

GAME BOY | DS | GAMECUBE | REVOLUTION

Nintendo®

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

ISSUE 01 MARCH 2006 £3.99

New Ways



To Play

How Nintendo
is revolutionising the
way you play games!

Turn
world upside down

insane robots

Rub

Blow

rivals away

Touch
rampaging bulls

Jammed
with 35
mini-games

It's one truly bizarre mission after the next in 'The Rub Rabbits!' the insanely addictive game that's turning the DS on its head. With 35 maddening mini-games, from slapping your friends to keep them awake, to shooting your rivals out of the sky, and from snowball fights, to games of twister, the list just gets longer and weirder.

Play it upside down, play it sideways, play it on your own, play it with friends, just play it.



The Rub
Rabbits!

NINTENDO DS

THE INSANITY
STARTS FEB 10th

SONIC
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SEGA
www.sega.co.uk

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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

A new dawn

A new day

A new mag

The revolution starts here!

Hey! Ho! I've got watering cans, turnips, wheelbarrows, a nice fishing rod, some tasty apples, a new carpet, some really cheesy wallpaper, hats, a nice shovel, plant seeds, a splendid grandfather clock, a stylish rug, some massive vases, this weird thing with a handle on it, a red spinner, caddy, no, some headed notepaper, the meaning of life...



Sheesh! All I wanted was a half-decent Nintendo mag...





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“The controller will fundamentally change the way we play games”
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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

Welcome

To issue 01 of the **New** Official Nintendo Magazine



You're holding in your hands the debut issue of the new Official Nintendo Magazine – the culmination of months of work by our dedicated team of Nintendo experts to give you, *real* Nintendo gamers, the magazine you deserve. Inside you'll

find a huge news section covering all the latest Nintendo happenings from around the globe, previews of the best games you'll play in 2006 and in-depth reviews of the latest GameCube, DS and GBA offerings by writers you can trust – seasoned Nintendo veterans with a gaming addiction that should see them in rehab.

They've seen it all over the years: great games and great innovations from the Game & Watch to analogue control to the DS to the upcoming Revolution. You can read all about Nintendo's history of innovation and 'New Ways To Play' (including our hands-on with the Revolution itself) in our exclusive cover feature, starting on page 66.

There's never been a more exciting time to be a Nintendo gamer. And there's never been a better time to be a part of **Official Nintendo Magazine**. We want your views on everything Nintendo, your

high scores for our Challenges section, your Friend Codes so we can meet you online in *Mario Kart* and your feedback on the mag. If you like it, why not subscribe? You'll save yourself the best part of 13 quid (the equivalent of 28 Chunky Kit Kats) and get a free copy of either *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*, *Pikmin 2* or *Donkey Konga* on GameCube. The choice is yours. See page 78 for details on how to get a guaranteed slice of Nintendo goodness every month.

Enjoy the issue!

Lee Nutter Editor
email: lee.nutter@futurenet.co.uk



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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

MEET THE TEAM



Chandra Nair
Associate Editor

Specialist in fiddling his business expenses by carefully doctoring receipts. **This month** Chandra succeeded in getting his boss to sign his latest claim form, unwittingly paying for his mortgage. You know him from Cube



Thomas East
Online Editor

Specialist in knowing all Nintendo trivia. Not just some. All. **This month** Tom sung the names of all Pokémon to the tune of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Modern Major General*. You know him from NGC



Charlotte Martyn
Production Editor

Specialist in Feng Schpell, the ancient art of arranging words in just the right order. **This month** Charlotte achieved a Zen-like office harmony through her correct usage of the word 'Berufsverbot.' You know her from games™



Steve Jarratt
Group Senior Editor

Specialist in being a hi-tech early adopter... then moaning about the cost. **This month** Steve used his Wi-Fi laptop to bid for a transparent case iPod Nano prototype off Malaysian eBay. You know him from Edge

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

Official Nintendo Magazine is written by experienced Nintendo fans. While our official status gives us unlimited access to the newest Nintendo games and the people who make them, our reviews are 100% honest and impartial.

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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

Take a walk on the wild side in **Animal Crossing: Wild World** 48



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DIRECTORY

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Don't insert coin!



Just play!

GAME BOY ADVANCE

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Breaking news
from the world
of Nintendo

AT A GLANCE

This month's hot stories

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Lite Up

Prepare for the Revolution with this gorgeous DS redesign

DS LITE It's been the stuff of rumour since late last year, but Nintendo's new baby has finally been unveiled. Following huge worldwide sales of the DS over the holidays, Nintendo has announced that it will launch a redesigned 'DS Lite' on 2 March in Japan. Launches in the US and Europe will follow shortly after.

The DS Lite's name neatly sums up what this redesigned handheld is all about: it's a smaller,

slicker, sexier, lightweight and more loveable version of the regular DS. At just 218g it's 20% lighter than the old model and just a touch heavier than a regular iPod. All the standard features remain – it has built-in Wi-Fi and still plays GBA games – but the redesign now brings the unit in line with Nintendo's next-generation home console, the Revolution. The polished, pearlescent white finish, the D-pad, the Start and Select

Don't miss...

... our foolproof guide to applying your snazzy free decals to your DS. Looking good!
Go to page 11

Don't miss...

... what developers from around the world have to say about the Revolution! Go to page 14

Don't miss...

... Shigeru Miyamoto's bonkers dream involving nasal hair and a tickly cough! Go to page 15

Don't miss...

... details of what you can expect to find on the ONM website over the next few months! Go to page 20

DS Lite  Hot Or Not

HOT

DS Lite It's not brand new hardware but it begs to be bought and cherished.

Revolution

Every week we hear word from developers on the new games they're planning.

Four-player

Mario Kart DS Whether played locally or over Wi-Fi, this is Nintendo gaming at its genius best!

The new ONM

We hope you like what you're seeing...

GameCube

There's life in the old dog yet – it's even outselling the Xbox 360 in Japan (snigger).

DS sales Nintendo's handheld rules the planet. Massive sales in the UK, US and Japan.

Female Zoo Keepers

A certain member of the team can't beat his girlfriend's top score of 115,00 on Time Attack. Which really grates.

Time Why must it go so slowly? It means we won't be able to play with the Revolution until the end of the year.

Nintendogs' Space Room Who's got the time to earn 100,000 credits, eh?

Grubby little fingers

Have you seen the state of the ONM DS's touch screen? Do these people never wash? Dirty beggars.

DS games that use one screen Don't just put a pretty picture on the second screen. We're watching you...

Viewtiful

Joe GC We just wanted more of the same, but it's turned up as a sub-par *Smash Bros.* Disappointing.

NOT

STAT-ATTACK

How about a bit of lite-hearted number crunching?

It's all well and good throwing a bunch of numbers at you, but there's no better way to see just how tiny the new DS Lite is than to give you a few direct comparisons. When you put the new unit next to a regular iPod and the current DS design it's easy to see how small it really is.

Unit	Length (mm)	Width (mm)	Depth (mm)	Weight (g)
DS	149	85	29	275
DS Lite	133	74	22	218
iPod	104	62	14	157



"A smaller, slicker, sexier, lightweight and more loveable version of the regular DS"

Your Life!

buttons... it's all part of Nintendo's stylised new look and we love every bit of it.

While we're on the subject of the Revolution similarities there is a notable omission on the DS Lite: the Power button. Could this be somewhere else on the unit? Of course it has to be, you wouldn't be able to turn the thing on otherwise, but its location is being kept secret at the moment. Is it hidden away on the back of the machine along with an all-new element? Again, these are details that Nintendo wants to keep top secret for the time being.

Aside from the aesthetic changes there are improvements to the system's screens. Both displays are of similar size to the regular DS screens, however they're just as sharp as the GB Micro's display. The screens can also be adjusted to four levels of brightness depending on the prevailing lighting conditions, and should be kinder on the eyes.

No release date has been set for Europe just yet but this is one piece of kit you simply have to have. We'll update you on UK launch details as soon as we know more. +

Over The Hedge announced for GameCube ** RE4 joins the \$19.99 Player's Choice range in the US, which hopefully means we'll get it for £19.99 here too **

 GLOBAL CONSOLE SALES

Nintendo DS Monster Success

Developer-friendly system takes over the world

DS Nintendo's dual-screen wonder is busy breaking sales records all over the world. The big news for UK gamers is that the DS has broken the one million sales barrier and is still going strong. In the battle of the handhelds, the DS is already the clear winner; now that the novelty of Sony's PSP has worn off, the expensive movie-player seems to be losing momentum.

But that's just the beginning. In its native Japan the DS has gone ballistic. Sales spiked when *Nintendogs* and the pink DS arrived, but it took off like a rocket when *Mario Kart DS* and *Animal Crossing: Wild World* appeared.

Chart toppers

To date, the DS has left all opposition reeling, selling over 300,000 a week and topping five million sales since launch. And it's the same story with software, with eight of the top ten slots in the Japanese charts regularly going to DS titles. Top of the tree is *Animal Crossing: Wild World*, the cute communication game that's sold 1.6 million copies in Japan. Second place is *Brain Training* (1.3 million) while sequel *Brain Training 2* is currently number one in the charts. And despite the short life of the DS, Japan is already home to five million-selling games: *Nintendogs*, *Animal Crossing*, *Brain Training*, *Gentle Brain Training* and *Mario Kart DS*.

Meanwhile, American DS sales exceed four million (with 1.3 million copies of *Super Mario 64 DS*), while Europe has bought 3.5 million. Worldwide DS sales of over 14.5 million since late 2004, equates to 25,000 units a day, every day. Including Sundays.

DS madness reached such a fever pitch over Christmas that Japanese stores reimported American DS packs to keep up with demand, while in the UK, the *Nintendogs* pack simply sold out.

Gouichi Suda, managing director of Grasshopper, the studio behind *Killer7*, has admitted he was taken aback by the DS's runaway success. "At first, I thought PSP would be more successful than DS," he said. "But when I went to buy an Xbox 360, people were buying two DSs each – one for

themselves, one as a Christmas present. It's really happy and delightful situation!"

Nintendo's Wi-Fi Connection wireless gaming service is also proving hugely popular, logging over half a million users within the first seven weeks. This bodes well for the launch of the Revolution.

Why should you care about this? Because this phenomenal success means that game developers are interested in developing new games. Big-hitters like EA, Konami, Sega, Capcom, Ubisoft, Square Enix, Namco, THQ and Bandai are furiously working, while Nintendo itself has around 20 titles on the boil, including a new *Zelda* game, *Pokémon Diamond & Pearl*, *New Super Mario Bros* (page 31) and *Metroid Prime Hunters* (page 60).

"Since its launch, the DS has sold the equivalent of more than 25,000 units a day, every day. Including Sundays"

The widespread appeal of titles like *Nintendogs* means that the DS is selling to people who aren't normally attracted to gaming.



GLOBAL COVER GIFT

Stick With Us Here...

Make your DS truly unique with this month's amazing free gift



DS Slipped in the wallet, behind the mag, you'll find an incredible set of vinyl decals that you can use to bling up your DS. There are four great designs on the sheet:

- **Miyamoto-san's signature** – Fool your mates into thinking gaming genius Shigeru Miyamoto has signed your DS.
- **Mario Kart DS** – If you're into the world's best multiplayer racing game, then add some speed stripes.
- **Animal Crossing: Wild World** – Show the world you're ready to communicate with this lush *Animal Crossing* artwork.
- **Nintendogs** – Nothing says dog-lover more than some designer paw prints.

HOW TO APPLY...

- 1 The idea is that the large panel goes on the lid of your DS, while the smaller decals can either go on top, if you still have room, or inside, above the speakers.
- 2 Put your closed DS on a solid surface. Now carefully peel your chosen design off the backing paper and position it over the case. Look down on it from above so you can line it up and avoid putting it on all wonky.
- 3 Slowly lower the panel into place, attach it at one end and then rub it down as you move along, making sure you don't get any air bubbles trapped. If you do, gently lift the decal back up and rub down from the centre to the edges. Once it's all down, rub firmly all over with a soft cloth to make sure it looks neat and transparent.

We've tried to please all tastes but what would you like on the next DS decal sheet? *Metroid?* *Mario?* Perhaps something a little more abstract? Let us know... +

GLOBAL NINTENDO EVENT

The Science Bit

Nintendo sponsors the Science Museum

MULTIFORMAT As part of its 'New Ways To Play' campaign, Nintendo UK is sponsoring three exhibits at the Science Museum in London to the tune of a cool £1 million.

Nintendo is funding the Game On videogames tour, which will take up residence at the museum later this year. It celebrates over 40 years of videogaming, from the earliest computer games to today's high-tech games machines. And as the key innovator over the short history of videogaming, it makes sense for Nintendo to be the main sponsor.

The cash injection allows the museum to open a new state-of-the-art interactive display at the front of the building. The exhibit, entitled Launch Pad, is intended to inspire kids to become scientists or engineers, and the uniquely hands-on style of the DS and Revolution will no doubt play a key role in the display.

Nintendo's financial backing will also help support the Dana Centre, an annex

Nintendo's DS is showing gamers 'New Ways To Play'.



A large building full of science, yesterday.



The Game On tour celebrates four decades of videogaming.

to the museum, which hosts live debates, art installations and has even been known to feature some stand-up comedy (er, jokes about sub-atomic particles and dinosaurs, we imagine). +

Go to www.sciencemuseum.org.uk for more details.





Tokyo Fever

Jonti Davies enjoys all things Nintendo in the land of the rising sun

Japan is still crazy for Pokémon! Pokémon Centers can be found in Japan's largest cities, with

Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama, Nagoya, Fukuoka and Sapporo all boasting one of these cartoon meccas. These Pokémon Centers bring merchandise together with play areas where younger Pokémon fans can be kept entertained. Special events are held at the Centers every few months, usually in the form of tournaments or mini-conventions where players can meet each other to trade and battle their monsters, and at Christmas the Centers stay open until late as many families think of them as ideal places for a day out.

The layout inside a Japanese games store is visually very different from those in the UK. Titles are promoted with cute and colourful characters rather than the gritty and realistic imagery you'll see in most Western stores. Square Enix's superb DS *Dragon Quest* spin-off *Slime Mori* has provided some great far-out in-store decoration.

The DS has been sold-out almost everywhere here since the start of the year. Due to an incredible level of demand Nintendo simply hasn't been able to make the machines fast enough – it even had to apologise to retailers who'd had to turn away disappointed gamers. At a Kyoto game shop called Wanpaku Kozo (which has a fetching *Super Mario World* facade and is just a mile down the road from Nintendo's HQ) there's been a 'sold out' sign above the DS hardware section for more than two months! Fortunately, DS Lite is due in Japan by 2 March, so everyone will be able to get their hands on one soon. Unless demand for that goes through the roof too... +



GLOBAL CONSOLE SALES

GameCube Fights Back

Taking on the new guy and winning!

GAMECUBE Microsoft has spent a huge amount of money marketing its Xbox 360 console, but in Japan it seems to be going to waste. In fact, the GameCube, a five-year-old machine, is outselling the Xbox 360 week-on-week. In the first three weeks of January, 23,000 GameCubes were sold compared to just 17,000 Xbox 360s. Of course, that's nothing compared to the 210,000 DS units shifted in that period.

So how is the GameCube managing to outsell a new machine? It's

all down to software. Since the Xbox 360's launch late last year, Japanese gamers have had little reason to buy into Microsoft's console – there just aren't any games to get them interested.

The GameCube release list isn't that impressive either but the machine has a huge back catalogue. Gamers must be realising that some great GameCube titles got lost in the Christmas rush and that they'd be better off with a Nintendo console, especially as it's so cheap. If only it was a similar story over here... +

It may be old but the GameCube is still better than the Xbox 360. It's official.



GLOBAL DEVELOPER NEWS

When Giants Collide

Another day, another merger, but what does it mean for you?

MULTIFORMAT Japanese publishers Namco and Bandai have merged to create super-publisher

Namco Bandai Holdings in a deal that could see the new company enjoy annual sales worth £2.2 billion. Big deal, you might think, some businessmen are going to be able to buy another private yacht. But this merger is actually good news for Nintendo gamers.

Over the past few years Bandai has made monstrous amounts of money through releasing games such as *Tamagotchi*, *Gundam*, *Hello Kitty* and *Naruto* on Nintendo systems. Namco is a company best known for games such as *Tekken* and *Ridge Racer* but it enjoys a special relationship with Nintendo whereby the two companies have worked together on games such as *StarFox: Assault* and *Donkey Konga*.

The eventual results of this merger are plain to see: DS and Revolution will be supported by a huge company with a world of resources. It also means that Nintendo-exclusive series such as *Baten Kaitos* will continue to be made. And that's much better news than some big-shot getting a lousy private yacht. +



Baten Kaitos looks likely to stay with Nintendo for quite some time now.



Namco worked together with Nintendo for *StarFox: Assault*.

Namco's *Soul Calibur II* featured Nintendo's Link. And this lovely lady. →



TWO JOES ARE BETTER THAN ONE!

**"...this one's a winner."
-IGN**

When a mysterious crime syndicate descends on the set of Captain Blue's newest movie and makes off with the film, Joe rushes to the rescue.

- Zoom in on the action to solve mind-bending puzzles!
- Split the lower screen to move objects and overcome obstacles!

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Double Trouble!™
FOR THE NINTENDO DS™

VENTIEUX JOE™
REDHOT RUMBLE

FOR THE NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

Captain Blue is casting for the lead in his new action movie and the competition is Red Hot!

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- Score points by skillfully using VFX Powers!
- Intense Head-to-Head Fighting!



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24TH FEBRUARY

12+
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Bradley Sullivan

puts the world to rights in the way only an American gamer can

Obviously the big news for Nintendo fans over here in the US is the announcement of the DS Lite. Gamers have been grabbing dual screens to the tune of over four million units, and there's mass rivalry between DS owners and PSP fanboys, who crow about how their expensive black battery-chewer is cooler than a polar bear's butt.

But when the DS Lite arrives, it'll be a different story. We've already got the best portable games with *Mario Kart DS* and *Animal Crossing: Wild World*, longer battery life and a smaller unit. But when the slimline DS turns up with its smooth enamel-style finish, sharper backlit screens and an even tinier case, then we'll be able to totally outdo Sony's pretender to the handheld throne. Now if only Nintendo could make it play MP3s, we could ditch our iPods too.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Let's be honest: Nintendo is reinventing itself. It's shaking off the shackles of its 'kid's toy' persona, getting Mario to move off centre-stage for a while and presenting itself with a new look. New ways to play – that's what I'm talking about.

Nintendo has been typecast for too long, a victim of its own success. Why shouldn't Nintendo be as stylish a brand as Sony? It makes great hardware – *Resident Evil 4* was generally regarded as the best game on any console during 2005 and the DS is simply awesome: 14.5 million buyers worldwide can't be wrong.

But if Nintendo is to appeal to the PlayStation crowd and the cell phone fashionistas, it needs a strong dose of cool – and the DS Lite and Revolution will do just that. I have two DS units already (silver and red), but I'll definitely pick up the DS Lite because it'll look sweet on those long transatlantic flights. White is definitely the new black. When Nintendo says there's a revolution coming, it ain't kidding. +

GLOBAL REVOLUTION UPDATE

Revolution Released

Development kits go out to teams all over the world

REVOLUTION Concrete news on Nintendo's next-gen console (codenamed Revolution) has been hard to come by over the past few months as the company woos publishers and finalises the hardware specs for its new machine behind closed doors. Now that things are really starting to heat up, developers across the globe can't help but evangelise about the machine and its amazing new controller.

"The concept of the controller is excellent," said Gouichi Suda, developer of *Killer7*. "With a new input device, I have a chance to invent some completely new ideas." Atsushi Inaba from Clover Studio (*Viewtiful Joe*) is impressed too, saying "I'm really interested in it and I'm really looking forward to making a game on Revolution." Publishing behemoth Electronic Arts has said it "looks forward to partnering" with Nintendo because Shigeru Miyamoto and the boys "make some of the best games in the industry".

Even Nintendo's normally tight-lipped internal teams are risking life and limb to speak out. On the subject of *Mario Party*, Nintendo's Shuichi Nishiyama told us "we believe we can create unprecedented and exciting things especially in terms of mini-games."

Development kits have gone out to the larger third-party teams at EA, Ubisoft,



The mysterious inner workings of the Revolution will finally be revealed on 9 May.

Sega, Activision, Namco and Capcom but specific games won't be confirmed until this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). This annual gaming conference is traditionally the place where all the biggest announcements are made. This year's event is being held between 10-12 May at the Los Angeles Convention Center and it's where PS3 and Revolution will be playable for the first time.

First Look

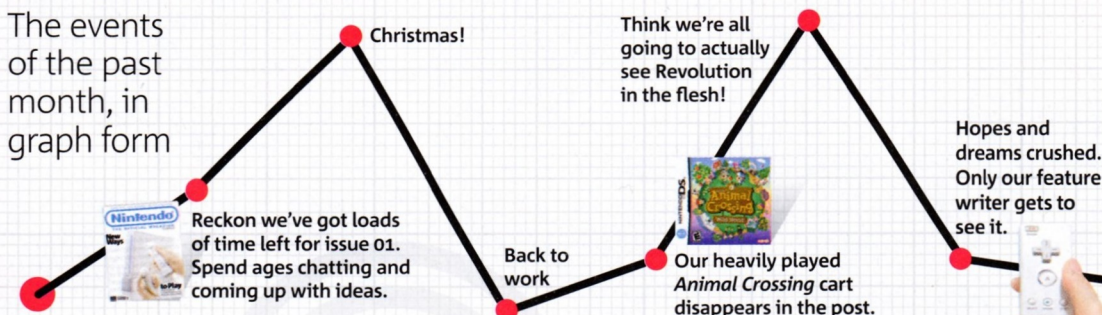
Nintendo will hold a pre-show press conference on 9 May to officially show the world what the Revolution can do. This will be the first time that gamers find out about the machine's other features and what games we can expect. It will also see the unveiling of the first screenshots of any Revolution games. We won't see any before E3 as several of these titles use features of the hardware and controller that Nintendo has yet to announce. That's right: as if the unique features of the controller weren't enough, there are more secrets to come.

Don't worry though, you won't have to wait until May to find out more about the

"As if the unique features of the controller weren't enough, there are more secrets to come"

THIS MONTH ON ONM...

The events of the past month, in graph form



Mario Party on the Revolution? It's not confirmed but the developers are already thinking about new mini-games for it.

Revolution Born In The USA



Revolution. Next month's Game Developers Conference will feature speeches from key Nintendo personnel who'll be talking about various aspects of Nintendo gaming, including more news on the Revolution. The future really isn't that far off...+



Worms gets lost in the post too. It's a conspiracy!

Suddenly realise how little time we have. Stop chatting and just get on with it.

Late nights.

Worms finally turns up. Hurrah!

Two words: DS Lite. Wa-heeey!

So does Animal Crossing... too late.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I had this weird dream where I had this really bad cough – so bad that I couldn't breathe – and I was coughing and coughing and coughing, and then I felt something tickling my nose, and I pulled on it, and it was a nose hair. But it just kept coming out, and I kept pulling and pulling, and then it made my cough go away."



Game designer Shigeru Miyamoto has bonkers dreams just like everyone else. Let's hope it's not the inspiration for a Revolution 'nasal hair' game...

JAPANESE MOUTHFUL OF THE MONTH

In Japan, the game we know as *Brain Training* is called *Touhoku Daigaku Mirai Kagakugijutsu Kyoudoukenkyuu Center: Kahashima Ryuuta Kyouju no Nou wo Kitaeru Otona no DS Training*.



RULES OF THE GAME

The clichés we just love to hate
No.1: Puzzle Games

- They always have multiple modes, but you'll only ever play the time attack.
- 'Marathon' mode will drone on for 20 minutes before becoming challenging.
- Even though the game needs no story, it will still have one that involves animals, spaceships or a magical quest for a gem/amulet/star/crown/whatever.
- It will have a looping soundtrack that could drive Tibetan monks to violence.
- The head-to-head games are too short.
- In the single-player mode there's always one level that's actually impossible.
- Anything based on *Tetris* that isn't actually *Tetris* is rubbish.
- Each stage 'rewards' you with a new background, although they look like they were drawn by drunken chimps.
- It always takes as long to click through the company logos, trademark warnings, title screen and menus as it does to play the stupid game.
- Despite all of the above, it will be insanely addictive and take over your life for six months.





It seems natural that you'd use the Revolution controller to swipe at enemies.

GLOBAL GAME UPDATE

Dream A Little Dream

Could the next Zelda game be coming to Revolution?

REVOLUTION Here at Global we like to think it's our job to find the very best Nintendo stories, iron out the kinks, remove the untruths and give you the full facts. So it is with this dose of rumour control...

One of the gloomiest Internet chat room predictions of recent times is that *Legend Of Zelda: Twilight Princess* will be bypassing the GameCube entirely, heading straight for the next-gen Revolution. The thinking behind this is that by the time *Twilight Princess* appears, the GameCube will be at the end of its commercial life but the Revolution will be about to appear in stores.

Well, there's no better way to quash that one than by going straight to Nintendo's UK PR manager Rob Saunders. He says: "Nintendo has always promised and maintained that *The Legend Of Zelda: Twilight Princess* will be a Nintendo GameCube title. Mr Miyamoto and Mr Aonuma are still fully committed to bringing *Twilight Princess* to GameCube owners worldwide later this year."

So there you have it – it *will* be on GameCube. Which brings us onto the second bit of tittle-tattle, that *Twilight Princess* will also be coded to work with the Revolution Freehand controller. As it's already been confirmed that the backwardly-compatible Revolution will play all GameCube games, it wouldn't be too hard to add some extra code to every version of the game, making it compatible with the Revolution's ground-breaking controller.

That all sounds reasonable, but what's the truth? Well, *Legend Of Zelda: Twilight Princess* is a GameCube game and has been in development for that system for a long time. The Revolution is backwards compatible so the fact that *Twilight Princess* is a GameCube game automatically means that you'll be able to stick it in your Revolution, plug in a GameCube controller (the Revolution also has ports for these) and play it as you would on a GameCube.



Nintendo is putting a massive amount of extra time into the game not only because it wants to create the greatest game for this generation of consoles, but also because this will inevitably be a must-buy game for any Revolution owners. It'll be the same game and it'll work on your new console.

As for the Revolution controller compatibility... Sure, it would be great to have your actions mimicked on the screen by Link swiping the Master Sword; it would be phenomenal to be able to lob the Gale Boomerang simply by flicking your wrist. Is it actually going to happen though? Sadly, the development team is keeping tight-lipped about this one. But if we know it's a great idea, we're sure they do too. +

Just imagine sitting in your living room, nun-chuck controller in one hand, with the Freehand controller high above your head ready to swipe. Droool...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED...

PERFECT DARK

Nintendo guru **Steve Jarratt** can't believe you're still in the dark about this classic shooter...

N64 More observant gamers may well have noticed the recent appearance of a certain *Perfect Dark Zero* which, sadly, is not available to play on Nintendo hardware. However, Nintendo fans *do* have an alternative if they fancy some top-notch shooting action. It might not boast quite the same glossy, high-res imagery, but the original *Perfect Dark* on the N64 is still a handsome and finely crafted shoot 'em up. And, in some respects, it's every bit as good as the over-hyped and long-overdue sequel.

Despite being six years old, *Perfect Dark* still looks the part. It pushed the N64 harder than any other game and included all sorts of sweet lighting effects, artificially intelligent enemies, multiplayer action, stacks of game modes, 21 levels,



The *Perfect Dark* world is a brilliant mix of rusting, worn out public spaces...



...and slick, shiny offices owned by power-dressing corporate jerks.

dozens of unlockable challenges and some truly brilliant level design. A game like this is exactly what the N64's 4Mb expansion pack was invented for.

Gamers remain divided over whether it's better than developer Rare's other classic shooter, *GoldenEye*. Personally, I prefer the Bond game – it's easier to get into and I stuck with it till the bitter end, whereas *Perfect Dark*'s mission design can get a bit complex so I never did make it to the final level. Fortunately, Rare crafted an amazing combat simulator which enables you to assign 'bots' to do the job of humans in the multiplayer arenas, so there's still plenty of action when you've had enough of the single-player mission.

I'm not convinced *Perfect Dark* deserved some of the near-perfect scores it received back in the day, but it's definitely worth tracking down if you feel the need to let loose a few dozen rounds of ammo. So get your N64 out of the loft, plug in all those spare pads and hijack the big telly – then you're all set for some action-packed deathmatch sessions! +



Hard to believe this is an old N64 game.



The wide range of near-future machine guns and pistols gives way to even stranger alien weapons as the story progresses.



Multi-layered levels make you more cautious than in your standard run 'n' gun game.



PD even boasts animated cut-scenes. It's jam-packed with gaming goodness.

Perfect Dark is almost certainly the most advanced game on the N64, but at times you wish Rare had kept it a bit simpler. It's easy to get lost, and the frame rate is all over the shop. But it's still a very classy shooter – and full of hidden secrets!



It's fair to say that this is a departure from the scenery we're used to seeing in *Monkey Ball* games.

➔ GLOBAL GAME ANNOUNCEMENT

More Monkey Mayhem

Time for a simian facelift as **Monkey Ball** gets a new developer

GAMECUBE When you've got a formula as ingeniously simple and addictive as *Super Monkey Ball* there's no need to change it, is there? Well, not quite. With the announcement of *Super Monkey Ball Adventure* for the GameCube



That's a monkey alright, but is that ball made of... wood? Lunacy, we tell you.

it's obvious that the simian-rolling series has undergone a revamp.

The most significant change has taken place behind the scenes, with Sega's Amusement Vision studio handing over the development reins to Traveller's Tales. Traveller's Tales has previously been responsible for titles such as *The Chronicles Of Narnia* and *LEGO: Star Wars*, which are pretty far removed from the concept of monkeys in balls but are decent games in their own right.

Monkey World

Within the game, the biggest development is the way the action opens out. Rather than simply getting from A to B in your big plastic ball before warping to the next level, now whenever you complete a stage you'll be able to open your wings and fly overseas

Ai-Ai is one little monkey who is really moving up in the world.

to explore new lands. In this respect, the game is more of an adventure than before, as the name implies.

Each monkey will now also have several balls to use, each with different properties. Just as the balls in the *Monkey Target* mini-game came in 'sticky' and 'magnet' versions, so the balls in the main game will let you stick to walls, float over gaps and even sail across areas of water.

Super Monkey Ball Adventure is set for a June release on the UK and we'll bring you more information as we get it. +

➔ GLOBAL GAME UPDATE

Resident Evil 5

Will the horror stick with Nintendo?

GAMECUBE Shortly after the GameCube was released, publisher Capcom signed a deal with Nintendo to bring all the *Resident Evil* titles to Nintendo's console. The fruits of this deal were a remake of the original game, *Resident Evil Zero*, ports of *RE2* and *RE3*, and a game that most people would call the finest game ever: *Resident Evil 4*.

However, in July last year Capcom announced that the next sequel, *Resident Evil 5*, would be appearing on the Xbox 360 and PS3, with no mention of the Revolution. Why would that be the case after Capcom



As the *Resident Evil* games go on, so the leading men get more chiselled

has enjoyed (and still is enjoying) such a close relationship with Nintendo?

Recent interviews with Capcom producers have revealed that they're very excited about the Revolution, but at the time the *RE5* announcement was made very little was known about the platform. It could be that, come the official unveiling in May, Capcom will announce its full support. For now though, here's a shot from the trailer of the game.

➔ GLOBAL GAME UPDATE

Splinter Cell: Double Agent

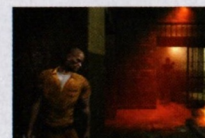
Staying in the shadows for a little longer

GAMECUBE Ubisoft's stealth adventure series continues this year with *Splinter Cell: Double Agent*. This time around, lead sneakster Sam Fisher is in prison under mysterious circumstances and you play much of the game as an inmate.

You may have seen coverage of this game in other places but there simply aren't any GameCube screenshots yet. The only shots that are available are from the Xbox 360 build of the game, but never fear – next issue we'll bring you an in-depth look at the GameCube version, which is due out in April.



This is no time to be hanging around...



Prison: not particularly cheery.

IF YOU'PLAY ONE GAME TODAY, THEN PLAY...

BATTALION WARS

ONM's very own **Chandra Nair** tells us why war has never been better...

GAMECUBE It's such a good feeling when a game that you're expecting to be decidedly average turns out to be great. *Battalion Wars* is definitely one such game. Created right here in the UK by little-known developer Kuju, *Battalion Wars* is a fun action-strategy game based loosely on *Advance Wars*. Now I know most people don't class strategy as fun but that's the whole point: this game manages to make strategic warfare enjoyable.

You head up the Western Frontier and are put in control of Grunts, Riflemen, Bazooka Veterans, Light Infantry, Tanks, Gunships and a load of other weapons of war in a wide variety of 3D landscapes. The control system means that at the tap of a few buttons you can control one, five or 50 members of your battalion and tell them what to do. It's so easy to control

your team, whatever vehicles they may be in, that you can't help but have a whale of a time busting the chops of the opposition.

There's a tongue-in-cheek storyline flowing underneath all the fun and some great voice acting to tie it all together. What's more, the leap into 3D from *Advance Wars*' 2D has worked pretty well. The only downside to the game is the complete lack of multiplayer modes, which is a bizarre oversight considering the game is perfect for this sort of gaming. Still, that just gives us more to look forward to from the inevitable *Revolution* sequel.

Battalion Wars is an instant classic that drowned in a sea of movie tie-ins, and with the current dearth of new GameCube releases it provides the perfect opportunity to remind yourself what Nintendo is all about – fun, accessible gaming. +



You and whose army? Your army, of course. Get to it!



We put one of these on our Christmas list. Didn't get it.



Things can get heated...



Take to the skies and rain down cartoony death on your puny opponents.



After the 2D brilliance of *Advance Wars*, many people doubted that 3D *Wars* would work. Well, it does.





Official Release Dates

YOUR ONE-STOP NINTENDO PLANNER FOR 2006

DATE	GAME	FORMAT	PUBLISHER	ANTICIPATION	DATE	GAME	FORMAT	PUBLISHER	ANTICIPATION
FEBRUARY					MAY				
17.02	Pac-Man World 3	GC, DS	EA	★★★★★	01.05	Beetle King	DS	D3DB	★★★
24.02	Namco Museum 50th Anniversary	GC, DS, GBA	EA	★★★★★	05.05	Metroid Prime Hunters	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
MARCH					26.05	Super Princess Peach	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
17.03	Finding Nemo	DS	THQ	★★★★★	26.05	Screw Breaker	GBA	Nintendo	★★★★★
17.03	Worms: Open Warfare	DS	THQ	★★★★★	26.05	Chibi-Robo	GC	Nintendo	★★★★★
17.03	Sonic Riders	GC	Sega	★★★★★	TBC	Big Brain Academy	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
24.03	Brain Training	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	JUNE				
24.03	Ice Age 2	GC, DS, GBA	Vivendi	★★★★★	02.06	Super Monkey Ball Adventures	GC	Sega	★★★★★
24.03	Street Racing Syndicate	GBA	Zoo Digital	★★★★★	02.06	Final Fantasy IV Advance	GBA	Nintendo	★★★★★
31.03	Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	Dragon Booster	DS	Konami	★★★
31.03	Animal Crossing: Wild World	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	WarioWare: Twisted!	GBA	Nintendo	★★★★★
31.03	Resident Evil: Deadly Silence	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	The Wild	GBA	THQ	★★★
31.03	Odama	GC	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	Metroid Prime Pinball	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
31.03	Ty 3	DS	Zoo Digital	★★★★★	SUMMER				
31.03	Tales Of Phantasia	GBA	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	New Super Mario Bros.	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
APRIL					TBC	Mario Basketball 3 On 3	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
07.04	Top Spin 2	DS, GBA	2K Games	★★★★★	TBC	Secret Of Mana: Children Of Mana	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
07.04	Polarium Advance	GBA	Nintendo	★★★★★	NOV				
13.04	Megaman Battle Network 5 DT	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	Baten Kaitos 2	GC	Nintendo	★★★★★
21.04	Tetris DS	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	2006				
21.04	Electroplankton	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	Legend Of Zelda: Twilight Princess	GC	Nintendo	★★★★★
21.04	Tamagotchi DS	DS	Atari	★★★★★	TBC	Pokémon Diamond & Pearl	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
28.04	Pokémon Link!	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	Metroid Dread	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
28.04	Trauma Center: Under The Knife	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	Pokémon Dungeon: Blue Rescue	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★
TBC	Harvest Moon DS	DS	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	Pokémon Dungeon: Red Rescue	GBA	Nintendo	★★★★★
TBC	Harvest Moon: Magic Melody	GC	Nintendo	★★★★★	TBC	Smash Bros Revolution	Rev	Nintendo	★★★★★
TBC	Mini R/C Racing	DS	KE Media	★★★★★	TBC	Metroid Prime 3	Rev	Nintendo	★★★★★
TBC	Garfield	GBA	KE Media	★★★★★					
TBC	Chronicles Of Narnia	GC	Buena Vista	★★★★★					
TBC	Splinter Cell: Double Agent	GC	Ubisoft	★★★★★					



Resident Evil: Deadly Silence is imminent.



Only one month to go 'til Wild World mania.



Tamagotchi comes to life on the DS in April.

YOU WHAT?

The lowdown on the games from this month's release list that you may not have heard of...

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURES

Announced this month, the next *Monkey Ball* game will take the form of an adventure game where you can visit various monkey-inspired islands. Check out page 18 for more screens and information.



MARIO BASKETBALL 3 ON 3

We've only seen one screen of this DS game so far but it looks more like a GameCube title. It's a basketball game where you use the stylus to bounce the ball, which sounds crazy but apparently it works.



POKÉMON DIAMOND & PEARL

The true sequels to the massively popular GBA games such as *Pokémon Ruby*, *Sapphire* and *Emerald* are coming to the DS. We have absolutely no information as yet but you can be sure that it'll be worth waiting for.



The Official Nintendo Magazine website

The ultimate Nintendo resource is coming to a PC near you

Official Nintendo Magazine isn't just about the pages you see before you. We think of it as a new experience, and part of that will be a definitive online Nintendo database. Here you'll be able to read all the reviews, previews and features that appear in the mag and see all the best screenshots and artwork at full size. Better still, we'll be updating our online news section

every day. All this and more will be coming over the next few months.

Then there are the forums. Fancy chatting to other people about games? Looking to swap Friend Codes? Maybe you're just stuck in *Resident Evil*. The forums are the place to talk to like-minded people and the magazine team about your favourite games. Watch this space...



WWW.OFFICIALNINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

THE NEXT BEST GAME IN THE WORLD EVER IS...

TRAUMA+CENTER™ UNDER THE KNIFE

Forceps. Swab. Stylus... Editor **Lee Nutter** explains why he can't wait to play digital doctor in **Trauma Center: Under The Knife**

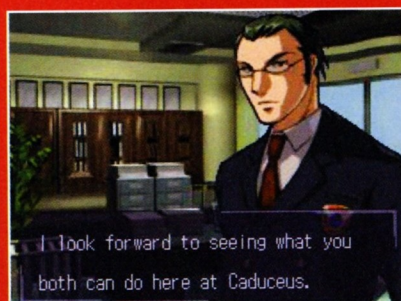
DS I once punched my younger brother so hard in the chest that he vomited up that morning's breakfast – cornflakes mainly. It wasn't technically the Heimlich manoeuvre, as he wasn't choking and I wasn't trying to save him, but for a brief moment I felt what it was like to have the power of life and death over another human being – something I'm looking forward to experiencing again when *Trauma Center* arrives next month.

One slip of the DS stylus and your pixellated patient will be seeping life-giving claret from a four-inch incision you never intended to make. That's pressure. But *Trauma Center* also promises to be one of the most deeply rewarding game experiences around. Imagine saving half a dozen lives before you even get to work in the morning. It'll enrich your blackened

soul and help atone for that unfortunate hitchhiker incident.

Sure, the soap opera bits in between the operations don't hold much appeal – like a Japanese version of *Casualty* but without the impending sense of doom – but it's in the operating theatre that *Trauma Center* comes alive. Diagnose the problem, anaesthetise the patient, select the correct implement for the procedure, slice 'em open, remove or repair the bad stuff, stitch them back up – and with no stain on your conscience and no costly legal reprisals for sloppy handiwork. Who needs a medical degree? +

Trauma Centre: Under The Knife is previewed next month



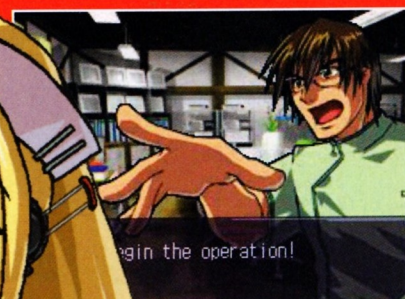
Angeles Bay



↑ Caduceus is an anti-terrorist agency that wants to use your medical skills.



↑ When is a stylus not a stylus? When it's a syringe, of course.



TIME LIMIT 03:00:00

CONDITION

Several bleeding lacerations found in the right lung. Patient's vitals are unstable and require extreme caution.

↑ No, not those vitals. He means blood pressure and suchlike. Honestly, one-track minds some people.



↑ Someone's made a right mess of their body and you need to fix it.



Perform emergency operations on the endless flow of sick and wounded using the DS stylus as a scalpel, needle and tweezers. Remove broken glass and tumours, monitor vital signs and apply bandages – all against the clock!

Nintendo®

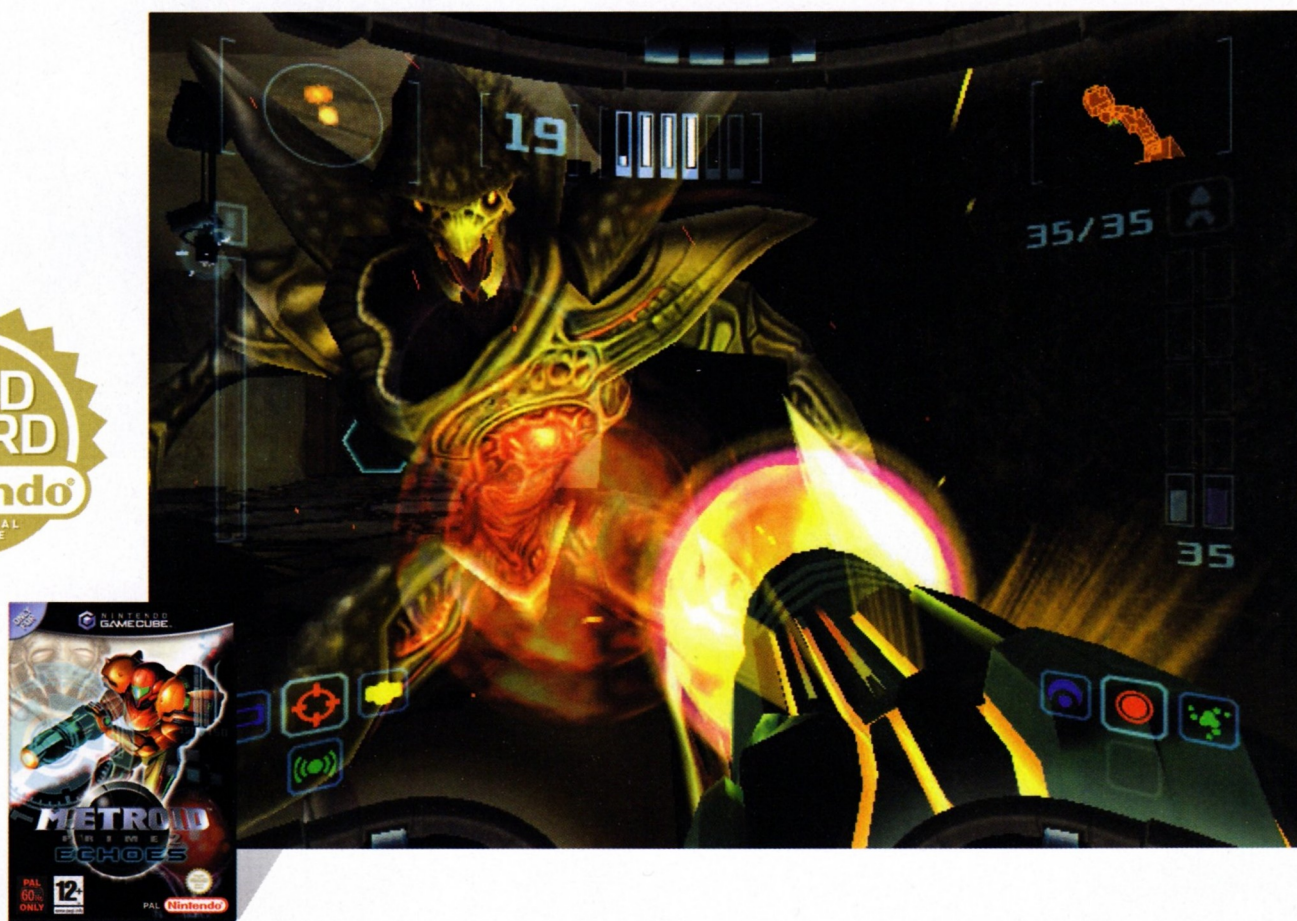
THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

Get one of these games...

Free! Turn to
Page 78



Metroid Prime 2: Echoes



"Another outstanding outing for Samus Aran"
94% Official Nintendo Magazine

Pikmin 2



"Bigger and better than the original!"
93% Official Nintendo Magazine

Donkey Konga



Plus Bongos!



"Fast and furious, especially in multiplayer"
90% Official Nintendo Magazine

Nintendo®

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

Next Month

Issue 02 April 2006

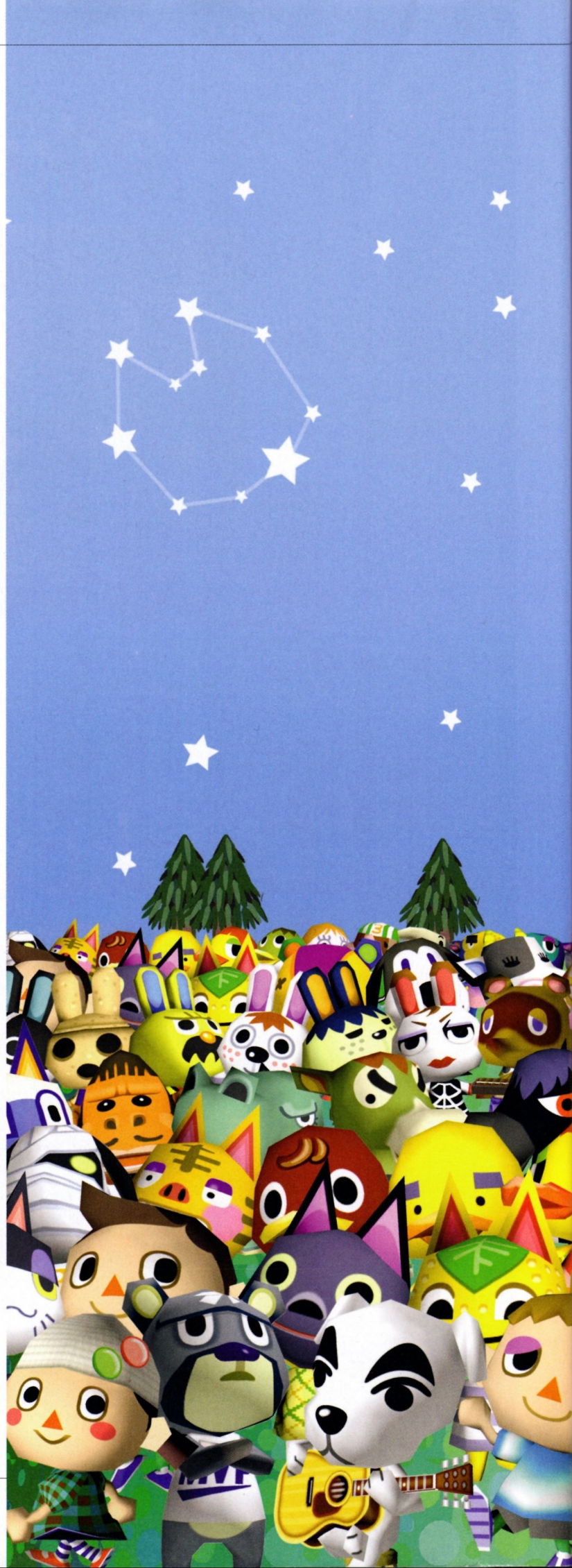
Free DVD!

Get a glimpse into the future of Nintendo with our must-see DVD

- We're first with the UK review of *Resident Evil: Deadly Silence*
- Why-Fi? Find out everything you need to know about global gaming
- Huge *Zelda* update – new screens and details on *Twilight Princess*
- Plus insider info on Nintendo's next generation of gaming – Revolution!



ISSUE 02 ON SALE
16 MARCH 2006





Animal Crossing

Forget about the real world, step into the Wild World with our exclusive UK review of *Animal Crossing*. There are a few people we'd like you to meet...



Behind the scenes...

Kicking back with the people who make it all happen

This month...

Capcom



Name
Capcom
Location
Osaka, Japan
Website
capcom.com

Japan...
also home to



Namco (*Soul Calibur*)
Sega (*Sonic*)
Konami (*Metal Gear Solid*)

For proven excellence, innovation and a string of downright fun games, you need look no further than Capcom...

For the past four years, one games publisher has stood head and shoulders above the rest. While various western companies are happy to churn out the same old games year after year, Japanese publisher Capcom has been the GameCube's saviour. Titles such as *Viewtiful Joe*, *Resident Evil 4*, *Killer7* and *PN03* have taken a gamble and pushed forward the boundaries of gaming, so it seems only right that we should pay the legendary studio a visit.

In For The Long Haul

Capcom has always enjoyed close ties with Nintendo. In the days of Nintendo's first home console, the NES, Capcom rivalled Nintendo itself when it came to pure volume of quality titles. Gaming veterans

will have fond memories of 1942, *Final Fight*, *Megaman*, *Ghosts & Goblins* and *Strider*. With the advent of the Revolution's downloadable classics option, it could be possible that we'll all be enjoying them again sometime soon.

From SNES to Game Boy, N64 to GBA, Capcom's many development teams have brought us such classics as *Street Fighter II*, *Ghouls & Ghosts* and *Breath Of Fire*. More recently, Nintendo and Capcom have started collaborating on some titles with great results. Remember the *Legend Of Zelda: Oracles* games? They were actually jointly developed by the two gaming giants, as was *Legend Of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures*.

Page 29 →



The understated logo over the door is the only sign you've reached game central.



Several of Capcom's games have been turned into successful anime series.



"Does my bum look big in this? How about my profile? No? Okay..."



Resident Evil... in first-person? Capcom is embracing the DS in many ways...



Visitors are rare in Capcom Osaka's development building. Most people only get to go in the company's corporate office on the other side of the road.

"I'm really looking forward to making a game on Revolution"



Atsushi Inaba

Position: President, Clover Studio
Game: Viewtiful Joe series



ONM: Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble is the first DS game to display full 3D on both screens (as opposed to 3D on one screen and 2D, or very cut-back 3D on the other). How did you manage it?

AI: That's all thanks to the programmers and we worked really hard to get 3D on both screens. When we made the initial design document, we wanted to have both screens in 3D because Joe is a 3D game after all. We wanted to make Joe's movements very clear, so I left it up to the programmers and they did a great job.

ONM: Viewtiful Joe is quite a recognised character these days. Can we expect him to make an appearance in the up-and-coming Super Smash Bros for the Revolution?

AI: Nintendo haven't asked me but if they did put him in the game I'd be a very happy man! I guess we'll have to see what Mr Sakurai [Masahiro Sakurai, director of Super Smash Bros on Revolution] says, but knowing that people are thinking about that kind of collaboration makes me very happy.

ONM: We noticed you've put a Resident Evil-inspired level in Double Trouble. Are there any other game references in there?

AI: The Resident Evil reference is the one that everyone notices but there are lots of movie references and lots of Japanese TV hero references in there as well. We've continued with the movie parodies you saw in previous Joe games.

ONM: When we saw the new VFX powers in Double Trouble, we couldn't help but imagine how the new Revolution controller could be used for a similar game. What are your thoughts on the Revolution?

AI: The Revolution controller is unlike the DS touch screen in that it can actually sense your movements in 3D, as opposed to just 2D on the touch screen. We would have to think about what makes the Joe series work with the Revolution controller and how we could express the VFX powers in new and exciting ways. I'm really interested in it and I'm really looking forward to making a game on Revolution.

You can find out more about the Revolution's capabilities on pages 66-77.

"Its controller presents a lot of possibilities"



Minae Matsukawa

Position: Producer
Game: Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney



ONM: How did you get into the videogames industry?

MM: I initially worked for a stock trading company but ever since university I had a deep interest in videogames. I left and went to Capcom with a design document I had put together for a mobile phone game. They hired me as an assistant producer.

ONM: Courtroom films and TV shows are quite popular in the West, so a game like Phoenix Wright should do well in the UK. Is this genre as popular in Japan?

MM: It's only just starting to catch on here. Actually the Japanese judicial system is going to change in a few years to come in line with the US and Great Britain. At the moment we don't actually have a jury; we have a judge and he determines the outcome.

ONM: Do you have any thoughts on bringing Phoenix Wright to Revolution?

MM: Unfortunately right now I'm so focused on the French version of Phoenix Wright that I've got all my energy focused on the DS. That being said, the Revolution is definitely a very interesting system and its controller presents a lot of possibilities. I definitely think it would be cool to make a game for it in the future.

Capcom also made...
Resident Evil 4 (GC)



Inaba-san and Matsukawa-san are both responsible for bringing completely new kinds of games to the mass market via the DS hardware.



Behind the scenes...



"I think I would have to be Lan's dad, as he has a really pretty wife!"



"Nobody knew how to program for DS"



Takeshi Horinouchi

Position: Producer

Game: *Megaman Battle Network 5*

ONM: *Megaman Battle Network 5* has already come out on the GBA. What makes this version different?

TH: There were many things that we didn't get to do with the GBA version. So we have those extras along with the new possibilities that the DS hardware opens. Even people who already have the GBA games will want to play this.

TH: Originally there was a discussion about just porting the games over but the development staff wanted to add all the extras that didn't go in the last game. The only downside to that is that the development time was longer than usual.

ONM: If you could be any character from *Megaman*, who would you be and why?

TH: That's a really difficult question...

TH: I think I'd have to be Lan's [the main character] dad, because he has a really pretty wife!

ONM: If Megaman had a fight with Viewtiful Joe, who would win?

TH: There's absolutely no doubt that Megaman would win! And there's

Tsukasa Takenaka

Position: Game Designer

Game: *Megaman Battle Network 5*

absolutely no doubt that the *Megaman* team would win!

ONM: So, you're saying the development teams would fight each other too?

TH: Well, it wouldn't need the whole team; Megaman himself could take out Joe and the dev team!

TH: Megaman can use all the powers of his enemies so it's almost unfair to put Joe up against him.

ONM: Would you ever consider making a first-person *Megaman* game on the Revolution?

TH: If we get requests from users saying they want a game like that, I think it could become a reality.

ONM: The traditional side-scrolling *Megaman* games were very similar to *Super Metroid* (SNES). That later became *Metroid Prime*, so perhaps we can look forward to *Megaman Prime*?

TH: Yes, you're right. We'll certainly take that into consideration in the future.

Minoru Nakai

Position: Director

Game: *Resident Evil: Deadly Silence*

ONM: Were you ever concerned that you wouldn't be able to achieve the graphics you wanted for *Resident Evil* on the DS?

MN: The biggest problem we faced was that, at the time, nobody thoroughly knew how to program for the DS. It was quite ambitious of us to try and realise a complete PSone title. It was no simple task.

ONM: This game comes on a 1GB card, which is far larger in capacity than your average DS game. Is it the first one ever?

MN: I don't know for sure but yes, I think it could well be the first one ever.

ONM: Inaba-san has put a *Resident Evil* level in *Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble*. Did you ever consider returning the favour?

MN: If you had only told me sooner, then I probably could have done something about it. The project is nearly done so we can't do it this time around, but... I feel really bad now... I wish we could have done that because that's a great idea!

ONM: Now you know it can be done, can we expect more *RE* games on the DS?

MN: From a technical standpoint, yes, it's possible. However, the determining factor will be consumer interest. If people want to see them then we will make them.



It's easy to break the ice with game developers... just ask them who would win if a rival character started a fight.



"Grasshopper has started development on an exclusive Revolution title"



THINGS TO DO IN...

Osaka

There are far more Japanese things to do in Osaka than looking at fish, but when it comes to unmissable tourist attractions, Osaka Aquarium is what everyone shouts about. It has a Whale Shark and The Best Penguin Parade Ever™ (above), and if you're finding it hard to understand why that's quite so good, trying watching the promo film (click the 'TVCM' tab) at: www.kaiyukan.com/index.html

→ Break The Mould

Nintendo and Capcom's happy partnership seems certain to continue because their philosophies on games match up perfectly. Sure, Capcom is as guilty as the worst of them when it comes to churning out endless sequels ('Street Fighter 27X Alpha: Triple Reversal Special Edition' anyone?) but it also breaks the mould in other areas. The most obvious examples are the imminent DS titles, as apart from Nintendo, Capcom is the only publisher actively using the machine's capabilities. Microphone use? Check. Touch screen use? Check. GBA slot use? Check. It's even pushing the boundaries further than Nintendo with *Resident Evil DS* using a massive 1GB card and *Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble* displaying impressive 3D graphics on both screens.

Ready For A Revolution?

All of this bodes very well for this year's introduction of the GameCube's successor, Revolution. As you can see from the interviews on these pages, Capcom producers are very excited about Nintendo's next console. Everyone wants



We don't know about you, but hair down to our feet is a collective dream of ours.

to develop new and innovative titles for the machine, but many of the teams are busy with DS projects right now. That said, there are many teams inside Capcom, and GameCube saviours Hiroyuki Kobayashi and Shinji Mikami (responsible for *Resident Evil: Remake*, *RE4* and *PD03*) are certainly in the planning stages of something very exciting. Gouichi Suda (who worked with Mikami-san on *Killer7*) has also confirmed that his company, Grasshopper, has started development on an exclusive Revolution title (check back with us next month for exclusive news on that front). All in all, that's an awful lot of Nintendo loving. +

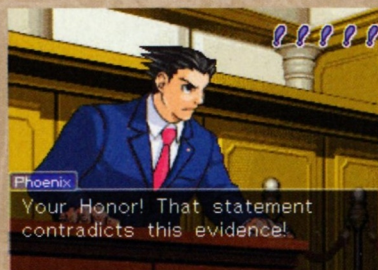
Capcom also made...
Killer7 (GC)



We don't recall the studio being quite so sepia when we were there. Must be something to do with the sun shining through such clean air...



Joe has been far more successful in Japan than he has in the West.



Did you know that the Japanese judicial system has no jury. Fact!



Minae Matsukawa is just one of several producers excited by Revolution.



Each character has a wad of detailed sketches and paintings filed away.



Anyone recognise him? Ladies and gentlemen, Tatsuya Minami (well, his head at least), the man behind the GameCube-exclusive *Resident Evil Zero*.

Nintendo®

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

“A pinball game with
a lot more depth”
Metroid Prime
Pinball



Incoming

A heads-up on the games that will be rocking your world over the coming months

Chibi-Robo

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Skip

ETA: May 2006

Format: GameCube



Ever wondered what it would be like to be a three-inch-tall robot in a world of humans? Of course you have – it's everyone's dream life.

Nintendo's *Chibi-Robo* lets you live that dream. You play as a small robot whose only aim in life is to please the humans in the house where he lives. Throughout the game you'll need to use your skills to right any wrongs you come across. This may include cleaning up rubbish or fixing faults, or altogether stranger tasks. The only catch is that you have limited power reserves so you need to plug yourself into the mains every so often. Domestic chores have never been so weird. +

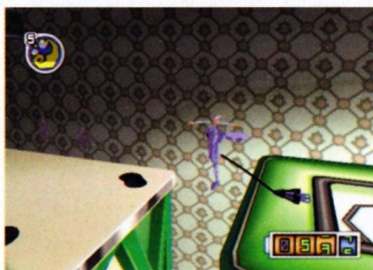
“Ever wondered what it would be like to be a three-inch-tall robot?”



Of course, you're not a proper robot without some kind of scanning device.



A cleaner robot – it's every homeowner's dream. Or so our girlfriends tell us.



The little robot can float across gaps with his chopper upgrade. Isn't he cute?



Puzzles such as getting the toy out of the dog's mouth are commonplace.



Whenever you run low on battery power you'll have to plug into the mains.



We don't want to be the person who owns that toothbrush. Bleurgh.



Drawers – helpful thing-storers or insurmountable obstacles? Hmm...



Damned pooch. We're gonna stick this brush where the sun don't shine!

"On paper, a 'card-based battle system' fails to excite on any level"

Incoming

Baten Kaitos 2

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Monolith Software

ETA: November 2006

Format: GameCube



Last year, Namco shocked us with the gorgeous and thoroughly enjoyable RPG *Baten Kaitos*. Now Nintendo is set to bring us the sequel.

Making this game sound interesting is a difficult task. Those who played the first title will know how great the battle system is, but on paper a 'card-based combat system' fails to excite on any level. You'll have to trust us on this one – as far as

RPGs go this game has a refreshing combat system that gets progressively more impressive.

It's easier to get excited about the graphics. As with the previous game the backdrops are presented in sumptuous pre-rendered 2D while the characters are modelled in 3D. The graphics engine has also been tweaked for this sequel, so the fight scenes look even better than before.

Details on the storyline are thin on the ground at the moment. What we do know is that the action takes place ten years before the last game and no doubt involves you tackling an evil empire intent on ruling the world. Well, it wouldn't be an RPG otherwise, would it? We'll have the Japanese version in the office next month, so expect a full hands-on playtest and detailed plot info. +



The action starts off quite tame but the magic attacks soon become impressive.



Lead character Kalas is back in the game, albeit ten years younger.



The battle scene graphics are a step up from the previous game's efforts.



Characters in this world are born with wings but they never seem to use them.



There are countless combinations of cards to learn. It's pretty hardcore.



At the top of a stylus Mario can turn into Super Mario, leaving poor Luigi in his wake.



Classic *Super Mario 64* favourites make a welcome return in the new game.



Mushrooms must be so fed up of being used as platforms by now.



Ooh, we remember this bit (or something like it) from *Super Mario Bros 3*.

New Super Mario Bros

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Nintendo

ETA: Summer 2006

Format: DS



It's been a long time since the last proper *Super Mario* game filled our screens but the intrepid plumber is set to return in a brand new platform adventure.

Over the years we've been treated to the likes of *Super Mario 64* (a defining moment in videogaming) and *Super Mario Sunshine*, but the last time Nintendo created a completely original side-scrolling *Mario* adventure was back on the SNES with *Super Mario World*. That's a long wait by anyone's standards but patient fans are about to be rewarded.

New Super Mario Bros combines the classic gameplay of the old games with pseudo-3D graphics and the DS's advanced features to create something very special. You can even link up wirelessly with a friend in order to get Luigi in on the action as well.

The game has been in development for some time and the release date still seems a long way off, but we defy any *Mario* follower not to be light-headed with excitement at the sight of these screenshots. +





"Stupidly addictive gameplay and a Wi-Fi connection? It's a winning formula"

Tetris DS

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
ETA: April 2006
Format: DS



If you've never heard of Tetris then put this magazine down now and hang your head in shame. Lower! That's not enough shame!

If ever proof was needed that simple is effective, *Tetris* is it. It's the most loved puzzler of all time and on the surface it's difficult to see why. How can fitting a few blocks together be so addictive? It's probably because *Tetris* is one of the few games of pure skill. Anyone can play it and anyone can be great at it if they put the practice in.



Ten-player Wi-Fi *Tetris*. Does life get much better than that? No, frankly.

Even your gran can become a block-shifting wizard. And it's this accessibility that should make the Wi-Fi DS version of *Tetris* one of the most successful games of all time.

Take the stupidly addictive gameplay and combine it with the fact that you can play against nine other people around the world courtesy of the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection and you've got a winning formula. We just wish we'd thought of it. We guarantee you that we'll be going global in every spare second.

Did we mention that levels are Nintendo themed (you'll see retro Mario stomping on Koopas' heads) and that you can use the touch screen to move the blocks? It's all too much, we tell you. We need to lie down... +



Many of the levels are themed in a retro Nintendo style.



Sure, you look tough, but toilet breaks must be a nightmare in that outfit.



There are plenty of upgrades and power-ups in the game.



It was a time of battle. It was a time of fear. It was a time of iron balls.

Odama

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Vivarium
ETA: March 2006
Format: GameCube



Take a deep breath and relax – this could be a tough one to explain. You see, it's all about a giant pinball machine and an army of men.

Imagine a battlefield filled with obstacles such as rivers, bridges, hills and trenches. Now whack in two opposing factions. Now turn this entire scenario into a huge pinball machine.



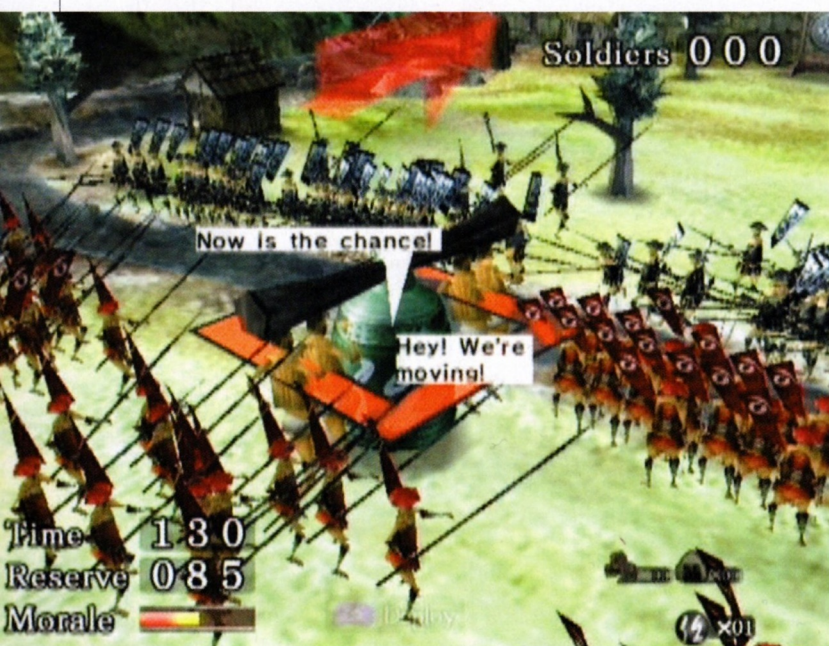
Every mission has a time limit. Defeat the enemy within that time or lose.

It's your job to direct a giant 'Odama' ball into the enemy's path in order to claim the land before you. While you're flipping the ball in every direction imaginable you can also command your troops with the GameCube Microphone peripheral, which will come packaged with the game.

It all sounds very far-fetched, we grant you, but the version we played was extremely addictive. It's a pinball game with added depth and it's something we're really looking forward to. +



If you don't look after your troops their morale will drop.



The aim of the game is to transport a giant bell across the field and ring it.

"It's amazing what a princess with attitude can do these days"



She's angry. No, she's sad. No, wait, she's happy. Ooh she's calm. Women, eh?



Graphically the game is a cross between *Super Mario World* and *Yoshi's Island*.



You'd be surprised at the many uses of an apparently flimsy parasol.

Super Princess Peach

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
ETA: May 2006
Format: DS



He's taken a lifetime to realise his mistake but Bowser has finally decided to give up the day job. Bowser will never again kidnap Princess Peach.

No, seriously, it's true. He's seen the error of his ways. It's blatantly obvious that Mario will always come to his beau's rescue and will always manage to save her, so why bother any more? Instead Bowser's hatched a new plan: kidnap Mario and Luigi, then all his

problems will be solved. It's not like the princess is going to turn into a superhero overnight, is it?

Well, that's where he's wrong.

Princess Peach is on a mission and will have to rely on her emotional vibes to get her through. When she gets

sad she can blast her way through obstacles. When she's happy she can float into the air and walk on water. If she remains calm she'll become invincible and if she cries her tears will act like a miracle growth serum for plantlife. It's amazing what a princess with attitude can do these days. Expect something every bit as fun and innovative as *Kirby* or *Mario* when the game launches in a few months' time. +



Make her angry and she'll explode. Quite literally.



Metroid Prime Pinball

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Fuse Games Limited
ETA: June 2006
Format: DS



You probably all know by now that the DS can play GBA games. But did you know that the machine's GBA slot has other uses as well?

Metroid Prime Pinball will be the first DS game to exploit this facility, because as well as the standard game cart this pinball title also comes with a rumble cart that plugs into the GBA slot. Whenever your ball hits a surface you'll receive a jolt from the cart. Another first for the game is wireless multiplayer to the tune of ten people using just one copy of the game.

As for the game itself, players take control of Samus in her ball form. The levels are beautifully themed to represent areas from the *Metroid Prime* world, and when you complete an area you'll face off against a 3D boss character. As with the GameCube's *Odama*, this is a pinball game with a lot more depth than you'd normally expect. +



As you can see from the top screen, everything is modelled in 3D, allowing the camera to zoom into areas.



At the end of every level you'll face an armoured boss character.



Naturally, the game features all the usual pinball rules and phrases.



The gritty, futuristic environments are typical *Metroid Prime* fare.

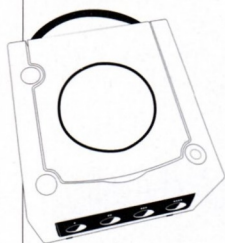
"This pinball title also comes with a rumble cart that plugs into the GBA slot"

Coming Soon

ETA 2006

The Legend Of Zelda Twilight Princess

Good things come to those who wait a very long time



Look back at any Nintendo console and there's always been one franchise that's sat comfortably in the top three must-have games. That franchise is *Legend Of Zelda*. A *Link To The Past* (SNES), *Ocarina Of Time* (N64), *Wind Waker* (GameCube)... they've all been up there with the finest games of their generation and this latest instalment in the *Zelda* series looks to be the most exciting of the lot.

The Missing Link

For GameCube owners the world over, the existence of *Twilight Princess* is old news. By the time it finally arrives at the tail end of this year, Link's latest adventure will have been in development for well over three years, putting it in the number one spot for production costs as far as Nintendo games go.

Twilight Princess had been slated for a Christmas 2005 release, but game director Eiji Aonuma and *Zelda* creator Shigeru Miyamoto dropped a bombshell last August when they announced: "Our development team has

decided to take extra time to add some incredible new elements". So what could these 'incredible new elements' be?

The last time we played *Twilight Princess* was at a special event in London in July 2005. While it looked, sounded and played beautifully, one thing was painfully obvious: this was very much Nintendo's 'Ocarina Of Time 2'. The great thing about *Wind Waker*'s cel-shaded approach was that it marked a departure from previous games. **Page 37 →**



Very little is known about Link's transformation. All will be revealed soon.



GAME INFO

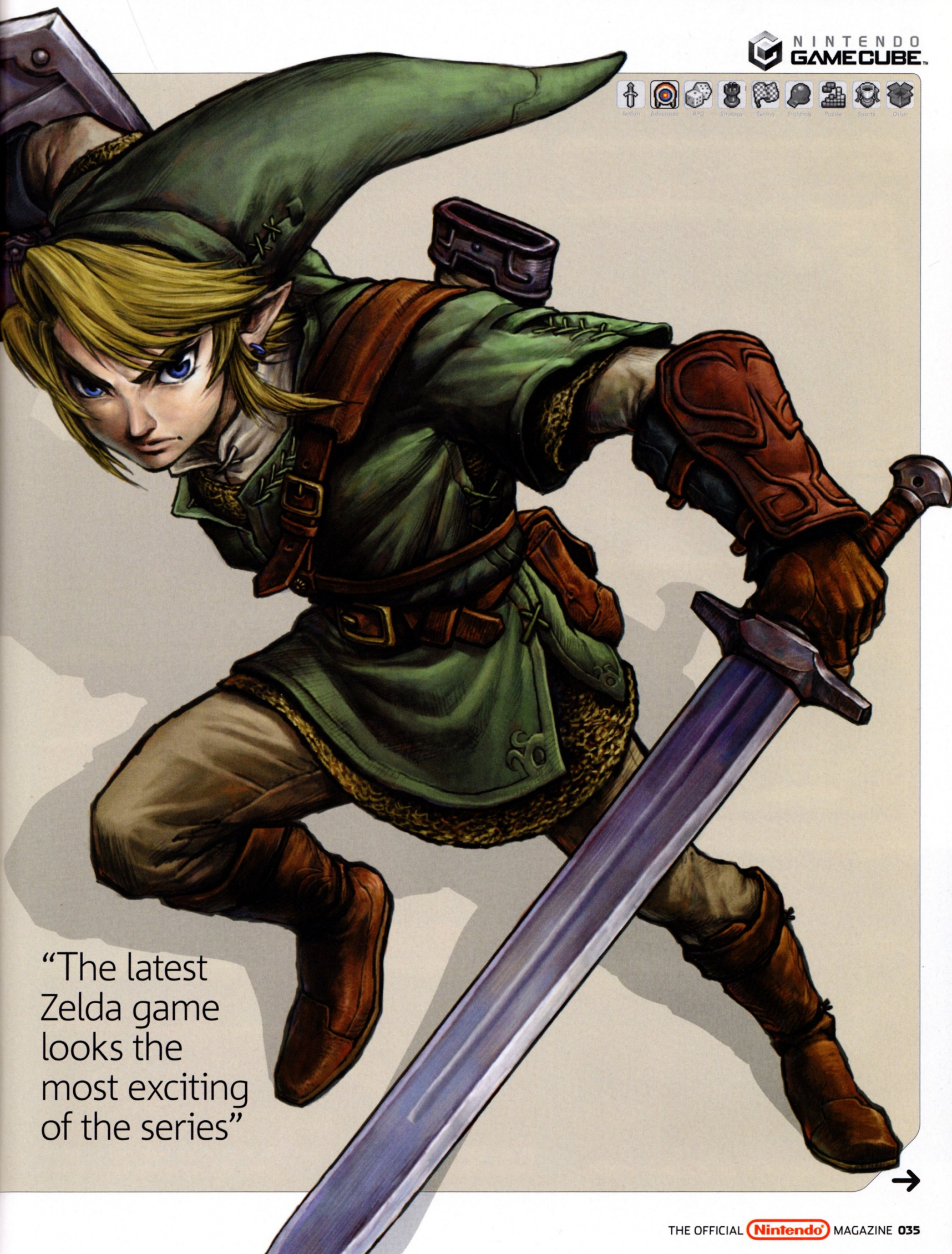
- Format GameCube
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Nintendo
- Multiplayer No



"It's behind you!" Why Nintendo never made a *Zelda* pantomime is beyond us...



Link can now fight battles while on horseback. It's all very *Lord Of The Rings* isn't it?



“The latest
Zelda game
looks the
most exciting
of the series”



Coming Soon Twilight Princess



WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Isn't there supposed to be a princess somewhere?



It just wouldn't be right for a *Zelda* game to be without a Princess Zelda, would it? While the main storyline of is still something of a mystery, we do know that the Dark Realm emanates from Hyrule Castle, where Zelda is now trapped. Nintendo has released just one screenshot of this hooded girl in a tower and trust us on this one – it's her.



Link can now carry a lantern into dungeons but the oil won't last forever. You'll need to take supplies with you in order to search the deepest recesses of Hyrule's underworld.



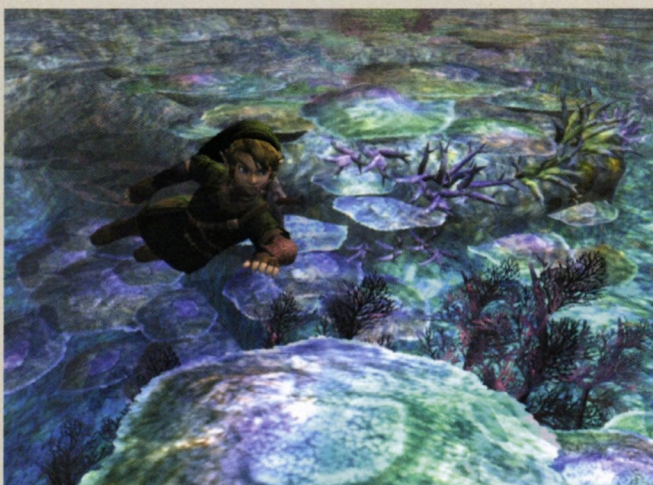
The cities and villages are particularly impressive, with dozens of people to talk to.



The development team are promising bosses like we've never seen. Check this guy out!



Link's transformation allows him to become part of the animal world.



How's that for gorgeous? Link can actually dive down under the water and explore secret caverns *Lara Croft*-style.



Winged demons attack Link on his way to Hyrule. Luckily he has a bow and arrow.



Twilight Princess' graphics are the best we've seen on GameCube.

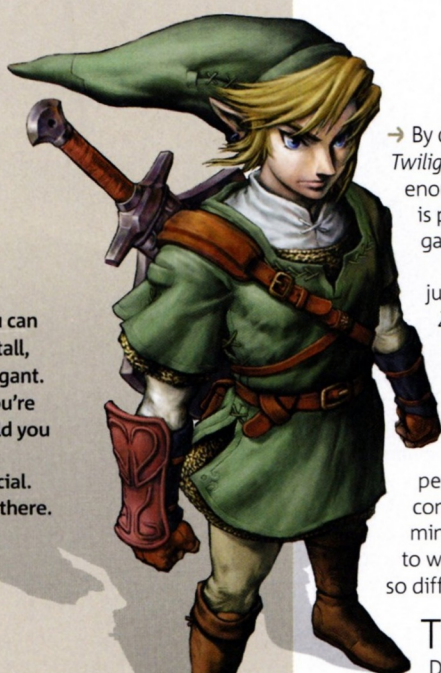


She sells fresh milk yet there isn't a cow in sight. Something fishy is going on here...



One section sees Link facing a boss in a game of 'chicken'. Close your eyes and hope for the best.

Yeah, yeah, you can stand there all tall, proud and arrogant. Just because you're saving the world you think you're something special. We've all been there.



→ By comparison, the version of *Twilight Princess* we saw didn't have enough obvious differences and this is probably the reason why the game has been delayed.

The thing is, Nintendo doesn't just want to make just another *Zelda* game – it wants to make something that will blow your socks off. It needs to be a truly great swansong for the GameCube and a fitting reward for the 19 million people who have bought the console since 2001. With that in mind, here's your definitive guide to what will make *Twilight Princess* so different.

The Big Differences

Difference No 1: *Twilight Princess*

tells the story of Link before he becomes a warrior. The game opens with Link as a young ranch hand in a small village on the outskirts of Hyrule. At this early stage in his life, Link has no idea what great adventures lie before him and his kind.

Difference No 2: The game now looks stunning. Matching *Resident Evil 4* in terms of wow factor (and set to improve before release), *Twilight Princess* returns to the realistic, dark and moody feel of the N64 titles rather than the cartoony look of *Wind Waker*. Graphics and art of this quality are what make the next generation's graphical performance an irrelevance. Even if the Revolution is only capable of a slight improvement, we'll still be very happy.

Difference No 3: As he progresses from farmhand to warrior, Link will learn how to fight on horseback. While *Ocarina Of Time* allowed you to explore the vast gaming world on the back of Link's trusty steed Epona, you'll now be able to battle against Moblins and winged demons on horseback. Evil is everywhere this time, not just in dungeons, and you'll be able to control Epona with the C-stick while controlling Link's sword arm and bow separately. There are even boss sections where you get to take on demons in jousting events.



Link can swipe at enemies with his sword while he's riding. Moblins beware.



On multiple occasions Link will seek help from his animal friends to overcome hurdles.

THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF

Q: What happens when a wolf and an alien get it on?

A: It's simple really. You get a wolf that can jump incredibly high and an explosive shower of incandescent goo. Well, you did ask...

When Link enters the Dark Realm he transforms into a wolf. He's understandably disturbed by this event (well, wouldn't you be?), so the appearance of an extra-terrestrial is the last thing he needs. Still, that's what he gets when a mysterious creature called Midna agrees to help Link escape back into the real world, although it's determined to keep its reasons and origins to itself.

What matters though is that working with Midna is Link's only chance of escaping the Dark Realm and saving the world from certain destruction. Midna rides on wolf-Link's back, attacking dark foes with an energy crown. Link can add to the body count by chewing up enemies, while he uses his wolfish strength to bound up cliff faces.



Even when the world is being suffocated by evils and is on the verge of total destruction, there's always time for a bit of tongue action.

Difference No 4: We think you'll agree this is the big one, as Link exists as both an elf and a wolf. The reason for this is that Hyrule has been shrouded in a mysterious dark veil that sucks the life out of everything it touches. Anyone entering this Dark Realm is instantly transformed into their alter ego animal – Link's Dark Realm animal is a fearsome wolf.

“Nintendo doesn't just want to make another good *Zelda* game – it wants to make something that will blow your socks off”

Difference No 5: While in wolf form, Link can join forces with a mysterious character called Midna. The pair are then capable of pulling off devastating new moves as described in the ‘The Boy Who Cried Wolf’ box at the bottom of this page.

Prepare Yourself

We've been pestering the *Twilight Princess* development team for more information on these new aspects of the game, and we should have a bunch of new screenshots and a load more information for you in issue #02 of the *Official Nintendo Magazine*, on sale 16 March. Make no mistake people, when *Twilight Princess* is fully revealed you can expect it to rock your concept of adventure gaming. +

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

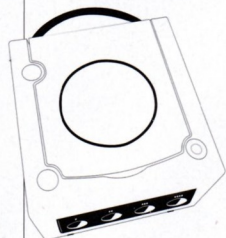
While we strongly suspect that *Legend Of Zelda: Twilight Princess* will end up being the GameCube's finest hour and one of the greatest games ever, there's definitely something missing from the latest version we've played. However, we have no doubts that the past 10 months will have seen the game transform completely. Big *Zelda* update next month folks.

Coming Soon

ETA MAY 2006

X-Men 3

Three heroes, three times the fun...



Mutants – the future of mankind or dangerous elements that need to be controlled and monitored? That's

the contentious issue behind the entire *X-Men* series and the core of this year's biggest film and game release. But unusually, instead of copying the cinema action, *X-Men 3* the game sets the scene for events in the film, giving you a pre-match build-up to this summer's cinema blockbuster. It explains how the main characters came to prominence and it ought

"The game gives you a pre-match build-up to this summer's movie"

to be bloody good too, being written by *X-Men 2* and *3* movie scriptwriter Zak Penn and Chris Claremont, who wrote the *Uncanny X-Men* comic series for 16 years. Between them,

they ought to know what makes those mutants tick.

X3 follows Wolverine, Iceman and Nightcrawler, three characters with wildly different skills. Now, that's what games always say, isn't it?



Nightcrawler can use his teleport powers to assault enemies without warning.

But this time, the differences between each X-Man really are massive, while their adventures are tailored to suit their super powers.

X-Man On A Mission

Everyone already knows about Wolverine – he's the gruff fighter whose moves are all about power. He's for the brainless action bits where the only thinking required is counting how many enemies he's skewered.

Next up there's Nightcrawler – the weird, blue, catty thing with teleportation powers. His missions are therefore a mixture of stealth, exploration and high-flying, acrobatic fighting up among the rooftops. It's his inclusion that adds a new twist for an *X-Men* game, offering players something a little more complicated than playing Wolverine or Cyclops and simply smashing everything in sight.

Nightcrawler's teleportation lets you flash around rooms evading enemies and this also has the additional effect of charging his regular combat attacks. So the more you use his mutant powers, the more you can use his other



Each of the three playable characters takes a route through the game that suits their powers.

mutant powers. This is no simple punch 'em up, it's a proper mutant extravaganza.

The final member of your new mutant team is Iceman, or Bobby Drake, the guy whose power is freezing water and blasting ice all over the place. As in the comic books, Iceman can travel along his icy blast, turning his levels into an interesting mixture of against-the-clock racing and fighting. He uses his ice as a weapon too, smacking enemies from a distance with beams of frozen popsicle doom or peppering them with shotgun-style hail storms. Sure, he's no Wolverine but he makes up for his reduced strength and stamina by being a speedy character who relies on pace to dodge enemies and keep out of trouble.

Location, Location

Throughout all this you're joined by additional computer-controlled mutants while other X-Men will fight alongside you during co-op missions. As well as getting help from your friends, the three playable characters develop their mutant powers as you progress. Your performance is rated at the end of each level, with the score rating you on the Evolutionary Scale – the better you do, the more your mutants' powers evolve and grow.

You also fight inside the Alkali Lake base, the Statue of Liberty and Cerebro (as well as other locations familiar to fans of the comics) and new locations modelled on sets from the upcoming *X-Men 3* movie.

Will this be the best X-game yet? Well, the chance to play as a powered-up version of the awesome Nightcrawler is worth getting excited about in itself. Combine that with the basic thuggery of Wolverine and the speed and wit of Iceman and we should end up with one hell of an impressive showdown. +

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

This is no half-hearted effort. You're given full access to the power of Wolverine, the skills of Iceman and the teleportation powers of fan-favourite Nightcrawler. Bolstered by a plot that explains the backstory of the events in the forthcoming movie sequel, and *X-Men 3* looks like being a truly super superhero game.



As you see, Kurt Wagner's not exactly built for fighting. His good friend, on the other hand...



Wolverine proving that three blades really do shave closer than one.

GAME INFO

- Format GameCube
- Publisher Activision
- Developer Z-Axis
- Multiplayer No



THE MAIN MUTATED MEN

Top *Trumps*-style profiles of the three very different playable characters in *X-Men 3*



Wolverine

His mum calls him... Logan

SKILLS:

- Hacking
- Slashing
- Healing himself

PLAYS LIKE:

A Tasmanian Devil tearing through enemies with an unstoppable rage, only slowing down to self-heal. He's a fighter, not a lover.



Nightcrawler

His mum calls him... Kurt Wagner

SKILLS:

- Teleportation
- Wall-climbing
- Stealth

PLAYS LIKE:

Spider-Man but with added teleportation. Stealthy and acrobatic, Nightcrawler's going to be mixing his agility with quick-fire combat.



Iceman

His mum calls him... Bobby Drake

SKILLS:

- Ice-firing
- Speed
- Defence

PLAYS LIKE:

Frozen racing meets fighting as Iceman slides through levels against the clock.



Nightcrawler's 'casual' disguise won't fool anyone. Your skin's blue, you fool!



The blue flash of Kurt Wagner strikes again. Teleporting also makes his attacks stronger.



Fire versus ice in a speedy confrontation that can only end one way – in steam.



Wolverine has a Fury mode where the whole carnage thing is turned up to 11.



Here's Logan inside the Alkali Lake base, where he got his bones chromed with adamantium.



A bucket of salt water should deal nicely with Iceman and that fiery boss. That's science.



The better you play, the more you can upgrade your character's mutant skills.

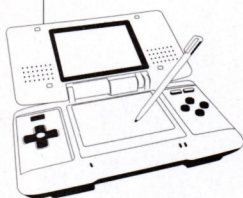
Sometimes, violence is the answer. In these cases, you need Mr Wolverine.

Coming Soon

ETA SEPTEMBER 2006

Secret Of Mana: Children Of Mana

The children of the revolution in a revenge-fuelled quest



We're all for innovation and originality in our games. 'New Ways To Play' and all that... We'll stand on the roof tops to shout about it and go out of our way to strike fear into the hearts of developers who dare to serve up tired experiences. Yet there's nothing like an update of a classic franchise to make us throw our standards out the window.

Now, we know what you're thinking: *Secret Of Mana* – hardly a classic franchise, is it? While certainly not a big-hitter like *Mario*, *Pokémon* or *Tamagotchi*, it was undeniably one of the best games the SNES had to offer. An update, therefore, is worthy of your unwavering attention.

Following in the footsteps of its 1994 sibling, *Secret Of Mana: Children Of Mana* follows the quest of a group of young adventurers who are out to restore power to

example, gives you a good all-round combination), while holding either button down charges your attacks. Gain enough experience from battles and you'll eventually be rewarded with a foe-flattening 'Level 8 Attack'.

Friends Reunited

The five playable characters in the game are Flick, Tumble, Pop, Nikita and Tiss. Childish, we know, but please do stick with us here. You can either play co-op with two friends or allow the computer to control them, and if you opt for the latter you can define exactly how aggressive they are in battle and even control their actions directly at the touch of a button. Every time you restore one of the missing Mana Seeds, you'll absorb its elemental powers and have access to a new bunch of screen-filling spells. Magic attacks and healing spells come courtesy of Pop and Tumble and ooh... those names really do grate, don't they? "Hey everyone, meet my friend Whizzbang!"

We're not in the habit of lavishing praise unnecessarily but it's very hard to find *anything* bad to say about *Children Of Mana* at this stage. Easily one of the most beautiful looking and sounding DS games in development, prior form suggests this will be both addictive and perfect to play on the move. Our only slight concern is the current state of the characters' intelligence, since you control only one character and need to know the others won't get stuck in fights or trapped behind objects. Developer Square Enix has assured us that these artificial intelligence problems will be remedied before release. This is definitely one to keep an eye on. +

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

Secret Of Mana on the SNES was really good fun and Square Enix looks to be taking that formula and improving on it. The one aspect that will elevate this game to giddy heights is the multiplayer – if it works well, we'll be in heaven. At this early stage though, the option isn't in place, so we'll reserve further judgement until we can get some hands-on time with a more complete version of the game.



Stand back, lads. He's got a sword and he's not afraid to use it.

"Extremely addictive and perfect for playing on the move"

their land's life-source, the Mana Tree. The funny thing about Mana is that it's everywhere. It's the lifeblood of the planet, with different areas protected from evil by eight Mana Seeds, only some powermonger is rampaging around knocking off sages and stealing the Mana Tree's seeds and... well, you can see where all this is going.

Children Of Mana is similar to the *Legend Of Zelda* games in that it combines straight-forward hack 'n' slash action with role-playing elements. You travel around, meet people, pick things up and get progressively mightier. Tapping the X and Y buttons will strike with your chosen weapons (sword and bow, for



Powering up your weapons results in all kinds of cool attacks, such as this whirlwind.



Don't whack the chest, little guy, just open the lid. So much anger in one so young.



The touch screen is used to keep an eye on your character and enemy locations, treasure chests and secret openings, as well as casting spells on the fly.

GAME INFO

- Format DS
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Square Enix
- Multiplayer 1-3
- Wi-Fi To be confirmed



FOUR CHILDREN AND IT

What does it take to save the world? Four kids and a fat cat, apparently...



Pop

Young, bouncy and mouthy to boot, Pop is a warrior child with attitude. Only nine years old, Pop lacks experience but she can focus her energies into offensive elemental spells that are essential against otherworldly enemies.



Tumble

Sweet 16 this girl certainly isn't. Out for revenge and a dab hand with a bow, Tumble also has the ability to cast curative and defensive spells. She's happy to tag along with Flick just so long as he kills all the people she wants killing.



Flick

Just 15 and he's already setting out to save the world... heroes seem to get younger and younger these days. Flick is the leader of the pack. As the main hero in the game, he has no skills other than leadership and a powerful sword arm.



Tiss

Sixteen-year-old Tiss is a girl of the earth... and we don't mean she's a naturist. She's at one with Mana, so she can walk and talk with the animals. She can also sense what state the flow of Mana is in, which is pretty essential to your quest.



Nikita

A traveller and explorer of unknown age, Nikita is a wise and worldly cat in a hat. He's only too willing to share his wisdom but if you fancy his various wares that he comes across on his travels, it's going to cost you a paw and a leg.

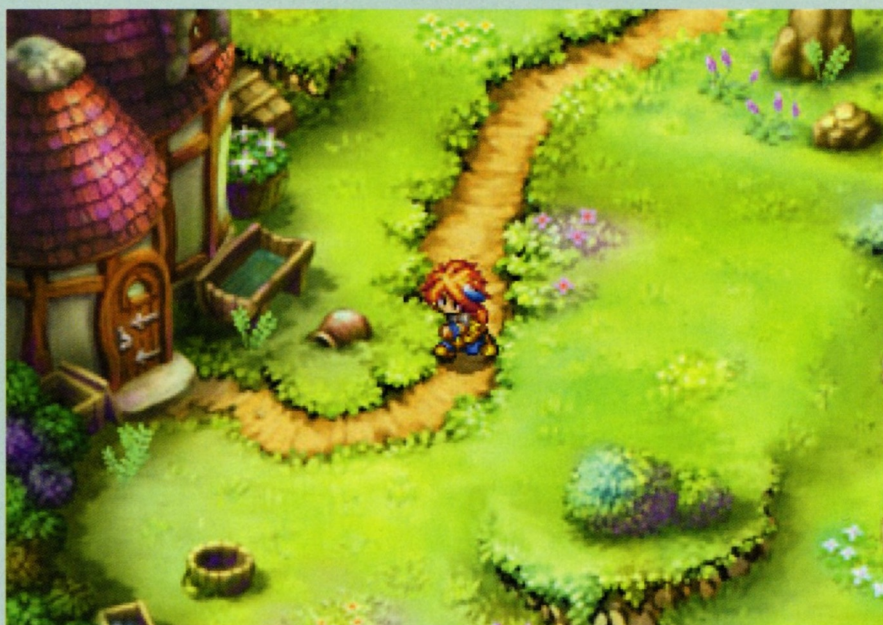


Just as the weapons can be upgraded, so too can the magic spells, leading to some darned impressive explosions and puffs of smoke.



If a giant cabbage attacked you, what would you do? We'd run. Fast. Well, faster than a giant cabbage, anyway.

"Easily one of the most beautiful looking and sounding DS games in development"



When you're inside a village, the display changes to these beautiful static scenes.



A cat you say? A cat in a hat? A cat in a hat speaking Japanese? Preposterous business...

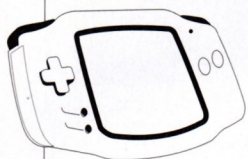


Pop seems to favour the whip, which can crack open even the toughest armour.

ETA MAY 2006

Screw Breaker

Ever fancied a licence to drill? Now's your chance



Have you ever wondered what the people who developed *Pokémon* would do if they had the chance to break out and design something different? Then wonder no more, for *Screw Breaker* is the answer. Coming from Game Freak, the brains behind Pikachu and pals, this GBA platformer couldn't be any more different from *Pokémon* if it tried. Yet from what we've seen of this so far, the two games could share the ability to offer level after level and hour after hour of compulsive, challenging handheld fun.

The central catchy gimmick here is that although this looks like a standard platformer, you're driving an enormous Drill Dozer capable of burrowing through pretty much all the scenery. This brutal form of 'access all areas' seems to have been first and foremost in the designers' minds as there seem few limits as to where you can go.

Of course, a game where you could go anywhere and do anything wouldn't be much of a challenge, so the fact that your Drill

underwater (among other things). We anticipate these mods will encourage plenty of addictive backtracking as you explore previously inaccessible areas of levels you've already completed. It'll be like *Metroid* but with, well, drills and stuff.

Dig For Victory

Sounds odd? It is. But *Screw Breaker* also looks like a huge amount of fun, offering a quirky challenge that's quite unlike anything else around at the moment. The storyline is inconsequential at best – you're on a quest to retrieve a precious red diamond that was stolen from you – but it's the inventive, imaginative, laugh-out-loud gameplay that will really get you hooked. +

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

Brilliantly. This is a little gem of a game. It was first shown at last year's E3 and it seems developer Game Freak has been taking its time in getting it just right. It's out very soon and we're warming up our GBAs right now.

"A quirky challenge that's quite unlike anything else around"

Dozer quickly overheats forces you to burrow tactically rather than drilling everything.

Since you can't rely on burrowing all the time, you'll also need to leap across chasms, latch on to lifts and indulge in more typical platforming behaviour. There are also two types of upgrade hidden within the game that allow you to progress further and faster. Special gears increase the Dozer's performance, making it easier to get through previously impenetrable surfaces. Chips can also be unearthed and spent at shops to acquire new drill tips, energy tanks and other essential modifications. Eventually, your Dozer will be able to fly and operate



In some ways the game plays very much like a traditional platformer – but with drills.



The game is developed by Game Freak, who invented the *Pokémon* juggernaut.



Screw Breaker looks brilliantly vibrant on the GBA's screen. Bring your sunglasses.



It's not all drilling and jumping – there are plenty of enemies to take out, too.



You'll need to upgrade your Dozer before you can drill through certain substances.



GAME INFO

- Format GBA
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Game Freak
- Multiplayer No

STRATEGIC TACTICAL COMMAND. OR JUST SHOOT THEM YOURSELF.



The greatness of the Advance Wars series comes to the big screen with a twist! Jump into the trenches and lead your troops through real-time, 3-D combat. Set the strategy or pull the trigger yourself. Either way, it's world war, and you get to decide the outcome.

Cube Magazine: 9.0 out of 10 - Star Game NGC Magazine: 90%



OUT NOW



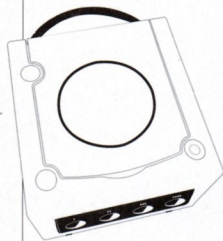
www.nintendo.co.uk

Coming Soon

ETA MARCH 2006

FIFA Street 2

Beckham plays football in a Marseilles ghetto. Just like real life, then



FIFA Street 2 conforms so accurately to the 'EA Sports Game' blueprint that you could box it up and send it to shops and

you wouldn't need to include instructions. If you've played FIFA, NHL or Tiger Woods, you know what you're getting: an entry-level sports title with a generous, undemanding learning curve, fully licensed everything and a snazzy behind-the-scenes set-up.

It's no surprise, then, that FIFA Street 2 has all of that, plus the privilege of a big-budget soundtrack and a tidal wave of street talk performed by homies who (we're guessing) know what it's like (we're guessing again) to play football in da hood. Thankfully, though, the terrible MC Harvey is absent from the commentary box and radio stations after he stank the place up something rotten in the first FIFA Street.

Ah yes, the first FIFA Street. You may remember it as being awful. It was. Well, here's the good news: this sequel has tightened things up. Animation is better.

"This sequel has taken the original FIFA Street template and tightened things up"

Tricks are better. Graphics are better. The marriage of scoring goals (general rule of thumb: four-a-side, first to five) and tricks seems to work better too, with Ronaldinho-style ball-juggling (and a lot more besides) easily accessible via the C-stick. Character creation has been tweaked as well, with impressive attention to detail giving you free rein to develop and maintain your own player.

A Game Of Two Thirds

But here's the bad news: it still doesn't really work. Four-a-side games, tricks or no tricks, just aren't fun in the same way 11-a-side is, principally because the game still isn't sure which is more important: finding the back of the net or nutmegging an opponent. If you stick to the normal rules of football – passing, dribbling, shooting – the game is a war of attrition, with no skill, tactics or guile involved at any stage; merely the process of getting from one end of a small court to the other, then trying to beat a mentally good AI keeper.

Switch your attention to doing only tricks and the game swings back the other way and becomes a circus sim as you glide around the court, furiously jabbing at the trick buttons and watching as Beckham, Robinho or Ballack throw outrageous moves at opponents. It's



Each arena has a unique ambience. This is the pitch in Berlin. Cheerful, isn't it?

just a hollow middle ground, with none of the showbiz of Madden and none of the magic of, say, Pro Evolution Soccer.

Like A Kipper

Plus – and this is a real problem – the gameplay is stodgy. Tackling is a lottery, so you're often just watching your opponent pull rabbits out of the hat as they dance past you. If someone dummies or lobs you, or in fact does any trick at all, you're left to stand stock still while they race past and hit the bag. To rub it in, when a trick's performed on you, the game forces you to 'freeze' for a second or two to emphasise the fact that you've been done. Not a bad idea in principle, but in practice it's infuriating. Especially against the computer, which knows every trick in the book and isn't afraid to use them. At times, it's like facing off against the Harlem Globetrotters.

Still, we like the concept if that's any consolation. +

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

The version of the game we played was pretty much finished, so we doubt FIFA Street 2's problems will get ironed out before release. That's not to say that this isn't an improvement on the first game, because it definitely is. But EA still hasn't really made the idea work, and gluey, sluggish gameplay and an emphasis on neither goals nor tricks doesn't really help.



GAME INFO

- Format GameCube
- Publisher EA
- Developer EA
- Multiplayer 1-4



Ever wanted to run rings around Cantona? Now's your chance.



"You, sir, have been royally punished. Lie there and think about what you've learned."



Matches have an international flavour, though we'll eat our hats when the 'Street' World Cup gets as popular as the real thing.



EA has secured the likenesses of dozens of top players. We'd like a sequel that shows the wives' likenesses having a touchline catfight.



The smaller pitches keep things moving quickly, but then you've got to factor in the amount of time taken to bamboozle your opponents.



This is the sort of fancy footwork that alliteration was invented for.



There are various 'hoods'. This one's probably full of 'Cockneys' who are 'aving a larf'.

"The game still isn't sure which is more important: finding the back of the net or nutmegging an opponent"

LIFE ON THE STREETS

There's plenty to get your teeth into in FIFA Street 2 – though not all of it's that good...



Unintentional funny moment #1 (in a series of many): When you get done by an opponent with a trick. Witness Legends' member Eric Cantona's animation as he falls victim to the C-stick. Makes his kung fu kick look like a walk in the park.



Mirroring NBA Street (where the tricks were much more suited to the gameplay), Gamebreakers slow the game down and give you the chance, should your fingers be able to do the talking, to deliver a game-winning trick/goal combo.



The celebrations are good for a bit of fun. Likenesses are terrific, but there's some hilarious over-the-topness. Once, after Beckham scored, he celebrated by screaming his delight into the faces of two stone-dead spectators.



A good way to practise what you preach on the court is to get busy in some of the game's additional modes. Being able to string together combos increases points and shunts you further towards those all-important Gamebreakers.



And then, of course, there's character creation. As in all EA Sports games you can use your likenesses in-game and turn them into classy four-a-side specialists – best not to make them too hilariously fat, then. That would be silly.

Coming Soon



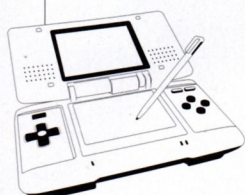
NINTENDO DS



ETA APRIL 2006

Electroplankton

Turn on, tune up, chill out...



Not only is the DS ushering in a new wave of unique titles like *Nintendogs*, its ingenious touch screen and microphone are enabling developers to create totally new forms of entertainment. And nothing signifies this better than Toshio Iwai's *Electroplankton*.

Toshio Iwai isn't a game developer as such; he's better known as a sort of 'multimedia artist' who specialises in marrying visuals and music in unique ways. Fittingly, *Electroplankton* isn't really a game as such either: you can't earn a high score and there's no real ending. But what you can do is interact with various organisms using either

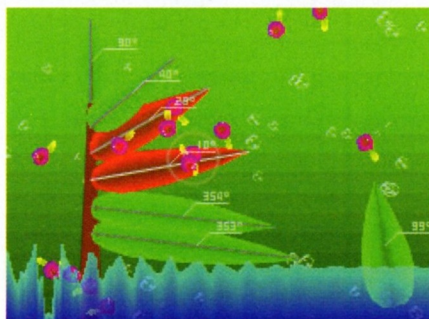
But don't go thinking this is the DS version of the Stylophone (if you're over 30), or *Garageband* (if you're under 29). It's not a dedicated music maker; in fact the sounds are generated more or less at random, and if anything comes out sounding tuneful it's merely the happy by-product of your tinkering around on screen.

The real purpose of *Electroplankton* is to act as a satisfying diversion, a way of chilling out for half an hour or so to some melodious new-age sounds. It's the zen of videogames. We've been playing with the Japanese version and it's fantastic – like having a massage for your ears (minus the risk of baby oil-related shoulder staining, of course). So if you've had a hard day, maybe you'd be wise to avoid the pressures of *Wi-Fi Mario Kart* for a while in favour of gently prodding some musical sea creatures. +

"This isn't a game as such; it's more a satisfying diversion"

your touch or voice and get them to create music... of sorts.

There are ten different species of *Electroplankton* and they each produce a specific type of sound. For example, the Hanenbow (our favourite) bounce off leaves making tinkly piano sounds as they collide, while the Volvoice can record your speech and play it back in a variety of bizarre ways.



Fact #1: The adjective 'plinky plonky' was never used correctly until the creation of Hanenbow.



Fact #2: The soothing drone of the Lumiloop is the same sonic frequency as happiness.



Using the stylus and the mic you can pretend you're a superstar DJ at the world's leading ambient nightclub.



Fact #3: *Electroplankton* will expand your mind until your brain falls out of your ears.

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

Electroplankton is the very essence of 'New Ways To Play', using touch and sound to form a totally unique experience. It won't appeal to everyone, but has real potential. We'll give you our finely-tuned opinion in issue 3.

GET THE LOWDOWN ON THOSE MELODIC ORGANISMS



Beatnes Remix some classic NES soundtrack tunes by tapping the different shapes in time.



Hanenbow Leaf-bouncing, piano-soundlike frogspawn. They make flowers bloom!



Lumiloop Spin the circles to create deep ambient tones (a bit like the Mystics in *The Dark Crystal*).



Luminaria Rearrange the arrows to set each creature's musical course, creating lovely looping tunes.



Marine-Snow The snowflakes swap places when tapped, releasing a pleasant noise as they move.



Nanocarp They respond to any sounds you make (see what happens if you say 'fluffy'...).



Rec-Rec These record and play back up to four voice samples, with hilarious consequences.



Sun-Animalcule Tap the screen to place these eggs, which emit sounds as they grow.



Tracy The Tracy follow lines you draw on the screen, making tinkly sounds as they travel.



Volvoice This species digitises your voice and then plays it back warped and distorted.



GAME INFO

- Format DS
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Nintendo
- Multiplayer No
- Wi-Fi No



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Small But Perfectly Reformed

GAME BOY micro
www.nintendo.co.uk

Coming Soon Feature

nintendo
Wi-Fi
connection

GAME INFO

- ETA March
- Format DS
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Nintendo
- Multiplayer 1-4
- Wi-Fi Yes

Welcome to

Animal Crossing

Wild World

Officer Copper's Most Peculiar Day

Join *Animal Crossing: Wild World*'s law enforcer Copper on his bizarre daily rounds as we investigate the weird happenings of the Wild World...

Morning Observations

Post Office Assistant Spreading Malicious Rumours

"A visitor to the local Post Office made a complaint that one of the two serving ladies was 'rude' and was also, so to speak, 'slagging off' the townsfolk and general environment. Upon visiting the branch I observed two bird-like servants, one of whom did indeed appear to have a bit of an attitude. However, being rude is not against the law so no charges were brought."



The perfectly rational explanation

Cryptic messages from Post Office staff are actually tips on how to make your village better. You might need to start picking up your rubbish, cleaning your feet or cutting down a few trees...

Rude Notes On Messageboard

"I received a complaint from village shopkeeper Tom Nook that several untrue accusations had been made about him on the village noticeboard. Whoever wrote the messages seemed to have an intimate knowledge of Mr Nook and his, er, 'preferences' so I can only assume it was a disgruntled local customer."



The perfectly rational explanation

You or anyone who visits your town can leave messages on the noticeboard. They can be read by any visitor but can't be deleted, so don't be rude or you'll upset everyone.

A Stranger In Town

"As I started my morning rounds, I noticed three unfamiliar faces running around in circles outside the Town Hall. They seemed very excited and were dropping items of furniture on the ground. Being familiar with all the local residents, I was confused as to the sudden appearance of these outsiders."



The perfectly rational explanation

Three other people can come to visit your *Animal Crossing* town through DS-to-DS link or Wi-Fi connection. Swapping items with visitors is an easy way to get the stuff you need.

Strange Symmetrical Lines Of Fruit

"As I approached Dora's house, I noticed several perfectly organised lines of fruit on the floor. There were no fruit trees in the immediate vicinity and the perfectly straight nature of the lines lead me to believe that some elaborate practical joke was being perpetrated. I returned to the area in the afternoon, only to find all the fruit missing."



The perfectly rational explanation

It's all about trading – foreign fruit being worth five times your local crop. Considerate players pile up their unwanted surplus local produce by the town's gate as a gift to Wi-Fi visitors.



Offensive Designs In Fashion Shop

"I received a complaint that a seemingly naked man was walking about the village. Upon closer inspection, he was in fact fully clothed but was simply wearing a pink outfit that had been designed to resemble nudity. The detailing on the body hair was quite convincing! Were I the suspicious type I might think the designer based the look on my own buff physique."



The perfectly rational explanation

You can design your own clothes in the Able sisters' clothes shop. Obviously, people can abuse this by making themselves look nude, spelling out swear words or appearing blood-splattered.

Curiously Empty House

"I was invited into the house of one Mr Thomas. Upon entering I was shocked at the complete lack of furniture. All of his belongings were stored in a single wardrobe placed along the top wall. There was no sign of the usual home comforts and I suspected he had been thoroughly burglarised – although Mr Thomas himself had made no such complaint."



The perfectly rational explanation

Some players follow the principles of Feng Shui, thinking certain designs alter their luck. A good house arrangement may lead to greater fortune in the fishing contests, for example...

5 Valuable Lessons For The Kids

Always Check On Your Neighbours

Giving sick neighbours medicine makes them better and stops them from hating you and moving away. Just think, one day it could be you who's old and alone.



Learn A Fact A Day

Museum staff will tell you all about items you bring to them. We've learned that the coelacanth fish was presumed extinct until it was rediscovered in the '30s!

Care For The Environment

Use the Town Hall recycling bin for the eco-friendly dumping of tyres, boots and things of no resale value. Don't forget to rummage – one player's rubbish is another's bargain.

Grow Your Own Food

Your fruit trees are your main source of income as well as food. Look after them well.

Save For A Rainy Day

Your first goal is to earn enough money to pay off the mortgage. This frantic saving teaches players the importance of achieving financial security.

Swollen-Faced Youth Found

"A sharp buzzing sound in a small wooded area captured my attention. Beside a tree I found a small boy with a hideously disfigured face. The boy looked guilty but admitted to nothing. Seeing as there is no such crime as 'having an ugly face' I simply warned the boy to stay out of trouble and continued upon my rounds."



The perfectly rational explanation

Shake a fruit tree and sometimes, items of furniture and small bags of money will fall out. Get greedy by doing it too often and eventually you'll shake out a nest of angry bees.

Identical Holes Spotted In Village Centre

"I observed that the usually flat ground between Goose and Elmer's houses was now full of small, perfectly symmetrical round holes. Nobody was in the vicinity and they were too large for moles to have made them. I can only assume that the marks were indentations left by the landing gear of alien spacecraft."



The perfectly rational explanation

Digging is crucial. Finding buried fossils lets you build up a collection in the town Museum, plus you can have fun setting traps for visitors by planting Pitfall Seeds.

Money Appears From Rock

"I witnessed a major commotion in the woodlands to the east of the upper bridge. A crowd of villagers were standing around a rock, collecting bags of money from the ground. I questioned three of the locals, who all told me the bags of money had, and I quote, 'come out of the rock'. Unless this was a group hallucination, I'd have to chalk this one up as some sort of religious miracle."



The perfectly rational explanation

"Every day, one of your rocks will produce a few bags of money when whacked by a shovel. Once you've worked out how to get the golden shovel, expect this payment to skyrocket in value..."

Coming Soon Feature



Evening Observations

Rude Shapes In The Sky

"When a villager complained of seeing 'body parts' in the sky, I naturally assumed they were the rantings of a man who had been eating mouldy fruit. However, when viewing the sky between 9:00pm and 10:00pm, the clear outline of lady bumps was definitely visible! I am unsure of the rules for dealing with celestial events, so will investigate this matter further."



The perfectly rational explanation
The village observatory lets you draw your own constellations, dot-to-dot style. Obviously, this is open to abuse, so expect puerile constellations with profane names. It's too funny not to.

Exhibitionist Spotted In Woods

"I received word that an eccentric female was showing her clothing to villagers... male villagers... and canvassing opinions as to her worthiness. Expecting to encounter a 'lady of the night' I headed to the location at double speed. Upon arriving, I witnessed a curious, but not in any way sexual, conversation about the fashion of the lady's clothing. I suspect she is merely an attention seeker."

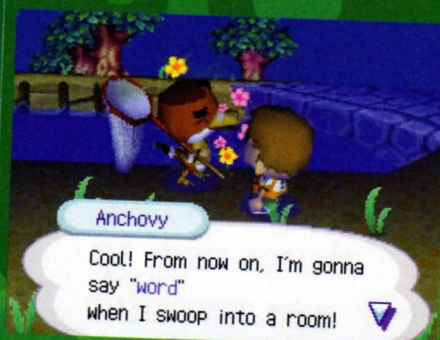


The perfectly rational explanation

Little quizzes and guessing games with villagers often reap rewards, especially if you get the answers right. Gifts usually follow correct guesses, which can be kept (or sold if you're heartless).

Villager Babbling Nonsense

"A report reached me that a confused local was greeting strangers in a very strange fashion. As I arrived, I saw a mischievous child telling the local what to say, and the phrase was then memorised and repeated. I believe the vulnerable person in question was simply trying to blend in and appear 'cool' to his friends by saying the right things. I pitied the impressionable fool and continued on my way."



The perfectly rational explanation

Your residents will all eventually ask you to come up with a new greeting for them to say. As with drawing rude shapes in the stars, most players make their poor little creatures swear.

Attempted Robbery Foiled!

"An attempted burglary was reported to me by an eagle-eyed community member. Apparently, a local youth brazenly entered a house without permission and began to rifle through drawers and wardrobes – in plain sight of the occupant of the house! Sadly, the thief fled the scene before I could arrive to make an arrest. Happily, he did appear to leave empty-handed."



The perfectly rational explanation

You can visit other people's houses when playing through a Wi-Fi link-up, but you can't move their furniture around or walk off with their stuff. That would be stealing!

Pig Spotted Wearing Make-Up

"A report of animal cruelty was made, specifically to do with the 'dressing up' and 'beautification' of a local pig. I rushed to the scene (taking care to dispose of my bacon sandwich before arrival) to be greeted by the hideous pink monstrosity. Upon questioning, the pig claimed to have applied the appalling make-up herself and said she thought the clothes were 'pretty'."



The perfectly rational explanation

It's only Truffles. She's a loud mouth, but if you ignore her for long enough she'll move out of your town. Being cruel to characters you hate until they leave your town is part of the fun!



5 Bad Lessons For The Kids

Money Grows On Trees

Every day you have to walk around your village and shake the trees because money and furniture fall out of them. This is irresponsible as it's implying that money isn't earned, it merely appears. (And hiding furniture in trees can lead to injury, particularly when handling Welsh dressers.)



People Give You Whatever You Want

You can buy things from the shop by working hard and selling lots of the fish you've caught, but it's easier to wait until a character gives you the item randomly. This easy option disgracefully gives kids the impression everything's free – especially if you're lazy.



Talking To Strangers Is A Good Thing

You can't get through the game without popping into strangers' houses. As you all know, talking to strangers is A Bad Thing, let alone going to their homes. Won't somebody think of the children!

Eating Fruit Is Bad

When an apple is worth 500 bells, there's no point wasting it by eating the thing. In fact the characters can exist entirely on a diet of coffee, which – if replicated in real life – would turn every gamer crazy. It's irresponsible game design!



Walking Around Alone At Night Is Good

Animal Crossing positively encourages you to walk around dark woodland areas alone at night. We dread to think what will happen once this game goes on sale and hordes of children head to the woods to catch insects.



Locals Forced To Endure Boring Chit-Chat

"I observed a couple talking beside a house. The female was very animated, but the man seemed quiet, subdued and close to tears! Drawing near, the lady drew me into the conversation and would not let me leave! After several minutes, I made a crackling sound similar to that of a police radio, and mumbled an excuse about 'having a call' in order to escape."



The perfectly rational explanation

Talking to the other villagers, even the boring ones, is the only way to get presents. What's more fun is listening in when they chat – gathering gossip is vital in the quizzes.

Rare Breed Trading

"A concerned animal lover (who wished to remain anonymous) warned me that illegal animal trading was taking place in the Museum. I entered the building and encountered a boy giving an octopus to museum curator Blathers. Under questioning, Blathers insisted he had the required paperwork and that the octopus would be looked after. I told him to report back to the station with his accreditation within 30 days."



The perfectly rational explanation

The Museum is home to everything you've encountered. One of every fish you catch can be donated and displayed while exhibitions also keep track of insects, dinosaurs and paintings.

'Special Milk' Found In Coffee

"A concerned villager complained to me that 'special' ingredients were being added to the coffee being served by Brewster in the Museum cafe. I proceeded to the location, ordered a drink and was shocked to be offered a shot of 'pigeon milk' by the pigeon waiter! Disgusted by this practice, I refused the drink and headed back to the office to investigate the legality of serving pigeon-based beverages."



The perfectly rational explanation

Brewster is a sad, lonely pigeon whose mood only improves when he sells coffee. We have no idea if the milk is his own, but we don't want to think about it more than we have to.

Angry Nintendo Employee Shouting At Child

"I observed a curious man acting in a very aggravated fashion, shouting at a small child. He seemed to be issuing some sort of advice, but it was clear to me that the child was not really listening. I suspected the man was drunk, but could smell no alcohol on his breath."



The perfectly rational explanation

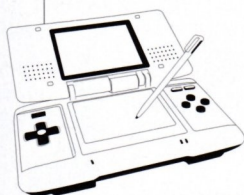
It's only Mr Resetti. If you foolishly turn your DS off without saving, he pops up next time you play to tell you off and warn you about the dangers of corrupting your town's save data. He means well.

Coming Soon

→ ETA MARCH 2006

Resident Evil: Deadly Silence

Capcom chooses Nintendo to host its handheld horror



Capcom's gory survival horror series may well include the finest games the genre has to offer, but when we learned that the Japanese developer was to wheel out the original game for yet another 'reimagining', our initial reaction was a wary intake of breath. Sure, the GameCube's gorgeous remake of the PSone classic was a welcome return to spine-tingling form, but do we *really* need to see the same game all over again on the DS?

Deadly Touch

Unsurprisingly, the DS interpretation of *Resident Evil* won't simply be a room-for-room rehash of the haunting original. Just as GameCube owners were treated to new areas and plot threads, so too will DS devotees be treated to their own version of *RE* gameplay. The most significant of these changes is the

"In the first-person view you can't move, so you have to use the stylus to swipe with your combat knife"

introduction of several first-person sections. When you're in this view you can't actually move so you have to fend off your enemies using the stylus as your combat knife. Once the enemies in that room have been dealt with, you'll be returned to the traditional third-person view and allowed to continue your exploration.

There are several different ways to attack while you're in the first-person view. Swiping the stylus from left to right results in a horizontal strike, whereas a vertical slice gives you an uppercut of sorts, and tapping the screen rapidly will give you short, sharp jabs. The stylus isn't only limited to playing sticky-knife-knife though, as a number of stylus-inspired puzzles have also been added.

Three For One

There are three modes on offer in the final game: Classic takes you back to 1996 and lets you play through the game exactly as it appears on PSone, complete with the original FMV intro and cut-scenes. Rebirth mode rearranges the locations of the items as well as adding a first-person stylus section and new stylus puzzles. Last on the game's menu screen is multiplayer, in which up to four



The Pedigree Chum cologne was probably a bad idea.

players can link up wirelessly and play either co-operatively (escape the infested mansion together) or against each other (kill as many enemies as possible in the time given). Which all sounds terribly inviting.

Too Little, Too Late?

The big concern with *Resident Evil* on the DS is whether it's going to have enough new content to warrant forking out £30. With the magnificent *Resident Evil 4* already on GameCube it's going to take something special to lure gamers towards handheld horror. However, over the past few months developer Capcom has kept adding to the pot, and for *Resident Evil* fans *Deadly Silence* is turning into an attractive proposition.

With increased zombie intelligence, new puzzles, first-person sections and a multiplayer mode, *Resident Evil: Deadly Silence* could well turn out to be a horror experience worth stomaching. +

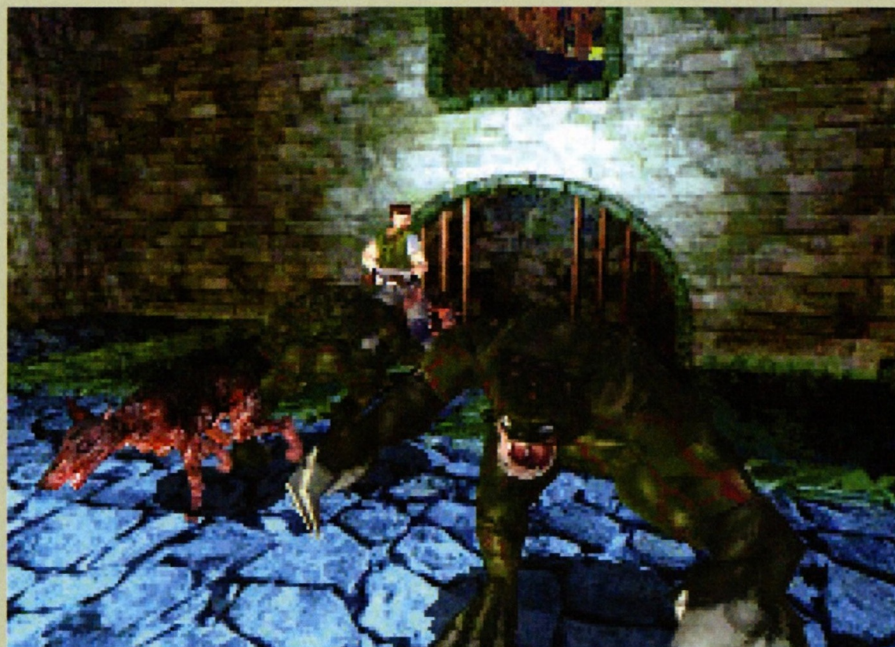
HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

When the first details of this game were revealed we were worried that it would just be a straightforward cash-in. We should have known better though, and Capcom is making an effort to add as many new features as it can. It's possible the first-person slashing section may well end up being a gimmick, but only time will tell.

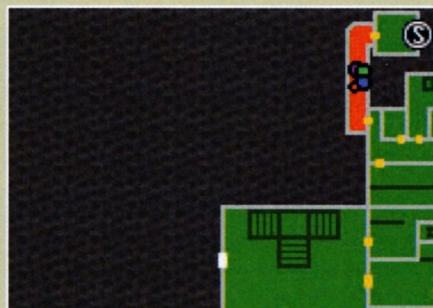


GAME INFO

- Format DS
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Capcom
- Multiplayer 1-4
- Wi-Fi No



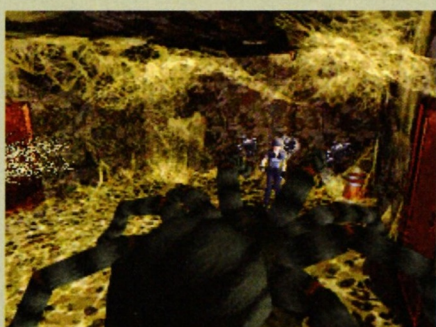
It's okay, he's got the shotgun. Mind you, we always used to say that just before we died.



The top screen is used to display the map, an option that previously required you to go into the Inventory screen.



Use the stylus carefully or lose a few fingers.



Aww, the fluffy spider wants a hug from mummy. Give us a kiss, gorgeous!

TOUCH 'N' BLOW

Capcom has put the DS hardware to good use in the handheld version of the horror classic.

Top screen This is used as the map screen – a welcome addition considering other *Resident Evil* games require you to leave the action to view it. This should save valuable time.

Touch Screen Different motions with the stylus result in different knife attacks on-screen. This forced viewpoint pops up at various points in the game.

Microphone Blowing into the mic will help you complete certain tasks in the game, such as resuscitating fallen allies and blowing away dust.



The microphone is put to good use with this resuscitation section, as well as in several other mini-games Capcom is keeping quiet about.

Resident Evil 4 was devoid of zombies, but we're reunited with their rotten stench for this DS outing.

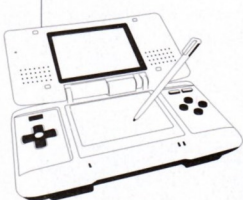


Coming Soon

→ ETA MARCH 2006

Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney

All rise for the right honourable legend
of loopy legalising...



You meet plenty of characters throughout the game – most are suitably mad.

The day the real legal system works as it does in *Phoenix Wright*, prison overcrowding's going to be at an all-time high. Lawyers plant their own evidence, autopsies are 'revised' to fit with the testimony of bent witnesses... it's a courtroom free-for-all. But while John Grisham fans will be left looking for the 'question judge as to lack of jury' option, everyone else is going to love this.

"Phoenix Wright looks set to deliver body bags of fun"

Phoenix has already spawned a successful series of GBA games in Japan, but unless you're fluent in Japanese criminology terminology, chances are you won't have played any of them. Capcom has made a wise decision to produce a Western version on DS. Considering it's a text adventure based on the generally dull British legal system, you might question that decision. But give *Phoenix* a minute of your time and you'll be hooked.

Objection!

You'll see a grisly murder involving your best friend, Phoenix's morally dubious girlfriend and a heavy statue... The five gripping cases all revolve around pretty young girls (who usually claim they've been framed for murder) and playing Phoenix Wright, your job is to defend them by gathering evidence, questioning witnesses, then breaking the prosecution's case. Pay attention to witness statements, spot all the clues at the crime scene and you'll quickly find discrepancies.



Shout 'objection!' into the DS microphone and the judge will let you grill the witness to prove they're lying. It sounds odd but it's utterly compelling.

While the crime-scene stuff's quite fun, the courtroom seems to be the best part of the game. With colourful characters to cross examine and over-the-top musical stabs accompanying each fresh revelation, there's a genuine sense of drama. And while each case is actually quite linear (dead ends cropping up quickly when you go off track), the game does a good job of making you feel quite clever when you uncover each new clue.

In the courtroom, your options are similarly limited. Make five wrong objections during the trial and you'll have to start again, paying more attention second time around. But even

this is less infuriating than the DS's other text adventure *Sprung: The Dating Game*, which restarts you practically every time you choose the wrong response.

Over-ruled

Limited or not, *Phoenix* looks set to deliver body bags of fun. With most cases reworked from previous GBA versions, it's a shame that only the final case fully utilises the DS's unique capabilities – you can dust the screen with powder then blow it away to reveal any fingerprints underneath. That said, it's unlikely anyone will care. They'll be too busy working out why the tea boy at the hotel is lying about what time he delivered that iced tea to room 303. +



GAME INFO

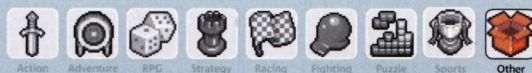
- Format DS
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Capcom
- Multiplayer No
- Wi-Fi No



Some inconsistencies are easy, others will make your head hurt as you work them out.

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

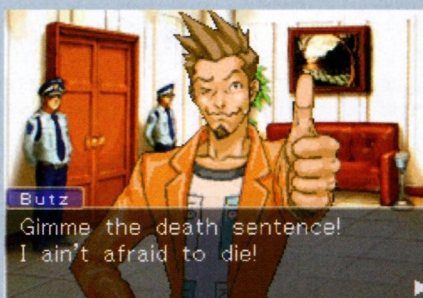
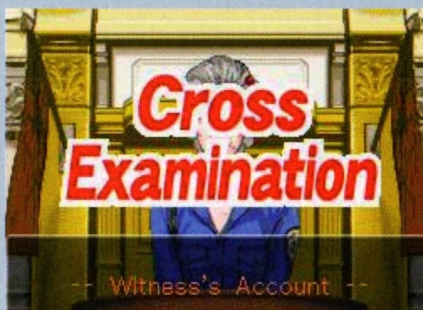
The DS continues to be the platform for innovative games, with the touch screen being used for everything from circling a floorplan to show where you think the murderer was standing to selecting evidence to show the judge. Our only worry is that it might be over a bit too soon – we sailed through two cases within a few hours. Our hope is that balance will be restored by making the final three much tougher. In which case, *Phoenix Wright* will be a bizarre but utterly compelling lawyer 'em up.



Each chapter starts with you witnessing a terrible crime.



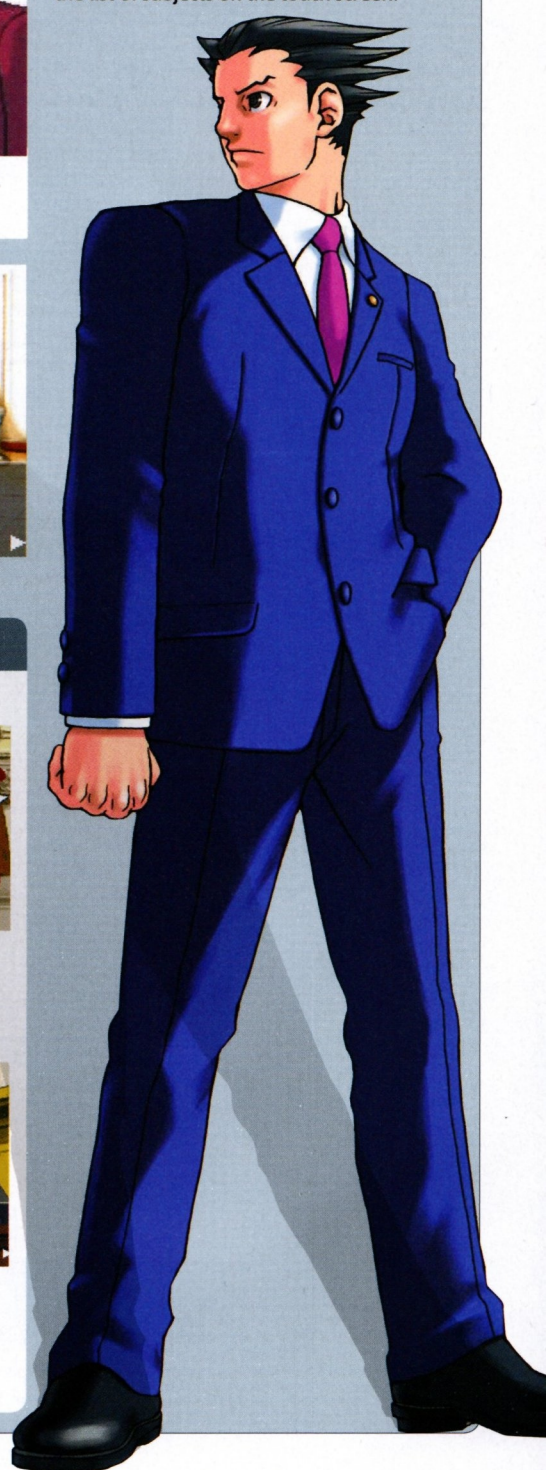
The judge has the final say on the outcome of the trial. Mess up more than five times and you'll need to start the day again.



Okay. One death sentence, comin' right up!



You can question witnesses by choosing from the list of subjects on the touch screen.

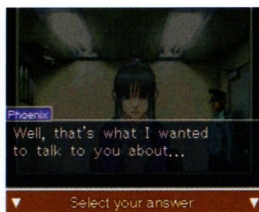


CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

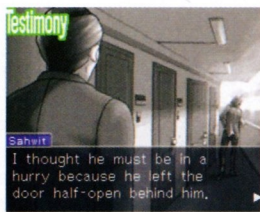
It's easy to point the finger of guilt when you're a legal eagle like Phoenix Wright...



1 This certainly looks like a crime scene. Comb it for clues that you can use in court later.



2 You can question the various witnesses involved in the case as well as the defendants themselves.



3 Each witness will give a testimony in court recounting (or, usually, lying about) what they saw.



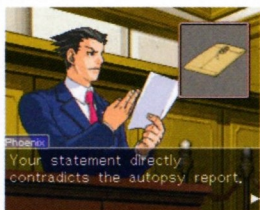
4 When you spot a lie, shout 'hold it!' at your DS, or tap the screen if you're too embarrassed.



5 This guy claims he found the body at 1pm, but the autopsy report says the victim died between 4-5pm.



6 Spot this flaw and you can butt into his testimony (in a suitably dramatic and over the top way of course).



7 Present the evidence that shows he's lying and see what the slimy little so-and-so has to say about it...



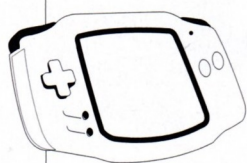
8 You'll need to find more than just one inconsistency before the judge will reach a final decision.

Coming Soon

ETA JUNE 2006

Final Fantasy IV Advance

Epic gaming in the palm of your hand is a fantasy no longer...



Recently, it's been uncomfortably easy to overlook the GBA, what with the mighty DS offering gaming masterpiece

after gaming masterpiece, but thanks to the genius of the GBA Micro and a wealth of exciting games on the horizon, this plucky handheld proves it's still got plenty of life in it.

Something of a watershed in role-playing game terms, *Final Fantasy IV* was arguably the chapter that created the bomb-proof template for all subsequent games in the franchise. Originally appearing on the SNES way back in 1991, it not only took the dramatic step of marrying a cohesive story with credible characters (most rival games were simple hack 'n' slash dungeon crawls) but it also struck gold with the original version of the Active Time Battle System. Allowing you to use spells, powers and abilities during the strictly turn-based combat, it's the fighting format still used in *Final Fantasies*, albeit in more polished and advanced forms. But it all started here, and while you might worry

"It's like an enormous fantasy soap opera... but a really good one"

that *Final Fantasy IV Advance* could look hopelessly old-fashioned in the bright, shining space-year of 2006, nothing could be further from the truth.

There's an intriguing (yet slightly convoluted) back-story to digest before you begin. The Dark Knight Cecil (your main character), uneasy at his lord's warmongering ways, is charged with delivering a ring to a nearby city. This gift turns out to be a bomb



The Active Time Battle System makes combat a strategy-based treat.



There's a huge variety of spells to learn and attacks to master – this is a very deep game.

that's powerful enough to destroy the city and as Cecil, his companion Kain and a girl called Rydia stagger out of the rubble, the game begins. Full of complicated plot twists and packed with a huge cast of characters, the game's clever enough to make you care about the people you control. It's like an enormous fantasy soap opera... but a really good one.

Not New But Improved

The story, of course, is just one facet of *Final Fantasy IV Advance*. The combat system proves that age is no barrier to success, fleshing out the hacking and slashing with reams of spells, special attacks and other abilities. Despite being quite basic, this ageing gameplay mechanic still works well and after all, the game's all about exploring new areas and indulging in lots of random encounters, not marching from fight to fight.

While we can confidently predict that *Final Fantasy* newcomers will find much to love



There's a whole world to explore in *Final Fantasy IV Advance*. It's enormous.

here, it's the tweaks and additions to this version that will be of most interest to series veterans. Given the game's reappearance on a handheld format, there's a handy quick save feature to cater for play in short bursts, while an entire new dungeon's been added towards the end of the game. For those eager to wallow in the immersive world of *Final Fantasy*, there's also a new bestiary that's packed with information on all the monsters you face, fight and slaughter along the way. Not a bad bundle of newness, then.

We've only just scratched the surface of what this massive, sprawling game has to offer but already we're certain that this will have casual gamers as well as role-playing fans glued to their Micros for hours at a time when it's released in a few months. +



GAME INFO

- Format GBA
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Square Enix
- Multiplayer No



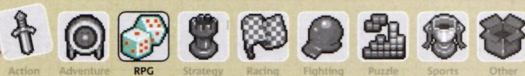
The graphics have been spruced up a bit since the game first appeared on the SNES in 1991.



While the main character is called Cecil, he's actually a lot harder than you might think.

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

Final Fantasy IV Advance is a 15-year-old game so there's little in the way of surprises, but that's not really the point. Regardless of its age or familiarity, this is shaping up to be a stone-cold classic, the kind of time-wasting game that sucks countless hours from your day like a massive fun-powered time-hoover. The little additions are more than welcome and the new dungeon is the only excuse we'd need to invest 25 hours and 25 quid in the game. *Final Fantasy IV Advance* is going to be great.



WELCOME TO THE WORLD

And what a world! You'll get lost in it, but in the best possible way. Here's why...

Cecil Lv 13 HP 827 MP 51	Paladin 827/51	827/51
Tellah Lv 23 HP 418 MP 58	Sage 418/58	418/50
Palom Lv 17 HP 257 MP 79	B. Mage 257/79	257/109
Yang Lv 20 HP 860 MP 0	Monk 860/0	860/0
Porom Lv 17 HP 246 MP 96	W. Mage 246/96	246/108
Baron		
Play time 9:50		
Gil 13001		



Baron Guard	Aslain	2
	HP	280
	Strength	40
	Defense	3
	Magic	26
	Magic Def.	14
	Gil	230
	EXP	710
	Treasure	None
	Drop	None

Your Party

Although Cecil is the main character, over time you'll gather a strong band of followers around him. Each has their own strengths, weaknesses and abilities and half the fun in *Final Fantasy IV* is nurturing those abilities. The multiple strategic possibilities they offer you in combat aren't to be sniffed at either.

The World

The world in *Final Fantasy IV* is immense, complete with entire towns and cities. Thankfully, you don't have to relentlessly trudge from town to town to new opportunity as transport is available, saving your fantasy shoe leather as you give into the urge to explore every nook and cranny.

Magic And Monsters

The Active Time Battle System is still a fantastic way to fight, allowing you to react and choose strategies and spells within a turn-based framework. And while the random nature of too many fights might get tiresome, as you get more powerful, the fights get a lot more enjoyable.

New Stuff

A whole new dungeon! That's the big draw here, and something *Final Fantasy* veterans will be champing at the bit to get to. For the rest of us, it simply means a bigger, better game. Cracking stuff, and the new bestiary enables you to pore over monster strengths and weaknesses to your heart's content.



Exploring the world leads to lots of random encounters with wandering monsters.



The chicken-like Chocobos are a staple of the series and appear in every *Final Fantasy* game.



A lone Cecil against three fiery eye-monsters? Those aren't the kind of odds we like...



While our heroes are rather cute-looking, their enemies are considerably more sinister.

Alligator	Aslain	3
	HP	175
	Strength	22
	Defense	2
	Magic	0
	Magic Def.	10
	Gil	95
	EXP	236
	Treasure	Leather Cap, Leather Garb, Hi-Potion, Silver Apple
	Drop	None

With the all-new bestiary option, every monster you beat can be examined.



Final Fantasy IV Advance is huge – it'll last well over 25 hours. Which is a lot of train journeys.



Some of the spells and attacks are spectacular to behold, especially the more powerful ones.



Eventually the entire series from I to VI will be upgraded and released on Nintendo handhelds.

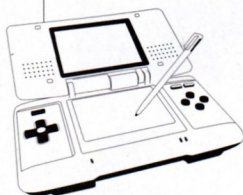
Exploring the world isn't straightforward – there are plenty of traps and puzzles.

ETA MARCH 2006

Professor Kawashima's

Brain Training: How old is your brain?

Time to flex your mental muscles...



While most games are content to let you shoot things until your trigger finger falls off or simply make a car go very fast, *Brain Training* aims for something more. In fact, there are two *Brain Training* games coming your way and they want nothing less than to measure the magnitude of your intellect.

The *Brain Training* games have been a massive success in Japan, and the two versions we're getting – one for gamers under 18, and one for those over 18 – look set to add a distinct gameplay wrinkle to all the

"The mini-games may sound educational but they're great fun"

touch-screen fun the DS has so far offered us. The younger version surveys how heavy your brain is, while the older version estimates the age of your brain – two concepts that basically tell you, in Nintendo-speak, how clever you are via plenty of mini-games.

Naturally, having a heavier brain in the under-18 game and a younger one in the over-18 version is what you're aiming for, so start warming up that grey matter. The games also tell you what kind of brain you have, allowing for all sorts of friend-comparing hilarity – we've already been told we've got the brain of a "stylist" (we hope this is a good thing).

The mini-games are divided into five categories such as Maths and Shapes, each of which is designed to test you on different cognitive and responsive skills. These range

from the simplicity of matching shapes with their silhouettes to rather more fiendish fare, such as memory tests and mathematical conundrums.

While *Brain Training* may sound suspiciously educational, it's actually in the vein of something like *WarioWare*, although not as fast-paced or as wacky, and solving the puzzles is hugely enjoyable (yes, even the maths-based ones). It's all done using the touch screen and stylus, which makes it as intuitive and easy-to-use as something like *Zoo Keeper*, breaking down the boundaries of confusing videogame control in the same manner, meaning these really are games anyone can play, despite the ages they're aimed at.

We'll have a review of them next month, when hopefully we'll find out if we've got the brain of Stephen Hawking (we'll give it back to him when we've finished the game). +

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

While these may appear to be just more collections of mini-games, the *Brain Training* titles' presentation and focus makes them stand out from similar fare. The urge to replay the game and improve the weight (or age) of your brain is huge. Two potential DS classics.



GAME INFO

- Format DS
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Nintendo
- Multiplayer No
- Wi-Fi No

Brain Age Check

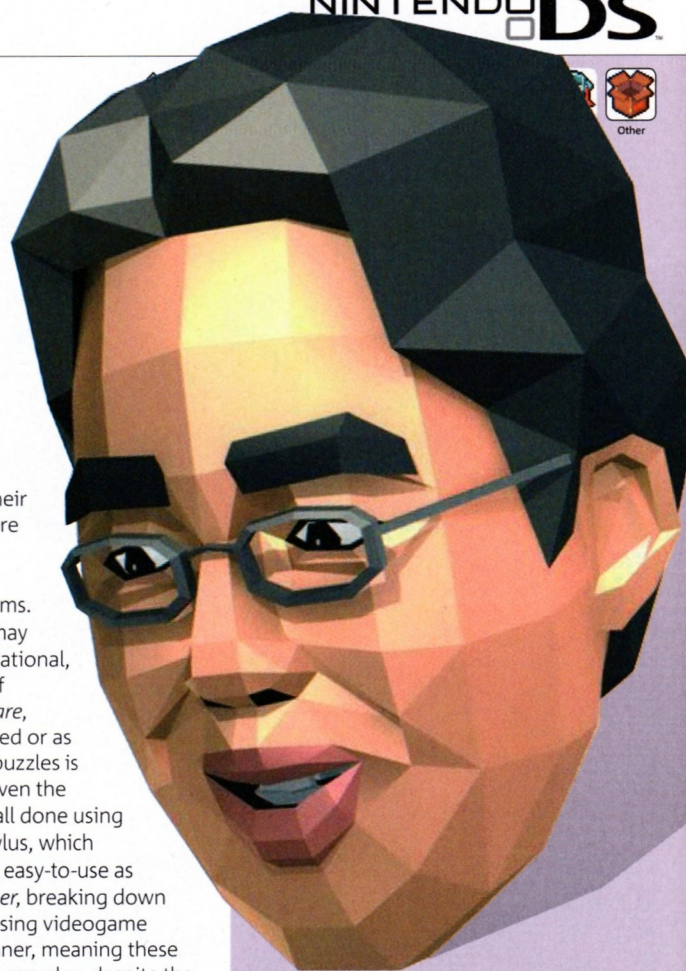
More

...Oh dear... Your brain is **very tired**. But don't lose heart!

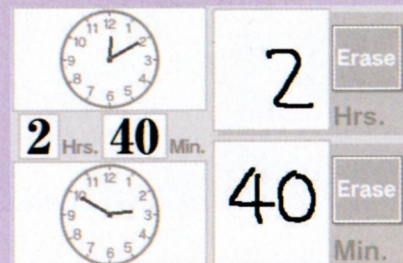


Your brain age is
53

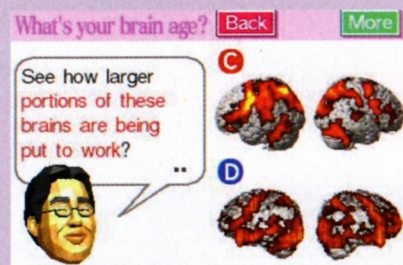
Best not show this picture to anyone who actually is 53 – no one likes having a tired brain.



Don't worry – behind this rather plain menu screen lies some fiendish puzzling.

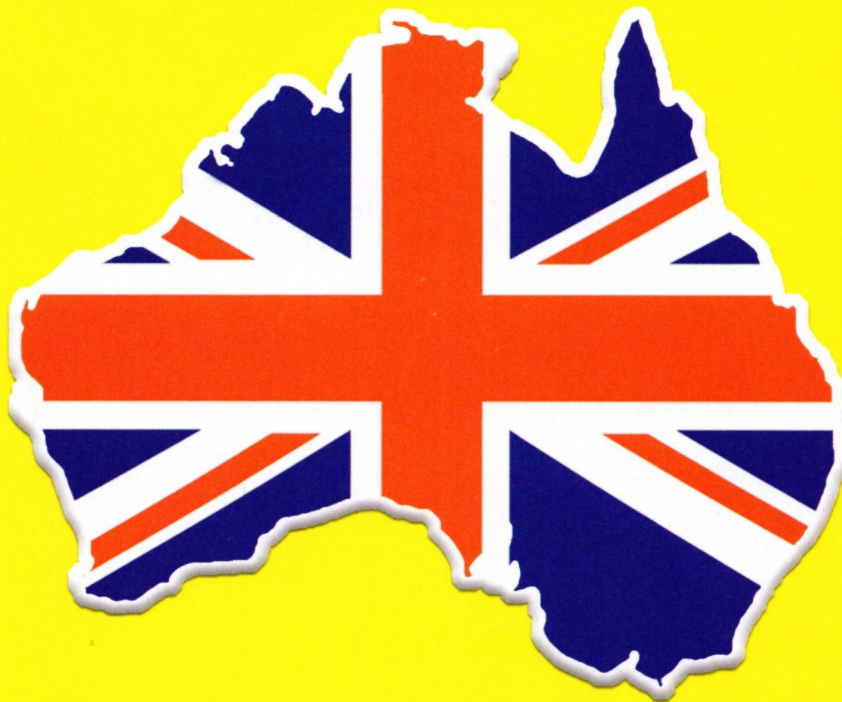


Yeah, working out the time elapsed may look simple, but you'd be surprised...



Brain Training is way smarter than some fancy-pants neurologist. And that's a fact.

IF YOU LIKE THRASHING AUSSIES



YOU WILL LIKE

MARIOKART[®]
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Why is Mario Kart DS even more super than the legendary Super Mario Kart? Not because you get fired through cannons. Not because it has the most frantic finishes in history. But because it is Wi-Fi. Beat up to 3 Aussies, or any other earthlings, by just flicking a switch. Link up to Wi-Fi through your broadband connection or at our special hotspots in a town near you. Not only is Nintendo Wi-Fi dead simple, it's free. Happy thrashing!



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NINTENDO DS[™]

open up and play

Coming Soon

nintendo
Wi-Fi
connection

ETA MAY 2006

Metroid Prime Hunters

Samus gets suited and booted for her DS debut



Every console worth its salt has a decent shoot 'em up. Xbox has *Halo*, PS2 has *Killzone* and we have *Metroid*. While the latter hasn't sold nearly as well as it deserved to over the years, the latest incarnation on the mighty DS has all the ingredients necessary to buck that trend.

The *Metroid* series follows intergalactic bounty hunter Samus Aran and her attempts to rid the galaxy of those who would defy the Galactic Federation. The *Prime* offshoot of the 20-year-old *Metroid* franchise debuted on the GameCube in 2003 and there have been two of these spin-offs to date (with another promised for the Revolution). These recent games take the form of first-person adventures rather than the side-scrolling platformers more usually associated with the *Metroid* series, and as you might expect, *Metroid Prime Hunters* follows the *Prime*

"Hunters is the perfect example of how first-person shoot 'em ups can work on the DS"

trend, although the touch screen allows for controls that are more refined than ever.

Power At Your Fingertips

Hunters is the perfect example of how first-person shoot 'em ups can work on the DS. Players use the D-pad to move and strafe; the stylus is then used to turn and look up and down. A double tap on the 'movement' area of the touch screen makes you jump, while weapon changes come courtesy of specific icons on the touch screen. Where many other touch-screen control systems can feel a bit

clumsy, *Hunters*' is proof that a stylus can feel more natural than a regular controller.

Prime Time Online

Nintendo is pushing *Hunters* as the next big thing (after *Animal Crossing*, of course) to show off the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, so we know very little about the single-player aspect of the game. But fear not: there is a mode for lone gamers, and it's quite substantial if rumblings from the development team are to be believed.

While Nintendo would prefer to keep the single-player details under wraps, we can tell you what's planned for the multiplayer game. The story involves an advanced race called the Alimbics who have created a source of ultimate power. Naturally, every bounty hunter with half a brain sets off to find it, and so the scene is set for a deathmatch of epic proportions. As Samus Aran it's your job to get there first and make sure this power doesn't fall into the hands of those who would misuse it.

The multiplayer hurls you into the Alimbic homeworld with a bunch of ruthless killers who each have their own special abilities and weaponry. A minimum of 25 multiplayer maps are promised, along with seven bounty hunters to play as. And as if the odds weren't stacked highly enough against you already, each area will also have cunning defence systems designed to protect the Alimbic power from unworthy opponents.

Can't wait for *Hunters* on DS? Subscribe to **Official Nintendo Magazine** now and get a free copy of *Metroid Prime 2* on GameCube – see page 78 for details. +

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

Developer NSTC has created some impressive graphics on the DS, and the touch-screen control system is coming together a treat. At this stage, however, we know very little about *Hunters*' single-player mode. If NSTC can deliver in that department and give us a ton of multiplayer options too, we'll be very happy hunters.

↑ She wants to be careful where she's pointing that thing. She'll have someone's eye out.



GAME INFO

- Format DS
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer NSTC
- Multiplayer 1-4
- Wi-Fi Yes



Other bounty hunters aren't your only concern – each level has its own defences to take care of.



You just know that a dome like this isn't as empty as it seems. Tread carefully...



Kanden is a powerhouse but his lack of a proper secondary weapon is his Achilles' heel. Otherwise, the character line-up is pretty well-balanced.



Developer NSTC has little experience with the DS but *Hunters* really is pushing the hardware.



Fans of the *Prime* series will be familiar with the games' fantastic level design.



Aiming is a simple case of looking in the right direction by using the stylus.

FIGHT TO THE DEATH!

Exclusive details on four of Samus' toughest Hunter adversaries



Noxus

This mysterious creature is the closest thing Samus has to an ally in *Hunters*. Although he'll slice 'n' dice her in a heartbeat, he's actually a pillar of justice. He roams the galaxy bringing villains to their rightful end, although his desire for the 'ultimate power' draws him uncontrollably to the Alimbic homeworld.



Spire

This silicon and rock-based creature can roll up into a spiked ball and charge at his enemies. As the only surviving member of the Diamont race he is on a constant quest to discover the fate of his ancestors... as well as make a quick buck along the way. The Alimbic homeworld is a potential Diamont resting place.



Kanden

This mechanised hulk is the result of a botched lab experiment. He was intended to be the ultimate soldier, but a miscalculation created an uncontrollable, unpredictable and deadly being. Enhanced in every way, shape and form, Kanden is the most feared of the bounty hunters.



Weavel

While this Hunter resembles a humanoid, it is in fact a robot that can split itself in two (although there's a human brain in there somewhere). The lower half remains stationary and becomes an automated gun turret while the upper half can float around acting as a scout. Well, a scout with a metre-long scythe, that is...



The HUD (head-up display) changes depending on which character you decide to play as in the multiplayer game.

Coming Soon

ETA MARCH 2006

Sonic Riders

Will the hedgehog's new racer have you hooked or just board stupid?



Before Sega stopped making consoles, Sonic the Hedgehog sat snugly alongside Mario: the yin to Mario's yang, a 2D platforming hero offering bags of invention and post-vindaloo mph. Yet while Nintendo has pushed Mario to even greater heights – incredibly, making him even better in 3D – Sonic has lost his way slightly, merely looking better in the third dimension, but not really playing better. Could his next attempt in the 3D world buck the trend?

Up In The Air

We're not doubting this crazy-paced marriage of *SSX* and *Mario Kart*, of course. But the question many gamers will be asking is, "why the hell is Sonic – the fastest videogame character ever created – strapped to a flippin' hoverboard?" This is a hedgehog, remember, who built his reputation on clocking three-figure speeds using just his pins – hell, a character whose gaming formula demands that he belt around using only the power of his little blue legs.

Unfortunately, *Sonic Riders* can only offer an instantly forgettable genero-story involving

"All the gameplay is tinged with Sonic's face-rearranging speed"

an Eggman-sponsored board-riding compo by way of justification, leaving you with a simple choice: you either walk away, disappointed at Sega for once again veering off uncontrollably from what made the *Sonic* games so magical in the first place (the heavily armed *Shadow The Hedgehog* being the last universe-crumbling offering), or you dip your toe in and see what happens. Let's go for the latter.



GAME INFO

- Format GameCube
- Publisher Sega
- Developer Sega
- Multiplayer 1-4



You'll rack up insane speeds. Whatever it's measured in you're doing 181 of them here.



Off The Rails

Calling *Sonic Riders* a 'boarding game' wouldn't be fair, as there are three forms of transport (referred to as 'gears' in the game) to whizz around on. Sonic gets a hoverboard but there are also bikes and skates, each offering different ways to approach levels, with each character specialising in one of the three. In return, levels offer varied areas for each type of gear. Skates let you grind rails that lead to shortcuts, while bikes offer sheer power, smashing through walls that the other gears can't. The flying ability of the boards offers the most fun, throwing you into the clouds and secret areas a hundred storeys up. It's simple stuff, but it means gameplay varies from character to character.

Races are a blur of effects, corner-taking and rings, and an experience you only really start to get the most out of once you've committed the tracks to memory. Mastering your gear type will only get you so far; you



It wouldn't be a *Sonic* game without rings, and now they're shinier than ever.



You could try to psyche out your rival. Or just punch him.

also have to throw punches, use currents (see 'Air Supply') and employ a *Mario Kart*-style powerslide – all mixed in with Sonic's patented brand of face-rearranging speed and occasional all-out confusion.

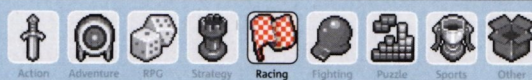
A Close Second?

There are 16 gorgeous tracks backed up by a multitude of modes, including story, time trial and free ride in single-player, and a four-player multiplayer that mirrors *Mario Kart*'s classic versus mode without really capturing the tension of belting down the last straight on Wario Stadium in *MK64*.

In fact, that's likely to be *Sonic Riders*' biggest problem: it's put together nicely, it whizzes by at a stunning pace and it's decent in multiplayer... but how can it possibly stand a chance against the almighty *Mario Kart*? Time, and Sega's skill, will tell. +

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

It certainly looks the business and there are some good ideas at work here, but *Sonic Riders* doesn't look set to deliver the taut, balanced, tactical battling of *Mario Kart*. That said, there are plenty of Sonic and Sega fans out there who have been dying for a *Mario Kart* style game with Sega characters, so if you're willing to sacrifice a bit (or perhaps a lot) of gameplay for the relevant character line-up you're in for a treat.



AIR SUPPLY

If you start hogging (ahem) other boarders' air you'll speed up significantly. Your character becomes harder to control, but the rewards are worth the effort...



Up...

Alright, we're on! This half-pipe-style current should help you if, like us, you're languishing in last place (we just got distracted, we're not rubbish or anything). The game gives you an indication of what to do control-wise, but it's fairly simple stuff.



Up...

Even within the confines of the air current you have to watch out for objects like these cars that will stop you in your tracks. This can get a bit frustrating if you've really been making up ground, but practice makes perfect, eh?



And away!

Now we're clawing back some respect. Well, not much. But some. Keep half an eye on the top left bar for a Boost indicator – once it flashes up, you can hit B and get an extra shunt that will leave your rivals eating dust. Well, air.



The cameraman who got this shot was either brave or stupid. Possibly both.



Although it's a hoverboard the moves should be familiar if you've played any skating games.



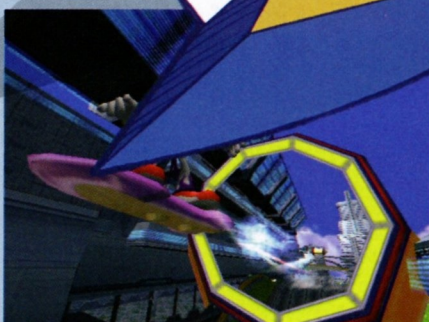
The 16 tracks have a variety of themes. This one looks pretty technological to us.



Finish first often enough and you'll win an ultra-rare Chaos Emerald. Funny that...



Stick close to your opponents and you can take advantage of their slipstream.



In keeping with the *Sonic* theme, there are ring-based tricks to pull off.



What's that? Too fast for you? Looks like you picked the wrong game. Move along.

No matter how speedy things get, there's never a hint of slowdown.

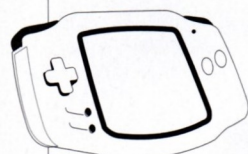




ETA MARCH 2006

Tales Of Phantasia

Find turn-based battles a turn-off? This might be the game for you...



Everyone who thinks that having to wait six months for the UK release of *Final Fantasy IV Advance* is a bit much should spare a thought for all the gamers who've been eagerly waiting for *Tales Of Phantasia* to come to these shores. This handheld remake of Namco's classic SNES role-playing game was released in Japan nearly three years ago, for heaven's sake! Still, with these two classic adventures being released on GBA in the space of six months, you could nod your head and mutter that maybe – just this time – everything does come to those who wait.

“This goes against the grain with its unique battle system”

Tales Of Phantasia is typical role-playing fare – Dark Knights destroy a village, two handsome young heroes swear to avenge their families and so on. Equally normally, you'll be using experience points to level up your characters. But here's where similarities end, for *Tales Of Phantasia* goes against the grain with its unique battle system that turns its back on the conventions of so many turn-based battlers like *Final Fantasy*.

Instead, the fights play out more like a side-scrolling beat 'em up as you directly control young swordsman Cress, the leader of the

group. Instead of waiting for your turn, you run up to enemies and get stuck in with special moves and spells. Meanwhile, two computer-controlled fighters back you up, smashing the enemy with their own spells.

If this is all sounding a bit too much like an action game with spells and experience points, don't worry. There's plenty of strategy involved and your success depends more on choosing the right players and giving them sensible orders than simply bashing buttons. Before the battle starts you'll have to select your formation, tell your party where to focus their attacks and let them know whether they should use magic or not. Once in battle you can give extra orders on the fly, perhaps telling people to use a certain spell or to heal.

To heal your troops you might have to learn how to cook. Of course, many role-players feature cooking these days, but back in 1995, when *Tales Of Phantasia* was released on the SNES, it was a real innovation. On your trek through villages, caves, fortresses and forests, you'll find many rare ingredients; collect and combine them and you can make restorative meals and potions.

Admittedly, *Tales Of Phantasia* looks kind of old but while adventures like the GameCube's *Tales Of Symphonia* highlight how things have moved on, there's nothing stale about the fun left in this ten-year-old game. +

Who will cook?		
4/25	★:Cooking Level	
Hamburge		
Rice Bal		
????????	★★★★★	★★★★★
Quiche		
????????	★★★★★	★★★★★
Cheese B		
French T	★★★★★	★★★★★

Wonder if the rule 'whoever cooks doesn't have to wash up' applies here?

MP			TP			ENEMY		
Cress	1071	96	Cress	1071	96	Giant Bat 2		
Mint	1026	169	Mint	1026	169			
Claus	1078	148	Claus	1078	148			
Arche	728	148	Arche	728	148			

You can tell your team which spells to fire off in the middle of a battle.

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

Like *Final Fantasy IV*, *Tales Of Phantasia* is looking a little dated next to modern role players like *Golden Sun* and *Fire Emblem*. The story is also clichéd, but with the battle system injecting some adrenalin into this epic adventure it should be worth playing. If you're normally put off games like this by the slow-moving, turn-based battles, *Tales Of Phantasia* will be an eye-opener.

MP			TP			ENEMY		
Cress	1256	118	Cress	1256	118	Caveman	4	
Mint	1026	176	Mint	1026	176			
Claus	1078	148	Claus	1078	148			
Arche	728	148	Arche	728	148			

Cress charges into battle. There's no sitting around waiting for your turn here.



Captain
“The fee is 80 Gald per person for passage, food, and insurance.”

Cress was out hunting when the dark knights attacked. Now he has to find them.



The knights were searching for a gem which they hope will wake an evil sorcerer.



Milard
“I hope you'll continue taking good care of him, you two.”

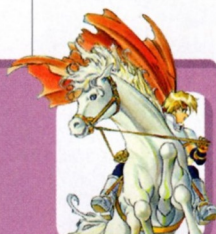
You'd better ensure no one dies in battle or Milard will be kind of peeved.



The graphics have been tweaked slightly for this GBA port of the SNES original.

MP			TP			ENEMY		
Cress	1369	108	Cress	1369	108	Giant Bat 3		
Mint	1026	176	Mint	1026	176			
Claus	1078	148	Claus	1078	148			
Arche	728	148	Arche	728	148			

Blue hair, silly hats – this is certainly following the game fashion rulebook.



GAME INFO

- Format GBA
- Publisher Nintendo
- Developer Namco
- Multiplayer No

3+

www.pegi.info

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MARIO PARTY 7



Feature

“Nintendo wants you to tap games and stroke them, to doodle with a pencil or shout encouragement to your on-screen character”



NEW WAYS TO Play

Have you ever learned to drive? You'll be faced with an array of switches and pedals, buttons and levers.

There are contradictory rules – keep your hands on the wheel but change gear, keep your eyes on the road but check your mirrors. And only by sticking with it hour after hour can you go on your first journey, which is all you ever wanted in the first place.



Until 2005, that was gaming. Those who'd mastered the buttons and levers were the boy racers; everyone else was forever stuck in the car park, watching the rest zoom off to exciting new places. Then,

last year, Nintendo ditched the driving test. Deciding that controllers are excluding more people than they're accepting, the company has simply done away with them. Nintendo wants you to tap games and stroke them, to doodle with a pencil or shout encouragement that'll affect the mood of your character. Nintendo wants you to jump and lean, to swoop your hand in a dramatic gesture that's replayed on your TV screen. Controller? What controller? You're just making things happen.



In Japan, it's this new way of thinking that's behind the viral spread of the DS. People who touch one want one. Young and old succumb in equal measures, men and women too; 14.5 million sales and counting for the little console you push and prod and whisper to. But that's just the start. There's a Revolution coming and anyone who knows how to watch TV is going to be part of it... →





Not only does *The Rub Rabbits!* use both screens and the stylus, you even have to tilt your DS.

→ If you've had a DS for a while now, it's easy to forget how radical it is. If you've still not laid hands on one, it's hard to think about anything else. It's got two screens. You play it with a plastic pencil. If no-one's watching, you can talk to it, and it'll *listen*. In fact, it's so chatty it might even talk to other DSes when you're not around, swapping notes and presents with other machines. It'll let you share your games with your friends, so you can play together or apart. Its most famous game is *Nintendogs*, which lets you keep a virtual pet puppy, but the real pet is the DS itself. It likes getting stroked, knows your voice, brings you presents and helps you make friends. There really has never been anything like it.



And, at first, that was a bit of a problem. No-one knew quite what to make of this strange machine. Surely it was all a

bit of a gimmick? The GBA SP was pretty close to portable gaming perfection – good-looking, great games, decent battery. Had Nintendo just been flummoxed by the task of coming up with a new version? Was the DS the result of it trying to reinvent the wheel, and instead coming up with a mini-Frankenstein's monster?



It was hard for anyone to imagine what sort of game could take advantage of all those different capabilities: dual-screen, touch-screen, Wi-Fi, voice-controlled portable gaming. Maybe an online wargame where you play a B-52 bombardier watching a map in the top screen while you wipe the sweat of his visor in the bottom screen and call out instructions to his pilot over Wi-Fi? Surely not. But, as we got our hands on the first few games, it suddenly became clear what the DS was all about: it wasn't just about new sorts of game – it was about new ways to play them.



What makes the DS so radical isn't that it crams lots of new types of technology into one chunky little case. It's the fact that the games designed for it can pick



Resident Evil 4 proved to be an awesome feat of gaming on the GameCube.

and choose which of those bits of technology they need to take advantage of. So some games need two screens, some need the stylus. Some were made to use Wi-Fi, some wouldn't make sense without the mic. Different types of games, but all sharing one thing in common: the way you play.



The DS lets you get right in there. The touch screen means you're physically connected to the game world. See something you don't like? Give it a poke. See something you do? Give it a tickle. Anything from the simplest join-the-dots puzzle to the most elaborate FPS becomes instantly accessible and rewarding. Wi-Fi means that playing

"It was hard to imagine what sort of game could take advantage of the DS's unique capabilities"



Reaching Out

It's little wonder that Nintendo picked 'Touch!' as the motto for the DS. Of all the machine's capabilities, it's the touch screen that has done the most to change the way people play. Being able to touch what you see makes gaming totally instinctive. Sometimes the effect it has is subtle – messing with the menus in *Meteos*, for example, is just a bit of idle fun. Other times it's the whole essence of the game. *Trauma Center: Under The Knife* puts you in the role of a doctor, plucking shards of glass out of wounds, suturing cuts and swabbing them with antiseptic, all while you keep an eye on those vital signs. It's an amazingly absorbing game, and it's hard to imagine it working without the touch screen.



But although we're getting used to being able to select and move things with ease via the stylus, its real sophistication is only just beginning to be apparent. It has huge creative potential: in *Pac-Pix* you draw your own Pac-Man in the game, but imagine if that was extended to a whole RPG, where you could design all your own characters. And don't forget that the stylus also doubles as a full analogue input, making full-scale FPS games like the long-awaited *Metroid Prime Hunters* possible for the first time on a handheld. As precise as a mouse, as comfortable as a joypad and about as high-tech as a pencil, the stylus makes possible dozens of new kinds of games.



The ubiquitous first-person shooter is about to successfully land on the DS in the shape of *Metroid Prime Hunters*. The stylus offers mouse-style control and a precision previously unavailable on handheld systems.



Trauma Center is one of those DS titles that you simply can't imagine seeing on any other games console. The stylus is the perfect substitute for a scalpel, swab or any other implement and the controls are instinctive.



Twilight Princess promises to showcase the GameCube and Revolution.

together isn't something you have to plan any more – whether you're on your own or surrounded by friends, you're never more than a minute away from some serious competition. Or, of course, some not-so-serious conversation, courtesy of *Pictochat*.



The thinking behind this strange machine, it turned out, was far from strange. Games, Nintendo reckoned, were getting too complicated to make and too complicated to play. Development teams were working for years to make something it would take you months to master. Which is perfect for a new *Zelda* or *Resident Evil*, but not so great for when you want to play for

half an hour before heading for bed, or when you need to kill a long train journey. Nintendo wanted to change the rules, to create a new games console that let developers make games more spontaneously, rather than having to spend years planning. And it thought that there might be quite a few people who might fancy playing those kinds of games: games with new ideas, and new looks, which they could get to grips with quickly – really quickly – thanks to that touch screen.



And Nintendo was right. Developers love working with the DS because they can come up with totally new ideas that no-one would have let them make before. Had you ever tried to woo a girl by sipping up goldfish before you'd played *Project Rub*? Karate-chopped vegetables before you'd played *WarioWare: Touched*? And Nintendo was right that quite a few people might like to join in. The DS has sold over 14.5 million units worldwide, making it the fastest-selling console ever in Japan, just as it was when it launched in the UK. Furthermore, in Japan, where the DS has had a few months' head-start on the rest of the world, it's become

“The thinking behind the DS was that Nintendo reckoned games were too complicated to play”

routine for eight out of the top ten videogames in the charts to be DS titles.



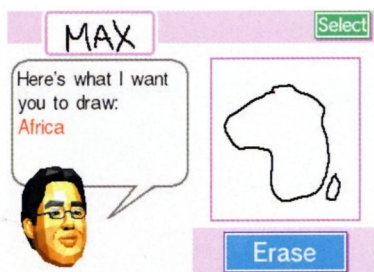
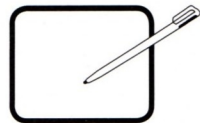
And it's not just hardcore game fans who have brought it this success. Nearly half the players of *Nintendogs* are female, and games like *Brain Exercise* (soon to be released here as *Brain Training*) have proved hugely popular among older and very young gamers. The reason for their success? Word of mouth – or rather touch of hand. People are instantly curious when they see a DS, and once they're given a go, are nearly always instantly converted.



And it's this factor that makes the DS a little bit scary. In the beginning, you had a few thousand DS fans around the world giving curious friends or family members a shot of *Mario* or *Meteos*. And that produced another few thousand DS fans, giving their



The bongo peripheral isn't limited to *Donkey Konga*, as even platformers can be controlled with drumming.



Esoteric titles like the *Brain Training* games have been massively successful in Japan, and that popularity looks to be repeated in the UK.

High Wire

A year ago, Nintendo barely supported online gaming, reckoning that it was still too cumbersome and expensive to be much use to anyone. Then came the DS, and *Mario Kart*, and in a matter of days the DS became the most successful online console in the world. Nearly half the people who bought *Mario Kart* in the US played it online, courtesy of the free Wi-Fi access points Nintendo had set up in places like McDonald's. Nintendo had promised that when it did go online, it would be simple, enjoyable and free, and it's delivered.



Wi-Fi means that you're never short of an opponent for a quick blast of *Mario Kart*. Wherever you are in the world – wherever your friends are in the world – you can keep your rivalries alive. Or, if racing isn't your thing, *Tony Hawk's American Sk8land* lets you fight your way to the top of the international leaderboard, or show off your custom board art. Then again, if you're not in the mood for competition, the unique *Animal Crossing: Wild World* allows you to visit your friends for a quick chat, a fashion show or a spot of fishing as you wander round each other's virtual villages. Wi-Fi means that the DS is as much about communication as competition, and the potential for new kinds of games is huge, whether it's massively multiplayer adventures that require co-operation or cut-throat global war games.



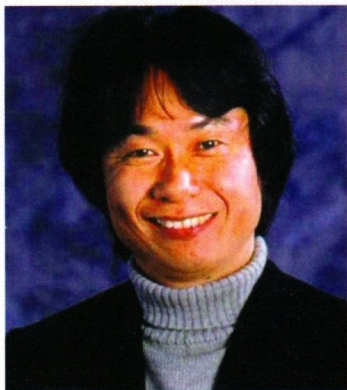
Mario Kart DS proved that Nintendo was committed to accessible online gaming.



Stunning graphics and that Wi-Fi playability have made *American Sk8land* a hit.



Wild World has the potential to be the most popular online game ever.



Shigeru Miyamoto has probably had more clever ideas than Edison, Einstein and Dyson combined.

→ friends a go on *Wario* or *Yoshi: Touch & Go*. But now you have 14.5 million DS owners out there, showing off *Nintendogs* to their bosses and teachers, younger brothers and ancient grandparents. It could be an epidemic.

□ But if the DS wasn't quite what anyone expected, it shouldn't have been a complete surprise either. Nintendo may be one of the most familiar names in gaming, but it has a tradition of innovation which is hard to beat. Think about almost anything you associate with gaming today and it's a fair bet that you have Nintendo to thank for it. From the humble D-pad to the whole hog of making games work in 3D, and from complex ideas like downloadable content to the common sense of sticking four controller ports on the front of a console, the company has been reinventing gaming for nearly as long as it's been invented.

So you could say that the DS is just the latest in a long line of bold ideas – another exhibit in Nintendo's museum of interesting concepts. But that would be missing the point. The DS isn't a one-off. It was a test-case to prove that Nintendo's new ideas would work. Because if they did – and they have – Nintendo was ready to start a gaming revolution.

□ What the DS proved is that the old idea that people want super-realistic games and super-expensive consoles doesn't hold water. It proved that what people like is games they can connect with. New games, old games, weird games, sensible games... it doesn't seem to matter so long as people can reach out and touch them. And the DS's success means that Nintendo has been able to move forward with the next stage in its plan to revolutionise the way we play. And for that task it has another new piece of hardware in mind: a brand new console, controlled by nothing grander than a TV remote.

□ Admittedly, it's a very sleek looking TV remote, and it comes in a very cool

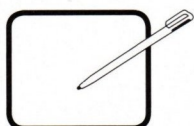


The Revolution controller essentially turns your TV into one giant touch screen.

range of colours, but that's still what Nintendo's revolutionary device is modelled on. It's hardly the most inspiring vision of the future you could imagine, but there are two very smart reasons for the Revolution's controller design. The first is that the TV remote is probably the single most often used piece of technology in the world. The second is that it is a TV remote – it's just that it controls what happens on your TV rather than just tuning you into a channel.

□ Nintendo won't be unveiling its new console and its innovative controller until later in the year, but we've already had the chance to fly over to Japan →

"The DS proved that what people wanted was games that they could connect with"



Twin Peeks

Two screens – twice as good or a doubly dumb idea? This was the most controversial aspect of the DS when it was announced, but it's established itself as one of the freshest ideas in gaming. At its simplest level it lets you clear one screen of clutter – health bars and icons can be relegated to the extra screen, letting you see the action in all its glory. *Mario Kart DS* is the perfect example, with the lower map screen enabling you to keep track of your position while you soak up the 3D of the race.

□ But, this being the DS, other games take it further. In *Another Code* you have to use the screens cleverly to solve puzzles: close the DS and you can make an imprint of an item on the top screen and save it for your investigation. In *Mario & Luigi: Partners In Time* the screens show you two perspectives on the same scene, giving you another take on the action.



Mario Kart has led the way in using both screens to their full potential. The race action gets a clear run on the top screen while the bottom one tells you where your enemies and the pickups are in relation to your position.



Plenty of lateral thinking is required to get through *Another Code*, which uses all the known functions of the DS and then some. The best is when you make an 'imprint' of an item by closing the machine mid-game.



You can be the watcher or be watched in *Mario & Luigi: Partners In Time*. The game ingeniously presents two perspectives on the same scene, so you get twice as much action. Now that's value for money!



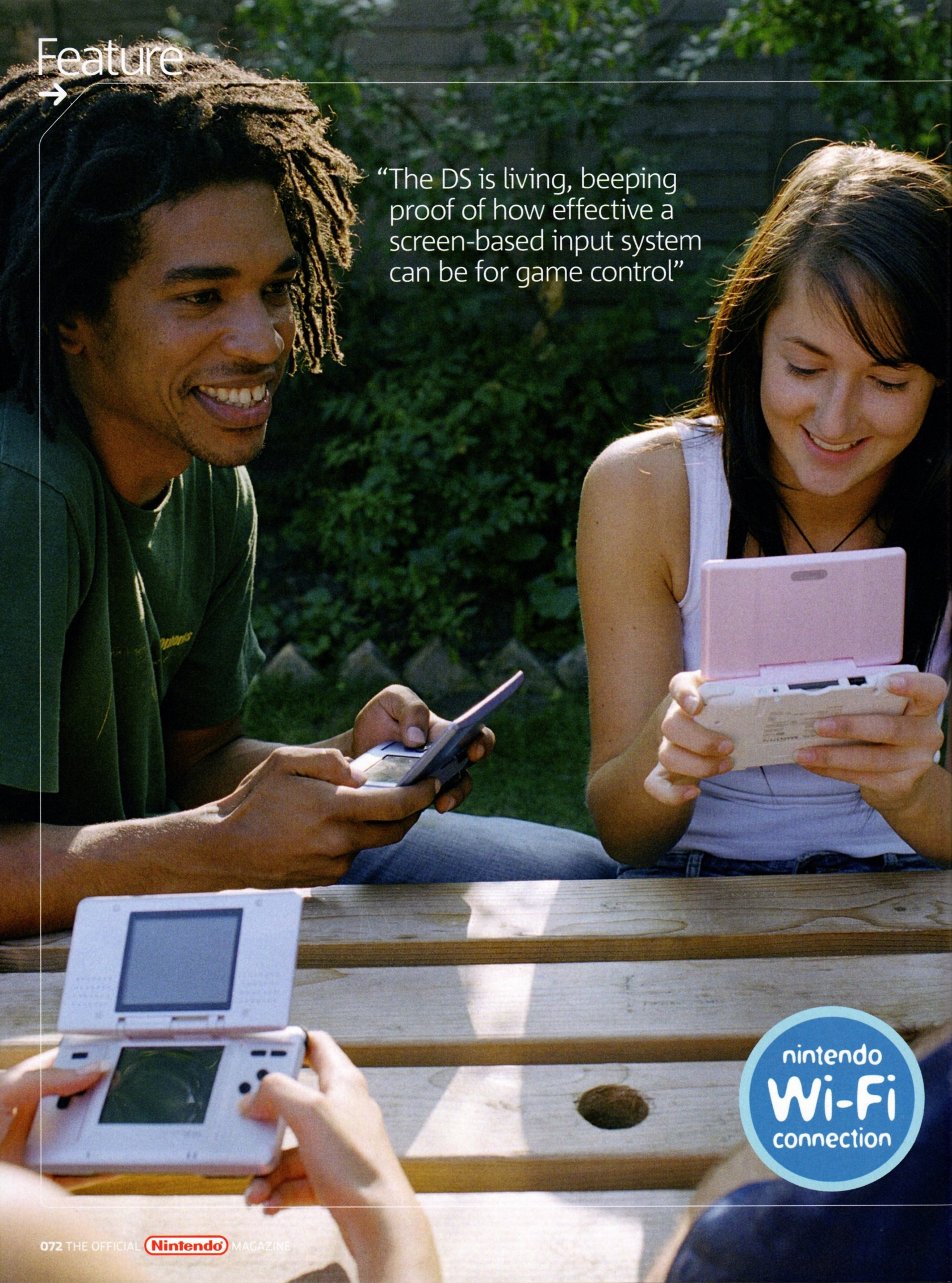
Nobody would have predicted it two years ago, but Nintendo is holding true to its promise: it really is expanding the market. A huge percentage of people who bought *Nintendogs* had never owned a games console of any kind before.

“Nintendo may be one of the most familiar names in gaming but it’s got a tradition of innovation that’s hard to beat”





“The DS is living, beeping proof of how effective a screen-based input system can be for game control”



Over the years, cynics have slated Nintendo for not embracing online gaming when it's actually one of the pioneers. With the DS, Nintendo has entered the online arena on its own terms, and has provided a simple and free service.

→ for a guided tour of the new technology from no less than Shigeru Miyamoto. It's a big moment. Or, at least, it should be. Miyamoto hands over a Revolution controller and guides us over to a TV which is showing the simplest game you can imagine. Nintendo isn't revealing any full games to the public yet, so all we're able to see are some tech demos to show off what the Freehand controller can do.

So what we're looking at is nothing more impressive than a few squares swarming round the screen. We point the controller at the TV and one of them explodes. We take aim, and bang goes another. And then someone grabs another controller and suddenly we're competing to take out these incredibly simplistic targets, jostling and laughing as we do. And with that, the big moment dissolves into a little moment. Once it's in your hand, it's impossible not to take the Revolution controller for granted. It may be packed with cutting-edge components, but once you're playing around with it you couldn't care less. It just turns into a handful of pure, effortless fun.

"Once it's in your hand, it's impossible not to take the Revolution controller for granted"

Shaped to nestle over the crook of your finger, the Freehand – as it's known – is light and comfortable to hold. Point it at the TV and the first of its capabilities become clear. Like an invisible laser-pointer, it lets you trail a cursor over the screen. The gentlest flick of your wrist will send it dancing from one side to the other, mirroring your moves with perfect precision. It's hard to shake the impulse – just like when you're holding a sparkler – to write your name with it. And this alone would be something of a gaming revolution.

The DS is living, beeping proof of how effective a screen-based input system can be for game control. With the Revolution you'll be able to use the controller for targeting, manoeuvring – even just getting round menus – with a kind of flexibility and ease that no joystick has ever offered. And, while

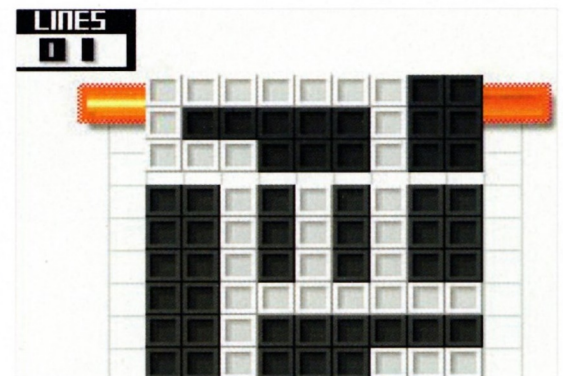


Bomberman's timeless multiplayer fun has been updated for wireless play.

A Perfect Investment

Probably the most social aspect of the DS is game sharing. The local wireless connection means that you can always connect to other players nearby without the need for a Wi-Fi access point. This means that if you all have the same game you can embark on some serious multiplayer matches, but even if you don't, the DS's game sharing function ensures that you can beam your favourite game to other players and each get a taste of what the other is playing. Often these have to be slightly cut-down versions of the full game, but that doesn't seem to reduce the enjoyment. Trading mines as you race through *Yoshi: Touch & Go* with a friend is more exhilarating than playing alone. Other titles, like *Bomberman*, only come into their own once you beam to other DS owners (up to seven of them) and start to wage frantic, unpredictable and hilarious war on each other.

Not that the feature is just limited to multiplayer matches. Some games, like the hypnotic puzzler *Polarium*, give you the chance to beam a demo to a friend, which they can then keep for as long as their DS is on standby. It's an essential part of the DS's viral charm, making sure that word spreads about interesting new games as fast as it spreads about the machine itself. And, as a plus, turning up with the game everyone else wants to play is an easy way to guarantee being the most popular person in the room.



Got Polarium? Like it? Why not send a demo of the game to your friend's DS so they can try it too?

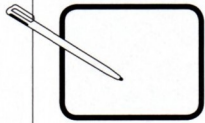


Yoshi: Touch & Go gets even better when you rope in a mate to play too.

Feature



“You don’t have to translate what’s on screen into abstract button presses – what you see is what you do”



Touch The Future...

It's all well and good reading about the Freehand, but how about holding one? Turn to page 131...



Sure, it looks a bit like a TV remote control, but this little gadget is far more powerful than that.



What better way to learn about the birds and the bees than with a stylus?

→ you immediately think of the kind of complex strategy games that would benefit from that form of input, or perhaps the lightgun-style shooting games which would be the better for its speed and accuracy, Miyamoto-san is ready with another demo to show there's more to it.



Kuru Kuru Kururin, as well as being one of the GBA's best early titles, was also without question the most raw stress ever squeezed onto a two-inch circuit board. Guiding your tiny duck-plank craft through narrow corridors and past rotating doors can hurt your brain badly enough to give it grounds to sue you. But take that game and add the



Revolution controller and suddenly everything becomes easy as pie. Simply wave the cursor over your craft to activate it, and from then on it will go where you point. You still need a steady hand, but suddenly your brain is under less strain because it doesn't have to translate what it sees on screen to abstract button presses under your thumbs. What you see is what you do, and what you do is what you see next. Although, of course, in one respect that only makes the *Kuru* stress worse, since you now really do have no-one to blame but yourself when it all goes horribly wrong.



But this is only the beginning of the Revolution's implications. As well as acting as a pointer, it can also sense movement. Imagine flying a toy plane, holding it in your hand as you take it through the swoops and turns of its pretend flight path. Actually, don't imagine it, because Miyamoto-san has organised it so you can do it for real...



Handing back the controller, he loads a demo which runs in the sunny square of *Mario Sunshine*'s Delfino Plaza.

Suddenly we're in control of a biplane, looping and diving around familiar streets. There is no control scheme: the controller is the plane. It's a subtle, sensitive flight sim, but you don't need a manual or years of gaming experience to be any good at it. All you need is, at some point in your life, to have been five years old.



But although these demos are enormously entertaining, they don't tell us a lot about what Revolution games will actually be like. What happens when you take this potential and put it into something more substantial? The best clue comes from a basic basketball game. Mimicking real-world sports is something gaming has been doing for decades, but the Revolution version is rather different. A Revolution basketball court has no players, just a ball the size of a space hopper and two tempting baskets. One button on the



Mario Basketball 3 On 3 uses this stylus to bounce the ball. The Revolution demo ran along similar lines.

"A Revolution basketball court has no players, just a ball the size of a space hopper and two baskets"

It's Good To Talk

Controlling things with your voice was always part of any self-respecting vision of the future. Voice-controlled computers, voice-controlled spaceships, voice-controlled doors... These may not have materialised yet, but the DS does bring you voice-controlled gaming – well, nearly. Thankfully, that doesn't mean having to bellow 'left a bit, right a bit, jump jump STOMP!' at Mario, since that would get tiring pretty quickly, but it does mean that the DS can learn to understand a few choice phrases which makes playing games more instinctive than they've ever been. So far it's *Nintendogs* that showcases this best, letting you pick your own commands for training your puppies. (Be careful, though – remember whatever words you choose you'll have to say in public if you expect little Tosker to play dead and fetch when you're out and about.) But let's not forget *Bomberman*, where being able to shout 'bomb!' to take out your opponents when your hands are full is a gaming joy.



And even if you're not talking to it, the DS is listening. Need to send a ship out to sea in the batty dating game *Project Rub?* Then blow into the microphone and it'll fill the boat's sails and send it on its way. It's the aspect of the DS that's most likely to embarrass you on the bus, but it's one of the most entertaining.

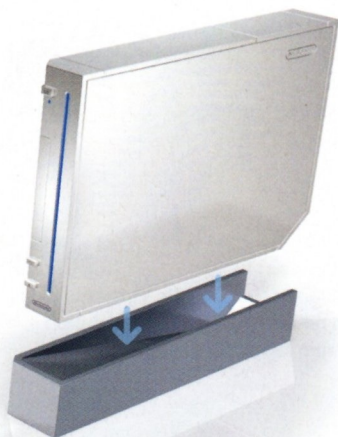


Some words of encouragement, a soapy sponge and he's happy.



Okay, so the DS isn't ready for dogs to use yet, but give it a few years and who knows...





This stand also acts as a power supply for the DVD-case sized Revolution hardware.

→ controller creates a dimple in the surface of the court. Make one next to the ball, and it will roll into it – drag the dimple round the court and the ball will follow it round. The other button pops up a bump into the court – make one under the ball and it'll pop into the air, and hopefully into the basket. It may look nothing like any basketball match we've ever seen, but head-to-head it's instant and absorbing fun, perfectly representing the pace and quick-thinking of the real thing.

□ And that, to be honest, would have done us. A home console version of the DS, brimming with new potential. But it wasn't enough for Nintendo. Because, on top of all the new tricks Revolution can offer, it can trump all the old ones too. Tucked in the base of the Freehand is an expansion port that allows it to be linked up to a secondary controller, complete with more buttons and a

good-quality analogue stick. And, all at once, the Revolution can do everything every other gaming platform can do. Used to playing on PC? Then this 'nun-chuck' configuration of the two controllers linked together, one in each hand, can do everything a mouse and keyboard can offer. Used to joypads with two analogue sticks? Then the Revolution gives you every bit as much control, and considerably more comfort while it's at it.

□ Actually, to be honest, that's a bit misleading. The Revolution can't match existing game controllers. Instead, it completely outclasses them. Because while it can match them function for function, it always has its tilt and depth sensors in reserve. And, for the moment at least, it's almost impossible to imagine how they could be used, since they have the power to truly revolutionise our interaction with game worlds.

□ We know a little about the games planned for the Revolution – a new version of *Animal Crossing*, an update of *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*, the next

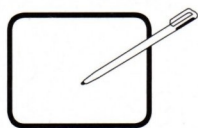


Ground-breaking and stylish too – the Revolution is looking good.

Super Smash Bros, an all-new *Mario* – but no matter how familiar you are with those games there's no way to predict how they'll be revolutionised. Think back to most people's best guess about DS games before the system was unveiled and you'll remember how off the mark most ideas were. But more than three quarters of Nintendo's vast army of developers are hard at work on DS and Revolution games, so expect to be amazed when they finally reveal the first titles.

□ For now, Revolution is still a code name. Nintendo is reserving the right to change it when it formally announces the console. We don't envy the

“The Revolution can't match existing controllers. Instead, it completely outclasses them”



Countdown To Revolution

Nintendo has been the driving force behind videogame revolutions for decades. Here's a brief history...

1980 – Game & Watch

A double first for Nintendo's early output. Gaming went mobile for the first time and later versions also included twin screens – a quarter century before the DS

1983 – D-pad

It's scary to think that without Nintendo we'd still be playing with wheels, joysticks and paddles. Game Boy inventor Gunpei Yokoi takes the credit for this innovation.

1983 – Microphone

It didn't make it into later models, but early versions of the controllers for Nintendo's first ever home console contained microphones with which you could control some games.



D-pad

1984 – R.O.B

Forget Robosapien, Nintendo's Robotic Operating Buddy – two decades earlier – could be controlled via the Famicom, and played an essential role in a handful of games.

1985 – Zapper

Lightguns had already found a home in the arcades, but Nintendo brought them into the home with the year's most desirable accessory.

1990 – Four Score

Hate playing alone? It's Nintendo who first realised how social gaming could be. This early NES multitap made it possible before four joystick ports came as standard.

1994 – Super Game Boy

Having invented gaming on the move, Nintendo brought it home again with this add-on for playing Game Boy games on your SNES. The granddaddy of the GBA Player.



Virtual Boy



e-Reader



R.O.B.

1995 – Satellaview

Incredibly ambitious, the Satellaview used a satellite network to broadcast games, tips and news to SNES players in Japan.

1995 – Virtual Boy

Before it tackled 3D on the N64, Nintendo tried to make it work for real with this funny looking tripod which let you see real three-dimensional images.

1996 – Analogue control

With the N64 Nintendo perfected this, giving the world the analogue stick, adjustable camera angles and the perfection that is *Super Mario 64*.

1997 – Rumble Pak

It's easy to take for granted now, but games that fought back were an innovation when Nintendo first unveiled its new N64 peripheral.

1998 – Game Boy Camera

Forget mobile phones – Nintendo took photography on the move

with the Game Boy Camera and printer, so you could shoot while you played.

2000 – Tilt control

WarioWare: Twisted! is nothing new. Five years earlier came the Game Boy Color's *Kirby's Tilt 'n' Tumble*, which had you rolling and flipping to victory

2001 – GameCube/GBA link-up

Whether designing shirts in *Animal Crossing* or hacking your way through *Four Swords Adventure*, playing GameCube games with a GBA was totally fresh.

2002 – e-Reader

It never quite took off, but only Nintendo – first founded as a playing card company – would have thought of storing games on bits of paper.

2003 – iQue

Just a few years on from the N64 and Nintendo had advanced enough to fit the whole console



Revolution might not be the final name but that is almost certainly the final size.

marketing chap in charge of coming up with potential new names one bit. What word could better sum up what this console is trying to do? It breaks nearly every rule of traditional console design. It fundamentally changes the nature of the games that can be made for it. And, once those games are made, the controller will fundamentally change the way we play them. And that combination means there's a very real chance that the console will fundamentally change the kind of people who play games in the first place. So what else can you possibly call a machine that does all that? It's hard to imagine anyone taking the Nintendo Sea Change seriously... +

inside its own controller, exclusively for the Chinese market

2004 - DS

Building on 25 years of innovation comes the DS, combining almost every Nintendo invention in one irresistible bit of gaming kit

2006 - Play-Yan

But Nintendo isn't done. Next comes the Play-Yan media player for the GBA, letting you take movies and music on the go, via an SD-card converter



DS

iQue



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And how the new DS Lite will help to drive the revolution...



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PREVIEWED ONIMUSHA: DAWN OF DREAMS **FAR CRY INSTINCTS: THE NEXT CHAPTER** EM ENCHANT ARM
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Reviews

Issue 01 March 2006

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Our ratings explained

0-19% Unplayable

A bad idea poorly implemented. Forget it, move on.

20-49% Poor

Restricted fun swimming in a sea of mediocrity.

50-69% Average

Good bits balanced by bad bits, although perhaps die-hard fans will get more out of it than general gamers.

70-84% Good

If you're prepared to take the rough with the smooth then there's plenty of entertainment here.

85-89% Excellent

A diamond in the rough. Only minor problems with design, difficulty or controls affect this game.

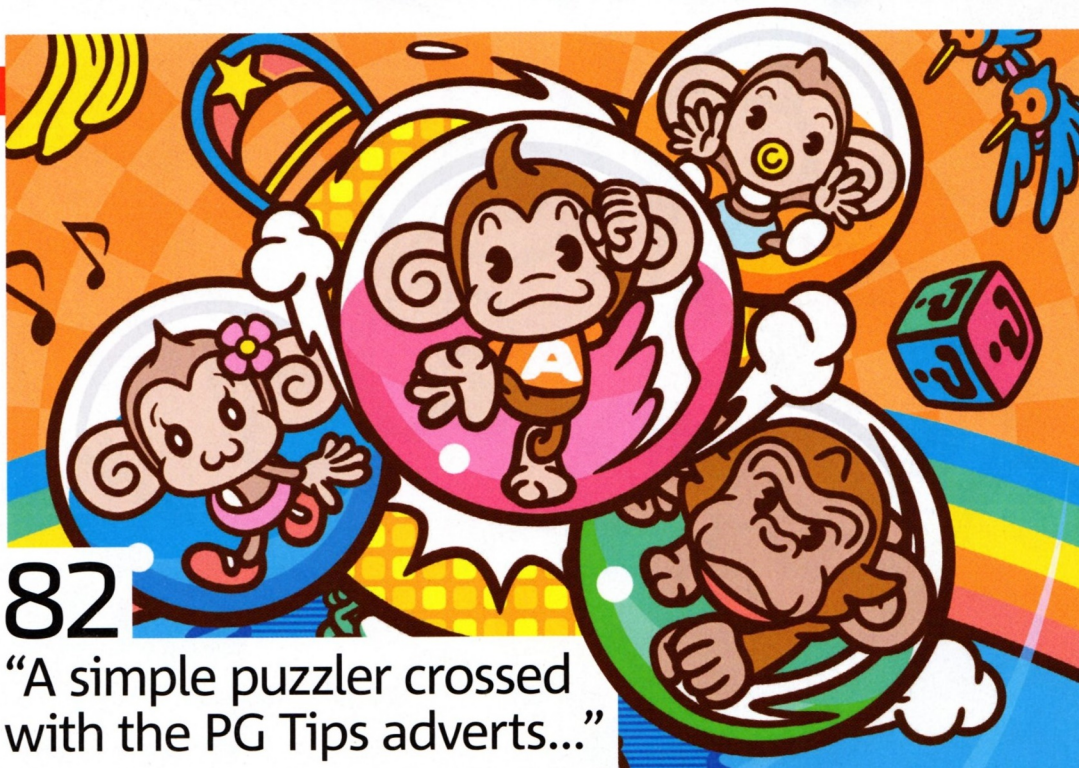
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82

"A simple puzzler crossed with the PG Tips adverts..."



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Steve Jarratt
Has been playing "Sega Casino" on the DS. A reckless disregard of my virtual fortune helped me break the bank in under a week!



Tim Weaver
Has been playing "Viewtiful Joe" on the GameCube, a game so full of mental, over-the-top visuals, it actually made my brain vomit."



Tom East
Has been playing "Tak: The Great Juju Challenge, a platformer that proved there's still fun to be had in even the oldest ideas."



Jes Bickham
Has been playing "Megaman" on the DS. You know what? I think that *The Matrix* might have stolen much of its virtuality plot from it."

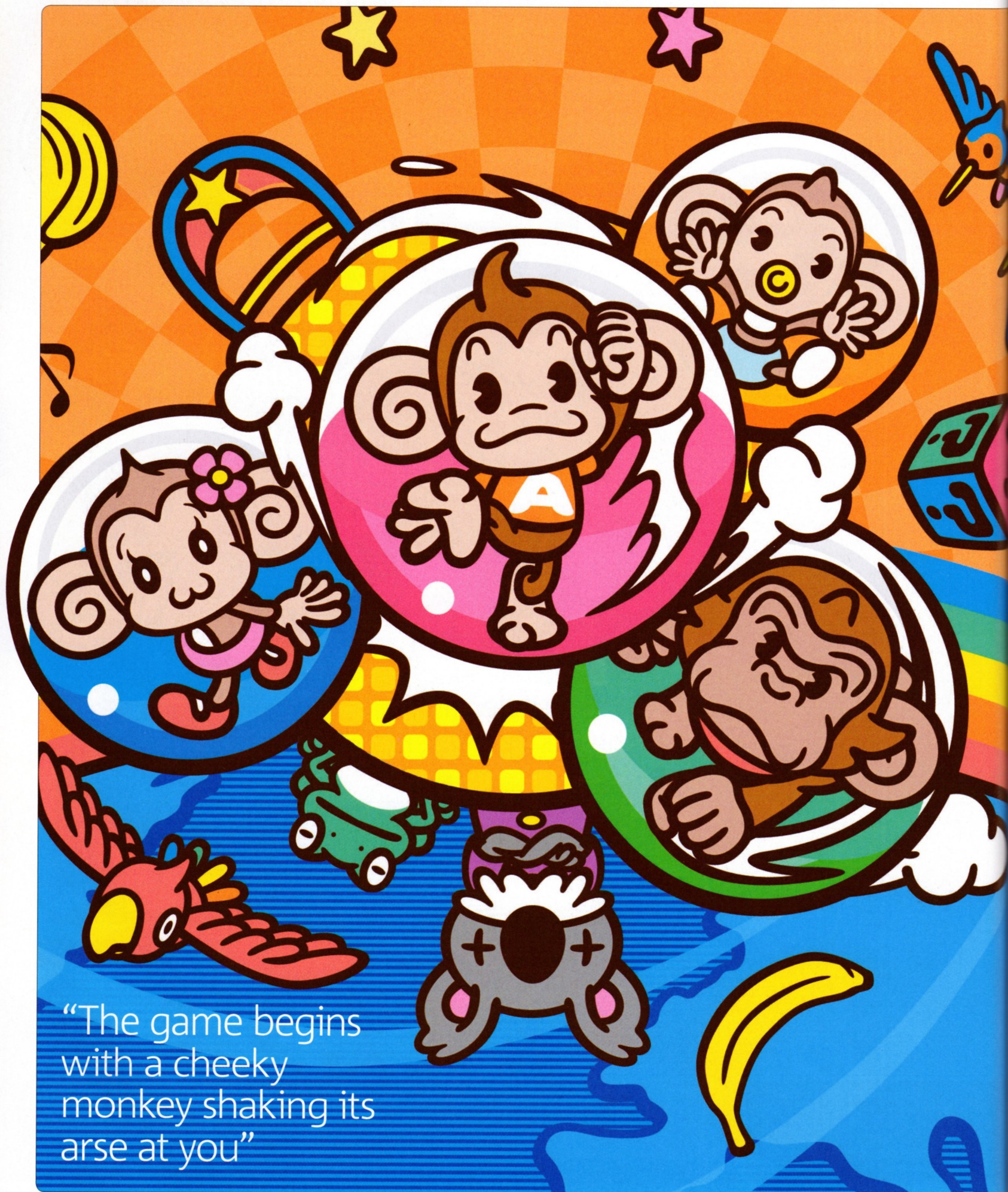


Mark Green
Has been playing "The Rub Rabbits!" on the DS. I now know that tenderly rubbing bruises are the quickest way to win true love."



Katherine Brice
Has been playing "Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll" on the DS, which increased my respect for all endangered simian species."

Review



"The game begins with a cheeky monkey shaking its arse at you"



Little monkeys have to get their momentum up to reach some bananas.



Each world has ten different stages. Lose all your lives and you have to start the world again.



Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll

Format DS Publisher Sega
Developer Sega Multiplayer 1-4
Wi-Fi No Release 17 February Price £29.99



Top screen Displays the game action so you need to keep your eyes firmly on it. Turn away for a second and your monkey will be rolling off into all sorts of trouble.

Touch screen If you choose to use the unique DS touch-screen controls you can stroke the ball on this screen to move your monkey. You also get a close up of his panic-stricken face.

SWINGING DOWN FROM THE FAMILY TREE...

Touch & Roll is the fourth *Super Monkey Ball* to grace a Nintendo console, following in the steps of two GameCube and one GBA incarnation. Each one was good enough to send you bananas...



Super Monkey Ball (GameCube)

The superbly original, er, original established the tone for the series and featured the excellent and hugely addictive Monkey Target.



Super Monkey Ball 2 (GameCube)

Delivering 100 new floors and twice as many mini-games, this sequel simply served up more of the same. And we loved it!



Super Monkey Ball Jr (GBA)

Simpler graphics as you'd expect, Jr came a little unstuck due to the unresponsive D-pad controls.



There's a bonus stage in every world which lets you stock up on bananas. For every ten bananas you collect, you get an extra life.

Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll

Monkeys sealed in balls? It'll never catch on...

Everyone thinks monkeys are cute, but that's if you ignore the fact they get their kicks out of murdering family members and slinging faeces. And everyone loves laughing at hamsters in those plastic balls too – especially when they smack headlong into walls. The stroke of genius on Sega's part was taking these two seemingly random fascinations and combining them into *Super Monkey Ball*. Mmmm... monkeys in balls. Brilliant.

The game even begins with a cheeky monkey shaking its arse at you and



imploing "Touch me!" Do as the monkey says and you enter the domain of *Super Monkey Ball* – a world so insane, even a comatose Buddhist monk on Prozac could only endure it for an hour at a time. By its hyperactive, ever-changing nature, it's a game that dishes up satisfaction and frustration in equal measures. On the DS, this love-it-then-hate-it split is intensified thanks to the unusual DS-specific control system.

Before we get into that though, a quick explanation for anyone who's missed the previous GameCube and GBA games. You control a monkey. It's trapped in a ball. Hence

Monkey Ball, see? Challenge mode makes up the majority of the game with you rolling the monkey through increasingly difficult stages that are filled with pitfalls, pratfalls and general hazards. Even when the dangers aren't as obvious as giant spikes, they're there in the form of a deceptive dip or awkward slope that'll topple, spin or flip you into the infinite drop that surrounds each level.

Secondary to this challenge mode are the mini-games – splendid little treats that are way too good to write off as merely distractions to the main game. The likes of *Monkey Golf* and *Bowling* are particularly addictive for anyone obsessed with topping the high score table.



Review Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll



MONKEY FALLOUT

From easy beginnings, *Super Monkey Ball's* challenge level ramps up to awesome complexity. No matter how hard though, you'll always go back for a second go...



The countdown on the bottom screen has a ten-second warning bell that strikes fear into the heart of every player.



Stages have got steps, slopes, narrow ledges and even things that smack into you. Not a safe place to roll a monkey marble.



Named Labyrinthine for obvious reasons, this brain-teaser relies on balance and maze-solving skills.



It seems simple but it's terrifyingly hard. Can you keep a ball on a bridge that rocks from side to side?



Reaching those goalposts is sweet relief like nothing you've ever felt before. Relax, little monkey. Breathe easy.



Moving platforms are particularly tricky to get past, especially with the dodgy camera.



Every time you think it's going well the tiniest bump will throw you way off course. Damn apes!



Stages are littered with weird slopes, angles and bumps that can trick you.

"The touch screen is home to a close-up of your monkey ball"

→ While this concept transfers perfectly into a handheld game, playing it can make you look a bit stupid. It's the nature of the game, you see, that immersive, precarious, don't-fall-off-the-edge game mechanic that tricks you into believing that it's you, not the monkey, who must lean. So you not only wiggle the DS around, you also physically lean towards the direction of motion. To anyone

watching you on a park bench or bus seat, you look like a freak with a raging inner ear infection. That's bad enough, but what really let the previous GBA version down was its taxing D-pad

control that sent your silly simian "wah-wah waaaah"-ing to his death time after time. It just didn't have the 3D precision of the GameCube's analogue stick.

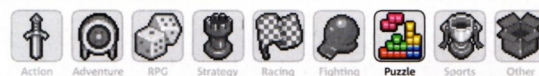
Touch & Roll

Since the DS is also lacking an analogue stick, Sega has come up with a touch-based control method in a bid to overcome this problem. With the action viewed on the top screen, the touch screen is home to a close-up of your monkey ball that you stroke with the stylus in the direction you want to tilt.

Although it's a clever idea, it's ultimately too unresponsive, requiring brain-freezing concentration and precision coaxing. Then there's the added problem that when you're looking at the top screen to balance your monkey on a millimetre-thick plank, the slightest wayward tap of the stylus can – and does – ruin everything. Luckily, there's still the option to use the D-pad in challenge mode but not all of the mini-games let you do this.



Of the six mini-games, two are brand new for the DS. Monkey Fight, Race, Bowling and Golf have already been on GameCube, although they're made quite different experiences by the touch-screen controls and the ability to play via Wi-Fi. Monkey Golf is the most suited to the DS – the fun crazy golfing has you physically flicking a swing-o-meter to determine how hard the ball is whacked. Monkey Fight suffers from not being compatible with the D-pad and the touch controls for it are just too tricky to persevere



MINI-MONKEYS

In addition to the main game, there are six mini-games – two of them new for the DS – that you can play either on your own or with up to four players. Monkey Race, Monkey Hockey and Monkey Wars let you share a single cart while the remaining three – Monkey Golf, Monkey Bowling and Monkey Fight – require one copy of the game per player. Even as single-player blasts, these mini-games are as much fun as the main game itself.



Monkey Race

Win the race but try not to go flying off the course and plunging to your doom! That's not always easy, especially when other characters are firing rockets at you.



Monkey Fight

Four monkeys with giant boxing gloves go head-to-head in a battle to push the others off the edge. Great on GameCube, the tricky controls make it half the fun here on DS.



Monkey Bowling

No surprises here – this is a faithful ten pin bowling sim. All bowling requires skill but there's something super-satisfying about scoring a strike with a monkey.



Monkey Hockey

Immediately addictive and superb against human opponents, this lets you play monkey style or the more traditional air hockey.



Monkey Wars

A fun but basic *Doom*-style shooting game. The computer intelligence is a bit dim, but against your friends this can turn into a real pulse-racer.



Monkey Golf

Our personal favourite, it's like a game of crazy golf in your pocket. It's as fun to beat your own high score as it is to play against friends.



In Monkey Race, the action is on the bottom screen and you drag the stylus to move.



The goalposts are in sight but it's not always that easy to reach them.

with for long. Out of the two new mini-games, Monkey Hockey is by far the best. A simple air hockey game, it lets you draw your own shape paddle on the screen before each match and win extra length to draw with.

The second game, Monkey Wars, is a sort of monkey first-person shooter deathmatch. You navigate various maps with the D-pad and stylus, tapping the screen to shoot while picking up different styles of bullets that do things like slow down or blow up your opponents. Against the computer it's extremely dull, but against friends it gets much better. And yes, regardless of who you play against, the controls are still too darn fiddly.

A Tricky Balance

Back to challenge mode and the good news is that it's nearly as good on DS as it is on the GameCube. Fifty new stages mean that even veteran players will want to check it out and, unlike the original *Super Monkey Ball*,

the 100+ levels have been sectioned into ten worlds so you can tackle them in bite-sized chunks. If you lose all your lives before the end of the world though, you have to do all those stages again from the start.

When you're trying to balance on a tilting platform and the camera is spinning off the wrong way, challenge does spill readily over into frustration but no matter how annoyed you get in the short term, it always keeps pulling you back for more.

When you reach stages that initially look impossible yet finally crack after numerous sweaty attempts, the satisfaction is immense and you can tell you're improving when the early levels you once found so difficult suddenly become easy.

And that's the magic of *Super Monkey Ball*. It might essentially be a very simple puzzle game crossed with a PG Tips advert, but it's unique and fun enough to make you pound your chest and roar like King Kong... trapped in a see-through golf ball. **✦ Katherine Brice**

"No matter how annoyed you get, the game keeps pulling you back for more"



Nintendo verdict

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

- Over 100 levels to navigate
- Multiplayer Monkey Golf – fantastic
- Monkeys are cuter than Nintendogs
- Touch-screen control doesn't work well
- Camera positioning works against you

Despite already being out on the GameCube and GBA, this DS version adds some fresh new ideas to the mix. It has problems with control but you still won't be able to put it down.

79%

Review

The Rub Rabbits!

Format DS Publisher Sega
Developer Sonic Team Multiplayer 1-4
Wi-Fi No Release Out Now Price £29.99



Top screen Most of *Rub Rabbits!* mini-games straddle both displays, with the top screen used for showing the consequences of your actions...

Touch screen ...as you rub, scribble and prod away at the bottom screen. Every one of the mini-games uses touchy-feely interaction but they're mostly tests of speed or aim.



So this is where babies come from: out of a cake. The couple must co-ordinate their button presses to deliver a bouncing beauty. Otherwise, it's one moody sprog.



There's only one way to dispatch a giant crab: spin the DS on its head and shake some tree.



Probably the sweetest mini-game of the lot: tending to your girlfriend's bruised leg. Awww.



Sidling up to your girl while she admires the fireworks is one of the title's few loveable games.



Babies are born with nappies already in place. And, occasionally, wearing a Viking hat.



Collecting fruit in games is hardly original. Lobbing a lady in the air to do it probably is.



The first few games see our hero battling his silhouetted pals for the girl's affections.

The Rub Rabbits!

Will the woman of your dreams love this romantic friction?

Courtroom whodunnits, imaginary dogs, surgery simulators... the DS is a magnet for the oddest game ideas.

So perhaps we shouldn't be surprised to flip open the twin screens and find ourselves helping silhouetted figures in pastel clothing fall head-over-heels in love to the strains of the cancan song. *Again.*

Like its older brother *Project Rub*, *The Rub Rabbits!* (aka *Where Do Babies Come From*) is a mini-game marathon – a scaled-down,

slower-paced *WarioWare* with mildly sinister shadow-people replacing the fat bloke with the spiky moustache. The aim is to woo a beautiful girl... by rubbing, stroking, poking, tapping and blowing with a passion. And the dodgy "rub it/rabbit" pun in the title perfectly signposts the hare-brained weirdness of it all. It is, quite deliberately, 'zany'.

So you're stroking the touch screen to roll a snowball at a runaway robot head. You're rubbing to shovel snow over people threatened by an angry bear. You're tapping to construct a skirt out of summer leaves for your bashful lover. Like *Project Rub*, it's uncomplicated, silly stuff that uses the stylus in just about every way imaginable.

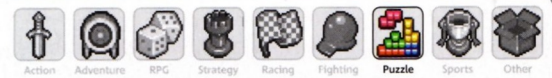
But here's the thing. We're just about a year on from DS launch day, when *Project Rub* made us giggle over its novelty. Since then, *Kirby's* scribbled rainbow roads and *Nintendogs'* interactive petting have shown what the touch screen's really capable of.

By comparison, *The Rub Rabbits!* is largely imagination-free. Scraping the screen to help a bloke up an escalator, tapping icons to play scissors-paper-stone... the DS has already seen cleverer days in its short, colourful lifetime. If you were hoping for the ingenuity and brilliance of *WarioWare*, look to *WarioWare*.

Charmless Man

Where did the charm of *Project Rub* go? The original game got to you. You wanted Ms Silhouette to fall for you, while the sweet mini-games – walking through the park holding hands – melted hearts made of granite and steel. *The Rub Rabbits!* has a couple of these spine-tingling moments (carefully covering your girl with a blanket)

"It's uncomplicated, silly stuff that uses the stylus in every way"



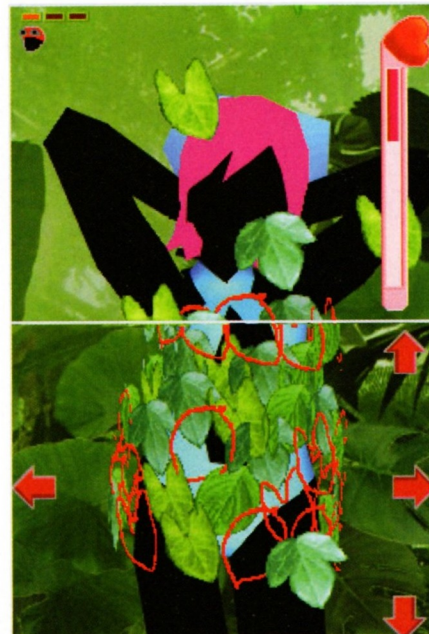
When your crazed stalker isn't bowling you over with bad cooking, she's attempting to knock you senseless with 'love bombs'. The girl's clearly a dab hand with a rope, too.



Toughest mini-game award goes to The One Where You Shovel Snow To Avoid A Big Bear.



Against-the-clock graffiti with silhouette men parachuting in to drop on your head? Odd.



Here, we're rustling up a leaf-dress for our girl while trying not to unintentionally commit the first-date faux pas of pawing at her half-naked body. Sega is clearly nuts.

but otherwise it's too busy being self-consciously weird to actually connect with you. Even the new hero is somehow less endearing than *Project Rub*'s Goldfish-T-shirted Bicycle Helmet Bloke.

The Rub Rabbits! is very funny though, mostly thanks to your jealous stalker who dreams up subtle ways of thwarting your love quest, like blasting you out of a tree with a cannon. And when the mini-games are good, they're very good. You'll go all gooey gently rubbing your girl's bruise better.

But three or four hours in, it's all over, and although you've played double the number of mini-games as *Project Rub* – around 50 in all – it adds up to only about half the fun. Too many of the episodes are boring (poking your girl's head and shoulder) or difficult (dragging electric eels into a waterfall) and it's often tricky to work out what's expected of you – the antithesis of *WarioWare*'s brilliantly accessible madness. The limited number of microphone-based games had us snapping

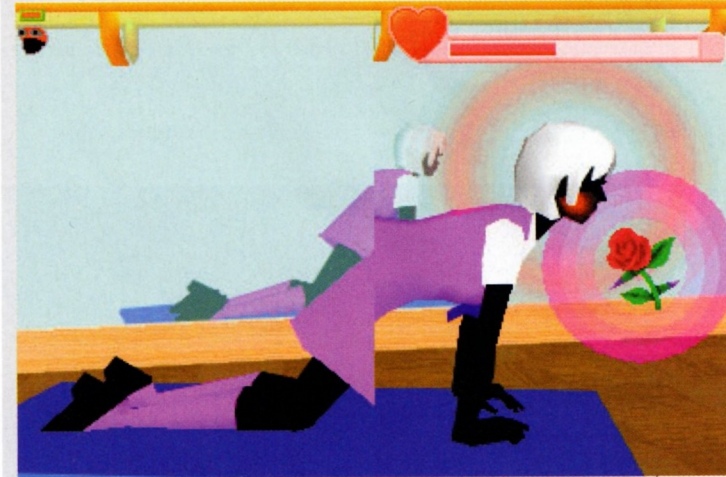
the DS's lid shut in a swears mood. There are many reasons why humans evolved hands for holding tools and one of them was so we wouldn't have to knock robots off a bridge by blowing into a tiny hole.

Multiplayer's a total joy and the 'making a baby' mode is simply insane. Choose a mate, enter your age and blood type, then jointly cut a wedding cake to unveil a baby that's often floating in the air and wearing devil horns. Read that sentence again... it's *all* true. With that and 'hullabaloo' (see 'Rub Rabbit Rub'), it looks like Sega is trying to use the DS to play matchmaker. Whether that works or not, the link-up games help lend *The Rub Rabbits!* some of the touchy-feely charm that the single-player is missing by fostering that *WarioWare* 'big box o' treats' feel.

But *WarioWare* is the problem, proving that this kind of thing can be done better, more amusingly and far more cleverly. Without the charm and ideas, it's probably time for *Project Rub* to take a breather. **Mark Green**

RUB RABBIT RUB

The *Rub Rabbits!*'s mini-games may all look odd and elaborate but playing any one of them turns out to be a doddle...



Your score is based on how quickly you finish the game and how many lives you keep. Points unlock new costumes for use in deviously perverted, lady-prodding maniac dress mode.



Most mini-games are played five times in a row, with each run being a little harder than the last. But some, like this mechanobird boss battle, are one long game. One very long, far too hard game.



Six of the games are playable with six people in the same room. There's also 'Hullabaloo', which is a sort of finger-based *Twister* designed for unintentional hand contact between players. Awww...

Nintendo Verdict

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

- Smartly stylistic and slightly creepy... all at the same time
- Multiplayer extras that you'd have to be mad not to love
- It might look weird but it uses the DS in unimaginative ways
- Too many boring, clumsy, confusing, unappealing games
- The music is like rusty nails being kicked into your ears

Oozing its own distinct style and with a genuinely laugh-out-loud sense of humour, *The Rub Rabbits!* is unfortunately out-weirder and out-clevered by the mighty *WarioWare*.

68%



Review

Worms: Open Warfare

Format DS Publisher THQ
Developer Team 17 Multiplayer 1-4
Wi-Fi No Release 17 March Price £29.99



Top screen This is the playing area, showing all your bloodthirsty worms wreaking terrible vengeance on each other in a range of terrific cartoony locations.

Touch screen This is, for the most part, a menu screen, showing you all the information you need, but it can also be used to move the view on the top screen so you can see the whole map.



While some terrain looks familiar, other areas are a little more, er, abstract.



It's war in London! Except it's far too small for humans to notice. Back to work, everyone.



You'll have to aim pretty carefully when you're using the bazooka but a steady hand will be rewarded.



That shark-bitten surfboard won't protect you for long. Time to ship out, soldier.



Gillian: a name to strike fear into hearts.

Groucho takes on the challenge.



It's hardly ground-breaking, but using the touch screen to select weapons with a tap of the stylus really speeds things up and makes the game flow more easily.

Laguna takes on the challenge.



Shoot one of those barrels to blow up a whole group of worms.

Worms: Open Warfare

Wriggle your way to winning warfare in this wormy wonder

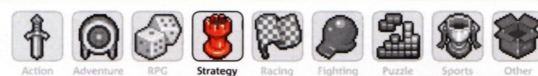
A good game is always a good game, even in the face of ever-better graphics and evolving technology. Look at Mario – his 2D platformers remain timeless slices of brilliance, untarnished by his move into 3D with the astonishing *Super Mario 64*. Or how about *Zelda*? A *Link To The Past* on the GBA might not sport the expressive cel-shaded graphics of *The Wind Waker*, but it's still a classic. Simplicity and rock-solid design are all a game needs to ensure immortality.

Worms is a case in point. A two-dimensional, turn-based game of tiny annelids blasting each other with an increasingly daft selection of weaponry, it's always been both laugh-out-loud funny and pleasingly strategic. In recent years the series has moved into three dimensions, but unlike with *Mario* and *Zelda* this development has not been an unqualified success, adding complications such as fortresses and losing something of the simplicity that has always been a trademark of the best *Worms* games.

Worms: Open Warfare, however, is a return to the franchise's strengths, and despite being utterly familiar, it manages to feel surprisingly fresh, perhaps simply because it's as fun as it ever was.

If Ain't Broke...

Once again 2D and turn-based, the game simply asks you to annihilate the opposing team, with each worm taking turns to move and fire. There's a strict time limit for each turn, however, so there's no room for chin-stroking. And that's about it as far as the fundamentals are concerned; there's a vast selection of weaponry and equipment to aid you in your war games, and scenery can be destroyed either in an attempt to create a path or drop your enemies into the sea below. Equipment and supplies randomly drop from the skies and hazards such as explosive barrels and mines litter the landscape, all of which can be used to destroy the enemy, as long as you can avoid them yourself.



Ever wondered what an exploding worm looks like? Wonder no more, gore fans.



The map on the bottom screen shows you where all the worms are (both on your team and the other side) so you can plan your attacks more efficiently.

It's the same as it ever was, then. But while *Worms* veterans won't find any surprises here, should there be anyone who hasn't enjoyed the majesty of *Worms* before, this is the perfect place to start. Indeed, it almost seems like the DS is the series' natural home. *Open Warfare* only takes modest advantage of the unique capabilities of the DS, but it does so in style, and the touch-screen support is well-implemented.

The bottom screen acts as a menu, offering information on worms' locations, wind direction (essential for plotting trajectories) and how long you've got left for a turn. More importantly, it allows you to select weapons with a touch of the stylus. It's hardly a new idea, but it makes playing the game more intuitive and much quicker. The touch screen also enables you to scroll around the map, which works brilliantly, allowing you to check lines of sight and plan moves. These additions may not be in the league of, say, *Nintendogs'* innovation (it's a shame the microphone isn't

CREEPY CRAWLY KILLERS

What good is a worm without a big gun? No good. Thankfully, there are plenty of weapons to choose from...



Shotgun

A close-quarters weapon, the shotgun is best used when you're up close and personal with your rival. It can fire twice in one turn, which is good for softening the enemy up or finishing them off if they've not got much health left.



Kamikaze

A last-ditch weapon, as the worm using it essentially commits suicide in spectacular fashion. Your worm will zoom ahead, hurting anything in its way and even tunnelling through scenery. You'll lose a worm but gain kudos.



Bazooka

You'll need to aim carefully with this, and the resultant explosion can hurt clusters of worms or take out explosive barrels. It can even be used to lob a shell into hard-to-reach places, which is tricky but definitely worthwhile.

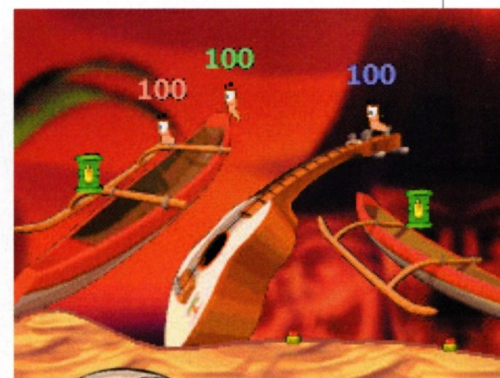


Fire Punch

A close-combat equaliser. Despite worms not having any extremities to speak of, this devastating attack will knock the block off an adjacent enemy worm. Thing is, you'll have to get close to them without being shot at...



There are a range of imaginative locations for you to visit (and then blow to smithereens as you unleash miniature hell).



Like Marmite, you either love it or loathe it.

used, for example), but they really add to the *Worms* experience. In this case a little evolution is better than a revolution.

Challenge Annelid

The other big additions here concern multiplayer and extending the single-player game. There's wireless multiplayer for four players, which is great fun, and the addition of a challenge mode in the vein of *Mario Kart DS*'s mission mode provides addictive bite-sized gaming. Asking you to indulge in such activities as killing enemies in as few turns as possible or within a time limit, it's a neat new element and includes tutorials for newbies.

While not the definitive *Worms* game, and offering little in the way of advances, *Open Warfare* is hugely entertaining. The varied arsenal – from humble bazookas and guns to more outlandish fare, such as the infamous exploding sheep – and simple-but-satisfying gameplay mean that this is a top-notch title. Old hands who have tired of *Worms* may not

find much here to justify a purchase, but if you're even the slightest bit interested in unpretentious, enjoyable gaming, then this is just the ticket. **+ Jes Bickham**

Nintendo Verdict

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

- Great new challenge mode
- Basic but effective touch-screen support
- It's *Worms*, which means it's great
- Not a huge leap forward for the series
- Not the fullest use of the DS's abilities

Offering the old-school laugh-out-loud fun that *Worms* has always provided, this is a fine introduction to the series and shows that a good game is always a good game, no matter how old it is.

79%

Review

Lunar Genesis

► **Format** DS ► **Publisher** Rising Star
 ► **Developer** Game Arts ► **Multiplayer** No
 ► **Wi-Fi** No ► **Release** 24 February ► **Price** £29.99



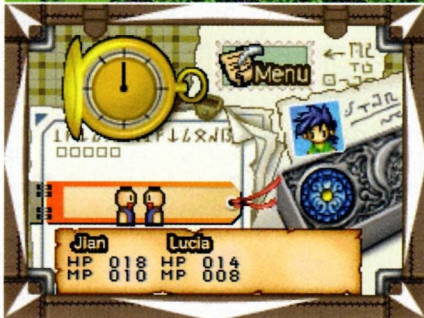
Top screen Here's where the 'action' happens – your characters scamper around and bump into monsters, towns and temples up top.

Touch screen Stats, menus, options and the like are taken care of down here, while using the stylus to click around is optional. Combat action scenes (shown here) take up both screens.



While you're in a settlement you can take on a delivery job if you fancy it.

It might look like aimless running around but trust us: these guys are busy defeating evil.



There's no denying that *Lunar Genesis* looks the part, but everything progresses so slowly that the graphics alone won't hold your attention for long.



This is Jian Campbell, Gad's Express courier and all-round roister-doisterer.



Arriving at a built-up area makes a nice change as you can shop for essential items.



When it looks like a battle's approaching you should be more worried about the game's 'helpful' enemy-targeting system than the enemies themselves.

Lunar Genesis

The first role-playing game on the DS.
 But not the first *good* one...

So, here it is – The First Proper RPG On The DS™. *Lunar Genesis* has been the talk of the town for months, as both the debut dungeon 'em up for double-screeners and the first new instalment in the much-loved *Lunar* series in a decade.

Shame, then, that if you're looking for rollicking RPG fun here, you're asking for the moon on a stick. It's a charming tale – a couple of teens, one armed with an

umbrella (no, really), join forces with their beast-like enemies to battle the kind of megalomaniacal evil that just won't take no for an answer. But *Lunar Genesis* is one giant backward step for RPGkind, thanks to some terrible features that really have to be played to be believed.

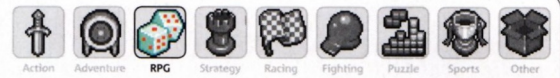
It all looks and sounds pretty good. There's no getting away from the fact that *Golden Sun* – a four-year-old game for a five-year-old system – knocks *Lunar Genesis* into a cocked hat. But the music's catchy, and even if the settings are over-familiar RPG staples from the outset – lush woods, medieval-esque villages, shops and farms and fountains – it's an attractive and welcoming world-on-a-cart.

But *Lunar's* got a bigger job to do than look fancy – it needs to prove that the DS is the perfect system for RPGs. Sadly, it doesn't. The use of the touch screen to toggle between combat modes and chat to your cohorts – and the way you can run away from the turn-based battles by, er, blowing – is all gimmick. You'll stick to the D-pad for everything, including the unpleasantly familiar tapping through screens of menu for the meaty info, which is a horribly missed opportunity to display all the numerical nonsense on the bottom screen while you gad about the caves, forests and towns up top.

The really bad news? The combat is appalling. *Lunar Genesis*' 'big idea' is 'keep it simple': so simple that when you bump into angry sacks of pus or dragons that span both screens you can't choose

"The use of the touch screen is sadly just a gimmick"





STATS AND THE CITY

After half an hour of snail-paced combat, entering a town comes as a blessed relief...



In addition to all that 'saving the world' malarkey, you're employed by Gad's Express to find and deliver items around the game world. There are jobs aplenty and cash rewards.

Relax with a spot of traditional RPG shopping – as long as you've earned cash by selling 'oddities' dropped by the local monsters. Just try to resist the Holy Umbrella.

The fountain's the place for saving and restoring your health, and you're going to need it after sapping all that HP running around when the game really doesn't want you to.



The frustrating battle system is enough to make you want to turn tail and run away from enemy encounters. But then you'd only get punished for running...



This place looks chock-full of items. And if there's one thing an RPG needs, it's items.



Engage someone in conversation and they'll pop up on the bottom screen when they talk.

This guy may be bigger and meaner than you but he's winning no prizes for that Barney costume.



which enemy to attack. Every time you draw your sword the game automatically targets the nearest or weakest enemy, instantly taking the strategy out of scraps and turning them into robotic, random and often deadly affairs.

On top of this there's a plodding pace (regardless of whether you press R to fractionally speed things up), an almost non-existent magic system, and weapons that routinely fail and break. It's awful. You end up feeling like a lab rat forced to stab repeatedly at a button as part of some cruel experiment – and the game even acknowledges this by offering to take care of battles automatically.

It wouldn't be so vein-poppingly frustrating if you could actually avoid battles, but *Lunar Genesis* sees to that with another brainwave: you're actually punished for moving too fast, with your team leaking cartoon sweat out of their heads and their health plunging if you run for too long. So the ostensibly short journey between towns ends up taking half an hour, every angry blob you meet

manhandling you en route because you can't sprint out of the way.

Fight The Bad Fight

It's a shame, as not all *Lunar Genesis*' ideas are so poor. You're able to switch combat modes at any time: the first rewards you with valuable items for kills, the second works like a time-limited monster-mashing challenge with the more traditional EXP as the prize. There are 60 collectable 'combat cards' with varying effects that add a smidgen of fun to pummeling a Phantom or quashing a Quetzacoatl. And every time you visit a town you enter a place that's – usually – a whole lot more interesting, as you shop, chat, take on Gad's Express delivery assignments and drive the slow but decent story forwards.

But however many neat ideas *Lunar Genesis* piles on one side of the scales, they can't outweigh that HP-sucking sprinting punishment or that combat. This is an RPG that lacks the flair of a *Final Fantasy*, the depth

of a *Fire Emblem*, the magic of a *Zelda*. But, more than that, it leaves you questioning how someone could get RPGs so wrong. Which means we're left crossing our fingers and hoping things get better in The Second Proper RPG On The DS™. **+ Mark Green**

Nintendo Verdict

- ✓ Sweet music and an eye-pleasing art style
- ✓ A huge adventure that'll last over 30 hours
- ✗ ...but 20 of those are spent in tedious battle
- ✗ Being punished for running is frustrating
- ✗ Minimal use of the stylus and touch screen

What would have been an above-average role-player has mutated into a tortuous nightmare of plodding, combat-saturated pain. Avoid if you value your sanity.



48%

Review

Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble

Format GameCube Publisher Capcom
Developer Clover Studio Multiplayer 1-4
Release 01 April Price £39.99



Captain Blue Jr dishes out the pain in one of Red Hot Rumble's VFX Battles. What exactly's going on? Who knows?



Graphically, Red Hot Rumble holds together nicely with no hint of frame rate problems...



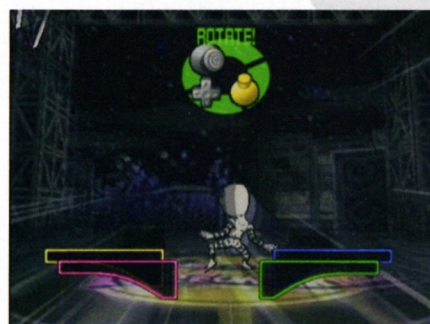
... it's just that with so much dancing in front of your face, you'll have a hard time keeping up.



Mini-games are shoehorned into regular rumbles with no explanation at all.



Here's one of the VFX powers at work – sound effects. Use them to knock foes into oblivion.



VFX Battle alert! Your most likely reaction? Staring into the middle distance, bewildered.

Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble

Smash Bros meets Viewtiful Joe in a honking mess of a game

Playing Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble is an assault on the senses. From the first menu screen to the last game level, it takes every colour, special effect, sound effect and background it can think of, straps it to a missile and fires it into your face.

And it hurts.

It hurts because the first two Viewtiful Joe games were superb. It hurts because, if any set of characters is going to challenge

Nintendo's home team in a Smash Bros take-off, these are the ones. But it hurts mostly because it's an abominable mess of a game with neither structure nor clear idea of what the hell is going on.

In typical fighting game fashion, the single-player story mode kicks off with a silly excuse for the mayhem to come. Captain Blue, newly retired from being a superhero, is searching for a leading man for his movie. He decides to organise an all-out scrap and whoever wins

the audition... well, you can guess the rest. Not exactly Lord Of The Rings. Not even Lord Of The Dance, in fact. But then it's unlikely you'll sit through the cut-scenes unless it's to see Captain Blue's new assistant Sprocket and her increasingly mountainous set of smashers.

Command & Control

You start off with a basic set of characters, including Joe himself, Captain Blue, Sexy Silvia, Blade Master Alastor and a few others. There are more to unlock, including Hulk Davidson, Gran Bruce, Charles the Third, Bianky and Flatty. The stages are similarly unlocked, with each one a different movie set for Captain Blue to film on and each timed section split into takes.

The actual fighting mechanic isn't that complicated: A is jump (tap twice for a double jump), B and Y are attack buttons, X is a special attack and the shoulders are VFX powers. VFX could have been the feature that





“VFX Battles are an
unprovoked assault
on your senses”



Review Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble



It's count the icons time as *Red Hot Rumble*'s four-player face-off descends into multiple effects overload and anarchy.

A mini-mini-game in action, during a regular fight. It's only a simple button-presser, but it's still confusing.



Backgrounds all represent Captain Blue's movie sets and are uniformly detailed and colourful.

"There's simply too much crammed on the screen – it's overwhelming"

→ made *Red Hot Rumble* more than just a half-arsed *Smash Bros* reworking, but it gets hopelessly lost like everything else.

Here's how the powers work. Kill enemies and they'll drop VFX orbs. Grab enough and four different VFX abilities are dished up for you. Mach Speed disastrously speeds things up even more, turning a dog's dinner into a dog's afters. Slow unsurprisingly slows the game down, so that you can move around at normal speed and dispatch justice. Sound Effects produce 'Bash!' style lettering that can be thrown at enemies, while Zoom enlarges you and boosts your powers.

Parallel to this are the orb-activated VFX Battles that create a VFX hole – effectively a black hole that all combatants get sucked into. In typical *Red Hot Rumble* fashion, VFX Battles are an unprovoked assault on

RED HOT RUBBLE

Worked out what's going on yet? Imagine the brain-strain of it all moving...



These barrels contain extra pick-ups if you smash them open but they add to the confusion by randomly dropping from the left, right and centre. In true *Red Hot Rumble* style, these aren't the only miscellaneous items flying around. Oh no – there's plenty more where that came from.

One of eight items that will drop into the stage at any given moment, this Power Glove allows you to smash opponents even further than normal. Watch out too for a time-stopping Stopwatch, health-restoring Hot Dogs and a Stunt Double Doll that creates two of you. Enough already!

Even in this static screenshot, the characters look a bit fuzzy and are hard to spot. When they're powering round the screen in a blur of luminous special effects, you'll end up losing track of them completely. Only Joe himself really stands out from this eye-frazzle thanks to his distinctive red suit.

In multiplayer, scores mean the difference between winning and losing. In single-player though, they're far more important, meaning the difference between progressing to a whole new level or an agonising replay of the same one. It's all a bit too much for one person to take on.

your senses. You get chucked right into the mixer, with five types of mini games – a couple of timing games, a quick draw, an all-out rumble and, er, stick spinning (don't ask) – immediately starting without any explanation as to what's going on. After several goes you might be able to handle it but for the first few attempts you'll zap through the hole, stare at the screen, belatedly press a few buttons and then be told you've lost before being chucked back into the main game. It's not exactly the friendliest of learning curves.

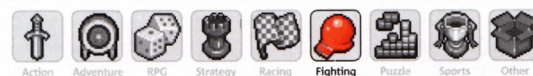
Senses Working Overtime

The fighting itself isn't fundamentally flawed, it's just impossible to follow. In story mode, where the scrapping is pared down to just the two of you, things are better but by no means perfect. There's simply too much crammed onto the screen: the main enemy, incidental baddies, VFX orbs, VFX powers, coins, special effects and explosions all slapped over garish backgrounds – it's totally overwhelming.

In *Smash Bros*, taking Mario, Fox, Samus and Kirby for four-way fisticuffs is easy because Nintendo makes it easy through great game design and strong character identity. *Viewtiful Joe*'s characters only begin to define themselves in the cut-scenes. In-game, and especially when the camera pulls back to accommodate things, you'll need eyes like The Terminator to spot anyone.

Unfortunately, the problem only gets worse with more players. In fact, we'd go as far to say that, in three- and four-player, *Red Hot Rumble* is just about unplayable. With the camera pulled back to its maximum distance and all the problems of story mode exacerbated by about, ooooh, a hundred times, you're left with the gaming equivalent of spaghetti. Within seconds of the stage starting, you'll lose sight of your character. With human players, the sense of confusion is rescued slightly by the fact that everyone's equally baffled. However, if you've got any CPU players making up the numbers at all,

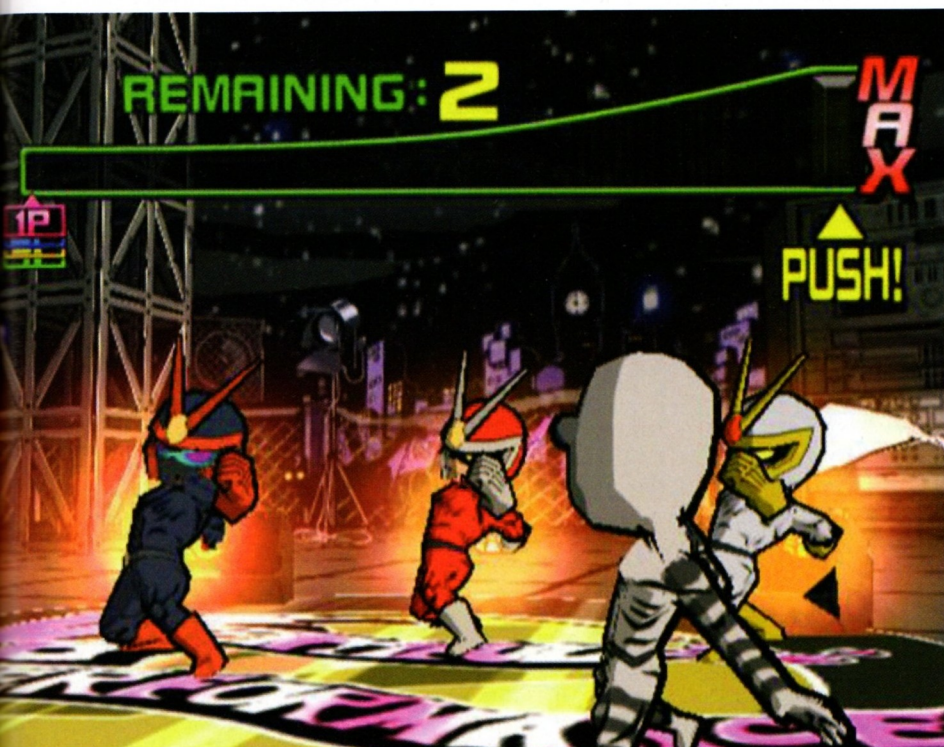




Another VFX Battle – this time Captain Blue Jr takes it big style in a two-player scrap.



Scores are tallied after every VFX Battle, the winner getting a main game boost.



Not a disco from the future, but *another* VFX Battle – this time a simple button jabber.

it's all over. Immediately. Four-player match-ups with even *one* AI character are pointless – you'll have your ass kicked nice and hard. Since CPU characters don't have to worry about merging into the background or getting lost behind massive explosions, you will always lose.

Lastly, the characters all look a bit samey and aren't actually that much fun to fight with. Throughout the whole game there's probably a core of three that offer any sort of variety. The rest just fade into the background, with bland, predictable special powers and samey, interchangeable animation. The fact that fights are chaos doesn't help, but there's none of the stuff that made *Smash Bros* so irresistible. There's no Kirby, no Captain Falcon, no Fox. Each has defining powers while the *Rumble* crew merge into one another.

The problem with the game isn't that it does things wrong but that it just tries to do too much. Dig a way down and you've got the

basis for a solid beat 'em up. But it's the frantic over-layering that makes it confusing. If Capcom is going to attempt any more sequels, it needs to adopt a back-to-basics approach. If you look at *Smash Bros* – in fact, *any* key Nintendo game of recent years – what makes it so special is its over-riding simplicity. You can pick it up and be up to your neck in ruddy-faced joy within minutes. Here, it's just too confusing for its own good.

Nail In The Coffin

There are two telling bits in the *Red Hot Rumble* manual. The first is in the Hints section – “Know what's up! Make sure you keep an eye on what's going on around you” – suggesting from the outset that maybe it's not going to be as simple as selecting a character and playing. The second warning is a title on one of the pages towards the back of the Hints section. It says: “Just what exactly am I supposed to do in this game?” – which is all you really need to know about a

VFX... WHAT THE HECK?

The VFX Battles are so fast and furious that, most of the time, they're over before you fully understand that they've even started. Sit back and melt your eyes as we take you through a typical fracas. Warning: not recommended for slow learners and old people.



1 A black hole sucks you and your enemies into a VFX Battle.

2 Rotate! says the only instruction. But what? And why?



3 No time to plan or think. The challenge begins...

4 Time up! You're zapped back, wondering if you won or lost.



The multiplayer game should be one of *Red Hot Rumble*'s highlights, but it's all just a bit confusing.

game that stabs your face with all the effects GameCube can muster, without ever engaging your brain. When even the manual sounds unsure as to what you're supposed to be doing, you know that you're in trouble. **✚ Tim Weaver**

Nintendo Verdict

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

- ✚ Likeable characters, easy-to-grasp controls
- ✚ Fights are impossible to follow properly
- ✚ VFX Battles aren't ever explained
- ✚ The more players, the worse it gets
- ✚ Proves just how blindingly good *Smash Bros* really is

In trying to do too much, Capcom has moved away from what made *Smash Bros* so successful. *Red Hot Rumble* isn't a bad game, it's just a hopelessly messy, over-designed one.

58%



Review

Sega Casino

Format DS **Publisher** Sega
Developer Tose Software **Multiplayer** 1-5
Wi-Fi No **Release** Out Now **Price** £19.99



Top screen Up here you'll get the main view of the action – either the card table, roulette wheel, one-arm bandit, weird tumbling basket-thing and so on.

Touch screen You can either use the A, B, X, Y buttons to perform actions, or the stylus, which is much preferred. Just tap on the button icons to deal cards, and drag chips onto the table to place bets. This screen is where you see the hand you've been dealt.



Baccarat is bonkers. It's basically just a very posh (and expensive) guessing game.



Twist. Twist. Twist. Twist. Twist. Twist. Twist.
Twist. Twist. Twist. Twist. Twist. Okay, stick.

➔ IT'S A GAME OF, ER, NINE HALVES

Sega Casino boasts nine different games plus an additional two modes of Video Poker. What are they and what do we think of them? Read on...



Blackjack

Also known in gambling circles as Pontoon or 21s. It's dead simple – keep drawing cards until you get 21, or as near as you dare. Go over and you're bust. A simple game to ease you in, but not much to keep you coming back.



Roulette

Gamble on a ball tumbling over a numbered spinning wheel. Simple guesses, like 'black' or 'red', pay low while statistically-unlikely bets, like 'eight', pay high. It's a mug's game though. The wheel always wins. A life of misery awaits you here.



Craps

Incomprehensible American game where you bet on the roll of three dice. There are no fewer than 17 bets including Horn, Four-Way Horn, Big, Hard Way and Don't Come. Honestly, we're not making this up. Too confusing for our small brains.



Baccarat

Not the '70s disco duo who sang *Yes Sir, I Can Boogie*, but a really dull card game where it's just you versus the banker. Try to guess which hand will end up closer to nine – no clues, just guess. Like Blackjack-lite, but without any skill whatsoever.



Sega Casino

Gambling without the risk? You betcha!

You can't turn on the TV or pick up a magazine without seeing something about poker. Or online gambling. Or gambling on poker online. Combine this with the law that says every new handheld console always gets a compilation of card games and it's no surprise to see *Sega Casino* swagger into view, chomping on a huge cigar and with giggling girls on each arm.

“It took just a few hours to unlock all the VIP rooms and games”

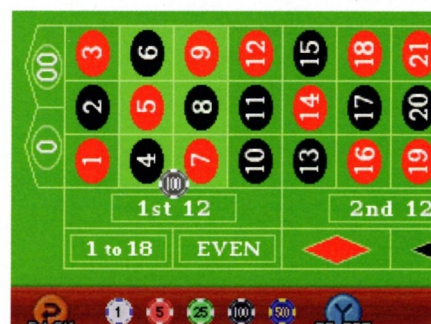
This is the usual kind of deal in that you get a collection of gambling games, and this time it's Roulette, Blackjack, Texas Hold 'Em, Baccarat and Craps (stop sniggering at the back). You can play any of these in Free mode, but the real fun is in competing in Casino mode where you unlock additional games and VIP rooms as you win more money. For example, once you've increased your original stake to \$2,500, you unlock the Silver Room where you can place bigger bets.

Skill Or Luck?

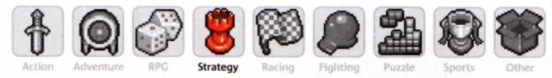
Just as you can up the stakes only after you've had a few big wins, you also only get access to the other games (Chuck A Luck, 7 Card Stud, Keno and Video Poker) after your luck has taken a turn for the better. Unfortunately, only the 7 Card Stud poker game is really worth unlocking. It's a far superior version of regular poker, in our humble opinion, yet slightly annoyingly, you have to plug away at lesser portions of the game before you can play it.

Regardless of what they're called, there are basically only two kinds of game here – the card games containing an element of skill and the dice and lottery-type games which are down to sheer luck.

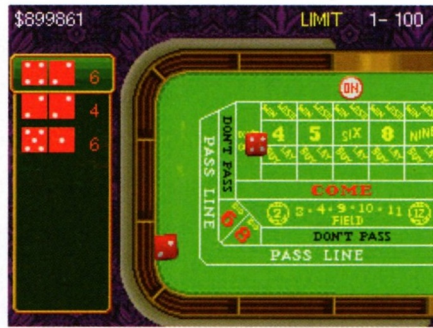
Now here's the thing. Buy a scratchcard down the local newsagents and the excitement's in risking real money for a



This action-packed screenshot really says it all. It says 'go and play *Mario Kart DS*, you idiot'.



Chuck A Luck resembles some sort of dice-torture. Like putting hamsters in a tumble drier.



Craps has the most bizarre set of gambling rules. Utterly incomprehensible.



Poker is where the game really shines. The road to personal ruin starts here...



7 Card Stud

A slightly more complex version of poker which, in our opinion, is the best game on the cart. Even playing against the dim-witted computer morons who fold when pushed, you can easily spend many hours having great fun with this.



Texas Hold 'Em

A simple poker variant where you bet on your hidden cards plus five 'community' cards that lie face-up on the table. A great way to learn the ropes and prepare you for a life of debt, divorce and living in hostels next to Alf 'The Axe' McKenzie.



Keno

Bizarre version of the lottery. Select ten numbers from 1 to 80 then see if any of them come up. If they do, you win money! We can't believe people really gamble their children's livelihoods on this. Very dull, even in multiplayer mode.



Chuck A Luck

Sort of like Craps but played in a wicker egg-timer and with much simpler betting. Unfortunately, the purely random nature of this means that playing on your own is a fruitless pastime best suited to terminally lonely people.



Video Poker

Poker – but on a one-armed bandit! Includes three game types: Jacks or Better, Double Bonus and Deuces Wild. So you get all of the expense of real poker but without any of the tension, human interaction or fun. Genius.

potential real win. Playing *Sega Casino* on your own and without any money at stake, victory feels hollow. It's even worse if you're losing, since all you have to do is turn your DS off then restart with your funds intact.

Having dispensed with the games of pure chance, you'll end up reverting to Poker and Blackjack. But while the head-to-head

multiplayer mode works well enough for you and up to four mates, you'd be crazy not to play against real people using an actual pack of cards and real poker chips – a decent set of which costs about the same as this game. Also, Sega has missed a huge opportunity by not including some rudimentary Internet Wi-Fi modes: the ability to pit your wits against real card players would have been a very appealing addition to the game and injected some much-needed tension.

Raise You

We won't profess to being card sharks but it took us just a few hours of poker to raise enough funds to unlock all three rooms and the secret games – mainly because the rival players are a pretty feeble bunch; play aggressively and you'll soon destroy them. Also, it's a shame your opponents are just names. They say nothing, have no poker faces (no faces at all, come to think of it) and no character. It's all pretty soulless.

Sega Casino may well keep you amused for a weekend or so, but once you've thrashed the AI players and unlocked all the new games, there's not much here to keep you coming back. A quick round of 7 Card Stud maybe, but that's about it. **+ Steve Jarratt**



Ooh, it's like *Deal Or No Deal*. But without the beardy dwarf. Or the boxes. Or the sad people.

Nintendo Verdict

- + Unlocking stuff is fun while it lasts
- + Wireless single-cartridge multiplayer
- More expensive than a pack of cards
- Chance games are a bit pointless
- Beating the computer at skill games isn't too hard

Hardened poker heads might get a few cheap thrills here, but – as ever – gambling on games of chance with no risk of losing any real money feels ever so slightly futile...



57%

Review

Megaman Battle Network 5 DT

Format DS Publisher Capcom
Developer Capcom Multiplayer 1-8
Wi-Fi No Release Out Now Price £29.99



Top screen Shows the gameplay area, both in the real world (where you play as Lan) and the online world (where you play as Megaman).

Touch screen Acts as an always-accessible menu screen and lets you drag and drop items as you wish.

"There's loads of game here and those new to Megaman will be in for a treat indeed"



There's a huge number of Navis for you to pick and choose from, so you're not limited to Megaman.



Equipping your Navi with chips is easy as pie as the touch screen allows you to drag and drop them wherever you like.



As you progress, your opponents obtain more and more outlandish and powerful attacks.

Megaman Battle Network 5: Double Team

Two Megamen for the price of one in Capcom's bumper DS package



What this latest *Megaman* title lacks in originality, it certainly makes up for in generosity. *Megaman Battle Network 5: Double Team* is essentially a DS bundling of two GBA titles – *Team Protoman* and *Team Colonel*. Both of these worked in a *Pokémon*-esque capacity, with each title containing characters and items that the other didn't. Presented together, *Double Team* offers cracking value for money while serving up a hefty slice of content for newcomers to the world of *Megaman*. Longtime fans however, who probably own *Team Protoman* and *Team Colonel* already, may feel a little aggrieved as there isn't a vast amount that's new here.

Admittedly there have been some tweaks to adapt the games for the DS's unique capabilities but more of those in a moment...

Worlds Apart

Double Team takes place in two distinct areas – the 'real' world and the virtual world. In the *Megaman* universe the Internet is so commonplace that everyone carries around a PET (personal terminal) everywhere. PETs not only access the Net but also house personalised AIs called Navis.

Megaman is one such Navi, owned by a boy called Lan, and these characters represent the two halves of *Double Team*'s gameplay experience. Broadly speaking, when playing

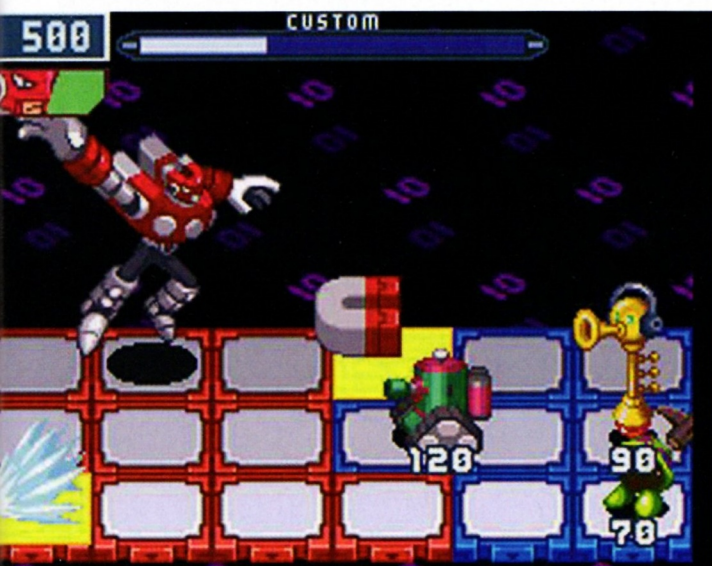
as Lan in the real world, you talk to characters, find new locations to visit and have a typical role-playing game experience. Playing as Megaman, however, drops you inside the Internet where the emphasis is on fighting evil viruses and other bad guys within the virtual domain.

The split's a great idea, although the *Megaman* sections win through thanks to greater depth and a satisfying combat experience. Initially confusing (you're bombarded with background detail and tutorials), the general idea is that 'chips' can be attached to Megaman – or whichever Navi you're using at a given time – to bestow special weapons, combat abilities and other powers.

Further complexity is added with numerous chip combinations and counter-attacks, while Megaman's emotional state actually impacts on his combat effectiveness. On top of all that, there are the Double Soul and Chaos Union powers – essentially ways of fusing the



The fighting system gets deeper the more your Navi develops. You'll need to be both tactical and quick with the reflexes.



The online part of the game – Cyber World – is full of random encounters. Intended to challenge, they're often a tiresome inclusion.

powers of allies and defeated enemies with your own. It's a sprawling and intriguing system but *Double Team* also has Liberation Battles – turn-based fights that add another gameplay twist. While Liberation Battles are significantly less engaging than the regular ones, it's good to have them all the same.

Sure this all sounds complicated and compared to *Pokémon* the combat system isn't as streamlined as it could be. Yet once you get your head around it and start to make progress, the range of chip combinations and the depth of the system really reward you.

New Life

Of course, none of this is new to any veteran *Megaman* players, so if you've already played *Team Protoman* and *Team Colonel* to death, you'd be buying this for the gameplay extras. In this respect, there's excellent wireless multiplayer support for up to eight players (in a tournament style), the ability to import chip data from previous GBA versions of the game

and, in Liberation missions, the power to transport Navis from whichever DS-based version of the game you're currently playing. So if you're playing *Team Protoman*, you could bring in Navis from *Team Colonel*.

In addition, the touch screen removes a layer of complication by displaying all menu screens all the time while touch-sensitive support allows you to, for example, quickly move chips around with the stylus. There's also a raft of new voice samples and, through the microphone, you can even cheer Megaman on when his emotional state becomes too distressed. This last feature is great fun yet sadly underused and it's a shame *Double Trouble* didn't embrace the DS's unique functions more.

Ultimately, what we have here is a rather half-hearted first step for *Megaman* onto the DS. That said, it's hard to begrudge *Double Team* for not making the innovative giant steps other DS games have – such as *Nintendogs* and *Mario Kart* – when it's such a

ANATOMY OF A FIGHT

How *Double Team*'s chip-based combat system works...



When The Chips Are Down

When you enter a fight, the first thing you do is assign chips to Megaman, or whichever Navi you're using. Chips confer special abilities, but you can only equip multiples of the same type.



Power Play

Press A to activate the chip power you're equipped with. Some might offer ranged attacks while others might offer assault-based combat, meaning you need to stand right next to your opponent.



Buster Move

You can only use equipped chips once per battle. However, you've also got your Mega Buster on the B button, an ever-ready weapon that can rapid-fire single shots or charge up for a more powerful single blast.



Orb Action

The 'battlefield' is divided into your side and the enemies' side, with nine squares apiece to move around. However, some chips can increase your playing field while shrinking the opposing area.



While *Megaman* veterans will have seen most of this before, it remains engrossing and fun.



Hopefully, the next *Megaman* game on the DS will be all-new and suitably innovative.

"You can even cheer Megaman on when his emotional state becomes too distressed"

generous package. There's an awful lot of game here and those new to the world of *Megaman* will be in for a treat indeed. For the rest of us, though, hopefully Megaman's next appearance will have more in the way of surprises. **+ Jes Bickham**

Nintendo Verdict

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

- Two full games for the price of one
- In-depth fighting system
- Decent multiplayer
- Already seen it all on GBA
- Minimal tweaks don't use the DS's abilities

Sprawling role-playing fun that delivers two full games for your money. Annoyingly, the DS features feel tacked-on and it's quite literally been done before on the GBA.



72%



Tak: The Great Juju Challenge

Format GameCube Publisher THQ
Developer Avalanche Multiplayer 1-2
Release 03 March Price £29.99



Lok won't follow you unless you ask him to. Bit dense like that, see.



This is where Tak needs Lok's help. He can't take them all on.



You'd be surprised how effective a tiny staff can be when it comes to slaying evil beasts.



Some levels contain side quests. Complete this shooting mission for extra Juju points.



Here Tak has to perform a magic chant to make some platforms appear. Just press Left...



Collecting time bonuses while swinging down the vines can be very tricky.



Let Tak deal with all the enemies while Lok smashes their nest with his club.

Look at that make up. Who does he think he is? Pete Burns?



Tak: The Great Juju Challenge

Slightly more fun than the Daz doorstep challenge. Slightly...

This year marks the tenth anniversary of *Super Mario 64*. That's ten whole years since the world's gamers gasped when they saw their favourite plumber bouncing around outside Peach's amazing new 3D castle. Ever since that glorious day, cynics seem to have described most new platformers as *Mario* clones. That may be a bit wide of the mark – after all, if *Crash Bandicoot*, *Rayman* and even *Tak* copied half of *Mario*'s style, humour and

level design there would be some excellent platformers stocking the shelves. What 'Mario clone' actually means is 'average 3D platformer', and that's the genre that *Tak: The Great Juju Challenge* falls into – it's a very solid, good-looking addition to the jump/hack/collect family, but as an adventure it's ultimately uninspiring.

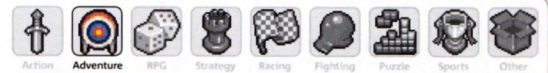
The only novel twist on the theme is that you play as two characters, Tak and Lok. After seeing off Tialoc in *The Staff Of Dreams*, Tak

has nothing to do except enter a tribal tournament called the Great Juju Challenge, so he teams up with Pupanunu's other great warrior, Lok. What this actually means is that the flame-haired duo leap over ledges, slide down vines and whack the odd enemy. And of course they both have different skills – Tak is faster and can leap longer distances, while Lok is a bit simple but can smash stuff and club enemies with his big hammer.

It Taks Two, Baby

Working together (either in a two-player co-op game or by switching between the two characters) is what *Great Juju Challenge* is all about. Sometimes you'll reach a huge chasm that Lok can't jump over, so you'll need to get Tak to find a switch or a treadmill that'll raise a platform for Lok to jump on. Also, while Tak can jump further he's quite small and needs Lok to pick him up and throw him to a higher ledge. This can get quite frustrating as Tak will often miss the target, leading to lots of





TWO CAN PLAY AT THAT GAME

Lok and Tak work together throughout the entire game, but switching between them can be a bit clumsy as you have to be quick on the Z button to make sure that Tak stands on the switch and doesn't follow you...



Most of the early puzzles have one character standing on a floor switch to raise a platform. Or putting a barrel on a floor switch, just to be different.



Now Lok can jump over to the other side of this cave while Tak just stands on the floor switch. Hey, it's a tough job but someone's got to do it.



Lok, armed with his club, is tougher than Tak, so he's best equipped to deal with this mini-boss. Avoid his flames and attack him from behind.



Once Lok has killed the boss, get him to stand on another switch so that Tak can leap over the raised platforms. Teamwork, see?



The checkpoint is too high for either character to reach by themselves, but now they're reunited, Lok can pick up Tak and throw him up there.



How will Tak and Lok get through these spiky plants? By leaping on the back of a rhino, of course.



Tak can use his magic to fire at enemies from a distance.

"This game is so insufferably nice that you'll never actually die"

alternating between the two characters. Things get slightly more sophisticated in the split-screen puzzles, but it's pretty basic stuff.

The real challenge is leaping over the ledges and sticking within the time limit – to beat the clock you'll need to solve the puzzles quickly as well as kill the enemies and make all the jumps first time. But, strangely, although the game pits you against the clock, if you fall short you can just continue without the time limit. You won't get a time bonus at the end, of course, but it makes the whole 'against the clock' thing a bit redundant – just an extra challenge tacked on to make up for the fact the main game is far too simple for anyone over the age of ten.

Hardly any of the puzzles go beyond putting a barrel on a floor switch to open a door for the other character to walk through and the platforming won't see you break into a sweat either – your heart never starts pumping like it does when jumping over the revolving blocks in *Super Mario Sunshine*.

The fact is a good platformer *should* make you angry, it should make you want to smash the pad when you fall to your death for the 50th time, but *The Great Juju Challenge* is just so mild-mannered and friendly that you'll never hate it. Trouble is, you'll never love it either. The only time you'll feel the rage is when you've been a bit too cocky, trying to leap over ledges too quickly, resulting in death when you overshoot a platform. Well, we say death...

Die Harder

See, this game is so insufferably nice that you'll never actually die and you'll never see that Game Over sign slam on to the screen, reminding you of your own ineptitude. Instead when you 'die' you just begin from the last restart point and, as already mentioned, if you run out of time you can carry on. Or switch off...

There isn't that much wrong with *The Great Juju Challenge* – it looks really good, the

puzzles and platforming are fine and the levels are pretty big, but other than the two-player gimmick there's very little invention here. Although it's mildly entertaining, *The Great Juju Challenge* is so inoffensive that it'll never excite you. **+ Tom East**

Nintendo Verdict

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

- ✔ Looks better than most platformers
- ✔ The levels are fairly long
- ✔ Two-player co-op mode works well
- ❑ Hardly original and pretty dull in places
- ❑ The puzzles are a bit too simple

While far better than some recent licensed dross, *The Great Juju Challenge* is never enthralling. Tak and Lok have some way to go before they become the new Mario and Luigi.



65%



Mario Kart DS

Get to the chequered flag first every time with our expert help

Are you getting hammered every time you play online? Does every other racer in the world scream ahead of you? Is your kart flipped by a Homing Shell on every corner? Help is at hand. We reckon we can turn even the most miserable Mario Karter into a boy racer within just ten tips...

Bonus Info

Don't forget: Mario Kart DS is designed to be a multiplayer game so you really should take part in the Wi-Fi matches.

1 TURBO STARTS

Start each race with welcome pace

A good start is essential to making your mark in *Mario Kart*. In the easier classes most of your rivals won't get a good start, but when you get up to the giddy heights of the 150cc races you'll find that every driver in the Mushroom Kingdom will be holding a Turbo Start. Yet to nab the nitro, all you really need is good timing.

You'll notice that every race starts with a countdown. To get a Turbo Start you just need to apply the gas halfway between '2' and '1'. Honestly, it really is that simple. Accelerate too early and you'll spin out, wasting valuable seconds. Accelerate too late and you'll get a regular start. Once you master the timing, you'll boost into the lead every time. Staying there is an entirely different matter, though...



Press the accelerator at just the right time in order to get a quick start.

2 POWERSLIDE TURBO BOOSTS

Feel the need for speed on every corner

Grabbing the lead is easy, it's staying ahead that's the problem. We guarantee you that in the harder classes your opponents will overtake you by screaming round corners, often with coloured flames shooting out of their exhausts. This move is called the Powerslide Turbo Boost and requires you to powerslide in such a way that when you stop sliding you get a boost. It's vital that you master this technique.



With some nifty D-pad waggling you can boost round every corner.

First things first, though. To do a regular powerslide, hold down R when you turn so that your kart hops before sliding. This slide will continue as long as you hold down R, but by steering in the opposite direction for a brief period you can cause nitro flames to come out of your exhausts. Once you've achieved the right colour, you can let go of R to get a speed boost.

Left-hand slide Once you're sliding steer right for a split second, then go back to steering left. If you get it right a set of blue flames will appear. Now quickly press right and left for a second time. The flames will turn orange. Now let go of R.

Right-hand slide Once you're sliding steer left for a split second, then go back to steering right. If you get it right a set of blue flames will appear. Now quickly press left and right for a second time. The flames will turn orange. Now let go of R.

It does take a bit of practice but eventually you'll be able to achieve these free speed boosts on every corner.

3 WEAPONS HANDLING



Who left those bananas lying around the place?

One of the main gameplay aspects that raises *Mario Kart* above countless other racers is its balanced weapons system. Yes, we know, when you're on the receiving end of a Homing Shell it doesn't seem very balanced, but you have just as many opportunities to pick up weapons as anyone else.

Driving through the coloured Item Boxes gives you access to a weapon. Leave the box to its own devices and it'll randomly allocate you a weapon after about five seconds, but if you're in a rush or would rather choose your own weapon, simply tap X a few times to speed up the process.

The trick with weapons is to know when to use them. If you get Triple Homing Shells or Triple Green Shells, you should immediately tap X to form a shield around you. If you get Triple Bananas, tap X straight away to trail them behind you. Bullet Bills and Stars should be saved and used to cruise through difficult areas. Bob-ombs should be used on straights where you can aim at someone. Weapons such as Lightning and Squib should be used straight away. We've gone into more specific detail on some of the weapons over the page.



Auto-pilot and invincibility in one package – few weapons are more potent than the Bullet Bill.

4 ON THE MAP

Eyes in the back of your head

You may not realise the importance of the map screen straight away but you'll soon be singing its praises. By tapping the touch screen you can switch between a top-down view of either the area around you or the entire track. The former can be used to set up attacks – it's perfect for lining up Bananas or a Fake Item Box for your rivals to run into. You can also use it to see items that might be on the other side of a hill. The zoomed-out view is useful for locating the leader of the pack. If you get a Lightning Bolt, why not wait until your opponent is in a tricky area before ruining his day?

Just a quick note about Fake Item Boxes. If you're not too sure about the validity of an Item Box just take a look at the map screen. Fake Item Boxes will be highlighted in red, while real ones appear green.



You can use the map screen to line up your attacks and improve your odds.

Check the position of racers, Item Boxes and more on the map screen.

5 KART ATTACK

Who's the right man for the job?

On the character selection screen you'll notice that you start with eight characters who each have a choice of two karts. Each character and kart has different attributes so you'll have to experiment in order to find your perfect match. Our recommendation comes in the form of Luigi with the first kart.

By completing the various Cups you can open up new modes, new Cups, new characters and new karts, with the ultimate achievement being R.O.B. The Robot as a playable character. Here's what you need to do to open up everything:

Bonus

Star Cup

Your Task

Unlock Star Cup in 50cc, 100cc and 150cc by winning Mushroom and Flower Cup.

Special Cup

Unlock Special Cup in 50cc, 100cc and 150cc by winning Star Cup.

Dry Bones Character

Dry Bones becomes selectable once you win all Nitro Cups in 50cc.

Leaf Cup

Unlock Leaf Cup in 50cc, 100cc and 150cc by winning Shell and Banana Cup.

Lightning Cup

Unlock Lightning Cup in 50cc, 100cc and 150cc by winning Leaf Cup.

Daisy Character

Daisy becomes selectable once you win all Cups in 50cc.

Choose From 3 Karts

Unlock another kart for each character by winning all Nitro Cups in 100cc.

Waluigi Character

Waluigi becomes selectable once you win all Cups in 100cc.

Choose From 7 Karts

Unlock another four karts for each character by winning all Nitro Cups in 150cc.

Mirror Mode

Unlock mirror mode by winning all Cups in 50cc, 100cc and 150cc.

R.O.B. Character

R.O.B. The Robot becomes selectable once you win all Nitro Cups in mirror mode.

Choose From All 36 Karts

Unlock all 36 karts by winning all the Cups in mirror mode.



6 ADVANCED TACTICS BLUE PATROL

How to escape the inevitable

Unless you've been covering away playing Time Trials, you'll have been hit at least once by a Seeker Shell, those pesky weapons that fly through the course intent on exploding against the leader of the pack. Under most circumstances they're unavoidable, but there are a couple of ways of shaking them off your tail...

Tip 1 The obvious trick is to drop out of pole position. You can always hear a Seeker Shell coming so if a rival is close behind, why not lay off the gas for a few seconds? You'll drop into second place, the Seeker Shell will ignore you and you'll be back in pole position in no time.

Tip 2 If you have a Star or a Bullet Bill at your disposal you're sorted, as these two will negate the effects of the explosion. Face it, though – the chances of you having these weapons at the right time are very low.

Tip 3 When you hear an incoming Seeker Shell, drop whatever weapons you have. The Seeker Shell explosion will shake them off you anyway, so by dropping them first you at least stand a chance of a rival getting hit by one of your jettisoned weapons. This won't help you defeat the Seeker but it could stop your rivals capitalising on the situation.

Tip 4 The Seeker's explosion has quite a wide radius, so even if you can't slow down enough to let someone pass you, get close enough to draw them into the explosion. If you're going down, you may as well take as many other racers with you as possible!



The Seeker Shell: more deadly than, um, death.

Bonus Info

Increase your Wi-Fi rating and go up against tougher adversaries by winning matches in Wi-Fi Connection mode.



Check out *Mario Kart DS* in action on next month's DVD.

7 ADVANCED TACTICS GO BANANAS



Turn into one slippery character

Triple Bananas are perfect for screwing with the people behind you, but don't just scatter them everywhere. Instead, look for narrow sections, a tough corner or areas of the track with big drops on either side. Lay the Bananas cleverly across the track to leave no safe route through, thus forcing your opponents into their path. Simple but effective.

There's nothing worse than tailing someone who has three bananas.



8 ADVANCED TACTICS COVER THE REAR

Stand fast for an attack to the back

Any real *Mario Kart* expert is equally clued up in defence as well as offence. Not a lot of people know this, but you can counter a fast-approaching Homing Shell or Green Shell as long as you have something trailing behind you. By holding down the X button (as opposed to just tapping it) you can hold a weapon behind you. This can be done with Bananas, Triple Bananas, Bob-ombs, Homing Shells, Green Shells and Fake Item Boxes, and each one will cancel the effects of one attack.

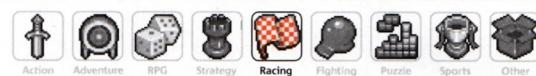


Surround yourself with Red Homing Shells for triple protection from attacks.



Holding Bananas and Green Shells behind you cancels out some attacks.





9 ADVANCED TACTICS CALAMARI, ANYONE?

How to turn a blind eye to the Squid

Blinded by a bit of calamari juice? Here are three top tips on how to dilute the effects of the Squid's thick, black ink.

Tip 1 The only sure way of negating the ink's effects is to boost just as the ink hits. You can either do this by pure fluke (if you just happen to be near a boost pad) or purposefully (if you have a Mushroom). If you get the timing right, the speed of the wind in your face will blow the ink clean off your screen.

Tip 2 If you don't have a Mushroom or aren't near a boost pad, you can still reduce the effects of the ink by jumping around (R) and steering erratically. This results in the ink only hitting a certain part of your screen so you can still see where you're going..

Tip 3 If you do get a face full of gunk, you're better off using the map screen to steer for the next five seconds. It's a little bit tricky, but it's better than spinning off the asphalt.



The only sure-fire way to beat the Squid is to use a Mushroom.

10 ADVANCED TACTICS BOOST MASTERCLASS

Top tips for moving with Mushrooms

There's more than meets the eye when it comes to boosting. In fact, there are four different ways to boost:

1 Race close behind an opponent to get into their slipstream.

2 Mushroom power-ups will give you one free boost.

3 Boost pads and boost ramps will give you a burst of speed.

4 When you fall off the track, Lakitu will pick you up and drop you back. If you apply the gas halfway through the drop, you'll get a boost as soon as you land.



Mushrooms offer a short boost and will get you out of an awkward situation.



Some boost pads force you to go wide and aren't always worth the effort.



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Next Month!

In issue #02 of the **Official Nintendo Magazine**, on sale 16 March, we'll be bringing you the ultimate guide to all the shortcuts in **Mario Kart DS**.

Battalion Wars

Ten ways to win a war

If you want to get an S-Rank in every mission and unlock the bonus missions, be sure to use this essential intel...



1 GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INFANTRY

The first thing you need to do is learn how to use your troops effectively. Starting with the infantry, the Rifle Grunts are weak so place them far away on hills and use them to capture buildings. Also good on hills (or under trees) are the Missile troops – use them to take out ground vehicles or pillboxes at close range. Assault troops are the best and can handle anything from Bazooka troops to Ack-Acks and MG Nests. Flame troops are much the same but shouldn't be used against Acid troops, while Bazooka troops should be deployed to take out ground vehicles. Finally, Mortar troops are decent all-rounders – good for attacking ground troops and vehicles or defending a post in sentry mode.



Defending a bridge? Destroying a tank? Pick the right man for the job.

2 GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VEHICLES

Obviously, you can use your tank to squash soliders, but it can also take out watchtowers, Flame and Rifle soldiers, and some enemy tanks, although you'll need three Tanks to take care of one enemy Heavy Tank. Light Recon are only good for taking out the Rifle Grunts who are keeping guard on the hills, while Heavy Recon are only really useful to draw tank fire away from your units. The Anti-Air Vehicles and Artillery should be dumped on hills with some Missile Vets protecting them from tanks. Saving the best for last, the Battlestation can take out Rocket and Bazooka troops – as long as you're supported by Missile Vets (to take out the Gunships), you'll be fine in one of these. Make sure you aim manually with R and that you're pointing towards your target when you shoot.



Time to catch a few grunts in your caterpillar tracks...



The Battlestation is the most powerful vehicle. Enjoy it!

3 GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PLANES

The Gunship is great for taking out vehicles and infantry but you should avoid Missile Vets, Anti-Aircraft Vehicles and Fighters as they're vulnerable to air attacks. It's a shame that you can't control T-Coverters, but they're good for reinforcements and they can destroy enemy craft easily. Make sure you keep close to the ground when flying Bombers or Fighters. Fighters' long-range attacks are inaccurate but they're ideal for destroying ground troops, while Bombers are slow and vulnerable to anti-air fire but they're very powerful and should be used to take out Battlestations. The Stratodestroyer is like a mix of the Bomber and Fighter and can take out vehicles and aircraft easily – don't leave it exposed though, as it's vulnerable to attacks from behind.



Strategic plane use can lead to very satisfying death-dealing.



4 GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

Now we've told you about the vehicles, you'd expect to be able to delegate and let them get on with the job. Wrong! The computer-controlled men just aren't as good as you; although they can be trusted to take out smaller units of Rifle troops, if you want to keep your stats healthy for the S-Rank you should take on the tougher units personally – so if you need to knock out Bazooka troops, get in a tank and do it yourself. For the same reason you should always hog the most powerful units. It's more fun controlling Assault Vets than rubbish Rifle men, but you'll do more damage than computer-controlled units so you'll get the job done far quicker.



If you want those troops wiped out properly, do it yourself.

5 KEEP YOUR INFANTRY SAFE

Before you go into battle, make sure you find out who you're fighting against. If you're taking on tanks, keep your Rifle and Flame troops well away from the action, always making sure that you put your original force back into sentry mode whenever you switch control. Also, if you're on a mission that contains a lot of capture points, you need protect your infantry as the more men you put on a point, the quicker it'll be captured. This could shave vital seconds off your time.



Be careful if you're on a mission with lots of capture points...



... as the more troops you put on a point, the faster it will be taken.

6 RISK YOUR LIFE

You already know that you can't hang around at the back and let your squad do all the work, but another good way to keep your men alive is to draw the fire away from them. The enemy will try to kill you before going for anyone else, so even if you're controlling a weak infantry unit you can go on a suicide mission by having a few pops at a more powerful unit like a Battlestation. This will draw its attention away from your other units, giving them the opportunity to attack.



Take one for the team by drawing fire away from your men.

7 LOOK AFTER YOUR VEHICLES

Before starting a mission, you should choose to command the vehicles with the least amount of health. If you don't control a weakened tank you risk losing it early in battle as the computer isn't that good at avoiding enemy fire and you'll be able to drive to the Medpacks and Jerry Cans far more quickly.



When choosing which tank to control, make sure you pick the weakest...



This way you can take better care of it than your computer-controlled troops.

8 HEAL YOUR MEN

You won't have much spare time if you're going for the S-Rank, but once you've seen off an enemy army make sure you give your own troops a quick health check-up and go on a Jerry Can/Medpack-grabbing mission. You have to be quick but on some missions you won't be able to complete them without certain troops, and if they've taken a kicking it makes more sense to heal them than to risk it for a few extra seconds off your time. You don't have to heal your men fully – as long as they're over 70% healthy you should be fine.



Look after your men and they'll look after you. Which only seems fair.

9 SWITCH MODES

When you're stationary – say you're protecting a base – make sure all your units are in sentry mode. Strangely, even if you're not moving, your units will only occasionally shoot at enemies when they're in follow mode, but put them in sentry mode and they'll shoot continuously at anyone in their line of fire. However, if you're being attacked by Bombers or Artillery, switch to follow mode or you'll become an easy target.



Put your troops in sentry mode and they'll fire at anyone (not you, mind).

10 KEEP YOUR SPEED UP

If you want to save time and work towards that S-Rank you must constantly keep on the move – even if this means venturing out alone with no support. You won't have time to wait for your squad to catch you up after they've taken out Rifle men, so tell your men to attack and then you should get on with another task – as soon as they've finished off the enemy they'll follow you straight away, so you won't be on your own for too long. Then it's back to base for a celebratory shandy.



Sometimes you've just got to go all Rambo and head out on a mission alone.

Mario Smash Football

Top 10 match-winning tips

Follow these tips and you'll be playing like Chelsea before long. If Chelsea were armed with Bananas and Shells, that is...



1 SAVE YOUR ITEMS FOR SUPER STRIKES

Super Strikes are worth two goals, but once you get to professional mode you'll find it difficult to find enough time and space to power one up. So before shooting, use a Green, Red or Blue Shell to give yourself the seconds you need to build up your shot. When you do shoot, if you stop the marker on the left-hand green bar the one on the right gets bigger, making things slightly simpler for you. Finally, if the computer has one weakness in rookie and professional mode it's that it's not exactly alert at kick-off, so fire off a Super Strike as soon as the whistle blows and you may score.



If you mis-time your Super Strike the shot may stun the keeper.



Stop both markers in the bars and you'll score two goals every time.

2 PRACTISE YOUR LOBS

In rookie mode you can get along by passing the ball along the ground, but try that in professional mode and you'll be tackled every time you have the ball, so you need to lob the ball in the air and start volleying it across the pitch. All you need to do is hold down L while passing and your opponent will find it much harder to intercept the ball. Then when you're near the goal, press B to head or do an overhead kick. It's flashy *and* it works.



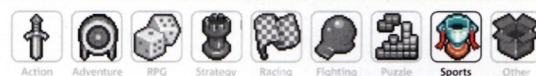
It looks really flash, but you just need to press B to do an overhead kick.

3 PERFECT YOUR PASSING

You'll notice the Perfect Pass stat on the screen after a game, and you'll no doubt be pleased to hear these passes are surprisingly simple to use and can often lead to a goal. Get some one-touch passing going and when you've got a player in some space press B before the ball reaches him to shoot. Get a shot in and you'll earn a notch on your Perfect Pass stat. It's not purely cosmetic though – shooting after a Perfect Pass will give you a lot more power and you're more likely to find the back of the net. Result.



If you can add some curl to your shot you're more likely to score.



4 SORT OUT YOUR SHOOTING

If you haven't got time to pull off a Super Strike or there are no opportunities for Perfect Passes, there are still plenty of ways to score. You should learn how to curve the ball by pressing left or right when charging with B – you'll find that your supporting players are better at curving long shots than your star. If the keeper is lying on the floor after parrying a Super Strike you should always press L while shooting to lob him. Another great scoring tip is to run towards the boards at the end of the pitch, turn back and run to the middle of the penalty area and shoot. Basically, you always need to change the angle of your runs just before shooting.



Run back from the by-line and shoot for an easy goal.

5 GET SOME SKILLS

Once you move up the difficulty levels you'll need to start using some skill moves. You shouldn't use a fake shot often, but if you're very close to the keeper and can't get a shot in, press the Y button to do a dummy and tap the ball into the empty net. You can also do a dummy when a defender is about to tackle you to create a bit of space for a Super Strike.



You should only try a dummy when you're very close to the keeper.



If you try any other time, it's just a wasted shooting opportunity.

6 USE YOUR ITEMS WISELY

You can switch between your items using the Z button. You'll need to do this as you shouldn't just fire off your items at random moments. Save the Red Shells for when your opponent is one-on-one with the keeper and use your Green and Blue ones to knock out players at close range. Drop Bananas behind you when you're on the counter attack and save Bob-ombs to chuck into the middle of a crowded penalty area to create an open goal without even trying. Finally, Chain Chomps are best for taking out the opposition – save these for the dying seconds of the game.



Clear the penalty area of defenders with a well-timed Bob-omb strike.

7 SAVE YOUR SHROOMS FOR SLIDEYS

If you've got men behind the ball, sliding tackles are far better than Big Hits as you'll come away with the ball and leave the man (or mushroom) lying on the ground. Always try to tackle from the front as you could set up a good counter-attacking opportunity. Finally, save your Mushrooms for sliding tackles as a Turbo Tackle is far more effective.



Sliding tackles are better than Big Hits as you'll come away with the ball.



Put in a sliding tackle here and Luigi will get frazzled by the electric fence.

8 THINK BIG

If all is lost and if your opponent is one-on-one with the keeper with a few seconds left on the clock, your only option is a Big Hit. Even if your opponent hasn't got the ball, you can ram him out of the way by pressing L. You won't necessarily come away with the ball, but your opponent will be stunned and taken out of play for a few seconds. But go easy on the Big Hits – every time you pull off one of these dirty moves your opponent will gain an item, so unless it's absolutely necessary you should always use a sliding tackle.



Prevent Luigi from scoring with an off-the-ball challenge (or foul, if you will).

9 IF IN DOUBT...

...Get it out. If you're 1-0 up in the final minute and the ball is loose in your own area, don't mess about trying to do a Perfect Pass or set up a Super Strike – just hoof the ball up the pitch. Hopefully your striker will pick it up, but if not, at least you've relieved the pressure for a few seconds. There's nothing more galling than giving away a game because your showboating moves backfired.



Don't mess around trying a fancy flick or a dummy here. Just get rid.

10 GO EASY ON THE SUPER STRIKES

Finally, it's tempting to try getting two goals with every shot, but if you're constantly trying to do Super Strikes you'll probably end up having fewer shots at goal as you'll be tackled more, so you need to work out when it's wise to use them. We think it's best to get a couple of goals ahead first and then you can start getting flashy and building on your lead. Also, if you're 1-0 down with ten seconds left, there really is no option – go for a Super Strike.



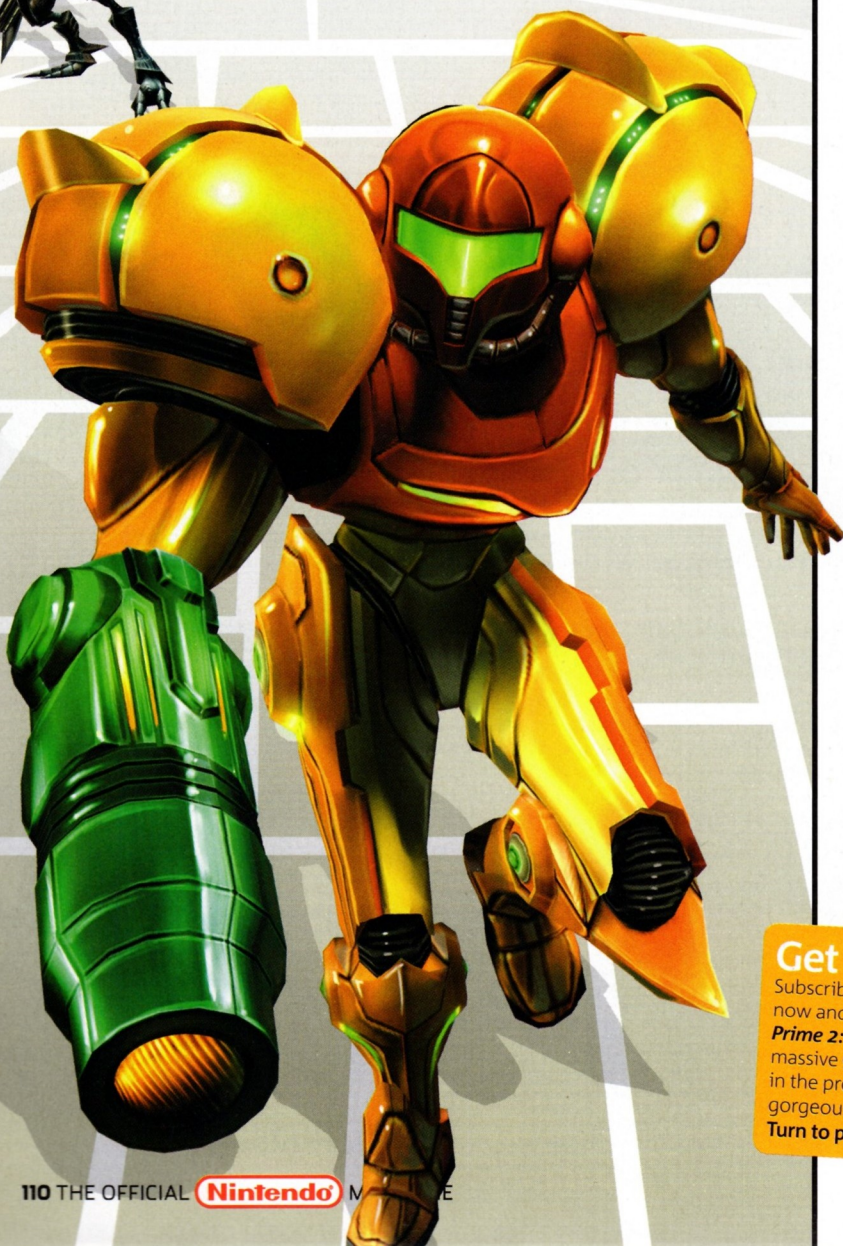
Peach slams in a Super Strike to save the game.



Metroid Prime 2: Echoes

Get the most out of this month's free subscription gift

Can't wait for Samus to make her debut on DS? Subscribe to the **Official Nintendo Magazine** today, get *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* for free, and use our expert guide to the essentials of power-suited bounty-hunting...



1 LOOK AROUND

Keep your eyes on the prize

The first and most important thing to remember about *Metroid Prime* games is that they are primarily adventure games, so you won't get anywhere by simply shooting everything in sight. Samus' key weapon is her Scanner and by tapping left on the D-pad you can equip the Scan Visor. This visor allows you to interact with computer terminals and scan your surroundings. Simply look at an object that appears highlighted and hold down the L trigger to scan it. You'll learn about enemy weaknesses, unlock doorways and find out exactly what happened on this desolate planet, all by scanning.

All the important items that you've scanned (enemies, plant-life, spatial anomalies, equipment) will be logged in the Logbook (in the options menu). Aside from being essential to progression in the game, there are other incentives to complete the Logbook; once you achieve a certain percentage of scans you'll be treated to bonus artwork in the Gallery section.



There are several different visors in the game, including the Scan Visor.



Enemies and objects of interest will become highlighted.

2 TAKE A DEEP BREATH

How to survive in the poisonous netherworld

The main gameplay dynamic in *Metroid Prime 2* revolves around jumping between Dark Aether and Light Aether. While Samus can exist in Light Aether's atmosphere, she can't breathe the putrid air in the dark realm. Every second you spend in the dark dimension you'll be losing energy but you can replenish your suit's energy levels by standing inside pockets of clean air. The Luminoth have strategically placed crystals in the dark realm. Simply shoot them to create a small, protective bubble.

These bubbles are temporary and will need to be recharged (just shoot them again) every 10-15 seconds. The Power Beam and the Light Beam will work just fine when it comes to recharging crystals but the Dark Beam will cover them in slime, thus making it much harder to charge them. You should be aware of this fact, as enemies will try to cover the crystals in dark slime if you let them get close enough.



These pockets of clean air are key to your survival in the putrid Dark Aether air.

Get Metroid For Free!

Subscribe to **Official Nintendo Magazine** now and grab yourself a free copy of *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* on GameCube. Scoring a massive **94%** and earning itself a Gold Award in the process, *Echoes* is the sort of drop-dead gorgeous game you simply *must* play. Turn to page 78 to grab your free copy.





3 ADVANCED BOSS TACTICS

Going up against the first dark boss: Jump Guardian

Compared to other bosses in the game, this first Dark Aether boss is actually easy to defeat, though at this stage in the game it might seem like quite a tough fight. This battle will require you to master the art of circling, charging, darting and jumping to the side. The Jump Guardian is actually very similar to the Warrior Ing, which you will already have encountered. The only difference is that it can jump to great heights.

While it circles you, use the charge attack (hold down A) to damage it. When it feels the pain it will start to charge up, which means it's ready to jump up to the ledges above. It will switch to a beam attack once it's up

there, so lock onto it and dodge the beam by jumping to the side. When the boss jumps down, you should immediately start charging. Upon landing it will send out a shock wave. Lock onto the boss, jump over the wave and unleash a charge attack.

After a few rounds of this behaviour, the boss starts to speed up, and instead of jumping up to a ledge it will jump over your head and land behind you. By the end of the battle the boss will be moving too fast for regular Power Beam attacks and you'll need to resort to missiles that lock on and follow him.



Your first tough encounter in the dark realm is the Jump Guardian.

4 LOST IN SPACE

A compass won't be much use here

There will be times when you simply don't know where to go next. It may be because you didn't take any notice when the hint came up on the screen or it may simply be that you've managed to miss a room along the way. The map screen should be your first port of call whenever you get lost. Use it to identify which rooms you haven't been in. The colour coding let you know what rooms you can enter and what locks you can open.

You should also look out for question marks – they'll appear in rooms that need investigating immediately, and you'll always get a message on your visor when your long-range scanners pick up something interesting. Don't worry if you miss these messages, though, as they will reappear every now and then as a reminder.



You can download maps and other data from certain computer terminals.

5 ADVANCED ENEMY TACTICS

Defeating those tough enemies with ease

Later on in the game, the Ing Horde start to get annoying. Their more advanced forms can withstand quite a pummelling but there is one way to suck the life out of them. Stand near a crystal and lure the enemy towards you. Once it's in range, shoot the crystal and activate the protective bubble. If the enemy is inside this bubble when it opens up you'll do massive amounts of damage. Even the toughest of foes won't last for long after a bubble wrap attack.



The Ing Horde... a bunch of ugly mothers at the best of times.

6 DARK VS LIGHT

The many different uses of the Light and Dark Beams

You start off with one main weapon: the Power Beam. By the time you reach the halfway stage of the game you'll have found both the Light and Dark Beams. These beams have several different uses:

Opening Doors: if you look on the map you'll see coloured doorways. Black doors can only be opened with the Dark Beam and white doors can only be opened with the Light Beam.

Opening Portals: light and dark portals can only be activated by shooting them with the relevant beam.

Defeating Enemies: while all enemies can be damaged by the Power Beam, you'll find that some weapons are more effective against certain enemies. All creatures of the dark realm fear the Light Beam whereas the Dark Beam will do very little damage. Inversely, all Light Aether foes fear the Dark Beam.

You should also remember that both the Dark and Light Beam require ammo. If you're getting low on a certain type of ammo, defeat enemies then shoot the crates with your depleted weapon to be rewarded with the correct type of ammo.



Man-made portals such as this one can be activated by pressing a switch...



... while natural portals need to be opened with the Light or Dark Beam.



Portals to Light Aether are turquoise while those that lead to Dark Aether are black.



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Next Month!

In issue #02 of **Official Nintendo Magazine**, on sale 16 March, we'll be returning to *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* to guide you through some of the later boss battles and help you find the upgrades for the Power, Light and Dark Beams. See you then.

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"So what exactly is the Directory? In a nutshell... it's unexplainable"

Directory

Your presence is mandatory... your opinion is gold

So what exactly is the Directory? In a nutshell... it's unexplainable. In a wheelbarrow, however, it's the part of the magazine that we hand over to you.

It's a place where you can have your say, take part in nonsensical competitions (that Lee thought up at 3am), get excited about Nintendo Wi-Fi and show the world your

gaming skills. It's also the place where we pool together all the essential information we think you'll need to make your life even better. Enjoy!

114-115 LETTERS

We want your feedback. Tell us what you think of the mag, tell us what you want to see in the mag and voice your opinions on the videogaming world.



120-121 SWAG

The way we figure it, if we give away 30 prizes then your chance of winning something increases by 30 times... so that's what we've done. Skip there right now to win, win, WIN!



116-117 WI-FI

Trust Nintendo to show the rest of the industry how to do online gaming properly. Find out what all the fuss is about, then grab yourself a copy of Mario Kart DS and join in all the fun.



122-123 CHALLENGES

Sometimes the knowledge that you've got particularly honed skills in a certain area just isn't enough. Everybody else should know it too. At those times, you really should come here.



118-119 RETRO

It's not all about the here and now. Every month we'll take a look back at a blast from the past. This month we've got a tough teenager who has been around for an age: Megaman.



124-129 RATED

Want to know what games you should absolutely, positively own? This is the place for you. Six pages rammed with the best 50 games on GameCube, DS and GBA.



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Tabloid Tales

People say that *Resident Evil 4* is too violent to be on a Nintendo console. And we all know from the tabloid newspapers that there's a direct correlation between violence in videogames and violent street crime committed by 'disaffected youth' (ahem). But I've finished the game (time taken: 21 hours, died: 47 times, hit accuracy: 87%) and I've never demanded cash with menaces from a stranger. I have from my parents on a few occasions, but times are hard.

If anything, I'm more likely to randomly assault someone in the street after losing to the computer in *Mario Smash Football*, which seems to have as much to do with

luck as it does skill.

Steve Walters, Newcastle

There's a moral in there somewhere. A free copy of the tabloid-baiting Mario Smash Football goes to the first reader who spots it.

The Name Game

So it looks like the Revolution isn't going to be called that name any more. Far be it for me to question the wisdom of the big N, but I think Revolution is a pretty apt name for a console that's set to redefine the way we play games. I can only imagine that Nintendo has an even better name up its sleeve that it will reveal closer to the time.

But, on the off-chance that it's

not that organised, may I throw my hat into the ring with a few suggestions of my own? How about the N-ovator, N-surrection or N-surgency. Clever, no?

Samuel Docking, via email

So you've basically looked up 'Revolution' in a thesaurus and replaced the 'in' part of the resulting words with an upper-case 'n'. One word: N-competent.

Reality Bites

While it's irrefutable that the PSP is a more powerful machine than the DS and is capable of pulling off PS2-standard graphics, it got me thinking; what are 'good graphics'? Certainly the PSP is capable of

producing more realistic graphics than the DS, but is realism the only form of good graphics? I personally don't think so.

Yes, games like *Shadow Of The Colossus* on PS2 and the *Resident Evil* games on GameCube are incredibly realistic and pretty, but for me their awe is on a par with games such as *Wind Waker* and the *Advance Wars* series. Games like *Animal Crossing* barely push the GameCube to its performance limits, but still have a certain something that would simply be ruined if executed any other way. *WarioWare* would not have the same appeal if Nintendo attempted to make it look ultra-realistic.

Of course there's such thing as bad graphics, but purely because a game doesn't look photo-realistic or have a million terraflopping polygons for a door handle, it doesn't necessarily mean it has bad graphics.

I'm not saying that we should abandon realism in favour of simple graphics – *Resident Evil 4* just wouldn't be the same in 2D – but I'm saying that we shouldn't abandon simple graphics in favour of realism, purely because it's possible. And we shouldn't (as a whole) mark games down for having simpler graphics.

So with the advent of the next-gen consoles, with all companies playing the 'my graphics are better than yours' game, list in your mind some of your favourite games. How

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Royal Rumble

My advice to anyone saving for a Revolution: check your home contents insurance before investing in one later this year. Just think of the amount of breakages likely to occur as a direct result of waving the Freehand controller and nunchuck around the place. Mum's expensive crystal vase poised perilously on the coffee table next to the sofa, Dad's Charles and Diana souvenir wedding plate on the mantelpiece, my nine-year-old brother who's a little over waist height and has already violently connected with my elbow on several occasions – they're all done for. Might as well write them all off now. Innovative controllers are all well

and good, but I can't help but think Nintendo is guilty of overlooking the costly consequences.

Christian Thomas, via email

You've either got a really small living room or really long arms. So which one is it? We need to know.



Wave goodbye – quite literally – to those heirlooms as you brandish your Freehand controller.

"The only game I want this year is Zelda. Has Nintendo given up on the GameCube?"

Charlie Anderson

many of them that you've listed have 'simple' graphics? Quite a few, I'll wager. And did it make them worse games? No, didn't think so.

Tom McShane, via email

We're getting to the stage now where pretty graphics and sumptuous sound are a given. However, in the same way that crisp sounds are nothing without decent music, 100-million-polygon scenes are nothing without great gameplay. It's all about striking the balance, a skill that Nintendo just happens to have mastered.

Life Beyond Zelda

I've been a Nintendo fan since *GoldenEye* on the N64. I mean, I'm not like a die-hard fan or anything, I do have a PS2 as well, but I really like Nintendo's games and some of my favourite games over the past few years are on GameCube.

I'm a bit worried at the moment, though. The only GameCube game I want this year is *Zelda*, and even that's disappeared into nowhere. Has Nintendo given up on the GameCube or something?

Charlie Anderson, London

*It's true things are slowing down as far as GameCube releases go, but there's more to look forward to than just *Zelda*. *Baten Kaitos 2*, *Chibi-Robo*, *Odama* and *Sonic Riders* should keep you busy over the summer, and we're expecting a bunch of new titles to be announced at E3 in May. Trust us, there's some good stuff coming.*

Turn On, Stay In, Don't Go Out

I've really started getting into *Fire Emblem* over the last few weeks and can't put it down. It was a bit slow at first, but once you get familiar with the characters and get a few battles under your belt it really pulls you in.

The problem is that my parents are giving me hassle for spending too much time indoors and are on my back to go to the park or play football after school or something. I want to work for a games magazine

one day and so my time's much better spent with *Fire Emblem*. How can I tell my parents this?

Chris Ramsey, Biggleswade

*Scare tactics. Tell them that local parks are commonly frequented by drug users and pimps and that if they value your safety and don't want you dragged into the seedy criminal underworld of Biggleswade, they'll allow you to remain in the safety of your bedroom playing *Fire Emblem* for as long as you like.*

Wanted: Girl Gamer

I find that as I get older I spend more time trying to impress girls and less time playing games. It's inevitable, I guess, but it does mean that I haven't had a chance to play games like *Battalion Wars* and even *Metroid Prime 2*. I just don't have the time. The only solution is to find myself a girl who wants to play games as much as I do. You lot are professionals – how do you get around it?

Chris Ritchie, via email

*Arm yourself with a pink DS and a copy of *Nintendogs* and you'll never go home alone.*

The Missing Link

I'm annoyed because I keep reading that *Twilight Princess* is coming out for Revolution, but I might not even get a Revolution. I bought a GameCube because I like *Zelda* and I don't see why I should buy a new console just for this game. I don't understand why Nintendo would do this to fans when *Twilight Princess* has been listed as a GameCube game for ages.

Dan Richards, Glasgow

*You've got the wrong end of the stick here, Dan. *Twilight Princess* is a GameCube title – that fact won't change. It's entirely possible, given that the Revolution will play GameCube games, that Nintendo may include Revolution controller compatibility, but the GameCube version remains Nintendo's priority no matter what you might have heard elsewhere. +*

TXT THE EDITOR

Start your message ONM LETTERS and send to 87103 (25p all networks).

I don't like dogs. Can U get nintendo to make Nintendolphin, nintendonkey or Nintendinosaur then I would buy it. Thx.

Steve B

Isn't Nintendo calling their next console 'Revolution' a bit arrogant? Its like Sony calling their console the Playstation Brilliant.

Dan from Leeds

I wanted to book a week off work to play *Twilight Princess* but no one knows when its coming out. I'll just have to fake an illness instead. How easy is leprosy?

Phil@GameStation

DS is the best handheld ever. Hope Nintendo make it a bit sexier tho like they did with GameBoy Micro.

Steph G

I got a plumber to fit my new bathroom and it cost more than the tub, sink and loo put together. Mario must be minted – especially if he does emergency call-outs.

Penny Less

Isn't it about time Nintendo updated Mario's facial fuzz? The moustache is a relic of the 70s and has no place in modern gaming.

SP in Cardiff

IN A WORD

Short answers for short questions

Will my GameCube controllers and memory cards work with Revolution?

Jason Hughes, Brentwood

Yes.

Trauma Center's been out in Japan for ages – when do we get it here?

Darren Fowler, via email

April.

I'm having a load of trouble getting the Wi-Fi USB Connector up and running. Where can I get help?

Shaun Coleman, Leeds

Page 116.

Which has sold more in the UK – PSP or DS?

Lee MacPherson, via email

DS.

Is *Splinter Cell: Double Agent* definitely coming out on GameCube?

Dan Herring, via email

Yes.

What's the fastest land mammal?

Jake Marsh, Ely

Cheetah.

And what's its top speed?

Jake Marsh, Ely

Nearly 70mph.

Nintendo®

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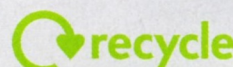
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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

Wi-Fi



"No wires, no subscription fee, no paperwork... in short, no hassle"

Challenge the entire world courtesy of Nintendo

GET THE WI-FI KNOW-HOW

To find out more about WFC, visit these websites...



Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection
www.nintendowifi.co.uk



The Cloud (Official Partner)
www.thecloud.net



BT Openzone (Official Partner)
www.btopenzone.com

For years, Nintendo has kept its distance from mainstream online gaming, mainly due to the costs involved for gamers and the fact that suitable technology hasn't been available. With the DS though, Nintendo has given us a games machine that can jump online wirelessly and enable us to play against people from all over the world, for free. But how do you take advantage of it? That's what these two pages are here for...

What's It All About?

The Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection (WFC) is the name given to Nintendo's online service. If you own a DS and an online-compatible game you can play against DS owners from all over the world. Seriously, that's all you need. No wires, no subscription fee, no paperwork... in short, no hassle.

Two online-compatible games are on the shelves – *Mario Kart DS* and *Tony Hawk's American Sk8land* – and

this will be the year where the service really takes off; we estimate that by the end of 2006 a large percentage of DS games will boast online options. The big online experiences to look forward to are *Tetris DS*, *Animal Crossing: Wild World* and *Metroid Prime Hunters*, all of which are covered in more detail on these very pages.

What Goes Around...

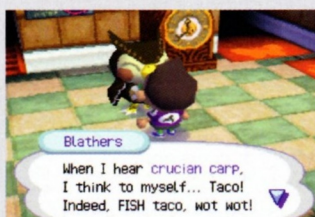
Right now, WFC is available exclusively for the DS. However, there's another machine in the wings that's preparing to take advantage of the system. Nintendo's Revolution will have similar networking technology to the DS, and when it arrives at the end of the year it will also use WFC for online matches, downloading demos and downloading entire games from the Virtual Console library (NES, SNES and N64 titles). This really will be an exciting year for online gaming.

COMING SOON THREE WI-FI HITS TO LOOK FORWARD TO



Tetris DS

The world's most popular puzzle game returns but now it's online. Instead of aligning blocks on your own you can face thousands of people in a test of mental dexterity. *Tetris DS* is due in April.



Animal Crossing: Wild World

Having sold over three million copies in the US and Japan since it launched last year, Nintendo's life sim is the most successful WFC game so far. By going online you can invite people to your village or even grow up in the same town with three other friends. *Wild World* is out in March and you can find out more on page 48.



Metroid Prime Hunters

After two fantastic first-person outings on the GameCube, Samus Aran makes her way onto the DS in May. There's a dedicated single-player adventure but for the purposes of WFC we're more interested in the four-player Deathmatch options. You can read more about *Hunters* on page 60.



GET YOURSELF CONNECTED

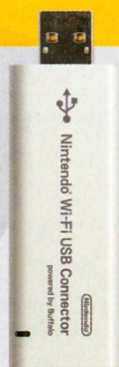
Here's a brief rundown of what you need to do in order to get online (but come back next month to get all the in-depth WFC info you need):

1. WFC-Compatible Game

It's obvious really, but it needs to be said: you must have a DS and a compatible game such as *Mario Kart DS* or *Tony Hawk's American Sk8land* in order to connect.

2. Find A Hot Spot

Nintendo has teamed up with McDonald's, Coffee Republic and several other high-street companies to ensure that you can make a connection in their restaurants. If you can see the Wi-Fi logo in these places, it's as simple as switching on your DS and selecting the WFC option. Then you can start *Mario Karting* with strangers over a skinny mocha.





Friend Codes

Some online challenges pit you against people of a similar skill level, but if you want to go up against a particular person you have to share Friend Codes. By doing this you can be sure that you're only going up against people you want to play with.



Professional Tips

If you own *Mario Kart DS* and haven't tried out the online options you really should get your arse in gear. Read through our tips on page 102 so that you're the best you can be before challenging anyone else. You don't want to look silly, now...



Revolution Online

The Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection has been put in place for the DS, but it will also provide the basis for the Revolution's global multiplayer and Virtual Console download service. It's the beginning of something huge, and you'll hear about it here first.



www.officialnintendomagazine.co.uk

It's not always easy to find a large group of people to swap Friend Codes with, so why not jump on the **ONM** forums where you can chat to hundreds of like-minded people and swap Friend Codes with every single one of them?

NOW PLAYING: MARIO KART DS

Nintendo's racer sets the online example



Of the two Wi-Fi-compatible games available at the moment, *Mario Kart DS* is by far the most popular. You can play against up to three other people in a variety of modes:

- **Friends** Play with people you've swapped Friend Codes with rather than complete strangers.
- **Rivals** Play against people with a similar skill level. The more races



you win the higher your skill level will be.

- **Continental** Only play against European players.
 - **Worldwide** Play against people from all over the world.
- Next month we'll be printing Friend Codes for the **ONM** team so that you can test your skills against us!

NOW PLAYING: AMERICAN SK8LAND

Skate, battle 'n' roll on a global scale



Tony Hawk's American Sk8land gives players the opportunity to go head-to-head with others skaters. You can go up against friends, friends' ghosts and you can also post your high scores and statistics on the scoreboard.

But it's not all about being competitive.



You can also teach your mates how to pull off brand new tricks by uploading your replays. Someone else can then try to replicate your runs in order to be as frankly awesome as you. It's quite a cool part of the game because you get to be part of a *Tony Hawk's* community as well as pick up some tips for nailing those killer moves.

3. Broadband

If you want to play over the Wi-Fi Connection at home you need to have wireless broadband installed in order to make things simple. If you have broadband via a cable you'll need to buy a Nintendo Wi-Fi USB Connector, a small device that plugs into your PC and enables it to transmit a wireless signal. Now you can play worldwide *Mario Kart* in the bath, the shed... anywhere!

4. No Broadband?

If you don't have broadband of any kind at home you can only play online by visiting a hot spot. We'll be listing all the relevant hot spots in next issue's WFC feature, just in time for the release of *Animal Crossing: Wild World*.



NEXT MONTH

The online antics pick up the pace in issue two

In anticipation of the UK launch of *Animal Crossing* we'll be bringing you a massive feature explaining exactly how to go online and where to find hot spots in your area. We'll also be bringing you the Friend Codes for the **ONM** team so you can test your skills against the people who do it for a living.

Retro

A look at the past that made Nintendo great today

Megaman

What happens when you ask one of the creators of *Street Fighter* to hop genres and create a platformer? You get *Megaman*, of course! *Street Fighter* guru Keiji Inafune was originally asked to design a game starring Japanese anime legend Astro Boy, but when licensing talks broke down Capcom dreamed up its very own cutesy robot boy. Names like Knuckles Kid, Mighty Kid and Rainbow Man were bandied about before the team settled on Rockman (*Megaman*'s Japanese name). Inafune-san drew the name from 'rock 'n' roll', and has reportedly never been happy with the 'Megaman' moniker.

There was just one hitch when it came to *Megaman*'s debut: the game that the team delivered – 1987's NES

Megaman – was a flop. Inafune-san pleaded for time to work on an improved sequel between coding duties on a title Capcom believed was much more important – *Professional Baseball Murder Mystery*. It paid off: *Megaman II* was a smash, and the franchise went from strength to strength, helped by an annual competition in Japan and the US where fan-designed bosses were chosen to appear in the next game.

It's odd that the fan-art idea wasn't extended to the games' boxes: the first two *Megaman* games have the ugliest cover images ever. Official!



LITTLE BOY BLUE

It's taken 19 years and 37 games to make this hero the Megaman he is today...



Megaman II (NES, 1988)

The breakthrough game, with the man mega facing off against eight Robot Masters. So tough, Capcom had to build an easy mode into the US and European versions.



Megaman In Dr. Wily's Revenge (GB, 1991)

Grey-and-green *Megaman* with a mash-up of bosses from the first two NES games and a 'stepping stone' ability to avoid embarrassing tumble-off-a-platform deaths.



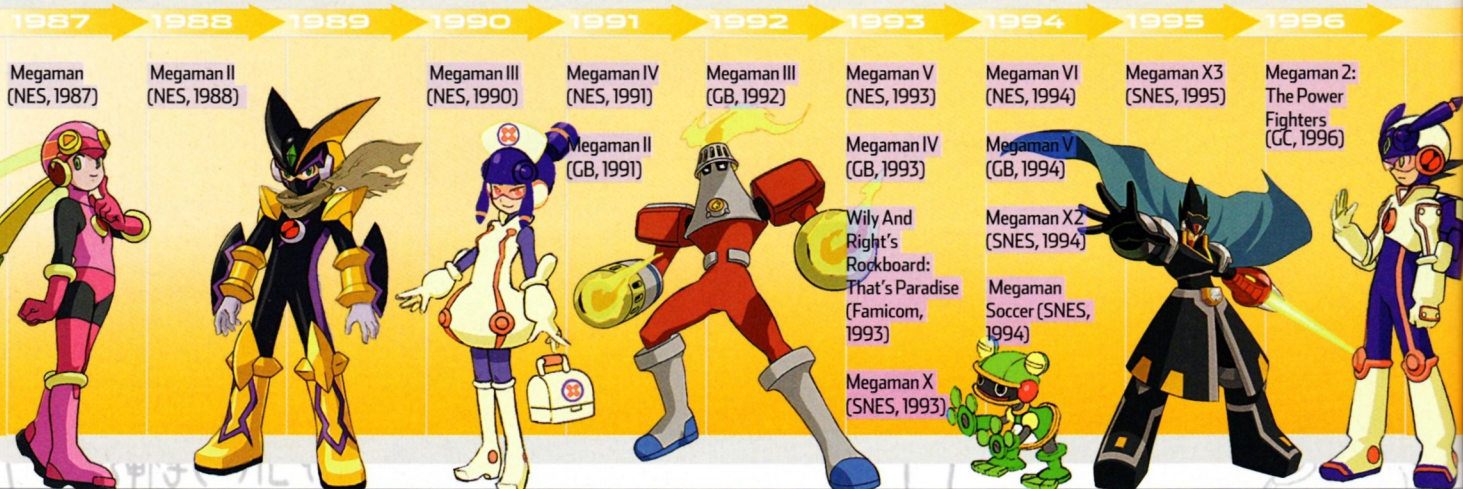
Megaman X (SNES, 1993)

An archaeologist discovers a long-dormant *Megaman*, names him 'X', sets him off some familiar boss-quashing platforming action and a 2D jump-around classic is born.



Megaman Soccer (SNES, 1994)

Dramatic turnaround – *Megaman* decides to settle his differences with the Robot Masters by kicking a ball around a pitch. The result: *Smash Football*-style football craziness.





Megaman models this season's superhero suit (only available in blue).



He may be small but you really don't want to mess with Megaman.

ANIME ANTICS

You can't get Megaman off your screen just by switching off your GameCube. His TV appearances have ranged from a chubby green-clad kid in *Captain N The Gamemaster* to comedy three-episode adventure *Upon A Star* (made in 1993 but only released in 2002). But it's *Megaman NT Warrior* that's given the robokid

his biggest telly break. Based loosely on the *Battle Network* games, it stars Megaman as an artificially intelligent bot who races around the Net battling viruses. In the US version, FireMan became TorchMan – seemingly to avoid offending firemen.

ROBOTAT

The popularity of the boy in blue has led to Japanese toy shops being crammed with Megaman-related merchandise. From remote-controlled cars to poseable figures designed to punch each other's lights

out inside a boxing ring, there's all kinds of stuff for Megaman fans. If you're a dedicated retrohead for whom a Megaman pillow is going a tad too far, there are other options – www.80stees.com sells an "I beat the

Master Robots!" T-shirt; the same site lets you have five Megaman bosses lined up identity parade-style in a parody of *The Usual Suspects* emblazoned across your chest. Hey, each to their own...

THE FAMILY TREE

- Keiji Inafune was the producer on Zelda game *The Minish Cap*.
- Most *Megaman* boxes were designed by Michiko Morita, who's produced art for Capcom titles from *Ghosts 'n Goblins* to *Viewtiful Joe* and *Resident Evil Zero*.



Megaman Legends (N64, 2000)

Another departure from the *Megaman* norm, originally called *Rockman DASH* in Japan. Three-dimensional action-RPG with dungeons and chattable citizens.



Megaman Xtreme (GBC, 2000)

Game Boy Color gets its fix of side-on run-jump-attack! action. As terrifyingly tough as ever, with 15 bosses – including a giant robot penguin and an automated armadillo.



Megaman Battle Network (GBA, 2001)

Surprise! Megaman morphs into a packet of data and battles take-turny style on a *Tron*-like grid. Average stuff, but it spawns more instalments *and* the anime.



Megaman Zero (GBA, 2002)

Set 100 years after *Megaman X*, where *Metroid*-style exploration is in vogue and Megaman's been replaced by a darker hero, Zero. This was Megaman creator Keiji Inafune's dream project.

1997	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003	2003	2004	2005	2006
Megaman VII (SNES, 1997)	Megaman & Bass (SNES, 1998)	Megaman Legends (N64, 2000)	Megaman Xtreme 2 (GBC, 2001)	Megaman Zero (GBA, 2002)	Megaman Battle Network 3 (GBA, 2003)	Megaman Network Transmission (GC, 2003)	Megaman Battle Network 4 (GBA, 2004)	Megaman Battle Network 5 (GBA, 2005)	Megaman Battle Network 5: Double Team (DS, 2006)
		Megaman Xtreme (GBC, 2000)		Megaman Battle Network 2 (GBA, 2002)	Megaman Battle Chip Challenge (GBA, 2003)	Megaman Zero 2 (GBA, 2003)	Megaman X: Command Mission (GC, 2004)	Megaman Zero 4 (GBA, 2005)	Megaman Battle Network 6 (GBA, 2006)
							Megaman Zero 3 (GBA, 2004)		

Directory

Swag

Your monthly chance to get your hands on the latest Nintendo gear

Head your envelope (or email subject line) with the competition name and send your entries to: Official Nintendo Magazine, 2 Balcombe Street, London, NW1 6NW

Or email: onmletters@futurenet.co.uk

Entry for all competitions (except **Text Your Bid** and **Big Game Hunter**): email or post.

Entry for **Text Your Bid**: text or post.

Entry for **Big Game Hunter**: cut out or photocopy the wordsearch, then send it in by regular post.



CAPTION THIS! WIN RUB RABBITS!

Look! She's wearing a bikini top! And he's staring right at her! And they're on an escalator! The potential here for a mildly humorous caption is immense! Make with the funny on this *The Rub Rabbits!* screenshot and bag yourself one of five free copies of the game.



BIG GAME HUNTER WIN KING KONG

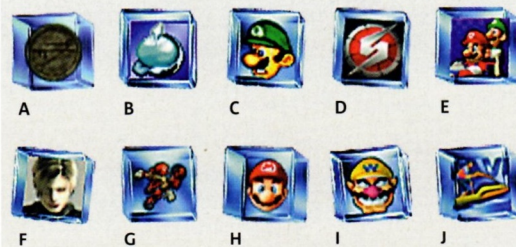
U O S U E U D J E Q K P P L G
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M C F H E B S Y B W W M E R
R U B R A B B I T S H V P I B
P J Q D E I C H Q J T E K V Y
P E G G K V E V U K K P J G Q

A random jumble of letters, or a cunning quadrangle conundrum? Find the ten games listed below and you could win one of five copies of *King Kong DS!*

ANIMAL CROSSING
BRAIN TRAINING
MARIO KART
METROID PRIME
PHOENIX WRIGHT
RESIDENT EVIL
RUB RABBITS
SEGA CASINO
SONIC RIDERS
VIEWTIFUL JOE



PLAY YOUR (MEMORY) CARDS RIGHT



How well do you know your Nintendo games? Could you identify them from the memory card save icon alone? Five readers who correctly name these ten GameCube games will each win a copy of *Sega Casino!*



TEXT YOUR BID! WIN SNOWBOARD KIDS GEAR

Here's the deal – reversing the basic concept of an auction, you need to make the **lowest unique bid** to win the snowboarding stuff.

That means you should aim low with your bid, but it shouldn't be the same as anybody else's. Text the keyword ONMBID, then space, followed by the amount in pence to 80889.

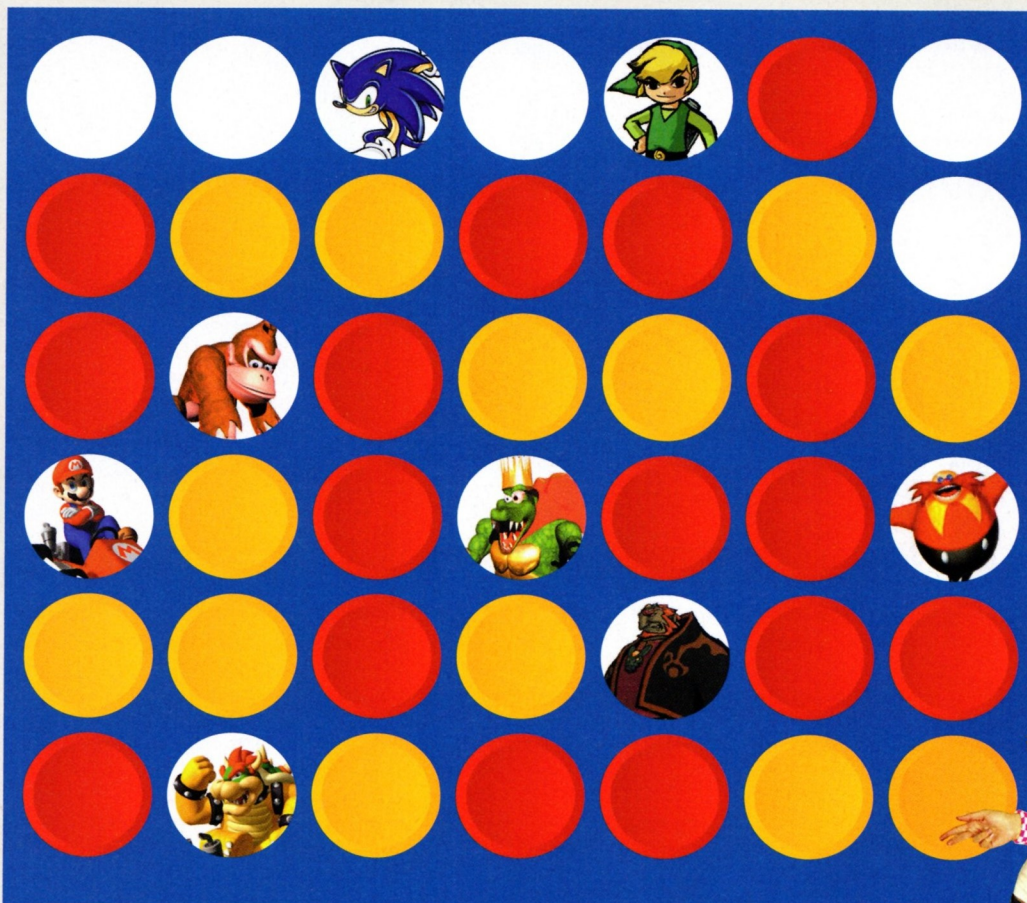
TERMS & CONDITIONS Texts cost 50p plus the standard network charge. The auction is open to all networks, postal bids should be sent to 'Text Your Bid!' at the usual address. The closing date for text bids is 15 March 2006; for postal bids it's 17 March 2006. No purchase necessary. Open to UK entries only. Details on what happens if you're a winner can be found at www.skillbidz.co.uk along with full terms and conditions.

So, for example, if you want to bid £1.25, simply text ONMBID 125 to the number.

For every bid we receive, we'll reply with a message to let you know whether it's unique but not the lowest, the lowest unique bid, or if it isn't unique we'll tell you how many other bids are lodged at that price. Best of luck!



CONNECT FOUR WIN JOYSTICK JUNKIES T-SHIRTS



We've turned four gaming heroes and their enemies into discs and inserted them into a Connect Four frame – an admittedly elaborate set-up for such a simple task. Match the hero to his nemesis and win some Joystick Junkies T-shirts, ideal for really special occasions.



CHRON-ILLOGICAL WIN VIEWTIFUL JOE: DOUBLE TROUBLE

The running order of the *Resident Evil 4*'s bosses has got mixed up. The first five readers to put them in the correct order the bosses appear will each win a copy of *Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble*. Place the order

number, from one to five, in the boxes below the images. Get sorting, people!



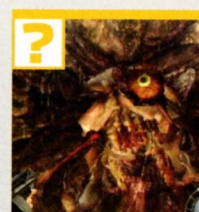
JACK KRAUSER
RUNNING ORDER?



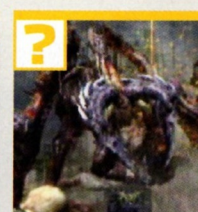
EL GIGANTE TWINS
RUNNING ORDER?



CHIEF MENDEZ
RUNNING ORDER?



RAMON
RUNNING ORDER?



SADDLER
RUNNING ORDER?

LETTERS

W-FI

RETRO

SWAG

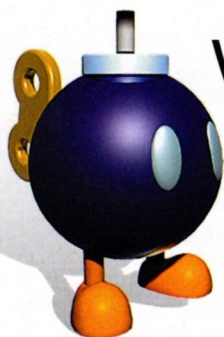
CHALLENGES

RATED



Challenges

Beat our high(ish) scores and see your name in lights. Well, in this magazine at least...



With over 80 years of Nintendo experience between us, we like to think that we're rather good at games, but we're always up for a challenge, whether it be a Wi-Fi *Mario Kart* race or a four-player *Super Smash Bros* scrap. Which is why we want you to take us on. We've set six tricky challenges for you to beat on GameCube, DS and GBA. Get a high score on any of them and you could see your name on one of the leader boards, which will surely rank at the top of your lifetime of gaming achievements. So what are you waiting for? Start practising now!



MARIO SMASH FOOTBALL



■ **Format** GameCube

■ **The Challenge** Win by more than three goals in a five-minute Legend match

Legend mode is tough, and the highest score Tom managed was 3-0, and that included one Super Strike. Beat this and send in a picture of the Final Score screen to prove your footy skills.

SMASH FOOTBALL LEADER BOARD

1	Tom	3-0
2	Get your score in here	
3	Get your score in here	
4	Get your score in here	
5	Get your score in here	
6	Get your score in here	
7	Get your score in here	
8	Get your score in here	
9	Get your score in here	
10	Get your score in here	

SONIC RUSH



■ **Format** DS

■ **The Challenge** Beat a time of 1:01:43 on Leaf Storm: Act 1

The only way to truly test your *Sonic* skills is in time attack mode. Beat our super-speedy time and you deserve a medal. Well, your name in the magazine at any rate.

SONIC RUSH LEADER BOARD

1	Steve	1:01:43
2	Get your score in here	
3	Get your score in here	
4	Get your score in here	
5	Get your score in here	
6	Get your score in here	
7	Get your score in here	
8	Get your score in here	
9	Get your score in here	
10	Get your score in here	

WARIOWARE



■ **Format** GBA

■ **The Challenge** Get a score of more than 51 on the Introduction level

The big stick is tiny, the clothes fall very quickly and the lorries get bigger. The Introduction level seems easy at first, but once you get past 50 it's a different story...

WARIOWARE LEADER BOARD

1	Lee	51
2	Get your score in here	
3	Get your score in here	
4	Get your score in here	
5	Get your score in here	
6	Get your score in here	
7	Get your score in here	
8	Get your score in here	
9	Get your score in here	
10	Get your score in here	



HOW TO BE FAMOUS

Do you think you're better than us? Well, despite our boasts, we have to say that this is a distinct possibility, which is why you have to send in your scores and get your name on those leader boards.

Finding fame is nice and easy. Pick a challenge (you can do as many of them as you like), and when you beat it take a digital photograph of the end screen, proving your prowess. Then email your photograph to onm@futurenet.co.uk with the title 'Challenge'. If you haven't got a digital camera, just post a normal photograph of the screen to **Challenges, The Official Nintendo Magazine, Future Publishing, 2 Balcombe Street, London, NW1 6NW.**

Please don't send in videos or memory cards as we can't promise that we'll send them back!



RESIDENT EVIL 4



- Format GameCube
- The Challenge** In Mercenary mode, get over 105,510 with Leon on the Village level. The Village level starts off easy but gets ridiculously hard, especially with Leon who's weaker than the other characters. Beat 105,510 and you'll be doing well.

RESIDENT EVIL 4 LEADER BOARD

1	Chandra	105,510
2	Get your score in here	
3	Get your score in here	
4	Get your score in here	
5	Get your score in here	
6	Get your score in here	
7	Get your score in here	
8	Get your score in here	
9	Get your score in here	
10	Get your score in here	

MARIO KART DS



- Format DS
- The Challenge** Playing time trial mode, beat 1:37:986 on Figure 8. Figure 8 is a simple course that's perfect for Time Trials, so put on your driving gloves, get your snaking skills out and try to beat our time of a fast-ish 1:37:986.

MARIO KART DS BOARD

1	Charlotte	1:37:986
2	Get your score in here	
3	Get your score in here	
4	Get your score in here	
5	Get your score in here	
6	Get your score in here	
7	Get your score in here	
8	Get your score in here	
9	Get your score in here	
10	Get your score in here	

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE



- Format GameCube
- The Challenge** Playing target test mode, beat our time on the Pichu level. Complete 25 target tests in under 12:30 and you'll unlock the Sheriff's Badge trophy. Beat our time of 0:52 on the Pichu level and your name will appear here.

SUPER SMASH BROS LEADER BOARD

1	Matthew	0:52
2	Get your score in here	
3	Get your score in here	
4	Get your score in here	
5	Get your score in here	
6	Get your score in here	
7	Get your score in here	
8	Get your score in here	
9	Get your score in here	
10	Get your score in here	

LETTERS

WIFI

RETRO

SWAG

CHALLENGES

RATED

Rated GameCube

Got a GameCube? Get these games! The 50 top-scoring titles you need to own...



Animal Crossing 90%

GOLD AWARD Nintendo

Year, so what did you do, pthhph?

When Nintendo does a *Sims*-style game, it creates a village populated by quirky little animals. The beauty is that it's all in real-time, so you won't be able to leave the game alone for more than a day in case some pesky animal spoils your home.



1080° Avalanche 89%

There are tricks, flips and jumps, but it's the time trials that are the real deal in this speedy snowboarder.



Battalion Wars 88%

Command cute armies in a war that blends action and strategy brilliantly. A great extension of the GBA's *Advance Wars* series.



Beyond Good & Evil 90%

Find rare animals, fight off an alien invasion and take photographs – that should keep you busy. A lost classic.



Billy Hatcher And The Giant Egg 85%

Of these top 50 games, this egg-rolling platformer is perhaps the most bizarre, but it's great fun.



Burnout 2 90%

By far the best 'realistic' racer on GameCube. This looks amazing, handles brilliantly and it's ridiculously fast.



Conflict: Desert Storm 2 88%

This is the best of the three Gulf War squad shooters because it really makes you think strategically.



Donkey Konga 85%

This arm-knacking drumathon really is great fun. It's fast and furious (especially in multiplayer) and great for building biceps!



Donkey Kong Jungle Beat 85%

A bongo-controlled platform game? Trust us – it works better than you could ever have imagined.



Eternal Darkness 90%

Play as 12 different characters attempting to retain their sanity in the face of unspeakable horror. Awesome.



Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles 86%

This brilliant multiplayer RPG benefits from four players, but is still good fun on your own.



Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance 89%

You shouldn't get tearful over a strategy RPG, but this is tactical and emotional. Losing a character really hurts.



F-Zero GX 92%

Perhaps the fastest racer ever, the pace is relentless yet the futuristic tracks remain impressively smooth throughout the game.



Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life 91%

More than just a farming game as now you have to find a wife as well as tend your cows and crops.



Hitman 2: Silent Assassin 90%

One of GameCube's most violent games sees you combining stealth and bloodshed. Compelling stuff.



Ikaruga 89%

There are just five levels but you deserve a pat on the back if you complete them all. This shoot 'em up is one of the hardest games ever.



The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker 96%

The cel-shaded visuals angered cynics when *The Wind Waker* was unveiled, but when the game was released, no one could deny that this is another stunning *Zelda* adventure packed with emotion and charm.



The Legend Of Zelda: Four Swords 90%

Four Swords can be a costly business (you need four players each with a GBA) but the rewards are worth it.



Luigi's Mansion 90%

Yes, it's short but that doesn't matter because there's so much charm packed into this bite-sized adventure.



Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour 85%

Crazy courses littered with Chain Chomps and Warp Pipes make this a truly Nintendo take on a serious sport.



Mario Kart: Double Dash!! 92%

The two-characters-in-one-kart idea may be controversial but this is still a hectic and enjoyable racer.



Mario Power Tennis 88%

Mario Power Tennis is packed with the usual Mario mentalness but there's a sophisticated game underneath.



Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes 90%

With updated visuals and a great mix of stealth and action, this remake of *Metal Gear Solid* is unmissable.



Metroid Prime 2: Echoes 94%

Another incredible outing for Samus – dark, clever and truly mind-blowing intergalactic action.



Metroid Prime 96%

Samus Aran returned in glorious 3D for this masterpiece. All the classic *Metroid* gameplay is here – morphing into a ball, using bombs to shoot to new areas, searching for weapons – and it's all played out in amazingly detailed environments.



NBA Street V3 88%

Three-on-three b-ball action is enhanced by the Nintendo All-Stars team. The arcade action even gets crazier when Mario turns up.



Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door 91%

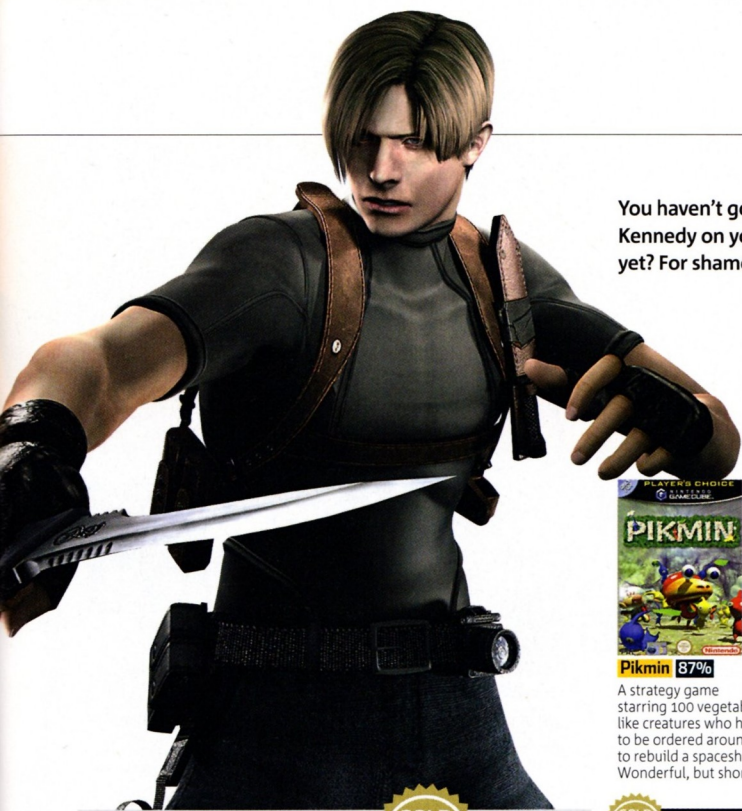
A unique paper-based RPG with a surprisingly deep battle system.



Metroid Prime 2: Echoes 94%

Another incredible outing for Samus – dark, clever and truly mind-blowing intergalactic action.

Both of Samus Aran's GameCube outings are must-have titles.



You haven't got Leon S Kennedy on your GameCube yet? For shame...



Resident Evil 4

This zombie-free take on the Resident Evil series is a work of genius. All the franchise's flaws have gone, leaving the perfect survival horror game that sees you shooting possessed yokels in a battle to save the President's daughter.

97%



Pikmin

A strategy game starring 100 vegetable-like creatures who have to be ordered around to rebuild a spaceship? Wonderful, but short.



Pikmin 2

Bigger and better than the original, *Pikmin 2* lets you control two characters and there are two new types of Pikmin to help you.



Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time

The first and best of the reinvented *Persia* games. The action and puzzling is superb and the fighting balanced.



Resident Evil

This glorious remake of the original *Resident Evil* introduces us to the crimson heads – zombies who just won't leave you alone...



Resident Evil Zero

As compelling as ever, it's the usual mix of zombie blasting and puzzle solving but shows signs of age.



Second Sight

Playing an amnesiac you get to use the hero's telekinetic powers – and it's these that make this stealth title a true original.



Skies Of Arcadia Legends

It looks a bit dated, but this is an epic RPG that you just can't tire of playing. Airships have never been so cool.



Soul Calibur II

The best beat 'em up in the world returns with an array of great weapons. And Link even puts in an appearance too.



Splinter Cell

The best of Sam Fisher's stealth exercises. It's the way Fisher pulls off his silent-but-deadly moves that makes this better than most.



SSX 3

SSX 3 lets you mess around on one massive mountain packed with half-pipes, jumps and slopes. Definitely the best SSX yet.



Star Wars: Rogue Leader

Worth it if only for the perfectly realised X-Wing level where you can destroy the Death Star time and again.



Super Mario Sunshine

Armed with a water-filled backpack, Mario returns in his first 'proper' platformer since Mario 64.



Super Monkey Ball

The main monkey-rolling game is addictive, but the mini-games make this an essential purchase.



Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005

There's so much to unlock in this huge sports game that you'll be playing for weeks before you see it all.



Super Smash Bros.

Nintendo's entire history squeezed into a fantastic fighter. This has it all – the characters, the game worlds, the tunes... The adventure mode is great, but grab some friends and enjoy one of the best multiplayer games ever made.

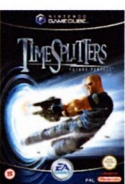
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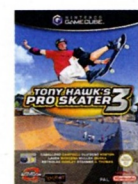
TimeSplitters 2

A massive time-travelling shooter that has you gunning down cowboys, gangsters and soldiers. A terrific multiplayer game too.



TimeSplitters: Future Perfect

The multiplayer is as great as ever, but the single-player game hasn't really moved on from *TimeSplitters 2*.



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

This is pure skating fun with none of the silly driving missions that appeared in later *Hawk's* outings.



Viewtiful Joe

Under *Viewtiful Joe's* cute, cartoony visuals lies a stylish 2D beat 'em up with some fiendish bosses. It's hard not to love it.



Viewtiful Joe 2

Joe's girlfriend Silvia, the new playable character, keeps things fresh with her powers changing the feel of some of the puzzles.



WarioWare Inc.

WarioWare's mini-games still appeal on a big screen. Cat poking, nose picking and banana peeling have never been such fun.



Wave Race: Blue Storm

Dazzling water effects, slick racing and wonderfully intuitive controls mean *Blue Storm* is still a treat.

SETTLING SCORES

Disagree with our GC top 50? Write in and set the record straight...

F-ZERO

92% for *F-Zero*? Sorry, but I found this far too hard to be enjoyable. Sure it's fast, but it's really punishing and I don't want to be punished. Give me *Mario Kart* any day.

Colin McDonald,
East Kilbride

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

This is probably the weakest *Mario* game for ages (*Mario Party* excepted). The water pack is good, but some of the Shines are so frustrating. I gave up after 40.

Daniel Nelson, via email

LUIGI'S MANSION

I think this is every bit as good as *Mario Sunshine*. I finished it in about four hours, but I don't care because hovering up ghosts is brilliant.

Ian Stacey, Stockport

IKARUGA

I think *Ikaruga* is the best thing ever, even better than *Resident Evil 4*. Sure it's ridiculously hard, but that doesn't matter if you've got the skills.

Mark Rymarz, via email

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

There's no way that *Sands Of Time* is better than *Warrior Within*. The plot's far superior in the second game and the darker atmosphere and moody Prince make it far more interesting than controlling some goody-goody.

Tim Crossley, London

RatedDS

The hottest half-hundred DS games around



Animaniacs 50%
Standard licensed kiddie platformer – collect this, hit that, solve the other – that's saved from the dustbin by an enjoyable multiplayer battle mode. Cute characters too.



Another Code 90%
A truly inventive point-and-click adventure that uses the DS's features brilliantly. A gripping story is enlivened by puzzles solved by closing your DS and also blowing.



Battles Of Prince Of Persia 69%
The platforming prince is resurrected as a pack of cards in a half-decent strategy game. Lacks the charm of *Advance Wars*, but it'll still make you think.



Advance Wars: Dual Strike
Visually very similar to the GBA version, *Dual Strike* inexplicably doesn't make great use of the DS's unique features. But once you get over the initial disappointment, you'll find yet another slice of amazingly addictive strategy gaming.

90%



Big Mutha Truckers 61%
Cruise the freeways in an 18-wheeler delivering goods to rednecks. Stripped down for the DS, it predictably loses some of its weighty appeal.



Bomberman DS 88%
Dull for one, this is all about eight-way play, and you only need one cart. Thirty battle modes make this *Mario Kart*'s only rival to the DS multiplayer crown.



Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow 87%
This great adventure expands on *Aria of Sorrow*'s soul-gathering system by letting you create your own move sets. Doesn't exploit the DS though.



Chronicles Of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe 70%
Hack 'em up that has four kids killing Narnia's creatures in return for valour, justice and gentleness ratings... Decent but repetitive.



FIFA 06 76%
This is fast-paced, goal-a-minute football. It looks awful but thanks to the return to arcade action, this handheld version actually beats the GameCube's *FIFA* for fun and playability.



Ford Racing 3 68%
There are too many dreadful racing games on the DS – *Asphalt Urban GT* and *Burnout Legends* to name a few. This one is pacy with decent tracks and has touch-screen steering.



GoldenEye: Rogue Agent 69%
AI characters are dumb and enemies don't die even when you've shot them in the face but this looks great, the action is fast and the weapons are brilliant.



Kirby: Power Paintbrush 90%
Kirby's return to form after the dreadful *Amazing Mirror*. With great use of the stylus and hidden stuff to collect, this is Kirby's best game ever.



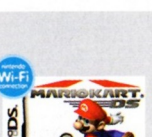
Lost In Blue 85%
An unforgivably slow start to this survival adventure hides a rewarding and emotional story that sees you and a girl trying to survive on a deserted island.



Madagascar 55%
Switch between the movie's lion, hippo, giraffe and zebra in a trawl through 2D platform levels. Solid rather than exciting and almost identical to the GBA version.



Mario Kart DS
Over 30 amazing tracks – including 16 retro courses – would be enough for most, but then there are the battle and mission modes plus the sublime wireless online racing. Get involved in a little blue shelling or turbo boosting to find a first class racer that's a DS must-buy.



Madden NFL 2006 65%
Potentially great American footy game that's ruined by frequent terrible camera positioning. Good use of the stylus controls though.



Mario & Luigi: Partners In Time 90%
Even funnier than *Superstar Saga*, this game sees the brothers team up with babies to save Peach from the clutches of Bowser.



Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team 72%
A range of styles and loads to see and do mean this is one of Megaman's finest outings on a handheld system. Good stuff.



Meteos 92%
Puzzle fun as you match the blocks to make them fly off on a rocket-powered platform. Get too ambitious building a huge platform and the platform will run out of rocketry oomph.



Mr Driller 76%
This miner's DS debut is exactly the same as all his other games! Drill through layers of blocks, gather air and avoiding falling debris. Addictive, but we've seen it all before.

Buy *Mario Kart DS* today to see what the fuss is about.



Nanostray 85%
Not as tough as shoot 'em ups like *Gunstar Future Heroes* or *Metal Slug*, the adventure mode can be finished in a day. But this awesome looking blaster has loads of replay value.



Need For Speed Underground 75%
Far better than *Need For Speed Most Wanted*, this racer improves on the jerky GameCube version. Not brilliant but still the best realistic racer on DS.



Nintendogs
Less of a game, more a virtual pet, you simply choose your puppy and encourage him to be the best little doggy he or she can be. Feed it, take it for walks, even throw a frisbee... you'll grow so attached that you won't be able to go a day without seeing how he's getting on.



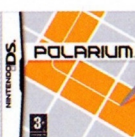
Pac-Man 88%
In an inventive stroke, you actually have to draw Pac-Man with the stylus before he can gobble ghosts. Get drawing against the clock for some furiously addictive gaming.



Pac 'N' Roll 80%
Like *Super Monkey Ball* with Pac-Man as you rub the yellow ball on the touch screen to make him roll around 30-odd stages gobbling up pills. It's fairly easy but fun while it lasts.

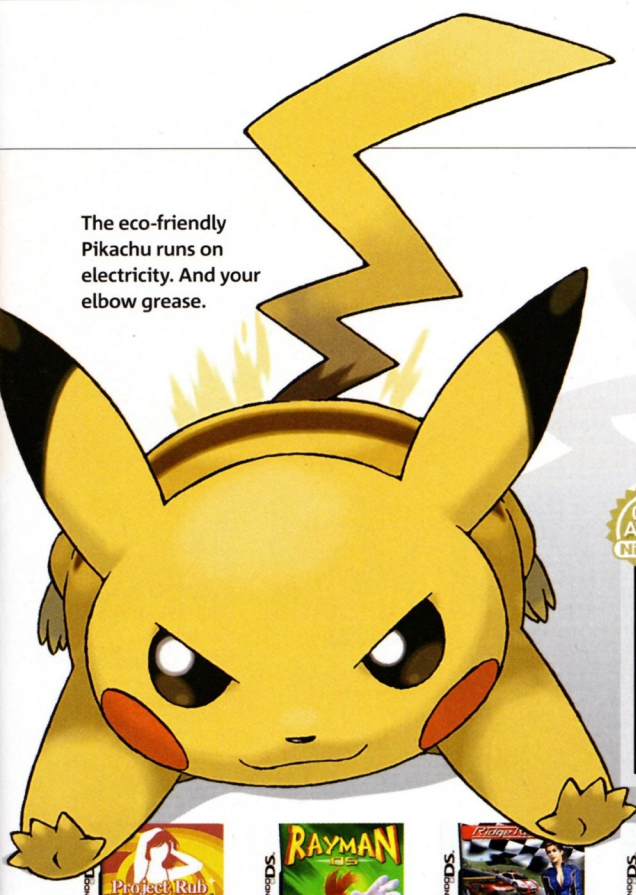


Pokémon Dash 69%
Make Pikachu run and tire out your stylus arm in this odd racer. Guide the yellow fellow by rubbing his back with the stylus. Fine until it gets tiresome (in more ways than one).



Polarium 80%
Hardcore puzzling that has you flipping black and white tiles to create lines of the same colour. Sounds simple, but with the action taking place on both screens, it's tough.

The eco-friendly Pikachu runs on electricity. And your elbow grease.



Nintendo Touch Golf
Mario is nowhere to be seen in Nintendo's first DS golf game, but it doesn't matter because this has the best control system of any fairway-based game ever, as you move the stylus back and forth to pull back your club and swing. Great stuff.



90%



Project Rub 84%

Complete mad mini-games in order to impress a girl. Blow sailboats using the mic, stab rampaging bulls and open skydivers' chutes by tapping the screen. Bizarre.



Rayman 2 50%

The once-great limbless leaper is getting a bit tired now. This looks great, but is marred by hopeless touch-screen controls on frustrating swinging missions.



Ridge Racer 60%

It looks good enough and moves smoothly too, but without analogue controls the steering isn't very precise and the touch-screen driving doesn't work very well.



The Rub Rabbits! 68%

This Project Rub sequel is a whole lot bigger but, sadly, not a whole lot better than the original. The mini-games are nicely quirky but far too samey.



Scooby Doo Unmasked 54%

This is just another average platformer with too many blind leaps of faith and some really dodgy combat. Scooby's disguises are good, though.



Sega Casino 57%

Play against friends or the computer in this rather uninspiring collection of card games. A round of 7 Card Stud is okay but the games of chance are pointless.



Shrek Superslam 59%

Simple brawler in which you can beat the story mode in less than twenty minutes. Aside from some entertaining special moves this isn't up to very much.



The Sims 2 70%

The Sims find running a hotel pretty easy. After a bit of hovering and mopping, just buy more hotel rooms and fill them with furniture. The whole thing will be finished pretty soon.



Sonic Rush 90%

Perhaps the fastest Sonic game ever as he racks up the rings on both screens. Plenty of alternative routes, hidden secrets and brilliant link-up races make this essential.



Spider-Man 2 50%

No one was expecting Spidey to swing smoothly around a 3D New York on the DS, but this is an average 2D side-scrolling platformer with poorly designed levels.



Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory 65%

Everything from the console version has been squeezed into this DS stealth title. It looks great, but the irritating 'three strikes, you're dead' system is back.



Star Wars: Revenge Of The Sith 60%

This slash 'em up has some shooting sections so it's not exactly the same as the GBA version, but it's not much better either.



Super Mario 64 DS 89%

Just seeing this move on DS is incredible. It's one of the best Nintendo games ever and with extra mini-games and characters this is a must-have.



Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll 79%

The monkeys make their DS debut in this entertaining roll 'em up. The controls are horribly frustrating but you'll keep coming back for more.



WarioWare Touched! 91%

WarioWare finds its perfect home on DS. Yes, it's another 200 mini-games, but thanks to the touch-screen and mic-powered controls it feels as fresh as ever. It's ludicrous but it's so much fun and completing all the games unlocks loads of rewards.



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Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare 60%

A side-scrolling punch/kick/slash platformer that's much the same as the GBA version, only with token touch-screen controls.



Tiger Woods PGA Tour '05 70%

The touch-screen swing controls aren't as intuitive as in *Touch Golf* and the putting is poor, but this is a good-looking golf game with lots of features.



Tony Hawk's American Sk8land 92%

Everything from the console version is in this first 3D handheld *Hawk*. The cel-shaded visuals are great and the skating is smooth.



The Urbz: Sims in the City 65%

Just like the GBA version, only with a new island, some pets and some touch-screen mini-games. Quite good fun but the GBA version is cheaper.



Yoshi's Touch & Go 85%

Guide Yoshi and Baby Mario by drawing platforms with the stylus. The point is just to rack up high scores. One of the best touch-screen-controlled titles.



Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmar Troubadour 65%

The card game has been faithfully recreated on DS. The adventure mode is poor and inaccessible to newbies but fans will appreciate the battles.



Zoo Keeper 86%

A variation on the match-coloured-blocks routine. This time you use the stylus to swap animal's heads around. It doesn't sound original, but it's worryingly compulsive.

SETTLING SCORES

Disagree with our DS top 50? Write in and set the record straight...

MARIO KART DS

95%? As good as the N64 version? This isn't even as good as the GBA version. The karts are slow and those missions are so annoying. That coin-collecting mission with Boo knocks off at least 4% for me.

James Pender, via email

YOSHI: TOUCH & GO

88% for a game with only two levels? You've got to be joking. I played *Yoshi's Touch & Go* for two hours, completed both levels and swapped it straight away.

Gary Potter, Belfast

SONIC RUSH

I'm disgusted to see that a game starring that blue squirt should be one of your highest rated games. The hedgehog should never be allowed near a Nintendo console. It's shocking.

Robert Walker, via email

CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

Narnia may be a bit sad, but this is a really good hack 'n' slash game. Don't ignore it just because it's got the Pevensie children in it. It deserves far more than 70%.

Ashley Cooke, Derby

MR DRILLER

I can't believe this only got 76%. *Mr Driller* games are always brilliant. I don't care if it's similar to other versions – this is easily as good as *Meteos*.

Danny Evans, email

Rated GBA

There are hundreds of GBA games to choose from, but these are the 50 you must own...



Advance Wars: Black Hole Rising 93%

More an upgrade than a proper sequel, *Black Hole Rising* essentially bolts on more missions, special powers and multiplayer modes to the same game.



Astro Boy: Omega Factor 89%

Handheld classic from the makers of *Gunstar Future Heroes*. Based on a Japanese cartoon, it's a *Viewtiful Joe*-style mix of side-scrolling action and cute robots.



Advance Wars

Describing it as a turn-based strategy game doesn't explain how brilliantly addictive this is. Beating off *Mario* and *Zelda* as our most loved GBA title, its bite-sized battles are perfect for handheld play. Strategy is fun? Believe it.



96%



Banjo Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge

85% The essence of the great N64 platformer somehow crammed onto a GBA cart. A worthy alternative to all the *Mario* ports.



Boktai 85%

A vampire-killing adventure that requires real sunshine! Store sunlight in the game's sensor and use it to kill the blood-suckers. Under this gimmick lies a very good game.



Bomberman Tournament 89%

Ignore the *Pokémon*-style collection and bomb your mates in the top-down grid. The addictive multiplayer mode needs only one cart for four-way fights.



Broken Sword 85%

Point and click adventures may sound old fashioned, but with an engrossing story, 60 interesting characters to chat to and over 70 lovely locations, it never feels tired.



Castlevania Double Pack 90%

A compilation of the two best GBA *Castlevanias*, *Aria of Sorrow* for meaty adventuring and *Harmony of Dissonance* for platform action.



Castlevania: Circle of the Moon 85%

Complete your GBA *Castlevanias* with this first game in the series. Very tough, it suffers on GBA's original dark screen and shines in the light of SP and Micro.



Chu Chu Rocket 88%

Puzzler where you use arrows to guide mice around cats and onto the safety of their moon-bound rocket. With thousands of puzzles, it's a bit mad but a lot of fun.



Doom 85%

Perhaps the 'wow' factor of seeing this classic 3D shooter running on a handheld has waned slightly, but blasting bloody mutants in the face is a good laugh.



Donkey Kong Country 82%

Donkey Kong teams up with Diddy to reclaim his bananas. Not quite as good as the SNES original, it's like a *Mario* platformer... with a swinging gorilla.



Duke Nukem Advance 88%

While *Doom* is big on atmosphere, the *Dukester* is all about non-stop shooting, although the famous swearing has been removed for GBA.



F-Zero: Maximum Velocity 87%

The computer-controlled racers cheat but the brilliant short-cut heavy tracks will have you constantly trying to beat your personal best time.



Final Fantasy Tactics 89%

Stripped of any exploration, this *Fantasy* is all about turn-based fights as you build up your characters by kicking serious butt.



Fire Emblem 90%

Reach for the hanky - this one plays like *Advance Wars* with emotion. If any of your guys die, they're gone for good. This burden of guilt makes it a great grown-up strategy.



Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones 89%

Blending emotional role-playing with turn-based strategy still works, but despite a new story and class system, it's too similar to the first game.



Golden Sun: The Lost Age 91%

The random battles go on a bit but with a gripping story and loveable characters, this is the best serious RPG (not counting *Mario & Luigi*) on GBA.



GT Advance 3 86%

If you like to race against people rather than gorillas or mushrooms, this is the place to be. The best 'proper' racer on GBA, it's fast and the arcade handling is spot-on.



Gunstar Future Heroes
Gunstar fans had to wait 12 years for a sequel to the Mega Drive's 1993 classic *Gunstar Heroes*, but it was well worth it. Fast-paced and fantastically original, there's nothing tired about this old-school shooter.

92%



Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town 90%

This farming role-player is often mocked, but play it and you'll be sucked into a world of animal caring and blissful crop watering.



Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories 81%

Kingdom Hearts never made it to GameCube, so if you want a role-playing game starring Goofy and Donald Duck, step right up.



Kirby: Nightmare in Dreamland 82%

Don't mock him because he's pink... This is Kirby's finest hour on the GBA and is packed with pacy platforming action and humorous power-ups.



Zelda's Link, wearin' green and fightin' mean.



Kuru Kuru Kururin 90%

This brilliantly addictive puzzler was a GBA launch game and still has us trying to move a rotating stick through painfully thin and twisting corridors.



The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap 91%

After the massive *Link To The Past*, this one seems a little short, but it's another classic *Zelda* and the shrink Link gimmick is worth the entry price alone.



The Legend of Zelda: A Link To The Past
Nintendo could have just released a conversion of the classic SNES game but this cart also contains a multiplayer adventure. This much-loved *Zelda* title offers a good 30 hours of adventuring even before you play the extras.



95%



Mario Golf: Advance Tour 92%
The golf game that doesn't shut up. Play as Mario on Mushroom Kingdom courses before chatting with club members to improve your skills.

Metroid's heroine Samus. Look, ma – one hand!



GOLD AWARD
Nintendo



93%

Metroid Fusion
With no *Metroid* games released on N64, fans had to wait eight years for more and they weren't disappointed. This is classic *Metroid*, mixing side-scrolling blasting with platforming and truly tough puzzling.



Mario Kart: Super Circuit 92%

While everyone loves *Mario Kart 64*, some longed for a return to the simplicity of *Super Mario Kart*. Here it is – and you can unlock old SNES tracks!



Mario Tennis 90%

Peach blows kiss shots and Mario hits the ball with a massive hammer but under the silliness lies an excellent sports game. Like *Golf*, it comes with a role-playing career mode.



Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga 91%

Even better than *Partners in Time* on the DS, this *Mario* RPG was the first time Nintendo attempted a comedy adventure. It works really well too!



Mario Vs Donkey Kong 85%

This puzzling platformer has Mario running through levels towards boss battles with DK. The super hard mode keeps things going for ages.



Medal Of Honor: Infiltrator 89%

After *Medal Of Honor: Underground*'s badness, this one's great! Features top-down action, first person shooting, sniping and vehicles.



Metroid Zero Mission 88%

Unlike the completely new *Fusion*, this is a remake of the 1986 NES classic. As such, it's not as enjoyable, but the revamped visuals and new power-ups are ace.



Ninja Cop 86%

Called *Ninja Five-O* in the US, you shouldn't ignore this obscure title. Part stealth, part platformer, part swinging on the ceilings, this is better than *Splinter Cell*.



Pokémon Pinball 89%

Playing on Pokéified tables, hit Pokéballs into the monsters to catch 'em all. There are 200 to catch and, though gimmicky, this is a great pinball game.



Racing Gears 85%

In the GBA's world of 3D racers, it's surprising that a top-down game can still feel fresh. It's all down to bendy tracks, mean rivals and lots of weaponry.



Sabre Wulf 81%

This remake of the ZX Spectrum classic sees you return to the Sabre's lair. Part exploration, part panic as you leg it from the chasing wolf, this is one classy adventure.



Sonic Advance 90%

The first of the three *Sonic Advance* games is the best, proving Sonic's at his finest when bouncing and corkscrewing through 2D levels. There's a bonus world too.



Street Fighter Alpha 3 90%

Complete arcade mode three times to unlock all 31 tremendous characters. Easily the best beat 'em up on GBA with longevity and amazing fluidity.



Super Bust-A-Move 88%

This classic set the template for the majority of today's puzzlers (well, *Snoody*) as you fire coloured balls into each other to make them explode.



Super Mario Advance 2 93%

The best of the *Super Mario* resurrections, if only because you could ride Yoshi for the first time. With massive levels, this is the perfect *Mario* platformer.



Pokémon Ruby & Sapphire
After years of remixing on Game Boy Color, the monsters returned for their first GBA role-player in *Ruby & Sapphire*. Bigger than ever, with over 100 new Pokémon to catch and new four-player battles, this is the best *Pokémon* RPG yet.

92%



Super Mario Advance 3 92%

With its sketchbook visuals, this remake of Yoshi's Island not only looks gorgeous but it's a masterclass in level design, with a fresh idea on each level.



Super Mario Advance 4 92%

This is a SNES remake of a NES original, retold on GBA. This set the template for all *Mario* platformers. Great level design, but not quite as varied as *SMA2*.



Super Monkey Ball Jr. 89%

Looking lush, the concept of rolling monkeys along bump-clenchingly tight platforms survives the jump from GameCube to GBA.



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 83%

Has since been beaten by the DS's incredible 3D *Hawk*'s, but this isometric version is still very good. Packs all the flips, ollies and grinds into a smooth game.



Virtua Tennis 88%

If you want a tennis game where the lead character doesn't whip out a massive hammer halfway through the first set, this is the place to come. Looks plain, but plays like a dream.



Wario Land 4 90%

Unlike most of Mario's adventures, this was created specifically for the GBA. As in the GBC's *Wario Land 3*, you amble through well-designed levels busting stuff up.



WarioWare 94%

Some 200 mini-games, each lasting about five seconds. Many gamers are confused before realising they only have to press A to win, but everyone bows to its addictive genius.

SETTLING SCORES

Disagree with our GBA top 50? Write in and set the record straight...

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2

How can you possibly say that *Super Mario Advance 2* is better than *Super Mario Advance 4*, the best game ever made? I don't care if you can ride a turtle, *Super Mario Advance 4* is at least 3% better than 2.

Andrew Newby, Norwich

KURU KURU KURURIN

A game where you move, and I quote, "a rotating stick through corridors" should never, ever get 90%. I don't care how addictive it is, you're controlling a stick. A STICK!

Ian Hotson, Luton

MARIO VS DONKEY KONG

Only 85% for *Mario Vs Donkey Kong*? This is one of the best *Mario* games ever and is a definite 90 percent. I'm still playing the super hard mode.

Jim Mitchell, Hayes

DOOM

85%? When this came out it was one of the most exciting games on the GBA, even if it was so dark you could barely see the mutants. But it is looking a bit dated now, don't you think? 70%, methinks.

John Wickenden, Fleet

ADVANCE WARS

This may sound silly, but this should get 100%! There is absolutely NOTHING wrong with *Advance Wars*. It's perfect.

Helen Binns, Burton-on-Trent

THE A-Z OF

Nintendo®

The Nintendo universe is rich and diverse, so here's a monthly guide to the highlights – in alphabetical order. **This month: A**



Metroid's Samus Aran – intergalactic bounty hunter. (But how does she squeeze into that body armour? Is the Atkins diet really that good?)

Activision

One of the first third-party game developers, Activision began life back in 1979 when a handful of staff left Atari to set up on their own. Activision has been a supporter of Nintendo hardware from *Ghostbusters* on the NES (1988) right up to the *Tony Hawk* series on the GameCube and DS.

Advance, Game Boy

The Game Boy Advance (GBA) is the fifth Game Boy design, following the original GB, GB Pocket, GB Light (Japan only) and GB Color. Released in June 2001, GBA featured a wide-aspect display, stereo speakers and a 32-bit processor. After years of squinting at murky screens, gamers rejoiced in 2003 when the SP version was released with a front-lit display.

Advance Wars

This turn-based war game is the sequel to Intelligent Systems' *Game Boy Wars*, which in turn was the sequel to *Famicom Wars* on the NES (neither of which were released outside Japan). *Advance Wars* is generally regarded as one of the best titles on GBA and the DS where it recently appeared as *Advance Wars: Dual Strike*.

Andross

Also known as Andorf in Japan, Andross is the villain of the *Starfox* games. In *Starfox 64*, he performed bio-engineering experiments on himself and now appears as a giant disembodied head and hands. And looks like an angry orang-utan.

Animal Crossing

Another slice of sideways thinking from Nintendo, in which the key element is communication with other people. The GameCube outing features a persistent world thanks to the built-in clock, but the DS release actually lets you visit other gamers' towns via the magic of Wi-Fi, the Internet and a Friend Code.

Aonuma, Eiji

Eiji Aonuma has been at Nintendo since 1988 when he worked on the RPG *Marvelous*. Impressed with his work, Shigeru Miyamoto asked Aonuma-san to act as assistant director on *The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time*. He was then promoted to producer on *Majora's Mask*, a role he also filled on *The Wind Waker*. He's currently putting the finishing touches to *Twilight Princess*.

Arakawa, Minoru

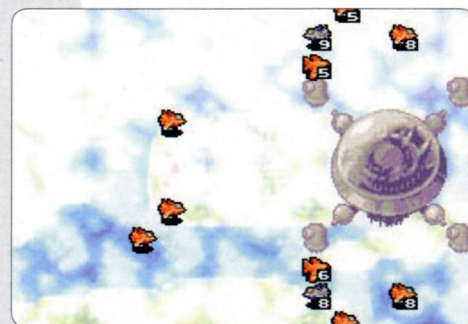
Minoru Arakawa was tasked with setting up the American arm of Nintendo by the then Japanese president, Hiroshi Yamauchi. Arakawa-san went on to run the company from 1980 until 2002, when he retired, aged 56.

Aran, Samus

The armoured bounty hunter of *Metroid* fame is actually a human girl by the name of Samus Aran. Orphaned at a young age, she was trained in warfare by the alien Chozo race and now cruises the cosmos in her unending quest to rid to universe of space pirates. Aran has made cameo appearances in many Nintendo games, including the *Super Smash Bros.* games, all three *WarioWare* titles and even *Geist*.



Animal Crossing is selling like hot cakes around the world – UK gamers can buy it at the end of March.



Advance Wars is the epitome of portable gaming brilliance. If you don't own a copy, shame on you!



The sexy SP version of **Game Boy Advance** features a front-lit screen and neat flip-lid case. We like.



Exiled to the planet Venom, **Andross** went psycho and experimented on himself. This is the result!

The Final Cut

Build your own life-size Revolution controller!

HERE'S HOW

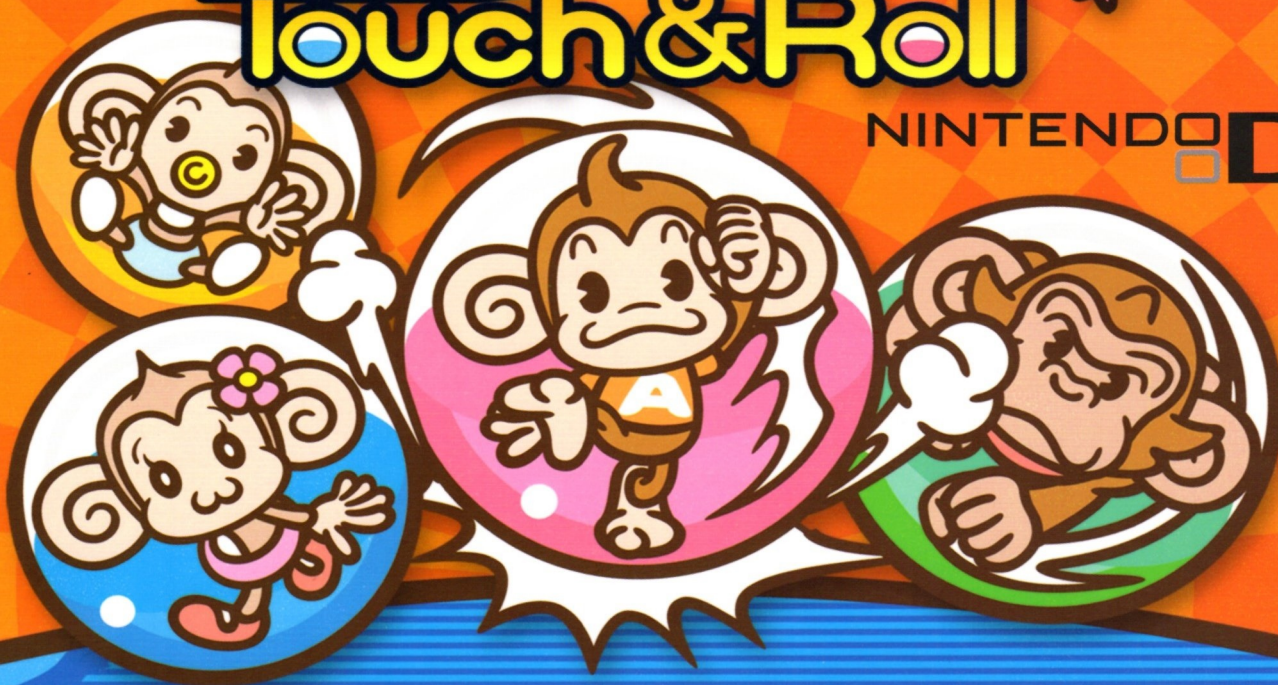
- 1 Cut around the outline of the controller
- 2 Glue or sellotape the tabs in place
- 3 Wave it at your telly (hint: nothing happens)



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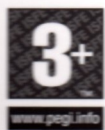
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