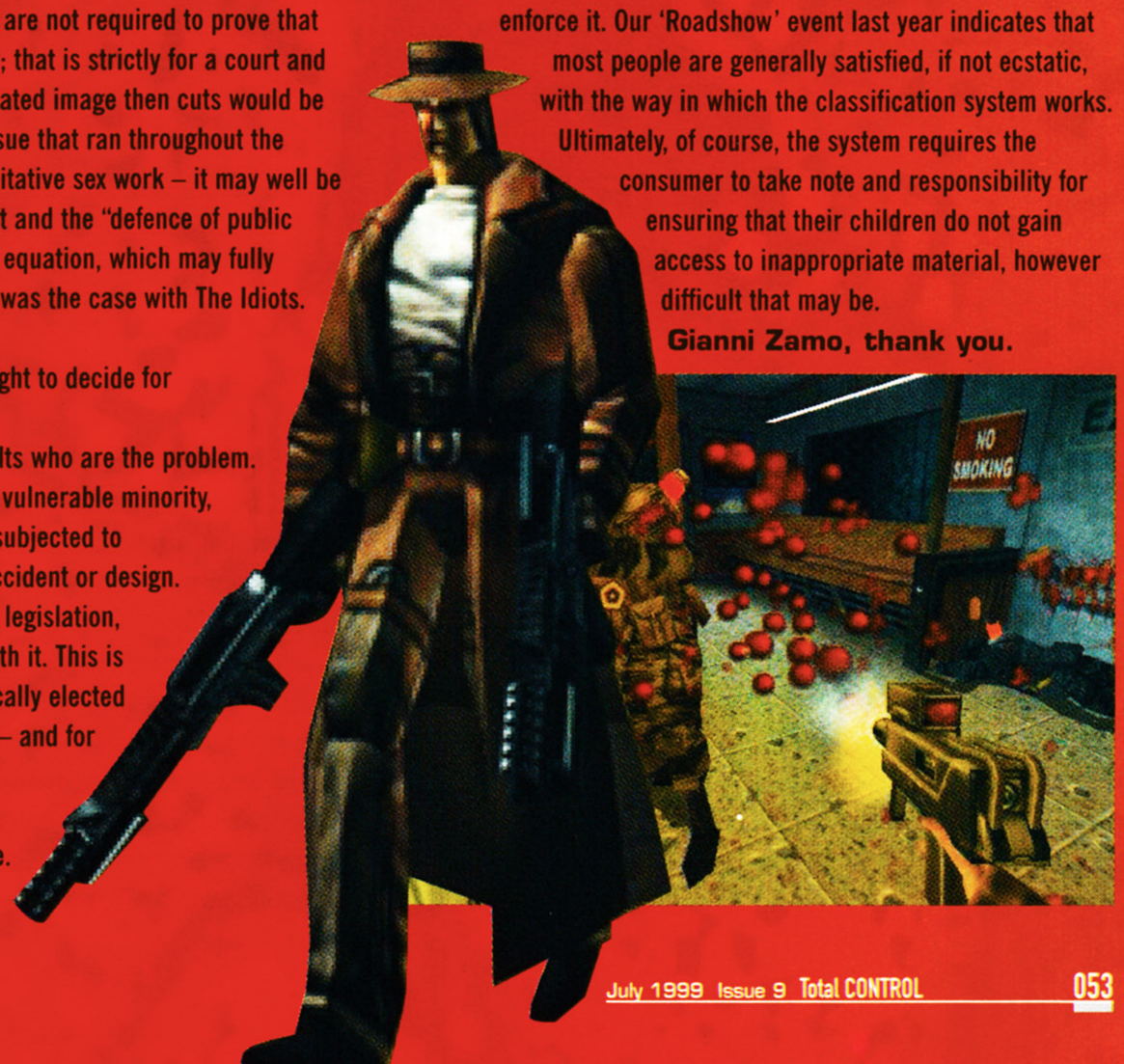
TC: What do you see as the future with regards to games?

GZ: In terms of future classification of digital works it may become impossible for the Board to continue to do so, since it seems highly likely that games will no longer comes as physical objects in the form of CD or cartridges and will be purchased as direct downloads from the internet. What controls can be put in place as a result and who should administrate the process is difficult to predict.

TC: What about the fact that kids are watching restricted videos all the time? Doesn't that diminish your credibility?

GZ: The video classification system, like any system of regulation, requires the collective will of the population in order to enforce it. Our 'Roadshow' event last year indicates that most people are generally satisfied, if not ecstatic, with the way in which the classification system works. Ultimately, of course, the system requires the consumer to take note and responsibility for ensuring that their children do not gain access to inappropriate material, however difficult that may be.

Gianni Zamo, thank you.



They make a valid point; they felt that, viewed by minors, this game, with its 'killing for kicks', would have a desensitising effect on impressionable youngsters, sending the message that mass murder for laughs was okay. Unfortunately the case is undermined by an apparent lack of knowledge of the game's content and the expressing of opinions which were mercifully bereft of the ravages of evidence. Unqualified opinions are fine in the lounge of a pub with your mates, not on a report that is seeking to justify the oppression of personal freedoms.

Had SCI not bothered with the appeal, the decision would have created a precedent, a baseline of acceptability that would see a number of more recent games cut or banned altogether. You might say that this is trivial, but that couldn't be less true. The BBFC tried to stop you from playing a game you might want to play on the grounds that it was 'harmful'. Not tasteless, not sick, but actually damaging. They had a responsibility to ensure that their decision had some factual basis, which they didn't.

In the name of fairness, it should be noted that all the media fuss came about as a result of the press releases by SCI themselves. The newspapers ran the story around about February without the slightest hint of what the game was about apart from this press release, and let's not forget the gaming press; we all went cock a hoop, tossing hyperbole around like confetti at a wedding. It shouldn't have come as too great a surprise that things got out of hand given the amount of attention generated. And what was the result of all the attention? Massive pre-release anticipation of the game and media pressure on the BBFC to "do something about it".

BLOOD 2

Consider *Blood 2*. There are lots of innocent people wandering around and rendered with far greater detail than the cartoony bitmaps of *Carmageddon*. They beg for mercy as you slice the poor buggers up with a knife and then kick the decapitated corpse around.

It was passed as an 18 without cuts. The official word from the BBFC is as follows, "*Blood 2*... was passed '18' on the basis of the *Carmageddon* appeal decision... *Blood 2* is unlikely to have major appeal to junior users since the first-person shoot-'em-up not only seems to be suffering from major consumer fatigue, but this game is relatively complicated to operate." Also, "killing... innocent civilians is not a part of the game's winning criteria."

Evil Dead 2: Contextual or willfully gory?

IN THE NAME OF FAIRNESS,IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT ALL THE MEDIA FUSS CAME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF THE PRESS RELEASES BY SCI THEMSELVES

CARMAGEDDON II

When it became prescient to release the time demo of *Carmageddon II*, SCI decided to play it safe. One of SCI's major complaints about the BBFC wasn't the decision they made regarding *Carmageddon*, but the interminable time they took to make it. Given that the BBFC claim that they were providing classifications within three weeks of receipt of the work, it took them two months to make a decision on the first game.

SCI provided a time demo on the 2nd September 1998 for classification. By Christmas '98 the board still hadn't made a decision. SCI had to take the BBFC to court and get a promise from them to have a certificate for the demo by the 15th January 1999.

The date came and the demo was certified. That day David Ratcliffe, operations manager of SCI at the time, sent the BBFC the full version of the game. They took three weeks to certify it, bearing in mind the fact that they had played what was essentially the complete game and the fact that the content was almost identical to *Carmageddon*.

And the BBFC don't do this for free; you get charged for everything you submit. SCI would have had to pay £633 per hour for the privilege of having their demo classified. £1755 per four hours for the full game. You have to pay half that again if you want to appeal a decision. Many smaller distributors actually cannot afford the costs of having a film certified. Especially if they then have to appeal.

Half-Life's storyline is strictly science-fiction...

... but what about the brutal realism of *Kingpin*?

DEBATE

The anti-censorship lobby argue that there is far too much censorship and that the BBFC are elitist. Films from major studios or from otherwise respected film makers are given far more consideration and resources devoted to them than some slasher flick or video game. A case in point being Lolita – the board went to extreme lengths to get expert opinions when it came to decide if it should be banned. On the other hand, cheap and nasty horror films get banned

Dr Jack Sanger

Dr Sanger sits on the European Panel for Protection of Youth, as well as the Panel for Children's Viewing. The BBFC refer to his research and seek his views regarding youth viewing. His views, and the views of his colleagues, carry some considerable weight with the BBFC.

TC: What, do you feel, is the role of the BBFC?
JS: I think the board used to be about morality and censorship but has changed over the years from a surveillance role to one of educating the public and generating debate over the issues of classification and suitability.

TC: But the BBFC still ban and cut many films, videos and games.
JS: True enough, but this has an effect, intentional or otherwise, of generating a great deal of publicity and debate about the content of film, video or any other art work for that matter. The problem we have is that the education system doesn't produce "critical consumers". We don't teach our children how to approach media, be it television, film or modern video games.

TC: Why is this so important?
JS: It's critical. The media is one of the most pervasive forces in the Western world, and children are given no education in how to assess what they are seeing. If we taught children how to properly deal with, say for instance, violence on the screen, we would have far fewer of the problems associated with the media today. The BBFC partially fulfill that role by making people think and judge for themselves about cuts that are made.

TC: But what of the accusations of them being inconsistent?
JS: You could call them inconsistent, you could call them autocrats who until recently didn't have to account to anyone really. The truth, I feel, is that they are no more inconsistent than society itself, with its fluctuating morality and hypocrisy. As for being unaccountable, well they were never really required to be accountable until recently. That's due to a change in public opinion, and the BBFC have responded.

on the say so of the board alone, as do video games. It's only when the board get challenged, which costs the distributor money, that the board actually have to present an argument to someone other than themselves.

You might argue that a well-made film deserves more consideration than some exploitative, badly-made horror film or game, but that is unfair to people who actually like cheap and nasty horror films and games. In an equal society should The Last Temptation of Christ get fairer treatment than *Resident Evil*?

The other argument against the BBFC is that they let the newspapers lead them by the nose and that they are wildly inconsistent in their decisions, an accusation levelled at them by one of their own censors. The James Bulger killing, the Dunblane Massacre – the BBFC were reportedly a lot tighter on violence in the films that came before them during the publicity of these tragedies. But is that fair?

The most persuasive argument is that the BBFC's tactics have no effect whatsoever. Films that teenagers can't see at the cinema are watched at home, regardless of certificate. The idea that cutting sequences from films that show the use of weapons or criminal techniques is derided as unrealistic. If someone really has it in their mind to commit crime or use weapons, who do they turn to? Not some Hollywood action film, that's for sure. They'll turn to their mates, who learned from their mates and so forth. Taking the example of Face/Off used earlier, the BBFC trim the use of a gravity knife but leave in scenes of killing, explosions, shoot outs and sadistic murders. Where's the balance? When the BBFC cut a film for video all they succeed in doing is annoying adults who missed a film at the cinema and are forced to watch the castrated version for video.

The flip side of the coin is of course that without some form of control, there would be absolutely no limit to the things that could be shown. Imagine a film that portrays the activities of a child molester. No real plot, just lots of simulations of children being abused and suffering purely for entertainment. Is that in any way acceptable? Dr Sanger's argument that at the moment censorship is the only way to create debate about media content is also well taken. Perhaps a more educationally based BBFC would satisfy the needs of all.

From the research conducted, most people feel that there is a need for some form of monitoring when it comes to entertainment, especially in the home. The problem has never been whether censorship should exist, just to what degree. Banging on about how violent games create monsters only serves to draw attention away from the real causes of violence. People don't become violent because they watch The Evil Dead or play *Doom*, they become violent when their ability to empathise is lost, when they see violence every day in their lives, when they watch their parents resolving every problem with fists and abuse and learn for themselves that violence is the way to solve their problems. Until we resolve those issues, all the censorship in the world won't help. TC

Art imitating life? Not in the case of the above I hope!

TC: Many companies complain that the BBFC stifle creativity and are unfair. Major studios get better treatment, etc.

JS: Companies that release games and films are not run by fools. They know their markets and they know their target audience. The distributors are well aware of the tolerances in various countries. Many of the films that are banned cater to the lowest common denominator and are meant to do so. What I would like to see is better education from an early age so that the lowest common denominator is raised.

TC: What of allegations that James Ferman, until recently director of the BBFC, was elitist. Letting some films go through with contentious material because he believed it would be shown to a "high brow" audience?

JS: Well, we're getting into the realms of personalities here, and it's fair to say that happens anywhere.

TC: What of the attempts to connect violence in media with real violence? Michael Carneal, for instance…

JS: Yes, well, the problem with that old argument is that if you have someone who is disturbed enough to be capable of such acts, you cannot predict what their 'trigger' will be. In societies that have no media, no TV, no film, no games, do you see any decrease in violence? Of course not. Ban all violent imagery in the world and you still find that people who are disturbed will be triggered by a painting or a book.

TC: Do you feel, then, that the BBFC serve the majority of the public's needs?

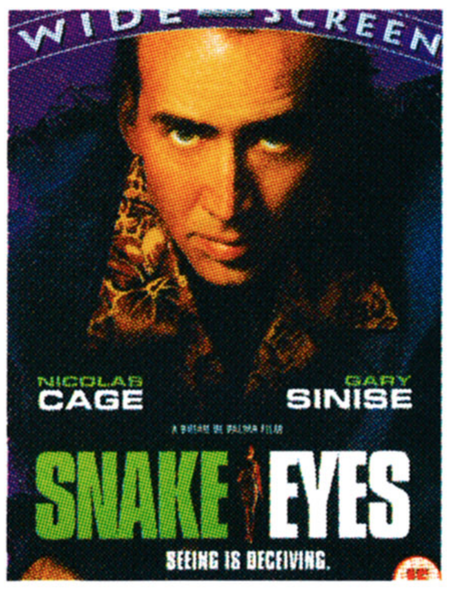
JS: Surveys of public opinion show that the public don't mind violence as long as, amongst other things, it serves the plot, there is some attempt at characterisation within the story, or humour is used to lessen the impact. People as a whole don't like gratuitous violence. The BBFC have to monitor these fluctuating tastes and respond. Morality isn't a thing in itself; it's created by society and changes with society. The BBFC's job is difficult, but I see them moving away from cuts and bans and more toward education. I feel strongly that this is a more important role; for people to be able to critically assess for themselves.

Dr Sanger, thank you.

DVD Reviews

SNAKE EYES

NAME	Snake Eyes
STARRING	Nicolas Cage, Gary Sinise
DIRECTOR	Brian De Palma
PRICE	£15.99
CERTIFICATE	15
RATIO 1	2.35
SOUNDTRACK	Dolby Digital 5.1
REGION	2



The Film 7/10

Brian De Palma's modern thriller certainly has a lot going for it – some excellent performances by the lead players, an intriguing plot and some fantastic cinematography. The opening shot of the film lasts for close to fifteen minutes – reason alone for movie buffs to by this movie.

The story follows the events that take place during a world championship boxing fight where the US defence secretary is assassinated. Local cop (Cage) becomes involved and uncovers a web of deceit and treachery.

Not De Palma's best work by any means, but it is an intelligent thriller that's both well scripted and acted. The direction is first rate and the film has a lot of ideas going on. Ultimately, the ending is somehow unsatisfactory. Hitchcock did this kind of thing much better...

The Extras 0/5

None whatsoever.

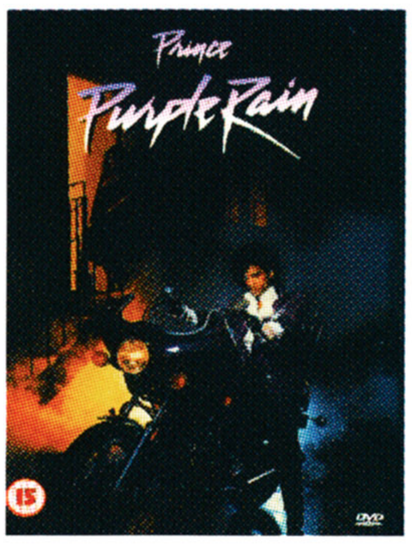
Picture Quality 5/5

Beautifully sharp and no jumping – this is as good as DVD gets. Show it to your mates to impress them.

Overall 12/20

PURPLE RAIN

NAME	Purple Rain
STARRING	Prince, Morris Day, Clarence Williams III
DIRECTOR	Albert Magnoli
PRICE	£15.99
CERTIFICATE	15
RATIO 1	1.85
SOUNDTRACK	Dolby Digital 5.1
REGION	2



The Film 7/10

For fans of 'The Artist', this DVD is basically a must-have, because the extremely shallow, semi-autobiographical plot means that Purple Rain: the movie is essentially a 107 minutes long music video. The album of the same name is probably still one of Prince's best works, so the soundtrack is unquestionably superior to that found on similar titles, although appearances from The Time and Apollonia 6 (The Revolution's rival bands in the film), are generally disappointing and will probably be skipped by Prince fans after the first time of viewing. Undoubtedly one of the best rock 'n' roll movies ever made, but then that's not really saying much, is it...

The Extras 0/5

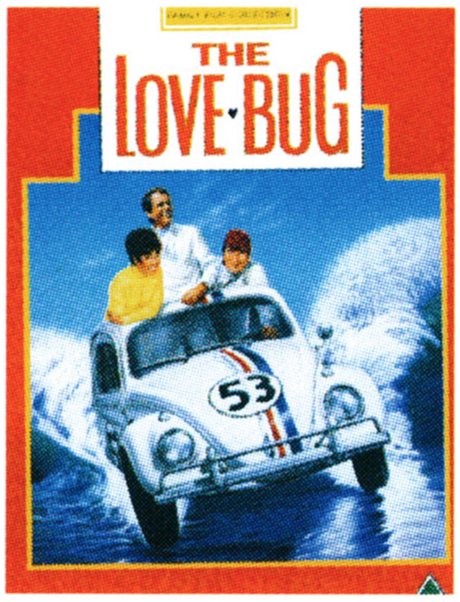
Plenty of subtitles, in no less than seven languages. Great.

Picture Quality 3/5

Overall 10/20

THE LOVE BUG

NAME	The Love Bug
STARRING	Dean Jones, Michele Lee, Buddy Hackett
DIRECTOR	Robert Stevenson
PRICE	£14.99
CERTIFICATE	U
RATIO 1	1.33
SOUNDTRACK	Mono
REGION	2



The Film 6/10

Disney's first Herbie film, and arguably the best of the lot, the Love Bug was as essential a part of childhood as potty training until our televisions were invaded by Teletubbies and the like. Obviously many of you, like us, will no longer be of target audience age for a film featuring a loveable VW Beetle in the starring role. If there are youngsters in the household, however, this DVD might come in handy when you want to get them out of your hair so that you can play *Half-Life* or something. Children will probably watch it over and over again, if only to laugh at Buddy Hackett as the slightly deranged Tennessee, but those of you who are looking to take a ride down memory lane will probably only do so the once.

The Extras 0/5

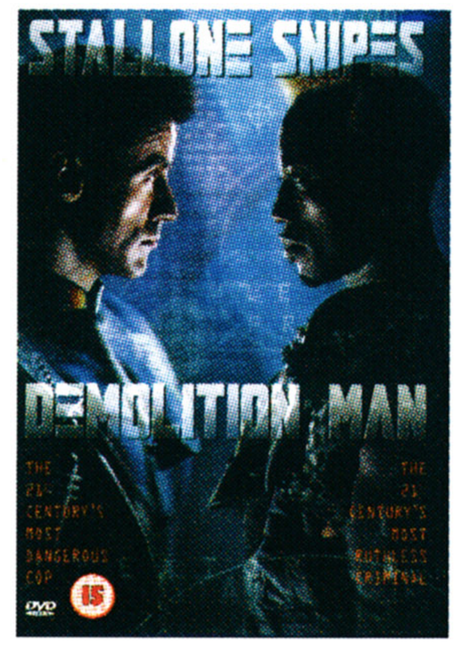
French language, Dutch subtitles, and that's your lot.

Picture Quality 2/5

Overall 8/20

DEMOLITION MAN

NAME	Demolition Man
STARRING	Sylvester Stallone, Wesley Snipes, Sandra Bullock
DIRECTOR	Marco Brambilla
PRICE	£16.99
CERTIFICATE	15
RATIO 1	2.35
SOUNDTRACK	Dolby Digital 5.1
REGION	2



The Film 7/10

"Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes go at it amid a dazzling cyber-future in this explosive hit", boasts the box. And that just about sums it up really. Snipes plays a cryogenically frozen criminal, revived to assist a corrupt politician, Stallone is the cryogenically frozen cop revived to catch him. The peaceful society of the future stands back as the two of them beat the crap out of each other and demonstrate their remarkable ability to fire enough ammo to win a war without once hitting each other.

Like any film of its kind, it has its moments, whether it be a good action sequence or a brief interjection of comedy, but these are few and far between.

The Extras 0/5

Another great example of Region 2 extras; Arabic subtitles – and that's it!

Picture Quality 4/5

Overall 11/20

QUALITYCONTROL

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VERDICTRATINGS

0 - 25

Generally speaking the games falling into this category are so pig ugly that not even their own mothers could care less about them. Perhaps the problem is that the programmers felt the same way? Please consider any game receiving a rating this low to be hazardous to your mental health – we're not scoring it this badly for fun you know! You wouldn't believe the grief we get from publishers for giving out these scores, but we're here to serve you, nobody else.

26 - 50

A below average game, but one which at least has some redeeming features. Certain aspects of these titles might be on a par with those scoring more highly, but if a game scores below 50% you can assume that it is flawed when seen as a complete package. Die-hard fans of a particular genre might still enjoy these games, but as a general rule you'll be better off saving your money. We might get sent games for free, but you don't, and we won't forget that.

51 - 75

Any game that achieves a score of over 50% should be considered an above average title worthy of your attention – especially if you're a fan of the genre. Most of these titles will not disappoint, they probably just lack that certain something that separates a good game from a great game. Please note that as our method of scoring is different to those in other magazines, a similar score in another publication might not represent a product of comparable quality.

76 - 100

These are the games that make buying the systems they appear on worthwhile. A lot of games players have access to more than one format nowadays, and these games are the reason why. Games achieving scores of 90% and above in particular can be considered highly recommended. We won't be giving out scores that high too often, so if you're thinking of purchasing a game that we've seen fit to endorse in this way, what are you waiting for?

Star Wars Episode One: Racer

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Despite this happening a **long time ago**, in a **galaxy far, far away**, *Star Wars* ***Episode One: Racer*** is a **futuristic racing game** in the classic sense. But does the **N64 have enough room for one more?**

TAKING CONTROL

Any fears that this game might reveal more of the plot of Episode One than needed are left unfounded. After a cool N64-rendered intro, we move quickly into a race and into the fastest, most adrenaline-pumping futuristic racer since... well, *Wipeout 64*. BUT it is Star Wars, with a great soundtrack to verify this, even if we don't know the characters yet. Let's hope there's more to this game than just fast racing...

INFORMATION

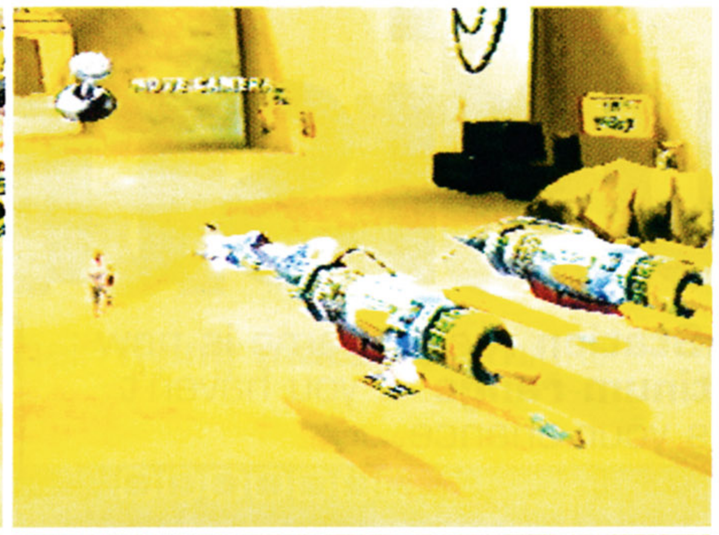
FORMAT	N64
PUBLISHER	Nintendo
DEVELOPER	LucasArts
STYLE	Futuristic Racing
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£49.99
PLAYERS	1-2
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
SAVE GAME	Battery Back Up
EXPANSION PAK	Optional

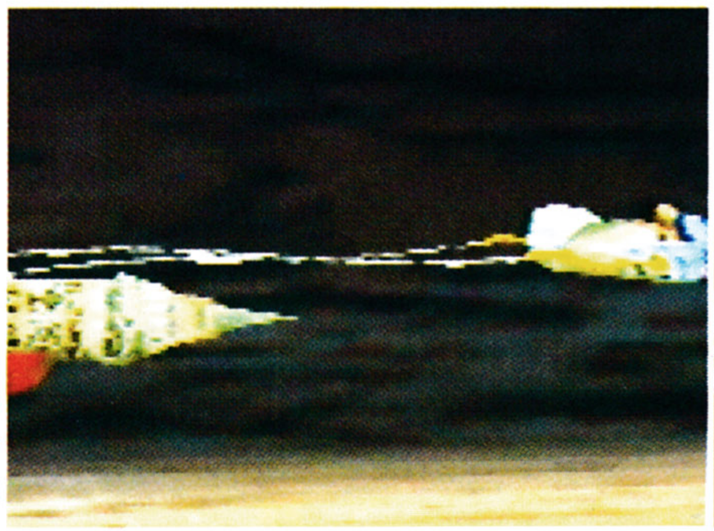
By the time you read this it'll be about two weeks to the UK premier of the new Star Wars film and this game will have been available for almost a month, so anyone who was going to buy it would have done so already. And seeing as it's Star Wars, there's no doubt that it will have sold like no one's business. Star Wars games have never been innovative, but they have been extremely successful in placing the Star Wars brand over some of the better genres of games. *Racer* is something else – it takes the futuristic racing game and does a few new and interesting things. Probably enough to make it the best of genre yet...

Racer is based around the already infamous racing scene in The Phantom Menace where the young Anakin Skywalker first realises that he has the powers of the Force. In the film the race only takes place on Tatooine, but the developers of the video game have been given a certain amount of licence, and now the racing takes place all over the Star Wars universe, in a sort of Grand Prix-style event.

The actual Pods themselves are little more than a future version of Roman chariots, the horses of two thousand years ago being replaced by gigantic engines. These have a real bearing on the control of the craft and makes the game significantly different to any others of this ilk. You are actually controlling your engines rather than the Pod itself, and this is a little strange at first, with

The surface of the track affects the handling of your Pod. Ice makes you lose almost all traction and sand slows you down





OR YOU COULD TRY...

The N64 has more than enough futuristic racers to choose from. The pick of the bunch are Psygnosis' super-fast *Wipeout 64* and Nintendo's own *F-Zero X*. It's very hard to choose between any of the three games, but *Racer* has that little something extra that makes it the best.

Mere stills cannot truly convey the incredible speed of *Racer*

Although most of the racing takes place close to the ground, there are 'zero g' sections

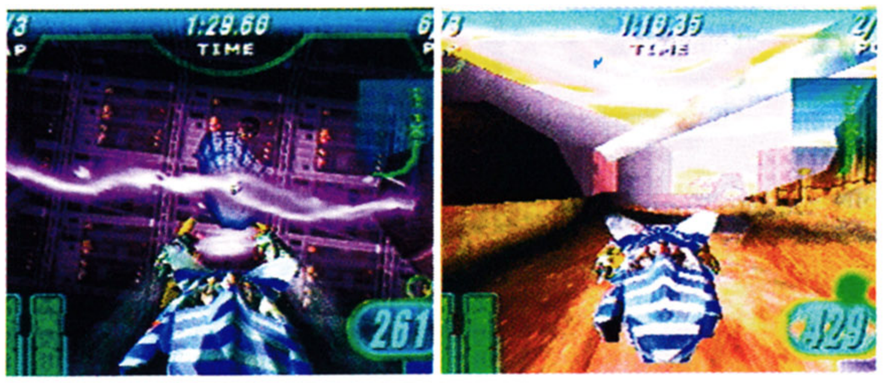
the cockpit being pulled around corners rather than pushed. However, after a while you get used to it. You'll soon realise what a great feel the craft have.

The key to winning races it seems is mastering the timing of the boost system. All of the craft have the ability to charge up a boost (by pushing down on the joystick) and then release it via a double click on the speed button. You are only able to do this while on a straight, so it is vital that you learn where the best places to do this are so that you don't just end up boosting straight into a wall. Keeping the boost on for too long, however, will result in an engine fire, and even if you avoid this, you will have to wait for your engines to cool down before you can use them again. In fact, damaging your engines is the worst thing that you can do (just scraping along a wall for while is enough to do this), and damaged engines will not only affect your turning but your speed as well.

To help you out with all this there is a great upgrade system whereby earning money from races allows you to invest in buying better components for your craft – components that will improve your pod's acceleration, top speed, cooling rate and so forth. This adds another dimension to the game.

THERE'S PLENTY OF VARIETY IN THE SETTINGS, THOUGH THE USUAL THEMES ARE HERE: ICE WORLDS, DESERT WORLDS, JUNGLE WORLDS, INDUSTRIAL WORLDS

Graphics-wise, *Racer* looks good with or without the 4MB expansion, but, as always, it is preferable with. Having the expansion also gives you a choice of resolution over speed. With the resolution turned up, the frame rate suffers severely in places, especially when there are one or two racers on screen, but you have the option of turning off the high resolution, and this makes the game run a smoothly as you like.



Real-time lighting plays a great part in the game's looks

Courses are brilliant both aesthetically and from a racing point of view. There's plenty of variety in the settings, though the usual themes are here: ice worlds, desert worlds, jungle worlds, industrial worlds and so on. Even so, enough thought has gone into the design as not to make them clichés. For example, the ice world is fairly routine in its frozen, twisting tunnels, but the sections of racing over giant ice fields (where the surface affects your control) and racing through the streets of a city give the course that extra something over anything else attempted in this genre. It's also worth noting that the length of courses changes; some take a mere 30 seconds to complete a lap, while others will take a good five minutes for one rotation. Obviously this has a bearing on the craft accordingly; the shorter courses favour those craft with high acceleration and turning, while longer courses favour those with good top speed. You'll also find that most tracks have plenty of multiple routes and shortcuts – enough to keep your average racing game nut happy for hours trying to find the absolute best route.

Like *Wipeout*, *Racer* forces the player to be absolutely focused on the screen, and as such is about the most perfect test of hand-eye co-ordination as you could get. The racing is fast and slick, the course design brilliant, and the game has an addictiveness that deservedly sees it eclipse both *Wipeout 64* and *F-Zero X*. There is no doubt, *Racer* is one of the most accomplished Star Wars games ever made. **Nick**

OTHER FORMATS?

PC ●●●●●

Released at the same time as the N64 version and to all intents and purposes identical. Obviously, the added power of the PC makes this version better.

PlayStation ○○○○○

As far as we are aware, this Episode One game will not be appearing on any other console. PlayStation does have *The Phantom Menace*, however.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Star Wars: Racer
GRAPHICS	85
SOUND	85
PLAYABILITY	90
OVERALL	91
Out of 100	

Gran Turismo

The **definitive PlayStation** racing game is now available in the **Platinum range**. If you haven't already got it, now's your chance.

CONTROL 90+ AWARD

Whoa! Keep those wheels on the road if you want to win

Well, here's a completely redundant review. Pretty much everyone who has had a go on a PlayStation in the last two years has played *Gran Turismo*, so you hardly need me to tell you what a great game it is. However, if I don't write it I don't get paid, so here goes.

Gran Turismo is, and will always remain, one of the most impressive examples of PlayStation programming. Its combination of utterly lifelike car physics and almost photorealistic graphics elevated the game to the status of a classic almost overnight. Its sales reflect this, with over six million copies sold world-wide and a long stay at the top of the game charts.

Fantastic

The game features realistic models of over a hundred and fifty real cars, mainly from Japanese manufacturers. The idea is simple: you start off with a basic showroom model, race it and attempt to win prize money. You then use this money to buy upgrades and modifications, until you have turned your slightly boring family saloon into a full-blooded racing car. There are over twenty tracks to race on, and four different licences to qualify for, which enable you to race for even bigger prizes.

And then there's the replays. If *GT* is famous for one thing it's that ultra-realistic replay mode. After you have finished your race, you can watch it again from a variety of camera positions, all in superb high-res graphics with environment mapping, dust and smoke, and shadows. There can be no question that *Gran Turismo* is a fantastic game.

GRAN TURISMO IS, AND WILL ALWAYS REMAIN, ONE OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE EXAMPLES OF PLAYSTATION PROGRAMMING

Well, now it has been re-released on the Platinum range for twenty quid and is back in the charts, so if you know someone who has recently acquired a PlayStation, and you are wondering what to get them to play on it, here's your answer. The sequel won't be released until around September, so *Gran Turismo* will still be the best driving game for the PlayStation until then. **Cliff**

With full racing support, you can race with the big boys

TAKING CONTROL

While *Gran Turismo* is unquestionably one of the best games ever made for the PlayStation, its idiosyncratic player interface does take a bit of getting used to. However, once you've managed to find your way onto the track, things get a lot easier. The cars are somewhat harder to drive than some games (*Rage Racer*, for instance), but that's because *GT* is supposed to be a simulator.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	SCEE
DEVELOPER	SCEE
STYLE	Driving Sim
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£19.99
PLAYERS	1-2
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	5-15 Blocks

GT2

Gran Turismo 2 is due for release this autumn, and it looks set to be a winner. This long-awaited sequel features over four hundred cars, many from European manufacturers – there's even a Mini Cooper in there. Other improvements include enhanced AI controlling the other cars, a real licensed track, and several more race modes. There will now be rally, sports car, and dragster racing as well.

OTHER FORMATS?

PC ○○○○○

If a PC conversion was going to happen, then I'm afraid it would have happened already. The code is written specifically for the PlayStation, so conversions are unlikely.

N64 ○○○○○

This is a Sony in-house game, so that pretty much definitely rules out a conversion to a rival manufacturers' console platform.

Dreamcast ○○○○○

With *Sega Rally 2* showing the way, the Dreamcast is capable of much more than even *Gran Turismo*. Plus, I can't see Sony giving Sega one of their hottest titles.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Gran Turismo
GRAPHICS	89
SOUND	87
PLAYABILITY	95
OVERALL	92
Out of 100	

Aironauts

Those **magnificent convicts** in their **flying machines** might just win **their freedom...**

TAKING CONTROL

This is definitely a game where the analogue controller comes into its own. If you own a PlayStation joystick, then it's time to plug it in. I completed all the training levels of this game in about twenty minutes, and the first level about twenty minutes after that. However, the following levels got harder and harder, so I can't really describe it as too easy. The learning curve isn't too steep either, so just stick with it and you should have no problem.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Red Storm Entertainment
DEVELOPER	Red Lemon Studios
STYLE	Flying Sim
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block

RED LEMON STUDIOS

Apart from *Aironauts*, Red Lemon Studios are also working on *Braveheart*, an epic strategy and combat game for the PC based on the film of the same name staring Mel Gibson. You can read an in-depth feature on this game in Total CONTROL no.7.

They are also working on a secret game for the Sega Dreamcast, known only as '*Project TTB*'. All they will reveal about it is that it is for one to four players, uses a first/third person format, and that it has "a unique strategy element that sets it apart from all other first-person shooters". We will bring you more news of this exciting project soon.

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's an Aironaut!

Having recently visited Red Lemon Studios to look at their *Braveheart* PC game, I know that they are a talented bunch of guys, so I was expecting great things of *Aironauts*. It is certainly original, and that counts for a lot these days. The back story of the game is grim but funny. In the future, inmates of overcrowded high-tech prisons can attempt to win their freedom by competing in highly dangerous aerial duels, screened live on TV for public entertainment. The duellists fly dodgy-looking contraptions consisting of wings and powerful engines strapped onto their backs, loaded with a variety of lethal weapons. The style of the game is very much tongue in cheek, and the contests, while undoubtedly violent, have a cartoon-like quality which removes any sense of threat.

AIRONAUTS IS A GOOD, HIGH QUALITY PIECE OF PLAYSTATION PROGRAMMING, AND SHOULD PROVIDE MANY HOURS OF ENJOYABLE ENTERTAINMENT FOR JUST ABOUT ANYONE

The 'aircraft' can perform a number of stunts, such as barrel rolls and loop-the-loops, but are quite easy to fly. There are eight convict contestants to choose from, each with different ratios of speed, agility and armour. Once you have chosen your favourite and completed the training levels to get the hang of the controls, you can start on the campaign game. There are six levels, each divided into a series of solo events, then a fully armed race against another inmate. You can do the solo events in any order, but you must complete all the events on one level before you can proceed to the next.

The mechanics of the game are impressive. The graphics engine can certainly chuck the old polygons around fast enough, and the bright colourful graphics look great. This isn't a game for the hard-core PC flight-sim fanatic, but other than that it would suit gamers of most ages. The screen is crowded with information, and there is always plenty going on. In fact, there can sometimes be a little bit too much to handle, and the game can disappear under a barrage of flashy effects, but this probably means I just need more practice. The soundtrack commentary is streamed from the CD, and is always apposite without being annoying.

Aironauts is a good, high quality piece of PlayStation programming, and should provide many hours of enjoyable entertainment for just about anyone. It is a shame it has no two-player mode, but I guess you can't have everything. **Cliff**

OTHER FORMATS?

PC ○○○○○

Red Lemon have no plans to convert *Aironauts* to the PC, which is a shame as it would blow *Plane Crazy* out of the sky.

N64 ○○○○○

If it were converted for the N64, *Aironauts* would be going up against *Pilot Wings*, so it's just as well that there are no plans for such a conversion.

Dreamcast ●●○○○

Red Lemon Studios are licensed Dreamcast developers, so I guess you can't rule out the possibility. No plans as yet, though.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Aironauts
GRAPHICS	78
SOUND	59
PLAYABILITY	72
OVERALL Out of 100	76

Starsiege Universe

Piloting huge mechs, **blasting around** with **your jetpack and** storming the **enemy base,** all for **the good** of your team. Sounds like fun.

TAKING CONTROL

The best method of maximising movement, direction and firepower control is to use the mouse for rotating and locating the enemy and firing, with the keyboard number pad or assigned keys to control momentum forwards, backwards or strafing. Alternatively, you can use joystick controls, but they are more cumbersome and unwieldy in an environment that demands to be treated more like a shoot-'em-up.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Sierra
DEVELOPER	Dynamix
STYLE	3D Combat Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£44.99
PLAYERS	1-32
PROCESSOR	P166 P200
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	450MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

Sierra have hit on the masterstroke of combining two of the most popular games in the States (*Starsiege* and *Starsiege Tribes*) into one bundle and retailing them for £44.99 rather than the expected £70 to buy separately. The latest offspring of the *Earthsiege* series, the title change refers to the galactic leap in concept and scope from earlier versions, and even though the two games differ widely in gameplay, they have clearly emerged from the same universe.

Starsiege is a robot/vehicle 3D combat sim in much the same vein as Activision's *MechWarrior* series, but the action spans seven worlds and takes in 45 campaigns using up to 25 vehicles (tanks, flyers and Hercs). The year is 2829, and the solar system is ruled by an evil immortal emperor. But rebel humans have discovered new technology on Mars that enables them to create new attack vehicles and weapons, and they rise up in revolt. At the same time the Cybrids, a race of sentient machines, have decided this is the time to annihilate the humans for good, and the action becomes a fight to the death between men and machines.

Once you get through the helpful and user-friendly tutorial and training sessions, you can then choose which campaign to enter. The two single-player missions let you take on the role of either human or Cybrid and practice wasting the opposition before moving up to the multiplayer option, which is where the fun really begins. You can customise your Herc and its weaponry (even down to the paint job!), control a team of wingmen, and alter the voice command tones from macho bass to mincing falsetto.

Tribes offers a twist on the usual idea of picking up guns and ammo, the maximum load is four and they must be bought.

The 3D engine is fast and smooth, the rolling terrain impressive, varied and colourful, and the firepower explosions satisfying without reaching *Quake II* excellence. You certainly get the sense of the immensity of the landscapes, whether under the scorching sun complete with haze and half-buried relics, or at night under the burning stars.

The HUD is simple, non-distracting and fully customisable, and you can arrange your weapons in three firing groups whilst altering the positioning and strength of your shields. The joy of this game is that it's quick to pick up, fast on its feet and beautiful to look at, but there's plenty to learn in the heat of combat. The linear structure means you can't progress to the next mission until the first is completed, but when you enter multiplayer internet gaming you can wallow in deathmatch or grab the flag mode.

THE 3D ENGINE IS FAST AND SMOOTH, THE ROLLING TERRAIN IMPRESSIVE, VARIED AND COLOURFUL, AND THE FIREPOWER EXPLOSIONS SATISFYING WITHOUT REACHING QUAKE II EXCELLENCE

Which moves us smoothly on to *Starsiege Tribes*, which is entirely designed for multiplayer usage either via the Net or LAN. Time has moved on, and the humans are now fighting each other in an interminable tribal conflict. The perspective has shifted into first-person shoot-'em-up mode, and you can dive into existing games or set up your own server once you've had a quick practice on the training missions.

This has to be the speediest, most seamless and exciting Net gameplay yet encountered, as the graphics are as stunning as ever and there's no lag in the action. It's easy to believe that you're playing off-line and completely lose track of time. You have sound and text communication with the other players, and the objectives are either simple destruction, capturing the flag, or occupying the enemy's fortress. You can vary the weight of your armour and the firepower of your weapons (plasma guns and chainguns are favourites), and the addition of a jetpack gives the extra variation of being able to drop on your foes from above or literally fly out of danger.

Command stations will offer you power-ups or armour-changing facilities; you can deploy sensors, jammers, portable remote turrets and targeting beacons. You can also purchase one of three combat vehicles: a recon scout; a two-passenger light personnel carrier; or four-man heavy personnel carrier to bombard the opponents with mortar shells.

Games can be chaotic with the rest of your team-mates doing their own thing, and the sprawling size of the maps can leave you lost or adrift from the main action, but there's no denying the exhilaration of the combat and the inspiration of the settings (even small details like sun-flare when you tilt towards the sky). I've yet to play with the full 32-player possibility, but with any number of combatants the addiction factor will ensure that food becomes a distant memory. **Martyn**

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ○○○○○

Daisy-chaining multitaps is a good idea in theory, but... no.

N64 ○○○○○

The closest Nintendo 64 owners will get to this for a while will probably be Quake II.

Dreamcast ●○○○○

Now that the modem bundle has been confirmed worldwide we'd like to think that it's a possibility. No news as yet though.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Starsiege Universe
GRAPHICS	88
SOUND	70
PLAYABILITY	85
OVERALL Out of 100	86

Total Drivin'

The **PlayStation's Platinum** range has been bolstered by **Eutechnyx's pre-*Max Power* racer**. Will this be giving **GT any competition?**

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Total Drivin'
GRAPHICS	60
SOUND	74
PLAYABILITY	57
OVERALL Out of 100	57

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Ocean
DEVELOPER	Eutechnyx
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£19.99
PLAYERS	1-4
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
SAVE GAME	Memory Card

The PlayStation Platinum range boasts some excellent titles, but with the standard price being £20 for each of them, there's also a lot of crap hiding away on the shelves. The problem comes when deciding whether to recommend titles like these when you can get *Gran Turismo* for the same price.

Total Drivin' is a fairly standard, run of the mill racer. While the high-res graphics look very crisp, it doesn't inspire graphically; the textures are bland, and the detail in the track and vehicles is below par. What the game does offer you is the chance to race in one of five different styles, including buggy, rally and sports, all of which have slightly different handling but can only be used on tracks designed specifically for them (for example, the buggy is only available in sandy courses).

Simple things

From the word go there is no championship or arcade option. You select one of six stages, and upon completion in first place you unlock the next course, which is often identical to the last but with a few minor tweaks. The handling of all the cars is usually extremely annoying. You cannot turn corners at high speed, and if you hit a wall at the wrong angle you will continue to face in the same direction, being then forced to slow right down to a snail's pace to turn your car around and face the right way instead of simply rebounding with a significant time loss.

Generally *Total Drivin'* looks and feels like a budget game. It is perhaps not as bad as I have been inferring – there's fun to be had for racing enthusiasts, and the four-player link-up option adds lastability – but with *GT* also now at budget price, *Total Drivin'* can't be recommended just because it's cheap, and it has nothing to help it compete with the best of today's PlayStation racers. **Will**

Keeping the right driving line is hard

Thrust, Twist & Turn

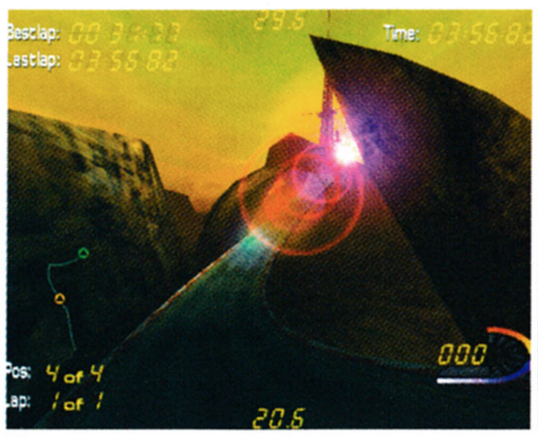
Take 2's **latest futuristic racer** promises an **adrenaline packed roller coaster ride**. Total CONTROL gets into the **swing of things**...

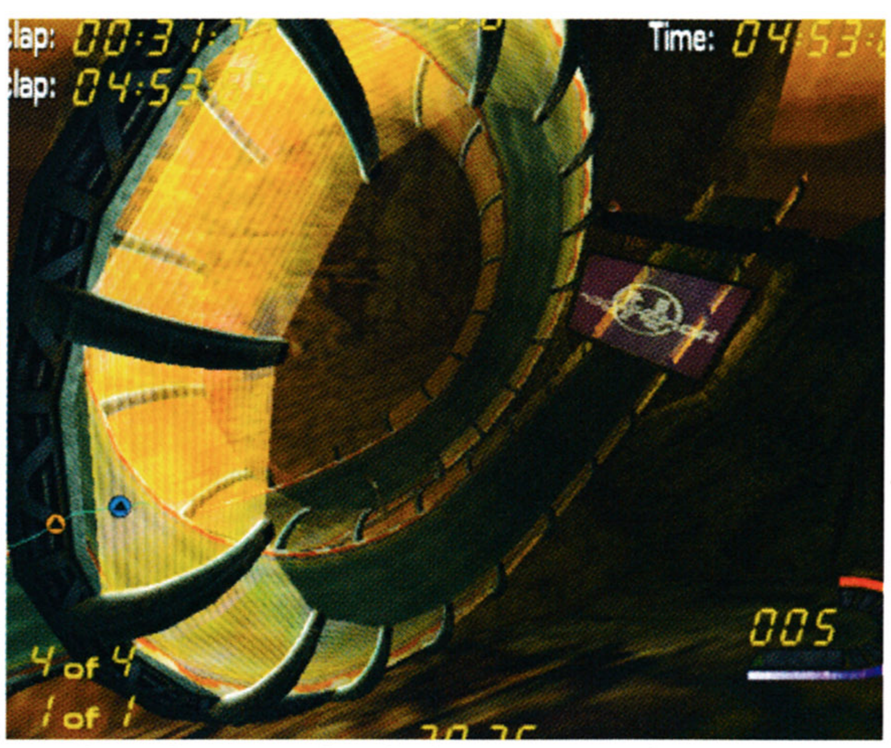
VERDICT

GAME NAME	Thrust, Twist & Turn
GRAPHICS	81
SOUND	78
PLAYABILITY	61
OVERALL Out of 100	63

TAKING CONTROL

About two seconds after the first race began I was off the side, and from each restart I was off the edge again several times running – it's a very strange physics engine that does not allow any amount of over-steering, which is initially frustrating. Eventually you get to grips with it and it plays fairly well, but the game never promises any surprises, and as a result it can be very tedious to play for extended periods of time.





Your car never feels like it is being put through any strain; the loops are purely aesthetic

PUSH IT

Apart from struggling to keep you car on the track, a lot of the skill in *Thrust, Twist and Turn* centres on your use of the Nitro button. You are allowed to fire your boost every couple of seconds, but because you cannot steer with the button held down, you need to use it carefully. At high speed your car can easily spin off as well, but it doesn't take long to master and doesn't make as much of an impact to the gameplay as it should.

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●○○○○

Again, it would be highly surprising if *Thrust, Twist and Turn* made the jump to the PlayStation, but *Wipeout 2097* or *Rollcage* are good alternatives

N64 ○○○○○

Highly unlikely. This is a low-key game, but Wipeout and the imminent Pod Racers should more than make up for this loss.

Dreamcast ●○○○○

Not likely, but *Hydro Thunder* could come pretty close when it is released later on this year.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Take 2 Interactive
DEVELOPER	Carts Entertainment
STYLE	Futuristic Racing
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£29.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P233
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	1000MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

If you have ever played *Dethkarz*, *Wipeout* or *Rollcage*, you'll know what Take 2 were trying to achieve with *Thrust, Twist and Turn*. It is blatantly unoriginal, but in today's industry games don't usually lose any points for that alone. The goal is simple: win as many races as you can in order to qualify for the next race and, eventually, win the championship. The twist here is in the tracks. Literally, because the tracks here feature more turns than your average bowl of spaghetti. Races flow through underground tunnels, loop-the-loops and vertical banks, all in glorious 3D.

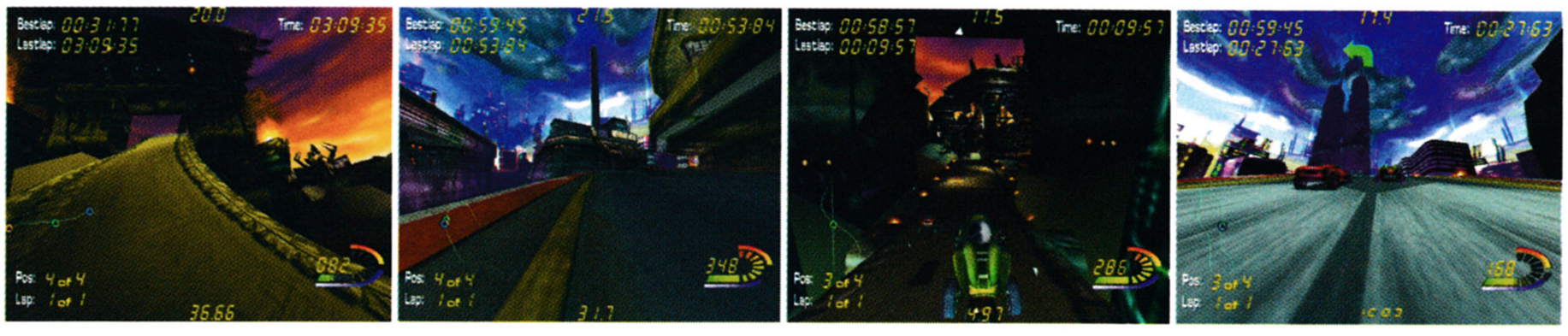
Fly off the wall

The courses frequently have no barriers on either side, which means that much of the focus of the race goes on keeping your car on the often very narrow course. Falling over the edge results in a predictable loss of time, but because the game runs at such a high speed, this often proves difficult. The game engine is also highly unforgiving in this area – nine times out of ten a bounce on a pillar on one side of the course will rebound you over to the other side of the track with no chance to regain control. Generally the game is poorly modelled this way; cars seem to strafe across the road rather than turn into them, and often you could be forgiven for thinking the backgrounds were pre-modelled for all the realism they give to the game.

It does look gorgeous, though. The draw distance is extremely impressive, and the lighting, textures and sprawling backgrounds whiz past at great speed. The track is always positioned high over the landscape, and the actual terrain below you covers a very large area. There are eight tracks in the game that must be completed in arcade mode before you unlock the Championship option and four different cars, so there is not that much variety.

CARS SEEM TO STRAFE ACROSS THE ROAD RATHER THAN TURN INTO THEM, AND OFTEN YOU COULD BE FORGIVEN FOR THINKING THE BACKGROUNDS WERE PRE-MODELLED FOR ALL THE REALISM THEY GIVE

Basically this is a very simple game that struggles to compete with the more advanced members of the genre. It's fun to play for a while, but the three opponents are not that intelligent and the game engine lets the title down. If you want to play a game like this then we'd recommend you try *Dethkarz* first. *Thrust, Twist and Turn* falls a fair way short of being a memorable title, but most people will enjoy it for a while at least. **Will**



World Cup Cricket: England '99

We were promised a **"carnival of cricket"** by the organisers of this year's World Cup. That statement may seem like a **contradiction in terms** to some, and if you're one of those people then stop reading this right now – **it's going to get all crickety on you...**

Cricket is a bit of an 'odd one'. Not the sort of sport that has the universal appeal (or the fashionable status) of football, but it is nonetheless a better sport than baseball – a game that has had hundreds of video game versions. And as *Brian Lara Cricket* proved, true to life, cricket makes a better video game than baseball, especially if you take into account the variability of the surface that you play on and the tactical side.

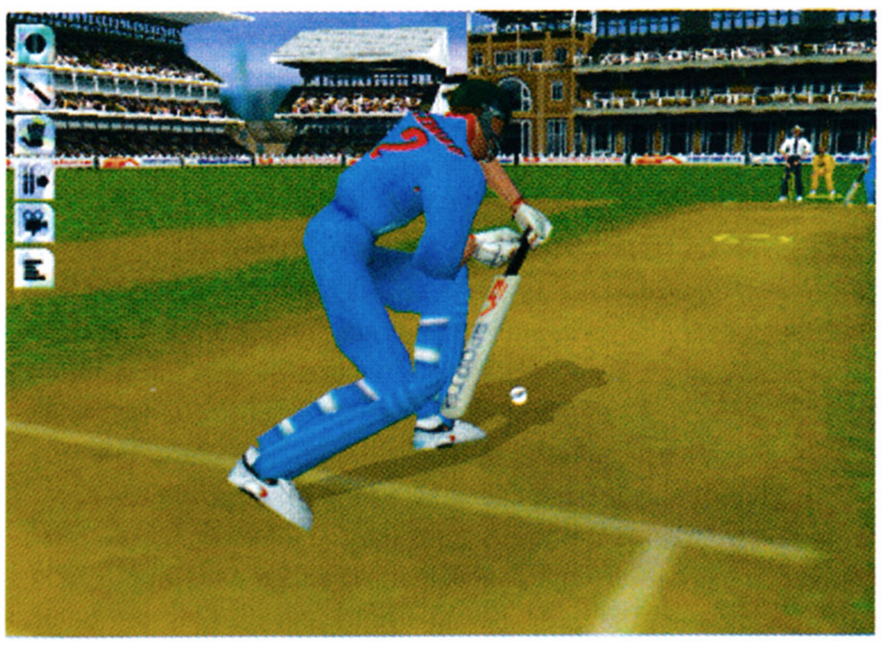
EVERY PERSON WHO HAS PLAYED CRICKET FOR REAL WILL KNOW THAT SHOT SELECTION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF BATTING. WORLD CUP CRICKET TAKES THIS AWAY FROM THE PLAYER AND HANDS IT OVER TO THE CPU

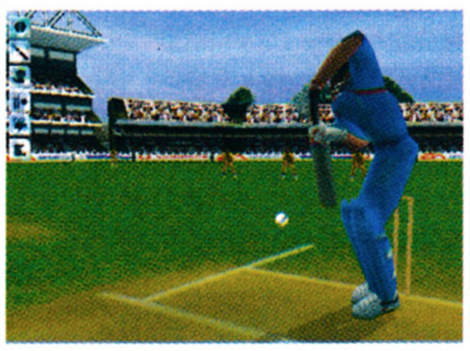
EA are not ones to miss the opportunity of an official licence, and this summer's cricket World Cup is no exception. The question is, will it be better than the excellent *Brian Lara Cricket*, or rather will that even matter with the presence of the licence?

There are certain things that are important to cricket players, and, unfortunately for EA, accuracy is one of them. For starters, there are only right-handed players in this game; even the world's most famous left-hander, Brian Lara, has mysteriously opted to change his technique.

Speaking of Brian Lara, it would be difficult for this game to do better than that one for attempting an uncomplicated control method, and, sure enough, *World Cup Cricket*'s interface is just too simplistic. The shot that a batsman plays is not decided by the player, rather by the timing of the shot and position of the batsman when you play the ball. Hardly the 'if it's in the game' attitude that you would expect from EA; every person who has played cricket for real will know that shot selection is the most important aspect of batting. *World Cup Cricket* takes this away from the player and hands it over to the CPU. If I were an umpire I'd be calling for the third eye by now...

So there you go. *World Cup Cricket* has a lot going for it – for a cricket game, anyway. It's not quite up to the standard of *Brian Lara Cricket*, but it's still a good digital interpretation of the sport. A simplistic control system, some slightly above average graphics and the World Cup licence – it should do fairly well. Assuming England manage to qualify for the second round, that is... **Nick**





Some good motion capturing can't hide the lack of batting options open to the player. The CPU makes all the decisions for you

TAKING CONTROL

Surprise, surprise – a cricket game to tie in with this summer's World Cup, and it's from EA. Who would have thought it? As far as I can tell there are two obstacles for this game to overcome: firstly the Brian Lara endorsed competition from Codemasters, and secondly the fact that it's cricket.

The game starts off well – nice presentation, intros and so forth, and the game modes are as you might expect – but there's no test matches. Well, this is the World Cup after all...

Even the new press box at Lords is included – the grounds are accurately modelled

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ○○○○○

Surprisingly, EA have no plans to release this game on PlayStation.

N64 ○○○○○

A fair few EA titles make their way across all formats, but not this one.

Dreamcast ○○○○○

Won't be out in this country in time for the World Cup. And to our knowledge those Japanese aren't exactly 'into' their cricket.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER	EA Sports
STYLE	Cricket Sim
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£29.99
PLAYERS	1-4
PROCESSOR	P200 P300
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	150MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

OR YOU COULD TRY...

Brian Lara Cricket from Codemasters. Not only is this a far superior game to *World Cup Cricket* in terms of controls and 'realism', the game also features test matches, historical games and a World Cup mode all of its own.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	World Cup Cricket
GRAPHICS	60
SOUND	60
PLAYABILITY	45
OVERALL	52
Out of 100	

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

TOTAL CONTROL 90+ AWARD

Use your **dark powers to dominate** the worlds of the **living** and of the **dead** in this **dark gothic fantasy** from Eidos...

TAKING CONTROL

Since most people ignore training levels, *Soul Reaver* doesn't have one. Instead, after a stunning animated intro sequence showing how Raziel came to be in his current sorry state, the game opens with Raziel being instructed by the Elder who has restored him to life. As he learns how to use his new powers, you learn how to play the game. This is a clever approach; by combining the training with the intro movie, the game kills two birds with one stone... and then probably eats their souls.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Eidos
DEVELOPER	Crystal Dynamics
STYLE	3D Adventure
RELEASE	July
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	Two Blocks

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, from Crystal Dynamics, is the sequel to *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain*, a 2D sprite-based adventure game released on the PlayStation back in 1996. In this latest instalment, you play Raziel, one of Kain's vampire lieutenants. As punishment for daring to challenge Kain's supremacy by being the first to develop the power of flight, Raziel was hurled into a vast whirlpool where the action of water on his vampire body should have killed him. Instead, he was resurrected by a mysterious entity called the Elder to seek revenge on Kain's evil realm. Raziel has only a few of his former powers, but he does have the ability to shift between the material and spectral worlds, and to consume souls from slain enemies, which he needs to sustain himself.

Stream of consciousness

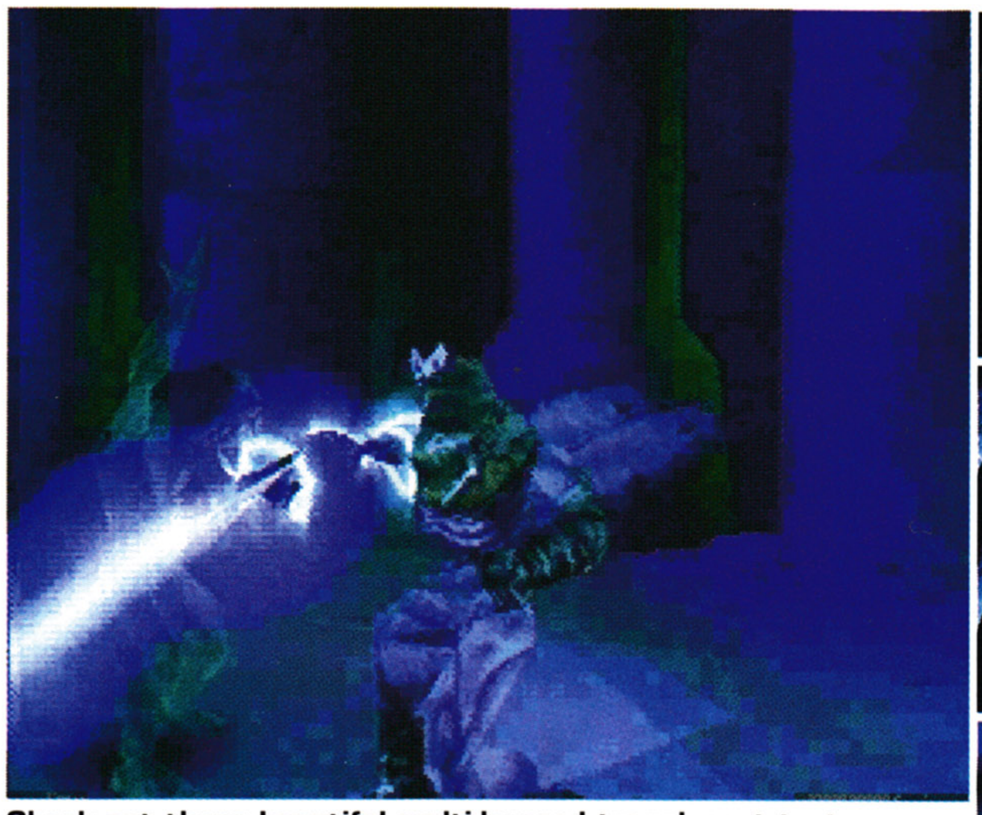
Soul Reaver is a remarkable piece of programming, incorporating a number of very clever features. The most important is one that you probably won't even notice, but nonetheless sets the game apart from other 3D adventures on the PlayStation. Games such as *Tomb Raider* have to load up each level as you enter it, which, as you are probably aware, can take a long time. *Soul Reaver* continuously streams the levels from the CD as you play, so you never have to wait for anything to load. It also means that individual areas in the game such as halls and caverns can be of enormous size without slowing down the game.

Another very nice touch is that apart from the initial intro sequence, all of the in-game cut-scenes and animations are

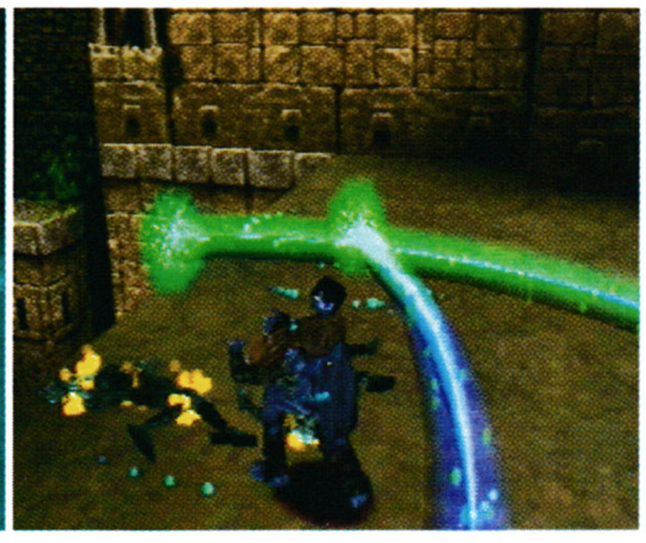
Incinerating your enemies and then eating their souls may not be too nice, but it's all in a day's work for a vampire lord

THE OTHER SIDE

Raziel exists in both the material and spectral planes, the lands of the living and the dead, and he can travel at will from the material to the spectral and back again with the aid of special conduits. When this transformation occurs, Raziel's surroundings alter in subtle but sinister ways. The graphics morph into new shapes and colours, similar to their old forms but slightly different. In some cases obstacles in one plane can be overcome by shifting into the other, and enemies may be easier to defeat. This plane-shifting vastly increases the size of the game. Every location has two forms, and you will need to explore both in order to complete the game.



Check out those beautiful multi-layered translucent textures



handled by the game engine, which makes transitions such as opening doors and activating portals completely seamless. This is not a unique feature, but it is very nicely implemented. If you approach a door carrying a torch, the animated going-through-the-door sequence shows you carrying a torch. These effects combine well with the animation of the central character. The figure of Raziel is composed of over five hundred polygons, and rendered using a smooth-skin technique which dramatically improves the realism of the character's movements. Actions such as running, jumping, fighting and picking up objects are all very natural looking. The overall impression is one of a single integrated whole, a very smooth game which is a pleasure to play.

Soul catcher

With the limited number of controls available on the PlayStation pad, several of the buttons do more than one thing, but the selection is context-sensitive. The square button allows you to pick up objects, use them as weapons, open doors, move blocks and activate portals, all depending on what you are doing and where you are standing. This is not as confusing as it sounds, and actually becomes second nature in a matter of minutes.

THE OVERALL IMPRESSION IS ONE OF A SINGLE INTEGRATED WHOLE, A VERY SMOOTH GAME WHICH IS A PLEASURE TO PLAY

The combat system is very effective and highly entertaining. Most of the enemies that Raziel has to fight are fellow vampires of one sort or another, and so they can only be killed by fire, water or impalement. To this end, Raziel has a number of special attacks. He can use found objects as spears to impale his foes, or use torches to incinerate them, but he can also pick up stunned enemies and hurl them onto spikes, into water or into the light of the sun, all of which are equally lethal. Once they are dead, their souls rise from their bodies so that Raziel can consume them. It is probably best not to dwell on the ethical implications of this, but it is only a game after all.

Mystery machine

The emphasis of the gameplay is on exploration and discovery, but not to the exclusion of other elements. There are also many puzzles to solve, and some of these are quite complex. There is very little of the 'pull the lever, open the door' simplicity which made the *Tomb Raider* sequels such a let-down. Instead, there are tests of 3D spatial reasoning, logic and lateral thinking. *Soul Reaver* is one of the few games in which the 3D environment is actually used to enhance the gameplay, rather than just to make it all look pretty.

That's not to say that it doesn't look pretty as well. The high-resolution graphics look absolutely superb, with realistic textures on rocks and walls, beautiful translucent effects, and fully dynamic lighting throughout the game. There is a certain amount of distance fogging, which is probably a function of the CD streaming, but I have seen far worse on PC and N64 games, so I'm not complaining.

If I do have one criticism of *Soul Reaver*, it is this: Because of the huge size of the game, and the fact that the CD streaming essentially turns it into one huge level, it can be somewhat overwhelming. To begin with there is no clear sense of direction or purpose. It is not until you get much further into the game that you start to comprehend the nature of the plot, and thus to understand the game. I can see how this might prove to be a problem for those with limited attention spans, but a little patience will enable you to get a lot of enjoyment out of this excellent game. **Cliff**

OTHER FORMATS?

PC ●●●●●

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver will be appearing on a PC near you soon, shortly after the PlayStation version.

N64 ○○○○○

Eidos have no plans to convert *Soul Reaver* for the N64. They probably don't want to scare the children.

Dreamcast ●●○○○

As with so many PlayStation and PC games, the possibility of a Dreamcast conversion cannot be entirely ruled out.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Legacy of Kain
GRAPHICS	91
SOUND	89
PLAYABILITY	95
OVERALL Out of 100	93

HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS

TAKING CONTROL

This is one of those games where you really ought to read the manual first. I tried jumping straight in, and although I got the hang of driving the soldiers pretty quickly, my whole squad were dead before they got halfway across the bridge. With a bit of study, some perseverance and just a tiny amount of luck, it took me an hour to complete the first mission. It was well worth it though, and I was straight into the next one. This game has a way of pulling you in.

What's **Hidden and Dangerous**? An **SAS commando crawling** through the **undergrowth** with a **backpack full of dynamite**, that's what.

With the latest high speed processors and third generation 3D accelerator cards now available for the PC, the potential to make complex strategy games with realistic graphics has never been higher. *Hidden and Dangerous* is a prime example of this, combining squad tactics, real-time action and superb graphics into one of the most challenging games I have seen this year. This is the sort of game that high-spec PCs are made for, and as you can see from the minimum specification for this game, it will stretch most systems to the limit. The game plays like a first-person 3D version of Eidos' recent hit *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines*. Illusion Softworks' powerful graphics engine provides a compelling feeling of authenticity.

The game is set during World War Two, recreating the early wartime missions of the now legendary SAS. A great deal of historical research has gone into the game, ensuring that the details of the uniforms and equipment are extremely accurate. This isn't essential for a good game, but it does add enormously to the atmosphere. The missions are not recreations of actual historical events, but they are based on the sort of missions the SAS were involved with during the war.

Staying alive

The game starts, as did the SAS, with the selection of the men who will make up your team, and the choice of weapons and equipment they will have available. You then move on to the briefing for your first mission, an attempt to rescue the crew of a crashed RAF Lancaster bomber. You must select a four man commando team from your available troops and equip them for their mission. All of these selection procedures can be bypassed if you can't be bothered, and automatic default selections can be used.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Take 2 Interactive
DEVELOPER	Illusion Softworks
STYLE	3D Strategy/Tactics
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-4
PROCESSOR	P233 PIII300
MEMORY	32MB 64MB
DISK SPACE	60MB 500MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Required

The ultra-realistic graphics give the game a great atmosphere, but don't forget to stay hidden, or it could be dangerous

ILLUSION SOFTWORKS

Illusion Softworks, founded in 1997, are currently the only computer games development company operating in the Czech and Slovak Republics. They have offices in both Prague and Bratislava, and have attracted business investment from Germany and the UK. They have recently signed a publishing contract with Take 2 Interactive for the global distribution of *Hidden and Dangerous*, but they have other games in the pipeline, including the spectacular fantasy flight combat game *Flying Heroes*. Although the game has not yet got a publishing deal, it is being developed for the PC and Dreamcast. The design talent apparent in *Hidden and Dangerous* should ensure the company a bright future.

The German soldiers don't mess about – a couple of hits and you're dead

The action opens with a deceptively simple-looking bridge crossing, and this is where the game shows how different it is from the usual first-person shooters. If you simply charge in with all guns blazing, you'll last about a minute. It only takes a couple of hits to kill your men, and there are no health and armour pick-ups in this game. If a man is killed, he stays dead and you will have to do without him until the end of the mission.

THE TELESCOPIC SIGHT OF THE SNIPER RIFLE HAS A GOOD ZOOM, AND YOU CAN PICK OFF SENTRIES AT QUITE A RANGE, LIMITED ONLY BY THE FOGGING IN THE EXTREME DISTANCE

The way to play *Hidden and Dangerous* is to plan every move with great care. Pressing the Space bar on the keyboard pauses the game and brings up a tactical plan of the mission, depicted as a 3D sandbox on a tabletop. From this view you can program the actions of your men on a kind of sequencer, telling them when to move, where to go and what to do when they get there. Most of the missions rely on accurately timed co-ordinated actions in several different places, so this ability is vital. The system works well, and with practice it is possible to run most of the missions like this.

Living colour

Once you have set up your plan, you can switch back to the action. You can take direct control of any of your men, from either a first or third person view, move them about and aim and fire their weapons. When you are controlling a particular man, the others are controlled by the game AI and will return fire if attacked. Their performance is based on their individual characteristics, so choose your men with care.

Unlike the enemy soldiers, the friendly unit AI isn't a particularly good shot, so you may want to help it out if things start to become pear-shaped. The telescopic sight of the sniper rifle has a good zoom, and you can pick off sentries at quite a range, limited only by the fogging in the extreme distance. Illusion Softworks deserve congratulations for the superb graphics engine in *Hidden and Dangerous*. It is as good as any I have seen, easily on a par with the likes of *Half-Life* and *Aliens Vs. Predator*. The detailed high resolution textures and dynamic lighting effects are second to none, and the drawing range is better than most other engines.

Covert intelligence

The enemy AI is also very impressive. The enemy soldiers have a realistic field of vision and range of hearing, and react accordingly. The range at which sounds can be heard depends on factors such as the weather and ambient noise levels, and it is possible to hide in shadows and undergrowth. This means that you can use stealth tactics and sneak about just like a real commando.

Other superb features include the ability to drive nearly all of the vehicles you encounter during the game, from motorbikes and sidecars up to Panzer tanks. They all have virtual cockpits and realistic performance.

Hidden and Dangerous has multiplayer options allowing players to team up with others over the internet and carry out co-operative missions against the game AI. Messages can be sent between different players to help co-ordinate the attack. Illusion Softworks are licensed Dreamcast developers and are working on a version of *Hidden and Dangerous* for that platform. No firm release date has yet been announced, but it seems likely that the game could be ready to coincide with the European release of the Dreamcast. **Cliff**

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ○○○○○

The PlayStation could never hope to produce graphics like this.

N64 ○○○○○

You'd never fit the *Hidden and Dangerous* onto a cartridge, and the N64 couldn't handle the graphics.

Dreamcast ●●●●●

Illusion Softworks are licensed Dreamcast developers, and they are currently working on porting the game over to the Sega console.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Hidden & Dangerous
GRAPHICS	91
SOUND	65
PLAYABILITY	81
OVERALL	84
Out of 100	

EXCESSIVE SPEED

Not **many new games** come out for only a **tenner.**

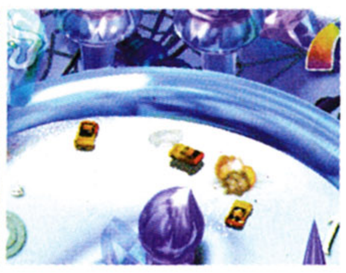
When I saw the box for *Excessive Speed*, I expected the game to be in the *Rollcage/Dethkarz* mould – a futuristic racing game full of high speed death and amazing graphics. Then I noticed the price. You can't reasonably expect the greatest game in the world for ten quid, and with *Excessive Speed* you get pretty much what you pay for, which is a simple top-down view racing game, a sort of *Micro Machines* with guns.

For a tenner it's actually not bad, although your car can disappear behind the scenery in a most annoying manner, and the low-grade ambient soundtrack gets on your tits after a while. There are no sound effects to speak of, but I'd rather have silence than crap music. The actual gameplay is pretty limited, although with a bit of patience it can be quite rewarding. There's even a four-player split-screen mode.

Excessive Speed isn't going to stretch either your skill or the capabilities of your PC, but I've certainly seen worse games at four times the price. **Cliff**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Iridon Interactive
DEVELOPER	Chaos Works
STYLE	Racing game
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£9.95
PLAYERS	1-4
PROCESSOR	P133 **P166**
MEMORY	16MB **32MB**
DISK SPACE	20MB **110MB**
3D ACCELERATOR	Not Supported

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Excessive Speed
GRAPHICS	38
SOUND	22
PLAYABILITY	60
OVERALL Out of 100	58



R-Type Delta

Classic shoot-'em-up **action...**

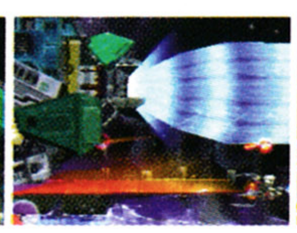
It's been available on import for some time now, and by the time you read this you should be able to pick up a copy of this game at your local stockist.

R-Type Delta is a fantastic 2D shoot-'em-up. It essentially remains the same as it was all those years ago from a gameplay point of view, but now the real-time backgrounds and special weapon effects make it excellent to look at as well. You choose from three ships, all with a different set of weapons, and face multiple levels of extremely frantic and very tough shoot-'em-up action. Although this is a very simple game at heart, just about everything that could have been included has been. It's very much a game that is easy to pick up and play, but it will take you ages to master.

R-Type Delta is essentially identical to the import version reviewed in Issue 4 (scoring 89%). Any fan of this ancient genre should get a copy of what is the current king in the field. Don't be put off by its simple nature – this will keep you coming back for more and more. **Will**

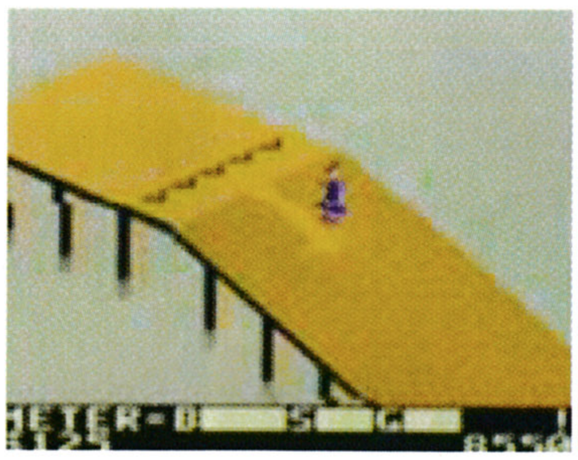
INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Sony
DEVELOPER	IREM
STYLE	Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	No
SAVE GAME	Memory Card & Password

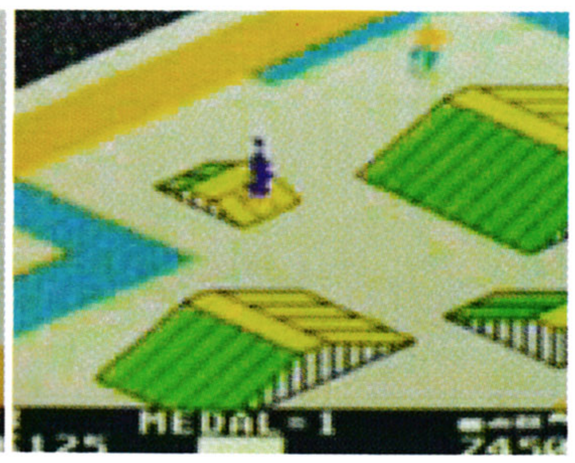
VERDICT	
GAME NAME	R-Type Delta
GRAPHICS	82
SOUND	83
PLAYABILITY	93
OVERALL Out of 100	89



720°

A classic from the eighties rears its retro-cool head on the Game Boy. The question is: **will *720* stand the test of time?**





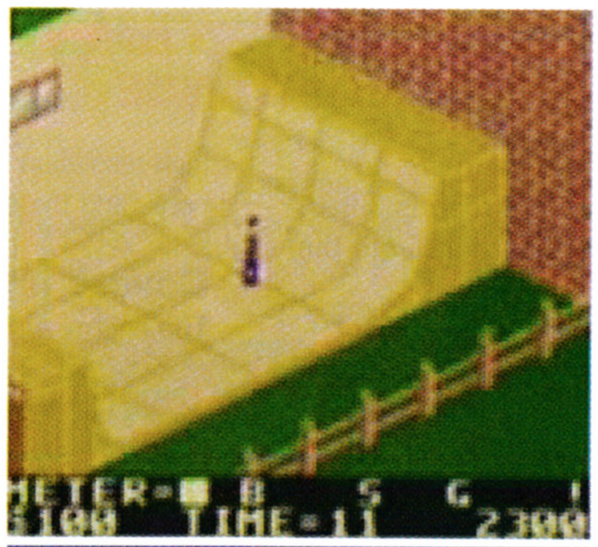
It was only a few years ago that this was the coolest thing in the arcades. *720* was a stunning machine to look at, with a huge ghetto blaster positioned on top, pumping out the game's brilliant soundtrack. Ten years on, things have a changed a wee bit; skateboarding games now involve the player riding on a skateboard...

The premise of *720* is simple yet brilliant. Skate around the town centre, pulling tricks and earning money. You can then use the money to buy upgrades – a new helmet (makes you spin faster), new trainers (make you go faster), and a new board (better tricks). You also get points for performing stunts, and getting a predetermined total will buy you a ticket to the next town. Each also has its own four skate parks – a half-pipe, downhill, slalom and jump park – and competing in these also earns you points and prize money.

The problem with the Game Boy version is that the control method is far too twitchy and it is too easy to oversteer your boarder. It doesn't help that the screen is so small (along with your boarder), making the game very trying to play.

Everything is here from the eighties classic, so as a nostalgia trip it's pretty cool. The trouble is that it just doesn't work on the Game Boy as well as it should. **Nick**

Basic it may look, but it's great fun on Game Boy

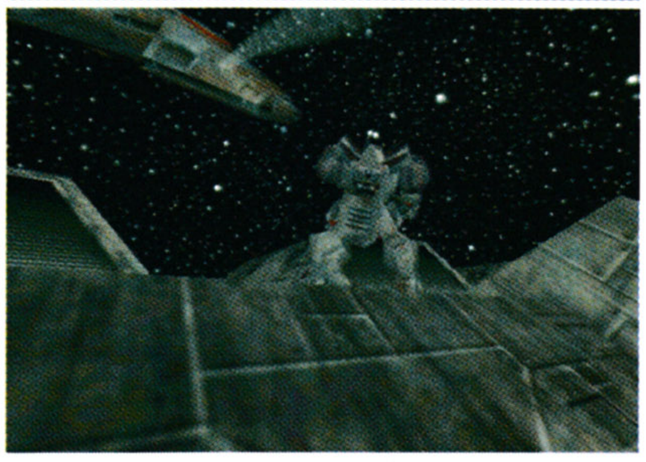


INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Game Boy
PUBLISHER	Midway
DEVELOPER	Atari
STYLE	Skateboarding
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£19.99
GAME BOY COLOR	Yes

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	720
GRAPHICS	50
SOUND	30
PLAYABILITY	65
OVERALL Out of 100	70

Heavy Gear II

Four years after the **war** on **Terra Nova**, the **Gears** are back in **action** to repel an **invasion**, and maybe save their **planet** from **destruction...**



The original *Heavy Gear*, released nearly two years ago, was an interesting but over-ambitious 3D combat game which had some good points but a number of fatal errors. It also suffered from one of the most boring terrain engines ever made. The sequel, which has been in development for the past eighteen months, has addressed all of these issues and more besides. What has emerged is a compelling hybrid of first-person combat action and squad level military tactics.

A GEAR IS A TEN-METRE TALL ARMOURED WALKING MACHINE CONTROLLED BY A HUMAN PILOT, AND CARRYING MORE FIREPOWER THAN HALF A DOZEN MAIN BATTLE TANKS

For those of you who have been in hibernation for the past two years, a Gear is a ten-metre tall armoured walking machine controlled by a human pilot, and carrying more firepower than half a dozen main battle tanks. The war in which they fight is set in the distant future on worlds colonised by humans originally from Earth. The *Heavy Gear* universe is based on a table-top role-playing game designed by Dream Pod 9, and the new computer game owes much to their work.

The sky's the limit

Combat takes place on a number of different worlds, as well as in space on the hulls of some huge spacecraft. For this reason, one major improvement in the sequel has been in the terrain engine. The game now boasts realistic sky, 3D rain and snow effects, and some of the best water effects I have seen. Gears can move underwater, so this does become important in the game. The designs of the buildings and vehicles has also massively improved, as have the explosions when they are destroyed, which is always a crucial factor in any game! The use of realistic shadows also adds to the realism of the game, but I can't understand why there is no cockpit view. There is a first-person and a moveable third-person view, but neither really gives the impression of being inside a huge armoured vehicle. Only the relative height of the enemy tanks provides a sense of scale.

One massive improvement is the inclusion of a highly intuitive tactical system, which allows you to give orders to the other members of your squad via an overhead map of the battlefield. This part resembles a top-down view real-time strategy game such as *Command & Conquer*.

Heavy Gear II was written from the ground up to be a multiplayer game, either online or across a local network, and to support this Activision are setting up dedicated servers with tournaments and ladders. *Heavy Gear* already has a big online following, so the success of the sequel should be guaranteed. **Cliff**

WALKING TANKS

The whole giant battle robot thing seems to have originated in Japan some time in the late seventies. From manga comics to Transformers toys, the idea of huge humanoid robots seems to have struck a chord, and refuses to go away. The military potential of vehicles like the Gears has been explored by several countries, but using current technology walking machines are complicated and prone to breakdown, so we probably won't be seeing them on the battlefields of the near future.

TAKING CONTROL

The game interface is simple and quick, moving cleanly from option to option. Once you have reviewed the various controls, you can jump straight in with the 'instant action' option. This pits you against a squad of enemy Gears in a simple kill-or-be-killed scenario, which is over very quickly. Perhaps a better way to get started is the training missions, which cover all aspects of the game. By the time you start on the campaign missions, you'll be a veteran.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	Activision
STYLE	3D Combat
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P166 PII300
MEMORY	32MB 64MB
DISK SPACE	427MB 487MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Required

Using a cheap camera for the screenshots results in a nasty case of 'redeye'

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ○○○○○

Heavy Gear II is a PC game through and through. There is simply no way a PlayStation could handle the graphics or the online options.

N64 ○○○○○

Likewise, there's more chance of world peace for the millennium than *Heavy Gear II* appearing on the N64.

Dreamcast ●●○○○

Although Activision will neither confirm nor deny, the approaching release of the Dreamcast must look very tempting.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Heavy Gear II
GRAPHICS	77
SOUND	54
PLAYABILITY	81
OVERALL	79
Out of 100	

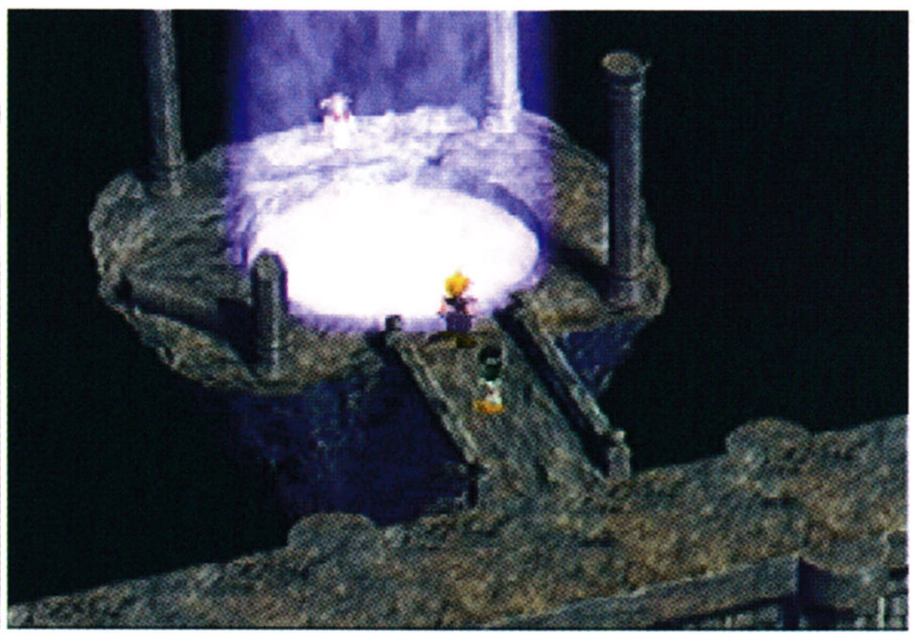
TOTAL CONTROL 90+ AWARD

FINAL FANTASY VII

One of the most **influential games** ever? It would be if anyone could come close to emulating the mastery that is ***Final Fantasy VII***. Now it's **available on Platinum**, there's no **excuse for not owning it...**

TAKING CONTROL

The incredible opening sequence hooks you straight into the game and straight into the action. The feeling of panic that you feel while trying to learn the fighting system is akin to that felt by the lead characters – a theme that the game explores throughout, along with a number of others. This is less of a video game, more of an interactive film...



INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Sony/Platinum
DEVELOPER	Squaresoft
STYLE	RPG
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£19.99
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	No
DUAL SHOCK	No
MEMORY CARD	Memory Card

It was only eighteen months ago that *Final Fantasy VII* was released in the UK and changed our perceptions of the RPG forever.

For anyone who has never played an RPG, *Final Fantasy VII* is as good a place to start as any. The game follows the story of Cloud, a typical loner type character, and his involvement with a terrorist. The story quickly moves to a global scale, and from here on in there is no looking back. Ever had an entire world to explore? You have here.

FOR TWENTY POUNDS, YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY GO WRONG – YOU SHOULD BUY IT IMMEDIATELY. FINAL FANTASY VII IS A PIECE OF VIDEO GAMING HISTORY

The story is the driving force behind the game, although there are other elements that make *Final Fantasy VII* one of the most compelling games ever. The game makes clever use of flashbacks to explain each character's story and how they got to be where they are. Apart from being thoroughly interesting, this forces you to empathise with each of the players to an emotional level that has yet to be achieved elsewhere in a video game. It is this attachment with the characters that drives you through the game, and with such a twisting storyline it is very hard to put the thing down. Even though the

game boasts upwards of fifty hours playtime, you find that completing it in a week isn't out of the question.

The battle system, dubbed Active Time Battle, is an evolution of Square's Final Fantasy system, so those familiar with that will find it pretty straightforward. In any case, the game takes you through step by step, and before long it's second nature. It is here that you begin to play with all the different magic (Materia) settings and discover how much there actually is to the system.

Even this long after the game's original release, it still looks fantastic. The manga-style characters are actually preferable to the Westernised ones of *Final Fantasy VIII*, but then that's down to personal opinion... There are plenty of flashy effects, and the design of the monsters and 'Summons' is spectacular to say the least. As far as the FMV cut-scenes go, the game is host to some of the best yet. *Final Fantasy VII* is still one of the best-looking PlayStation games around.

There are things about *FFVII* that begin to grate after a while – the random battles, for example; there's nothing more annoying than trying to explore a new location when a battle pops up every thirty seconds, and you start to resent this after a while. Overall, though, this can be excused with the brilliant story, fantastic battle system and life-dominating gameplay. For twenty pounds, you can't possibly go wrong – you should buy it immediately. *Final Fantasy VII* is piece of video gaming history. **Nick**

Pre-rendered backgrounds are mixed with real time graphics to great effect

FINAL FANTASY: THE SERIES

Possibly the most popular of all series of games ever, *Final Fantasy* has been around since the early nineties. Because of the interest generated by *FFVII*, Square have announced special PlayStation versions of *FFIV*, *FFV* and *FFVI*. The games are identical to the original SNES versions apart from some new FMV sequences. If you can get hold of a copy they are well worth getting. *FFVI* is reputedly better than *VII*...

OTHER FORMATS?

PC ●●●●●

Out now, and you can probably pick it up for around twenty quid as well. Looks even better running with accelerated graphics.

Dreamcast ○○○○○

As much as we'd like to see a *Final Fantasy* game on the Dreamcast, it won't happen

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Final Fantasy VII
GRAPHICS	85
SOUND	80
PLAYABILITY	90
OVERALL Out of 100	95

Machines

Real-time strategy should never have been the same after ***Warzone 2100***, but then again...

I was afraid that something like this was going to happen. When Eidos released their superb *Warzone 2100*, they breathed new life into the tired, stale genre of real-time strategy games by introducing true 3D action and a range of other great features. It was only a matter of time before other publishers tried to jump on the bandwagon, and the first ones onto the tailgate are Acclaim with *Machines*, a tale of battling, err, machines on faraway planets in the distant future.

It has all the traditional features of the genre – base building, researching new technologies and fighting huge battles – but with the addition of a 3D landscape and zoomable camera angles. The game boasts one unique feature, namely the ability to take a first-person viewpoint in any of your units. This is of limited usefulness in a combat situation, and looks pretty much like a gimmick. It certainly doesn't make this game into *Uprising*. The accelerator-only graphics are adequate, but nothing too special. Apart from this *Machines* is pretty much the same as any other real-time strategy title, such as *StarCraft* or *Dark Reign*. Despite needing two CDs to fit it all on, the game lacks the either the style or the feature-packed inventiveness of *Warzone 2100*, and brings nothing new to the genre. The fact that all three review copies refused to run on all but one of the office PCs, and ran very badly on that one, just made matters worse. **Cliff**

My God! Huge red spiders!

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Acclaim
DEVELOPER	Charybdis
STYLE	3D Strategy
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-4
PROCESSOR	P200 P266
MEMORY	32MB 64MB
DISK SPACE	114MB 400MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Required

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Machines
GRAPHICS	64
SOUND	41
PLAYABILITY	51
OVERALL Out of 100	53

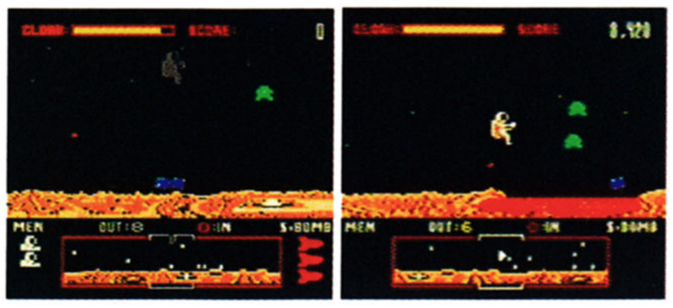
DROPZONE

The **classic 80's** shooter returns on Game Boy

This is a classic conversion of Archer Maclean's hit arcade game from the early 80s. *DropZone* is true to the original in every sense, and the superb playability is still there in its original form. You must travel across a sideways scrolling level, collecting the androids that travel across the bottom of the screen and returning them to their base. While doing this you have to avoid all of the enemies that are infesting the level, attempting to destroy both you and the androids. The level is finished when all of the remaining androids have been returned and all enemies have been destroyed.

The problem with the Game Boy incarnation is the oversensitive controls which make this extremely difficult – it would have perhaps made more sense to have the game increasing in speed as you progressed through it. The number of enemies is also very limited. Lives are awarded slightly too often, and it would have made more sense to use Start as the cloak option instead of Select. These faults are only minor though, and although you've seen it all before, the fun of playing this arcade classic will never go away. **Will**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Game Boy
PUBLISHER	Acclaim
DEVELOPER	In-House
STYLE	Action
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£24.99
GAME BOY COLOUR	Optional



It's over-responsive, but still excellent fun

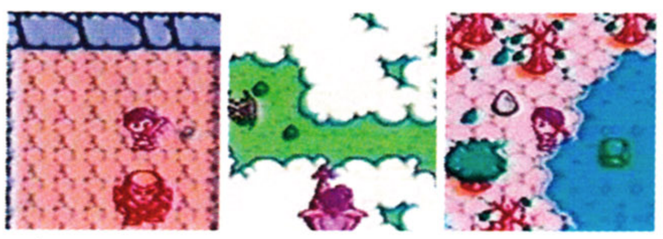
VERDICT	
GAME NAME	DropZone
GRAPHICS	63
SOUND	60
PLAYABILITY	79
OVERALL Out of 100	74

Quest for Camelot

Could this be the best **alternative** to ***Zelda*****?**

Quest for Camelot is the game based on the 1998 Warner Bros animated film of the same name. In a very novel move, Titus have decided against merely porting out yet another sideways scrolling platform game and have given us something a little different. You play the role of Kayley in her quest to recover the missing sword Excalibur from the evil knight Ruber.

The game plays in a similar style to the *Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX*. From the top-down view you must explore the worlds and progress through the story. Although the RPG element is toned down here, the mix of exploration, puzzle solving, battles, character interaction and item collection is superb. The game looks pretty good, follows the film and features plenty of the characters in it – you can even print out the static cut-scenes if you have a printer. *Quest for Camelot* is highly recommend to all of you who are growing weary of Nintendo's pointy-eared elf



INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Game Boy
PUBLISHER	Nintendo
DEVELOPER	Titus
STYLE	RPG
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£19.99
GAME BOY COLOUR	Supported

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Quest for Camelot
GRAPHICS	75
SOUND	71
PLAYABILITY	82
OVERALL Out of 100	83

Quake II: Quad Damage

The **game** that showed us just **how much fun blowing pixelated holes** in **each other** really was has **returned** to the **office** in a **neat** little **collector's edition...**

The much celebrated *Quake II* is not a game that needs any introduction. In a final attempt to breath some life into the worn-out title, Activision and id Software have put together this special collector's edition of what may well be the most famous PC game of all time.

Opening the box reveals a *Quake III* poster, a few manuals, and four shiny CD cases containing each of the *Quake II* CDs released so far. Alongside the Original *Quake II* disc are the two mission packs, *The Reckoning* and *Ground Zero*, and the NetPack, *Extremities*. Although it must be said that Activision are not really trying to compete with the shoot-'em-ups of today with this release, the game engine does has a very dated look, while paradoxically managing to evoke memories of the technical awe that it once held.

We come in peace...

Quake II is undeniably a game that everyone should have played by now. It marks a critical point in the evolution of computer games and will slot perfectly into anyone's collection. If you are one of the very few PC owners yet to try this classic title then *Quad Damage* is a must-buy. And even if you already own the original, the two mission packs extend the life of the single-player game to epic proportions, and the NetPack makes this a multiplayer title that, like *Goldeneye*, won't ever be allowed to gather dust.

In my opinion, this collection faces no competition from the imminent *Quake III*; this is a pack for the shoot-'em-up enthusiast. It won't stun technically, but the sheer scale of the game makes it a collector's item worthy of anyone's attention. The question is, do you think it's really worth £40? **Will**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	id Software
STYLE	First Person Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-32
PROCESSOR	P90 **P133**
MEMORY	16MB **24MB**
DISK SPACE	10MB **750MB**
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Quake II: Quad Damage
GRAPHICS	72
SOUND	80
PLAYABILITY	88
OVERALL Out of 100	87

Midtown Madness: Chicago Edition

Microsoft's latest could give *Driver* some **hefty competition** on the PC. The **streets** of **Chicago** will never be safe again...

The snow texture actually changes during the race

There have been very few city-based racing games that have managed to successfully model civilian traffic to the extent seen in *Midtown Madness*. It's surprising, because the effect that this has on the game is superb. Imagine, if you can, *Carmageddon* without the violence; you have one complete arena where you have total freedom to go and do whatever you want, all within the confines of a living, breathing city complete with traffic lights, junctions and pedestrian crossings.

The arena in question is a section of Chicago – although it's fairly big, it's the only one you'll be able to play. There are plenty of shortcuts, underground car parks, freeways and places of interest to be found, all of which are authentically modelled around the actual city. The game is split into several modes: a free exploration mode with no time limits where you can explore the map, occasionally having to avoid the police; a checkpoint blitz mode; a checkpoint attack mode; and a standard circuit race option. The blitz mode is very good – you have a set time limit to reach several points in the city, but avoiding the traffic makes it so much more fun. You have limited health corresponding to the status of your vehicle, so too many crashes will end your race prematurely. All of the civilian drivers act very naturally, slowing at traffic lights etc., but it does feel as if they are often driving without noticing you at all. That is, unless you crash into them head on. There's also a strong civilian presence in the game, but if you attempt to turn them into a red paste, they'll jump athletically out of the way or throw themselves up against nearby walls to avoid you.

IT'S NOT JUST THE WORRY OF SPINNING OFF, YOU NEED TO TAKE CARE NOT TO CRASH TOO OFTEN, AND THE MOVING TRAFFIC MAKES EACH RACE VERY INTENSE

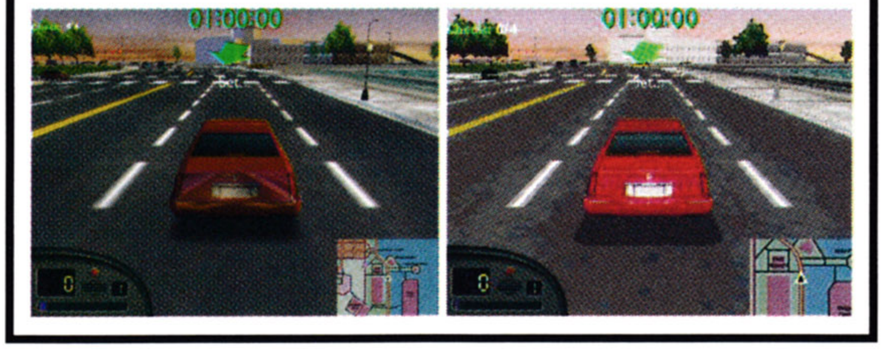
Summer in the city

The prize for success comes from unlocking a number of new vehicles such as huge lorries and school buses, and it will take you a long time to get them all. As soon as you've finished all of the races in amateur mode, you can do them again with professional difficulty, which will take even the most skilled of drivers months to do. Each race has a multitude of things that can go wrong. It's not just the worry of spinning off, you need to take care not to crash too often, and the moving traffic makes each race very intense.

Midtown Madness is a highly recommended game. It is as addictive and as much fun as *Carmageddon*, and it will keep you playing for ages. The only fault is the steep specs required for a smooth game, but if you've got a decent PC then you should definitely consider buying this. That is, of course, if you can't wait the extra few months for GT Interactive's *Driver*, which could quite easily outclass *Midtown Madness* in every department when it hits the shelves later on this summer. **Will**

SOFTWARE VS 3D

The specs for *Midtown Madness* are misguiding. Even with the recommended spec it is far from optimal, but it runs surprisingly smoothly without a graphics accelerator. You do get a serious lack of detail though, and the screen is exceptionally blocky. If you don't have an accelerator, make sure you have a nippy processor if you want to run it with the majority of the graphics options on.



TAKING CONTROL

It's fairly rare that a relatively unhyped game such as this rolls into the office and goes down so well with everybody here; it's instantly enjoyable and very difficult to turn off. However, it was also commonly confused with *Driver*, which, sadly, may steal the sales figures from this even if it isn't as good. Still, it's definitely a lot of fun from the word go.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Microsoft
DEVELOPER	Angel Studios
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P166 P333
MEMORY	16MB 32MB
DISK SPACE	300MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●○○○○

There is not a strong chance of a conversion, but the possibility is there. You'd be better off waiting for either *Carmageddon* or *Driver*, both of which will be heading your way soon.

N64 ○○○○○

Microsoft are not known for their console releases, so the possibility of an N64 outing is slim. But *Carmageddon* is heading for Nintendo's machine, so don't worry too much.

Dreamcast ●●○○○

The Windows operating system makes a Dreamcast conversion more likely than most, but I doubt that Microsoft will consider the market to be big enough.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Midtown Madness
GRAPHICS	79
SOUND	73
PLAYABILITY	86
OVERALL Out of 100	80

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Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace

Apparently this **game is based on** a **new film** that's going to be **released this summer** – it's called **Star Wars** or something...

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	LucasArts
STYLE	3D Action/Adventure
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	One
PROCESSOR	P200
MEMORY	135MB 325MB
DISK SPACE	32MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Required

TAKING CONTROL

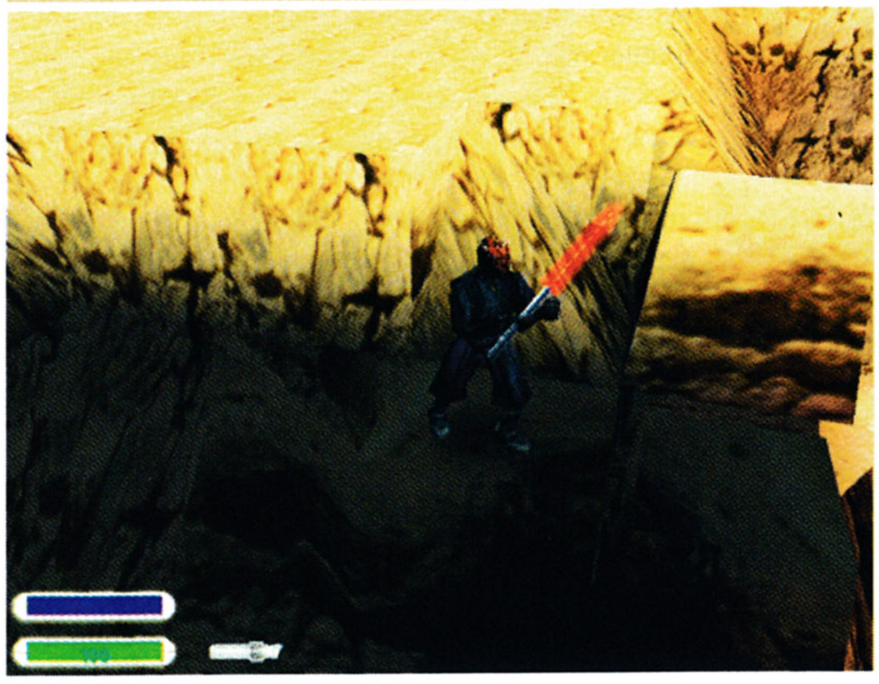
The usual fight to get to play a new Star Wars game was strangely missing as this rolled into the office. Not that we weren't excited about the game, more that we wanted to remain excited about the movie. After the barricades were in place on either side of my desk and the sound was turned right down, I was given permission to begin, and, just as you might expect, really enjoyed it from the beginning.

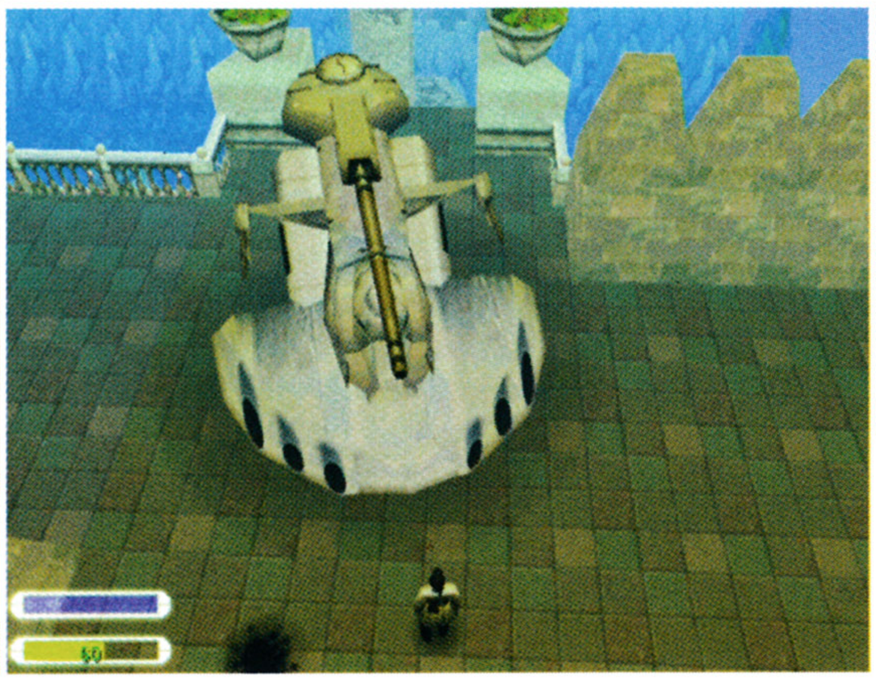
Seeing as the movie's release is about a month and a half away as I write this, you may be able to understand my extremely mixed feelings about reviewing the game based on what will surely be the most successful film of the millennium. Unlike *Star Wars: Pod Racers*, *The Phantom Menace* follows the plot of the film all the way through, and before I even played the game I felt I already knew too much from the mission descriptions in the manual. Of course, I haven't seen it yet, and it's unlikely you have either, so I'll try not to disclose anything that the trailers have not done already.

We haven't much time

The Phantom Menace follows the exploits of Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn, and his apprentice, Obi-Wan Kenobi, as the power hungry Trade Federation begins an invasion of the peaceful planet of Naboo. Fleeing from the planet, they find themselves on Tatooine, where the discovery of a young boy with an exceptionally strong connection with the Force gives them new hope for their battle against the forces of evil. Without seeing the movie I can't accurately comment on the connection of game and film, but there is a definite and very strong Star Wars feel to it, albeit with a different style to that of the previous trilogy, which seems to agree with the general consensus of the film reviews posted so far.

The game is played from a real-time isometric viewpoint, and the background rotates around you so that you are always facing ahead. One very noticeable problem is the lack of any camera control. It's often nothing more than a slight annoyance when you





During the game you can raise or lower the Light Sabre should you want to appear more or less threatening

want to see further ahead, but on some levels such as Tatooine, which has a lot of open and bland, sandy backgrounds, you find that you don't know where you are going at all. The camera does tilt in some situations though, so you usually have the best view of the action. You begin the game in control of Obi-Wan Kenobi, but later on you will control Qui-Gon and a few other characters. Most of the character moves remain the same, but there are a few subtle differences when you are controlling a Jedi. Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon have the ability to flip or roll in any direction to avoid oncoming fire. They can also use a 'Force Push', which will throw opponents back for a small distance depending on their weight, or will activate unreachable switches. The biggest difference is their use of the light sabre – a highly powerful weapon, but close range only – just like in the films. Careful timing of the button press can deflect oncoming fire from the Battle Droids, often returning the shots to their source. Touches like these are commonplace: R2 units roam the floors, and if left alone will help you out later on; floors cave in; real-time cut-scenes occur in the background; and characters such as Qui-Gon (when you are playing Obi-Wan) often help out and talk to you when you are near them, which gives it a very convincing movie-style feel.

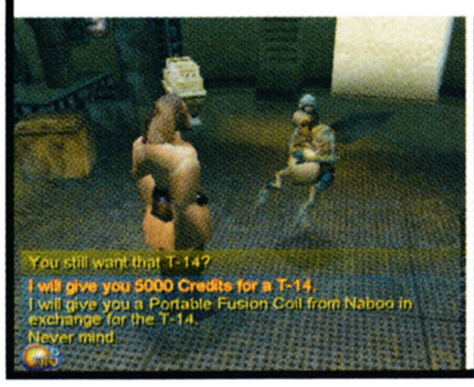
THERE WAS LITTLE TO FAULT IT ON THROUGHOUT, AND ANY SELF-RESPECTING STAR WARS FAN WILL FIND THEMSELVES COMPLETELY IMMERSED IN A MATTER OF MINUTES

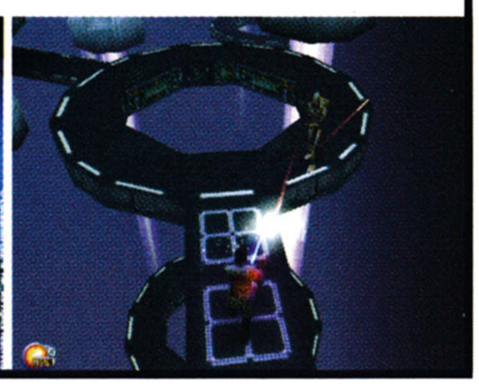
You believe it's this... boy?

Although the game is best described as a 3D action adventure, there is a strong element of exploration here too. Some levels have

ONE WILL

The two Jedis that you control have the obvious advantage of being masters of the Force. This not only allows you to be able to wield a Light Sabre with stunning effectiveness and physically throw back oncoming enemies with a Force Push, but in certain situations you can also use your Jedi mind tricks to get you out of potentially sticky situations by convincing others that you pose no threat to them during a conversation.



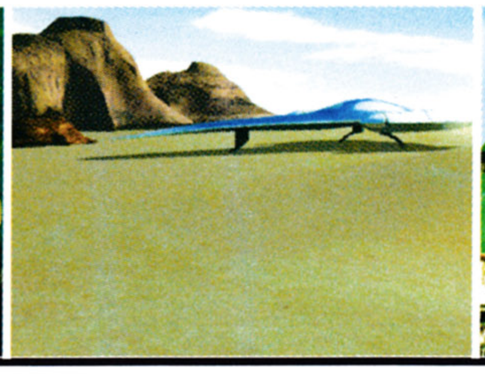


ONE VOICE

In an attempt to add a strong movie feel, there is a lot of speech in the game. But despite the official licence, only one role in the game is voiced by the same person as the film: Jake Lloyd, who plays the young Anakin Skywalker. Surprisingly, the characters in the game actually look very different to those in the film – especially the face of Obi-Wan, whose voice is also perhaps the furthest away from the movie's character. But despite not being as authentic as it could be, the speech is generally well voiced, even if the script is occasionally a tad on the patronising side.

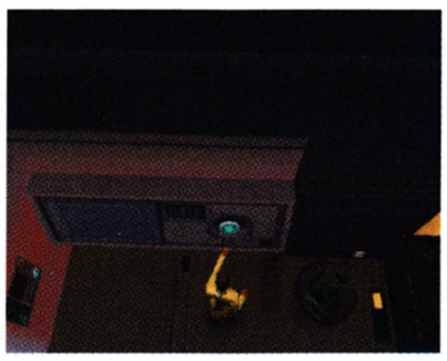
ONE DESTINY

It has already scooped huge box office receipts in its first few weeks, and despite some extremely mixed reviews is destined to become the highest selling movie of all time. Since this game is due to be released on the 4th of June, a month and a half before the movie, you should be warned that although it can never follow or give away the plot of the film completely, it does give away the structure of the movie and the series of events that happen in it. That's not going to put me off seeing it though – if anything, I want to see it even more now.



very little fighting, and instead involve plenty of character interaction. In city areas the interaction is often very important – you can even trade items with the locals if you want. Conversation occasionally opens up unique sub-quests in the game, such as locating lost people in the level, and you are always well-rewarded for any participation. The best part of the level structure is the different feel given to each; the balance between exploration, action and puzzle solving is varied, and occasionally missions involve protection or escorting, which adds a new level to the game.

THE USE OF COLOUR IN THEED CITY IS EXCELLENT, AND THE DRAW DISTANCE AND SHEER SCALE OF SOME OF THE AREAS AND CITIES IS CERTAINLY IMPRESSIVE



Interactive objects such as this button are well marked

Graphically the game is far from outstanding. It looks extremely blocky – not in a low-res sense, but in terms of the level design. The swamps of Naboo are a good example, showing obvious difficulties with the game engine when trying to create a natural and undefined world. But at other times it seems totally different; the use of colour in Theed City is excellent, and the draw distance and sheer scale of some of the areas and cities is certainly impressive. Thankfully, LucasArts refrained from using clips from the movie in the cuts-scenes – a usually cheap option that rarely works in any film licence – but there's a good mix of both pre-rendered and real-time story-fillers here, and they also work really well.

I see much fear in you

The twelve offensive weapons range from the accustomed Light Sabres, Blasters and Thermal Detonators, to less well-known items such as Energy Balls and Proton Missile Launchers. There are also items such as the non-moveable Heavy Repeating Cannon which can tear through hordes of enemies at once. Other pick-ups include health packs, key cards and energy shields, as well as several other hidden bonuses. Some characters can only use a selection of the total available in the game (Queen Amidala, for example, is the only character to be able to use the Droid Stunner), which gives the characters some variety, but the problem with most of the combat is the difficulty in avoiding enemy fire – a side-step command may have been a better alternative to the side roll or jump. Only the Light Sabre can be used effectively to protect from enemy fire while also returning it.

I really enjoyed playing *The Phantom Menace* straight from the start. Although it's a very simple game with almost nothing new or original in it to place it above the competition, there was little to fault it on throughout, and any self-respecting Star Wars fan will find themselves completely immersed in a matter of minutes. For brief periods in the game you actually are Obi-Wan Kenobi, running up to a group of battle droids using your Light Sabre to reflect their fire before doing a 360 degree swipe, leaving them in pieces, and then pulling out a blaster to pick off another at long range and rolling around a corner as a second patrol runs up, all to the brilliant John Williams soundtrack. It is often excellent in this way, but I have to admit that had it not been a Star Wars game the experience would have been much less exciting. It lacks the polish of some of the better games in the genre, which is a shame because with a little more time it could have been one of the best Star Wars games yet seen. **Will**

***The Phantom Menace* takes plenty of breaks from the action, allowing you to converse with the often unpredictable locals**

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●●●●●

Originally planned for a simultaneous release, the PlayStation version has now been delayed until sometime in August. Sorry.

N64 ○○○○○

There are no plans to release this game, but you can play *Pod Racers*, the other Episode 1 game. If you want something more similar, *Castlevania* is about as close as you could get.

Dreamcast ●○○○○

There has been no announcement of any Star Wars games on the Dreamcast so far, but they will surely come eventually.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	The Phantom Menace
GRAPHICS	79
SOUND	92
PLAYABILITY	82
OVERALL	80
Out of 100	

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TOKYO GAME SHOW

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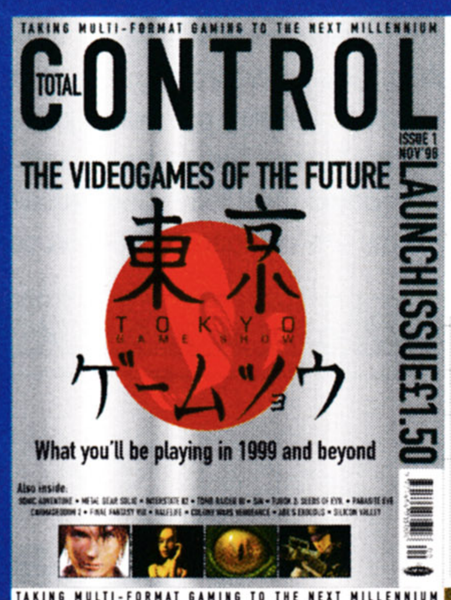
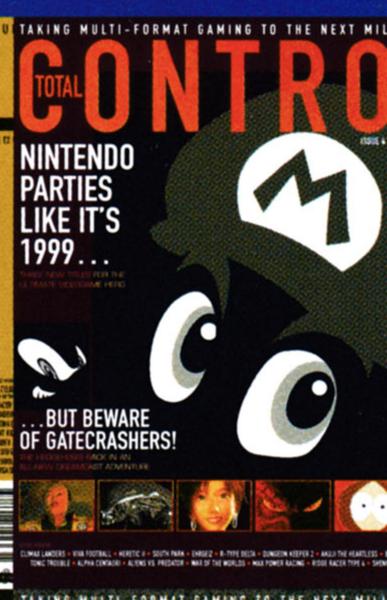




NET TOTAL

STEVE BROWN
e-mail: steveb@rapide.co.uk

Not long after last month's section went out, the *Quake III Arena Q3test* for Windows finally appeared. It was immediately downloaded and installed on the network at Rapide, and epic battles between Total CONTROL and Ultimate PC have been waged ever since. The gameplay is fast and furious, and you would be mad not to download it and get online immediately if your PC will run it. You will need a fairly high spec PC, a decent internet connection and a 3D graphics card. You may also need to get new drivers for the card you are using at www.3dfx.com.

This month we shall again be featuring the usual sections, with news on the latest Dreamcast Net games, cable TV gaming, internet helplines, and more free calls with a new ISP. Check out the Downlink section to find out where you can get Dreamcast, PlayStation and Nintendo save games for those titles that you were never able to complete. Network Focus looks at the UK's premier free game network, BT's Wireplay, and Wanted looks forward to *Carmageddon III: The Death Race 2000*, which has been designed from the ground up with internet play in mind. The popular server-browser Gamespy 3D stars in Application Form, so you will have no excuse not to find *Quake III* servers. Finally, with Star Wars fever at its height, we take a look at some lighter Star Wars sites, including irreverent animations and a tutorial on how to build some outfits from the earlier films. These are serious projects involving full-body fibre-glass casts, so if you want to have a go at home, be prepared for weeks of work and make sure that you follow all of the safety instructions.

We haven't yet received any Reader Sites, so please drop your false modesty and get those entries in. We promise not to be cruel and are genuinely interested in what you might be into. I would also like to extend the invitation to send in pointers to any cool game or non-game-related sites that you may not have put up yourself but think deserve a mention in Net Total. Send them by email to my address at the top of this section, or by post to our address at the beginning of the mag.

Until next month, may the Force be with you...

HOT OFF THE WIRE

Sega Play Down Racing Lines

When the European version of *Sega Rally 2* is released for the Dreamcast, it may be one of the first titles to achieve internet popularity using the console's modem features to connect with other online players. As you may be able to see from these recent pictures, each driver has their net-name displayed above their heads, denoting that there is a networked version of the game. Although online racing is nothing new to PC gamers, console users have yet to experience how much fun it can be. Whether they will experience similar frustration with connection speeds remains to be seen...

Big Games for Cable TV

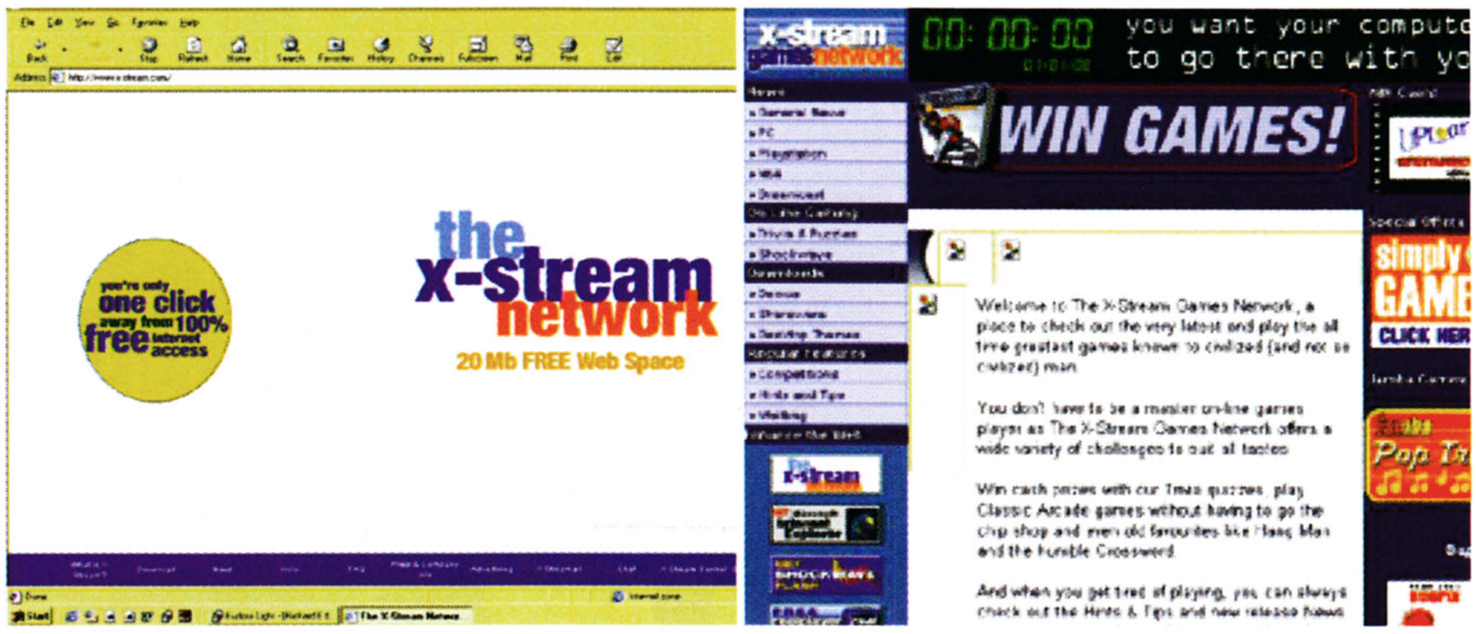
Activision have become the first major game publisher to provide some of their titles for play on an American cable TV channel (ICTV). Although based in the States, this move will hopefully signal a general expansion of this service, both over there and over here. The games that subscribers will be able to play down their cable lines without a PC are to include *Twinsen's Odyssey*, *Upland Game Hunter*, *Earthworm Jim*, *Top Shot*, *Extreme Paint Brawl* and *Hexen II*. Not a bad start. Let's hope for the same soon.

Extortion or Genie-ous?

Infogenie are a telephone technical support service that already offer computer and game hotlines, among others. They have just launched a number for those with any questions or problems concerning the internet. The good thing about Infogenie is that they are a huge, established company, so they have modern databases to make your solution as quick as possible. On the other hand, this is essential as they charge £1.50 a minute for their services. If you've got a problem, if no-one else can help, and if you can afford them, phone 09066 664460.

X-streamly Cheap Internet Access

X-stream is another of this year's ballooning number of free-from-subscription ISPs. The advantage that it offers over its rivals is the availability of periods of free connection, a typical period being from 08.00 to noon on a Saturday. At present these free connection times seem to vary considerably, and the www.x-stream.co.uk website must be visited to check when the 0800 number can be used to connect. At all other times an alternative dial-up number must be used at the standard local phone rate. X-stream is a half-way house between providers like Freeserve, who have no subscription but constant local-rate phone charges, and Screaming.net, who offer free subscription and free access every weekday after 18.00 and all weekend. The advantage of X-stream over Screaming.net is that you do not have to change your telecom provider, but simply use the 0800 number to get free calls during the set periods. The disadvantage is the infrequency and variation of free access times. The X-stream software can be quickly downloaded and installed from www.x-stream.co.uk. Be prepared for a fairly unobtrusive advertising banner on top of your windows while you browse, as this is how the company covers its costs.



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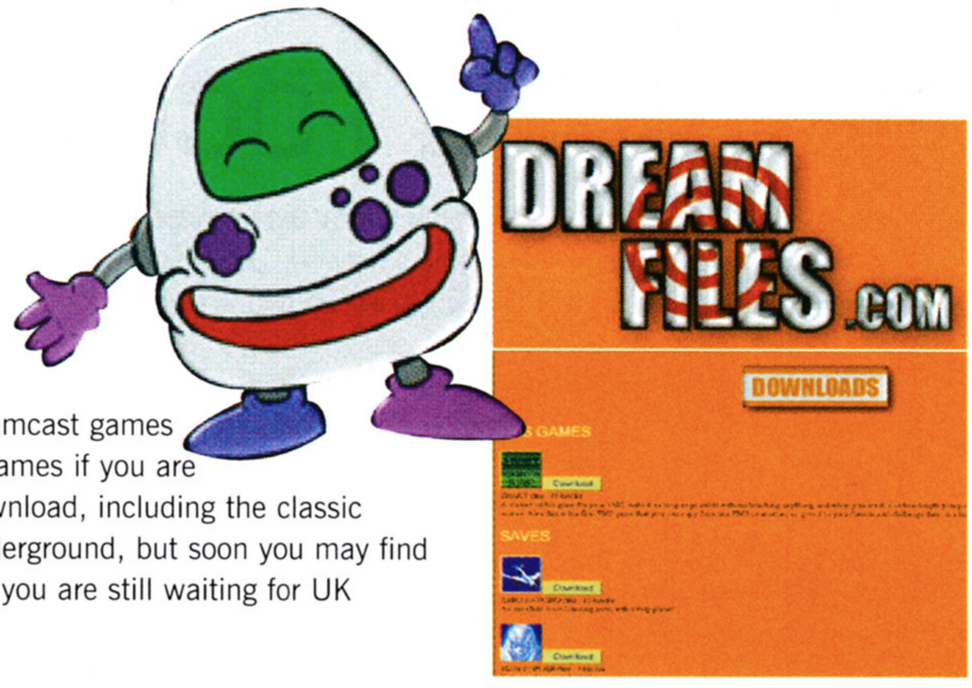
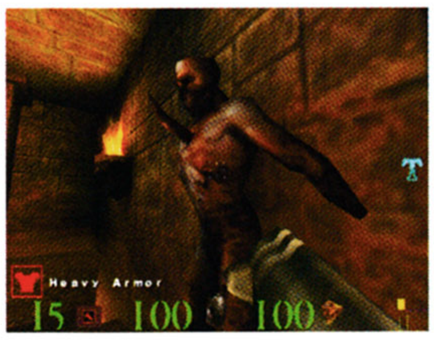


The Saving Bank, www.dreamfile.com

Dreamfiles is a spanking new site for those who are lucky enough to already have hold of a Dreamcast console with VMS. It is a well-designed and easy to navigate site that is basically a database of saved Dreamcast games that may be downloaded and saved directly to the VMS. The saves will allow you to get new positions in games if you are stuck (or just lazy), and may include hidden levels and characters. There are also a few VMS games to download, including the classic *Snake*, for when you are on the move. At present you will probably only see these played on the Tokyo underground, but soon you may find them in good old British traffic jams. The database is bound to grow as more titles are released, so even if you are still waiting for UK release, it is definitely a site worth bookmarking.

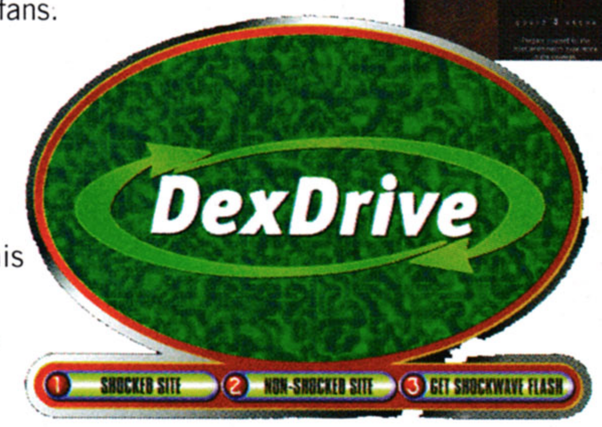
Q3test: Third Time Lucky, www.q3arena.net



Having first been released on the internet for Mac and Linux, the two-level *Q3test* has finally been released for Windows. It is not officially a demo, but a hardware bug-tester. However, it is fully playable online, and there are already hundreds of servers and new versions of server browsers such as Gamespy to find them. An interesting conspiracy theory for its late release for loyal PC players is that ID Software wanted Mac and Linux users who had not played online before to get used to the style without getting their butts whipped and being put off the finished product when it finally appears. A bit far-fetched perhaps, but ID's official line of 'delays in Microsoft certification of 3D drivers' was equally suspect. You will also need to download updated 3D drivers, but there are links to these from the official site. The gameplay and graphics do not disappoint, and it is a must-have for all first-person fans.

Dex-terous Downloads, www.dexchange.net

The Dreamcast is not the only console with the ability to use downloaded save games. If you own a Dex Drive and have PC internet access, then you can also find saves for PlayStation and Nintendo games on this top Shockwave site from Interact. There are hundreds of saves for both popular and more obscure titles, with excellent instructions on use, a lighthearted discussion forum, and a game-related Agony Aunt feature called Little Timmy. Little Timmy's Safety Tip for this month is, "Clip your fingernails often. When they start to get long, you may scratch people. That's a good way to lose friends". The Dex Drive will also work with the backwards compatible PlayStation 2, so you can expect the Dexchange to keep going from strength to strength.



TOP TEN DEMOS

This month all of the demos are available from www.avault.com, one of the best sites on the internet for demos, patches and screenshots.

Russian Roulette 2

You are the last in the Romanov bloodline and must open five intergalactic gateways on six different worlds to find an artifact and save mankind in this original action strategy.

NASCAR Racing Online Series

Fans of the multiplayer NASCAR internet competition can now race two of the tracks for free with this playable demo from Sierra Sports of the deservedly popular racing title.

Hidden and Dangerous

A cross between *Commandos* and *Rainbow Six*, this first-person strategic combat game is set in the Second World War and could well be one of the surprise hits of '99.

Battlecruiser 3000 AD

This original space sim combines flight sim elements with the ability to wander around your starship in first person view. The graphics are superb, as is the multiplayer gameplay.

Dark Matter

This space simulation combines action and strategy from the perspective of an alien race of your choice. It has been designed from scratch as an internet game.

Warzone 2100

An updated demo of this post apocalyptic real-time strategy includes new missions from campaigns two and three. A multiplayer demo is also available for download from the Eidos FTP.

Shadow Company

In a similar design vein to *Hidden and Dangerous*, *Shadow Company* mixes first-person combat with strategic planning, but using a band of modern mercenaries with photorealistic graphics.

Quake III Arena

Now available for Windows at last, this test version includes two very different levels – one medieval *Doom* throwback and one future-industrial jump-pad arena.

Official Formula One Racing

Only the very best racing games get to carry the official Formula One licence, and Eidos' effort deserves the honour, with amazing realism and detail in graphics and gameplay.

Street Wars

The sequel to *Constructor*, *Street Wars* is an isometric strategy sim with a whole lot of humour. New tactics to expand your real-estate empire include distracting prostitutes and bomb-planting.

NETWORK FOCUS

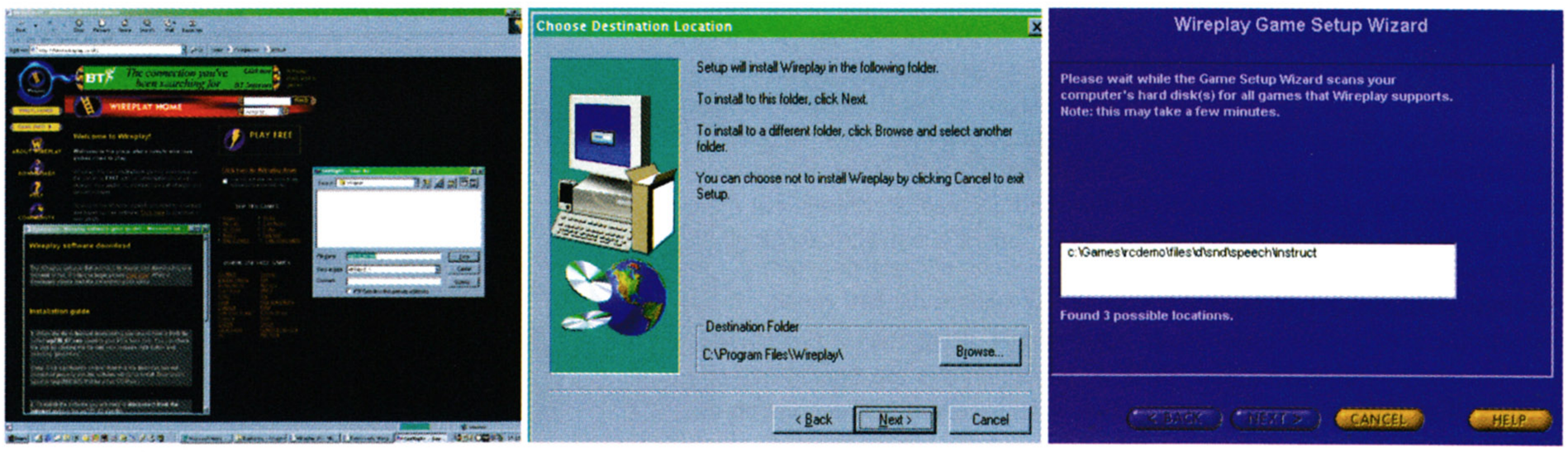
Wireplay, www.wireplay.com

Wireplay is BT's gaming network. It is now subscription-free, and there are two ways to access it. Power Play uses Wireplay software, dialling a local rate number and not using your ISP at all (phone BT for a free connection CD or download it from the website). This should give fast connection to over 100 supported games (see box-out). You can also access Wireplay's Open Play service through your existing ISP to play a smaller selection of games.

Although Wireplay used to charge you for online time at slightly higher than a local call-rate, there is now only the standard local charge for what is an excellent service. The software is easy to install, and you then simply have to set up your account name and password to gain access. Power Play access using a different number to your ISP is the preferred way to connect, as this gives access to more local Wireplay game servers that offer much lower ping rates than the Open Play connection. I enjoyed *Quake II* at speeds of between 200 and 300 milliseconds, which is more than acceptable. There are a decent number of games to choose from, including multi-user text games, as well as the more popular first-person and RTS titles. There are loads of excellent chat rooms and player search engines to help you find competitors and games of your standard. For a free service it compares very favourably against the subscription games networks. Give it a try – you have absolutely nothing to lose (except game battles).

TOP TEN WIREPLAY GAMES

1. Quake II
2. Half-Life
3. Air Attack
4. MUD II
5. Rise of Rome
6. Quake
7. Duke Nukem
8. Bridge
9. Red Alert
10. Total Annihilation



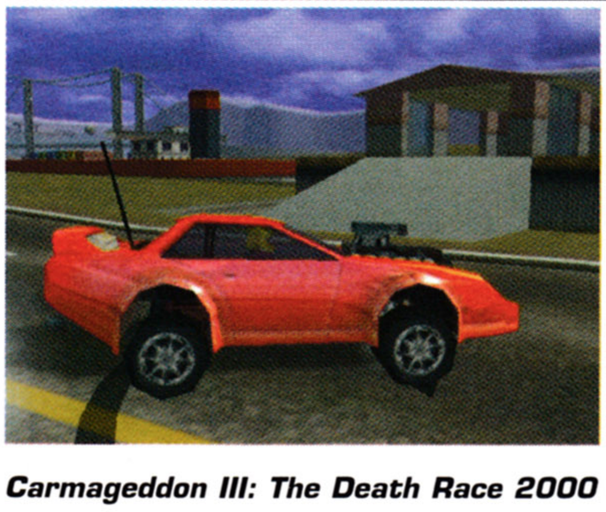
The installation of Wireplay software is very straightforward, and you will soon be playing your games with a decent ping

WANTED

Carmageddon III: The Death Race 2000

Although it will not be ready until Christmas, the third in the controversial *Carmageddon* series promises to be a hot online title as well as an involving single-player game. SCI are promising huge deathmatch arenas and a variety of racing environments, both in the wide outdoors and in enclosed environments such as shopping malls and sewers. The new environments will involve far more animated structures such as raising river bridges, huge moving ships that can be jumped onto, and far more extensive train networks. Other features that should add to online gameplay include huge spherical acid vats that can be knocked over in an opponent's path in industrial zones.

If acid lands on your vehicle it will slowly eat through the bodywork, cause engine damage and impede performance. SCI are also planning to launch servers with the Massively Multiplayer universe, so we can expect the number of human players per map to be impressive. Having compiled large numbers of wish-lists from existing fan-sites, the vehicles will be far more customisable right from the start of the game, as SCI recognise that the proliferation of custom skins and models on the internet for *Carpocalypse Now* reflected a strong desire for easier editing. There is bound to be controversy over the violence, but hopefully a temporary compromise with the BBFC will prevent a delayed release.



***Carmageddon III: The Death Race 2000* has been designed from the ground up with internet play in mind and should definitely be put on your Christmas list**

APPLICATION FORM

TOTAL CONTROL

Name *Gamespy 3D*

Size *1.4MB*

Present Wage *Unpaid Unlimited Shareware*

Expected Wage *$20.00 Registration Fee*

Job Description:
You must be skilled in researching the fastest available game servers and sorting them into any order required. You must also be able to make easy contact with colleagues all over the globe.

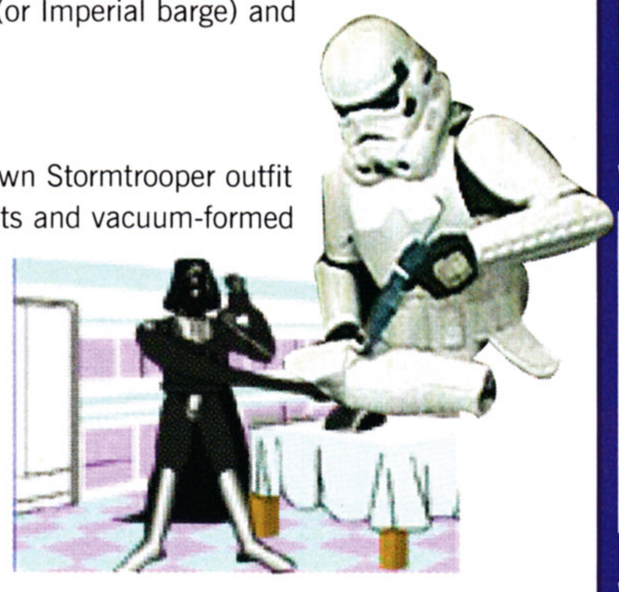
Why do you feel that you are suited to the job?

Without wishing to appear arrogant, I have already provided service for over four million happy employers. I require a minimum of induction into a new system and will find my way around your game files with very little direction or management. I am infinitely flexible and will be happy to provide you with exactly the information that YOU require. With access to all the latest contact lists, I can quickly check and review the fastest servers running not only the titles, but the exact game type and level that you wish to peruse. I have even recently retrained to familiarise myself with the latest Quake III servers. If you need to find a colleague for an immediate meeting, then I can quickly locate anyone who is attending a server conference and act as negotiator for your discussions prior to the real business. I can even find a server that provides equal ping rates for a more balanced debate. At the end of the day, you simply have to click your fingers and I will come running your game.

Please leave an address where we may contact you:
www.gamespy.com

GAME OVER, MAN

Star Wars fever is escalating, as the Phantom Menace film is released in the States (and inevitably slated by the press) and the two LucasArts games hit the shelves in the UK. So this month I thought I'd jump on the bandwagon (or Imperial barge) and check out some sites in a galaxy far, far away...

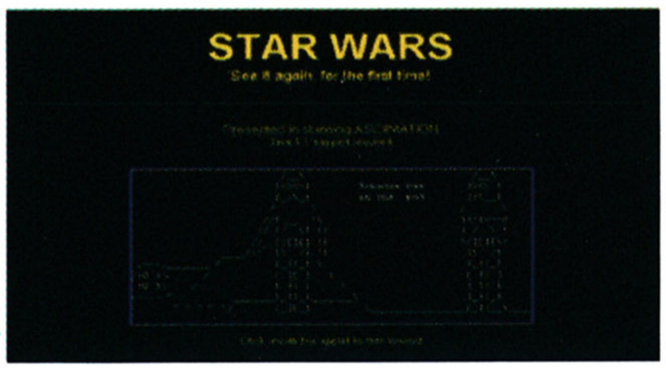


www.studiocreations.com

If you visit the 'How to...' section of this site, there is an in-depth tutorial on building your very own Stormtrooper outfit or Powerdroid. You should be warned that these are serious projects involving fibre-glass bodycasts and vacuum-formed plastic, but the projects can be undertaken in a garage by the enthusiast with detailed tutorials and reference pictures. Anyway, a Stormtrooper outfit will be all the rage this summer, if a little hot on the beach.

www.spacewars.virtual-power.net

This hilarious site features a number of spoof Flash animations that send up the original film trilogy. They include 'Darth Vader's Hobby', which involves the evil overlord making dirty heavy-breathing phone calls to Princess Leia, and 'Sabre Trouble', which sees Luke Skywalker having droopage problems with his phallic weapon and in need of some Space Viagra.



www.fortunecity.com/tatooine/lucas/339/

This may be a long-winded URL to type in, but it really is worth it. Someone has gone to enormous trouble to convert the first Episode IV Star Wars film into an animated ASCII character classic. It's an ongoing project that has so far reached the Mos Eisley Spaceport scene, but it is about fifteen minutes of incredible text animation that you just won't be able to tear yourself away from. Forget email, the @ sign was originally intended for use as the buns of Princess Leia's hairdo – @oo@.

Quick-Click

First-person:
www.3dactionplanet.com

Hardware:
www.extremehw.com

Console News:
www.coremagazine.com

Multi-Console Cheats:
www.gamesages.com

PC Shareware:
www.zdnet.com

Film Database:
www.uk.imdb.com

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STATION

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- PUMA STREET SOCCER
- KKND KROSSFIRE
- NEED FOR SPEED: RC
- TOTAL DRIVIN' (PLATINUM)
- FUTURE COP LAPD 2100
- FORSAKEN
- STREET SK8TER
- BIG AIR SNOWBOARDING

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- DINO CRISIS
- EVIL ZONE
- CARMAGEDDON
- SPEED FREAKS
- AIRONAUTS

...PLUS MUCH MORE!

AFTER DYING... KILLING IS EASY!

shadow man

Sometimes, it takes a KILLER to stop a KILLER. Exclusive PAL preview and rolling demo of Acclaim's Dark Prophecy.

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OMEGA BOOST

We have the first UK review of Sony's graphically accomplished take on an arcade classic, Space Harrier.

ISSUE NINE ON SALE NOW!

HARDSTUFF

CLIFFSMITH
e-mail: cliff@rapide.co.uk

Regardless of whether you prefer consoles or PCs as your chosen gaming platform, you can't help but be impressed by the graphics of the latest PC games. However, when you play a game of any sort on a PC, what you see on screen depends on the display adapter you are using and whether or not you have a 3D accelerator card installed into one of your computer's expansion slots. The better the card, the better the graphics, so if you want to turn your PC into a really capable games machine, you are going to need the best. But with the wide range of products on the market, which one do you choose?

With VideoLogic finally announcing the release of a PC graphics accelerator based on the PowerVR 2 chipset used in the Sega Dreamcast, the stage is now set for a showdown between the big five manufacturers of accelerator chipsets. Market leader 3Dfx's Voodoo 3 is already available and doing well. It boasts some impressive features at a reasonable price, and is a strong competitor despite its lack of 32-bit rendering. ATI also have their latest board, the Rage Fury, based on their powerful 128-bit circuitry and boasting 32MB of memory, and which does support 32-bit rendering with no loss of speed. This is the board powering the Apple iMac and G3. Matrox are looking very strong with their awesome 256-bit G400 and its range of advanced features and special effects. NVIDIA, meanwhile, have weighed in with their TNT2, a high quality 2D/3D board which can easily compete with the Voodoo 3. The PowerVR 2 is going to have its work cut out to survive against such stiff competition.

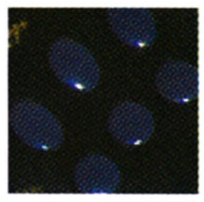
The only way to know for sure which is the best 3D accelerator is to test the competing boards against each other in a head-to-head comparative review, using a series of standard benchmarking tests and popular games to rate their performance. If we can talk the five companies in question to trust us with their brand new hardware, then we should be able to start work, and we'll have the answer for you soon.

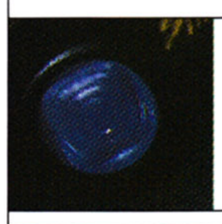
GRAVIS STINGER

Company: Gravis Price: £29.99 On sale: OUT NOW Format: Laptop PC

This little gadget is a complete giveaway. All those businessmen and women strutting about with their laptop computers, pretending to be hard-working and important, have been having us on. Those laptops are just there for playing games on, and here's the proof. The Stinger from Gravis is the first gamepad to be specifically designed for use with a laptop computer. It plugs into the standard serial port and allows those busy executives to have a quick, therapeutic blast on *Quake* before that important meeting.

The Stinger is a tiny little thing, provoking comments like 'Ahh! That's so cute!' around the office. Despite its almost delicate appearance, it is very well-made and solid to the point of indestructibility. A lot of thought has gone into the design, and it shows. It has a smooth proportional D-pad with a full 360 degrees of control, and ten programmable buttons which can be configured using the supplied software. The overall layout is clean and uncluttered, and despite the fact that I could hide the thing under the palm of my hand, I found it surprisingly comfortable and easy to use.





This controller is ideal for the gamer on the move. It is small enough to fit into the corner of a briefcase or carry-all bag, but powerful enough to meet almost all gaming needs. I'm surprised nobody thought of it sooner.

4 OUT OF 5

GRAVIS XTERMINATOR

Company: Gravis Price: £39.95 On sale: OUT NOW Format: PC

Gravis have been making high quality gaming accessories for nearly fifteen years, and it shows. The Xterminator is one of the best-designed and best-made game controllers on the market. At nearly forty quid it's not cheap, but you are getting a lot for your money. The Xterminator has more control options than any other pad in its class. It has two D-pads; one a simple digital control, the other a fully proportional analogue type. There are two shoulder buttons on the front of the device, which are also proportional so they can be used as rudder controls for flight sims. There are two trigger controls underneath, and on the top there are eight more programmable buttons, a proportional throttle slider, and an eight-way point-of-view switch. All of the buttons can be mapped onto keyboard commands for those few games that don't support a controller. There is even a facility to connect two pads together for two-player games.

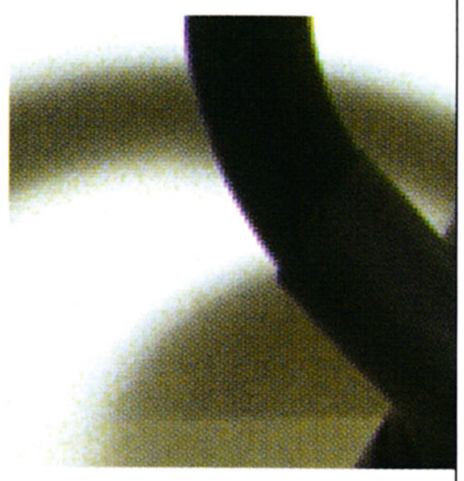
The GrIP software included with the Xterminator is very powerful and versatile. It automatically configures the controller for many current games, and you can set up different control configurations for any that are not covered. It automatically loads up your programmed preferences as soon as you start the game.

I don't usually like all-in-one controllers, preferring the right tool for the job, but the Gravis Xterminator is an exception. It is the perfect all-rounder, and you won't find a better controller anywhere.

5 OUT OF 5

TURBO RACE WHEEL

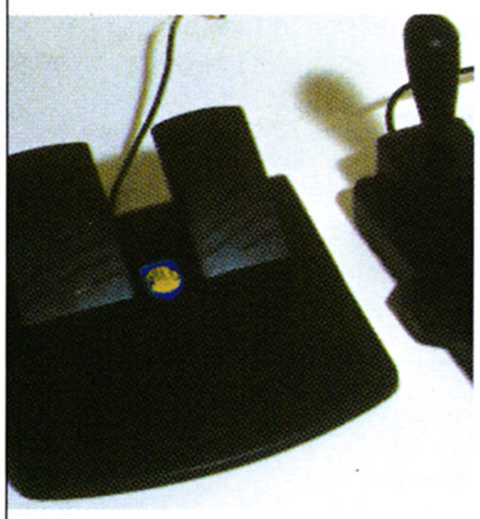
Company: Wild Things Price: **£64.99** On sale: **OUT NOW** Format: **PlayStation**



Compared to the other two steering wheels which have been dragged under my rotating knives this month, the Turbo Race Wheel from Wild Things is undoubtedly the most versatile. It has more functions than a posh hotel, and you certainly get a lot of buttons and things for your money. In the box you get three separate units, the wheel itself (obviously), the pedal unit and the unique selling point of the Turbo Race Wheel, the handbrake/gearshift unit, which gives a bit more realism to those exciting handbrake turns.

The wheel is designed to be used either on a desktop or wedged under your thighs in an armchair. The angle and height of the wheel can be adjusted using chunky plastic locking levers, somewhat similar to the InterAct V3 wheel. Like most compromises, it is not particularly good in either position.

The pedal unit is too light, and the springs under the pedals are far too soft. Even barefoot it was difficult to get any feeling from the unit, and it was inclined to slide about and get tangled in the cables.



The handbrake/gearstick unit is a nice idea, but poorly implemented. The controls feel very flimsy and the unit is so light that it never stays in one place, even with the attached suction cups. The Turbo Race Wheel comes with two rather cheap-looking G-clamps, but to hold down the wheel and the handbrake unit you really need three.

The main problem with the Turbo Race Wheel is the build quality. The fit of the mouldings is not good, and the whole thing feels cheap and flimsy. For nearly sixty-five quid, I would expect a product of a generally higher standard.

2 OUT OF 5

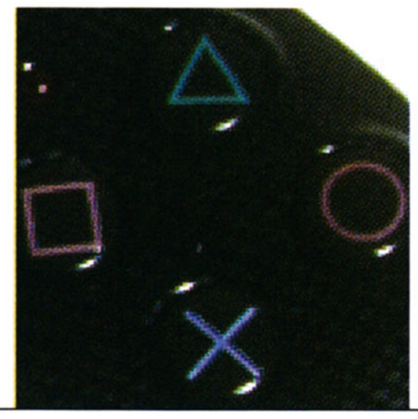
PRIMAL PAD

Company: Wild Things Price: **£24.99** On sale: **OUT NOW** Format: **PlayStation**

The first thing that strikes you about the Wild Things Primal Pad is that this is a great looking pad. Its size and overall shape are more like a PC controller than the usual Sony clone PlayStation stuff. It will be especially useful for adult gamers with large hands, or anyone who tends to find the standard PlayStation controllers a bit fiddly.

The Primal Pad is generally well-made, although the handgrips do flex slightly and feel as though they could be snapped off with enough force. This is a deliberate part of the design though, as the rumble motors are housed in the handgrips, and the slight flexibility transmits the vibration more readily. The casing is smooth and glossy, and feels comfortable in the hands. The finish resembles the super-strong carbon fibre material used in racing cars and looks suitably high-tech. The placement of the controls is logical and comfortable, and the trigger-like position of the L2 and R2 buttons is a nice touch. The analogue joysticks are a bit on the floppy side and could do with slightly stronger springs, but this is really a matter of personal preference. The inclusion of slow motion and turbo buttons is just a finishing touch.

I like the Primal Pad a lot. It is well-designed, looks great and is comfortable to use, although I do have some reservations about its durability.



4 OUT OF 5

DENON DVD

Denon, Japan's oldest hi-fi company (founded in 1910), have announced the launch of a new entry-level DVD player which brings a wide range of premium features within the range of the budget buyer. The DVD-2500 boasts DTS digital output, previously only found on more expensive machines. This gives Dolby Digital sound with MPEG II and PCM datastreams. The unit also has 2 SCART sockets – one with RGB – and a Cinema Voice Mode, which raises the volume of dialogue to enhance clarity. The 24-bit 96kHz D/A converter is compatible with the latest, highest standards of DVD technology. The DVD-2500 uses the highest grade electronic components and is built to Denon's usual exacting specifications. It is available in black, with a gold model available on special order. The price of this desirable piece of kit is a remarkable £499.99

SIGNS OF NEON

VideoLogic have announced the launch of a PC graphics accelerator based on the PowerVR 2, the chipset that provides the graphics for the Sega Dreamcast. The Neon 250 is a 2D/3D card which replaces your standard display adapter as well as providing accelerated 3D graphics for games.

The card features the PowerVR 250 processor, 16MB of fast SDRAM graphics memory, full AGP 2X bus connector, and support for effects such as multi-texturing, environment mapping and anisotropic filtering. Included with the card's install software is PowerVR Tools, a program to help you get the most out of your graphics.

HI-HO SILVER HEADPHONES

Sennheiser have released a new model to top off their Four series headphone range. The HD 495 Silver Stereo Headphones are a lightweight design with a one side cable, making them ideal as replacements for personal CD or MiniDisk players. They employ Neodymium Iron magnets and a special magnet diaphragm design for deep, low distortion bass. They have a frequency response of 17-23000 Hz at 0.2% distortion, and a maximum loudness of 106 dB. The cable, although very thin, is enormously strong, employing Kevlar carbon-fibres in its casing and core. The cable is low noise oxygen-free copper for the best in audio performance. The HD 495 retails at around £59.95. For more information contact the Sennheiser helpline on 01494 551571, or find their website at www.senheiser.co.uk

V4 FORCE FEEDBACK WHEEL

Company: InterAct Price: £99.99 On sale: OUT NOW Format: PC

This is InterAct's replacement for the popular V3 Racing Wheel, a versatile model available for the PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and PC. The new V4 is a development of the same concept, a wheel which is equally suitable for clamping to a desktop or gripping between the thighs. InterAct are developing a version for the console formats, but the first one in the shops is the PC Force Feedback model, and it is a vast improvement over its predecessor. Its new design is very clever. It hinges at two points, which allows the wheel to be positioned at almost any angle. I found the V4 to be easy and comfortable to use both at my desk and sitting in an armchair.

The V4 uses a compact but extremely powerful force feedback mechanism developed by InterAct, and it compares favourably with the Microsoft Force Feedback wheel, which costs around sixty pounds more.

Build quality has also been much improved over the V3, with many metal parts giving it a very solid feel. Because of the hinged linkage between the motor and the base plate, the feedback vibrations don't shake your desk as much as some more conventional wheels.

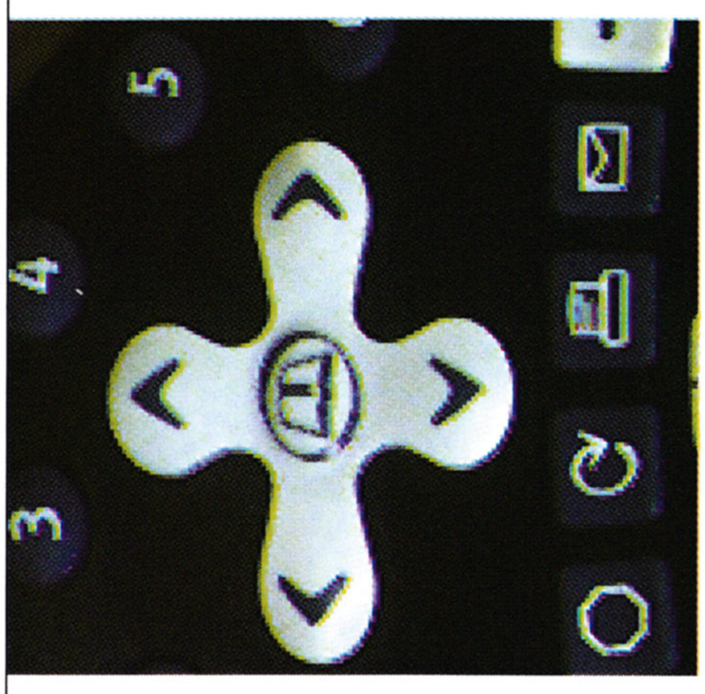
The pedal unit is also good, although I would like more tension in the springs. Unlike most other controllers, the pedals are on a long lever, which makes them feel a lot more like real car pedals.

At under a hundred pounds, the V4 is easily the best value force feedback steering wheel on the market, and its unique design makes it an ideal choice for most gaming needs. InterAct can be contacted on 0161 702 5010.

5 OUT OF 5

WEBRACER

Company: Kensington Price: £49.99 On sale: OUT NOW Format: PC



This contraption is the Kensington WebRacer, a device which will, the manufacturers hope, replace the mouse as the best tool for navigating the internet.

The central feature is a touch pad, one of those little square thingies that laptops have instead of a mouse. This is supposed to be quick and easy to use, and I suppose it would be if you had a forefinger shaped like the end of a pencil. For those among us not so blessed, using the touch pad to navigate around the screen is likely to prove frustrating – God knows how laptop owners put up with the damned things. On either side of the unit are four flat buttons which I kept accidentally pressing. Bad ergonomics there, or the triumph of style over function.

Other features of the WebRacer include six buttons that act as hot keys to your favourite websites, which is fine as long as you only have half a dozen. My bookmarks page contains well over a hundred entries, so I guess I'd be needing a few more buttons.

There is also a cross-shaped button which is designed for scrolling around websites and other documents. It appears to work. The final button calls up a completely useless on screen keyboard to save you the trouble of using the real one normally attached to your computer.

If we are going to start browsing the internet on our TVs in the near future, we will be seeing a lot of gadgets like this appearing. I just hope they are better designed. For now, I'll stick with the mouse.

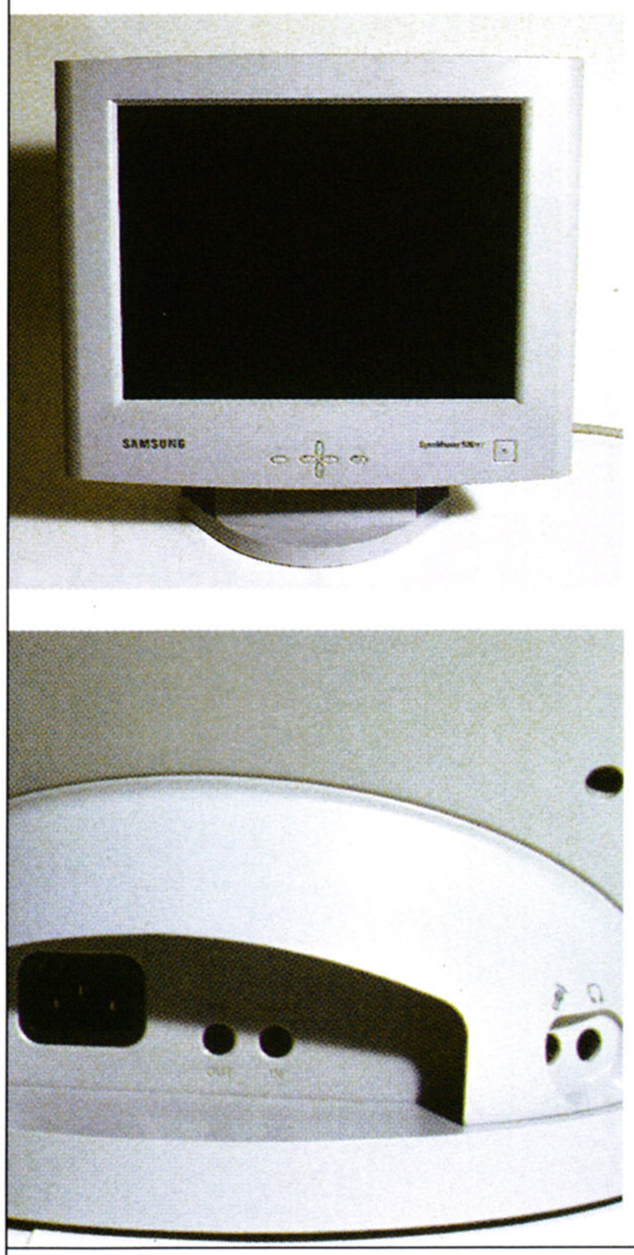
1 OUT OF 5

JAM!! IN THE SHOPS

The Addonics Jam!! adapter, which was reviewed in last month's Hard Stuff, is soon to be available in branches of HMV in Newcastle, Liverpool, Gateshead, Manchester, Birmingham, Oxford Circus, Oxford Street and the Trocadero Centre, and possibly also one or two other high street outlets. The remarkably useful device, which allows games consoles to connect to PC monitors, is going on sale at around £49.99. If sales are good, it will probably be available in other stores soon.

SYNCMASTER 520 TFT

Company: Samsung Price: **£839 + VAT** On sale: **OUT NOW** Format: **PC**



Samsung are world leaders in flat-screen LCD technology, and products like this SyncMaster flat-screen monitor clearly demonstrate why. The 520 TFT is completely plug-and-play compatible, and as such is easy to set up as a normal monitor. Its stand incorporates a pair of high quality multimedia speakers, and Samsung's self-explanatory Wide Viewing Angle Technology means that the picture can be clearly seen from 60 degrees either side of the screen, which makes the device ideal for audio-visual presentations.

The quality of the picture is slightly higher than a comparable size CRT monitor, with sharp images and clear bright colours in VGA, SVGA and XGA modes, with a maximum resolution of 1024 x 768. The controls are a bit on the sensitive side, and it may take some fiddling to get the ideal picture, but it is worth it. The 520 TFT is an ideal match for the latest graphics accelerator cards, delivering game graphics and sound with great clarity.

The big advantage with LCD monitors is the space they save on your desktop, but the 520 TFT goes one step further, with optional wall mounting. The 520 TFT is an expensive piece of kit, but if you can afford it, you'd be hard pushed to find a better monitor.

4 OUT OF 5

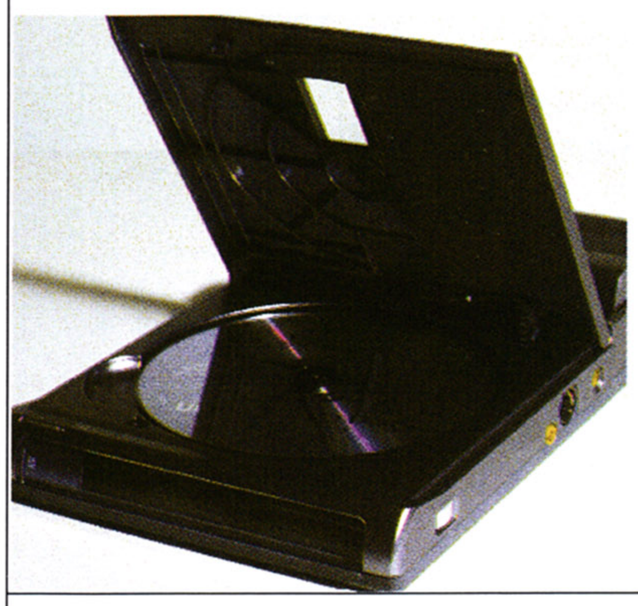
MINIDISC MARVEL

MiniDisc seems to be taking off at last as the format of choice for personal hi-fi, and Aiwa are hoping to cash in on this with the release of the high-spec AM-F70. Building on the success of the two-year-old AM-F5, the new model is smaller, lighter, has a higher performance and a longer battery life, and is 20% cheaper than its predecessor. The features of the AM-F70 include a digital optical cable for direct recording from your CD player, a forty-second electronic anti-shock device, a battery life good for forty hours of replay, and a funky florescent blue backlight for the displays. The AM-F70 is available now at around £200. For more information call Aiwa on 0990 902 902, or check out www.aiwa.co.u

SONY DVD DISCMAN

Company: Sony Price: **£600** On sale: **OUT NOW** Format: **DVD**

Call me picky, but there seems to be something very important missing from Sony's latest portable DVD drive. Due to a strange decision by Sony UK, in every European country except the UK this gadget is available with a pair of remarkable Glasstron LCD glasses which allow you to watch the equivalent of a 125cm screen hovering before your eyes, making it the ultimate travel accessory. Of course, I can see the possibility arising where you may want to show off your new machine at a mate's house, and Sony's new player is small enough to make this less of a hassle than moving a larger midi-size machine. However, when you are paying an extra £300-400 for the privilege of portability, it seems slightly pointless without the addition of the Glasstron unit. Unlike the Panasonic DVD–L10 with its built-in screen and speakers, the Sony machine cannot be used 'on the go' on its own, and the lack of a screen makes it a very overpriced piece of kit.



Apart from this it's everything that you need from a DVD drive. It plays all PAL-2 DVDs, video CDs, audio CDs and more, and features all the standard options. As a drive it's only faulted by the relatively slow access speed and slightly noisy operation. The battery life of three hours beats the DVD-L10 by thirty minutes.

If you seriously have the money to go out and buy this, then an extra £300 for Panasonic's alternative probably won't sound like too much extra, and you'd be buying a much cooler and far more useful piece of kit. Unless you are able to get the Glasstron unit as an import, the only real use is for hooking it up to hotel TVs or for those of you with a second home. Basically, the majority of you would be best advised to consider a normal-sized machine for your front room.

1 OUT OF 5

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Home is where the heart is

PART 1

Craig Vaughan talks to the world's **most talented** amateur coders and **exclusively previews their current** projects...

We all have fond memories of the heyday of eight bit computing. It was a time when fortunes were made and gameplay barriers were repeatedly broken. Games were written in weeks or months by lone coders working from home, squeezing minor miracles out of machines of the day. These days you'd be forgiven for thinking that games development had become the sole preserve of massive multi-million pound software companies, but you'd be wrong. There's a slew of dedicated amateur coders currently beavering away on a variety of projects, and their efforts put many of their professional counterparts to shame. Usually with no formal programming qualifications, these self-taught guys transfer their love of games into inspirational code, which they deliver free unto the masses. You might think such talented folk would restrict their efforts to the open architecture of the PC, but we've also uncovered a burgeoning PlayStation scene, and – keep this quiet – it's not making use of Sony's Yaroze.

THE PC SCENE

The best example of amateur coding on the PC is within the 'Total Conversion' scene. For the uninitiated, a 'Total Conversion' is just that – a game that's totally converted into something else. Take *Quake II*, for example: many commercially released first-person shooters use the *Quake II* engine to power their games, but totally convert the plot, environments, graphics and sound; *Sin* is a good example of this technique in practice. What the commercial releases lack, however, is the degree of innovation and spirit of adventure present in their amateur counterparts. So where should you go if you fancy an all-out racing game using the *Half-Life* engine or – get this – a flight sim using the guts of *Quake II*?

where the heart is

PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED

Web-heads start here

For any 'scene' **to thrive, it requires** a base for its **creative output.** So for dedicated total converters, Graham Rocher's site is **manna from heaven...**

Anyone wondering where to start their search for information on total conversions should point their web browser at www.converted2.com, the ultimate online resource for total conversion authors, their work, and the massed ranks of 'first-person shooter' fans. The success of the site is a tribute to one man's determination to give the scene the recognition it deserves. Despite being all things to all people and one of the busiest webmasters around, Graham Rocher took time out to talk exclusively to Total CONTROL, beginning by relating the origins of his site:

"Just over two years ago, I started an internet site called 'Roach's Total Conversion Roost', which was part of the now defunct Brutality gaming network. The subsequent demise of Brutality saw me move to 'Quake2.com'. I was keen to expand my site in an attempt to showcase the amateur coding teams and their work, so there followed a meeting with another site known as the House of Milamber. Both sites later merged to form Converted2.com, and its popularity grew. We soon saw the need to expand further, and moved to our own domain to become part of the Telefragged network (www.telefragged.com). With that expansion, new members of staff were needed, and a more in-depth database of total conversions and information was required. A number of guys joined the Converted2 team, which was headed up by myself. One of our more prominent members is Magnus 'Shockman' Blikstad from Sweden. He handles the web design, development section, and site maintenance. Other contributors include Govinda, Merlin, Dwayne and a number of other temporary news updaters. As for myself, I handle site administration, hosted site management, and try do the odd review/preview/interview when I find time".

BY HOSTING TOTAL CONVERSIONS, THE END-USER GAMING COMMUNITY HAVE A SITE WHERE THEY CAN FIND PROJECTS TO GET INVOLVED IN OR DOWNLOAD

Recalling the site's roots, it's clear that Rocher feels he's close to achieving his original goals: "The plan for Converted2 from the beginning was to create a close total conversion community, a place where everything comes together. I'm not sure if we've entirely achieved that yet, but we're on the right track for sure. By hosting total conversions, the end-user gaming community have a site where they can find projects to get involved in, or download. And, with our comprehensive database of total conversions, visitors can track down a game they're looking for – it's quick and hassle free".

Outlining the benefits of such a tight knit community, Rocher explains: "A number of total conversions out there are handicapped from the start because their homepages are located at sites that provide free, but limited, web space. These sites are often slow, require a number of advertising banners to be set up within them, and don't provide much publicity. We've changed that for the total conversions we host by offering unlimited web space, pop3 e-mail accounts, publicity throughout the Telenation, and support from the webmasters at

GAME ON

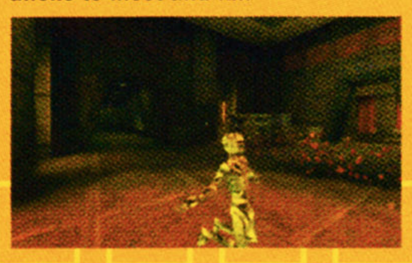
Here are just a few of the conversions hosted by Rocher's site...

Mayday: A *Half-Life* total conversion currently in development...

Mayday: It has dark and sinister environments

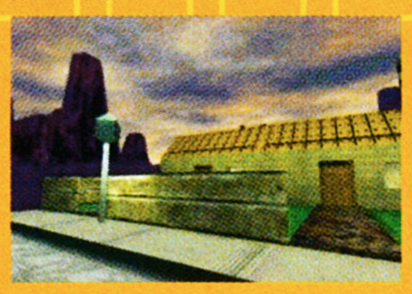
Dr. Who: In Quirky *Quake* episode as the Tardis arrives

Dr. Who: There's all manner of aliens to meet and kill

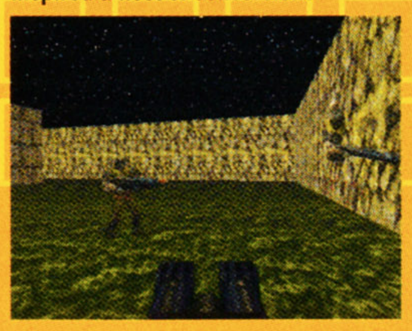


Scourge Of Eternity: *Scourge of Eternity*, an early *Quake* conversion

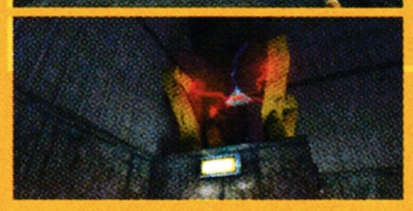
Pokemon: A *Half-Life* conversion to look forward to



Pokemon: It seems *Half-Life* has inspired a host of conversions



Vietnam Quake: *Quake*, in Vietnam. Nothing's sacred in this cracking *Quake* conversion



Chemical Existence: Made its debut at E3 and proved to be a real crowd-puller

***Quake III* in the Arena**

Internet favourite, *Half-Life*

Converted2 and the Telefragged Network. They also have access to forums where they can post queries, 'help wanted' adverts, and just about anything else".

What might surprise many about the man at the centre of everything total conversion related is that his own personal programming skills are relatively limited. Rocher explains: "I'm into the graphical side of design, although I do know HTML and scratchy DHTML. Magnus Blikstad is lead programmer of the *Chemical Existence* total conversion, one of the lucky programs to be chosen to be demonstrated by Valve Software (creators of *Half-Life*) at the E3 gaming convention. He handles the programming, and basically anything really technical that needs doing. He's the man I go to".

Reflecting on the highs and lows of his web-based venture, Rocher recalls: "It's extremely time consuming to start off small and to become the massive site Converted2 has evolved into. It takes time, patience and dedication. Every day you have to deal with e-mails from hosted sites, update the news, keep the site original for your readers, and handle administration and site maintenance duties. As I said, you need to be patient as it takes a while for people to realise that your site actually exists, and if they like it they may post a link on their site, and suddenly you're getting regular hits".

Rocher's enthusiasm and obsession shows no sign of abating, and he still gets a regular buzz from his work: "The feeling you get when someone important (i.e. a recognised figure in the gaming community, or any id Software employee) e-mails you and compliments you on a job well done is great. And at the end of the day the reason I started the site in the first place was a love of the games these people created".

Looking to the future, Rocher sees the opportunities for total conversion authors opening up exponentially: "When the total conversion scene first started, there really was only one game around to develop for, which was *Quake* by id Software, although there was the odd *Duke Nukem* total conversion here and there. But, as more companies have started to create first-person perspective games with new 3D engines, the variety of games to create total conversions for has increased dramatically. We try to keep track of as many of these games as possible. The games we currently have total conversion listings for in our database are: *Quake*, *Quake II*, *Quake III: Arena*, *Prey*, *Genesis 3D*, *Unreal*, *Half-Life*, *Daikatana*, *Max Payne*, *Sin*, *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Duke Nukem Forever*, *Heretic II*, and *Blood 2*. We plan to expand further and offer support for more and more games as the first-person genre expands".

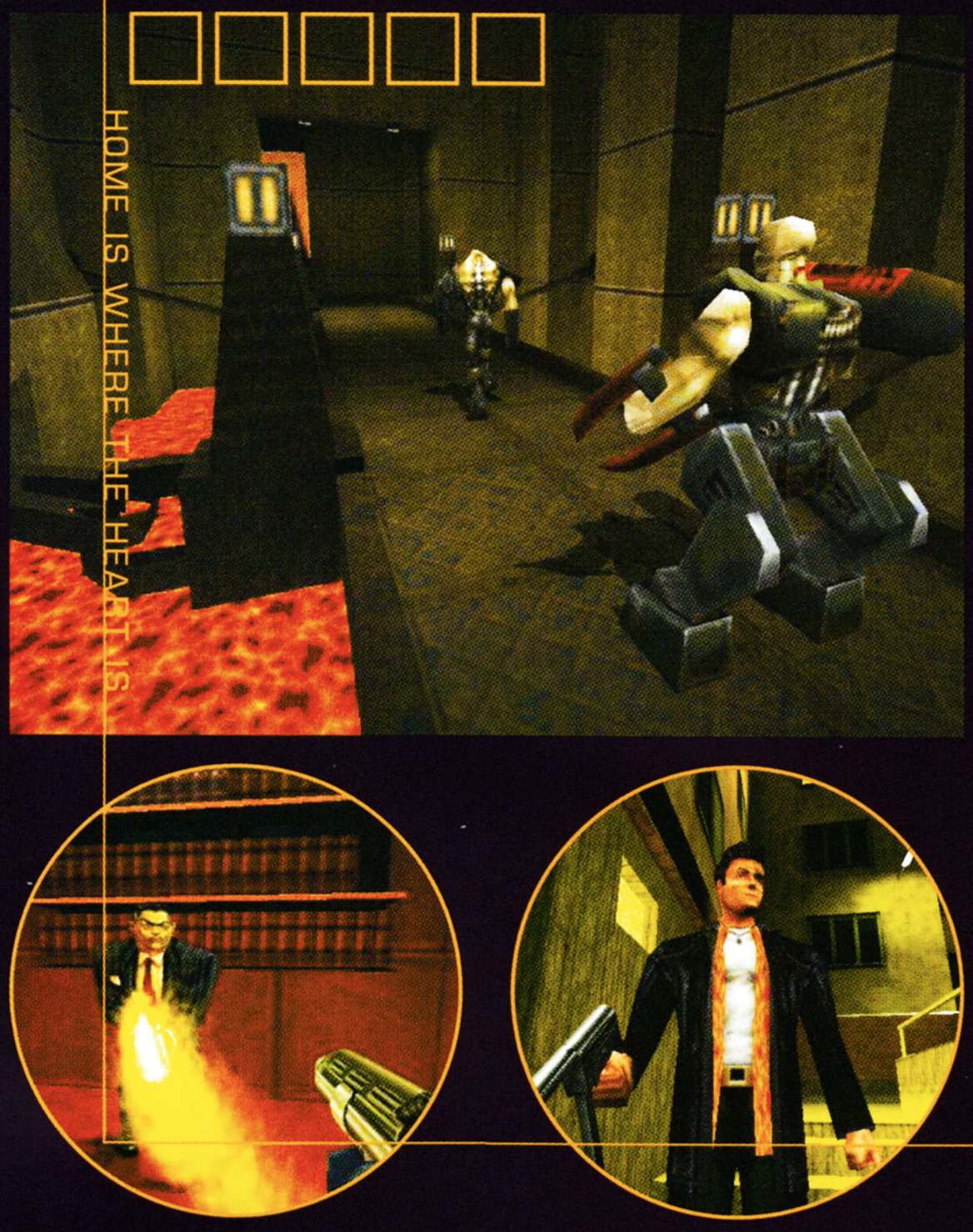
A political beast at heart, Rocher recoils when asked which total conversions he's most looking forward to: "This is a tough one, and my comments may prove controversial,

THE BEST MULTIPLAYER TOTAL CONVERSION WOULD BE ACTION QUAKE II FOR QUAKE II

but currently these are the top five that I can't wait for. (Note: I am not including commercial total conversions in my choices):

- *Gunman* Total Conversion for Half-Life (Http://gunman.telefragged.com)
- *Chemical Existence* TC for Half-Life (Http://chemical.valveworld.com)
- *AirQuake 2* TC for Quake II (Http://airquake2.converted2.com)
- *Operation Urban Assault* for Half-Life (Http://opua.valveworld.com)
- *FireArms* TC for Half-Life (Http://www.planethalflife.com/firearms)

As for the best total conversion ever? Well, I'd have to divide that into two categories. The best multiplayer total conversion, in my opinion, would be *Action Quake II* for *Quake II* (http://action.telefragged.com). Whilst the best single player conversion has got to be *Fantasy Quake: Rise of the Phoenix* for *Quake* (http://fantasy.stomped.com)".



ULTIMATION

Living in fear

Many regard *Half-Life* as the best first-person shooter ever. Feartech Unlimited wouldn't disagree, but they're striving to go one better by totally converting their favourite game into something quite spectacular...

Having navigated our way through Rocher's site, we contacted the scene's five leading amateur coding groups to discuss their current projects. What we found (without exception) was a degree of dedication and enthusiasm to rival any commercial coding team's efforts, coupled with lashings of raw talent and an undying spirit of adventure.

Mike Cherichetti is head honcho of Feartech Unlimited, an international team of amateur coders dedicated to breathing new life into the seminal first-person shooter, *Half-Life*. Although he's only seventeen years old, he's already a veteran of the total conversion scene, having previously coded levels for id's *Quake II* (see 'Meet the Gang' box-out). Producing a game by remote control – sending data backwards and forwards between coders and level designers – is a frustrating and time consuming task that requires long hours and a good deal of determination.

Introducing us to the game, Cherichetti skims over the plot, which appears to be incidental to the action. He enthuses: "In *Ultimation* there is only one aim: 'It's kill or be killed!'. You work for the United Nations of Earth on top secret covert space missions, gathering data and being generally devious. That's until you return home from somewhere in the Andromeda galaxy and discover you've brought something sinister back with you. Only you and your ship's crew (see 'Ready to Rumble' box-out) can put an end to the chaos and save the earth from total destruction..."

Although the game uses the *Half-Life* engine, Cherichetti is keen to highlight the enhancements that his team have made: "There's a whole host of new weapons and enemies to fight (see 'Beasties' box-out). Throughout the game, the player has to make important decisions, like whether or not to use stealth on a particular level or to trust a character he's come across. These decisions will affect the route you take, and the final outcome".

Cherichetti continues: "The environment is going to be far more realistic – the majority of the game is set on Earth, so we're trying to recreate actual real-life places wherever possible. A small portion of the game will take place on the alien planet, but it won't be a 'Xen' type of thing. The

ULTIMATION

Fallen columns and dead soldiers... not good!

Looks like the conveyer belts are still working

Whatever you do, don't set off that trip-wire!

What a mess! Looks like a bomb went off in here

The upper level doesn't look too safe

***Half-Life* – seminal stuff**

alien race is highly advanced and their world is a futuristic version of our own – that'll make more sense when you actually play the game".

He goes on: "The levels are also going to be more interactive than most people are used to – just about everything can be damaged, broken, or used in some way".

What really sets the game apart from its rivals is the innovative 'team' and multiplayer modes. Cherichetti enthuses: "The greatest feature of *Ultimation* is definitely the team system we're using. The story has changed from the typical 'one man against thousands of hostiles', to a squad of six soldiers who all fight side by side. Obviously the player will be able to control each squad member using commands like 'Follow Me' or 'Stay Here'. All the characters will have one or more special abilities, such as the Medic who will be able to heal your wounds by administering first aid".

But it's the multiplayer mode that's set to cause the stir, as Cherichetti explains: "*Capture the Core!'* is the multiplayer version of *Ultimation*, although we're retaining the normal free-for-all deathmatch mode – there's no way we can do away with that! In *'Capture the Core!'*, the object of the game is simply to capture the core (which randomly spawns in the middle of each level) and bring it back to the reactor in your base, where it must remain for three minutes. If you're able to protect it for that long, your reactor will be fully charged and you'll score a capture. Whenever the frag or time limit is met, the team with the most captures wins".

IT ISN'T JUST SHOOT, KILL, EXIT, AND DO IT AGAIN ANYMORE... IT'S MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT

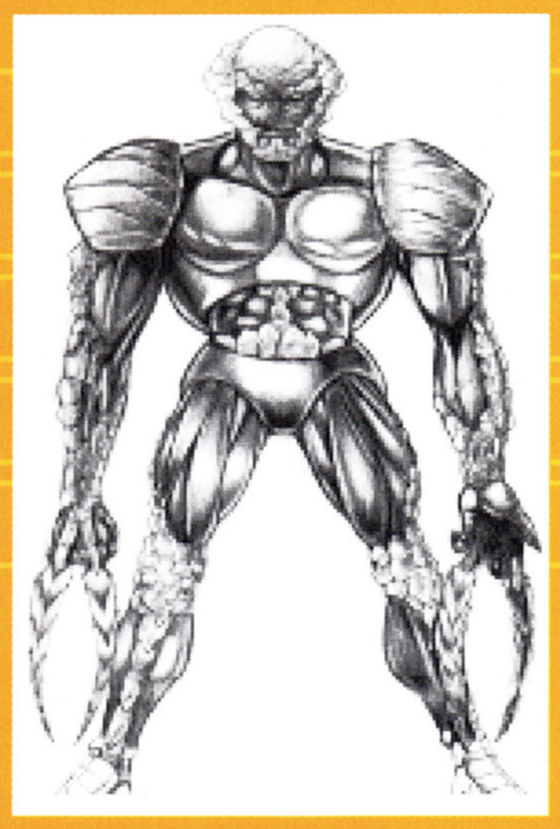
Pressed for a release date, Cherichetti reveals: "We're planning to release *'Capture the Core!'* before *Ultimation* in the form of a multiplayer mod. It will include all the new weapons and collectable items. If all goes according to plan, we'll release it in early June 1999. As for the main game, well, up until now we've been saying 'when it's done!', but if I had a gun to my head and had to tell you, I'd say somewhere around Christmas 1999".

As development continues, it's clear that the game is evolving into something that may even surpass the technical and gameplay achievements of the original. Cherichetti continues: "It isn't just shoot, kill, exit, and do it again anymore... it's much more complicated than that. You'll have to plan your attacks, carry out missions

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

BEASTIES

Work continues apace on the **design of the alien** scum. Here's the stats and **concept art showing** the meanest baddies **you'll encounter...**



If you can see the colour of his eyes, it's too late

A demonic beast who relies on magic and mayhem

The hardest enemy you'll encounter

Grushad:

Defence: Razor Sharp Claws
Analysis: Medium/Hard
Comments: The Grushad is very effective at close range with his razor sharp, retractable claws. Your best bet is to sneak up on him. Just try not to get too close… you'll go to pieces.

Grandiron:

Defence: Mounted Laser Guided Rocket Launcher/Plasma Rifle
Analysis: Medium/Hard
Comments: Both his weapons pack a mean punch, and he's out to cut you down. His laser guided rockets make him an formidable opponent, and with the help of his plasma rifle he can easily take you out.

Trekk:

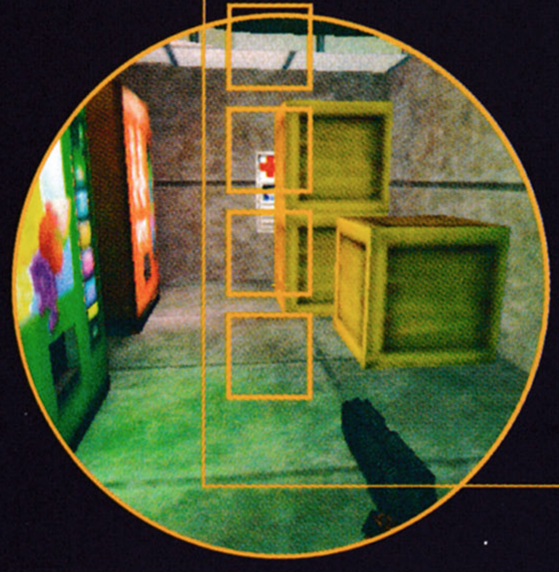
Defence: Carries a multi-function grenade launcher.
Analysis: The Trekk is the most advanced enemy you will face in the game.
Comments: He makes use of a portable teleportation device which is attached to his arm.

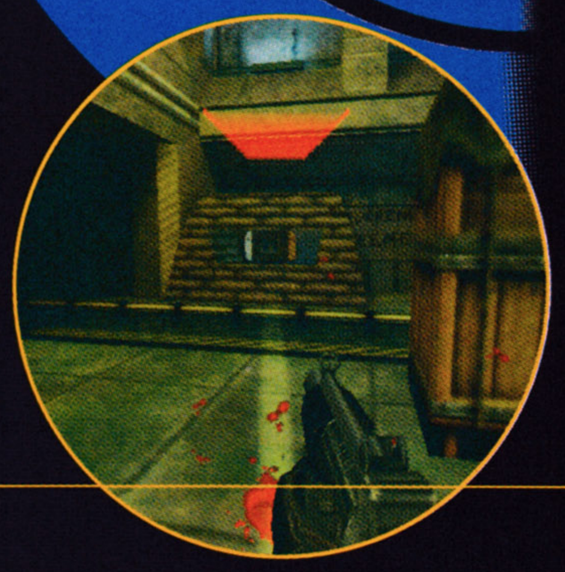
Scorch:

Defence: Scorch relies on his power to call upon the 'fires of the earth' and throw fireballs at you.
Analysis: Medium/Hard
Comments: The Scorch is of a demonic breed, though that in itself is a different story.

This heavily armed mutant wants to kick your ass

where the heart is





to the bloody end and, most importantly, think ahead! Make the wrong decision... well, let's just call it 'early retirement'".

Cherichetti is aware that many PC gamers deliberately steer clear of total conversions altogether, worried that they're all just too complicated to set-up and install. Speaking about his own project, he argues: "People should have no trouble downloading and installing *Ultimation* or *'Capture the Core!'*. Valve has done a great job with their Mod/Custom Game browser which is included in the last patch for *Half-Life*. When *Ultimation* or *'Capture the Core!'* are released, you will be able to see that they are available for download right from the Mod browser within *Half-Life*. After downloading you can simply click on 'Install', and it does. Whenever you want to play the game, all you do is go to the Custom Game menu and activate *Ultimation* or *'Capture the Core!'*. If you want to play another TC/mod or normal *Half-Life*, you can simply choose the deactivate option".

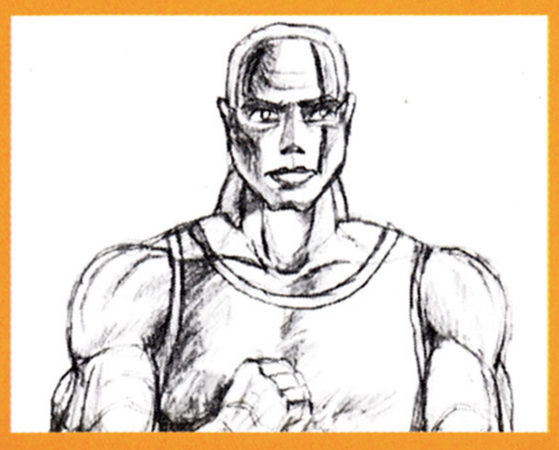
Considering the time and creative effort that has already gone into both games' development, readers will be astonished to discover that – in common with most total conversions – both *Ultimation* and *'Capture the Core!'* are going to be freely available for download from the internet, although Cherichetti concedes: "If we get an interested publisher, we will definitely consider going commercial with either or both projects".

For more information on this title, visit: http://www.feartech.com/ultimation

READY TO RUMBLE

More **exclusive concept art** depicting your comrades and their history...

Name: Brianna Craimer Sex: Female Age: 27
Eye Colour: Blue Hair Colour: Brown
Occupation: Mechanic Marital Status: Single
Background: After Brianna's father died when his car shop burned down, Brianna decided to join the UNE and start a new life. Brianna often brags that she can fix anything that's mechanical or electronic. No one has ever proven her wrong.



Name: Hal Davidson Sex: Male Age: 30
Eye Colour: Blue Hair Colour: Blonde
Occupation: Defence Expert Marital Status: Single
Background: Hal, being the patriotic man he is, joined up with the UNE as security and defence analyst. Hal can spot trip wires and laser grids a mile away... and he can brew up some excellent battle plans too!

Name: James Gustaffson Sex: Male Age: 34
Eye Colour: Blue Hair Colour: Brown
Occupation: Commander Marital Status: Married
Background: James was drafted into the UNE from The Royal Air Force. He was a member of the crew that flew the test flights on the UNE Stingray while it was under development.

Name: Jasper Descantes Sex: Male Age: 29 Eye Colour: Green Hair Colour: Brown Occupation: Weapons and Explosives Expert Marital Status: Single
Background: After leaving Jamaica to pursue a medical degree, Jasper somehow ended up in the UNE. Jasper had been around weapons all of his life in Jamaica, so the UNE decided to mold him into the weapons and explosives expert that he is today.

Name: Jeniffer Calber Sex: Female Age: 23
Eye Colour: Blue Hair Colour: Blonde
Occupation: Field Medic Marital Status: Married
Background: A graduate of Notre Dame, Jeniffer was drafted into the UNE's forces. A valuable addition to the UNE, both as a field medic and a soldier, Jeniffer quickly moved up in the ranks.

Name: Mark Davenport Sex: Male Age: 26 Eye Colour: Brown Hair Colour: Black Occupation: Secret Military Agent Marital Status: Single
Background: After attending college he was drafted into the UNE's forces. With his supreme skill and determination he was promoted to his current rank. His newest assignment is to find out what happened to UNE Stingray and come back alive.

MEET THE GANG

Cherichetti is **far from a one-man** band. Recently he and **several key members of his team** took time out **for an exclusive Total** CONTROL interview...

FROM CHERICHETTI'S PREVIOUS PROJECT 'DMPak2'

Just teleported in from picking up the BFG

Take a ride on the belt to get the BFG

Watch out for campers behind pillars!

The centre of all the action in Grudge

About to enter the lower tunnels

Mike "Barracuda" Cherichetti
Age: 17
Occupation: Student [Lead Level Designer]
Area of Residence: United States
Programming Background: Perl, Java
Qualifications: 3D Level Designer, Web Designer

Total CONTROL: What is your motivation for this project?
MC: I think most of my motivation comes from the thrill of building a game that other people all over the world are going to see and play. This may sound crazy, but creating 3D levels is very addictive. Once you develop your skills and begin to realise that the possibilities of what you can create are virtually endless, it's very hard to stop. Movies are a great source of inspiration as well. If I see a good movie I always try to think of a way to get a reference to that movie into a level I'm working on.

Total CONTROL: What previous projects have you been involved with?
MC: The only released project that I've worked on was a Deathmatch Map Pack for *Quake II* called *DMPAK2*. Development took roughly three weeks to complete. *DMPAK2* contained six levels, all done by myself. Though the maps may not be the best, they were my first completed levels.

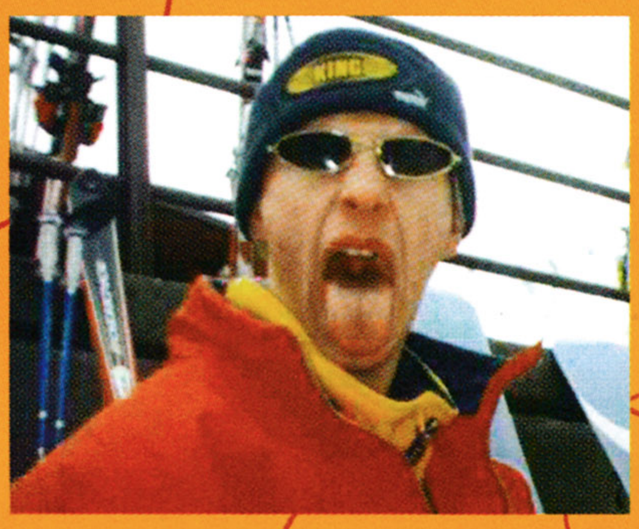
Total CONTROL: What do you think of *Half-Life*?
MC: It's probably the best first-person shooter I've played to date. The game screams quality and fun from start to finish. What I like the most is the excellent monster AI. Without the highly intelligent monsters that you battle against, the game just wouldn't be the same.

Total CONTROL: What would be your ideal job within the games industry?
MC: I'd have to say that my ideal job would be working for a well-known gaming company as a 3D level designer. So, if there's anyone reading, I'm available...

James "Govinda" Constable
Age: 17 and 3 quarters
Occupation: Student [Artist]
Area of Residence: Highlands Of Scotland
Programming Background: Basic, Perl, and currently attempting to learn C/++
Qualifications: SQA Computer Graphics Module, Higher Computing, CSYS Computing

Total CONTROL: What is your motivation for this project?
JC: Erm... the main reason I do this is basically because I have nothing better to do. My girlfriend lives about four hours away and I need something to do during the dark, lonely nights.

Total CONTROL: What previous projects have you worked on?
JC: *SoniQ* (a wacky *Quake* conversion based on *Sonic the Hedgehog*), and *Quario Karts* (an unreleased *Mario Kart* conversion).



Total CONTROL: What are your thoughts on the TC scene?
JC: It seems to be slowing down. In fact, personally I think that there are far too many people who get a little idea and decide that they should make a TC. These people are generally only skilled in one area of editing the shooter of their choice, so they seem to grind to a halt a few months down the line and are never heard of again. What these people need to do is get themselves into a team (such as FearTech) and use this as a platform to share their ideas with a group of people. If their idea is good enough then it'll be picked up as either a future project for the team, or incorporated into an existing one. Plus this person then gets the experience of working on (and hopefully completing) a large scale project which could lead on to further prospects down the line.

Total CONTROL: What is your favourite game?
JC: Well, it's gotta be *Quake*. No other game, for me, has generated that much excitement. I unfortunately missed out on *Doom*, and even after seeing it running at a friend's house I didn't think much of it. But when I loaded up *Quake*, I was gob-smacked. It was like I was really there.

Mark "Position" Coleman
Age: Unknown
Occupation: Full-time student [Programmer]
Area of residence: North-west England

Total CONTROL: What is your programming background?
MC: I'm proficient at Pascal, C, C++, and Basic. I'm self-taught, and learnt all my skills at college, through books and Net tutorials.

Total CONTROL: What previous projects have you worked on?
MC: Well, keep this to yourself, but I did a multiplayer mod for *Quake II*. It was called *BombSquad*, and it went horribly wrong, but it was fun and very educational.

Total CONTROL: What would be your ideal job in the games industry?
MC: Erm, let me think... does John Carmack sound familiar?

Owen "Impaler-Z" Marlowe
Age: 33
Occupation: Engineer [Level Designer]
Area of Residence: California

Total Control: What is your programming background?
OM: I can code in BASIC, Pascal, and C.

Total CONTROL: What previous projects have you worked on?
OM: I worked on *Disposable Heroes* with The Coven, as a level designer and texture artist.

Total CONTROL: What would be your ideal job?
OM: I'd love to be a lottery winner, sitting on a remote beach surrounded by beautiful women.

where the heart is

HOVER 2

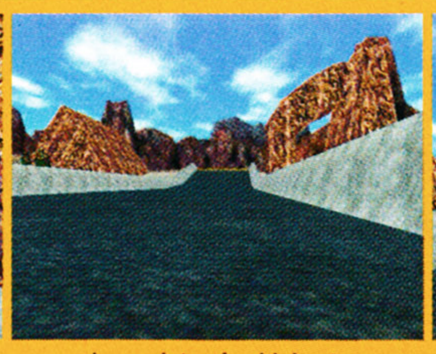
Moltar Interactive are **attempting the** near impossible. **Unbelievably, they're** trying to turn a first-person shooter into **a racing game. Intrigued?** Read on...

It's Half-Life, but not as we know it...

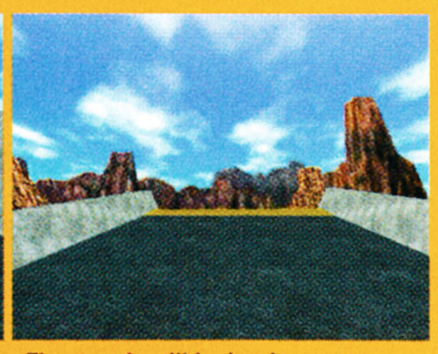
Exclusive to Total CONTROL: In-game **screenshots...**

Looks beautiful, and moves well too

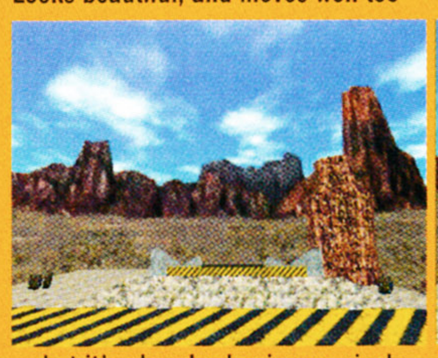
Whole host of weapons to collect...



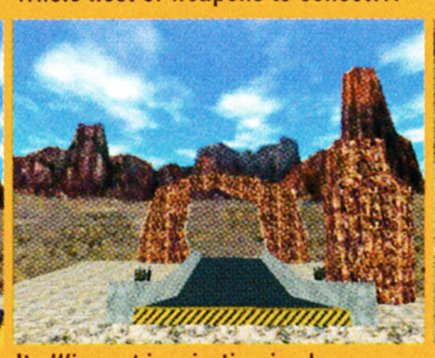
... and a variety of vehicles to race



The game's still in development...

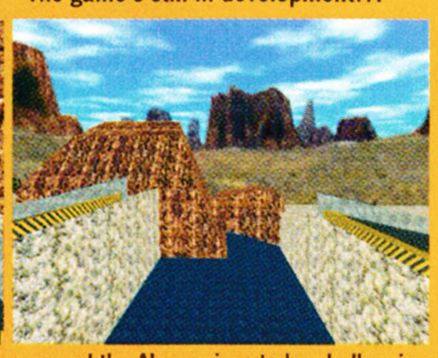


...but it's already shaping up nicely

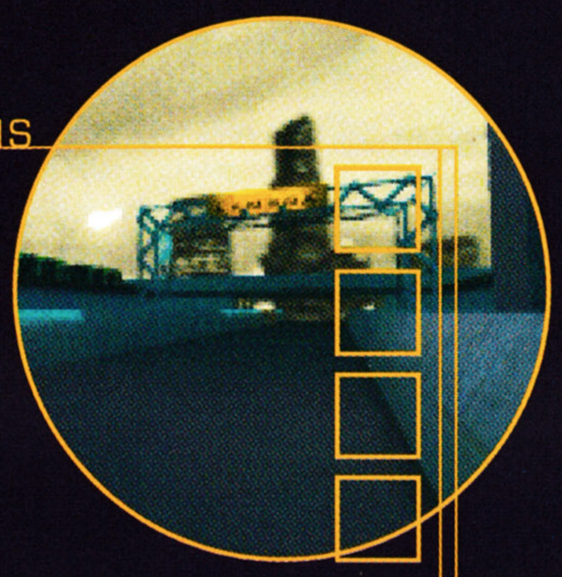


Its *Wipeout* inspiration is clear...

...multiplayer should enhance longevity



...and the AI promises to be challenging



Tweaking the *Half-Life* engine to produce a similar first-person shooter might be regarded as a challenge in itself, but Moltar Interactive's managing director, Andrew Gits, and his team have taken the total conversion idea a dramatic stage further, as Gits himself explains: "When *Half-Life* was released, I thought it was one of the greatest games I'd ever played. I loved it, but it only just ran on my P133 – and even that was only because I'd bought a 3Dfx (for the release of *Quake II*). I was looking around for an original idea, because I felt that there were too many freeware and commercial first-person shooters flooding the market and internet. I found out that there were only a couple of other 'genre' modifications being created. Some, like *Quake II War* – a strategy game for *Quake II* – were original and had a lot of publicity, so I decided to create a racing game. The fact that *Quake Rally* was already being made put me off the idea of a straight racing game, and lead me to think of futuristic racing – that's how I came up with the idea to use hover crafts".

Gits continues: "I started up a mod called *Decay*, but after a bit of research I found the original *Hover* total conversion for *Quake I* (by Means of Destruction: http://www.planetquake.com/mod/) and, with their permission, started on *Hover 2*.

IF YOU IMAGINE, SAY, WIPEOUT CROSSED WITH HALF-LIFE, YOU'LL START TO GET THE DRIFT OF *HOVER 2*

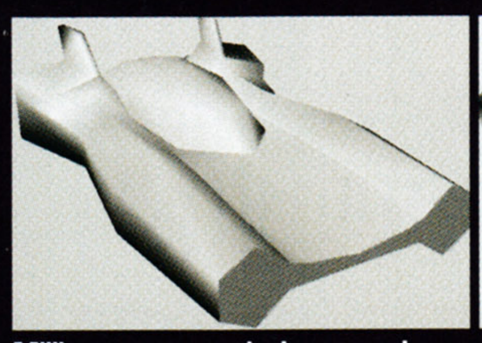
With the release of *Half-Life*, I switched to that game engine, and two guys joined me. The rest, as they say, is history".

With development well under way, Gits describes the premise of the project: "Well, basically *Hover 2* is a futuristic racing game. If you imagine, say, *Wipeout* crossed with *Half-Life*, you'll start to get the drift of *Hover 2*. With multiple classes of vehicles to choose from – fast and weak, slow and powerful – players hop into the craft of their choice, race (or kill) their opponents, and win the game. Even if you haven't got internet access, you can still enjoy the game by battling against the computer over a series of fiendishly contorted tracks against up to seven computer controlled 'hoverbots'. You can even set the amount of bots to eight and watch from the stands. Plus, you can even join up to an already full server, wait for the next race to compete in, and watch the current race while you wait! Add some amazing special effects, like a completely unique hovercraft HUD, speedometers, afterburners, a massive arsenal of awesome weapons, and you're only starting to imagine what *Hover 2* is going to be like. *Hover 2* is the future of racing".

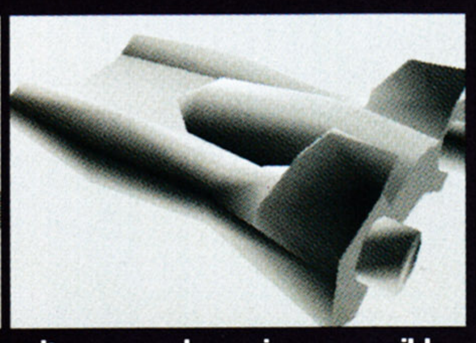
To catch up on the latest info on this project : http://www.converted2.com/moltar

TELL US A STORY

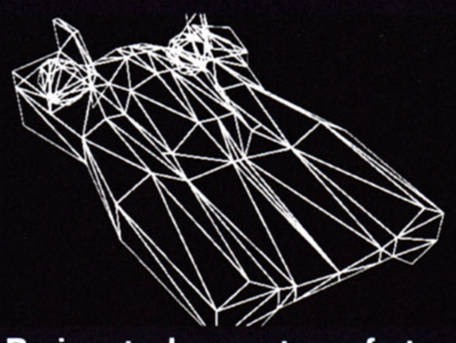
Unusually for **an out-and-out racing** game, the plot is quite **engaging...**



Millions spent on design to make...

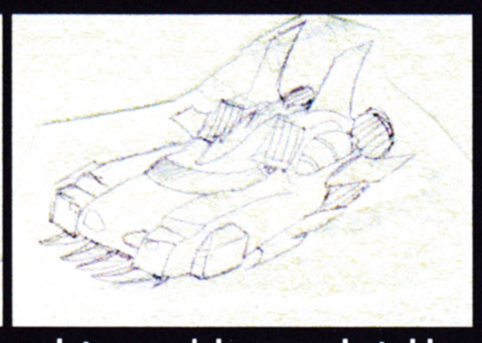


...it as aerodynamic as possible



Designs took years to perfect...

...originals were uncontrollable...



...later models proved stable

In late 2016, a scientist named Ron Zelt theorised about a new form of transportation using the Earth's own natural magnetic field! By placing several highly intense electromagnets inside a vehicle and reversing polarity, he postulated that you could obtain a hovering effect. Furthermore, by distorting this field he believed you could propel yourself. By the summer of 2023, the first prototype of the Zelt Hovercar was unleashed. In front of an expectant audience – a press conference attended by thousands of reporters, scientists and spectators – the Hovercar rose off the ground about four feet, turned 180 degrees, and shot off so fast that when the vehicle finally stopped moving, they had to peel the test pilot's remains off the seats with a spatula. While a slight setback (for the test pilot especially), it certainly impressed people, and that's when the government started funding the project. By 2026, the newly formed Zeltech Enterprises unleashed a great breakthrough in Hovercar technology – Inertial Dampeners. By counteracting the intense acceleration of the Hovercars, this made safe usage possible, and before long Hovercars started appearing in retail chains throughout the civilised world. Disaster struck in the late summer of 2030, when the nations of Earth broke out into World War III. The bitter battle came to an abrupt end when the Japanese empire launched twelve nuclear warheads at all major cities of the world. The resulting counter-strikes took out 82% of Earth's entire population. With civilisation destroyed, Earth began to rebuild from the war, and a new form of entertainment was formed – hover racing. With no rules except 'get to the finish line first', people began to stock their cars with weapons and new gadgets, defensive and offensive alike.

MEET THE TEAM

You don't just start programming a game on this scale without having a bit of history behind you. The main men at Moltar Interactive told us about their background and inspiration...

Name: Andrew Gits
Age: 16
Job(s): Project Leader, 3D Graphics Artist, Web Page Maintainer...

Total CONTROL: So, how did your love of all things *Half-Life* related evolve?
AG: I started with computers way back when I was about nine – my teacher brought me up with about half a dozen Macintosh Classics, and that's what really started me off. Later on I was introduced to my first '386', and that was a magnificent machine to me – 256 colours with Windows 3.1! It was not until a few years ago that I became interested in *Quake*. After downloading *Quake* shareware from my dad's work's internet account (which lead to a bill of about $200, but that's another story...), I became instantly addicted. After a while, I started feeling that there could be more to *Quake*. So I decided to start out my first conversion. *SubQuest*, as it was called, placed you into a submarine for some all-out action, shooting other 'subs' in deathmatch and single play. It was a massive conversion and I did a lot of art, but unfortunately I didn't realise the scale of the challenge, so I decided to call it off and left the conversion to another guy. Later on, I started thinking about making a total conversion, and I downloaded a freeware 3D graphics studio. I spent quite a while on this, and I even spent a long time changing all of the graphics in *Doom* to make what I didn't realise was a *Doom* TC. This got lost after a hard drive failure, and I started up in the big world of *Quake* mods. I had many ideas for mods – unfortunately most of them using copyrighted material. Eventually, I started out on a first-person shooter called *Anarchy*. This was designed for *Quake II*, and was going quite well. We had levels, weapons, and even a coder, but due to the enormous amount of shooters out there already, including all the commercial games about to be released (*Shogo*, *Half-Life*, *Sin*, etc.), we never got very much publicity. Eventually *Anarchy* was put on hold until later, which was a disappointment. But I'd learned valuable lessons which are helping me now.

Matt Benson
Age: 23
Jobs: Systems Engineer at the top rating TV station, GTV Channel 9, Melbourne, Australia

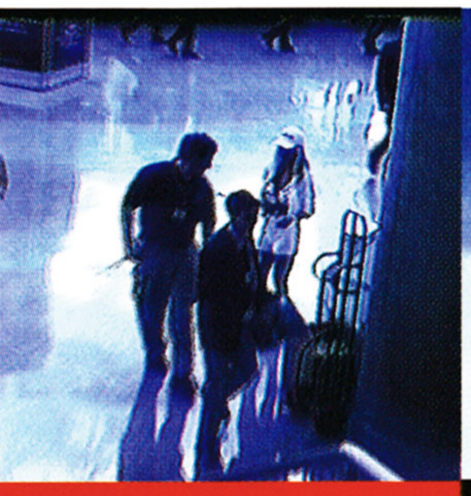
Total CONTROL: Tell us about your background...
MB: I have a degree (first class honours) in Software Systems Engineering from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). The four year course took in many aspects of today's engineering streams – communications, electronics, software and computer systems.

Total CONTROL: So why get involved in a project like this?
MB: One of the best things that I enjoy about coding is that you get to see the project evolve from the very beginning. I get a kick out of making something work, meeting all the requirements, and finally seeing it in operation and doing what it was designed for. This is my first attempt at a total conversion, but I'm quietly confident that we'll make a great piece of work. I like being able to work within a team, and it gets especially interesting when the other team members are people that I've have never physically met before. I find that the coolest thing is how the gaming community is so willing to share experience and insight, making tutorials and source code available for us to get into.

Pat 'Mr.Grimm' Tapia
Age: 19
Job: Level Designer

Total CONTROL: What previous total conversion experience do you have?
PT: My previous projects involved a failed *Doom* conversion that changed to *Quake* and then got cancelled, and a TC of the Crack.com game *Abuse*, which was called *Aliens*, by Team Firestorm. Currently I'm studying Softimage in college, and have been doing level design since the old *Wolfenstein* days.

TO BE CONTINUED...



THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

TOTAL CONTROL™

If your idea of heaven is a room big enough to hold fourteen jumbo jets wing to wing filled instead with video games, then this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles was the place to be. The show was held in two rooms that totalled 536,000 square feet, and the organisers boasted that every E3 attendee would discover a new game every nine steps they took. It wasn't pointed out that those nine steps would take half an hour as the show was attended by more than 55,000 people – retailers, developers and journalists from all corners of the globe

Yes, if you haven't sussed it by now, the E3 is the biggest interactive entertainment show in the world, and is thus the place where all the big announcements are made, all the big games are unveiled, and where all the new hardware is revealed.

In its fifth year, this year's E3 was the biggest on record in terms of games shown (around 1,900), people attending and announcements made. We saw Nintendo's announcement of their next console, known as Project Dolphin for now. We saw Sega's first showing of the Dreamcast before the US launch, and we saw Sony promoting the last of the PlayStation's good games before they start the hype behind the 'next generation PlayStation'. The PC also enjoyed one of its best years yet, and many of the best games were only available on PC.

An intermediate show for an intermediate year in the industry. The old consoles are on their way out and the new ones are about to be welcomed with opened arms. Next year will be next-gen full steam ahead, but for now there's still plenty of PlayStation, N64 and PC software to get extremely excited about...

Omikron

The day before the show began, we were invited to attend a press conference where it was announced that David Bowie has not only written the *Omikron* soundtrack (and very good it is too), but that he will in fact be starring in the game along with his band. A group of select journalists were invited to interview Mr. Bowie at the House of Blues on Sunset Boulevard, and guess what? Total CONTROL were there...

Question: David, thanks for giving us the opportunity to talk about your latest endeavour.

David Bowie: My pleasure. (Taps the microphone) Testing, testing, 1-2-3 – we're back to rock and roll, you see. 1-2-3-4 testing, testing.

Q: Would you like to comment on your involvement here today for Eidos?

DB: First of all, I'd like to thank Eidos for inviting us to be part of this enterprise. It's really fascinating. Reeves and I have been writing music and songs for movies for years, but I think the idea of developing a soundtrack idea for a game is really quite unusual. The idea of writing songs specifically for a game is really a compelling factor. It was really the one thing we wanted to do, especially because they didn't give us a preconceived idea of what we should do. We were left to our own devices.

Q: How computer literate were you before you started this project?

DB: Umm... not many people know this, but I was the first artist to take computers out on the road in the early, early eighties. In fact, on the Serious Moonlight tour in 1983. We were going online back then – delivering all the facts and figures back to home base. So my experience with computers goes back a long time. I've been actively working on the internet for about two years now, with about six months in actual operation now. I've also been producing art on the computer since 1994. That's when I did my first little series of (pauses) things. So, I guess I can 'mouse about'.

Q: How successful was your recent songwriting contest?

DB: We had something approaching 300,000 entries, every one of which I read myself. No, really. That's why I disappeared for six months. And the result was... I picked one! (Laughs) Isn't that absurd? It's just so ridiculous. In fact, the winner is coming into the studio with us on the 24th of this month to record the song, which, incidentally, will be relayed live on BowieNet, along with cameras from Lucent; we've got an arrangement with them to give the user absolute access to the studio. They will be able to go right into the studio– it will be about a three hour run.

Q: What video games, if any, do you play, and which of them inspired you to do this project?

DB: None of them. I don't play games. Everybody knows that. No, you've got to understand that my son is the games merchant round our household. I've played games before. Of course, I've played *Tomb Raider*, just like every hot-blooded male who's in love with Lara momentarily, until I realised she wasn't real... (To himself) She's not real, she's not real... this must be the end of the millennium.

Back to your question, I think the idea of producing a soundtrack for anything that has a computer orientation is a real magnet for me, and we approached it as if we were doing a film. What we're trying to do more than anything else is to provide an emotional heart to the game. That's because the one thing I did find by going through the games that I've viewed before we started work was that a lot of the games have a cold emotional drive. In fact, rarely do they have an emotional drive. I think that the most unusual aspect of writing for this is that we've produced romantic pieces. We've developed a secret life for the character of Boz (Bowie's character in the game) and for a number of the other characters.

Q: It seems that many times the soundtrack for a game is almost secondary or thrown in at the last second. How did you take that into account and avoid that particular pitfall?

DB: That's a very good question. I think the one thing we noticed immediately is that most of the soundtrack material that's used in games is taken off albums; very rarely is music actually produced specifically for the game. They just sort of take an album track here and an album track there, and it sort of works – some of the time. We spent quite some time in Paris, working with the design team over there, understanding the depth and the many levels of the game involved, so we got a pretty fair idea of what the scenario was. We got to know some of the characters fairly intimately.

***Omikron* is shaping up to be one of the most impressive releases of 1999. Look for an Alpha Report next month**

Q: *Omikron* seems a bit more intimate than most games...

DB: The reincarnation factor alone brings a certain kind of poignancy to it. There's a sense of isolation, which is fundamental to most of these games, but we actually took on more of the notion of the isolation of the forces involved.

Q: Will any of the songs on *Omikron* be released on any of your upcoming albums, or do you plan on performing any of this new material live during your concerts?

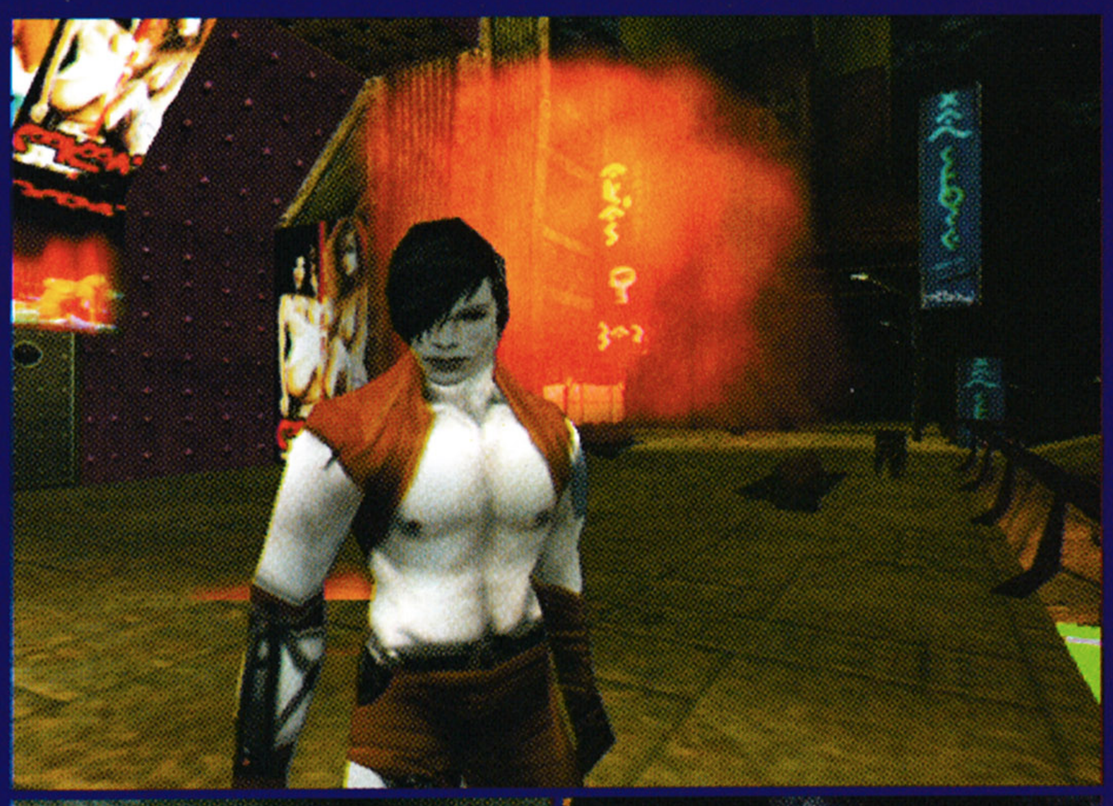
DB: That's pretty hard to say. All we're doing at the moment is focusing on the fact that we've got completion dates to get over and get all the finished mixes done by. Reeves and I, over the last year, have spent a lot of time writing songs. I think what we're going to do in the future is pretty open. We wrote over a hundred songs last year.

Q: What was your involvement with actually appearing as a character in the game as opposed to just supplying the music?

DB: I told everyone my top priority was that I should look about twenty-four years old. (Laughs) And that was my input, really. For weeks and weeks they kept sending me sketches and I just said "No, no, no, YES! That's the one! I look twenty-four again!" (Laughs) A twenty-four year old avatar. I'm a really good looking twenty-four year old avatar today.

Q: What was it about *Omikron* that made you want to get involved with the project as opposed to the myriad of other video games out there?

DB: Because this one is going to be the best this year, that's why. It's pretty fantastic. I'll tell you the number one reason is because we were asked, and they also said the parameters were ours – we could work our way. We've actually turned down three other definite offers to do games of this sort before. We didn't, because they already knew what they wanted and I didn't want to work like that. I wanted to do it my way.



SEGA EUROPE 1999 RELEASES

With the launch of the Dreamcast now only a few months away, we asked Sega about the all-important launch titles and software support for the remainder of 1999. The following is a list of all of the titles scheduled for release in Europe before the end of the millennium:

Airforce Delta – Konami

Blue Stinger – Sega

Cool Boarders DC – Sega

Jimmy White's 2: Cueball – Virgin

Expendable – Infogrames

Formula 1: World Grand Prix – Sega

House of the Dead 2 – Sega

Hydro Thunder – Midway

Incoming – Rage

Marvel Vs Capcom – Capcom

Monaco GP – Ubisoft

Mortal Kombat Gold – Midway

Metropolis Street Racer – Sega

NBA 2000 – Acclaim

Power Stone – Capcom

NFL Quarterback Club 2000 – Acclaim

Rayman 2: The Great Escape – Ubisoft

Ready 2 Rumble – Midway

Red Dog – Sega

Redline Racer – Ubisoft

Sega Rally 2 – Sega

Sega Soccer – Sega

Sonic Adventure – Sega

Soul Calibur – Namco

Speed Devils – Ubisoft

Supreme Snowboarding – Infogrames

Toy Commander – Sega

Trick Style – Acclaim

UEFA Striker – Infogrames

Virtua Fighter 3tb – Sega

Wild Metal Country – Infogrames

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

One of the many highlights of the Capcom stand, and recently signed up by Eidos Interactive, *RE3* is looking like it'll live up to expectations with no trouble at all. Considered the true sequel to *RE2* by most fans, not least because it's being released on the same format, *RE3*'s plot is a little strange in that it is set before, during and after the events of *RE2*. Initially you play the part of Jill Valentine from the first game, and start playing just as the inhabitants of Raccoon City are 'turning', shortly before the events of *RE2*.

Later in the game you'll get to play as a Brazilian mercenary character, and without wishing to give away too much of the game's plot, your mission – set more or less during the events of *RE2* – is to reach Jill. By the time you find her the game time will be approximately a day after *RE2*, and so in effect this is where the sequel truly begins. Certain locations in the game will be instantly recognisable to fans of the series – it's the same city after all – and you'll even get to explore the Police Station again. Much more of the city is available for you to explore now, and you're given a far greater sense of freedom of movement than in either of the previous incarnations. There's also a much greater feeling of things going on around you. We visited the *RE3* booth a few times and witnessed slightly different events occurring each time in what appeared to be the same locations. Whether this means that some of the events are real-time or that the players hadn't yet completed tasks to trigger the events remains to be seen.

Graphically *RE3* isn't too far removed from the other games, although there's definitely more variety in the zombies now, who, incidentally, also seem slightly more intelligent and bullet-resistant.

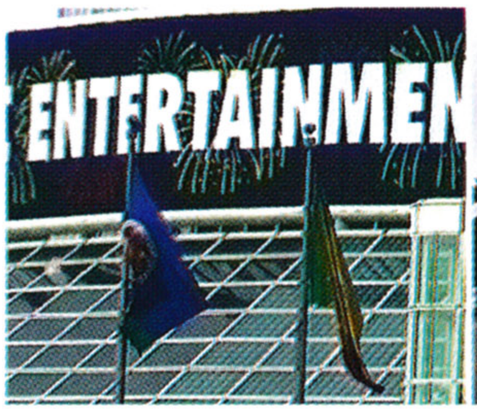
Obviously a game that we're looking forward to immensely, expect plenty of build-up in the run-up to the release at the end of the year.

The whole of (what's left of) Raccoon city is yours to explore

SHENMUE

There were three different playable demos of *Shenmue* at the show, showing general play, combat and... playing darts? The demos were fairly brief, and although graphically *Shenmue* was one of the most impressive games on Sega's giant stand, the general feeling of players seemed to be one of disappointment. For the most part the gameplay consisted of little more than pressing the correct button when you were told to do so, making *Shenmue* in its current form no more exciting or involving than the ancient *Dragon's Lair*. Perhaps when the game is finished and all of the ingredients are brought together it'll prove to be a great recipe, but right now it's looking very much like an acquired taste.

A Day at the 1999 Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles:



MAKEN X

Maken X is a twist on the standard first-person shooter game. With more and more titles of this type demanding bigger and more involving stories, Titus Software have taken the plot to a unique level. *Maken X* casts you in a teenage female lead (although alternate characters with different endings have been hinted at) in an alternate universe where carnage and corruption have evolved to an unprecedented scale. From here it is your sole task to rebuilt the devastated world of your origin before it can be re-entered by the living.

Despite our censorship laws that have been put in place on games like *Carmageddon* and *Kingpin*, *Maken X* will be a very different task for the BBFC. In this alternate universe the medieval backgrounds are joined by numerous swastikas and Nazi uniforms. Their relevance to the game is sure to be strong, so it's possible that *Maken X* may be the first game to be banned for its moral aspect.

The game lets you explore the storyline, working out what is going on as you progress. Standard guns and explosives have been replaced by a range of older weapons such as swords, and in many ways this could turn out to be a first-person version of *Bushido Blade*. The lock-on system has been designed to work like *Zelda*, keeping the enemy in view while you move around him. As well as its unique setting, *Maken X*'s graphics will go a long way to promote interest; at the moment the game is said to run at a consistent 60 frames per second at a high end 640x480 resolution. Internet options and single machine deathmatches are also very likely.

READY 2 RUMBLE

Definitely one of the surprise titles of the show, *Ready 2 Rumble* was the only game on Sega's stand that was consistently difficult to get to due to the number of people who wanted to have a go at it. It could be argued that this was just because in comparison to the other sports titles on show it was a lot easier to pick up and play. But those lucky enough to get their hands on a joypad were definitely not in a big hurry to let go of them.

Around eight different pugilists were available to choose from, although there were plenty of extra spaces for what we assume will be secret characters in the final version.

The characters on offer were incredibly diverse, ranging from lightweight kick boxer types and the humorous seventies throwback 'Afro Thunder', to giant no-necks with fists the size of basketballs. The number of moves available for each fighter is relatively small, although with a couple of different evade moves available and a few special attacks accessible through different button combinations, the fights were far removed from the button-bashing brawl you might expect. Boxing games are generally under-achievers as far as beat-'em-ups are concerned, but *Ready 2 Rumble* looks like one of the best to date, and we sincerely hope that it will go the distance with the likes of *Virtua Fighter 3tb*.

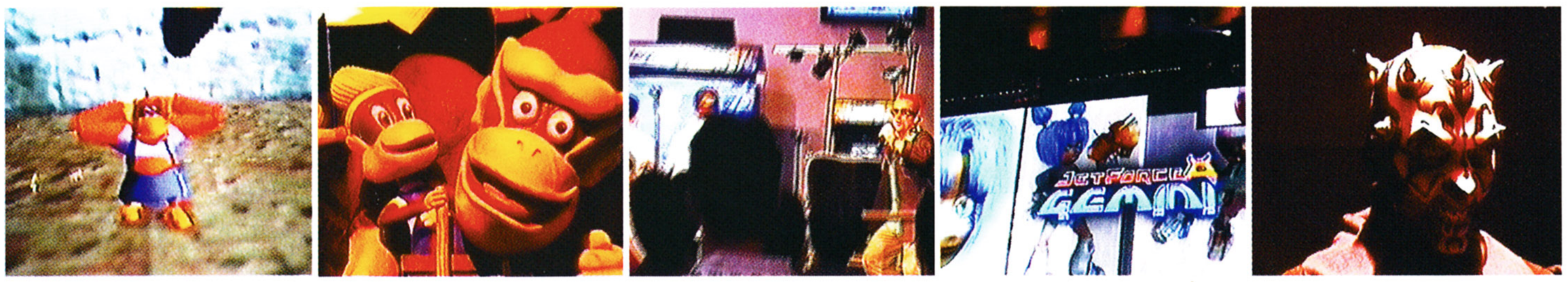
In addition to the arcade mode on show, we understand that a more in-depth Championship mode will also be available, allowing the player to get involved in management and training as well as the fight itself. In this mode your character's statistics will change based on performances in the ring and gym, and as a trainer you may have a number of fighters in your stable at any one time, so you can expect to be kept pretty busy.

Ready 2 Rumble is also scheduled for release on PlayStation and Nintendo 64 later this year, although it's unlikely either of them will be able to compete with the graphically superb and modem-play enhanced Dreamcast version.

WIP3OUT

The third instalment of Psygnosis' ever-popular futuristic racing series was playable for the first time at this year's E3, and fans of the first two games seemed far from disappointed. Only one craft was available to play with at the show, although plenty of new ships promise to make up the eight racing teams allocated for the game's launch later this year. Also confirmed for the final product are no less than eight stunning new tracks, the inevitable great soundtrack (this time supplied by DJ Sasha) and plenty of new game modes, including battle mode, tournament and, at long last, a split screen mode.

Those of you lucky enough to own a widescreen television will also be able to make full use of your set's extra girth with a specially enhanced widescreen option, especially good when combined with the vertical split screen option.



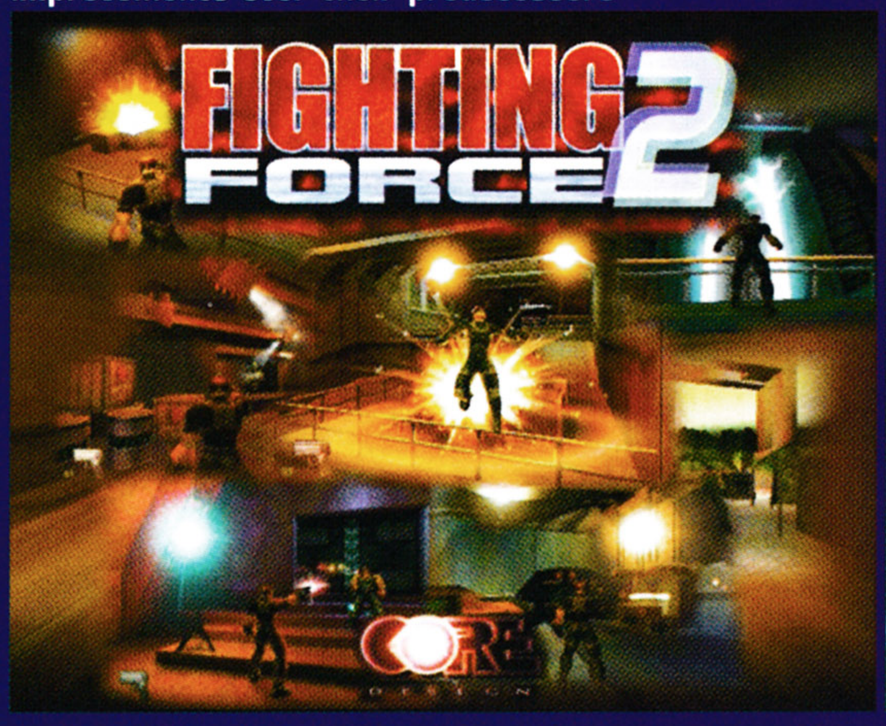
FIGHTING FORCE 2

The original *Fighting Force* on the PlayStation was, at best, an average game – the N64 version failed to impress at all – but Core and Eidos may have managed to turn that around with their high profile sequel.

The *Double Dragon*-style sideways scrolling romp that was the original has had a significant image change; it is now a combination of *Tomb Raider* and *Metal Gear Solid*, still viewed from third-person but with greatly enhanced gameplay. You play as Hawk, the only playable character to return from the original, in an effort to stop the Nakamichi Corporation's plans to create the ultimate cyborg soldier. Using a combination of hand-to-hand combat and the obligatory iron bars and other weapons (including a very cool sniper rifle), you work your way through the levels taking out the enemy in small groups or one by one. There's also a small element of stealth in the game, and the AI has received a lot of work so that enemies will actually follow your character rather than staying routed in the predetermined positions.

Core have been working on much longer and more *Tomb Raider*-style levels with more objectives to reach in each. They have even claimed that one level will be nearly as long as the original game, with 20 levels in total (all of varying length). This would be an impressive feat. The moves list has been vastly lengthened and improved, while the control system is much more responsive. Overall it seems as if they have improved the game in just about every way possible. It will be interesting to see what they have in store for the Dreamcast version.

If only all of Core's sequels had as many improvements over their predecessors



MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD

How could they? There was a time when a version of *Mortal Kombat* was an essential title on any system, but as far as we're concerned, those days are long gone. With so many great beat-'em-ups already confirmed for the Dreamcast, why Sega would allow Midway to pollute their new console with such rubbish is beyond us. Maybe it's because Midway is also responsible for the far superior *Ready 2 Rumble*? The Sega press kit contained just one screenshot of the game, and here it is, in all its glory.

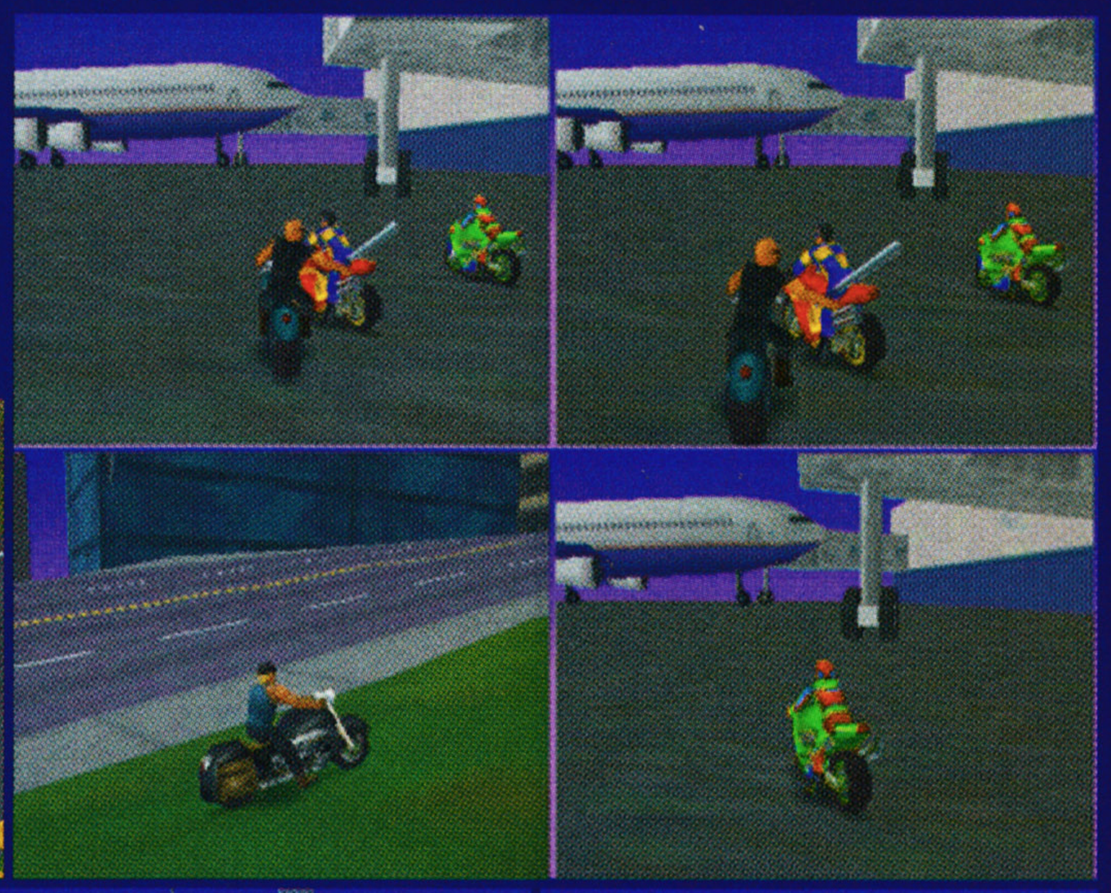
ROAD RASH 64

When *Road Rash 3D* appeared on the PlayStation, it was criticised for ditching the *Road Rash* tradition of beating up your opponents at high speed; instead it concentrated much more on the racing element. *Road Rash 64* has been in the works for quite a while, but we are happy to report that this time has been spent making much more of the game than a simple conversion of the PlayStation title.

Road Rash 64 brings back the 16-bit idea of combat and mixes it with some very impressive graphics. The game engine seems to be very well modelled; after crashes, bikes and riders spin ahead independently of each other, sometimes colliding with other objects, just like *Redline Racer*. The new version will have brand new environments, new characters including cops and female racers, and a multitude of racing modes such as gauntlet, team race, escape and pursuit. There are also new weapons, including a pool cue that can be jammed into the spokes of an enemy's bike.

The game will utilise the 4-meg RAM Pak to boost its visuals and help keep up the frame rate in the four-player mode to just below 30fps. Not impressed? Well, it can pull all this off with up to twelve riders on screen at once.

Pedestrians and special multiplayer arenas are still to be added, but from this early stage it's sure to do well for its multiplayer appeal alone.



The Nintendo 64 incarnation of *Road Rash* should be the best yet

COMMANDOS 2

Present only in behind-the-scenes video form, *Commandos 2* was arguably the best-looking game at the show. The video showed what was allegedly in-game footage of a soldier performing a great number of actions in an attempt to evade his pursuers. The aforementioned character could be seen jumping out of windows, stealthily hugging the edges of walls, and even doing a forward roll off the edge of a raised platform as he was chased through a beautifully rendered wartime village. All of the animations were completely seamless, and in all honesty I have to say I'll believe it when I play it. *Commandos 2* seriously looked too good to be true, and I wonder whether the in-game footage may have in fact been a 3D animator's impression of what the game is expected to look like. We look forward to finding out...

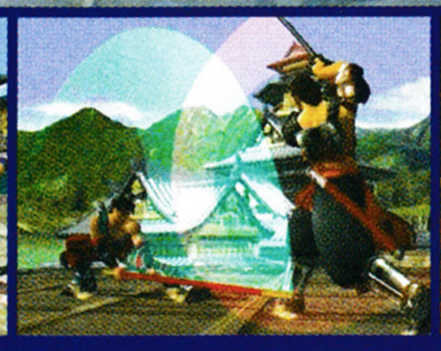
SOUL CALIBUR

It came as quite a surprise to most people in the industry when Namco announced last October that they would be developing games for the Dreamcast since they had worked exclusively for the PlayStation since 1995. However, they have now put their money where their corporate mouth is, and unveiled their first Dreamcast title.

Soul Calibur is a sequel to the enormously popular *Soul Blade*, itself a development of Namco's *Tekken* games, and was released as a System 12 coin-op game last year. The System 12 hardware is based on the PlayStation but with far more memory, so a port to the Sony console was out of the question. The Dreamcast version is not a simple port of the arcade game though, but an enhanced version with sharper graphics and a super-smooth sixty frames a second. The models of the fighters use more polygons than the System 12 version, as do the 3D backgrounds.

The superior lighting effects possible with the Dreamcast hardware allow sparks from clashing weapons to light up their surroundings, including the fighters.

Although the game is not due for release until the autumn, a playable version was on show at E3, and it looked superb, with fast, solid looking graphics and plenty of combat action. If *Soul Calibur* makes it in time to be a launch title for the Dreamcast, it will certainly boost the popularity of the new console.



OBI WAN

With the release of The Phantom Menace only days away, and the Nintendo stand dominated by a life-size Pod Racer flying over the inevitable giant logo, you might think that the last thing on LucasArts' minds would be doing something else to gain attention. Cue the announcement of *Star Wars Episode 1: Obi Wan*, a brand new first-person game in the style of the *Dark Forces* and *Jedi Knight* series.

Obi Wan was not playable at the show, but a brief video and details of a brand new game engine utilising realistic motion capture for Obi Wan and his adversaries in the Episode 1 universe were more than enough to satisfy the crowds.

EIDOS STAND SURVIVAL HORROR

Eidos Interactive, whose stand at the show contained the usual attention dividing mixture of great games and great women, announced that they have recently signed the rights to distribute *Resident Evil 3* in Europe. Undoubtedly bad news for Virgin, but maybe Eidos will come up with a way to use one when publicising the game?

PLANET OF THE APES

Fox Interactive have often made good use of their relationship with the movie branch of the Fox family, and it looks like they are about to do so again. The cult 1969 movie Planet of the Apes is about to be turned into a computer game for the PC. To celebrate the thirtieth birthday of the sci-fi classic, Fox are about to release a Lara Croft-style third-person adventure game based upon it. Their stand at E3 featured an enormous bamboo cage containing a group of human 'captives', including the traditional scantily clad women. Quite what the game is all about remains something of a mystery, as the company are saying precious little about it. However, expect to encounter Taylor, Galen and Dr Zeus, and don't be too surprised if you have to fight off hordes of angry gorillas.

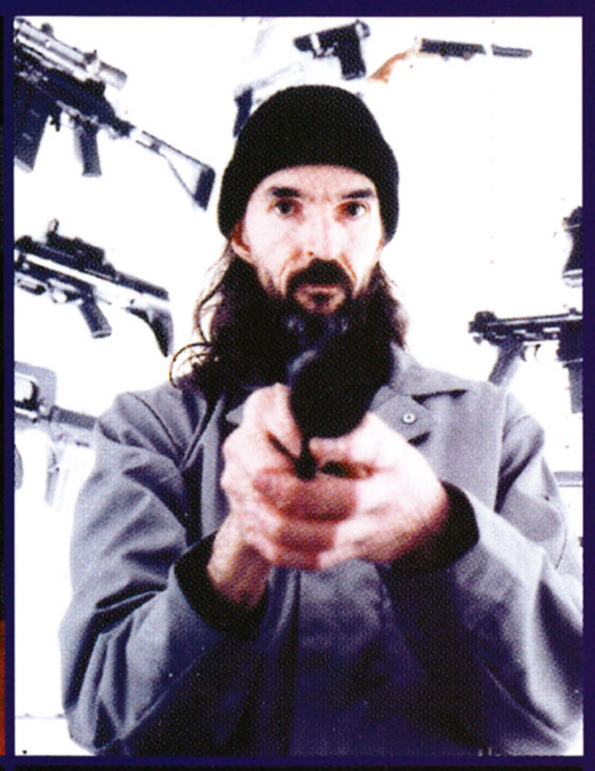
GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

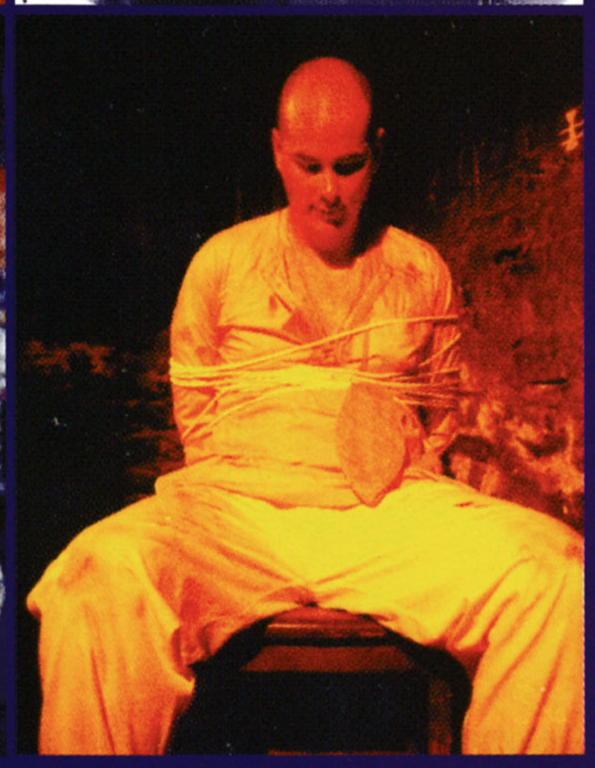
Behind the scenes on the Take 2 Interactive/Rockstar Games stand, and on show by special invitation only, was a playable version of one of the most eagerly awaited games in the Total CONTROL office – *Grand Theft Auto 2*.

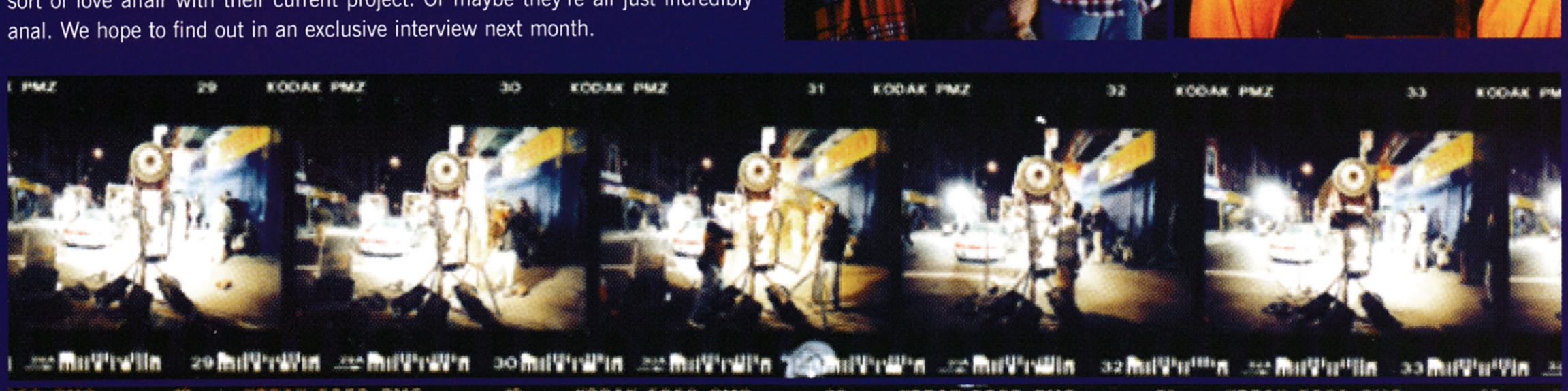
Although certain lesser magazines we could mention were apparently disappointed by the continued use of the overhead viewpoint, we at Total CONTROL saw the original *GTA* as a triumph of gameplay over graphics and are more than happy for this trend to continue. But not everything about *GTA 2* is so familiar, and in the words of Sam Houser, president of the recently formed Rockstar Games, "You have to earn respect from the game before it will let you play", and he's not joking. You start the game as nothing more than a member of the public. The numerous gang bosses in the city have never heard of you, so why would they even think about hiring you? It's up to you to get yourself noticed by causing havoc throughout the city. You're not the only loser with ambitions though, so watch out for other car thieves and gang members who are looking to increase their own notoriety.

The level of detail in *GTA 2* is nothing short of amazing. For example, if you steal a taxi, members of the public will try to hail you down. Pull up alongside them and they'll get in, tell you where they want to go, and the meter will start running. Now although it's not really in the spirit of the game, if you drive sensibly and take your passenger to the correct destination, they'll pay you. This means that in theory it would be possible for you to accumulate enough money to progress to later levels simply by 'acquiring' a yellow cab and working as a taxi driver. This sort of thing will be common in *GTA 2*, as the developers have attempted to make everything *GTA* fans wanted to be possible in the original possible in the sequel.

Even sticking to the top-down view, *GTA 2* represents a significant leap forward from the original, with improved graphics, mission structures, and a level of depth to the gameplay which suggests that those responsible are having some sort of love affair with their current project. Or maybe they're all just incredibly anal. We hope to find out in an exclusive interview next month.







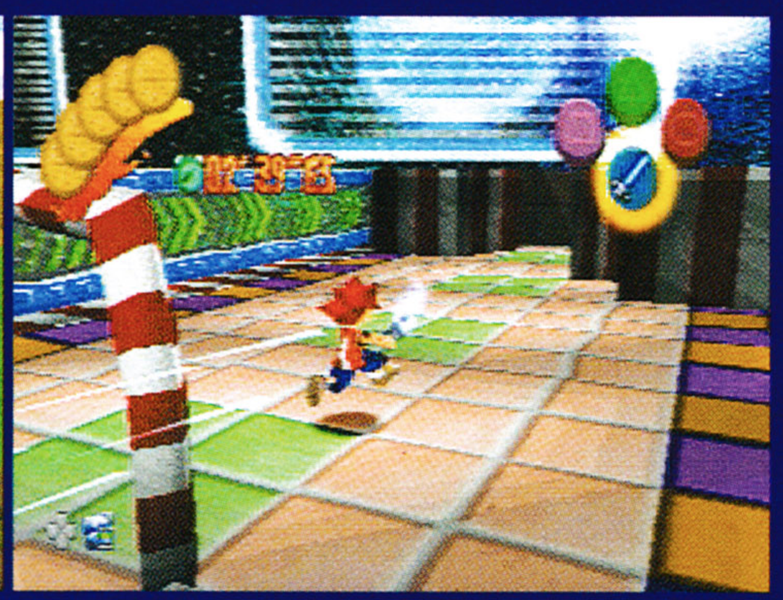
APE ESCAPE

With the lack of quality in-house titles from Sony, *Ape Escape* stood out loud and proud from the otherwise lacklustre games on show at the Sony stand. A typically Japanese platformer, *Ape Escape* should appeal to those of you who found last year's *Spyro* just too much sugar to bear. It does have an insane Japanese sense of humour – without which we wouldn't have a game based around the notion of time travelling monkeys...

Evil apes have escaped from the local Monkey World and broken into a scientist's laboratory. Using his cutting edge time travelling technology, they travel back to the age of dinosaurs and plan to change the history of the world by wiping out the human race! This is where you come in: it's your job to go back and capture the naughty apes with your time net – a device that will take the apes back to the modern day.

Ape Escape is the first game that requires an analogue controller to play it, and as such has one of the most innovative control systems yet seen in a game. The left analogue stick controls your movement, while the right stick allows you to attack with your weapon at any angle.

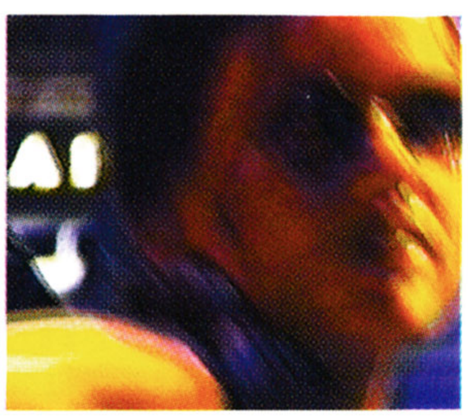
Apart from this, *Ape Escape* displays some well thought out level design, a well-balanced learning curve and some fantastic monkey noises. *Ape Escape* will be one of Sony's big games of the winter, and it thoroughly deserves to be.



UEFA STRIKER

One of the surprises of the show as far as we're concerned, the 60% complete version we were allowed to play was already showing signs of being of being a worthy challenger to the likes of *ISS* and *FIFA*. The AI of the players was especially impressive, with team-mates making intelligent runs according to where you were with the ball, and even turning back if they realised they were offside. Graphically it's certainly not as impressive as a couple of its rivals, but then since when are games of football decided on who's the best looking? To be honest it was so great to come across a product where the developers had obviously put gameplay at the top of their wish list at a very early stage that at 60% complete I'd have gladly played the game using sprites from *Sensible Soccer*.

There are over 150 club and national teams in the game, although some of these will only be accessible once you've proved yourself in the certification test mode. Probably the best feature, and certainly the one that Infogrames are crowing about, is the unique 'Total Control System'. Not only is it a rather cool name, but it's probably one of the most user-friendly control interfaces to appear in a football game in recent years – at least on the PlayStation version that we played. Whether the Dreamcast and Game Boy Color versions will be as playable remains to be seen.



HYDRO THUNDER

We've been impressed by a few of the boat racing games that have been released on the PlayStation and N64, but *Hydro Thunder* could be the best yet. The unique game engine combines *Wave Race* with *WipEout* as you compete in a hectic competition in catamarans, superboats and hydro boats. The degree of realism and control is determined by the difficulty level, which makes the game engine tougher and less forgiving for the player rather than simply increasing the speed of your opponents.

Hydro Thunder allows players to actually use the waves in the water to their advantage, so that you can hang in the air for longer or jump over opponents ahead of you. There are loads of boosts on each level, but they will not have as much of an effect on the faster boats as they do on the slower ones. This provides different gameplay for different vehicles, as well as forcing you to find the optimal strategy for each.

There will be a minimum of nine tracks plus a few hidden tracks (and vehicles such as the hovercraft) which are set in locations ranging from the Greek islands to the Arctic Circle and an abandoned ship graveyard, all of which look absolutely gorgeous and run at an impressive frame rate. There are rumours surrounding internet and VMS options that are still to be confirmed, but a multiplayer mode of some form is sure to find its place.

Hydro Thunder will be joining a very strong list of racing games for the Dreamcast, and looks to be an arcade perfect conversion. It's not due for release in Japan for several months yet, but check the news section in future issues for more info on this potentially huge game.

TEAM FORTRESS 2

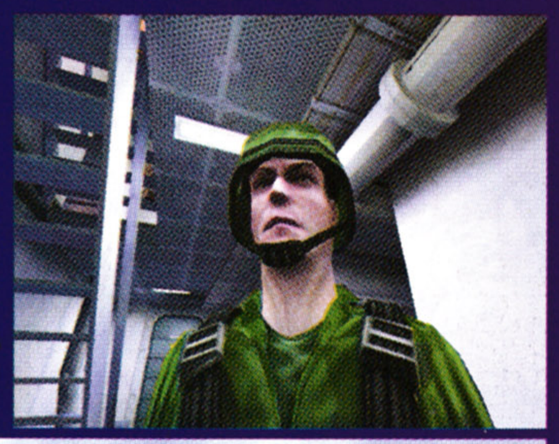
One of the most popular games around the Total CONTROL office is, as I'm sure you know, the *Team Fortress* add-on for Valve's amazing game *Half-Life*, a multiplayer-only game in which you take on specific character classes with special abilities and operate as part of a team. One of the hits of this year's E3 was Valve's demo of the eagerly awaited *Team Fortress 2*, due out later this summer. This sequel features nine classes of character – including such new faces as the Commander, the Rocket Infantry, and the Commando – twenty new maps divided into four campaigns, and over a dozen highly realistic weapons, which are apparently based on real-world

equipment used by the armed forces.

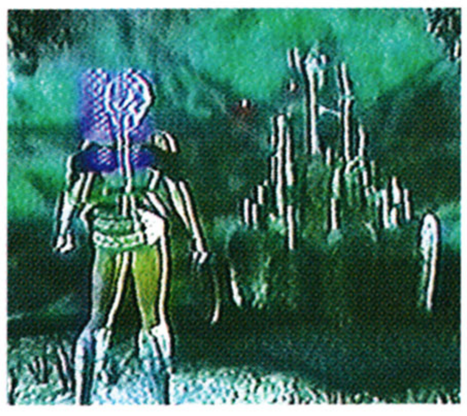
Rather than relying entirely on human participation, *Team Fortress 2* also has AI-controlled players, so you can either pit your human team against computer controlled opponents or have AI players on your team to make up the numbers. The true test will be to see if you can tell the difference. The Turing Test in a game, anyone?

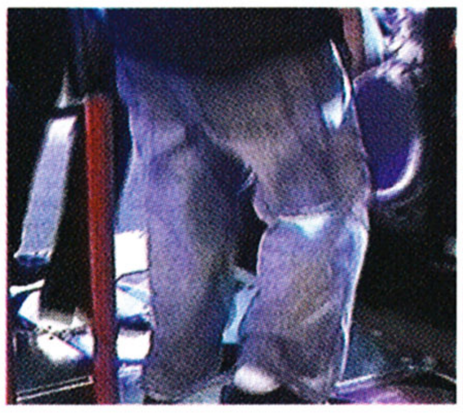
Perhaps the most eagerly anticipated feature of the game is the inclusion of a range of driveable vehicles, including APCs, tanks and even helicopters, which should make for some fantastic games. Team play is further enhanced by a sophisticated communication system allowing you to talk to other members of your team.

The playable demonstration on the Sierra stand was drawing huge crowds throughout the show, and reaction amongst those lucky enough to get a turn on it was enthusiastically positive.



From the developers of *Half-Life*, the first game to better it?





ROLLCAGE EXTREME

"360° no-holds-barred racing pushed to its turbo-charged limits."

Psygnosis and ATD are currently hard at work on a sequel to the highly successful *Rollcage*, due for release in spring next year. Offering indestructible high speed vehicles similar to those seen in the original, *Rollcage Extreme* also promises an impressive 20 new tracks for you to zoom around in what could perhaps be described as a suicidal's nightmare.

Perhaps not too different to the original, but already looking like a worthy addition to any collection

TRICK STYLE

Probably the most exciting third party Dreamcast title at the show was Acclaim's *Trick Style*, a futuristic hoverboard racing game, which, unlike others in the genre, can boast playability and originality amongst its good qualities.

Developed by UK studio Criterion, *Trick Style* is graphically one of the best games currently in development for the Dreamcast's US launch. There are only three tracks on offer, which sounds pretty pathetic until you realise that each one boasts a great number of different routes, some of which are only accessible by performing the correct stunts at the correct places in the race. For example, a shortcut might require you to momentarily lie down on your board to squeeze through a narrow opening. The three courses are, perhaps a little predictably, post-apocalyptic versions of major cities. Future London, Aerial Tokyo and Neo Manhattan are only recognisable by the often derelict landmarks that pop up from time to time (Big Ben and the Empire State Building, for example).

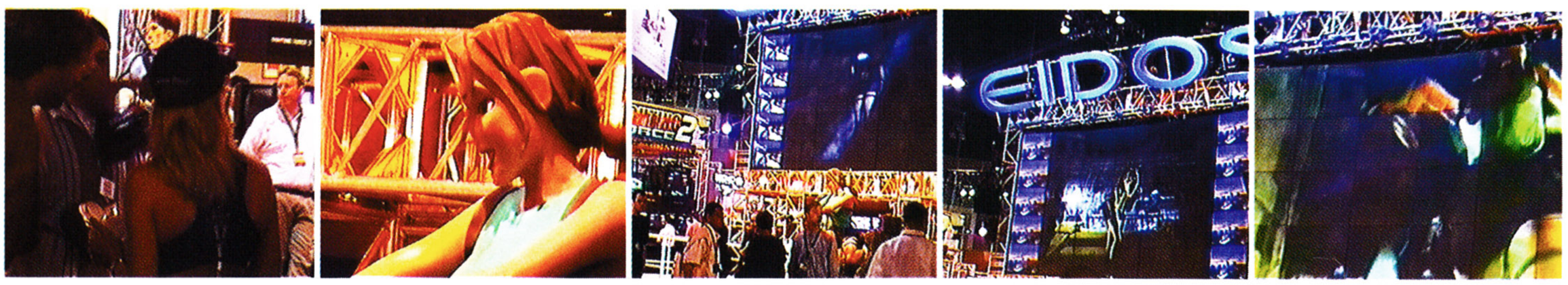
Another innovative option within the game is 'Point to Point Racing', which will allow the player to place markers around one of the vast courses in order, effectively designing their own route which must be adhered to by all participants. The possibilities aren't exactly endless, but they're certainly exciting and a welcome addition.

There are a variety of racers and boards to choose from, each offering different levels of skill in different areas. There's a small amount of hand-to-hand combat involved, but fortunately the programmers have not included any projectile attacks (often the ruin of a good racing game). Certain stunts will be unique to individual racers as well, which presumably means that one or two of the shortcuts may only be taken by certain characters.

In addition to the race circuits, there will be skate parks called Velodromes, where you don't have to worry about beating the clock, instead taking time out to perfect your moves. Such practice sessions are normally the reserve of the solo gamer, but *Trick Style* is rumoured to be completely internet compatible, meaning that visiting the practice arena would be no different to visiting your local skate park, with online players able to meet up and chat about techniques.

When we played the game at E3 the animation and speed were certainly impressive, with the game running at a constant 30 fps+. The characters have apparently been animated by hand so that they never appear to be defying gravity on their boards – the boards defy gravity but the characters don't. The effect is totally convincing, and the animations, unsurprisingly, are about as smooth as we're likely to see on the Dreamcast for quite some time. This is a game we are truly excited about, and we hope to bring you an Alpha Report along with developer interviews in the next couple of months.

These PC shots are obviously impressive, but we can apparently expect the Dreamcast to be superior

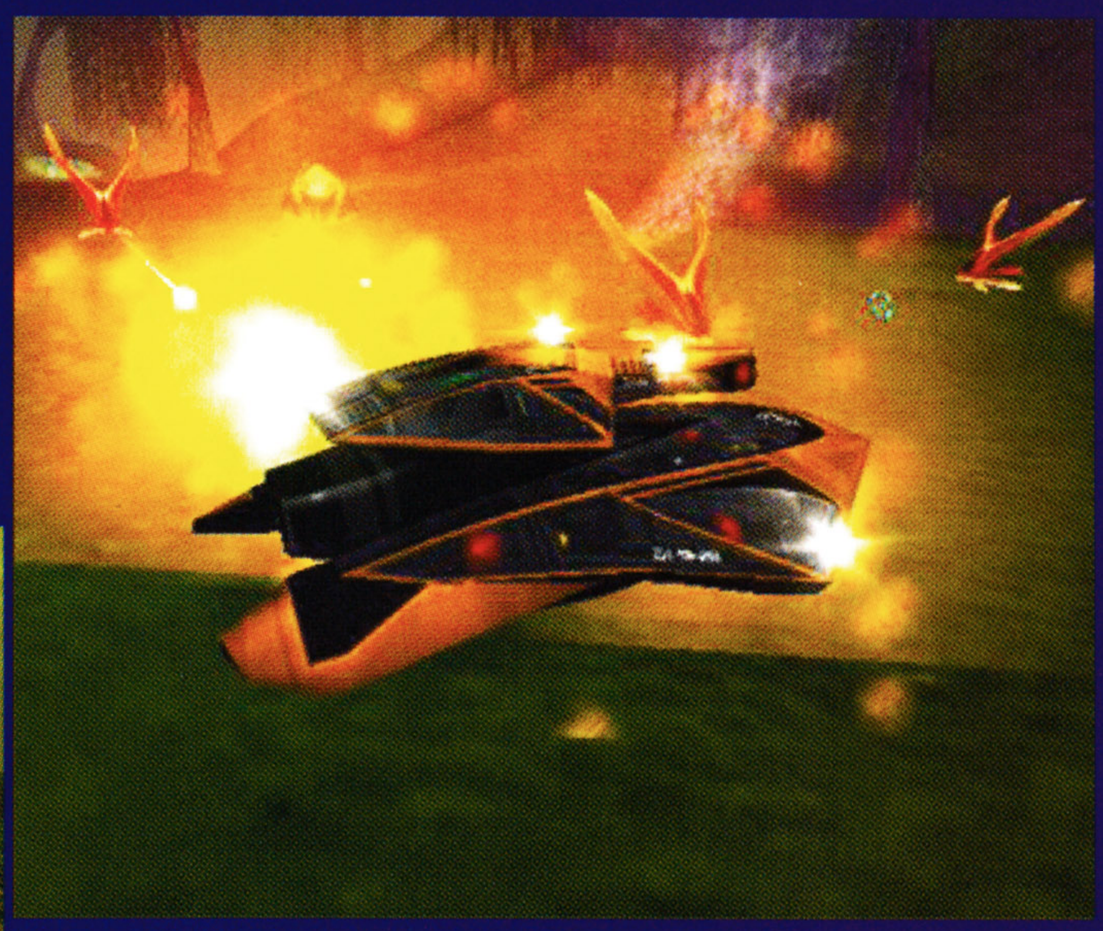


BATTLEZONE II

Unquestionably one of the highlights of the show was the sprawling Activision stand, featuring two great sequels, namely *Battlezone II* and *Quake III: Arena*.

Battlezone II, from Pandemic Studios, is the sequel to one of the most original games of 1997. Older gamers may remember an ancient coin-op game called *Battlezone* in the late seventies. Activision updated the original idea, adding superb 3D graphics and sophisticated AI, as well as brilliantly implemented strategic elements to produce a breakthrough game. The sequel enhances the gameplay even further, with over thirty new vehicles such as the Mortar Bike or a huge Walker, more complex 3D models for both vehicles and terrain, and an even more cunning enemy AI to defeat.

You can get out of your tank and move about on foot, and the interiors of structures can now be explored. The new advanced accelerator-only graphics engine supports the latest features of the next generation of 3D graphics accelerators, such as bump mapping, specula lighting and multi-layered textures. *Battlezone II* is scheduled for release in the summer. As you can see from the accompanying pictures, this is going to be one spectacular game and a worthy successor to its illustrious forebears.



Stunning visuals address perhaps the only flaw of the original

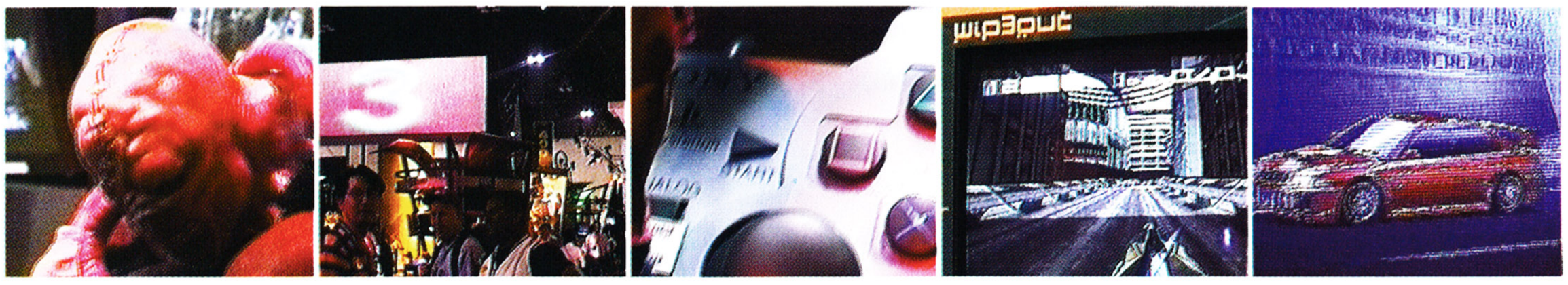
QUAKE III: ARENA

The other major game on Activision's stand, and possibly one of the most significant games of the year, was id Software's spectacular *Quake III: Arena*. Designing the game to be multiplayer-only shows that id know what their public want, and they've delivered it by the truckload.

If anyone out there in Readerland hasn't yet seen the downloadable *Quake III* test version which is doing the rounds, playing it is like playing *Quake II* on acid. (Not that I've ever done that, of course). Huge, beautifully designed, almost Gothic levels, high resolution anisotropically filtered texture maps, volumetric smoke trails from rockets, coloured dynamic lighting and more high speed fragging action than ever before – this is truly the ultimate deathmatch.

The new enhanced graphics engine supports a number of interesting features, such as real-time reflection and refraction in glass surfaces, extensive use of curved surfaces in the terrain models, and some very advanced lighting effects. The unique open architecture of the programming means that new features can be added with relative ease.

Considering that *Quake II* is seen as being the archetypal PC game, *Quake III* looks set to break new ground by being one of the only games to be released simultaneously on both the PC and the iMac, as well as supporting the alternative PC operating system, Linux.



NINTENDO 64 GAMES ON SHOW

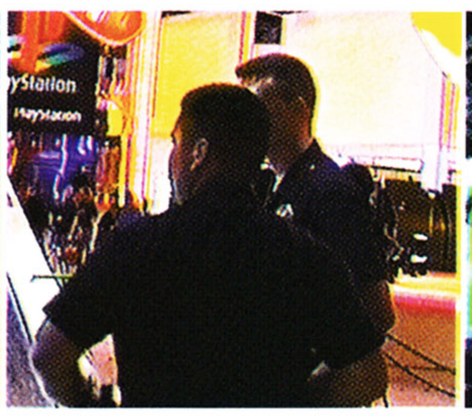
Contrary to popular belief, the Nintendo 64 has a massive number of titles in development at the moment. The following is a list of practically every Nintendo 64 game that was present at the show, excluding those that have already been released or were present only in video form:

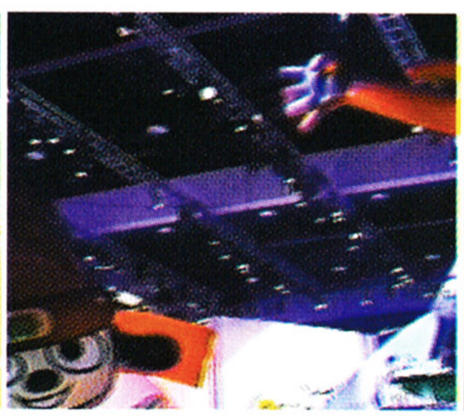
40 Winks
A Bug's Life
All-Star Baseball 2000
Armorines
Army Men
Asteroids 64
Bass Hunter 64
Battlezone 64
Blitz 2000
Blues Brothers 2000
Carmageddon 64
Command & Conquer
Daikatana
Donkey Kong 64
Duke Nukem: Zero Hour
Eternal Darkness
F-1 World Grand Prix
Fighting Force 64
Gauntlet: Legends
Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko
Harrier 2000
Hot Wheels
Hybrid Heaven
Hydro Thunder
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000
Jet Force Gemini
Ken Griffey Jr.'s Slugfest
Knockout Kings 2000
Kobe Bryant 2
Lego Racers
Madden NFL 2000
Mario Golf
Michael Owen's World League Soccer
Mini Racers
Monopoly
Monster Truck Madness
Mortal Kombat Special Forces
NBA Jam 2000
NBA Live! 2000
New Tetris
NFL Quarterback 2000
Nuclear Strike 64
Paperboy 3D
Perfect Dark
Pokémon Snap
Pokémon Stadium
Premier Manager 64
Quake II
Rainbow Six
Rally Masters
Rayman 2
Resident Evil 64
Re-Volt
Road Rash 64
Roadsters
Rugrats 64
Shadowgate: Trials of the Four Towers
Shadowman
Space Invaders
Star Wars: Episode 1 Racer
Starcraft
Supercross 2000
Superman: The Animated Series
Tiger Woods 2000
Tonic Trouble
Top Gear Hyper Bike
Top Gear Rally 2
Toy Story 2
WCW Mayhem
Wild Waters
World Driver Championship
WWF Attitude
Xena, Warrior Princess – The Talisman of Fate

DREAMCAST GAMES ON SHOW

Sega's Dreamcast stand was in the same hall as those of Nintendo and Sony, so competition was fierce. The line-up of games for the new system, however, was more than up to the job in hand, and Sega stole the show in our opinion.

Aero Wings
Air Force Delta
Armada
Blades of Vengeance
Blue Stinger
Carrier
CART Racing
Castlevania Resurrection
Climax Landers
Cool Boarders DC
D2
Dark Angel
Deep Fighter: The Tsunami Offensive
Dynamite Cop
Ecco The Dolphin
Expendable
F-1 World Grand Prix
Fighting Force 2
Frame Gride
Geist Force
Gundam: Second Story
House Of The Dead 2
Hydro Thunder
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000
Maken X
Marvel vs Capcom
MDK 2
Metropolis Street Racer
Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation
Mortal Kombat Gold
NBA 2000
NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC
NFL Blitz 2000
NFL Quarterback Club 2000
Outcast
Power Stone
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing
Red Dog
Redline Racer
Resident Evil: Code Veronica
Revelations: The Demon Slayer
Seven Mansions: The Uncanny Grimace
Shenmue
Slave Zero
Sonic Adventure
Soul Calibur
Speed Devils
Street Fighter Alpha 3
Supreme Snowboarding
TNN Motorsports HardCore Heat
Tokyo Xtreme Racer
Toy Commander
Vigilante 8: Second Offense
Virtua Fighter 3tb





PLAYSTATION GAMES ON SHOW

Unsurprisingly, there was a massive amount of titles on show for the PlayStation - equally unsurprising is the fact that many of them already show signs of being best avoided. This list of just about every game at the show gives you an idea of what you can expect during the next twelve months:

40 Winks
Abe: Oddworld 3
Ace Combat 3
Alien Resurrection
Animorphs
Armorines
Bass Masters
Bass Landing
Battletanx 2
Beavis & Butthead Do Hollywood
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling 2
Carmageddon
Chocobo Racing
Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon II
Clock Tower II
Colony Wars: Red Sun
Colin McRae Rally
Crash Team Racing
Danger Girl
Demolition Racer
Die Hard Trilogy 2
Dino Crisis
Dragon Quest VII
Dragon Valor
Dukes of Hazzard
Eagle One: Harrier Attack
Echo Night
F1 Racing Sequel
Fear Factor
Fighter Maker
Fighting Force 2
Final Fantasy Anthology
Final Fantasy VIII
Football Manager
NHL Championship 2000
GTA 2
Gauntlet Legends
Glover
Golf Pro
Gran Turismo 2
Grandia
Hot Wheels
Hydro Thunder
Indiana Jones
Jackie Chan's Fighting Stunt Master
Jade Cocoon: Story of Tamamayu
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000
Jet Moto 3
Juggernaut
Warpath: Jurassic Park
Kingsley
Kiss: Psycho Circus
LEGO Racers
LEGO Rock Raiders
Le Mans 24 Hours
Lunar: The Silver Star Story
Max Payne
MDK 2
Madden 2000
Major League Soccer 2000
Metal Gear Solid
Mission: Impossible
Mortal Kombat Special Forces
NFL Blitz 2000
NFL GameDay 2000
NHL Blades of Steel 2000
The Next Tetris
Pac-Man Classic
Pac-Man World
Paperboy
Planet of the Apes
Q*bert Classic
Prince Naseem Boxing
Quake II
Rainbow Six
Re-Volt
Ready 2 Rumble
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Rising Zan: The Samurai Gunman
Roadsters
Rugrats: Studio Tour
Saga Frontier II
Saboteur
Shadow Tower
Silly Billies
Sled Storm
Soul of The Samurai
South Park
South Park Rally
South Park: Chef's Love Shack
Space Invaders
Spider-Man
Spyro 2
Shaolin
Star Wars: The Phantom Menace
Strongest Shogi
Suikoden 2
Superman
Tarzan
Tenchu 2
Test Drive 6
Test Drive Off-Road 3
Thousand Arms.
Thrasher: Skate and Destroy
Tiny Tank: Up Your Arsenal
Titanium Angels
Tomorrow Never Dies
Toy Story 2
Trick 'N' Snowboarder
Ultimate 8 Ball
Um Jammer Lammy
Urban Chaos
V-Rally 2
Vigilante 8
Wild Wild West: The Game
WCW Mayhem
WWF Attitude
Wip3out
Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style
X-Men Activision
Xena: Warrior Princess

PC GAMES ON SHOW

Far too many PC titles were present for us to even attempt to list them all. The following, however, should give you some idea of the quality of product that was vying for our attention at every turn as we made our around the show:

4x4 Mud Monsters
A-10 Warthog
Abomination
Age of Empires 2
Alien Intelligence
Allegiance
Alone in the Dark 4
Anachronox
Arena
Armoured Fist III
Atlantis II
Aztec
Battlezone
Black Moon Chronicles
Blade
Bloodshot
Braveheart
C&C: Tiberian Sun
Carmageddon: Death Race 2000
Civ II: Test of Time
Civilization III
Clan Wars
Close Combat 4
Colin McRae 2
Commandos 2
Conquest: Frontier Wars
Creatures Adventures
Creatures III
Croc 2
Cutthroats
Dark Reign II
Delta Force II
Demolition Racer
Descent III
Deus Ex
Devil Inside
Die Hard Trilogy 2
Discworld Noir
Drakan
Driver
Duke Nukem Forever
Dungeon Keeper 2
Earthworm Jim 3D
Evolva
FA Premier League Stars
Faust
Fighter Ace II
Fighting Steel
Flashpoint
Flight Simulator 2000
Flight Unlimited III
Force Commander
Freelancer
Freespace 2
Galleon
Giants: Citizen Kabuto
Grand Prix World
GTA 2
Gunship III
Heavy Metal: FAKK 2
Hellboy
Hidden & Dangerous
Hogs of War
I-War 2
Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine
International Football 2000
Interstate 82
Kingpin
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver
Links LS 2000
Loose Cannon
Magic & Mayhem II
Max Payne
Maximum Overkill
Messiah
Mig Alley
Might & Magic VII
Missile Command
Mission Impossible
Mortyr
NFS: High Stakes
No Fear
Nocturne
Omikron
Outcast
Pandora's Box
Phoenix
Planet of the Apes
Prince Naseem Boxing
Prince of Persia 3D
Psycho Circus
Quake III: Arena
Rally Masters
Rayman 2
Reach for the Stars
Revenant
Saboteur
Seven Kingdoms II
Shadow Company
Shadowman
Shanghai: 2nd Dynasty
Sheep!
Shogun: Total War
Simon the Sorcerer III
Soldier of Fortune
Soulbringer
South Park II
Space Invaders
Spirit of Speed
Star Trek: Klingon Academy
Star Trek: New Worlds
Star Trek: Starfleet Command
Starlancer
Starship Troopers
Star Wars: The Phantom Menace
System Shock 2
Tachyon
Team Fortress II
Test Drive 3 Off Road
Test Drive Le Mans
Theme Park World
Thief 2
Third World
Time Machine
Titanium Angels
Tonic Trouble
Total Annihilation 2
UEFA Striker
Ultima Ascension
Ultimate Golf
Urban Chaos
Wargamer: Napoleon 1813
Warhammer: Rites of War
Warlords Battlecry
Warzone 2120
Wolfpack II
X-Com: Alliance

TOTAL N64

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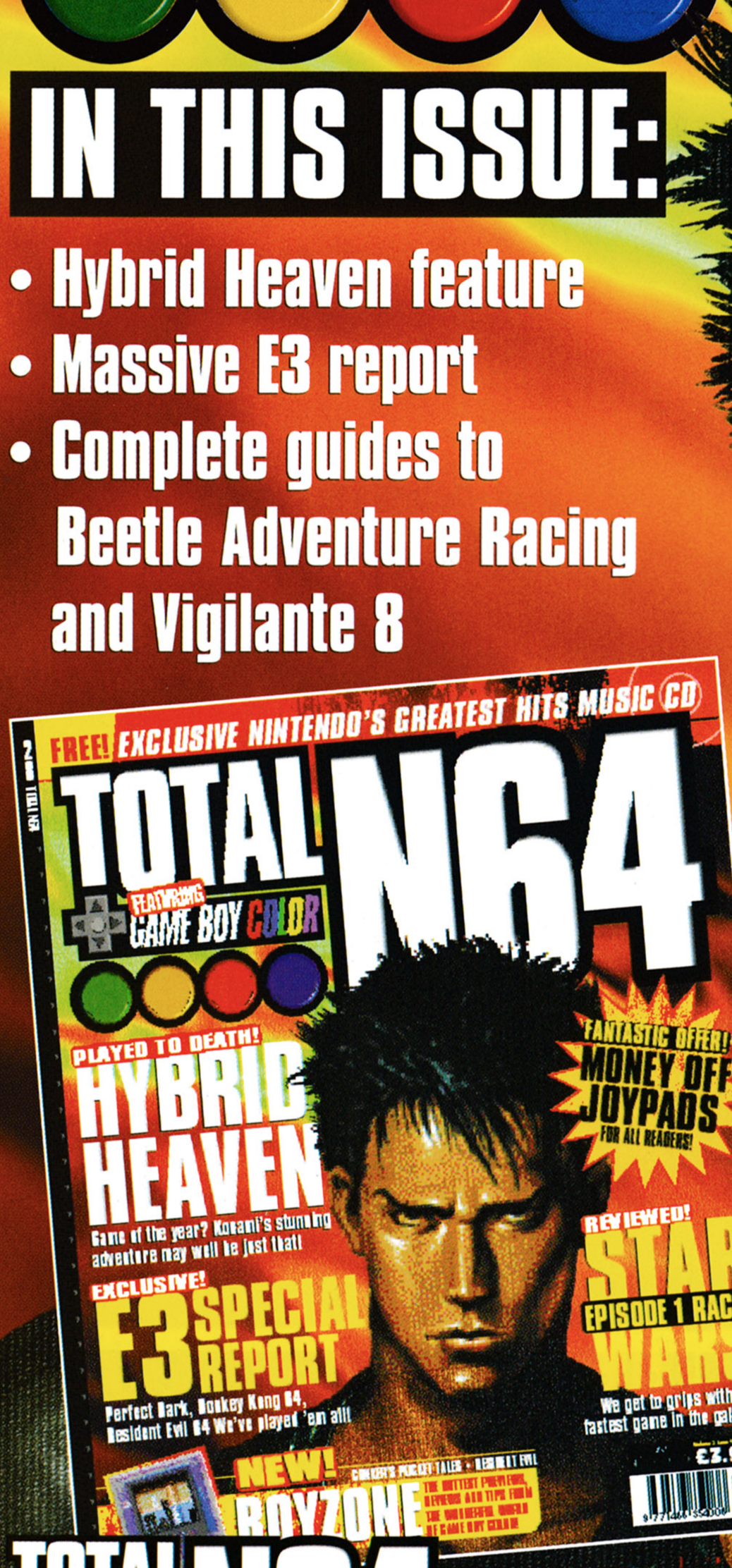
- Complete guides to Beetle Adventure Racing and Vigilante 8



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RAPIDE PUBLISHING

EASY WAY OUT

WILLADKIN
e-mail: will@rapide.co.uk

Another month clocks by, and the games aren't getting any easier. We've dug up another selection of cheats to help you with games such as *Aliens vs Predator*, *Akuji the Heartless* and *Buck Bumble*, amongst many, many others. Because of the multi-format perspective of Total CONTROL, we can only print cheats from the most recent and most popular titles, but if you need help on a slightly older or less well-known title, or even on imported software, send your request to the address elsewhere on this page and we'll try to print as many of them as possible. Here are a few of the requests we've answered this month:

Q – "I recently bought the *Monkey Island Bounty Pack*... I've managed to get three map pieces, but I can't work out how to get the last one in the treehouse. Do you know how to get it?" – Ian Tanlem, Bolton

A – You must have already worked out how to get up into the treehouse to get the telescope, so all you need to do now is to go the mansion and pick up the dog by the front door. Take him to the treehouse and use him with the bird and then with the pile and you can take all four map pieces to Wally.

Q – "Do you know any good cheats for *Quake* on the Saturn?" – Mark Higley

A – Try pausing the game and highlighting the Customise Controls option. Then quickly press R, X, L, Z, L, R, Y, L, R, Y for all weapons with full ammunition, or press R, L, X, Y, Z, R, L, X, Y, Z for invincibility. A confirmation message will appear on screen if you do it correctly.

Q – "Is there a cheat for infinite health and weapons on *Turok* on the N64?" – Paul Jones, Edinburgh

A – If you enter NTHGTHDGDCRTDTRK as a passcode you will be blessed with invincibility, all weapons, unlimited ammo, infinite lives, full map, big head, level skip, and warps (Long Hunter, Mantis, T-Rex, Campaigner), which could be useful.

If you're stuck on a particular part of a game, have been looking for specific codes, or just want general advice, send your request via letter or postcard to: Easy Way Out, Total CONTROL, Rapide Publishing, 1 Roman Court, 48 New North Road, Exeter, Devon, EX4 4EP, or via e-mail to will@rapide.co.uk, and I'll do my best to answer them all.

Having **trouble** against overwhelming odds? **Nasty aliens** getting the **better of you**? Have a flick through **Total CONTROL's** cheats pages to turn the **tide in your favour**...

PC CHEATS

NEW WAY OUT

Army Men 2

Cheat mode:
Press Backspace to enter the message mode, then type '!when all else fails...' to enable the cheat mode. You can now enter one of the following codes to activate a cheat.

Effect, ... Code on right
Vulcan gun ..... a better tomorrow
Mines ..... acme discs
Armageddon ..... armageddon
Sniper rifle ..... beautiful nikita
End of Phoenix ..... cliche ending
Healing ..... doctor doctor
M-80 ..... fourth of july
Air strike ..... geronimo!
Explosives ..... gnomish inventions
Sniper rifle ..... god of gamblers
Lose mission ..... i give up
Grenades ..... i have a rock
Flight ..... jumpjets
Stealth mode ..... ninja arts
No rocket launcher ..... no rocket launcher
Paratroopers ..... paper dolls
Flaming Sarge ..... phoenix!
Mine sweeper ..... pooper scooper
Aerosol spray ..... roach spray
Medical kit ..... rubber cement
Magnifying glass ..... ruby ray
Invincibility ..... santini
Disguise ..... shrink wrap
Disguise ..... smorfs
Grey disguise ..... metal sheeting
Full map ..... spidey senses tingling
Commit suicide ..... suicide kings
Overwhelmed by enemies . surprise party
New background sound ..... techno
Win mission ..... veni vidi vinci
Flame-thrower ..... village people
Reconnaissance flights .....
..... watchtower in the sky
Highlighted men promoted to five stars
patton's speach .....
Flak jacket ..... aluminum foil
Bodies not scattered or melted become zombies .... night of the walking dead
"Go Bruins" message ..... ucla
Mini-map objects blink faster .. warp 6

NEW WAY OUT

Aliens vs Predator

To activate the cheat mode press ~ + [F12] during game play to display the console. Then enter one of the following codes while playing as the indicated character to activate the corresponding cheat function:

Effect ..... Code
Create CPU controlled Alien(ALL) .....
..... alienbot
Create an CPU controlled Marine (ALL)
..... marinebot
Create CPU controlled Predator (ALL) .
..... predobot
All weapons and ammo (ALL) .....
..... giveallweapons
God mode(ALL) ..... god
Create light aura, (repeat for brighter) (ALL) ..... light
Player invisible to all opponents (ALL)
.....
..... observer
Display level coordinates (ALL) .....
..... showcoords
Display frame rate (ALL) ..... showfps
Replenish energy supply (Predator) ....
..... gimme_charge
God mode (Marine) . freakoftheuniverse
God mode (Predator) .... skullcollector
God mode .....
heonedeadlycreautureevercreated
Become Final Xenomorph (Alien) .....
winneroftheonegreatbattleoftheuniverse

NEW WAY OUT

Carmageddon II

Enter the following codes during the game:

Code ..... Effect
TILTY ..... Pinball mode
WATERSPORT ..... Underwater ability
LEMMINGIZE .....
..... Stupid pedestrians/zombies
STIFFSPASMS ..... Mutant corpses
WOTATWATAMI ..... Greased tyres
SMARTBASTARD ... Completes the race
BIGDANGLE ..... Mutant Tail thing
WETWET ..... Credit bonus
TINGTING ..... Free repairs
STOPSNATCH ..... Timer toggle
MOONINGMINNIE ..... Lunar gravity
CLINTONCO ..... Hot-Rod
FASTBAST .... Turbo pedestrians/zombies
STICKYTYRES ..... Wall climber
GOODHEAD ..... Pedestrians/zombies
..... with stupid heads
EVENINGOCCIFER ..... Drink driving
TIMMYTITTy ..... Time bonus
POWPOW ..... Opponent repulsificator
ZAZAZ .. Pedestrian/zombie Annihilator

Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith

Press T and then enter one of the following case-sensitive cheat codes to activate the corresponding cheat function.

Unlimited full force powers ... iamagod
All weapons ..... diediedie
Full inventory ..... gimmestuff
Disable AI ..... statuesque 1
Enable AI ..... statuesque 0
Increase Force level ..... trainme
Fly ..... freebird
Enable invincibility ..... boinga 1
Disable invincibility ..... boinga 0
Full mana ..... trixie
Full map ..... cartograph
Slow motion ..... gospeedgo 1
Resume normal speed ... gospeedgo 0
Level skip ..... gameover
Jump to specified co-ordinates . quickzap

NEW WAY OUT

Sim City 3000

To use one of the following cheats, press Control, Shift, Alt and C simultaneously. This will bring up a window in which you should input the following codes:

Code ..... Cheat
I am weak
Building, zoning, utilities and trees now free
call cousin vinnie ..... Petitioner with $100,000 to give you shows up
garbage in, garbage out
All garbage buildings available
power to the masses
All power buildings available
water in the desert
All water buildings available
UFO swarm
After typing code, set disaster to UFO and watch the swarm
The Bird
Keep your sims wary of those seagulls
nerdz rool
Promotes clean, hi-tech industry in your city

All Buildings cheat:
Open and close power plants menu.
Open and close rewards and opportunities menu.
Open and close garbage menu.
Open Landmarks menu.
All buildings in *SimCity 3000* are now available to you.

Redline

During the game hold G + O + D to display the command line. Now enter one of the codes from below.

IMMORTAL ..... God mode
MORTAL ..... Turn off God mode
RETICLE . Gives you a smart reticle that turns red when over a target
CAMERA .. Third-person view when on foot
TARGETS .....
... Targeting for weapons (on foot only)
DMDAMAGE .....
..... Deal out double damage on foot
RADAR ..... Gives you radar on foot
CW ..... All car weapons

EASYWAYOUT

CA . . . . . Max car ammo levels
STONEAGE . . . Puts a running person in place of the car
CAROFF . . . . . No car geometry
CARFLIP . . . . . Flip the car geometry
WHEELSOFF . . Toggle on/off car wheels

Thief

These codes will only work with *Thief* v1.33
Mission Skip = CTRL + ALT + SHIFT

Open the dark.cfg file in your *Thief* directory and add the lines: 'cash_bonus' to give yourself lots of money and 'starting_missionx' to start on the mission number that you replace 'x' with.

Warzone 2100

Create a shortcut in Windows and enter the command line "warzone.exe -ImACheatingScallyWag". Then, in the game, use the following codes.
CTRL + M . . . . . Skip mission.
CTRL + N . . . . . Power boost
CTRL + G . . . Reveal all map on RADAR
CTRL + X . . . . . Instant research
Timedemo . . Frame rate averaged over last five minutes
Carol Vorderman. . . . . Sound sample
Hallo Mein Schatz . . . . . Mission skip
Normal . . . . .

EASYWAYOUT

NGLFFPTTFP Mission 3 - Times Square
SHPPNRVWGB ..... Mission 4 - Strangle Hold Bridge
MRFFCRTKP ..... Mission 5 - Bonus
LPGCVBBJCF .... Mission 6 - Heartland
GLWHJCRNLK ..... Mission 7 - Lake Shore Drive
KMKJTMHRNS ... Mission 8 - State St.
FLWWFCWNRK ..... Mission 9 - Bonus
WSMBCPVRWS ..... Mission 10 - Armageddon Highway
CGJWVRGLNM ..... Mission 11 - Area 51
KVVLHFHWTB . Mission 12 - Fremont St.
FCLPJRWTMP .... Mission 13 - Bonus
TMFNJMKJGF Mission 14 - Crimson Gate
PPJLJHRCVV ..... Mission 15 - Wharf
LNKNSWKGTH .... Mission 16 - Bonus
WMNRSMRTR ... Mission 17 - Q-Zone

Multiplayer weapons power-up:
Begin game play in multiplayer mode and collect at least 15 of one weapon, except for grenades. Aim at an opponent, then press A + B to fire a powered-up version of that weapon.

Drive Goliath tank off rail:
While in the Goliath tank, hold C-Left or C-Right until the tank stops. Then, hold C-Down until a grinding sound is heard. A message stating that the tank is off the rail will appear. The tank may now be driven to any location as needed.

NEW WAY OUT

Buck Bumble

Full health, full ammunition, all weapons:
Press Left, Right, Up, Down at the title screen. Then hold Z and press Right(2), Left(2). A sound will confirm correct code entry. Then, press A + B + R during game play for full health, full ammunition, and all weapons.

Level select:
Hold Z and press Right, Down(2), Right at the title screen. Release Z, then press Right, Up, Down, Left(2), Up, Right(2). A sound will confirm correct code entry. A level selection screen will appear when the game begins.

Invincibility:
Hold Z and press R(2), L(2), Up, Down, Left, Right at the title screen.

Play as Dark Stinger:
Hold Z + Analogue-stick Up and press C-Up, C-Right, C-Down, C-Left(5), B, A, B before the opening screen appears. A sound will confirm correct code entry.

Extreme-G 2

Enter the following codes as passwords:
68QCMH3H9HT ..... Venom bike
55HZ1MH3H9H1 ..... Wasp bike
3GP8ZKW76ZMW ..... All bikes
8KLSZKW76ZM7 ..... All tracks
HSFDCCV611FV ..... Spectre bike and Duel mode
HS3B9BQ9DGPL ..... Mirror mode
N31GG76CG9DZ Extra multiplayer levels (enable the "Venom bike" or "Wasp bike" codes first)

Level skip:
Enter RA50 as a name at the bike selection screen in extreme contest mode. Begin game play, then press Start to pause the race. Select the "Quit" option and choose "Yes" to confirm. Select the "Go" option at the placing screen to advance to the next level.

Extreme modes:
Enter the following codes at the bike selection screen in extreme contest mode and listen for the phrase 'Extreme' to confirm that it has been activated. Enter it again to deactivate the code.

Wipeout mode 2064
Spiralling screen ..... SPIRAL
Full screen ..... NOPANEL
Overhead view ..... SPYEYE
Turbo mode XXX
Unlimited lasers and shields . XCHARGE
Unlimited weapons ..... MISTAKE
Unlimited nitros ..... NITROID
Blurred graphics ..... FLICK
Remove screen fog ..... PIXIE
Wireframe graphics ..... LINEAR
TRON mode ..... NEUTRON
Random tracks ..... JUGGLE
All homing and multiple missiles ..... MISPLACE

Micro Machines 64 Turbo

Change into objects:
Pause game play and press Down(2), Up(2), Right(2), Left(2). A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.

Behind car view:
Pause game play and press Left, Right, C-Left, C-Right, Left, Right, C-Left, C-Right. A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.

High bounces:
Pause game play and press C-Left, Right(2), Down, Up, Down, Left, Down(2). A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.

Turbo mode:
Pause game play and press C-Left, C-Down, C-Right, C-Left, C-Up, C-Down(4). A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.

Slow CPU racers:
Pause game play and press C-Right, C-Up, C-Left, C-Down, C-Right, C-Up, C-Left, C-Down. A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.

Debug mode:
Pause game play and press C-Left, Up, Down(2), C-Left, C-Right(2), C-Up, C-Down to enable debug mode. The following debug functions may now be used:

Instant win
Press Z + C-Down during game play. Note: This cannot be done during the time trials.

Change camera angle
Hold Z and press Up, Down, Left or Right during game play.

Zoom camera view
Hold Z and press L or R during game play.

CPU control of car
Hold Z and press C-Left during game play.

Destroy all cars
Hold X + C-Up + C-Right + C-Left during game play.

Smash Brothers

Alternate costumes:
Press C-Left, C-Right, C-Up, or C-Down at the character selection screen.

Play as Luigi:
Successfully complete the Bonus 1 "Break The Target" with the eight original characters and one bonus character. This can be done during Bonus 1 practice. Then, defeat Luigi. If you lose the match, complete Bonus 1 again with any character for a rematch.

Sound test:
Successfully complete Bonus Games 1 and 2 with all characters, including the secret ones. This can be done during Bonus 1 and 2 practice.

Change character view:
Hold Z and press the analogue stick at the character biography screen.

Borrow a life:
Begin a team game under versus mode. Press Start if you lose a life to take a life from your partner. Alternatively, press A, B, Z, Start.

Item switch:
Use any character to record one hundred kills to unlock an item switch menu. This menu allows various weapons to be toggled and control the frequency in which they appear. Alternatively, select versus mode, choose any character for yourself, and the three CPU players. Select "stock" mode, set the number lives to ten and computer handicaps to five. Begin game play and win. Enter the options screen under versus mode to access the items switch selection.

Lose a power as Kirby:
If you want to intentionally lose a power gained after eating another character as Kirby, press L to execute his taunt.

WipEout 64

Unlimited energy:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right during game play.

Unlimited ammunition:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Down(2), C-Left(2), C-Right(2), C-Up during game play.

Unlimited time:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Up, C-Right, C-Left, C-Down, C-Up, C-Right, C-Left, C-Down.

Cyclone weapons power-up:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Left, C-Right, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, C-Down, C-Up at the main menu. This power-up doubles the damage caused by your weapons.

Velocitar track:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Left, C-Right, C-Up, C-Right, C-Left at the main menu.

All ships:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Down(4), C-Right, C-Up, C-Left at the main menu.

DREAMCAST CHEATS

NEW WAY OUT

Blue Stinger

Hidden artwork:
Place the game disc in a PC compatible CD-ROM drive to find more .BMP images from the game in the 'omake' directory. Two short voice samples in .WAV format are also in this directory.

Near-invincibility:
Successfully complete and save the game. Start a new game with the saved game file to have 200 Hassy Drinks (100 small and 100 large) in the inventory. This should allow the game to be played with near-invincibility and the additional bonus of not having to buy any other health items. Additionally, any money left from the last game will also be available in the new game.

Heat-seeking raygun:
Successfully complete the game twice to receive a heat-seeking raygun, which is not available in any shop or vending-machine. It fires four heat-seeking lasers.

Mad mode:
Successfully complete the game three times and save the game. Start a new game with the saved game file. The phrase 'Mad Mode' will appear next to the health bar. In this mode 200 Hassy Drinks, all weapons (including the ray gun), and full ammunition will be available.

Bank card passwords:
Enter one of the following passwords for the indicated bank card at the Bank Of Kimra (across the street from Rat's Place) to receive the corresponding funds.

Bank card	Money	Password
Eliot	$20	3532
Kimra	$4000	1008
Yucatan	$5700	1861
Bermuda	$6000	1394

NEW WAY OUT

Marvel vs. Capcom

Fight as Lilith:
Highlight Zangief at the character selection screen. Then press Left(2), Down(2), Right(2), Up(2), Down(4), Left(2), Up(4), Right, Left, Down(4), Right(2), Up(4), Left(2), Down(4), Right, Down. Lilith will appear below War Machine.

Fight as Roll:
Highlight Zangief at the character selection screen. Then press Left(2), Down(2), Right(2), Down(2), Left(2), Up, Right, Up(2), Right(2). Roll will appear to the right of Mega Man.

Fight as Shadow Lady:
Highlight Morrigan at the character selection screen. Then press Up, Right(2), Down(4), Left(2), Up(4), Right(2), Left(2), Down(2), Right(2), Down(2), Left(2), Up(2), Right(2), Up(2), Left(2), Down(5). Shadow Lady will appear below Gambit.

Fight as Red Venom:
Highlight Chun-Li at the character selection screen. Then press Right, Down(4), Left, Up(4), Right(2), Down(2), Left(2), Down(2), Right(2), Up(4), Left(2), Up. Red Venom will appear above Chun-Li.

Fight as Orange Hulk:
Highlight Chun-Li at the character selection screen. Then press Right(2), Down(2), Left(2), Right(2), Down(2), Left(2), Up(4), Down(2), Right(2), Up(2), Down(4), Up(4), Left, Up. Orange Hulk will appear above Ryu.

Fight as Gold War Machine:
Highlight Zangief at the character selection screen. Then press Left(2), Down(2), Right(2), Down(2), Left(2), Up(4), Right(2), Left(2), Down(4), Right(2), Up(2), Left(2), Down(2), Right(2), Up(5). Gold War Machine will appear above Zangief.

Full pause screen:
Press Start to pause game play, then hold Y and press X.

Selecting special partners:
Note: The following codes must be entered while holding Start before the special partner selection screen appears.
Unknown soldier: Hold Weak Punch
Lou: Hold Medium Punch
Arthur: Hold Weak Punch + Medium Punch
Saki: Hold High Punch
Ton-Pooh: Hold Weak Punch + High Punch
Devilot: Hold Medium Punch
Anita: Hold Weak Punch + Medium Punch + High Punch
Pure and Fur: Weak Kick
Michelle Heart: Hold Weak Punch + Weak Kick
Mighty Thor: Hold Weak Kick + Medium Punch
Cyclops: Hold Weak Punch + Weak Kick

+ Medium Punch
Magneto: Hold Weak Kick + High Punch
Storm: Hold Weak Punch + Weak Kick + High Punch
Jubilee: Hold Weak Kick + Medium Punch + High Punch
Rogue: Hold Weak Punch + Weak Kick + Medium Punch + High Punch
Psylocke: Hold Medium Kick
Juggernaut: Hold Weak Punch + Medium Kick
Iceman: Hold Medium Punch + Medium Kick
Colossus: Hold Weak Punch + Medium Punch + Medium Kick
US agent: Hold High Punch + Medium Kick
Shadow: Hold Weak Punch + Medium Kick + High Punch
Sentinel: Hold Medium Punch + Medium Kick + High Punch
Secret character quick select:
There are certain tasks that when completed will unlock the secret characters in arcade mode without entry of a cheat code. The tasks are listed in the FAQ. If these characters are challenged and defeated, they may be selected by moving the cursor to where they would appear when their cheat code is entered. For example, for Roll go to Megaman and press Right. This quick select method may be saved to the VMS.
Name changes:
Enter xxxxxxx as a name to have the game change it to 'SIN'. Enter AAA as a name to have the game change it to 'CAP'. Enter MMM as a name to have the game change it to 'MOT'.
Switch starting character:
Hold Weak Punch + Medium Punch + High Punch at the versus screen to switch the character that first starts the match with the second character selected.

Virtua Fighter 3tb

Fight against Alphabet character:
Highlight Akira on the character selection screen and press Start. Then, highlight Lau and press Start. Finally, highlight Pai, hold Start, and press X.
Fight as Alphabet character:
Highlight Akira on the character selection screen and press Start. Then, highlight Lion and press Start. Then, highlight Pai and press Start. Then select any character and press A.
Fight as Silver Dural:
Press Start + X + A at the character selection screen in training mode.
Fight as Gold Dural:
Press Start + Y + A at the character selection screen in training mode.
Arcade backgrounds:
Select team battle, normal or training mode. Then, intentionally allow the timer to reach zero on the stage selection screen.
New training mode backgrounds:
Select training mode, then hold Start and press A at the stage selection screen.
Alternate stage backgrounds:
Hold Start + B at stage selection screen..
Slow motion replay:
Press B before the instant replay begins.
Alternate costumes:
Hold Start and select a fighter at the character selection screen.

GAME BOY CHEATS

The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX

Free bow:
Purchase the bow and press A + B + Start + Select and save the game as the rupees appear from your hand. Continue the game with the bow and your rupees.
Bomb-arrow:
Configure the bombs and arrows as two button items, then press A + B to shoot.
Easy money:
In level three, the boss will taunt you and say that you will never find him. To get unlimited rupees, get to the boss, but do not ram the wall with the Pegasus Boots. Kill the blobs that fall on the screen for easy money.
Cheaper purchases:
Select an expensive item from the counter and begin payment. As your character's money is being deducted, quickly press Start + Select + A + B, then save and quit the game. Reload the saved game to keep the item and most of the money used to purchase it.
Heart piece locations:
Refer to the game map as a grid with 1 to 16 going left to right and A to Z going up and down. The heart pieces are located at the following co-ordinates:

1: 1-K	4: 3-G	7: 15-C	10: 8-A
2: 2-I	5: 15-M	8: 14-M	11: 2-A
3: 5-E	6: 9-H	9: 7-H	12: 7-I

Always have Marin:
Complete the first three levels and get Marin as a follower. Use the teleport hole to travel to the animal village. Move to the left, then press Select just when you are about to enter the next screen. Your character should move across the screen. Marin will now remain in your party for the duration of the game.
Stealing:
Your character can steal from shops by taking an item and standing above the store keeper. As he looks towards of the top of the screen, use the door to leave the shop. Note: Your character will be branded a thief and may never return to the same shop. However, the game can be saved and reloaded if your character is killed by a store keeper, which allows the store to be re-entered without penalty.
Bonus seashells:
Find exactly five secret seashells, then go to the Seashell Mansion. Enter, then walk right until finding the water flowing up a big pipe. Another bonus shell can be found by doing this with exactly ten seashells. Note: Return to the Seashell Mansion with twenty seashells to obtain a level two power sword. This sword can shoot when your character's life is full.
Flight:
Obtain the Boomerang and the Rooster. Throw the Boomerang and pick up the Rooster. The Boomerang should hover below you. You cannot get attacked by normal enemies but you may attack them.

NEW WAY OUT

NFL Blitz

Cheat mode:
Press Start, B, and A to enter the following codes on the match-up screen in exhibition mode. The numbers in the following list indicate the number of times each button is pressed. After the first part of the code has been entered, press the D-pad in the indicated direction to enable it. Example: to enter 1-2-3 Left, press Start, B(2), A(3), Left.

Effect	Confirmation Code
Desert field	GLOSSYVOMT 2-0-2 Right
Night game	NIGHT GAME 2-2-2 Right
Parking lot	PARKINGLOT 3-2-3 Down
No pointer	NO POINTER 3-3-3 Left
No fumbles	NO FUMBLES 4-2-3 Down
Invisible receiver	I.RECEIVER 4-3-3 Up
Unlimited turbo	INF. TURBO 5-1-4 Up
Strange colours	PREDATOR 5-5-1 Up
Start in overtime	OVERTIME 0-0-6 Up

Emerysville Eclipse team:
Enter 00606744 as a password.
Midway Blitzers team:
Enter 06267545 as a password.
Random play:
Press Left + B at the play selection screen.

NEW WAY OUT

Tetris DX

Expert mode:
Press Start to pause game play, then press Select. The preview window will not show the next piece when game play resumes.
Reverse movement:
Hold Left or Right while any piece except a straight bar or block is descending until it is against the wall. Then keep holding Left or Right and rapidly tap A.
Alternate screens:
Allow the game to remain at the main screen until demonstration mode begins. Press Select to display a screen featuring swimming fish. Press A to return to the next part of demonstration mode, then press A again to display a screen with confetti and the Nintendo logo. Press B to return to the next part of demonstration mode, then press B. Eventually a screen featuring a blackboard will appear.

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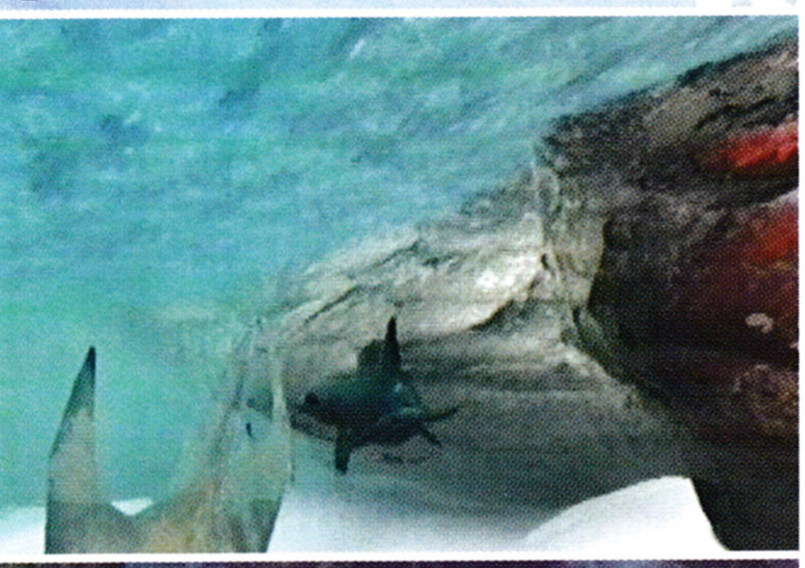

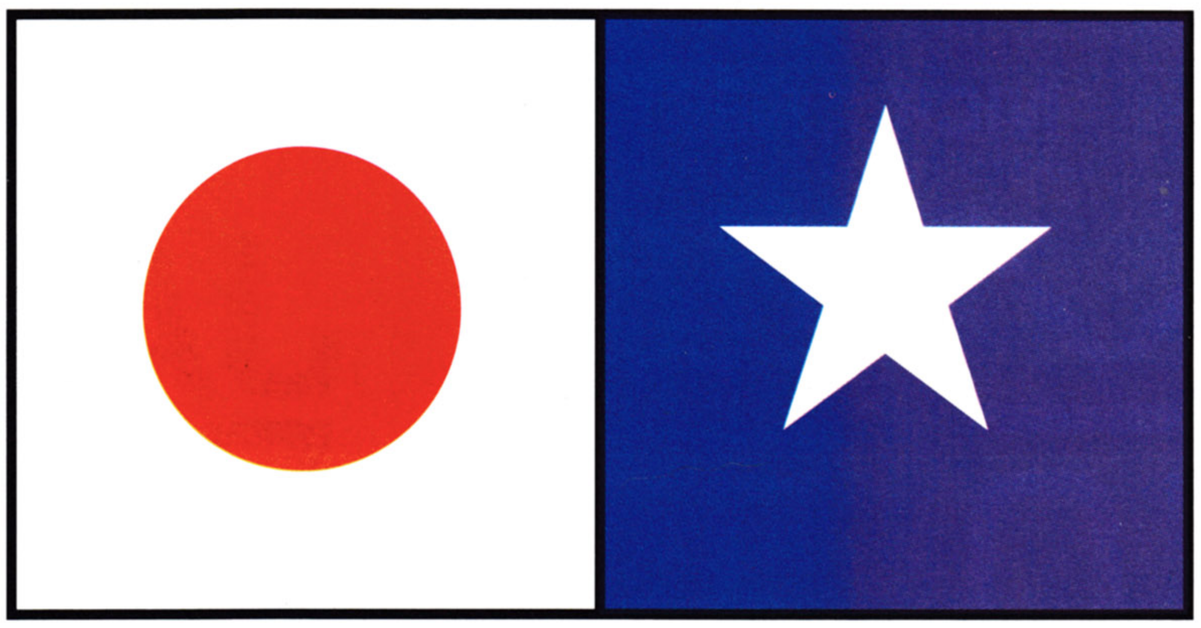

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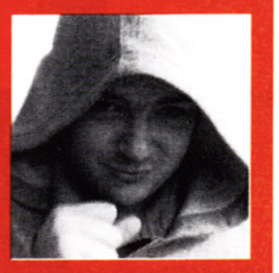

NICKJONES
e-mail: nick@rapide.co.uk

The announcement that Sega will be cutting the price of Dreamcast has come as something of a surprise. True, the console has only sold around a million in its first nine months, but surely there's plenty of time before PlayStation 2 and Nintendo's Dolphin hit the streets?

Well, actually there isn't. PlayStation 2 may not be due until spring 2000, but the hype is just about to begin. Six months to launch and we should begin to see the first signs of games – these are expected to be the expected sequels to popular current PlayStation games. There will also be the usual Japanese racer in there somewhere amongst the launch titles. It will be the biggest hyped event since the launch of Walkman, and for a good reason. Sony are investing an enormous amount of money into PlayStation 2 (we're talking billions of dollars here), so the marketing will have to sell it.

When this hits, the theory is that consumers will take one look at Dreamcast and feel a little underwhelmed. Why not wait until the spring and get yourself cutting edge technology with lifelike graphics, DVD on so on?

It matters not whether the PlayStation 2 is better than Dreamcast. The perception, if Sony's marketing men have anything to do with it, will be that PlayStation 2 will be the best thing ever. Dreamcast won't even be in the running when Sony offer a world of possibilities.

Or at least that's one point of view. Sega have a chance, and that's to get as many Dreamcasts installed before the hype machine starts spurting out 'PlayStation 2 is better than God', or whatever the advertising slogan will be. Let's hope for Sega's sake that the price cut is enough to convince gamers to go for Dreamcast. There's enough room for more than one video game manufacturer, surely?

Dreamcast™

JAPANESE DREAMCAST SLASHED!

Sega announce major price cut for console

Aggressive marketing or a move of desperation? Whatever your opinion, there can be no doubt that Sega's decision to cut the price of Dreamcast from ¥29,000 (£150) to ¥19,900 (the equivalent of just over a hundred pounds) is great news for consumers. The new price point puts the Dreamcast within grasp of both the N64 (equivalent of £70) and the PlayStation (equivalent of £80) and is seen as a necessary move in some quarters because of the Dreamcast's slow sales in Japan.

The move has led Sega President, Shojchiro Irimajiri, to predict that they will sell more than two million Dreamcasts between 1999 and 2000, bringing the total sold to 3,000,000.

Software will also receive a hefty price cut, and the four launch titles, *Godzilla Generations*, *Pen Pen Tricelon*, *July* and *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, along with *Sonic Adventure*, will be available for the equivalent of £10 – a price cut of £20

WITH NINTENDO'S 'DOLPHIN' AND THE NEXT GENERATION PLAYSTATION JUST AROUND THE CORNER, IT SEEMS THAT SEGA HAVE DECIDED TO GO FOR BROKE

Sega is emphasising that, in addition to stunning gameplay, users can also easily enjoy the internet and e-mail using Dreamcast. Sega's ISP is still free and, therefore, Dreamcast offers the cheapest method of network communication in all of Japan.

We shall see if this aggressive pricing is transferred to the UK over the next few months, although we expect the price of a UK Dreamcast to remain constant well into next year. With Nintendo's 'Dolphin' and the next generation PlayStation just around the corner, it seems that Sega have decided to go for broke. Only time will tell if they are to be successful.

GO FISHING FOR WATCHES

Get Bass competition sweeps Japan

Japanese gamers owning a Dreamcast and copy of *Get Bass* will be able to participate in a nation-wide competition hosted by Sega. The aim is to score the largest virtual catch in Japan while playing in either consumer or practice modes and then send a photo or video to Sega. The lucky owners of the top three catches will each receive a unique Casio G-Shock wrist watch complete with *Get Bass* logo, and the next 100 runners-up will be awarded a *Get Bass* VMS strap. Hopefully Sega Europe will be promoting the same kind of competitions in the UK when the Dreamcast hits over here in September

Big fish equals big prizes

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SEGA TO COMPETE WITH DOLPHIN

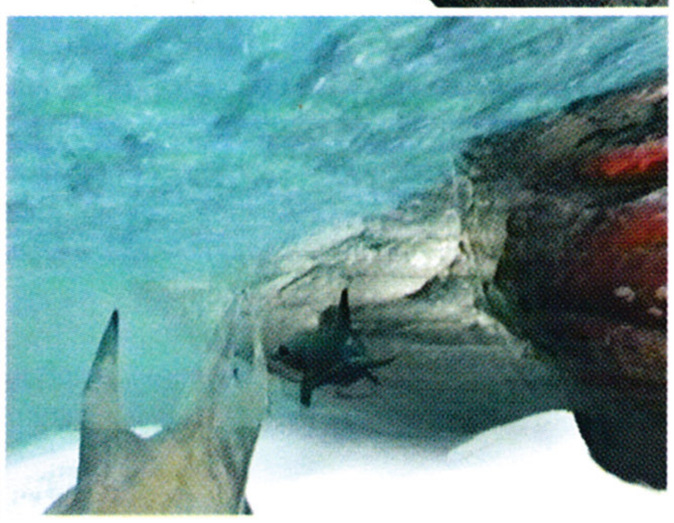
Ecco the Dolphin to show full Dreamcast potential

If you remember being stunned when *Ecco the Dolphin* first appeared on the Megadrive, you'll be glad to hear that the next incarnation on the Dreamcast will impress even more. The video footage of the game showed at E3 and the recent Sega conference in London left audiences breathless, and it has since been hailed as the most visually and technically impressive Dreamcast game yet. When the competition includes *Shenmue*, *Code Veronica* and *Sonic Adventure*, this is high praise indeed.

Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future is essentially Ecco in 3D. You work your way through a sprawling underwater metropolis, helping out and seeking help from others as you complete the many various quests in the game.

Despite news on the details of the gameplay being extremely scarce at the moment, the hype that this game is building up is extremely impressive – the screenshots can never put across the grandeur of the game world or the animation on show. We'll be bringing you more news and screens as soon as they become available.

A video of the game was shown at E3



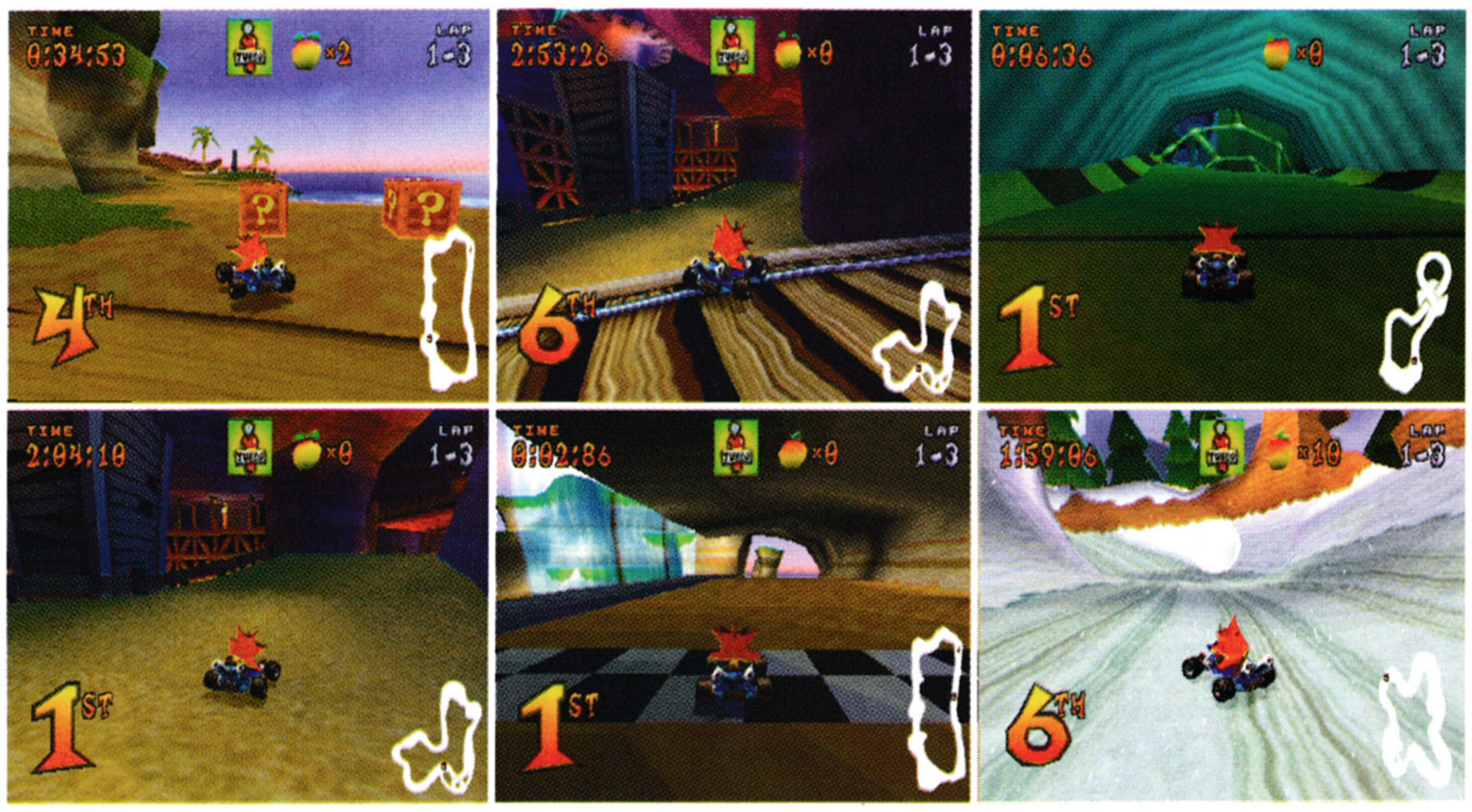
CRASHING AT SPEED

Crash Team Racing to arrive on PlayStation

Naughty Dog's latest foray into their hugely successful *Crash Bandicoot* series has the potential to reach the parts that *Chocobo Racing* couldn't. In another crazy plot involving the mad scientist, Nitrous Oxide, and his obsession with speed on a remote desert island, you must compete in a series of races to put a stop to his evildoings.

Crash Team Racing looks like becoming the PlayStation's answer to *Diddy Kong Racing* on the N64. There are eight popular Crash characters and 20 different tracks to learn in time trial, versus, Grand Prix and battle modes, plus an exciting adventure mode where you must collect crystals, gems and gold wrenches to power up your vehicle before your final confrontation with Nitrous Oxide.

All of the cars can be upgraded during the races and can be fitted with a multitude of weapons. The four-player mode alone makes this a potentially huge game, and it looks like the PlayStation may at last have a cute racer capable of rivalling the all-time greats on the N64. Look out for a more detailed report soon.



DOLPHIN STARTS TO PICK UP SPEED

Games for Dolphin are already in development

Shigeru Miyamoto is rumoured to have already began work on his first title for Project Dolphin. Stories have leaked stating that the unnamed game already has full storyboards and is at an early programming stage.

Nintendo is also reported to be working on a development kit for the new machine long before the hardware is actually available. This has presumably been done in an attempt to lure third party developers to their new machine and bolster the launch with a more impressive selection of games than they did with the N64. News on the machine is still scarce, but we'll let you know more as soon as we find it.

JAPANESE PC MARKET WILL ACCELERATE

3Dfx stake their claim on the Japanese market

With the wave of new super-consoles about to hit over here, challenging the PC games market, renowned makers of PC graphics accelerators, 3Dfx, are taking the war to its source.

The new wholly owned subsidiary will be based in Tokyo and will officially begin operations during June. The company has been founded with an apparent ¥10 million in capital and predicts sales of 70,000 accelerator cards before the millennium. The effect that this move will have on the slacking Japanese PC market remains to be seen.

OMEGABOOST

Another **bog-standard 3D shoot-'em-up**, or a fantastically playable **reincarnation** of the **old genre**? We decide...

Plenty to see and do in the myriad world of *Omega Boost*

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Sony
DEVELOPER	Polyphony Digital
STYLE	3D Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£49.99
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
SAVE GAME	Memory Card

TAKING CONTROL

The game is technically excellent right from the spectacular intro. The control system is initially confusing, making the game very disorientating until you get used to using the lock-on button. Nevertheless, it's hectic from the start, and a great re-visit to the old days of classic shoot-'em-ups.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Omega Boost
GRAPHICS	86
SOUND	83
PLAYABILITY	76
OVERALL Out of 100	74

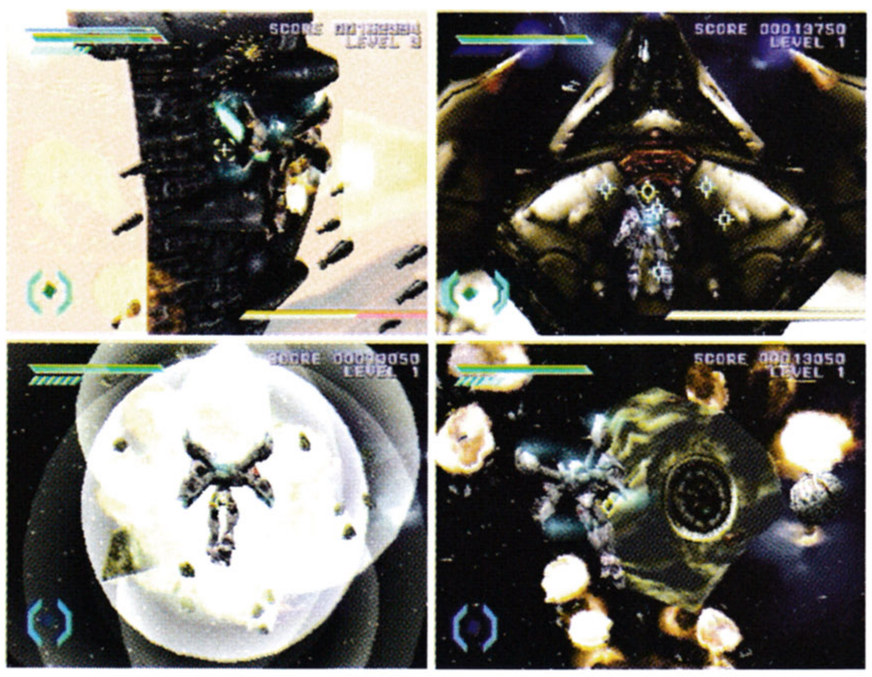
From the very high quality and extremely expensive looking intro sequence, *Omega Boost* promises much. Going back to the foundations of the shoot-'em-up genre, the game pits you as the controller of a giant robot known as the Omega Boost – mankind's last hope against an aggressive alien foe. You face nine levels of hard-hitting, hectic shoot-'em-up action, packed full of fancy graphical effects and gameplay that is very similar to the old 2D shoot-'em-ups from the days of the 16-bit games machine.

But not quite...

Omega Boost is a 3D shoot-'em-up, a cross between *R-Type*, *Lylat Wars* and *Space Harrier*. You play the game in one of two different modes – free flight and lock on. When in free flight you must manoeuvre your machine in a similar manner to that seen in *Lylat Wars*, flying into the screen. If you hold down the lock button you will always point towards the nearest enemy and can strafe around it in all directions. This works very well, but it simplifies the game perhaps too much. Shoot-'em-ups are not supposed to be complicated to play, but in *Omega Boost* you only need to lock on to an enemy, strafe around it while it shoots at you, and fire when it isn't. The Omega Boost has three different weapons available: a standard rapid shotgun; an infinite bank of missiles that lock onto the target when you take your finger off the trigger and then automatically re-supply; and a special 'smart bomb'-style weapon that slowly charges up as you destroy more and more enemies. Sadly there are no extra weapons or pick-ups to be found in the game, but the number of missiles that you can fire at any point does increase when you have enough points.

This is a very nice looking game; the screen is always packed full of special effects such as transparencies, the enemies, especially later on, look very impressive, and there are some hugely imaginative boss characters. The most serious drawback is its lastability; as soon as you have worked out a tactic for destroying each boss character, they won't cause you too much trouble again, and there is not enough challenge between them to cause much worry. Still, it's a lot of fun, and if you are a fan of the old-style hectic shoot-'em-up, you'll find this is a great buy for as long as it lasts. **Will**

AS SOON AS YOU HAVE WORKED OUT A TACTIC FOR DESTROYING EACH BOSS CHARACTER, THEY WON'T CAUSE YOU TOO MUCH TROUBLE AGAIN



YOU'RE MONEY BABY

The hugely extravagant introduction sequence shows you getting strapped into your Omega Boost and fired halfway across the galaxy to destroy a load of nasty enemies. There are several updates between missions, but each one seems slightly wasted as none are as exciting as they should be. The mix of live action and CGI is done well, but the rock soundtrack (performed by Feeder) is out of place, and the 'C' in CGI might as well stand for 'cheese'.

RASETSUSWORD

Konami's most **recent title** to hit Japan has now **arrived in the TC office**. Can it make **an impact** on the **import market?**

Rasetsu Sword is another very difficult to review foreign game. It blends parts of *Resident Evil* and *Bushido Blade* in a mix that has a lot of potential to be a very good story-led game, but the lack of English text makes it very difficult to follow, resulting in you frequently getting lost and losing your direction.

The game is played by moving through a series of pre-rendered backgrounds (some of which house surprisingly small areas) and resorting to the use of your sword for the real-time battles. In many ways this could be described as *Resident Evil* with swords, but the combat is much more varied than the point and aim structure of Capcom's horror title. When you draw your sword in preparation for combat you can access a number of strokes by holding the button and pressing directions on the pad. It's easy to use, but a system much more akin to *Bushido Blade* in depth would have helped the game immensely.

Old timer

Graphically it shows the age of the PlayStation. The characters are poorly animated and not well detailed, but it is still passable in the current field and, more importantly, doesn't detract from the action. Like *Resident Evil*, it is very easy to get lost; the game leans on conversation to give direction, and you'll have to rely on luck to get past many of the puzzles. A European conversion has been strongly rumoured, so you'd be strongly advised to wait for that to happen, or look elsewhere if you don't speak Japanese. **Will**

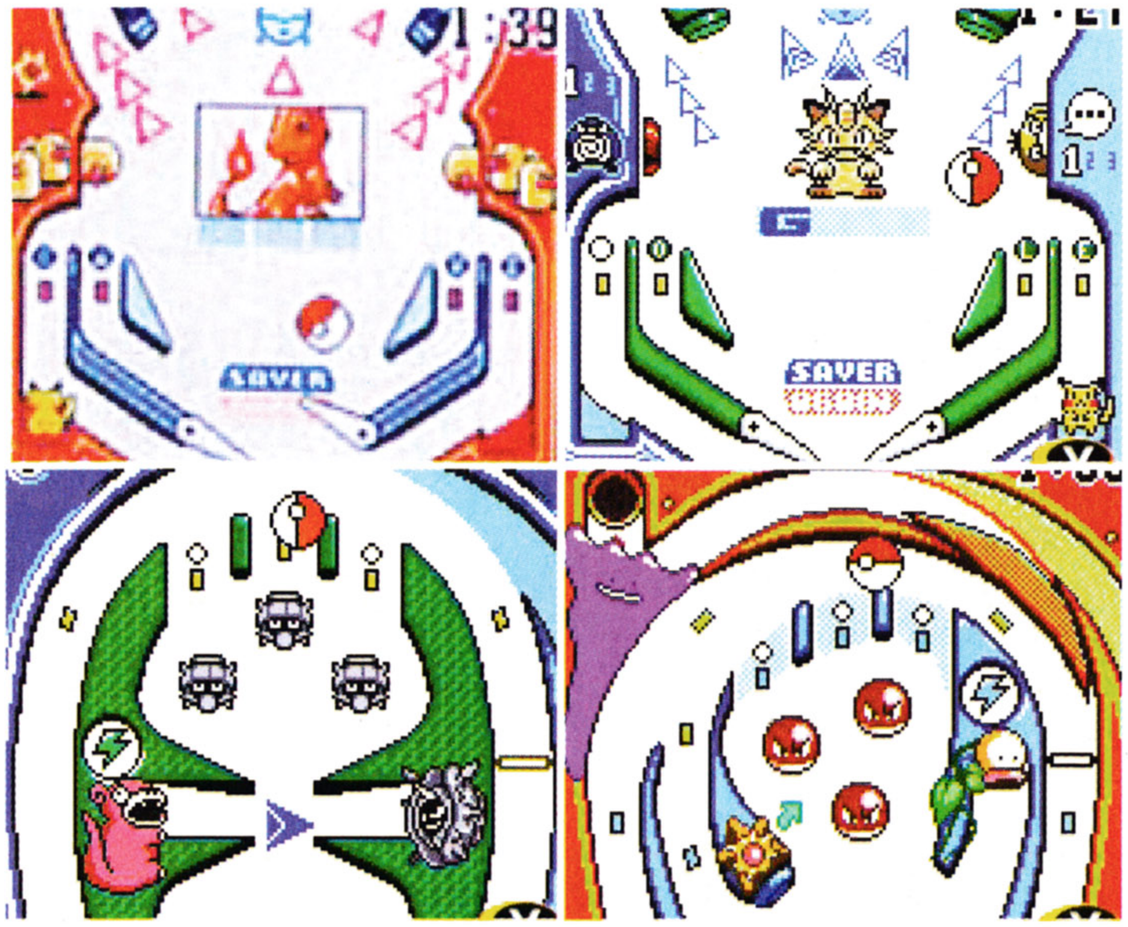
More Nipponese weirdness from Konami

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Konami
DEVELOPER	Konami
STYLE	Action
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£49.99
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	No
SAVE GAME	Memory Card

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Rasetsu Sword
GRAPHICS	66
SOUND	63
PLAYABILITY	70
OVERALL Out of 100	59

POKÉMON PINBALL

Fancy hitting some **Pokémon** with **hard metal balls?** Here's your chance in **Nintendo's latest** for **Game Boy Color...**



Most of you will have not yet had the pleasure of sampling the Pokémon craze that has been sweeping Japan and recently hit America. Those of you that have may also have heard about *Pokémon Pinball*. This is a great twist on the standard idea of the game, because instead of merely trying to obtain the highest possible score, you actually have an objective. By targeting certain spots on the table you can release and eventually capture one of over 100 Pokémon and then train them up by hitting other targets around the level. Just like all of the other games in this unique series, the principle of collection is still very strong, and from the Pokedex you can check out the stats for all of the creatures you have captured so far.

As a pinball game it's plenty of fun too. There are both red and blue tables, and you need to master each to capture every Pokémon in the game. The tables don't scroll, they flip, which can be momentarily distracting, but it's a better alternative to a constantly blurred screen. *Pokémon Pinball* also comes on a rumble cart, just like *Top Gear Rally* – perhaps a strange choice for a pinball game, but it adds a lot more realism to the game, and the rumble effect is very good.

Flipped out

Scores of between 50-100 million won't be uncommon for your first game; the ball is fairly big and the game isn't hard, so it can keep you playing for ages. There were no problems with the Japanese text, and this is about as good a pinball game as you could want. It's faulted only by the lack of tables and the fact that, being a pinball game, it won't provide much variation and may become tedious after extended play. However, if that doesn't bother you, check this out at the first possible chance. **Will**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Game Boy Colour
PUBLISHER	Nintendo
DEVELOPER	Nintendo
STYLE	Pinball
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£34.99
GAME BOY COLOUR	Supported

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Pokémon Pinball
GRAPHICS	78
SOUND	82
PLAYABILITY	87
OVERALL Out of 100	83

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OUT OFCONTROL

CLIFFSMITH
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

I asked Justin if there was a subject for this month's Out of Control, and he replied "No, just write anything you like", which is, if you ask me, simply asking for trouble. I've just had a weekend of extreme alcoholic depravity with a couple of old friends from Uni, and then had to help another friend out of a hideous domestic crisis (don't even ask), so the chances of getting anything coherent and sensible out of me are about as slim as Fat Boy.

I could write about the weather, and since we've had an alternating series of sunshine and thunderstorms for the past week, there's a lot of it to write about. You know, I sometimes forget just how lucky I am to be living in this tropical holiday paradise that we call Devon.

I just got a funny look off Justin, so I'd better mention a few games to keep him happy. *MechWarrior III* looks fantastic, and Saitek's new range of controllers are as lovely as ever. We've got lots of graphics cards next month, so until then, stay out of the rain.

NICKJONES
DEPUTY EDITOR

There's nothing quite as bad as being stuck inside an office with the sun beating down outside. This makes you question your chosen profession – a better life would have been as a barman, or maybe a deckchair assistant in Torquay. Hmm... journalism isn't all it's cracked up to be. Free games – who needs them?

This glumness isn't helped by the fact that there aren't any decent games around at the moment. It seems that games companies have got the right idea; concentrate on the winter and leave the summer months for what's important: hanging around in parks, doing stunts on you BMX and, oh yes, socialising.

If only we were allowed to take the summer off as well – just look at the number of N64 mags on the shelf at the moment that are forced to reprint 40 page *Goldeneye* solutions to fill the pages.

Let's just hope it starts raining soon, gets dark and freezes over. At least we'll get some games to play.

I've had enough of summer already. Roll on November.

WILLADKIN
STAFF WRITER

E3, in my opinion, turned out to be fairly disappointing. Very few brand new games were announced, and most of the excitement was taken up by titles that we've been hearing about for the last six months or longer; *Perfect Dark*, *Shenmue*, *Gran Turismo 2* etc. Of course the big news is the announcement of Project Dolphin, or more that it will be competing directly with the PlayStation 2 next year. Rumours that Sony are having trouble keeping the price below $400 are strong, and with the backing of IBM and Panasonic, Nintendo's promise of a more powerful machine with a faster processor that will sell for a lower price is certainly believable. Sony's reputation with the current generation PlayStation may not be enough to turn the tide in their favour.

Next month we'll be hoping to play-test many of the games that were being shown at the show. As I write this I'm itching to get back to *MechWarrior III*, and with games like *Kingpin* and *Outcast* due to turn up shortly, it should be a very strong Issue 10.

JUSTINCALVERT
EDITOR

I've had an exhausting month, what with having to cover the entire E3 show on my own, and then making the trek up to Wembley only to see my team lose what I thought was a guaranteed Premiership place to Watford. Still, the annual new games shortage has at least given me chance to catch up on some of the older games that I've been meaning to play for ages. Favourites at the moment include *GTA London*, *Tenchu: Stealth Assassins*, and of course the slightly more recent *Championship Manager 3*.

Next month promises to be a little better in terms of the number of games we'll allegedly be receiving for review. A fair number of them have already landed on my desk and are attracting attention from work-hungry writers, desperate to get their hands on a game they can enjoy. I can honestly say that our next issue looks like being one of the best yet, so, end-of-the-world permitting, be sure to get yourself a copy. Even Cliff managed a smile today when he saw the games that had arrived.

NEXTMONTH

GTA2

We talk to the team behind this year's most shocking sequel

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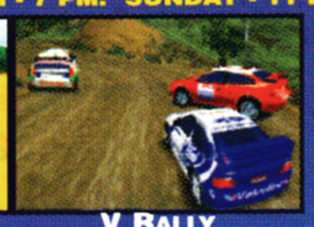
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