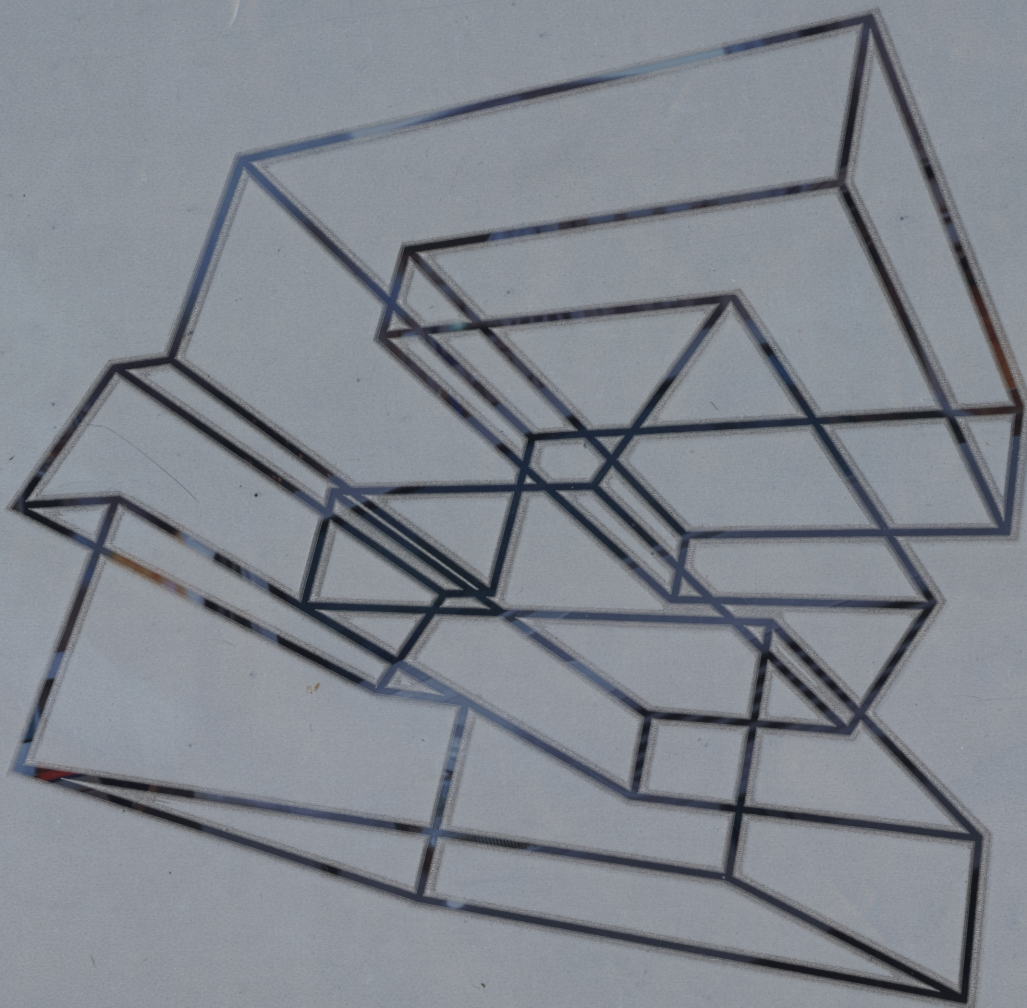


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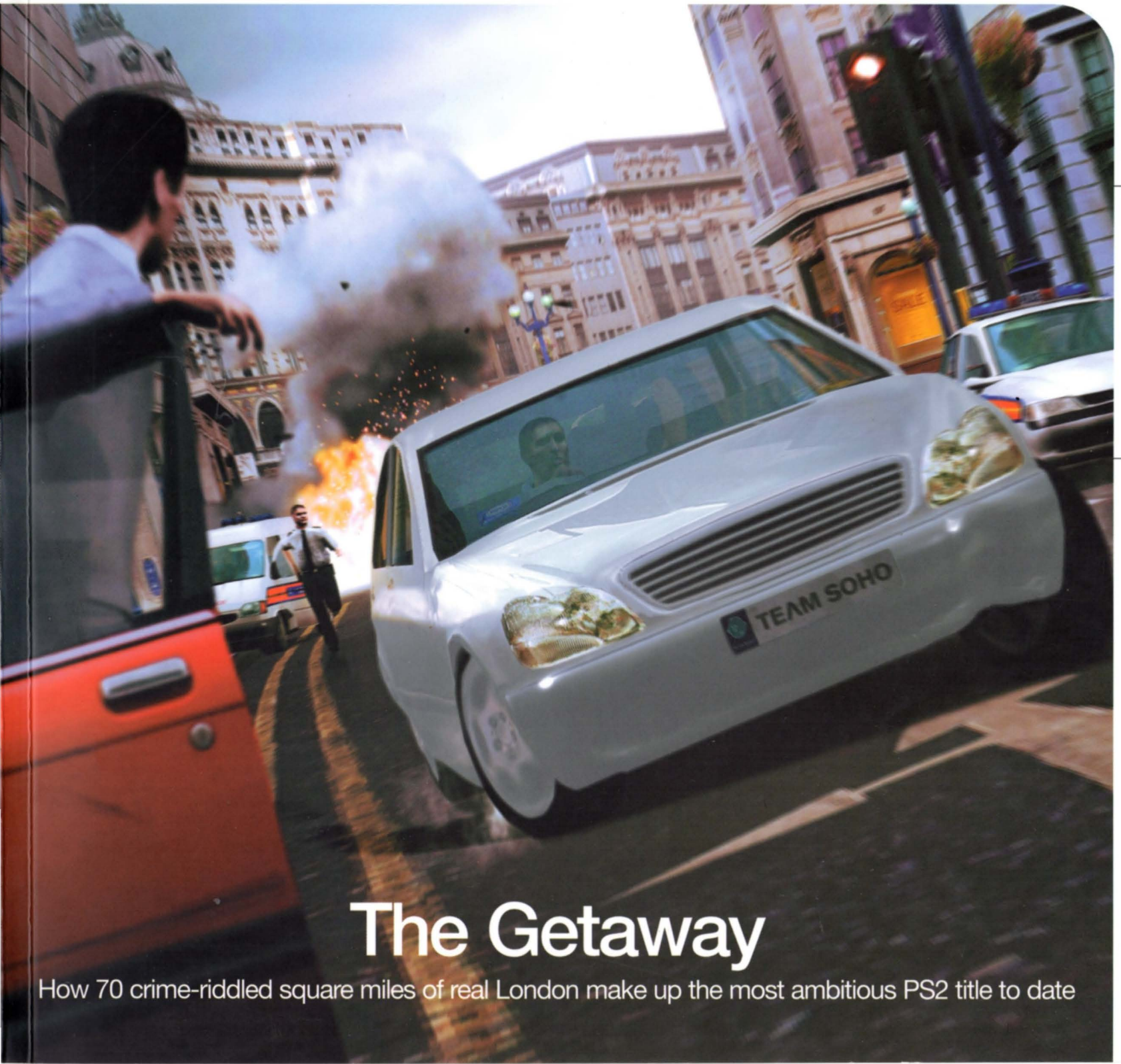


The future of electronic entertainment issue#89

# EDGE<sup>®</sup>

PlayStation | PS2 | N64 | Dreamcast | PC | X-Box | Dolphin

Dolphin and Game Boy Advance unveiled: the full story from Tokyo  
Mobile phone gaming: is this really the future of electronic entertainment?  
The rebirth of Sega: exclusive interviews with nine new divisions



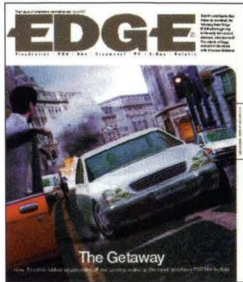
## The Getaway

How 70 crime-riddled square miles of real London make up the most ambitious PS2 title to date










How often have you played a game and wondered, what if? What if that collection of buildings lining the road in your driving game was not mere scenery, but in fact an element of fundamental consequence to the gaming experience? What if you could actually stop your car, jump out of it and enter a shop? The team putting together *The Getaway* clearly has pondered all of this, but, rather than allowing such pipedreams to float off into the ether, it is attempting to build them on PlayStation2. The result, showcased this month on p52, is the most stupidly ambitious videogame **Edge** has ever witnessed, and if the finished article comes even near to realising such grandiose plans it will stand tall as a new paradigm.

Yes, developers are finally beginning to foster fertile relationships with their PS2 dev kits, and software of *The Getaway*'s stature seems certain to cement the console as an essential piece of furniture for the home – despite Fleet Street's sensationalist hacks doing their worst to throw a particularly ugly-looking spanner into the works.

While Sony factories continued to churn out millions more of the company's new lifestyle choice in the form of PS2, this month Nintendo chose to present its new toy, GameCube. At Spaceworld 2000 the company gleefully unwrapped the box in front of hundreds of industry execs holding their chins in their hands, wondering what plans the sleeping giant from Kyoto had been hatching since an aquatic mammal had first been showcased in emblematic fashion in 1999. DVD movie playback, now recognised as one the smartest items on the PlayStation2 agenda, was notable by its absence. In place of such a masses-appeasing element was a giant video wall primed to deliver footage of a new form of entertainment. As 128bit renditions of *Zelda*, *Metroid* and *Mario* danced in front of expectant onlookers' eyes, Nintendo reminded the world that it was ready to come out to play again, and that it was bringing some old, much-loved friends.

And, faced with a barrage of such bewilderingly stellar slices of IP, for an all-too-brief instant, considerations such as being able to use your videogame console to watch 'Blade Runner' paled into insignificance. 





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## 046 Sacrifice

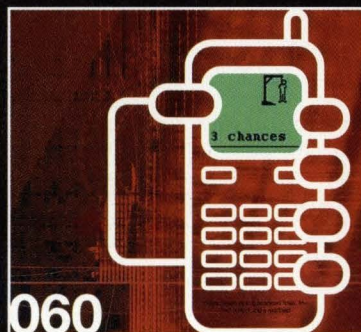
It may have been a long time since the company last tasted both critical and commercial success, but Shiny's latest could turn around its fortunes

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The break-up of Sega Enterprises has resulted in the generation of nine new companies. **Edge** talks the men tasked with making them a success



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### Editorial

**Future Publishing**  
30 Monmouth Street  
Bath, BANES BA1 2BW  
Telephone: 01225 442 244  
Editorial fax: 01225 732 275  
Email: edge@futurenet.co.uk  
Edge Web site: www.edge-online.com

### People on Edge

**Tony Mott** editor  
**João Sanches** deputy editor  
**Jamie Dolling** production editor  
**Ste Curran** writer  
**David McCarthy** writer  
**Mark Walbank** writer  
**Christophe Kagotani** Tokyo bureau

**Terry Stokes** art editor  
**Darren Phillips** deputy art editor

### Advertising and recruitment

emma.lewis@futurenet.co.uk  
Telephone: 0207 317 2604/2600  
Fax: 0207 486 5678

**Emma Lewis** advertising manager  
**Emma Cole** senior sales executive  
**Rob Silverman** classified sales executive

### Subscriptions

**Future Publishing Ltd**  
FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton  
Somerset TA11 6BR  
Telephone customer services: 01458 271112  
Telephone customer order line: 01458 271112  
Fax: 01225 822523  
Email: subs@futurenet.co.uk

### Future Publishing people

**Kirsty Bell** production coordinator  
**Lou Raffell** production manager  
Production fax 01225 732293  
**Steve Michaels** ad design manager  
**Beccy Michaels** print services coordinator  
**Judith Green** group production manager  
**Rachel Spurrier** pre-press coordinator  
**Simon Windsor, Mark Gover** colour scanning  
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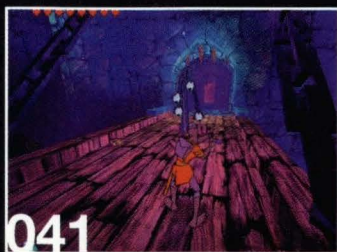
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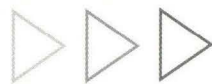
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"Hey, buddy, you got a dead cat in there or what?"



# frontend



News and views from e-entertainment's cutting edge





# Nintendo shows its hand

**Game Boy Advance and GameCube unveiled at Spaceworld 2000; Miyamoto stresses discernible performance over specifications**

Nintendo unveiled its two new hardware units – Game Boy Advance and GameCube – at Spaceworld 2000 on Thursday August 24, 2000, at Tokyo's Makuhari Messe Convention centre.

After a brief delay, executive vice president Atsushi Asura opened the proceedings with an introductory speech focusing on Nintendo's past achievements. Within five minutes, his hand reached into his jacket pocket to reveal the Game Boy Advance unit. Essentially a sleekly designed joystick powered by two AA batteries with a centrally mounted 2.9-inch screen (1.5 times the size of GBC's), the 32bit unit boasts two shoulder buttons (which feel disappointingly short on travel), negating concerns over the button limitation of previous Game Boys. The screen is a reflective TFT colour LCD which utilises a newly developed high-contrast white panel – in practice, the image is more visible than its GBC cousin. A PCM stereo sound generator is being used, enabling multiple track simultaneous playback. As expected, GBA is compatible with the current range of GB and GBC games (which currently number some 1,000 titles in Japan). As with the current GBC, different coloured units are available, including the now-obligatory translucent models.

Game Boy Advance will launch in Japan on March 21, 2001 at a ¥9,800 (£60) price point with ten titles. In Europe and the US, a July 2001 release is currently planned, though no details of price were given. Asura-san explained the delayed Japanese release is a result of increased demand for the current



GameCube controllers will arrive in the now-familiar rainbow of Nintendo colours

GBC model, presently being produced at a monthly rate of 1.5 million units. In order to satisfy customers, production will increase to 2.5 million per month before Christmas, after which GBA manufacturing takes over to ensure a successful launch. Nintendo expects to achieve sales of one million units by the end of the launch month.

## GameCube out of the box

Asura-san then turned his attention to the afternoon's other announcement. A six-foot-high container was wheeled on to the stage and, accompanied by billows of dry ice, five Nintendo GameCubes carried by a quintet of helpful Nintendo girls emerged from the previously empty box to rapturous applause. Painted in five different colours, and measuring just 150mm x 110mm x 161mm, the 405MHz near-cubic unit resembles the top half of a micro hi-fi system, and despite its angular appearance, in the flesh comes across as instantly desirable hardware. Four joystick ports line up above two Digicard slots (used for either 4Mb Digicard flash memory cards or a stamp-sized 64Mb SD-Digicard adaptor for connecting a variety of digital devices such as cameras and mobile phones). To the rear of the unit, digital and analogue AV outputs join the 12V power socket, and a handle assists portability. Storage media comes in the form of an 8cm, 1.5Gb proprietary optical disk from Matsushita, with an anti-piracy system developed by the same company. (Nintendo believes this 8mm disc should be the format of the future and Matsushita should have released DVD-RAM video recorders based on the 8mm disc storage system in Japan by the time you read this.) Accessories include a 56K modem with a broadband unit to follow – either slots neatly into an allocated space underneath the machine.

## Launch titles and demos

GameCube launches with five titles in Japan in July 2001, with the US rollout following in October. No details regarding price were unveiled and, typically, Europe will have to wait until early next year for details regarding the PAL launch.

Once the applause died down, Nintendo kicked off the GameCube demos. A glimpse at a sequence showing a roomful of gloriously rendered, partying Pokémon got the ball rolling before *WaveRace* stepped in. Featuring some excellently modelled jetskis



## GameCube specs

Nintendo used Spaceworld to reveal finer GameCube details

MPU: IBM PowerPC ('Gekko')  
 Clock frequency: 405MHz  
 CPU capacity: 925Dmips (Dhrystone 2.1)  
 Internal data precision: 32bit integer and 64bit floating-point  
 External bus bandwidth: 1.6Gb/second (peak)  
 External bus bandwidth: 1.6Gb/second (peak) (32bit address, 64bit data bus)  
 202.5MHz  
 Internal cache: L1: Instruction 32Kb, data 32Kb (eight-way); L2: 256Kb (two-way)

System LSI: 'Flipper'  
 Clock frequency: 202.5MHz  
 Embedded frame buffer: Approx. 2Mb  
 Sustainable latency : 5ns (1T-SRAM)  
 Embedded texture cache: Approx. 1MB  
 Sustainable latency : 5ns (1T-SRAM)  
 Texture read bandwidth: 12.8Gb/sec (peak)  
 Main memory bandwidth: 3.2Gb/sec (peak)  
 System floating-point arithmetic capability: 13.0GFLOPS (peak) (MPU, geometry engine, HW lighting total)  
 Actual display capability: 6 million to 12 million polygons/second (display capability assuming actual game with complexity model, texture, etc)  
 System main memory: 24Mb sustainable  
 Latency: 10ns or lower (1T-SRAM)  
 A-memory: 16Mb (100MHz DRAM)  
 Image-processing functions: fog, subpixel anti-aliasing, HW light x8, alpha blending, virtual texture design, multi-texture mapping/bump/environment mapping, MIPMAP, bilinear filtering, realtime texture decompression (S3TC), 24bit colour, etc  
 Other: Realtime decompression of display list, HW motion compensation capability

Sound processor: custom 16bit DSP  
 Instruction memory: 8Kb RAM + 8Kb ROM  
 Instruction memory: 8Kb RAM + 8Kb ROM  
 Data memory: 8Kb RAM + 4Kb ROM  
 Clock frequency: 101.25 MHz  
 Maximum number of simultaneously produced sounds ADPCM: 64ch  
 Sampling frequency: 48KHz

Disc drive: CAV (Constant Angular Velocity)  
 System average access time data transfer speed: 16Mbps to 25Mbps 128ms  
 Media: 8cm Nintendo GameCube disc, based on Matsushita's optical disc technology media, approx. 1.5Gb capacity

Input/output:  
 Controller port x4  
 Digicard slot x2  
 Analog AV output x1  
 Digital AV output x1  
 High-speed parallel port x1

Main unit dimensions:  
 150mm(W)x110mm(H)x161mm(D)





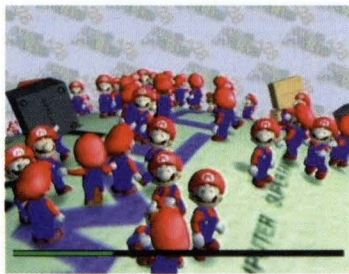
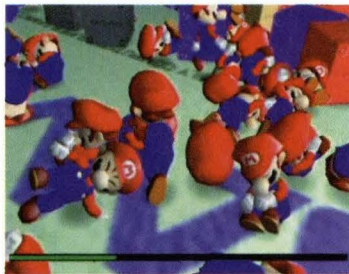
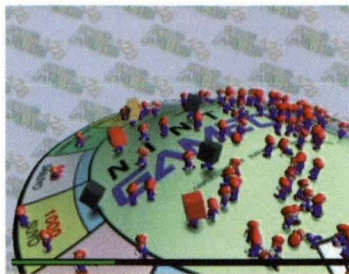
GameCube's expansion port accepts either a Nintendo 56K modem or a broadband unit



The SD-Digicard adaptor will allow GameCube to be linked up to devices such as digital cameras and mobile phones



Nintendo proudly demonstrated its new controller, which can be used with an optional wireless adaptor from up to ten metres



and riders cutting their way through a chrome-like sea, the all-too-rapid sequence was enough to demonstrate some striking quality, enhancing the remarkable texture quality. If you remember the original's impact on the videogaming world, you won't underestimate the noise this will make.

*Zelda* was possibly the most visually impressive title, with a sequence showing a grown-up Link fighting Ganondorf in an atmospheric castle room lit by the numerous sword/axe strikes. The detail of the characters is unprecedented in a Nintendo game, and the seemingly advanced state of the title surprised many who thought it still very much stuck in development infancy.

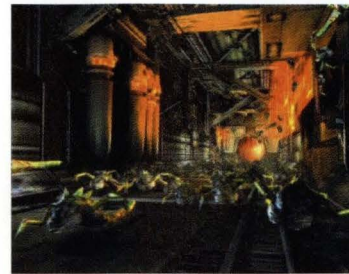
But if the crowd reacted emphatically to both *WaveRace* and *Zelda*, it positively erupted as a sequence showing a gloriously textured Samus from *Super Metroid* running towards the camera along a gloomy



spaceship corridor (followed by hundreds of beautifully animated space rats) kicked off. The level of detail in Samu's suit is awe-inspiring, and while the aesthetic of a 128bit update of one of Nintendo's finest creations has long been a moot point, the resulting images astound.

### Thirdparty offerings

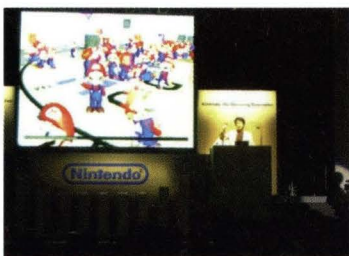
LucasArts followed with a sequence showing a squadron of X-Wings and their subsequent attack on a Death Star-type structure. Marginally less impressive than Nintendo's own material, the sequence was solid and a strong indication of a visually rich 'Star Wars' title on its way for Nintendo's forthcoming machine (much in the same way as the early demos of *Shadows Of The Empire* for the N64). Rare's offering of a high-polygon, but almost motionless, model of Joanna Dark failed to excite and was by far the most disappointing



Each demo brought a different type of emotion from the attendees of the pre-Spaceworld event. Miyamoto-san's Mario demo (each of the 128 character models was made up of around 700 polys) had some in stitches, while the *Zelda* section drew gasps because of its insane level of detail. However, the most vocal response greeted the appearance of Samus Aran in a sequence that could become part of a StarCube *Metroid*

sequence. (After the show, a sequence detailing a 128bit version of *Banjo-Kazooie* with the eponymous duo running away from a posse of pursuing high-poly characters shown on a looping demo would go a little way to restore the developer's reputation – dust effects, texture quality and facial expressions were most notable.)

Nintendo regained audience interest with a sequence showcasing Luigi's antics (sliding down the banister, screaming like a girl) from *Super Mario 128* in a superbly detailed and masterfully lit haunted mansion boasting a stupefyingly polygon count. A crashing chandelier demonstrated realistic physics modelling, while the semi-translucent Boos terrorising Luigi were beautifully and intricately detailed, with some superlative facial expressions – in many ways they're reminiscent of the slimer ghosts from the 'Ghostbusters' films – only better animated. Everything ran at 60fps.



Shigeru Miyamoto's presentation (left) was naturally a highlight, containing carefully considered language. Nintendo hopes that the 8cm disks (centre) will become a kind of industry standard in years to come. GameCube in all its naked, part-IBM-engineered glory (right)





The key difference between Nintendo's demo and those of its competitors was the use of real game footage as a way of detailing genuine applications.

### Focusing on games

As the attendees recovered and the US journos ceased their hollering, Nintendo director Genyo Takedo took to the stage and emphasised Nintendo's focus on games and gameplay. The concept of GameCube, he stated, was to present developers and players alike with the ultimate hardware for playing games. Hence the ease of use and the removal of the typical bottlenecks associated with development problems. He talked of the N64's reputation as a games machine that

was difficult to develop for as a valuable lesson, and went on to list the features introduced in order to make its 128bit successor a far more straightforward proposition. He highlighted the introduction of 1T-RAM technology, which has a minimum of delays, into the main memory, and the graphics LSI mixed memory. Secondary cache memory with a large capacity is implemented in the MPU, resulting in alleged functionality that can be used with games with consistent reliability.

### The Wavebird controller

Shigeru Miyamoto then stepped up to talk through the joy pad. If GameCube isn't necessarily a shape you would normally associate with Nintendo, the controller certainly is. With the aid of an onscreen Boo which burped out function letters and altered its shape on command, Miyamoto-san cycled through the ergonomic unit's eight buttons, two analogue sticks and D-pad. The L/R buttons are now analogue, and two trigger buttons have squeezed in above them. The C buttons, while still perceived as camera operators, have been replaced by an analogue stick. Named the Wavebird, the joy pad unit is also available in wireless form and will operate up to a distance of ten metres. The coup de grâce was that a Game Boy Advance can be plugged into the GameCube, and games can be played using the GBA controls with its screen acting as a high-spec VMU.

Explaining that following the way competitors aped ideas first seen in the titles shown for the N64 after the machine's initial public appearance, Miyamoto-san said he had to restrict the amount of game footage Nintendo was willing to show. Still,

Nintendo's big brands were pushed to the fore, with Luigi negotiating a haunted castle (far left), plus Pokémon plenty

a technical demo of the machine's potential featuring Mario on a circular Monopoly-style board was soon on the stage's three screens. Within seconds, 128 hi-res Marios made up of 700 polygons each (along with the 128 polygonal boxes they were hiding under) were running around, rolling each other off the edge of the board and generally behaving independently from each other, while displaying correct physical modelling. Unsatisfied with the number of moving objects, Miyamoto-san added more boxes, radically changed the terrain topography (only the stronger Marios resisted falling into the resulting troughs), altered the lighting, wobbled the board with hilarious effect as most of the Marios bounced their way into oblivion, gave them all toon shading, turned them transparent, added motion blur, and then turned the whole thing into a pizza. It was an impressive insight into the machine's potential, though Miyamoto-san made a point of not talking figures.

"In my experience, there have often been theoretical claims of high performance for game hardware, and although people were very impressed by the figures, the actual products haven't even delivered one tenth of the claims," he stated. "It is a given that the Nintendo GameCube will offer better graphics and higher quality sound, but more importantly it will allow developers the freedom to concentrate on creativity without worrying about technical limitations." A preliminary strike against Microsoft's more powerful hardware, undoubtedly, but until X-Box boasts a line-up as convincing as GameCube's, Edge's money is unquestionably on Nintendo's machine. Expect no more details on GameCube until E3 next May, where Nintendo has announced it will reveal its line-up in preparation for the Japanese July launch. Edge will carry a full report of Spaceworld 2000 in next month's issue.



Nintendo terms these tones magenta, purple, black, champagne and steel. How much it expects the carrying handles to be used is unknown



Game Boy Color was the last item on the handheld agenda at the event: its Mobile Adapter GB was shown for the first time in Japan



In a novel twist, GBAs can be linked to GameCube to act as luxury VMUs

"There have been claims of high performance for game hardware, and although people were impressed, the products haven't delivered"



Forthcoming GBA titles include (from left to right) Mario Kart Advance, Ougon No Taiyo (Golden Sun) and Napoleon





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# PlayStation2 suffers new media storm

Press rounds on Sony over UK PlayStation2 price compared to continental Europe and US

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The troubled launch of PlayStation2 in the UK has been hit by further setbacks in the shape of a spate of newspaper headlines denouncing its £300 price point, which materialised shortly after Sony announced that the launch date would be set back by a month. While the preorder system is still planned to commence on September 7, the European release date for the machine has been pushed to November 24. The US launch is still set to take place on the originally mooted date of October 26.

The substantial difference in the price of PlayStation2 in the UK and the US – where the console will sell for \$300, or approximately £200 – was seized upon by several national dailies, including *The Star*, which featured the story on its front page as another example of 'rip-off Britain'. However, HMV games manager **Doug Bone** argues the issue isn't quite as clear cut: "The price point is certainly an issue – the headlines in the tabloids help nobody – but it has to be said that less than £300 for a DVD player and a 128bit console is in



line with other platforms in the marketplace, and still better bang for your buck than £7.99 for a pack of Pokémon trading cards."

Some gamers will no doubt continue to be aggrieved by the price, but it's clear that there are several factors beyond Sony's control, as director of marketing for the UK, **Alan Welsman**, explains: "There is no gain in us pricing it higher than we think the market can bear. The truth of it is that there are different tax regimes in America and England or Europe, and that we have, on average, a 17.5 per cent VAT, whereas they have a sales tax which is between six and ten per cent." While this may not be sufficient in itself to justify the price, there are other issues, says Welsman: "We also have far greater distribution and administration costs across Europe. First of all we have localisation issues – different languages and transport arrangements. All of the kind of administration costs that you might imagine, including rent, rates, taxes

differences across the European Union are less marked, with the console priced at ¥456 (£278), in France.

**No such thing as bad publicity**

Press interest in the launch of a videogame console clearly owes much to the current 'rip-off Britain' campaign, but it is also a testament to the current prominence enjoyed by the videogame industry – built in large part upon the success of the original PlayStation. So it is disturbing that trade papers cited rumours that the headlines were started by the activities of 'the PR agency for one of Sony's rivals'. This is especially true given the price of one rival console, the Dreamcast, which also launched at a substantially lower price in the US – \$200 – than it did in the UK, where it launched at £200.

Territorial discrepancies are not a new phenomenon for the industry. The relatively high price is, though, a bitter pill to swallow given the delayed launch, and

**“Sony isn't looking for sympathy, and we understand that people might feel aggrieved, but we do our best for Europe and the UK”**

associated with businesses generally being higher for all of the businesses we deal with, and on top of that the margins that European retailers look for are greater than the margins that American retailers look for. They only ask for a higher margin because their shop, their staff, and everything costs more over here than it does in any other country." Certainly the

does seem to be a strange reward for the loyalty that British gamers have shown to PlayStation. "We understand exactly how important Europe is in the whole of the business for PlayStation and PS2," says Welsman. "We have sold more PlayStations in Europe than they have sold in both Japan and America. At launch there is a bottleneck. Because the demand is outstripping supply in Japan, they're having to feed that market, and subsequently, because of the NTSC similarities between America and Japan, they move swiftly on to America.

"Some of our figures are saying that demand before Christmas could be as high as over a million units. Unfortunately production can't meet that demand. We're trying to talk to our consumers and make sure they know that we do value them, but there is the inevitable conclusion that, yes, there is a pecking order, and that Japan comes first. All of us would like it to be a global launch date, but actually that's very difficult to achieve when you're producing the kind of numbers that we need to fulfil



Alan Welsman is keen to dismiss claims that PlayStation2 is overpriced, citing greater distribution costs and sales tax

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**EXCLUSIVE** Britney pops out

the demand. We're not looking for sympathy, and we understand that people might feel aggrieved, but we do our best for Europe and the UK."

Nevertheless, there is still uncertainty as to how many units will actually be available on the day of launch, and the preorder system is not entirely popular with retailers. Sony has also revealed that, contrary to earlier reports, there will be no free stock available until possibly after Christmas. "We can't at the moment say exactly how many units will be available on launch day, we can only confirm that three million units will be shipped in Europe for the end of our financial year, which is the end of March 2001," says Welsman. Consumers who preorder a PlayStation2 will be guaranteed to get a machine before

The price of PlayStation2 was announced to the public in a series of indignant headlines



Christmas, but not on the day of launch. Enough preorder forms will therefore be distributed to retailers to cover the amount of units that will be shipped before Christmas, and consumers will be informed when they will receive their console in a letter from Sony. The verdict of **Clare Askem**, of Dixons, regarding preorders is muted: "It's not ideal, but I can understand what Sony are trying to deal with, which is a very small amount of stock versus the anticipated demand. I think it's very complicated, and as a non-specialist it's quite a complex thing to be doing, and I'm quite worried about the operational aspects of that, in terms of trying to manage that through our busiest time of year. In terms of the strategic intent, I sympathise with it."

The biggest difficulty posed to retailers by the system is the management of consumer expectation and understanding, which some retailers point out is to the advantage of Sony's competitors. "Dreamcast is entering a potentially exciting period," argues Bone. "With the most impressive 128bit software ever developed about to hit shelves, the opportunities for Dreamcast this Christmas are vast. In the same way that Nintendo 64 capitalised on stock shortages of PlayStation in recent Christmases, Dreamcast is poised to take similar advantage of PS2's limited availability." Welsman is less concerned, believing that consumers will wait: "There will always be a minority who switch to the Dreamcast or any other format that's available if they can't get the machine they're after, but most people who want a PlayStation2 will wait for a PlayStation2." Certainly retailers are agreed that the Dreamcast will have to be on sale at the right price before consumers will be willing to switch.

It's unlikely that the high price point and shipping delays will dampen the huge demand for PlayStation2 that already exists. Sony should be more concerned by the fact that devoted gamers are still likely to be deterred by the average quality of many of the titles that have been pencilled in for launch. It is therefore to be hoped that the company uses the delay to ensure the delivery of a higher quality of launch software than is currently expected.



## industry opinion

### Developers and retailers on PS2 launch problems

"Sony have certainly implemented a rather radical approach to their preorder process. While the communication flow to retail has been consistent, they will need to maintain their traditionally strong PR message to the consumer, as there is some confusion as to how customers go about securing their machine before Christmas. Stock availability will be an issue, though in Sony's defence it always has been, no matter what the platform may be. With the overwhelming launch success in Japan, plus the production demands of the imminent Psone, it will be no different for the PS2.

"Many cynics appear to have already picked their winners in the hardware wars, citing the war as a two-horse race between Sony and Microsoft, but with Sega about to potentially get their online message over to customers and Nintendo about to reveal further details of Dolphin, there may be more to this battle than initially appeared."

**Doug Bone, HMV**

"Obviously it's a shame that we will be getting PS2 later than the other two main markets, but I think this is sympathetic of two things – the huge demand in Japan and the development of PAL hardware. It's always going to be easier to ship new consoles for the US, because they use the same TV standard and don't, as such, need any new display hardware.

It's a fact of life, but still disappointing for the European consumers.

"I'm pretty surprised about the amount of concern in the press about the price of the console. I remember buying the first PlayStation five years ago for around the same price and didn't consider it a rip-off at the time. I think the new console has so much more going for it – games broadband, DVD, etc – that it seems remarkable that it's stayed at the same price.

"Personally I hope that the delay will help us get some better games ready for the market than some of the games we saw for the Japanese launch. I think there is quite a good window of opportunity for Dreamcast. It's all about having good games. At the start there weren't too many, but as time has gone on they've got better and better. I think this will also be true for PS2 as the games that are now in development look amazing."

**Brendan McNamara, Studio Soho**

"I don't think the delayed launch of the PS2 will alienate consumers – the price point is aggressive for an entry level console, and it will still make it in time for Christmas as anticipated. This is a stunningly desirable machine that consumers will wait for – a four-week wait won't push them towards alternative consoles. I'm sure Sony will use the

delay to maximise the hype, though this raises concern that they may not be able to cope with the initial demand at retail."

**Paul Jackson, Electronic Arts**

"I don't think the delay will alienate people; not for long anyway, as most purchases will be Christmas presents. Once you buy a machine, the fact it was a month or so later is soon forgotten. It is more likely to increase anticipation. A few people may buy a Dreamcast, but those that are swayed by a month's delay suggest it is not a major purchase for them and probably have the money to buy both – in fact, they probably have a Dreamcast already."

**David Braben, Frontier Developments**

"I think there will be an awful lot of disappointed customers this Christmas, especially the non-hardcore gamer. Anybody who's very close to the market and the product will know there are shortages, but in the more massmarket case, where little Johnny really wants one for Christmas and his mum and dad go out and try to get one in the run up in the normal purchasing cycle, I think the consumer's going to be very disappointed. Which is why I can understand why Sony are trying to manage that expectation and manage the flow of products."

**Clare Askem, Dixons**

## Blockbuster goes broadband

### Video rentals giant dives into on-demand, paving the way for games piped direct to the home

The implications of a broadband future became more apparent on July 19, when Blockbuster announced plans to launch an entertainment on-demand network in conjunction with Enron Broadband Services in the US. Initially the service will offer video on-demand to several US cities by the end of the year, so that users can enjoy pay-per-view movies which benefit from VCR-like functionality. Eventually, though, the service will offer other forms of entertainment, including videogames on demand. It is planning to extend the service to other markets, including the UK, in 2001.





Titles including *Baldur's Gate* (right) and *Colin McRae Rally 2.0* have seen their release on Dreamcast cancelled



## Dreamcast price slashed

Sega cuts console RRP in run-up to PlayStation2 launch

While Sega has announced that from September 8 the official price for the Dreamcast will be reduced from £200 to £150, Dreamcast owners will be unhappy to hear that the platform has been hit by the announcement of a number of cancellations. UbiSoft has confirmed that *The Road to El Dorado*, based on the movie of the same title, won't appear on Dreamcast, while PC port *Baldur's Gate* has been dropped and *Messiah* placed on hold. Other titles said to have been dropped from the Dreamcast release schedule include *UEFA Striker 2001*, *Croc 2* and *Max Payne*.

A Sega spokesman would only say: "We have fantastic support from thirdparty publishers. Between now and Christmas thirdparty publishers will release at least 58 titles for Dreamcast. As always, Sega

of Europe are working very closely with thirdparty publishers to ensure that Dreamcast continues to supply gamers with outstanding and innovative titles such as *Black & White*, *F355*, and *Half-Life*."

However, it is clear that publisher apathy is responsible for at least some of the cancellations, and developers continue to have reservations about the platform, including *Jej San* of Argonaut: "We could all be surprised and Sega might do something good, but so far they've not been doing so well. I'm sure its not through want of trying, but more through lack of cash. The industry does not expect them to pull through in the form that they are today. Everyone expects them to throw in the towel on platform ownership, and become a software company for other people's platforms."

## BAFTA to visit evolution2000

Interactive entertainment award nominations to go on show in Leeds

The deadline for entries for this year's BAFTA Interactive Entertainment Awards has passed, and the nominations will be on display at evolution2000, part of the Leeds International Film Festival, taking place on October 12-13.

Created by festival Director Chris Fell and BAFTA Interactive's Helen Wood, evolution2000 is now in its second year. Last year's attendees included Peter Molyneux of Lionhead Studios and Charles Cecil from Revolution Software. This year the event will feature BAFTA Interactive sessions about designing for modern consoles and a presentation from

Jonathan Freedman of Sony on PlayStation2. Attendees will also be able to enter several gaming competitions, with games projected onto an open-air cinema-size screen courtesy of Christie Digital Systems. ELSPA is on board as an official sponsor, and the event is organised in association with Synergy-tv.com, a Web broadcaster. Further information and tickets can be obtained by visiting [www.leedsfilm.com](http://www.leedsfilm.com), and the event will be broadcast live on the Internet.

The BAFTA Interactive Entertainment Awards ceremony will take place on October 26, in London.



Following the success of last year's event, which featured speakers such as Jonathan Freedman (far left) and Peter Molyneux (left), a strong line-up has been announced for this year, including Revolution's Charles Cecil (above)



# Siggraph marks new movie-game synergy

New Orleans convention showcases fresh wave of cinema/videogame cross-fertilisation



On top of films like 'Stuart Little' and 'The Perfect Storm', Alias Wavefront envisages Maya becoming middleware for PlayStation2 with its SDK package, which will create an engine for artists and programmers to work within

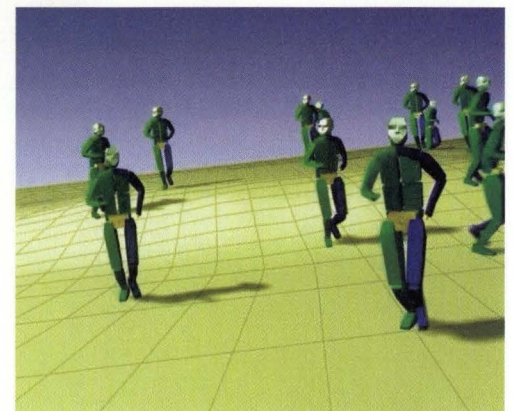
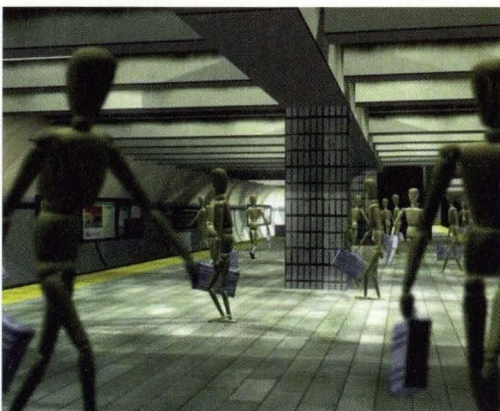


The last week of July witnessed the Siggraph Conference touch down for a five-day graphics extravaganza at the Ernest N Morial Convention Centre in New Orleans.

Pixar screened its 'For the Birds' short to an American audience for the first time, Sony Pictures lapped up the plaudits for its work on 'Stuart Little' and 'The Hollow Man', and ILM revealed a few of the secret tools and techniques it used to create that amazingly real rough water in 'The Perfect Storm'.

While this may seem as though it has nothing to do with the games industry, most of the tools currently used for movie effects are exactly the same ones game developers are taking on for their PlayStation2 and X-Box projects. Equally, software developers like Discreet, Alias Wavefront, Softimage and Side Effects are keen to turn their motion-picture FX products into games industry moneymakers. Though game companies didn't have a massive presence at the exhibition, plenty of artists and creative directors from development houses were sniffing around the show, taking in the techniques used in the major movies in the hope of converting the knowledge into stunning content for PS2, PC and X-Box. That, and checking out the latest creative software for their studios.

Perhaps the most interesting trend as far as software is concerned is how animation systems are evolving. Having released *SoftimageXSI* this spring, Softimage has also been making great strides forward. *XSI* already affords its



Others use custom solutions, but Discreet's *Character Studio 3* is a plug-in for *3D Studio Max* which makes generating realistic crowd animation easier, eliminating character collisions





ILM's work creating super-waves for 'The Perfect Storm' could give game developers a number of new pointers

users the ability to create animations in a process similar to non-linear video editing. Hence a run cycle can be merged easily with a jump animation, with the software working out what a running jump might look like. In future versions, XSI will include a new viewer system wherein animations can be created for games based on behavioural systems. A character with a basic set of animation cycles can be released into an environment and sent out to achieve an objective. Like a game character with its own logic and pathfinding ability, it can be left on its own to go into motion. When this technology is fully developed, animators will be able to interactively direct animations rather than keyframe them.

Available more immediately will be Discreet's *Character Studio 3*, a plug-in for *3D Studio Max*. This brings with it a crowds feature making the animation of groups of people, or flocks or herds of animals, that bit easier. Animated characters can mill about in realistic fashion without colliding with one another.

Discreet was also showing its next

version of *3D Studio Max*. Extremely popular in the games industry for the creation of artwork and animation, the new version will have a realtime viewer wherein users will be able to instantly preview work, even if it requires multiple passes. Full effects, shading and texturing


## Most of the tools currently used for movie effects are the same ones developers are taking on for their PS2 and X-Box projects

– all animated – can be seen. It's a way of giving artists an approximation of what their output will look like in realtime, with the game engine.

Indeed, with features like crowd-handling, behaviours and realtime effects rendering appearing in these creative packages, the applications themselves are moving closer and closer to being game engine technology. It won't be long before much of this software is classed as middleware. Indeed, Alias Wavefront, already well known for its *Maya* software,

used for both film effects and games, is now shipping a realtime SDK. Artists and programmers are presented with an engine to work within to develop for PlayStation2, X-Box, GameCube and OpenGL on the PC. Thus, art assets don't need to be ported, converted

or dumbed down for the game code.

The first client for the SDK is Sony, as its 989 Studios prepares to use the system to develop sports titles for PS2. Sony itself had a rather strange presence at Siggraph. The company was demonstrating its rather odd GScube – a box with souped-up PS2 chipsets inside and flashing lights on the exterior. It was a prototype workstation capable of rendering scenes from Square's 'Final Fantasy' movie in realtime, as well as other applications, like military flight sims. 

## Making waves

ILM shows off technology that generated 'The Perfect Storm'

One of the most fascinating presentations at Siggraph was staged at the Alias Wavefront user group meeting. Before an audience of some 2,500, ILM showed how it used *Maya*, plus a host of plug-ins and extra tools, to create the incredibly realistic waters in 'The Perfect Storm'.

The company had technical directors covering every angle of fluid dynamics. Some worked on mist and spray. Others tackled surface turbulence, foam and capillary waves. Plus there was the task of handling the changing air pressure just above the surface of the water so that spray would move up and down with the waves. Once the water itself had been simulated, it had to be set up to interact correctly with the boat in the film. While in some scenes a live-action boat was used, in others it's entirely CG. The lighting had to be set up to render correctly; an added difficulty was that different types of spray create different types of refraction.

Soon nautical games may require similar levels of effort to be convincing. Thankfully, though, at least some of the legwork has been done.



# Rebellion sparked as Judge Dredd sells out

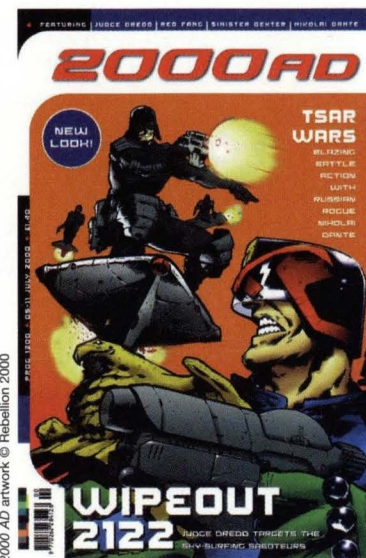
Brit developer purchases *2000AD* from Egmont Fleetway, obtaining super-rich seam of character IP



Dredd remains the best known character, but the vast *2000AD* portfolio includes characters like Deadlock

British developer Rebellion, best known for PC title *Aliens vs Predator* and currently working on *Gunlok*, has purchased the well-known British comic *2000AD* from publisher Egmont Fleetway. While it could be argued that taking on the responsibility for publishing a weekly comic could dilute the focus of the developer, access to a 23-year back catalogue containing a vast portfolio of characters, many of which would sit easily in a videogame context, is likely to outweigh the potential disadvantages.

"It all started out with licensing characters," explains Rebellion CEO **Jason Kingsley**. "Up to now and in the future we're going to be working with other people who own their own licences, like Fox and Universal. We also wanted some level of independence, and we were looking at trying to find our own characters to make our own games out of. We got in contact with Egmont Fleetway, and it was just difficult to get the kind of deal I was looking for." Thus began 18 months of discussions that resulted in the acquisition, though Egmont Fleetway will continue to print the comic on a contract basis. "We own the comic, we are employing the editorial staff, but we are looking at setting up a separate corporate vehicle for *2000AD* because it's a successful product in its own right – it makes a profit and has been doing for a while," continues Kingsley.







**Andy Diggle**, better known to his readers as Tharg, is clear about the advantages that the new ownership brings to *2000AD*: "The Galaxy's Greatest Comic always sat badly within Egmont Fleetway's portfolio of titles, as they are primarily a children's publisher. *2000AD*'s brand of sci-fi, violence and very black humour didn't quite gel with the likes of 'Thomas the Tank Engine' and 'Barbie', and consequently Egmont Fleetway never really knew what to do with it. This was obviously deeply infuriating, especially when it was obvious that *2000AD* is a goldmine of potentially highly profitable licences."

### Licences to print money

This rich portfolio is the chief advantage of ownership for Rebellion, which can now develop and license games based on some 700 characters. "Personally, the prospect of a *Syphon Filter*-style game based on Strontium Dog has me drooling with anticipation – although that's just a daydream at this stage," declares Diggle. There is also the talented roster of artists and writers who have worked on the comic over the years, though Rebellion CTO **Chris Kingsley** is cautious not to overstate the possibility that such writers as Grant Morrison and Alan Moore might work their magic on a Rebellion game: "It's very early days at the moment as to how things like that are going to work, but the great thing about it is there are some extremely talented writers and artists on *2000AD* who I'm sure would be interested in getting into games and all that sort of stuff, but we'll see how it develops."

With the sheer size of *2000AD*'s

**"The prospect of a *Syphon Filter*-style game based on Strontium Dog has me drooling with anticipation... it's just a daydream at this stage"**

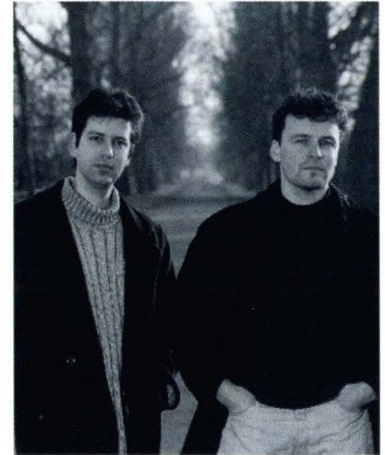
relatively untapped back catalogue, maintaining the integrity of the franchise is clearly a concern, but is a challenge that the Kingsley brothers are certain they can overcome. "*2000AD* is going to remain exactly as it has been for the last 23 years, which is that the editor's in charge and he makes the decision over what goes in and what doesn't, so if we've got something

that we want to put in, we have to pitch it to him and we have to convince him that it's a good idea," states Chris. "We want to work with developers and publishers and creatives and license out characters as appropriate," continues Jason, "but we want to make sure that they're good quality stuff. When we do make movie

announcements, we'll be quite involved in controlling how things appear. We want to be very actively involved, otherwise we won't do it." When it comes to licensing to other videogame developers, Rebellion hopes that its experience as a licensee will be beneficial. "Hopefully we'll be a bit more sympathetic than your average rights holder," argues Chris. "Once you've got

some great ideas and intellectual properties you can use them in lots of different ways, but we want to build them up rather than just exploiting them.

Although it may be a while before any announcements are made regarding videogames featuring any *2000AD* characters, the next-generation consoles and new ownership provide the perfect opportunity to finally doing the likes of Dredd, Rogue Trooper and Halo Jones justice – and repay the debt that the industry owes to the comic, if you agree with Jason Kingsley's argument that the comic has influenced a whole generation of game designers and programmers. As he says: "Mega City One predates the conceptual art on 'Blade Runner' by five years, and most of the people who worked on 'Blade Runner' were Brits. They were all in their twenties, and I'm sure they were all readers of *2000AD*. One wonders if it has had an influence on everything that we've ever come across."



Chris and Jason Kingsley have been readers of the comic, which features strips like *Durham Red* (left), since its first issue, and are hoping to increase its circulation by returning to its darker roots

### Morphe injects new life into WAP

Activision text adventures to be developed for mobile phones

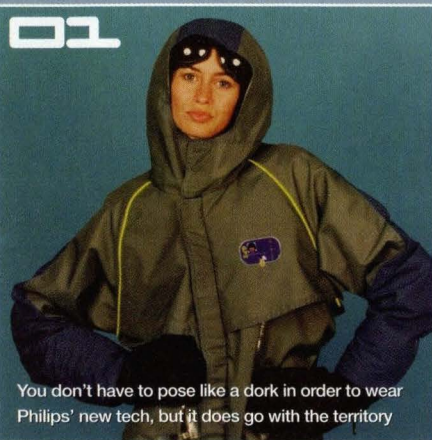
London-based WAP developer Morphe has announced that it will bring several of Activision's *Infocom* text adventures to WAP platforms. Titles such as *Zork*, *Planetfall* and *The Hitchhikers Guide To The Galaxy*, wowed gamers back in the '80s, though they do not seem to be the obvious choice for a WAP version given the limited interface of current handsets. "Conversion of the Z-Machine to WAP certainly poses some interesting challenges, particularly that of designing and creating an easy to use enhancement or replacement of the classic text entry system," concedes **Andy Fitter**, Morphe's technical director.



# OUT THERE

## REPORTAGE

01



You don't have to pose like a dork in order to wear Philips' new tech, but it does go with the territory

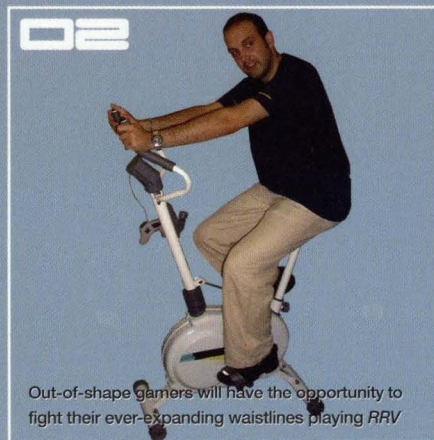
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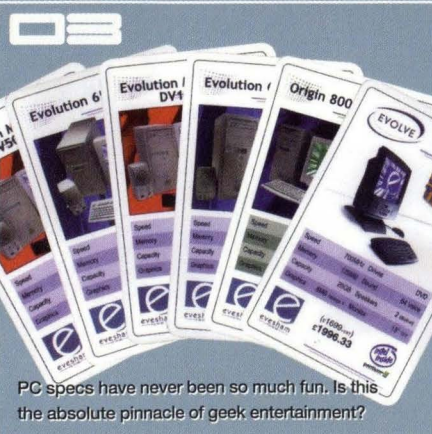


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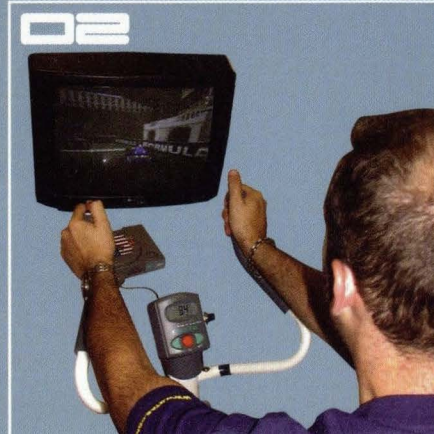
Out-of-shape gamers will have the opportunity to fight their ever-expanding waistlines playing *RRV*

03



PC specs have never been so much fun. Is this the absolute pinnacle of geek entertainment?

02



### 01 Philips unveils wired wear

**UK:** Following Stone Island's dalliances with MP3 player-equipped jackets last season, Philips and Levi Strauss have joined forces to weave magic in the form of the Industrial Clothing Design brand. Dubbed ICD+, the Massimo Osti-designed range of four jackets is a strictly limited edition run of 600 pieces, each containing a Philips Xenium GSM mobile and Rush MP3 player. Both units are to be controlled from a single remote control woven to a network in the jackets – which are available now from around £400. The item's one-stop-shop appeal to the mugging fraternity is doubtless without bounds.

### 02 Gamers get on their bikes

**UK:** If inventor Steve Croston has his way, gamers will soon be able to banish any fears about the effect of an overwhelmingly sedentary hobby on their health. Aiming to hit the demographic sweet spot of middle-aged dads who are hitting mid-life crisis and their gameplaying kids, he has developed a prototype controller for the PlayStation based on an exercise bike. Four years in development, the device enables players to cycle round – for example – *Ridge Racer V*, though he has yet to find a manufacturer for the unit. Whether it will encourage hardbitten city types to compete even more in the gym is another matter. **Edge's** guest tester certainly wasn't enamoured by the beast.

### 03 Evesham shows ultimate PC cards

**UK:** They may not offer the complexity of *'Magic: The Gathering'* or the collectability of *Pokemon* trading cards, but Evesham's new Tech Trumps range will delight PC-heads everywhere. Though manufactured to promote its new Origin and Evolution range, the card game can generate a serious amount of competition. But which is better – 2 x SBS52 speakers or 2 x Zy-Fi speakers?

#### Data Stream

Number of copies of <i>Samba de Amigo</i> Sega is shipping to the US:	<b>30,000</b>
Number of maraca controllers Sega is shipping to the US:	<b>10,000</b>
Number of subscribers who signed up for Alta Vista's unmetered service since June:	<b>270,000</b>
Number of users who actually used the service:	<b>0</b>
Sega's predicted Dreamcast unit sales for the financial year:	<b>4.9m</b>
Actual Dreamcast sales worldwide:	<b>4.6m</b>
Number of PlayStation2's sold since the console's launch:	<b>three million</b>
Number of PlayStation2 units Sony expects to sell worldwide by March 2001:	<b>10m</b>
Damages paid by MP3.com to Sony Music Entertainment over copyright infringement:	<b>\$270,000</b>
Name of Namco's forthcoming RPG for PS2:	<b>7</b>
Increase in nVidia's revenues for its second financial quarter:	<b>118%</b>
Product Riot Entertainment is to develop for WAP mobile phones:	<b>X-Men: The Wireless Game</b>
Presenter of the best dance video at this year's MTV awards:	<b>Ulala</b>
Year in which <i>Dungeons &amp; Dragons</i> was first published:	<b>1974</b>
Average age of D&D dungeon masters:	<b>25</b>
Average age of D&D players:	<b>23</b>
Percentage of D&D players that are female:	<b>19</b>
Number of videogames in development that are based on D&D's Forgotten Realms campaign setting:	<b>four</b>



## 04 Grail of gaming unearthed

**US:** Published in 1981 by Bantam, 'How to Master the Video Games' is perhaps the first tips book in existence. Though the tome offers sage advice on how to crack classics such as *Phoenix*, *Battlezone* and *Gorf*, the pages also include exercises on improving hand-eye coordination. Improving finger muscles and reflexes couldn't be easier – merely rotate a digit around a doorknob for one minute before asking a friend to drop pens from several heights. Ah, the joys of car-boot sales.

## 05 Midas horses around

**UK:** Some might scoff at Midas Interactive's efforts to tap into the most niche of markets but **Edge** cannot help but praise the dressage disciplines in *Equestriad 2001*. Though grooming and tying ribbons around your mount's tail have not yet been implemented, it will be possible to doff your cap to the judges in a polite salute. Is this the beginning of a *FIFA*-style franchise?

## 06 Control your own destiny

**UK:** The design of Nintendo's GameCube controller generated as much speculation as the machine itself. Small wonder, then, that Joytech is seeking to improve the art of this type of interface by inviting design students across the country to enter the Joytech Design Challenge 2001. The winner of the first prize will be given a 12-month placement at Joytech's development department and a trip to Hong Kong to see their design being manufactured. Entry forms must be submitted by October 13 and can be acquired from [designchallenge@joytech.co.uk](mailto:designchallenge@joytech.co.uk).

### Soundbytes

**"Games are said to play to arcade standard"**

*The Sun* offers its own special brand of PlayStation2 analysis

**"Recreational videogames have the potential to help both children and adults with a variety of health problems – from concentration difficulties to physical stress"**

NASA press release detailing new biofeedback research

**"It's not really a virtual pet type of software, it's more like mind-control software"**

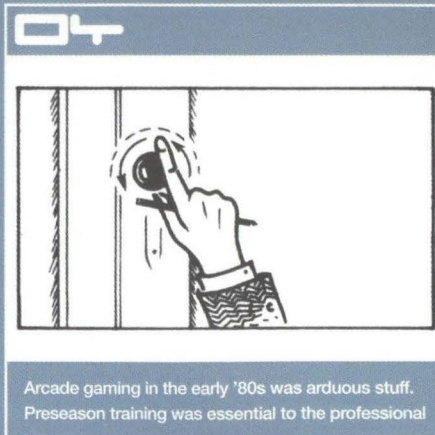
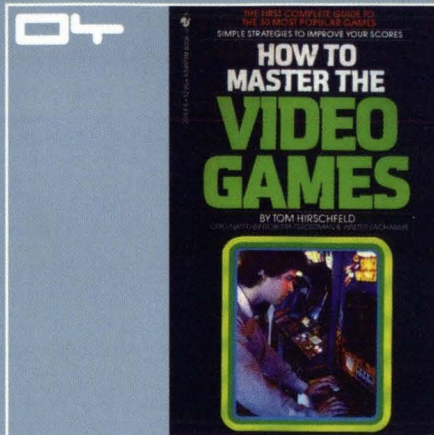
Yutaka Saito describing his latest creation, *Seaman*

**"When you are learning a difficult videogame, you should not be thinking about Bar-B-Q-flavoured potato chips. You must learn to channel your attention into the new world you have entered, be it outer space, undersea, or elsewhere"**

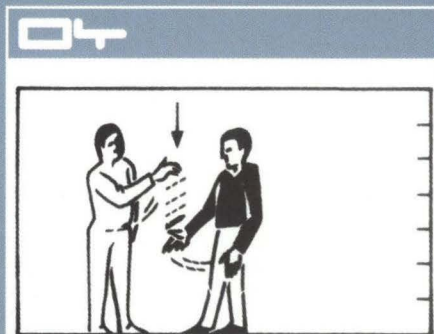
Tom Hirschfeld in 'How to Master the Video Games'

**"The design's a bit patchy. Two pages of silhouetted-out purple clip art? No thanks"**

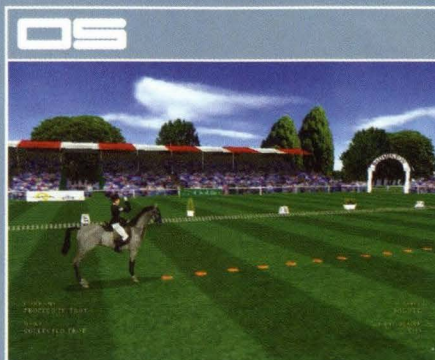
Web forum poster misinterpreting Sony's PS2 ads in *E88* (pages 27 and 29) as part of the magazine's redesign



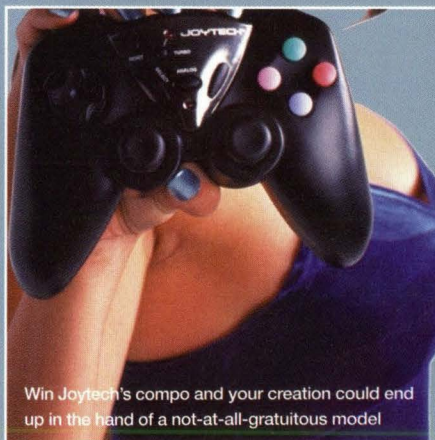
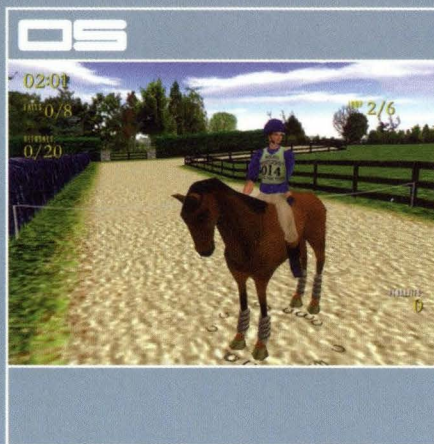
Arcade gaming in the early '80s was arduous stuff. Preseason training was essential to the professional



No, not a guide on how to deliver a low five, but early advice on improving your videogame reflexes



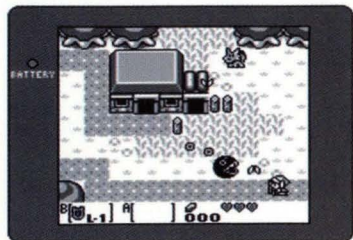
Just follow the dotted line at a canter before saluting the judge. Who said games for girls were clichéd?



Win Joytech's compo and your creation could end up in the hand of a not-at-all-gratuitous model



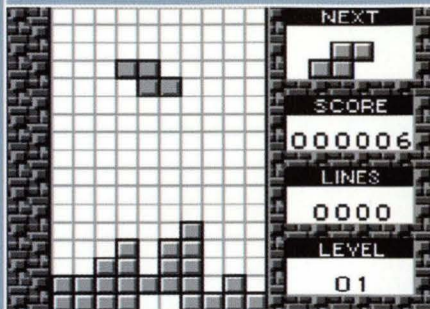
07



BacklitGames *goby*

Gamers will now be able to hide their Game Boy addiction behind a veneer of executive respectability

07



Building your business' future or shooting for a high score on Tetris? No competition, surely

07



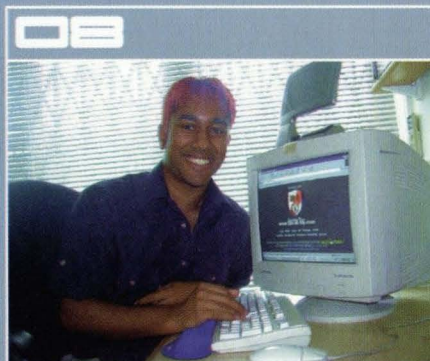
08



08



08



Join Sujoy 'Thunder Fingers' Roy and a bunch of other, er, distinctive types in a bid for the \$300,000

08



Divine intervention in the form of angels guides you through the game, explaining level missions

09



You're armed with nothing more than the Solomon Sceptre, Moses Staff and - of course - your faith

## 07 Palming off the Game Boy

**UK:** Such is the Game Boy's popularity that BacklitGames decided to spend an entire year writing an emulator for the machine in C++. Goby can be downloaded from its Web site for £15 and will run on any palmtop using Symbian's EPOC Operating System. Though authentic Game Boy audio isn't reproduced, Goby offers added extras such as resolution functions, auto save and magnification options. The really devoted can even call up a bitmap image of its border.

## 08 Game tournaments grow

**Korea:** Dong-Woo Kim, aka 'Fingers of God', and Britain's Sujoy 'Thunder Fingers' Roy are just two of the high-profile competitors entering the largest international game tournament ever staged. The World Cyber Game Challenge will take place in Seoul from October 7-15, and the winner can expect a cash prize of \$300,000 (£202,000). Battletop.com is organising qualifying heats at the Millennium Dome from September 9. Those with nimble fingers and a suitably hip-sounding pseudonym should contact the company's Web site for more details.

## 08 Gaming's new religion

**US:** Currently endorsed by 28 national ministries in the US, *Catechumen* is a biblical firstperson shooter from N'Lightning Software Development set during the reign of Caesar Nero. Players take on a newly catechised initiate who must protect the Christian faith from persecution, armed only with the likes of the Solomon Sceptre and Moses Staff to convert the heathen Romans. The Angelic Host seems to offer little assistance other than to sing a chorus of 'Hallelujahs' when a soul is saved. Is this the future of Christian entertainment? Is the Pope a Catholic?

**Continue**

### A new *Metroid* on GameCube

Just hope it doesn't take four years to develop

### Cubic hardware

First Apple, now Nintendo: straight lines are the new curves

### Namco's *Pac-Man* beach balls

Worth buying C&VG for

### Mating *Seamen*

In-tank sex-death shocker stuns office into silence

**Quit**

### Infogrames '*Big Brother*' videogame

It's going to be an 'arcade platform game'. How lame?

### Videogame sensationalism in the tabloids

It's back, and it's talking about 'this Christmas' 'hottest toy'

### Nintendo's GameCube console design

One half of the office loves it, the other still refuses to believe it

### *Seaman*'s American tongue

Adopting a Yankee twang is no laughing matter



## 10 Dervish Is Digital

Since William Gibson's seminal overture 'Neuromancer', every cyberpunk author has looked for original angles on the 'day-after-tomorrow' world of cyberspace. In her new novel Pat Cadigan, two-time winner of the Arthur C Clarke prize for science fiction, searches in the basements of the cop-shop thriller genre and offers up this 'Hill Street Blues' tale, cyber-style.

Detective Dore Konstantin, chief officer in charge of the TechnoCrime, Artificial Reality Division, is trying to get to grips with reality, and it ain't easy. Spending half her working life jacked into AR chasing down pirates, code smugglers and stalkers, Konstantin can't shake that 'unreal feeling' – a kind of jetlag of the psyche – which plagues her every time she unplugs from the virtual world. The disorientating condition develops into much more of a problem when Hastings Dervish, a psychotic hacker-millionaire, turns cyber-stalker. Dervish seems to have swapped his mind with that of an artificial intelligence from within the network and, literally, turned digital – attaining god-like powers in virtua.

As if that person shift isn't enough of an 'unreality' check, in comes a detective from the Hong Kong cyber-police squad who likes to show up in AR as a nine-year-old child. Faced with these unsavoury characters, it's easy to sympathise with Konstantin's problem: everyone lies in AR, so how do you get the truth?

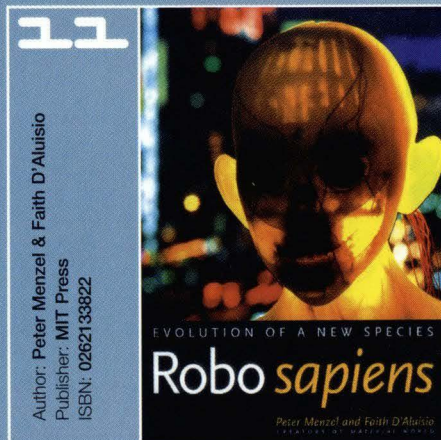
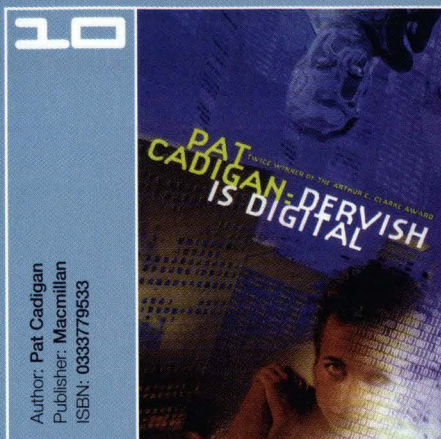
It's a rambling novel, and a long chase after the illusive Dervish. Cadigan tempers her techno-lust with humour, but it's the kind of stuff you'll smirk or wince at, not split your sides. At one point Konstantin's superior says: "Take my advice, don't admit to anything." This novel takes little perseverance, but ultimately it can hardly be described as a worthwhile exercise.

## 11 Robo Sapiens

Robo sapiens: 1. A hybrid species of human and robot with intelligence vastly superior to that of purely biological mankind; began to emerge in the 21st century. 2. The dominant species in the solar system of Earth. This definition, extracted from Menzel's fantasy 'Microsoft Universal Dictionary, 2099', is the warning message that rings throughout this fascinating book – a potted biography of robotics at the dawn of an age.

Menzel and D'Aluisio don't trust robots. In this comprehensive, thought-provoking study they set forth into the world's most advanced research labs to discover the state of the art in commercial and recreational robotics, talk to the creators, and imagine the future they are building. The 160 colour photos that illustrate the book are, alone, well worth your money. There are walking, swimming, crawling, crabbing, stair-climbing, talking, learning, face-making robots of every shape and form. But the technical advances are only part of the book's agenda. The authors challenge the engineers and scientist they meet to argue their motives and moral responsibilities of their creations.

They photograph hundreds of robots in Japan, Europe and the US, from the comic 'Safety Sam' (a traffic-police robot in Tokyo), to the amazing robo-insect Unibug 1.0 in the Colorado Rockies. Kris Pister, Rodney Brooks (father of humanoid robot 'Cog'), Fumio Hara and Toshio Fukuda (he makes robot apes) are some modern-day luminaries interviewed. Whatever your views are on the future, their thoughts are worth reading.



Site: [Screen\\$](http://Screen$)  
URL: [users4.50megs.com/alaggan/zxscreens/](http://users4.50megs.com/alaggan/zxscreens/)

## 12 Web site of the month

**UK:** Some people collect stamps, others coins. But Andrew Laggan hoards loading screens from yesteryear and makes them available via his homepage, Screen\$ (ex-Speccy users will recognise the term as the file format for such images on the 8bit computer). The pics – which sat on TV and monitor screens for the three or four minutes it took games to load from cassette tape back in the day – provide a fascinating snapshot of the videogame industry when it was at its most shabby (see the pic that accompanied Mastertronic's *Streaker*, its most obscure (who remembers *L'Oeil de Set*, for heaven's sake?), and its most creative (see most of Dave Thorpe's work for Ocean, including the likes of *Head Over Heels*). A totally absorbing site for lovers of the obscure.



## 13 Advertainment

**Japan:** DigiCube, one of Japan's largest retailers of videogames (it is the ecommerce medium for Square and its Play Online strategy, and it was responsible for the majority of *Final Fantasy IX* sales), has seen its traditional sales lines reducing, so it has embarked on an initiative to promote DVDs.

**01.** Ad opens on bedroom scene. Woman (standing): "Ow! Who is this woman?" **02.** Man: "Is there someone?" **03.** Woman (standing): "Yes! Just by the side of you!" **04.** Man: "Which woman?" **05.** Woman (standing, now very aggravated): "Her!" **06.** Man: "I think you've watched 'The Sixth Sense' a few too many times!" **07.** Voiceover: "'The Sixth Sense', at last available on DVD!" **08.** Promo ends on logo



Marty Harrington paused outside the doors and took a deep breath. Was he sweating? This was the make-or-break moment for his new development studio. The two investors stood at his side, chequebooks concealed somewhere within swish tailoring. They raised their eyebrows. Suddenly he realised that not only the studio was on the line – this was make-or-break for himself, too. Thus unorthodox methods were fully justified. He exhaled.

"Gentlemen," he said, opening the door. "Shall we?" The room was a hive of activity. "This is what we call the 'red hot core' of Volcano Productions," Harrington tittered as he ushered the suits into the open plan office. "We can talk the talk all day, but these boys make it happen." He coughed and looked towards a girl at the nearest desk, who stared impassively into her screen.

"Well, you don't hang about," said a suit,

the Yank game, Marty?"

Marty coughed, and released his Vulcan grip. "Er, yes, well, to be honest we're not really sure who'll we go with yet. Lots of interest. Actually, it's a bit of a work in progress. The landscape is constantly shifting at Volcano." He owed his dishevelled lead programmer – his only programmer – a drink. "You know, fluid like lava – and red hot."

"Right," drawled the suit.

So, *Scooter Circus* was a 'project' rather than a product in the boss' eyes, the scruffy man mused, as he circled the now empty office on a silver scooter. The student actors and the rented equipment were gone, and Mike Gray actually missed them. True, it had been like working in an episode of the 'Twilight Zone' populated entirely by Gap staff, but that was better than working in a 1,500-square-foot office populated entirely by him and Harrington. The old programmer saw

Saturn's finest hour had already passed and – 18 months in – it pulled the plug. Next up, a big sports game developer, but it wasn't big enough and it was acquired by a French concern which didn't fire anyone, but instead spent six months driving them into leaving out of sheer boredom. Gray's approach subsequently became more proactive. At the slightest sign of trouble, he'd jump ship. The strategy worked – he got the fun of design without the pain of the crunch. He also got a pay rise. So he started jumping at the slightest sign of a better job.

Nevertheless, he had been excited by the new position as technical director of Volcano Productions. With Harrington's still quotable profile and his own experience – albeit unconsummated – Volcano had held real potential. And he would hardly cancel his own game.

Harrington passed the programmer a sweaty Kronenbourg and waited for his Guinness. "Look,



## REDEYE

Commentary from inside the videogame industry

Start-ups: smoke, mirrors and cynicism

impressed. "You wouldn't believe how many 'start-ups' I see that haven't even left their old jobs."

The second Paul Smith-wearer chuckled. "Exactly. 'GreatGamesRUs@hotmail.com' and a contact number from Orange."

"Now I take getting an office together as a signal of intent," agreed Paul Smith senior. "Of course, most developers can't tie their laces, so you can't expect too much."

If the staff of Volcano Productions were offended, they didn't show it. All but one – a scruffy chap surrounded by 'Star Wars' figures – ignored the visitors. They stared into their screens, clearly lost in their work. Harrington draped his arm around the nearest guest. "Back to my office for a swiffie?"

"Swifter the first, the sooner the second," he replied. But before Harrington could stop him, the other suit was heading towards a desk. "Excuse me, but what are you working on?" he asked an unusually healthy looking coder. Marty's grin was fixed, his grip on the suit's shoulder tightening.

Suddenly, the scruffy man stood up. "He's working on maps for *Scooter Circus*, our first game," he said as he walked towards them, extending a shaky hand. "Sorry – we're a bit focused today. Mike Gray, technical director."

The questioner shook his hand like a schoolteacher. "*Scooter Circus*, eh? That

that he had been suckered just like those investors. Harrington had convinced him that Volcano Productions would become the new Bullfrog or id Software, but it was clearly the latest shaky rung on the head man's laborious descent towards the bottom of the industry. Sad.

### The long-forgotten joy of his first job in the industry had given way to a cynical secret: he had never completed a game

Gray had read about Marty in *Zzap!* when still a kid, and *Harrington's Way* was the game that had inspired him to make games himself. But in the big-budget 3D age, Harrington wasn't just a dinosaur in an industry of twentysomethings – his mind was prehistoric, too. He wasn't the man he once seemed – but then neither was Mike Gray. The long-forgotten joy of his first job in the industry had given way to a cynical secret: he had never completed a game.

It wasn't his fault. He initially worked for an electronics conglomerate on its 'TV-computer' that swiftly became a 'multimedia centre' and then a multiformal 'nerve centre' as technology ate itself in the early '90s. None of the machines made it to the shops – an ominous portent. Still, he'd been thrilled to move onto a company founded by elite Dutch demo coders to create what was to be the Saturn's finest hour. Sadly, the publisher thought the

I'm as disappointed as you are, Mike, but you know the trouble we've had securing backing. How many two-bit developers have those guys seen over the last couple of years? And no one has signed a stick-it-in-a-box game since Mucky Foot or Elixir."

"But WAP, Marty? A 'roaming entertainment

destination with broadband-ready portal potential'. what the hell is that?" The programmer shook his head. "Bollocks is what."

"A gravy train is what it is," Harrington retorted. "If I sign that deal, we're looking at £1 million upfront for changing our name to Volcano.com."

"And how long will that last us when we're hiring a dozen students every time the investors turn up to have a look under the lid of their little incubator?"

"Forever," smirked Harrington. "You don't actually think that I paid those bozos do you?"

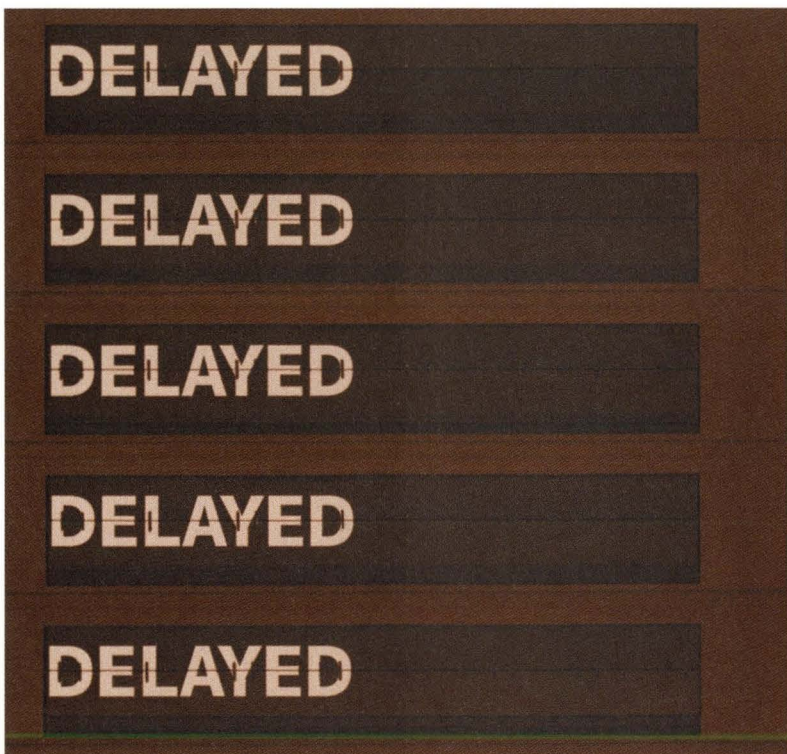
"So, what compelled them to sit there for two days? Your charisma?"

"Sort of," said Harrington, with a hint of real sadness. "I promised them sexy jobs in the industry."

*RedEye is a veteran videogame journalist. His views do not necessarily coincide with Edge's*



# AND YOU THOUGHT THIS WAS A TRAIN RIDE FROM HELL.



If this is your idea of a nightmare train journey, think yourself lucky. There's a soldier on board the NATO St Petersburg to Paris express who has to contend with merciless terrorists trying to blast him to pieces.

And he certainly doesn't have stale curly sandwiches to look forward to. Or cold cups of coffee. Just a perilous 110mph journey on the roof dodging gunfire from helicopters overhead. And if he's lucky enough to survive that lot, the poor mite has to deactivate a bomb to save Europe from nuclear disaster. In fact, to this brave soldier a points failure would be bliss. As for delays, that's the type of thing he can only dream of. So next time a leaf on the line makes your blood boil, remember, there's always someone a lot worse off than you.

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Videogame environments have become ever more graphically dazzling over the last five years, but we are only just beginning to see the first shoots of true maturity in their design. It has long been important, of course, to make environments look pleasing. The first two *Tomb Raider* games were artistically successful, arguably more for their architecture than for their heroine: the real hook was the constant jolt to our sense of aesthetic wonder, induced by some of those rooms.

The spatial and textural beauty of good videogame environments acts as a kind of reward system, motivating the player to try to reach the next architectural masterpiece. But there is a lot of laziness in environment imagineering, too – a handful of visual templates, slavishly copied from cinema, get endlessly borrowed and reworked. Do we really need yet another H R Giger-style biomechanoid ship interior, all black-green ribbed curves and slime? Do



## TRIGGER HAPPY

Steven Poole

Environments: capturing the real world

we really need more stony dungeons with sweating walls and naked-flame lighting? Why such laziness and repetition? Well, certain visual styles automatically convey certain useful atmospheres. The visual cannot be divorced from the visceral.

Giger's widely copied biomechanoid style, for instance, evokes modern man's technological ambivalence. You are a biological organism (Joanna Dark, Jean-Luc Picard, Ripley) fighting the unnatural marriage of biology with machinery (the Skedar, the Borg, the Alien), yet you have to use machinery, both the PC or console and the in-game weaponry, to accomplish your mission. This subtext contributes to the aesthetic style's pleasing tension and paranoia.

Equally suggestive is another popular environment type: the warehouse. The idea of a warehouse represents the forces of global commercialism, with its stacked and packed industrial goods. Against such impersonal forces in the real world, an individual is helpless. In a videogame, however, you are decidedly not helpless: you are in full, immediate control of your destiny, even in the belly of the capitalist beast. The paradigm of the warehouse shootout, then, offers a neon-lit celebration of humanist power.

As well as such buried political messages, an

environmental style also incorporates a particular set of dynamic possibilities. You can texture a warehouse in moody gunmetal greys and bas-relief, and you can light it dramatically, but, frankly, a warehouse is still not that visually arresting a place. Conversely, especially when it is full of rectilinear stacks of crates, it makes a great hunting and sneaking environment, as *Metal Gear Solid* shamelessly attests.

The dynamic logic of the space is crucial. Indeed, in some games the experience of prettiness forcibly vanishes after about five minutes. The futuristic medievalism of *Quake III* – all vaulted stone arches and crazed rainbow lighting – is rapidly betrayed and made redundant by the speed of the game: stop to admire the view and you're toast.

So environment designers already have to negotiate the three axes of visual beauty, atmospheric implication and dynamic logic. Now, the power of next-gen consoles and PCs offers

also to attempt the process the other way round – choose a beautiful space, and imagine what kind of new gameplay opportunities it can host.

The other revolution in environments will be one of functionality. Traditionally, solid-looking environments have been rather stupid illusions. Textures slapped onto wireframe geometry don't 'know' how to behave, which has given rise to functional and causal incoherence. A rocket-launcher won't harm a wooden door; an enemy won't bounce off a wall but merely sticks to it. Now, I have spent many a happy if totally pointless half-hour in *GoldenEye* or *Perfect Dark*, having failed a mission objective, simply going around shooting out glass panes or spotlights. And as environment behaviour becomes more coherent, so that every light can be shot out, every weak door blown up, we as gamers will have an evermore persuasive sense of being free agents in the digital world.

two further fascinating possibilities. First is the recreation of real spaces for the player to romp in. *Metropolis Street Racer* and *The Getaway* both promise accurately modelled sections of London, but there is no reason why it should stop at driving games. The crude examples of *Tomb Raider III*'s pseudo-Venice level, and *TR3*'s pseudo-London

### The sheer beauty of good videogame environments acts as a kind of reward system, motivating the player to reach the next masterpiece

Underground environments, give only a hint of the drama to come. The *Quake III* engine has already been licensed by UNESCO to create a virtual tour of Notre-Dame Cathedral. And the real world is a near-inexhaustible source of such beautiful spaces.

Importantly, this approach will be one way for designers to sidestep the tyranny of sci-fi cliché. The idea of stalking enemies around the Tate Modern gallery, or one of the astonishing new Jubilee Line stations at Westminster or Canary Wharf – these modern cathedrals of light – is infinitely more attractive than another bloody set of steel corridors. Certainly, aspects of real spaces will often need to be 'tuned' to accommodate gameplay considerations, but in order to break moulds, designers ought

As our freedom increases, of course, the political and moral dimensions of the gameplay can grow.

*Dead or Alive 2* laudably allows you to smash your enemy through windows or throw her off ledges: strategic opportunities are thereby increased, as they bleed into the use of the space itself. The Geo-Mod engine of Volition's upcoming FPS *Red*

*Faction* may well be a seminal development here. Shooting a rocket-launcher into soft ground makes a trench that you can hop into for cover? Outstanding.

Too often today, the experience of playing even a top-flight videogame is one of second-guessing the designers. At the moment, you consider an option – say, destroying the glass case around a switch with a grenade – and then you reflect: "No, that won't work, because the gameworld doesn't work that way." The ideal is for you to be thinking: "No, that won't work, because the real world doesn't work that way." Now, that will be progress.

Steven Poole is the author of 'Trigger Happy: The Inner Life Of Videogames' (Fourth Estate, £12)





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# profile

Videogaming's movers and shakers

## John Pickford

Creative director, ZedTwo Game Design Studio

The company name ZedTwo is spelled out, rather than written 'Z2', in order that Americans may not mispronounce 'Z' as 'zee'. This is typically whimsical of the quirky, Manchester-based outfit, headed up by Ste Pickford (see p156) and his brother John, who still gets his hands dirty coding while sitting under the title of creative director.

Those familiar with Mastertronic's 8bit output in the '80s will be familiar with his early coding efforts as part of Binary Design, such as *Zub* and *Amaurote* – games whose quality sat at odds with the label's 'cheapo' reputation. He went on to set up Zippo Games, which started out producing 16bit Amiga/ST games such as *Cosmic Pirate* and *Voodoo Nightmare* before hooking up with Rare, which switched the team on to the potential of NES software.

"That was the real real turning point," Pickford relays. "They really taught us a lot about game design. It was a revelation to us that NES games were fully fledged consumer products. They were actually tested; players actually expected to finish the games. Games had to be fun and bug-free. It seems crazy now, but back then I think we were all writing games for our own satisfaction or to show off some clever idea. If a game turned out to be fun, it was probably more by accident than design."

Parts two and three of the *Wizards & Warriors* series, plus *Lunar Jetman* and coin-op conversion *Cabal* all followed on the NES as part of the Rare deal before Software Creations came calling. "I was approached by them and offered the chance to work on the SNES," Pickford remembers. "They had the only dev kit outside of Japan so

it was a pretty exciting prospect. I remember that NOA even visited because they hadn't seen a SNES at the time."

*Equinox*, the much-lauded sequel to the isometric-viewed NES adventure *Solstice*, followed before the Pickford brothers began work on *Plok!*, a supremely accomplished SNES platformer whose existence, unfortunately, became overshadowed by such me-too fare of the day as *Bubsy The Bobcat*.

Corporate stiflings eventually took their toll, and Pickford began to explore more immediately gratifying avenues. The result was ZedTwo and puzzle game *Wetrix*. "This was the hardest game to design I've ever been involved in," he admits. "With a puzzle game you have nothing but gameplay – it has to work. If the game is weak, the graphics won't help, and you can't just throw in a few extra enemies if the game is too easy. You have nothing but the naked gameplay, and that means the underlying concept has to be right. Each and every feature has to interact with every other feature in the game."

Now 33, Pickford is putting the finishing touches to *Aquaqua* (see p42), which takes the *Wetrix* concept and translates it for PlayStation2. ZedTwo remains stubbornly focused on what makes videogaming tick – fun – but the company is now embarking on a number of super-ambitious projects. Like many coders who've been around since the halcyon days of the '80s, Pickford is content that today's landscape is a healthier one, but concedes that "the only real downer is the difficulty in getting an original idea off the ground." With his track record, this is an especially sobering sentiment.





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## Edge's most wanted

### Shenmue

When the US version ships on November 14 it should be one of the must-have titles for your Dreamcast. Absorbing, mesmerising and oddly compelling.



### Mujura's Mask

It won't have the impact of *Ocarina of Time*, but Miyamoto's sequel to the best game on the N64 is an entirely new prospect requiring replay upon replay.



### Hundred Swords

An intriguing RTS which enables four players to go head to head in a fight for supreme dominance. The Dreamcast version will have a glut of online options.



### Ultima Worlds Online: Origin

EA is hoping that the complexity of its online universe will encourage social activities alongside the traditional questing. One to keep an eye on.



(DC) Sega

(N64) Nintendo

(DC) Sega

(PC) Origin

## Story bored

Losing the plot in favour of gameplay

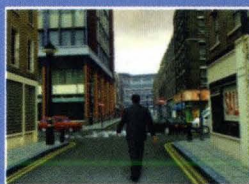
Having the opportunity to enter the heart of Sony's Soho studio to take a glimpse at *The Getaway* (below; see p52) was revealing in several ways. Apart from the impressive attention to detail there was one aspect which stood out as being slightly overworked: narrative. Employing two full-time scriptwriters and storyboard artists has its advantages. The plot, it must be hoped, will link the game sequences together in a cohesive manner and drive the player onwards towards their ultimate goal.

However, taking a look at the copious amounts of storyboarding which details every single character movement and action sequence, alongside the bundles of script which will dictate the flow of the cut-scenes, gave cause for concern. This is an obvious point, but it needs to be made: FMV sequences are not interactive. They do not constitute gameplay, and rarely overshadow the game proper. Being brutally honest, even the cut-scenes of *Final Fantasy VII* can drag on interminably. Cry at the death of Aeris Gainsborough? Most gamers were more likely to wail with despair at the 30-minute wait between save points.

Clearly, some games lend themselves more readily to narrative input than others. There's little point in a developer breaking up the flow of a puzzle title with some tenuously related plot device. *Driver 2*, however, like *The Getaway*, will contain sequences detailing Tanner's progress in the game. Reflections' first *Driver* game opted for an ambitious, tiered narrative structure which branched off at several points, and the extra work needed to create these optional sequences saw a reduction in quality of the overall FMV. Feedback confirmed that players literally lost the plot and exited the cut-scenes to get straight back to driving.

The fact is that narrative can be a stifling influence on the flow of a game. When designers decide to place FMV sequences in your game then they are seriously curtailing your freedom. The more narrative unveiling there is, the more likely it is that your videogame experience will be on rails.

If you review *Edge's* top 100 games (E80), you'll note that the leading 12 games feature either zero FMV or incredibly brief cut-scenes. Even *Half-Life* (at number nine) delivered its narrative either during player interaction or in short blasts between levels. Confirmation that, as in *Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, the best games are those where the player feels some freedom to search out their own destiny.



030



032



035



040

Severance (PC)  
p030

The Dreamland Chronicles (PC/PS2)  
p032

Smuggler's Run (PS2)  
p034

Insane (PC)  
p035

Baldur's Gate 2 (PC)  
p036

StarTrek: Voyager - Elite Force (PC)  
p038

Ready 2 Rumble 2 (DC/PS2)  
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Episode One Starfighter (PC)  
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Medal of Honor Underground (PS)  
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Dragon's Lair 3D (PC/Mac)  
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Gunlock (PC)  
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Theme Park World (PS2)  
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Midnight Club (PS2)  
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Wild Wild Racing (PS2)  
p044

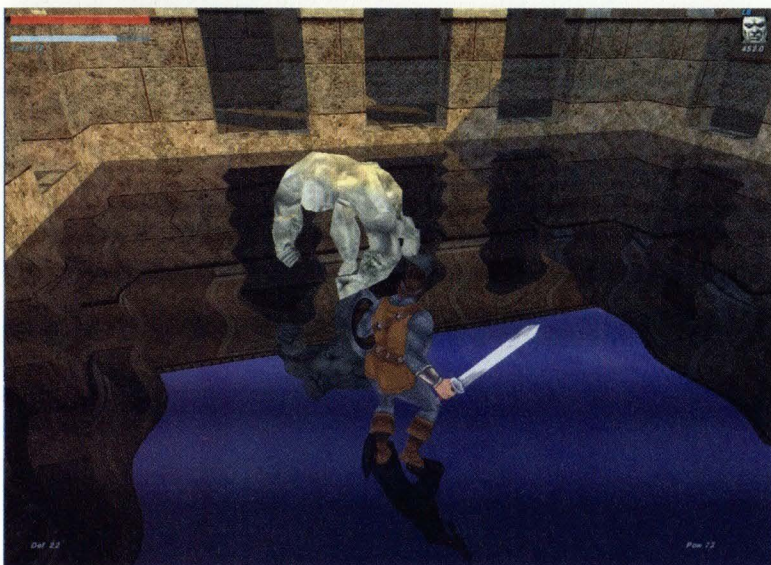
Castrol Honda Superbike 2000 (PS)  
p045

MotoGP (PS2)  
p045



# Severance

RebelAct's gore-soaked action RPG may win column inches for its no-holds-barred depiction of battle wounds, but the game's underlying worth remains open to question



The light sourcing is even more striking when there's water around, generating stunning reflections. On the gore side of the *Severance* coin, if your character is injured in the water, their blood will diffuse into the liquid

As mentioned in last month's Testscreen intro, for a game to score highly in **Edge** it must push the envelope of its genre. Often this means testing the limits of the host machine (*Alien Resurrection*, reviewed this month on page 94), but sometimes not (*Mr Driller*, E87). What both games have in common is that they distill elements of others into an addictive mix, while being sufficiently innovative to avoid being derivative. Regardless of high polygon counts or massive texture sizes, one thing remains true: the playing experience is everything.

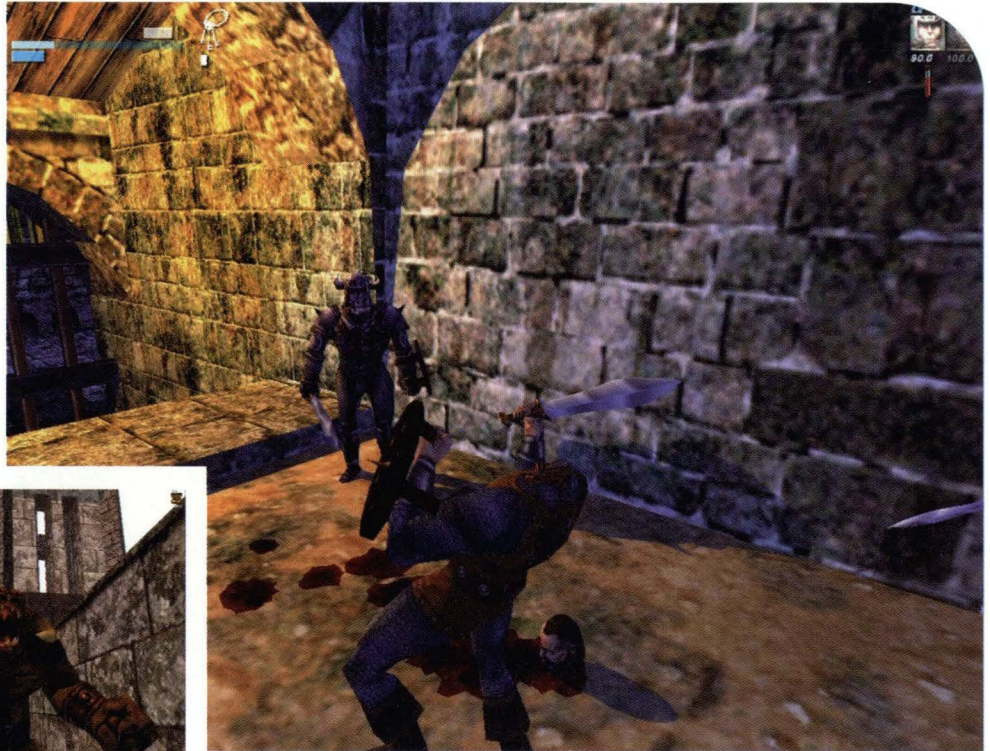
*Severance: Blade of Darkness*, previously simply titled *Blade*, is an action-based RPG whose tone is similar to a violence-crazed crossbreed of *Ultima IX* and *Gauntlet*. Locations as varied as monasteries, volcanoes, and underground cities make up the 18 levels of challenge. Despite the variation in the look and feel of the areas, each is based primarily on the slaying of evil minions, and culminates in the arrival of a boss who must be defeated in order to progress. So far, so *R-Type*.

There are four characters – knight, dwarf, barbarian, and the ubiquitous amazon – available for selection at the start of the game, and, as you would expect, each boasts their own abilities. More unusual is that each begins with a dedicated tutorial zone, leading into the linear stream of levels that follows. This is designed to give the player a non-repetitive way of trying out each character and finding out which is more suited to particular styles of play, and doesn't promise to add to the replay value. However, the developer promises that playing through as a different character will offer a different experience, both in combat and in solutions to the simple puzzles on offer.

Though *Severance* doesn't contain a traditional D&D advancement system, the strength of your character and his or her level increases with your kill count. Levelling is particularly important, because progression reveals special combat moves and the key sequences needed to execute them. Fighting, extended by the system of special moves, is carried out with two buttons, one for attack and another for defend. With good timing, attacks can be concentrated on particular parts of an enemy's body. Experienced players will be able to knock the shield from a rival's hand with a well-aimed blow, or – and this is where the hype surrounding *Severance* lies – slice their arm clean off.

Your character can both inflict and suffer





Enemies come in all shapes and sizes, but the humanoid ones are just as deadly as the more fantastical creations. One swipe from a sword and you can find yourself without an appendage – in this case, your head

horrific injuries, and almost all body parts are detachable with some persuasion from sharp weaponry, but so what? Admittedly, the level of violence is both unique and disturbing, but if all the publicity surrounding *Severance* concentrates on the bloody mess of deconstructed character models, then other parts of the game will suffer an injustice. Aside from being able to pick up recently severed limbs and using them as weapons, the bloodshed leaves the gameplay unaffected. In fact, this isn't even the most graphically impressive aspect of the game.

Carrying more impact and more style than a thousand disembodied goblin body parts, *Severance's* shadows are astonishing. Torchlight renders the cartoon imagery with an otherworldly realism, but it's when the silhouettes start to dance that the engine really shows its power. Pick up a torch, and your shadow is projected behind you, laid onto the rock or snow or dungeon walls. Swing the torch at an enemy, and both his and your shadows swing too, as well as that of every other object within the torch light. It's an effect that, used smartly by the level

## Experienced players will be able to knock the shield from a rival's hand with an well-aimed blow... or slice their arm clean off

designers, can lead to misplaced fear, when tiny, backlit enemies project monstrously huge shadows round corners.

Aside from the main game, an eightplayer multiplayer mode places the competitors inside a gladiatorial arena littered with armour and weaponry. But, despite this and its occasional RPG pretensions, *Severance* is primarily a oneplayer action/adventure title. Whether it's going to be a great one is in the balance; there's no doubting that its graphical credentials mark it out as a contender, but it's worth questioning how much depth lies behind the game's façade of gore. For a title to be labelled a necessary purchase, it needs more than just a sparkling engine; the key to brilliance lies in a sound, inventive game dynamic, and it's here that *Severance* has yet to prove its cutting edge.



### "It's only a flesh wound..."

Using a bloody limb as a cudgel might be a gimmick, but it underlines one of *Severance's* other features. Almost any object you see in the game is open to abuse as a weapon, though deciding whether to use a shoe or a broadsword to bludgeon an enemy to death is more a question of deciding whether style is more important than substance, rather than one of common sense. Still, in eightplayer mode it offers new and exciting methods of humiliation, the main principle of many multiplayer games.



# The Dreamland Chronicles: Freedom Ridge

Not only have alien forces invaded Earth, they've taken the place over. The time has come to build a resistance force to overthrow them, and you're the one in command



The missile launcher (above) may seem like a good idea, but when you fire a weapon of destruction in an urban area, you're asking for trouble. Besides conventional weapons, Mythos has invented some alien firepower (top)

P C games that totally redefine their genre are few and far between. In fact, once you waded through the me-too titles and marketing hype, there are only a handful of titles that are exceptional. One of these rare games was the DOS-based classic *X-COM: UFO Defence* by Mythos Games. It's no secret, however, that like many great franchises, *X-COM* has ultimately been watered down with sequels and uninspired spin-offs. Still, Mythos has been itching to do a true follow-up, and now, with a new publisher and a new engine, the company hopes once again to redefine state-of-the-art strategy gaming.

Much like the original *X-COM*, *Freedom Ridge* involves aliens – lots of aliens. "The storyline is based on the classic Earth invasion scenario and the copious amounts of UFO conspiracy stories that have been circulating for years," explains Mythos Games co-founder **Julian Gollop**. "The Dreamland mythology features prominently. Dreamland is the code word for the Area 51 facility in the Nevada desert where the US Government is alleged to have tested alien technology."

The game starts shortly after a particularly rapacious alien race known as the Saurans

conquers Earth following a few months of intense, destructive warfare. Players are faced with the daunting responsibility of building a resistance force capable of overthrowing the invaders, and the keys to doing this are strategic planning and tactical expertise. "The full scope of operations is under the player's control," says Gollop, "from resource management to squad-level combat." So, while you start off with only a handful of resistance fighters (consisting of scientists, pilots and soldiers) you must win skirmishes with the enemy and build up your forces to eventually conquer the alien threat. There are about 25 different enemy types in the game, including robots, primitive creatures and even carnivorous plants. While some of the enemies will be new to players, others – like the mysterious Men In Black – will be recognisable to conspiracy theorists and 'X-Files' fans alike.

To fight these invaders you'll not only have to recruit new allies, but also discover new weapons and technology. There are more



Format: PC/PlayStation2

Publisher: Bethesda Software

Developer: Mythos Games

Origin: UK

Release: Q4 2000



than 50 weapons in the game, all with unique properties. The goal, according to the team, is to make players think about the tactical deployment of these weapons, instead of just always picking up the biggest gun.

The heart and soul of the original *X-COM* beats within *Freedom Ridge*, so strategy veterans will be familiar with the turn-based combat mechanics and strategy. The game does have a few enhancements that give it that extra level of realism, however. Your combatants will now be able to detect enemy forces by hearing, seeing and even smelling them. And the strategic part of the game includes more complex and integrated vehicle combat (*Edge* has seen Jeeps in the game, and tanks are promised too) and base placement than previous *X-COM* titles.

The most mesmerising aspect of the game is the groundbreaking physics model. Nothing is left to chance here; everything in the world is 'live'. "We have been working closely with Havok, [the physics engine] programmers, to put some cool features in the game, such as 'fracturing' of objects at various points, such as the base of a tree or the legs of a table," explains Gollop. "We can also simulate water, cloth and soft bodies. Injured characters will flinch and collapse like a rag doll when they are hit. Limbs can even be blown off and sent tumbling through the scenery."

What does this mean for the gameplay?

***"Injured characters will flinch and collapse like a rag doll when hit. Limbs can even be blown off and sent tumbling through the scenery"***

Well, if enemies are hiding in a house, you can take out a load-bearing wall (with a tank, if you like) and the house will collapse in on itself. Knock a simple hole in the same wall, however, and the house remains intact. Every object in the game has unique properties that ingenious players can use to their advantage. After checking out some interactions in a very early version of the game, one word comes to mind: astounding.

*Freedom Ridge* is definitely an ambitious title – no one has attempted tactical, squad-level, turn-based combat on such a grand scale and with such attention to detail. With both technology and gameplay on the developer's side, it looks like Mythos may have another legend in the making.



### The game that started it all

While *X-COM* may not have the same connotations as it once did (the last game was a space sim and the next is a firstperson shooter), the *Enemy Below* version still managed to rank number 23 in *Edge's* list of the top 100 games of all time. Quite simply, the game did it all, even with the limited PC gaming technology available at the time: resource management, tactical combat and even a little bit of horror (there were some genuinely intense moments). *Edge* hopes Mythos is on the right track with *Freedom Ridge*, not only to recreate the experience of its superior classic, but to reinvent it with the new physics and graphics technology the team has available to it.



The tactical planning stage of each operation enables the player to move the camera around freely and get a good vantage point of the action (above). As the game is being developed with both PS2 and PC in mind, the interface should suit joystick and mouse control



# Smuggler's Run

Format: PlayStation2

Publisher: Rockstar

Developer: Take Two Interactive

Origin: US

Release: November 24

Live the redneck dream courtesy of Take Two Interactive and transport questionable cargoes over the county line behind the wheel of the souped-up jalopy of your choice



**B**ack in May, when *Smuggler's Run* was sharing showspace with countless other E3 hopefuls, it looked bleak. The graphics were bland, environments were barren, framerate was questionable, and its gameplay concepts, although good on paper, appeared unable to translate into the game proper.

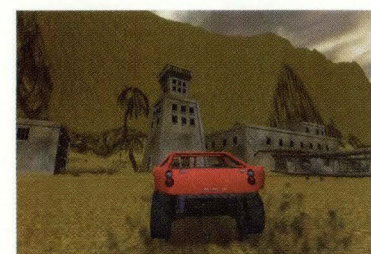
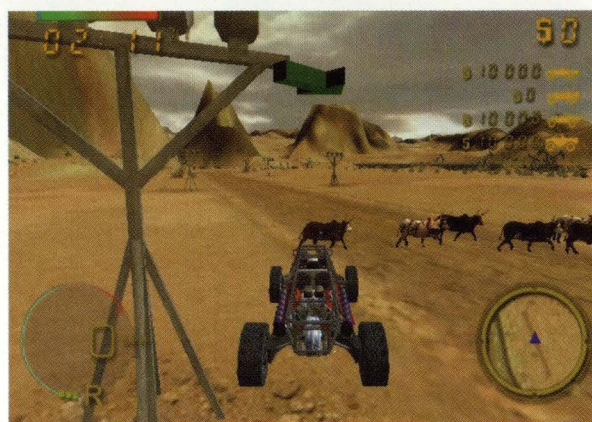
Some three-and-a-half months on, things have altered considerably. The most obvious improvement is visual. Texture quality has increased and the vast areas now boast far more distinctive features (trees, villages, animals, boulders, etc), making them more exciting places to motor around. The overall graphical quality may not knock you over à la *MGS2*, but the distance to which the scenery is drawn will certainly get many to sit up and pay attention. Make your way to the top of a hill and marvel as the camera displays

scenery in all directions as far as the horizon. All the while the framerate remains doggedly constant at 60fps.

The main oneplayer game generally sees you smuggling contraband from one checkpoint to the next, preferably avoiding police, but free to flatten cows, deer and backpackers. Occasionally a race against fellow smugglers is organised to avoid monotony, or another variant crops up. For instance, later in the game you are offered the opportunity to smuggle as a gang, with AI stablemates providing support such as decoy or straightforward protection from the ram-first-question-later law enforcers. How you make your way between objectives is up to you – you're free to go anywhere you see fit, bearing in mind that the shortest route isn't always the quickest.

As well as completing the mission-based objectives, you can always drive around the environments with no fixed goal. Although you'll bore of this eventually, this could take longer than you'd think – driving up absurdly steep slopes in off-road vehicles always proves stupefyingly compelling. A little more action then can be found in the Melee option, with the added attraction that it includes a two-player element. Three styles of play exist: straightforward capture and deliver the case, a team-based version of the same, and a checkpoint race. The developer admits the AI is currently a tad over-aggressive, resulting in seven competitors relentlessly bending your chassis as soon as you've picked up the case. This is amusing at first, but a little tweaking would negate any frustration that could inevitably crop up in the long run.

A little polish on the handling model wouldn't hurt, but *Smuggler's Run* is by no means unplayable as it stands, although some more subtlety may improve it. Other than that, Take Two Interactive may have put together one of the very few titles worth owning when PAL PS2 arrives.



As in *Crazy Taxi*, floating arrows indicate the direct route to your destination, but taking this isn't always the best option, as the police or rugged terrain can hamper progress. Whatever happens, draw distance extends as far as the horizon, affording the adventurous fantastic views from high country

Cows, deer and even hapless backpackers can be crushed under the wheels of your butch road warrior



# Insane

Format: PC

Publisher: Codemasters

Developer: Invictus

Origin: Hungary

Release: November

As racing games continue to explore off-road avenues, Codemasters brings its own spin to PC petrolheads in the form of a dirt-hugging, multiplayer-focused extravaganza

**I**nsane is a racing game from Codemasters. Few surprises there, except this is an acquisition, developed far from Leamington Spa – in Hungary by developer Invictus. Originally a physics demo, the *Insane* engine impressed Invictus so much it built a game around it. The game, unsurprisingly, plays to the strengths of that engine, being a screaming race around, up, and across hills, and against gravity.

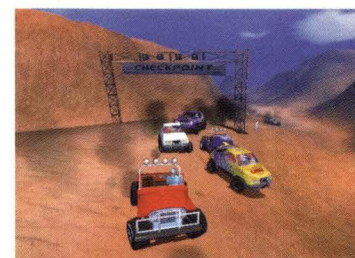
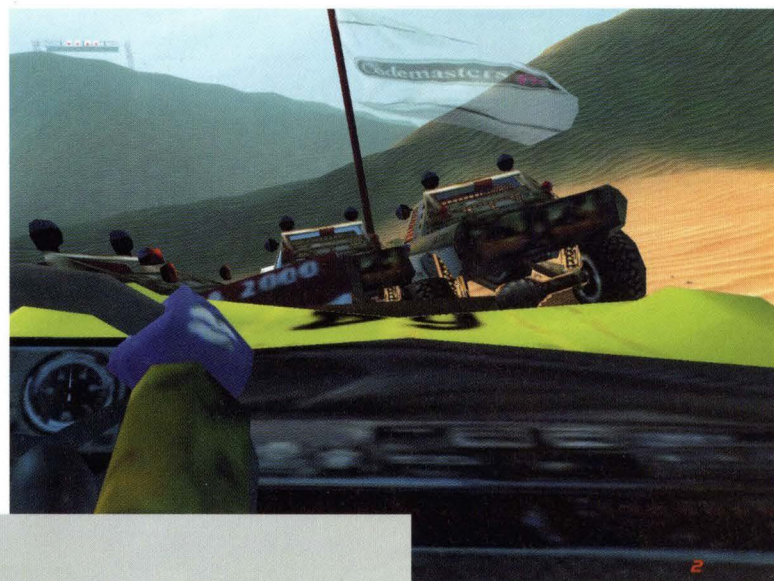
There are seven game modes in all. Gate Trail, Gate Hunt, Off Road Race and Jamboree are all based on passing through the checkpoint-style gates that litter the hills and valleys of *Insane*'s 20 pre-designed courses. On Jamboree, the gates light in order, and points are only scored by the first car to make it through each one. Gate Hunt sets a similar task, but doesn't specify which gate the competing cars should take first, and as such is a freeform scramble around the map to reach as many checkpoints first as possible. Off Road Race is the closest *Insane* comes to conventional circuit racing, the sequential gates carving a course loop in the hills. In Gate Trail, the gates can be taken in any order the player chooses.

Of the others, both Catch The Flag and Return The Flag involve retrieving a randomly placed marker and, according to the game mode, keeping hold of it or taking it to a map location. Finally, the Destruction Zone carries points for making your opponent roll, plus more for managing to stay on a huge 'X', the nominal destruction zone.

The 20 vehicles are split into five different classes: 4x4, sport, pickups, trucks, and extreme. The difference in handling and suspension between the classes is enormous, and the selection of an appropriate vehicle is the key to coping with *Insane*'s rolling terrain. Invictus has moulded 20 different landscapes, but in addition to them comes a fractal-based landscape generator. A single-number seed stretches the land into peaks and valleys of

varying intensity, adds the roads, gates, and water level, and provides the player with a new arena to take into multiplayer.

A oneplayer mode exists, too, which enables the player to experience all the game modes in the company of computer cars of varying levels of intelligence. Winning races will unlock further areas to race across, but although this basic reward model seems neat enough, the stress here is firmly on multiplayer action. Level designers, while not promised, are expected, and Codemasters hopes that *Insane* will develop a strong Internet presence and community. If it can persuade enough PC owners to drop their traditional FPS, RTS, and sim-only outlook in favour of *Insane*'s hill-rolling arcade adrenaline, the plan may just succeed.



*Insane*'s steep terrain means that rolling your car, even without opponents trying to knock you over, is almost inevitable. If you end up upside down, pressing and holding down a key will see it slowly roll upright, meaning your race can continue. Damage, too, can be repaired in three seconds, but the vehicle must be stationary at the time



## Damage done

The oneplayer mode, while clearly not the focus of *Insane*'s bid for your attention, carries its own share of delights that aren't available in the multiplayer option. In particular, the landscape has far more objects that can be interacted with; animals roam the desert terrain and flee from your thunderous engine, and posts that are so static and solid in multiplayer can be knocked flying. In both modes of play, though, damage is both clearly visible – wheels impacted too hard can roll clean from your car – and feed directly through to how your vehicle handles.



# Baldur's Gate: Shadows of Amn

Format: PC  
Publisher: Interplay  
Developer: Bioware  
Origin: US  
Release: September

Interplay offers up a sequel to its hugely successful AD&D-based game, which picks up where the last title left off and looks set to include a raft of refinements



The improved Infinity engine can cope with a more visually opulent array of magical effects, which is in keeping with the rarefied heights of power that characters can now reach, acquiring strongholds and familiars on their adventures



Players who were disappointed by the non appearance of dragons in the original may yet have their appetites sated, but Bioware has not yet confirmed anything

## Second edition vs third edition

Although *Shadows of Amn* is based on the second-edition AD&D rules, Wizards of the Coast has just released the third-edition rules, giving the 26-year-old game a much-needed facelift and dropping the 'Advanced' prefix to eliminate confusion. Bioware's forthcoming title, *Neverwinter Nights*, will be based on the newer rules, as will SSI's *Pool of Radiance*, and it's likely that if Bioware decides to develop another instalment in the *Baldur's Gate* series, then it, too, will be based on the newer rules.

The overwhelming success of the first instalment in the *Baldur's Gate* series, which sold more than one million copies worldwide, has engendered a fan loyalty similar to the AD&D franchise upon which it is based. Expectations are high, then, for this sequel, particularly in the light of competition from SSI, which is also developing a title based on the D&D universe. For the uninitiated, Bioware's RPGs bear little relation to Japanese console titles of the same genre. There are no cute sprites, mah-jong mini-games or overlong cut-scenes, though narrative and character development is just as strong.

*Shadows of Amn* commences shortly after the denouement of the first episode, taking place in the Forgotten Realms universe. The action is ostensibly set in the merchant kingdom of Amn, though intrepid adventurers will find themselves traversing the Elven forests of Tethir, marvelling at the Cloudpeak Mountains, and navigating the Drow Cities of the Underdark. Initially, though, they will find themselves locked in a cage with next to no equipment, and have to escape fairly sharpish. Seasoned swashbucklers will be pleased to learn that characters can be imported from the original.

Thanks to an enhanced version of the Bioware Infinity engine, there are a number of refinements in place, including improved pathfinding, the option to annotate maps and journals, better inventory management thanks to gem bags and scroll cases, higher resolution, and a better-looking graphical interface. The most obvious difference though, is the sheer size of the game. Although it will be possible to complete in 50-60 hours if sub-quests are ignored, diversions can increase this to around 300 hours.

Many such distractions are thanks to a greater degree of dynamic interaction with NPCs through the game. Any which join your party have lives and goals outside it, and may leave to pursue them. Higher-level character development, in keeping with the AD&D mythos, also results in a number of missions, such as that of a Paladin to obtain a magical sword in return for pursuing a religious quest.

Indeed, the overall effect of the various refinements is to pack in even more of the complex rule set upon which it is based than its predecessor did. Players can choose from more than 40 character classes and kits, making the sequel a fitting swan song for second-edition AD&D, and a respectable preface to the third edition.





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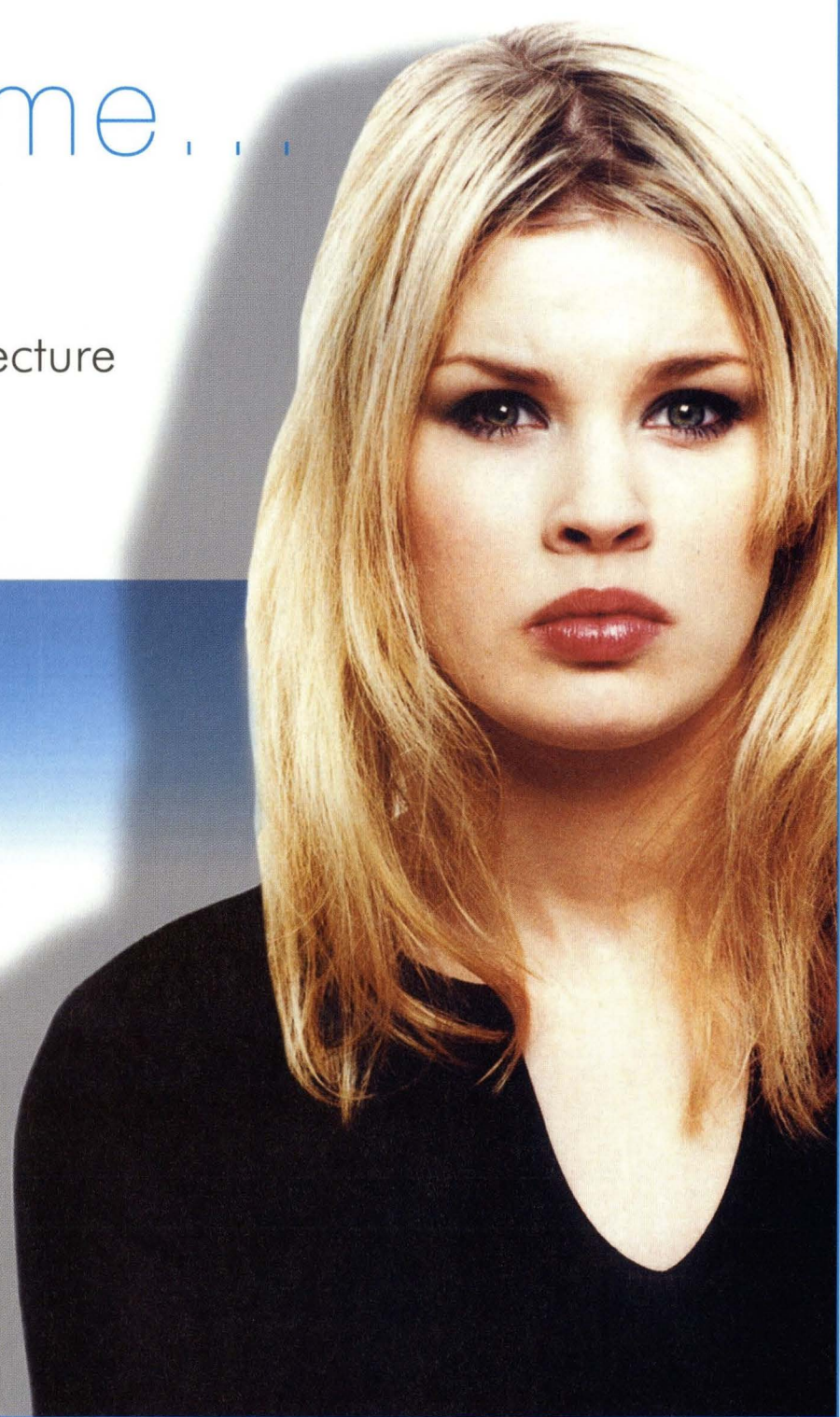
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# Star Trek: Voyager – Elite Force

Format: PC  
 Publisher: Activision  
 Developer: Raven Software  
 Origin: US  
 Release: September

Raven sets out its stall to extend the appeal of 'Star Trek' videogames beyond the series' hardcore fanbase by developing a firstperson shooter based aboard Voyager



Historically, efforts to adapt the successful formulae of the various incarnations of 'Star Trek' in order to win over the hearts and wallets of gamers have been cumbersome at best. Attempts to combine those elements that contribute to the success of the various series with gameplay that appeal to a wider audience have largely failed. But by adopting and tweaking an existing formula – that of the firstperson shooter – rather than attempting to start from scratch, Raven seems to be following the path of the celluloid originals, dodging the mistakes of other developers.

Which is not to say that *Elite Force* doesn't capture the feel of the TV series. The plot could have been lifted out of any episode, with Voyager and her crew lured to an alien starship graveyard in an uncharted region of space. As part of a newly formed Hazard Team under the command of Lieutenant Commander Tuvok, you take on the role of Ensign Munro and are sent on several missions to avert the threat of the alien entity responsible for Voyager's predicament.

Of course, the advantages of such a plot are that it allows the game to feature different environments and enemies, and it averts the threat of extinction of any of the show's stars. Standard missions are spiced up by the assistance of other team members, and are interspersed with stealth missions, while routine maintenance tasks afford the opportunity to explore Voyager.

The various environments in the game are populated by a mix of familiar enemies such as the Borg and Klingon scavengers, as well as newer races like the Etherians. And in addition to the standard-issue phaser and compression rifle, you have access to more exotic weaponry of alien origin.

Extremely well-detailed visuals are to be expected from the *Quake III* engine, as is a strong multiplayer mode that allows more scope for interaction with the better known members of the Voyager crew – though 'Star Trek' purists may balk at the prospect of having to shoot both Janeway and Tuvok. They may be swayed by the Seven of Nine skin, however, and the well-designed levels that are dotted with power-ups.

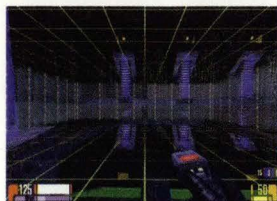
*Elite Force* will no doubt appeal to the legions of 'Star Trek' fans out there by capturing the spirit of the TV series, but it also looks to be shaping up as a title that will achieve wider appeal by adapting an effective engine to a well-designed example of a popular genre.



Multiplayer affords the opportunity to use one of many 'Star Trek' skins and features a *Quake III*-style oneplayer mode, with AI-controlled bots

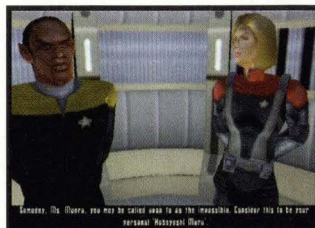


Several smaller missions take place on Voyager, which is recreated in some detail. The bridge and the holodeck, in which newly discovered alien weaponry can be tested, are depicted left




## Star tracking

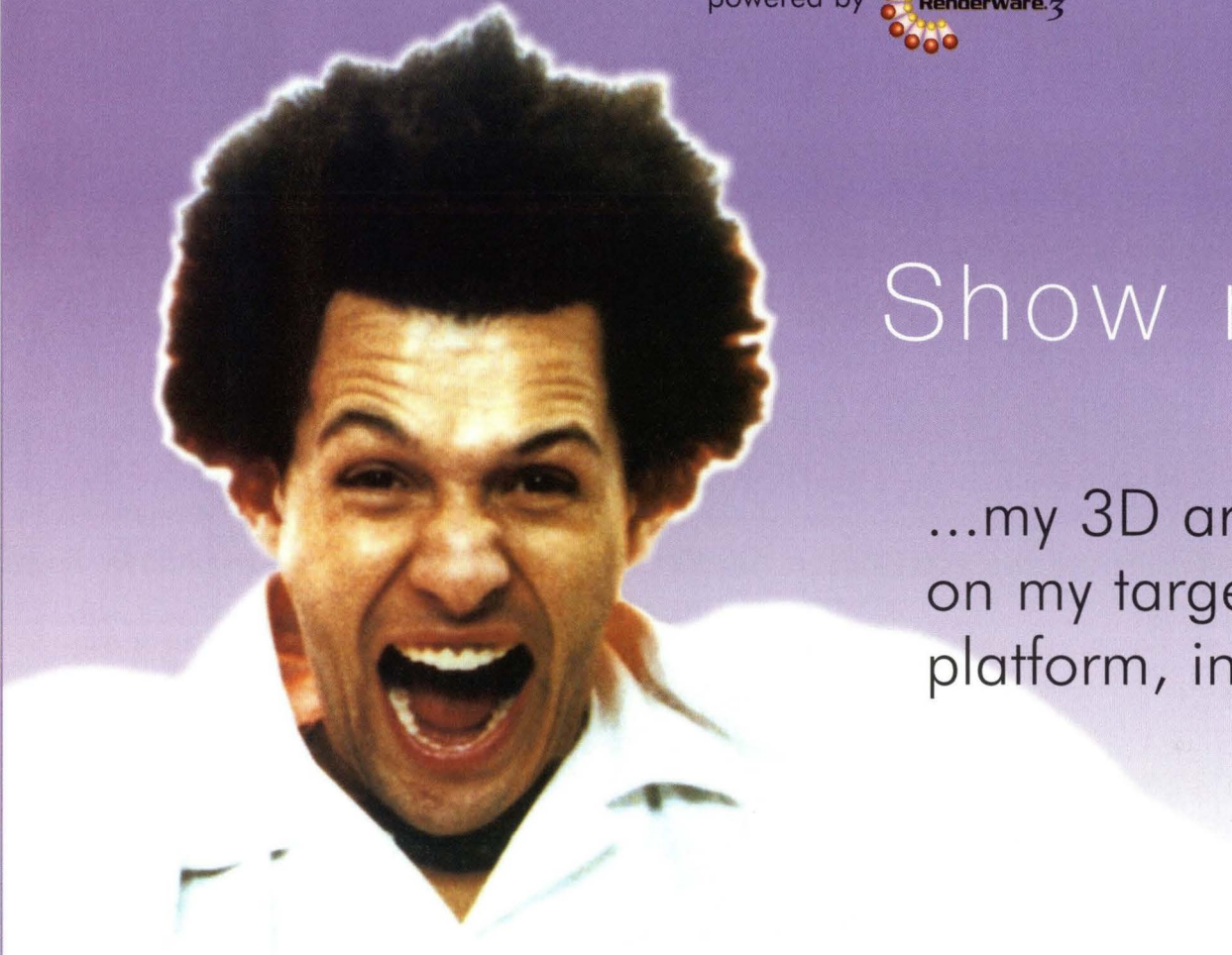
The cut-scenes throughout the game are of the highest quality, with virtually all the members of the original TV cast making their vocal presence heard at some point or other. As head of the Hazard Team, Tuvok – voiced by Tim Russ – has the most onerous duties, though the doctor also makes several appearances. The digital likenesses of the crew are also of a high standard, which makes the multiplayer game all the more compelling, as well as fleshing out the Hazard Team itself – though there are one or two characters who make even the crew of Voyager look positively three-dimensional.





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# Ready 2 Rumble 2

Format: Dreamcast/PlayStation2

Publisher: Midway

Developer: In-house

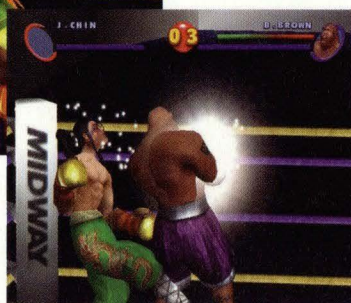
Origin: US

Release: November

Playful pugilism readies itself for battle on PS2 and DC as Midway's smash hit returns for further joystick punishment, complete with 14 new cartoony characters



The fighting principles of the original *Rumble* remain. Particularly powerful punches are indicated by glowing gloves. The rumble power-up has been extended – collect all the letters of RUMBLE and three levels of unique combos can be activated



One of the Dreamcast launch titles, the original *Ready 2 Rumble* sold 400,000 copies on that format alone, with a further 550,000 units shifted on the PlayStation and N64.

It's not surprising, then, that Midway has pushed through a sequel in just over a year, this time for release on Dreamcast and PS2.

Equally unsurprisingly, the PlayStation2 version benefits from slightly more detailed character models, but otherwise the difference between the two titles is negligible. Around three quarters of the code is common to the two formats.

There are now 24 competitors to select, ten of whom return from the first game. The new characters range from robot fighter Robox, to the slightly fey cowboy Stubby, and also include the dubiously exciting celebrity presence of Michael Jackson and basketball superstar Shaquille O'Neal. Each boxer has an arch-rival – for example, Afro Thunder and his limelight-stealing brother JC – and bouts between the two rivals will be specially billed as 'bad blood match-ups'. The Tournament mode has also been improved, but there's still no Dreamcast online network play. Whether the additions will elevate the game from update status to a must-have for owners of the original is questionable.

# Episode One Starfighter

Format: PlayStation2

Publisher: LucasArts

Developer: In-house

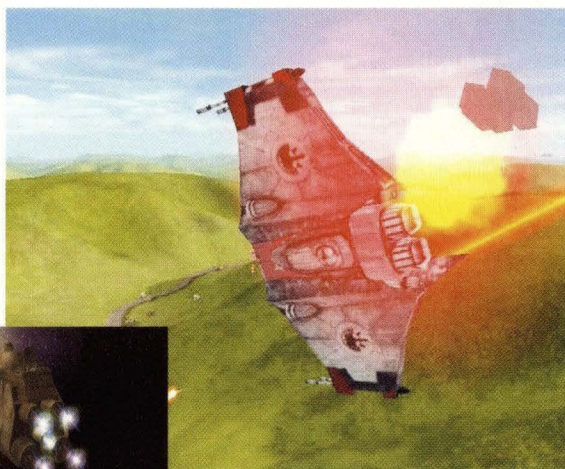
Origin: US

Release: November

Prove your dogfighting mettle as LucasArts invites you to step into the shoes of three characters omitted from the film in a game that looks like overshadowing its inspiration

Thirdperson space combat comes to the 'Episode One' universe, and three characters absent from the film make their debut here. Each brings a different style of combat to the game: Vana, a stealthy mercenary; Nimh, a pirate under attack by the Trade Federation, who pilots a well-armoured bomber with an independently firing turret; and Rhys, a member of the Naboo Forces, whose strengths lie in close-quarters dogfighting. The current gaming vogue for sniper combat also makes an appearance. Each of the characters begins separately, but their plot lines interweave and eventually link-up for the climatic battle against The Federation.

The settings range from *Rogue Squadron*-style canyon terrain to the more X-Wing-esque space battles. LucasArts promises that if you can see something in the landscape, you can fly to it – level boundaries have been set so far out that only persistent investigation will reveal them. Multiple texture passes on each ship have been used to add a battleworn look to the fighters, and scanline blending means the jagged edges so visible on earlier PlayStation2 releases are almost absent here. If the gameplay is as smooth, *Starfighter* may well represent an improvement on the movie that inspired it.



Fighting takes place both over land and in space. On the land based levels, it's possible to fly into the upper atmosphere and view the fighting from above. At this point, use of the sniper weapon is advised





# Medal of Honor Underground

Format: PlayStation

Publisher: EA

Developer: In-house

Origin: US

Release: October 10

Relive the war as EA reprises its WWII-themed game with an episode set immediately prior to *Medal of Honor*, featuring clever guards, covert ops and a killer soundtrack

Though this sequel uses the same engine as *Medal of Honor*, EA has endeavoured to increase the challenge by offering six new weapons, including the explosive Molotov cocktail, and seven missions spanning 12 levels. Other additional touches include a split-screen multiplayer deathmatch mode and missions which will take place in desert terrain, designed, presumably, to break the gloomy atmospherics of the first game.

The events take place prior to *Medal of Honor* and require the player to take control of Manon, a female member of the Parisian Resistance. Though *Medal of Honour Underground* feels very similar to its forebear, some levels will break the routine of simply moving from location to location and operating event triggers. Most notable is an undercover operation where Manon is tasked with taking photographs of enemy movements and installations. Amusingly, guards will even pose for the camera on certain occasions.

Fortunately, the wonderfully moody music of Eric Kraber, key to developing the tension of the original, returns to complement the excellent gameplay. Orchestral strains are provided by 25 members of a boys' choir, which alters subtly depending upon the levels of stress and action onscreen.



The weapons in the *Medal of Honor* games are just one of the series' standout features. At key points, the player can operate powerful gun turrets to devastating effect. The player can never just lazily lob a grenade or Molotov cocktail down a corridor (above) – often it is picked up by alert guards and thrown back towards your location



# Dragon's Lair 3D

Format: PC, Mac

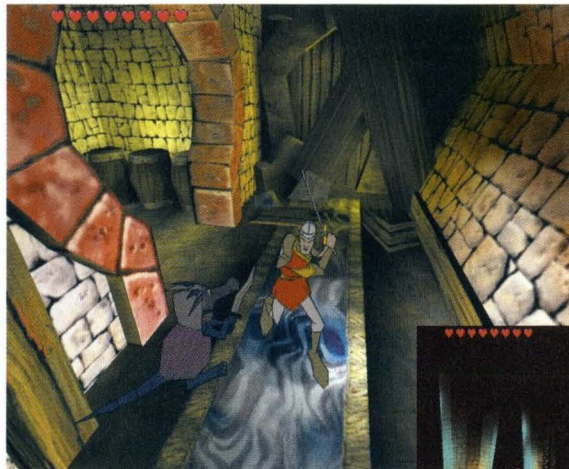
Publisher: Blue Byte

Developer: Dragonstone

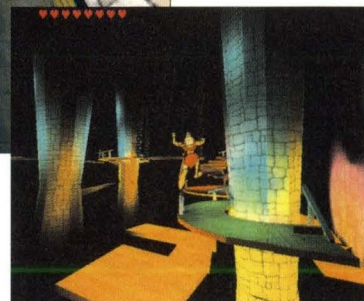
Origin: US

Release: Spring 2001

The Laserdisc 'classic' gets a 3D makeover as Dirk sets out to rescue Princess Daphne all over again, this time with some 180 locations to navigate before reaching his goal



While some scenes differ from the original Laserdisc game, the bright, Disney-esque cartoon look of the title is identical. Hopefully, the true 3D environment will allow for more freedom of movement, and a deeper gaming experience than the first title offered



Take off those rose-tinted spectacles: *Dragon's Lair* was terrible. It hid its poisoned, random-death gameplay behind a glossy sheen of Laserdisc cartoon beauty. *Dragon's Lair 3D* aims to expand the experience somewhat (though it could hardly reduce something that, conceptually, amounted to a lottery of sporadic joystick wrenching with the occasional button press) by remaking the original in true 3D.

So, the plot remains the same. Dirk's quest involves making it through the lair to rescue the beautiful Princess Daphne, although the 30 areas of the original have been expanded to take in 180 unique locations. Equally similar are the graphics, which render the 3D world with a cel-shading style similar to that of Dreamcast's *Jet Set Radio*, and perfectly evoke the spirit of the Laserdisc version. Dirk has managed to learn some new skills in the last 17 years, too, with a projectile weapon, a hint-providing medallion, and some new sword techniques now at his disposal.

But misguided retro fans needn't fear: the game also includes a Classic mode, which simulates the original using the new 3D engine. It's a bold move, and hopefully gamers will be able to spot the difference.





# Aquaqua

Format: PlayStation2

Publisher: Sci

Developer: ZedTwo

Origin: Japan

Release: November 24

Imagineer updates *Wetrix* for PlayStation2, adding improved graphics, a number of new stages, and a focus on 'earth creation' to the already successful gameplay formula



Aquaqua will feature four characters, two of which will feature in the actual gameplay and another pair which, teasingly, will appear as 'special' items. The droplet-shaped individuals represent different eras in the world, which is apt, as collecting water is the key objective



Conceptually developed for the Japanese market by Imagineer and technically developed abroad, *Aquaqua* is said to be more than a mere conversion of *Wetrix* for PS2. The theme of this version is 'earth creation', and in addition to visual improvements, new stages have been incorporated into the code.

The idea of the game remains largely the same as it was previously. Starting with a flat rectangle of land floating in mid-air, you build pools to collect water in. Build too few receptacles and precious liquid is lost over the edge. Build too high and you risk earthquakes. All the while, other destructive elements appear throughout play, but successfully balancing all of these is the key to a high-scoring round.

The power of PS2 has enabled the developer to attain a degree of expression previously missing. Mountains, water, fire, rainbows and other effects have all benefited as a result, hence the game's more organic appearance. It may not affect gameplay, but it remains a clever touch.

In truth, little seems to have radically changed. A twoplayer Versus mode is understandably addictive, but overall this represents business as usual. And given the quality of the original release, that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

# Driver 2

Format: PlayStation

Publisher: Infogrames

Developer: Reflections

Origin: UK

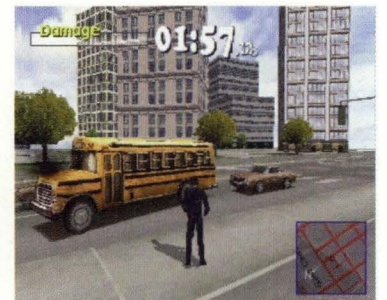
Release: November 16

A poorly animated Tanner resumes his undercover police work courtesy of Reflections, this time in cities with curved roadways and (currently) surprisingly light levels of traffic

Though still looking rough around the edges, *Driver 2* will instantly appeal to those familiar with Reflection's first outing. The road system has been completely overhauled to include curved highways, bypasses and slip roads. The traffic filtering has also been upgraded to cope with this new multi-levelled road structure, while cantilever bridges will allow more reckless drivers the opportunity to perform impressive leaps over rivers for the camera.

Chief among the disappointments, however, is the poor animation of Tanner, who is now able to exit and enter any vehicle which is not moving. Though more coding work remains, Tanner's exploits beyond the confines of the steering wheel are not as dynamic as fans of the original game would have hoped. There is little to do bar walking up to red arrows to perform automatic actions which will trigger off an FMV sequence.

Lack of traffic, too, makes driving around the streets a slightly dispassionate experience. Hopefully, this should be improved for the final code. Multiplayer options and extra driving games have been included to try and distinguish the sequel from its forebear. It is clear, though, that a winning formula has not been tinkered around with too much.



The animation and detail of Tanner needs more work if he is to convincingly navigate his way around his environment. Having him exchange a battered car for a newer model is a nice touch, but once the police are on his tail exiting the vehicle is prohibited. This severely limits certain gameplay possibilities, such as avoiding the police by switching cars



# Gunlok

Format: **PC**  
 Publisher: **Interplay**  
 Developer: **Rebellion**  
 Origin: **UK**  
 Release: **October**

Saving the world from rampaging robots is not the most original idea for a game, so can *Gunlok* introduce enough innovations and challenges to keep the genre fresh?

**H**aving lost the bloody war against machines at the end of the 21st century, humankind now faces extinction. As Gunlok, male organic humanoid and lone member of the Advanced Special Forces Group set up to combat power-hungry robots, the time has come to end the reign of The Corporation. Naturally.

Initially, you control only Gunlok, though others join your quest, each contributing different attributes to the group. Along the way, enemy units (that detect your presence either visually or audibly) try to hinder your progress while the game's puzzle elements attempt to baffle you.

One of the more interesting aspects is the ability to swap weapons or equipment (usually found by rummaging through debris piles) between the different robots in your unit, upgrading their abilities. These scrapheaps can also be used to hide from enemy robots if the fevered realtime combat proves too much.

All of the environments *Edge* has seen to date are suitably post-apocalyptic and varied. Being fully 3D, *Gunlok* allows the camera to be rotated as well as zoomed in and out.

While its premise and treatment may not be the most forward-looking *Edge* has come across, *Gunlok* appears competently put together and should easily attract existing fans of the genre.



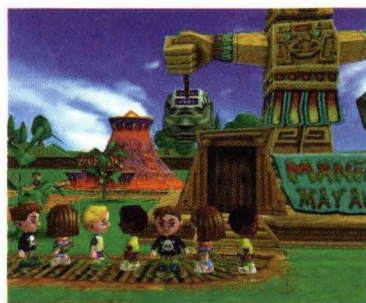
*Gunlok's* impressive level of character detail – down to individual fingers – only becomes truly apparent once you zoom in on a member of your clan (right). The game promises 15 vast levels with a further ten multiplayer arenas with a variety of modes (co-operative multiplayer on oneplayer levels also possible), true 3D line-of-sight targeting and advanced 3D pathfinding



# Theme Park World

Format: **PlayStation2**  
 Publisher: **EA**  
 Developer: **Bullfrog**  
 Origin: **UK**  
 Release: **November**

Bullfrog's popular funpark sim has been updated for PS2, but even the addition of chundering kids may not be enough to entice those already owning an earlier version



The children touring the park will be polygonal rather than sprite-based and can now display several emotions, including pleasure, excitement and boredom. And if you should accidentally build a rollercoaster which is too extreme, they will vomit for added effect. The audio has also been improved so that the rumbling sounds of the rides can be heard throughout the theme park



**E**A was hoping to get its popular fun-park simulator on to the shelves a week before the PS2's launch. Presumably, this was to sell copies to those eager for any PlayStation2 merchandise, whatever form it took. Sony's decision to push back launch day will do no favours for the game which will come up against much more solid opposition in November.

For a game based around the employment of innovative design to give people the thrill of their lives, Bullfrog's update ironically smacks of extremely conservative reasoning. Graphics are noticeably improved from previous versions, but do little to push the hardware, and although some additions have been made they are fewer than anticipated.

Rollercoasters can be constructed as before, but this time you will be offered a rating for your white-knuckle invention. Twenty-eight categories will be appraised, including the maximum and minimum degrees of slope, G-forces imparted on the rider, and the total distance. Devise the 'ultimate' rollercoaster and a secret editing option is unlocked.

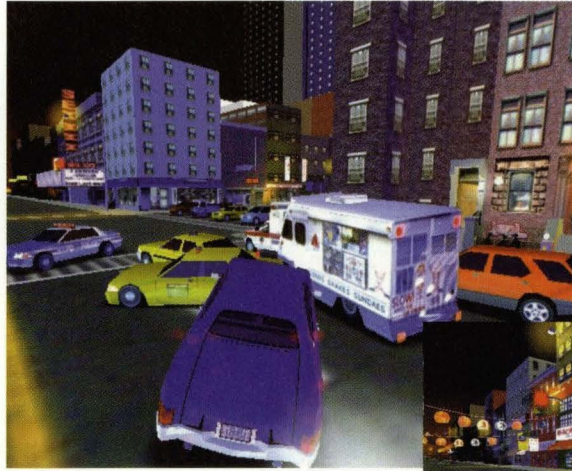
Eight levels, increased ticket challenges and some supplementary sideshows will be little compensation to those already familiar with the franchise.



# Midnight Club

Format: PlayStation2  
 Publisher: Rockstar Games  
 Developer: Angel Studios  
 Origin: US  
 Release: Q4 2000

At last a title truly taps into the world of the boy racer as fully modded motors take to the night-time streets of London and New York in a frenzy of illegal racing

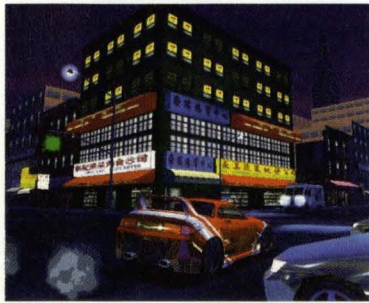


M

*idnight Club* is the latest attempt by Rockstar Games to inspire a vehicular crime wave, set in the shadowy world of secret street racing. Maniacal driving skills are a must – gunning red lights, making use of sidewalks and eluding the attentions of traffic police are all necessary to overcome other members of the eponymous club in illegal races through London and New York streets.

The two cities are modelled with a reasonable degree of accuracy, although for some reason the developer has opted not to recreate the gridlock that characterises their real-life counterparts. There is a healthy number of background vehicles to avoid, though, including black cabs, yellow taxis, and various civilian cars. Drivers needn't be so mindful of pedestrians, however, who seem to be less of an impediment to progress.

Handling is impressively arcade-esque, allowing maximum use of the handbrake to negotiate corners and turns, and in all 17 different vehicles are featured over 75 races. A Career mode gives you the opportunity to rise up within the ranks of the club, fine-tuning cars as you go, and – as has come to be expected from Rockstar titles – the soundtrack is suitably of the moment, boasting contributions from the likes of Detroit techno DJ Derrick May.



Victories allow players to access better cars. Grease monkeys can fine-tune these with equipment from the likes of Dimmer, VeilSide, Zender and Wings West, but for those players to whom that means very little, there is always the potential for a pile up to punctuate races. The races themselves take place across a number of different modes, including head to head and waypoints



# Wild Wild Racing

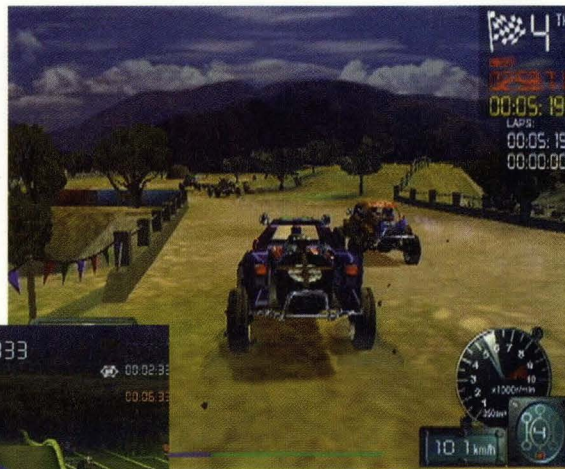
Format: PlayStation2  
 Publisher: Rage  
 Developer: In-house  
 Origin: UK  
 Release: November

This colourful off-roader from Rage may boast straightforward handling, but currently lacks the bounce you'd expect from all-terrain buggies being thrown over rough terrain

At first, *Wild Wild Racing* is disillusioning. While *Smuggler's Run* (p34) tries to be slightly different, *WWR* appears to opt for a fairly straightforward off-road racing structure. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, of course, provided certain game elements distinguish themselves from the competition. Yet whether *WWR* holds anything in reserve isn't immediately apparent – the game's potential is obscured by lifeless Championship/Quick Race options.

The handling model may make *WWR* perfectly playable and the courses are long and offer plenty of shortcuts, but they're not very exciting. Why not exploit the uneven terrain to liven things up? These are off-road vehicles, after all. You'd expect them to be bouncing all over the scenery, yet cars display restraint when negotiating jumps, as if embarrassed to launch themselves into the digital air. It's a shame, as increasing their jumping ability would make things far more exciting.

Still, eventually the more interesting additions appear. The Challenge mode, with its promise of new vehicles for successful completion of the subtasks, is reminiscent of *Beetle Crazy Cup's* wackier exploits. And, like the latter, these prove more entertaining than the main racing. Perhaps the balance will be redressed by release time.



Oddly, *WWR's* straight racing option (above) doesn't prove as gripping as the game's challenge modes, which include racing around tracks collecting letters, pushing generously proportioned beach balls to the finish line, or negotiating stunt courses within strict time limits. If the main game can match the fun of these tasks, *Rage* could have something here, after all



# Castrol Honda Superbike 2000

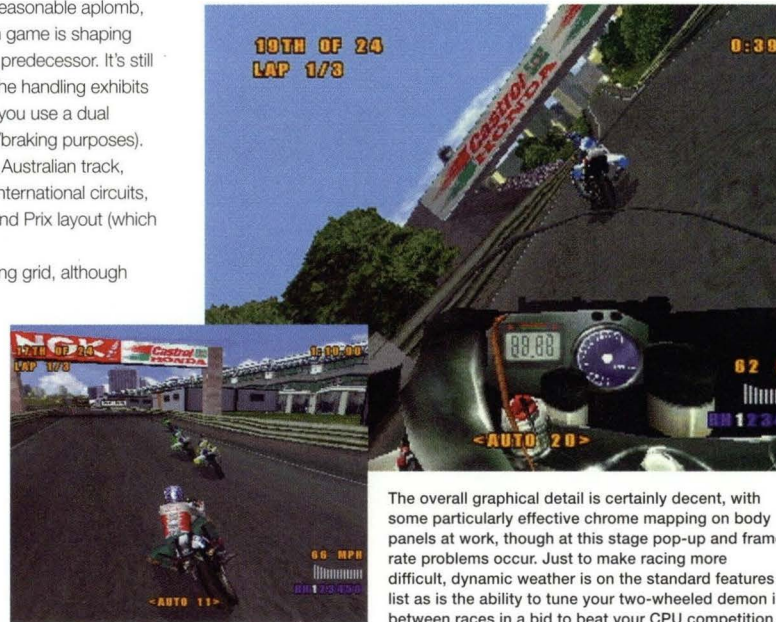
Format: PlayStation  
 Publisher: Midas Interactive Entertainment  
 Developer: Bubble Boys  
 Origin: UK  
 Release: October

With a 24-racer pack, realtime damage and 11 international circuits, this Bubble Boys PC conversion looks like bringing competent motorbike racing action to PlayStation

Converted from its original PC code with reasonable aplomb, Midas's latest *Castrol Honda* PlayStation game is shaping up to be far more playable than its 32bit predecessor. It's still a couple of months from completion, but already the handling exhibits a number of rewarding features, particularly when you use a dual analogue stick configuration (right stick for throttle/braking purposes). While the demo *Edge* has played only features an Australian track, expect the release version to contain a further 11 international circuits, including the enticing prospect of the Monaco Grand Prix layout (which is never used for bike racing in real life).

Impressively, the races include a 24-rider starting grid, although you shouldn't expect the game's realtime damage system to allow all of them to cross the finish line – in Professional mode one or two tumbles is usually enough to cause either terminal suspension or engine failure, forcing abandonment of the bike.

As ever, the usual Championship and Single Race play selections are included along with a twoplayer split-screen option. With the promise of improvements such as rider animation to be implemented in the final code, *Castrol Honda Superbike 2000* could emerge as a competent proposition.

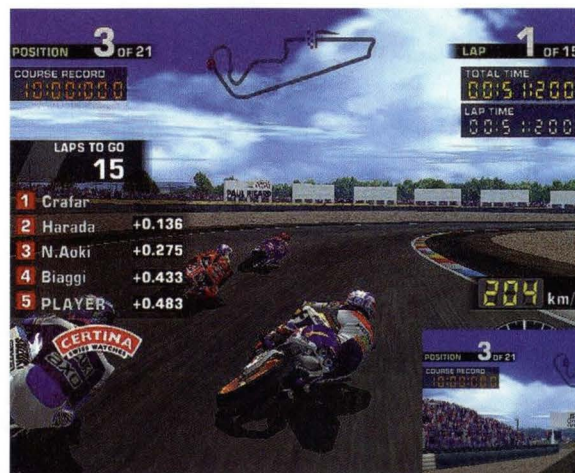
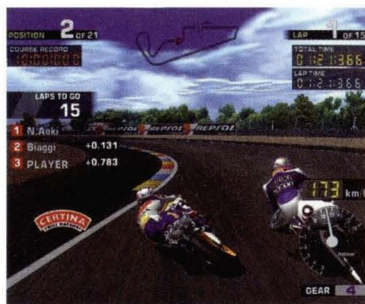


The overall graphical detail is certainly decent, with some particularly effective chrome mapping on body panels at work, though at this stage pop-up and frame rate problems occur. Just to make racing more difficult, dynamic weather is on the standard features list as is the ability to tune your two-wheeled demon in between races in a bid to beat your CPU competition

# MotoGP

Format: PlayStation2  
 Publisher: Namco  
 Developer: In-house  
 Origin: Japan  
 Release: December

Namco revamps a lacklustre 1999 coin-op for the 128bit home market, hoping to lead a gaming category that has always failed to prove as popular as its four-wheel equivalent



Bold and colourful arcade-like visuals may win it friends – for a first-generation PS2 game it's not looking too bad – but the primary question is whether the arcade version's stifled gameplay has been improved for this home adaptation. The official tracks are Japan's Suzuka and Motegi, the UK's Donington, Spain's Jerez, and France's former F1 circuit, Paul Ricard (shown here)



Officially licensed on the FIM Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix event, *MotoGP* focuses squarely on the furiously competitive world of 500cc racing and features all the riders, bikes and teams from the 1999 season. Converted from Namco's own *500GP* coin-op, the racer's detailed visuals shouldn't strain its host platform, resulting in the polygonisation of five circuits.

Four game modes (Time Trial, Challenge, Season and twoplayer Versus) join the Arcade option. Other home improvements include the ability to customise any of the 32 available bikes. Expect the Challenge mode to unlock additional elements such as tracks and photo galleries.

Curiously, despite being regarded by many as more exciting than any other form of motorsport, few motorbike games since *Super Hang-On* have managed to seduce players in the same manner as, say, *Ridge Racer* or *Gran Turismo*. The primary reason for this is a control issue – the feedback from a joystick doesn't translate as satisfactorily when it comes to the handling subtlety of two-wheeled machines. The question of whether *MotoGP*, with its extra modes, becomes any more tempting once in the comfort of your living room than it is as a full-size arcade cabinet will be answered in a few short months.







# Sacrifice

After the disappointments of *Messiah*, Shiny has taken a different tack with its forthcoming title, which is firmly positioned in the popular RTS realm but features strong RPG elements.

MD Dave Perry explained his shift in focus to **Edge** over dinner in a San Francisco sushi bar

**D**ave Perry may still be the prime example of a games designer living the luxury ex-pat-in-LA lifestyle, but despite the wealth and fame (of sorts), it can be hard not to feel a little sorry for the lofty but affable Irishman.

Not because he's just relinquished his cherished Dodge Viper for the more modest lines of a BMW – a sad loss perhaps, but Laguna beach will be safer for it – and certainly not because of the passing seagulls that occasionally obscure the striking panoramic coastal views from his oceanside living room.

## Fallen angel

No, it's far easier to muster a bit of sympathy for Perry when you consider the three years that he and his 30-strong staff laboured over *Messiah* – the intelligent but flawed PC title that promised so much but ended up delivering an awkward mixture of gameplay styles that failed to find an audience. After a lukewarm reception from the world's videogames press, a frosty welcome awaited when it tanked at retail earlier this year.

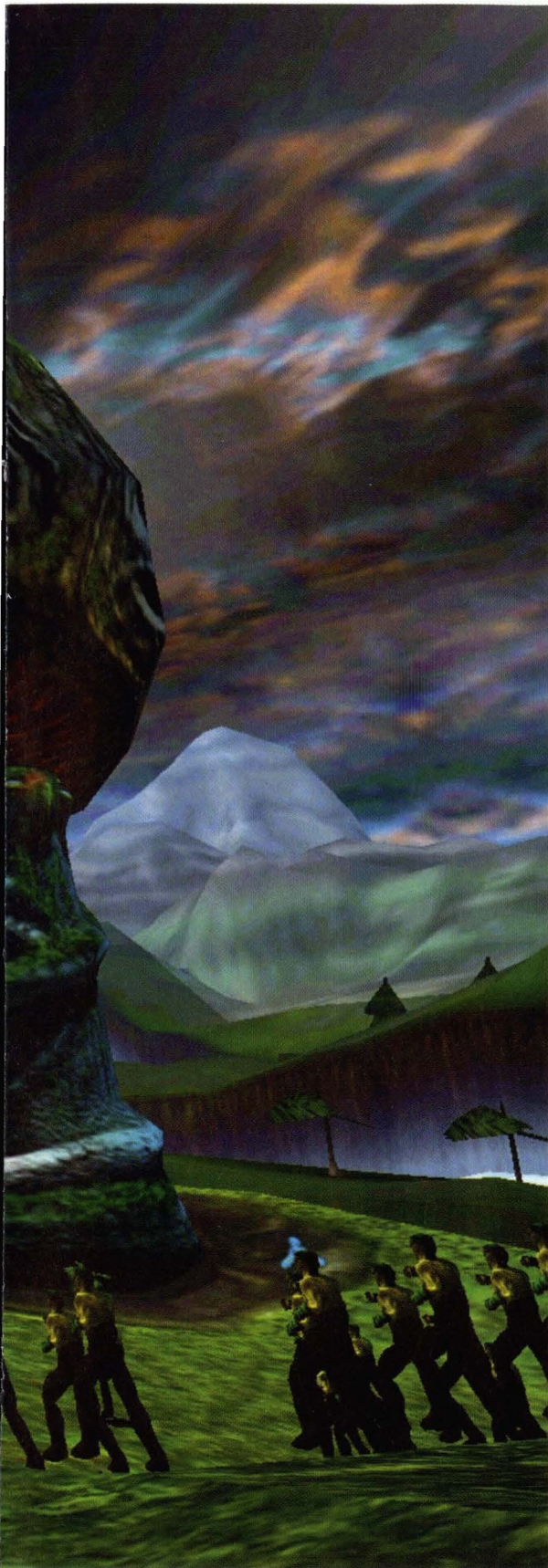
"We hyped it too damn early," concedes a tanned and inordinately healthy looking Perry, while ordering sushi in a busy San Francisco restaurant. "That's why *Sacrifice* was kept under wraps so long."

Shiny's latest title is, in the words of its creator, an 'epic, multiplayer, no-holds-barred 3D realtime strategy game with strong RPG elements'. At first glance it seems as far away from the Shiny's typical quirkiness as you could get. Draped in gloomy fantasy RPG aesthetics and brimming with RTS functionality, *Sacrifice* is virtually a call to arms for strategy and RPG PC gamers. There are no worms in space suits, no sniper-equipped helmets, and most definitely no flying cherubs. Has Perry finally geeked out?

"*Sacrifice* is a very Shiny game," he explains. "Its fundamental design is based on what we want the game to be doing, not what other games are already doing. I was lucky and got some of the key people who produced, directed and designed *Starcraft* [including James Phinney, lead designer and producer on *Starcraft* and associate producer on *Warcraft II*] to make sure the game embraces realtime strategy gamers. But we've created a game that will also keep us 'I don't like farming' action guys very happy too."

The result is a fusion of action gaming and strategy gaming expertise that successfully elevates *Sacrifice* well above the quagmire of 2D-masquerading-as-3D RTS clones. Most noticeably, its thirdperson perspective and heavy action

Format: **PC**  
Publisher: **Interplay**  
Developer: **Shiny Entertainment**  
Price: **£40**  
Release: **October**







“*Sacrifice* is a very Shiny game,” says Perry. “Its fundamental design is based on what we want the game to be doing, not what other games are already doing”



*Sacrifice* combines a number of elements, including slaughtering the opposition, sucking up their souls and placating your own god, all of which will level you up



## Action stations

*Sacrifice* is a true videogame hybrid – a fusion of action and strategy that could well require players to do parallel-processing of their own if they’re to get through its 46 single player levels. What could come as a surprise to dedicated RTS fans, though, is how the mouse-operated unit commands have been cleverly integrated into the arcade-style dynamics. For example, command layouts are accessible via directional clicks on the mouse. Holding down the right button and moving in a certain direction will select a particular unit formation (a pop-up window system and audio will assist if you’re slow), or double clicking on a unit type will select all the units of that type. In fact, pretty much everything in *Sacrifice* has been streamlined for speed – and you’ll be glad of it when you’ve got about a hundred angry goblins and demons nipping at your heels.





slant mean that players are constantly in the thick of the action, rather than enduring the traditional RTS stance of nudging pieces around a board several miles behind the frontline. This makes for a wholly immersive experience – a sophisticated combination of resource-based strategy and balls-out 3D action.

### Casting the spell

Stepping into the shoes of a wizard – essentially a roving commander – players inhabit vast, suspended landscapes that are presided over by five different gods. By choosing a god to serve and then receiving a mission objective, particular spells are granted. The core of the game is then spent capturing the souls of your enemies, summoning creatures (there are more than 50 types) and preventing your enemy from casting units – all the while boosting your own resources and levelling up. In the oneplayer game, the choices the player makes have a direct effect on the action – primarily changing the god served also changes which spells are accessible.

Initially, though, the player needs to secure their own mana supply. This is done by summoning a manolith over a mana source and then using manahoars to channel the mana towards them. Once the mana is in the bag it's time to go off hunting for souls (left behind by killed enemies or other inhabitants of the landscape), building up experience levels (the RPG overtones) and, yes, sacrificing.

Sacrifice is necessary for two reasons: first, if a killed creature was benign it leaves behind a blue soul. These can be picked up simply by running over them. If, however, the creature was an enemy then the red soul it leaves will need to be resurrected with a spell and dragged to your altar to be sacrificed (and converted to blue). A second type of sacrifice occurs when a player wants

to banish an enemy wizard – achieved by casting a desecrate spell on one of their own units while near their opponent's altar. The resulting sacrifice will desecrate that altar and damage the wizard opponent.

Such game mechanics might appear tedious to all but the most hardcore strategy fans, were it not for the fact that a simplified 'tech-tree' and resource-management system allows the action – depicted in cracking 3D – to take centre stage. Make no mistake, this game contains some of the most startling 3D visuals that **Edge** has seen. The landscape, for example, is generated by a hugely extrapolated version of the *Messiah* technology and it unravels naturally and convincingly into the distance, providing a real sense of scale.

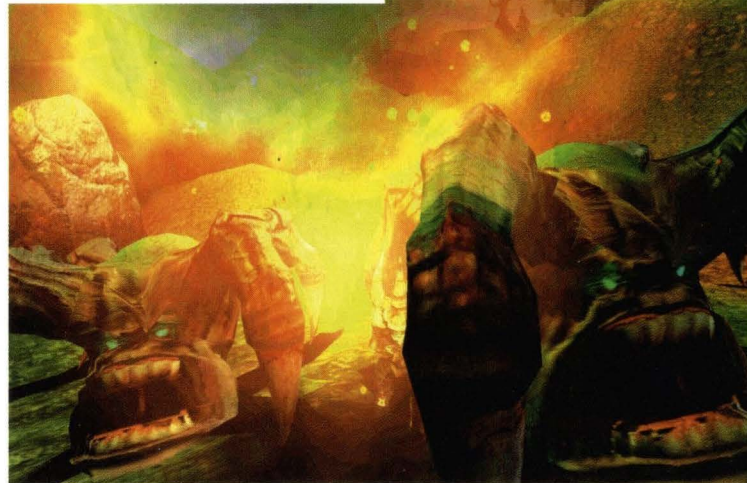
However, what really impresses is the sheer volume of animation taking place at any one time. Seemingly, through a combination of intelligent optimisation and cunning programming tricks, there's no discernible limit on the number of creatures you can summon on screen – simply fill it with winged, fully animated demons and surprisingly it all keeps moving; even, it's worth noting, when there's also a volcano spell wreaking havoc on the terrain, and multiple gigantic twisters spiralling gorgeously into the clouds and sucking up myriad creatures.

### Multiplayer promise

While *Sacrifice*'s oneplayer mode is refreshingly geared towards replayability (the NPC AI doesn't cheat and uses a limited 'view' of the action, just like a typical human player), it's the multiplayer mode that will receive the most scrutiny. Here the player pledges allegiance to a god before entering, thus determining their 'tech-tree' prior to battle – and those battles come thick and fast. The developer also claims to have eliminated one of the



The thirdperson perspective involves the player in the thick of the action, which is a step away from the traditional RTS perspective of marshalling your forces from a position far from the front line

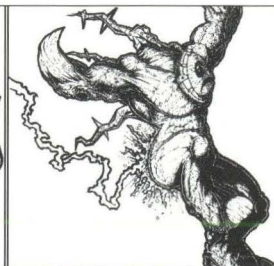
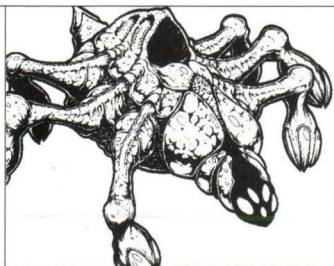


bugbears of many threeplayer RTS sessions – when a one-on-one battle between two of the players is demolished by a third player who muscles in and cleans up. Shiny's game constantly powers up the players so that any strategic bystanders will be easily overpowered by more effective magic, as all the souls are snapped up.

As the designers finish focusing on balancing the basic game elements, they will implement a variety of multiplayer scenarios – something RTS fans have allegedly been concerned about on Shiny's forums. Planned modes include Soul Harvest (where the winner is the first to collect a number of souls) and the unforgivably dubbed Gib-o-rama mode, in which the winner is the first to 'gib' a specified number of



The landscape is generated using technology developed for *Messiah*, and generates a hugely convincing game world







The straightforward control interface enables the player to make some quickfire moves, a requisite for success in the game's mix of action and strategy

creatures. Add these modes to allied play and map editor Scapex, which will ship with the game, and the package is shaping up very nicely.

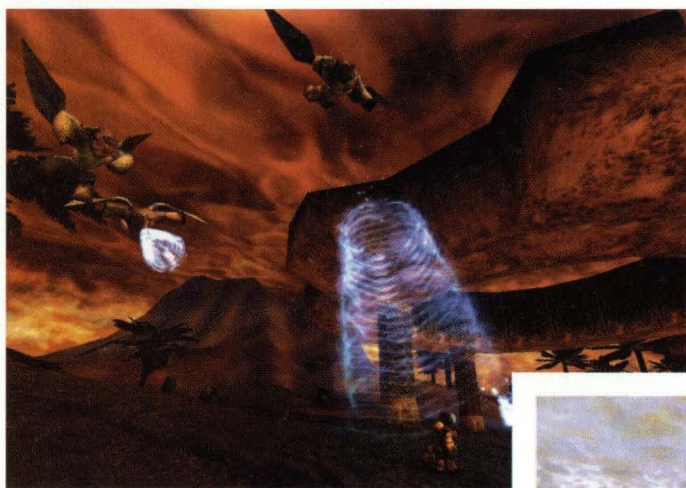
Few titles have taken strategy into the third dimension and convincingly used the extra plane for more than a dazzling 3D makeover. *Homeworld*, *Battlezone* and perhaps one or two others have succeeded, but it looks like *Sacrifice* will be the first all-out action interpretation of the RTS genre. The intuitive mouse-based combos

that are used to generate spells and attack formations are particularly impressive – this is what happens when you get a bunch of console gamers working with PC heads.

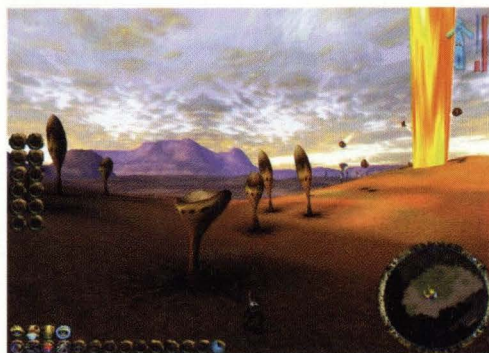
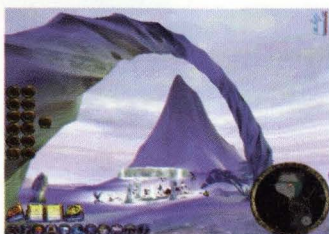
### Recipe for success

However great *Sacrifice* is already looking, though, Shiny's boss must be aware of the fine line between delivering the play-it-safe-money-in-the-bank game mechanics and truly bewildering the player. In that sense, Shiny seems to have steered well clear of a complicated RTS fest, and has invested its time in a game engine geared towards immersing players in a fight of mythical proportions

After the disappointment of *Messiah*, there's arguably more at stake for the 33-year-old Perry this time. "The response has been great," he concludes, taking his final sip of sake. "But I'm not hyping this one up – it's for the player to decide if it's their kind of game." It may be that he already knows it will.



The game engine is capable of supporting a huge number of creatures onscreen, even when a volcano spell has been cast, or twisters are winding their way across the open plains of the game



## Interview: Dave Perry

### How do you feel about the *Messiah* experience?

Shiny just loves to make games that have an interesting hook to them. The possession idea in *Messiah* was a really good example. It allowed you to leap into the bodies of your enemies and then use their bodies to fight each other. It allowed you to pretend to be an enemy by using their friend's body and then sneaking up on them.

It allowed you to use an enemy's body as armour, letting it take pain for you. I personally really enjoy getting into a good firefight using this mechanic. The problem was that this game also had a lot of platform game elements, which the typical *Quake* gamer is hyperallergic to. With hindsight, the PC market was really the wrong format for the game, it would also have saved us a lot of struggling with compatibility. Luckily it's all sorted out now.

### Would you change anything in the game?

Yes, we would have put it straight on to console, and would have removed some of the harder platform elements. We would also have made it multiplayer. I still believe it would be a bloody amazing multiplayer game, and hope someone makes one sometime soon with this kind of raw possession in it.

### Does a part of you yearn for the days of surefire hits like *Earthworm Jim* and *Aladdin*?

Those days are still here... it's just a frame of mind. Do you copy the formula that gamers are currently buying in droves, or do you try making something different? Eight years ago, I played it safe. I used to say: "People like hamburgers. They don't want 'creative' hamburgers that might taste funky." I guess I broke my own rule and since then we have enjoyed making something a bit, well, erm, 'different'. That means that our company attracts extremely creative people that enjoy the freedom. We understand that this is a business and, yes, we will be turning our attention back to more 'socially acceptable' games for a while.

### What's the next step for Shiny? Where do you see your company going?

We are focused on introducing new techniques for immersing a gamer in a rich ambient world. I love technology, I love fresh ideas, and, being an ex-programmer, I will be making sure the design really flexes the programmers here. You can expect me to go underground once *Sacrifice* gets released, I will be pouring a ton of my personal time into this next game. There go the vacations for another two years.

### How do you see the PC development climate?

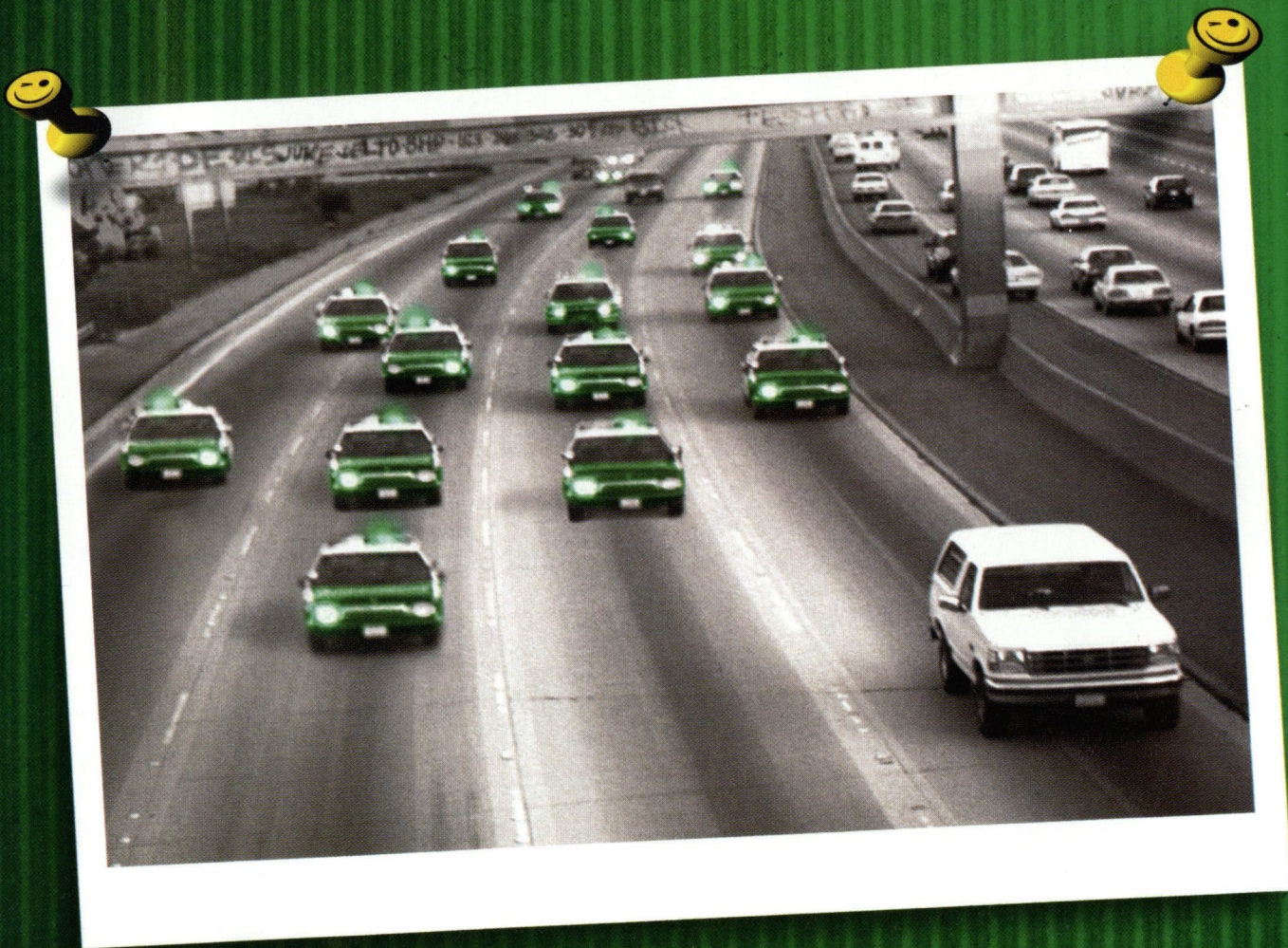
The PC is really taking an unfair beating. Console developers are declaring it dead, but this is just not the case. It is still, and will remain, a fantastic place to play games – well, if you have the cash. The problem is that a great 3D gaming videocard alone on a PC is the price of an entire console system with DVD! That's worrying for the PC gamer, especially considering the X-Box is based on PC architecture – he has gotta feel burned unless Microsoft charges \$1,000 for the X-Box.

### Do you think X-Box will affect PC development?

The X-Box is a new dawn for PC game developers. I think there may be a mass defection. Make sure you order yours early.



# You can run but you can't hide



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Inside...

## Team Camden

Think Michael Caine in 'Get Carter'. Think Bob Hoskins in 'The Long Good Friday'. Think Vinnie Jones in 'Lock, Stock'. Think London, gangsters, guns and car chases. Think real. Think *The Getaway*. **Edge** visits the Sony team that thinks it's designing the most realistic game in the world. Ever.

## SCEE'S

Soho studio is almost exactly one year into the development of *The Getaway*, and the time has come to find actors to play some of the peripheral roles in the game. Unfortunately, **Edge** arrives a couple of days early for the lap-dancer auditions. Instead, a troupe of 'Yardies' is ushered into the building. **Edge** is unsure whether they are very convincing actors or actually the real thing. As it transpires, the word 'real' is used extensively during the day.

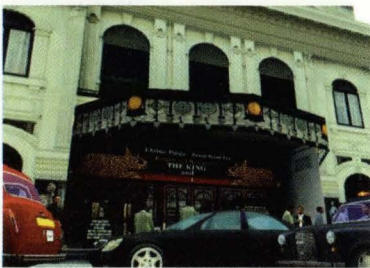
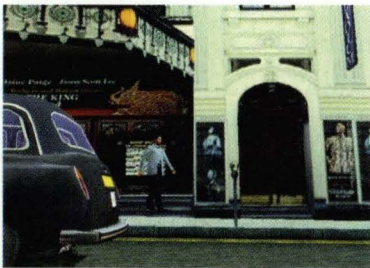
Studio manager **Brendan McNamara** is unphased by the bizarre casting situation, mentioning that 'Big Walter' is due in later – all seven feet two inches of him. McNamara speaks with no-nonsense economy and, like many of the coding team, his face has been scanned into the game for use as a character. He would be the first to admit that a high-ranking gang lord might best suit his demeanour, and **Edge** isn't about to argue with him when he states that *The Getaway* will be the most realistic representation of a city ever seen in a videogame. One particular anecdote underlines his striving for detail: "One of the girls who is wardrobing the game went out to Dalston. It's one of the hairier parts of London, and she was trying to take some pictures of people with the kind of gear the gangsters will be wearing. She nearly got rolled for her camera," he relates casually. "Now we send them with reinforcements."

### Punishing PlayStation2

Other than the much-vaunted *Metal Gear Solid 2* there have been few games **Edge** has viewed which looks like putting the PS2 architecture under any kind of strain. While many will scoff at the notion that 'reality' can actually be built within a videogame, McNamara's ambition for photorealistic

Photography: Martin Thompson





environments, accurate car handling and the most lifelike animation ever seen in a videogame are beginning to come together.

He expresses some discontent at the way early screenshots, released in May, were widely reported as being conceptual renders. "Nothing you see today is rendered," he asserts. "And *The Getaway* is not just about driving. There is a whole internal game there."

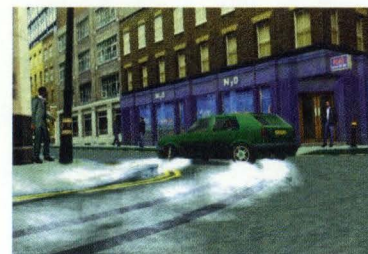
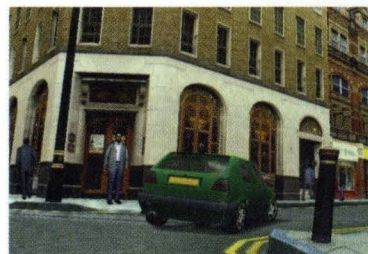
Comparisons with *Driver 2* are inevitable, yet Sony has ambitions to take things several exciting steps further. Lead designer **Chun Wah Kong** breaks the news: "The game is completely free-roaming and mission-based, but how you go about getting there – whether you decide to run there or drive there – is completely up to the player." Wah Kong goes on to disclose that the game will be 60 per cent driving and 40 per cent thirdperson

action. They will be seamlessly interwoven. The implications already stir the imagination.

Wah Kong continues outlining these aspects of the game: "You can walk into a warehouse and pick people off using a Z-lock-style aiming system. There will be several points of entry. You can walk through the front door and try to take on everybody, but that would be foolish. Using your brain will be necessary. With the level of realism which we are going after you have to consider that."

### Covering the turf

The size of the task McNamara's team is undertaking is evidenced by a map which lines the wall of the corridor leading into the heart of their development studio – 50 square kilometres of Central London have been pencilled in for use in the game. This includes



Car enthusiasts will note that current models lack some distinctive features such as badges. Sony's legal department is currently negotiating all the licences for the game. Will Audi allow its new TT to be wrecked?

Much work still needs to be done on the street furniture: litter bins, lamp-posts, boxes and even the cracks in the pavement still need to be added. The overall effect is still impressive, if currently, a touch barren. The team is hoping to implement a damage system whereby different objects cause degrees of damage. So, hitting the side of a lamp-post will cause more crumpling than a plastic bin





side streets, cul-de-sacs, roundabouts, one-way streets – only the smallest of roads have escaped the highlighter pen treatment. It will be possible to drive through Hyde Park, visit Kensington Palace or even perform stunts across the Tower of London. McNamara maintains that those familiar with London will easily recognise particular districts. So painstaking is the translation from street to game that potential taxi drivers would do well to invest in a copy to learn The Knowledge.

The game world which the player is to inhabit will be familiar to those who have seen 'Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels'. Along with *Driver*, 'Get Carter' and 'The Long Good Friday', the film has become required viewing for the team. The videos are available to take home and watch – the coding equivalent of an actor getting into character. The team wants



Black cabs will be predominant, giving London natives the chance to exact revenge in-game

**Edge** suspects that this car interior is speculative at the moment – whether they make the final cut is another matter. The team would like to offer the player both third and firstperson perspectives while driving. Police officers will be able to drag you out of your vehicle



to make it clear that the game won't just be technical exercise. "We have a whole bunch of people from a film background," continues McNamara. "We've had to wardrobe it. Two people are now working on the script, which has been really, really difficult, and we've had someone art directing who has worked in film. We want the game to be driven by the story."

### Both sides of the law

Two characters will be playable: Mark, an ex-professional bank robber trying to forget his past, and Roy, a police officer taking on the missions from a law enforcement perspective. Mark's son is kidnapped by a gangland boss and he is reluctantly dragged back into the seedy world of corruption. Roy is assigned his case. There will be 12 missions in total, although each can be played with either character and will be markedly different. They will include shootouts, robberies, stealth and, of course, manic car chases through London.

One particular concern **Edge** expresses is in how the chase and internal action sequences will be integrated. Wah Kong is confident that such a transition can be achieved satisfactorily: "I'm pleased with the way we have integrated the interior and exteriors with no loading time whatsoever. That seamless element is something we have spent a lot of time on. It's done using portals which group sections of the road and interiors, so we

### Talking Heads

The Talking Heads software is the most realistic realtime facial animation package **Edge** has seen. Facial features are scanned in from actors and laid across a muscle mesh which consists of 64 independently moving joints. Speech software is integrated for further effect. The result is scarily realistic and matches *The Getaway's* attention to detail.







FACTORY

GARNARDY





are able to throw away textures."

Should everything Team Soho is pushing for materialise, the freedom granted to the player will be unprecedented in what is ostensibly a driving game. Buildings that can be entered will be clearly defined by people walking in and out of them from the street. They will consist of several rooms and even multiple levels, depending on the location. The interiors **Edge** saw were already as detailed as any seen in the most advanced firstperson shooter. More remarkable still is that Wah Kong wants events on the outside to affect enemy behaviour on the inside. "We want some really subtle effects," he enthuses. "One task might

We are going for a system where you can lay down all the lanes on the whole of the map. We want all the rights of way and all traffic lights. Cars travelling in [*The Getaway*] London will respond in the same way they do outside. The map will be able to tell the ratios of where cars are distributed. You can go to any junction and see 50 per cent of cars go straight on, 25 per cent go right and 25 per cent go left. We will actually use these ratios."

Pedestrians will be dynamically modelled and animated to react to their environment. This will not just be a case of them jumping out of the way of oncoming vehicles, as in *Jet Set Radio*, but being imbued with a diverse set of

## Team Soho isn't compromising on 'realism' in any way. Sony has already begun labelling the game's artwork with an '18' certificate

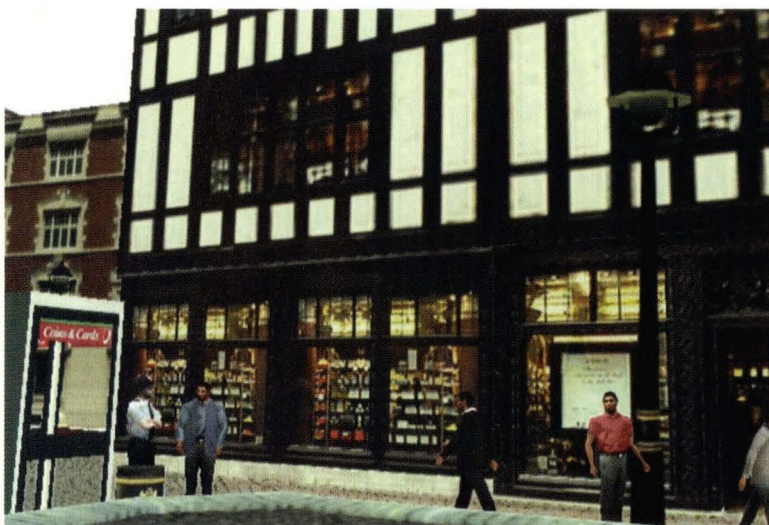
be to drive to a particular location to grab an item without them knowing. If you drive to a location and then you slam the brakes on really loudly, then that will alert the baddies inside. Also, if you come out of a gunfight into the road and you're still carrying your gun, everyone is going to run away. But if you put it away, then you can blend in with the crowd."

### Being real

Though only just in the process of being implemented, the AI of both enemies and pedestrians was taken into account during the game's conception. Realistic car physics and the accurate representation of London's streets would be bland without a realistic traffic and pedestrian system to bring out the bustle of city life. Lead programmer **William Burden** is single-minded about his vision for the game: "I want a full and comprehensive street system.

reaction parameters. "They will be a few leaps on from anything seen before," adds Burden. "At crossroads they will look in windows or at each other. They can answer mobile phones, even stop and point at emergency vehicles." It is vital to the team that peripheral characters are modelled to the same detail as the main characters to prevent the game world's spell breaking. "It should be continuous," says Burden. "All we do is change the level of detail according to how close they are to the player. If you walk up to a pedestrian he will be as detailed as if you looked at yourself in a mirror."

Controversially, Team Soho isn't compromising on the 'realism' factor in any way. This inevitably means that pedestrians are subject to the abuses of wayward driving. While no benefit is gained from running them over, as in the *Carnageddon* titles the lifelike representation of people being crushed under



The art team has been studiously going around London taking pictures (when the weather is fine) of shopfronts with a digital camera. Each building takes around two days to be 'cleaned up' and imported

## Getting away with car physics

**Javier Carrion** is SCE's senior programmer and works on every aspect of *The Getaway's* car dynamics. Though based in Spain, he maintains a close working relationship with the Soho Team, and revealed to **Edge** the level of accuracy he is aiming for in each of the 50 drivable cars in the game.

Carrion's most innovative decision is to move away from what he calls 'built-in specifications'. "We've never imputed things like the maximum speed values or acceleration figures," he says. "All cars in *The Getaway* have different values for the transmission type, engine, suspension geometry, caster, camber, toe in-out, even quality of tyres. If the model is right, the car will perform exactly as it does in real life... and it does. Every time the player is driving, the dynamic model is computing the engine traction force against the aerodynamic drag and tyre friction." Degradation parameters will also be implemented to simulate some cars being more worn than others. "Not all cars you find in the street are new," Carrion adds.

The suspension alone allows for a range of behaviour. "If you look at the rear axle of a Ford Transit, it behaves like a rear solid axle and the wheels always stay parallel. On the other hand, the front suspension of a Jaguar XJ6 consists of a wishbone and springs. Wheels are no longer perpendicular to the ground. As the Jag springs up and down, the camber, caster, toe in-out are all modifying – even visually – the orientation of the wheels."

**Edge** drove one car model (Sony's legal department is still negotiating with manufacturers to secure licensing deals) around *The Getaway's* streets, and although some aspects still need to be added, the car proved incredibly responsive. Wheelspins and tyre wear were noticeable, and you can perform handbrake turns. Just how sensitive the differences between cars will be, however, remains to be seen.

It is a priority for Carrion to include a comprehensive car damage system, which will see some of the most recognisable vehicles in Britain becoming wrecks after fierce shootouts and fast chases. "Besides the compulsory scratches and sparks, we are working on an actual bodywork realtime deformation algorithm," he reveals. "Different materials have different deformation values. We are doing the kind of simulation crash tests that car companies do."

Damage will affect handling in a coherent way. "If a car hits the pavement at speed, the geometry of the front suspension is modified. The steering parameters are altered and the car begins to behave differently." Carrion promises that the player will see cars pulling to one side, wheels showing more compliance, bearings locking and even radiators overheating if hit by a bullet.





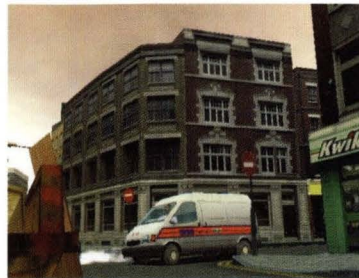
The player will be able to perform 'Hooper'-style stunts after some practice. Driving on two wheels down alleyways and leaping other cars might be necessary in certain situations if the police are in pursuit

vehicles is destined to court outrage. Sony has already begun labelling the game's artwork and promotional materials with an '18' certificate, yet pressure to remove morally sensitive aspects from the game for commercial reasons may weigh heavy in the coming months. McNamara remains adamant that this aspect, and other adult material including swearing, maiming, racist characters and storylines incorporating the sex trade, will remain: "I think it's a non-issue, I really do. I worked in the States and there was all this stuff about what records people listened to and what games they played, but there's no talk about how cheap it is to buy handguns. I think if you did something about the handguns then you would get a much better result than banning videogames."

At least the player is not encouraged to kill innocent bystanders. As Wah Kong explains: "You can run people over, you can get out of the car and start shooting pedestrians, but the consequences of that is that loads of police turn up. The police helicopter can emerge, so you will get punished." McNamara concludes: "We have a morality in the game which comes out through the story, but we're not forcing people to think in certain ways."

### Getting personal

It is a bitter irony that the closer videogames come to representing human characteristics, the more pressure will build to ban them. Developers will naturally use additional processing power to form game worlds that better mimic our own physical universe. Yet giving a freedom of action with realistic human representation will inevitably lead to moral outrage. **Gavin Moore** is the senior animator on *The Getaway*, and his ambition to bring the most lifelike representation of human movement to a videogame is nearing fulfilment. "The technology is called Talking Heads," he reveals. "We can mimic blink rates, random head movement, and even breathing at the end of sentences." Though the screenshots display a remarkable level of detail including



skin tones and pock marks, the still images can't show the wonderful contortions each face is capable of.

Each head is scanned in from the actor playing the part of the game character and is overlaid onto a muscle mesh. The muscle structure covers 64 of the main muscle points in the face, all of which can all be manipulated independently. Talking Heads has six basic parameters, which include happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise and disgust. Others like perplexity, shock and tiredness can be added. Adjust the intensity of the parameters and the face reacts accordingly. They can all be blended to produce a complexity of animation.

Speech is also incorporated using the company's proprietary software. The lips respond to a 16 phoneme set (there are only six in a standard Disney cartoon), and once a .wav file has been recorded the data can be checked against a digital dictionary for its phonemes. This ensures that painstaking speech-for-speech lip-synching is avoided. The example demonstrated to **Edge** was impressive; apart from some missing details inside the mouth when it opened, the face came to life with an unnerving accuracy.

Almost on cue, a hulking figure can be seen walking through the development studio and towards the casting room. Those who spot the man destined to be 'Big Walter' from the Bethnal Green Mob stop their work and look over with curiosity. As well as tall, he's also on the rotund side. Should he get the job – and who would refuse him? – he'll be one of the next characters to get the Talking Heads treatment. Your correspondent is also offered the opportunity to be scanned into the game, but the prospect of squaring up to an angry, gun-toting Big Walter isn't to be taken lightly – even in a virtual world.



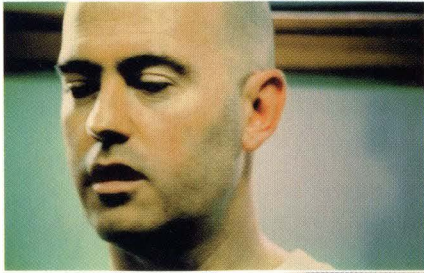
Each area of London is being meticulously reproduced. It will certainly be possible to recognise your district right down to the local McDonald's. The team might also include its own studio in a bonus level

**Brendan McNamara**  
studio manager

**Chun Wah Kong**  
lead designer

**William Burden**  
lead programmer





## FAQ

**Company name:** SCEE Team Soho

**Founded:** 1994

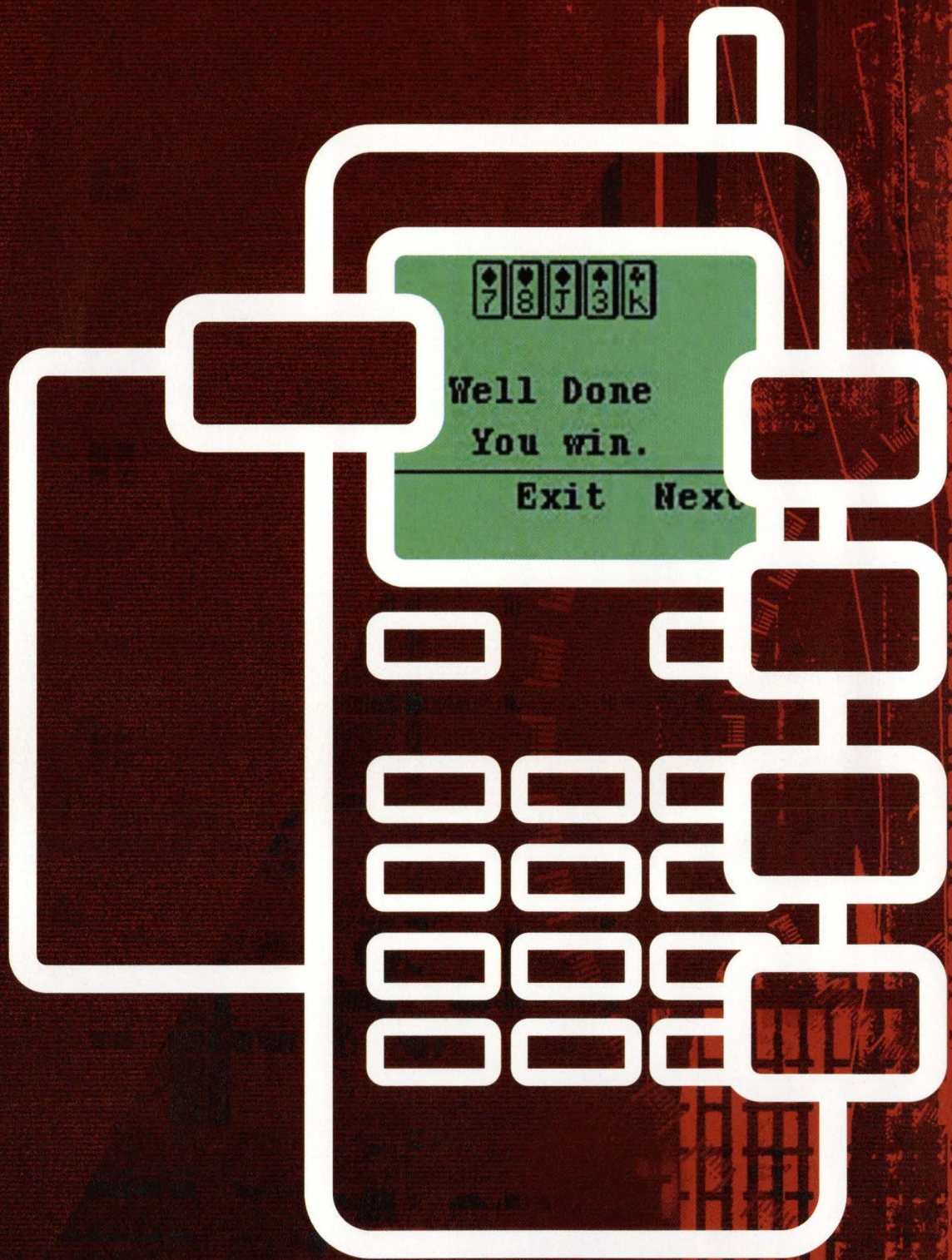
**HQ:** Noel Street, London W1

**Number of employees:** 60

**Softography:** *Total NBA* (PS), *Total NBA 97* (PS), *Porsche Challenge* (PS), *Rapid Racer* (PS), *Spice World* (PS), *This Is Football* (PS)

**Projects in development:** *This Is Football 2* (PS), *This Is Football* (PS2)





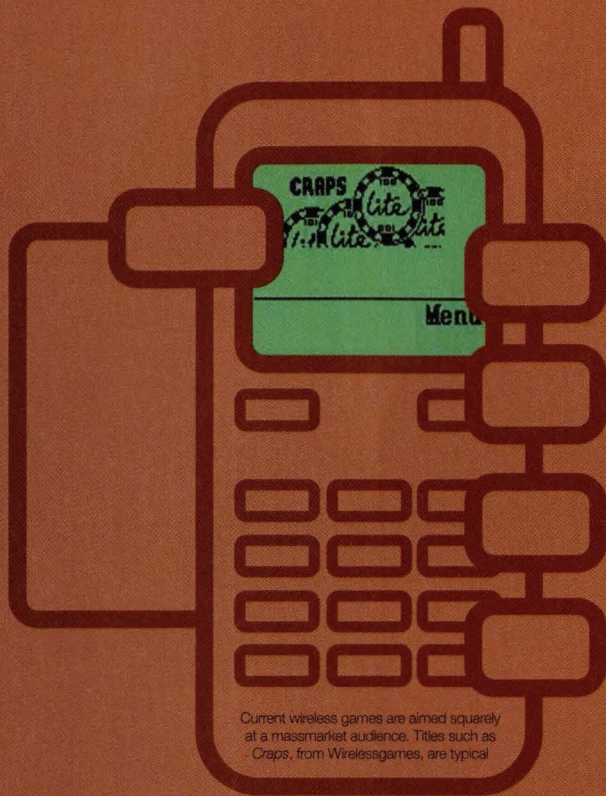


# WAP'S the big deal?

WAP has been hyped as the easy way to buy into the erevolution – the world in your handset. Games come as part of the package, and **Edge** talks to the developers creating the first generation of titles that can be played on a phone

**A**nybody who has occupied themselves with the so-called games that come packaged with the current generation of mobile phones will probably have done so to escape the inevitable onset of boredom that is a feature of – for example – the dentist's waiting room. So they could be forgiven for being somewhat sceptical about the advantages of the mobile phone as a next-generation gaming platform. News that Sony has introduced an element of wireless connectivity to its redesigned PSone is just one example of the way in which the industry has begun to prepare for future iterations of wireless technology, but the immense popularity of iMode technology in Japan is in rather stark contrast to the slow take-up of WAP in the UK, where network operators don't have the benefit of low PC penetration. BT Cellnet managed to shift substantially less than its forecasted 500,000 units, despite offering WAP as a cheap, pre-pay service, while Orange was forced to cut prices for its own offering. Consumers have yet to be won over by a technology that is characterised by long download





Current wireless games are aimed squarely at a massmarket audience. Titles such as *Craps*, from Wirelessgames, are typical

times, limited content, and a restricted interface.

### Quick turnaround

Nevertheless, several game developers have been quick to seize the opportunity to generate WAP content, seeking to turn apparent limitations in functionality to their advantage by producing massmarket product with short turnaround times. Companies ranging from the well-established – such as Activision and Rage – to start-up companies like nGame and Friendly Giants all have WAP content in development. Digital Bridges is perhaps alone in focusing on underlying delivery technology and adopting a role as a distribution partner, but it is also developing WAP content in its own right. “The difficulty right now for all game developers is finding the right style of product that works properly on small monochrome screen resolutions, with tiny amounts of available memory and very limited bandwidth,” argues **Glen O’Connell** of Rage Software, summing up the difficulties facing the current crop of WAP developers. “These games have to offer much wider appeal than your traditional core gamers’ title on the PC or console.”

Capturing the attention of the elusive

advantages of the quick development periods that current WAP content requires: “*Black & White*’s been three years now, and I’m hoping *Sorcery* will be no more than a few months.”

Indeed, Friendly Giants places this brief turnaround at the centre of its philosophy. “In-house we deliberately limit any game’s development to a maximum of six months,” explains co-founder **Peter Scott**. “That means that anything we do has a much lower risk as far as development, and it has a much higher creativity about it, meaning that we can get more ideas out the door, and if anything goes wrong – say, if we develop a game for three months and it’s crap – it doesn’t threaten to bring Friendly Giants down when we have to write it off.”

### Evolving technology

It is fair to say, though, that massmarket gaming is not likely to appeal to the average gamer. Playing Poker or Fours on a phone doesn’t really compare to the likes of *Soul Calibur* or *Perfect Dark* on a large screen, but there are a number of technologies on the horizon that raise the possibility of a more complex gaming experience over wireless



Developers have been quick to generate WAP content, seeking to turn apparent limitations to their advantage by turning around massmarket product in a short time

‘*Tetris* audience’ will indeed be a major challenge. **Steve Jackson** of Lionhead Studios, who is working with Digital Bridges on a game based on his ‘*Sorcery*’ adventure gamebooks, also emphasises accessibility as a crucial design component, but he is well placed to illustrate the

networks. The present technique for sending data over wireless networks is circuit switching, where data is assigned to a specific channel, which it hogs for the duration of a call. Future technologies like GPRS, which is designed to optimise current networks, rely on packet switching, a process in which data is broken down and sent via the most efficient route. The upshot of this development, and the 3G networks that are in the process of being established in the UK, is an increase in bandwidth, and always-on Internet access.

**Doug Goodwin**, the UK country manager at Motorola, highlights the advantages of such systems, stating that: “It gives the consumer far richer experience, it gives the operator a



far more attractive proposition to market to the consumer, it gives a better utilisation of the network's capacity, and it provides the publisher or developer a better environment for the game to be built within." Likewise, Nokia's business development manager, **Matt Chatterley**, is keen to highlight the potential impact on wireless gaming. "If you look at something like GPRS," he argues, "where the phone can just trickle information down overnight, without paying for a full time connection, you're just paying for the amount of data you download. You could download a new game, and it wouldn't download it immediately, so it wouldn't take up a major network resource, but it would download it overnight. And then the next morning you've got a new game on there, or a video clip."

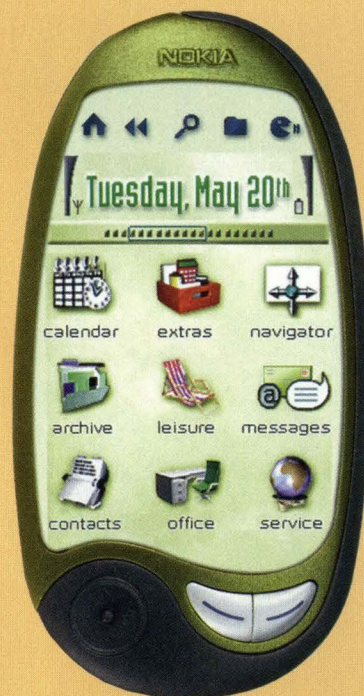
### Keeping it simple

Surprisingly, though, the developers themselves seem unconvinced by the potential of new technology to dramatically affect their focus on developing gaming content for a general audience. Scott sums up the philosophy of Friendly Giants by saying: "We don't want to fall into what we see as the mistakes of the traditional gaming industry, where PlayStation2 comes out and the first game that comes out has to have 3D models which have more polys than you can shake a stick at, and have to have bigger visual effects. What they've done is let the hardware lead the game design. What Friendly Giants want to do is always keep the game design first." More fundamentally, some developers hold reservations about the actual potential of next-generation wireless technology. **John Brimacombe**, CEO of nGame, is one of the doubters: "Everyone is overselling GPRS and UMTS. In practical terms, these platforms are about smoothness of response, not about bandwidth. All of this 2Mbit talk is nonsense. Somebody said to me – an operator – if you kept a UMTS device on at 2Mbits, you would rapidly grow an extra ear with the radiation burning into your head. That's eight cellular channels to achieve that bandwidth. In the end there's less room in the airwaves than in physical cable. So everyone is over-hyping what's happening in terms of bandwidth."

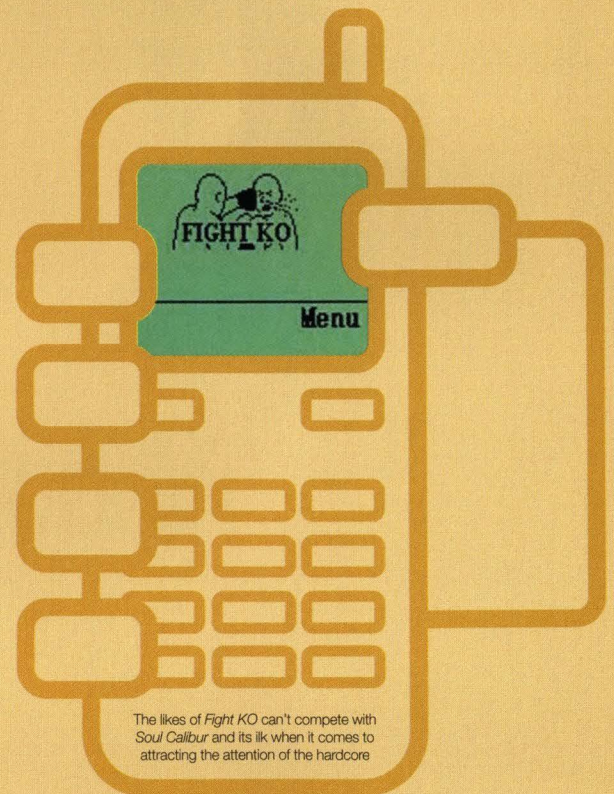
It does seem unlikely that 3G networks will have such a limited impact, but bandwidth is just one part of the equation. All of the major phone manufacturers are working on designs that will offer a greater degree of functionality

"Everyone is overselling GPRS and UMTS. In practice, these platforms are about smoothness of response, not about bandwidth. All of this 2Mbit talk is nonsense"

and intuitiveness. How will the current approach to wireless gaming content – which is clearly shaped by the limited interface of current-generation handsets – adapt to developments like touchscreen inputs? **Matt Kelland**, also from nGame, is sure that these developments are more significant to the evolution of wireless gaming: "The kind of games that we're looking at, we find work very successfully on low bandwidth. What I'm more interested in is finding devices with more screen estate. The ability to go to eight or 16 colours from two colours will be a major luxury. Once you've got a larger screen, that puts you on a par with something like a Game Boy. That way you can then make games that look appealing."



3G handsets, such as this early concept from Nokia, will offer developers more to play with



The likes of *Fight KO* can't compete with *Soul Calibur* and its ilk when it comes to attracting the attention of the hardcore



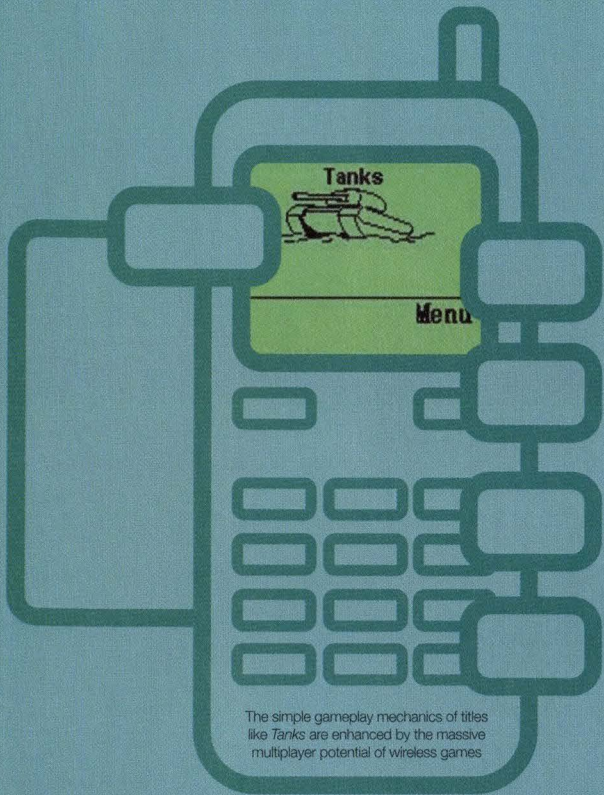
“WAP is a bundle of things, some of which are going to be relevant to the future, some of which won't. Bandwidth is always going to be the premium”

It's reassuring to know, then, that the hardware manufacturers take wireless gaming seriously, citing such content as one element that is driving the design of future handsets. “Games and the whole multimedia future is where we want to be,” outlines Chatterley. “We want to be a part of the mobile information society, we want to create it. Games are one of those things, the same as video downloads, audio downloads, that sort of thing – they're all going to be in there. And you will see future products coming out with colour screens.” Motorola is equally interested in gaming content, as Goodwin illustrates by drawing attention to the company's plans to attend this year's ECTS: “[Gaming is] going to be part of an overall entertainment sector in the mobile space. We estimate that could see the market as big worldwide as potentially \$200bn within five years. Interactive entertainment gaming on a mobile basis is going to be a large, large part of that.”

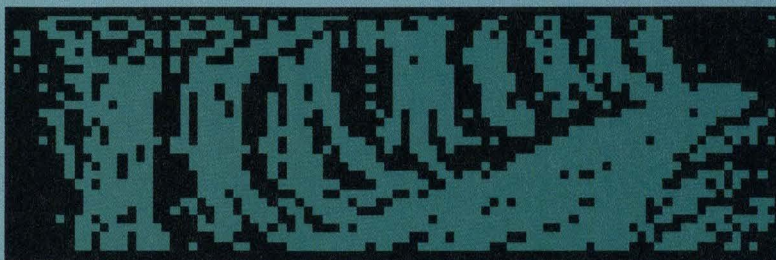
### The road ahead for WAP

Enhanced bandwidth and superior handsets will not threaten the hegemony of the massmarket approach by themselves, but in combination with the evolution of WAP, it is possible that they will contribute to a more competitive market. Critics have been keen to attribute problems to WAP, mistakenly assuming that it is synonymous with low bandwidths and small screens. But as its supporters are keen to point out, it is an ongoing technology. “Everyone acknowledges that WAP is a transitional technology,” argues Brimacombe. “WAP is a bundle of things, some of which are going to be relevant to the future, some of which won't. Bandwidth is always going to be the premium, and technologies that fix bandwidth usage, like

the byte coding – which gets rid of your text transmission of the markup language and replaces it with an efficient binary stream of it – that sort of thing will survive out of WAP.” The chief rival to WAP, NTT DoCoMo's iMode, is restricted by the fact that it is a proprietary format. “iMode is successful from one perspective,” argues **Kevin Bradshaw** of Digital Bridges, “in that there's a lot of people on DoCoMo that use it, but it's not actually that successful in that there's only one network that you can get it on, and that's after a good 18 months. WAP is the global standard. Everywhere outside Japan, every network and phone guy is doing WAP. WAP will evolve. There's no doubt WAP is here to stay, but it is an evolutionary thing. It's not like it's going to stay like it is. Phone.com have just previewed the colour WAP browser. It looks fantastic. And you'll get GPRS coming in underneath the WAP browser. You'll get WAP browser and Java working together, just like you do on the Web. Some components of what's being done on iMode will probably be adopted by some of the content guys.”



The simple gameplay mechanics of titles like *Tanks* are enhanced by the massive multiplayer potential of wireless games



2.5G phones, like this Motorola, are similar in design to current handsets, but will benefit from increased bandwidth



## A changing marketplace

If a mature version of WAP does tempt more companies into the area, it is still not clear that this will stimulate the development of games which will be able to compete with a title such as *Mario Kart* on Game Boy Advance for the attention of devoted gamers. But the most significant impact of the switch to GPRS and UMTS for developers of wireless games will be that new revenue models will be necessitated by always-on network access. "As of now, we get paid by network operators in relation to how much air time we generate for them," explains Bradshaw. "These games generate a whole whack of minutes. When you get to GPRS, packet data, always-on, different kinds of gaming clearly pop up as possibilities



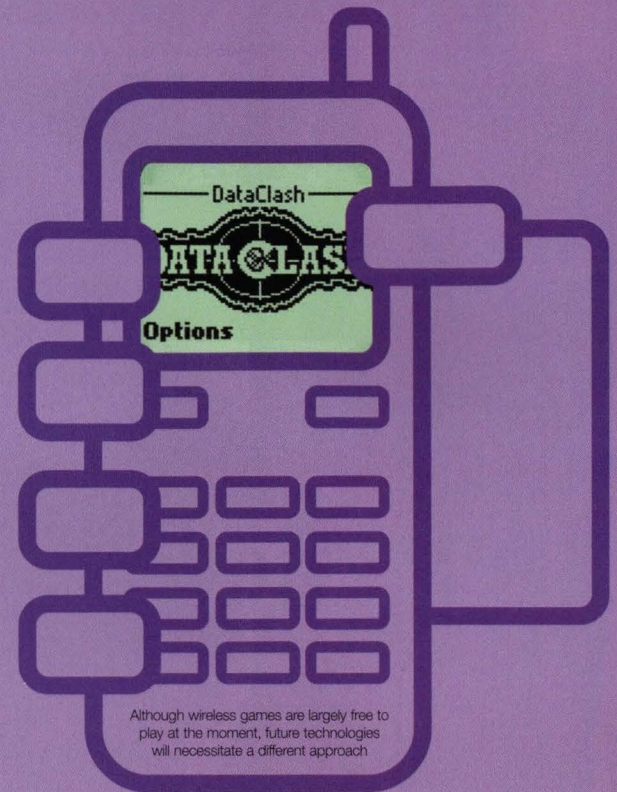
that need different kinds of billing models. It will be a combination of either transactional fees per play – so the user might pay 10p a go – or probably monthly subscriptions for the more complex stuff which you can dip in and out of as many times as you like in order to update the game, or whatever. Clearly we're going to move from an airtime based thing to a transactional and/or subscription model." Brimacombe is more explicit about the effect that this will have on the fledgling industry: "At the moment, if you are a premium rate carrier and you do find gaming content which drives minutes, you are identifiably making money from the use of that content, which you then have some economic interest in sharing back with your content authors. That must all go away in a flat-rate data world, where the operator is no longer making any scalable return from their content, but is in fact apportioning out a scarce resource – bit transmission – between content providers. And there the entire demographic's going to reverse, so that content authors have to be the primary revenue generators and they will have to pay the carriers by revenue share or fixed fee for carriage. That is going to turn this market on

its head." It is viable to cite the number of people who play *Minesweeper* and *Solitaire* to support a simple game design paradigm in an environment where such games are similarly inexpensive. It is not clear how such a model will stand up to the rigours of economic competition in an environment where consumers will be expected to pay – particularly if network operators pass on the inflated cost of third-generation licences to the consumer. Bradshaw, however, insists that there will still be a market for simple games. "There's lots of other ways to incentivise people to use simple stuff," he states. "I think there will always be people who fancy a quick game of [fours]. There's a whole load of different revenue models. They could be free, but maybe there's

the odd advert in it. Lots of different ideas."

## Convergence

But the Holy Grail of the communications industry – convergence – may also present developers of simple games with a threat. Like virtually every company operating in the communications industry, Motorola is planning for a convergent future. "If you look at our history, more recently in the last 11 or 12 months," argues Goodwin, "the purchase of General Instruments by Motorola, which is the world's biggest set-top box manufacturer, gives a clear indication as far as strategy is concerned that we recognise that set-top box delivery and wireless world are part of an end-game solution,

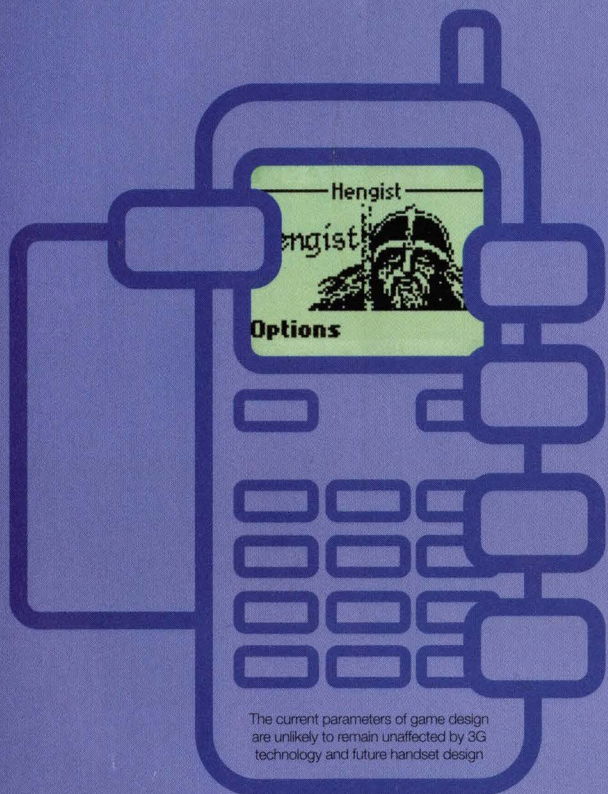


Although wireless games are largely free to play at the moment, future technologies will necessitate a different approach

"It will be a combination of either transactional fees per play – so the user might pay 10p a go – or probably monthly subscriptions for the more complex stuff"



"We're all just experimenting with ideas, the take-up of devices is at an early stage... I don't know how anyone can be anything but positive about what's going on"



and interface between both handset and set-top boxes are very much at the fore of our mindset, and digital convergence is very much an ongoing part of our strategy."

Nevertheless, convergence isn't guaranteed. There are, of course, problems inherent in such a strategy, which are succinctly put by Jackson: "Convergence will be wonderful for gamers, but I wonder how anybody's going to get any work done." Brimacombe raises some more serious doubts: "I'm very clear that a mobile phone is not a Game Boy. Combining all of the devices I carry around with me into a single device looks like a good call for a geek. But the history of media devices is they remain enormously separate. So the assumption that PDA and Game Boy and phone will converge is, I think, a fallacious one. I'm probably a bit heretical on this, but looking at the market today, there are 700 million-plus cellphones out there, and seven million Palms. You've just got to keep those numbers in perspective. Content that works on a phone is content that recognises that a phone is a communications device, and content that focuses on communication and social interaction is the stuff that fits with the user base of that device."

Therein lies the future of wireless gaming. If it is to succeed, it is probable that a massmarket approach will be sustained



Wireless gaming is just one of the catalysts for next-generation handset design, but will also benefit from larger, colour screens and a more ergonomic design. Touchscreens are also likely to provide a more accessible interface for gamers

## Further information

### Digital Bridges

As well as running content channel [wirelessgames.com](http://wirelessgames.com), Digital Bridges' UNITY server provides network operators, portals and content providers with the capability to develop and distribute wireless content.

[www.digitalbridges.com](http://www.digitalbridges.com)  
[wirelessgames.com](http://wirelessgames.com)

### Friendly Giants

Friendly Giants develops games with massmarket appeal for clients and platforms, including Internet and WAP-enabled mobile phones.

[www.friendlygiants.com](http://www.friendlygiants.com)

### nGame

nGame has signed deals with WAP portal Mviva and AT&T Wireless Services to provide content for their services, like *Alien Fish Exchange*, a fish breeding and trading game.

[www.ngame.com/index.html](http://www.ngame.com/index.html)

### Rage Software

Rage is developing a range of games for Orange that will go live in late summer, as well as a WAP version of its forthcoming *Internet Football Club* game.

[www.orange.net](http://www.orange.net)

simply by the always-on, inexpensive connectivity via a handset that will offer a decipherable amount of screen estate and an intuitive interface. It is another question as to whether the massmarket approach adopted by developers correlates to the expectations of the consumers, but with heightened competition brought about by maturing technology, wireless gaming looks set to offer both a broad spectrum of genres to suite the wide range of consumer tastes, and a gaming experience that can compete with that offered by traditional devices. As Bradshaw puts it: "We're all just experimenting with ideas, the take-up of devices is right at its very early stages. But I think we're at a great stage of development in what's going to be a fantastic market. I don't know how anyone can be anything but really positive about what's going on."





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# Sega's



SEGA



SEGA ROSSO



Hitmaker™





# new beginning

Sega Enterprises is no more. In its place is a raft of new companies charged with taking their parent into a new era. On an unprecedented visit, **Edge** spent two days at the company's Tokyo HQ and discovered a world of change



GA™



TEAM 17



musement  
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WOW ENTERTAINMENT™



OVERWORKS™

Offering frank opinions on the company's coin-op operations, their plans for the Dreamcast's future, and – as will become especially evident over the next 18 pages – a brave new world of online interaction, this month nine Sega execs, who preside over approximately 700 staff, explained to **Edge** how they are charting the way forward for a company facing its most stimulating challenge to date.

In flinging open the doors of its Japanese HQ, Sega made its intentions clear: it is comprehensively aware that the new era of electronic entertainment requires new thinking, new methodologies, and new approaches to existing technology.

Nintendo does not do this. Sony Computer Entertainment simply does not so have so much in-house talent to lay bare. Microsoft? Likewise, only perhaps more so. So, enjoy this delve inside the heads of those seeking to bring the glory days of one of the industry's proudest names back to the fore. Sega is changing, and it wants the world to know it.



# Sega Rosso Kenji Sasaki

**Best Sega game ever:** *Afterburner*. Sasaki-san says it was this title that took Sega into the ranks of major players in the games industry.



**Achievements:** *Sega Rally Championship* (1995, coin-op), *Sega Touring Car* (1996, coin-op), *Sega Rally 2* (1998, coin-op), *Star Wars Trilogy Arcade* (1999, coin-op), *Star Wars Racer Arcade* (2000, coin-op). Kenji Sasaki (and most of the Sega Rosso staff) came from Namco. He is well known to have had a major role in the development of the *Ridge Racer* series. (List does not include console conversions.)

**Staff:** 40-50



1. *Sega Rally*
2. *Sega Touring Car*
3. *Star Wars Arcade*

(formerly Soft R&D#5)



SEGA ROSSO

“Arcade games had become too exclusive, aimed at a few core users, and even I couldn't find a game I wanted to play. I wanted a simple concept for everybody”

#### Why did you choose the name Sega Rosso?

We thought it was important to maintain the strong image that Sega has in the arcades. Traditionally, the Sega brand is associated with the colour blue and the idea that 'it is cool'. But someone in the team suggested it would be better to have a hotter image. Putting the Sega logo in red was one suggestion, but it wasn't really suitable. We discovered that red in Italian is rosso and 'Sega Rosso' sounds great. We had about 100 other suggestions, but in the end 'Sega Rosso' was the best. I mean, it's perfect.

#### What will your development policy be now that you are a separate company from Sega?

Well, racing games are our main achievement and our foundation, and we want to keep it that way. There is still a lot to do in this field, but I will only launch another title when I have something really new. Until then we will concentrate on other genres. Shooting games are now an important part of our company with the *Star Wars* series. And we want to develop network games, too. Basically, we will develop across all Sega's markets, from the Dreamcast to 'eCS' (e-consumer), but with the

arcade as our main market. We have diversified and we will develop any new ideas we come up with. For example, we did not start *Card Captor Sakura* because of the licence [it's based on an anime series], but because of the concept. We hope to reveal a playable version of this in the autumn.

#### What projects are you developing right now?

We have four lines, so we have four titles running at the moment. The first one is the *Star Wars Racer* coin-op. The game has already been released, but for technical research reasons the line is still active. The second is *NASCAR*. It is nearly complete and will make its debut in late summer. The third is a Dreamcast title called *Card Captor Sakura*. The last one is *Cosmic Smash*, a simple idea that's good fun. Arcade games had become too exclusive, aimed at a few core users, and even I couldn't find a game I wanted to play. I wanted a simple concept that anybody could enjoy in the arcade, and that's *Cosmic Smash*. Looking ahead, Sega is developing its arcade network based on optical fibres. It's called eCS and I definitely want to develop titles using this feature – not adapting existing titles, but producing original games based on eCS to introduce new gameplay and new concepts into the arcades.

#### Are you planning to network Dreamcast and arcade games together?

Initially, I doubt we would be able to port the eCS concept to home gaming. It's very hi-tech, and the home entertainment level is just too limited at present. In the future it will be possible to link arcade games and consoles, creating a large online community, a virtual gaming zone. But eCS will be exclusive to the arcades for a while.

#### How do you think eCS will change gameplay?

Focusing on the network issue could result in poor content. Including an eCS option in an existing game or using it to make VS play possible on a large scale is just not viable. For example, I think that *Sega Rally* is a great title, but I don't think it would be more fun just because of eCS. So, any project should be network based from the beginning in order to create a truly new entertainment. I can't really tell you what will be different at this stage. Let's just say that we are studying the system and thinking about new ideas. I am beginning to visualise what would be great, but I need more time. I think we'll come up with a few projects to illustrate the potential of eCS next year.

#### What is the most important thing Sega should do now?

I think that Sega needs to listen to the users – both arcade and console. It is no good developing games in a particular genre simply because it happens to be successful at that point in time. You would always end up one step behind. No, Sega should observe and understand the users.

The arcade market is not performing well, so the Dreamcast must be vital for Sega's survival. As the Dreamcast market is focusing more and more on the USA, will Sega Rosso design games for the Americans? After all, Soft#5 had a strong European flavour because of *Sega Rally Championship*. I have to admit that we love Europe at Sega Rosso, and maybe *Sega Rally* is one reason. Maybe because Europe is the centre for racing. Anyway, I tried to make the game as universal as possible despite its cultural content. I don't think the arcade market will disappear. It is not going very well, but it is not dead. Of course, if people continue developing games in the same way they always have, the situation will get worse – we need evolution. We are not about to abandon arcades for consoles so we will try to continue to give our titles their universal appeal.

#### How can you attract people back into arcades?

I believe a game's interest is independent of its technology. I think people are developing arcade games using concepts and methods designed years ago. That's why users are bored now. It is fundamental to rethink the core of the game design. Innovation is essential when you are in crisis – it is the only way to survive. Sega Rosso will try to make several original games. I know it will be difficult and risky, but I would like one of these projects to be a hit – my dream is that Sega Rosso will be remembered for creating a key title in the games industry.

#### Are you thinking about working with other companies or developing for other platforms?

We are already collaborating with other companies on several projects, including *Star Wars* and *NASCAR*. As for other platforms, we will stick to Sega's. Don't forget that we're still 100 per cent owned by Sega Group.

#### How will your new-found independence change the way you work?

We are the smallest AM unit in Sega – we have less than 50 staff, so we are not a big structure. I guess work here will not change much. I will still work on games, but there will be more business tasks to accomplish.



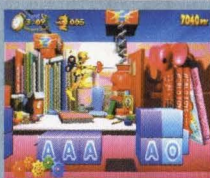
# OverWorks Noriyoshi Oba

**Best Sega game ever:** *Shinobi*. Oba-san would have preferred to pick *Sakura Taisen* instead but, according to him, it divides players – some love it, while others think it isn't really a typically Sega-style title.



**Achievements:** *Super Wonder Boy In Monster World* (1988, coin-op/MS), *Super Shinobi* (1989, MD), *Bare Knuckle* (1991, MD), *Bare Knuckle II* (1993, MD), *Super Shinobi II* (1993, MD), *Bare Knuckle III* (1994, MD), *Clockwork Knight 1/2* (1994, Sat), *Clockwork Knight 2/2* (1995, Sat), *Clockwork Knight Complete* (1995, Sat), *Riglord Saga* (1995, Sat), *World Advance Taisen* (1995, Sat), *Sakura Taisen* (1996, Sat), *J-League Pro Soccer Club Tsuku* (1996, Sat), *Riglord Saga 2* (1996, Sat), *World Advance Taisen Files* (1996, Sat), *Advanced World War* (1997, Sat), *J-League Pro Soccer Club Tsuku 2* (1997, Sat), *Sakura Taisen Columns* (1997, Sat), *Deep Fear* (1998, Sat), *Sakura Taisen 2* (1998, Sat), *GuruGuru Onsen* (1999, DC), *Sakura Taisen* (2000, DC).

Staff: 80



1. *Super Wonderboy In Monster World*
2. *Super Shinobi*
3. *Clockwork Knight*

(formerly Soft R&D#7)







**So, what about the name – Over Works? Is that related to your staff being overworked?**

Oh no! Over Works is simply the diminution of 'Over Quality Works'. I know it is a bit confusing. The basic idea is: 'Let's make the ultimate quality product'. We are based on the former Soft#7 department. Our main achievement on the Saturn was the recent *Sakura Taisen* series. [There is a strong probability that Oba-san chose the name Over Works as a way to include his own name. In Japanese, 'over' is pronounced 'oba'.]

**What titles are you working on?**

We have three titles on the way. *Eternal Arcadia* is at beta stage and *Sakura Taisen 2* is in its final debug stage. We will try to include a few additions with it, such as a demo disk of *Sakura Taisen 3*. We are quite proud of what we have done on *Sakura Taisen 3* – I think we have achieved state-of-the-art visuals. We are redeploying more and more staff to *Sakura Taisen 3*. *Sakura Taisen* and *Eternal Arcadia* will be the heart of this company, but we will also develop any other interesting ideas. We have already released a Dreamcast title called *GuruGuru Onsen*, which is a network party game. This aspect will be the second great strength of our company, as we want to develop and grow a true 'Web community'.

**And how will you develop that?**

*GuruGuru Onsen* was a great experience. There has been a greater interest among users for the online feature than we expected, and the price was very attractive at ¥300 a month. When people try an online experience, they are tempted to go back again and it can become almost a habit. On average, users were playing for around three hours each time. So there is a market. But until now, the online aspect of a game has been optional. There was the game and then the network play as a bonus. I think it is time to really design games for online use. I am starting to see how it is possible, but I will need this year before the ideas become reality.

**How will you attract more people to the Dreamcast?**

That is our main problem, and I think we will face it for some time. I think the network issue is one answer. The mobile phone is generally presented as the competitor to videogames, but I don't believe that the Internet is the reason. If people want to invest so much money in mobile phones it is because it creates a community, it allows communication. I think this is the field to work in. Developing well-adapted games and contents to create this 'Web community' – which is my key phrase – around Dreamcast would boost the platform greatly. I want to work on it.

**So what will Over Works be concentrating on?**

Without a doubt, the Dreamcast will be the core of our developments. However, I think other platforms may be included, such as PC or network systems. But the Dreamcast will be our foundation. The machine has more potential than you may think, and I believe it has a second chance. At Over Works, we have four lines and we expect to release six projects a year.

**How do you think your current projects will sell?**

I would like *Eternal Arcadia* to perform like *Final Fantasy*. At least, it would be great to sell a million here in Japan. However, given the market, I will be happy if it reaches 500,000 copies, but it should do well overseas, particularly in the USA. I think *Sakura Taisen 3* will be great. It has so many fans and both episodes did very well on Saturn. I want the game to be released overseas, but it hasn't been confirmed yet.

**“We may work on PC, but the Dreamcast will be our foundation. The machine has more potential than you may think, and I believe it has a second chance”**



**Best Sega game ever:** *OutRun*. "Its fun and its atmosphere are symbolic of the Sega spirit." Nakagawa-san thinks this spirit is missing now and would like to see more games like *OutRun* to revive Sega's dynamism and creativity.



Staff: 120

> (formerly Soft R&D#1)

"We have to innovate because it is essential. I would say that, thanks to our independence, we have greater freedom to decide what level of risk to take"

Wow Entertainment  
Rikiya Nakagawa



**Why Wow Entertainment?**

I wanted a short name that is easy to learn and easy to say. I wanted a brand with two elements and two katakana in Japanese. I also wanted the name to work worldwide so it had to be present in the English dictionary. We came up with Wow, which actually sticks perfectly to our image.

**Will you continue to be mainly a coin-op developer?**

Until now, we specialised in arcade titles but with a foot in the consumer market via ports. As it is not satisfying us, we are going 50/50 arcade and console, with games designed from the beginning for their target market. That way we will introduce as much originality as possible in both fields. We will keep our most popular series, like fishing titles and *The House of the Dead*, etc. We will also keep porting successful arcade titles to the console, when possible, by adding content, network features and more novelties to really adapt them for the console. Console users expect more from a game than in an arcade.

**Which markets are you targeting?**

I say: "Let's do whatever is good." I mean, entertainment is more than just arcades and consoles. We have worked in the games industry for years now and we have the experience, the knowhow, and the resources to touch any kind of entertainment. For example, we can design Web or i-Mode content. We are already designing content for Kodansha and NTV on Docomo Internet colour mobile phones.

Moreover, Soft#1 used to take charge of technical aspects of the Naomi development. We programmed most of the graphics library. Now everybody is independent we are losing part of the structure we benefited from before, but I intend to maintain the way we worked. For example, we will develop Naomi's network library and continue to share our knowledge with other former AMs.

**What projects are you developing right now?**

We are developing numerous titles for both arcade and console markets. We have 12 to 13 production lines. I know it is a lot, but we are used to developing many different kinds of games, from puzzle and quiz titles to big cabinet games. We have just finished a baseball title for the USA, *World Series Baseball*. It may come to Japan as well. *Giant Gram 2000* has also been finished, despite the split in the Japanese professional wrestling association. There are two federations now, the old and the new one. We managed to get both licences, so *Giant Gram 2000* will represent both federations. For the Dreamcast, we are adapting our *Marine Fishing*, the sequel to *Get Bass!*. It will have more content, network compatibility, and the game should be released for the autumn. And there are also three titles in preparation for the coming JAMMA show, but I can't tell you too much about them just yet.

**What changes are there now you are independent?**

We had both fears and hopes of the change. Since every former AM is now separate, we have lost some synergy. We used to share resources on several developments, but now it is difficult – or at least different. But there are good things too. When we were AM1 or Soft#1, we had to stick to planning and didn't always have the proper time, the proper resources. We often thought that a title would have been much better if we had changed one aspect or had more time to finalise a feature. Now we can take the necessary time to

finish a project properly and test our ideas at every step of development before releasing a title onto the market.

**Will you be aiming your games more at the west?**

No. We have one line based in the USA, and it is taking charge of this market by designing titles exclusively for it. The team is coming up with lots of ideas. As we have a popular arcade baseball series here in Japan, the team thought it would be great to make an American counterpart based on the Major League. I thought this was a great idea, so they developed *World Series Baseball*. So, no, Wahoo will continue to make games as Soft#1 did before.

**What is the nature of your collaboration with other companies, like NTV?**

The project with NTV [Nihon Television], was to see what a TV channel and a game maker like Sega could produce together. We brought realtime animated CG characters to NTV's CG movies, and the collaboration produced results that will be used in several ways including videogames. We are working on four TV programmes and want to continue the collaboration, since we are learning a lot through it. We are reaching a huge number of people via television.

We are working in very close partnership with Kodansha, too. The collaboration is based on the manga *Aah Megamisama* and we had the direct help of its creator. This collaboration has opened the doors to i-Mode for us.

**What does Sega need most right now?**

Good games! During the 'bubble age' in videogames, any title could clock up reasonable sales. But now we have to come up with new ideas, and networking is certainly one of them. I believe it will play an important role in the coming years. However, I don't think there is any one track to success in this particular field – we have to try any viable ideas. Let's make different uses of the network: communication, VS play, the mix of both, etc – I have a few projects in mind. People will be able to experience network play adapted to their profile. Arcade or console, I don't see a big difference. Videogames are technically about looking at a screen; the network is then about gathering people in a virtual space via hardware and a screen. The difference lies in where you are playing.

**What about multiformat games?**

For the time being, we are only working on Naomi and the Dreamcast. However, we want to port our most successful titles to the PC. We will reinforce our partnerships with other companies.

**Will being independent limit project budgets?**

I have to admit that it will. We have to take care of our own finances, so we must be careful in order to be profitable. I would prefer not to have to think about it, but we have to run a business. When you invest in a project, you expect a result, but there comes a point where you have to overlook the financial aspect to let the creativity continue. It is a balance I have to manage carefully now. But we have to innovate, because it is essential. I would say that, thanks to our independence, we have greater freedom to decide what we develop and the level of risk to take. However, as we are a 100 per cent subsidiary of Sega, we get our finances from it and it has a say in the decision of whether or not to develop a project.





**Best Sega game ever:** *Virtua Fighter*. It is not really Naka-san's favourite Sega title. In many respects *Sonic The Hedgehog* made the Mega Drive successful and Sega a major player in the console market. But *Virtua Fighter* is the perfect image to represent Sega's spirit, he says: "It is 100 per cent gameplay, sober and very advanced."



**Achievements:** *NiGHTs* (1996, Sat), *Sonic Jam* (1997, Sat), *Burning Ranger* (1998, Sat), *Sonic Adventure* (1998, DC), *ChuChu Rocket* (1999, DC), *Samba de Amigo* (1999, arcade), *Samba de Amigo* (2000, DC). Naka-san is also known to have worked on the *Phantasy Star* series and, of course, he created the *Sonic* series, which helped to make the Mega Drive such a major hardware force in the '90s.

**Staff:** 70 (including Sonic Team USA)



1. *Burning Ranger*
2. *Samba de Amigo*
3. *Phantasy Star III*

"I think Sega is lacking that certain something. I used to buy and play lots of Nintendo and PlayStation games, but now I can't find one good title"

Sonic Team Yuji Naka



**Why did you keep the Sonic Team brand?**

When we released *Sonic* in 1991, Sonic Team appeared as a team name. It was with *NIGHTS* that the name became a true brand. When we had to come up with a name for our company, it was an obvious idea to keep the same brand, Sonic Team, since it is famous and reflects our main achievements so far.

**What is Sonic Team's strategy going to be?**

We want to continue to make videogames enjoyed by kids around the world. However, using the network feature, we would like to create a new style of videogame. I call this 'Live Entertainment'. In the case of *Samba de Amigo*, both the players and the people who watch the players enjoy the game very much. We want to use networking to build up Live Entertainment. One of the aspects of Live Entertainment will be called 'Mobile Entertainment'. As you know, I signed a deal with Motorola so several titles based on Sonic will be released on mobile phones. Then I aim to link the Dreamcast to these mobile phones. I think this is a fascinating idea – users can play at home with the console and take the game outside using their phone. That is one application; I'm studying its full potential. We are working with Nokia and Motorola on games based on Java. I believe my company is the best place to develop this technology.

I would like to limit sequels. I think that Sonic Team has always tried to innovate as much as possible to find new ways for games. I believe it is important not to become trapped in a conservative and defensive logic – I want to keep my heart open to new ideas and keep my company as innovative as it has been.

**Will being independent change the way you work?**

It is too soon to tell, but I don't think Sonic Team has changed very much. We often developed our titles in-house with no relation to outside partners anyway. Maybe we will have to develop more relations with other companies in the future. Personally, I will still work as director and producer in addition to my new role as CEO. As far as the relationship between my office in Japan and my subsidiary Sonic Team USA is concerned, the Internet is a great help to transferring data easily between the two offices. I can supervise *Sonic Adventure 2* development which is going on in the USA. When I made *Sonic* I was in San Francisco. *Sonic* was incredibly successful in the States, so we decided to develop *Sonic 2* there. Similarly, I decided to create Sonic Team USA in order to take charge of *Sonic Adventure 2*.

As for the content of the titles, I think it is important to create games that involve more players. I think that my titles were, until last year, fairly standard oneplayer games. However, I don't want to change the content of my games too much. I guess I will decide on a case-by-case basis according to the project.

**What does Sega need most right now?**

I think Sega is lacking that certain something. I used to buy and play lots of Nintendo and PlayStation games, but now I can't find one good title. I mean, I think the Dreamcast is very good hardware and its titles are very interesting, but I really think Sega is lacking that little something. I believe many users are interested in the Dreamcast but they simply aren't buying it. I don't know why and I'm searching for the reason. I'm trying to develop something to provide Sega with that little element that will make the console successful. I think it is vital for Sega.

I really think the Dreamcast is a great system, but the most important aspect of a console is certainly the games. I believe games on the Dreamcast are far more interesting than on PS2, for instance, but PS2 had a great start. Is the success of a console simply a matter of polygon numbers or marketing skill?

**Are you planning to develop more arcade titles?**

That was a great experience, but I don't know. Consumers are my main market, but I would like to reserve one of Sonic Team's four lines for an arcade title. I'm planning to release a new version of *Samba de Amigo* in the autumn but, as with the original, I am having lots of problems licensing the soundtracks, although the game itself is finished. This new *Samba de Amigo* will be released as a simple ROM conversion so the operators won't need to change the cabinet. I've included many novelties as new moves. Actually, it is very funny! It'll be at JAMMA.

**Are you satisfied with both the arcades and console versions of *Samba de Amigo*?**

Oh yes, I'm very satisfied. The arcade version was a complete success. On the Dreamcast, the demand is high but sales have been limited by low production of the maracas controllers. They need a special chipset for the motion sensors and it is quite hard to manufacture them. Still, it is the first time a videogame company has made such a move for the home market.

**Is developing *Phantasy Star Online* a good experience, given that it's your first full online title?**

Yes, it is a very rich experience, but it takes so much time – originally I wanted the game to be released in March. Setting the network feature is so difficult. When I hear that *Diablo II* took two years of development I quite understand. Lots of changes are happening during development, so the project is never-ending. But, as the Sonic Team is now a company, we have to limit delays. So I have to manage both aspects: deadlines and protection of the content. Plus there is the problem of the servers. The Internet is basically for governmental and educational use and hasn't been built to support videogames. I don't know one company designing servers exclusively for online gaming. I have the feeling that we are forcing the servers to accept games. But it is a very interesting tool that has enabled gaming to reach a wider public. I kept this in mind when developing *Phantasy Star Online* as the game is scheduled for a worldwide release. On that topic, I would like to add that I have always designed worldwide games. I will continue in this way and the Internet is proving very interesting as it will allow players from around the world to enjoy the same experience together. I also intend to take the Asian market more in to consideration.

**What do you intend to do with networked games?**

Personally, I'm very interested in network play, but it is still very difficult to implement. Present network gaming is at an early stage. I guess it will have a major role in the future and playing online will become a standard genre. On consoles, for the moment I see the network as a simple continuation of what has been done on PCs. *Final Fantasy X* and *XI* are not the killer applications that will make online gaming standard on consoles. These titles are, however, a good first step in helping network gaming to grow.

I believe network gaming has many virtues. Humans need to communicate and networking allows that on a large scale. When Capcom made *Street Fighter*, nobody had thought about the possibility of two players sharing the same experience, yet now it is so common. So, I think network play will develop in the coming years and I would like to be the one who develops the *Street Fighter* of the online age. There are hundreds of developers on this Earth who are doing the same, but I really dream of being the one. In this context, *Phantasy Star Online* has to be seen as the very first step. There are many people who have not yet experienced any online entertainment on a PC and I would like them to start via a console and *Phantasy Star Online*.





**Best Sega game ever:** *Virtua Fighter*. Nagoshi-san witnessed the whole process of *Virtua Fighter*'s birth as he was at AM2 at the time. It was the first time a developer had built a game based closely on the model of a human. The technology proved a challenge, and he thinks the game shows off Sega's achievement and spirit perfectly.



**Achievements:** Nagoshi-san has created some famous series in his time, starting at AM2 where he developed the *Daytona USA* series, *Scud Race*, and the *Spike Out* series. Amusement Vision includes teams that spawned other series such as *Virtua Striker* and *Virtua Fighter*. As former Soft R&D#4, Amusement Vision has already developed *Virtua NBA*. (List does not include console conversions.)

**Staff:** 50-60



1. *Scud Race*
2. *Spike Out*
3. *Virtua NBA*

(formerly Soft R&D#3)

“I would like arcade and console games to be developed separately. The projects should be designed from the beginning according to their target market”

Amusement Vision **Toshihiro Nagoshi**



**How did you choose a new name?**

Originally I wanted to keep Sega in my company name – I joined Sega because I loved the company and its image. But then I was told that Sega Group would appear on our business cards and documents anyway. Plus, can you imagine how long the name would be? I always thought Sega Enterprises was too long. 'Amusement' is the core market of my company and 'vision' is a term I have loved since university, as it suits our creative spirits perfectly. Vision is vital for creation. Of course, I asked my employees for ideas, but I could not forget the word vision. I know 'AV' is quite confusing [it represents 'Adult Video' in Japan], but in the near future adult videos will be streamed so there will be no more use for videos. At that point my only rival for the name will disappear – and when people talk about AV, they will be referring to Amusement Video!

**What is your development strategy going to be?**

Our first title was *Virtua Striker 2 v.2000* and for the moment the company is focused on arcade games. I will reveal a new title for the JAMMA show. I don't want to change our nature as a game maker, so I don't want to go into other markets. But I would like to use all the technologies available to introduce new ways to play. For example, CSK possesses lots of interesting technology.

**Which platforms will you develop for?**

Of course, as we are 100 per cent owned by Sega, we are developing for Sega's hardware. But I would like to develop partnerships with others companies. If we find something interesting, we will go in that direction and talk with other companies as necessary. We will buy engines if they are needed for some of our projects. Basically, we would only collaborate with other game companies, as it is our only market. But I don't want to make titles on the model of blahblahblah VS blahblahblah. Any collaboration would be based on a common development of an original title using the particular skills of each side. I think the Dreamcast will be perfect for that sort of project.

**What kind of titles are you developing?**

I think we are well known worldwide for several famous action titles, such as *Virtua Striker*, *Virtua Fighter*, *Virtua Racing* and *Spike Out*. We are very action oriented. These titles are a heritage from our previous experiences. I would rather not make sequels to these series, but I know it will be necessary, since fans are expecting new versions of popular games like *Virtua Striker*. Plus, it is profitable. But I'd prefer to make new, original series under the Amusement Vision label.

We have around 50 staff who are not exactly divided into teams, but let's say there are four teams in our company. Our main title is *Virtua Striker* so far, as it sold more than 10,000 arcade units worldwide. There have been many versions, but now the Japanese understand soccer better – a few years ago nobody understood 'offside'. Now they know, so we can design a new *Virtua Striker* encompassing more aspects of the game.

Basically, I would like arcade and console developments to be separated. The projects should be designed from the beginning according to their target market. I have no plans for eCS yet. There are projects emerging inside Amusement Vision, but they are not viable yet.

**Are you planning conversions of well-known arcade titles for the Dreamcast?**

I have a few titles in mind, but not all arcade titles can be converted to console. I don't really like porting arcade titles to console – not because I don't like the consumer market, but

simply because it is difficult to make a satisfying conversion. Many titles are converted because of their popularity, but as a console game they are too limited. I don't want that.

**What does Sega need most right now?**

I guess Sega needs to think and study again what the Internet is. At Sega we hear so much about network play, but I haven't met anyone who really understands it or who can predict the Internet wave. I don't believe it is Sega's problem. Many developers still think they have time before networking is a reality, but they are already out of date. Anyway, when you work it is important to understand your tools. If you don't, how can you expect to make a good quality product? How can you expect to learn while working? It is just unrealistic. I don't think Sega is late, but it is important to study the concept. Sega and CSK built so many Internet structures, for example with ISAO, but it is important to have the services first. Sega's network strategy is right, but without services it is useless. So ISAO should think about what kind of services it is essential to provide to users. I would call it 'Network Entertainment Services'. 'Network' can mean many things – it can be phones, etc – so let's focus on the entertainment services. For me, 'network' means 'services'.

The VMS and ISAO are good concepts for the online strategy Sega and CSK are developing, but the companies shouldn't expect any results without the services. I'm thinking of a game for the Network Entertainment Service – it is a long time since I have developed a console title, but I would like to use it to get experience in the online field.

**What do you think about multipatform development?**

It could be great. I'm learning how to work on the Dreamcast and I must say that the console is well designed, leaving aside any consideration of polygon numbers. So even though I am only planning to work on arcade titles for the moment, I would like to develop Dreamcast games in the near future, as well as the network project I'm thinking of.

**So how about *Planet Harrier*? [A demo is running on a looping video]**

What? No, no, it is a simple demo I programmed for all of you. I thought you would be bored with all the old titles on video. I made this demo just for you. It would be fun if it became a game.

**What is your biggest expectation as CEO of Amusement Vision?**

During my years at AM2 and AM4 I have designed different kinds of games. I have touched all the major genres, so I think I have a good experience in the games industry. Plus, I have highly skilled staff who can make innovative games. I really think we can make titles based on our creativity rather than on marketing. But since Amusement Vision has to survive, it won't always be possible to follow our creativity. My dream would be to initiate or create a new kind of game, to open a new way.

**What sort of games do you personally like?**

I don't have a particular genre in mind and it would be difficult to name one title. I think it is because I really like the titles I have made or am making – it is my main motivation. Of course there are aspects of my creations I don't like, but the positive aspects are much more numerous. I haven't really had any negative experiences during development. Videogames are my life, it is the way I have chosen. So I think I'm very happy with my life. But if I can't name a particular genre I like, at least I can tell you that I'm not fond of RPGs.



**Note:** Mizuguchi-san elected not to share what he perceives to be the best Sega game of all time

**Achievements:** In addition to *Space Channel 5* (1999), Mizuguchi-san has worked on numerous titles, including *Megalopolis* (1992, ride), *KomeKome Live* (1992, ride), *Sega Rally Championship* (1995), *Manx TT* (1995), *Sega Touring Championship* (1996), and *Sega Rally 2* (1998). (List does not include console conversions.)



1. *Space Channel 5*
2. *Manx TT*
3. *Sega Rally 2*

(formerly Soft R&D #9)

United Game Artists  
Tetsuya Mizuguchi



**How did you settle on a name?**

I have had this name in mind for a long time and it is a concept I have been wanting to put in to practice. When I was given the opportunity of having my own company within the Sega Group, I decided to take my concept as my company name. Each member of UGA is a creator, a videogame artist. Our goal won't be, for example, to develop for a particular market like Japan, America or Europe. No, our 'market' is the human being. So our orientation will be universal – I want to make games for a worldwide audience.

**What projects are you developing?**

As a game producer, I'm much more focused on the creative aspect than on the administrative and business sides. Today, I'm in a suit, but normally I'm in far more relaxed clothes. Since taking on the company build-up, I have been really busy. In fact, I have experienced a lot of stress. But we have started at last. And from now on, if we manage to make great titles, my stress will disappear.

Anyway, we have two projects at present; one is still at a very early stage. I'm nervous, as I'm watching them take shape. I'm aiming for a 2001 release for the more advanced one. I want to introduce an original concept, very different from *Space Channel 5*. And... and... okay, let's talk about this game in detail. No? [His assistant is telling him not to say anything.] All right... I would like to talk about this game so much. So I have nothing to say? [Looks at his assistant.]

**What are your goals for this year?**

With *Space Channel 5*, we had a precious experience. The team that worked on it – around 25 people – is now much more confident. It is like passing from Serie B to Serie A [in the Italian football league] and competing for the championship. There is another team I would qualify as still being Serie B class. I would like to spend a lot of energy creating a real UGA culture inside the company and then focus on other matters next year, based on this creative environment.

**“I compare what happened inside Sega with the movie industry in Hollywood years ago. The media, the production, and the distribution were separated”**

As UGA is 100 per cent owned by Sega Group, we will work at taking Sega to the top. I compare what happened inside Sega with the movie industry in Hollywood years ago. The media, the production, and the distribution were separated. I think it is the same in Sega Group. I'm quite excited by that, and I believe it was a good move by our chairman and CEO, Mr Okawa, even though it is not easy since the business issues have to be considered. We have to survive and create at the same time. I can't tell you how long it will take, but, as a producer, as a games studio, I want to be the number one in the world.

**Are you considering developing anything other than console games?**

What is great about the consumer market is that you can reach a huge number of people. I know the arcade market

quite well, as I have produced several racing games, but there you reach mainly male users – and in some countries, children aren't even allowed into arcades. I have many ideas, many concepts to share with people, so, for the coming years, I will be developing for consoles. But I'm not the only person in UGA, and it is important to take into consideration everybody's ideas and aspirations. It is a kind of human chemistry and it is important to manage it. Projects will emerge as a result of this chemistry.

**What does Sega need most right now?**

I would say there should be fewer barriers. To entertain a large number of people, you need a certain power, charisma. Working hard for a few months is not sufficient, as the process takes a long time. It is a long, drawn-out job to create a culture, an image, and it is still essential for Sega, even though all the teams are separate and operate independently. I would say that what Sega is doing best is carrying on. Sega can continue for a long time as a console maker and as a game maker, but I would like Sega to think again about the foundation of its consumer business.

**What do you think about network gaming?**

I have a view on the next five years – I'm very excited and I even have difficulty sleeping. However, I'm not thinking of entering the network business yet. I know it is the network boom in Japan and nobody talks about anything else but, in my view, it is something you have to think about carefully before making a move. I will wait until I have a solid project, but I really want to work on network titles. I'm not sure that network gaming will take place on consoles when it matures – it's possible that a new kind of hardware or platform will appear in five years, changing people's habits.

**What kind of games do you want to develop?**

I don't have any genre in mind. I don't even differentiate between an adventure game and an RPG. I'm much more interested in fun or feelings and particularly in how to put them into a game. With *Space Channel 5*, people wanted to put it in a category and I had to agree with every suggestion: action, musical, dance. It was a problem for me as the game had no particular genre to fit into. So for our new titles, I will let users decide themselves. I would rather develop taste and feelings through my games as I did with *Sega Rally*. It is one of the foundations of UGA, developing cutting-edge or popular stuff.

**Are you considering external collaborations?**

As a matter of fact, it is already happening. Among the 60 people working at UGA, there are several people who don't come from the games industry. They are specialists in various fields: visual, dance, DJ, sound etc. They are integral to numerous stages of the game development and they usually help me design the game concept. It's a way of working I want to continue at UGA.





**Best Sega game ever:** *Virtua Fighter*. "When I saw the game for the first time, I was so impressed. It is so Sega. It is stoic and so advanced at the same time. There was also another title, developed in a section just beside mine: *Super Shinobi*. This is another great title, running on the Mega Drive. I loved its stoic image."



**Achievements:** *Sega Rally 2* (1999, DC), *Pro Baseball Team Tsuku* (1999, DC), *Pro Baseball Team Asobo* (1999, DC), *J-League Pro Soccer Tsuku* (1999, DC), *The Typing Of The Dead* (2000, DC), *Jet Set Radio* (2000, DC).

**Staff:** Approx 105



1. *Sega Rally 2*
2. *The Typing Of The Dead*
3. *Jet Set Radio*

(formerly Soft R&D #6)

Smilebit **Shun Arai**



**Why did you choose the name Smilebit?**

My goal is to make games people will enjoy, if possible, as a family. I would like players to be very happy with our titles. I also want these people to enjoy playing online with other players they don't know. For all these reasons, I wanted to include the word 'smile'. However, smile is not serious enough on its own, so I decided to include a digital image by adding the word 'bit'.

**"I really do not feel the problem is the DC hardware. That would be too naive. As the first next-gen console, it's not surprising that it has lower polygon performance"**

**What are you working on now?**

Smilebit is mainly based on the former Sega PC, which represents about a third of the staff. We have six lines and even though there are 105 of us, it is still not enough. We have regrouped some very successful series with all Sega's club simulation titles (soccer, baseball, horse racing, etc). And we have developed the cutting-edge *Jet Set Radio*. We are continuing to develop these series using some of the lines.

When I joined Sega, I wanted to develop a few online projects, as Sega had decided to diversify into home banking, home trading, etc. Then I was in charge of Saturn's development tools and technical support. For all these reasons, when Smilebit was founded, Sega asked me if I could come up with an online title to support Sega's network strategy. As a result, we have a network game that will be compatible with the Dreamcast and Net@ [eCS]. It's called *Hundred Swords*. And we have a second project in progress, quite original and also network based.

**Can you elaborate on *Hundred Swords*?**

It is a 3D realtime simulation game, like *TA Kingdoms*. It has been designed from the beginning as a true network game. Dreamcast and arcade [Net@] versions will be a little different. On a console, users will play longer, so a Story mode is included with 30 scenarios. In the arcade, time will be limited (for example 30 minutes or one hour) and there will be three scenarios. The chat system will be quite different between the two versions, and *Hundred Swords* will benefit from higher texture quality using the large amount of memory available on Net@. There are four kingdoms with different ways of evolution. They fight each other.

**What is your development strategy going to be?**

As part of Sega Group, our aim is to boost Sega in the games industry. Sometimes Sega will ask us to take on particular projects, as was the case with *Hundred Swords*. But to be able to respond to any needs from Sega Group or from the market, you have to be able to work fast. So I will allocate some of my resources to research and develop new technologies. That might be a line which is not busy or a separate team. My approach is simple and may differ from others. Even if you have a great project, you cannot do it unless you have the right technology to support it.

I'm also developing a PC line since we have experience on the platform. Projects will be developed simultaneously for the Dreamcast and PC. Simulation games may be our main genre. But, of course, I want to develop new genres too.

On the business side, it is our first year of existence so our main objective will be to be profitable on March 31 next year.

After a couple of years, maybe three, we will be able to evaluate our profitability and then invest in building our own game server at Smilebit. Based on this server, we would develop services and eCS features based on the game field. As our chairman and CEO, Isao Okawa, stressed recently, in five years we want to get involved in IPO services.

**What does Sega need most right now?**

I think we have to develop 'Sega-looking' games. I don't think we are making Sega games any more, and the users have already noticed. Of course, as a separate company it is vital to make Smilebit games, but we mustn't forget to include the Sega flavour in each of our titles. Users should see Smilebit as a company belonging to Sega Group.

As far as the Dreamcast is concerned, I really do not feel the problem is the hardware. That would be too simple, too naive. As the first next-generation console to be released, it is not surprising that it has lower polygon performance. The main issue is to explain to users why the Dreamcast has a modem. Also, we have to exploit several key features of the console, such as the memory, the graphic chipset and the CPU. There is still a lot to do. I really think the Dreamcast is a well-balanced machine. I know that there are projects which would be impossible to implement on the Dreamcast, but at Smilebit we are working hard to get the most out of the console's power.

**What do you think about network gaming?**

I remember during the 2D age, it was difficult to make games as the hardware limits were soon reached – but we managed to make a few great titles. Now it is much easier because of the great evolution in technology in recent years. With network play, the main difficulty is the infrastructure. It wasn't developed to support gaming and it is too expensive. Things are getting much better, though. Three years ago, for example, ISDN was still out of reach of most people and only core users were enjoying digital, high-speed Internet. Now it is common.

My vision of network play is a game that doesn't give the impression of being a network game. I mean, users won't have to wait for the system to establish a connection or spend time searching for a friend on the network. Everything has to be immediate, ready to use.

I said the time for network gaming has arrived, but we still need some time, since the infrastructure is not yet perfect and the consoles aren't ready. According to my vision, telling people now that network gaming is reality is a lie. Consoles don't have sufficient power to support true, realtime network play. That means you have to limit your project, find tricks to prevent the game from slowing down. In other words, you are searching for tricks to fool the user, to make him believe he is experiencing what everybody is calling network gaming. We need the technology to be good, and cheap enough to make it viable.

As a business, network gaming is very hard to measure. If you sell 50,000 copies of a game, you cannot predict how many you would have sold if it was a network title. We can only make online titles in such a way that people will accept pay-to-play. I hope that in the following years, the network business will represent around 30 per cent of our profits.

**Are you planning arcade titles or Japanese installations?**

We worked for a few years with the AM departments – we presented the idea for *Typing of the Dead* to AM1. For arcades, we are mainly working like this, looking at what we can adapt or exploit. We will work mostly on the consumer market, though. We have to help Sega grow, as it is part of our survival.



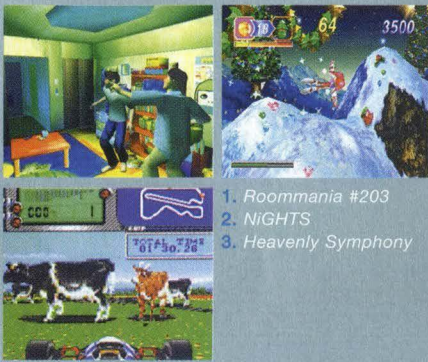


**Best Sega game ever:** *Sonic The Hedgehog*. Not because he worked on the game but because it was the first project he worked on in Sega. He supplied music and effects for the seminal title.



**Achievements:** *Sonic The Hedgehog* (1991, MD), *Ariel Crystal Densetsu* (1991, GG), *Advanced Taisen* (1991, MD), *3x3 Eyes* (1993, Mega CD), *Sonic The Hedgehog CD* (1993, Mega CD), *Heavenly Symphony* (1994, Mega CD), *NIGHTS* 1996, (Sat), *Roommania #203* (2000, DC).

**Staff:** 40



1. *Roommania #203*
2. *NIGHTS*
3. *Heavenly Symphony*

(formerly Sega Digital Media)

Wave Master Yukifumi Makino



**Why have you chosen the name Wave Master?**

Most of us come from the former Sega music studio – there is a big sound studio inside Sega HQ. We used to provide soundtracks for both CS and arcade development teams, so I thought it was important to keep a trace of our origin, of our very foundation. However, I didn't want to restrict our image to sound. We want to be more than simply a sound studio as we were before. We will make our own products and develop our own image and culture. So I decided not to include a word like 'sound' in the company name in order to give us a wider field of activity.

"I think Sega is moving in a very closed environment. Teams are working together and nothing new is coming from outside while the entire industry is changing"

I used to play on the Famicom and PC Engine and didn't know much about Sega. I attended a corporate meeting at Sega for new graduates. I met every department and decided to join as a developer. The first project I worked on was *Sonic The Hedgehog*, and I have been able to use my sound abilities from the start. It has been a great experience – I never thought sound would be my profession, although I had a band at university. It is great to do what you like.

**What is your development strategy going to be?**

We used to specialise in sound, so producing games is quite new for me. We will continue to write soundtracks for other teams when they ask us. But I think that eventually each new company will have its own sound department, so their development will be unified. Others may seek outside collaboration, so our business may get smaller and smaller. In order to survive, we have to develop games – or at least services.

We will work with the entire Sega group and maybe other outside companies. We developed the Dreamcast sound tools and library. We will still provide sound support, which I guess will represent about 80 per cent of our activity in the beginning. The other 20 per cent will include developing original titles and other sub-activities, for example DJ album production or movie soundtracks, etc. Anyway, during this first year we will focus on what we know best – sound – but at the same time we will learn, find new opportunities and think about game projects.

**Do you have any game projects yet?**

Not really, but we will certainly help or work in collaboration with other members of Sega Group on their game developments. That will give us more knowledge about development. But I'm thinking of entering the first wave of entertainment development for Docomo's next revolution in mobile phones: W-CDmaone. We will use this cutting-edge technology to program innovative services. I think this will be big business next year.

I'm also starting *Roommania 2*. I want to include network ability in this sequel, but how that will take shape, I cannot tell you yet. I'm studying several ways. I would really like to develop the sound feature in DVD. This format is booming in Japan, but the sound hasn't been exploited properly. There

is a lot to be done, and I have a lot of ideas.

**What does network gaming mean to you?**

For me it is simple: networks are a communication tool, no more and no less. Okay, they can be used to support online play so numerous people can compete with each other. But for me, it is the greatest tool for people to communicate. I would really like to develop various solutions as networks will be a great market, more for their communication potential than for gaming. People are investing a lot of money in mobile phones, primarily because they want to communicate with each other. In this respect, there is much to do and the outlook is promising.

**What does Sega need most right now?**

I think Sega is moving in a very closed environment. Teams are working together and nothing new is coming from outside while the whole industry is changing – as is the market. I think it will be a problem soon. *Roommania #203* was an indication of that for me; in many aspects, this game is an incarnation of Sega's problems.

**What problems are you facing, given that you haven't developed many games before?**

We have a very, very young staff with an average age of 20 years old. They are all sound artists, sound creators. When we decided to be a company we faced many aspects we had never touched or thought of before. The biggest problem is certainly the business part. We had to forget our artistic natures in order to be PR or business representatives to deal with our parent company and others.

**What are your goals as a company?**

If people said we had developed a great title or service, we would be very happy, of course, but more important to us is to have done our best. We want to be proud of our creations. We have a lot to learn, but even at our level we are seeking the very best quality and cutting edge or innovative products. If we can achieve complete satisfaction for the users and ourselves, I will be the happiest man in this industry.

We have very skilled staff in the company, as they have worked on major projects. We really know how to exploit hardware in order to deliver the maximum capacity. So I think we are able to adapt these skills to programming. That will be very helpful for our future game projects.





**Best Sega game ever:** *Sega Rally*. "Did you know that *Sega Rally* was initially an AM3 title? I remember Mizuguchi and Sasaki deciding to leave AM3 with the *Sega Rally* team. When they got their own AM, Mizuguchi decided again to leave Sasaki for some reason, to leave Sega HQ for Shibuya. Well, I don't know if it was my fault, but so many people left our department. Who would be next? Oh yes, Watari (*Virtual On*)? It is becoming a big problem? It is if you look at the credits for *FFIX* – a large number of the staff came from us."



**Achievements (all coin-op):** *Rail Chase* (1991), *Jurassic Park* (1992), *Star Wars* (1994), *Dragonball Z VRVS* (1994), *Sega Rally Championship* (1995), *Rail Chase 2* (1995), *Funky Head Boxers* (1995), *Virtual On* (1995), *Gunblade NY* (1995), *PakuPaku Animal* (1995), *Manx TT* (1996), *Decathlete* (1996), *Last Bronx* (1996), *The Lost World* (1997), *Top Skater* (1997), *Winter Heat* (1997), *Dirt Devils* (1998), *Virtual On Oratorio Tangram* (series from 1998), *Magical Truck Adventure* (1998), *LA Machineguns* (1998), *Crazy Taxi* (1998), *Touch de Uno* (1999), *Toy Fighter* (1999), *Derby Owners Club* (1999), *Jambo Safari* (1999), *Power Smash* (aka *Virtua Tennis*, 1999), *Touch de Uno 2* (1999), *Kase Channel* (1999). (List does not include console conversions.)

**Staff:** 128



1. *The Lost World*
2. *Decathlete*
3. *Jambo Safari*

(formerly Soft R&D#3)

Hitmaker Hisao Oguchi



**Why did you choose Hitmaker?**

I thought it was the perfect translation of our image. But that isn't all – there are other reasons I haven't revealed to my staff. Look at the logo and you may notice something similar to the '@' symbol. I thought it would be good to include this idea, as it will become more and more important. And if that adds ¥1,000 to our stock value, why not?! [He's kidding.] When I proposed this name to my employees, there was much opposition. Younger people wanted to include words like 'digital' or 'universal'. My concept is to sell content, solid gameplay. I think this name suits these ideas.

**What is your development strategy going to be?**

In three words: network content provider. This direction represents 50 per cent of our priority. The only way to face PS2 is with network gaming, so I'm preparing a project called 'Project X'. We will have our own servers and it will be a massive network game in which up to 100,000 people can play. I think I can gather 80 per cent of these 100,000 players.

**“The only way to face PS2 is with network gaming, so I'm preparing a project called 'Project X'. We will have our own servers and up to 100,000 people can take part”**

**What about Dreamcast development?**

Well, as I said, I want to prepare the alpha version of 'Project X', then a playable version in February, and launch the business for cherry blossom time.

I'm definitely a fan of *Ultima Online*. I played for a year and a half. I still have an account but haven't played for six months. I don't want to erase my character. It has been a great experience. I have watched how Origin managed to renew the game continuously to keep users in *UO*. I want this title to be our first truly original DC title. I will, however, take into account the level of the infrastructure in Japan and make a title easy to play.

I would also like to launch a new series based on the 'Crazy' label to follow *Crazy Taxi* – maybe *Crazy Shopper*, *Crazy Paperboy*, etc. And I want to develop *Virtua Tennis* into a series – maybe in the arcade. So I'm thinking of sequels. The overseas version of *Virtua Tennis* is not network compatible, but the Japanese version is. Since *Virtua On*, we have certain experience in this field, I think *Virtua Tennis* might become a great network title. The only problem is knowing how much we can push this title on the DC here. I hope that it will be able to gain a little ground on the PS2.

**What does Sega need most right now?**

I would say money and marketing staff. If you consider Dreamcast titles, I really think they are great. Don't you think so? There was this great PS2 wave but now it is over – so few people play on it. So how did SCEI manage to make the system sell so well in the first place? Surely it is an example of Sony's power in the marketing and communication fields. We had the feeling that we had to buy a PS2. For the Dreamcast, I have to admit that the marketing has been quite poor even if the Yukawa campaign was correct. So, if we cannot convince people to buy a Dreamcast even with a good quality line-up, the only way left is the network feature.

On the development side, technology is not enough. Previously, Sega sold games based on its advanced arcade technology. Nowadays it is no use. The Dreamcast has beautiful graphics, but so does the PS2, and so do all the next-generation machines. There is no advantage any more. We need new concepts.

**What do you think about network gaming?**

I think there are many titles – Sega's included – where you have to show courage: if you don't show a little bravery, you cannot finish the game. This idea is not suitable to network gaming for a wide audience. In Japan, the sort of people who will play network games is quite limited – students or salarymen. They will only play for a few minutes each day after school or work and just before going to bed. That means you have to minimise the time spent accessing the game and you have to allow users to enjoy short play. My idea is to let people play their way. If you want to enter a long action story then go for it. But if you just want to walk around and talk to other users, okay, no problem. Gaming on demand; network content provider – these are my visions of network gaming.

Many people are developing online titles, but I'm sure that users will play only two or three titles a year since such games require more time, or are infinite like *UO*. We are targeting young adults and older for network play. Plus, we are thinking about a fee of ¥800 to ¥1,000 a month. Not many people can pay such a fee every month. So our target market will certainly be limited to students and salarymen.

**What is your development strategy going to be?**

Have you noticed that we have hardly any sequels in our titles? Sequels would be a good move from a business perspective, as nearly 70 per cent of the previous users would play the sequel. But we have a strong feeling within Hit Maker: we really want to make something new and innovative each time. That's why so few sequels exist.

Everybody is making realistic-looking games, for instance. At Hit Maker we had a different point of view, and decided to make something not realistic at all – *Crazy Taxi*. In fact, that is far more difficult than reproducing an existing car. That's an illustration of our philosophy. It is also a proof of high levels of technology and skill. If you faithfully copy a real element, you only have to reproduce it using physics and an exact 3D model. In the case of something as original as *Crazy Taxi* or even *Jet Set Radio*, you have to start from scratch and add originality to a real-looking environment. I think that is far more challenging.

Plus, we are very careful with our titles to set the level of fun. You know that with a little change, a game can be a disaster or a big hit. For example, in *Crazy Taxi* we added the drift a couple of weeks before its announcement as we found the game too sober and not enough fun. It is quite a difficult thing to set. It is much easier with a realistic title, as you stick to physical models.

**What do you think about today's games market?**

More types of entertainment are emerging in our everyday life. For instance, in my office I have three pinball-type games. Yu Suzuki has wine and audiovisual stuff. I prefer analogue games that are simple and funny. I don't believe it is more fun to play a console or arcade game. When you consider arcades, the environment is quite sinister. We should improve the image of videogames.







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## Edge policy

Every issue, **Edge** evaluates the best, most interesting, hyped, innovative or promising games on a scale of ten, where five naturally represents the middle value. **Edge's** rating system is fair, progressive and balanced. An average game deserves an average mark – not, as many believe, seven out of ten. Broadly speaking, score correspond to the following sentiments: one: disastrous, two: appalling, three: severely flawed, four: disappointing, five: average, six: competent, seven: distinguished, eight: excellent, nine: astounding, ten: revolutionary.

## Videogames on the Edge

Titles slowing productivity this month

### Seaman

Co-opting the whole **Edge** office into a 'My Nine Dads' sitcom scenario, raising the world-weary Seaman is an amusing and rewarding experience.



### Puzzle Bobble Mini

It may not be on sale any more, but the Neo Geo Pocket is worth digging out of a bargain bin for this game alone. Survivor mode is especially addictive.



### F355 Challenge

The stuff of dreams, literally. So exacting is Yu Suzuki's driving sim that it will keep you awake at nights wondering how to beat that final stage.



### GoldenEye

Playing *Perfect Dark* prompted **Edge** to dust off its counterpart for another session or two. A divine piece of software that never ages.



## Power without control

The key role of the controller in videogames

Pirelli ran an ad campaign featuring Carl Lewis – once the world's fastest man – wearing stilettos. The 'power is nothing without control' tagline naturally applied to more than tyres, and videogames are no exception.

Consider the number of times you've experienced a game whose potential was stifled by an inadequate control system or obtrusive joystick design. Too often, developers appear unwilling to devote enough time to the quest for the most appropriate control system. And yet, get it wrong and you may as well have not bothered with the months spent working out routines for cramming all those polygons on to the screen. Does it matter that all that data is refreshed every 1/60th of a second if you can't control your polygonal alter ego? You could have the world's most impressive visuals, but as soon as the game becomes unplayable you're left with nothing more than an indication of your plastic box's triangle-pushing potential, not a game.

Nintendo seems to understand this better than most. Having always led the field when it comes to joystick design, it's inevitably aped by competitors. Sure, other hardware engineers put an awful lot of effort into designing controllers, but you can't help but feel that they concentrate more on making the controller as ergonomic as possible, whereas Nintendo always gives the impression that a lot of thought about gameplay implications has also gone into what must be a headache-inducing process. As a result, its developers can work at making the joystick as 'invisible' as possible for the likes of *Mario 64* (below), *Wave Race 64* or *1080°*.

Would you ever find the buttons on a Nintendo pad sitting too high for the classic button-bashing approach required by *Track & Field*-type titles? Not likely. But can you say the same of the Dreamcast controller when attempting to play this month's *Virtua Athlete 2K* (p99)? Sadly not.

Of course, some developers are keenly aware of how joystick design may restrict the gameplay of their product. Witness how Argonaut thoughtfully included PlayStation mouse support for *Alien Resurrection* when it realised the game suffered from Dual Shock-only control. Unfortunately, many other developers would have been content to leave gamers to struggle with the latter option alone.

Maybe Mario should embark on his own ad campaign, encouraging developers to better harness the power at their disposal. Let's hope the stilettos fit.



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(DC) Sega

(SNK) Neo Geo

(DC) Sega

(N64) Rare



# F355 Challenge

Format: Dreamcast Publisher: Sega Developer: In-house Price: ¥5,800 (£36) Release: Out now (Japan) October (UK)



Ferrari's Fiorano test track can't be raced on, though Time Attack and Practice is allowed (top). The pit sequence is superb, and useful during endurance meetings

Most people will initially find *F355 Challenge* dull and insanely difficult. But after 30 minutes it becomes clear that it is no narcolepsy cure, nor is it impossible to play. It's true, though, that getting to grips with 380bhp of pseudo-authentically simulated Italian engineering on 11 (six from the arcade and five a DC-only bonus) of the world's most technical circuits takes a little longer than it does in most racing games.

While a collection of electronic assists are immediately available to beginners, switching off the intelligent braking system from the start is recommended – it has a tendency to decelerate far too early, making it impossible to outbrake your competitors and hence achieve a decent finishing position. While far less intrusive, the others should be turned off sooner rather than later – this may make life harder initially, but it does precipitate the learning process. Stability control is arguably the easiest to live without, followed by traction control (though this remains particularly tempting for starts), and eventually ABS. As ever, the quicker you adopt a manual transmission system, the better. You should then find that keeping up with the pack and even winning races becomes a genuine possibility.

And this is what sets *F355* apart. It is unquestionably one of the most comprehensively hardcore racing games to date. There's no eagerness on its part to reward your initial feeble efforts, and, the few

It's one of the most comprehensively hardcore racing games to date. There's no eagerness on its part to reward your initial feeble efforts

limited driving aids aside, it makes no concessions for your inexperience. With eight competitors matching each other in terms of performance, this is real racers' territory: if you want to win in *F355*, you're going to have to work at it, bringing all your videogame experience into play.

As such, *F355* draws you in like few other games. You may well scream in despair as one more trip into a gravel trap ends yet another chance of victory. Yet, without hesitation, you subsequently load up another race, promising yourself this time you'll brake that little bit harder and a few centimetres later, hug the apex a couple of millimetres tighter, and power out more decisively and a fraction of a second sooner.



Possibly the best-looking racer to date, *F355* offers inspired renditions of Monza, Motegi, Sugo, Suzuka (short/international layouts), Long Beach, Atlanta, Laguna Seca, Nürburgring, Kuala Lumpur and Fiorano

Maybe then you'll beat that sixth-placed man to the first corner. Away from your Dreamcast you'll contemplate new lines, later braking points, different strategies of dealing with the opposition, relishing the moment you're next behind the wheel of your digital *F355* again.

Despite this, the game could be better balanced. Being forced to start from the back of the grid is particularly harsh when everyone is racing the same car, and can become demoralising – you always have to work that little harder than everyone else. That's fine for the Arcade mode, but why wasn't a qualifying or random grid positioning system included for the Championship game? Also, a championship including

the extra tracks would have been an excellent addition, and it surely wouldn't have been much of a headache to implement.

But the main concern isn't *F355*'s structure. It isn't the lack of damage, either (though it would have benefited the game tremendously), or the way cars bounce unrealistically and disappointingly off each other whenever mid-race collisions occur (or the fact CPU drivers invariably seem to come out better from such automotive arguments). Or even that, while decent, the AI never fools you into regarding the opposition as human – it's certainly far less convincing a case than *TOCA World Touring Cars*, for instance.

No, the problem is wild understeer. By losing the force-feedback of the arcade





Replays are the only time you get to see more than the top of your F355's bonnet and steering wheel, as the in-car view is the only one offered. Widescreen TV owners will welcome the anamorphic display option

version, it becomes extremely difficult to judge the adhesion level of your race-prepared machine. Furthermore, having experienced a Challenge-spec F355 firsthand, this writer feels the developer has underplayed the grip available – in the real world these vehicles can be thrown into corners at absurd speeds and, provided you adhere to conventional racing driving techniques, the car's slicks refuse to let go. Naturally, this wouldn't be a problem if it did not interfere with *F355's* gameplay, but this isn't the case. Being forced to tiptoe around the circuits isn't particularly clever – it's a simple case of practice – but it can feel particularly chastening. Faster corner entry speeds and brusque steering

input that doesn't necessarily result in control loss could have made things more exciting and ultimately even more rewarding.

Having said that, this is a splendid effort and easily the best Dreamcast driving game to date. True, it could have attempted to embody more of the passion and identity associated with Ferrari, as at times it can be a sterile experience. And it's a shame more wasn't made of the home version; even a simple Career mode would have ensured further substance. Regardless, those prepared to take on the challenge will find it one of the most enjoyable yet.



Edge rating: Seven out of ten

When not racing the Arcade option, you're given the choice to tinker with your vehicle's set-up. As ever, it's a subtle process and it can help reduce the game's over-zealous understeer characteristics

### F355 Challenge Twin (Versione Domestica)

Like most racing games nowadays, *F355 Challenge* offers a two-player split-screen mode for a step-up from the CPU opposition (though, naturally, this varies according to individuals). There's a slight loss of graphical detail once on the track, but other than that it's business as usual. Far more interesting, however, is the game's cable link option, which allows two Dreamcasts to be connected. Aware of *TOCA 2's* outstanding link-up facility, this is likely to be an essential investment.



# Spawn

Format: Dreamcast Publisher: Capcom Developer: In-house Price: ¥5,800 (£36) Release: Out now (Japan) TBC (UK)



In *Spawn*, having your body cleaved in two is only a temporary setback. Reducing the enemy energy bar to nothing within the time limit is your aim

Todd McFarlane's characters are huge, intricate, and carry a crunching impact; *Spawn* is no exception. The game, overseen by McFarlane himself, possesses a screen-shaking power and cartoon style appropriate to the series, and crosses it with the clarity of an arcade machine. Everything about *Spawn* shouts coin-op, from the slick visuals down to the time-limited, vacuous, thirdperson beat 'em up action. Even its insistence that you play in the split-screen multiplayer mode (the number of players defaults to the number of controllers plugged into the Dreamcast) smacks of arcade combat camaraderie.

Once you've forced the software to let you play alone, it's obvious why it tries to steer you elsewhere: the oneplayer game is almost an apology for the mayhem of the multiplayer. Choose your character, take on seven bosses over the course of seven short levels, destroy them, and another fighter is yours. Then repeat with the character you've just won, and so on. The levels can also be played co-operatively in split-screen mode, which brings a little life to the experience. The number of selectable characters means completion takes a while, but it's not necessarily time you'll enjoy.

One button for jump and another for attack means the combat is neither strategic nor complicated, despite a massive range of weaponry and a limited set of special moves. The action is, however, breathtakingly fast. Each round takes place over two-and-a-half minutes, in which the level's boss must be killed, and death for your character means



Close combat might be powerful, but it makes you more vulnerable to enemy attacks, meaning defensive power-ups are crucial. The yellow arrow, shown at the top of the screen, points the way to the level boss

Everything about *Spawn* shouts coin-op, from the slick visuals right down to the time-limited, vacuous, thirdperson beat 'em up action

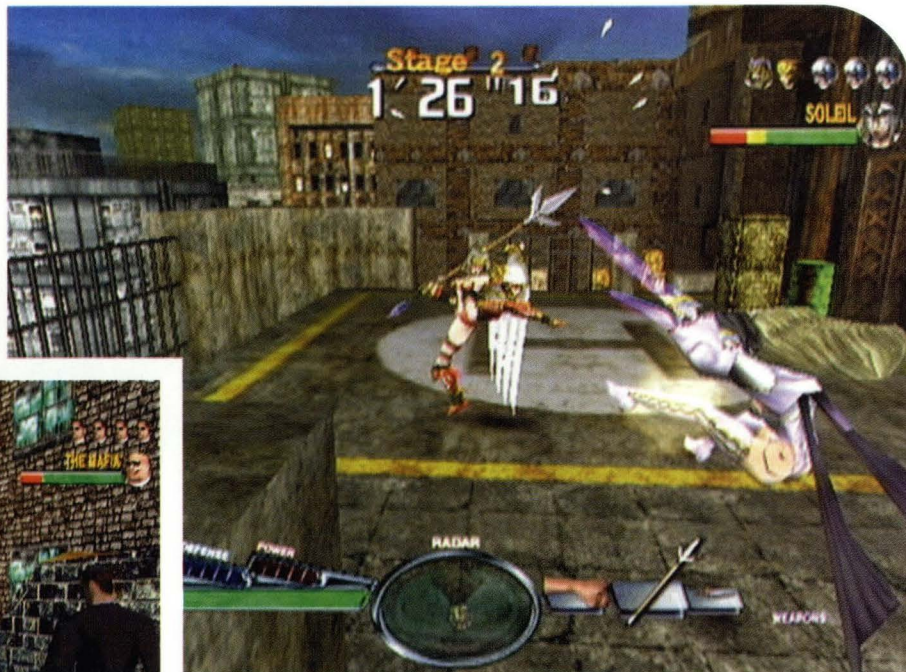


One game mode lets you select four fighters and play them off against each other in an arena of your choice. Points are awarded for kills, and the winner is the player with the highest score after three minutes

a time penalty is subtracted from the clock. Destruction predominates, and though the violence is a world away from the stylised gore of, say, *Soldier of Fortune*, it has a speed and intensity that's far more powerful. Graphically, it's immensely satisfying, but spoilt by the utterly inane camera.

Dizzying and unpredictable, the constantly shifting thirdperson view means that you often can't locate attackers. Feeling you're in control of your character and aware of where your enemies are is crucial in something this fast-paced, but when instant death comes from nowhere time after time, it feels unfair. The developer has attempted a fix in that one button briefly shifts the view to a firstperson perspective so you can align the camera, yet it fails, as the speed of the game is such that by the time you've adjusted to face the enemy he'll be upon you. You're left with the ridiculous situation of





Barrels and crates litter *Spawn*'s levels. Some can be picked up and thrown at your enemies

shooting blindly at where an opponent might be, then guessing when he'll attack and timing your evasive action accordingly. Co-operative multiplayer suffers the same problem, but in deathmatch the frustration is tempered by knowing your opponent will be suffering in a similar fashion.

Full of kinetic carnage and a ferocious power, *Spawn* is the comic made digital, but even fans will see it as absolutely transparent. Although the two-dimensional gameplay model can be accepted as an attempt at addictive simplicity, when your failure is persistently caused by poor camera angles, there's little incentive to try again. This is acceptable in an arcade, as you can walk away. Justifying the purchase of a game that's only really playable in the still-flawed multiplayer mode isn't as easy.

Despite much of the combat taking inside moderately sized arenas, occasionally the levels are based around smaller passageways, staircases and rooms. In theory this should add more variation to *Spawn*'s limited fighting style, but, unfortunately, the camera is even more unpredictable inside confined spaces

### Slip into the Bikini of Steel

At the end of each game, a screen illustrates the weapons that you managed to collect during the levels amongst silhouettes of the ones you missed. These take a full range of modern day artillery as well as traditional swords and sorcery fantasy weapons. The game also features some slightly odder implements of destruction – the evil clown, in particular, uses a combination of chainsaw and giant boxing glove to smite his enemies. Other favourites include the M60, the Flaming Sword, and the elusive Bikini of Steel.

Edge rating: Four out of ten



# Alien Resurrection

Format: PlayStation Publisher: Fox Interactive Developer: Argonaut Price: £35 Release: September



The FMV intro fits the mood of the game perfectly, intercutting scenes of the spaceship with foreshadowing shots of the Aliens and a gruesome operation

Conceived in '97 and born September '00. Prolonged gestation signals problems in most forms of media, and gaming is no exception. *Resurrection* was expected sometime last year, but was delayed, then trashed, then reconstructed from its original thirdperson format into a firstperson 'horror adventure'. Hardly an auspicious start for any game, particularly one that attempts to follow the splendor of the franchise's previous release (*Aliens vs Predator* on the PC), on a machine now showing its age.

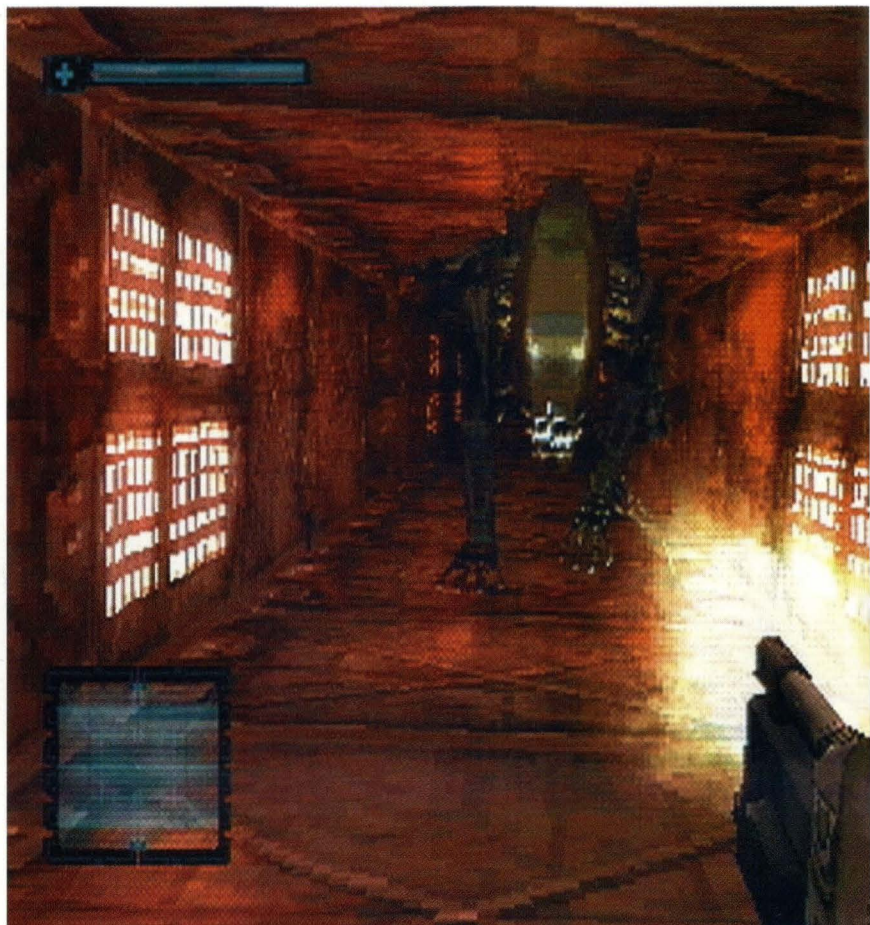
Actually, the PlayStation benefits from the leaden green claustrophobia that indelibly marks the films, the terrifying gloom hiding the inevitable jagged polygons and crude bitmaps. When they do come to light, they're forgivable. When pixelated lines are visible in the chewed-up guts of the crew members, it's not their jagged form that causes revulsion. When a rare bright light illuminates a smear of bitmapped blood and your imagination tells you something's been dragged screaming towards an uneven hole in the wall, it's not the obvious polygons that scare.

*Resurrection's* film-based plot means you begin as Ripley, with both humans and aliens trying to take you down. The humans are tough, the aliens tougher. If they get to you – and although they're slower than their film or PC counterparts, they're still fast – you're dead. They run up walls, across ceilings, and scuttle towards you with startling pace. Initially, it all seems a bit unfair, especially with a joystick. No matter how well-designed the interface, the Dual Shock's two analogue sticks can never substitute for the instinctive

Even during a casual half-hour game in the daytime this has the capacity to scare – play it in the dark and it's absolutely terrifying

FPS control of a mouse. Despite the numerous control configurations offered here, the inaccuracy of the joystick irritates, especially when you find yourself in a sudden, surprise confrontation, where *Resurrection* excels. Thankfully, mouse support is included and changes the game from frustrating to, literally, scarily good.

What sets *Resurrection* apart from anything that's gone before it is the fear



Vents may not be a particularly original aspect of *Resurrection*, but given that the films are so grounded in fear and claustrophobia, they're particularly relevant. Crawling is realistically and scarily cumbersome

it engenders. Offering genuine, disturbing anxiety, perhaps more than in anything ever previously seen in gaming – only the *Resident Evil* series and *System Shock 2* come readily to mind, and even their terror isn't as sustained or intense as exhibited here. Even during a casual half-hour game in the daytime it has the capacity to scare – play it in the dark and it's absolutely terrifying. In fact, play it with the sound turned down and the lights on and you're missing the point. Flickering shadows, and no health, no bullets, no torchlight, no save points. And worst of all, the distant screaming and scratching on metal, the tip-tapping that gets closer, and the lack of enemies anywhere. Until... screech, panic and scream.

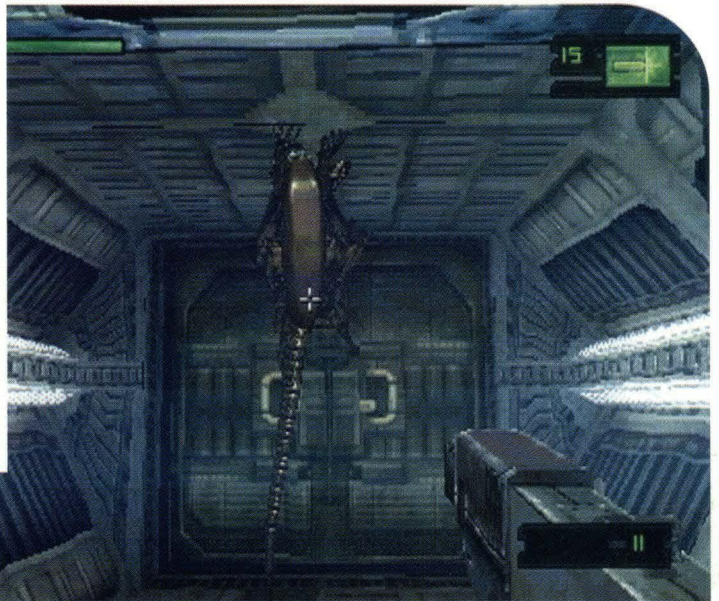
This is *Doom*, not *Deus Ex*; forget

about stealth and sneaking up on your alien foes – their presence is triggered by your actions and it's all rigged to happen when you're at your most vulnerable. Not just at the lows in your character's health, but at the peaks of your emotional fragility. It's genius, exhibiting little originality, but is near-perfect in its scripting, execution and timing – a little ironic given its delayed release. There's a chance the game will be buried in the avalanche of PS2 hype and mediocrity because of its interminable delay, but it doesn't deserve to be. It's better than that, and either as testament to what can still be achieved with the PlayStation or as its final hurrah, it merits praise and celebration.

Edge rating:

Eight out of ten

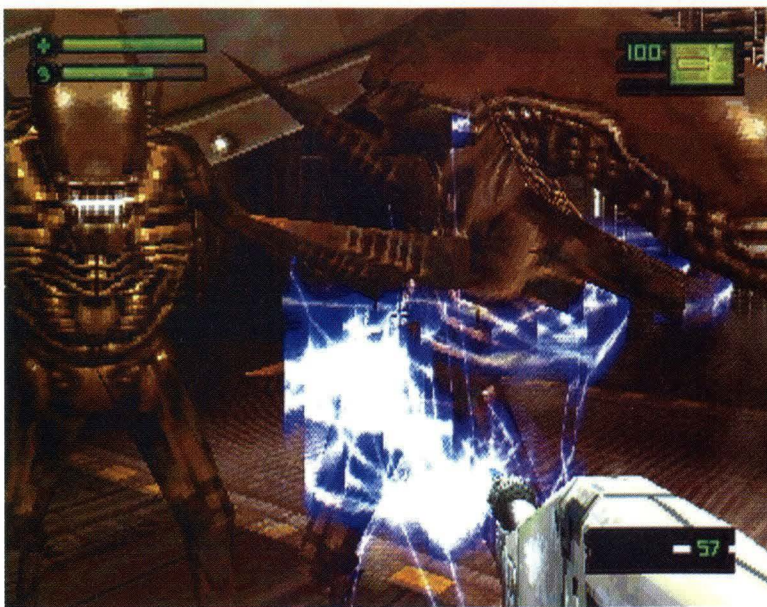




Bodies litter the ship, but most of the killing has nothing to do with you. With every dismembered corpse comes a reminder that somewhere, possibly very close indeed, the killer waits to do the same thing to you

### Can you stomach it?

The presence of face-huggers adds more panic to *Resurrection's* already fearful mix. Firstly, they're small and difficult to hit without using a weapon with a broad impact range, like the flamethrower. Secondly, when they get you – as they almost inevitably will – you'll wake from a brief period of unconsciousness to find an alien ready to burst from your stomach. Find an AutoDoc before the on-screen time limit runs out and you survive. Fail, and a sickening ripping sound indicates the alien's birth – and your Game Over.



Bullet-based weaponry exists, but using other weapons is a more creative way of alien slaying. Both the electricity gun and flamethrower are graphically well-executed, and their effects on the aliens can be lethal

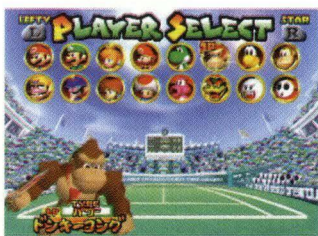


# Mario Tennis

Format: N64 Publisher: Nintendo Developer: In-house Price: ¥6,400 (£40) Release: Out now (Japan), October 13 (UK)

The idea of a sports simulation is a fallacy. However slick the onscreen action, the nimble joypad taps of a FIFA expert are a world away from the skill of even the dourest professional footballer. While the strategies may be similar, albeit at the most tactical level, there must come a point where imitation is discarded in favour of entertainment. *Sensible Soccer* succeeded in the 16bit era for precisely

**Mario Tennis scoffs at the ultra-realism of Virtua Tennis – players become surrounded by rainbows, bubbles or crackling electricity**



Every part of the game exhibits typical Mario style and character, from the selection screens right through to the colourful end-game celebrations

these reasons, distilling the beautiful game into two-minute matches of hyperactive fun that were more like a game of pinball than football. *Mario Tennis* takes a similar approach, scoffing at the ultra-realism of *Virtua Tennis* and sucking Wimbledon into candy-coloured Mario Land.

In *Mario Tennis* the ball is only slightly smaller than the characters' rounded polygon faces. In *Mario Tennis*, a good stroke is surrounded by a glowing aura. In *Mario Tennis*, players can charge themselves up for powerful shots and become surrounded by rainbows, bubbles, or purple crackling electricity. The only nod to the game proper is court layout and the lines that mark it – but these are overseen by Bob-Omb judges who explode when the ball drifts out.

Within the confines of this quirkiness lies a beautifully simple control system based around the analogue stick and just two buttons: Strike (A) and Slice (B). Double tapping the buttons gives the ball a blue or orange glow, making accurate returns difficult. Pressing a button before the ball comes to you means the character will ready his racket, unable to move, but capable of striking the ball harder than before. Finally, pressing first Strike then Slice will produce lob, while Slice then Strike hits a drop shot.

The game is structured like most Mario titles, with a main objective surrounded by smaller, non-important goals. The key task is to attain victory with the 16 characters in the tournaments *Mario Tennis* offers. Just as in *Mario Kart*, these are three cups: the first is simple, the second slightly less so, and the third stops just short of frustration. Victory in a cup either provides access to



Holding a button down before the ball arrives means a more powerful shot, indicated in this case by stars sparkling on the character's racket. Adding slice to this can make returning insanely difficult

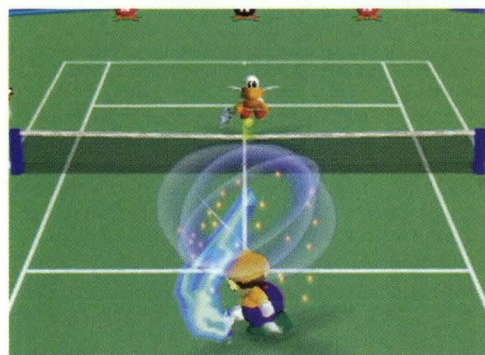
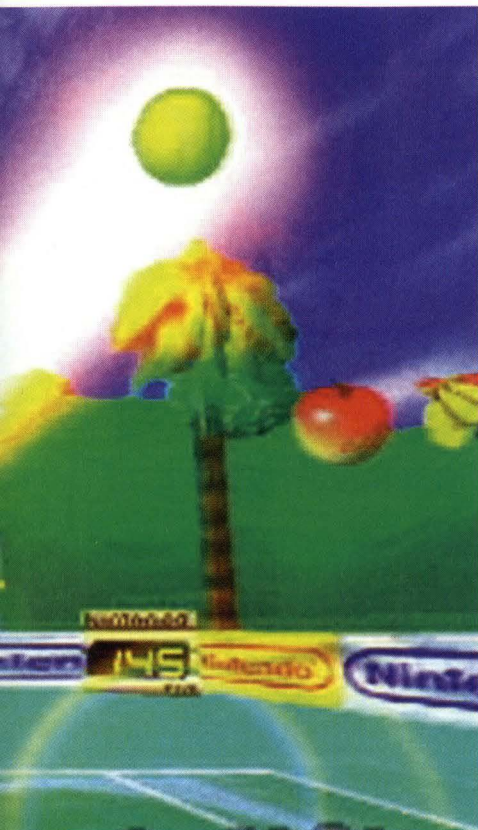
the next one, or unlocks bonus characters or courts. Two, three and fourplayer matches can also be arranged, and this is where the bulk of the game's appeal lies. Apart from the obvious plus of playing with friends, the reason for this is that while the highest-level computer players are difficult to defeat, their simple AI produces a repetition that the multiplayer lacks.

As well as the Tournament mode and the configurable exhibition matches, *Mario Tennis* offers a series of mini-games. In the simplest, players practise passing an opponent by returning balls randomly spat out by giant Piranha Plants. The ring game places giant *Sonic*-style golden rings all over the court; each rally

accumulates points according to how many of the randomly placed hoops the ball passes through, and the points are collected by the player who wins the rally. The final mode of play takes place on a swinging stone court, nominally the home of Koopa (Bowser in the UK), where characters meet in a kind of tennis deathmatch. *Mario Kart* players will recognise the power-ups, with lightning strikes, banana skins, and red and green shells being among the various collectibles to be unleashed on your opponent.

*Mario Tennis* isn't jealous of the power and realism of Sega's *Virtua* model. It thrives on its characters' own hyperactivity – they get giddy with excitement at





Baby Mario, first seen in *Yoshi's Island* on the Super Nintendo, is one of the 16 characters in *Mario Tennis*

racking up achievements on the numerous statistics screens. While the singleplayer mode can become repetitive and is best enjoyed in small doses, multiplayer playtime takes on a distinctly 'fifth set deadlock' feel before you know it. *Mario Tennis* is exactly what you'd expect from Nintendo: exuberant, addictive and almost poisonously sweet.



Edge rating: Eight out of ten



Pressing both buttons simultaneously results in a powerful stroke, illustrated by the purple haze. When a point is won, quickfire replays appear – one button skips these, and the other changes the camera angle

Victory can mean accessing special courts, such as the Yoshi and Baby Mario one above. The tilting deathmatch tennis court means judging angles and movement can be tricky, especially when avoiding shells and banana skins

### Characterisation

Predictably for a Nintendo *Mario* title, ingame characterisation is delightful. Each of the 16 players performs his or her own quick celebration/sulk routine at the end of each point, as well as slightly longer ones to end matches and tournaments. In twoplayer mode, this ups the emotional stakes considerably – Kinopio (Toad) in particular has a victorious squeal and bounce that almost caps his *Mario Kart* "I'm the best!" for sheer gloating potential.

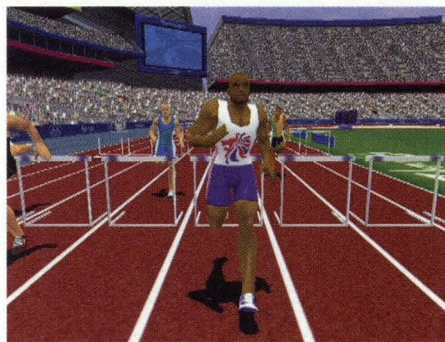
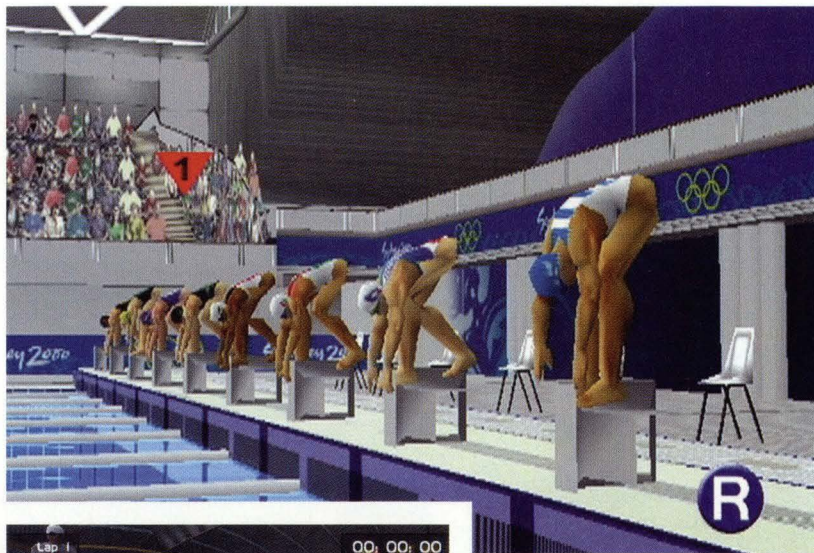


# Sydney 2000

Format: Dreamcast/PC (reviewed), PlayStation Publisher: Eidos Developer: Attention To Detail Price: £40 Release: Out now



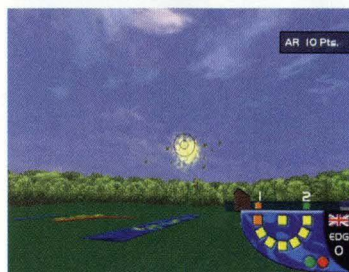
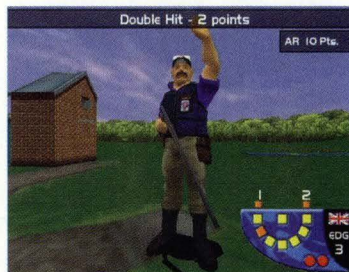
The long jump is a classic button-bashing event: gain speed as you tap, time your jump so you hit the board dead on, and hold a button down to get the right angle



Sydney 2000's realism cannot be understated. Replay angles often resemble those seen during televised athletics events, and the athlete models are fantastic, splendidly attired in their country's Olympic kit

## Taking the plunge

Diving is one of the few events unlikely to result in a sprained wrist. The player chooses a dive from a list, rated according to difficulty, and then attempts to stop a power bar at maximum to provide height off the board. As the diver plummets towards the pool, she passes through a series of blue, green and red coloured hoops on the way to the water – the player must press the same sequence of buttons on the joypad. Dives are judged on their execution and the score is increased by a difficulty multiplier.



Skeet shooting is fun, requires speed and accuracy, and is an aspect of Sydney where the pressure can really start to tell in multiplayer

Did Ocean, when publishing Daley Thompson's Decathlon, see it as the future of electronic entertainment? Maybe not. Regardless, the genre it spawned remains caught in the same key-bashing dynamic that destroyed so many computer keyboards 16 years ago. And Sydney 2000, the officially licensed game of this year's Olympics, is as faithful an exponent of that ethic as any of Decathlon's distant children.

There are 12 events, most demanding a predictable combination of intense button-pressing and exquisite timing. Some break the mould: in kayaking, for example, a clumsy control system means you struggle to steer your canoe through approaching gates. Skeet shooting is perhaps the most enjoyable, being a non-lightgun Duck Hunt for the year 2000, though it suffers from a lower resolution on the Dreamcast version than the PC.

A oneplayer Olympic mode sits in the middle of the game, allowing you to take athletes through Bishi Bashi-style training games to qualify for – and ultimately win gold at – the Olympics. Together with making attempts on world records in the oneplayer Arcade mode, this ensures the solo gamer will find some enjoyment in the title.

But the solitary experience pales next to the clustered misery/ecstasy dynamic of the multiplayer mode, where the presence of others watching, waiting and competing is everything. The character animation that bookends the action is no longer frustrating – as in previous incarnations of the game – but provides vital moments of calm amid the tumult of competition. Each event's simplicity almost adds to the pressure as you struggle to perform even the most simple of tasks to a competitive standard. The atmosphere is consuming; the tension, arguments, glory and gloating all-powerful – you almost forget this is little more than an 8bit game in polygon guise.

So, how many weights or heights do you pass on before you brave an attempt at the weightlifting or high jump? Will the catcalls and jeers during your run-up throw out your rhythm? Is unorthodox joyypad technique bad sportsmanship? Is rubbing your sleeve across the buttons the digital form of steroid abuse? All interesting questions, but not immediately pertinent. The one that's crucial to ask before buying Sydney 2000 is this: can you forget about the almost inane simplicity when faced with a game that encourages multiplayer rivalry at its finest?

Edge rating:

Seven out of ten



# Virtua Athlete 2K

Format: Dreamcast Publisher: Sega Developer: In-house (Hitmaker) Price: £40 Release: Out now

**V**irtua Athlete 2K rekindles fond memories of Saturn *Decathlete* in 1996. The game's cartoon look and balanced playability certainly gave the PlayStation's *International Track & Field* a button-bashing run for its money. Over time, Konami's event selection has offered slightly a more immediate, improved multiplayer ambience than Sega's, but it has always been a close-run thing.

Yet, with the overcomplication of *IT&F2*, the opportunity for Sega to capitalise on its closest competitor's stumble has emerged. Ironically, though, Sega has gone the other way, over-simplifying elements that were already at their most basic. This results in some events losing a little appeal, with the shot put, for example, degenerating into an exercise in brute luck. Conversely, where an embellishment to the traditional gameplay has been made – such as the stamina bar during the 100m sprint – the balance of the gameplay has been carefully conserved.

Far more damaging is the quantity of events. Just seven categories are available (100m sprint, 110m hurdles, javelin, 1,500m, shot put, long jump, high jump), resulting in some indecently brief competitions, as the chances are you're just getting warmed up as the end sequence kicks in. And don't expect to unlock extra events – you can't.

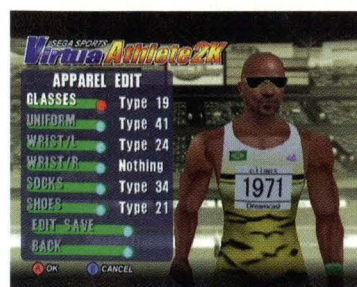
However, *Virtua Athlete 2K* isn't to blame for everything. The Dreamcast pad isn't suited to button-bashing, as its buttons sit too high, and unless you reconfigure you'll find yourself holding it at the oddest angles, rendering the D-pad/analogue stick useless, which is fine providing the event doesn't require their use. The resulting gameplay experience simply isn't as smooth as that offered by the competition.

On a more positive note, the presentation throughout is mighty impressive. Pre-event preparation undertaken by the skilfully animated athletes is depicted in a thoroughly convincing manner, and the various camera angles do a commendable job of further dramatising the events. Good, too, is the CPU competition which, on the highest difficulty setting (World Championship), provides a real test – welcome news for any oneplayer punters out there.

While on paper *Virtua Athlete 2K* presents itself as a potential worthy successor to *Decathlete*, in practice, fewer events, a penchant for oversimplification and rougher controls take their toll.



Possibly the hardest event to excel at, timing the high jump (above) can prove particularly tricky for anyone used to *International Track & Field*



Fourplayer 110m hurdling (above) can degenerate into hysterics for contestants as one player inevitably takes the direct approach and attempts to power their way through, as opposed to over, the obstacles

## Creating the ultimate competitor

An interesting touch not previously seen in this type of title is the ability to customise your character. After you've selected skin tone, renamed and given your athlete one of the several available nationalities, you can clothe him (sorry, no girls), and spend stress-inducing moments attempting to co-ordinate wristbands with sunglasses, socks and trainers. Furthermore, you can select three disciplines of specialisation from a huge range (some only become available by completing the game), though there is apparently little correlation between those selected and your man's ability on track. Besides, you have to wonder how a penchant for sepak takraw, billiards and reggae affects your athlete.

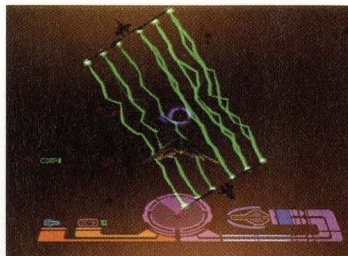
Edge rating:

Five out of ten

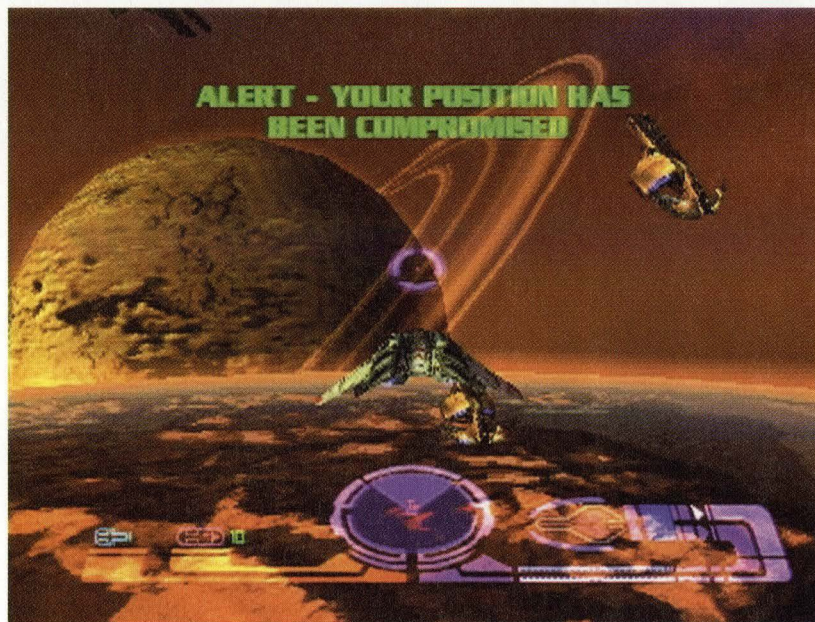


# Star Trek: Invasion!

Format: PlayStation Publisher: Activision Developer: Warthog Price: £30 Release: Out now

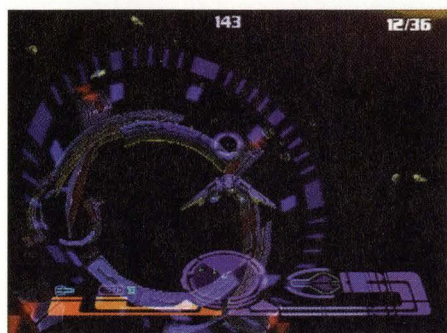


*Invasion!* is based around smaller craft than usually seen in the series. It's only when you get close to some of the more widely known 'Trek' ships that you get a true idea of scale



## Telling tales

Next to so many poorly conceived and atrociously written stories in other sci-fi games, the tale told here stands out, benefiting from Paramount's extensive input and the strict confines it placed on the developer. Graphics, too, are consistent with the Federation's shiny curves, and will be hugely satisfying to Trekkers. Even the new fighters created from scratch by Warthog – and there are lots of them, this being a game based on much smaller ships than those generally seen in the series – have the look and feel of official 'Trek' craft.



The *Elite*-style radar, displayed along the bottom of the screen, makes locating enemies quick and easy. When they're onscreen, tapping triangle makes them your target. Holding the button down will lock you on to their flight path

What's infinity like? It's tiring. There's a boulder, and you push it up the hill, and there it is at the bottom of the hill again. And so on, and no one tells you when it's going to stop, but somewhere around the corner you hope that it just might.

*Star Trek: Invasion!*, as previewed in last month's *Edge*, is a polygonal shoot 'em up that can't fail to hit the requirements of its target audience. It takes the 'Next Generation' series, scoops out all the pacifism, and places Klingon Worf in charge of the operations of a fleet of fighter ships. Known as the Valkyrie squadron, they're sent to investigate a Borg ship thought to be heading towards Earth. The player assumes the role of one of these pilots, devoid of background information, character or motivation. This is a shame, because plot-wise *Invasion!* is excellent – at least, those who appreciate the pseudo-philosophical dispassionate sci-fi that proliferates in Gene Roddenberry's universe will love this game.

Missions interlinked by plot-pushing FMV throw you into the space-based combat. The simple arcade model the game follows means that control is instinctive, weaponry varied, and the destruction beautifully orchestrated. Your ship darts, turns, strafes, accelerates to warp and then stops on a sixpence. This is hardly realistic behaviour, but certainly more exciting than the sluggish control that crushes the life from some space simulations. Missions have varied nominal aims – retrieve, rescue, protect – but all ultimately depend on your destruction of the weak enemy fighters. And though fighting sometimes occurs close to planets or around massive capital ships, the scenery rarely matters. The minimalism that impresses at the beginning of the game starts to feel less artistic and increasingly shallow.

The problem with *Invasion!* is that nothing ever really changes. Sometimes exhilarating, the combat eventually becomes like the boulder and the hill – neverending and draining. The instinctively brilliant weaving battles start to tire under non-stop waves of identikit enemies. Patterns emerge. The warp, strafe, lock, fire routine remains, and there's no indication of how many times you must go through the motions before you move on a level or reach one of the boss starships. What once startled and sparkled becomes laborious – just one more kill, just one more wave, and so on and so on, to infinity.

Edge rating:

Six out of ten



# Koudelka

Format: PlayStation Publisher: Infogrames Developer: Sacnoth Price: £35 Release: September 22

Once you learn that developer Sacnoth is staffed by former Square employees, you don't get any points for guessing that *Koudelka* harbours some RPG elements. What would be difficult to predict is quite how far this fusion of adventure and battle RPG falls short of the dizzying sophistication of *Final Fantasy VIII* and *Parasite Eve 2*.

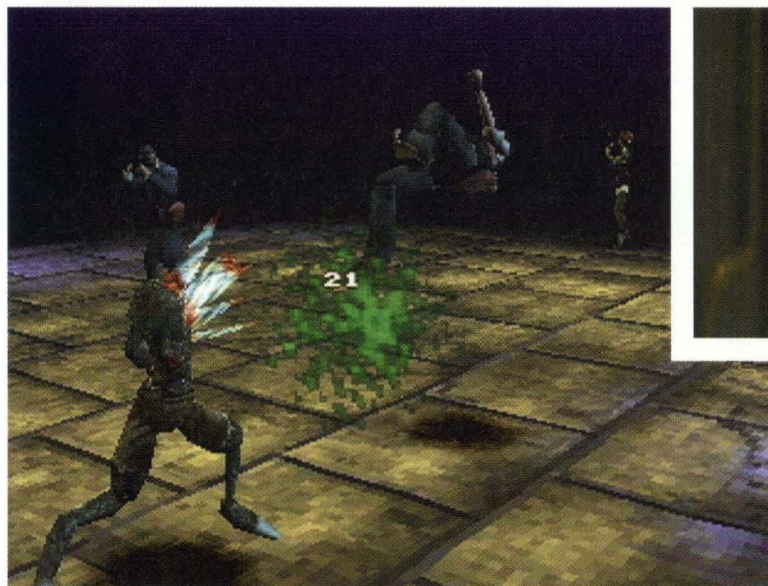
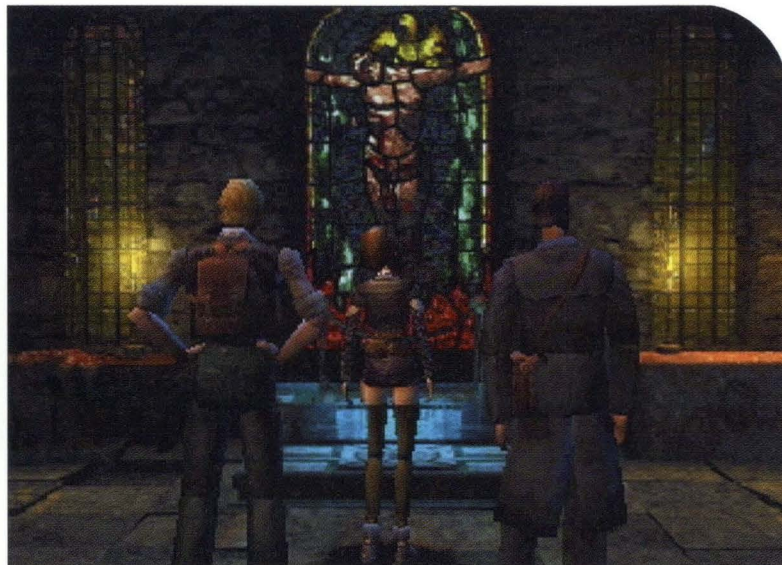
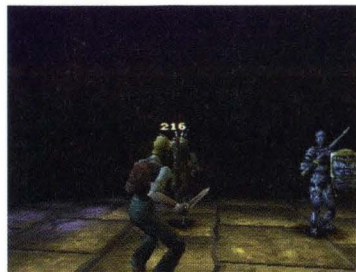
The intro and cut-scenes show off hi-res models of party leader Koudelka and her accomplices Edward and James, but this is perhaps the sole area of the game that has received sufficient polish.

Moving polygon characters over rendered backgrounds has worked for much of the PlayStation's back catalogue, and here, in Exploration mode, Sacnoth comes up with solid, if hardly slick, solutions; there are no loading doors, but there are mid-room pauses before the next scene appears, and a view-oriented rather than a character-rotating control method has been used.

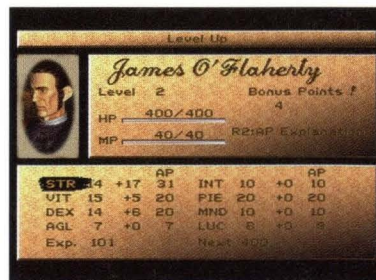
However, it's disconcerting to see that as your party grows from one to three only Koudelka wanders about the corridors and rooms. Of more concern is the fact that enemies never block your path, or ambush you by dropping from the ceiling. Indeed, enemies don't appear in this section at all, as every time you meet one the monastery vanishes and the real villain of the piece – an RPG battle-style patio grid – appears.

An initial disappointment is that the transition from exploration to combat is so obvious. There's little attempt beyond a change of floor texture to link the fighting area to the location you've just come from. When battle is joined your options are limited. You can't move beyond the last enemy on the grid. There's no different terrain to use to your advantage. Characters can't combine abilities to boost an attack. Magic and projectile moves make blocking an enemy's line of fire impossible. There are spells to learn and cast, but as these amount to little more than dressed-up rocket launchers. The weapons tend to break without warning, but many fights pose so little challenge you can win them with your bare hands.

*Koudelka* is a game divided, and its story, exploration and roleplaying elements never properly mix. Ambition is a fine thing, but in this case you can't help wondering if, rather than trying to be all things to all people, Sacnoth wouldn't have been better off aiming for a solid battle RPG.



These quality rendered cut-scenes don't make up for the problems with the game's battle sequences. While the enemies are easy to beat, the frequency of the battles becomes annoying



## Horror sound

Sacnoth desperately wants *Koudelka* to be taken seriously as gothic horror, but this is made even more unlikely by the game's awful sound. In horror games, just as in movies, sound effects and music play an important part in building atmosphere, whether it's by using a distant groan, a thudding heartbeat or a sinister melody. Despite its four discs, it appears that so much space has been allotted to mundane speech samples in *Koudelka* that the battle scenes have to make do with clunky effects and a sole, completely inappropriate piece of RPG muzak.

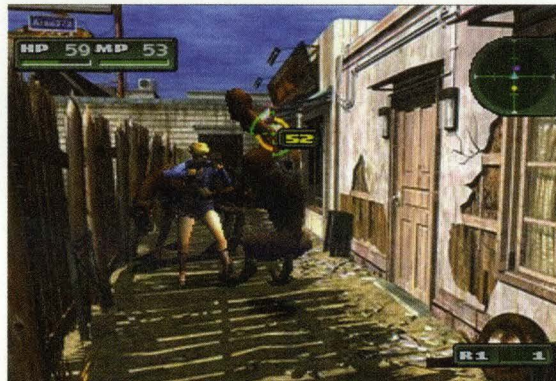
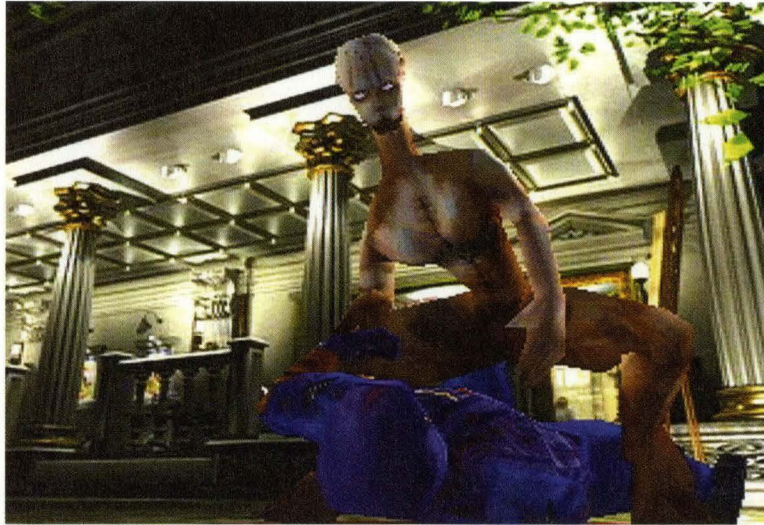
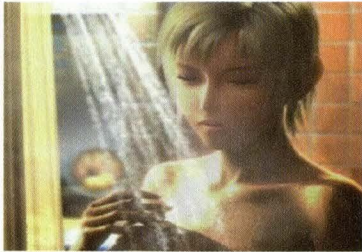
Edge rating: Three out of ten

Searching the monastery for items is made difficult by the random battles that await down every corridor. These at least mean that soon your character's stats will be boosted sky high, due to the constant fighting



# Parasite Eve 2

Format: PlayStation Publisher: Square Europe Developer: Square Japan Price: £35 Release: September



Unusually for a Square game, your character's magical attacks are not enormously OTT – a far cry from the self-indulgent extremes of *FFVIII*

## What's the story?

*Parasite Eve 2*'s plot-furthering asides are wonderful to behold, but its dialogue is truly execrable. The omission of voice acting initially appears to be an oversight. With time, however, you come to regard it as a blessing – the woeful script on offer hardly lends itself to entertaining vocal exchanges. Like the similarly blighted *Resident Evil*, it's fortunate that the implied narrative in certain scenes – a room full of slaughtered SWAT troopers, for example, or a seemingly harmless woman transforming into a hideous monster – introduces a modicum of atmosphere.



The various encounters with 'boss' monsters are rather overshadowed by the outstanding FMV interludes that introduce them. The invariably system-oriented methods required to progress are, to be frank, tedious

With its *Final Fantasy*-style 'random' battles and RPG leanings, the original *Parasite Eve* was an unusual reworking of the survival horror brief. After no doubt jealously eyeing Capcom's continued success with the *Resident Evil* franchise, Square has opted for a more conventional approach in this sequel.

It's hard to dispel the suspicion that the use of prerendered environments has become an admission of limitations – be they of programming team, resources or chosen format – rather than a style issue. It's a ham-fisted way to present a game environment, albeit comparatively cheap.

It is, however, a clumsy way to build a combat-oriented adventure. Aya Brea, the returning heroine, is leaden to control. Worse still, she has a frustrating propensity to moonwalk against scenery. By filling (and then, invariably, re-populating) maps with generic monsters, *Parasite Eve 2* leaves the player injured, almost bored with its combat sequences. There's an onus upon positioning Aya behind objects or running to another vantage point before blasting opponents, whose feeble AI can't handle this bewildering conundrum. This isn't, of course, a design fault – and neither are the instances in which you fight an off-camera enemy.

From the phenomena of 'brushing' Aya against scenery in order to find hot spots – interactive elements or items – to constant pauses to pull data from CD, *Parasite Eve 2* exhibits familiar flaws. Furthermore, the relatively ambitious nature of its backdrops all too often demands active suspension of disbelief – encounters with interactive-seeming but actually inert objects impedes any growing sense of immersion.

Being a Square production, *Parasite Eve 2* is host to accomplished FMV sequences, not to mention the odd marvellous cut-scene generated on the fly. It's a shame, then, that it often feels as if the action between these showy moments merely serves to fill in the gaps. From cryptic-seeming (but actually simple) puzzles to basic exploration and key finding, there's little more in the way of content than a certain Capcom opus from years ago.

At its best, *Parasite Eve 2* is comfortable; there are worse ways to spend an afternoon. But exciting? Rarely, outside the boundaries of its cut-scenes. With videogames, participation is king – and Square, with its love of extravagant showmanship, would do well to remember that.

Edge rating: Four out of ten



# Seaman

Format: Dreamcast Publisher: Sega Developer: Vivarium Price: \$50 (£33) Release: Out now (US) TBC (UK)

The concept is simple: an electronic pet on your Dreamcast, a sardonic fish with a human face. Raise him, feed him, keep him warm, watch with pride as he grows and ages. With *Seaman*, though, comes a microphone that adds a twist – you can talk to him, and he'll talk back.

As a baby, he'll coo and giggle to your words. As a toddler, he starts to recognise and repeat them. The first time he says hello is a proud moment, and he'll respond to the word 'play' gleefully, squealing 'play, play, play,' right back at you. Becoming the Seaman equivalent of a teenager makes him sulky, and from there it's a short jump to the rude, sarcastic, vaguely disinterested fish who depends on you for his survival.

Voice recognition is occasionally shaky, but smart enough to enable your pet to ask you questions about your age, birthday, job, and more, and to correctly interpret the answers. The AI provides intelligent and witty responses, and often surprises. Simplistic, yes, but it's also beautiful, terrifying, and unforgettable; you'll remember your first conversation with your fish. Limited it may be, but where other games wash from your memory, *Seaman* leaves an indelible stain.

Edge rating:

Six out of ten



Tap on the glass and your Seamen will swim towards you, alerted by the noise. It's also possible to hypnotise your fish – move the hand icon in circles around his faces and his eyes will follow it



By picking up your fish you can get an idea of his size. A separate habitat tank means you can raise larvae and moths, vital food for a growing Seaman

# Heavy Metal: FAKK 2

Format: PC Publisher: Gathering Of Developers Developer: Ritual Entertainment Price: £30 Release: Out now



By pressing the left mouse button during a swipe of your sword, a special move can be executed. The move depends on what *FAKK 2* is holding in her left hand, but will more than likely dismember an enemy



The fantastical settings are colourful and varied, a far cry from the endless greys of Ms Croft's adventures. Enemies are also creatively designed, and a joy to destroy

Rather than creating its own heroine and proportioning her like a porn star for marketing purposes, Ritual has skipped the design middlemen and whisked genuine porn star Julie Strain from B-movie infamy. Strain, the real-life inspiration behind the title character *FAKK 2*, leaps, crawls, and climbs her way through numerous colourful future fantasy settings.

*Tomb Raider* is the obvious reference point; exploring comes à la Lara, but fighting is more involved. *FAKK 2* can hold weapons in either hand, meaning it's possible to keep a sword in one hand for close combat while using a pistol. Swapping one weapon for a shield means you can block, but enemies can do the same, and combat can be a matter of timing rather than the manic firing and running away common to similar titles.

The *Tomb Raider* structure is given an invigorating new look, and while there's nothing wildly different between this and the Eidos title, what pushes *FAKK 2* ahead is the combat, the slightly less linear puzzles, and the entertaining game world. It's historically confused lo-fi sci-fi where lizard-green monsters are slain by slings, semi-automatics, and lightning-charged swords – and it's refreshingly fun.

Edge rating:

Seven out of ten



# Terracon

Format: PlayStation Publisher: SCEE Developer: Picture House Price: £35 Release: Out now



Dramatic views are complemented by some impressive pyrotechnic effects, but greater variation in both gameplay and appearance would be more welcome



Over the course of his endeavours, Xed must balance the use of 'genergy' as both ammunition and raw material. Items such as the floating platform above must be constructed by using the appropriate colour

There has been a minor proliferation of videogame Greys of late. *Terracon*'s protagonist, Xed, is more congruous than *Perfect Dark*'s Elvis, but it would be unfair to stretch the comparison. The game pushes the PlayStation to its limits and defies easy categorisation, but the abundance of good ideas do not quite gel.

Xed's attempts to save the solar system from the terraforming robot that wiped out his race take place over several planets and 32 free-roaming levels. The E-Scape graphics engine enables an impressive draw distance, and later levels offer expansive environments, although there is minimal variation in appearance.

Gameplay also offers little in the way of diversity. The developer has tried hard to add an element of resource management, with 'genergy' used both as ammunition and to construct necessary items from meshes dotted around the alien landscapes, but in practice little thought is needed to progress.

Fundamentally, the game is a simple shoot 'em up in which control inadequacies and poor collision-detection become tiresome. The few levels that stray from this formula further emphasise deficiencies in control, which is a shame. *Terracon* is not a bland or derivative title, simply an original premise that is not successfully implemented.

Edge rating:

Five out of ten

# Tenchu 2: Birth Of The Assassins

Format: PlayStation Publisher: Activision Developer: Acquire Price: £30 Release: Out now

Cynics will note that *Tenchu 2* has sneaked into the shops with little fuss. Could Activision be hoping to sell a substandard title on the back of its success with the original and enjoyable *Tenchu*?

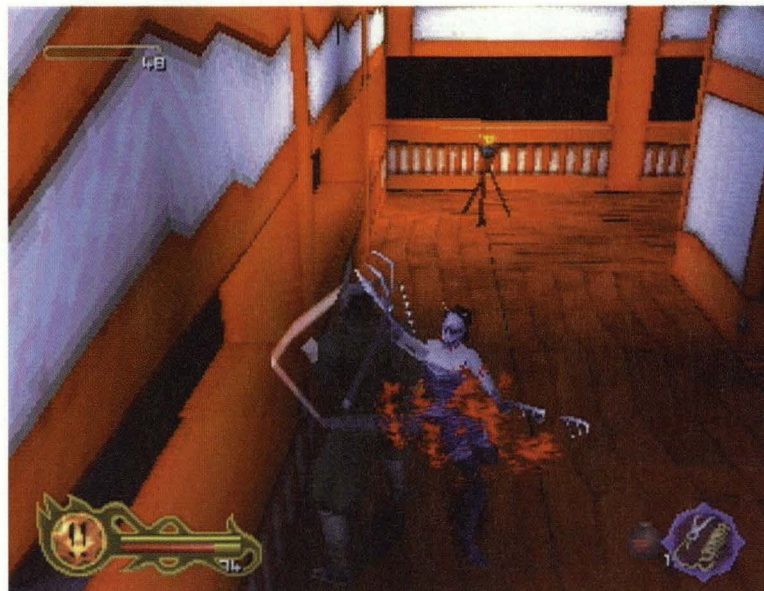
Unquestionably the sequel suffers from massive technical deficiencies. The graphics are rudimentary, textures pixellated, animation robotic, draw distance short, controls awkward, loading times irritating, polygon counts low and enemy AI basic. Yet, for all its obvious flaws, *Tenchu 2* still proves to be a fairly enjoyable and compulsive title.

Most impressive is the manner in which the game rewards and punishes you for your actions. Whether through fluke or comprehensive playtesting, the balance achieved is perfect. Successfully sneak up to an enemy and they can be dispatched easily with one stroke. But alert a sentry, and awkward energy-sapping combat must be initiated. Extra points are awarded for completing the level with as few 'spots' as possible. The drive to finish the game with a 100 per cent assassination rate is really quite compelling.

With two playable characters, a range of innovative weapons including blow guns and caltrops, and even a mission editor, *Tenchu 2* may win over those who are willing to overlook its cosmetic failings.



The patient will enjoy *Tenchu 2*'s more surreptitious moments. Hiding in water using a reed (top) or creeping along walls (above) can be hugely effective

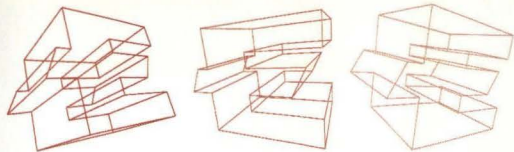


If your stealth tactics fail then your enemies must be dispatched in traditional hack-and-slash fashion. There is only one attack and one block option, making combat feel like the now-dated *Prince of Persia*

Edge rating:

Six out of ten





# Datascop

**GAMES PEOPLE****PROGRAMMERS****3D Specialist; London; to £40k**

This is a start-up company, well funded and headed by three of the most influential personalities in the UK games industry. They are specialising in facial modelling technology in games and they are seeking skills in Mesh reduction, Polygon Reduction, Geometrical Compression and Advanced Shading techniques. Ref:- 1731

**Programmers; Surrey; £20-40k + bonuses**

A small offshoot of Bullfrog - very talented, very enthusiastic. Responsible for Urban Chaos, an Action/Adventure PC/PSX game. Currently working on Simulation/Sci-Fi game with 3D tech. General games programmers required to work on Startopia (a PC 3D RTS style game) Ref:- 1745

**WAP Programmer; Hampshire; £16-£32K DOE**

A new company backed by Infogrames working on "the most innovative and original game at E3 1998". They are looking for a WAP Programmer with experience of Java and Perl. Industry experience useful but not essential. Ref:- 1741

**Software Engineers; South West London; £Excellent + benefits**

This company specialises in graphics accelerator chip technology are their customers make graphic cards. The R&D team is 50 strong and growing. This company has a lot of 3D expertise. They are currently looking for experienced or graduate Software Engineers. Candidates must be skilled in C/C++ with familiarity with 3D graphics e.g. DirectX, OpenGL, assembler programming ASIC or chip development would be an advantage. Ref:- 1726

**Programmers; Liverpool; Negotiable**

Part of the Sony group, this is a NorthWest studio and is in the heart of a famous division. This is your chance to work on PS2 ahead of everyone else. They will be delivering a launch title and this project is the F1 2000 game. The 2nd project is

WipeoutFusion. Other projects include Destruction Derby and a 3rd person adventure, which is currently in prototype stage. Ref:- 1723

**On-line Games Programmer; Leeds; £20-28k**

This company creates games and interactive digital experiences for fun brand lead websites. They currently require an enthusiastic games programmer to work on on-line games from conception to completion. You need good maths skills and preferably experience in Lingo and Java. Level and Games design skills a real bonus. Ref:- 1752

**Programmers; Warwickshire; £Neg + benefits**

This is a veteran British game developer based in idyllic converted barns in rural Warwickshire and has a small studio atmosphere. They are financially strong and stable and have excellent staff pay, conditions and training. We are looking for an experienced Programmer with C++ to work on a new PS2 racing game. You will be responsible for game code. The ideal candidate will have at least one year's industry experience or at least one published game. Ref:- 1698

**PRODUCERS****Producers; London; £30-40K**

A long established company specialising in strategy and historical war games, also doing sports games. They have had many hits and along with a few other "Britsoft" developers have a world-wide reputation. Studios in London, Oxfordshire and the Northeast. We seek producers with good gaming experience at the producer level for various roles. Ref:- 1746

**Project Manager; Sheffield; £25-30k**

One of the biggest game and interactive entertainment developers. With studios all over the world, and a number in the UK, this company develops a range of AAA title across genres and platforms. This is to project manage the Superman game. Ref:- 1725

**ARTISTS****Lead FMV Artist Leeds; £DOE**

The Leeds branch of the UK's largest publisher. This role is to head a team of artists to provide 'cut scene' artwork for all projects in the studio. You'll need experience in Maya, with film based story telling (storyboarding, editing) excellent character, texture and animation skills and good knowledge of game production processes. Ref:- 1743

**Graphic Artist; Nottingham; Up to £20k d.o.e.**

This is UK subsidiary of a highly reputable and successful small US company. They specialise in true 3D world creation. 3DSMax and PhotoShop skills essential. Interest or experience in game landscapes, preferable. Applications from graduates with a good portfolio welcome. Ref:- 1687

**Animator; Warwickshire; £DOE**

This developer has some cool sports games amongst its titles, including multi-million selling hits. They need talented character animators with strong 3D modelling skills. Experience in games ideal but not essential. Ref:- 1678

**Artist; Surrey; £25-35k + bonus**

This is a brand new company with a pedigree backing. This is a fast paced combat game set on a dynamic, morphable and beautiful world; players develop tremendously destructive powers so that they can rip the world in two. The current requirement is for a talented all-rounder, with excellent modelling and texturing skills. Ref:- 1733

**Games Artists; South London; £DOE**

A new spin-off from Eidos which is well funded and with an independent publisher. The company is growing strongly and should double in size to around 35 people over the next 12 months. They are looking for Artists with 3DSMax, modelling, texturing and animation experience. Good sketching skills essential. Ref:- 1703

Contact **Julien Hofer** for programmers or **Paul Wilkes** for artists and others

Programmers £16-50k • Artists £10-40k  
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The world of the recruitment agent and secret agent have much in common; both require the utmost discretion, absolute confidentiality, a professional approach and ultimately the ability to recognise the good guys from the bad guys!. However rather than rely upon Q's gadgets to save you from the master villains, we'd prefer to count upon our hard earned experience. Formed in 1989 Aardvark Swift is the longest established games agency in the UK. With eleven years experience in this "secret service" it makes perfect sense to allow us to represent your career interests - especially as many well known companies now use our services exclusively. The bottom line is if we don't have your details on file, you simply can't be considered for these opportunities. So, get your career dossier to us today. Oh, and don't forget to mark it "Top Secret!".

## PROGRAMMERS

**WAP Programmers £40k + Bens Scotland.** Join the mobile revolution with one of the longest established WAP games companies with a world wide presence, picturesque location. Near ST Andrews Golf Club. REF:CD645W

**On line game Programmer £40k + Bens. Midlands.** One of the best companies in the world and what a time to join! An opportunity to be part of one of the most talked about teams. You will not be disappointed. REF:CD014W

**PS2 Programmers £Excellent + Bonus Manchester.** Racing title and secret project. C++ programmers with good products favourably considered, urgent req. REF:DT245F

**AI PROGRAMMER £30K - £32K + Royalties London** New cutting edge technology company seek background in evolutionary AI/Biology, fuzzy logic, route finding, flocking etc. Excellent opportunity to assist design and implement own comprehensive AI system. REF:DT393F

**Senior PlayStation Programmers £30-40K + Excellent Benefits - North** Secure multi-national company. Two new projects - character based and huge space epic. Experienced PC programmers favourably considered. City centre location. REF:DT472F

**C++ Network Game Programmer £to 35K + Royalties + Bonus - Oxon.** "Broadband" Product. Client server networking architecture essential. Famous licence. Great working environment. Friendly crowd. D:CCA/P

**Programmers/Senior Programmers £30-50K Basic Royalties+Pre Ipo Share options.** Market leader in mobile entertainment, seek very best to join highly talented team developing games for next generation broadband hand held devices. Highly attractive opportunity and salary package. Be part of the revolution! REF:DT548F

**C/C++ Java Programmer £Neg+ Forthcoming share options South East** Develop on line games for blue chip multinational emphasis on FUN and playability - typical product lifecycle 5-6 months. Newly qualified graduates considered. REF - DT324F

**C++ PROGRAMMER £30K - £40K Basic North London** Interactive TV project. Exciting growth area. Knowledge of user interfaces and plug in's advantageous. REF - DT574F

**COLOUR/GAMEBOY PROGRAMMERS - Many vacancies nationally and a few internationally.** Advance work and some home based options.

**3D SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS £ Excellent South East England, Sunny California & Texas** Possibly the greatest 3D graphics company on the planet wish to "Hire" Programmers with DirectX and Open GL. Immediate openings. Create great content working in conjunction with external developers.

**PC/XBOX PROGRAMMER £30K - £40K London** Innovative original company with unique strategy action product. Jaw dropping graphics. New DirectX project. REF - DT018F

**PLAYSTATION/3D PROGRAMMER £40,000 Basic + Bonus Leeds** Action adventure genre. Newly created role. Exclusive and unadvertised. REF - DT476F

**C++/AI PROGRAMMER £16K - £30K South East** PC strategy product. Sequel to best seller. Multi player/network coding beneficial. Experienced directors, great working atmosphere. Newly qualified graduates considered. REF DT324F

**INTERNET PROGRAMMERS £40K - £50K + Stock Options Central London** Unbelievable opportunity for C++, Java developers with games and internet background of interest. Superb benefits include action outings, adventure trips, free tickets for the footie, celebration parties, training courses in exotic locations etc. Work hard play hard ethic, plus one of the best working environments around and flexible hours. Exclusive Ref - DT451F

**Senior Programmer £35-40K + Bonus - Leeds** Innovative and dynamic internet organisation backed by world leading multi-national C++ 3D games background ideal for cutting edge high profile project. Prestigious premises. Outstanding career opportunity. Exclusive & unadvertised vacancy. REF: DT393F

**PLAYSTATION 2 PROGRAMMERS** Project and vacancy notifications now coming through thick and fast. Call now and acquire valuable "next gen" skills.

**3D Engine Programmer £30K+benefits London** PC based 3D real time strategy product. Open GL and D3D essential. Expanding company. Ref - DT596F

**Assembler professional (x4) =£28-40k. West Midlands.** PSX2 Platform. Well established successful co. REF:DT026F

## ARTISTS

**Senior Animator £35-40K + Bonus - North.** Innovative dynamic internet business. High profile animation project. Proficiency in human realism and team management sought. Autonomous role, prestigious premises. REF:VC675G

**Character Animators. £Neg + Bonus. Surrey.** Fancy a change from games? High end film & TV broadcast co with 3DS max & Character studio. REF:VC459G

**Maya & Softimage Animators £Neg + Excellent Benefits - Yorks** New requirements for 2 fully approved projects. FMV/ movies background ideal. City Centre location. REF:VC472G

**3DS Max Artist x15 (yes fifteen!) £Competitive + Bonus - South East (not London)** All levels considered - new graduates to industry veterans. Company bursting at seams with in-house projects! Freehand drawing/traditional skills highly prized.

**3D Studio Max Artist £17-25K Somerset** Expanding multimedia company with a learning/training bias. Great location. Leave the city behind. Ref - VC450G

**3D Studio Max Artist £28-30K London** Sci-fi project for PS2. New title famous developer. Exclusive. Ref - VC435G

**2D ARTISTS - Lots of opportunities Nationally for Gameboy, WAP** Graphical content for Mobile devices, and general in game texturing work.

**LEAD ARTIST (Cartoon Style) £25K - £32K London** New office of established Northern developer. Emphasis on quality with in-depth knowledge of the cartoon/animated games universe. Ref - VC355G

**GRAPHIC ARTIST £18K - £28K + Profit Share + Pension + Royalties North West** Playstation2 game. Nurbs/Polygon modelling skills sought. Small friendly working environment set in Countryside. Ref - VC325G

**ANIMATOR £35K - £40K London** Small development studio with affiliation to high profile industry visionary. Highly talented team. Ref - VC390G

**MAYA/ALIAS ANIMATORS £25K - £30K + Bonuses London** Sequel to best seller. Mo Cap knowledge beneficial. Large, secure and well respected organisation. REF - VC095G

## MANAGEMENT

**Head of Studio £Neg + Bonuses North.** Create and implement a strategic business plan for studio. Determine budget and manage lead personnel. Direct and oversee all operations, leading team builder. Management exp needed. REF:SD245L

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER £35K - £40K North** Internal and external responsibilities. Senior role working with some of the best known licences in the business. REF:DT046L

**Senior Producer £45-50k + bonuses London.** Determine & manage games strategy for interactive TV. Diverse proven manager sought with design & production experience. Newly created role. REF:CD727L

**PRODUCERS £Neg South East** Totally original product with visually stunning graphics. Creative flair needed, preferably with design exposure. Talented team. REF:DT016L

**SENIOR PRODUCER £ to late 30's + Bonus + Benefits Yorkshire** Internationally renowned organisation working on multiple platforms including Xbox and Playstation2, require experienced Producer to manage projects in a variety of genres incl major prestigious licences. New requirement. REF:DT046L

**Technical Director. £80k and Extra Bens. London.** Investigate new technologies, set the pace. Games, Music, Fashion, TV and Film involvement. You will have managed a technical team of programmers and developers. Exciting Opportunities for exciting times. REF:CD643A

**Studio Manager £55k + Bens. London.** Superb opportunity! Establish a studio from scratch with an established games developer. Stop thinking about it, apply now. REF:CD508A

**Development Manager £High + "large company" benefits - South East** Team player with supervisory experience needed for well known soccer management franchise. MS project. Love of footie and a foreign language advantageous. D:IC/M

**Producers (x2) £Competitive + "higher than average" bonus - South East (Not London)** Hands on role with creative bias. Full complement of next generation platforms including mobile and famous film and character licences. Exclusive to ourselves (for 6 weeks). REF: D:COH/PR

**Project Managers/Producers (X2) £40-50K+Royalties-Pre IPO Share options** Market leader in development of technology and games for mobile platforms require ambitious games producer with strong leadership & organisational skills. Superb opportunity with package to match. Ref - DT648L

**Producer, £30-35k + co. car + bonuses. Midlands.** Sports brand management company, with rights to major world events. Key role. Prestigious group. Self motivated & dedicated professional needed. Ref - DT671L

**Studio Mngr £Excellent + large company Bens. S-East (not London).** High profile games company who need no introduction. Track record speaks for itself. Project manager and delivery skills highly prized. Games experience not essential. REF:CD525L

## OTHERS

**Level Designers. £neg + benefits South West.** Well funded small company with highly experienced (+ very approachable!) directors. RTS/ Strategy/ Adventure product. REF:VC053H

**Games Designer £20-30K + Excellent "large company" Bens - Yorks** Secure multi-national employer with multiple creative studios. Min. 1 title required. Superb opportunity to join high profile co at commencement of new project. REF: SD472H

**LEVEL/GAMES DESIGNERS (X3) £16K - £28K + Bonuses London** New project. RPG/RTS genre. Company are a splinter group from a major publisher with own autonomy and budget, working on their second project. Creative individuals with good ideas and commercial acumen required. Ref SD243H

**GAME DESIGNERS £40K - £45K + Bonuses Midlands** Experienced creative ideas people sought by successful profitable developer with a string of number one hits to their credit. Project Managers, Producers and existing Designers alike all favourably considered. Ref - SD014H

## OVERSEAS

**SENIOR PROGRAMMER + GRAPHIC ARTIST & DESIGNER £Neg + Stock Options Germany** Leading international player in internet and Multi User Technology, floating soon on "Neuer" market. Relocation assistance. English speaking company. Short term and permanent places available

**LEAD PROGRAMMER, PROGRAMMERS, 3D ARTISTS, ANIMATORS AND WEB ARTISTS £Excellent Australia** Pioneering organisation with world leading technology. Interviewing in London again soon so apply without delay!

**PROGRAMMER/ARTISTS (USA) 65K - 80K dollars + Royalties,** medical and legal fees. Well respected West Coast developer always in the market for "good Brits" to join team in sunny California. Company works for major publishers, are British owned & are just 7 miles from the beach.

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## PROGRAMMERS

**PROGRAMMER - EUROPE** £DOE  
Our client is one of France's hottest new properties in video game development. Located in the beautiful city of Paris, an opportunity exists for an industry experienced programmer with strong maths/physics, DirectX and D3D skills to join their highly original and creative titles on next generation platforms. Lucrative package awaits.

**LEAD PROGRAMMER - MIDLANDS** £35K  
If you are one of the very best of your ilk you may be pleased to know that your skills are required to join this expanding creative team that are working on top-drawer licenses and fresh ideas. As a lead programmer, your credentials will be second-to-none (matching the existing talent at this ambitious studio) as far as C/C++ and 3D graphics skills are concerned. Attractive package on offer.

**GAMEBOY PROGRAMMER - MIDLANDS** £NEG  
Based in the heart of the thriving Midlands development community, this company offers rewards beyond dreams if you know your Z80 from your Z3 or your Assembler from your elbow. Working in house is of paramount importance to begin but before long you could be working from the comfort of your own home if you'd prefer.

**PROGRAMMER - LONDON** £TO 35K  
With Advanced GameBoy just around the corner, a skilled programmer with previous 16-bit console and C/C++ experience is sought in order to complete the final piece in the jigsaw for this ground-breaking developer. You'll have a proven industry track record with successful titles under your belt in return, your coffers will be swelled considerably.

**CONSOLE PROGRAMMER - NORTH** £TO 40K  
Our Client is an industry figure head with an unarguable portfolio of No.1 successes to their

credit. They are hoping that you have a similar background. If you fit the bill, then this could be a match made in heaven (well at least the N.W. of England!) capable of coding in all recognised languages you'll be glad you took this career defining opportunity. Salary is enviable.

**PROGRAMMER - SOUTH** £TO 35K  
Based in the south, one of the industry's most diverse companies require a like-minded individual. Them: Early adopters of web-based technology as well as the more traditional gaming platforms; You: A versatile and flexible team player with exemplary programming knowledge and a willingness to make a difference.

## ARTISTS

**GRAPHIC ARTIST - EUROPE** £30K+  
If you harbor a desire to spread your wings and work abroad, our client, based in one of Europe's most exciting and lively capitals may provide the opportunity you have been looking for. A creative mind coupled with expertise in industry standard 2D/3D art packages is all that is required. That and a passion to produce genre-defining games with stunning visuals. Money, no object.

**ANIMATOR - SOUTH** £TO 35K  
Undoubtedly the largest software publisher on the planet, this company require the skills of an exceptionally talented animator who has a thorough understanding of the human form and anatomy in order to bring characters to life. If you can think, visualise and communicate in 3 dimensions, you will flourish in the opulent surroundings that constitute this working environment.

**CHARACTER ANIMATOR - EUROPE** £30K+  
Scandinavia beckons for an experienced character animator with flair, ambition, drive and intimate knowledge of SoftImage. Working on PSX2 titles, you'll be required to lend your talents to exciting

film licenses, character based titles and new and diverse game concepts. A fantastic working environment awaits you so pick up the phone and call us.

**GRAPHIC ARTIST - LONDON** £NEG  
London Calling. New generation games developer offering a highly creative environment seeks industry professional artist to work on PC, X-Box, PS2 and WAP platforms. If you know the ropes when it comes to Character Studio, 3DS Max and Photoshop and can profess to being a focused team-player, then your next career move awaits you.

**GRAPHIC ARTIST - MIDLANDS** £NEG  
A bright future awaits you at one of the UK's fastest growing and well-respected development studios. Based in the heart of the country, developing AAA titles have become second nature to them - they want you to have a similar ability to produce cutting-edge visuals to showcase exciting titles on next generation formats. If that's not enough of an incentive, then maybe the competitive salary will be.

**GRAPHIC ARTIST - SOUTH** £DOE  
A once in a lifetime opportunity exists for you to sink your teeth into the industry's most successful titles and franchises to date. Your job is to take games that are already considered the best in their class and make them better. You'll do this through your expertise in any of Maya, 3DS Max or SoftImage as well as Photoshop. Unbeatable package on offer make this an opportunity too good to miss.

**GRAPHIC ARTIST - LONDON** £30K  
This developer, set-up 2 years ago by industry veterans, require a supremely skilled Maya artist to complete their in-house creative department. You'll have the opportunity to work with the best people, on the best titles, in the best

environment. It's only fitting then, that you should be able to hold your own as a graphic artist with such illustrious company. You'll have a showered to die for and a desire to be judged on your results. Team members welcome, precious shouldn't be in your vocabulary.

## PROJECT MANAGERS/PRODUCERS

**PROJECT MANAGER - NORTH** £35K+  
Part of the one of the industry's longest running and fastest expanding publisher/developers, this Northern studio would like to hear from you if you have what it takes to project manage games to completion, on time and within budget. A games development background is essential whilst a genuine interest in team sports, in particular football would be a distinct advantage. A financially rewarding future awaits you at this publicly-quoted company.

**PRODUCER - NORTH** £TO 40K  
Undoubtedly one of Europe's major industry powers, this publisher wishes to recruit experienced Producers. The experience in question covers people management and project management skills but these don't necessarily need to have been gained working in video games. Fresh thinkers welcome! You'll be expected to motivate teams and be able to recognise individuals' 'hot-buttons' in order to get the most out of them.

**PRODUCER - SCOTLAND** £NEG  
Not content with being one of Scotland's No.1 developers, our client won't rest until they are the best. They see hiring you as an integral part of their long-term strategy and assault on the rest of the industry. AAA titles that will be enjoyed on next generation consoles and high-end PCs will be under your watchful eye as you co-operate to produce the next wave of killer application software. A recognised portfolio of must-have titles will help secure this position.

For more information please contact Paul Chapman or Terry Haynes on 020 8423 3400

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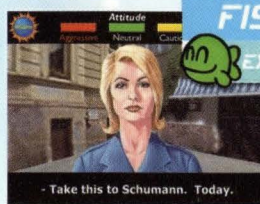
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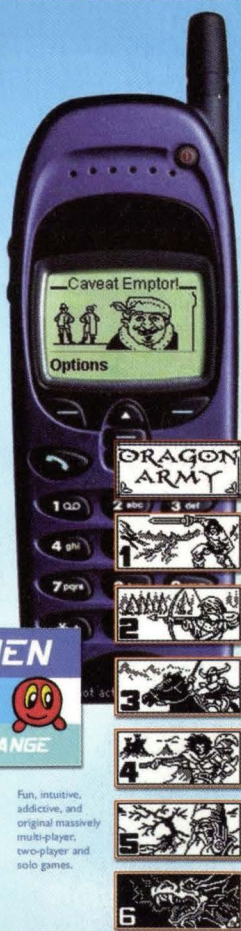
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*Due to an ongoing expansion program, Empire Interactive is currently seeking a number of exceptionally talented and creative individuals to fill a host of new positions within our Development, Marketing and PR teams. So if you are highly motivated, like a challenge and think you have what it takes, we'd like to hear from you.*

### Producers/Senior Producers - £Excellent + Bonus

Experienced Producers required with a minimum of 4 years experience to manage the complete development process from concept to mastering for a number of original projects for Sony PlayStation 2, PC CD-ROM, Microsoft X-Box, and Dolphin along with any future platforms. Must love games, have excellent communication skills, be experienced in project and risk management, and have the ability to create the vision and drive it through to completion.

### Q.A and Customer Services Manager - £Excellent + Bonus

A great opportunity for an experienced QA individual to create a well oiled testing machine! The ideal candidate will have a minimum of 3 years experience in the QA environment and will work closely with Producers and Developers to produce great games for all the next generation formats. Must have excellent communication skills, be extremely organised and have the desire to create the best QA team and testing infrastructure possible.

### Lead Testers - £Excellent + Bonus

Candidates should have at least 2 years experience in a QA environment, ideally having experience across a range of formats including PC CD-ROM and Sony PlayStation.

### Game Testers - £Excellent

Candidates should have previous experience within a QA environment (Games Company). Able to design reports accurately and concisely. Keep up to date with the latest developments in software and hardware. Candidates should have strong verbal and communication skills, assist in the designing phase of our products, providing feedback and ideas.

### Product Manager - £20 to £25k

Reporting directly to the Marketing Manager, the Product Manager will be responsible for creating and implementing entire campaigns for launching multi-format titles into the market place. The successful candidate will be responsible for all areas of the marketing mix including creative design, budgets, promotions and media buying. You will be working in fast moving environment, and as an enthusiastic team player you should be prepared to work flexible hours.

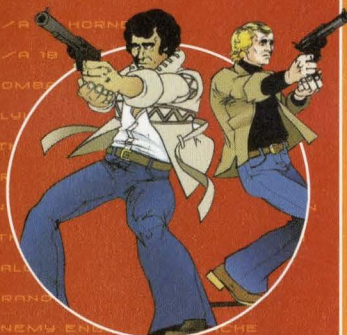
### PR Executive - £17-21k + bonus

This is an exciting opportunity for a bright individual to continue expanding our profile within the European market. Ideally you will have a number of contacts gained in your 6-12 months experience of PR or Marketing, within the games industry. You will be dealing with specialist and non-specialist press throughout Europe and be the point of contact for many of our International distributors and overseas offices. Planning, organisation and strong communication skills are essential, as is a keen interest in games. Some European travel will be required.

*Please send your CV and a covering letter, clearly stating which position you are applying for, to:*

Recruitment, Empire Interactive, The Spires, 677 High Road,  
North Finchley, London N12 0DA

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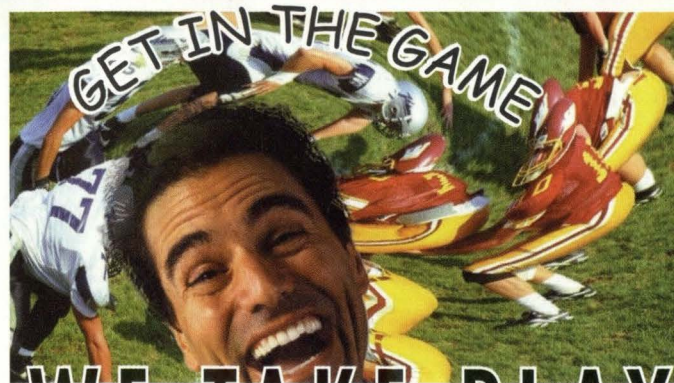
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PG Studio



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Hey, we're also looking for **Animators, 3D Artists, QA Project Managers, and Development Team Project Managers.**

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PC Gameplay July 2000

#### Senior Games Programmer

3 Years+ Games Industry experience.

1+ published game to credit.

Experience with C++, plenty of miscellaneous games programming experience.

#### Senior AI Programmer

3 Years+ Games Industry experience in similar position.

1+ published game to credit.

Experience with C++, scripting languages.

#### D3D Programmer

2 Years+ Games Industry experience in similar position.

1+ published game to credit.

Experience with DirectX and 3D hardware

#### Internet Games Programmer

2 Years+ Games Industry experience in similar position.  
1+ published product to date, demonstrable experience of the pitfalls of programming for the internet is essential.

C++, detailed knowledge of TCP/IP and DirectPlay and the ability to provide a strong network platform for an exciting new games product.

#### Lead Artist

3 Years+ Games Industry experience in similar position.

1+ published product to credit.

Experience with 3D Studio Max.

#### Artist

2 Years+ Games Industry experience.

1+ published product to credit.

Experience with 3D Studio Max + PhotoShop, Hi and Low poly modeling skills.

#### Concept Artist

Experience in similar role a plus, but not necessary, must be able to work to the highest quality within deadline.

#### Apply to:

Recruitment,  
Elixir Studios,  
93 Bayham Street,  
Camden,  
London NW1 OAG

Quoting reference E7.  
[www.elixir-studios.co.uk](http://www.elixir-studios.co.uk)





- Like you, I have a passion for computer games and their development.
- I am also a professional recruiter.
- With the next generation of emerging platforms the competition to join the top companies has become much greater.
- You are looking for a move and want to work with someone, who listens to what you want to achieve, understands your love for the industry and can open important doors.
- Call me, I want to talk to you!



## Natural Leaders

to £40k

London, Guildford, Coventry, Yorkshire, Edinburgh

As an experienced **Producer**, you've already got a number of successful games under your belt but have yet to feel challenged or rewarded. If so, I want to hear from you today. New platforms, challenging opportunities, real rewards wait. Call me and open up a discussion.

## Coding Genius

to £35k

Countrywide

I have a large number of clients looking for **programmers** who are capable of working at the leading edge of interactive entertainment. You must be fluent in C/C++ or Assembler with a strong background in Math's. Essentially, you are a computer games fanatic and have a desire to see the end result of your hard work on the top ten shelf in the shops.

## Imaginative Guru's

to £30k

Scotland, Warwickshire

Being a **Game Designer** is hard work but rewarding. With at least one successful title behind you, you have a proven ability to conceptualize a title, guiding its progress into chart status. Perhaps having spent some time coding or designing artwork for games, you now would like to exercise your imagination further and make your creativity voice even louder! If so, call me and demonstrate your passion.

## Next Gen Monet's

to £40k

Countrywide

With a background education in Art, you are an extremely capable **3D animator** and artist. Capable of building high and low polygon models, your 3D skills have flair and the ability to amaze. A good portfolio is essential which you will be able to present with pride and passion.



*Professional Recruitment*

SOLUTIONS

For a confidential discussion contact **Nick Dixon**. ● T: 01908 393939 Daytime 01280 815856 Evening ● F: 01908 397474  
E: [nick@crescere.co.uk](mailto:nick@crescere.co.uk) ● Crescere Resourcing, Fortuna House  
South Fifth Street, Central Milton Keynes  
MK9 2EU



# Make a piece of gaming history

An amazing opportunity for the finest industry talent interested in pushing the limits of PC and next generation platforms

You won't see us shouting about our achievements - we leave that to the reviewers. But if you want to work at the same development studio which produced Grand Prix 1 and 2 (with combined sales figures of over 2M on PC alone) and one which has recently completed work on the highly acclaimed Grand Prix 3, you're in luck.

Following the signing of a new 5 year deal with the legendary Geoff Crammond, we are finalising details of forthcoming projects featuring the most advanced, realistic and playable series of Motor Sports simulations in gaming history. Our ambitious, long-term plans mean we have vacancies for the very best individuals in the following areas:

## MICRO PROSE MOTOR SPORT

### Programmers

Highly experienced in C/C++ , PC assembler or console programming, you should have a passion for the PC and next generation platforms. You'll also be fluent in one or more of the following; 3D effects and techniques, networking and multi-player, tools programming, UI and AI.

### Artist

We need an industry veteran with a reputation for excellence in the areas of Graphic Design, Texturing, 3D modelling and Animation. Editing experience would be an advantage. You'll be intimately familiar with 3DS Max, Photoshop and Fractal Painter and had experience with Premiere. Please send samples of your work with your application.

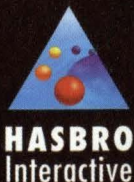
Backed by one of the world's leading toy companies means that if you can demonstrate exceptional talent, salary won't be a problem. In addition, you'll earn big company benefits in a small developer atmosphere. We can offer some unique perks - our shelves are currently groaning with complimentary games and Grand Prix tickets. You'll also be able to get an amazing range of Hasbro toy products at a fraction of the street price.

Our close relationship with the world of Formula One means you'll also have the chance to attend awesome test days at Silverstone.

You'll be working in our newly refurbished offices located in rural Glos. just 10 minutes from the M4 and 25 minutes from Bristol (crammed with pubs and clubs, annual free music festival, 4 multiplex cinemas, international airport and one of Europe's biggest shopping malls).

With a location like ours, you'll be keen to take advantage of our comprehensive relocation package.

This is a major opportunity for the top talent in the industry to be a long-term part of something very special. Make sure you don't miss your chance. Send CVs (and work examples for the Artist position) to:



MICRO PROSE  
MOTOR SPORT

E-mail : [motorsport\\_jobs@hiuk.com](mailto:motorsport_jobs@hiuk.com)  
Snail Mail: Recruitment, Microprose MotorSport,  
The Ridge, Chipping Sodbury, Bristol, UK. BS37 6BN



**animators**

**artists**

**programmers**

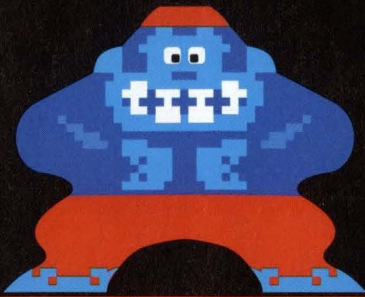
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USE YOUR



TALENTS ON

A NEW PLATFORM

You've done your time in the funky world of computer game development. You've got creative flair and serious software expertise. Where now?

In the UK alone the uptake of Digital TV has been phenomenal. Current trends show that it will soon be a dominant platform in the race to provide the innovative home entertainment services of the 21st Century.

NDS Group plc, is a global specialist in open software systems for the secure distribution of digital entertainment information and services to TVs, PCs and other portable devices. They partner with some of the biggest names in global broadcasting including BSkyB, NTL, Microsoft and DIRECTV. As a recognised force in the industry NDS are now seeking to recruit their

## HEAD OF SOFTWARE - Interactive Applications

Circa £70k (Flexible Location, West London or Hampshire)

As a technological software expert you will ideally have the experience to lead a team of developers and have the creativity and vision to design interactive applications including gaming, home shopping and betting services.

You are likely to be experienced in:

- C, C++, JAVA, HTML
- Computer graphics, (tools, content encoding, HTML layout)
- Embedded software in a consumer electronics business
- Real Time Operating Systems

In return NDS offers the opportunity for you to make a lasting impact on this emerging technology which promises to revolutionise home entertainment.

To discuss this opportunity in total confidence, please contact Ben Fielder at PSD Technology, quoting ref 638330. Alternatively send your CV to him at PSD Group, 7 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3TN, Tel: +44 (0)1293 802000, Fax: +44 (0)1293 802004 Email: [syseng@psdgroup.com](mailto:syseng@psdgroup.com) Internet: [www.psdgroup.com](http://www.psdgroup.com)

Internet: [www.nds.com](http://www.nds.com)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

PSD

Technology  
Recruitment



## THE POWER BEHIND THE INDUSTRY

### DISILLUSIONED?

IS YOUR CAREER GOING NOWHERE?

STUCK DOING THE SAME PROJECT YEAR IN, YEAR OUT?

WORKING ON UNINSPIRING GAMES FOR UNINSPIRING COMPANIES?

EVER FEEL LIKE YOU'RE JUST A NUMBER?

At Climax we believe that the most precious asset a company has are the creative staff who make games happen. That's why we pride ourselves on ensuring that everyone in the company works within a creative environment and has the resources needed to realise their potential.

We work with the industry's biggest names on a wide range of AAA titles – from sports to real-time strategy, from racing to RPG. We can offer you the opportunity to work on cutting edge (and commercially successful) products at either our Fareham or Brighton studios.

With the release of 14 Climax-developed titles this year – each of them a tribute to the hard work our teams put into them – we are Europe's largest independent developer. Our project management ensures that our games are seen through to completion, not canned halfway through development. Our teams are structured so that every member has a voice and that they compete against the best in the world, not each other.

If this sounds like the kind of place you'd rather be working at then why not refresh your career and contact us today. We need talented and dedicated people to join us on our mission to be the world's premier provider of digital entertainment. We currently have vacancies across the board at all levels within our Fareham and Brighton development studios. Contact us at the address below and help shape the face of the industry.

PLEASE SEND ALL CVS AND DEMOS, STATING STUDIO PREFERENCE TO:

HR Dept.  
CLIMAX,  
Fareham Heights,  
Standard Way,  
Fareham,  
Hants  
PO16 8XT  
UK

Tel: +44 (0)1329 827777  
Fax: +44 (0)1329 828777

Website: <http://www.climax.co.uk>



# CLIMAX

<http://www.climax.co.uk>



PlayStation 2







## Want to Work With Great Characters?



*Would you like the opportunity to work on the hottest titles in a fun and friendly working environment?  
We are currently seeking talented and enthusiastic people to fill the following positions:*

*Project Managers/Producers*

*Programmers C/C++/DirectX/PSX/PS2/Dreamcast/Gameboy/Java*

*Texture Artists Dpaint/Painter/Photoshop*

*3D Modelers/Animators 3DS MAX*

*Contact us for an application form.*

*Demos will be required and are always returned.*

*Direct applications are always given priority over agencies.*

Blitz Games, PO Box 186, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5TX Tel: 01926 311284 Fax: 01926 887209 jobs@BlitzGames.com

more info at  
[www.BlitzGames.com](http://www.BlitzGames.com)

Action Man 'Destruction X' is one of many games currently being developed by Blitz Games.  
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**INTERACTIVE  
STUDIOS**



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Then contact [jobs@aqua-pacific.com](mailto:jobs@aqua-pacific.com)

We are looking for development talent to join our team.  
Talent that will grow as we continue to grow.

### Programmers:

Due to the number of leading edge titles we have signed recently, we are keenly seeking experienced and creative C++ and assembler programmers to expand our coding department.

### Artists:

Both 2D animators and 3D modellers sought to work on exciting new technologies.

Email or phone now on +44 (0) 1926 336 800

Aqua Pacific Ltd  
1st Floor  
Lawrence House  
1a Morrell St  
Leamington Spa  
Warwickshire  
CV32 5SZ



## CHANGE direction

Change provides tailor-made solutions to finding you a new opportunity

**808: NORTH: ARTIST/PROGRAMMERS/PRODUCER/DESIGNER:** £20-40,000 + BONUS. 2nd largest games company in world. Choice: action, license, cartoon, sports titles. N64, PSX2, Dreamcast titles. Art: animation, texturing, modellers

**999: LONDON: ARTIST: £20-40,000+BONUS:** Magical opportunity to join leading developer. PSX2 titles, either futuristic war or gothic adventure style game. Photo-realistic. Ideal skills = Maya, Alias. Cross train from 2D available. Prototyping/research or modelling roles also available.

**1214: NEWCASTLE: 2D & 3D ARTIST: ALL LEVELS TO £50,000 PACKAGE:** Smashing driving & fighting titles. Pure talent need only apply. 2D & 3D skills in any: Maya, Lightwave, SoftImage, Character Studio, 3DS Max. Texture, modelling and animation opportunities.

**920: LONDON OR SURREY: PROGRAMMERS: £25-45,000 + BENS + BONUS:** AI, tools & engine programmers required. C, C++ to work on simulations, episodic adventures and racing games. Friendly team. PSX2, AAA titles. ROLE AVAILABLE IN NORTH ALSO.

**830: ARTIST: OXFORDSHIRE: £22-35,000 + BENS + BONUS:** Virtual reality worlds creator needs real artistic flair + capability to build CG characters, in highshpolygons, from supplied character model drawings and able to create their own figures. Demonstrate mood and emotion. Animation skills a bonus. 3D packages: Max, Maya & Photoshop (textures). Strong pencil skills required.

**1000: LONDON OR CAMBRIDGE: DESIGNER/PRODUCER: £MEGA:** Passionate about games? Are your ideas better? Must have worked within games industry. Creating Next-Gen. epic story line titles, project management skills. 2D & 3D games. Company with excellent track record.

**1270: WARWICKSHIRE: ARTIST/PROGRAMMER: GRADUATE -> LEAD:** PSX2, GBA, GBC: Supersonic company and technology. Driving and strategy titles. Programmers in any: C, C++, Assembly, DirectX. Good career path and progression. Artists in any: 3DS Max, Photoshop. Hit published titles - get the recognition you deserve.

**926: SURREY: ARTISTS/PROGRAMMERS: £20-40,000 BASIC + BENS + BONUS:** One of UK's leading independent original game developers. AAA flight, shoot 'em up and racing titles. Programmers = C, C++, Java or DirectX. Artists = 3DS Max and Photoshop. Great team and great pay.

**998: HOME /LONDON /CAMBS: INTERACTIVE TV /GAME BOY/ WAP ARTISTS / PROGRAMMERS:** Broad target market. Booming sector. Programmers any language from: C, HTML, Java, JavaScript, Assembly, Z80. Artists from games, TV or post production background. Company growing like wildfire. Absorbing. Freelance or permanent openings. Mass market appeal, strategy and shoot 'em up games. Art skills in 2D, DPaint and game boy experience. Wacky designs. Marvel and 2000AD artists welcomed. PRODUCERS & DESIGNERS also required.

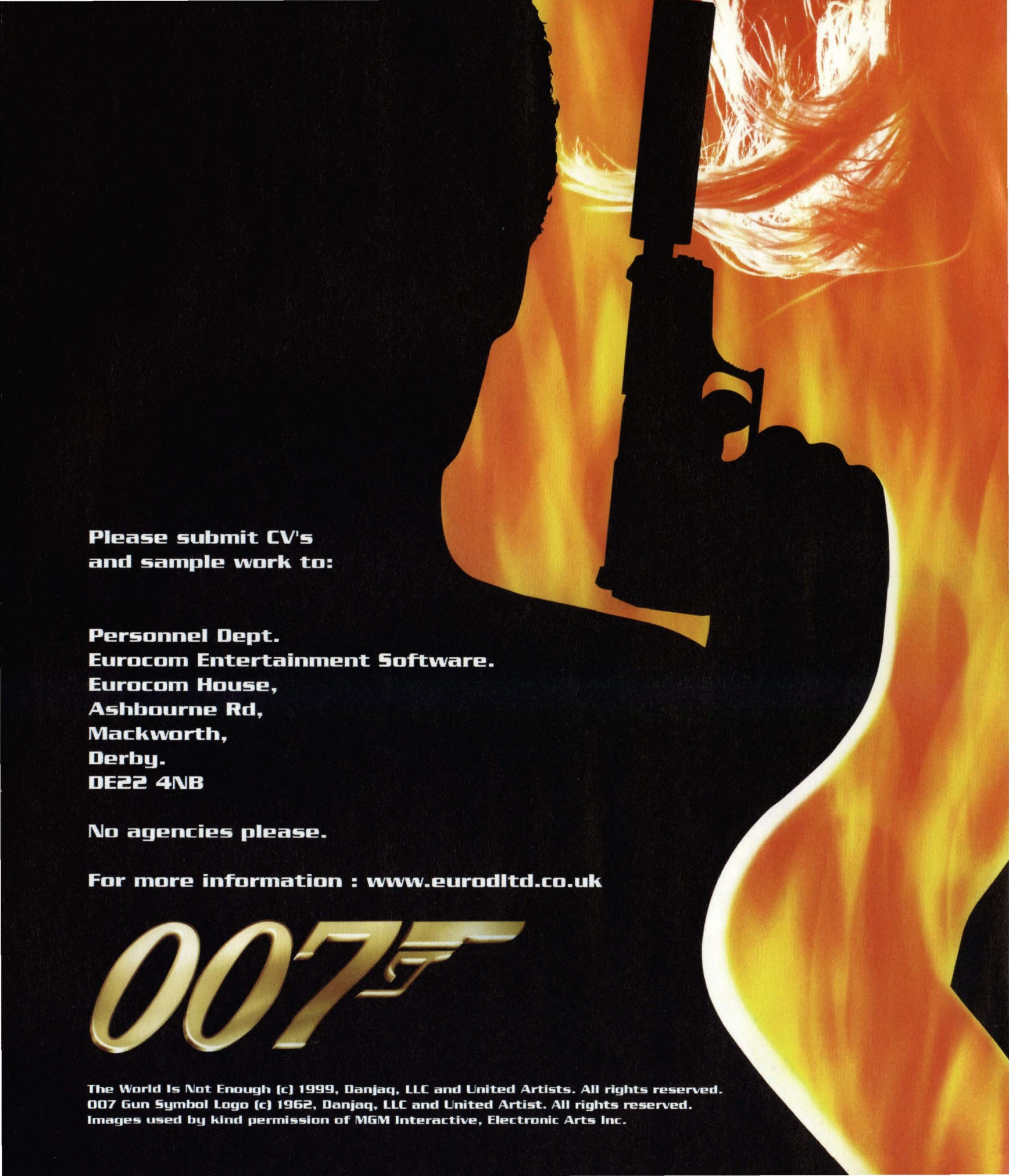
**780: QA: LEAD & CONTRACT: LONDON OR SHEFFIELD: £14-18,000 + OVERTIME:** Any level of experience considered. Real time strategy and sports titles. Team leading possibilities.

**921: EPOC/WAP PROGRAMMERS: LONDON/SURREY: £20-40,000 + GREAT BENS + BONUS:** Lead roles available too. C, C++ with Java & WAP desirable. Established, stable company with cutting edge technology. Any EPOC experience considered.

**HUGE NUMBER OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ON-LINE, INTERACTIVE TV, WAP JUNIORS/GRADUATE** (many vacancies), PRODUCERS, MANAGERS, LOCALIZATION, QA, LICENSING, SALES, MARKETING, PR - see web-site OPPORTUNITIES UK-WIDE : Manchester. Liverpool. Middlesbrough. Warwickshire. London. Cambridge. Oxford. Wales. South Coast. Middlesex. Sheffield. Leeds. Bristol.

Ask for Monica or Ania. Send demo to:  
CHANGE LTD, HANOVIA HOUSE, 28/29 EASTMAN ROAD, LONDON, W3 7YG  
TEL: 020 8746 2525 / 020 8931 1749 / 0973 413060 EMAIL: [jobs@change-job.com](mailto:jobs@change-job.com) WEBSITE: [www.change-job.com](http://www.change-job.com)





**Please submit CV's  
and sample work to:**

**Personnel Dept.  
Eurocom Entertainment Software.  
Eurocom House,  
Ashbourne Rd,  
Mackworth,  
Derby.  
DE22 4NB**

**No agencies please.**

**For more information : [www.eurodltd.co.uk](http://www.eurodltd.co.uk)**

**007** 

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007 Gun Symbol Logo (c) 1962, Danjaq, LLC and United Artist. All rights reserved.  
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**Eurocom Entertainment Software**  
are known for developing games based on the  
biggest characters in the entertainment business.  
Now we need the very best to join our existing  
teams in developing a blockbuster suite of titles  
on all major gaming platforms.

**We are currently seeking the following:**

### **Programmers**

- \*C programmers for existing and future platforms.
- \*C/ARM programmers for AGB work.
- \*Z80 programmers for GBC work.

### **Level Designers**

- \*Designers required for fps and platform genres.

### **Artists**

- \*2D pixel artists.
- \*3D high polygon artists.
- \*3D animators.
- \*Real-time special effects artist.

**EUROCOM**  
ENTERTAINMENT  
SOFTWARE







# Manchester Sheffield Leeds

We are currently looking for the following staff to compliment one of the largest internal development facilities worldwide. You will work on challenging and exciting games for both the current and next generation platforms in an excellent office environment.

We are one of the most dynamic and fastest growing companies in the industry offering clearly defined career paths for all employees. An excellent remuneration package is on offer including an *Attractive Salary* as well as a *Completion* and *Product Performance* related *Bonus Scheme*. A range of benefits including a *Pension Scheme*, *Life Assurance*, *Private Medical Care*, *Permanent Health Insurance* and *Critical Illness Insurance* are also provided.

## EXPERIENCED PROGRAMMERS

We are looking for experienced programmers with at least one published title to their name. Both extreme tech-heads and team leaders with management and coding skills should apply.

## ARTISTS

We need both 2D and 3D artists. 2D artists should have experience in Photoshop, Illustrator or similar packages. For 3D artists experience in 3D Studio MAX, Maya or another major 3D package is essential. A good portfolio is crucial and ideally should be submitted on CD or VHS with the application.

## DESIGNERS

You will have a fantastic understanding of games, good communication skills, an annoying eye for detail and the ability to describe the indescribable. You should submit either a preliminary game design or a critique of an existing game with your application.

## PRODUCERS

Producers will have experience of people management and/or project management, but not necessarily from within the games business. You'll love games, be able to motivate people and have the ability to solve complex problems - all in your lunch hour!

If your career's stalled and you're looking for new opportunities we have positions open in Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds. Opportunities also exist in France, Australia and the USA.

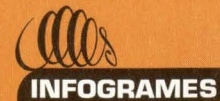
CV's and portfolios to:

Christine Johnson  
Infogrames Studios Ltd  
The Green House  
33 Bowdon St  
Sheffield  
S1 4HA  
United Kingdom

email: [cjohnson@uk.infogrames.com](mailto:cjohnson@uk.infogrames.com)

All portfolios will be returned on request.

UNITED KINGDOM FRANCE AUSTRALIA USA





Opportunities

# RUNECRAFT

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■ **Runecraft** are looking for talented individuals to join our group. We have vacancies across our 3 sites for industry veterans who are looking to work with a professional Company with a strong management infrastructure.

- **Three** development studios - **Dewsbury,**
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  - **Nottingham.**
  - **Taunton**
  - **Manchester**

**Runecraft** offers:

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- **Company car scheme**
- **Company pension scheme**
- **Excellent working environment**

RUNECRAFT

BB



We are currently looking for:

### ARTISTS

- 3DS Max, Photoshop.
- Low/high poly and Low/high colour.
- Industry experience preferred.

### EXPERIENCED CONSOLE PROGRAMMERS

- PC, PSX, PS2, Dreamcast.
- Industry experienced.

### WEB CODERS

- Experience with HTML, JAVA and FLASH.

### Contact

- E-Mail [jobs@runecraft.co.uk](mailto:jobs@runecraft.co.uk)  
Send your CV



Runecraft Limited,  
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Tel: 01924 500817  
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[WWW.runecraft.co.uk](http://WWW.runecraft.co.uk)



# Creations





# Little Monsters, big ideas

Coming to a TV screen near you, a series of interactive adventures that are going to give the kids the best fun they've had with a remote control since they fed it to the dog.

A new term of interactive entertainment has witnessed **ntl:** ganging up with Digital Creations Media to invite you into the interactive world of Splash Publishing's 'Little Monsters'.

Well loved characters such as Silly Sidney, Perfect Prudence, Dirty Dermot and Tell Tale Tallulah make up our class of September 2000 and they are all waiting for you to tune in and help them get through their action packed day.

But that's not all that's happening in the Creation's playground.

Creations are in discussions with several PC and console publishers over exciting new products scheduled to be released in 2001 and 2002. So instead of skulking behind the bike sheds why don't you get your jotter out and write us a hundred lines on why we should register an interest in you.

Creations, we've done our homework, and now it's time to play.

[teacherspet@creations.co.uk](mailto:teacherspet@creations.co.uk)

<http://www.creations.co.uk>

Telephone: 0161 839 2239. Fax 0161 832 7608.

Creations Ltd, 140 Cheetham Hill Road,  
Manchester, M8 8PZ

**ntl:**

D I G I T A L  
*Creations*  
M E D I A

Little  
**MONSTERS**





She'll put you  
through

paces

Meet Jo Dark. Secret agent,  
international crimefighter  
and one demanding bundle  
of gun-toting trouble.

One of our hottest properties, she needs constant attention to keep her at the top of her game. She's been putting us at Rare through the mill for years, insisting on constant innovation, coding breakthroughs and bigger and better guns. Along the way, we've also garnered Baftas for gameplay innovation in a few of our other little projects such as Goldeneye, Jet Force Gemini and DK64. Now we need fresh recruits.

We believe in taking on graduates whose imagination and creativity haven't been sapped by years in a pinstriped suit. People who still believe that a bright idea and a ton of enthusiasm can change the world. Bring us that attitude and we'll give you the opportunity to work with the best secret agent in the business. She's a tough taskmistress but you'll enjoy the privilege of working with her - if you can keep up, that is.





# your

**0-4 years' experience plus stacks of energy**

## **game programmers**

To code cutting-edge software for current and future Nintendo hardware. Either Assembler, C or C++ skills required.

## **3d artists**

With imagination, plenty of enthusiasm and a natural flair for creating detailed environments, characters or animation. Previous experience with 3D packages, particularly Maya, would be advantageous.

## **game boy color/advance programmers**

For development of new titles as part of our dedicated Game Boy team. You must be fluent in Assembler. Previous Game Boy experience will be beneficial.

## **game boy color/advance artists**

To join our hard-working Game Boy team in creating a variety of Nintendo handheld titles.

## **3d graphics engine programmers**

Experience with Assembler, general 3D engine coding and various surface representations would be useful.

## **research and development software engineers**

To join our expanding R&D department working on advanced software for next generation hardware. Either Assembler, C or C++ skills are required. Knowledge of Physics, Advanced Maths and AI would be a plus.

Have you got the staying power? Then send a CV and examples of your work to:

HR Department, Rare Ltd, Manor Park, Twycross, Warwickshire CV9 3QN

[www.rareware.com](http://www.rareware.com)





**PARTICLE SYSTEMS,** CREATORS OF THE  
AWARD-WINNING "I-WAR" AND "INDEPENDENCE WAR:  
DEFIANCE" ARE CURRENTLY RECRUITING FOR A NEW  
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A SMALL COMPANY WITH AN INFORMAL AND RELAXED  
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ADVANTAGE, BUT WOULD SUIT AN ENTHUSIASTIC  
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REAL-TIME GAME DISCIPLINES SUCH AS LOW  
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**CONTACT:**

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**PARTICLE  
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# MISSING!

## GAMES DESIGNERS

last seen near  
a layout pad

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[recruitment@codemasters.com](mailto:recruitment@codemasters.com)

It's late. Far too late. You should have been home two hours ago. But the thought's been nagging away at you that what you've been doing still isn't right. All your friends think you're mad. We'd like to meet you.


### Games designers

We're looking for people with the right stuff. People with talent, quick wits, and the vision to guide a game's development from the first scribbled thoughts on the back of a fag packet through to world-wide release. Far from a games design virgin, we'll expect you to be the proud parent of at least one published title.

You'll either need to be a graduate with at least a 2:1, or a designer with some experience already under your belt. Importantly, you'll need the heady concoction of imagination, dedication, determination and passion it takes to create a masterpiece.

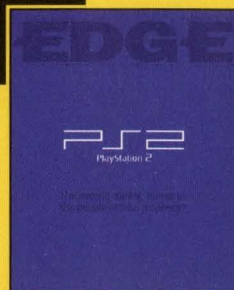
We're offering an innovative and welcoming atmosphere, flush with Dreamcast and Playstation2, layout pads and pens. There are also awesome careers. To find out what you've been missing, email us your cv and examples of your work at [recruitment@codemasters.com](mailto:recruitment@codemasters.com) or send them to Liz Gilleran at Codemasters Ltd, PO Box 6, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 0SH.

If you'd like the chance to meet us in person, why not come along to Stand G420 at the ECTS Show in Olympia from September 3rd to 5th and find out all about the great career opportunities at Codemasters.

Codemasters® 

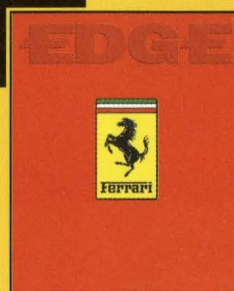
GENIUS AT PLAY





**News** In a month of shows, **Edge** reports from Tokyo's PlayStation2 Festival and details plans for the console's European release; Millia 2000 show report; Infogrames chief calls for games shrinkage  
**Prescreen** *Dead Or Alive 2; Dogs Of War; Excitebike 64; In Cold Blood; Star Wars Racer; Vanishing Point; World Touring Cars; Deus Ex; Carmageddon TDR 2000; Project IGI*  
**Prescreen focus** *Rieselied; Commandos 2; Heart Of Stone; Praetorians*  
**Testscreen** *Biohazard Code: Veronica; Syphon Filter 2; Sega GT Homologation Special; Micro Maniacs; Fear Effect*  
**Features** *America's Most Wanted - Edge meets the new wave of US dev talent; Telling Tales - the art of storytelling examined*

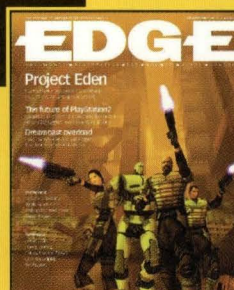
#83 APRIL 2000



**News** Microsoft unveils its X-Box technology - **Edge** was there to see it in action; full report on how the PlayStation2 launch rocked Tokyo; Sega steals limelight at the spring Tokyo Game Show; Channel 4 incurs the wrath of the videogame trade over its 'Dispatches' show  
**Prescreen** *Time Splinters; World Sports Cars; Wipeout Fusion; Dropship; Mujura's Mask; Tokyo Highway Battle 2; Eldorado Gate; Star Wars Racer; Vagrant Story; Virtua Tennis*  
**Prescreen focus** *Jet Set Radio; Phantasy Star Online; Samba de Amigo; Ferrari 360 Challenge*  
**Testscreen** *Tekken Tag Tournament; Street Fighter EX3; Ridge Racer V; Fantavision; Dead or Alive 2; MDK2; Evolve; Soldier Of Fortune; Strider Hiryu 1&2; F1 2000*

#84 MAY 2000

Collector's edition featuring Ferrari slipcase



**News** Sega Europe outlines Dreamcast online plans; new research into possible links between violence and videogames; new wave of PC 3D video cards; BT to launch broadband service  
**Prescreen** *Metropolis Street Racer; Seven Blades; Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX; Gun Spike; Mario Tennis 64; Commandos 2; Street Fighter III; Project IGI; Final Fantasy IX; Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2; MoHo; Alien Resurrection*  
**Prescreen focus** *World Sports Cars; Shadow of Destiny; Project Eden; F355Challenge; Out Trigger; 18 Wheeler*  
**Testscreen** *Perfect Dark; Driving Emotion Type-S; Powerstone 2; Fur Fighters; Ecco The Dolphin; Dogs Of War; Shogun; Kirby 64*  
**Features** *Sony's Phil Harrison talks PlayStation2*

#85 JUNE 2000

Includes free 28-page guide to working in the videogame industry

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**News** X-Box specs are ramped up; new technology for Sega coin-ops; MGS 2 stuns E3; interim online solution for PS2; Sega shake-up; Dreamcast *bleem!*; Molyneux to quit PC for X-Box

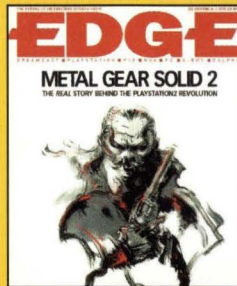
**Prescreen** *Stunt Squad*; *SRC*; *No One Lives Forever*; *Silent Scope*; *Stunt GP*; *Deus Ex*; *Evil Twin*; *Planet Of The Apes*; *F1 WGP II*; *Vanishing Point*; *Virtua Tennis*

**Prescreen focus** The team behind *Metal Gear Solid 2* tells all; **Edge** sees Liquid RTS *Battle Realms*; the *7 Blades* team talks about the influence of cinema in videogames

**Prescreen special Edge** reports on how PlayStation2, PlayStation, Dreamcast, PC and N64 fared at the Electronic Entertainment Expo

**Testscreen** *Vagrant Story*; *Colin McRae Rally 2.0*; *Excitebike 64*; *In Cold Blood*; *Daikatana*; *Super Runabout*; *Samba de Amigo*

#86 JULY 2000



**News** **Edge** reports on Sony's repackaged and upgraded PlayStation, PSOne; Dolphin and Game Boy Advance news leaks prior to SpaceWorld 2000; Namco and Sega unveil new coin-ops; Windows Games Developer Conference report; PS2 hard disk drive revealed

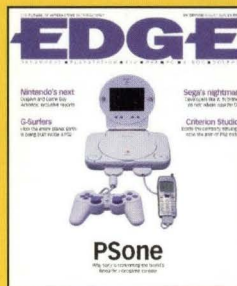
**Prescreen** *Malice*; *Cosmic Smash*; *Slashout*; *Virtua Athlete 2K*; *Ultimate Fighting Challenge*; *Driver 2*; *Insane*; *Aerowings 2*; *Onimusha*

**Prescreen focus** *Infestation*; *Zone Of The Enders*; *G-Surfers*

**Testscreen** *Vampire*; *Legend of Mana*; *Chase The Express*; *MoHo*; *Mr. Driller*; *Dragon Valor*; *Front Mission 2*

**Features** Criterion's Creations – **Edge** talks to the middleware men; The House That EA Built – through the keyhole at the new EA HQ; Ever Decreasing Circles – Sega Dreamcast past, present and future

#87 AUGUST 2000



**News** The trouble with PlayStation2 – developers tell all; Microsoft restructures Euro X-Box team; Sega opens net@ areas in Tokyo arcades; publishers face financial slump; NTL's service heralds iTV gaming

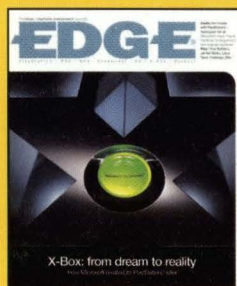
**Prescreen** *No One Lives Forever*; *Star Trek: Invasion!*; *Aiken's Artifact*; *Red*; *Wipeout Fusion*; *Gran Turismo 2000*; *ISS*; *Mr Driller 2*; *MGS2*

**Prescreen focus** *TimeSplitters*

**Testscreen** *Jet Set Radio*; *Virtua Tennis*; *Deus Ex*; *Legend Of Dragoon*; *TOCA World Touring Cars*; *Grand Prix 3*; *Shutokou Battle 2*; *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike*; *Diablo 2*; *Infestation*; *Spider-Man*; *Kiss Psycho Circus*; *Carmageddon TDR 2000*; *Vib Ribbon*; *Ray Crisis*

**Features** *Playing Cards* – **Edge** joins coders on 3D hardware tests at WDGC; *Territorial Advantage* – how games are tailored for different audiences; the X-Box story; the new language of videogaming

#88 SEPTEMBER 2000



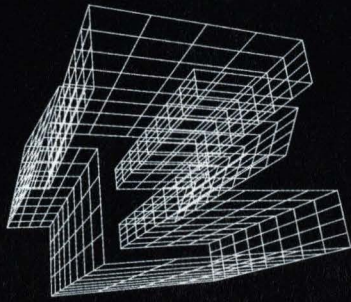
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Animators x 2	Scotland		
Artist x 2	North East		
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Artist	Midlands		
Lead Artist	West		
3D Animator x 3	West		
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3D Artist	Midlands		
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1 Lead Artist	Open		
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Scotland	to £30K		
Scotland	to £24K		
North	to £35K		
London	to £25K		
South Coast	to £22K		
London	to £25K		
South Coast	Open		
North West	to £25K		
Midlands	to £25K		
South West	to £18K		
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Animators x 2	Scotland	to £22K	602
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Lead Artist	London	Open	590
Artist	Midlands	to £25K	579
Lead Artist	West	to £35K	569
3D Animator x 3	West	to £35K	568
3D Artists x 11	Midlands		
3D Artist	Midlands		
2.5K	London		
1 Lead Artist	Open		
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Animators	North West		
to £30K	532		
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to £30K	531		
Midlands	to £35K		
Scotland	to £30K		
Scotland	to £30K		
Scotland	to £24K		
North	to £35K		
London	to £25K		
South Coast	to £22K		
London	to £25K		
South Coast	Open		
North West	to £25K		
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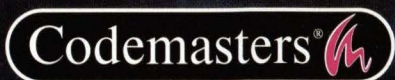
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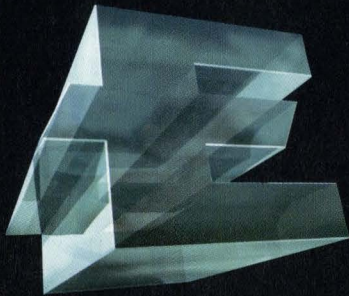
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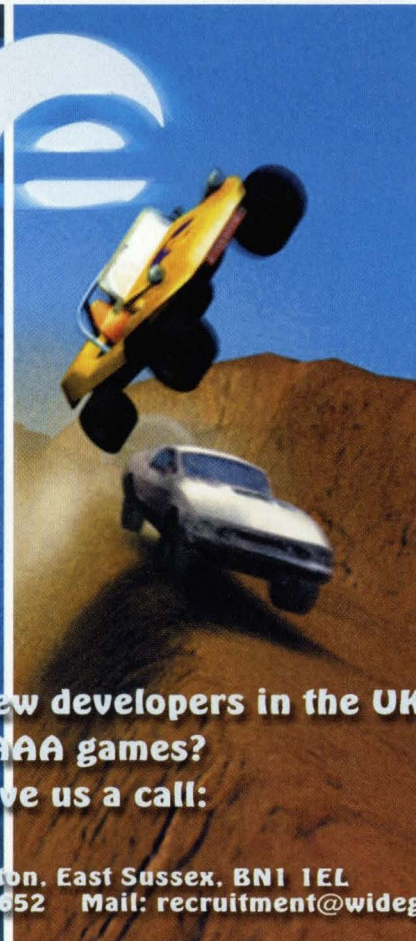
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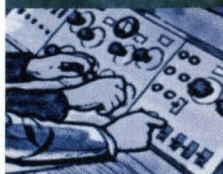
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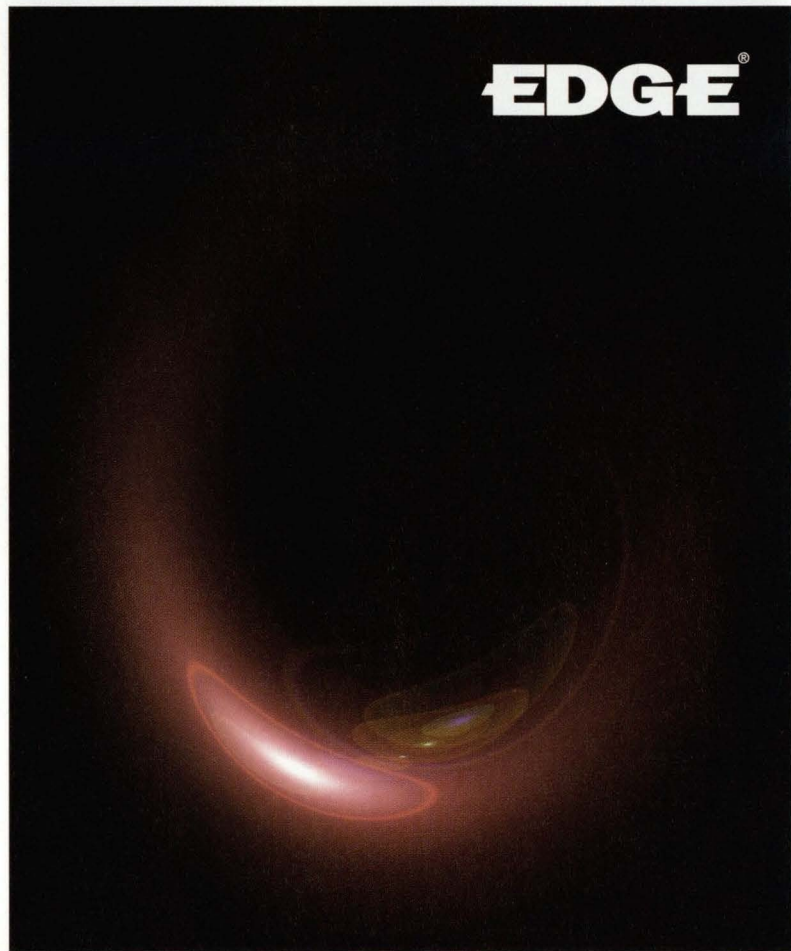
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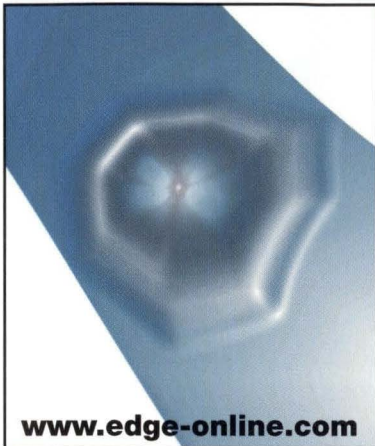
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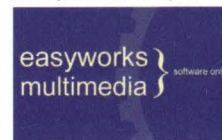
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## Middleware on top

Cross-platform development proves a boon for Criterion's *RenderWare3*

Criterion technical director Adam Bilyard



RenderWare 3

One particular piece of tittle-tattle currently doing the rounds features a large US publisher, which, after letting its in-house team fiddle with PlayStation2, swiftly switched the target platform of its next two AAA-licensed games to Dreamcast. Hard to believe, maybe, but the key point the bar-room raconteurs fail to mention is that the unnamed monolith's decision rested not on the complexity of the Sony machine's parallel processors per se, but the timescale required to get the specific titles to market.

This is a scenario that isn't lost on **Adam Bilyard**, Criterion Software's technical director. "I think people now recognise that you can have the best game ever but if it's six months late,

you're screwed. Getting stuff out on time is a big part of development these days," he says, a big grin playing across his face.

The reason for his happy demeanour is clear. The upshot of an unstable transitional period of the games industry cycle combined with the drive towards multiple-platform development has been an explosion in demand for the Guildford-based middleware vendor's *RenderWare3* package. "I just don't think people realise there are shitloads of titles using *RenderWare3*," Bilyard says. It's currently being used to create games in more than 170 studios worldwide.

Criterion has certainly come a long way since the painful learning curve of *RenderWare2*. "*RenderWare3* doesn't share a single line of code with the previous versions," he explains, ruefully. "We threw the whole thing away and started again." But the results speak for themselves. While many developers would rather express a preference for *FIFA* over *ISS* than admit to using middleware, some of the biggest games publishers have signed on Criterion's dotted line. Deals announced so far include Interplay and UbiSoft. The first *RenderWare*-developed PlayStation2 titles are shipping in Japan from studios such as ASCII and Jaleco.

The greatest coup has been the support of Japanese giant Konami, which is using *RenderWare3* in all its Japanese studios, with the notable exception of Hideo Kojima and his *Metal Gear Solid 2* team. "I remember when we were in Tokyo and we had simultaneous demos running on PlayStation2, PC and Dreamcast," recalls Bilyard. "I think then Konami saw the writing on the wall. And while there's always room for the \$20m blockbuster, that's not what it's all about. The meat-and-potato stuff is about not arsing around trying to reinvent the wheel. At the end of the day that's a compelling argument."

It's particularly compelling with some publishers only allowing developers nine months to turn a title around. With the ever-present opportunity of content convergence,

this is a situation that is only likely to get worse. "Everyone talks about convergence, and it is going to happen," says Bilyard. "You've got more outlets – it may be consoles, it may be digital TV, and it really doesn't work to say you are going to spend 18 months on a game."

He does caution, however, that *RenderWare* shouldn't be viewed as a magical black box that can effortlessly swap code between platforms. "It absolutely isn't just press a button and out pops a Dreamcast version," he says. Even if an API could compile code completely unchanged between another platforms, it wouldn't be a good thing. Developers should always play to the strengths of a platform. For PlayStation2 this obviously means more polygons, whereas for Dreamcast it could mean more textures, or transparency layers.

"*RenderWare* does simplify the process a great deal, though," he says. "I think people will be pleasantly surprised once they get something going on one system to realise that it won't be a nightmare to bring it over to another platform."



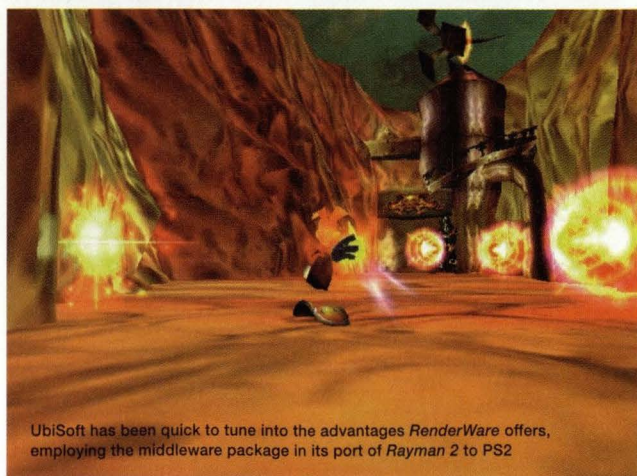
URL  
[www.cls.com](http://www.cls.com)  
[www.renderware.com](http://www.renderware.com)

### Ray of light

The highest-profile game using the cross-platform qualities of *RenderWare3* is the PlayStation2 version of UbiSoft's limless cutie *Rayman 2*, officially titled *Rayman 2: Revolution*. "UbiSoft really understands what the issues are," says Bilyard. "There's no doubt it could port the game without *RenderWare*, but why would it chose to do something that would take two years when it has a very strong brand and a proven game concept ready to go?"

The game itself is an update of the PC and Dreamcast game that has already been released, featuring additional and larger levels, more enemies, and refined graphics and lighting. The title is scheduled to be released the week after PlayStation2 launches in Europe.

"It's no good showing people spinning teapot demos," Bilyard explains. "The thing that impresses engineers is showing them their proprietary formats running in *RenderWare*. UbiSoft have been pretty successful in moving all their assets into a *RenderWare* form." The result is *Rayman 2* up and running on PlayStation2 within months, not years. As Bilyard himself admits, "It's *Rayman 2*, running on *RenderWare*. It's a bit eerie!"



UbiSoft has been quick to tune into the advantages *RenderWare* offers, employing the middleware package in its port of *Rayman 2* to PS2



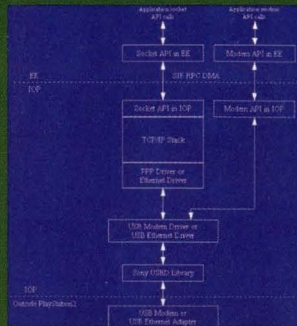
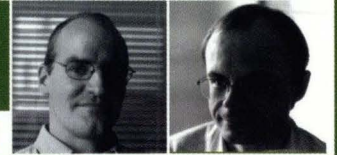
A number of Japanese development houses have adopted *RenderWare3*, and have already started shipping titles



# PS2 Bristol fashion

SN Systems' dev tools bring online capabilities to PS2

SN Systems CEOs Andy Beveridge and Martin Day

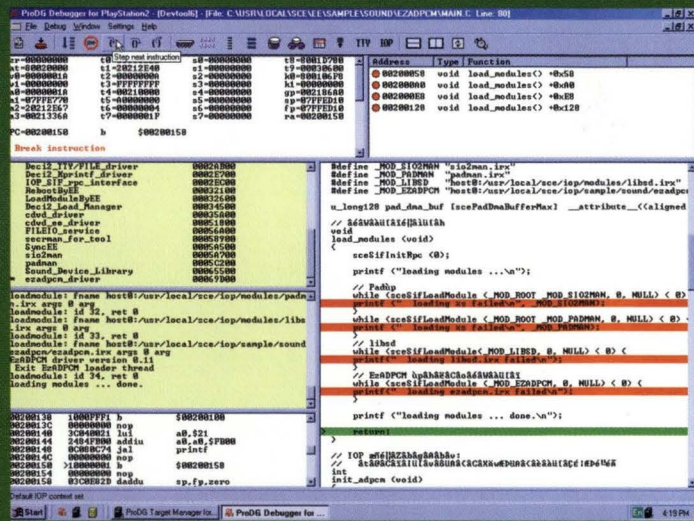


When the first batch of black boxes marked 'T-1000 TOOL', left Sony HQ, the obvious delivery locations would have been 'Derby, Core' or 'Newcastle, Reflections'. But instead 'Bristol, SN Systems' was top of the PlayStation2 dev kit list. Relatively unknown outside the industry, within it the reputation of this small tools specialist is second to none. It has already sold its *ProDG* Windows-based PlayStation2 development tools to more than 100 studios in multiples ranging from a few units into the hundreds.

"Sony has been encouraging from the very beginning," says **Andy Beveridge**, one of the company's directors. "Even before they launched their own *Linux* tools, they made it quite clear that they wanted us to do *Windows* tools, and they expected most developers to work on *Windows*."

This is a gap in the market SN Systems has been happy to fill for hardware manufacturers throughout the ten years of its existence. Back in the days of the Saturn, more than 70 per cent of western Saturn development took place using SN Systems' tools, which weren't approved by Sega.

Unsurprisingly, for anyone who knows anything about PlayStation2's architecture, a lot of time is being spent on the co-processor vector

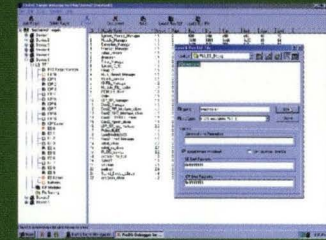


Bristol-based SN Systems has built a formidable reputation within the industry, and enjoys an excellent relationship with Sony

units (VUs). "We're trying to extend the basic debugging code," says **Martin Day**, SN Systems' other director. "The problem is that if you debug the VU by going through the instructions, it can behave differently to if it runs straight through."

"The view early on was that the VUs were pretty much undebuggable," says Beveridge. "The more we've had the change to play with the hardware, the more ideas we've had."

Another area to be looked at is adding profiling performance analysis functions. "One of the keys to getting the performance out of PlayStation2 is making sure all the components – the CPU, the VUs, and the graphics chips – are all working at the same time and you're not getting a



bottleneck anywhere," Day explains.

With more complex consoles released at a more regular rate, the company's workload keeps growing. Beveridge estimates that it took five or six times as much work to complete the PlayStation2 development tools compared to the original console. Dolphin, Game Boy Advance and X-Box will all be supported, however.

"There are some possibilities with X-Box," says Day. "We're talking to Microsoft. They think everyone will be happy with *DevStudio* [Microsoft's development tools], but we think there's some stuff we can do, especially in the graphics chip debugging."

The only black cloud on the horizon, and the reason behind the decision not to support Dreamcast, is born of success. "We have more work than we can shake a stick at," Beveridge says. "We just have problems recruiting people."

URL  
[www.snsys.com](http://www.snsys.com)

## PlayStation2 wired

One of the most interesting pieces of code SN Systems has released is its PlayStation2 TCP/IP stack. This standalone piece of middleware allows developers to create online multiplayer content.

"It was a bit speculative, really. When we started we didn't know what Sony's plans were," explains Martin Day. "We knew they had broadband access but we didn't know if they were going to provide modem access or a TCP/IP stack. It's working out well because Sony have told us they are happy for us to go ahead and do modems and USB-based Ethernet adapters as well."

Two thirdparty companies are already known to be preparing to release USB modems to online gaming. It's expected that the stripped-down feature set of the modems will make them cheap enough to be bundled with games, as well. And with Sony unwilling to make any announcements about narrowband connectivity, developers can use the technology any way they wish, "They could connect two PlayStation2s back to back or connect them through the Internet, or connect them to a server on the Internet," says Day. "We provide a totally generic TCP/IP stack. They could have games which are PlayStation2 or even have a server that will allow PlayStation2 and PC games or Dreamcast to play together."



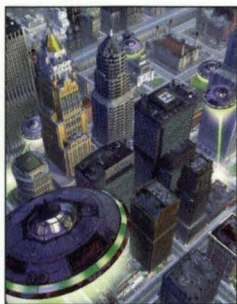
# Power to the people

Expect better mods and levels thanks to Discreet's *gMAX*

Discreet's developer of software Jeff Yates



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*3D Studio Max* has become an industry standard. *gMAX* will be a stripped-down version

The gap between professional game developers and prosumers has been narrowing, thanks to the sophistication of the tools available to the budding moddists. But at the recent Siggraph expo, Discreet removed all the barriers with the announcement it will be releasing a stripped-down version of its industry-standard modelling package *3D Studio Max*. Named *gMAX*, the free, 30Mb download will enable gamers to generate their own content for games created with *3D Studio Max* and which support *gMAX*.

Jeff Yates, Discreet's director of software development, explains: "The move to *gMAX* is a clear decision to stay focused on what we know and love to do – creating tools for game content developers and to continue to stay supportive of value-added developers."

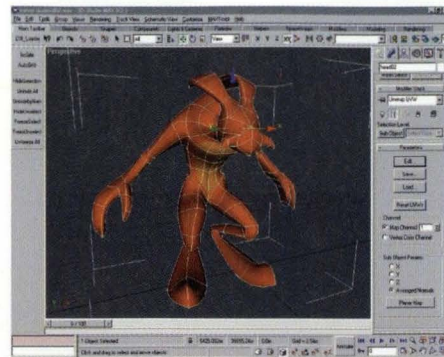
Game developers will be able to license the rights to use *gMAX* and ship what are being referred to as 'game packs', which consist of plug-ins and scripts, with their games. Players will then be able to

create their own levels and characters using *gMAX*. They will even be able to sell content on the Net without having to play a licence fee to Discreet. "We hope that something like 'eBay' for games content could grow out of the *gMAX* community," says Yates.

Compared to existing editing tools such as id's *Quake* editor *QERadiant*, *gMAX* will offer amateur designers a more stable, well-documented and supported package. It also has a lot more functionality, including 3D polygon modelling, animations, scripting, modifier stacks and more viewing and manipulation tools than have been available previously.

"In investigating the concept, we've realised that there are some very cool features in level editing applications that we should have been thinking about a while ago," says Yates. As a proof of concept exercise, Discreet is experimenting with implementing *QERadiant*-style brush techniques on top of the *gMAX* core, which will be based on the forthcoming release of *3D Studio Max 4*. It has already demonstrated import/export compatibility with *Quake III*, and another early adopter for the technology will be Microsoft's perennial favourite, *Flight Simulator*.

An SDK for developers will follow the spring release of *3D Studio Max 4*, with the consumer download expected to go live in autumn 2001. The first *gMAX*-enabled games are expected to ship for Christmas.



It will be possible to create content for games created with *3D Studio Max* and which support the *gMAX* package

## URL

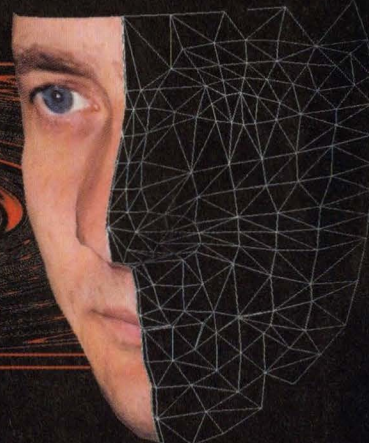
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## Running *gMAX*

The minimum PC specification needed to use *gMAX* will be a 266MHz machine with 64Mb of RAM, running *Windows 98*, *2000* or *NT*, which is the same spec that will be required to run *3D Studio Max 4*. A 3D graphics card will not be strictly required, as *3D Studio Max* supports the Heidi software graphics driver, but having one will obviously speed up working processes. Most cards support *3D Studio Max*, with nVidia's GPU cards being the preferred option.



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# The new shape of Emotion

Sony reveals the scope of its ambition with the massively parallel GScube

SONY



Siggraph attendees were treated to rendered footage from the forthcoming 'Final Fantasy' movie in realtime, courtesy of Sony's GScube

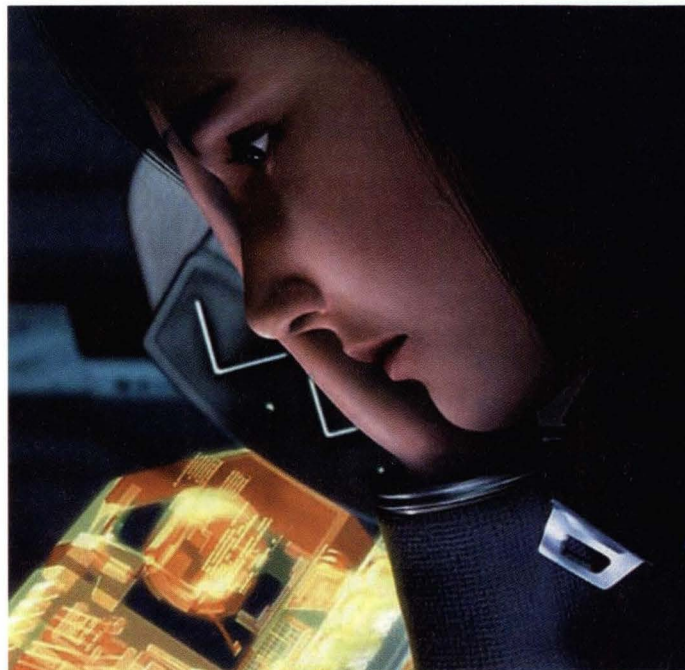


The all-singing, all-dancing *RenderWare* package had 'Antz' running on GScube

With Ken Kutaragi in attendance, Sony continued to unveil more pieces of its plan for the entertainment space with the demonstration of its graphics visualiser, GScube, at Siggraph 2000. Consisting of 16 PlayStation2 Emotion Engine units and 16 enhanced versions of the Graphics Synthesiser rendering processors, GScube is designed to bring the realtime rendering speeds of the games industry to film production.

Ten times more powerful than a single PlayStation2, the prototype box is the forerunner of development tools that will be ten times more powerful again. As demonstrated at the show, GScube is already close to possessing the capacity to render in realtime CGI scenes which, using standard practices, are taking several hours to complete per frame. At Siggraph, it rendered scenes from the Dreamworks movie 'Antz' and footage from Square's forthcoming 'Final Fantasy' movie in realtime, running at a resolution of 1920x1080 at 60fps. Such is the quality of the output that it was beyond the interlaced scan of the digital HDTV standard, and so had been shown on newly developed Sony high-definition monitors. A full commercial version of GScube is expected to be rolled out before the end of the year.

According to **Adam Bilyard**, Criterion Software's technical director, the key to programming GScube will be load-balancing the 16 parallel processors. And as Criterion's



GScube features 16 PlayStation2 and 16 enhanced Graphics Synthesiser rendering processors – the key to its processing apparently lies in load-balancing the components

*RenderWare3* package was used as the viewer for the 'Antz' demonstration, Bilyard is one of the few people to have begun to get to grips with Sony's latest box of tricks. "After two-and-a-half weeks of very hard work we had something working that was pushing about 65 million triangles per second," he says. Criterion expects to have an optimised version of *RenderWare3* ready for GScube's launch.

"It's a fascinating machine in that you can load-balance by doing tile rendering as well as pipeline rendering," Bilyard explains. "Within the 16 processors you can configure them differently, or do all sorts of things – such as daisy-chaining down the frame buffer."

Not a standalone box, GScube needs to be fed information from a broadband server, such as the SGI Origin, which was used at Siggraph. Not content with the realtime rendering applications, Sony is also pushing this combination as a broadband distribution and projection solution for digital cinemas.

## URL

[www.gscube.com](http://www.gscube.com)  
(still under construction)

## Cube power

### CPU

Clock frequency: 294.912 MHz  
Memory size: 2Gb  
Memory bus bandwidth: 50.3Gb/s  
Floating point performance:  
97.5GFLOP  
3D CG geometric transformation:  
1.04Gpolygons/sec

### Graphics

Clock frequency: 147.456MHz  
VRAM size: 512Mb  
VRAM bandwidth: 755Gb/s  
Pixel fill rate: 37.7Gb/s  
Max polygon drawing rate:  
1.2Gpolygons/sec

### Misc

Host interface transfer rate: 2.4Gb/s

Dimensions 424v424x424mm

Weight 48Kg



# Optimising DC online

Sega offers French-developed package to developers for free

Sega associate director Serge Plagnol



NexGen Software



The TCP/IP stacks used for *ChuChu Rocket!* were optimised for a browser, not a game

URL  
[www.nexgen-software.com](http://www.nexgen-software.com)

Still limited to offering western gamers *ChuChu Rocket!*, Sega Europe is finally sorting out its console's battered online reputation. Following a worldwide licensing deal with NexGen Software, developers will be able to use its low-level TCP/IP stack, called NexGenIP, to create online content – and they won't have to play a licence fee to use the code, either.

"NexGenIP is carefully layered to offer the exact features developers need," explains **Serge Plagnol**, Sega's associate director for developers' technical support. The TCP/IP stack formats data to be sent over the Internet, while NexGenIP has been designed to minimise the overheads for the processor. This is clearly a big issue for consoles, as CPU usage is a key factor determining the speed of online games.

"Our objective is to offer developers one of the most complete embedded

TCP/IP stack which is perfectly tuned to exploit our optimised architecture," outlines Plagnol. "The stack also offers features that make online game logic prototyping easier. This is a great time saver while developing network code."

Although Sega has developed its own networking API, KAGE, this was a high-level API. "KAGE, like any high-level API, requires a TCP/IP stack such as NexGenIP to send data over the Internet with the highest performance," says Plagnol.

In contrast, *ChuChu Rocket!*'s online mode uses the TCP/IP stacks that were developed for the Dreamcast browser. But because this was optimised for a browser and not a game, the placing of arrows in *ChuChu Rocket!* suffers from an embarrassing lag of a second.

Plagnol confirms that firstparty and thirdparty Dreamcast titles will be released

this year using NexGen's code, but refuses to name specific titles. Sega's online release schedule includes *Quake III*, *KISS Psycho Circus* and *Half-Life*.

NexGen, a 16-strong company based in France, specialises in designing embedded Internet Protocols for a range of different applications. Previous clients include Ericsson, ARM and Dassault. It has developed online products ranging from simple point-to-point protocols to mail utilities and Ethernet connectivity.

Designed to be portable across a wide range of CPUs and OSs, the underlying TCP/IP stack was only recently optimised for Dreamcast's Hitachi SH4 CPU. "The resulting port is probably the best one we have done," comments **Jean-Paul Medina**, NexGen's president.

"It manages to improve both the portability and the performance."

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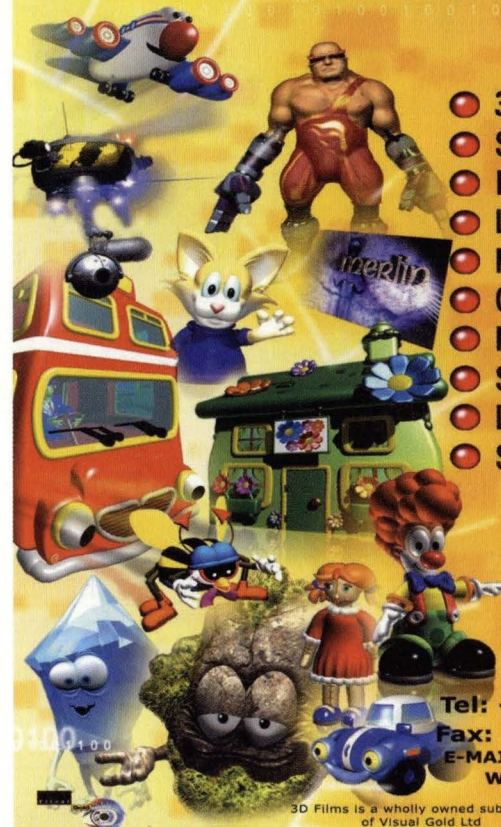


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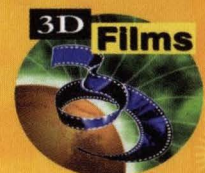
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# Diary of a videogame

The importance of E3 can never be overestimated by a developer

Brain In A Jar diary, part one  
by managing director Matthew Gabriel



Brain In A Jar is composed of Ferrari nuts, but even as the team got to work on a demo for a game featuring its favourite motor, working out which publisher held the rights proved tough

The Codeshop diary now focuses on two projects from two developers. Brain In A Jar's next instalment will be in E91

We have made it at last. It started with a dream, but now we have a team, a contract with a publisher and development is underway. So, how did we get here?

Having worked together on previous products and having had numerous conversations about starting our own development company, Oli Wright, Carl Dalton and I formed Brain in a Jar in December 1998. It seems so long ago now, and looking back we have been to Hell and back several times already.

We had already decided that we wanted to create a racing game, but it was the dream of developing a Ferrari racing game in particular that kept us going through the low points. We are all complete Ferrari nuts – always

**'We had already decided that we wanted to create a racing game, but it was the dream of developing a Ferrari racing game in particular that kept us going'**

have been and always will be. I can't explain what it is, but I guess it's much like supporting your football team. The three of us dedicate every other weekend to Formula One, even getting up in the middle of the night to watch races on the other side of the world. So we set ourselves the task of not only developing a convincing demo, but also of tracking down who held the Ferrari licence.

While Carl and Oli got down to work on our first demo, I spent my time talking to people, bringing an agent onboard and locating the publisher holding the licence. You would have thought the latter would be the easy part, but in fact it took us a long time – several publishers made noises suggesting they had it, but none of them would actually confirm.

By the time we had developed the first demo, we had started to use the services of an agent: Mark Cochrane from The Games Agency. On the strength of our first demo, Mark helped us set up meetings with several publishers. They were all very positive, but none would make any commitments – they wanted more. We had to develop the demo further.

Scraping together our final pennies, Oli and I headed off for E3

'99 armed with a new demo. We had some luck locating the Ferrari licence, as Mark had put us in contact with Alex Ward at Acclaim, and we thought – although we weren't sure – that it was the legitimate holder of the Ferrari licence. E3 proved successful, and our relationship with Acclaim was growing. I discussed possibilities with Rod Cousens over the following weeks and a plan was hatched. Rod loved what we had, and was willing to take a gamble on us, funding us to develop a more substantial demo over the next couple of months.

We developed the final demo with Ferrari in mind. Ferrari is about passion and history, and that is what we wanted to capture. It goes without saying that the demo had to prove we

were technically capable of creating a groundbreaking racing game, but that isn't enough to do justice to the Ferrari name, so we tried to incorporate the passion of Ferrari in the handling and style of the demo.

In September, a few days after ECTS '99, we presented our final demo to Acclaim. This was our big chance. The presentation went very well and we had most of the people in the office taking a look at what we had created. All were impressed and we felt confident. The next day I asked Rod whether we should be happy. "You should be ecstatic," he said. It looked liked we had got the deal, and the rest should be easy. Or so we thought.

Later in September, I went with Acclaim to the Tokyo Game Show, which was very impressive. (If you have the means, I would highly recommend it.) One night over dinner, Rod and I briefly discussed the terms of a deal, and these terms formed the basis of the development contract with Acclaim.

Now the hard bit: contract negotiations. My advice to anyone thinking about starting up is to make sure you have a good lawyer and a good accountant. They will cost you

money, but believe me it will be worth it ten times over. The contract negotiations seemed to take forever, but that is the nature of contracts. You don't spend your time arguing over the royalties or the advances, but over the small clauses that only come into effect if everything goes pear-shaped. It is annoying, as it doesn't feel that these things are important, but don't underestimate the importance of this side of the contract and don't underestimate how long it can take. Even with the best will of both parties, it can still take months. We actually signed around the time of E3 in May this year. It was during these seven months that we felt we were making frequent journeys to

Hell, although looking back it was both worth it and necessary.

So, once we were signed and money was coming in, we had to go out and get the most important thing a company can have: the team. We looked first at those people we had worked with before. We are great believers in small but good teams. We knew people who were good at what they did and would work well together. We made good offers to them and all accepted immediately. Luckily, Rik Ede from Dolby is a good friend of ours and his company is taking care of all our audio needs. Now we have a full team of eight people on board and development has begun. Our thanks to Chris Green, Craig Grounsell, Dean Burns, Nigel Kershaw, Bev Bright and Gamesound for joining us.

In fact I thank everyone who helped us get here, and wish all the best to anyone who is just starting on the road. Take the highs with the lows and have confidence in your abilities. Surround yourself with quality friends.

And the company name? Someone said they had always wanted to have a company called 'Brain in a Jar', and no one could think of a reason not to.



# The making of... Lords of



**L**ords of Midnight was truly a thing of beauty. Its icy wastes, craggy citadels and distinctive deep blue sky brought a dimension of style to the ZX Spectrum of 1984 which served to dignify, rather than trivialise, videogames. And, like all the games which alter the way we think about electronic entertainment, it wouldn't fit neatly into any given category. Strategy, RPG, text adventure – it was all of these and something quintessentially more. An independent universe which would leave a residual trace in the memory of all those

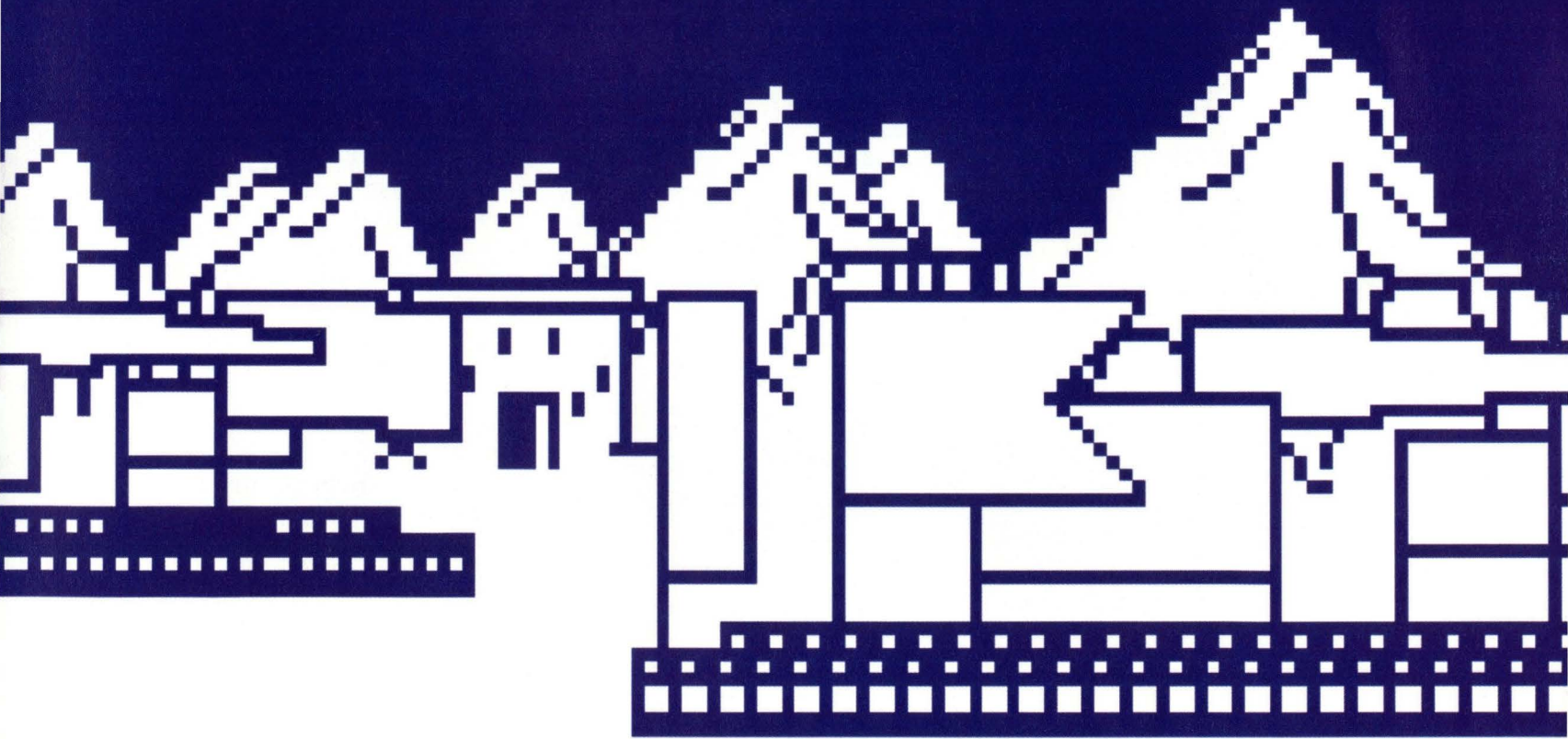
who traversed its furthest reaches.

The goal was straightforward: to overthrow the evil witchking, Doomdark, and restore stability to the land of Midnight. The execution was somewhat more complicated, as sole creator **Mike Singleton** explains: "I wanted to allow the player to explore and discover new places and new allies in a game environment that had the breadth and depth of a real country. The vital seeds were the map and the story; with those two elements finalised everything else very quickly fell into place."



# Midnight

Coder Mike Singleton breathed life into huge, convincing gameworld *Midnight*, stunning a generation of gamers in the process. **Edge** talks moonprinces, witchkings and cassette tapes with the man who fought the Spectrum – and won



Singleton admits to Tolkien's influence, yet *Midnight's* narrative certainly had its own power to captivate. Four characters were playable: Luxor the Moonprince; his son Morkin; Rorthron the Wise; and Corleth the Fey. Each character could be moved independently around the vast world, recruiting armies and battling creatures. Doomdark's own 250,000 Iceguard warriors were determined to hunt down and kill your men, and had the dreaded Ice Fear on their side – a terrible psychological power which could sap an army's motivation to fight.

However, the allies had two powerful weapons. Luxor owned the Moon Ring, which gave him powers of command and vision. This enabled him to direct all the other characters. Morkin, meanwhile, could totally resist the Ice Fear, giving him the opportunity to seek out and destroy the Ice Crown (Doomdark's power source) at the Tower of Doom in Ushgarak. In this way two strategies could be employed to win the game: the military campaign with Luxor, or the stealthy approach with Morkin.

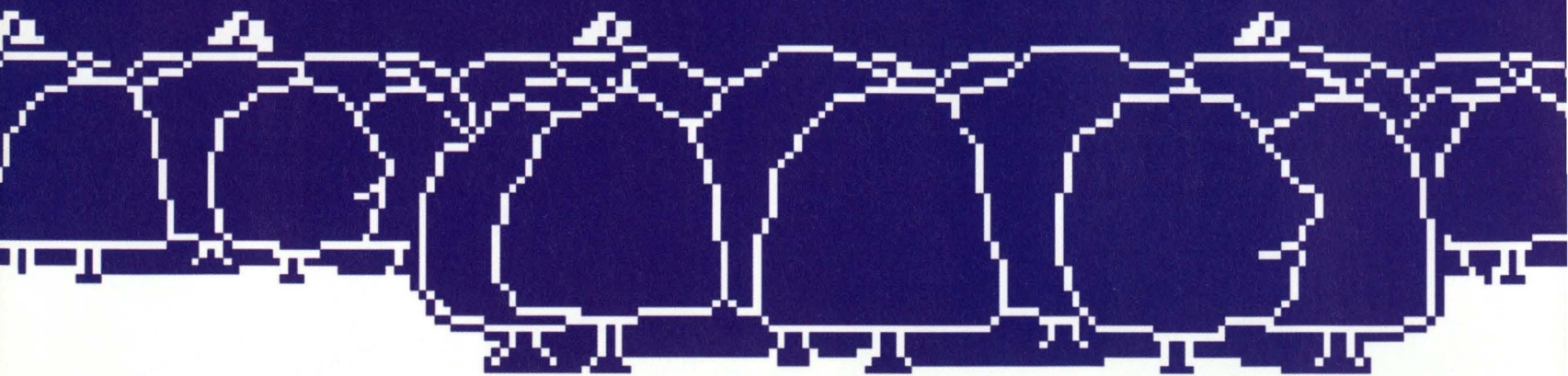
Singleton's vision was ambitious, and he

would have to apply his programming skills towards organising and calculating vast armies across a map consisting of 4,000 independent locations with 32,000 separate views. Though movement commands were simple enough (typing NE, E, SW, etc), the player would have to consider when to rest, when to recruit, and which terrain to attempt to negotiate. Each had a significant effect on the player's forces status. Interestingly, the adventure game *The Hobbit* provided the motivation for the technical intricacies. "It was one of the very first adventure games to

include pictures, and I was suitably impressed by it," says Singleton. "But two things struck me about the graphics. Firstly, although the cameos and landscapes were nice, they were purely decorative – they had absolutely zero function in the game. Secondly, it took ages for the graphics to be drawn, and I mean ages – not half a second or maybe a whole second, but one minute, maybe two."

The limitations of the Spectrum's 48K memory and difficulty in displaying colours would actually define *Midnight's* stark visuals and gameplay mechanics. "I described [to





## Luxor the Moonprince



He slew the wolves. Four hours of the day remain and Luxor is utterly invigorated. The Ice Fear is very mild. Luxor is utterly bold. He has with him the Moon Ring. He thinks again....

Luxor needed to be protected at all costs. Should he die then the Moon Ring would fall into the enemy's grasp, who would then control his armies

Beyond Software] my idea of 'landscaping' – 3D panoramas which would be composed and drawn realtime by scanning a map of the game world and using scaled graphics for each of the landscape features. The graphics were all drawn directly to screen using the graphics utilities I had written and were largely dictated by the limitations of the medium. I wanted all of the characters to be bright and colourful, in contrast to the uniformly blue-and-white landscape. But on the Spectrum, you can't colour individual pixels, you can only colour whole 8x8 pixel cells – a maximum of two colours per cell. This means that the characters had to be designed so that their colours fit to the cell boundaries, but also so that they don't end up looking like Lego bricks."

Due to *Midnight's* complexity, the project had to be meticulously planned from the start. "The real key was not to write the game first

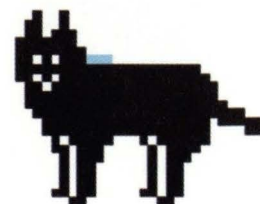
and then try to compress it, but rather to write the game in compressed form right from the word go. I knew the landscape graphics would take up a lot of memory, so the first couple of weeks were spent writing routines that used a specially modified form of run length encoding and decoding for these graphics, as well as some utilities in BASIC that would enable me to interface with a graphics tablet and automatically scale and then manually touch up the landscape features I had drawn."

Singleton was adamant that the game was not to be about merely wandering around and admiring the scenery. Much thought went into creating the characters and creatures to support the over-arching concept. Small details would prove to be significant once the player was submerged into the game world. "The data that the map had to store included landscape features, armies, place names, magical objects and creatures such as wolves, dragons, wild horses, skulkrin and trolls. Each of these was encoded with the absolute minimum number of bits," explains Singleton. "The creatures, for instance, were stored in just one bit per cell. That bit said whether there were creatures there or not. Then a number-scrambling routine told you which type of creature it was by scrunching up the map coordinates of the cell. Likewise, all the text in the game was tokenised using a one- or two-byte code per word, and the words referred to were further compressed by using only five bits per character."

Other technical headaches were to give Singleton more late nights. The 48K memory capacity was just too limited to contain all the

code. As Singleton stresses, every spare byte had to be conserved if Morkin and Luxor's quests were to run with any degree of success: "The code itself was kept manageable by using short subroutines for almost any piece of code that cropped up more than once. Nevertheless, it was only on the third rewrite of the code that I finally managed to fit everything in. By that stage you are reduced to expedients such as rearranging the order of subroutines so that a routine that calls another as its final call is instead placed immediately before the called routine. You can then remove the call instruction and the return from subroutine instruction, and allow the first routine to drop through into the second. This saves four whole bytes."

Dealing with ordering routines was commonplace in BASIC. More exacting still was dealing with the Spectrum's infamous storage medium – the cassette tape. "*Lords of Midnight* was designed, assembled and tested entirely on cassette tape, which was almost as slow to load as *Windows 2000* is to boot up your PC," recalls Singleton. "I still have a cardboard box at home full of 100 five-minute tapes which comprise the source code and the graphics of *Lords of Midnight* and all the back-ups and back-ups of back-ups. The code itself had to be split up in ten different segments, each with its own little tape, and each with its own declaration of variable and subroutine addresses from the other nine tapes (and all typed in by hand). So, each of the rewrites involved changing each of the ten segments, strictly in order, because the address changes in the first would have a knock-on effect through all







the subsequent segments. Things like that make you very careful with your back-ups and your labelling of tapes."

Terry Pratt at Beyond Software saw the game universe coming together and had great faith in the project. He organised a three-month teaser campaign in magazines, and when the game was finally released it was met with an 'ecstatic' response. The only negative feedback Singleton remembers was at the press launch for the game: "I'd been demoing the game to journalists all afternoon in the bowels of some club in London and we were about to start dismantling the equipment when Tony Takoushi, who in those days was a journalist, swayed in, somewhat the worse for wear after a very long liquid lunch. He staggered over, and after about 30 seconds of watching the game pronounced, 'Tha'sh a pile of shit', and immediately left. With that seal of approval, the game became an instant smash hit."

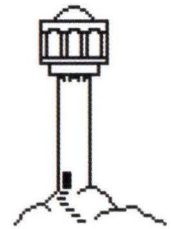
Very rapidly, the game began to attract a core of passionate gamers who would send fan mail concerned with the most trivial or groundbreaking detail of the game into the videogaming magazines of the time. "The thing that did surprise me was how quickly some people managed to beat Doomdark," admits Singleton. "In less than two weeks

someone had sent in a winning printout to Beyond (you could print out a scene-by-scene record of your game on the Spectrum's thermal printer). I had estimated at least a month or two. When I was testing the game it took me nine solid hours to gain a military victory against Doomdark, and I had all the maps and data to help me. We reckoned there must have been some fanatically dedicated people out there."

Singleton has spent most of his working life in the industry, bringing other well-respected titles into the world such as *Midwinter*. When asked if he preferred the self-sufficient days of 8bit coding to today's two year development cycles and publishing stresses, he expresses a complete disregard for nostalgia: "Would I rather be programming *Lords of Midnight* on a Spectrum or *G-Surfers* on a PlayStation2? Don't be silly. The new technology is even more exciting than the old was, even in its day. Our imaginations are still racing to catch up with what's possible now. There's so much more scope for creativity now. In five or six years' time, there will be categories of game no one's dreamed of."


The legacy of *Midnight* still lives on. *Doomdark's Revenge* (1984) pushed the Spectrum architecture even further with its

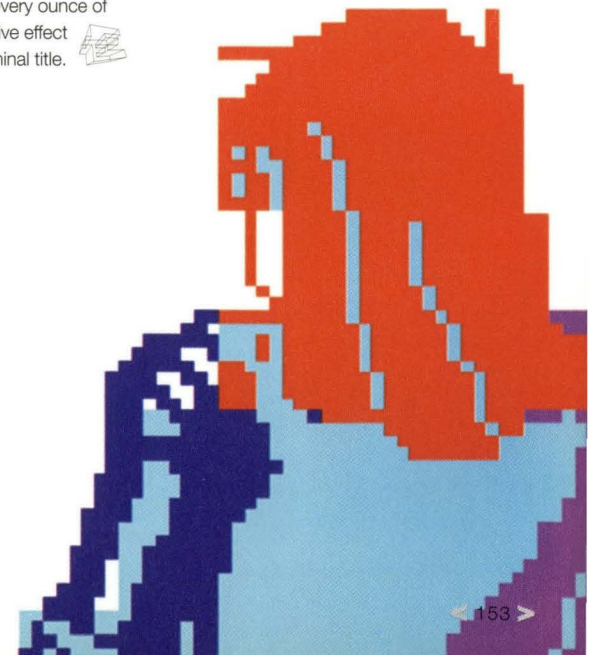
### Luxor the Moonprince



He has found guidance. A voice calls, "Looking for the Lord of Xajorkith, you must seek the Citadel of Xajorkith." It is dawn and Luxor is utterly invigorated. The Ice Fear is quite cold. Luxor is slightly afraid. He has with him the Moon

Doomdark could win in three ways: kill Morkin, kill Luxor, or capture the Citadel of Xajorkith, Luxor's base. Defending and attacking were both vital

48,000 panoramic views – one full screen for every byte – and *The Citadel* (1994) brought realtime voxel rendered landscapes to the PC. Plans are even afoot to bring the fourth instalment of the game to the new generation of consoles. But wasn't *Lords of Midnight* a shining example of creativity blossoming because of, not despite, hardware limitations? Some might argue that the PlayStation2 may never have every ounce of its power utilised to such creative effect as displayed in Singleton's seminal title. 



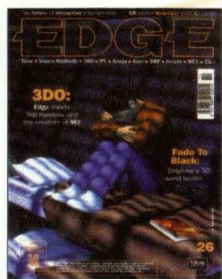


# RESET

Where yesterday's gaming goes to have a lie down

## reload

Examining gaming history from **Edge's** perspective, five years ago this month



Issue 26, November 1995

**Back in November** 1995, £3.50 bought you just under 60 pages of proper **Edge** editorial. (Perhaps that's why **E26's** cover star – one Conrad Hart – looked so thoroughly despondent, covering on a prison bed with a copy of the magazine discarded by his side.) But, a feature discussing the future of strategy games aside, at least a number of considered elements made it on to this meagre number, including yet more juice squeezed out of an apparently withering fruit known as The 3DO Company, and an interview with Sony's **Phil Harrison** to coincide with arrival of the first PAL PlayStations.

From 3DO's Redwood City HQ, **Edge's** writer reports that 'a major part of M2's future involves MPEG video... [which] is becoming increasingly important in games today'. Substitute 'potent realtime 3D rendering' into that assertion and 3DO may have been on to something.

Harrison, meanwhile, revealed that Sony's "biggest rival is apathy in the market". It would take that particular beast another five years to mature, of course.

An ECTS report led news, the show demonstrating just how serious a charge Sony was mounting. Things would never be the same again.

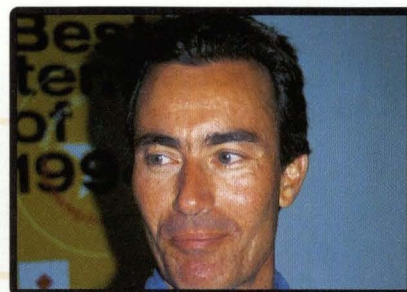
**DID THEY REALLY SAY THAT?**  
3DO's **Trip Hawkins**: "I don't believe anyone's going to dominate the market – it's going to be carved up." Yes, but what about the size of the biggest slice?

**DID EDGE REALLY SAY THAT?**  
From a caption in the *Fade To Black* review: 'Get the key, then do him'. From the review of *Bug!*: 'Graphically and sonically, *Bug!* is lovely'. Oh, how the magazine's vocabulary has changed over five short years.

**TESTSCREENS (AND RATINGS)**  
*Yoshi's Island* (SFC; 9/10), *Destruction Derby* (PlayStation; 7/10), *Fade To Black* (PC; 9/10), *Chrono Trigger* (SNES; 7/10), *Bug!* (Saturn; 6/10), *Zero Divide* (PlayStation; 7/10).



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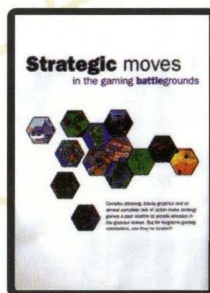


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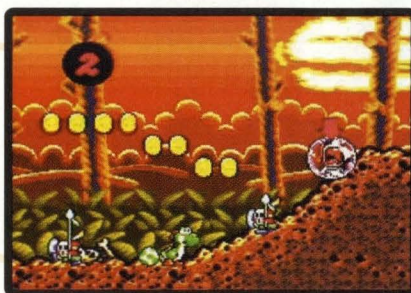
1. A fresh-faced Phil Harrison evangelises Sony's entry into the console hardware market
2. A slightly more cynical Trip Hawkins considers the future of 3DO
3. Philips finally finds its CD-i killer app in the form of Web browsing on your telly
4. Another of **Edge's** legendary (cough) genre features
5. *Yoshi's Story*
6. *Bug!*, a Saturn flop



3



4



5



6

## pixelperfect

The industry's favourites from yesteryear. This month, Rebellion's **Chris Kingsley** gets spacey



Predating *Elite*, *Star Raiders* was the first game to fully realise 3D space combat

**It must have** been about 1977 that I remember reading about the new Atari 800 in the Maplin Electronics Catalogue. The Atari 800 had a real keyboard and 16K RAM that could be upgraded to a massive 48K. It had great sound and astounding colour – it even had a 256-colour screen mode. What really caught my eye, though, was a game called *Star Raiders*, a 3D space game just like 'Star Wars'. It just sounded so cool.

For me, *Star Raiders* was the Atari 800's 'killer app'. It was the reason I wanted to get the computer, and the reason I nagged my mum and dad night and day. I convinced them it would be a great investment for my future. For once, it was true.

Just as I had hoped, it was 'Star Wars' in 3D – although there were no polygons. It used only sprites, or 'Player-Missile graphics', as Atari called them. The shots travelled in 3D, and when you destroyed an enemy you could fly through the debris.

There was even a 'real' starfield that gave a great sense of motion. The gameplay was great, too. There was action, but action that required skill and not just repetition. There was strategy, but it was in realtime. There was even resource management. And all this in 8K! I was hooked. *Star Raiders* made me want to make my own game instead of just playing others', a game that made me want to work out how they did it and do it myself, but even better.





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# FAQ

Ste Pickford

Managing director, ZedTwo Game Design Studio

**H**aving trodden the path from 8bit hobbyist artist to big cheese of one of the north west's most respected codeshops, **Ste Pickford** is heading up ZedTwo's next-generation development drive.

## What was the first videogame you played?

I have really vivid memories of playing both *Space Invaders* and *Sprint* in the late '70s. I remember at first thinking it was a really strange concept, to put money in a machine to play a game in which there was no chance of winning any money back (all arcade machines I'd seen up until then were one-armed bandits and the like), to pay just for the pleasure of playing.

## What was the first computer you owned?

It was a long time before I owned a computer. My brother John had a ZX-81, then a Spectrum, then Amstrad 464s and 6128s, Tatungs, etc. I think my first may have been an Atari ST.

## What was the first thing you ever created on a computer?

My brother wrote little art programs on both the

## “Publishers only want copies of last year's hits. How many more karting games do we need? How many more FIFAs?”

ZX-81 and Spectrum, and, using these, both of us had 'computer-generated' pictures printed in *2000AD*, so that was the first published work.

## What was your first job in the industry?

My first industry job was a freelance graphics job, while I was still at school (aged 14 or 15). I did the graphics for Amstrad *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* for the fantastic sum of £50. I was really excited, until I found out I only had four colours per level, rather than 16, so the results were pretty poor. I was proud of the loading screen, though, which also went on the C64 version. The first original game I worked on would have been either *Zub* or *Feud*. Both games were designed by John, but I designed the look of them.

## What's your favourite game ever?

*Mario 3* on the NES. It's hard to explain exactly why, but we played the Japanese version, which we got as soon as it came out, so we had no instructions, and no tips or hints on the signs. We had to work everything out for ourselves, which led to a wonderful feeling of discovery. We didn't know that Mario could fly until we'd been playing the game for about two months, so it was an incredible surprise to find that there was

a whole section in the clouds above the first level.

I think far too much is given away in games now. The instructions within the games spell everything out so clearly that there is no sense of discovery, and secrets and walkthroughs are often published (even officially) before the game is even released, which is a real shame.

## What was the last game you played?

The last game I finished was Game Boy *Wario 3*, which was great. The gameplay was split into lovely short chunks, so I could play a level on the bus to work in the morning, and always finish it before I arrived. I'm playing *Perfect Dark* at the moment, which I'm enjoying more than I expected, considering that I hated *GoldenEye*.

## What's your favourite movie, book and album of all time?

Movie: probably 'Goodfellas' – a movie-making master class. Book: 'Gravity's Rainbow' by Thomas Pynchon – mind-blowing. As far as albums go, I think I've probably listened to the first Stone Roses album more than any other record ever.

## Which game would you most like to have worked on?

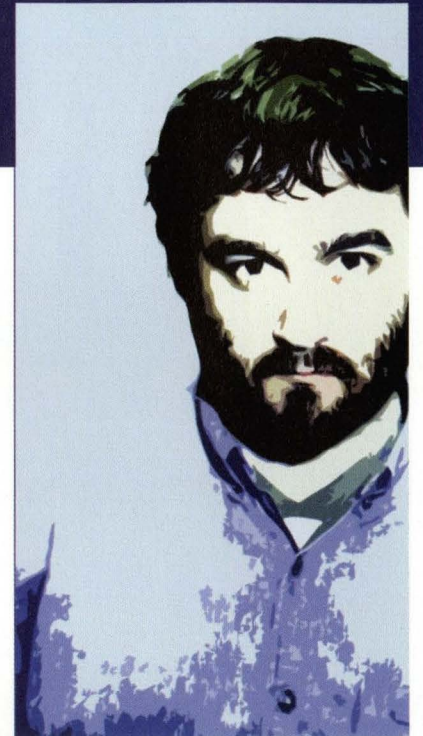
I can't say any of my favourites (*Mario 3*, *Yoshi's Island*, *Zeldas*, etc) 'cos I might have messed them up. I'm quite happy with what we're doing right now at Zed Two, really.

## Of all the games you've been involved with in the past, what's your favourite?

Right now, *Wetrix*, because it's the game where we've had the least publisher interference, and had to make the fewest compromises, so it's a finished product that most closely resembles our original ideas.

## Is there anything in particular that annoys you about the industry?

The fact that it's next to impossible to do original games, and that publishers only want copies of last year's hits. How many more karting games do we need? How many more FPSs which describe a slightly different shape of gun as an 'innovative new feature'? How many more FIFAs? I'm disappointed that after some exciting early years, there has been little or no development of gameplay ideas of late. All the focus has been on minor tweaks and



modifications to existing game concepts, masquerading as originality.

## What is the most expensive item that you have ever bought with a bonus?

*Bonus?* Actually, I did get a few grand bonus when *Ken Griffey* on the SNES started selling, and I used that for the deposit on my house.

## Which new platform are you most looking forward to?

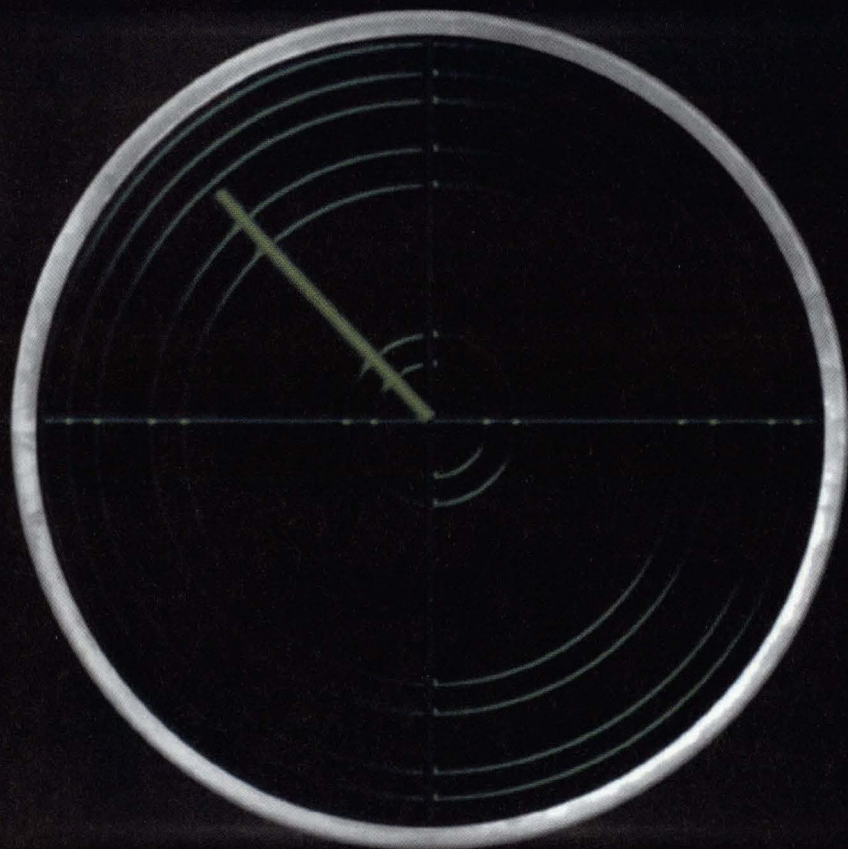
GameBoy Advance, mostly. We're not really bothered about platforms, to be honest. We like games, and tend to get excited about game ideas, rather than the hardware they are implemented on. We'd come up with great game ideas for digital watches if somebody would pay us. It's exciting to have better graphics and sound available with which to realise your ideas, but for a small company like us, without unlimited resources, the newer platforms mean more money spent on development. More money spent on development means a greater urgency to make that money back, which means less risks. This of course means more 'safe' clones of last years hits, and less 'risky' original games. More karting games, in fact.

## What's your take on mobile-phone gaming?

My gut feeling is that it is nothing more than a fad right now, a buzzword used to separate investors from their money. Sure, I'd play a game on a phone in my hand (I play my Game Boy), but I wouldn't pay for it. Maybe when the screens are better. Then again, I'm quite prepared to be completely wrong.



# INCOMING!



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**I read with** great interest 'X-Box – The Story So Far' in **E88**, and I've drawn several conclusions.

Microsoft wants to be the new Sony of the console business. The only problem is, I don't think the X-Box will ever be as revolutionary as the PlayStation. I am not talking technical specs. I am talking about cultural phenomenon (or is that saturated marketing campaigns?). Like it or loathe it, and not withstanding the current (perceived) difficulties with the PS2, no one can deny that Sony has, to a large degree, created massmarket appeal to what was once a niche area. In other words, the PlayStation has street cred and loyalty base. The PS2 will be a success, even if it is technically inferior to a would-be rival that is one year (at least) away from release.

The way the project was initiated has planted a seed of doubt in my mind. Bill Gates had to be sold the idea and nearly balked at the prospect X-Box not being PC-compatible. It suggests to me that once the big money has to be spent on manufacturing and marketing, we shall get a true indication of the Microsoft's commitment to the project. The X-Box is so different from Microsoft's core business that with the current legal problems in the US it may not make the X-Box a top priority.

The main thing that stuck in my mind from the article was the very last paragraph. It was stated that the games situation was unclear and the X-Box creators were only too aware that this was the most important issue. In the past few months several developers have announced that they have ceased working on the Dreamcast. This does not bode well if a relatively established format is losing out to a machine (PlayStation2) that has not yet been released in all territories.

**Raymond Russell, via email**

Microsoft is doling out \$500m in its bid to build a PS2 beater, which sums up just how serious its views this new avenue. More importantly, the X-Box team is a bunch of gamers, not suits.

**With regard to** your question in **E87** as to why the other half of the European Dreamcast owners haven't signed up to the Dream Arena service yet, it's because they can't. I live in Holland, one of the most densely cabled countries in the world, yet it is impossible to use a Dreamcast for going online. Sega keeps making all kinds of promises, but the fact of the matter is that Dutch Dreamcast owners have paid for a modem they can't use. Furthermore, it is almost impossible to find a Dreamcast in any high-street store in Holland today. Chains like Dixons have already slashed the price of a Dreamcast by half. Are these the signs of a healthy competitor in the next-generation market?

The sad thing is, I really like Sega. Games like *Jet Grind Radio* and *Chu-Chu Rocket* look really appealing, but if I, as a resident of one of the ten richest countries in the world, can't find a Dreamcast and go online with it, that surely must say a lot about Sega's chances for the future.

**Maarten Brands, via email**

It certainly seems that the scale of the Dreamcast online element was underestimated. The old 'six billion players' claim looks even shakier today.

**As I read** through your article 'Ever Decreasing Circles?' in **E87**, it occurred to me that Sega ought to do the following, regarding the Internet connectivity issue: build a 'universal modem' – a replaceable unit that offers the following:

1. A 'normal' modem performance, offering a 56K minimum, preferably more.

2. A LAN 10/100mBit Ethernet port.

3. Optionally, a USB port for future compatibility.

The modem should be able to be configured with an existing ISP connection, since most people already have an Internet connection at home, and are reluctant to have yet another one installed. The data should be saved on your VM unit for further use, of course. The same thing should be possible with the Ethernet port. I am the owner of an xDSL connection at home and would love to use this in conjunction with online gaming on the DC. LAN gaming would therefore also become a big step forward, and give the DC a bleeding edge.

By doing this Sega could be relieved of some of the burdens of acting as an ISP, and let others deal with these issues, and attract those people already owning an Internet connection. Surplus funding could be used for spicing up the Internet portal, which still should be there by default.

**Massimo Fiorentino, via email**

A number of significant DC developments are due over the next 12 months, in fields that include comms tech, so you may find online satisfaction.

**Industry, gamers and** retailers rave about the sheer power of the next-generation games consoles, but little is said of what is perhaps the most important interface between the gameplayer and the game code. Control pads are rarely mentioned, unless it's news of Miyamoto's Dolphin controller or Sony 'borrowing' the rumble concept for its Dual Shock controller. Yet without an intuitive and ergonomically balanced controller, the best game can be spoiled.

Nintendo makes the finest controllers, even though the N64 pad looks cheap with its creaky plastic casing and an analogue stick that starts off



According to Joachim Wold, PSone is evidence of a Sony cash-in. Anthony Percival, meanwhile, communicates somewhat different feelings



stiff, then becomes smooth, and with age gains grit. But the actual shape, layout of buttons and balance in the hand was perfect. The N64 pad seemed durable, too. Dual Shock was a welcome addition with a hefty bulk that filled this westerner's hands. Analogue sticks soon became sloppy and inaccurate, requiring replacement every three to four months.

Much is said about Dreamcast – some good, most bad. Sega's great white hope is solid, of clean design and boasts enough oomph to run complex code. Games like *Virtua Tennis*, *Soul Calibur* and *MDK2* endear me to the Dreamcast, but I worry about the poorly designed and cheaply manufactured control pad – I'm on my third pad in four months. The red 'A' button loses its bounce all too soon. And how can you drive a racing game with analogue 'triggers'? Trigger action, borrowed from firearms, involves a closing action. Hovering the trigger at halfway wouldn't be so hard if the stick and buttons sat in the correct plane. Visiting friends have marvelled at the software and struggled with the pad. "I would buy one, but for those horrible pads," they say. Personally, I put up with control frustrations to savour what Sega does best: software.

As Dolphin, X-Box and PS2 land in our docks, will their controllers open our minds or cramp our hands? I suspect the Nintendo offering will feel cheap, but will otherwise outclass the competition.

**Rob Cole, via email**

**It seems to me** that Sony has got it all backwards. I read on the cover of the official mag the words: '... how PSone will revolutionise gaming'. Eh? What's the deal here? The old PlayStation in a shiny new package won't change

the face of gaming forever – but the next generation of consoles will. What is so special about the 'new' kid on the block, then? It's not as if they actually modified it for the better, adding more RAM, faster CD drive or anything – Sony's just showing off.

Having been an avid PS fan for almost five years now, I've been happy with Sony's efforts. The old PlayStation is a great machine, although it's clearly showing its age now. So it's time to move on. But wait, is that the sound of a cynical marketing ploy I hear? Or is it the sound of pure stupidity on Sony's part? Sony seems to be having trouble letting go of the PS, so they try to cash in on the 75 million who still own the machine by rereleasing the same five-year-old technology. Why aren't they concentrating on the PS2 and its impending western debut? Of course, it could be because they are afraid of standing up to game publishers everywhere, because they know that an average PS game equals money in the bank for them. That's why we see *Tomb Raider V* (Core Design, give it a rest) on the PS, that's why companies release games for superior formats like DC and PC, but still squeeze in money-making conversions to the good old PS.

I totally agree with you guys: releasing the PSone so close to the PS2 launch could be a potentially fatal flaw. It will only create more confusion for the consumers who are not tapped into the whole videogame scene.

Picture this: a mother walks into a game store at Christmas: "Hello, I want to buy one of those new PlayStations for my son." Shop assistant: "Sure, miss, which one?" Mum: "What do you mean? Is there more than one of them? Hmm, I'm not too sure about this... Which one is the cheapest then?" Shop assistant: "That would be the PSone." Mum: "OK, I'll have that one. How much did you say?"

Do you get my drift? It's no problem for customers to understand that there's a difference between PS and PS2, because the current model is so recognisable. But a semi-new model can only hurt PS2 sales and will make developers continue to flog the almost-dead horse that is the PS to keep the publishers happy, because cash rules the publishing world, and great games rule the development world. Those two worlds will almost surely collide if Sony doesn't grow up and move onwards to the new age. They've got a great machine with the PS2 – they should be exploring the new possibilities. Mobile phone connectivity? Pah, I want great games for my console, that's why I buy it. One day we all have to leave our childhood toys behind. When will Sony leave theirs?

**Joachim Wold, via email**

And another perspective...

**When Edge first** launched, each issue was to me a tantalising, nay teasing ('the future is almost here', I think were the words) view of the dizzying delights promised by the superconsoles of tomorrow – and it still is. Holding a fresh issue in my hand, I would sometimes wish I could see four, maybe five years into the future, just to catch a glimpse of what fantastic new console/piece of software adorned your front cover/pages – indeed, such issues as the one which revealed 'Sony's world-beating gamebox' (circa '94) often induced this sort of wishful thinking. And here (at last) is my point: would any of us have believed, bearing in mind the speed at which computer technology was supposed to be evolving, that five years down the line a slightly modified (re)iteration of seven-year-old console technology would still be dominating the front cover and pages (I refer, of course, to PSone)

“As Dolphin, X-Box and PS2 land in our docks, will their controllers open our minds or cramp our hands? I suspect Nintendo will outclass the competition”





According to Snowman Jr, the nuances of *Rayman 2* can be the cause of much trouble and strife within the home

of *Edge*? Sony, I salute you (and look forward to the all-singing, all-dancing PStwo in 2005!).

**Anthony Percival, via email**

More irony? That's two months in a row.

**Once again it** is time for the well-worn argument of 'violence is caused by...' to rear its head and turn its attention to your favourite and mine, videogames. Well, while we're on the subject, I may as well have my thrupenny bit's worth.

I've played many games and clocked up many hours on the keys/stick/pad so I am more qualified than many to sit on the appropriate side of the fence: videogames do cause violence.

I have seen many cases of this in my time and I shall relay to you just one by way of example. My girlfriend (an avid *Tekken* fan) was recently playing her latest DC acquisition when there was an obvious and distinct change in her personality. For someone who never swears, the air was bluer than a Smurf, and rarely has a controller taken such a hammering. The aggression was there for all to see, and it was every bit the fault of the game.

I believe that all games of this nature should be banned, for it is our moral responsibility, as today's gaming generation, to stop this behaviour from spreading any further, least of all to our children, at whom many of these 'games' are aimed.

I speak, of course, of the deplorable *Rayman 2*, and all such 'platform' games with their annoying "I pressed jump!" moments, and the all-too-frustrating "I never did!" fall-of-death occasions.

Join me, my fellows, and my organisation End Platformers Or Suffer Shall Our Morals! You know it makes sense!

**Snowman Jr, via email**

Make sure she doesn't get hold of *F355 Challenge*.

**I feel I** have to write this letter on behalf of all gamers out here, concerning yourself and all other gamers magazines on the subject of scoring. As we all know, the small print on the opening page of Testscreen explains your scoring system. Now, I totally agree with you that five is an average score for a game, but there is also a baseline for what we gamers will consider buying. Unfortunately, playing a game with a score of five is very different from playing a game with a score of seven and above.

I have been playing games for about 18 years now, and have made my own scoring system (that I believe is the same for hardcore gamers) based on *Edge* reviews. If you give a game a seven and it is the type of game I like, then I will consider buying it; if it has an eight there is a greater possibility that I will purchase it; if you score nine or ten then I will definitely buy it. However, I will never buy a game scoring six or below. This does not mean that seven is an average score, it just means that us gamers know that this is our baseline for a good game that will keep us happy for several hours.

We, the hardcore gaming nation, are bored of uninspiring games and are sick and tired of PlayStation dross – this is why seven is considered an average and not five by the gaming public, and whatever you write will not change this – this is the view of the nation.

This is why I have stopped buying games before you review them, as a game can seem so good from the press build up (including yours) and be such a flop after you have reviewed it. I talk from experience, and a couple of games come to mind, such as *Mission Impossible* and *Tekken Tag Tournament*.

**Shaun Satterthwaite, via email**

Finally. Someone who gets it.

**One thing unites** all online gamers: the search for the ultimate setup. Whether it be 'best mouse', 'best graphics card' or 'best config', there will always be debate, differing opinions, and constant technological improvements that render last week's top choice redundant. Take mousemats, for example. There are two main contenders: the 3M Precise Mousing Surface and the Everglide Large Attack Pad. Oh, how they fight for the gamer's approval. The 3M, celebrated for its sensitivity and used by some of the world's top *Quakers*; the Everglide, new kid on the block but with infamy gained from its stability and durability (and an endorsement from I33t Yank *Q/ler*, Makavelli). Both are similarly disadvantaged, though: price and availability. It's a specialist market and that's reflected in the pricing, and you can add P&P to that because you're not likely to find either on the shelves of your local PCs 'R' Us.

But the struggle for mousemat supremacy is over. The Holy Grail has been discovered. You're reading it. I don't know what treatment the cover of this fine mag is given, but it works wonders. Smooth but accurate, big enough for the 'low-sensitivity' players, but never obstructive. Cheap, readily available and a fine read between frags.

The secret is out, and it's spreading like wildfire, I kid you not. Within a month it'll be the number one gaming surface in this country. The UK online gaming scene thanks you.

**AFT^oUtKast, via email**

Truly, this is a victory for both style and substance. Okay, the new '101 Other Uses For *Edge*' initiative starts here. Send in your suggestions. (No, nothing involving rolling it up and sticking it anywhere, please.)

"The air was bluer than a Smurf, and rarely has a controller taken such a hammering. The aggression was there for all to see, and it was every bit the fault of the game"



Shaun Satterthwaite's 'bitter experience' of *Tekken Tag Tournament* was brought about by taking a punt on the game before reading *Edge*'s review





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The future of electronic entertainment



Issue 17, October 1999



Issue 18, September 2000

How well do you remember October 1999, when a four-page magazine called Edge first hit the newsstands? It was an unusual piece of work, inherently aimed not at everyone but at a select audience who understood just how valuable a normal e-entertainment was, a bunch of different individuals who, in the years since, have seen that interest jump up, increased and recharged, and set off down the clear to the masses.

You've seen how new formats arrive and pass without even getting things up in the air, or those that might stay with you in the same way your first sight of Doom or Super Mario anyone to buy into either 3DO or Jaguar. You've seen the multimedia revolution promised and regally messaged up, only to see it miss. Some attempt to recast it with the advent of PlayStation. You've watched, happily, as Edge has turned from e-entertainment's "looker" brand into something the general public seems to be ready to test to grips. Well, you've even seen Rise Of The Robots on the cover of Edge. This truly is an odd business.

And it is a business of change. Next year, a reformer giving designers, artists and technicians the opportunity to slip, look around, and think not about how many polygons there are on screen, but why they exist there at all.

Crossly, e-entertainment will soon be as much about what happens outside of the box as well as inside it. With three years, their country the industry's most serious player, will be showing movies and music on a page 100 your living room via your PlayStation. And the company's network internet represents a paradigm shift in the gaming process. Multiplayer Chu-Chu Rocket via a 256k modem? No, that's quite enough of that, thank you very much.

As slow as its delivery framework is slow, Microsoft will be spending out half a billion dollars like a high roller in Vegas in an effort to create a 24-hour-a-day niche for itself. Just one year ago, who could have foreseen the creator of some of the world's most varied software being new player to offer a dynamic, generally viable platform in the videogaming hardware market?

In recognition of all this change, Edge has got three new hands to help. However, the magazine you hold in September will allow you to consume Edge's unique brand of journalism via a different path. Reader reaction will be encouraged, and by being a part of it you will find yourself in a position to get closer to videogames, even communicating directly with the people responsible for making the phenomena it is.

Participate the phenomena it is, and you will find the future of electronic entertainment is direct from...







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