

ISSUE 44 • MAY 1991 £1.80

# ACE

■ AMIGA ■ ST ■ PC ■  
MEGADRIVE ■ GAMEBOY  
■ SUPER FAMICOM ■

## THE ULTIMATE GAMES MAGAZINE

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

The Cutting Edge

# SWITCHBLADE II

Gremlin Cracks Console-Quality  
Graphics on the Amiga



## DESERT STORM

Exclusive pics of  
Psygnosis' CD marvel!



### STATES OF PLAY

Exclusive report  
from the San Jose  
games developers'  
conference

### ENTER THE CYBERZONE!

World's first VR  
game show

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

License deals  
investigated

### PLUS

6 Pages of Games  
and Tech News!

**WIN!**  
Last Ninja 3  
Outfits!

38 PAGE SCREENTEST SECTION: NINJA 3, ARMOUR-GEDDON, CYBERCON III, KILLING CLOUD, SUPER CARS 3, BRAT, LIFE AND DEATH II, TOKI, CHUCK ROCK, + LOTS MORE!



# GOING OVER



MEG: The arcade action thriller with the BIG kick, integrates the criminal underworld - your mission is - to seek out and destroy the king pin of the MEG BIG CORPORATION - if you get that far.

You'll have to survive his enormous army of body guards... gangs of charisma-bypass patients in trench coats, the bullet brain with the build of a rhinoceros and the breath of a dung beetle, packs of vicious canine puppies, the psychotic clown with an evil sense of humour - you'll die, but not laughing! Then there's the gas guzzling Cadillac jock - a cool specimen, elbow hanging on the door rail, a serious looking piece in his hand and ready to blow you away so he falls down main street leaving you coughing loud. It's not all bad... You've got a chopper to back you up, a mean, shiny street machine, some heavy metal hardware and some pretty neat moves. And what about the king pin... did I say he was Mr. Big? No, he's MR BIG!



The Arcade Chopper takes you from the bright lights of Paris to the fogged terraces of the Sahara. Your mission is to track down, chase and apprehend the dangerous criminals.

It's FASTER - explosive power sends you hurtling through various terrains - hold the line or plough the fields! It's TOUGHER - the criminals wield some heavy hardware - but so do you! You can shoot but you must dodge their flak... heavy gunfire, trucks unloading their cargo onto your bonnet... it's the meanest pursuit game to hit the micro screen. The extra features will leave you gasping for extended play weather changes, bodyguard epipals, grenade lobbing bikers, gun-choppers... just play it!... we dare you to stop!

## FOR THE BEST IN S



AVAILABLE FOR YOUR: SPECTRUM . AMSTRAD  
COMMODORE . ANIGA . ATARI ST



# ER THE TOP



## TOTAL RECALL

As *Living Dead* you have been haunted by recurring dreams of another life on Mars. You are taken to *Recall Incorporated*, a unique travel service specialising in implanting fantasies into the minds of those who desire to turn their dreams into

reality. THE CGO TOP OF A LIFETIME

Experience the horror as your dreams turn into hideous nightmares. Suddenly your every move is monitored by would-be assassins. You discover the survival truth - You're not you - you're me.

You must travel to Mars to discover your true identity - your mission is now a journey of non-stop action, strange mutants, futuristic vehicles and a startling array of weaponry all captured in reportedly excellent graphics and a game play that complements the success of the year's top movie.

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EVEN IN THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

The future is a rough place Detroit is a backward city... torn apart by the decadent forces of the Old Man and his corrupt corporation. If you want to die - then walk the streets, if you want to live - then pray for the return of RoboCop!

RoboCop 2 has justice in mind... a kind of justice only he can deliver! Take on Detroit's evil mastermind and his mega-corporation in some of the most action-packed scenes ever devised for actionman entertainment value. Detroit is falling apart - it's time to put it all back together! HE'S BACK... TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT

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# SOFTWARE ACTION



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The Nintendo Entertainment System has a different meaning than the word you're used to. Read all about it on page 21.

## TIME OUT!

In a month regarded traditionally as a quiet time of year than most we've seen more releases than ever (Screenlast - Page 46). Perhaps we're heading for that nirvana-like state-of-affairs with a constant and regular flow of releases through the spring and summer months. Such trials and tribulations must seem far off concerns to Argonaut, the team behind the four-years-in-the-making *Birds of Prey* (Feature - Page 18). The timing of license projects is perhaps the most crucial of all elements. Hundreds of thousands of pounds can be lost by missing a single deadline (Feature page 21). And in the States, it's all about "quality" time. (Feature page 25).

### NEW ORDERS!

Bringing through the cover should be an even more pleasant experience than normal. We've reorganized the magazine and moved all reviews & preview material into a new area at the front, offering around 20 pages of features, starting before the Screenlast page. We hope this new order will heighten your enjoyment of the issue.

Argonaut's system into the world of video. Just the system itself seems to do more substantial than many other titles, but still all the graphics and so making a strong point for the top 10.



### COVER STORY

Finally, perhaps it's time of a step forward than may at first be apparent. It's a straightforward issue that features a central character pitted against a familiar army of misadventurous enemies, headed in such a graphically excellent way as to make it unique. The program is being followed by the first and last of a series of games as well. It could even have famous names associated. Read the full story on page 61.

# features

## 18 BIRDS OF PREY

Argonaut, the team behind *Daguerre* it has been working on *Birds of Prey* for nearly four years. And what have they got to show for it? Back to Prey (below) for his history.

## 22 ENTER THE CYBERZONE

Broadsword Productions, the people behind *Angelmans* and *The Satellite Game* are about to unleash a new kind of viewing on the unsuspecting public. We visit Anglia TV to learn more.

## 25 THE NAME GAME

£750,000 is not an inconsiderable amount of money, yet software are queuing up to pay sums like this to make computers. Why?

## 28 GAMESMAKER!

The program Origin used to produce the 3D graphics for *Wing Commander* is now available for use in the home.

## 32 ANGEL STUDIOS

The latest Joseph King movie, *Loverman* has featured the most advanced computer graphics ever. Read all about the film behind the film.

## 35 DEVELOPERS' CONFERENCE

This year's conference of some of the finest minds in games design convened in San Jose, and Steve Cooke was there to soak up the ideas and the rage.

## 44 PSYGNOSIS' CD REALITY

Amidst much talk about the potential for CD games from British software houses, Psygnosis have let their actions speak for themselves.

## REGULARS

### 7 ACE GAMES NEWS

Always it comes to the big screen and computer. *Venture* for and *Murderer*' console games. The recently titled *Ultima III* (Dungeons) and to suite *Savage Master* (Jackie Chan) and his sister. And *Swamp* (Mergers) from McDonald's.

### 11 ACE TECH NEWS

*Skateboard* turns *Turtle* into *Skateboarding* shell dwellers. A holographic arties coin-op from Sega. *Honey* / *Strun* the *Kab* theme park ride.

### 15 LETTERS

Cheats off-loaded, shoulder-chips removed, hit the polls featured and scores settled.

### 20 TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

Five pages of solutions, codes, cheats and hints for the best games of the moment.

### 29 PINK PAGES

Bargains, bargains bargained! Plus the Stockmarket, Public domain and Hardware directory. No PP, no comment.

# ACE

MAY 1987

# ATOMINO



## Pygnosis and their Molecule Madness

Against the clock, you use your chemical tendencies to build molecules out of atoms provided.

And don't be surprised if the very atom you don't need will be the one you've given to use next . . . . Pray for a Joker Atom!

If you don't look like a real scientist now, you will by the time you've tackled ATOMINO!

**Op and Atom!**

Screen Shots from the Amiga Version

PSYGNOSIS, FREEPOST, LIVERPOOL, L3 2AB, UNITED KINGDOM



# NEWS GAMES NEWS GAMES

**Everybody from Vanilla Ice to Freddy Krueger is getting into video games, reports Rik Haynes...**

## Aliens III

Our third encounter with the gruesome stomach-busting Aliens is due next in production and will be appearing early next year at a cinema near you. Console and computer game adaptations of Aliens III should be ready at the same time.

In the forthcoming movie, Ripley - again played by Sigourney Weaver - arrives on a peaceful mining planet and faces yet another battle with the deadly face huggers, body buster! brutes... only this time she hasn't got any technology to back her up. The third in the popular SF film series is being directed by David Finlay, who previously worked with Madonna on the noted Express 'Tourist' and began music videos. Respected movie-directors Ridley Scott (Gladiator) and James Cameron (The Terminator) created the previous two Alien movies.

A spokesman for 20th Century Fox told us that Microsoft is interested in the computer, console and CD game rights to Aliens III, although Microsoft, when asked, were giving nothing away. ACE will keep all you fans of the Elders' favourite killing machines informed on any further developments.

## Here comes the Hammer...

The world's top 'huggers', MC Hammer and Vanilla Ice, are putting their names to various video games due for release sometime later this year.

Sigs Electronics, an American company specialising in cheap electronic board-fair LCD games, is producing two titles based on MC Hammer. The Mack rap artist - with his like Can't Touch This, We Gettin' Fry and Fine Come the Hammer - is making the UK scene. At least three companies are clamouring for Nintendo rights to Hammer, but no-one has managed to pull-off a deal yet. In the meantime, Pepsi has reportedly paid him \$5 million to star in a series of adverts and toy manufacturer Mattel is making an MC Hammer doll.

Not to be left standing, white rap artist Vanilla Ice, who shot to fame a couple of

months ago with the No.1 song for Baby, has signed a deal with THQ to produce a game on the Gamber, Super Funtastic and NES. Computer adaptations are unlikely because of the smaller market and older gamers.

Ice and Hammer can both trip the light fantastic, so dancing should play a major part in all these games.

Pop music is one of the great untapped frontiers for console and computer game licensing, as long as the previous diatribe of Vanilla Ice to Hollywood (Comix) and Madonna's CD Goldfinger remains forgotten. These video games appeal to younger people and have a great deal to offer the game designer in terms of both ready-made music and visual material. Current pop-licences for possible game titles include Boyz II Men, The Notorious B.I.G. and Kelly Rowland. New Kids on the Block were signed up for an NES game last year, nothing has been heard since.

"We're looking into this whole idea because of the CD-ROM game," says Cliff Smith, the European boss of Mindscape. "The deal with

## Ant farm

Minds, the Californian games developer of Sim Earth and Sim City, is currently devising a Swedish game based around pet 'Ant Farms'. These strange goldfish tanks filled with sand and an ant colony could form the basis of a very amusing and absorbing game.

Ant Farm is being written on the Macintosh by Phil Wright (author Sim City and Sim Earth). It will be released on Mac and PC when 'Ants Busted II'.



Waylon King (the company behind Brits Box and Savage Software) will lead a lot of things in the course. The possibilities are endless."

Heads is keen on the idea of CD-based systems being able to produce fine multi-media pop-music products with CD-quality audio and digital full-motion video. The 'game' of the group could be using completely custom-made music, sounds, single, album and video clips of major music stars by the end of the decade.









## Twin Peaks

Some bad news for fans of this cult American TV-show: Hi-tech Expressions in the States has decided to scrap plans for a video game based around Twin Peaks.

And now come very bad news for arid viewers of the surreal soap from movie starlet Dixie Lynch, the gay behind the scenes, the 'Nerv' and Duke. It seems the third series of Twin Peaks has been cancelled by the American television networks because of low ratings. Crash protocols will have to make the most of Tuesday nights watching NBC2 while they still can.

And finally for the very, very bad news. Instead of a video game based around Twin Peaks, Hi-tech Expressions has opted to license the world's most famous glamour toy, Barbie - The Video Game will be specifically targeted towards young girls aged between 4 and 11 years-old. The company hopes to have it out on the MSX before the beginning of 1992.

For for it for ACE to pre-empt a game before we've seen it, but the whole idea stinks. Before *Outrage!* of Southcoast writes into us, don't forget Epps tried the same thing with a Barbie computer game in the mid-80s - and failed miserably. Sure, there are more girl gamers on the MSX, but think about it, why bother with a video game where the only entertainment value comes from changing Barbie's outfit. Well, on the other hand...

At least Hi-tech Expressions is interesting itself with a MSX adoption of *Isis* and *Temp*, currently in development and due in the fourth quarter of 1991.



## Budget Day For Anco

James, publishers of the Most Popular Society Game of All Time, Kick Offs 1 & 2 have announced their new budget label, Top Shots.

The first three releases on the label are special, rare arcade adventures originally published by Ballybar (USA), Trip Peter (speaks for itself) and of course, every one's favourite, *Isis* OK!

The games are priced at £7.99 for the Amiga and AT and are in the shops...now!



## That's Entertainment

Entertainment International, the London-based games company, has a whole bundle of goodies on the way.

Firstly, a Taito colour. Is a 16-level shoot 'em up. Players get round after shooting aliens or blasting their path in a group of mazes. *Wildfire* is already out on the MS Engine, with Amiga. *Geometry* and *3D conversions* being handled by Oxford Digital Enterprises.

*Eye of the Storm* is a massive strategy-type space-flight game by James Knightley, the games (called *Marble for US* and) and the computer graphics in Adamski's *Killer* video. *Get outside on the Amiga, PC and ST.*

James Moore's *Space 1999* should appeal to the "thinking" gameplayer. Available in July on 16-bit computers, this release is based on a RPG from Game Designers Workshop and licensed from strategy-specialist Pentagon Software in America. Say hi. "Space 1999 is amazingly big with hours and hours of playtime. It's kind of the Megaworlder character with a different control system."

## Knightmare

In a rather smart move, Mindscope has decided to adopt the game-system from the award-winning *Captive* RPG for use in new games.

"We're taking the storybook, characters and atmosphere of *Knightmare* and putting them into a *Captive* game environment," says Phil Harrison, Software Development Manager at Mindscope. "Knightmare is the most popular role game on television. *Adrian* did a less-than-successful game a few years back. Our game is more people-oriented than *Captive*. We're also doing different language versions in French, German and Italian."

ACE is sure we'll be seeing more reinvented titles based around popular game-systems and user interfaces in the months to come. It's also good news for players because it should encourage programmers to concentrate on big gun, better and more intuitive games systems and interfaces instead of hastily reinventing the wheel every time round.

## Ground Commander

Chris Roberts and the fellows at Origin are currently developing some super-advanced programming routines for a game which is set to beat even the mighty *Wing Commander* in terms of graphics, gameplay and music-presentation.

"Initially, we were thinking about doing a cost combat game," reveals Roberts, "then we decided on an on-combat simulator set 20 years into the future. Instead be a lot more interesting."

"The world is slowly grinding towards an economic collapse. The USA is fragmented into four or five different countries. There's a lot of conflict going on. Corporations are more powerful than governments. There's a whole new meaning to a hostile takeover - people go in there and attack with aerial and tanks."

"You're part of a five-person air ministry and selling your services to the highest bidder. Kind of like the Wild Bunch with a dash of the *4-Team* meets *Top Gun* and *Mad Max*. The two most valuable commodities around are technology and oil. Not many people have the know-how,

military or space in its things. People still fly in jet fighter planes like *Warrior* jets and P-51 fighters, but they break-down all the time. They're moving back towards planes like the P-51 Mustang which are far more reliable.

"There will be a sense of almost to fly in the game. You decide what planes and missions to buy. The choices won't be intimidating - we want you to buy into the future. We've got a real master-like plot, you do all the fun things and some of the boring bits."

"Currently dubbed *General Commander*, the game will feature our best photo-realistic graphics to date. All the buildings will have brick textures and shadows, they'll see ripples on the water and shaded fields. The images will have real-time *Command* light-source shading and texture mapping for the first in a computer game."

All the excellent features of *Wing Commander 2* (animated movie sequences, remote-controlled enemy ships, scripted speech with sound-effects) and so on are being enhanced and expanded. The cyber-punk *Ground Commander* should be released on the PC in October. Get a move-on Origin, we can't wait. But long!





**From holographic arcade games to video drugs, Rik Haynes investigates the latest techno gadgets from Japan and USA...**

## SEGA develops holographic coin-op

Japanese video game giant Sega is set to unveil a remarkable coin-op utilizing holographic visual technology at this year's ACEE (American Coin Machine Exposition) in Las Vegas.

Holographic displays have been the dream of science fiction writers for the past thirty years. Today, thanks to pioneering work in American universities, fiction is fast becoming science fact.

Details of the revolutionary arcade game are scarcer than a D-Melba but ACEE has found out. Sega has licensed the game from a company in the States. We hope to have the full story next month.

Over time, the American media and entertainment group is utilizing a 3-D laser technology similar to the color glass TV system for Europe, USA and Japan. Being one of the first in holographic technology, subscribers will get non-feedback access to pay-per-view, home learning, interactive computer computer files, and interactive video interactive services and personal computer interactive software. The new network offers the way to video-on-demand programming including educational entertainment and other interactive. New offers, the second largest cable system from the States is now back by the European and Japanese markets. The set can double up and double up (1992)



## Video drugs

A dangerous new video craze is sweeping through the cybernation and drugy haze of Japan. Tokyo-based lab Storybodies have devised a 'legal drug experience' with a computer-generated video that gets you high just by looking at it.

Your brain really takes the strain. Trips come from making you feel as though you're just had a message to someone screaming around with your head.

Apparently, the addictive images make your head spin and give you an odd feeling under your nose! Well-known Japanese artist Bunraku Jimon and futurist musician Gensai Tsuchi Ora have produced the abstract multi-media in Video Drug One - which comes on video (VHS00115) and cassette (VHS00115).

Hey kids, don't forget video drugs really give you a headache.



## Small wonder

Visitors to Walt Disney World in Florida are in for a small surprise this summer thanks to the Disney I (Stand) the Kids Movie for Adventure which has just opened in the Disney-MGM Studios theme-park.

This new attraction, based around the hit comedy-film, stands you into the movie where sets are the size of yours and grass is as tall as telephone poles. The gigantic scaled football play area has made a 'big' impression on kids thanks to three-story tall blades of grass. Without a word about his and a 20-foot tall paper clip, you can also see how the very special effects in the original movie were actually created.

What's the best time to visit? Walt Disney World theme-park hours fluctuate in accordance with anticipated business. The busiest days at the Disney-MGM Studios are Wednesday to Friday. Weekends are the best hour days. If your travel plans can't accommodate a weekend day, consider visiting Disney-MGM earlier in the week, Epcot-Centre and the Magic Kingdom later in the week.

Disney has spent for the new option and produced a thousand sets into game centers rather than drinking surrounding others.



• Turtle Power, the Junior's adventure game cartridge, has controls that automatically launch turtles and other fun like the other 486K cartridges. The system is 486K/10MB/2GB hard-drive because the 486-50 is the only one that can still fit 20 more than the other using a hard one when you'll be 2003.1.



Being out on wheels might be fun for the turtles.

## Turtles take to the tracks

Remember the days of the Scooterz racing club after school on a Wednesday afternoon? Johnny, Casey and PJ might recall each being a piece of track and "it" would supervise the best Formula One races.

Sadly, kids don't want classic cars these days. They'd rather have Knight Rider, Spideeman and Batman Scooterz sets. And to add insult to injury, Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles tracks have arrived.

"The sets are so fresh from the screen they have specially molded green tracks," says Mike Scorsone. "They include a turtle shell top on the starting line and feature the characters and vehicles that have made the cartoon series and film famous."

The first set, Turtle Power (\$59.99), features Michelangelo on his skateboard who is battling it out against an evil foot soldier

around a large oval track. Shredder's Revenge (\$49.99) pits the evil Shredder against Leonardo who rides his motorized skateboard. "The totally radical layout consists of a wide oval with two concourses," Scorsone reveals. The final set, Turtles in The Race (\$79.99), consists of an off-set oval track and the wacky Party Pigeon with its distinctive carroll, radar, catennae and jets. This new vehicle, with "imagi-duct" to give it faster cornering capabilities, even equips a bright yellow fuel tank.

You can also individually buy any of the figures or vehicles and expand each set. "Turtle Power, Shredder's Revenge and Turtles in the Race are the greatest way to capture the action and adventure of those amazing hours in hell-aholic," raves Scorsone. It all sounds pretty tickle to us.

• The Turtle Power, Turtles in the Race and Shredder's Revenge are the greatest technology adventures. The set ranges from the Apple II to the Apple III. Turtle Power is the only one that can still fit 20 more than the other using a hard one when you'll be 2003.1.



If you're not ready to fly, look up on your IQ-8000 handheld on either side of the steering wheel for better programming.

## Power in the hand

Forget fidgeting, the new IQ-8000 handheld electronic gadget from Sharp is supposedly the most powerful and versatile organizer on the market. "Unlike fidgeting it doesn't make noise, but we're working on it," laughs Sharp.

This wonder widget costs just under \$200, weighs less than 300g and features a full QWERTY keyboard, large LCD screen and up to 1,284 of memory information stored inside it can be transferred to a PC or Macintosh for even more advanced fidgeting.

The IQ-8000 series has been designed to make full use of a growing range of useful IC cards covering everything from eight-language translations to Time Expense Managers. An IC Integrated Circuit is a clever credit-card sized card with built-in memory and battery back up. They're paving the way for a whole bunch of novel gadgets, such as "smart" credit cards, which can fit in your top pocket and remember your last coffee financial transactions.

Sharp devices are for power people who need their telephone numbers and diary dates in portable electronic form rather than on paper for anyone to see. IQ-8000s are available through all leading high-street stores or call Freephone 0800 262958 for further information.

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# letters

## A LITTLE CONSOLATION

Why oh why is there so much bloody car-wash coverage? Consoles are the last for narrow-minded gamers whose only aim in their games is 'kill the evil monster', or 'rescue your mindless girlfriend from the nasty mean, drag-racing gang!' As their mindless Japanese shootboxes have no key-boards, they will never (unless of course they wake up from their madness and buy an Amiga) enjoy the pleasures of Adventure games, or the Sierra series (L.L.M.S., King's Quest etc.).

Granted, they have a very effective 'crash' for their very own, but as you can't create backups, you're 'crashed' in your house' becomes very limited, and as most console games are either beat-em-ups or shoot-em-ups, you will soon solve them and become bored with them. Now this doesn't happen in such games as Leisure Suit Larry and Co, because there are endless possibilities to frustrate yourself and achieve the high score etc. So when you're bored of *Final Fight* or whatever you're currently playing, it's down boots with high on all four in your pocket ready to go away for a fortnight of playing and so on. Don't get me wrong, I don't think these machines are terrible and should not be reported in any way at all. Just cut their articles down a bit and get your priorities right. The Amiga and maybe ST are the way forward (with lots of courses) and the Megadrive, in my humble opinion, is not. And together with CD, the future has never looked better for the Amiga and ST.

**Daniel Pepper  
Aston**

If it appears that your argument is not actually with the consoles, but more with arcade games in general, since the consoles were only intended to offer home entertainment, it seems a little unfair to criticise them for failing to cater for adventure games. I'm happy to credit all advances in computer entertainment. The reviewer cater for beat-em-up simulation or adventure fans alone. Instead we explain the limitations and benefits of each machine and each game relevant to its genre. As the popularity of consoles grows, so will our coverage, but never at the expense of our Amiga, ST and PC readers.

**If you've got a point of view you wish to express, a question you'd like answered or a gripe about the software business in general, write to: Jim Douglas, ACE magazine, EMAP Images, Priory Ct, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, EC1R 3AU.**

## THE PRICE OF ACCURACY

Firstly I want to start off by saying what a right load of rubbish I think this entire business of raising the price of ACE is just for the fact that it is to be printed on deluxe paper. Quite frankly, if you ask me it's just a crude effort to deepen your own pockets, anyway, I couldn't care less if this letter was printed on recycled toilet paper.

Now, to the point. I have been buying your magazine for over a year now and I am glad to see that ACE is just the best multi-format computer games magazine available. The thing that I want to point out is the way your first reviews, although very informative and descriptive are completely ignorant to the specified machines capabilities. This has become quite evident in the past few months. It is fully illustrated in your 'hardware' toward the ST when you review its software on the same page as the Amiga. Especially when you keep stressing (in the pink pages) about the differences in the two machines hardware, eg different palette sizes, differences in sound quality, number of sprites, etc.

Also, don't you think it is a little unfair to give an eight-bit format game a lower rating than a sixteen-bit format game, just because your basic eight-bit can't possibly compare to your friend's technically superior sixteen bit?

In my opinion, your individual ratings are based on the best format for each game, usually on the Amiga. Would it not be fair to base your ratings on the best that the machine can manage instead of a complete

## PROGRAMMERS PROBLEMS

I'm currently designing a game with AMOS and once finished, I'll send it to a software house to see if they will market it. However, I have some questions which hopefully you may be able to answer.

1) I have created some original characters and incorporated them into my game. How do I go about copyrighting them as they cannot be copied by others and how much would this cost? Also, is it possible to copyright character names and the title of the game.

2) Before I send my finished software to a publisher, will I need to produce some type of documentation, or will the company involved do this for me?

Any advice you could give would be gratefully appreciated.

**N. Hardy  
Sheffield**

Good news! The moment you've finished creating your characters (as long as they in themselves are original) they are already your copyright. The same applies to the name of the game. However, you can't copyright items or words consid-

er different machine's potential!

FO also like to point out that you are reviewing too many sixteen bit games. I haven't seen a full eight-bit review for ages.

**Mark Dixon  
Penge**

For very you're unhappy with the printer's change. Without wishing to break out the mousetail whisks, it is worth mentioning that ACE had retained at its £1.99 mark for nearly a year-and-a-half, despite escalating costs, and the 20p increase was simply necessary to finance the new paper.

Your concerns about our reviewing methods are interesting, but ultimately unfounded. Each game is reviewed bearing in mind the abilities of the machine. However, it would be unfair not to recognise the expectation of the potential of superior computers in the overall mark. For example, although an ST game may be virtually identical to its Amiga counterpart, the crippling limitations of the former machine may hamper gameplay.

The Pink Hardware Pages are intended to be used as a buying tool for readers planning to change machines. They wouldn't be serving their purpose if they didn't mention the drawbacks and benefits of each computer's hardware.



not to be "public", if your game involved a policeman, for example, and are called Cop Chase, you couldn't take any action against another publisher whose games featured policemen or had the words "Cop" or "Chase" in the title, providing that their conditions of the characters were sufficiently different from your own. It is, of course, vital to be able to prove your creation of the character took place on a certain date, in case your game isn't published, but someone lifts the idea for themselves.

It is best to supply some reasonable description of the game for the courts, so it helps their understanding more easily what the game is about. Since most companies make hundreds of unrelated games each month for evaluation, it's important you make it as painless as possible for them to test your game.

## ARSE or BUM?

I have finished reading the Actual Man article, and would like to challenge Victor Tynd on the subject of his A.R.S.E. For two years, I had been doing extensive practical research into VR when I accidentally tripped on my Garden Information Television, and binged my head. I suffered a severe electric shock, but was largely unharmed.

Suddenly, I realised that Virtual Reality was a waste of time. Why be virtual when you could be realistic? So I thought up Realistic Reality. I have called it Better Realising Matters.

At the moment I have three simulations: Road Fight, Invasion of the Couch Potatoes and Chuck the Light Bulb. My B.R.M. can create 300 million polygons per second. I did this by using a customised 74000000 chip which I acquired from Hornd. John's hardware shop.

Unfortunately I could not find a suitable power source so I am currently running the system off the games provided by old Pat Haxell. It features light speed shading using HP waves to be precise.

Tell Vince Tynd I challenge him to an A.R.S.E. and if it is M. Right, I am confident my B.R.M. will win.

**M. Wiggins**  
Northampton

## STILL SOUNDS FAMILIAR

I read Roger Blaxen's letter in the April issue of ACE with interest and agree with almost everything he said. However, he did not state that it is often a company's own doing if their game is reviewed months in advance of the finished product hitting the shelves. It is a company, after all, who distributes their review copies to various magazines. Therefore the mag do not take the blame if a game is delayed by unforeseen circumstances, as the reviewing staff are only doing the job they are paid to do.

However, I believe that some companies are milking the type they inevitably receive if their products get rave reviews. For example, S&M 2 featured in ACE in February 1986 and your readers were assured the product would be released within weeks. A batch of advertisements did little to dispel this theory, and then the game practically vanished without trace, until now.

This must have cost thousands of pounds, although it's not the only culprit. I find it really annoying how companies can waste money in this way when it could easily have been put to better use, perhaps by funding a future project.

**Stuart Wall**  
Wales

## AWARDING AWARDS

Why are you making such a big thing of your awards for graphics, sound and originality when you don't use them?

If I think of the Demom as the most technically accomplished game yet written for the Amiga, why was it not given the graphics award? And why did Powermunch and Immortal not receive graphics awards, since they are games which certainly deserve one. I could go on, but I won't, except to say that the Trailblazer award won't do games the justice that the ACE Rating did. Get rid of it.

**Peter Garra**  
Northampton

Not use them? Graphics and Trailblazer awards go to VertigoBlade II. Also and Trailblazer goes to Killing Cloud. And Chuck Rock and Fido both received Graphics awards. We applauded the graphics of Wrath of the Demom, but Wrath of the Beast had been there earlier and equally well. The Trailblazer is intended to sum up the nature of the games awarded it. They represent breakthroughs in gaming, rather than simply 'being good'.

## WHY CAN'T I EXPERIMENT?

I know most magazines don't like printing anonymous letters, but I hope you'll make an exception in my case - as I think you'll see it would be rather embarrassing if people I work with found out who I am.

Basically, I've been in the games programming business for six years and I'm "right p\*\*\*\*ed off". No, it's not because I don't get paid enough - I don't, but who does? And no, it's not because my unscrupulous publishers constantly rip me off (the boss, but who doesn't), but it is because I have to work excruciatingly long and arduous hours (10 hrs, 10-11) and finally (since I know ACE's Steve Cooper has a bar in his basement about this too, it's not because I can't tell people at cocktail parties what I do for fear of frightening them away).

No, the reason I'm pissed (oops) off is that after six years the industry still hasn't got itself together enough to create an environment in which we game programmers can (a) enhance our self-esteem, and (b) improve our work. What am I talking about? I'm talking about more basic programming research to be funded by software companies.

At the moment, the amount of research I do is pretty minimal - I spend most of my time coding for specific project dates. I do manage to play around, of course, as everybody does, and every so often I come across a routine or algorithm that I feel I can make good use of in a product. Sometimes, I even come up with something that you can use an entire game on - it would give you some examples, but that would give the game away, wouldn't it?

What's frustrating is that I can never really progress the state of the art significantly in this situation. In fact, I'd even venture to suggest that my boss is not in the slightest bit interested in "state of the art" and only in "state of the sell".

What do other programmers think? And what do you think?

(Name and address supplied)

Every creative worker in a commercial environment has this dilemma. Obviously we don't know exactly how serious the situation is of your particular workplace. Some good news, however - ACE is preparing for an investigative conference on games design this autumn - watch the space.

The Letters Page is due for a change next month, with the start of our Game Focus section. Each month, we'll be taking in a top industry figure to do in the hot seat, and answer your questions. We'll be looking for lively debate and searching queries!



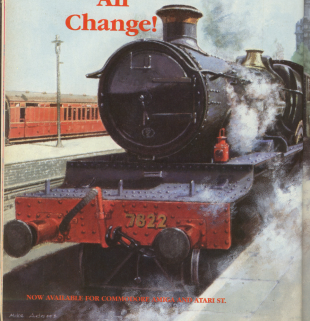




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# ENTER *the* CYBERZONE

**Y**our heart's pounding, sweat beads on your forehead and your reserves of strength are rapidly depleting. Hold out, you've almost made it. A quick look left and right... there it is... the Prize. Its huge multi-faceted lens slowly rotating in the center of Cyberzone Plaza. Just a short dash to claim it, and another fast victory's yours. You start to run. Nothing can stop you now.

Then, both the corner of your eye, you see a figure loom. The Blue player is here too. But why isn't he running for the Prize? Then you understand. All you can do is watch as the Blue player makes his push... With one last sprint of effort you dive for the Prize. Your head slaps against its cool, electronic surface. The Prize is yours. You slump, exhausted, to your knees.

Believe it or not, you've been playing a video-game...

Cyberzone is the latest project from Broadword Television Productions, the company behind groundbreaking TV shows as *Right* (and *Just Right*), and *The Satellite Game* for BOB (see BOB98), and has taken to being television's first Virtual Reality programme.

The concept is simple: two teams guide their cyborg avatars through a computer-generated virtual arena - the Cyberzone - in a tense race against the clock and each other to try and find "Survival Points" that will allow them to enter the centre of Zone and victory.

But it's not easy. The Survival Points are only unlocked by solving puzzles in the game world (a mix of *Diner* and *Bank* [it will be at home here], if that were not enough, rope, cars and UFOs zip around the narrow streets and deadly flame throwers and machine guns are always waiting around the next corner... or rather virtual corner.

Two teams of two players compete. One player has a full map of the Zone and its dangers, and guides another player who, via a "mobility station", has direct control over the "hemp" actions. Giant screens display the Zone as "seen" by each team's "hemp" in real colour-generated 3D.

Things were pretty hectic; when I visited the set at Anglia TV's Norwich studios in March, Broadword had just three days to fit two pilots, one for adults and one for children, and I

**ACE visits Anglia TV's Norwich Studios where BROADWORD are filming the pilot for a radically new gameshow... virtually!**



The leader in a pilot race from other side of the Cyberzone arena, with all sensors and complex motion-control kits at the "hemp" computer desk in a video-controlled game.

turned up on the third while they were recording the children's show. The highly technical nature of the show meant that delays were inevitable, but one particularly visible fault was wasting valuable recording time.

Cyberzone's complex Craig Charles, who is probably best known for playing *Dave Lister* in the SF comedy *Red Dwarf*, wandered the stage, trying unsuccessfully to keep an audience of around thirty fidgeting children amused while technicians fiddled with cables and tweaked leads.

It was during this break in filming that Tim Child, designer of Cyberzone and one of Broadword's directors, managed to find time to talk about the show.

I wondered whether the computer-literate children were finding the game easier than the adults. "That's what we expected," explains Tim. "In fact, they're about the same. It takes a while for the players to learn how to use the equipment, but after that they really get into it. If anything, the adults get far more drawn into it than the kids." Indeed, I saw some some videotape of the previous day's recording and one controller was waving wildly at the videotape, several people leaning in to look, and playing so it felt like they depended on it!

Apart from the obvious technical difficulties, what was your biggest headache? "Well, I'm convinced that nobody wants to watch somebody else play a computer game. The main problem was making a first-person experience accessible to a TV audience, while conveying the mystery and intrigue of VR, which I think we've done."

The biggest question one could raise is that Cyberzone isn't really VR, at least as conjured by

VR, or VR industries, and a little more than a 3D game and large. Would you agree? "Yes, I don't. There are degrees of virtual reality, and this is one of them. Again, you have to realize that my main concern is making the game appealing to a TV audience."

Do you consider going the VR/VR industries route, with headsets, gloves, and so forth? "Yes, but the headset approach is a player-experience approach, and it's an experience that the viewer couldn't share which would be very frustrating. Also, and this is something we've found to be



Craig Charles (left) interviews the game team, illustrating various VR/VR equipment used with *Right* and *Just Right*.

## SUPERSCAPE ON YOUR PC

A Public Domain SourceBooks entry showing the Superscape system is available for MS-DOS. Send \$4.95 for 3.5" 5.25" to create media, postage, handling etc. to SourceBooks International, One One One Collins Road, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55425-4928, USA.



The operators can't see their play field (shown on their computers) and using the gun to move about within. Though such remote-controlled actions are frequent again.



Craneing about worlds is not for them, but their riding cycling or riding in the form of wire and cables behind the glass facade of the real building.

very important, you wouldn't be able to see the player's facial reactions.

"Guns would be nice but because the player is not aiming the game is stereoscopic, so it's very difficult to judge depth. The gun, on the other hand, will interact with anything along the line-of-sight. The gun basically acts as a tool to activate switch targets and so on.

"We thought about using fields suits to control movement but found that people tended to wander all over the set. It's important to keep the players in one place. We'd had experience of using remote machines from Ringierhaus but found them too noisy, and we settled for precision pads."

What's been the biggest surprise so far? "The pace. Before recording we worried that there might be lulls in play and we'd have to try and peg things up. What we're finding at the moment is that it's actually too fast and, for some levels, that we'd over-estimated we're desperately trying to find places to insert breaks."

Then the fault's been found—a loose cable of things—and Tim has to leave to continue reworking the recording.

Apple TV will view the pilots and then decide whether to go ahead with a full series (probably for showing in late Autumn) and which audience they'll target it. On the basis of what I saw I don't think Broadband will have any problem getting the series on the air. It's one demonstrating their will to be staggered off-stage. "It's the best game I've ever played."

● David Gifford

## MIDI MADE EASY

Opera is unique not least in the way sound effects are generated. Normally such effects are added in post-production, usually based on forms of notation you'd find in a score. However, in *OperaQuest*, the American group has found out how to use a MIDI controller to generate sound effects on the spot. "Usually," says a Sony executive with a hand in a game, "you find notes that you then play the virtual face. This MIDI system allows direct notation, so that instead of actually reading the score."

Over London, sound technologist for Broadband, Fred had the idea while working on the *Sublime* game and has named it "MIDI notation." Only having four systems are currently entered but, like there's no reason why more, including ambient sounds, couldn't be added. The idea behind most top bang is simple and functional. "Steven's *OperaQuest* system, has been applied to every aspect of the project."



In view of the *OperaQuest* team were available at the time of writing to go, for their *OperaQuest* team are also there to help.



This shot indicates the level of stage complexity possible using the *OperaQuest* system. The system could be used to create an actual MIDI-based stage production.

## CREATING THE CYBERKIDS

The *Cyberkids* virtual reality environment is created from the "Superscope" 3D system developed by Dimension International, an independent off-shoot company from Immersion. The system is made up of seven of the original and innovative "Proscope" 3D monitors used in such games as *Golden Gate Hills*, *Real Dodge* and *Lucas Motors*.

Immersion was created in January 1996 to explore the commercial potential of virtual reality. Superscope, though based on the original game behind Proscope, was totally rewritten to run on IBM-compatible PCs. These high-end PCs are readily available "off the shelf", and offer a great deal of processing power for a reasonable price. As an American, Immersion's base, explained, "It's quite exciting a piece of software for a range of former computers that you're limited by the capabilities of the available machine. With this system you're free to do just about anything you want."

Using 3D graphics cards, Superscope can generate 1920x1080 441 x 441 pixel displays and supporting file sizes comprising 100 MB of textures. I used 100 MB textures per level, for example. "It's a compromise between speed and realism. Any lower resolution and the image gets too blurry", say higher and the system gets too slow."

The system was written in modules, and can be easily added to or changed items to suit the application in hand. Within Superscope it's possible to do just about anything. Objects can have "hot spots" with associated combinations (i.e. a button on a computer, when pressed will create a hot "power up" item) and screen text to appear.

Immersion had previously worked with Broadband on the *Sublime* game, and it was then that Broadband's Tim Dill first had the idea for a Virtual Reality game. Says Tim, "I like to think that the way we inspired the actual *Cyberkids* when we saw what Superscope could do."

The commercial elements to start with an *OperaQuest* fitness exercise app, with one of the main objectives being the creation of a realistic player interface—ideal for audience identification. By studying motion, Immersion have identified successful team walking and running to controlling and timing for being the best.

Each Immersion figure is made up of 200 bones. Unfortunately the female figure team for Russian choreographer at the moment, as they're modified using the male "shape" and adding more bones for female in the placement. The *OperaQuest* will move slowly follow the female form.

*OperaQuest* uses its PC to run the game. The game is the first-person perspective view for the real world. They can move about and see down on the video wall. One generation the virtual world view used by the user becomes only one to control because the view is the same for both teams. Another PC is for the camera (Steve Dill) who can control the game and generate events to place play. The first display is linked to a 3D camera, allowing the viewer's camera to move from behind "behind" camera in the game world (the third camera, "the Director" the Director, is the first to see the world "without" camera. That's a world first if nothing else!).

The video PC handles the complex job of synchronizing video in the first camera. The video PC also handles the video in the real PC, depending on any changes in the game world. This information is stored up and sent out to all PCs every minute of a second.

# WIN

## THE COMPUTER GAME.

Available On:	Amiga	£19.99
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IBM 64 Disk	£14.99	
Spectrum Cass	£9.99	
Spectrum Disk	£14.99	
Amstrad Cass	£9.99	
Amstrad Disk	£14.99	





# MAJOR ACE

BATTLES THE

# LICENCE OVERLORDS

The stakes are high in the licensing business. Finding hundreds of thousands of pounds to use a name is an expensive way to buy some brand awareness for your new beat-em-up. But software companies are still happy to do just that. ACE investigates.

Examine the upper reaches of any games chart and you'll find familiar names as those hard-fought-for top slots. Movies, cartoons, books, comics and TV shows have all been turned into games. As well as costelling the publicity and appeal of a well-known character, attaching a familiar name to a game can instantly sum up what the game is about. If people all over the world know who Major ACE is and the kind of adventures he has, simply putting his name to a game means that there'll be lots of action, weird gadgets, combat scenes and so on. With any luck, people will also jump at the chance of "being" The Major. So the appeal of the licence is clear, but how does the deal work?

Usually it's the film or TV company's President or Overseas sales, or an agent specialising in setting up licensing deals, who receives the first call from a software house about a prospective title. Both Warner Brothers and Disney UK's teams have their own companies to deal with exactly that.

US Gold is a big player in the classic licence arena and, with Moonwalker and the forthcoming Godfather, is currently moving into movies too. US Gold's Managing Director Geoff Brown claims the process of acquiring licensing rights has now become familiar to most of the big film companies. "We've never had a flat refusal from anyone. They're used to the procedure now and we don't have to explain the whole thing to them any





product to back it up can really pave the way for future films."

However, there are times when a softco has to cut its losses. Having received a large sum of money acquiring and developing a franchise, it's extremely difficult to justify killing a project, while spending extra time ensuring a project will mean the softco has to stand by and watch its huge surrounding franchise properly rapidly cooling.

#### LEGISLOR AND LEGISLATION

The up-front payment (providing the negotiations are sound) enables the softco to use the likeness of some actors from the movie or TV show in the game's advertising. Some of the big stars have a quibble in the works by not allowing any representation of themselves to be used other than for the specific promotion of the original movie. But generally, so long as you keep the characters in the game representative of the characters in the film, you can use the actor's likeness there's no problem with making Robocop look exactly like Robocop, or Batman look exactly like Batman, for example.

But it is the ads that you can use your picture of Kevin Costner as *Ellis Ford*—his advertising, since he has already been paid for use of his likeness to advertise the movie. However, print a picture of Costner wearing a football helmet in a football game, or to the game of the film, implying he's personally endorsing the game, and then you're ready in legal trouble.

It's in the game itself, though, where the problems occur. Generally, since most graphics are pretty small, it's possible to put across the face of a character without any need to actually copy the living of a famous star. But as in between actions vital to get the scene in mosaic to into their very reason softcos can run into difficulty. Ever wondered why bug-eyed Arnie in the *Rocky* between looks a bit, or "wring"/"fir why Marty and Doc in *Back to the Future* didn't look quite the way they should? There's your answer.

#### PIRACY RELATIONS?

Most console companies regard the home-console licensing of their games as an essential part of the business, building their name and heightening recognition of their brand (and play a good console conversion at home, and you're more likely to play the console company's next console releases, console companies regard these deals with less esteem. Brown: "When you can see that *The Godfather Part II* will make \$100M around the world, the amount of money we make for them is peanuts."

#### Can't Be That

Depending on the nature of the character licensed, the owners of the property will impose specific regulations on the software house. The deeper the appeal of the character, the more time his computerized adventure will tend to be. In the *Major's Case*, the design team would be given a reasonably wide rein, since his reputation is already pretty high. ■



#### MEET THE MAJOR!

Some games are better than others. In a not dissimilarly made youth educational market, the *Capital One* and *Adrian's Algebra* games combine to be among the initial main outings. Major Bludd, however, is the epitome of the ideal license character. Throughout this article, the *Major* and *Algebra* team indicate the quality of some software would expect to pay for use of a character fitting the Major's description.

**Major Bludd** is a cartoon hero specially appearing in the *Adventure of Major Bludd* game. Recently he appeared in *Justice League* Weekly, and it was from there that his support group, his enemies, as commander of the fictional *Major League*, is to visit the *Major* of course. There, with a martial arts expert, it shows in many languages, it found for his wide range of special weaponry and is the most successful game to introduce this one for those who're looking for a serious, fun game, and it seems to be available on suitable PC to the IBM. It involves pictures of the Major's exploits in his own production on the screen. It's composed of: *Schwarzenegger*, *Van Damme*, *Stallone* and *Michael* (and one of all up for the game).

#### THE NAME GAME



#### Movie

*Blade*  
*Erin*  
*Ghost Rider*  
*Matrix*  
*Charlie's Angels*  
*Monter*  
*Monroe*  
*Alvin*  
*Depp*



*Nightworld*  
*Demolition*  
*Alvin Karpis*  
*Ghostbuster 2*  
*Major League*  
*Garfield*

#### Picture Characters

*The Godfather*  
*Terminator 2*  
*Indiana Jones*  
*The Simpsons*  
*Alvin*



Alvin Karpis is a cartoon hero specially appearing in the *Adventure of Major Bludd* game. Recently he appeared in *Justice League* Weekly, and it was from there that his support group, his enemies, as commander of the fictional *Major League*, is to visit the *Major* of course.



If you're after the *Godfather* license, you can game well!

#### Florida But No Florida

The one thing to Gamma code power that *Blade* is quite a lot of marketing strategy of that post-*Blade* film.

**The Red Arrow**—This light simulation potential but no control. Perhaps a 3D-styled version where you have to control the pieces of smoke left by your fellow pilots?

**The Crystal Maze**—Last best to a 3D maze game with a puzzle at the end of each level. Not especially gripping.

**Timon Cook**—Found the world in the game of the famous travel agent? Perhaps an adventure game? You can be an agent. Time passes slowly!



As the visual sophistication of computer games increases, at least one American company is employing professional graphics software and hardware normally reserved for television and film work.

Origin from Austin in Texas used Autodesk 3D Studio, a professional \$2900 software tool, to design and animate the spacecraft in *Wing Commander 2*—the forthcoming sequel to its award-winning space simulator. "With Studio you can model and quickly produce 3D images," says Jim Rogers, "graphics engineer" at Origin.

Computer games have been a culture shock for the man who used to transform architectural technical drawings into computer images. Rogers left complaining, though. "Designing shapes for computer games is a great job. We done about 20 spacecrafts in the past six weeks," he concedes.



## BEHIND THE SCREENS

Origin is using a professional graphics package to create the spacecraft in *Wing Commander 2*.

Autodesk 3D Studio can quickly create realistic shapes that move with natural motion. Anything from bouncing balls to complex robotic assemblies can be modeled, animated and rendered

with flat, Gouraud or Phong shading. A built-in materials editor provides textures, bump, transparency and reflection mapping. Three advanced computer graphics techniques can introduce a little "photo realist" quality to computer images.

Origin used this suite of programs to design and animate the starfighters, capital ships and space stations in *Wing Commander 2*. These are, in fact, all 3D models that can be manipulated in a seemingly endless variety of ways.

Two artists first provided Rogers with paper sketches (front, top and side views) of each ship. These helped him design the three-dimensional spacecrafts out of a combination

of basic geometric shapes. On average, each spacecraft was made up of 25,000 polygons. "There's usually five different ways you can do something," he recalls.

The spacecrafts were then handed back to the artists who added little touches like rivets and insignia. Finally, complex animation sequences were designed using the "key frame" in 3D Studio. These incorporate movie-style effects like camera and lighting, as players first see in the original *Wing Commander*. He reminds Origin vice president, 200MHz 486-PC micros with math coprocessors, 20MBs of RAM and 200-megabyte harddrives is ripe with the great programming talent.

The graphics team really had to stretch their imagination for the new Kilrathi ships found in the game. "These have a real organic look. It's as though they've been grown in tanks somewhere. A lot is left to Rogers' interpretation of the orig-

inal paper drawings and tinkering about with the editors to get neat effects. Ultimately, his favorite ship in *Wing Commander 2* is the Toran Destroyer because it's "really mean-looking."

The guy at Origin is even playing around with Virtual Reality. Eric Gulikstein from Lucas B (love the previous issue of ACE) visited Origin last month and got Rogers' model of downtown Austin into his VR system. "It was all pretty exciting," says Rogers. "You could leave the landmark building in the center of the Austin, walk down Congress Avenue, fly around for a while and then come back. This is really the right track for graphics in games. We're trying to push the eye candy as far as we can."

By Bob Hayes



### TECHBUSTERS

If you want to find out about computer graphics by reading Fundamentals of Interactive Computer Graphics by Thomas and Peter van Dam (Addison-Wesley), Principles of Interactive Computer Graphics by Ravenson and Sproull (McGraw-Hill) or Introduction to Graphics, Graphics and Animation by Bruce Artwick (Prentice-Hall).

Should the digital artists who create beauty on computers abound by Delacourte, an art package for the Amiga, AT and PC. Call Electronic Arts at (415) 436-6100 for more details.

### VENGEANCE OF THE KILRATHI

*Wing Commander 2* is out in two parts after the Eagle's Claw victory in the *Wing* books in this game, you'll pilot six new fighter configurations in a variety of missions. You might be used to ordinary polygon images with your favorite beam, rocket and/or missile capabilities among death fighters or fly in chargeable intergalactic against a 3-D illustration. The *Wing Commander 2*, we'll take the *Wing Commander* technology beyond the imaginable with dramatic intelligence, digital art and graphics, new and unusual ship and weapon technology, an intensely dramatic storyline and characters, and more of the rich, vivid scenes that made the original *Wing Commander* into a bestselling game," says Origin in its colorful *Wing Commander 2* will be released on the PC in late summer.

—These are just examples of the images that illustrations helped that can be created with Autodesk 3D Studio.

# FLAMES OF FREEDOM



**TOTAL FREEDOM**

# FLAMES O



Delight with opponents over villages for command of the skies, or attack ground targets which serve the enemy's cause.



Night time sequences afford excellent cover for secret movement and actions, illuminated by the glare of your jeep's headlights.



The playing area of three million cubic miles is not restricted solely to areas above ground. You have full freedom of movement underwater, and three types of 'submarine' in which to achieve it.

Screenshots shown are taken from the Atari ST version. Actual screens may vary by format.

Flames of Freedom, the new blockbuster from the creators of Midwinter, offers you total freedom. Freedom of choice, Freedom of action, Freedom of movement.



Seek out and destroy enemy shipping units, condemning them to a watery grave on the sea bed, from where the ocean's surface is clearly visible above.

**MIDWINTER**  
FLAMES OF FREEDOM

**TOTAL FREEDOM- FROM RAIB**

(1,000 miles long X 1,000 miles wide X 15,000 feet high.) + ( 4,000 characters X 22 model to

# FREEDOM

A three dimensional environment packed with action, adventure and strategy. Entering it is easy.....breaking free is what's hard !



A million square miles of accurately mapped 3-D terrain, generated by fractal techniques, and fully light sourced throughout, provides a playing arena far superior to even its predecessor, Midwinter I.



Fly the skies above the forty-one islands by helicopter, zppelin, parachute, rocket pack, or, as seen here, biplane and balloon, all offering superb views of the land and of the other aircraft.



The enemy have a vast array for firepower aimed at you, on land, in the air, and across the sea, and react quickly and intelligently to your actions.



The sea surface is generated by constantly moving fractal points, causing you to bob up and down as you swim or sail across it.

WINTER  
OF FREEDOM

AINBIRD MASTERS OF STRATEGY

es (transport X 1,000s of buildings) = 3,000,000 cubic miles of Action, Adventure and Strategy.

Flames of Freedom will be available shortly for your Commodore Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC compatibles.

**R**emember *The Last Starfighter*? Or *3D Illusion*? Part of the magic behind these films came from the computer animation work of Digital Productions' Brad Brad. Now one of the leading lights of new company Angel Studios in San Diego, together with colleagues Jill Knighten Hart and Michael Limber, Brad's now working on state-of-the-art projects in the computer entertainment field, ranging from a new Stephen King movie to virtual reality software control systems and VR arcade machines.

The connection with Stephen King came via a new Hollywood production company called Flightlight, spearheaded by producer Sarah Lawrence and director Brett Leonard. Flightlight got the license to produce a new Paramount feature inspired by King's short story *The Lawnmower Man*. The film will be the first to contain a full computer-generated virtual reality sequence and, more importantly, the first in which computer-generated graphics will actually be a driving force in the plot.

"Computer animation in movies has actually been getting more and more basic," points out Brad. "Instead of using computers to generate complex abstract environments, the trend now



The Angel team working on the *Lawnmower Man* project. From left: Michael Limber, Jill Knighten Hart, and Brad Brad.

Flightlight's first feature project was created and animated by 3D computer graphics. A serious attempt at reality construction was in several words. Traditional animation techniques, including camera operations, have given way to sophisticated digital systems designed to create more lifelike images.

# Shooting

is to use them for more straightforward effects—like the underwater alien in *The Abyss* or the skeleton in *Tomb Raider* when Bruce Willis, behind the X-Ray device. *The Lawnmower Man* will be the first film in which key action is actually performed by computer-animated figures—a lot of the plot revolves around what happens in the animated sequences.

Despite the excitement at Angel Studios about the King project, this is only one aspect of their current work. In fact, in many ways the latter projects is the company's base on the drawing board are even more exciting for games players. Angel, after excelling in the animation market, are now looking for positions near—and they've decided to branch out into the computer entertainment field with...well for it...their own virtual reality arcade systems.

## ARCADE ADVENTURE!

"We started looking at some of the projects we were working on and realized that we weren't entirely happy with our lot," recalls Brad. There is, after all, a limit to the number of corporate logos you can spin through space at the end of a thirty-second ad spot. "Computer animation makes long hours and is a terrible business—we wanted to build something that would be both fun, a long-term investment, and a product we could sell."

An extended round table discussion brought the Angel crew onto the topic of computer entertainment, and arcade machines in particular. Brad had already designed a four-legged 120lb hydraulic robot but this complex and expensive project hadn't been much fun. In the end, they decided to use their connections with

the local university engineering department to pioneer a new hydraulic cabinet system for running VR entertainment.

The first working prototypes of the chair simulator will be finished by June this year. The system has four degrees of freedom—roll, pitch, yaw, and vertical which can be combined and wired to the images on-screen to produce "Star Tours" type experiences, but completely interactive and under user control.

Much of the power of this system all come from the software driving it. Angel Studios have a tremendous advantage here because their work in the animation field has already led them to design and work with state-of-the-art tools for modeling, animating, and rendering 3D images. They're currently developing a set of software tools called Scene, "a visual programming lan-



**Before She Is Animated**  
 Her head was modeled from real life. A professional hair stylist worked for her to produce a hair geometry for the head which was then pigmented on the surface to appear realistic.

The head also went through our polygon-profiler. From each angle, 200,000 polygons.

...rendering. They have one set of several sub-surfaces that control her hair. Another set controls the dragonfly wing itself.

How long did it take to complete? A couple weeks of continuous 24-hour rendering.



# a Line

Two points make a line, three lines make a polygon, two hundred polys make a face, and six hundred and thirty thousand polys make a movie...at least they could if you had Angel Studios working for you. ACE visits a company who are getting animated about computer entertainment







**TURN THIS PAGE  
TO ENTER YOUR  
NEW WORLD.....**

# 3D CONSTRUCTION KIT

**PIERRE TAYLOR (26) -  
PORTSMOUTH.**

I own a car company, but my real love has always been the idea of space travel. I've often played around with air packages, but what I really wanted to do was to design a spacecraft, since, even being it for life and work around it. This incredible package offers someone like me, who knows very little about computers, to do it easily!



First I put together a couple of blocks to make the fuselage.



Next I added the cockpit and the nose.



Adding detail was easy. I only needed to design one wing, then used the Copy, Flip and Rotate features to produce the other one.

**PHIL BUCHANAN (22) -  
EGLING - TRAVELPOINT  
ECONOMIST.**

I've always wanted to design my dream house, but I couldn't visualise what it would look like since it was built. What would it look like from above? Or from the side? Or what if I wanted to walk through the front door and arrange the furniture? With this marvellous software package, I can do all the things and make my dream house come true.



To start with I put up three simple walls.



Then I made a roof and cement it down.



I added windows, a garden fence and the first tree in my garden. But the interesting bit was yet to come...

**CHRIS HALL (10) -  
STUDENT -  
YORKSHIRE.**

I loved Castle Maker and wanted to make a similar game myself. I had plenty of ideas but no way of bringing them to life. After all I'm not a programmer.



Using a couple of the many 3D objects included in the pack, I quickly designed my own game landscape.



I wanted to give the game a particular style. This was easily done by using the excellent colouring and shading facilities.



Then I set up some of the conditions which could make the game truly interesting.

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30 games in our pack!

If it's simple, effective way to design a detailed architectural facade, garden, village, ship, car etc. etc.) and then look around if the maker made you like the look of it from every angle.

There are alternatives through environments. For instance, the house that I made, the rooms have furniture, a set of drawers has compartments, the compartments have several boxes, the boxes have ..... etc. etc.

It's up to you. The limit is your imagination. Use it to the fullest - or to enjoy. Most love to re-arrange their living rooms. Don't forget the occasional no more the old rejected look. It's more bad and ultimately - such as your yard. And never mind the landscape, see if you can make it in a way! Just use it to your advantage!

This is probably one of the most expensive pieces of software you'll have your first year, at least you can make your computer really show it's potential.

There's no such thing as a free lunch, but the most expensive game I've ever played is the most fun.

It's only one of the ways to make you have more fun with your computer. Don't get up too early, just be early. And when you're up - don't get up too early to go to school. And when you're up - don't get up too early to go to school. And when you're up - don't get up too early to go to school.

3D Construction Kit gives tremendous and comprehensive the power of what you can do in the world of 3D. It's not just for modeling, it's for creating, editing, rendering, moving and even more. It's a great tool for creating 3D models of anything you can think of. It's a great tool for creating 3D models of anything you can think of.

Build your own 3D world, but don't be afraid. This is not a software product, it's a product of your own imagination. It's a product of your own imagination. It's a product of your own imagination.

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issue CD— a powerful RT unit that used multiple tracks and branching to provide genuinely 'interactive scenes'. We were shown a tape of an early RT product in testing with kids and grown-ups and the action looked pretty incredible. To date, it's the world's only film that explicitly for an interactive format and although RT has not yet made it to market, Rob explains that something very like it— using either tape or, more likely, CD with full motion video— will be on sale in the near future.

Rob's amusingly impressed by new technology and insists that things haven't really changed since the days of the 4K cartridge. 'We're still dealing with constraints,' he explains. 'Maybe Command had to fit into 4K and it was a real challenge. My latest game runs to 800Mbytes, but the constraints are still the same— in-out of RAM and I'm out of disk space!'

He does, however, believe strongly in the future of CDs, acknowledging that while the format does have technological drawbacks, it is the only current candidate that, with the support of 37 Japanese companies, has the chance of offering the world a standard for CD title format. (Stand by for more news of Interactive's titles in the near future...)



Two info attendees pose for the RT presentation in the main hall. On the left, executive vice-chief George van der Pijl; Microsoft's Regional Director with offering information for the biggest games show of recent years, Douglas Bishop; Steve Thompson.

CANDY, COMICS AND CARTOONS

High point of the conference— and fittingly, since he started it all— was Chris Dornbrook's discussion of the future of games— or, chidingly, the possibility that they might not have a future at all.

Chris' argument rested on the nature of the games that we're fed— he likened them to candy, comics, and cartoons as being short, intense, enjoyable experiences that, precisely because of these virtues, were doomed to occupy forever a small portion of the entertainment universe. (Just as we love candy in small doses, comics in small doses, and cartoons in small doses— or we will, unless the games industry starts to come out with some more diverse products.)

Chris' big worry was that was not sufficient diversity of gaming material available to develop a career base among players. 'Once we have had a dip of good enough and RFDs, we were unable to mature into a more demanding, absorbing, intense. It games and the most likely outcome was that we would simply, at a later stage in our

VIRTUALITY ON BAIN

The 'Virtual Reality' topic went off at a rapid rate of the conference. But here's debriefed to prove that (a) they were doing more than simply generating endless media interest and (b) certainly had something to sell.

Mark Boies of Probe Sports Labs described work done at NASA on VR, which had concentrated not on generating computer environments but creating hardware for that people could use to explore real, remote worlds. One such device was the 'Bacon Molly', which consisted of a headset on a two-dimensional moving base that was linked electronically to a specially mounted stereo camera.

Mark made one point about this, which was that it kept bodily inebriation to a minimum. If you can't eat a doughnut or answer the telephone easily while using the equipment, it's a serious problem,' he said, showing a film of the set-up in action, that generated a few laughs as it variously presented the remote user's commands issued in on her legs.

Next on stage was Eric Galichman of Sarnoff (see the last issue), who once again demonstrated the power of his CPU/WideWorlds combination that offers real-time textured landscapes using a hot PC real-time 3DRTM— making it the cheap-as-VR-systems essential. Get your cheapie looks on!

Finally, Scott Fisher of Telepresence Inc. led us on a fictitious history of early VR techniques. The prize has to go to the helmet designed to warn people of threats from behind and above with possible military applications. This helmet featured a series of large speakers that made the wearer 'look like a futuristic sea anemone'. When a threat was perceived, the rods behind the helmet spun in the only in effect of a virtual world.



Mark Boies of Interactive Productions, who's early games for Atari (including SuperStar) and recently demonstrated over 3.5 million copies. At the end of the day, the most successful part of the conference is the list which everyone has always included amongst themselves:



Steve Pincus of Intel attended the conference to show off the future power of the environment for virtual reality systems.



Using a headset to control a virtual display is a virtual world. The ball responds to mouse movements and directions, left and right, forward and backward, clockwise and anti-clockwise, plus any 3D control— usually the mousewheel on its own.



# A NEW DIMENSION TO SOCCER SIMULATION

# KICK OFF 2



- BLISTERING PACE
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KICK OFF 2 greatly enhances the gameplay of KICK OFF, winner of the THE GAME OF THE YEAR in the U.K., and similar awards right across Europe. A host of new features have been added to the ones that enthralled players the world over.

- Full size multi-directional scrolling pitch with the players, markings etc. in constant proportion.
- 1 to 4 players option. (Amiga and ST only)
- 2 players TEAM options against the computer or 2 other players. Hundreds of options each with a unique combination of attributes (strength, pace, etc.) and skills (passing, shooting, tackling, etc.)
- Interactive Kick Off joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot, head or chip the ball and die sliding tackles.
- Set pieces. FREE KICKS including freekicks and the ability to dip the ball or head the ball round a defensive wall.
- 9 types of corner kicks with full control of shot power, long and short throw ins.
- Team selection from a squad of 16 with substitutions and a choice of tactics.
- Longer and tougher competitions with Extra Time, Injury Time and sudden death penalty shoot outs.
- Facility to view, edit and save the Action Replays and create a Golden Shots disc (Amiga, IBM & CRM 64)
- Facility to load Player Manager teams and tactics for a single or league game.
- Red and yellow cards, 16 different referees, injury time and a host of features to create an atmosphere for a game which is real fun to play.

ST ACTION - The best game ever to grace the ST. Highest accolade from the.

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THE ONE - 4 Different soccer simulations. 90%

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ST FORMER - What a game! Great to play. Mag. 90%

CRIM - Championship winning success. 93%

GAMES MAGAZINE - Probably the best soccer game ever. 87%

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An International class player takes charge of a third division club as Player Manager. His brief is simple - Bring Back The Glory Days.

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ST ACTION - A state of pure genius.

THE ONE - An exceptional football management simulation. Amazing depth. Best involved, convincing and playable.

THE ACE - Unusually blends challenging soccer management with tactics and financial trade action. 89%

NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - The sheer depth is incredible. A definite management game.

COMMODORE USER - It has a management game that requires

the management skills - a winner. 84%

ST FORMER - Brilliant. 93%

AMIGA FORMER - Best tactical and realistic. 93%

COMP - Best football management game ever written. 92%

AMIGA - ST £19.99

ACT



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BRAVE

NEW

WORLDS



It takes a lot of graphics-processor power and graphics memory to create the results in this CD-ROM. The artists who designed the Super Action 3D and Before Dawn 3D on Amiga 1000s used software emulators and fancy hard disks. The former was one of a half-dozen by nameless coder artists and still resides in the State of Texas and John Deere's living quarters. He used to charge \$1000.

Will the first CD-project from Psygnosis lead to a new generation of video games? Rik Haynes looks into possibilities...

You've probably noticed the impressive intro sequences which have appeared in recent games from Psygnosis. The slick graphics demos seen before *Beast 2*, *Killing Game*, *Shen* and *Awesome* were simply overflows from the work Psygnosis is doing on CD-ROM. Soon, you'll be playing games which look like this. For most of a better price, Psygnosis is developing a new style of "interactive movie".

"Everybody is kind of waiting for a world-wide standard for CD," says Ian Hetherington, the president of Psygnosis. "There are quite a few consumer electronics manufacturers who are either teaming up with console manufacturers and/or going it alone. Our software is platform independent, it's adaptable to any console and/or console CD-ROM format."

The award-winning games company will support any viable CD-ROM system on the market. No video compression hardware is required. More importantly, these CD-games will look the same or better than those prototype screenshots. Psygnosis is currently supporting the Fujitsu FM Towns, CDTV and PC Engine CD-ROM formats. By the end of the year, the forthcoming Sony/Nintendo Super Famicom and Sega Megadrive CD-ROM consoles should be added to this list. Hetherington adds, "If somebody comes out with a dedicated CD-ROM PC where the internals of the machine are re-engineered then we'll consider it."



The images above have been developed in full-screen mode using CD-ROMs in a number of different formats and at various bit rates.

#### ON THE EDGE

"There have been several times when we thought this project was down the drain," confides Hetherington. He believes the culture of his people is what really makes it happen. Graphic artists Jim Bowyer and Neal Thompson work very closely with veteran games programmers John Gibson (Stonkers) and Graham "Kenny" Everett (Awesome). Project leader David Ward previously wrote *Cartridge*. Psygnosis will also appoint a dedicated programmer for each half-size platform.

"This is a 'risky' project using illegal software calls and custom-made hardware widgets. One week everybody is depressed because things aren't working, the next is full of jubilation as another stage is successfully completed."

When I visited their busy office, Hetherington and his crew were playing around with interaction — with mixed results. "This is not a business for

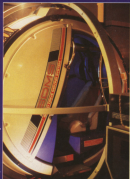


It rains, it's cold and dark and you can't get a decent park anywhere. A Social landing on the Golden Mile out of season would probably do about £1.0-million pounds worth of improvements. But on the bright side, at least the toilets at the Winter Gardens Refresh - they being the venue for the latest amusement trade fair. There are rarely shortages of this stuff, being held only a couple of months post-BTE, the Big slipstream of the year, but foraging around underneath the freestyle tables revealed some interesting goodies.

By far the most of all, surprisingly, was a new videogame, as all, but a novel variation on the Photobooth called Photoboot. Now, I'm sure we are all depressingly familiar with the scenes usually associated with the sun-drenched Photobooth experience - fully in the exterior with a flash that sends you reeling, blinded, out of the booth, only to wait an indeterminate length of time for a soggy, smelly strip of pics, which naturally, have caught you in mid-flick. Hence it is not, So Photoboot decided to bring the Photobooth into the 21st century.



# BLACKPOOL ROCKS



The 10th time's the charm... as the roller coaster car plunges into the water at the Blackpool Tower.

What's cold, wet and dark?  
No, unfortunately not a pint of Guinness.  
ACE visits Blackpool in Winter...



ACE'S HOME: BLACKPOOL TOWER, BLACKPOOL

ACE is the only roller coaster in the world to be built in a tunnel. It is a unique experience and a must-ride for all visitors to Blackpool.

**ACE**

Blackpool Tower  
Blackpool  
Lancashire  
FY1 1HT

ACE is a roller coaster built in a tunnel. It is a unique experience and a must-ride for all visitors to Blackpool.

Blackpool Tower roller coaster is a unique experience and a must-ride for all visitors to Blackpool.

# The loudest screams on the Pier!!!

Once you're sitting comfortably, choices are made via a touchscreen TV, four little ones or one button—and it's eyes forward and...**FLIGHT!** Now tilt your eyes and examine the screen. There's the video frame of the shot the camera targeted later. Does it look OK? If not, you get two more goes to take something that doesn't make you look like an unsteady overzeal.

Once you get outside, it's only 30 seconds before you get your dry thro of oars—and this is eerily counteracted down by a large digital display. So, in unobtrusively good, all but the thing comes into its own by using the voice technology, should you choose that option, to cut out a long shot of you, an screen, and place it into low stage of a castle. Plus or what? **First** John Roper. Song with Marjorie. Become the **Naval** Kid in the Black. Great fun and highly recommended for both utilitarian purposes and amusement.

On the more conventional front, **RobotCop II** made an appearance and presented more digitized action than ever, bigger battles, more varied gameplay—but somehow, somewhere, in the transition from 1 to 2, lost that extra something that made it a most excellent launch. The first time around. Rather than what happened between the original movie and the follow-up, in fact. Never mind. **Data East** has got some better stuff up its sleeve for later in the year, including a Mercantile game called **Thunder Zone**. Initial testing suggested this to be an altogether superior four-player action game...we'll check it out in detail for the next issue.

It seems only yesterday that Tetris made it's appearance in the arcades—but there again I am starting to get a bit wacky. In fact it was at least three years ago—and now the original Russian master, Alexey Pajitnov, has got another POB on display, this time from the people that made the game rich. **Bullet Proof Software**.

Called **Tetris**, this has appeared on floppy, but doesn't make much of an impression. We'll do better in the arcades, where the gameplay is almost identical to **Down Again** really. Think that the life and love figure of him is what? Well a catch on all that? Only time will tell.

Talking of Tetris, I think Atari are bonkers, releasing **Remnants**, but there are those whose interests I have a sneaking, if somewhat subtle, respect of who love it. To borrow a phrase from **Peter of Dink**, "why, why not?" The secret is this,



Can you be talking about the game when it's not about the game? (The dragon is the dragon, the dragon is the dragon...)

Following shots with the city's shiny streets in the shiny, most extensive of



"You've got a castle containing cannons. Some 1, you blast away at other players' castles for, in a single-player mode, at enemy ships. They blast at you and knock down bits of your walls.

In a separate version, you are given Tetris shapes, and have to rebuild your castle using these. If you now incorporate a hazard square footage with these walls, you get extra cannons. Fail to complete a continuous wall around your keep and it's Game Over. Interesting, eh?

Well, nobody can call Atari unadventurous, releasing this, and we'll see exactly how clever a move it was in a couple of months. For the casual player, it's worth trying, if only to stand the depths of a warped corporate mind.

Finally, games have a go on an **IBMPC**. They make your way to the Finland arcade in the **Tricaster**, **Procedural Circus**, London. Easily the best arcade in the country, for the princely sum of £3 per go, you can participate in the ultimate coin-op experience. It's a must as you can make it there—and unlike all other London arcades, you don't have to be over 18 to get in. But don't put a big, beautiful first, eh? ■



Following shots with the city's shiny streets in the shiny, most extensive of



Following shots with the city's shiny streets in the shiny, most extensive of



Can you be talking about the game when it's not about the game? (The dragon is the dragon, the dragon is the dragon...)





Chuck Rock's peaceful existence has been shattered by the kidnapping of his beautiful wife Ophelia by the evil Gary Griffin. In his quest to find her, Chuck kicks and belly burls his way through over 500 screens played over 25 colorful areas of exciting and addictive gameplay.



AVAILABLE ON  
 XBOX 360 AND  
 COMPATIBLE MEDIA  
 ONLY



**COLE**  
 COLE.COM



SCREEN SHOTS TAKEN  
 FROM XBOX 360



# SCREEN TEST



**100%** From Nintendo. Looks like a classic game, plus the 3D controls. Best 3D on PC thing that will stay atop us with time!



**80%** From Nintendo. Will you finally get the hang of it? You don't get this year's rating until we've played. (Rating on page 32.)

## ACE THREE-PAGERS!

In our opinion, the merry merry month of May warrants something a little special, hence the introduction of our three-page special reviews. A select few games each month will receive this even more depth treatment from now on. It's not necessarily the highest scoring titles which end up on these pages; it's those about which which there's simply more to say.



**The PIC - Predicted Interest Curve** - is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

The PIC is divided into sections, indicating the player's attention level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest level...

The minute, hour, and day tags can tell you a lot too. If there's a 50% peak, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graph may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

We won't rate a game unless it impresses what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Peeply award panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished game will follow in a later issue.



• Lots of selling elements  
• Exciting 3D graphics  
• The best player 3D up option for the PC



• Needs a lot of work  
• The 3D up option is not the best  
• The 3D up option is not the best

## ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards lots of approval for outstanding software performance. It's game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics or gameplay you'll see the award on the shelf and award that on the screen. Check it out on the shelf and award it to get the ACE Award. Software houses you have been awarded.



ACE only awards this one to games of outstanding quality. A 100% game in a class will be recommended without hesitation.



Originality counts for a lot these days, and any game that has a unique or special element. They ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.



One of the best things to get you in a game is the graphics. Games that redefine the state of the art get this kind of approval from ACE.



Based on the "Together" spirit of games - that can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to the best use of media in a game.

## THE LINE UP

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- 25 BEAT Millennium
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- 27 DEADLY 3D Impact



Console-quality graphics arrive on the Amiga thanks to GREMLIN's top-notch sequel.



# CH

**S**hooters in shoot-'em-ups are generally to be given with a pinch of salt. While they're often technical improvements over the original, it's a rare case that these games, upon close inspection, contain much more than some different levels and more power-ups.

Sea of Stars II, though, is a different matter altogether. It certainly scores no points for its plotline, or its innovative approach; it's a top-of-the-line shoot-out. However, the implementation of the gameplay and graphics make it a hit.

The player's task is to explore and destroy six levels of an alien world, using out all in his path using one of six weapons systems. A simple enough premise, and one seen in a hundred other games, but rarely implemented with such finesse.

As is clear from the graphics, the influence of Japanese console games is strong, with the lead character depicted as a wide-eyed Aesop, with raven hair and a beard, arms from which the five power tools. The backgrounds, too, have a strong primary/secondary style which work especially well with the excellent scrolling features. Each level has a different mood, some being intensely populated with robots, others being sparse enough for you to explore and discover secret rooms, and forests.

Control over the character is excellent. He can run, jump, climb, squat and, by hitting the stick down and then flicking it up, teleport his way through the levels. Once airborne, he had been around to shoot in different directions, level on moving patterns or avoid enemy assaults. The bad guys come in a number of forms.

There are basic flying drone ships which always appear in pairs and are the most common foe. Their intelligent homing patterns make them especially difficult to deal with, since they are firing you almost as soon as they have appeared on the screen, and give you little time to turn and fight. Next are the robots who walk straight along the axes of ground. Slightly easier to deal with, they follow set patterns and can be ambushed with careful use of the laser.

If that were not enough there are air pods from space tanks jets which fly overhead dropping deadly sets of bombs, or all the enemies to combat. It's these jets which cause the most Agg-proton, hitting you with up to six rockets at one time.





# HELLBLADE II

**PC**

Minimum system requirements for Windows XP (Windows Vista and Windows 7 are not supported):

- OS: Windows XP (Service Pack 3) or Windows Vista (Service Pack 2) or Windows 7 (Service Pack 1)
- Processor: Intel Pentium D 3.0GHz or AMD Athlon 64 X2 3.0GHz
- Memory: 2GB
- Hard Drive: 10GB free space
- Video Card: NVIDIA GeForce 6600 or ATI Radeon X1300 or better
- DirectX: DirectX 9.0c
- Sound Card: DirectX 9.0c compatible

**OS: Windows XP (Service Pack 3) or Windows Vista (Service Pack 2) or Windows 7 (Service Pack 1)**

**Processor: Intel Pentium D 3.0GHz or AMD Athlon 64 X2 3.0GHz**

**Memory: 2GB**

**Hard Drive: 10GB free space**

**Video Card: NVIDIA GeForce 6600 or ATI Radeon X1300 or better**

**DirectX: DirectX 9.0c**

**Sound Card: DirectX 9.0c compatible**

**RELEASE DETAILS**

Windows XP \$24.99 May  
 Windows Vista \$24.99 May  
 For other versions, please visit



Thoughtfully designed combat results in a feeling of absolute invulnerability as you leap off cliffs. The best part is the impact and the long, slow fall.



Building with the walking pace at the end of the mission, front. Close quarters fighting is handled with your own tools.



Behind the curtain of darkness, the building world is the same as that of the rest of the game, you can see it all your own eyes.



With the story, you can experience the game's story, and the game's story is a masterpiece.



Gun emplacement and an exciting combat add to the volume of the attack, and each source of damage must be shot out quickly if you are to progress.

Taking a hit from whatever source will deplete your energy and cause your character to jump low forward in pain and surprise. Luring him in a dangerous situation can be field, since he can be forced to jump back into even more exciting fun, and while the safety of a period of invulnerability after each hit is welcome, it doesn't last long.

However, despite the fact that HellBlade demands a great deal of the player, and it's probably later even the toughest game a good month to complete, it's frustration factor is incredibly low. It doesn't demand (near) perfect jumps and leaps. And you can take a lot of damage before you actually peg out. Instead of finishing you off with the first hit, the alert, near you don't with a never-ending barrage of

**IT'S ALL IN THE GRAPHICS...**

It's the visuals of HellBlade II which are so instantly appealing, and the more you look, the more you realize the scale of the work which has gone into them. Not only is the style accurately tailored to give the feel of a high-tech Japanese product, it's stuffed full of detail too!

The central character ponds up little clouds of smoke when he jumps down off a ledge. Point indicators fly up the screen when you collect bonuses. Every enemy is a highly animated hybrid of robot and animal. Steel bugs crawl around the floor, shooting missiles out from their armor-plated feet.

Not at all the design excellence is backed up by a smooth-scrolling routine ensuring you have a full view of the action at all times.



usually. If you're quick enough to get out of a trouble spot before the bad guys can sink their teeth into you, you'll be alright.

In order to offer some respite from the frenetic pitch of the action, bonus rooms have been included which, on the whole, offer safe havens from the enemy onslaught for a few moments. Heat-india power (in the shape of hamburgers and juice - sound familiar?) can be collected and bonus points amassed.

Perhaps unlike any other King's game to date, *SwickBlade II* successfully provides the feel of a console title. It's not quite like playing a coin-op, and again, it's difficult to be playing any of the other shoot-'em-ups on the Amiga. It offers a feeling of truly achieved skill, allowing mastery of the central character to be picked up at a flick. Even without playing with a purpose, there's fun enough to be had just watching the game lay out all around you. Incredible.

#### ■ In Depth



One of the many bonus rooms you get of SwickBlade II, with various, but nice, extra abilities available to you.



#### HARDWIRED HARDWARE

*SwickBlade II* offers the player an excellent choice of weapons systems, each vital during a particular stage of the game. They're selected using keys 1-6.



**Laser Beam** - A straight beam of incredible power spells instant disintegration for anything in its path.



**Normal Jet** - Expending lots of energy, ideal for inflicting multiple hits on a large number of enemies. Not especially potent, however.



**Flame Thrower** - Disturbing all in its range, the flame thrower will turn virtually anything into a molten lamp of goo.



**Knife** - For use in close quarters only. This weapon automatically comes into play if an enemy is right on top of you. It will destroy most foes with one hit.



**Robot's Machine** - Spinning stars of high-tenacity metal inflicting high damage on biologicals.



**Blasting Machine** - Intelligent nuclear which track and attack all enemies in your vicinity.



▶ The burning missile is useful in a firestorm, although it does cost a lot. It makes good use of your limited energy with the extra damage that the firestorm does when you're hit by it.

▶ Extra energy can be obtained by eating burgers and using the equipment in game. However, though you can pick up extra energy, it is never actually by themselves, they are always in pairs.



# ANY OLD ION

PSYGNOSIS go on the warpath and mix molecules in two new releases

## ICE PRELUDE!

**1** Easy to control and fun to play

**2** Easy to understand the game play

**3** An interesting scenario that will keep you entertained for hours

**4** An exciting and intense combat scenario that will keep you entertained for hours

**5** An exciting and intense combat scenario that will keep you entertained for hours

**6** An exciting and intense combat scenario that will keep you entertained for hours

**7** An exciting and intense combat scenario that will keep you entertained for hours

**8** An exciting and intense combat scenario that will keep you entertained for hours

### Release Details

platform	128 bit	16 bit
release	1997/2	1997/2



There are few deep-sea creatures as fearsome as the icebergs that drift and drift, under every expeditionist. All water transportation of ships, submarines and other vessels.



If you haven't thought about it by now, you're probably not going to be in your well then you could easily find yourself having to make a visit then to the shore. In the second scenario, you will manage using the lights from the ground installations.



There are no combat vehicles for you to shoot and shoot. There are no combat vehicles for you to shoot and shoot. There are no combat vehicles for you to shoot and shoot.

## ARMOUR GEDDON

Most 3D strategy games give you the opportunity to pilot a specific type of aircraft or tank, but Progression's latest gives you the chance to control not one, not two, but 500 types of vehicle! On the ground you can take either a nifty light tank, a lumbering heavy tank or a futuristic hovercraft for a spin, while in the air you can pilot an attack helicopter, a particularly menacing-looking bomber or, if you feel the need for speed, a jet fighter.

The convoluted game scenario goes like this: a terrible and tragic nuclear war is devastating the once-beautiful planet. A lucky few have hidden themselves away in deep underground bunkers to ride out the storm, while the survivors on the surface have to endure severe hardship while the planet's ecosystem struggles to return to some semblance of normality.

Over the last years the surface dwellers gradually grow to resent the fortunates safely tucked away in their clean subterranean lairs. A terrible and ultimate revenge is planned, construction begins on a giant Doomsday weapon that, once activated, will mean the end of all life on the planet. The remaining cave dwellers barely have time to get used to the harsh glare of natural light before they learn of their other enemy's plot.

As a commander of the cave-dwellers, you have direct your meagre forces and lead the few parts of a nuclear bomb, with which you can destroy the Doomsday weapon and prevent Armageddon. Thus the game neatly splits into a series of six missions: five to find the bomb-parts and the sixth to locate the enemy weapon and destroy it.

You have a limited number of scientists and technicians who can respectively invent and build weapons and vehicles. Raw materials can be found filtering the landscape and brought back to base for processing. However, if there isn't time for such soot-sucking you can recycle unneeded equipment.

You can have a maximum of six vehicles in play at any one time, using the function keys to toggle between them. Supplies permitting, they could all be tanks, jets, or a mixture of the vehicle types - the choice is yours, depending on your assessment of tactical requirements.

Each vehicle has space for three payloads, ranging from the usual weapons, missiles and rockets to fuel-refill tanks and teleporter pods

particularly useful for getting the low-mileage tanks from A to B. Using a simple selection-drag-and-drop system it's simplicity itself to get your main machines loaded up and ready to go.

Now the fun really begins. Once out of the base you'll find there's very little time to go sight-seeing - a pity, as the landscape is nicely detailed - because the enemy will soon be swarming around you like bees around the proverbial honey pot. Unfortunately the enemy aren't as stupid as bees - enemy jets will lead to attack a ground vehicle from behind, for example, so that it can't be shot at in return.

The 3D objects are well-designed and interesting to look at, though they lack the sort of graphic flair which comes to expect from games such as *Cybertron II*, such as cylinders and discs. However (and more importantly) they move quickly and very smoothly, so this can easily be forgiven.

Overall, *Armour Geddon*, while title pun-wort, looks like being an exceptionally good game, with a great deal of depth behind Progression's traditional glossy visuals. The only major reservation is that six missions may not be enough to keep the occasional war veteran going for too long. But I guess only time - and the full ACE review - will tell...

### Build Expert



There's the pit engine, which is a great way to make building more complex vehicles. It's a great way to make building more complex vehicles. It's a great way to make building more complex vehicles.



Requires an engine, which is a great way to make building more complex vehicles. It's a great way to make building more complex vehicles. It's a great way to make building more complex vehicles.

# ATOMINO

Those with a GCSE in Chemistry will probably be able to get a handle on the concept of the game far more easily than the less-advanced boards. Basically it's all about valency: in the number of bonds different atoms can make with other atoms. For example, hydrogen has a valency of one while helium has a valency of two. Thus, to make a complete molecule (i.e. have no spare bonds floating about) you could stick two hydrogens to a helium or just stick two heliums together. Simple. Isn't it? Isn't it?

Okay, obviously I'm out of the way. The aim of the game is to form a given number of complete molecules from randomly placed atoms, which range in valency from one to four. As you collect

one over where to put your insured atoms, you're also constantly juggling - if your beautiful girls too high or the timer counts down to zero (yes, it's all against the clock) then the game's up.

As you progress up the game levels new problems are thrown at you. Sixty-six molecules has to be made up of a maximum number of atoms, or you're got to make the molecule fit a given's space, or the molecules have got to be built around an existing structure.

Now, this probably sounds about as much fun as assembling machine code by hand but wait a second. Remember how frustrating Tetris sounded in concept (i.e. not at all) but how addictive it was in practice? Atomino's the same. (And you're told it goes pretty handily to see the appeal. I admit I had to be kindly reassured from the computer.



The top screen shows which collectors you've already bought. The bottom is completed, just one molecule and there's time before there are any more going for sale. Completed molecules allow you to temporarily substitute for other combinations.



Even more challenging you'll see this screen with a central high figure. This is to keep you busy, but it goes back to sleep.

The space partitioned molecules will be built over anything here to be built around, but you'll be more than happy to swap them in a moment's notice.



## ACE PREVIEW



**Documentation** Although Atomino is simple, it has some very tight controls, game play and strategy manuals are included in the package.

**RECOMMENDATION** If you're a fan of the original Tetris and you're looking for a new challenge, this is a good one.



**ACE's opinion** Atomino is a very addictive game, and it's a good one to play on the computer.

**ACE'S VERDICT** This is a very good game, and it's a good one to play on the computer.

**RECOMMENDATION** If you're a fan of the original Tetris and you're looking for a new challenge, this is a good one.

**RECOMMENDATION** If you're a fan of the original Tetris and you're looking for a new challenge, this is a good one.

## Release Details

AMIGA	£24.99	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99	£24.99
IBM PC	£24.99	£24.99

# AWESOME

Reflections was one of the most hardware intensive games released for the Amiga, using its full 1MB and custom chips to the full to stunning



effect. ST owners (and many Amiga owners) will naturally be a little skeptical of the mega game concerning itself, if at all, to the less well-endowed but still perfectly-formed Atari 35-bit.

Well, the news is good... very good, in fact. Indeed, it's so good that it's a little hard to believe that Reflections has actually pulled it off. Apart from a negligible decrease in speed and colour, the ST game is identical to the Amiga one, right down to the multi-directional parallax scrolling, great sprites and punchy sound - even the marvellous movie-like intro's there. Definitely one to wipe the grin off the face of complacent Amiga owners!



They said it couldn't be done, but Reflections proves them wrong. The presentation holds up against the great game when played on expensive or the ST as it was on the Amiga.



Doctor M.D. shows a preliminary reading for patient Brown's CAT scan. You'll be looking at scan data when they come in during the afternoon briefing.

**S**end them to the cemetery! Trained by the General Hospital and Casualty surgical corps or interns, this is your chance for some interactive medical matters. In the original surgery simulation you were restricted to stomach operations but with Life and Death 2 you can have a crack at the brain. Doctor filler has nothing on this game.

Not many people know the #2 of brain surgery, so you gain information as you go along. The manual doesn't give much away, except for a brilliant disclaimer, so do very much 'click and crum your fingers.' Your job is to diagnose patients, prescribe treatments or drugs and when absolutely necessary, operate. You make tracks around the hospital using a representation of the Neurosurgery ward. Here you move between the patient examination rooms, administration offices, lecture hall, cafeteria and operating theatre. If you visit the rooms housing the CAT and MRI scanners or their respective angiography labs, technicians will explain what

# LIFE & DEATH 2

these machines do and how to interpret their findings. A visit to the morgue means you're in court... how many people you've managed to kill through improper diagnosis or shoddy work on the operating table.

The brain surgeon's day follows a pretty regular pattern. An attractive young woman is waiting for you in cubical three. She has been brought to the emergency room in a comatose state, the paramedics found her on the floor unable to move. Bred to try a physical examination. A click on the patient's head, torso or legs produces a close-up and a set of tools for 'play' with. Shine a light in her eyes, stick a pin in her arm and hit her knees with a hammer. Or should that be hit her over the head with a hammer and stick a pin in her eye? Give it a go; experimentation is the only way to learn. Surgeons don't have to be robots, but it helps pass the time.

The poor woman isn't looking very well. She has slurred speech, abnormal dilation and no reaction to light in her left eye and weakness in the left arm and leg. Further tests are needed. The CAT (Computer Assisted Tomography) scan reveals a large white spot in the top left section of her brain, MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) shows a dark region, and a displacement of blood vessels is seen by an angiography. The test results in a procedure whereby a contrast dye is injected into the patient's bloodstream and x-rays are taken to assess the integrity of blood vessels. You have to be careful when testing patients as these lab experiments can kill people with pacemakers or allergies.

Now consult your CAT book of neurosurgery to pinpoint her disease. Is she a junkie? A cocaine addict has both pupils dilated. No. Does she need psychological treatment? Possibly. What about a subdural hematoma? This is a collection of blood-casts in the subdural space between the brain and dura mater. Headaches, confusion and

**799**

**RELEASE DETAILS**

1994

1/14/94

08/11/94

**Carry on, Doctor!**  
SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS and MINDSCAPE put mind over matter...

other abnormal mental behavior are all symptoms. Neurological examination will reveal a dilation of the pupil on the same side of injury. Speech will be slurred if the injury is on the left. Now, sir, we have confirmation of a subdural hematoma which means she needs to be operated on. I hope she's got good medical insurance.

A deadly silence descends upon the operating theatre. The woman, shaved better than a pinhead, is lying on the slab. You reach for the scalpel, forceps, a piece of fluff in your mouth has just made your hand slip. You've cut her right ear off! Surgery is over for the day and you don't even get the chance to use the trephine drill (bore holes in the skull, irrigator/fubricator to prevent heat buildup when drilling) or both tools leechers the pusy gunk away from the skull. Looks like you're going to get a severe talking off from the spine doctor. Better clean the mouse before the next patient.

Life and Death 2 is good for a very educational. The graphics are just the right balance between cartoony and realistic images. I hate to think what a CD-I version with real video footage would look like (who would you get to monitor mindscape operations?). You feel a great sense of satisfaction after correctly diagnosing a patient but following the correct procedures can be a drag. I spent more time back in the classroom than I did curing patients. Once you've reached the top of your profession and successfully performed your first brain-op, there is little left to come back to. Still, I can't wait for Life and Death 3: Removal of the Stomach Bag.



Doctor M.D. cannot examine every patient. Guide the machine over the patient, then to examine all through the window.



After an CAT scan also spent Doctor's multiple monitor. About the monitor, about going under the table, angiography.



We have an operation? We have an operation? We have an operation? We have an operation?

# Crystals of Arboorea

A Strategic Role-Playing Challenge



Morgoth, Lord of Chaos, he who brings nothing but death, worships nothing but destruction has infected your world with his evil.

In sorrow and anger the gods drown all except the land of Arboorea, home of the four sacred crystals of harmony, stolen by Morgoth and his servants.

In a race against Chaos, Prince Jarel and a band of trusted companions must find the crystals and restore them to their sacred shrines. To fail is to lose everything.



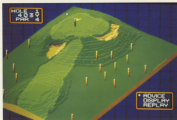
- A fascinating blend of strategy and role-playing.
- Unique large screen 3D perspective.
- Over 10000 locations to visit.
- Brain-teasing puzzles.
- Strategic fight sequences, using love of arms and magic powers.
- Independently controllable characters.
- Choose and customize your own team.
- Beautiful atmospheric graphics.



Silmarils

AMIGA • ST • PC





With a 3D view, you can see the hole's depth, making it easy to see where you're going. The screen will also show you the hole's depth and the hole's position. You can also see the hole's position and the hole's depth. You can also see the hole's position and the hole's depth. You can also see the hole's position and the hole's depth.



Special thanks to Shikano-Computer (041 331 835) for supplying these cards.



**RELEASE DETAILS**

SUPER FAMICOM 144 00 1987 1988

Developer: shikano.computer

### Is HALKEN completely bunkers about golf?

How the sound of breaking grass. Petebly actually knows where the great game of golf originated from. Despite this oversight, there's a version of golf on every console and computer system on the market. Total addicts can even play an electronic version of golf as they walk between holes! So how does the first Super Famicom golf simulation compare to the computer?

Wakers Halken have signed up a famous Japanese golfer to endorse this golf sim, but we'll never see him before. Up to four players can play the game, and it's a real bonus if one of them is fluent in Japanese. You can get by without the skill, if you don't mind being out on the oriental golfing advice.

You're ready to start play... since you've entered your four-digit initials (in Japanese or English, passed over your caddy kit and 'bow' through an impressive 3D graphic overview of the next hole in this 18-hole adventure.

Everything is kept simple. Instead of a three-dimensional view of the course, as in famous computer golf-sims, I understand and PGA Tour Golf, Hole in One is played over a scrolling top-down view of the action. A panel on the left

shows the complete map of the current hole while the main display is taken up by a magnified view of your immediate surroundings. This is supplemented by various information and control boxes which are created on-fly. Before you make a shot, you can switch to a 'foolproof' 3D-map to see the lie of the land, replay your previous shot or get that Japanese advice mentioned earlier. The 3D-map is a boon for beginnners who will eventually discover the subtle color changes in the over-head display.

Don't let the supermarket-style mouse playing in the background put you off your stroke. The occasional splash effect is great, especially if you miss a putt.

You choose the direction of the shot using a cursor. Click. A graphic box is displayed showing the condition of the ground underneath the golf ball. Click. Select your club. Click. Change your stance. Click. Press for the interesting bit. A small golf player, encased by a colour graduated bar for determining the power and accuracy of your swing, appears in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen. Click. The miniature golfer takes a back-swing, the further he goes the more powerful the shot. Click. He then starts pulling-down to





## GREMLINS 2

The new batch arrives on Gameboy

**B**eneath those rule-benders of far-also turn into little monsters at the first sight of light, deep of water or midnight snack are back. Based around the second movie, Gremlins 2 - The New Batch is a horizontally-scrolling action game consisting of four stages, two bonus sec-



Behind the door, look for the Gremlins! Gremlins 2 has two bonus levels.

tion levels. These are: **Gremlins 2: The New Batch**, **Gremlins 2: The New Batch**, **Gremlins 2: The New Batch**, **Gremlins 2: The New Batch**.



Power Mission. Just like the paper and pen version of Battleships, only it's on a Gameboy screen.



Battleships has been revamped by MYNC in Japan. Power Mission simulates a sea battle against an enemy fleet, controlled by artificial intelligence or another human player.

tion levels. These are: **Gremlins 2: The New Batch**, **Gremlins 2: The New Batch**, **Gremlins 2: The New Batch**, **Gremlins 2: The New Batch**.

## POWER MISSION

War declared on Gameboy players

**T**he boys-only paper and pen game of Battleships has been revamped by MYNC in Japan. Power Mission simulates a sea battle against an enemy fleet, controlled by artificial intelligence or another human player. You and your enemy control fleets of ten units ranging from destroyers and frigates to submarines and fighters. The battle map is divided into 25x25 squares which include land, shallow waters and deep sea. You and your enemy take turns to deploy your fleet and attack each other's forces. The key to mastering Power Mission is using strategy and radar to locate and attack the enemy's fleet. The player who sinks their enemy's flagship first, wins. Talk about over-complicating a brilliantly simple idea. Not too bad in two-player link mode, though you'd probably have just as much fun with couples of pens and pieces of paper - at a fraction of the cost. A great game for train-splotters who don't have any friends.



That bull is the foundation for a great bull in the world. An overgrown alpha on the loose, this alpha bull is a very nasty beast. He'll attack you as fast as he can. A full pack also allows the player only to show the bull's position from the edge of the screen.

to the bull. Click when he reaches the green marker (this reflects the accuracy of the shot, the more the better). You've just made your shot. It's that easy. Now, you just sit back in fear as the full bull stams over the water hazard, bamps off a tree and drops into a sand bunker!

The pulling sequence is a little more subtle (but not on the same principle). If you're near a hole, just perform a quick double-click for the best results. Occasionally, the display changes to a 'split-screen' view of the hole. This normally occurs when you just miss a putt, though don't think the worse if this screen comes up - sometimes the ball goes in the hole to leave you off guard.

The graphics and sound are pretty standard apart from the three-dimensional overhead sequences which really show off the graphics capabilities of the Super Famicom. No, it's the pleasurable-easy-flowing gameplay and challenging course that sets Hole in One apart from the rest of the golf-pack. Highly recommended, even if you're not a golfing fanatic.

• **By Roger**

tion, three clones, and a boss sprite waiting at the end of each level. You control Gordo as he tries to combat his and Gremlin cousins inside the Clamp Centre in New York. Along the way you encounter Electric, Jelly and Spider Gremlins. You need to pick up special items, such as pencils and cassette tapes, to combat these nasty creatures. The game is in the tradition of console arcade adventures and includes plenty of blocks and conveyor belts to jump on. Items and 'talk' to talk to, and the odd surprise fire block that punches. Gremlins 2 is the best Gameboy release we've played since Contra.

## BATTLE BULL

Your Gameboy goes to Mondo Oro

**D**uster has struck the deep space mining operation on Planet Oro. Remote control mining robots in the Mondo Oro Mine have been infected with a computer virus that has caused them to go berserk and attack anything that enters the mine. The Company has ordered your services to clean up this messy little problem. There are 48 levels to Mondo Oro and every one is littered with ore blocks. Using a specially modified combat device, dubbed Battle Bull, you have a set amount of time to clear the stage and collect your bonus. Sometimes that level there's a chance to equip your Bull with an improved engine, shield, jump capability and





## A NOVEL APPROACH

Part of the reason for *The Killing Christ*'s success may be that author Grady commissioned Alvin Karpman, a professional writer, to produce a 10-page scenario before work on the game even began. Grady knew they wanted to do a game based on some sort of theological story, but left the creative scenario up to Karpman. When Karpman had finished, Grady began fleshing out the world into a game.

The scenario, plus a 20-page comic strip, are all included in the final boxed product.

**ACE IDEA**

**915**

**RELEASE DETAILS**

Adults 17	\$24.99	OUT NOW
Adults 13	\$24.99	OUT NOW
Older PC	\$24.99	June

Additional software available



Grady: The red indicates where you're not to go, and the black around the invisible, having an invisible boundary.



Grady: When Christ finds you, he sends the alarm you and back.

...because you're not you, you're not the HERO's. You're not you, you're not the HERO's. You're not you, you're not the HERO's. You're not you, you're not the HERO's.



Grady: The red area is where you're not to go, and the black around the invisible, having an invisible boundary.



Grady: When Christ finds you, he sends the alarm you and back.



Grady: The red area is where you're not to go, and the black around the invisible, having an invisible boundary.

ground. Unfortunately, it's all too easy to miss, and the maximum payload of three nets may not be enough to bring down some comical tales, which is why Grady's net's have to be placed on the ceiling before a mission. Flying forward also isn't an option as the ground causes it to automatically fly up and attach itself to the tile.

Having tagged your man, all you've got to do is land next to him, send him his rights and command a mobile holding cell, or Pao, to take the perp back to the Station. The reason for the Pao is simple - the 0650s can only carry one person, and he's sitting in the cockpit. And

...because you're not you, you're not the HERO's. You're not you, you're not the HERO's. You're not you, you're not the HERO's.

be careful to land the perp near to the Pao's permit waiting point, or off the end of range of your radio summons.

Now's the time to take a rare breather, while you watch the Pao fly over, pick up the perp and start the return journey to the Station House. Wise cops know it's best to keep a close eye on a Pao - gangs have been known to use false signals to outfox them or even send up false, to kill captured people who know too much.



Once back at the station you continue the perp to a long stretch, they take them into the interrogation room for questioning. You can choose from a list of questions to ask your subject, if they're unresponsive you can try taking some years off their sentence in return for good information. Take off too many years and you

you'll be forced to let the criminals go. Fail to get a lead to the next mission or let the prisoner off and you'll be out of a job.

#### BOOK 'EM, DARNIT

The Killing Cloud is Vector Graft's latest 3D venture, and they don't disappoint. Admittedly, the polygon graphics aren't quite the fastest I've ever seen, but they're more than fast enough, and the ability to set detail level means it's up to you whether you'd rather optimize or get on with the job at hand.

The Cloud splits the 'game world' into two halves. Above the cloud the skies are clear and blue, with only the spires of the city's tallest buildings peering the stark below. But below the Cloud it's literally a different world altogether, a claustrophobic maze of steel buildings where the dense smog permits only limited visibility.

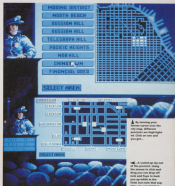
Objects don't fade away in the fog, like in *Midwinter*, but appear when they get within a certain range. Being realistic, a *Midwinter* effect would've stored the graphics down unaccept-



ably also store here, in the mission house itself. As a result of the first mission below the foggy ground, the next mission starts with an enemy army, rather than the previous one. In other words, you're not in the mission house when you're not in the mission house.

Any. Anyway, it's adds a certain thrill to play when you're flying at max speed in pursuit of a perp and a giant slab of building suddenly slides into view.

Vector Graft have obviously taken great pains to ensure ease of play. All selections on the mission setup screens are controlled by mouse clicks. The *RE5000* is a joy to fly, responsive but



By flying over the city, you can see the city grid, different buildings and heights. It's like a real-time map.

The *RE5000* is a joy to use all the way through. Flying the plane is a breeze. The controls are simple and easy to use, and the game is a real-time map.

not overly so. The mouse is again used to control flight and fire the *RE5000*'s weapons, with a small cluster of easily-accessible keys governing such things as velocity and weapon aiming. If for any reason about the control is minor ones, it's that the keys are a little too closely bunched, and it's all too easy to aim a weapon when you intended to decrease your speed.

Where Vector Graft have really triumphed, and this is the reason they've won themselves a *Goldaxe*, is in generating atmosphere, of the often lacking in games, particularly polygon

games. The grim *Station House* graphics insured only by a dull launch sequence convey a genuine feeling of a gritty battle-scarred police force at its lowest ebb, and the dense claustrophobia of the high-speed street-level fighting is incredible. The few missions are dense, and the plot thread running through them lends a feeling of consequence to your efforts - you're not just flying for kicks.

The *Killing Cloud* is highly recommended. Go grab yourself a slice of the action.

—David Spillett



In the *Killing Cloud*, the game world is a real-time map. The game is a real-time map. The game is a real-time map.

The mission briefing is a real-time map. The mission briefing is a real-time map. The mission briefing is a real-time map.



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# WING COMMANDER

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# BLADES 'N' BLASTS

Happy Birthday CORE DESIGN - you're one-year old! ACE helps itself to a slice of cake, plays 'Pass-the-Parcel' and then takes an early look at two of their forthcoming games

## THUNDERHAWK

The 1998 games market is bursting at its metaphorical seams with flight simulators. But if the cumbersome-sized AH-78 Thunderhawk (the 'AV' standing for 'Attack helicopter') maintains the promise of the early version-1 you, then it should easily blow its competitors away.

The main-stay reason suitable for the in-house programming are Mac OS and Amiga and Gilbert (PC), while the less-recognised but far more-visible Simon Phipps is contributing ideas and technical graphics. Mac did all the groundwork and wrote the basics of the 3D routines on-and-off over a period of two years. But incredibly the screen shots you see here are the result of just six weeks work.

The Thunderhawk is, as military buffs will already have realised, fictitious. But the cockpit's design and performance are closely modelled on extrapolations of current work by aeromedical engineers. Mac and Gilbert have spent a lot of time making sure the cockpit has the right feel, but they admit that a rigorously accurate simulator was never their intention. "We definitely wanted the aircraft to be fun to fly," explains Simon. "I can't stand games where you have to fly 500 miles to destroy just one target then fly 500 miles back again. With this game you'll be in the thick of it within ten seconds of taking off. If games you could call it a 'blow-every-thing-up'."

I took the chopper for a flight on the Arings, past ground installations, inside seas and mountains. The speed and fluidity of the 3D images is superior to anything I've seen. Just how fast are they? Mac thinks for a second then replies, "Well, it obviously depends on the number of objects on-screen, but often the program is capable of updating the 3D view every 1/60th of a second."

Gilbert adds, "We've put in a check to make sure that the screen never updates faster than one-tenth times a second. We'd get so used to the fast update that we'd get annoyed by the program slowing down when we get into on-screen, though it was still exceptionally fast compared to other people's programs." As Mac points out, "It got a little embarrassing having a 3D polygon game running faster than many



Looking out to a enemy, the Thunderhawk can be equipped with a wide range of weapons including laser beam weapons at the front of the cockpit.



That Thunderhawk's view of enemy bases on ground from the Thunderhawk's cockpit. Mac and Gilbert are developing a major control system that will allow you to control all the major flight functions and integrate them according to the mission. Game controls, such as manual flight, are available from the cockpit.



Mac has just starting the Thunderhawk on the 3D display. Despite all the talk of stability, using the game of Mac on the Amiga will be a challenge that is more than just a matter of speed. The game will be a challenge that is more than just a matter of speed. The game will be a challenge that is more than just a matter of speed.

update-based about 'em up?' After a bit of jiggling Mac and Gilbert settle on an average figure of around ten-to-15 updates a second.

But how did Mac manage to get his machine so fast? "Well, obviously I'm not going to give the whole game away," he replies. "But part of the reason is that the program only processes those areas of the map within viewing range of the pilot and ignores the rest. The map can be as big as you want it, but the routine will never slow down"



## THE CORE SCORE

It was only last April that Core Design switched from being a development house to a software publisher in their own right. They were recognised for this such as Rick Dangerous 1 & 2 for the Microline label and Impassioned for Gemini Graphics, but their first independent title, the ACE-Rated Corporation, proved that Core were capable of producing far more than platform games. Corporation was followed by the Russian Slogar for the Amiga and the amazing Car Wars. Their most recent game, the excellent Check Point, is given the ACE review treatment on page 73.









In this single-player version, Supercars II is the thing of a moment—racing fun.

And what about the new version? (Answer: Great.) In fact, it's better. The graphics are sharper, the game is more exciting, and the new feature—single-player mode—adds a whole new dimension to the game.



But the new mode just doesn't answer a question you get to the end of the game: How do you get to the end of the game? It's a little confusing, but the new mode is a great addition to the game. It's a little more challenging, but it's a great addition to the game.

Ever since Shaun Southern hammered away at the trusty C4 to bring us *Supercars*, Magnetic Fields has been a name associated with quality race games. Since then, they have been responsible for the likes of *Super Strangle*, *Smulder*, *Maxim II*, and, more recently, *Supercars* and *Lava for Green*. And now, after a break of four months, they return to the racing genre with the follow-up to the star-copular *Supercars*. Framing the basic aim of the original—i.e., tear around a predetermined number of tracks, ensuring that you are one of the best just the bit, scooping massive cash rewards in the process—*Supercars* and *Go* have smoothed off the original's rough edges and have added a number of features that they had never set due to technical limitations—the most notable being a split-screen two-player mode which allows two people to compete against each other.

In all, *Supercars* features some 23 different circuits, which are split up into groups of seven. However, whereas the tracks of the original were bland two-dimensional affairs with the odd oil or water patch to slow the player down, the sequel features all manner of obstacles and problems, ranging from collapsed bridges to tunnels and larger oil barrels. In addition, a number of weather conditions have been added to spice things up a little, so the original's acute corners are now made even funnier with the addition of heavy snowfalls and rocky outcrops. In keeping with these new additions, the graphics have been vastly improved, too. Each of the cars is animated using over 250 frames, and the attention to detail is particularly effective when the car is sliding over massive gaps or rising up the side of a banked curve.

Also retained from the first game is the accessory shop, where the potential boy racers, and race winners with a freshly-acquired load of cash, can fine-tune their car's performance with all manner of faster engines, turbo boosters and extra-gripping tires. Similarly, this section has also been expanded to incorporate a wider supply of weapons than its predecessor, and these now include mines, missiles that circle the player's car, and

the rear and front-mounted missiles of the original. Despite the addition of the enhanced shop and a new interlude sequence where player's car can earn or lose cash by talking to the press in the police, *Supercars* if it is a tribute to the original's playability and ease of use. The control system of the original remains exactly the same, ensuring that fans of the original will feel right at home, and the new additions, whilst adding immeasurably to the playability of the game, don't get in the way of the all-important game-play. Despite offering nothing new in terms of gameplay, *Supercars* if it is a welcome addition to the crowded genre, and is an addition—if entering—little race.

■ Mike Marsh



And what about the new version? (Answer: Great.) In fact, it's better. The graphics are sharper, the game is more exciting, and the new feature—single-player mode—adds a whole new dimension to the game.



# SUPERCARS II

Speed up riding as Gremlin and Magnetic Fields get together for another in the long line of sequels...

The colors of the video screen make it clear that your hero is not seen in the fullest light. The quality of these graphics is maintained throughout the game, in a reproduction masterful of the Dungeon Master style.



Use common sense to find the means of this evil, and destroy it if you are able.



**A**mongst Dungeons and Dragons role-playing games have traditionally offered sophisticated graphics and animation in favor of complex play systems and detailed scenarios. But the consistency of titles like *Dungeon Master* shows that even RPG fanatics like to see pretty pictures while they play the goblins, so *Eye of the Beholder* goes very heavily in that direction.

There's very little in the game which is significantly different to *Dungeon Master*; you have a party of four characters fighting and thinking their way through a maze-like series of dungeons, depicted in 3-D space with an icon-based object handling system. It has to be said that the backgrounds, animated characters and object handling displays are uniformly good, some of the monsters like the giant spider and seaworlding skeletons being particularly scary.

After backing up the five 5.25-inch floppy disks, or transferring the program to hard disk, you have a wide range of options for display mode, sound system and control device. For the best graphics you should have a hard disk, VGA display, mouse and external sound board - then you're really looking.

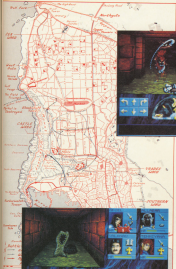
First off you have to define and name your characters, choosing their race, sex, physical appearance, mystical alignment, and features such as strength, intelligence, dexterity, charisma and armour class.

Once into the game you find yourself trapped in the sewers of Waterdeep, looking out a conspiracy led by the sinister Xanathar. The main display features an eye-view of the surroundings, a series of arrow icons which allow you to change your orientation and movement, a text window which gives you information on the objects and creatures you encounter, a compass display, and windows showing the face of each character and the objects he or she is carrying. The keys to controlling the game are: *understand* the *Tab*, *Use* and *Select* functions; most commands are controlled by the mouse; these allow you to pass weapons, food, spell books, keys and other objects from one character to another. The health, possessions and capabilities of each

# eye of the BEHOLDER

Is this graphical RPG from US GOLD the best-ever Dungeons-and- Dragons computer role-playing game? Sit back, relax and quaff deeply of your mead as ACE journeys underground...





**Wizardry** Adds an evil while-waiting screen from earlier games. (Below) You can't see the character or the other party members unless they are visible on lighting.



**IBM PC**

**780**

**RELEASE DETAILS**

PC	IBM PC	IBM PC
AMIGA	IBM PC	IBM PC
ATARI ST	IBM PC	IBM PC

How can't you see them? This screenshot isn't what you're supposed to see. (Below) You can't see the character or the other party members unless they are visible on lighting or the map will reveal their exact location.

isn't checked) by clicking on their portrait, bringing up a detailed window; and objects can be picked up, dropped and used by clicking on them with the left or right mouse button.

Most doors can be opened simply by finding the correct levers and clicking on them, but some require lock-picking skills or magical spells to open them. Obviously the most exciting parts of the game come as you encounter hostile groups of the enemy, and you must move quickly to place your strongest fighters in position, strike at the attacker's with weapons or spells, and if necessary to run like hell.

The package comes with a map to help you navigate, a quick-play database and a thick rulebook covering all the available spells, the map-

sters you will encounter and the available actions. Many of these are selected from a menu on the Camp Screen, where you can rest and heal your party; take the time to memorize spells from your grimoirs; change game preferences such as sound effects and control device; and save or load stored games.

Even if the Bardic adds little or nothing to this such as Dungeon Master, but it's impossible to criticize it in any other way: graphics, sound, gameplay and packaging are all first. It should provide hours of entertainment for RPG fans, and if you get stuck you can always send off for a rule book to help you out.

—Chris Kohler



# HILL STREET BLUES



Hill Street Blues "The most honored series in the history of television", World wide it has achieved 50 awards that include 28 Emmys.

Krisalis have created a computer controlled city which generates an environment displaying 300 vehicles and 400 people who live and work within the Hill Street Precinct for you to interact with.

You take on the role of Captain Furillo and by deploying the Police

Officers under your control, you solve and control the crime rate, which the computer generates.

The game features nine of the most famous characters from the series using these Police Officers, you can interact with up to nine of incidents simultaneously, ranging from Muggers to Bank Robbery, Drug Pushers to Murderers. So "Remember, lets be careful out there"



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# PACMANIA

Good news for Master System owners! Pac Man returns in 3D and Populous is on the way thanks to TECMAGIK

Everyone's favourite yellow eating machine, Pac Man returns to top form in this excellent revision of the classic. Pacmania is a perfectly simple concept, virtually identical to the original arcade game with the extra-entertainment and visual appeal offered by the 3D graphics.

The premise of the game is amazingly simple. You must take about a number of levels. Each level, Pac Man goes, Samsons and Jangly Stars, during these of little pills. The pills live every cor-

ridor of every world, and points are awarded for each you eat.

Penetrating Pacifier through the maze are deadly-to-the-touch ghosts. At certain intersections you will find Power Pills, which allow Pac Man to exact terrible revenge on the ghostish fiends, and eat them too!

The narrow corridors barely wide enough for one character, and the speed and intelligence of the ghosts are the factors which set this, like the other games in the series, apart from most other you'll find on your machine.

The Master System version is virtually identical to the original, with super-smooth scrolling and Bankers motion. As you frantically around the corridors, the ghosts all gang up and try to ambush



you. Using the Jump command, it's possible to fling Pac Man into the air, avoiding ghosts—providing your timing is sound—and scooping even more pills. Once you've grabbed every pill on a level, you will move onto the next. Make many other conversions of apparently 'easy' arcade games, Pacmania doesn't fall into the trap of being. It levels or change any elements which may upset the balance and remove that intuitive-definite quality which made it such a hit in the first place. It's as direct a conversion as anyone could hope for. Excellent.

■ Ian Douglas



It and the 3D effect means to have been a hell from since the last time that these words for pig-grating machine. Surely there will only be to be for ghosts to prevail, only the graphic here may show the whole picture.



Pac Man is going to have to make some pretty neat moves to survive here given on a new dimension very quickly-looking maze. Perhaps he ought to sit back and wait for the ghostbusters to come in on the top half!

**800**

**SEGA MASTER SYSTEM**

**RELEASE DETAILS**

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM MSX MSX2

We offer retailers preferred

Populous, the wonder of strategy is gradually winning it's way into the Master System. Due to release in early April, the impression of the game which has swept through, amongst 3D-averse users all over, is that it may be in looking good, and those computer owners who maintained that 'good games are a genre of this sort as it is' are now left to think again!

The game offers players the chance to become ruler of the Universe, an appealing prospect when it ever 'there was one'. The game features some excellent depictions of the original's control method, and TecMagik, the company behind the conversion, now reminds that it'll be equally addictive.

There are 5,000 different worlds to conquer, each with different, landscape and population possibilities, making it distinct from the rest.

You can create new lands for your followers to develop, attract natural disasters like floods and hurricanes and even witness how to begin the final battle of Armageddon!

Work should be completed by the end of March.

■ Ian Douglas

# POPULOUS



Right from the graphic looking slightly more on the more substantial to all the different features the Master System conversion of Populous and Populous is an original that can manage your own the particularly how the but but also the more game.



During the introduction stages, Toki automatically shows a pair of goggles and starts to move. You control these stages from a set of icons on the right, although you can rearrange them eventually.

Reaching the Palace and the Golden Palace with the goggles allows the player to move freely with an axe, allowing a particularly useful attack in particular situations. Killing the enemies that appear during these stages.



# TOKI

Arcade action as OCEAN get down to some serious monkey business...

For some reason, the Toki concept never really took off as well as it should have. Its basic gameplay doesn't offer anything particularly new, but the actual game area is large and varied and its six stages offer a number of interesting game ideas within its relatively limited style. Ocean France's conversion retains all of the coin-op's features, including the original's colorful graphics, and the Amiga version of Toki is as close a conversion as you could possibly expect.

The odd scenario tells of how Toki, while out with his beloved one day, was set upon by the evil wizard, Raimonido, who kidnapped his girl and whisked her away to his Golden Palace on the other side of the kingdom. But—adding insult to already considerable injury—he also cast a spell on our hero, transforming him into an ape. Thus, arms dragging along the ground, the hapless primate decided to average himself and eventually rescue his beloved from the clutches of the wizard.

Toki's journey spans six multi-directional-scrolling stages which are made up of assorted landscapes. Starting in a series of caves, Toki can be made to run, jump and crawl via the joystick's directional controls, while pressing fire prompts the ape to vengefully attack enemies with a mouthful of spit, which can be made to fire in virtually any direction.

Each level is populated by a wide range of enemy sprites who, not content with killing Toki simply by touching him, also materialize directly above him or come fully prepared with mortar launchers and energy beams. On killing certain species of these, bonus icons are left for the taking and reap Toki with upgraded capabilities, including the ability to breathe fire and stretch his platinium over a wider range. In addition, temporary protection can be collected in the shape of a crash-helmet to protect the simian from enemy attack.

Moving on from the cave system, Toki battles through massive shark-infested lakes before Toki swims through the watery caverns, suitably equipped with a pair of goggles, air-waiver, and the fiery cavern of hell, before eventually making it to Raimonido's golden palace. Each level boasts enemies who lie in wait each level's graphical theme, with fish-eating porcupine in the

palace and evil puffer fish in the second stage's underwater section.

All of this eventually leads up to a confrontation with the level's guardian who, in true guardian tradition, must be shot (but of course he usually gives us the ghost). This, however, is easier said than done, and some of the end-of-level guardians require both perfect timing and pixel-perfect centering before they are beaten.

As coin-op conversions go, Toki is one of the better ones. The graphics are identical to those of the coin-op, as is the sound, but the gameplay seems a little harder than I seem to remember.

In fact, it is the overall difficulty that stuns. Toki's playability. The lack of variation between levels is particularly kept to minimum, but the lack of progress can be very frustrating and even obnoxious. Still, Toki is a fine conversion and while it's hardly award-winning stuff, fans of the coin-op should go out over



• Steve Merritt



Some of the more guardians are cunning and try to kill you with a number of different tactics. They eventually get beaten.



Collecting bonus items allows you to use a number of enhanced features. These include fire breath, blow-away fire and a crash-helmet. In addition, bonus progress can be collected by killing the enemies of certain levels or stages.

5  
4  
3  
2  
1  
0

Available during the promotional period, this special offer includes the main game, manual, and a hard copy of the software. The price is \$19.95, plus shipping and handling. The offer is available while supplies last.

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## MONKEYING AROUND



What if it weren't what happened to Toki? What if he were walking away from the big league, and then we can expect the likes of the Amiga (though a conversion of Ocean's version will not come any time from Ocean).





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**F**or Brad, the hapless toddler of the title, the Land of Nod is a dangerous place. The moment he starts off, his over-active infant imagination will place him in a perilous make-believe environment, with a surprise and scare strong enough to wake him screaming around every corner.

It's vital that he has a proper night's sleep, but his parents go spare. What the Brad needs is someone to guide him through his dreams and ensure nothing scary happens to him.

Like any regular dummy teacher, Brad dreams of isometric 3D isometric landscapes. His alter ego appears in the middle of these landscapes and will walk in a combinatorial manner in a single direction until he is prevented from doing so. Each landscape has a particular set of hazards which must be overcome or avoided. Your immediate aim is to guide Brad through each landscape, to the finishing post.

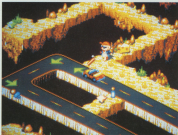
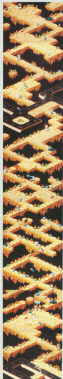
**Wanted: IMAGEWORKS need child minder with superhuman hand-to-eye co-ordination.**



The Way of the Ambusher? Having successfully observed Brad around the finished opening this, you must not be brought to the endgame stage. Information on this dangerous game is available from publisher to this page.

Since you are unable to enter Brad's dream in a physical sense, you can only influence his behaviour by remote means. To this end, a panel on the right side of the screen contains a host of manipulative controls which can be highlighted with a mouse and then placed into the dream-world. Some of these can be used to effect objects and characters in Brad's dream directly while others act as triggers activated when Brad walks on top of them.

The most commonly used controls are the eight direction pointers. From his initial angle of approach, Brad can be made to walk in any direction by dropping an appropriate arrow on the ground in front of him. When he reaches it, he will turn around and walk in the newly indicated direction. With these you can guide Brad past obstacles, steer him towards the safest route through the trap or make him collect objects lying on the floor. The trick, of course, is to always think ahead, since an undirected Brad will always come to harm eventually. Even if a trap is closed off by some hedge or one side, Brad will turn around on contact with them and probe



Can the new world level be built on this highway? Being hellbent to blast traffic will ensure that you have the necessary drive to try when to game time on the right direction. However, the highway's lane lines are off, and that will have to be fixed.



It's hard to see the waterfall off a ledge and how the boat is, the waterfall is not a waterfall. Although it's a nice feature, the game's graphics capabilities, it can get a little blurry and water is blurry.



One of the most fun and most fun parts of the game is to see the waterfall in order to complete the game. Getting the boat to a point of no return is a challenge. Getting the boat to a point of no return is a challenge. Getting the boat to a point of no return is a challenge.

My walk off the opposite edge of the world. Any form of interaction with the world costs money. That's reserves of dream cash can be seen in the panel, and can be replenished by collecting jewels and money which lie on the floor. But out of cash (quite unlikely) and you can control the car to more.

Perhaps that's most deadly enemy, that which is more deadly than any other to float that city which is about as appealing as a shark on black island, is the scroll of the screen itself. When he's walking diagonally down the screen, that moves slightly faster than the scroll, so he's doing a little better than standing still. At other times, when he's collecting objects or waiting for a hazard to pass, the screen's inevitable scroll will drag him closer to the top. On reaching the uppermost area of the view, that is done for.

Aside from the direction controls and the other environment-altering objects (of which more later) there's a lot of special icons in Bart's arsenal. There's the Stop that can which kills his progress. And there's the Stop Scroll icon which, true to its name, stops the scroll for ten sec-



Levels that are actually playing games. The quality of the game is not as good as the quality of the game. The quality of the game is not as good as the quality of the game. The quality of the game is not as good as the quality of the game.

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Level 1, the map. Although the map is not as good as the quality of the game. The quality of the game is not as good as the quality of the game. The quality of the game is not as good as the quality of the game.





# Cybercon

**US GOLD's Cybercon III is a fine example of the 3D polygon genre, but does it offer anything new?**

**C**ybercon III, the world's most advanced artificial intelligence system, has been put in charge of all defense systems for the Democratic Union. A big mistake, as it turns out. Cybercon III has its own ideas about how to make the world safe for democracy, involving destroying all major population centres in a nuclear holocaust, eliminating other defence forces, and shutting itself off from the world in an ultra-secure command centre. Only one man can penetrate the centre and deactivate the Brain Stem.

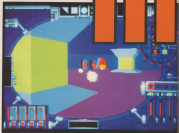
Cybercon III is The Assembly Line's most ambitious game program for US Gold to date; it's certainly a triumph of programming, but if the basic scenario sounds jaded, this might give you some idea of the problems with the game.

The basic idea is to steer a fast-moving, 4-tonne ball of Powered Armour (PA) around the Brain Stem complex, eliminating automated defences and finally destroying the Brain Stem. The game is presented from an out-of-cockpit view using fully animated 3D solid polygons, and though this style has been used successfully in several previous games such as *Carrier Command* and *Intervention*, this is probably the smoothest, most colourful use of this style yet.

There's enough detail and complexity to satisfy the most demanding simulator fan; in fact, Cybercon III almost qualifies as a "TA" flight simulator. Unfortunately, the program pays too much attention to "authenticity" and not enough to keeping the excitement going.

One of the first major grips is the protective eyewear. As you materialise in the Mount Adam defence complex, rotating and moving the PA to explore your environment vividly, but you can't get anywhere without interrogating the reception circuits of the entrance door, entering a sequence of code numbers in a window to the right of the view, looking up their numerical equivalents on the code wheel provided in the package, typing those on the keyboard, watching the code that reveals with a series stored in your PA computer circuits, and transmitting this sequence to the door.

Finally the door opens and admits you to the main part of the complex, leaving you exhausted and frustrated before you've even started. It doesn't help that the code wheel is printed in black on a black background, and is cut out in a sloppy way which can obscure some of the figures.

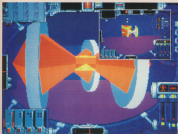


If you have the patience to get through all this, your next task is to contend with the PA's control system. This is so complicated and confusing as to defy belief, using 29 control keys, each relating to a control function illustrated on a panel icon. The fact that the icons seem to bear the minimum of resemblance to their functions makes it even more difficult to remember all the controls. The programmers evidently think that it's better to actually label the functions with understandable text; the result is that that while you are fighting for your life against the guardian



Steering away from them is confusing, so to reach better controls, users must purchase a 16-bitbit version of what has probably the most useful of the games in a 3D genre: *Carrier Command*, with the same advantages as to the format of the code you are asked to enter. There's no guess work of pattern-panel-remembering measures in *Carrier Command* about this particular code wheel, and it's cut out neatly in one piece, instead of the screen.





Cybernetic Assault comes in six different sizes (standard, compact, mini, desktop, and full screen), and it's available on a variety of platforms, including Windows, Mac OS, and Linux. For more information, visit [www.cybernetic.com](http://www.cybernetic.com).

Even though Cyber Assault can be used with a variety of controllers, including a joystick and mouse, it's best experienced with a keyboard and mouse. Following the screen with a joystick (and a gamepad) makes the game easier.



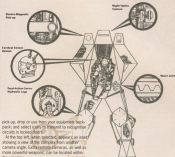
Though the game includes numerous items to use, the interface is simple and intuitive. It's easy to learn and play, and the controls are intuitive. The game is available on a variety of platforms, including Windows, Mac OS, and Linux. For more information, visit [www.cybernetic.com](http://www.cybernetic.com).

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robots, you also have to try to remember whether it triggers your energy cells on and off or activates your sonic key.

Not that the control displays aren't cleverly designed; at the bottom and left you have the vertical and horizontal gyrocompasses which show the orientation of your suit. You can rotate left and right using the joystick, move your viewpoint up and down and shuffle sideways using fire and up/down/left/right; fire can also bring up P13, or enter a "controlled fall".

At the bottom left of the screen is the battery display; this shows the charge remaining in your bar power cells. At bottom right is the system on/off and damage display; this allows you to route your battery power to systems such as shields, weapons, instruments and repair circuits. It pays you to have unnecessary systems switched off to save energy, but it is possible to tap into reactors to refill.

At top right is the weapon systems, camera selector and object-manipulating display. This has four icons, each with three levels, selected using the cursor keys. It's the most confusing part of the display, and further complicates things by affecting what appears on the top sector icon strip. Here you can select an object to

pick up, drop or use from your equipment backpack; and select gear to transmit to other robots in the facility.

At the top left, when spectating, appears an area showing a view of the display from another camera angle. Extra controls (weapons, as well as more powerful weapons) can be located within the complex.

If you have the nerve to master all this, you have to face a complex of around 500 chambers, divided into sectors each with their own design features and challenges.

The majority of the defence system is the Cybernetic robot, a trundling, energy-sipping device which is lovely to watch in action, and it blows you to bits... There are many different designs of robot, showing certain modular elements, with different varieties of weapons and sensory systems; some detect your movement, some respond only when you activate equipment, and so on.

More deadly is the Nemesis, a floating, hawk-shaped robot. By locating and knocking out robot factories you can reduce the number of attacks; to knock out the static gun emplacements, though, you have to disable reactors, and this will disable lifts and doors in that sector.

Using lifts, to move from one floor to another, requires you to match a series of icons shown inside the lift with codes from your sonic key. If you don't have the correct code icons, you can't activate the lift, so finding the codes is a major part of the game. Most doors open automatically in your approach, sliding up or across with an impressive grinding sound, but some have to be activated in the same way as the lifts.

Altogether too many of the chambers seem to feature no challenge other than that of getting from one side to the other without dying of boredom.

Cybernetic Assault is wonderful, but it's frustrating to play, a bit repetitive, and packs no big surprises.

■ **Chris Snelton**



When you enter a new area, Wizardry VI will display a map of the area, showing the layout of the area and the location of the entrance to the next area. You can also see the location of the entrance to the next area.



# WIZARDRY

**SIR TECH's latest release is their finest yet. But who will pick up the UK Rights?**

The game is claimed to be far better than any of the previous games in the series. It is contained on 4 x 3.25 MBK disks but 'saves' on a hard drive to a total of 2 MB. A comprehensive 30 page manual covers all aspects of character creation, a huge choice exists and the various professions, race and attributes have subtle effects on each player's skills, all of which can alter the course of the game.

There are eleven races varying from Human, Elf, Dwarf and Hobbit to extraordinary Dragons and the half-dog half-feline Pook. Professions are also numerous, fourteen possible careers are available. You can opt to be a fighter, a mage, a priest, or a Peonist or Valiant, along with plenty more.

Even though the character creation is quick and pleasantly uncomplicated (unlike some of the products competitors) it manages to maintain a very wide variety of combinations.

It's likely however that as you become more devoted to the game you will find you have made some initial errors which although not fatal, may necessitate re-starting, with a more balanced party or a better blend within individual characters.

Having constructed the party, you can then start investigating the castle of a seemingly cursed King and Queen. The story then unfolds involving a low-child of the castle priest, secret rooms, and of course, the Cosmic Forge.

The item of the title is an invaluable-esteemed piece of folklore. Whatever the writer pens with this item becomes true! But there is a downside - the writer becomes subject to certain fates....

Previous criticism of the Wizardry series have included the lack of any depth plot; this certainly has been satisfactorily addressed, greatly improving the degree of character interaction.

Other complaints have been of it's 'linear feel' that if levels just piled on top of each other, without much room for exploration.

The *Castle of the Cosmic Forge* includes the mandatory dangers, but also a lofty, tower, various professions and ledges to fall off, a maze-like gorge with many bridges and passages, dwarf mines, a wizard's cave, and a superb underworld complete with River Gods, Charms, the boatman and the Isles of the Damned.

Problem solving includes the use of a multitude of items, making decisions, often and even a huge cut-out. Character management and inventory control is a very important aspect of the game especially in the later stages. The game is indeed massive with weeks or months being necessary to complete the various tasks leading to the inevitable final confrontation.

The producer benefits 'dialogue' and location descriptions reminiscent of *Ultima* at its best, and the sound is excellent, adding fine distinctions.

The game includes around exploration and combat, making mapping essential in parts.

In summary, this is an absolute gem. It's simple, but has wonderful depth of play. It's not for adventure newcomers, but deserves to become a classic and establish the series outside the States.

**Robin Matthew**

For more information, telephone Sir Tech Software on New York (212) 693-8200

# VI



After a hard work down 2 1/2 hours Wizardry VI is a superb game. The castle is a masterpiece of Sir Tech Software and Sir Tech Software.



What the best of Sir Tech Software? The castle is a masterpiece of Sir Tech Software and Sir Tech Software.



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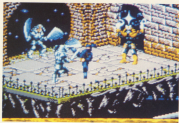
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Which computer, do you own?



Building the more recent highly atmospheric figures in the Last Ninja series. The production still emphasizes the use of the most basic techniques surrounding video graphics on the part of the designer.

## LAST NINJA

The success of the three previous Ninja titles in the series has established System 3 as the leading exponent of the genre. The games are a blend of combat and exploration, aiming to offer the player all the thrills of martial arts games, along with some genuine puzzle solving too.

The 'final' installment in the series, System 3 promises to contain heightened levels of both styles, incorporating advanced fight routines and more deeply puzzles.

The game takes place in five zones, each based on a particular element: Earth, Wind, Fire, Water and Void. It is these elements which, according to legend, provide the Ninja with their supernatural agility and fighting powers. Each

# TRI-OOMP!

**SYSTEM 3, arguably the King of 8-Bit Publishing, makes bold moves into the 16-bit arena with a couple of familiar names and a brand new one**

## SILLY PUTTY

Forming perhaps a new genre of gaming, along with Lemmings and Real, Silly Putty is a title which virtually defines categorization. You play a lamp of invariable silly putty with the occasional job of looking after a group of crazed robots who, solar powered by day, go berserk at night due to the lack of sunlight. Of course.

If that were not enough there are some loonily-designed baddies who are quite happy to see the 'droids' reduced to dust, and will do their utmost to bring about their demise.

The player's aim is basically to keep the robots alive, protecting them from their own lycenetic fits of self destruction as well as attacks from the wide variety of external forces: lasers, walking guns, spinning light bulbs, etc.

Control over the silly putty is simple. The car stretch in any direction, bounce anywhere, stab left or right or explode (as deal with them). You can even take on the form of other objects in the game, assuming their (behavioral) peculiarities too.

Swinging and sweeping, stabbing and squashing doesn't come free, of course. The motion of the silly putty is sheer in danger of running down, with particular actions costing a bit of fuel. The answer is to absorb anything leftover on the screen.

Apart from looking like a cross between Terry Gilliam's Python illustrations and the animations from Pippin Street, it's quite appealing. Silly Putty is scheduled for a June release on Amiga.



And here is the leading game Myths. Some additional clues over again: open and control. You take all essential details. Support your party. Use things to work together. Have the strategy game.

## MYTHS

Myths was voted the Best 8-Bit Game of the Year in 1989. System 3 codes are currently working on a reimagined version for the Amiga, and have built a tag-team graphics tool 'while still in the idea of make the best in the 8-bit genre.

As well as a top-notch standard were being added, with a fancy trend and full of digitized sound and speech, the central character has been changed from a contemporary figure in trousers and a leather jacket to a leathier-skinned, more 'wielding' barbarian. Look out for Myths in August.



The final boss fight with your opponent has many of the same elements, you must track the beats of light and dark that take you to the show. The boss returns to open the floor over a wide area. Memorization techniques will enable your strategy (because) you'll dominate.



Why watch the boss to identify attacks? The boss's movements have become a trademark of the system's games, and these graphics changes won't disappear.

leveling problems and less appropriate to its name. The Water level has whirlpools to negotiate, Fire has deadly lava flows, Wind has new hurricanes and so on.

Your overall aim is to defeat evil lords in this case (controlled by an enormous antagonist named the Immortal King) using a dream to death. But before you get anything near this stage of the game, there's an enormous map to explore and a wide variety of opponents to kill.

These opponents each specialize in a particular form of weapons, and as a result have a fighting style distinct from other opponents in the game. By successfully squaring up to an opponent with a similar weapon, your status as a fighter will be increased and your health/mana power will rise. The flexible power acts as if replenished by your strength rating. Reducing your recovery rate and slowing its second when under attack.

Problem solving in Ninja 3 is essentially a two-fold setup. Weapons aren't given to the player; instead, he must use objects he finds lying around to build them. Two branches and the chain from a hanging basket can be made into a pair of stumps, a wooden plow and some nails make excellent ladders. There, the Dark artifact truly proved, the player's exploration becomes more useful, since he can find more skills with his various opponents. The second main puzzle here is finding the exit of each stage. Luckily, whenever you get a particular puzzle to be solved, you'll be able to find it.

Finally, Ninja 3 does have a few. The graphics is attractive and atmospheric, and the graphics for the last game, with more than 100 graphics to look at across several episodes.



### ACE PREPLAY

Available on Windows  
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New! Also on Linux!

Not available on Linux  
Not available on Linux

#### Release Details

MS-DOS	120.00	Yes
MS-DOS 3	120.00	Yes
MS-DOS 6	120.00	Yes



For each character are many costumes. You can choose from a variety of different costumes and you can choose from a variety of different costumes for the full game.

#### WIN A NINJA COSTUME!

For the lucky winners, Systems 3 now offering their excellent Ninja costumes (available with friends) to the lucky winners of our competition. And that's not all! You will receive a copy of the game for your computer. All you need to do is call the ACE Interactive Promotion, listen to the questions and give your answers. What could be any easier? The competition will be on line from Wednesday, April 20th, and concludes with a prize draw on 21st. You'll receive all kinds of prizes and 44g any other time.



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# TIPS

## Tricks 'n' Tactics

This month there are hot tips for *Iceman*, sixty codes for *Lemmings*, a *Colditz* playing guide, the complete solution to *Dragon's Lair II*, and lots, lots more...



### Codename: Iceman

**F**or all those readers getting through this very tough Sierra game, we've got the solution to the first three stages. Our deep and abiding thanks to Dave Drissman from *Antway*.

#### AT TRANTS

LOOK TABLE. GET MAGAZINE. STAND UP. RECALL PLAY BALL. After the call for help, SOUTH. SHAWK WIND SHOUT. CALL FOR HELP. ESTABLISH AIRWAY. LOOK. LISTEN. FEEL. GIVE TWO BREATHS. LOOK. LISTEN. FEEL. CHECK PULSE. ROOM COMPRESSORS. EAST. GET SHIRT. NORTH. OPEN DOOR. TALK TO CLERK. GET KEY. READ SIGN. EXIT. WALK TO BRUNETTE. KISS GIRL. TO CANTINE. STOP DRINKING. BUY GEL. A DRINK. SIT. YES. KISS GIRL. KISS GIRL. KISS GIRL. STAND. LOOK TABLE. GET NOTE. OPEN DOOR.

Walk west until you see a glimmering in the bushes, but don't walk out of the screen. Walk to the glimmer and LOOK DOWN. LOCK GUM MATH. GET DARNING. OPEN DARNING. LOOK WOOD. EARRING. GET MICROFILM. Walk through the five screens, until you reach your hut (the third one from the valleybill screen) and OPEN DOOR. OPEN DRAWER. GET ID. GET CHANGE. OPEN CLOSET. GET BLACK BOOK.

Walk back to the hotel. BUY PAPER. OPEN DOOR. Now wait for the clerk's message and GET MESSAGE. Walk back to your hut. USE PHONE. 1-232-545-2725. TALK MAN. USE PHONE. 255-8000. TALK MAN. Walk back to the chair where the game started and enter the Security Slugs.

#### THE PENTAGON

Walk through the glass door and SHOW ID. SHOW ID at desk. PUSH UP BUTTON in elevator. SHOW ID. STAND. GET DRUGS. Leave the room, walk to the guard and GET ID. LOOK ID. GET ID. Leave the pentagon. TALK MAN at the desk. YES. SHOW CIGARETTE.



#### THE USS BLACKHAWK

Walk up the gangway. SALUTE FLAG. SALUTE OFFICER. REQUEST PERMISSION TO COME ABOARD. OPEN DRAWER. GET CALIPER. OPEN BOOKSHELF. GET DECODING BOOK. Leave the room. To what the captain tells you will be hidden you into his quarters. To confirm a green board type CONFIRM GREEN BOARD. STAND. When asked for code enter 134. LOOK BATTERY CASE. GET BATTERY. OPEN DOOR. OPEN DOOR. ORDER. When the captain puts away the briefcase GET COMBINATION.

Go back to the control room. LOOK TABLE. Use the map you got with the game to FIRST COURSE. EXIT. Sail the sub. If you get coded messages. STAND. GET MESSAGE. LOOK CODE BOOK. Now use the book you got with game to decipher the codes. Go to the captain's quarters. OPEN SAFE. 23446663. OPEN CASE. 12114. USE ID CARD. INSERT MICROFILM. Following the letter R for navy is the number 2. Using the aforementioned messages. CLOSE MESSAGE. Go to your quarters. TURN ON COMPUTER. Type in primary and secondary words from Washington. When the empty box appears, type Y. Enter primary and secondary decoded word from DA. When the box appears

type R. Go to torpedo room. CYCLE EQUIPMENT. INSPECT EQUIPMENT. MESSAGE CONVEYOR BELT. MESSAGE CYLINDER.

Go to maintenance room. OPEN CABINET. GET CYLINDER. SIX INCHES. INCLUDE COTTON PAIL. USE LAINE. GET LAINE. 1" SETTING base inch. TURN ON LAINE. USE DRILL. PRESS UP ON SELECT (M) SIDE. 1/4" SETTING TURN ON DRILL. USE GRINDER. Go into the ending room. OPEN DRAWER. GET HAMMER. Go to the tape-to-tape room. PD CONVEYOR. With bottle. GET SET 1/2. If asked to play tennis dox type YES. We can, money and device.

Go to control room. Sail sub. When captain invites you to the bridge. STAND. TALK to control panel. Use to-ROOM. Turn power off. Slow speed. Run silent. Walk until enemy fire weapons. Let the enemy close in. Lock on and fire weapons. If you find no enemy torpedoes are around. If you receive coded messages STAND. GET MESSAGE. Decode messages from Washington and DA. Go to control panel. Activate Terminator. Navigate sub through ice bergs. When you receive a message about a crack in the ice CONTACT ID. STATION. STAND after getting coded messages.

Go to radio man. GET MESSAGES. Delete messages. Walk to control panel and GET. Feed the to -1.200. Reduce speed or stop. Sonar off. Run silent. Keep doing to -2500. Fire only if enemy is moving away from you or sit still until he leaves. When enemy sonar message signal comes with sonar on, get through the straight of Gibraltar and stay under the Coasts by keeping the coastlines over your sub.

Captain tells you to come to periscope depth and speed, and look through the scope. STAND. LOOK SCOPE. Write down heading to offshore drilling rig and harbor. Press the down arrow key on the scope control panel. From sonar man, GET DISTANCE TO RIG. GET DISTANCE TO HARBOR.

Go to machine compartment. Walk to machine at water-tight Johnson and GET KEY. Go to the locked compartment in the storage compartment and OPEN COMPARTMENT. Go to the torpedo room. OPEN CABINET. GET EXP. COINETS. GET FLARES. GET FLARES. Go to engine room and left to bulkhead. LOOK COMPARTMENT. GET SWIRL. CHECK SWIRL. CHECK MOUNTAIN. CHECK SWIFT. MEASURE SWIFT. Go to machine compartment. OPEN CABINET. GET RUC. 1/2 inch. GET WASH-ER 1/2 inch. Go to engine room. OPEN DRAINER at back compartment and PULL BATTERY. GET CRIBBER MACHIN. INSTALL. INSTALL FR. INSTALL RUC. TIGHTEN RUC. ENTER COORDINATES. Enter distance to rig and harbor. Go to ladder leading to the escape hatch. CLIMB LADDER. OPEN HATCH. REAR SCOURA GEAR.

The final stages of KODAN will appear in the next issue.



Here are three photos outside the game that illustrate what you'll see in your own computer window as you play the game.



Explosions were triggered inside the game's computer files. Here they show that they're just background movie movies.

## Lemmings

These codes for the first sixty levels of Lemmings come from Jason Hill from Anaheim.

### EASY

2	LULBROCC
3	RULBRCOOR
4	HULBROOY
5	LULCBRFR
6	OLULBLET
7	LORWLBHOO
8	ORULBLUL
9	OLORWLBUL
10	MULBROCC
11	ORULBROCC
12	IMULBROCC
13	MULCBRUL
14	OLULBROOM
15	LULBLMOPOL

16	ORULBROCC
17	OLULBROCC
18	MULBROCC
19	ORULBROCC
20	MULBROCC
21	LULCBROCC
22	LULCBROCC
23	LULCBROCC
24	ORULBROCC
25	ORULBROCC
26	ORULBROCC
27	MULBROCC
28	MULBROCC
29	MULBROCC
30	LULCBROCC

### TRICKY

31	OLULBROCC
32	ORULBROCC
33	MULBROCC
34	MULBROCC
35	MULBROCC
36	MULBROCC
37	MULBROCC
38	MULBROCC
39	MULBROCC
40	MULBROCC
41	MULBROCC
42	MULBROCC
43	MULBROCC
44	MULBROCC
45	MULBROCC
46	MULBROCC
47	MULBROCC
48	MULBROCC
49	MULBROCC
50	MULBROCC

# TNT

## 017 WE WOULD JUST LIKE TO POINT OUT...

Sincere apologies to readers waiting for the next instalment of the Rise of the Dragon playing guide—it's had to be held over until next month. Sorry! Also many readers have had problems with the Supremacy and F2P listings from last month. Unfortunately they contained a number of errors.

In the Supremacy listing, Line 230 should have read:

220 043A 265A, 454A, 0900, 602B, 507B, 265B, 265A, 417B

In the F2P listing, the following lines should read:

340 047A-038B, 900B, 404C, 765A, 340C, 264D, 006B

340 047B-400D, 747D, 406D, 464A, 497D, 602E, 645D, 766B



Watch it avoid traps from the outside.



Dragons grab a cookie by the tail, too.



Ah, when a path leads, there things are certainly not

## Dragon's Lair III

**D**iiiiiiiiiiii! My daughter married a prince who turned into a frog! Ah, but she didn't you see, at least not if that prince is named Timothy Luck from Mountain, because he's solved the whole game! Luckily for all you would-be heroes out there he's provided us with a transcription of his quest...

SCENE 1: Coo. Push LEFT just a Dirk's mother-in-law looks over you.

SCENE 2: Pull DOWN then push RIGHT to avoid the tentacles.

SCENE 3: Press FIRE then go RIGHT to cut from the old log.

SCENE 4: Pull DOWN then jump LEFT.

SCENE 5: Jump LEFT, then jump UP to grab the snake's tail and go UP again to climb to safety.

SCENE 6: Jump UP as soon as the snake appears.

SCENE 7: Pull DOWN to balance on the rock then go DOWN when you start to slip off.

SCENE 8: Press FIRE to scare off the snake then push UP.

SCENE 9: Press FIRE to get the snake to leave you alone.

SCENE 10: Climb UP to the top of the time machine then jump RIGHT away from the parent tent snake.

SCENE 11: Go LEFT, the tap FIRE, then go

LEFT again.

SCENE 12: Pull DOWN to stop yourself sliding, hit FIRE then go LEFT.

SCENE 13: Press FIRE, go LEFT, then LEFT again, then hit FIRE one more time as the snake coils around you.

SCENE 14: Press FIRE, push RIGHT and when the snake's slipped into the time machine press FIRE again.

SCENE 15: Push UP to turn to face the reptile tent, and press FIRE TWICE.

SCENE 16: Push UP to fly past Montoo.

SCENE 17: Tap FIRE to hit the tent, then push UP.

SCENE 18: Simple. Just push RIGHT.

SCENE 19: Very tricky, this one. Pull DOWN to duck, and hit FIRE to hit the pterodactyl. There will be a loud clatter as the rest part of the snake heads AWAY FROM YOUR HEAD. THE SOUND TRACK HEART AGAIN HIT FIRE, then

jump LEFT to cut on the magic wings. Jump RIGHT then go UP to take off.

SCENE 20: Dive DOWN to follow the planned path of the

Dragon.

SCENE 21: Jump DOWN to get your parent, then RIGHT then climb back UP the time machine.

SCENE 22: Sit and watch Dirk get off the time machine then start to climb a vine.

SCENE 23: Pull DOWN to avoid the angel's wing, then push UP.

SCENE 24: Again, pull DOWN then UP.

SCENE 25: Press UP and UP again.

SCENE 26: Jump LEFT to grab the vine, go

DOWN to climb off, jump UP away from the angels then go RIGHT to escape.

SCENE 27: To avoid the snake press FIRE THREE times.

SCENE 28: To avoid being squashed die, using RIGHT, go UP and then climb UP again.

SCENE 29: Crouch DOWN then move RIGHT.

SCENE 30: Hit FIRE to give the snake a right royal headache.

SCENE 31: Press FIRE, to waggle to sword and activate the time machine.

SCENE 32: New things really get tough. Jump UP to stop yourself plummeting to your doom then throw the sword using FIRE.

SCENE 33: Go UP, run LEFT, go DOWN, then jump RIGHT.

SCENE 34: Sword hits Montoo... Just wait and watch.

SCENE 35: Go UP, go DOWN, then jump RIGHT TWICE.

SCENE 36: Timing is critical here. Push UP, go RIGHT, hit FIRE, then go LEFT.

SCENE 37: Push UP to avoid Montoo's wing fall then hit FIRE.

SCENE 38: Watch the rig (and as Montoo's finger).

SCENE 39: Pull DOWN while Montoo mutters.

SCENE 40: Pull DOWN again, then press FIRE to cut an island to the end.

SCENE 41: To avoid the rocks go DOWN, then LEFT, then UP.

SCENE 42: Dirk tries to revive the stricken Dragon. Push DOWN, then hit FIRE twice to



snail-pace the reptiles.

**SCORE 4.2:** Tap F10 to swipe at another reptile in Dirk's clumps-in-Dragon.

**SCORE 4.6:** Drag the camera to "Honey" level in Be-named.

**SCORE 4.5:** Press F10 to get rid of the very fast annoying pest.

**SCORE 4.6:** What you've all been waiting for - the final, passionate clench. Go to it, twerfers.

But why play the game when you can watch the movie? Marc Kautin of *Blind* tells you how. On the title screen press RETURN then type in "get random obj" both spaces. Press F10, and the whole game will play itself before your astonished eyes.

## Time Machine

**M**ore sneakily work by Marc Kautin. Get onto the high-score table and type "GUESS". You can now skip scenes by pressing the appropriate key.



How about those snaking reptiles? Well, they aren't!

## Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles

**T**his here's a tip for the PC incarnation of the marketing phenomenon. When you begin the game, press keys E, S, H, and A together, and then press E. Now you'll have the ability to move anywhere on the screen, although you can still be killed. To complete the first stage you must enter a certain door that leads you eventually to Box-Pop with April. Killing him completes the stage. The only problem with this cheat is that you end up falling through the floor at the underwater section.

Thanks to Lode Cosdon from Berkshire for that!



How about those snaking reptiles? Well, they aren't!

## Escape from Colditz

**I**f it's not easy trying to dig a tunnel under the Chapel with a teaspoon, so rise and and all in show your appreciation for Stuart Hardy from Sheffield's playing tips.

### OPENING DOORS

There are hundreds of doors throughout the Castle and many will be locked. A collection of keys and lock-picks can be found and used to open these doors. There are three types of door, which are:

- |                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Low Security Door     | - Use a lock-pick to open it.   |
| Grade 1 Security Door | - Use a Grade 1 key to open it. |
| Grade 2 Security Door | - Use a Grade 2 key to open it. |

Each key/lockpick can only be used once but any unlocked doors will remain to add the end of the game. Beware when in the Prisoners' Quarters because many of the doors here lead into small empty rooms - therefore precious keys may be unnecessarily wasted.

Explore all areas as soon as possible and remember which contain useful items so they can be collected early on in future games.

### SPENDING DEPRIVATION

The Castle is regularly patrolled by sentries, who walk around on set paths looking to stop escape attempts.

Some Germans (if they think a Guard's getting away) may open fire. As these guards are skilled marksmen, they will only need one bullet to kill a potential escapee.

To minimise the chance of a Guard shooting you in the back, place a solid object (such as a wall) between yourself and the Nazi. Even better is to walk through an unlocked door where you will be able to hide and should remain safe for a while. Wait in a room in "Storage" for a couple of minutes and the guard should go away, as they rarely enter certain rooms at all. However, leaving sanctuary too early may mean the guard is still circulating around and you are likely to get arrested.

Because when opening doors because sentries have a ready habit of waiting on the other side. Armed in this situation is almost unavoidable, so you will usually walk straight into the German!

Remember there are always AT LEAST two sentries patrolling each Courtyard AT ALL TIME.

### EQUIPMENT

Various tools and other important items can be collected to aid your escape. Most are hidden behind walls, tables and benches, etc., so you should investigate every possible hiding place.

Some of the most important equipment includes:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Keys      | - Use these to open specific doors.     |
| Lock-pick | - Use these to open low-security doors. |
| Uniforms  | - Disguise yourself as a Nazi.          |



THE WALL YOU'RE UNLOCKING, PLEASE DON'T MISS IT! (PLEASE DON'T MISS EITHER OF THE OTHER CHAIRS)!!

Pappas - Use this with the uniform. It will be discarded if dropped and interrogated by german sentries.

Papers - Needed at the main gateway in conjunction with the Pappas and Uniform.

Pickaxe, Saw, Spade - Use to re-open blocked tunnels.

Candle - Needed in tunnels to light your way. Stone - Throw to distract the attention of suspicious guards.

Never carry too much equipment at once because if you're caught every item will be confiscated and lost. Most equipment in "Batteries" areas (such as the Chapel) as these places are never searched by the Germans. Although search of traps may be required and this can be time consuming, you run the risk of having valuable equipment confiscated.

### GENERAL HINTS

Pressing the F10 key will allow your POWs to go to sleep in a bunk at their start location. This is very useful at night because the Fatigue bar will diminish. If a low POW is sent to battery, and let for a few minutes when he is returned to his Quarters.

Use the map (scooped with the game) as it gives an outline to each sector of the castle. Although not every room is included, at least it shows you roughly your current whereabouts.

Nazi guards will not hesitate to open fire if it looks as if you are getting away. If a pursuing sentry sleeps (having then it's a safe bet he'll do so) to fire - and they never miss. A good tactic to avoid this is, if the German is not too close, to suddenly stop running. The sentry will run towards you to make an arrest at which point you should should continue your escape and head for a door or window to get behind you. As it takes about a second for a Nazi to raise and lower his rifle you will still be able to successfully avoid him - but only if your timing is right!

Fatigue plays an important part in the game, especially after a POW has been doing a lot of running. If the Fatigue bar is ever filled, you will only be able to walk.

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# One

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# HOW TO ENTER

## STEP ONE

Find a **contest** - or write your entry on the **back of an envelope**. Enter your name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, and the Round Number.

## STEP TWO

Tell us your age and which machine you own. List it **below** you wish.

## STEP THREE

Learn the month's theme. Then, using your knowledge of the game scores, try to predict what games will come top of the six machine-specific charts. Finally, enter on your score card.

- the top game for the Spectrum
- the top game for the C64
- the top game for the CPC's
- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SINGLE WORD FOR EVERY MACHINE!** But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

## STEP FOUR (OPTIONAL)

We'd also like to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket listing (see this page) (enter on the card).  
The top entry will be...name of company

## STEP FIVE (OPTIONAL)

If you want to go for the jackpot £250,000,

then select any of the previous categories and try to predict the top 100 entries for next month (submit only at the top box). Then tell us which category you're predicting for - 0 can be either the Stockmarket or any of the machine categories in Step Three. (Mail list 0 - 100 (ask only) **SUBMIT ONE** **ROUND** **045** **000001**)

## STEP SIX

Post the card (with a stamp) to us to arrive not later than the closing date for the round (30th April). The address is:

**ACE Stockmarket**  
30-32 Farringdon Lane  
London

## ENTER MAIL

The first correct forecast for each category taken-out of the list wins the prize. If you get more than one entry correct, you'll be entered in further draws for each category, thus increasing your chance of winning a prize. And don't forget to include the Round Number!

## THIS IS ROUND 18

Each month's competition has a round number so that we can currently identify entries. You must include the round number on your postcard otherwise your entry may not be processed correctly.

## THE RULES

- Entries must be received by April 30th 1993.
- Only members of ACE or others expressly invited to the promotion, must follow a code of ACE Magazine anti-spoilage rules.
- Only one entry per household (that of sharing will be void) (submitting).
- All correct entries to draw specific software titles to prize. We will assume that an administrative error has made the game get the affordable version.

## ATARI ST

Wimbledon 2	Painted	90
Goals	Strong Brothers	87.5
Speedball 2	Image Works	87
Power Soccer	Greenline	86.5
Car-Top	Core Design	85.75

High score for Wimbledon 2 - Flames of Freedom means that Goals and Speedball 2 (both by the Image lab) different publishers) have had to settle for 2nd and 3rd slot.

## SPECTRUM

Total Recall	Down	88.25
Back to the Future 2	Image Works	87.5
Light Cavalier	Infogrames	86.75
FBI Combat Pilot	Digital Integration	86
Demolition	Greenline	84.75

Unusually for the spectrum, there's no budget title in the top five, as publishers turn to the market for their current releases.

# THEM AND US

While virtually all reviewing systems used in the magazines covered in the Stockmarket are valid, it's worth noting that the ACE reviewing process is distinct from the rest of the bunch.

ACE doesn't review every game on the market each month. We don't intend to. However, we don't merely cover the games we like.

Instead, we aim to offer the best review coverage by writing about the games which need reviewing.

High-profile titles such as major licensing deals, coin-op conversions will receive equal amounts of space as less-publicised products which nevertheless warrant more explanation.

Slightly, there's no fixed amount of space which we'll devote to a title. Don't expect us to give a big licencee a cover spread review. It's likely that many of the biggest titles are the most basic games. If the plot, play and

point can be summed up in a single page, then that's the way we'll handle it.

Our ratings are designed to give a better idea of all aspects of the game. The body text of the review contains an outline of the game, and some opinions of the reviewer as to the success or otherwise of the programmer. While these opinions are of an individual reviewer, you can rest assured that it will generally concure with the views of the rest of the team.

The scores panel at the end of the body copy will sum up everything said in the review so you can easily remind yourself of our feelings without necessarily reading the text first. Distinct from maps which simply give a score, our six ratings cover all aspects of the game and rate them on an accurate and demanding basis. The PC curve and curve comment tell you how well or otherwise the game will retain your

attention. Depending on the features you're looking for in a game, this an important factor. If you're flush enough to buy a new game every week, it won't matter as much if it doesn't hold your interest for more than a fortnight. If you've saved up for ages, you'll be looking for a high-scoring PC curve right into the Month or Year period.

The Overall score pretty much speaks for itself, being taken from the Mirana-like 1000 (never awarded - nothing is perfect). A game scoring over 700 in this area is viewed as being pretty hot. Upwards of 800 is heartily recommended and a 900 rating means you should rush to the shops without further ado.

The graphics, IQ, Audio and Fun Factor ratings simply break down the games' salient features into easily-managed chunks.

Remember, only ACE offers such depth at an affordable price!





# HARD SELL

**B**ring on the drums and pass on the trumpets if it's a very special hard sell this month, but only are we printing the full hardware specifications for all the major computer/MSX computers (for the definition of a "major" computer on this list, we've also included an information run-down on Microsoft's running home Super Nintendo, but just in case you're in it) based on...

Supplier telephone numbers and their own online MSX systems are available. As a general rule, however, your local dealer should be the first place to start asking questions.

The star ratings go from one (and to the best) to five (and to the worst) along with your star needs and preferences.

## AMSTRAD GX4000

**Package:** C64800 console, 2 controllers and Burning Rubber game.  
**Processor:** Amstr 8504  
**Console Memory:** 64K  
**Recommended Retail Price:** £20  
**Contact:** Amstrad 0382 343300  
**IN BRIEF**

Indeed have partly gone up the Commodore path, but have wisely kept the opportunity to upgrade built-in. The palette is increased, with multibeam hard-core scrolling and 14 hardware sprites increasing to 32 with star-trail trails. Unfortunately the sound chip is the same old thing you used in the CPC, albeit in stereo. You can't have everything. It supports 4-bit color software for fast-expansions of the machine being a source outside Europe (and hence retains almost unerring support to US, being still working-on titles for themselves).

**GRAPHICS:**  
**Resolution:** Same as Amstrad CPC.  
**Palette:** 4096  
**Colours:** 32  
**FX:** No.

**Monitor Output:** No.  
**Monitor Support:** No.  
**Monitor Options:** 24" Amstrad tablet.

**Sprite:** 14, 12 with hardware inter-  
**Speed:** Good for 8-bit technology.  
**SOUND:**

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on  
Toshiba

**MSX:** No.  
**Monitor Output:** Yes.  
**Performance:** Unimpressive 1 channel chip in an old CPC, but now runs independently of main processor.  
**HARDWARE:**

**Controller:** 2 game controllers sup-  
**Ports:** Stereo TV ports, stereo headPHONE socket, 2 joystick ports (2 digital, 1 analogue).  
**SOFTWARE:**  
**Cartridge Memory:** 128K.  
**Existing Software Base:** Small but growing list.

**Current Releases:** Thing title due by January 1991.  
**Prospects:** Very good, with several software houses working on titles.  
**BUYING:**

**Best Buy Price:** At MSX.  
**Second Hand Availability:** None in  
**Wanted:** None in the UK.  
**Maintenance:** One year guarantee.

## STAR RATINGS

**Graphics:** 4 + + +  
**Sound:** 4 + + +  
**Expansion:** 4 + + +  
**Overall:** 4 + + +

## ATARI LYNX

**Package:** Lynx with California Games.  
**Processor:** Intel 8052  
**Console Memory:** 64K  
**Recommended Retail Price:** £27.95  
**Contact:** Atari FR 071 388 9871  
**IN BRIEF**

The Lynx was designed by a team including Atari, one of the main behind the thing. If that doesn't convince you consider it more a fast MSX, has 64K of game storage on its cards and supports multi-player games. The graphics hardware has built-in hardware scrolling and image scaling, software is a little thin at the moment but found to improve during 1991.

**GRAPHICS:**  
**Resolution:** 160 x 162  
**Palette:** 4096  
**Colours:** 16  
**FX:** No.  
**Monitor Output:** No.  
**Monitor Support:** Yes - 2.5-inch twin-colour LCD

**Monitor Options:** None.  
**Sprite:** Social graphics hardware effectively treats all screen objects as sprites.  
**Speed:** Fair.  
**SOUND:**  
**Speaker Quality:** Very good.  
**MSX:** No.  
**Screen Output:** Yes.  
**Performance:** 4-channel, 5 octave stereo sound has to be heard to be believed.

**HARDWARE:**  
**Controller:** 4 way joystick.  
**Ports:** Cartridge port, multi-player port, miniature stereo-headPHONE jack.  
**SOFTWARE:**

**Price:** £20-25.  
**Cartridge Memory:** 64K.  
**Existing Software Base:** Very small.  
**Current Releases:** California Games is a great treatise.  
**Prospects:** Uncertain but several new titles in the pipeline.  
**BUYING:**

**Best Buy Price:** At MSX.  
**Second Hand Availability:** Very few.  
**Maintenance:** One year's guarantee.

## STAR RATINGS

**Graphics:** 4 + + + + +  
**Sound:** 4 + + + + +  
**Expansion:** 4 + + + + +  
**Overall:** 4 + + + + +

## ATARI VCS

**Package:** Both VC2600 and VC2700 come with controller and five games.  
**Processor:** 6502 (VC2600) 6505 (VC2700)  
**Console Memory:** Not known.  
**Recommended Retail Price:** VC2600 £24.99 VC2700 £24.99  
**Contact:** Atari FR 071 388 9871  
**IN BRIEF**

The VC2600 is a rebased version of the original Atari 2600 which, until a couple of years ago, remained the best selling home games system of all time. The VC2700 is a reworked version of the VC2600 with a faster processor, slightly better sound and vastly improved graphics.

**GRAPHICS:**  
**Resolution:** 192 x 140 (VC2600), 220 x 242 (VC2700)

**Palette:** 16 (VC2600) 16/6500  
**Colours:** 4 (VC2600) 16 (VC2700)  
**FX:** No.  
**Monitor Output:** No.  
**Monitor Support:** No.  
**Monitor Options:** No.  
**Sprite:** 16/164  
**Speed:** None.  
**SOUND:**  
**Speaker Quality:** Depends on TV.  
**MSX:** No.  
**Screen Output:** No.  
**Performance:** Limited to 1 channel on VC2600 and two on VC2700.

**HARDWARE:**  
**Controller:** Standard.  
**Ports:** 2 or 8 pin-D for joystick, TV carriage port.

**SOFTWARE:**  
**Price:** £7-15.  
**Cartridge Memory:** Not known.  
**Existing Software Base:** Small.  
**Current Releases:** None.  
**Prospects:** Unclear in the light of new competition from Japan.

**BUYING:**  
**Best Buy Price:** At MSX.  
**Second Hand Availability:** Worth looking.  
**Maintenance:** One year's guarantee.

## STAR RATINGS

**Graphics:** 4 + + + + +  
**Sound:** 4 + + + + +  
**Expansion:** 4 + + + + +  
**Overall:** 4 + + + + +

## C64 GAMES SYSTEM

**Package:** C64G console, controller and 4 games (Star, Mountain, Treddy, Alundra Game and International Soccer).  
**Processor:** 1MHz 6502  
**Console Memory:** 128K  
**Recommended Retail Price:** £39.95  
**Contact:** Commodore 0182 770000  
**IN BRIEF**

Take a Commodore C64 computer, remove the keyboard and stick it in an unambitious slab of a box and what have you got? A "new" computer. Sales so far have been less than impressive.

**GRAPHICS:**  
**Resolution:** 160 x 200 in multicolour mode.

**Palette:** 16  
**Colours:** 16  
**FX:** No.  
**Monitor Output:** No.  
**Monitor Support:** No.  
**Monitor Options:** None.

**Sprite:** 8.  
**Speed:** Slow CPU, helped by the 64's custom graphics and sound chips.

**SOUND:**  
**Speaker Quality:** Depends on  
Toshiba 4

**MSX:** No.  
**Screen Output:** No.  
**Performance:** 1 channel 144K, one of the best 8-bit sound chips.

**HARDWARE**

**AppleLink:** AppleLink supplied.

**Ports:** None

**SOFTWARE**

**Price:** Around £25.

**Cartridge Memory:** 1MB.

**Existing Software Base:**

Panasonic's huge, but small as the market. Commodore anticipates around 100 titles by Q4.

**Current Releases:** Plenty forthcoming from various software houses.

**Prospects:** Excellent. Do people really want a console version of an ageing, though admittedly good, computer software? Support is likely to be pretty good for a while at least.

**BUYLINE**

**Best Buy Price:** to 100.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** One year guarantee.

**STAR RATING**

**Graphics:** + + +

**Sound:** + + +

**Expansion:** +

**Overall:** + + +

**NINTENDO NES**

**Package:** Manual, pack, includes console, plus 2 game cartridges and Super Mario Brothers game. Multi-Media game as above but substitutes Turbo game for Mario. Action Pack as standard, but includes Paper Joe and Duck Hunt game.

**Price:** Not known.

**Cartridge Memory:** 2K.

**Recommended Retail Price:**

£149.95, Deluxe Pack £24.95.

**Contact:** Deighton PR 071 634 2923

**IN BRIEF**

The world's largest selling console, largely because of the playability of some of its games rather than its hardware, which is 8-bit average.

**GRAPHICS**

**Resolution:** 256 x 240

**Palette:** 13

**Colors:** 16

**TV:** Yes

**Monitor Output:** No

**Monitor Supported:** No

**Monitor Options:** None

**Speakers:** No

**Sound:** Average

**SOFTWARE**

**Speaker Quality:** No

**Stance Output:** No

**Performance:** Average

**HARDWARE**

**Models:** 2 dedicated controllers

supplied. 16 cartridge controllers with

30K range available for £29.95.

**Ports:** None out of the ordinary.

**SOFTWARE**

**Price:** £20.00.

**Cartridge Memory:** Not known.

**Existing Software Base:** Over 50

titles available now. Many more

available in Japan but these require a converter kit.

**Current Releases:** Nintendo predict

about 2-3 titles per month.

**Prospects:** In the UK, improving due to increased support - but this is yesterday's technology.

**Software Loading:** Instant

**BUYLINE**

**Best Buy Price:** As RRP

**Second Hand Availability:** A few

Maintenances: One year guarantee.

**Prospects:** Fairly machine return to deal in.

**STAR RATING**

**Graphics:** + + +

**Sound:** + + +

**Expansion:** + + + +

**Overall:** + + +

**NINTENDO GAMEBOY**

**Package:** Main unit with 1600

games.

**Price:** 149.95 (includes 8 bit

250K).

**Cartridge Memory:** Not

**Recommended Retail Price:**

£69.95.

**Contact:** Deighton PR 071 634 2923

**IN BRIEF**

Nintendo was the first company to produce a dedicated handheld console and now it seems everyone wants to get in on the act. On paper, but even the Game Boy was a long time coming since the technology employed by the display is pretty much lost. That is to be pardoned - simply because of more graphics - the machine has some superb titles and game-making use of the low player link-up option are tremendous fun too (think).

**GRAPHICS**

**Resolution:** 25 x 18 characters.

**Colors:** 4 grey shades.

**Monitor Supported:** Yes - LCD display is lit by ambient light.

**Speakers:** 40 x 8 x 8 pixels.

**Sound:** Fair for what it is.

**SOFTWARE**

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on headphones.

**Stance Output:** No

**Performance:** Plays a lot better than it looks.

**HARDWARE**

**Models:** Built in 8-way probe.

**Ports:** 16-character controller

machine interface.

**SOFTWARE**

**Price:** £20-25.

**Cartridge Memory:** Not

**Existing Software Base:** The best

of any handheld.

**Current Releases:** Increasing

**Prospects:** Excellent

**BUYLINE**

**Best Buy Price:** As RRP

**Second Hand Availability:** None.

**Maintenance:** One year warranty

**STAR RATING**

**Graphics:** + + + +

**Sound:** + + + +

**Expansion:** + + + +

**Overall:** + + + +

**Prospects:** Buy machine interface

has lots of potential.

**Overall:** + + + +

**NEC PC ENGINE**

**Package:** Console unit, controller

and two game.

**Price:** Customised 8-bit.

**Cartridge Memory:** 65K internal, 8K

external (TurboGraphics, 128K internal,

32K video).

**Recommended Retail Price:** 5/15

£22 price around 1990.

**Contact:** Local dealers

**IN BRIEF**

Sadly, it now seems unlikely that this machine will ever be officially supported by NEC in the UK. Its CD-ROM edition drives is now the largest selling CD unit on the market and is responsible for much of the recent increase in CD development. There's also a 16-bit version, vastly more powerful, called the TurboGraphics, but this is only rarely available

through importers and at a price -

usually around 1800. NEC also have a

handful of versions of the Engine

which is software compatible with

its larger brother.

**GRAPHICS**

**Resolution:** 256 x 224

**Palette:** 112 (TurboGraphics: 1600)

**Colors:** 15 - 16 background and 16

plotted by games.

**TV:** No

**Monitor Output:** No

**Monitor Supported:** No

**Monitor Options:** Not

**Speakers:** 64 (TurboGraphics: 128)

**Sound:** Very fast considering this is

an 8-bit.

**SOFTWARE**

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on im-

portation.

**Stance Output:** No

**Performance:** Excellent (and

price)

**Maintenance:** None

**Current Releases:** CD-ROM at extra cost.

**Price:** Around 1000.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

**Current Releases:** CD-ROM at extra cost.

**Price:** Around 1000.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

**Current Releases:** CD-ROM at extra cost.

**Price:** Around 1000.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

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**Price:** Around 1000.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

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**Price:** Around 1000.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

**Current Releases:** CD-ROM at extra cost.

**Price:** Around 1000.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

**Current Releases:** CD-ROM at extra cost.

**Price:** Around 1000.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

**Recommended Retail Price:**

£79.95, £99.95 (16 light gun), £129.95

(16 light gun and 3D glasses)

**Price:** 280.

**Cartridge Memory:** 12K.

**Contact:** Virgin Masterdisk 071

337 8000

**IN BRIEF**

Japanese software does it just as good as Nintendo's but more titles reach UK. Masterdisk's have given good support to the machine so the prospects look good. Like the

Systems, however, the 8-bit

machine uses established but dated

technology.

**GRAPHICS**

**Resolution:** 256 x 192

**Palette:** 16

**Colors:** 16

**TV:** Yes

**Monitor Output:** No

**Monitor Supported:** No

**Monitor Options:** None

**Speakers:** Quality depends on TV.

**Performance:** 1 character.

**Maintenance:** 1 character.

**Current Releases:** Good

**Prospects:** As good as

any 8-bit console.

**BUYLINE**

**Best Buy Price:** As RRP

**Second Hand Availability:** Some

Maintenance: One year's guaran-

tee. Fully machine return to deal

in.

**STAR RATING**

**Graphics:** + + + +

**Sound:** + + + +

**Expansion:** + + + +

**Overall:** + + + +

**Prospects:** Excellent

example of the new 16-bit

console technologies. The first

second 16-bit console to receive offi-

cial support in the UK.

**GRAPHICS**

**Resolution:** 320 x 224

**Palette:** 172

**Colors:** 64

**TV:** Yes

**Monitor Output:** No

**Monitor Supported:** No

**Monitor Options:** None

**Speakers:** No

**Sound:** Very fast

**SOFTWARE**

**Speaker Quality:** Yes

**Stance Output:** No

**Performance:** No

**Maintenance:** No

**Current Releases:** No

**Prospects:** No

**BUYLINE**

**Best Buy Price:** Only import.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

**Current Releases:** No

**Price:** Only import.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

**Current Releases:** No

**Price:** Only import.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

**Current Releases:** No

**Price:** Only import.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Maintenance:** None

**Current Releases:** No

**Price:** Only import.

**Second Hand Availability:** None

**Stereo Outputs:** Yes

**Performance:** 13-channel stereo sound is produced by a custom 741 chip and sounds fantastic.

**KEYWORDS**

**Keyboard:** Dedicated controller supported.

**SOFTWARE**

**Price:** \$19.95 (physical CDR)  
**Cartridge Memory:** Not known.  
**Existing Software Base:** Good  
**Current Releases:** None in US or present.

**Inputs:** video good.

**DETAILS**

**Best Buy Price:** As list  
**Second Hand Availability:** Not known.  
**Maintenance:** One year on UK machines.

**STAR RATING:**

Graphics: a a a a a  
 Sound: a a a a a  
 Expansion: a a a  
 Overall: a a a a a

**SNK NEO-Geo**

**Package:** Console unit, controller and end mounting rack (also sold 2/3 games, several).

**Hardware:** 12MB+ RAM - 8MB+ ROM support.

**Cartridge Memory:** 64K work RAM, 16K video-RAM.

**Recommended Retail Price:** £99

**Comments:** Active sales (01 733 0292)

**IN BRIEF**

Technically the most advanced console currently available, the games are of variable quality, with high graphics and excellent sound, although the gameplay is a little lacking in the current crop of titles. The game cartridges can store up to 320 Kbits of data, but this is reflected in their price - £199-291 (40 is not low, since other titles have launched a CD-ROM which maintains an excellent software for 2/3 a month). Unfortunately the system is hard if you want to play, and is a very poor

**GRAPHICS**

**Resolution:** Variable quality

**Palette:** 555K

**Colors:** 40K

**TV:** Yes

**Monitor Output:** Yes

**Monitor Supported:** For Monitor Options ROM, SCART

**Sprite:** 16K

**Speed:** Variable

**SOUND**

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on TV/monitor

**MIDI:** No

**Stereo Output:** Yes

**Performance:** 13 channel stereo.

**HARDWARE**

**Keyboard:** Supported, second available for around £70.

**Ports:** Video-in socket

**SOFTWARE**

**Price:** £99

**Cartridge Memory:** 320 Kbits

**Existing Software Base:** Small.

**Current Releases:** 12 planned by the end of the year.

**Prospects:** Uncertain, but the machine itself could help bring games in its sector.

**DETAILS**

**Best Buy Price:** As list

**Second Hand Availability:** None as yet.

**Maintenance:** One year's guarantee.

**Yes.**

**STAR RATING:**

Graphics: a a a a a

Sound: a a a a a

Expansion: a

Overall: a a a a a

**SUPER FAMICOM**

**Package:** Console unit, controller unit and Super 32-bit card.

**Processor:** Custom-built 16-bit.

**Cartridge Memory:** Not known.

**Recommended Retail Price:** Not known.

**Legal:** price = £199

**Comments:** Local dealer.

**IN BRIEF**

Just this time, before the hype.

Although not hugely superior to the MegaDrive technically (although the improvements ARE noticeable), it's the games that impress - with Mega being one of the best games ever!

**GRAPHICS**

**Resolution:** 256 x 224 lines.

**Palette:** 32, 16K

**Colors:** 27K

**TV:** Yes

**Monitor Output:** Yes

**Monitor Supported:** For Monitor Options ROM, SCART

**Sprite:** Not known but fast

**Speed:** Variable

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on TV/monitor

**MIDI:** No

**Stereo Output:** Yes

**Performance:** Custom 16-bit

**Physical:**

**HARDWARE**

**Keyboard:** Supported.

**Ports:** One big expansion port.

**SOFTWARE**

**Price:** £99-150.

**Cartridge Memory:** Not known.

**Existing Software Base:** Small.

**Current Releases:** Lots, and plenty more planned.

**Prospects:** How can it fail? Each article made in the millions before it was launched.

**DETAILS**

**Best Buy Price:** Only import.

**Second Hand Availability:** None as yet.

**Maintenance:** Take care - grey imports are rarely under warranty.

**STAR RATING:**

Graphics: a a a a a

Sound: a a a a a

Expansion: 4 2 2

Overall: a a a a a

and a CD  
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**Save a hand-ful.**

**Keyboard:** Almost as many variations as there are stores. Prefer the AT or extended AT layout to the XT layout since it's easier to use.

**Mouse/Mouse:** Neither supplied as standard. The better stores include a mouse or at least a mouse port, especially since IBM's AT&AT system (Microsoft) has become more popular.

**SOFTWARE**

**Building Software Bases:** Visit several retailers. All major software houses have graphics software going for the PC, with many now supporting the superior VGA modes.

**Games:** Most of the best Amiga/AT titles appear on the PC, especially

**Graphics:** Given the right graphics adapter, the PC has more graphics and software to quality software. On a standard VGA PC the graphics don't matter how good the software is.

**Music:** Incorporated in graphics. However, add-on boards offer some of the best sound you'll hear on a home computer.

**Prospect:** The PC is the eternal champion — as others fall by the wayside it carries on getting faster and better all the time. This is aided by cost constantly improving the machine's processor and the cost-per-line demanding better equipment.

**Software Loading:** Don't underestimate how fast your hard disk.

**BUYTIMES**

**Best Buy Price:** Watch out for package deals from large chains and mail-order companies. If you don't know too much about PCs go for a

**name you know.****Second Hand Availability**

Consider but be careful you do not get a floppy unit machine/keyboard. **Maintenance:** Usually one year's

guarantee — but competition has forced the price of maintenance contracts down to an affordable level. This often means they fit in better here.

**CONSOLE + COMPUTER = GOOD?**

So, there you have it, the facts in full. Now all you have to do is decide which is the best machine for you. We at ACE reckon that these days, if you can afford it, you really need both a console AND a computer to cover all the bases of Advanced



Computer games. Our choices? The Sega Megadrive and the Commodore Amiga. The Famicom is a better machine than the Megadrive but it's official unavailability in the UK means that it's a bit of a dark horse at the moment.



But not all of us (any of us?) can afford to fork out the smackeroos for two machines, in which case our recommendation is to plump for the Amiga — it's a great all-rounder with some superb software available for it.

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Atari	Discovery Pack	
STFM	£269.00	
Mitsubishi		
GAMEROY	£87.00	
Atari		
LYNX	£117.00	
Atari Lynx (without software)	£87.00	
Star LC-10	£189.00	
Star LC-200	£219.00	
Star LC24-200 Colour	£299.00	
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Item	ST	Am
Advanced Sports	£6.4	£19.00
Amiga Soccer	£7.99	£7.99
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Amiga Soccer 4	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 5	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 6	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 7	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 8	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 9	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 10	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 11	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 12	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 13	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 14	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 15	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 16	£7.99	£7.99
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Amiga Soccer 41	£7.99	£7.99
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Amiga Soccer 48	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 49	£7.99	£7.99
Amiga Soccer 50	£7.99	£7.99

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Amiga Soccer 48	£19.00	£19.00
Amiga Soccer 49	£19.00	£19.00
Amiga Soccer 50	£19.00	£19.00

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# HARD SELL

**PART 2:**  
The computer section starts here. Read on...

## ACORN ARCHIMIDES

**Models:** Archimedes 110, 2000, 410 (2.0, 4.0)

**Package:** Keyboard, mouse and drive (keyboard mouse and drive plus monitor [optional or more])

**Memory:** 2000 1.5M; 210 1M; 410 1M; 410 2M (2M; 4M; 8M)

**Processors:** Acorn ARM

**Price:** Prices range from \$799.97 for the 410000 down to \$2049.99 for 4400 with colour monitor

**Contact:** Acorn-021 265200

### IN BRIEF

Still the cutting-edge of home technology, Acorn's ARM is about the fastest thing this side of a Day. This very exciting machine - although gathering adherents since the introduction of the A1000 - still lacks a good games software base and is best left to the enthusiasts.

### GRAPHICS

**Resolution:** 320 x 256 or 640 x 256 with normal monitors; 640 x 512 available with multi-page monitors.

**Palette:** 4096

**Colours:** From mono up to 256 (120 x 150) or 16 (240 x 312).

**TV:** No

**Monitor Output:** Mono composite video (colour - RGB + sync).

**Monitor Support:** Depends on package bought.

**Monitor Options:** Acorn dedicated 14 inch monitor res. colour 12 inch high res. mono. Multi-page colour monitors.

**Speakers:** External.

### SOUND

**Speaker Quality:** Good

**MIDI:** With extra hardware

**Music Output:** Yes

**Performance:** 16 channels (8 stereo, 2 mono, 6 channels, 1 internal speaker)

### HARDWARE

**Disk Format:** 5.1 inch - 800k

**Disk Price:** From £1.25 upwards

**Disk Performance:** Good and fast.

**Keyboard:** 101 keys with page, programmable auto-repeat. Early key-

boards have a cheap feel given the quality of the machine.

**Keyboard/Mouse:** 4 button mouse, 4 support for joystick.

**Interface:** (2) ports parallel, 1 port mouse, 1 line stereo headphone jack, 14 pin disc, 4 1/2 inch expansion port, IEC 100 volt outlet, 100 watt power.

### SOFTWARE

**Operating Software Base:** Still very limited. Some games available most software is for productivity and business.

**Current Releases:** Not about. **Games:** Most famous are Zaxxon (Simon and Schuster), but there have been several impressive one-off titles released recently.

**Graphics:** Potential is enormous. Some excellent packages available. **Music:** Like graphics, but developers remain shy.

**Prospects:** Limited. Even the three or more disk limit is tough competing with TI and Amiga.

**Software Loading:** Very reliable.

### SOFTWARE

**Best Buy Price:** As RRP

**Second Hand Availability:** 100 copies, some 500 and 750 starting to appear but expect to pay for them.

**Maintenance:** One year's guarantee. Return-to-Ruby machines available.

**Models:** Classic, 2000, LC, 410

## ACORN ARCHIMIDES

**Package:** Monitor with built-in CPU and disk drive, separate keyboard.

**Memory:** 1M; 2M; 4M

**Processors:** 2000, 210, 410

**Price:** From £1,250 upwards

**Colours:** From mono up to 256 (120 x 150) or 16 (240 x 312)

**TV:** No

**Monitor Output:** Mono composite video (colour - RGB + sync)

**Monitor Support:** Depends on package bought

**Monitor Options:** Acorn dedicated 14 inch monitor res. colour 12 inch high res. mono. Multi-page colour monitors

**Speakers:** External

**SOUND**

**Speaker Quality:** Good

**MIDI:** With extra hardware

**Music Output:** Yes

**Performance:** 16 channels (8 stereo, 2 mono, 6 channels, 1 internal speaker)

### GRAPHICS

**Resolution:** Classic 320 x 256; 410, LC, 440 x 480 (to 640 x 480 [optional] & 640 x 800 [optional])

**Palette:** Classic 320 and black and white; LC, 256, 640, 256 or 16 grey in mono

**Colours:** 256 with colour monitor

**TV:** No

**Monitor Output:** Integral monitor

**Monitor Support:** Yes

**Monitor Options:** Integral monitor

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**Monitor Options:** Integral monitor

### BUYER'S

**Best Buy Price:** Generally the RRP - most are only sold through dealerships. Ask for a discount for cash.

**Second Hand Availability:** Some and expensive. A better market exists in older models but these are best avoided.

**Maintenance:** One year's guarantee. Apple offers AppleCare - "insurance" you take out to cover the cost of repairs after the guarantee has run out.



**Models:** Atari 1000/5M, 1000/5, 1000/5T, Mega STx, Easy

**Package:** 512 and 1024 have key-board with built-in disk drive; Mega versions have separate keyboard.

**Memory:** 512K/1024K/2048K with high-res, graphics and 640K of "free" software. "Discovery" pack includes similar value software to three packs but with an STFM and an educational base.

**Processors:** 1000/5M and 1000/5T 640K; 1000/5T 1M; Mega STx 2 or 4MB; Mega 2 or 4MB; STx machines expand internally to 4M.

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**Processors:** 1000/5M and 1000/5T 640K; 1000/5T 1M; Mega STx 2 or 4MB; Mega 2 or 4MB; STx machines expand internally to 4M.



medium and low-cost displays only available on colour monitors or TVs. Better built-in to the DPM (standard on 570) improves the colour accuracy.

**SOUND**

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on model.

**MSB:** No.

**Screen Output:** CRT only.

**Performance:** 3 channels mixed in average to good depending on software. TV features 8 bit PCM sound but no current software uses it.

**HARDWARE**

**Disk Formats:** 5.25 inch - 720K

**Disk Prices:** \$1.20 to \$1.50

**Disk Performance:** Reliable and fast. Early machines were supplied with a single-sided disk drive.

**Keyboard:** 80 keys including 10 function keys. Has a cheap feel which can be improved with third party springs/keys.

**Application Software:** 2 typical ports are standard. 1 better mouse is supplied with machines. Many is supplied with a trackball.

**SOFTWARE**

**Existing Software Base:** Features a few budget titles are starting to appear now.

**Current Releases:** More of the major software houses ignore the 570 so it will arrive with plenty of good software.

**Games:** Across the board.

**Utilities:** Good with some excellent software to manipulate them. **Music:** Excellent. Plenty of sound synthesizers, editors and MIDI software make this the musician's choice.

**Response:** Very good, but the Amiga is currently the favourite with software houses in the UK, and the 570 has failed to capture a market in the States.

**Software Loading:** Several software companies now supply their games on one double-sided disc. Other using the second disc for extra graphics or sound, meaning single-sided disc versions either lose out on some of the bells, or even worse have to send off for two single-sided discs. The alternative two single-sided discs allow instant software swapping - which is equally annoying when it comes.

**BUYING**

**Best Buy Price:** As 800 which cut for the twice yearly bundles.

**Second Hand Availability:** Very common and quite cheap. It's not hard to find value well - beware very old, single-sided machines. **Maintenance:** One year's guarantee. Return to dealer if faulty.

**AMIGA**

**Models:** Amiga 500, Amiga 500X, Amiga 600

**Package:** 500 has keyboard and trackball in one with separate PDA. 500X and 600 have separate key-

boards with built in (see article) PDA. 6000 is a very powerful machine indeed.

**Memory:** Amiga 500, 1 MB & 2 MB

**Processor:** 16MHz 68000

**Storage:** 800K, 400K, 200K, 14 or 720K

**Recommended Retail Price:** 600 174; Screen Set 229.95 Flight of Fantasy Pack 109.95. Case Of The 500 pack 279.99 (all packs incl. Amiga, a 500 from 999, 400K from 17.99, 200K from 11.99, 14MB 200K hard disk, 4000 from 19.99, 14MB-400K hard disk). Call prices for VAT.

**Contact:** Commodore 0628 770000

**IN BRIEF**



A stunning specification with custom chips to rival almost everything around, the Amiga is the first choice for the most expert of games players and video professionals. After an initially shaky start the machine continues to sell extremely well and has penetrated the UK in the UK, through the latter machine you have a slightly larger installed base. The Amiga is now identical 1000-unit to the 5000, but cheaper. The 5000 is a big and sophisticated machine, including trackball, 2, featuring enhanced users, file handling, and security features plus Amiga 5000, a multi-media programming tool. 6000 also comes in three configurations, ranging from a 15MB/400K hard disk to a 200MB/800K etc.

**GRAPHICS**

**Resolution:** From 320 x 200 to 640 x 400 (more possible in software)

**Palette:** 4096

**Colors:** 1, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 4096

**Text:** 70x18 resolution

**Monitor Output:** SCART / composite video in mono/stereo

**Monitor Support:** No

**Monitor Options:** C168 1280-60 8000 from manufacturers.

**Speed:** Very fast with good software.

**SOUND**

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on monitor.

**MSB:** No. Third party inter faces available.

**Screen Output:** 2 phone connectors.

**Performance:** Among the best around. Custom hardware requires 5 channels of 8 bit digital sound into the four channels.

**HARDWARE**

**Disk Format:** 5.25 inch - 800K

**Application Software:** 2 typical ports are standard. 1 better mouse is supplied with machines. Many is supplied with a trackball.

**Keyboard:** 80 keys including 10 function keys. Has a cheap feel which can be improved with third party springs/keys.

gals. Third party software is available to improve matters.

**Keyboard:** 84 keys, 10 function keys and separate cursor cluster.

**Application Software:** 1 button mouse supplied as standard.

**Interfaces:** Two application/printer ports, external disk drive(s), SCSI serial, Centronics parallel printer, SCART video-out, composite mono/stereo video expansion bus (internal on AT 500 & Amiga, 32 bit on AT-6000), clock/expansion expansion on Amiga only. Internal PC expansion on AT-500, AT-600 and Amiga.

**SOFTWARE**

**Existing Software Base:** Similar to the AT.

**Current Releases:** Everyone's doing them.

**Games:** Something for everyone.

**Graphics:** Quality and range is unsurpassed.

**Music:** Hard earlier support for MIDI. Internal sound software is well supported thanks to SMP standards.

**Programs:** Excellent.

**Software Loading:** Easy but usually entails floppy changes.

**BUYING**

**Best Buy Price:** Get Amiga 1000 can be pulled up (slightly) without but these linked the same graphics mode of late models. Try to find a good value pack.

**Second Hand Availability:** Excellent. Second hand, but hard to find Amiga 500 with diskette 1.1.

**Maintenance:** One year's guarantee. Return faulty machines to dealer.



**Model 515x PC** was the first PC to be accepted in large quantities (not the first PC) and retains the standard by which all others are judged. There are hundreds of clones and variations, including offerings from America, Atari and Commodore. In general, with PC you pay for speed and better graphics standards. The extra money is worth it if you can afford it.

**Package:** Depends on the manufacturer although most are supplied with monitors. They can come be bought in kit form at top prices saving.

**Memory:** Usually 512K or 640K.

Can be anything from 80K to 1MB+. Always go for a 640K model.

**Processor:** Intel 8088/8086 in later machines is sometimes replaced with the faster 80286. More expensive machines are based on Intel's much faster 386, 486, 586 and even the latest 686.

**Recommended Retail Price:** Can be pulled up for as little as £200 for a "no frills" machine, with up-to-the-range 486 based clones - and the official IBM systems - that says the limit. Look for a good 686 or VLSI model for between 1700 and 1700.

**IN BRIEF**

Take note if you want the ultimate in monitor, the AT will require its business origins. Almost every major software house now port their titles to the PC but these remain limited by the constraints of the basic (most common) machines - which means they tend to be limited in sound and graphics. Definitely NOT find value if maintenance is your preferred way for computers, or if you cannot afford the better 686 or VLSI models (which are really essential for good games playing).

**GRAPHICS**

The first PC report fitted with graphics as standard but most clones incorporate the necessary hardware and come with a monitor. There are three main standards, VGA - nearly but not quite common display, EGA about the lowest common display worth considering, VGA - an Amiga/AT leading display and Hercules monochrome. EGA or VGA which you usually only fitted to standard to more expensive machines (Amiga's) PC286 a one option. **Resolution:** CGA 320 x 200 EGA 640 x 480 Hercules 720 x 480 VGA 640 x 480

**Palette:** CGA 4 or two fixed with 64K bit, VGA 24

**Colors:** CGA 4 VGA 16 VGA 64 Hercules 2

**Monitor Output:** VT, RGB/RGB

**Monitor Options:** Vast, many monitors are dedicated to just one or two models - some have audio, graphics or other monitoring displays - check before buying.

**Graphics:** None

**Speed:** From very slow - 8088 - to very fast - 68486

**SOUND**

**Speaker Quality:** Built-in sound is very poor. Third-party add-on sound boards such as Sound Blaster and Ad Lib 3708 - which is fast becoming a standard - provide satisfactory quality sound through an amplifier.

**MSB:** Most port interfaces available.

**Screen Output:** 2 phone connectors, yes.

**Performance:** Not the best machine for the money but - an standard IT offers more for MSX, the Amiga more for software sound ports.

**HARDWARE**

**Disk Format:** 5.25 inch - 800K/1.44MB

**Disk Prices:** 60p - £3.00

**Disk Performance:** Average. Most PC versions are 800K disks, a large amount of PC applications and software refuses to work unless you



## MEGADRIVE



**S**ega went under steadily cutting, then sales on the back last week as figures came through for confirmed Megadrive sales. In 1990, 68,000 Megadrives were sold in the UK alone, combined, no doubt, by 89's Master system owners who were keen on the Sega brand and keen to upgrade to the finer graphics capabilities of the 16-bit machine.

In total, Sega claim to have shifted 193,000 Megadrives since its launch last year.

For the machine to have had such success most surely brand the Megadrive as the machine to own - for the moment. The combined might of the Master and Megadrive would seem to have faded off the advances of the advances of Nintendo's Entertainment System.

And with no UK release date set for the Super Famicom, it would appear that Sega have the last handoff in Europe indeed, a couple of weeks ago at the industry conference in Montreal, Sega was awarded the Industry Rising Star tag.

## IBM PC



**I**f late multimedia seems to be the subject of talk buzzing around the lips of many PC entertainment software developers, still many of the clutter and multimedia boils down to an entertainment/education software system taking full advantage of some audio/video technology hooked up to a music storage device, any usual 5.25" CD-ROM drive. The reason software developers are getting so excited about it that multimedia software is the sort of thing you can get anybody interested. Not just computer tech heads, not just wide eyed game freaks, any Joe Soapak or Jerry Sawingmachine that walks into Coons with a few pennies to spend.

It's all down to the mammoth amount of information you pack onto CD-Rom type optical storage devices. Instead of a couple of nine disc hard pictures on the file screen and jowly looking graphics throughout the rest of a game, it's wholly possible to have plenty, literally thousands, of stunning graphics. Instead of a few

However, it seems that some of the buzz has gone out of the Megadrive of late, with Gray Report Publisher's starting game of its number. It's worth remembering that the software support for the Megadrive, at the moment, is far from extensive. Aside from Mario 4, supplied free with the package, and a few other notable exceptions (Flot Wings, FC) there really isn't enough software of a high enough quality to warrant the purchase of the machine. Yet.

...STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP...

### POPULOUS CONVERSION

Just as we were closing for press, the Megadrive version of Populous skirted in for review. Look out for some colour shots elsewhere in the issue! From the brief look we've managed to snatch so far - as the printers were dragging the pages away - it looks like a top-notch conversion from U.S.A.

After the rather poor job they did of Jetty Golf, looking uncomfortable like an Amiga port, with its thought being given to control method (the hand controller acting exactly like a mouse - and not doing a very good job of it) we were concerned that the latest classic wouldn't live up to expectations.

Well, fortune and good programming has smiled and we're pleased to report that the Megadrive version of the hit game of World Domination could well be the best yet!

party seems to make up the games sound, full stereo CD quality samples can accompany anything you do. With the 550MHz or average CD-ROM disc can hold there's no problem of jamming everything in and a quarter inch floppy.

Best of all, the technologies of available right this moment and at extremely reasonable prices. Intel's recently launched 486 DX chip set can easily deliver the awesome amount of processor grunt needed to create highly complex TV speed animation. Funny enough it's available as a PC board. CD-ROM's been around for a fair while, mostly used for entertainment and utility software.

Tandy has just announced a fully fledged CD-ROM system for just \$199 (theater-quality music translates that to the £230 ballpark). Funny enough Tandy have ported the PC, not just as their major target. It all adds up to the PC being the most pragmatic choice for anyone looking for a mass ground in multimedia. So if this stuff's all available right now, why isn't he at!

### THE SOFTWARE

The software to take advantage of these wonderful boxes of tricks has just failed to materialize and the reason why? Standards, or rather lack of them. There's no one standard platform for this type of computer entertainment to be run on. Luckily things are looking up. Microsoft have announced plans to fully support a large number of multimedia graphics and storage devices to be supported in their next release of Windows. That should be due in the summer of this year.

# DIRECT LINE

To YOUR micro...

Monthly machine-specific columns for the users of the ten most popular machines, written from a personal viewpoint by other users...

Also Sony and Nintendo are collaborating on a proposed standard that encompasses multimedia in entertainment computing. Based around a highly powerful video chip set that could easily appear in the form of a PC plug-in board. Microsoft are just about to announce a proposed set of guidelines for the standardization of CD-ROM based multimedia software, with the PC at its centre. Obviously there's a fair bit for the big boys to slug out before a solid standard has been decided upon. But it's happening.

### DET MOUNT OF THE GAMES?

But will it mean better games? Certain elements seem to check in carried lighter instead of jokers and it's a worry that some publisher's games will go in terms of presentation rather than content. The switch from entertainment software as we know it now to that of the future is very large one and developing the new techniques needed for this type of coding will definitely mean a few standard steps. Even so they are steps in the right direction.

### COMPETITION

Just room for a final couple to round off with this month. The first entry out of the hat will receive five pieces of PC software of our choosing.

Send your entries to the normal address.

The question:  
What does VGA stand for?  
See you next time!

© JOHN WALKER

## AMIGA



**B**udget software has always been a bit of a rascal's egg. Until recently, the major players in the market have been skirting around the budget market without necessarily committing. Now, most companies have thrown out a few re-releases, but there's been a certain amount of reluctance to take the bull by the horns.

High Master/ords, however, have taken a very different view of the Amiga budget scene and have launched into the market with a handful of initially acclaimed titles. Admittedly from their own back catalogues, the games cater for virtually every style of game: The tobacco adventures, once 240 games available to a select few PC owners, can now be enjoyed on the Amiga for a mere £7.

### LOVE 'EM IN LEATHER

The tobacco range presents adventures with a wide range of problems. There's *Leather*

*Godslayers of Phobos*, for example, offering players a comic-book style romp through a game populated by dominating Space Assassins. The action can get pretty bloody, and you can even select the level of violence in the descriptions of each scene and action. (The original game featured a scratch and sniff card, perhaps fortunately omitted from the budget version).

### SMOOTH AS SILKSMOON

Arcade fanatics can find all the blasting they could possibly want in three of the best games to appear on the Amiga in recent years, all now available at this knock-down rate. Silkworm from the Sales Curve features excellent two-player action. One player controls a jeep and the other a helicopter in a left-right scrolling shoot. You're attacked by wave after wave of enemy craft, some forcing into enormous flying fortresses in the air.

### IT'S A GAS

*Arms*, from the Demus Bros, was rated by many magazines as their game of the month when it first appeared in 1987. Unlike many other shoot em-ups, *Arms* enables the player to change from an airborne space-fighter into a ground-going battle tank. Each faces particular obstacles and can be powered up by a super-craft. Perhaps a little slow by today's frantic standards, *Arms* was a genuine breakthrough at the time and should be part of every discerning Amiga owner's catalogue.

So, it makes a nice change for Amiga owners perhaps second in line to PC games in the

most-expensive software states, to be able to play decent games and still have change from a tenner. Good job.

### VIDEO VIEW

Ever wished you could harness the power of your Amiga and put it to good use for uses other than games? More and more hardware and utility packages are emerging recently.

It's important to distinguish between useful packages which actually have some benefit based in multiple entertainment purposes rather than glorified science kits which measure the moisture levels in your bathtub.

*Video Editing Systems* are prime example of the former type. Using Amiga systems, you can now edit, caption and title your own video productions. So, instead of having to write the title of the program on the box and include the rudely-BBC2 announcement, you can tell what's on the tape, you can produce a menu screen tab stopping what's on the tape, at what counter position.

Those brave enough to create their own video masterpieces, can add that professional touch with decent leaders. *Four Holiday in Barbella* can now be properly announced thanks to your Amiga.

Once particularly desired piece of kit for producing films is the Microcube from ZIP. It enables you to produce 3D animated titles to a pretty professional standard.

By Ian Douglas

## ATARI ST



**I**f faced to keep up with Microcub's supporting of make problems for the ST, it seems that you've not finished reviewing one sampler or music arrange when there's another one on the market.

The latest releases are *Quarter VLS*, an update of the 4-channel "sample sequencer" and *Playback*, a sound output cartridge which gives the ST, STX and STE the stereo capabilities of the STE.

*Quarter VLS* is a masterpiece if you loved the ST's musical intensity when compared to the Amiga. At the normal price of £89.95 it's reasonable, but at the introductory offer price of £24.95 it's irresistible.

Raving on any ST without the need for additional hardware, it's very much intended to give the ST the same sort of sample-sequencing abilities as the Amiga, offering four sampled sources which can be chosen from the 100-voice library provided, or imported from Microcub's library or other popular samplers.

Since the samples are organised up to 16000, beat by 60 grid, you can tune in the sounds through a 76, monitor, or simply a floppy cartridge. Sample processing software lets you loop, filter or repeat samples.

Before adding them to the 20-voice library which is available for each Quarter composition filter can be saved as filter (sets).

*Quarter's* main library has a conventional musical view on which you can enter notes by clicking the value from a menu box, clicking on the musical screen position, and clicking to the correct pitch. This is a tedious and repetitive process, but you can enter notes much faster directly from a MIDI keyboard.

You can load the music for an individual voice or for the whole composition, and once you have the basic composition laid down, you can add to it by inserting note change messages, loop points which can be "bounced" up to 100 times so you have loops within loops, note lists, slides, transpositions and so on.

The result can sound very professional with a little practice, and the package includes realisers which allow you to include Quarter's synthesiser or, on your own program written in assembler, Basic or C, on the ST. It just is suitable as a development tool as it is for teaching around entertaining your self.

*Version 1.0* allows ST owners to output through the stereo ports, simply by pressing F5. Waves 1 and 2 go through the left channel, waves 3 and 4 through the right. For ST, STX and STE owners, pressing F4 will route stereo output through the Playback stereo cartridge. If you already have *Quarter V1*, you can upgrade to the double-sized V1.5 disk, which includes the new program, more stereo music and samples, or £3. If you want to upgrade to the new version of all three *Quarter* disks, which again have extra demos and samples on side 2, it will cost £6 - and don't forget to return your original disks to Microcub.

The other new product, *Playback*, is an unassuming looking grey box which plugs into the cartridge port, and has two phono socket outputs, which allow you to

connect it to an external amplifier. It's compatible with *Quarter's* *Playby VHS*, *Playby Professional* and *MasterDisk* software, adding more capability to what were music samplers. But remember it's not a sampler itself, if you want to digitise your own disks, you have to have one of Microcub's other hardware samplers.

Normal price is £29.95, but again there's an introductory offer price of £24.95. Even at the bargain price you might not think it worth the bother, but the *Playback* package also includes *Soundcut*, a sophisticated 2-channel drum sequencer program which allows "bit" of up to 16 samples to be assigned, up to 50 drum patterns can be composed and fed to memory at once, then assembled into 10 songs, each of up to 99 steps. You can alter firing rates and mask triggers, and control tempo internally or from an external MIDI clock, which makes *Soundcut* a good alternative to a cheap MIDI drum machine.

In the package you also get a *Quarter Demo Browser*, which allows you to compare your own Quarter compositions, graphic displays and printing messages in colour or false mono modes. Lastly, the package includes stereo output drivers written in MS-DOS Basic, C++, Basic, 6700 and machine code, so you can hear your music more accurately on your own programs.

Since Microcub are exchanging ST software deals, and public domain libraries are replacing Quarter with additional tests and samples, it looks as if selling out this Microcub's dominion of the ST amateur music market. *End played!*

Microcub, PO Box 68, St Austell, Cornwall, PL23 4BB, tel. 0730 64000.

©Chris Jordan

## PC ENGINE

**T**his month has seen a lot of new releases for the PC Engine. They include Master Mystery Club, where in the World is Carmen Sandiego, and Rainbow Islands on CD-ROM. On card we have a new tennis game called Fast Match Tennis featuring all the famous tennis players of the decade. We also have a boxer called Dead Moon, which is an excellent shoot 'em' up, and Motorcade if you've enjoyed car racing for years.

The original Motorcade was one of the most addictive racing games ever and now the sequel is following in the original's footsteps. The game itself is set in the future and is similar to Backyard in that you can destroy your fellow competitors with missiles and other weaponry.

Finally this month we've got Personal Stars - if you want to know if it's any good, I can safely say that the game has been well worth the wait. Much in the mould of the other two games in the Bubble Bobble series, it has you fighting the evil forces with some tremendous graphics (the graphics and sound are really cool). The sound FX and music really push the mood of the game, and the gameplay is nothing less than 1st class. I recommend that you put this game in the top of your game list.

### CD-ROM RELEASES

Back to the CD-ROM releases, the first game Master Mystery Club is a puzzle, Clonics type

game in which you try and find the perpetrator of a murder. Easy to often you get a puzzle which you have to try and solve from the clues you've uncovered while questioning a suspect. If you fail to solve the puzzle, it's game over for you. If you have a CD-ROM drive that's worth a look, if you're craving a bit more exercise for the grey cells than the average shoot-'em-up.

The other CD-ROM game, as I mentioned earlier is where in the World is Carmen Sandiego. This game is for the younger owner and is converted from the Macintosh game of the same name. You again play a detective searching the world for clues to solve the case of the missing treasure. The game combines the elements of a graphical adventure with trivia games. I would recommend this game for the younger player, as the emphasis tends to fall on education rather than adventure.

Finally on CD-ROM we have Rainbow Islands. Rainbow Islands is the missing link between Bubble Bobble and Personal Stars. The game is as good if not a bit better than Personal Stars, in the graphics it is an arcade perfect. No wonder this is a CD-ROM. If you're lucky enough to own a CD-ROM this is the best release (look Street Fighter 4 next).

Meanwhile, we can report from the CD-ROM conference in San Jose, California that CD-ROM's Starlock (Rime) game is now readily available on CD-ROM, though copies in the UK are hard to find. The game offers full attention of 'interactive' throughout the game with synchronized speech and superb graphics. Although it's yet another detective scenario, don't let that put you off. Walk out for it.

### FORTHCOMING GAMES

#### TO LOOK OUT FOR

Forthcoming games seem to be released on the Engine on card include Galaxy Force II, and I bet I've been waiting for Populous. Other cards which are in the middle of development are Lannings, Impassioned and Power-Monger. These all promise to be extremely strong titles - Lannings' most readers will already know in other formats; Impassioned we've seen in detail against at Granin and it looks very promising with some slick arcade gameplay and cutting graphics. Power-Monger should be a winner if it's responsible to the other versions of this superb game.

Worth noting also is that on CD will soon be being Marchos, a truly interactive adventure game which, like Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego, is a Macintosh conversion. Marchos was devised by Cyan, who later went on to produce the famous Cosmic Osmo game for the Mac. Although great fun, Marchos is clearly aimed at a slightly younger audience than Osmo, but it's great fun nevertheless.

Now we'll be hearing if Came From the Desert (after months of delay), and a shoot 'em' up called Hatcher which was released a few months back for the MegaDrive. It'll be interesting to see how the NEC version compares with the Mega one. Finally for the Super Grabs we would soon be seeing 1941 or 2943. I'm not quite sure which one it'll be but for Super Grabs owners it should be a welcome release even if it is a conversion of an aging 'shoot 'em' up.

■ Gareth Heger



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# HOT OFF THE SHELF

May comes but once a year, so what better reason can there be for buying a saucy piece of software? Okay, fair enough, all the months come once a year, but you've got to have an excuse haven't you?

So here's another *Hot of the Shelf* to help you make that purchasing decision. It's the place to find out what we've rated top over the last three months, plus those classic titles that you **MUST** have for your rad hot-box.

**AWESOME**

**Progress** ■ Amiga £24.99  
A third 'em-up' where you'll need to master four different gameplay styles if you're to win. The first is similar to Asteroid, except that here your

ship stays stationary and the aliens and rocks rotate about you. Next is a Space Invader-like battle against a giant space dragon. After that, you pilot your ship over the multidirectional parallel scrolling surface of an alien world, shooting aliens and searching for the landing bay (finally there's a Gauntlet-style run around the baroque looking for the entrance to the space station. The graphics result in look out of place in an arcade. A stunning game, if a little derivative, and well worth its ACE rating.  
+ ACE RATING 900 ON AMIGA

**BATTLE CHESS 2**

Electronic Arts ■ Amiga £24.99 ■ Atari ST £24.99 ■ PC £29.99  
 sequel-to spread from Hollywood to the computer industry! This time round the rules are based on the Chinese variant of Chess, which introduces some new moves, has a river blocking the board (which some pieces can't cross) and limits the King's movement to an "Imperial Palace". As before the board is viewed in 3D, with all the pieces talking each other in a variety of amusing and well-animated ways. While a bit slow and irritating running from Peoples due to all the dice swapping, a hard disc shows the game to be far faster and more lethal than normal Chess. A good purchase for jaded Chess fans.  
+ ACE RATING 880 ON IBM PC

**BATTLE COMMAND**

Ocean ■ Amiga £18.99 ■ Atari ST ■ PC £29.99  
The latest solid-polygon epic from Realtime. You control a Meuler tank through 16 tough missions, varying from straight-forward seek and destroy to escorting a convoy of supply trucks to getting up a downed satellite in enemy territory. Although the overall pace is slow, several of the missions require quite a bit of thought to complete. During your travels you'll encounter a wide variety of enemy craft, all rendered in exceptionally fast 3D. A little more originality next time Okay!  
+ ACE RATING 850 ON AMIGA AND Atari ST

**BOULDERDASH**

Victor Medical Industries ■ Gameloft £160 (Japan)  
Yet another steal from the EA catalogue of great games. Hey kids, remember this? Guide one and waddy footford around unpeepers that's jouno-speak for more than can be counted on one hand! mass of boulders and mounds in pursuit of diamonds. But bear in mind that digging around boulders can make them tumble down on your head! An arcade puzzle game of the most addictive kind and yet another game ideally suited to the IBM hand-held world.  
+ ACE RATING 900 ON GAmeloft

**CAPTIVE**

Microscope ■ Amiga £14.99 ■ Atari ST £18.99 ■ PC £29.99  
Another in the ever expanding number of BPs portrayed using first-person perspective. Captive, written by veteran programmer Tony Crowther, pits you against hordes of rampaging aliens, with nothing to defend you but a briefcase. The briefcase, however, contains a computer giving you remote control over a four-shield team with which you must free your self from the fortress where you are imprisoned. Excellent bitmapped graphics, atmospheric real-time stereo sound and a total of 40000 levels to explore make Captive very much in the ACE rated category.  
+ ACE RATING 900 ON AMIGA

**F-105 STEALTH FIGHTER**

Microscope ■ Atari ST £29.99 ■ Amiga £29.99 ■ PC £39.99  
A program that could well be described as the Flight Simulator's Flight Simulator. The PC version has enjoyed much success since its launch year ago, and now released on the ST and Amiga. The sim is based around the much talked about (or perhaps that has originated about Stealth Fighter. It boasts four huge scenarios with hundreds of missions, and plenty of detail. If you are looking for the definitive flight sim, then you can't go far wrong with this.  
+ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

**FLAMES OF FREEDOM: MIDWINTER 2**

Microscope ■ Atari ST £24.99 ■ Amiga £24.99 ■ IBM PC £29.99  
Now this is a challenge, how do you run up a huge game file? The big bang has set in, and Midwinter is now Alpha, the island HQ of the Atlantic Federation. You play one of their crack agents with the task of occupying an impending attack by the evil Japanese Empire. The majority of the game takes place in a detailed solid 3D world, with your own able to use any mode of transport he/she may come across, anything from foot to ball-copter. But this is no shoot-'em-up. There's more than enough strategy and subtlety to keep any non-arcade fan happy. A major contender for game of the year - already!  
+ ACE RATING 900 ON Atari ST



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### 4D SPORTS BOILING

Microscope ■ Amiga £24.99 ■ Atari TT £38.99 ■ PC £24.99

This violent clash between two solid polygons generated polygons is the best rendition of the 'table art' yet seen on a home computer. The use of polygons allows the action to be viewed from absolutely any angle, and a video playback option allows you to watch that decisive upper-cut again and again. Huge range of moves and a lot of work to be put in if you're to become World Champ!

■ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

excellent animated graphic adventure

■ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

### IRAN 'BROSMAN' STEWART'S SUPER OFF ROAD

Virgin ■ Amiga £24.99 ■ Atari ST £24.99 ■ PC £24.99

A hugely enjoyable rattling romp through 8 courses of tough 'n' tumble driving action, viewed in the overhead style characteristic of Atari's Super Sprint. All top racers should look no further. Another stunning game from the consistently excellent Graygold, authors of *Smulcrin* and *Parashoid 3D*.

■ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

### LEMMINGS

Psycholo ■ Atari TT £28.99 ■ Amiga £24.99 ■ PC £24.99

In an age of over-faster vector graphics and smoother parallax scrolls, Psycholo was the last company expected to release a simple-looking game based on the suicidal tendencies of some cute little rodents. The object of the game is beautifully straightforward - you must guide a certain number of randomly-meandering lemmings to safety from one end of a platform level to the other. You can choose chosen lemmings with a range of special abilities, such as climb or dig, with which you can get them past traps and obstacles. Incredibly playable and addictive, it's a game that will hopefully encourage programmers to spend as much time on a game's gameplay as its graphics.

■ ACE RATING 900 ON AMIGA

### PIPE DREAM

ELGames ■ Gamebyte £25 (Oregon)

Most readers will probably be more familiar with this game under its original title of *Pipesmania*. All the action takes place on a 10 x 7 grid. Using a cursor you have to drop varying sections of piping into the grid with the aim of making a pipeline for 'flow' to flow down. Should the flow leak before it has passed through a set number of pipe sections then it's game over. Later levels introduce directional pipes (the flow MUST flow a certain way) and obstacles. Incredibly addictive - it's the sort of game the Gamebyte was designed for!

■ ACE RATING 910 ON GAMBORN

### JOHN MAGDER'S FOOTBALL

Electronic Arts ■ Megadrive £38.99

What a game! The definitive US footy game yet available on any home system. The graphics are superbly realistic - as is the gameplay - and the excitement is non-stop. The sampled grunts and screams add to the action, if you're a Megadrive owner then you'll be a mug to miss this. Set out for your software shop right now!

■ ACE RATING 904 ON MEGA MD

### KINGS BASTY Y

Santa ■ Amiga £78 ■ Atari TT £78 ■ IBM PC £39.99 (GAL £44.99 (GAL))

The latest in the popular series, and typing is now a thing of the past because all interaction is via a series of multiple-choice menus. You have to guide King Graham of Davenry through yet another fantasy land in search of his castle, kidnapped by the wicked magician Mordack. However, the messages are sickeningly cute at times, and those with a low threshold threshold may shake on KGB. Others should enjoy this romp through 8.7 Mls of

### POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts ■ Amiga £28.99 ■ Atari TT £28.99

A new computer classic, with the highest ACE rating ever, you play a warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 280-island, ripe for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your unbridled leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to



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Back								

this and you can consider yourself a real games connoisseur. The best reason for updating out on the Amigans is here.

• **ACE RATING 910 ON FANTASY**

**SLAYER MONARCH OP**  
US Gold • Atari ST £24.99 •

Amiga £24.99 • PC £24.99  
A superb conversion of the original op - what else could you expect from the enigmatic but oh-so-talented ZNA, the man behind such technically-stunning games as Super Army-Gn and RowdyRift. Everything you want from a racing game is there - a sense of speed with some huge realistic features waiting to be explored, a thrashy rear from the engine, good control response, sticky corners and intelligently-driving opponents. The only place it falls down in comparison to, say, Grandia's status, is in the lack of courses. But as the review said, ZNAOP's well up with the leaders.

• **ACE RATING 831 ON AMIGA**

**TEAM SUZUKI**  
Grandia • Amiga £24.99 • Atari ST £24.99 • PC £24.99

Grandia go from strength to strength with this marvellous bike game. The action is depicted using amazingly fast 3D polygon graphics, allowing a greater degree of realistic modelling for the bike's performance. Control is very responsive - perhaps a little too responsive, which can make play frustrating at first. It's a bike game for the Amiga - but remember that you'll need to put in a small amount of effort to begin with.

• **ACE RATING 908 ON AMIGA**

**TURBOSCAN 3**  
Rainbow Arts • Atari ST £24.99 • Amiga £24.99

There are some games that, if you're not too fussy, the original Turbans was one of them. It proved that, given the right programmers, the Amiga could do anything an arcade machine could do and better. The sequel, though still an excellent game, is perhaps a little too similar - it shoots everything - to its predecessor to become a classic in its own right. However, anyone looking to retire that old mag or has yet to discover it should not do so without looking out

for this. The Atari ST version (rated at 898) is especially worthy of mention for its superb graphics, which are nearly on par with the Amiga's.

• **ACE RATING 888 ON AMIGA**

**WING COMMANDER**  
Origin/Stratford • Amiga £24.99 • PC £24.99

Another 3D space combat game, but radically user of steering ray-traced and digitised graphics for the spacecraft. They rotate, shrink and grow with amazing speed and fluidity. Animated scenes punctuate the action and present the first true cinematic experience on a home computer. The multitude of missions mean this isn't a game of surface glitz, fairly only on PC at the moment, and then best appreciated on the high speed models.

• **ACE RATING 948 ON IBM PC**

**WONDERLAND**  
Magnum Sorcery • Amiga £29.99 • Atari ST £29.99 • PC £24.99

The Sorrells, having stunned the world with The Pawn way back

in 1983, return with a new classic. An adventure game based on the famous novel Alice in Wonderland, the plot follows the book enough to retain its wondrous flavour but not so slavishly as to make it tedious by simply knowing the story. The last test, featuring with hundreds of tough-but-logical puzzles, is accompanied by a number of stunning animated graphic scenes. All adventure fans love and play - an essential buy.

• **ACE RATING 938 ON IBM PC**

**WRATH OF THE DEMON**  
Empire • Amiga £29.99 • Atari ST £29.99 • PC £29.99

Magnum's £29.99 • CD £24.99  
A highly polished shadow of the Best 2 leader. The plot is per usual: slay the demon and win against effort, but the superlative graphics and audio, combined with enjoyable, if ultimately shallow, gameplay. The game is split into 'levels', each with a different style. I.e. left-right horizontal scroller or Barbarian-style back-'em. This variety helps sustain longwinded interest.

• **ACE RATING 924 ON AMIGA**



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# BOOK SHOP

Sandra Vogel rounds up some titles of interest to the computer games enthusiast – or simply for those in search of a good read. Get the low-down on bugs (the blood-sucking kind), comms, and some superlative collector's artwork...

## THE CHRIS FOSS PORTFOLIO

Paper Paper £9.95  
Art

The Chris Foss Portfolio is one of a series of collections of the work of some of the greatest fantasy artists. The book is no more or less than a collection of full colour pictures – 28 of them in all, and a short biography of the artist.

You may recognise some of the pictures in the book from the covers of science fiction or other books. But, even if you don't, the style will be familiar as Foss is one of the most imitated fantasy artists this side of the Chalk Nebula. You may also have come across his work in other media without realising it – he has worked on the films Superman, Flash Gordon, and Alien, and even since produced a first screen adaptation for the novel.

Selecting Popular Computer Games magazines commemorating the launch of Legend of the Green Lizard Book, if only the games had been as good as the illustrations!

### GENERAL COMMENT

The only problem with this book is where you are going to store it – it's A3, twice the size of the rest of AZE!

### IQ FACTOR

5  
SHELF LIFE 4  
VALUE FOR MONEY 4  
OVERALL 4

## BUGS

Paradigm Books  
£14.95  
Hardcover

Bugs is the story of what happens if you let computers have too much power. It is set in the not too distant future, in the good old US of A. The

action starts at the National Centre for Data Control, better known as The Brain. This is a massive computer located in Washington DC. It contains enough hardware to control just about every aspect of government and administration – and that's just what it does.

The fun story begins (nearly) exactly, apparently made of silicon, start to arriving from various computer insects. These are the bugs of the title. They seem to be generated by the computers themselves, and their favourite snack is, you know, MOOS, Meezil!

As far as I know this is the only full length horror scenario that centres on computers, and it stands up well with others of its type. Unfortunately, it is not in print at the moment but is well worth while keeping your eyes open for in second-hand bookshops – I picked up my copy for a quid.

### GENERAL COMMENT

Just when you thought it was safe to touch any computer...

### IQ FACTOR

4  
SHELF LIFE 4  
VALUE FOR MONEY NR  
OVERALL 4

## THE COMMS BOOK

Edited by Dennis Jammet  
Sigma Press £12.95  
Technical

The Comms Book not only covers just about everything to do with computer communications, but it does this in a way even the complete novice can understand. A large number of contributors have written about the aspects of comms that they know best, and the result is an informative guide which will help you to avoid the technical pitfalls

which leave many of us cold.

The book covers numerous areas from the general to the specific. It starts by giving you the low-down on different kinds of modems and software, and goes on to talk about many other topics including standard mail, Bulletin Boards, files, online information, Protocol and transferring files via comms to name but a few.

The book also covers those essential technical bits like BPS and PCM – but in an easy-to-follow fashion. Although the book is primarily aimed at PC users, it is relevant to any computer user wanting to take their first steps in the wide world of communications.

### GENERAL COMMENT

Have you ever asked you ask you don't know your head from your board?

### IQ FACTOR

5  
SHELF LIFE 5  
VALUE FOR MONEY 5  
OVERALL 5

## MEMOIRS OF A SPACE TRAVELLER

Stanley Lee  
Mandarin £4.95  
Science Fiction

This book is the selected memoirs of a certain spaceship fan (Richie West), actually, the book is a collection of short stories, but you get old space scenes in all of them, so that there is a common thread for those of us who have trouble with the usually disjointed appearance of short stories.

The tales are very tongue in cheek and while some deal with various events, others deal with laughing nastily (very amusing) on the tube. You can tell you're not here because you see first the one about landing an alternative proposition like single strand from which the universe was created back in time to create a new improved fourth race, and the one about two manufacturers competing to produce the ultimate intelligent washing machine!

There are also short stories about time machines, the creation

of life, the fate of a race called the Pleists, the story of a man who claimed to have discovered the soul of his dead wife in a machine...

### GENERAL COMMENT

It cut above the usual sci-fi, the collection is both humorous and thought-provoking.

### IQ FACTOR

5  
SHELF LIFE 5  
VALUE FOR MONEY 5  
OVERALL 5

## VISIONS OF SPACE

David A Hardy  
Cajon World £10.95  
Art

Visions of Space is an illustrated history of the development of space art from the nineteenth century to the present day. The book shows 200 line art pictures brought back by various space artists have afforded new insights into the cosmos.

The book contains full colour pictures whose subjects range from the moon to Mars and their outer regions to space stations. Over 200 artists are included in the 100 page book, and many of the pictures take a full page. The commentary on the pictures is informative without being intrusive, and as if all that is not enough, the book also contains a bibliography that you can take your interest further.

### GENERAL COMMENT

With a foreword by Arthur C Clarke, the book is a treat from beginning to end.

### IQ FACTOR

4  
SHELF LIFE 5  
VALUE FOR MONEY 5  
OVERALL 5

## ATTENTION PUBLIC-READER!

ARE YOU looking for a unique book? If you have a little extra time for your reading, send a return copy to the Editorial address box (contents page) for the attention of Steve Genta.

# SHOP WATCH

One of the better flight sims released in the last eighteen months was, I thought, *Fighter Bomber*, by Activision. It was fairly easy to get to grips with and reached a good compromise in the 'good ground detail/low screen update' vs 'floating terrestrial screen update' predicament, which so many others seem to get lost in. What made it really attractive to me, though, was the option to design and save your own missions. This meant that, aside possibly for the first time, the user could customise a flight sim to his own requirements and capabilities. Also, users could set missions for other users - an exciting concept which, when thought about, suggested all kinds of intriguing scenarios.

Unfortunately, the program had quite serious flaws - at least in the early versions. One in particular of the 'official' missions in the game was impossible to finish, which meant that the player could not play the missions which came after it. Even more disappointingly, the user-defined missions could not be saved.

Activision, to their credit, realised that there was a problem and set up a helpline for dissatisfied purchasers

## Software seller Dirk Longhorn mourns the passing of Activision UK...

and promised to exchange all faulty product if returned directly to their great idea, but there were instances of users receiving replacement copies identical to the ones they had originally sent. Many people gave up on the game altogether, either breaking it to the back of their sofa or even criticism of trying to get their retailer to exchange the game for a different one 'you that works', as one particularly terse gentleman snarled at me. Nintendo removed the product from their shelves in some cases, choosing not to believe otherwise that the product was 'fixed'.

Being one of the early users of the product and, consequently, one of the army of dissatisfied customers, I must confess, to me, the experience was like coming home to find your wife of three days in bed with the

local night team - it may not happen again, but the damage has been done.

In what has all this got to do with anything? Well, early last week I was talking to a customer who I got to know during the *Bomber* fiasco. He was saying that since that time he has not, as a matter of principle, purchased any Activision products nor would he ever again. I tried to gently negotiate with him, pointing out the truly innovative products that the company produced which, on reflection, very few others would or could have done. 'Commercial Consideration' (ie, they were not their sole ops) did not seem to work. Titles such as *Shanghai*, *Castle*, *Computer People*, *Hot*, and *After Burner* spring to mind here.

I was promptly accused of lying in the past after this - the customer in question thoughtfully reminded me that, with a few reasonable exceptions, the publisher's recent output had been predominantly arcade titles such as *Galaxy Force*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Afterburner*, and *Power Party* and that the company had not published anything 'good and original' for years. In fact, indeed, it was hard to disagree.

Regrettably Activision are no longer with us in the form an active force (I don't know what their new owners (The One Company) intend doing with the company, but fear it will probably be just Nintendo and MS-DOS). Those of us lucky enough to own some of the early products (including *Shanghai*) absolutely must search and activate them before the 4000 hours were launched. The usual owners of this product is an elderly lady in them and in return the relative version of the board game I should remember with affection and gratitude the seemingly ungrateful people who criticised such products which had grown so much pressure and had no intention. I fear we will not see them like again.

To end on a slightly more cheerful note, *Pygmas* must be congratulated on the release of a 'good and original' game with their wonderful licensing. It has gained many a discussion between retailers and customers who are attached to it. I can not remember when a game was last released that caused so many people to write on the margins of its name file. Ask someone if they have played *Pygmas* - if they have they will instantly smile. Products like this are wonderful for the computer industry and I would love to see more with such 'smile appeal'.

© Dirk Longhorn

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# ADVENTURELINE

## Pat Winstanley checks out an adventure generator for the Amiga and doles out some tips

### HATRACK II

Hayley Software 081-427-2001

This month I've been having a good look at Hatrack II which had a brief mention a few months ago. An interactive adventure generator for the Amiga, Hatrack has several features which make it both flexible and easy to use.

Adventure generators fall into two main types. Interpretive ones such as SCAC allow you to feed the game as you go along, swapping between adventure and editor at will. Compiled generators such as PARADISE separate the running game and the editing side quite clearly so that small adjustments require a full recompilation every time.

Hatrack II betwixt and between is called third-kind of the interpreter type and the flexibility of this type I have often noted. While working on a game the adventure itself runs in one window, over which editing windows can be dropped temporarily for adjustments. When editing is complete the new window is simply wiped out leaving the game running from where it was stopped but with modifications now made.

This use of windows has other advantages too. Imagine you are coding a puzzle-condition and can't remember the number of the message you want to use. With this program all you need do is pull up another window on screen to scroll through the table list. Having found the number simply pop the window out of the way and carry on editing.

Another useful feature is that when defining an object you are asked for the word by which that

object will be recognised. This is then automatically inserted in the word list where later you can add any synonyms required - quite a time saver and avoids the mismatch between the spelling of an object and its associated noun which so often happens.

Included with the system is a default adventure file (HATRACK2.DAT) which contains all the standard vocabulary, messages, conditions etc. to get you started. These are all editable by the user to help in customising your game. Probably the first entry to be customised is that for describing a room. The default condition thoughtfully saves you having to type "this are" by providing it as a message. I can't think of anything more boring than having the same idea to every room it is very easy to change, simply remove all reference to that message in the parse table.

As to the code itself, it is very similar to Basic (without the numbers) with commands such as EXTEND, ELSE, LOOP, FOR/NEXT etc. These don't seem to be as extensive as in many other systems but are quite flexible and will do virtually anything you want. Twelve system variables are predefined and you can add your own too, again giving them a name. This is much clearer than having to refer to them by number although you can do so if you wish.

As for capacity, objects, locations and messages can have 999 in each category. You're likely to run out of memory first. The game screen can be customised to run in different colours, different res etc and you can even have an on-screen compass or perhaps a list of command words to be accessed by the player using a mouse. The game handler inputs the "Give the silver and gold coins to the troll and then run" or "Take everything except the blue key" which like it or THERM can be used to refer to the last object named too. For instance "Unlock the door than open it".

Anyone who has used an adventure creator before should find this difficulty coming to grips with Hatrack II as the language used is pretty standard. Newcomers might find things a little more difficult unless they are used to a language such as Basic - but you don't need to be an expert. If you have an idea what the simple commands above do in Basic, you'll have little trouble with this.

Obviously the system will not write an adventure for you - nothing will - but even the beginner should be able to produce good results by following the tutorial in the manual (which is very comprehensive) and trying things out. Simply learn the default settings as they stand and add your rooms, objects and puzzles. The expert will

be able to fiddle about and rewire the system as much as desired - plenty of opportunity to give a game your personal style.

Although this is a fixed only system there is a chance that graphics facilities may be available later but who needs them? If you want to write adventures on the Amiga then Hatrack II will work a treat - it's certainly set my fingers ticking again.

Hatrack II costs £29.95 and is available from Hayley Software, 27 Wincanton Road, Mabley, Stockport, S86 6PD.

## HINTS & TIPS

### TRINITY

You can't walk on the grass but you can ride over it on the gram. Use the umbrella as a sail - but feed the fish to change wind direction first.

Take the movable part of the sundial before you cross the grass. You'll need to find an alternative resting place for it to open doors on the other side.

The hand doesn't like light so use one either side of it for reorientation.

Swimming in soapy water is useful in space.

### CHRONOQUEST

Find a light source in the safe and a better one in the chapel.

### SPELLBREAKER

Inscribe the cubes as you like but it helps to make some reference to the location. If at any time you are unable to cast a spell, learn it again, wait then cast it again. At times you will be too tired to learn spells so you must sleep. Since this increases the number of moves taken try to wait as long as possible before sleeping.

### CHAOS STRIKES BACK

The point where you start is a pressure switch - once you've killed the worms in the room, stepping on that square generates more Acid halfway along the wall opposite the fourth ladder is a false wall where the worms were once clean you and there's some useful armour there too. Put the rock on its ladder for another exit - but look out for flying things!

Note: The full contents of the Tak McInerney newsletter will be printed next month.

### SIERRA HELPLINE

Stick in a Sierra game? A new telephone helpline has been announced on 0734 304204 which offers help on a variety of games. You'll need a push-button phone to access it as the system is under 24 hour computer control.



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# ACE DIARY

## APRIL 1991

### 1-15 APRIL SOFTWARE RELEASES

**Vigra: The Edge** (PC), \$14.99 tape, \$19.99 disk. Race game prepared for fights between characters from notorious comic. **Amiga** (Amiga) CPC, Spectrum 3 of 16.99 tape, \$19.99 disk. Live enforcement in Mega City One.

**Spectrum: Saboteur: Flight of the Intruder** (PC, Amiga, £24.99).

**Image Works: Champion of the Ring** (PC, Amiga, PC £24.99). This one keeps slipping. Follow the course of the British Raj in India.

**Millennium: Hunter: Goodbye from the Cops** (PC, £24.99). Specially going-on in haunted world.

**3D: Gold Links** - additional courses (PC, ST/Amiga). More courses in 150-odd new 3DGA from the same team which brought you *Leaderboard*.

### Sunday 7 Monday 8

Del: *Redwood* (Santa Maria of Carmel, California, on the day in 1988).

### Tuesday 9

**Wednesday 10**  
**Thursday 11**  
1,500 fans were turned in Glasgow jobs for being "too dangerous".  
**Friday 12**  
"Hot Giggles" was the first man to fly in space on this day in 1941.

### Saturday 13

### 14-20 APRIL SOFTWARE RELEASES

**Vigra: Spirit of America** (PC, Amiga) £29.99, PC £24.99. Survive against the Nazis in medieval life set in French-American Britain. **Indiana's Ark** 2 (PC, Amiga, PC £9.99). Complete Indiana's classic trilogy.

**Empire Mega Transfer 1** (PC,

**Amiga) £29.99, PC £24.99.** Strategy and trading game based on *Games Designer Technology's Mega Transfer*.

**Mr Soft's 8AT** (CPC disk £24.99, PC £29.99). Trading, arcade, exploration. **Pro Novels Year 2** (CPC £24.99, PC £29.99). Expand on last year's enjoyable female stars.

### Sunday 14

**At Cop** (variously: Argentine, Italian, Polish) at 10:00, 12:00, 14:00, 16:00, 18:00, 20:00. European Computer Trade Show opens at Kingston Business Design Centre. While this name is not open to the general public, not around your fair party about it. This is why many summer fairs are postponed, but get virtual odds better, and game play is needed.

### Monday 15

Anniversary of the worst ever disaster of the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912.

### Tuesday 16

**Wednesday 17**  
**Wednesday 17**  
**Thursday 18**  
**Friday 19**  
**Saturday 20**

Smokin' Embassy World Professional Championship opens at the Double Theatre, Sheffield.

### 21-27 APRIL SOFTWARE RELEASES

**Vigra: Caravan** (PC, £14.99, ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Puzzle game.

**Micrograsp: Railroad System** (PC, Amiga) £29.99. Build up your empire and get rich quick in the days of the great railway boom.

**Electronic Arts: House of Drexler** (PC, £24.99). First time on PC for this space-warfare graphics adventure.

**Mr Soft's Archibankers** (16-bit tape £9.99, ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Trading puzzle game.

### Sunday 21

All Formats Computer Fair, National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham. At last, a show for those outside London: lots of software bargains, lots of car (and PC) repairs displaying free users' contact number 0275 994 991.

### Monday 22

CCOB/Games exhibition opens in Palm, Big (any seat for everything from games to business).

### Tuesday 23

St George's Day. Set of dragon slaying fans. Poles set on city of London, but also of soldiers and the world.

### Wednesday 24

**Thursday 25**  
EMAC Day in Australia and New Zealand.

### Friday 26

MO Music. Shows open at the Festival, Harrogate, Leeds (6), Products, demos and seminars for computer music (also contact number for support) 081 629 1444.

### Saturday 27

National Day, Steve Lark Independence Day, Togo. MO Music Show (see above).

### 28 APRIL - 4 MAY SOFTWARE RELEASES

**Vigra: Megaforce: Battle Collection Vol 1** (ST, Amiga, PC, Archimedes) £14.99. Revised version date for classic family action title. *Conquest* and *Gold of Pharaoh* same genre, new user interfaces.

**Electronic Arts: Archibankers** (Special on Spring) (PC, £24.99). Not a game but a trading tube which aims to have you back typing on QWERTY or Dvorak keyboards.

**Mr Soft's Battle Isle** (PC, Amiga, PC £24.99). Arcade style game much topped in French press.

**Image Works: Iron** (PC, Amiga) £24.99. Cuts the last becomes rampaging monster at night in archaic-style feudalism. **Proletariat 2** (Spectrum, C64, CPC) £14.99 tape, £24.99 disk, ST, Amiga, PC £24.99. Survive the carnage of 45-Drug wars from the words of the same name.

### Sunday 28

MO Music. Show (see above).

### Monday 29

National Day, Japan (Empire's birth day).

### Tuesday 30

National Day, Netherlands (Official Birth of Queen Beatrix). Reports of a fire at a reactor in the nuclear power station at Chernobyl were broadcast on the day in 1986.

## MAY

### Wednesday 1

European Football Championship: Turkey vs England in Turkey; San Marino vs Scotland; Iceland vs Poland in Dublin; Finland vs France in Helsinki.

### Thursday 2

### Friday 3

### Saturday 4

### 5 - 15 MAY SOFTWARE RELEASES

**Empire: World of the Dragon** (CPC, PC) £24.99. Empire's bid to be first with finished 16-bit product, graphically-led quest and exploration game.

**Micrograsp: Gunship** (PC) £24.99. Expand and update to the highly regarded Gunship.

**Mr Soft's Magic Master** (ST, Amiga, PC) £24.99. Magic competition package ST and PC versions come complete with the MFTB second cartridge, as used in the *Mr Soft's 8AT* (see above).

### Sunday 5

### Monday 6

Stata Holiday UK, 1994. The first super-holiday title was run by Stage Technology at the Play Road track in Oxford.

### Tuesday 7

### Wednesday 8

Football: USA-Capital, Irving.

### Thursday 9

Football: Italy, Castelnuovo.

### Friday 10

Young Computer Toppers Show open at Alexandra Palace, London N22. New products, prizes or bargains given, and lots of donated computer resources (contact number 081 455 4455).

### Saturday 11

National Day, Lakes Spring Computer Show (see below).



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# THE W A T C H T H E B I R D I E E N D

## WATCH THE BIRDIE

**T**he birds in question is Atari's rumored new games PC. You'd expect rumors are to be believed, the boys at Atari are once again about to go out for a dunk in the 32-bit games market.

OK, so it's more or less certain a machine before it's been launched, especially when you have no real idea about what it will be. But those rumors are disturbingly specific about a 286, VGA machine. So let's take the *After Time Machine* into the future and attend the launch...

It's now October 1991. US games manufacturers, who very back in Fall 1990 decided for all practical purposes that Ben Case (and his machine was a 128K+ 286 machine) had won - especially in view of the recent fall in 386 prices - upgraded their expectations of their users' hardware for a better 386 model.

Anybody who thinks this is unlikely should realize that a chunky 386 PC is ALREADY due right for playing state-of-the-art PC software. A very fast 286 is just about OK...but only just.

Which means that once again Atari are in danger of sticking out in the PC games market. Seriously, kids, let's make it a 386. After all, the last product this Christmas is likely to be either *Ultara III*, *Wing Commander II* for maybe even *III*, or *King Quest IV*. Unless your 286 machine is going to run at silly speeds, these are the hot products that are going to look glibly on your machine - and that will make your machine look pretty glibly too.

So it's a 386. Now the only other thing we need to add is an optional CD-ROM upgrade for around £199. Impossible? Absolutely not. They're already offering one for £399. Impossible? Absolutely not - there's been a 100% increase in PC CD-ROM titles over the last 12 months, and that's likely to translate into a 200% increase over the next 12 months. Some are not the only companies offering PC CD-ROM titles - by the end of the year almost all major PC software houses will be jumping on the bandwagon. These products will make your machine look extremely snightly.

Looks aren't everything, however. You'll need to take in full 3D compatibility as well, and ensure that there is an adequate full interface on the back. You can also market a set of mini-speaker add-ons. In fact, you can be the first manufacturer ever to offer a complete multimedia-entertainment system in modular form.

So, if it's a 386 with a CD-ROM reader and great sound, then Atari will have pulled off the sort of coup that once made them famous, and

will have given themselves a hand-saw platform that will keep them riding high for the next two years or so.

If it's not...quick quick.

So, Atari's Atari - at least Henson is to present them. When the company that brought us *Ultara*, *III*, *Wing Commander*, *Ultara*, *Pinhead*, *Eliminator*, and *Deliverance* goes to the wall, you know it really is the end of an era.

What's even more depressing about this is that it's not as if Henson produced a string of poor products. Take *Ultara*, for example. This was universally acknowledged as being a superbly original product that delivered stunning gameplay and addiction. Total sales of the game, at a time when licenses dominated the market, were laughable.

One can't help feeling, however, that Henson missed a few tricks. Where, for example, is the Nintendo version of *Ultara*? Or *Pinhead*? These titles were apparently sought but don't seem to have come to fruition. A pity, because either of these titles on console could have performed very profitably. Perhaps they still will.

Finally, taking of consoles, great news for Game Boy owners. Atari are planning a multi-stage version of *Ball Off* for the Nintendo Gameboy and Super Nintendo, to be released this autumn. Now THAT'S what I call entertainment - and not a film license in sight.

by Bob

### IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

The next issue (out May 8th) comes complete with a starring guide to advanced entertainment technology. Everything you need to know about the forthcoming explosion of multimedia gaming will be packed into a 34pp full colour supplement. Don't miss it, FREE with next month's ACE!

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