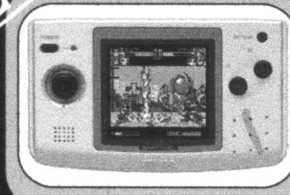


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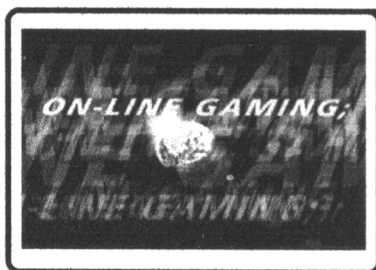
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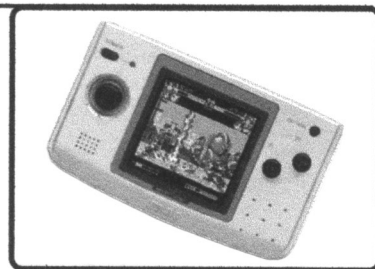
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Dreamcast, PlayStation 2, Next Generation Nintendo. The next wave of super consoles are coming. But just what direction will they take us in? United Games investigates the Future of Gaming.

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Enter the Handheld Kingdom, and discover how SNK plan to take the handheld market head on with their new NeoGeo Pocket Colour!



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[Welcome to our word. Our United World. This issue everything from the latest news to an insightful look at the latest developments as the phenomena known as computer gaming plunges head first into uncharted waters.

Just what is the future of gaming? Stick with us, after all, we KNOW gaming. ☺!]

News at bullet point:

- **Sonic 2 is confirmed for Dreamcast!**
- **EA have signed the right to produce James Bond games on P.C. and next gen systems.**
- **Dragon Quest VII has been delayed in Japan. It will now come out for PSX in Feb 2000. Enix plan to release it in the west as Dragon Warrior VII.**
- **Pac-man is to be available on Gameboy as well as NGPC.**
- **Soul Reaver is to be released on Dreamcast.**
- **Take Two Interactive have obtained the license to publish Austin Powers based games on P.C.,**

Shenmue for the New Year?

Unbelievably, in the wake of the delay of Dragon Quest VII for PlayStation, Sega have chosen to release Shenmue, THIS year, thus having no big name RPG to be up against. This is unbelievable, as many people were expecting Sega's Shenmue press release to announce yet another Shenmue delay (it was rumoured to be coming out next year). Sega have taken everyone by surprise. But it's great news! It comes out on December the 29th in Japan...just scraping into the tail end of 1999 there. Importers will doubtlessly seek copies for sale over here, although we'd advise you wait for the official U.K. release.

Another piece of Shenmue info is that, during the game, you are able to purchase a

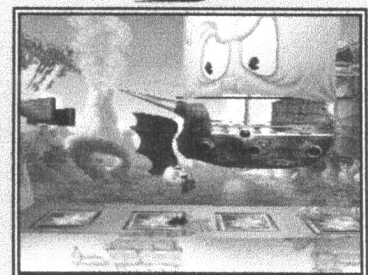
Sega Saturn, but before you can play it, you require a Saturn CD. Now, this is what isn't clear. Is this a virtual Saturn CD in a shop, somewhere in the Shenmue game, that allows, say, a level or two of a Saturn game to be played, or does "you require a Saturn CD" mean that you can play your Saturn games on a Dreamcast once you've got a copy of Shenmue? We're unsure. Our source of information, www.fgnonline.com supposed it could be a Saturn emulator built into the game, but wouldn't commit itself to saying it was 100% sure. With the release date so near, we're bound to find out soon! Watch this space. In the meantime...I'm off to play Christmas NIGHTS...lalalala!

20 years of pacin' pellets!!

Namco. Think Ridge Racer, think Time Crisis, think Tekken, but heaven forbid you forget to think Pac-man! Pac-man is 20 years old! And Namco are celebrating his anniversary, with a brand new 3D adventure on PlayStation! All you people who remember Pac-man's "maze and ghosts" game-play needn't fret, however, as beside the main 3D platform adventure, there's also an arcade conversion of the original Pac-man! Great stuff! Of course, Retro Heads will argue that the Arcade conversion IS the main game, and the 3D adventure, is just some tacky thing tacked on the end. Still, it'll be interesting to see how it plays.

It was at ECTS 99, under the title Pac Man 20th Anniversary, but all that was running on the PlayStation was the arcade conversion...the 3D stages weren't being demoed. Still, we went onto Namco's web site, and the pictures seem very rich. The potential is definitely there.

But what about everyone else who doesn't have a PlayStation? Well, Pac-man is available for the handhelds! Pac-man is out now on NeoGeo Pocket Colour, and is due out soon on the Gameboy. Let's teach the children of today what real gaming is all about! Wokka, wokka, wokka!



Pac Man: 20th Anniversary, may well have changed it's name to Pac-man 3D if these shots are anything to go by.

N64 console now available in different colours.



(Here's a black and white shot).

The sinister art of Voodoo!

3Dfx have released details of their two new up coming graphics cards, so we can all start saving our pennies for when they are released. The Voodoo 4 is the successor to the Voodoo 3, but the Voodoo 5 goes even further, offering more bells and whistles than a whistle crew of 200 ravers waging war on 200 morris dancers.

Voodoo4 comes with 4Mbs of RAM and Voodoo5 comes with between 32 and 128Mb!! Both cards are said to allow you to run games at a resolution of 2048x1536 , but still have it running at 85Hz, speed-wise. This is amazing! And it's all thanks to a 350Mhz RAMDAC. Not sure exactly what that is, but if it's generating that kind of performance, I am in no way complaining. Both cards contain even more useful features for making games run more smoothly, including texture compression with no quality loss. You see, by reducing the size of the texture file, you end up reducing the amount of data needed to be loaded up into the card's memory at any one time. This means the

already blindingly fast Voodoo card can knock games out...er..blimey..even faster! The cards also incorporate a DVD assist feature, which endeavours to keep DVD titles running at a steady 30Mhz, without any dropped frames. Voodoo 5 of course offers the higher fill rate (how long it takes the card to fill your P.C. screen with pixels), and also sees T-buffering enabled, as well as anti-aliasing (smoothing of the edges, N64-style) and Depth of Field (PlayStation 2 is capable of this. A 3D camera's view point can focus on the foreground, with the background blurred, and vice versa. Just like a real camera with lenses!). Other effects include soft shadows, soft reflections, and, an extenuation of depth of field - Motion blur. For more information on these two cards (not yet available at time of writing) check out 3Dfx's web site at www.3dfx.com As for a general round up of the current 3D Card scene, check page 24.

+ More people to appreciate great gaming??

If you're an avid Arcade goer, or a Saturn fan of old, or maybe even someone who once owned a NeoGeo Console, then perhaps you're familiar with SNK. But it has to be said that those groups of people are seen very much as a niche in the market. Well, SNK are trying to open up other people's minds to their world of gaming. Besides having launched a groovy handheld with their games on, for all of us to appreciate, they're developing for Dreamcast (well...they developed for the Saturn, so Dreamcast seems to be a natural progression), and now they're also converting such great titles as Metal Slug, and King of Fighters to PlayStation!

Yep, you heard me correctly. SNK are to be publishing their games on PlayStation. Metal Slug, the addictive and comical shoot-'em-up will be out in February, along with King of Fighters 99. We're currently unsure whether the PlayStation version will link up to the NeoGeo Pocket Colour in the same way as the Dreamcast version, but there's

a good chance it might. Then, in May, comes the release of Fatal Fury. A few SNES owners should remember that one!

SNK's Dreamcast activities involve following up King of Fighters 99: Dream Match, with the title King of Fighters 2000: Match 2000, which is to be released in Japan in February.

Whilst most people will know about SNK's beat-'em-ups and more arcadey titles, not many know much about SNK's RPG shenanigans. Well, they are apparently coding an RPG (Role Playing Game) to be released over here, in February. It's called Koudelka. We currently don't have any details on the content of the game, I'm afraid.

Whatever is up, it's good to know that a wider audience can now appreciate SNK's works, through PlayStation and Dreamcast, respectively.

Our sources: www.fgnonline.com,
www.game-online.com, www.3dfx.com

Gameboy Colour, PlayStation and PlayStation 2.

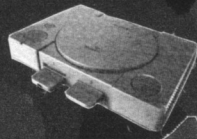
■ **Saffire are developing a First-person-perspective, 3D shoot-'em-up for the NGN, intended for release at launch.**

■ **Sega of America are said to be making an announcement, come March 2000, about a DC DVD drive for release in the west. It should enable DC owners to watch DVD movies, amongst other things.**

■ **X-fire, a action adventure title from Square / EA is said to become one of the PS2's Japanese launch titles.**

■ **Resident Evil: Code Veronica, for DC will use the VM unit to display your character's life-signs, including physical strength and their pulse meter.**

GARLERIANS!



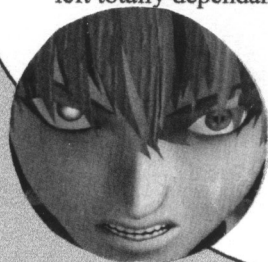
Open your eyes. Realise you have no concept of who you are or where you come from. Open your mind...find the answers.....



Your name is Rion. But perhaps that's about all you know. You've woken up in a hospital-esque environment, to find your mind expanded, but your memories dispersed. You hear a woman calling you in the back of your mind...but in your current state you can't even come to comprehend what it all means. And so you go forth looking for answers.

On first viewing, one maybe forgiven for thinking this is another Resident Evil/Silent Hill/Deep Fear, etc, etc... but whilst the gaming environment is made up of pre-rendered backgrounds, and the direction controls work in much the same way as Resident Evil, that's about where the similarities end.

You see, this game centres around drugs. The main character, Rion has been victim to drug-related experiments, granting him the power of Extra-Sensory Perception, or ESP - telepathical powers. However, he is left totally dependant on drugs, he hears voices in his head.... a woman.... beckoning him, and his memory has been blanked. This is a story where a boy called Rion searches for answers, utilising his new found psychic abilities along the way....even though the use of his new powers pains him so. The setting is initially a hospital, where the cruel experiments have been taking place. Obviously this place is littered with the drugs Rion is dependant on. However, on a



whole, the game is set in a Neo-Tokyo of the future made up of dark, futuristic Bladerunner-esque city-scapes. A future where technology runs riot, and ancient evils attempt to surface. At the beginning you'll be trying merely to find out who you are, but once you start probing, other questions plague your mind....like just what is the mystery behind the "Dorothy" computer??

GAMEPLAY



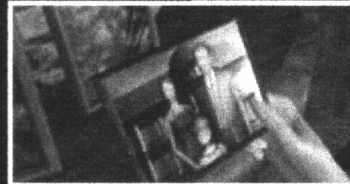
Okay. So now you know the plot, but just how does it all effect the game play? By now you've probably got it into your head that Galerians is a Resident Evil type game, with an interesting ESP-focussed plot, but is, ultimately, a game lacking any real innovation. Er...wrong! For once the plot is actually reflected by the game. After all, if you were designing an ESP-based game, you would naturally want the player to be able to directly utilise the ESP-based powers on offer, and as it stands, players can do just that. As a player, you'll find the psychic abilities to be an integral part of the game. One of the very first tasks you have to perform is telepathically opening a door. But it's also worth noting, that there are no physical weapons to be employed at all during the game, and because of this, you even have to use your ESP talents to dispose of enemies. It is indeed possible to make your foes literally explode just be harnessing the power of telepathy. Scary stuff, 'eh? Kids - don't try this at home! Instead, why not go bend all your parent's cutlery? Oh, and if they ask you what you're doing, be sure to point out that United Games, and indeed the writer of this article take no responsibility for anything dodgy that occurs as a result of this somewhat daft comment. Thank you. <Ahem> Still, to keep you on your toes, you can't just go around using this power and

that power, thinking "I am invincible!". You see, you need to pick up syringes throughout the game, and keep injecting yourself with drugs, in order to keep your telepathic powers going. You know when you need more drugs, besides the usual health points, there is also an Addiction power bar. When this peaks, your character is reduced to a snails pace, and begins to clutch his head. In addition, everything begins to go blurred, and shakes like it's an episode of Buck Rogers and the main ship has just been attacked (oh please. Ed.). Well at least I didn't mention the confetti ending, where they pour confetti over the camera, to make it look like you're whizzing through space. REAL STARS DON'T HIT THE CAMERA! (Look, can we just drop the whole Buck Rogers thing and get back on with the preview?) Oh...fair play then.

So here you are, going all dizzy, slowing right down and clutching your head. It kinda sounds like you'll be an easy target doesn't it? However, to balance things out a bit, when in this state, any approaching enemies automatically have their heads blown off. However, this isn't an unlimited invincibility mode, as the longer you spend in this state, the more rapidly your health deteriorates. Pop a few pills and you'll be fine. Perhaps we should point out at this stage, that United Games is anti-drugs - however, these aren't street drugs, these are strange medical concoctions that you depend on as a side effect of the cruel experiments your character was subjected to in the opening sequence.

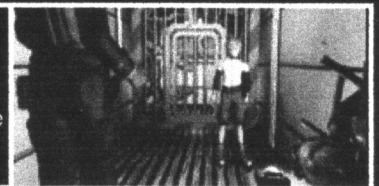
CONTROLS

The controls are fairly simple once you get to grips with them. You can deal with enemies by holding down R1 to charge a drug-fuelled attack. The amount of charge behind the attack is measured in a gauge. To actually trigger the attack, once charged, you press square. It may sound complicated, but is relatively simple....charge, then unleash. The triangle button is commonly used for non-destructive psychic abilities. The triangle button has a wide range of effects, from providing you with a slightly confusing vision/apparition of where a vital item is located, to triggering story-progressive cut scenes.



Our hero picks up a photo... but does it bring back any memories?

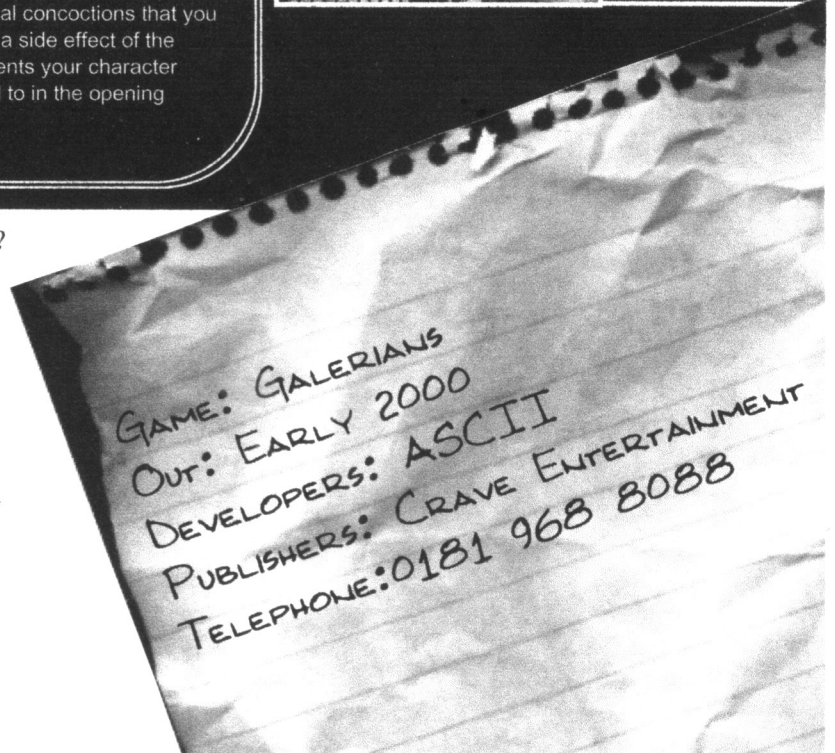
The pre-rendered backgrounds give the game that R.E. feel.



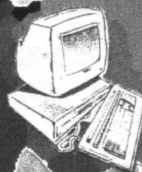
Nope, he's not a vampire, rather a heavy metal fan who befriends you in the game.

And who is the woman you have heard calling you? All will be revealed, provided you succeed on your quest...

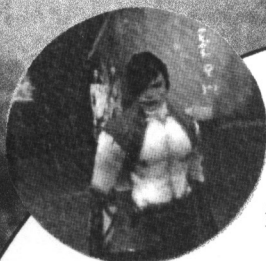
Crave Entertainment have a very interesting title on their hands. It looks initially the part of a Resident Evil clone, which is enough to draw in a sufficient crowd, yet the RPG angle, as well as the innovative ESP-related ideas, promise to make for a very absorbing game. Intricate levels, a disturbing yet engrossing scenario, and a full orchestrated soundtrack are all by the way :- how many games out there allow you to set someone on fire just by thinking about it? It would seem it's just the one: Galerians. An epic RPG coming soon. (Don't use the word "Epic" so frequently Andrew!! Kelvin.).



THE NOMAD SOUL



Another game comes out of gay old France, but luckily for you P.C. owners, there's not a flawed Superman in sight. Instead you play a lost soul in the city of Omikron, whose destiny it is to save said city from the perils of Evil. With Mr and Mrs Bowie on board, and Eidos behind the game 100%, you know this is going to be big. United Games takes a look at just what's so special about this title.



The one thing that makes

Omikron: The Nomad Soul (to give it its full title) stand out from the crowd is the sheer ambitiousness of the whole product.

The game gives you a startling amount of freedom within a realistic living, breathing, city to explore and interact with. Of course, on later stages you'll be able to venture forth from the confines of Omikron and venture into the other four cities, but because the icy conditions beyond the city borders one must travel via a woolly mammoth-type alien creature. See the "Plot" box out for more details.

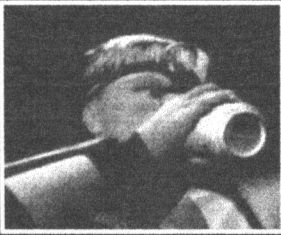
A heavy feature of The Nomad Soul is the rather stylishly named virtual re-incarnation feature, which sees you, as a free roaming spirit, trapped in a strange world, being able to switch between bodies.

Although this proves useful in solving problems, or gathering information, it also makes way for very different gaming experiences given just what body you are controlling. For example, when you possess



robots, like the one pictured above, the whole game takes on a look not too dissimilar to a first-person-perspective shoot-'em-up. We've seen video footage of bike chase scenes, close-combat, and even your character having a quick drink in a bar!

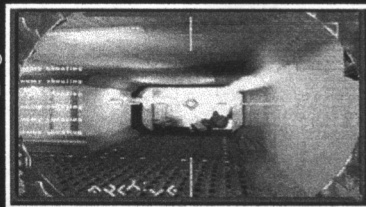
VIRTUAL RE-INCARNATION (!?!)



In this exciting FMV clip, our hero goes down the pub for a drink. No! Honest!

when your body is killed, is that you possess the body of whoever touched you last. See? It seems just like a fancy way to evade death in the game. But later on you'll learn a spell, enabling you to perform this feat at will, and thus enabling you to possess different characters with different abilities in order to use their skills to perform a variety of tasks required. Just what these tasks will be is as yet unknown. But it could involve fighting, racing, shooting, talking, or even flirting! It's possible to take control of a local bar's stripper in order to get things done with some of the men who just can't say no to a lady. The idea is that you'll be able to apply real-life strategies to the world of Omikron. What would work in the real world, even if it sounds like a long shot, should work in Omikron to help you through the game. You can even go watch Mr David Bowie (who provides the sound-track and is a character called BOZ, the leader of The Awakened) play down at the local pub. And if that's not enough, thus is the freedom of the game, you can go out and buy his CD, and play it in your virtual abode, with a virtual CD player no-less. Good grief.

This stylistically named feature is why most games mags are calling this a Zenist game and all this stuff. Well just because it features a virtual representation of re-incarnation doesn't mean it leads to true enlightenment. However, this nifty trick does play a heavy part in progressing through the game. At first it just seems like a gimmick. You're a spirit, and thus can't die, so what happens



Life through the eyes of a robot. Whether robots have souls or this is an exo-suit, we haven't a clue. But it's definitely a shooting section.

What's the plot then Guvnor??

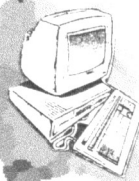
The planet Phaenon is suffering from an ice age, during which, only the main cities are inhabitable and the people are provided for by computers that govern the cities. Such is the snowy weather beyond the edge of the cities that each city has become completely isolated, so when an ancient evil entity known only as Astaroth takes over the city of Omikron's master computer LX, and captures the soul's of it's citizens via a computer game, you can bet there's going to be trouble and no outside help. So it's up to you to work in conjunction with an underground organisation called The Awakened. This organisation knows the past myths and legends surrounding the evil Astaroth, and as such enlist you, a would-be games player to enter into the game, and possess some of the inhabitants of Omikron. You start off as a local copper, and have absolutely no idea of who you are or what you are doing, and so begins this amazing game, as you search for answers.

In general, it looks like this game could be a Shenmue for the PC. A fully functioning 3D world, with inhabitants to chat to, and things to do. But we think that the whole spiritual twist will make for a much more engrossing experience. The well thought out plot and the variety of activities it initiates will leave many a member of the games-playing public feel it was money well spent. I'll leave you with the man himself, David Bowie, and a quote from his web site:

"Part Grail-like quest, part Zen odyssey, the player embarks on a spiritual mission when they start the game. Only by ignoring the dark seductions of the decadent city and resurrecting the ancient forces of good so long forgotten will the player conquer evil and find salvation."

GAME: NOMAD SOUL
OUT: OCTOBER
DEVELOPERS: QUANTUM DREAMS
PUBLISHERS: EIDOS
TELEPHONE: 0181 636 3000

SOUTH PARK RALLY

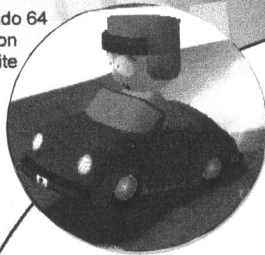


And thus it was declared, that in a small town known as South Park, the children should be free....free to drive cars all by their very little 8-year-old selfs. "Kick ass! C'mon you guys, I'll race you!" And so South Park Rally was born. Amen.

SCHOOL BUS

South Park Elementary R-1

Dreamcast screenshots below, Nintendo 64 shots on opposite page.



First and foremost I feel exceptionally proud to be able to reveal to you that this game is in no way as diabolical as the first South Park game released (don't buy it, don't buy it!). The South Park crew's previous game (the first person perspective shoot-'em-up from Iguana) was only mildly enjoying, before becoming extremely boring. South Park Rally on the other hand just seems loads of fun.

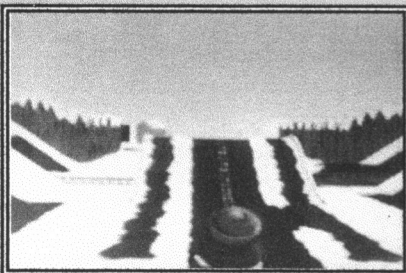
Okay, so who am I? Why should you believe me? What's going on here? Just how does Gravity work?? Why am I here? What's the meaning of life? Well, I'll endeavour to explain some of these points over the next few pages (oh will you? Ed). Yes I will (Can't wait to hear the meaning of life, then. Ed). You see, I had the privilege of being at this year's ECTS show in London, where they had a demo of this game running on a Nintendo 64. I've been informed that the game is due out on all systems, and I've even seen some Dreamcast screenshots. But right here, right now, I'm going to be talking about my experience of a half finished Nintendo 64 version. Bear with me please.

(Okay, we're bearing...go on. Ed.). Well as a bit of a South Park fan I of course noticed the game running in the Nintendo area, and waited for a turn. The person playing eventually handed the controller over to me, after falling through the road, into blue nothingness. Of course that wasn't meant to happen. Obviously the game was at a very early stage of development. Still, I reset, and went through the different options (more on them on the other page) and choose a character to race as.

And low and behold, I was in my vehicle, on the streets of South Park. Groovy stuff. Off I trundled, in my little buggy, driving merrily along the road minding my own business, when "Oh!" suddenly my little jeep-mobile (Oh great name, mate! E.d.) flew itself into the air.... up.. up.. up.. it went...and then (down.. down.. down it came by any chance? Ed.). Yes. How did you know?

ECTS Shenanigans[continued]:

But I was no crazy kid. Nonononono (really? E.d). It was the game, it was just so much fun! "Er...what are you doing??" quizzed Jazz as I tried to drive up a steep bank...my South Park buggy (you call it something different every time don't you?) now standing up on it's hind legs like a dinosaur trying to reach high up leaves. (What kind of simile is that??? Disgraceful...and quite pathetic really! E.d). But eventually I did manage to get up on that bank. Indeed, you're able to drive on every thing in South Park Rally. I even drove up and onto a static train! It was great stuff! I was a little miffed I couldn't go through the doors of the houses, but, hey, this was a racing game...not an explorational game. Hang on...this was a racing game???



Cartman the Cop approaches a ramp for a quick thrill!

"Er...Jazz." I began "Where are the other competitors?? Where's the clock for crying out loud?? Er..I've been around the track three times and I still haven't won!! What's going on??" Indeed, things were very confusing. Furthermore, we hadn't really been able to determine which way one must go around the track, for there were various routes one could take, such as the non-linear nature of the game. To add to the confusion, littering the track were strange blue panels that glowed when you crossed over them. There were five of these and each had a massive blue number hovering over it. "Maybe," suggested Jazz "you have to drive around in a specific way so that you cross over each number panel in number order!!!"

"Wow! Great idea Jazz!" I thought, and promptly tried it out. This was not only quite challenging (the numbers were in a different position each time you restarted the track, so a little reconnaissance was in order first to familiarise yourself with the number layout). We also forgot where some of the panels were on the track. I remember careering around a certain part of the track with Jazz shouting in my ear the direction...."No! Not that way!!! Around this corner...no...that's number 4...we need 3 next...arr...swerve to the side...now!!!" and such moments were pretty tense and funny at the same time (strange combination there. E.d.) Hey, you know what I mean. Anyway, we finally found the numbers, and made the panels glow in the correct order. "Woohoo!!! I did it!! I won! I won! I won!!! Woohoo! Hang on just a moment...." I said, looking again at the screen. "Nothing has

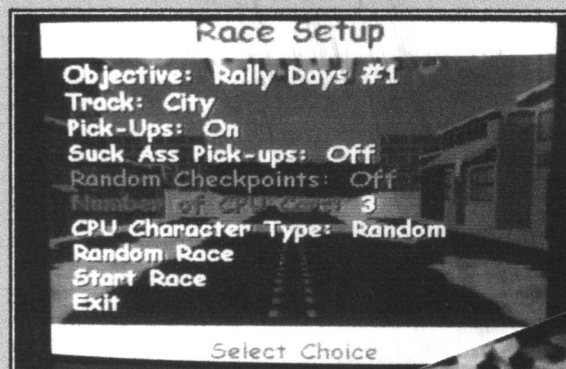
happened!" indeed, passing over the numbers in order hadn't help me win at all. "Hmm...quite strange." I concluded. "Hey, what do you expect - it's not finished yet...just leave it." And I regret, with that, we moved on to other games (Perfect Dark, Killer Loop, Unitron, Tokyo Highway Challenge and Space Debris to be precise!).

So who can I race as?

There's a phenomenal amount of characters to race as! Anyone you've ever wanted to play as from the series is in here! Check it, here's the list: **Stan, Eric, Kyle, Kenny, Wendy, Mephesto, Cartman Cop, Satan, Barbrady, Chef, Starvin' Marvin', Bebe, Pip, Shelly, Jesus, Death, Big Gay Al, Uncle Jimbo, Skuzzlebutt, Ned, Chicken Lover, Kenny's Dad, Mrs Crabtree, Tweek, Grandpa, Damien, Mr Mackey and Mr Garrison.** Phew! Such a selection of characters(!) and each one unique! Not only do they drive different vehicles (Jesus rides on a cloud, Skuzzlebutt uses a giant wicker-basket, and Mr Mackey has a Beetle) but speeds differ too. For instance, CHICKEN LOVER and Mrs Crabtree both drive gigantic buses (these take up the entire vehicle selection screen - they are sooo big!) and their size is reflected by their speed. They are indeed quite slow and cumbersome, a nippy Cartman Cop could overtake them any day!

OPTIONS:

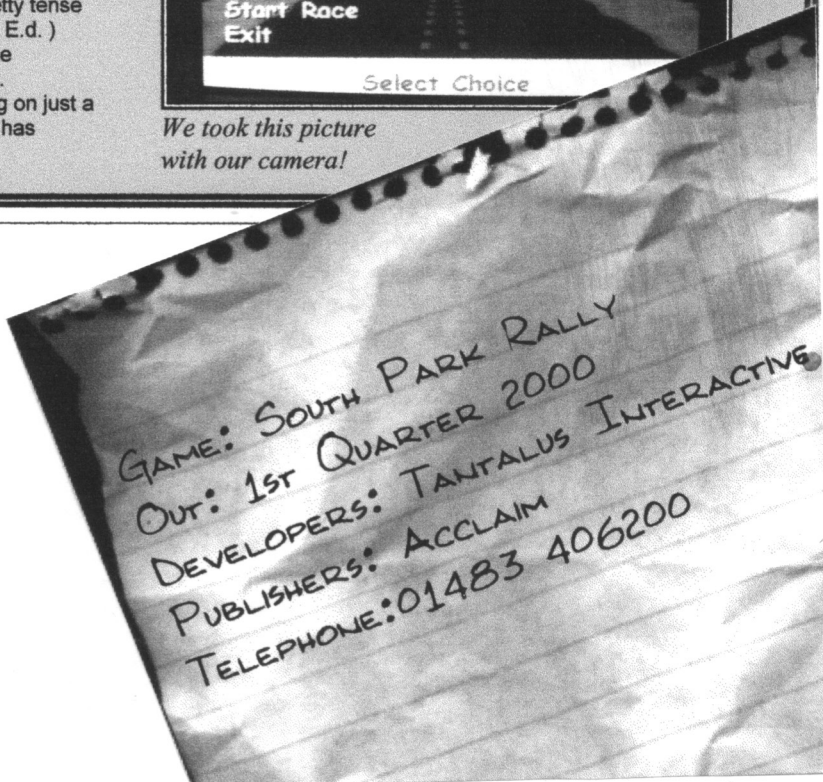
The options screen features the following options: Objective: (game mode), Track, Pick-Ups On/Off, Suck Ass Pick-ups On/Off, Random Checkpoints (those blue panels) On/Off, Number of CPU cars (set a number of computer opponents to race against), CPU Character Type (we presume this sets who you race against), Random Race. Yep...now you know we just read that off the following screenshot don't you?



We took this picture with our camera!

However, remarkably I was still in one piece, and continued on my merry way, bouncing along the road. "Kick ass!" I thought. "Let's do that again!" "Whhhhheeeeeee!" I cried out, as I soared into the air for a second time, whilst a few Nintendo officials plotted to have me cleared of the area. "We can't be held responsible for the actions of this crazy kid." I overheard one of them saying. <Continued in box out>

Summery: Overall South Park looks set to be an enjoyable, crazy game. Acclaim promise a choice of tracks and the ability to hinder your competitors through a range of attacks. So now that's cleared up, it's time for me to provide the meaning of life. Well, I've done a lot of research on this, and the meaning of life is.... oh, damn, bugger and blast! Ran out of



EVOLUTION!

Introducing to you the Dreamcast's first RPG series, proving that Dreamcast isn't just about arcade experiences. Enjoy!



Below: (Top to bottom)
Pepper, Linear Cannon, Mag
Launcher. (Terrible puns!)
Right: Linear Cannon - since
her parent's death she has
remained silent. =(



Evolution: The World of Sacred Device will be the first of the new Dreamcast RPGs to hit these shores when it is released early next year. You take the role of Mag Launcher, a 16-year old lad who's parents were keen explorers in their heyday. Inspired by their exploits, you too set out on a quest, deciding to embark upon one your parents started, but failed to finish. That quest was to discover the origins of your people and how they evolved. Accompanying you on your quest is Linear Cannon, who you have taken it upon yourself to look after, following the untimely death of her parents. Together, you make the remarkable discovery of ancient ruins...and it is in those ruins, that you uncover the marvel that is Cyberframe technology!

Evolution is set in a 1930s style environment, and it's developers, Sting/ESP have openly admitted that inspiration was drawn from the Indiana Jones films. Whilst all indications point to the primary goal of the game being to find how your people evolved, after the discovery of the CyberFrame technology, the game more or less encourages you to seek ultimate control of all of it. This is, in many ways useful, because it is this CyberFrame technology that sees you able to equip yourself with all manner of cybernetic add-ons and power enhancers for use in the battle mode. CyberFrame technology is powerful stuff, and it shouldn't fall into the wrong hands. So seek to master it and the rewards cannot be denied.



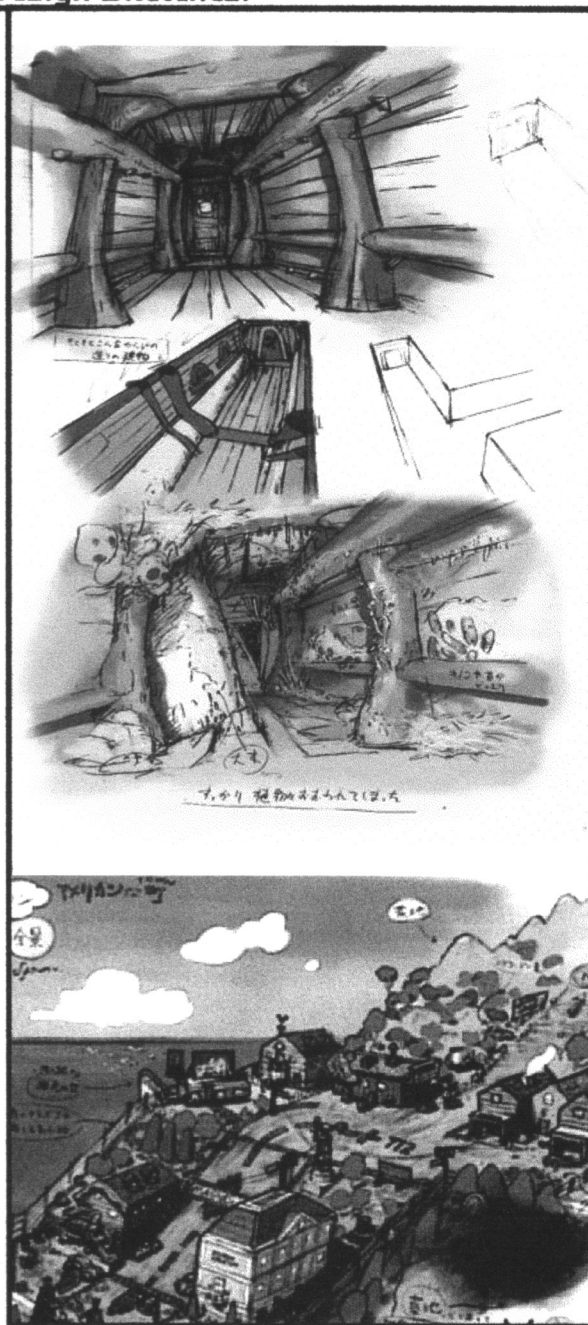
Like most RPGs nowadays, your character has a range of team mates that can be extremely helpful come a battle section. Characters that you'll meet along the way include a 16 year old rival girl, nick-named Pepper, the short-but-powerful Chain Gun, and your parents' old assistant, and competent adventurer, Gre Nade. Each have different specialities - for instance, Linear is especially good with magic.

Battles:

Battles in Evolution take place in the scene you are currently in, so there's no separate "battle world" (so to speak) that you're whisked off to. This makes the battles feel much less out of place. It's also possible to equip the characters with cybernetic weapons and armour, that "evolve" throughout the game.



Design Sketches:



The Comic??:



Yes, there is even an Evolution Comic Strip. This has been doing the rounds on the Internet, but nobody seems to know where it came from. Is there an evolution comic out there, or did a fan just get bored one Sunday afternoon? (It reads right to left). Heh. We'll probably find out it was scanned from the instruction booklet or something. Heh.

The Sequel:



While researching Evolution on the Internet, I came across the developer's web site, only to find it plugging Evolution 2! Yes, it would seem this isn't just a one off RPG, but a series! The main character is even the same, so chances are that the game's storyline could follow on from where Evolution 1 finished!

Both the characters and the landscapes are polygon-generated, so everything is in complete 3D, allowing for some impressive camera moves during play, as well as in the many cut scenes!

RPGs have had a tendency, quite often, to be very linear. Even some of the greatest games such as Panzer Dragoon Saga, have been accused of this. Although Evolution doesn't change things dramatically (you're still, for the most part, going through a series of events the developers have planned for you) you will find that the story can be influenced by actions you make at key points in the game. This should hopefully give some scope for re-play, as will a random dungeon generator. Yes, you heard me right. Dungeons will be randomised. What this ultimately means is that they will be a little different every time you visit, with new rooms cropping up from goodness knows where, and that item you're hunting for in a different place every time. Good grief.

It's obvious what Sting/ESP are trying to do here. They're trying to build up a name for themselves and their series. But with so much effort having gone into the development (check out the detailed sketches!!!), the game seems sure to, quite simply, ooze quality. It's because this seems the case, that Evolution is generating so much excitement. Dreamcast owners want RPGs to complement the more "arcade" experiences currently on the market. Perhaps they've been drooling over screenshots of Climax Landers, Grandia 2, or Shenmue. But with this game being the first out of the wave of Dreamcast RPGs about to crash down on U.K. shores, and it showing no signs of disappointing those looking forwards to a game of this type, Ubi Soft might just find they're onto a winner.

Due out 5th December. Developed by Sting/ESP. Published by Ubi Soft. Telephone: 0181 9449000

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At the time of writing, it's going to be about a week before the web site is set up, so if the web site isn't there, you can simply email one of the two email addresses above, and we'll email you back a list of articles for you to choose from.

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Something to wet your appetite:

At the moment, highlights in the archive include a Parasite Eve Review, C&C:Tiberian Sun TAKE A CLOSER LOOK, Aliens VS Predator TAKE A CLOSER LOOK, Commodore 64 remix CD review, Keith Ainsworth's first experience with Mario 64, "D" review, Saturn Bomberman review, and much, much more..... (send S.A.E. for full list). Btw...chances are that FFVIII could be added soon...we're hoping to get it in the next issue of United Games too....anyone owning the game wanting to write about it, is welcome to contribute a second opinion to complement this article.

Game eXtra and UnitedGames are made on a non-profit making basis. Any addresses submitted will never be passed onto 3rd party organisations. The only passing of addresses, emails, etc, that will occur, is when someone is busy and wants to get another team member to do the job for them (the job of replying), whilst they bunk off down the chippie.

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE.....

The FUTURE of GAMING

A United World article.



As we approach the next millenium, new hardware is beginning to materialise. The Dreamcast has just touched down, and PlayStation 2 and even Nintendo's Dolphin are rumoured to be around this time next year. Each machine boasts more realistic graphics than ever before. What problems does this pose for shooting-based games? Is this an opportunity to knock out the same old dress but with better graphics or does more power provide games designers with more creative freedom? Are we on the road to innovation, or will Microsoft continue to restrict us with their terrible user interfaces? Ladies and Gentlemen, United Games investigates...the future of gaming.

VIOLENCE AND CONTROVERSY:

Remember Space Invaders anyone? That was an addictive, great, shooting game. Played KingPin...that's an addictive, great, shooting game. Blimey. Look how far we've come!

While publicly nothing could be seen to be wrong with a supped-up, ultra-realistic, totally immersive, game that sees you, as a space pilot, shooting down attacking alien ships from behind boulders, when you take the guns to earth, and on fellow humans, with a multitude of weapons, and amazing graphics, controversy is bound to follow suit. A few months back, Total Control magazine reported on how certain American mass-shootings were being blamed on violence in the media, with computer games in particular being targeted. But just how credible is the claim that violent computer games can play a major part in encouraging violence? Well, there's always the theory of imitation, and if there's a graphical representation of murder in a video game, and it's being carried out by a character that is seen to be a role model, it could be read as "Killing is good, killing is cool." But personally, I'd be pretty hard pressed to give an example of a game that could harm sensitive minds in this way. I began with the example of Space Invaders, and it's true that most shooting games are set

in fantasy or would-be scenarios. You're a Marine in Aliens V.S. Predator, trying to destroy hideous creatures hell-bent on your destruction, or you're a pilot gunning down enemy planes in an arcade flight sim. Such light scenarios as these rarely cause any controversy, as the violence that occurs takes place under socially acceptable circumstances. E.g. There's a war on - you're just doing your duty. Indeed, the violence in Tekken isn't portrayed in a way a young person could mimic in order, to, let's say, beat up his or her younger brother or sister. Rather, it's within the context of "How to win a martial arts tournament". It's not mindless, but rather requires strategies, as whilst pulling off one move, you're anticipating your opponents reaction and also contemplating a follow up move. The only influence a two player one-on-one beat-'em-up game is going to have on young kids, would be to encourage competitiveness among them, but also teach them how to loose graciously (Ben still throws the joypad around the office, every time he loses a game...tut-tut. Ed.). Usually, computer game violence is fantasy violence. The scenarios are more often than not out of context of real life and this means that it rarely has an effect on people's lives and the way they think and behave, in this respect.

You'll find that when an anti-violence, 3rd party, "never played a game in my life apart from bowls" games critic hunts for an example of violence in computer games, anything that falls into the category of shooting things will be on the list, as encouraging violent behaviour. Yes, okay, in such games you're shooting at something, but, more often than not you're not observing any violent behavior. Indeed, games like Time Crisis, and House of the Dead are more about reflexes and timing. As such, you can't discredit an entire genre with the idea that it is corrupting the minds of the general public. It's not. If computer games are being blamed for shootings at all, then, I

would automatically assume that they are being blamed along with other factors, because a computer game alone, has yet to ever drive anyone to kill. Some people might even argue that violent gaming can have positive effects. Indeed, action based computer games in the past have been known to be great stress relievers. Why take it out on a fellow human using a rolling pin, and risk arrest, when you can use your rage to thrash a computer opponent, and win that secret fighter you've been trying to play as for seven months!?! Wow! Was that something constructive out of rage? See how that works anyone??

You see, violence in computer games is harmless, it's when people draw from computer games and imitate that it can become scary. However, I personally don't believe that violence is drawn from computer games. If it is, it's probably in a fantasy way, just as kids will fight each other with sticks, making "Swooshing" noises, after a trip to the cinema to see Star Wars. And one of the main reasons why violence is rarely drawn from games, is because they have always been graphical representations of real life. If you saw someone get smashed over the head with a kitchen utensil, you would cringe, but in Tom and Jerry, it just doesn't have the same shocking effect. Animation is often less censored than conventional film due to it's surrealism. In much the same way, the BBFC never bothered censoring computer games when the games industry was in it's infancy. In May 1990, "Escape from Hell" did cause a lot of controversy, as the box was marked with a warning sticker citing the game as containing: "...nudity, violence and controversial images." But when players saw the pixellated woman sprite, they must have been sorely disappointed. Indeed, EA later admitted that the sticker was a marketing ploy. Our concerns are, that as graphics become more realistic, people won't be gunning down polygons, or ickle sprites. Rather, they will be gunning down realistic, life-like living entities, and this poses moral dilemmas. Of course, the truth of the matter is that the companies who make games are interested in profits, and as such aren't going to ever make a game so gross and unappealing that people won't want to watch, because it doesn't maximise their audience ...or does it? <CONTINUES ...>

Did you know?

In the P.C. title **KingPin**, you get to have a taste of what it's like to be a gangster. As such, it's not just mindless shooting. Characters are programmed with AI in much the same way as in **Outcast**, so they respond differently depending on how you've treated them and their colleagues. The game has plot and meaning, and it gives some idea of what it might be like to be a gang banger, without you going anywhere near a gun. Plus I've heard multi-player is a laugh, and that's what gaming is all about, right?

Having a laugh.

Sales of horror films and so forth, heck, even that fake warning sign that EA put on "Escape from Hell" back in 1990 all show that controversy sells. No doubt games of the future that are deemed as extremely violent, or containing controversial images will be age rated, so that reduces the fear of young people getting influenced by these things. But, at the end of the day, most people are stable after watching a horror film, and further more, such is the current trend of the games market, that more and more games are required to have a plot behind them, as consumers want reasons behind the action, and want to care for the characters they play. Consumers want to be able to empathise, and relate to them, and as such, the chances are that violent games of the future could well be Macbeths. Gory...but a plot...that reveals consequence of actions taken in the game. "A good book or a good film would show you the side effects...this is what happens - you've killed somebody, and these are the knock on effects of life after that person's death. You could probably do it far more dramatically, far more disturbingly, I think even, in a game, because you'd actually get to see what's going on." commented Gary Penn, creative director of DMA Designs, when asked about controversy in computer games, on the Channel Four games show, Bits.

DMA Designs are the team best known for creating the infamous Lemmings, but in more recent times have become better known for the Grand Theft Auto or GTA games (GTA1, GTA:London 1969, and GTA2). These games did cause quite a bit of controversy, as they centre around mob activities including drug dealing, running over pedestrians (er...right) and, as the title would suggest, automobile theft. It all sounds quite terrible, and indeed, the game was even mentioned in the houses of parliament, but the game takes place from a top down view. Pedestrians appear as non-descript ants, and the drug dealing is merely background info to a mission. Whilst games like Kingpin have been very visual in their violent nature, GTA always kept the distance. So did the publishers quickly address the situation and reassure everybody that the game was not as bad as it had been painted? Of course not, controversy sells, and this is driven home by the marketing campaign of Grand Theft Auto 2.

It seems in the past that all cries of how bad video games are have been completely unfounded. Night Trap was billed as porn, it wasn't...in fact it was really quite pathetic. GTA was criticised for being too violent ('eh??) when you can't call a 15mm by 30mm car zooming about your TV screen,

avoiding police cars, violent. Reckless driving, maybe...Heck, even Super Mario Bros was billed as ruining people's lives as "My child is addicted to Nintendo!" stories appeared during the 80s, in both the press, and on the TV. As such, controversy in the games industry has always been a bit of a joke. The main point now is that it's no longer going to be taken so lightly. The technological leap that games consoles are making...from Saturn to Dreamcast...from PlayStation to PlayStation 2 and from the Nintendo 64 to the Next Generation Nintendo, will see such realistic graphics that the BBFC may well find itself censoring more and more games simply on their graphical content. At the end of the day though, gaming is all about having fun, so the likelihood is that games won't go quite so far out as some films have. But you can bet your auntie's pack of biscuits that if it does, it'll be suitably rated and on the top shelf, meaning your auntie won't go hungry (because you won't have lost the bet...get it?). (<Sigh> Ed.)

THE AUDIO VISUAL EXPERIENCE:

When games first made the cross over into 3D, old hat became new hat, and the gimmick of 3D almost forced it's own methods of innovation. For example, the Mario games had always been about progressing through levels sideways, collecting power-ups and mushrooms, and disappearing down clumsily placed pipes (who the hell put that there? Arrr!! Vortex sound FX!!). Moving into 3D injected a lot more innovation into the genre. Firstly, the idea was to capture a whole 3D world where you could move in any direction. With Mario 64, as well as bringing innovation into controllers...with the first console-based 360° controller, the game also used the freedom given to encourage an explorational angle to the game. Now, when we make the next step up, as we are doing with Dreamcast, and eventually PlayStation 2 and Nintendo's Next Generation, I don't believe we'll see quite the giant step we saw when games moved into 3D for the first time. This poses a worry, that because new hardware is introduced every few years, initially games are sold on the new graphical effects the new hardware can achieve, while the old game play still lies beneath. Of course with some games that's not a bad thing, and people will tell you that not all games are like that anyway. But sometimes, even if you do take an old formula and merely improve the graphics, the results can be fantastic, because, like it or not, games are made up of more than playability. Adding supped up graphics to an old formula can give that formula the edge above the competition. Would Sonic R have been half as good if it wasn't for the amazing bright colours and the great singing of ex-technician two member, T.J. Davis?? Just doing a lap on that game was an A/V experience (an audio/visual experience). Racing past all those colours with happy, motivating music blaring in the background. When Wipeout 2097 was launched, with it's stylistic graphics, and fire-starter inclusive sound-track, just looking at the game was fun in itself! Of course, when you picked up the pad, there was more to it, with weapons to pick up, and

a race to win, but no-one can deny just how ultimately cool it felt to race fluidly around smooth-scrolling futuristic tracks in a hover car, while really, the basic premise of the game was still that of "come first place and win". Games are judged on gameplay, or playability - what it feels like to actually play that game. We ask our reviewers "Why do you like this game? What makes it so special?" and so games are often judged on the feeling you get while playing. Sounds and graphics contribute heavily to that recipe.... Would some of the tense moments in Resident Evil 2 have had such an impact on you if it had been bleepy Spectrum music, and a pixelated licker than looked like a stick dog? We thought not. And although I love my Spectrum games (See Retro Zone), you must admit that the advancement of visual and musical capabilities enables the whole gaming experience to become all the more immersive, contributing heavily to the whole experience of actually playing the game.

So even if the old experiences are dressed up with more intricate, or detailed graphics, and feature more immersive sound tracks, it can only improve them, as elements of atmosphere can be introduced, or else an a/v experience can provide an adrenaline rush in a way you never thought possible through video games.

THE ADDICTION FACTOR:

Of course one fear is that games will get too immersive. There's always been an addictive quality in games, and magazines rate highly on that...is it going to be worth the money? Well, if you're going to be up day and night playing it, then you're definitely getting value for money. However, let's be realistic for the moment. Most people only play games a few hours at a time...or maybe loads on some days, and hardly at all on others. No, computer games have their place in a person's life, but they don't rule it. But what of the new "box under the TV that does it all"? Dreamcast takes us one step closer to this dream, so now people can watch TV on their TV, play computer games, go on the internet, or send email. Dreamcast even promises on-line gaming. And whilst it'll probably be a while before I'm producing this fanzine on a gaming console, it's evident that people worry that the next generation of kids are going to be zombified by one machine that does it all. It's bad enough kids come straight back from school and collapse in front of the TV, but now could they be glued even longer, as they not only play games but also succumb to the addictions of the internet? The internet, while a vast resource of useful information, is also a great time waster. You, as an individual, will not need the vast amounts of information you will stumble across, and all the time there's a nagging feeling in your soul, telling you "I'll just find something fun and satisfying on the internet, and THEN I'll get on with editing the magazine," but you don't. You browse more and more. When you do finally decide to disconnect, and look at the time, you realise how much time you've wasted by searching for something cool to do on-line and only finding out about the structure of MODs on the Amiga. Interesting, but useless for me, I'm

afraid, - and oops! There goes an entire hour! Well, you can always be a pessimist and predict that computers have taken over the work place (which they have actually done. Ed.), taken pride of place in schools (Yep, that's happening too. Ed.), and are now infiltrating homes (that's happened too, mate. Ed.) and because of this combination of P.C.s, TV, and Consoles, we'll all be unable to escape from the screens, become social only through email, and all die of cancer because of the radiation VDUs emit. However, if you are an optimist, you'll realise that the phone bill is the unlikely saviour in this instance. Whilst it will have little effect on schools, colleges or in the work place, at home, time wasting on the internet will not be tolerated unless you're a guess at a friend's house, running up their bill as revenge for that long-distance call they made around your house, last year, when they merely told you they were phoning for a lift! But is this future a certainty? Well, in America local calls (which is the price internet billings are charged at) are free, and indeed, the U.K. being a copy-cat nation (Why people, why? Ed.) will inevitably go that way too. Already some internet service providers are offering free weekend calls, and others are selling the internet like they would mobile phone packages, with special free phone times allowed. Still, although one could say that this means people will spend more and more time glued to P.C.s, one could easily accept one less bill coming through the letter box each quarter. As for other places that you come across P.C.s? Well, it seems to me that the P.C. selling business is where all the money and hype is, and stuff-shirted execs are trying to sell computers to everyone for use in every situation. However, I predict a time will come when consumers will be able to tell in which scenarios buying a computer will prove extremely useful and helpful, and in which scenarios, given pricing, and many other factors, a manual system would be far better suited to the job in question.

A MATTER OF... **SEX** Sex...

Sex and video games, 'eh? Well like any media, hidden sex persuaders sell. Whether it's a beautiful anime woman, or Lara's "assets" that does it for you, the hidden sex-persuaders are there. In full view. Of course, as Japan has been responsible for the majority of game development over the past few years, a lot of anime, and risqué images have come over to the west through the media of video games. But one must admit, we've been pretty much protected from any porn-esque material adorning our games. Duke Nukem 3D, did feature naked women and dodgy cinema reels, but the BBFC rightly gave it an 18 certificate, treating it, as they would a movie with similar content. But just what is the future of sex, or more to the point, sexiness in computer games? Well, in the post Lara-croft era, it seems a lot of games are giving female characters the lead role. However, this isn't necessarily born out of the idea that the computer games industry is dominated by a male audience, to which a sexy female character will appeal. Although marketing people will definitely try and sell a game with a female lead character, based on

that character, and perhaps market her as "Sexy" (as was done with Lara Croft of Tomb Raider fame) sometimes you'll find that the developers behind the game are merely trying to get things even, and make way for more women in computer games. So, it's only inevitable that we'll see more and more games that let you play a female character, or, as is the current trend, let you choose from two or more characters, with differing gender (E.G. House of the Dead: Zombie Revenge, Jet Force Gemini). As for future games that, with Emotion Engines and so forth powering the super-realistic graphics, are capable of generating realistic-looking female bodies, if it's a bit too kinky for the younger audiences, you can bet the BBFC will step in and give it an appropriate legal age-rating.

However, as with violence in the media there are concerns that too much sex-oriented games could lead to a generally perverted society. I previously mentioned that a selection of risqué images in the form of anime have made it to the west in various computer games. However, what we don't see over here are the various Japanese boyfriend and girlfriend "Dating" games. Far from being a sex-ridden scandalous form of entertainment, these titles actually hone your social skills. They're mostly text based, seeing you chat up a number of girls, and if you're lucky, and have made the right moves, you get to go on a date with them. Some titles even let you choose which date this is, with choices ranging from the local cafe to the cinema. All this is perfectly harmless, and may even help some individuals be more out-going, as I would presume one could pick up cliché chat up lines, and re-iterate them in real life to dire effect (MacDonald's advert: Get your coat luv' - you've pulled!). However, there are also a few titles which go that little bit further.



Shots from the PlayStation dating game GETTER LOVE: PANDA LOVE UNIT

Still composed of anime stills and text boxes, Steam Hearts on the Sega Saturn goes that extra step further. The girls actually get their clothes off. I wonder what all the American mid-wives with their missionary tea parties would think of that? And it's this attitude that means these types of games are unlikely to be released in the west (on consoles at least). Still, there's a chance the less risqué dating games, might make it over here. Afterall, there was a time when people thought the Japanese Fishing and Horse racing games would never make it over here and now we've got horse racing arcade games, and Sega Bass Fishing. The Japanese know gaming you see, it just takes time for some of their game ideas to take off in the west. But what if some of the more risqué titles were released over here? Well, this brings me back to my main point: would they damage British Society as we know it? Personally I doubt it. I can't see an influx of these titles coming in in the future, and even if they did, it is perhaps the Japan's pervy nature that sees it with the lowest sex-crime rate in the world. (**News Update:** The first

Dead or Alive 2 is a great fighting game, but it chooses to sell itself on its female's cleavage rather than its combo system.



U.K. dating game will be launched soon for P.C. CD-ROM. We don't have all the details, but it's aimed at 9 year old girls, who are able to try chatting up some Ken-esque figure. Now you can't say that's corrupting the youth of today.)

Another concern however, is pornography. There's little point in talking about how it effects our society, as it's been around in a variety of forms for a long time now. However, the most successful form in recent times has been the internet. Sad but unfortunately true, that the most popular web sites are pornographic ones, and the internet is still sold on the supposed merit of free porn. Dreamcast and Sky Digital's internet services will allow these things into the front room...through the main telly, and this of course is a concern for parents. From my experience with P.C.s, I know it's possible to block obscene web sites, via Microsoft's Internet Explorer web browser. I presume similar options are available with Netscape, and I hope both Dreamcast and Sky Digital web browsing software allows the user to decide what level of explicit content is allowed to be viewed. Another worry is that DVD will become a video format for pornographic material, just as in the early days of CD, when porno companies attempted to distribute porn on the Video CD format. However, while CD had it's limitations, with each CD only able to contain 70 minutes of Video Footage, it can't be denied that DVD is very good at storing video data. However, before you all get up in arms about how little Johnny might end up playing naughty-naughty DVD movies on his PlayStation 2, bare in mind that DVD is a format seeking to rival not only CD, but also conventional VHS. It's basically still a porn video, but on a disc. As such, age ratings will exist. You see, there will always be varying degrees of sexual content in all forms of media. This is why we have bodies such as the BBFC to classify, and censor titles. At the end of the day, if the worst comes to the worst, I can only see games becoming much more like films in this respect. There will always be the niche in the market of sad people who don't get out much, getting their mitts on dodgy material, whereas the mainstream sector of the industry will probably feature decent, strong female characters, with the possibility of a romance sub-plot somewhere in the game. We're already seeing some of this happen. FFVIII's main, male character, was designed to appeal to the female market. Do you see? In much the same way as some cinema productions sell themselves on having an attractive cast, so too, does the games industry seek to utilise it's ability at creating realistic graphics to create more life-like characters that we can not only empathise with, but as Lara Croft has proved, even end up fancying, in much the same way as people have crushes on movie stars. Scary stuff, 'eh?



INNOVATION

Well it's all well and good talking about better graphics and sound, A/V experiences and so forth. But superficial aspects to one side, is this new technology really taking us forwards? In the rush to build new machines, and pump out the same old game formulas with just better graphics and sound, and perhaps a few more special features over last year's release (Formula 1 97, 98, 99, etc, etc...zzz...zzz..) have we perhaps forgotten the likes of innovation? There's no disputing that PlayStation 2, Dreamcast, and Nintendo's Next Generation can deliver the next level of processor power....but can they really deliver the next level of gaming??

When Sega announced the Dreamcast, there were a lot of Sega critics around, and criticisms from them were often counter attacked by official reports of developers working on new titles, praising the hardware. From comments made by Dreamcast developers, and also people who have seen the PlayStation 2, it sounds as if the programmers are beside themselves with joy. There was very much a feel, with the 32-bit machines, and indeed the cartridge medium of the N64, that the programmer was in many ways restricted. I'm sure Yuji Naka didn't want Burning Rangers on the Sega Saturn to have such annoying clipping, and Turok wasn't actually supposed to be shrouded in fog ALL THE TIME, but it hid the rather close draw-in point (Rather than buildings and dinosaurs being drawn right in front of you...or popping out from no where, the fog effect saw them come out of the fog). Whilst better and better graphic libraries and game engines have seen recent PlayStation games look extremely good, it was a lot of hard work getting the games to run like that, and this is why when the PlayStation was first launched, you didn't have games to the same graphical standard as Gran Turismo....What the new wave of consoles do is to give programmers who are used to developing games under tight memory restrictions, more memory than they know what to do with. It's this prospect that is quite simply mind-boggling to them. As soon as the developers get their mitts on the new development kits, they're there, trembling, thinking: "I have no boundaries. I can create games I never previously thought possible."

And whilst most developers play it safe, sticking to an old tried and tested formula, merely with better graphics and sound, some really do see new hardware as an excuse to let their imaginations run wild!

Shigeru Miyamoto's imagination

seemed to know no limits in Super Mario 64, a game that still remains unsurpassed on N64 to this day. It would seem, that when a designer's imagination is allowed to run free, the end product is usually of an extremely high quality. So just what innovations can we see in the future of video gaming?

Well, the introduction of new consoles

can bring new ideas, but new consoles aren't the only form of new hardware that breed innovation. In Japan, Nintendo have brought out a microphone accessory for the Nintendo 64, that allows you to actually talk to the character in the game. The game in question is a spin off of Pokémon, and sees you rearing Pickachu (that's the yellow one with the spiky tail, folks!) in a tamagotchi-style way. Depending on what you say, Pickachu reacts differently. You can get his little current eyes swelling up with tears, or you can make him happy and playful. It really is quite fascinating and a great showcase for the advancement of AI (Artificial Intelligence). To the best of our knowledge there are currently no plans to bring the N64 title to the West, but, if that changes in anyway, we'll be sure to report the change to you.

Most of you by now should also be familiar with the Gameboy Pocket Camera. This accessory was a popular novelty, but now, that novelty is being stretched further, once again into the world of the N64. Games such as Rare's Perfect Dark allow photos taken with the Gameboy Camera to be loaded into the N64 memory, and texture mapped onto a players face, for use in death-match mode!

Nintendo aren't the only ones with innovative add-ons that change the way we play games. Sega have recently launched the VM, or "Visual Memory" for Dreamcast, and PlayStation already has an equivalent device available in Japan, called PocketStation. Both devices are primarily memory cards, but feature a small LCD screen that mini sub-games can be downloaded to. The VM unit was even sold as an LCD game in it's own right, before the Japanese launch of Dreamcast - see the Godzilla VM picture below. You basically raised baby Godzillas, tamagotchi-style, but the VM unit was also compatible with the Dreamcast, and when it launched with the game Godzilla Generations, Godzilla VM owners, found they could load their created monsters up into the Dreamcast's memory for use in the game. However, one could argue this isn't massively innovative, however, it's worth noting that the Sega VM takes on an additional role thanks to a large massive hole in the control pads. Yes, innovation from nothingness. This gaping hole is as massive as....well, the VMS LCD screen, which is convenient because it means when the memory card is plugged into the controller, you can see the



screen....through the hole. See how that works? Hmm..well maybe you won't initially, but it means future multi-player espionage-style games can let secret messages be displayed just to you on the VM's LCD screen, without your mates seeing it on the main screen. It definitely gives a lot of scope for creativity and new gaming ideas.....it's like a way of holding cards close to your chest, without your opponent seeing....pretty clever 'eh? Gone will be the days of joystick waggling and cursing, instead, you'll be telling your mate Tea is ready, so he/she will put down the controller to investigate the kitchen, and you'll take the opportunity to check out all their secret messages! Or something like that. (okay then Andrew...whatever. Ed).

All these hardware accessories and innovations are great in their own respect....but ultimately, a lot of them just amount to novelties or little bells and whistles on games. When are we going to experience a totally new gaming experience? Some of the first announced PlayStation 2 titles, also scheduled for release on P.C., are from a company called AndNow and their games are a refreshing alternative to the games we currently have available to us today. The first is a game that many will doubtlessly site as an Ecco the Dolphin, or even Fluid, wannabe, seeing as you take the role of a Dolphin. In Virtual Ocean however, a game that has been described as "a role-playing game with an action interface" a lot of emphasis is placed on underwater communication, using a variety of different sounds. For instance, when playing as the Whale, you may have to use sounds such as the Whale Song in order to progress through the game. Their second game, Nooks and Crannies enables you to raise two different races, the Nooks and Crannies and then pit them against each other in battle, in a kind of Dragon-Force-come-Tamagotchi-hybrid of a game. Well, at least original ideas are still out there. But it could be of some concern that they are increasingly in the minority. This is sometimes because companies are scared to take the risk of launching a new game idea, in case it flops. It's far safer to produce yet another racing game, than to experiment with new ideas that risk not being accepted by the public. NiGHTS on the Saturn and even Parappa the Rapper on PlayStation were rated highly by the gaming press, and sold moderately well, but not nearly enough as to do themselves justice. You see, us members of the public, can take a little while to come around to the ideas of a new game. Just as Trip Hop is currently only listened to by a niche in the market, so too these new games got a small but devoted audience. But as we see games such as Um Jammer Lammy, BeatMania and Dancing Stage emerge, it seems the music-orientated game genre, is now finally starting to take off. 1...2...3...I gotta believe! Budur, Budur, Budur-dur....

So new hardware can give scope for new ideas. But that's a conditional "can". If the developers run dry of new ideas then alas, it may not be so....but there will always be someone somewhere with a fresh new game idea, and whilst it may initially prove slow to take off, before you can say Space Invaders, they'll be Space Intruders, Invaders 1000, Ace Invaders, Space Vaders, and Galaxians all over the place (i.e. a lot of different people jumping on the bandwagon).

The Future CHAPTER 1:

Dreamcast - the here and now!



From the
Godzilla VM:



My little friend:

The Visual Memory system is Sega's innovative memory card that features a small screen, and buttons for play on the go, ala game-boy. Don't expect anything massively sophisticated though. The display is more akin to that of a tamagotchi screen than a Gameboy screen. But there's certainly no denying how cool and compact this little thing is...it really is very small and cute. It stores the time and date, and also your saved game files. But it's also capable of having little games downloaded into it's memory from the main Dreamcast console. For instance, Sonic Adventure allows you to download the sub game "Chao Adventure" based on the Chao babies that feature in the game. The only problem I see with this accessory, is that in order to plug it into the Dreamcast controller, you have to first remove a plastic lid. But you can't treat the VM like a pen, and put the lid on the other end...in fact there is no where to put the lid, and I just know that some poor old fool is going to loose the flippin' thing.

Dreamcast Specs:

128-bit RISC CPU; 16MEGS RAM
CPU SH4: RISC CPU with 128-bit graphics engine (200MHz, 360 MIPS, 1.4GLOPS)
GRAPHICS ENGINE: Power VR Second Generation (rated at 3 million polygons per second)
SOUND ENGINE: Super-intelligent sound processor with 32-bit RISC CPU (64 channel ADPCM)
MAIN MEMORY: 16 megabytes (64Megabit SD-RAM x 2)
MODEM: V34 (33.6Kbps) - built in as standard!
OS: Customised Microsoft Windows CE operating system
MEDIA: CD-ROM
CD DRIVE: Maximum Speed 12x
COLOUR: 16.77 million colours
CG: Bump mapping, fog, alpha-blending, mip-mapping, tri-linear filtering, anti-aliasing, environment mapping, specular effects
DATA SAVE: VM system
OTHERS: Clock etc
SIZE: 190mm (width) x 195mm (height) x 78mm (depth)
WEIGHT: 2.0KG

Whilst PlayStation 2 and Nintendo's Next Generation are a year off from our shores, Dreamcast has already touched down. The first of the new super consoles was launched in the U.K. on the 14th of October, with the Dream Arena internet connection operative three days after. Now surfing the net from your TV is a reality. Dreamcast is the future of gaming, right here, right now.

Let's do some sums!

The Internet:

With every new Dreamcast, there comes a GD-ROM disc dubbed "DreamKey". Ladies and gentlemen, this is your key to the internet! The settings are extremely simple, so there's no fear of shifting through complicated jargon to address any errors. On your first go you choose to register as a Dream Arena member (Dream Arena is Sega's term for the Dreamcast Internet Service). Registration is done through an 0800 number, so it's all free, and it's a good job too, because unless you've forked out £19.99 for a Dreamcast keyboard (P.C. keyboards will not work with it...gr...) you'll have to make do with the software keyboard. This involves selecting letters with a cursor, and it's extremely slow and tedious. After registration, however, if you're just going to be browsing the internet, the Dreamcast controller is all you'll need. But we can't stress enough that if you want to go on chat rooms, or write email, a keyboard is going to save you a lot of hassle.

The Deal: Free Internet connection provided by Sega and BT. You're only charged for the phone bill, charged at the local rate.

In the box: Phone wire, Phone line connector (allows wire to be plugged into regular phone socket), Dream Key internet Software.

Extra: Dreamcast Keyboard (£19.99), Visual Memory enables settings to be saved (£19.99)

The Games:

Sega know gaming. This is why many people feel confident about buying into the world of Dreamcast. Sega were responsible for such classics of the 16-bit era as Ecco the Dolphin (by Appaloosa, published by Sega) and Sonic the Hedgehog, both of which are appearing on Dreamcast! Furthermore, whilst the Saturn lost the 32-bit war to the PlayStation, it still had some fine games, and sequels are planned for the Dreamcast. Grandia 2, the sequel to a mad RPG is already in the works, and it looks set to give Final Fantasy a run for it's money! Still, if you never knew the Megadrive or Saturn, I'm sure you'll still be able to appreciate that Sega make great games. A trip down a local arcade reveals everyone is playing House of the Dead 2. Well it's out, now, on Dreamcast! Still, we regret that whilst there are loads of games to look forwards to such as Virtual On 2, WorldWide Soccer 2000, Metropolis Street Racer, Sonic Adventure 2, NiGHTS 2, Shenmue ... (the list goes on and on...) there will inevitably still be cack games. It's sad but true. Every system will have it's worst. As yet, we've been more-or-less lucky...some of the launch games do verge on the mediocre...but we've nothing abysmal ...yet(!) Of course, the prospect you're all salivating about is online-gaming! And Sega have been driving the message home with their "Dreamcast...up to 6 billion players" adverts. However, it's worth noting that not one of the games currently released allow for online gaming at this point in time. We'll have to wait and see on this factor, just how effectively DC delivers.

How does it all Add Up?

Well it's very clear that Dreamcast is the most powerful console out there at the moment with an awesome line up of games that should see most people sufficiently entertained. The net option is cool, but ultimately a chore for those without keyboards. It is though, £199, and whilst some stores are doing great deals on packages (i.e. buy a console and game and save a tenner) the PlayStation is £79.99 and the N64 has just dropped in price to £64.99!! Both Sony and Nintendo are trying their hardest to make the Dreamcast look over priced. Personally, if you can afford it, I can see little wrong with buying a Dreamcast...unless next year when PS2 and NGN hit, you sorely regret it. The main thing to remember is that Computer Gaming is all about playing a game you want to play. If Dreamcast has a sufficient number of games you wish to play, then I don't see why, if you can afford the cash, you shouldn't splash out. Bare in mind it will be a whole year before PS2 and NGN hit these shores, by which time you might have saved up for them too.



- Sonic Adventure

■ £39.99 ■ Out now for Dreamcast

This was the first game I bought for my Dreamcast. It was time to see whether a Dreamcast with Sonic Adventure would deliver the same kick I had felt back in 1997 when the Nintendo 64 launched with Mario 64. I did, however know that this time around it would all be slightly different. The Sega magazines of old had all passed away, so there wasn't quite the amount of press hype I had anticipated. Most magazines I had read had failed to convey to me just exactly WHAT on earth Sonic Adventure was. I had seen screen shots of pinball sections, I had seen footage of what appeared to be racing-style tracks, but I had been told this time around it was an RPG... quite frankly, I was left with the notion that the only way to find out was to buy a copy of the game, and experience this phenomena for myself.

First up, the RPG element became obvious. This was to be no FFVII, Panzer Dragoon Saga or Xenogears. Nope. This was a platform game with meaning and plot. The very first scene sees you battling a water entity known as Chaos. This was so easy, that I managed to beat the character before I really knew what I was doing. Because, yes, this is the old skool style of platformer, where jumping into an enemy sees them pack their bags for oblivion...and another two jumps on the head send them there. After this encounter, a little bit of plot revealed that Robotnik was somehow mixed up in this all, before switching scene to show Tails and his new plane go out of control! Sonic's next mission? To rescue Tails from the crash site. And this is how the game works while in adventure mode, everything is story driven.

When I played an E3 version of Sonic Adventure, it was merely the courses that were on trial. I found the first, Emerald Beach to be initially soo totally pointless. It was like I merely ran from A to B, and that was that. As someone who absolutely loved the explorational element of Mario 64, I was somewhat miffed to find such a lush 3D landscape with no rewards for exploration. I hoped the finished game would be a heck of a lot better, or at least provide potential for getting the most out of that level. Well I'm glad to say, that Emerald Coast is now my favourite course in the game. So how did the turn around occur? Well I'll be completely honest with you. Playing the game with some background plot made me realise I was out to rescue Tails, so I of course didn't need to explore. As the story progressed there were a few levels I found merely mediocre, or else good, but not appealing to me until I had gotten into them, but the plot (and this is going to sound really sad now) was the main reason I kept coming back. It may be primitive, and slightly cheesy, not a patch on the story telling involved in Square's FF games of course...it doesn't try to be...but I still felt that I was the character I was playing, and I had a duty to do. Be it destroying Eggman, reuniting a bird with it's parents or catching

a frog with a fishing rod...I just had to do it, to see what would happen next. And so I did. And if a level wasn't initially appealing, (but, just to keep things fair, most were) I ploughed through it anyway. With most games, there are a few levels you love, and really enjoy, and others that merely fall into the realm of mediocrity. Whilst with most games, it's on these levels that the game can wane, and you might lose interest altogether, in Sonic Adventure, you put up with it, but - and this is an important point, in doing so, in due course you come to appreciate that level for what it is. As such, it is the desire to complete the game and unravel the storyline with each character that proves to be the greatest incentive for continual play. As you play through the various action stages, completing the tasks required by the plot, you end up having fond memories of some, whilst others tend to be neglected. It's then, when you've exhausted your favourite levels that you dare to venture into those action stages you whizzed through earlier, not caring for much...and it's then that even those levels open up for you.

One thing that gets to me about Sonic Adventure, however, is the fact, that after a few weeks I had completed it. Now I think it was an absolutely amazing game. Sonic's final Boss stage, in particular, I found extremely addictive. The extra character stage that opens up when you complete the game with all the standard characters is a pure adrenalin rush, that starts off with some nice story-telling sequences, that in themselves seem a reward for completion, and I'll even go on record to say that a large percentage of the levels are fun-focussed, and a really decent way to waste some hours. However, as I've stated before, the aspect that made me want to come back to the game was the plot...and now I've completed it, and unravelled all the plots, I'm quite dubious as to whether I'll come back to it. What other reasons could I find??

Well, you see, Sonic Adventure is split up into Adventure Fields, and Action Stages. Adventure Fields are the world of Sonic and chums, and they involve running around talking to people, or running off to the entrance of the next Action Stage. However, in both Adventure fields and Action stages there a number of Sonic Emblems to be collected. So herein lies the challenge. From Sonic Adventure's menu, it's possible to choose to view your emblem results. You can make a note of where there are still some to be found, and then go and get them, by either exploring the adventure fields in Adventure mode, or selecting a character and action stage in the Trial Mode. Searching in the Adventure mode is just that...searching. Now is the chance for your explorational self to take over. The Action Stages, however, set various challenges. You see, each Action Stage has three emblems to collect. The first objective is usually one that's relative to the plot. Like in Emerald Coast, you have to rescue Tails. However, visit it a second time, and a challenge is set to finish the course with 50 coins. This sounds



Those capsules can be burst for hidden goodies! Rings, Speed ups or even extra lives!



Tails goes Snowboarding in style! Watch out for the avalanche!



Sonic goes for a walk, showing off the great graphics of the Dreamcast!




Knuckles returns from the newsagents stand at Station Square, in disbelief of the headlines. Flying Echidnas indeed!

easy, but it's not. 51 or over just will not count, and so you're trying to get that exact number - pretty hard if you're hitting ramps that send you hurtling through 20 coins, when you've already got 49! With some courses it can be about luck, others you can calculate where to get hit by an enemy (and thus loose your coins) and where to pick the exact number from. Other challenges involve the time. Some of the time limits seem impossible at first. The 2 minute time limit on Emerald Coast, forced me to explore for short cuts. Knuckle's stages involve him locating fragments of the master emerald. Upon revisiting his levels, challenges such as finding them without using the hint balls, and further challenges to find them in a certain time limit (whilst their location is different everytime) are sure to last! Suddenly, a game that to me was about adrenalin rush, a bit of fun, cool boss stages, and plot progression, suddenly becomes challenge based.

It's like the game is saying: "Okay, you've had some fun with this game. It's been a laugh...but how good are you really??" and the tasks push you...of course, these challenging tasks aren't necessary to complete the game, but you might want to complete them to see if anything special happens once you've collected all the emblems on offer. There are even emblems available for Chao Baby races, so you had better start using your VMS tamagotchi-style and visiting the Chaos gardens, where these little creatures live, in the game. Personally, I know I'm going to be playing these levels and taking up some of the challenges in order to see what happens once all the emblems have been gathered, but also for the fun-factor that is evident on some of the levels. But, I think I can honestly say, that this is mainly because Sonic Adventure is the only Dreamcast game I currently have. You must understand that there is a brand new console under the TV, glistening in the light...calling out to me, and I can't help feel that if I had another Dreamcast game to give Sonic Adventure some competition, I probably wouldn't be bothered to collect all the emblems just based on curiosity. The chances are I might re-play some of my favourite levels again, and as a by-product obtain more emblems, I might even decide

to replay the adventure mode with the various characters on offer, but, ultimately, I don't think I would be bothered to slog it out trying to cut 20 seconds off my Emerald Coast time, if I could be having a laugh with my mate on Ready to Rumble.

So to conclude, Sonic Adventure is absolutely fantastic. It's like living a Sonic cartoon. During the course of the story, you'll be able to have some larks in a variety of Action Stages that wouldn't be possible on any other console, not with the same richness of experience. Some sections are extremely memorable, and others carry a certain fun-factor about them, however, after completion, you may well want to revisit those sections you found the most exhilarating, or fun, but the emblem collecting will only appeal to the dedicated. It's scary how we take games of this standard for granted so quickly...and it's because I'm not jumping up and down screaming my head off, that I'm not awarding it a Brilliant Blue. It is extremely close to that award, but just because I'm giving it a Mellow Yellow, it doesn't mean that it's not worth getting. You see, in our review system, our colours describe games. One description isn't necessarily better than another, and Sonic Adventure falls into the Mellow Yellow category, because, despite being an adrenalin-rush-esque audio visual experience in parts, it's appeal is quite subtle. I'm in no way running around thinking this is brilliant (blue), rather I'm immediate accepting it and just getting on with playing it, and I'm appreciating every bit of it. Buy this game and you can not go wrong with it. It's worth the money, is a unique and rewarding game, whose long term lastability depends on how inclined you may be to collect all the emblems after initial completion. Sonic is back, in style. Show your respect.

 **Summary:**
This game is absolutely stunning, and a fair representation of Yuji Naka's Genius. Roll on Sonic Adventure 2!

DREAMCAST GAMES ROUND UP:

A few pages back, I mentioned that console buying at the end of the day boils down to what console you think you can have the most fun with, and fun means GAMES! So a sure-fire solution to the dilemma of whether or not to get a Dreamcast, is to look at the games available, and see if a significant number of them appeal to you. If they do, it's fairly obvious you're going to enjoy the console. So let's take a look at the games and decide if you will, yes?

Ready to Rumble:

This game has become hugely popular on the Dreamcast. It's a great laugh with mates. But it's worth noting that it's also being released on the Nintendo 64, which means you may not need to own a Dreamcast to actually play it.

Power Stone:

Our Team Member Peter has played this game around his mate's house, and it has had an amazing effect on the P.C. junkie. He is now extremely open minded to consoles, whereas before he would have shunned the things. The game is a one-on-one Beat-'em-up by Capcom, and a huge fun factor becomes evident in two player mode. Here's Peter:

"Powerstone is a fighting game like no other. Taking control of one of a number of fighters, Single Player Mode sees you fight all the other characters..SIMPLE! Well Single player is the game's weakest point! Multiplay....now that's something else!

The fun is unbelievable since the game could be likened to a Bar room brawl with Powerstones thrown in for fun! (Power what?? Ed.). Let me explain: Collecting all 3 Powerstones enables you to become "SUPER". Using the Analogue triggers you are then able to do massive damage attacks! But that's only half the fun! Getting the stones while your opponent is doing the same is havoc! 😊!

For instance, I was playing a friend one time, and as he went for the final Powerstone, I threw a Bin at his head! It hit him and he lost a stone! (Hmm...what a unique way to loose weight! Ed.).

This game will leave you with withdrawal symptoms if you have played it in Multiplayer mode. Hours disappear as you fight your opponent laughing ALL the way! I was amazed at the game's graphics and the backdrops are great! You can even climb up walls, or run up them if you're playing as WANG-TANG. Hurling a table at your mate is VERY enjoyable as he yelps when it hits him!

So it seems it's a great game to get out when you've got friends around, and want a bit of a laugh. Pity Peter couldn't enlighten us too much on the one player aspect. Because we're not rich here, we haven't got every DC game, so here's the current titles split into categories based on ratings given in the main stream gaming press:

Top Banana:

Sonic Adventure (Adventure/Action title), House of the Dead 2 (Zombie Shooting), Trick Style(Hover-board Racing), Ready to Rumble (Arcade Boxing), Speed Devils (Driving/Racing).

Decent Banana (Great stuff!):

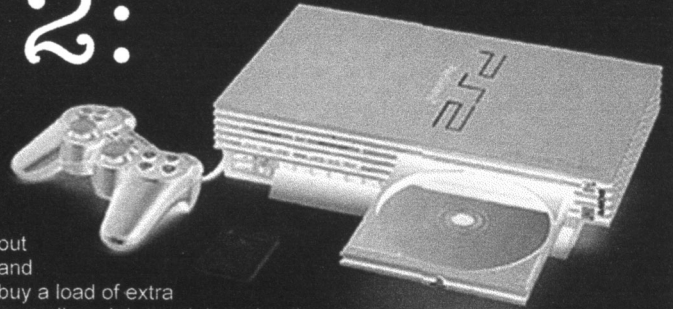
Pen-Pen (4-player wacky racing), Sega Rally 2 (Arcade Racing conversion), Virtual Fighter,(Arcade Fighting Conversion) Toy Commander (miniature toys at war), Blue Stinger (Survival Horror game), Tokyo Highway (Highway Driving), Monaco Grand Prix (Racing), Millenium Soldier Expendable (Top down viewed shoot-'em-up).

Slightly bruised in transit banana:

The lorry driver was very careful in transit. We're in shock. As yet no bananas have been badly bruised. We'll keep you posted.

The Future CHAPTER 2: PS2

The PSX2 isn't actually white - it's black - we just reversed the colours so it would look cool on a black background!



The PlayStation 2 will be launched on the 4th of March in Japan, and is due on these shores in time for Christmas 2000. The console itself looks similar to a kind of DVD machine, or the ill-fated CD-i player. This is a piece of gaming equipment that just refuses to look out of place next to a video recorder. It lays horizontally, like most consoles of today, but with the edition of a stand it can be positioned vertically. Even the little PlayStation logo on the front can be rotated to suit whether the console is lying down or standing up. Still, the plastic hub may lay down, but PlayStation 2 could never be accused of lying down on the job. (That was terrible. Ed.) (Thank you). The PlayStation 2 is said to be capable of 66 million polygons per second at the most basic. This is brought down to around 20 million once all your special effects, textures, etc. have been added. Compare it to the Dreamcast's 3 million polygons per second, and you start thinking about how much we've advanced in so little time. Another advantage of the PlayStation 2 over other future consoles, is that it's DVD based. DVD can hold up to 17Gb - much more than both CDs (650Mbs) and Dreamcast's GD discs (1024Mb). The likelihood is that you'll be able to play DVD movies on the console too, but this remains unconfirmed. If PlayStation 2 will be able to play DVD movies, and is reasonably priced when it launches, then it could even prove to be competition for the likes of DVD players in general and also NUON DVD technology.

Yet another great thing about the PlayStation 2 is that it's backward compatible, and not just with games. the old controllers will work with it too, which should allow some people to have fun with 2-4 player game modes, without having to go

out and buy a load of extra controllers. It is worth knowing though, that PlayStation 2 is bundled with DUAL SHOCK 2 controllers... in every way the same as the current DUAL SHOCK model for PlayStation, save one detail - all the buttons are analogue, so the console can always tell how hard you are pressing each button.

Sony have earned respect in the games industry for helping computer games to become mainstream media, and PlayStation 2 not only has the potential to take us to a whole new level of gaming, with incredible graphics and sound, but it's also in a decent position to be an ultra-successful "box-under-the-TV-that-does-it-all". It may well be able to play DVD films, and it will definitely have internet capabilities. However, the console does not have a built in modem. You'll have to buy one separately. This has been a conscious decision of Sony's, as they recognise that around the release date of the PlayStation2, a new standard of modem will be released. They would rather you went and bought a separate modem, adhering to that new standard, than them give you a 56k modem, only for you to find, a few months down the line, that it doesn't adhere to that new standard.

PlayStation 2 has all the right ingredients to succeed, but it still has it's work cut out for it. Nintendo will be launching their NGN machine in the U.K. around the same time AND Sega may well have an optional upgrade package ready for Dreamcast. Still, with companies like Square on their side, you know that this little gem could well be worth saving your pennies for!

the
POWER
t h a t i s
PLAYSTATION 2

CPU core 128 bit RISC (MIPS IV-subset)
Clock Frequency 300MHz
Integer Unit 64bit (2-way Superscalar)
Multimedia extended instructions 107 instructions at 128 bit width
Integer General Purpose Register 32 at 128 bit width
TLB 48 double entries
Instruction Cache 16KB (2-way)
Data Cache 8KB (2-way)
Scratch Pad RAM 16KB (Dual port)
Main Memory 32MB (Direct RDRAM 2ch@800MHz)
Memory bandwidth 3.2GB/sec
DMA 10 channels
Co-processor1 FPU (FMAC x 1, FDIV x 1)
Co-processor2 VU0 (FMAC x 4, FDIV x 1)
Micro Memory (I:4KB D:4KB)

Vector Processing Unit VU1 (FMAC x 5, FDIV x 2)
Micro Memory (I:16KB D:16KB)
Floating Point Performance 6.2GFLOPS
Geometry
+ Perspective Transformation 66Million Polygons/sec
+ Lighting 38Million Polygons/sec
+ Fog 36Million Polygons/sec
Curved Surface Generation (Bezier) 16Million Polygons/sec
Image Processing Unit MPEG2 Macroblock Layer Decoder
Image Processing Performance 150Million Pixels/sec
Gate width 0.18 micron
VDD Voltage 1.8 V
Power Consumption 15 Watts
Metal Layers 4
Total Transistors 10.5 Million
Die Size 240 mm 2
Package 540pin PBGA

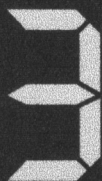
The Future

CHAPTER 3:

Next Generation Nintendo Console.

Nintendo have recently dropped the codename "Dolphin" for their new machine. It's now to be called the Next Generation Nintendo Console, or NGN. Wow. How highly original!

Yes, Nintendo have a brand new console in the works, and unbelievably it's due for a WORLDWIDE release of Christmas 2000!! Heh. Let's hope we won't have any delays like last time! Whilst some of you may feel the Nintendo 64 shouldn't be superseded by another Nintendo console so soon, you have only to look at the supposed market place of Christmas 2000 to realise it would be Nintendo 64 V.S. Dreamcast V.S. PlayStation 2. Nintendo feel the need to stand up to the two super consoles Dreamcast and PlayStation, and not to be left behind, and they've responded with something quite special.



3 of a kind.

Whilst Sony enlists the help of Toshiba, and Sega went with Hitachi and Microsoft, Nintendo has chosen IBM and Matsushita as it's partners. IBM will be involved in producing a 0.18 micron chip (like Intel's PIII, and in Sony's Emotion Engine), but with one clever twist. IBM, you see, are the only company capable of producing copper processors, and yep, you've guessed it, the NGN's main CPU will be a state of the art copper processor. You see, usually aluminium is used to link transistors in chips, as opposed to copper (which conducts better). IBM have been producing copper processors on order since 1998, and are believed to be the only company capable of using copper in the main CPU processor (we've heard it's a bit of a tricky job see?). Now, you may well be sitting here reading this thinking: "So what?? They used copper instead of aluminium?? Do I care??" Well, you see, because Copper conducts better, it enables processor speeds to be significantly improved, and furthermore, the copper technology reduces power consumption and has, in some cases proved to be more reliable than

conventional circuitry. All quite grand 'eh? IBM will be manufacturing the NGN main CPU, which has been dubbed "The Gekko Processor". It is based on IBM's PowerPC architecture, and cited as having a clock speed of 400Mhz.

Okay, so where do Matsushita come into this? These people are best known for shelving Bulldog or M2 - the sequel hardware/upgrade for the 3DO. But no, to our knowledge, they're not trying to turn the NGN into a 3DO 2, rather their deal involves the supplying of a DVD drive. Yes, Nintendo's new console will also be DVD based! You'll be able to watch movies, as well as play your Nintendo games! But the deal goes even further. Matsushita, along with companies they own, such as Panasonic, will be allowed to incorporate the NGN technology into their home DVD players. No...hang on a minute. So, next year we'll have NUON, PS2, NGN...all trying to be DVD players?? Er...I'm beginning to wonder whether NUON is up to coping with both Nintendo and Sony's ruthless strategies. Only time, and the consumer's preference will tell.

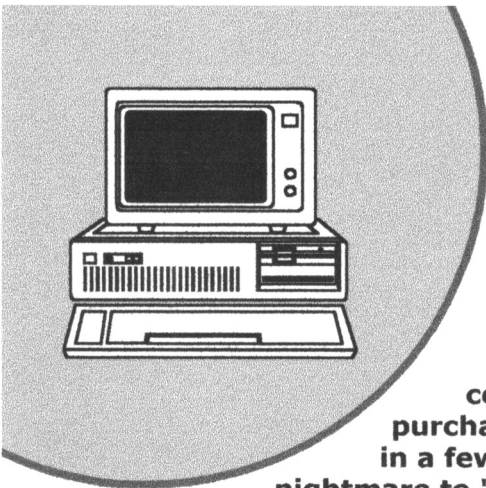
DON'T MAKE A SPEC TACLE OF YOURSELF!!

CPU: IBM Gekko Processor (an Extension of the IBM Power PC Architecture)
400 MHz Clock Speed
Semiconductor Process 0.18 micron Copper Technology
Graphics: Custom Chip Designed by ArtX (headed by Wei Yen, a pioneer of the N64 graphics chips).
200 MHz Clock Speed
Semiconductor Process 0.18 micron Embedded DRAM Technology
System Memory: High Speed DRAM Technology
Memory Bandwidth -- 3.2 GB / second
Software Medium: Matsushita Unique DVD Technology
Enhanced Counterfeit Protection

THE GAMES??

Of course what people really want to see are the games. Well, that's a bit hard at the moment. Information on games is pretty thin on the ground, and Nintendo are, at the moment, more keen to promote all the games they have coming out for the Nintendo 64, as they try and down-play people's fears of buying a machine this year which will be redundant next year (check out the lower RRP of £69.99). Development kits aren't out yet, unlike PS2, (Konami is said to be working on 50 titles for the PS2!!!), but a few companies are keen to produce the games, and to this end have read the specs and are developing games based on those specifications. The main thing though, is that this is brand new technology which will be v. similar to the performance of the PS2, and may even stand a chance of bettering it (although we reckon they'll level out to be more or less the same..), and so NGN has the power, and that means more creative freedom for the likes of Shigeru Miyamoto:

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



the FUTURE CHAPTER 4: | The ever evolving P.C. |

Whilst Consoles take us into the future one step at a time, with the introduction of new gaming platforms once every three years or so, the P.C. market just isn't the same. It is constantly evolving, and any new piece of hardware you may purchase will be bettered in a few months, or in some cases, even in a few weeks after you purchase it. So whilst this can mean it's a nightmare to "keep up" and constantly upgrade all the time, it does mean that the P.C. in general always seems to be one step ahead of the games consoles, in terms of hardware sophistication. Indeed, Intel's Pentium III chips were engineered using 0.18 micron technology which is also being used for PlayStation 2.

Intel Processors.

We may complain, but if Intel didn't continue to constantly churn out faster chips all the time, another company would. This is how they stay atop the industry. Their latest offering is a new generation of pentium chip..the Pentium III.

The chip features 70 new instructions, many of which were developed with games in mind. Intel are also marketing it as a chip for the internet, and some sites, are being optimised to take advantage of the new instructions (Seen the ad? Yep, you can rotate 3D objects online now).

Intel have already made Intel PIII chips that exceed 800Mhz(!), and rumour has it that they are aiming for 2000 Mhz in time for the millenium.

The story of evolution:

We've mentioned that the P.C. is constantly evolving, and it's possible to keep upgrading, and upgrading..add infinitum. You see, the industry works in a similar way to the fashion industry. You have to keep changing the fashion, in order to get people to buy new clothes. Well, personally, I say don't buy new threads if they're going to sit in your wardrobe untouched. For instance, DVD will probably replace CD as the main medium of the P.C. You could get a drive now, and watch a few movies, but software on DVD at the moment is few and far between. Wouldn't it be wiser to wait until DVD on P.C.s have really taken off, before investing? By which time, of course, you'll either find the prices for drives have gone down, or else find that you are able to get a faster drive for the same price. See how that works? What you have to think of, especially if your budget is low, is "What do I need right now?". We're assuming you're a gamer, and if that's so, then you may well be contemplating buying a 3D card to complement your P.C.'s raw processing power. If this is the case, we advise you read Will's article below. It really is top stuff!

THE FUTURE??:

So where is the P.C. industry going?? Companies keep churning out new technology, we keep buying it...and a lot of this is games driven. We're long past upgrading a computer in order for a word processing package to run faster. Games want hardware to run on that makes the P.C. look better than a Dreamcast, whilst hardware manufacturers want games to use their hardware. So more hardware is produced for games developers to utilise, and more games are produced to take advantage of new hardware. Both these factors drive the industry forwards, meaning I can't envisage a future where a P.C. never becomes out of date. On the software side, the court case against Microsoft might see more innovative user interfaces finding a place into today's P.C. market, which could be the start of a new chapter of user-friendliness. Apple Computers, makers of the iMac and G3/G4 models have become noticed in the market places, partly due to their products' eye-catching colour schemes. As such, perhaps we'll start to see coloured P.C.s? "Would you like an Intel PIII in blue or silver, madam?" Only time will tell!

3D Cards Too Much Choice is the Price of Capitalism

Round-up by
Will Jenkins

Which one? Which one? Nobody wants a Voodoo 1 any more. But which of the new crop of bitching 3D cards should a putative purchaser pick? There are so many chips and cards!

Each card has various pros and cons and most will perform differently on different games, but looking at lots of benchmarks it is possible to get an idea for the general trend of performance. Looking at benchmarks is boring though, boring and bad for your eyes. Roughly, low-end systems around the P2-233 mark should go for a Voodoo 3. Fortunately the Voodoo only has three permutations - 2000, 3000 and 3500 - or "worst, middle, best." Go for what you can afford. Fans of colour depth should forget the Voodoo altogether, as it cannot do 32bit colour depth.

For most other systems a Riva TNT2 based card is your buddy - get a TNT2 Ultra if your finances will stretch that far. Riva chips appear on a variety of cards, but again your choices can be simple: Go for the brand name you recognise and get a Creative Labs one (16Mb or 32Mb), go for a relatively unknown brand name and get the fastest out-of-the-box card in the Hercules Dynamite TNT2 Ultra (bearing in mind that Hercules has now stopped dealing everywhere except Japan, so tech support might be a worry), or go for speed and get a Falcon Xentor SE. This card is based on Guillemot's Xentor range but has been worked over by Falcon Northwest for even more performance, and is only available in the US or through online ordering.

And then if your system is absolutely spanking top-notch, get a G400 MAX. The G400 performs best when the CPU is fast - and I do mean FAST. On an 800MHz AMD Athlon it just

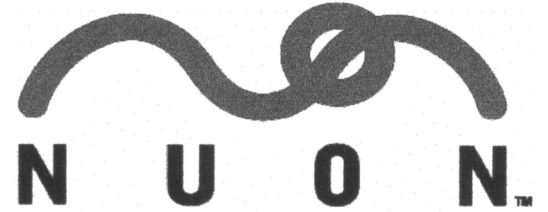
pipped the TNT2 at 1600x1200 on several benchmarks. Slower systems may find the TNT2 to be a better option - however if you buy the G400 you can wait longer before you upgrade.

But the question then remains, should you even bother with an upgrade at all? TNT and Voodoo 2 owners, I would say stick with what you have right now for a little while. The Voodoo 4 and the new Nvidia chips are reported to be coming out before Christmas or in the first quarter of 2000. These chips promise to make the same advances that the original Voodoo did. Of course, whether they live up to these claims remains to be seen but regardless they will bring new technology (like the Voodoo 4's T-Buffer, which will allow realistic motion blur) which will enhance your gaming further. If you can stand to wait and own a reasonable card, hold onto your cash for now.

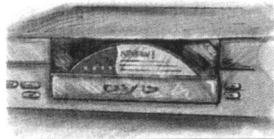
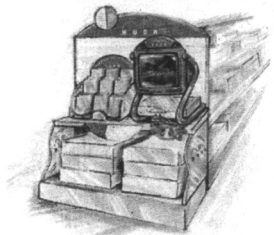
The Future

CHAPTER

5:



'Eh? NUON...what's all that about then? Well, NUON has been set up by British based company VM Labs in order to exploit the future DVD market. You see, in order for DVD players to be able to read and understand the data on a DVD disc, they need to decode it, and the decoding is done by an MPEG 2 decoder. What VM Labs have done is to engineer a piece of circuitry that not only has an MPEG 2 decoder on board, but also some dedicated games hardware. Now the makers of DVD players have an option. Should they put a standard MPEG 2 decoder in their DVD player? Or, for more or less the same cost, put NUON technology..also capable of internet surfing and games playing into the DVD player? Do you see how that works? NUON is fast becoming a "Why not?" option for many DVD manufacturers. The actual NUON technology will bring an element of interaction to the DVD medium - be this playing a game that's stored on a DVD disc, or watching an interactive movie of some description! Nuon will also enable web browsing software on DVD players to become a reality. Ultimately, this hardware is going to mean that DVD players of the future will play movies, games and music off the one machine. It sounds like the CD-i all over again doesn't it? However first up, it's worth noting that in America DVD is more or less a success already, and secondly, NUON is being supported by the gaming community, so things look promising. Both Capcom and THQ have shown an interest in NUON, whilst confirmed developers range from such board-game converting heads as Hasbro Interactive, to the llama loving Jeff Minter. Titles to look out for are Tempest 3000, Iron Soldier and Merlin Karting, the latter of which is a 3D racing game featuring characters such as King Arthur and Merlin himself. NUON doesn't sound a match for the Next Generation Nintendo or PlayStation 2, but it promises to do interesting things to the world of DVD. Toshiba plan to release it's range of NUON DVD Players sometime next year. Watch this space.



The Future

Ben's Predictions

For this article I have taken up the role of the sweet little granny looking into her tea leaves. Now as you know we have asked you to send your thoughts to us about the future of gaming (see below), and everyone knows that I always get my views across first; whether it be life or what's the best sex position! I could go on all day about my favourite sex position but this is a computer magazine, so I will have to leave that to my other magazine! Looking down my tea leaves (which is quite impossible as I am drinking coffee) I see a number of things which will change in the computer world.

➤ As you know, games these days are getting ever more violent, but if you think games these days are violent you just wait! I predict in ten or twenty years time you will be able to invite someone you hate around to your house and virtually blow their minds out with a nice little computer

generated gun which shoots a nice little laser. Bring on William Hague any day! (Oi! Some of us are conservative! Half the Team.)

➤ Forget all this religion nonsense and worshipping God stuff. In the year 2020 (yes this time I am being precise) we will be on our knees worshipping our new leader. No, I am not talking about me, that is another ten years off yet, I am talking about the God formerly known as Bill Gates. He will have a statue in the biggest city in the world, New Billgates, made of gold, which people will travel the world to see and kiss.

I am feeling tired and groggy, the visions are fading away from me, so it is time for me to go. One last thing before I go, good luck dealing with that little menace we like to call 'The Millenium Bug'. Remember it is not an insect, so don't go smashing your computer up trying to find a real insect in there.

See you soon.



Let us know your opinion on the future of gaming! What do you think about the issues raised this issue? Do you have any points of your own you would like to introduce to the topic? Perhaps you disagree with something said?

Let the United Games Mail Bag hear about it all! Send your mail to: THE JANITOR, PO BOX 61, West Swindon, SN5 9GR.

"Those people upstairs in the United Games office, won't let me do anything apart from answer the mail! But I know more about games than the crumbly lot of them! But I'm stuck down here in the boiler room, moan, grumble, ...help me prove myself. Write to me about the magazine and we can slag it off together....bwoarhahahahaha! Oow! Me ticker...I think I need a sit down."

MODEL LEAVES UNITED GAMES!!!

Alas, our United Games model is up and away and onto greater things. That's why she's not on the front cover this issue. So where has she gone? Did she just vanish? Not a bit of it my good man/lady. Rather she has gone off to live the good life over in America. So what does all this mean? Well, next issue we'll be getting a new model! Just who it is hasn't been announced yet, but I can guarantee you now, she won't be wearing a G-Police cap. Maybe a G-police 2 cap....I dunno.

REVIEWS!!!!

At United Games we like to leave all the info on a game for a section called TAKE A CLOSER LOOK, and leave the main bulk of the reviews to just answer the question of "Is a game fun?" and also "Why??" As such, you'll find our reviews split into two sections. The main review, explains what the

reviewer thought of the game, and another section called Take A Closer Look, acts as a show-case for the game, documenting any special features or options, or comedy events that might make for an interesting read. Racing tracks, character profiles, all such things can be included in the TAKE A CLOSER LOOK section!

We also use a colour rating system. This is explained fully on the opposite page.

Why not write for us?? You can contribute an article, or you can apply to be part of the United Games team. Pick up a review pack to find out more. Review Packs are available for free by sending a S.A.E. to: **United Games, PO BOX 61, West Swindon, SN5 9GR.** Remember to state it's a Review Pack you're after, or we may send you a Game eXtra list or something you don't want. Cheers!

THE

TEAM

Welcome to another day in the life of the zany United Games Crew. After managing to swim their way back from the island of Beautiful woman, the Team found themselves once again in the United Games office, writing up reviews on the latest video games! All except for "Mad Grey" Ross that is, who we presume is still somewhere on the island. Jammy git.



Andrew Mehta:

<Swoosh!>, <Swoosh!> "Oi! Ben! Get that Light Sabre out of my face! I'm trying to work!" exclaimed Andrew, as Ben started re-living his childhood, either that, or re-living a scene from the latest Star Wars movie. "Anyway....." said

Andrew, "I thought the Phantom Menace was supposed to be rubbish!"

"No way!" exclaimed Ben. "Although I guess you could say the originals were better."

"Yeah, well, I never saw them, did I?"

The whole office room suddenly fell silent.

"What did you say?" asked George in disbelief.

"I said I've never seen any Star Wars films."

The Team stared blankly at Andrew.....

...and then promptly reached for their wallets, so that he could buy the videos from WH SMITHS. "Suckers" smiled Andrew, now £40 bob richer, as he headed down to the Bookies.

Ben Evans:

But Ben knew something was suspicious, as Ben was the only smart one there. If he hadn't seen Star Wars, how come he was wearing Star Wars socks? But then Ben realised it was him who was wearing the Star Wars socks. However Ben still decided to follow Andrew, as he is that kind of warped person (but also because he was familiar with Andrew's regular treks down to the local massage parlour, and he had been too



drunk the last time he followed Andrew to remember where it was...and had caused quite a scene, so Andrew wouldn't let him go again.) But Ben remembered two kind women....or were they men? He couldn't quite remember....but either way, he didn't have enough money for them at the time...but Ben had devised a daring and dastardly plan to rob Andrew of his £40 and then find the two women. Ben caught.....



Edd Morris:

.....a slap around the face from George! He was lying on the floor of the United Games office, dreaming about Massage Parlours again. "That's the third time it's happened this week!" exclaimed Edd. "But how did you know I was dreaming about Massage Parlours again?!"

"Well the last time I saw a bloke lying on his front engaging in small-talk with a spider plant, it was someone dreaming about massage parlours ...to be precise, you, yesterday." said Ken. Suddenly someone noticed a newspaper clipping on Andrew's desk. "GIANT INFLATABLE CLOWN ON THE LOOSE IN DOWNTOWN SWINDON!" shrieked Peter. "Hmm...whilst that is a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence, aren't you curious to know why Andrew has highlighted all the horse racing details in illuminous marker?" asked George. But Peter and Edd merely ran into the corner of the room, trying to hide each other from the giant clown image. "I was only six years old..." began Jazz, suddenly, out of the blue, "and that clown opened his"

Jazz Morgan:

"....clown-like trench coat, and withdrew a thermal detonator! The whole circus was terrified and ran for the exits, trampling each other in the process, and accidentally letting lose, a horde of rabid Elephants. It was lucky for me I managed to climb the trapeze ladder, and hang there for the four hours it took for things to settle back down again. I've always had a fear of elephants and clowns since. I say we go and find that inflatable clown and pop it."

"But what will we pop it with?" quizzed the rest of the team. "I've come prepared! I'll prick it with this pin!! I've been sharpening it for all these years!" said Jazz, producing a sharp pin from his trouser pockets. "Who's with me?" Ben and Ken raised their hands in agreement, and looked up directions to down town Swindon.



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Game eXtra, PO BOX 61, West Swindon, SN5 9GR.

END CREDITS: Will and Mark for their PC material. Marcus for the WFF Attitude review...thanks a lot! Kelvin, for helping out last minute with PS reviews (he also has a Parasite Eve review available via Game eXtra). Also the games shops for stocking us - where would we be without you?? So a massive shout out to the CEXy Computer Exchange people, and the inhabitants of the Pink Planet. Sorry....that was terrible. We also thank the peep at Picking Pack Service point, as only their low prices enable this fanzine to be photocopied and sold at such a low price! U.G.



George Morgan:

Meanwhile.....Andrew had ducked into the betting shop, swiftly followed by George, (using her 007 skills to get from the office to the betting shop in one sentence) who stopped outside and looked through the window. As she glanced up at the TV monitors, she noticed the horses on display for the next race. It got to horse number 9, and her jaw dropped! The horse looked suspiciously plump. Bursting into the betting shop, George proceeded to hold up everybody inside the store...and shouted very loudly: "This whole thing is a scandal! That's not really a horse up there! Can't you all see? It's the inflatable clown!!". Slowly every head turned to face George and Andrew. Evil grins spread onto every face, as hands were raised to every scalp, and in one sudden motion, each man pulled off his mask. Revealing that they were all in fact giant inflatable clowns!

Peter Wood:

After bravely covering in the corner for a while, Peter and Edd, made their way down to the chip shop, to get some eats for the rest of the team. However, this path lead them past the betting shop. Passing it, they realised that George was in trouble, and devised a cunning plan. Edd started banged on the betting shop window. Slowly, each clown went outside to see what it was. However, since the door was quite narrow, they could only go out one at a time. While looking away as each clown came out, Peter extended a borrowed lighter, in front of the entrance, and as each clown came out, they exploded into a small glitter of sparkly things. "Ah-ha!" said Edd with a gleeful grin, "We've found a way to beat them, AND we've beaten our phob..." Edd cuts off, as his face suddenly turns white with fear. He quickly ducks under a thorn bush promptly followed by Peter. "Ouch this hurts!" said both. "Look on the bright side," said Peter, "at least we can't get harmed by those absolutely unwholesome clowns, whilst in here." Meanwhile Ken.....



Ken Flatt:

.....shows up and a western-style scene takes place. Everyone in the town slams shut every door and window and runs to take refuge in the safety of their own homes. Ken, wearing his long black trench-coat, chains, and his Coal Chamber shirt starts chewing on a toothpick Razor-Ramon style and points at the remaining killer clowns. "Sick Em!" he says, and from the distance a thundering sound could be heard. An entire army of Exploding Carrots begin to make themselves visible as they pursue the retreating clowns. The chase heads off into the far distance. A loud explosion was heard and neither the clowns or carrots could be seen. Could it be that this was the last the Team would see of them?
"C'mon out everyone," Ken said
"All's safe".

Colour Symbols!

Here at United Games we don't rate games out of 100%, or out of 10, or even out of 5!!! Nope, we don't rate games at all, we award them colour symbols! So, you'll want to know what each colour means won't you?



Red Hot!!

"If you own the hardware this runs on, you MUST get this game. If you don't, you should consider getting it!"

EXPLAINED: A Red Hot is not given to a game to say it's good. It's given to a game to tell people "THEY MUST BUY THIS"! A game everybody loves, is the best thing since sliced bread, and nobody will have any regrets buying. Obviously only a select few ever receive this accolade.



Brill Blue:

"Brilliant!"

EXPLAINED: An excellent game. Brilliant. This is usually the highest recommendation, with the red hot only reserved for ever-so-special games.



Groovy Green:

"We understand not everyone's cup of tea...but there's something in it that makes it oh-so special!"

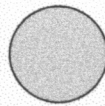
EXPLAINED: This could be a love it or hate it game, an acquired taste, or perhaps a game you hate...but can't stop playing. Maybe it's a "one for the fans" that, say, Star Wars fans will lap up, but the rest of us will dislike. All in all it's a classic "Great...if you like this sort of thing!" type of game.



Mellow Yellow:

"An all round nice game, you can't go wrong with"

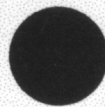
EXPLAINED: This is basically a "safe buy". It'll please most people, is good value for money, and whilst not necessarily the bee's-knees, will still fit snugly into your gaming collection with no qualms.



Average Grey:

"Nothing wrong with it, just nothing right either."

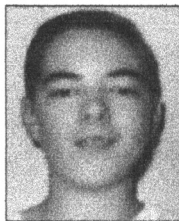
EXPLAINED: Ho-hum Average. Not good, yet not terrible. Best avoided simply because there are so many better games available.



Black: Burn it.

"Don't buy this game!"

EXPLAINED: Be careful when awarding blacks, in case it's just an acquired taste - it may appeal to some. True blacks appeal to no-one. A complete waste of money.



Does it live up to all the hype?" pondered Marcus, stroking his chin, wondering why the editor had inserted this pointless space filler.

I had been awaiting the release of this game for awhile, but wasn't sure if it was going to be all I thought it was going to be. So I ran down to the local video store to check it out. I got it, brought it home, and started it up. At first I just checked out all the options, then started playing. I played one normal match, trying to figure everything out. I lost, but didn't give up. After that I just decided to try out the career mode. I started out as X-Pac. It was at that point I noticed the different visuals. I noticed that ring entrances were pretty good, but the hands on everybody were pretty bad. They were just all fingers stuck together. Also, as soon as you see someone like HHH who carries a microphone out with him, you realise object-drawing isn't quite as detailed as you'd hoped. At first I thought he was carrying a large can or something. Unfortunately, the same applies to the items used in weapons mode. Other than that however, they were pretty good graphics. The entrances were awesome too. The only problem I saw with the entrances was that when X-Pac came out, the Raw Stadium had steps not a ramp, and it looked like he fell off of them and landed on his feet. That was the other thing. The different stadiums weren't correct. The Raw had steps, and all of the arenas had the same amount of people in the audience. So that meant that there were hardly any people at the PPV (pay per view) and Raw events. The crowd was merely the same as the House Events.....but to tell you the truth, I thought the game rocked.

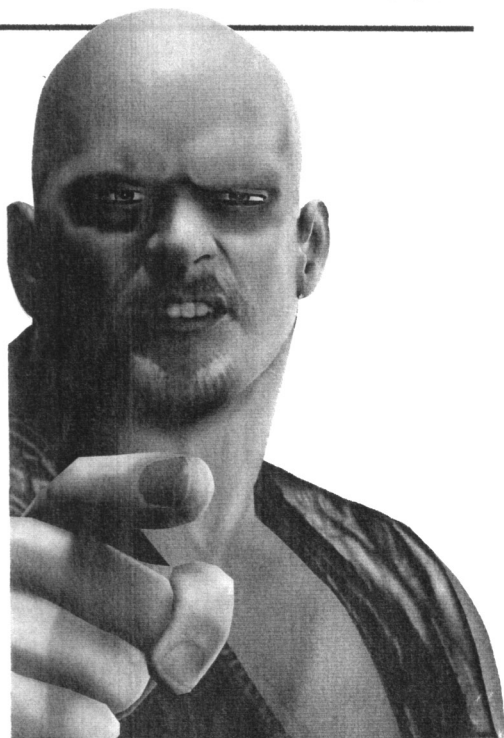
I thought the game rocked because of the many game modes, the awesome Create A Wrestler, and the great career mode. The many game modes and the many wrestlers allow you to play forever and still not do everything that is possible in this game. The create-a-wrestler feature is so much better this year, and gives you so many more options to fiddle with. The new

career mode is a much-improved option to Warzone's Championship mode last year. Another thing that you people may enjoy over Warzone is Attitude's cheats feature . Last year you would have to play Championship mode with each wrestler - and in different difficulties - to get all the cheats. This year you can just beat the Career mode with any person you choose.

WWF Attitude could be said to be more like a tournament fighter than a wrestling game, at least compared to the WCW World Tour and Revenge games, because if you compare them by playing one, and then immediately playing the other, you'll realise that the striking moves and the button combinations make it seem like you're playing Mortal Kombat, albeit it all being a little more realistic than said title. Also there is no rope break or any rules that are true wrestling rules.

I thought, at first that the game was going to be too unrealistic, and boring. But after playing it and seeing the beautiful entrances, I realized it was pretty much like Warzone in gameplay, whilst the entrances were in a league of their own - the best I have ever seen! That is what completely changed my mind and in the wake it blew my mind as well.

I completely believe that this game is worth every cent you'll have to pay for it. This game will blow your mind, and anyone that you play it with will love it and love you for having it. As for any people that already own Warzone or any other game, or if one of your friends owns one of them, don't think that this game will be the same. Go out and buy it, because even though the gameplay is a lot like Warzone, nothing else is. It is completely in a league of its own, and in this humble reviewer's opinion, is the best wrestling game out so far. (at time



of writing, Mayhem has yet to be reviewed. Anyone want to review it for us? See page 20! Ed.).

If you don't care too much about the realism of a game, and are more interested in the game-play, then this game will be the best game you ever played, and with all its modes and modifiers, it's sure to last.

So to conclude, I recommend this game to anyone that likes tournament fighters, or the last Warzone game. Maybe even people that like wrestling games. Even though it could be said to be more like a tourney fighter than a wrestling game.

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**An awesome game
that is well worth
buying.**



Brill Blue!



"Oi! No Cameras allowed!"

God only knows" runs the tagline to the game. God only knows how Square made another game as superb as FFVII, but they have...

USA IMPORT.
U.K. Release likely.

The word "epic" is bandied about left, right and centre nowadays. Alundra, Wild Arms, Parasite Eve, and in fact just about every half-arsed RPG lays claim to being an "epic". Only a very few games are the dictionary definition of a "long story... of heroic deeds and/or history". Xenogears has a storyline spanning 10,000 years, and took me 85 hours to complete. And it is truly deserving of the title "epic".

The plot, is absolutely superb.

You play as Fei, an artist in the sleepy village of Lahan. Fei has no recollection of life beyond three years ago. However, the locals have now accepted him as family. The peace is shattered, however, by the crash-landing of a special "Gear" (mechanoid) and as other Gears arrive to fight for it, all hell breaks loose. A dramatic turn of events leads to Fei's exile from the village, and his search for the true motives of the continual conflict in the world, begins. He also has inner demons to confront.....

The graphics are extremely

detailed. The backgrounds and environments are 3D, which means much camera rotation. However, it soon becomes second nature to use the shoulder buttons to manipulate the virtual camera. The 2D sprites allow detail, but become blocky and distorted when viewed from different distances. Mind you, I'm not one of those who think graphical perfection is important.

The video sequences, however...

well.... they are anime, which is great, but they're so badly dubbed! The character's mouth will be moving, but they won't be saying anything, then all of a sudden they'll blurt out "Oh!". It's hilarious, but it distracts you when you

are watching some of the more serious scenes.

The music, though, is superb. The world map music, the Yggdrasil theme tune and the Shevat Aerial City tune are just three of the most memorable compositions in the game, and lead to much irritating whistling and hummage. The sound effects are perfunctory.

The battle system is truly unique:

while retaining a turn based element, there is a beat-em-up-esque combo system. For more information on this innovation, see the section "Take A Closer Look". You also get to fight in the Gears, and each character (you get nine) has their own Gear to maintain, upgrade and empower. It is a very interesting way of having something developing alongside your character.

Speaking of characters, the characterisation in this game is INCREDIBLY deep. Particularly with Fei and Elly (hero and heroine). I have never read any book nor seen any film with characters that are more emotionally expressive. If you've played FFVII, and enjoyed scenes such as the date at the Gold Saucer, then you will love Xenogears. Some sections of storyline go on for hours (literally) without any player interaction. However, such is the compelling nature of the unfolding drama that you simply don't notice. You'd think that this decreases replay value, but it is likely that you won't catch everything the first or even the second time around. In the same way that a great film retains its quality after many watchings, so too Xenogears can hold your interest in the same way. Then there is game length. The fastest time in which I have managed to



complete Xenogears is 40 hours, but that is with much corner cutting. Between 60-70 hours is much more realistic, and if you explore lots (like me!) then you may well shoot over the 100 hour mark.

Were this not an independent fanzine, you'd be forgiven for thinking that someone had paid me for this review. However, I'm not afraid to criticise Square when I think they've done wrong (see my Parasite Eve review, available via United Game's Game eXtra service). This game is beyond parallel in terms of storyline and character depth. However, the battle system isn't very customizable (compared with FFVII's) and it has one or two minor flaws, such as the linear nature of the game. Disc two in particular is a lot more linear than the first disc, in fact the second disc could almost be an entirely different game! It takes a narrative, storyboard-esque approach, where characters talk in the past tense about events that have happened or are happening. Still, these are minor niggles, and ultimately, I have no qualms whatsoever in awarding it a Brilliant Blue.

Xenogears is ©1997, 1998 Square Co., Ltd

Xenogears exhibits all the qualities of a great RPG...and then some!



Brill Blue

XENOGEAR'S BATTLE SYSTEMS

The two battle systems (one for character battles, one for Gears) are very different from what has gone before.

#2 GEAR BATTLE:

Similar to character battles, except that the AP system is replaced by fuel.

Attack strengths:
Triangle: Weak (10 Fuel).
Square: Medium (20 Fuel).
Cross: Strong (30 Fuel).

You cannot gain Deathblows while in a Gear. However, for every character Deathblow you gain, a new one will be usable in your Gear. There are some real spectacular Deathblows to see. You can also attach parts to your Gear that give it new abilities. Things to increase engine speed, replenish health and other such helpful accessories go alongside the usual armour and weapon upgrades.

CHARACTERS:

Fei:

A young man living in the village of Lahan. He suffers from partial memory loss due to an incident prior to his arrival. Fei enjoys teaching martial arts to the children and is adored by all the villagers. His hobby is painting, an ability he appears to have inherited from a master artist.

Age: 18
Weapon: Fists (oohh, hard!)
Gear: Weltall

Elly: (ELHAYM)

Assigned to a post with Gebler in Aveh after completing her training as a Solarian officer. As a spy, she steals the latest model Gear from the rival Kislev Army, but is shot down at Lahan. Her chance meeting with Fei has an immense effect on her future.

Age: 18
Weapon: Rods
Gear: Vierge

Citan:

A doctor who runs a clinic on the outskirts of Lahan. His origins are believed to be the Sacred Empire of Solaris, and he is shrouded in mystery. He is by far the most intelligent person known to Fei. His hobby is repairing relics from old civilizations (including Gears).

Age: 29
Weapons:
 i) Fists
 ii) Swords (I know which I'd rather have!)
Gear: Heimdal

Bart:

Leader of a group of sand pirates who rule the desert in their sandship, the Yggdrasil. However, it is a fact known to few that he is of royal blood, and would be ruler of Aveh had there not been a coup by the dictator Shakhan. Bart's impulsiveness causes much grief for crew and friends.

Age: 18
Weapon: Whips (less said the better!)
Gear: Brigandier

Billy:

After watching his mother die in an attack by undead "Wels Reapers", Billy rose through the ranks of the "Ethos" to reach his current level of Etone (purger of reapers). Billy's father is a heavy drinker, and frequently absent from home, so Billy alone raises his mute younger sister, Primera.

Age: 16
Weapon: Guns
Gear: Renmazuo

Rico:

Age: 30
Weapon: Fists/Wrestling
Gear: Stier

An incredibly strong demi-human created through bio-engineering (GM baby shocker!). For three years running he has been champion of the battling arena in Nortune, capital of Kislev. He is a prisoner, but has a very high standard of living.

CHU-CHU:

Age: ???
Weapon: Various methods of hurling her own body about.
Gear: Chu-Chu (you'll see!).

A member of a race thought long dead, Chu-Chu currently resides in Fatima Castle, and considers herself a prisoner. She has the appearance of a cuddly toy, but she is oh-so-much more.

Maria:

Age: 14
Weapon: Very weak fists
Gear: Siebzehn (the best Gear).

Personal servant to Queen Zephyr of the Flying City Shevat. Maria's father was taken prisoner by the forces of Solaris some time ago, and hasn't been seen since. Maria has dedicated her life to bringing about the downfall of Solaris.

Emeralda:

Age: 4,000
Weapon: T-1000 style body shaping.
Gear: Crescens

Created by scientists in an ancient civilisation through nano-machines, - subatomic structures that ultimately brought about the downfall of the civilisation. Little else is known about her.



#1 CHARACTER BATTLE:

You are allocated a number of Action Points (between three and seven, depending on your level) and may use them freely. There are three attack strengths:

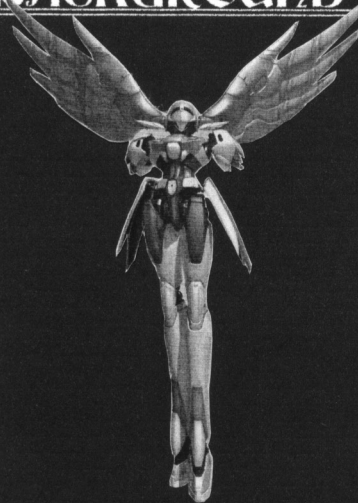
- Triangle: Weak (1 Action Point Used).
- Square: Medium (2 AP Used).
- Cross: Strong (3 AP Used).

For example, if you had 4 AP, you could go (cross, triangle), (square, square), or indeed (triangle, triangle, triangle, triangle). Using different combinations of buttons frequently will lead to the gaining of "Deathblows". When activated, they set in sequence a powerful blow or combo. For example, when you learn Fei's "Raijin" (triangle, cross) and activate it, he will draw back, gather energy, then leap forward and smack the enemy. This is only the most basic Deathblow, and most characters have about 10 to 12 different Deathblows.

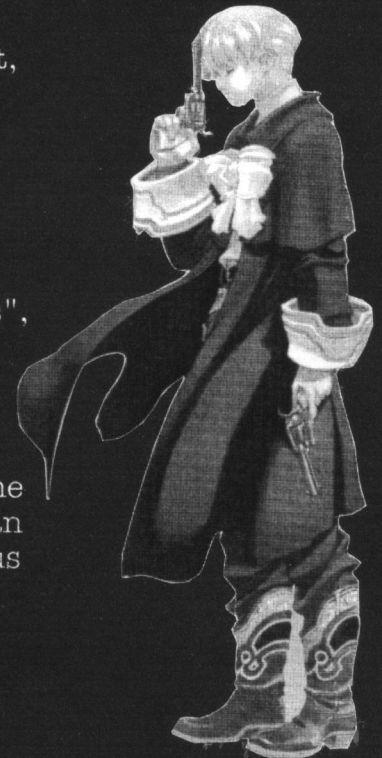
Note!

You also acquire magic ("Ether") spells. However, they are gained at certain levels, so continual fighting is the only way to get them fast.

BACKGROUND STORY:



The largest continent on the planet, Ignas, has for an indeterminable amount of time, been war-torn. The two nations: Kislev in the north, Aveh in the south, are in constant battle for land. No-one quite remembers why, since historic records are controlled by the "Ethos", a religious group with immense scientific knowledge. With the discovery of Gears (the technology for which was found in the ancient ruins that the Ethos renovated), the war quickens in pace. Kislev gain an advantage, almost eliminating Aveh. However, a mysterious military force called "Gebler" arrives in Aveh, and provides large scale military aid (for reasons unknown) to them. Aveh have now blitzed Kislev, and now Kislev are on the back foot. But what are Gebler's origins? And what interest do they have in the war?





You may not be a beat-'em-up fan. You might not be a fan of the Nintendo characters either.

That doesn't matter. This game rocks and you'll love it!

USA IMPORT.

U.K. release: This Christmas

Picture yourself, a few of your mates, some cold adult beverages and perhaps a pizza. You're all piled round one victim's house and you've got the night to kill. What do you do? Reach for a video? Nahhh, seen 'em all before. Reach for your favourite male thing to do to pass time? No - there are females around. The answer is simple - get your N64, hunt down that Import Adapter you got a while ago for the latest big release, and then slam in Super Smash Brothers! This title was originally announced by Nintendo out of the blue, along with Mario Party, giving people only a month or two to get wound up before it was released. Both games feature the Nintendo characters, both games utilise good 3D N64 graphics, and both games are AMAZING to play with friends. Be warned - if you're sober whilst playing either game, you'll probably kill each other! But enough about Mario Party - that's for another review (Go get it by the way!)!

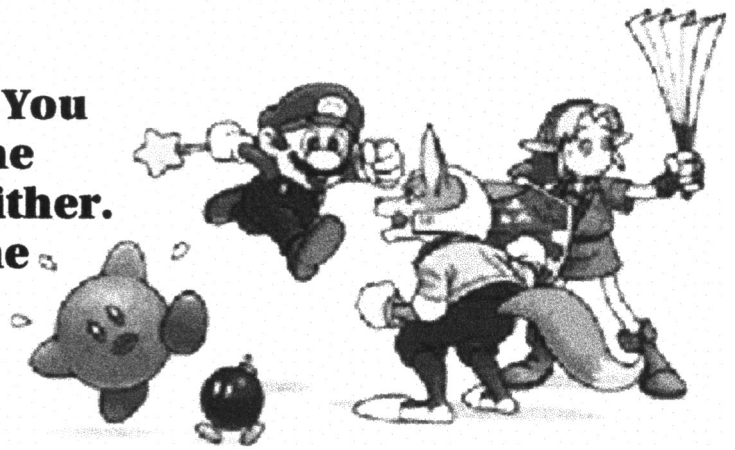
Super Smash brothers is NOT a beat-'em-up, or turn-based. It's like a beat-'em-up - but with weapons - and character traits and, well... okay, I guess you could call it a beat-'em-up. But how many beat-'em-ups feature 4 players at once on a screen? Or a

giant hand for the final boss? (oops - what a spoiler!).

Basically it's a frantic fight between 4 people on screen, using the weapons and skills that are unique to their chosen character. For example, Samus (Metroid chick) has her big plasma gun, and Kirby can change into a rock or absorb another character's powers as his own.

It's a killer multi-player game. You'll get really mad as your friend perfects some cheap-ass tactic with a character that seems to always work on you, but then you'll figure out a cunning tactic for another character and they'll get mad at you. Fantastic. The team games you can have vary the action from the thrills of free-for-all and give extra multi-playing life-span to boot.

In case you were worried that playing it on your own would be boring - think again! The single player may not last long in the hands of an addict who can't put it down, but it will last you a while as you master the different characters going through it on VERY HARD. The single player offers more than just 1-on-1 bouts like standard multi-player games. As well as a few bonus challenges of varying types, scattered about



Above: Kirby nearly trips over a bomb, and Link gets to know one of his biggest fans!

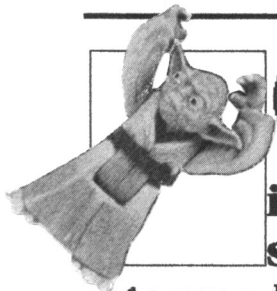
here and there, there's also varying types of battle you have to fight. Take the Yoshi Team for instance. You fight many different coloured Yoshies, 3 at a time, until you've got through 20 (I think) of them. The same applies to the Kirby Team and the "Fighting Polygon Team". It's certainly got variety there! Oh, and there are four secret characters to obtain, I won't say how just yet, that would spoil it!

Super Smash Bros ©1999 Nintendo LTD / HAL Labs. Text is ©1999 Jazz Morgan, edited by Andrew Mehta. Layout is ©1999 Andrew Mehta. Pictures and stills are ©1999 Nintendo Ltd. Want to use this article? Then see FREE LICENSING OUT on page 26 **United Games will provide more coverage of Super Smash Bros when it is released in the U.K.**

This is a class new game which is as fun to play as it is original. Grab yourself an import copy with an adapter, get your mates round and get at it! (Or wait for the UK release - hopefully this Christmas).



Brill Blue!



In the good old US of A, Superman (on the N64) sold out in virtually all American stores and suffered severe stock shortages. It stormed the all formats sales charts, gaining the highest place a N64 game has achieved this year! Bear that in mind as you read this damning review.

Let's become philosophical for a quick moment and ponder life, the universe, and Superman. Why has the old Y-front wearer become so popular in the first place? In my opinion, it's as he's a character that everyone wants to be. Everyone wants to be a Superman-stylee super hero, and everyone wants to fly like our chisel-chinned mate. Everyone wants to be Superman - and so everyone wants to play as Superman in a video game!

So, if Titus have made a Superman game, it's imperative for it's success that it covers the two most important factors that make Superman so popular. First, make his ability to fly as fantastic as possible, and make the tasks he has to complete as heroic and fantastic as possible.

*However....*the first major problem in Superman:The Game, is flying. I felt no sense of freedom whatsoever - mainly as you can't fly to any altitude greater than lamp-post height, and, stupidly, the only way to descend from the sky, when you wish to stop your aerial antics, is to crash into a wall. Other flying abominations include a strange noise rather like a goat bleating when you take off (why?) and, when you're in the sky, Superman's cape ripples with all the flexibility of a sheet of hard board, thanks to some amazing graphics!

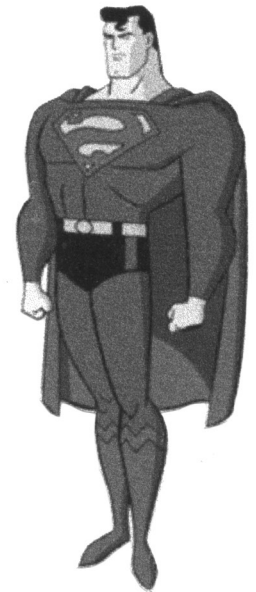
Superman is boring. This is mainly due to the tasks you are set. They are so mundane that it hardly feels like you are a hero - more like Bert the Builder from down the road. I never felt like a hero when I flew through level after level consisting of rings for flying through, and when I did have a chance to do

something "heroic" - like save the Daily Planet - all I ever had to do was to use my ice breath time after time, after, time, after.....zzz.....(where d'you go? Ed.).

But Titus, the developers, haven't stopped at making embarrassing errors concerning Superman's appeal. They've gone and broken about every rule in the Developer's Guide to Creating Basic Games (including the one featuring the squirrel and the marshmallows). They've hashed up the control system, making the game virtually unplayable (the controls are far too sensitive, and, stupidly, when the camera moves, the control system changes - e.g., if you run forward, and manoeuvre the camera slightly to the right, you'll start running to the right, even if you're still pressing forward). The AI is also incredibly stupid; enemies run around in circles and, if you get too close to an enemy, THEY CAN'T SHOOT YOU (They can't aim)!!! As mentioned before, the levels are boring and rubbish, the graphics are weak and the sound effects are just plain pathetic. Unfortunately these are just a small number of faults...there are many more besides. (Oh dear. Ed.).

But after all is said and done, Superman 64 is strangely amusing. I found myself laughing out loud at some of the terrible examples of the enemies' supposed Artificial Intelligence (AI), and also Lex Luthor's "Maze", which is really a series of rings. However, the most amusing part of the game is Lex Luthor's laugh. Unlike a deep, hearty, bad-guy laugh that you'd expect him to sport (Like Ganon in Zelda 2 on the 8-bit NES - Ed), whenever he triumphs, he emits a feeble cough that sounds ridiculous. Actually, it really sounds like

Everyone but Superman has to take a master's course in Ballet before they can be respected in tights. →



someone choking on their own vomit. Choking on your own puke. Superman 64. How very appropriate.

Still, I guess I only found

Superman 64 amusing as I knew that, after a week and a bit, I could return it to it's original owner (who, after having forked out £40 for this pile of turd, probably isn't amused in any way).

Superman is a character / trademark of DC Comics. © 1999 DC Comics Inc. Superman (the game) for N64 ©1999 Titus. Review text ©1999 Edd Morris of EGN fame. Edited by Andrew Mehta. Layout ©1999 Andrew Mehta. Want to use Edd's article? Then see FREE LICENSING out on page 26.

**Repeatedly
slamming your
fingers in the car
door is probably
more fun than
playing Superman.
A staggeringly
inept game.**

Black: Burn it!!



The court in session! How on Earth Can Superman be bad?

How on Earth Can Superman be bad?

It is in these hallowed pages that the critical flaws of Superman 64 will be pointed out by me, Edd, the attacking, in the United games court of law. The right honourable presiding judge Mehta will issue the sentence, and will also spit at the judge from the plinth on high.

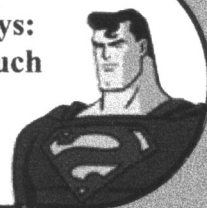
Critical flaw one:

To fly you must press "Z" to launch into the air. (Sounds fair enough. Ed). Then you must press B to fly (for some bizarre reason). Forget about gaining any height, an invisible wall, 5m from the ground prevents Supes (is that supposed to be an abbreviation? Ed.) (Yes it is, so there. Edd.) from gaining any height. If you want to get out of the sky, you'll have to crash into a wall, press Z, and hope the game will let you land. It doesn't always (good grief. Ed.).

Making Superman walk is just as much fun. The tiniest nudge of the control stick makes Superman bomb around in that direction, like a headless chicken. Also, for some strange, bizarre and overly STUPID reason, the control system alters when the camera direction changes. For example, you may be directing Superman forward, and decide to change the camera angle to the right slightly. Consequently, superman will start moving to the right, but YOU'LL STILL BE PRESSING FORWARDS!

Defence:

Superman says:
"I had too much coffee this morning!"



Playing Environments:

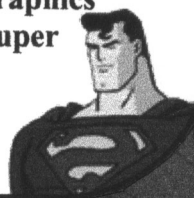
The levels in Superman are staggeringly ill thought out. Most of the city-scapes provide a very linear route through the game, and when you are given some freedom to explore, the fog is so dense, that it becomes extremely hard to navigate. In fact, the fog is so dense, it's often possible to bump into a building that suddenly appears out of the gloom at a second's notice. Definitely worth mentioning here, is the level where you have to explore Metropolis to find Lexcorp in a limited time. Very difficult as Metropolis seems to have fallen victim to atrocious smog.

The only plus points are the visuals. When not obscured by terrible fog, they are acceptable. (What, really? Ed.) Yeah, if you're looking in the other direction!! Ha-ha! (That was pathetic. Ed.).

A prime example of the terrible level design can be found in a certain sub game, that involves flying along a stretch of road with a police car. Your path is obstructed by evil people at the road edge, armed with grenades. Unfortunately, the evil people tend to throw the grenades OVER the road and onto the other side, giving you a relatively trouble-free run down the road. Pathetic.

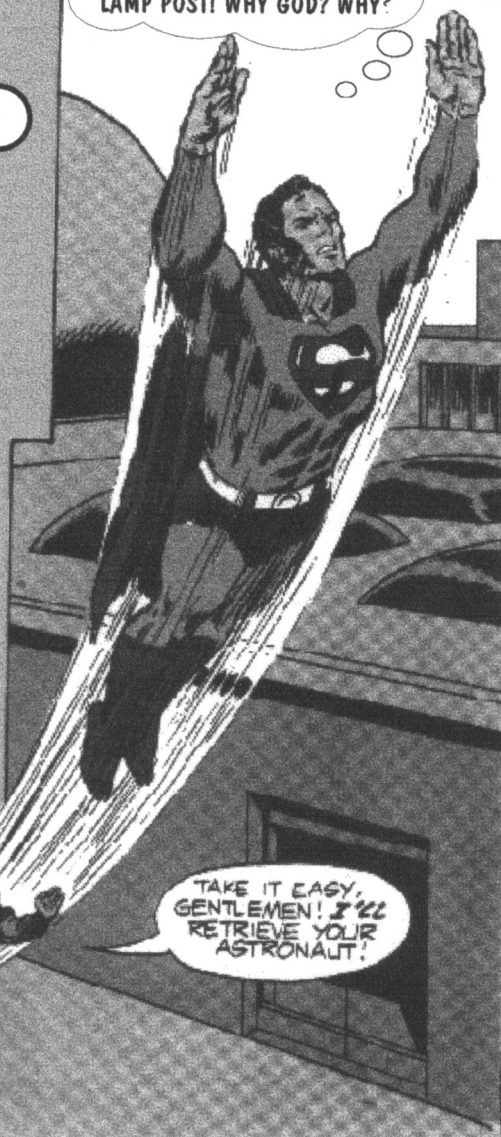
Defence:

Superman says:
"My bad graphics are just a super stealthy disguise!"



Critical flaw two:

HNN...
CAN'T....FLY...HIGHER...THAN A
LAMP POST! WHY GOD? WHY?



Critical flaw three:

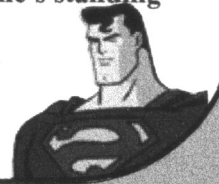
Artificial Intelligence + Enemies.

Robots are really evil. (Ooooh...Ed.). Unfortunately, in Superman, these droids are totally stupid. They run the Metropolis factories, look after the nuclear power plants, and are forever on the look out for the one in blue tights. Hmm...well, that is if you call walking around in a rectangular pattern for an infinite number of times, "forever on the look out." It wouldn't be that bad if they did something when you approached, but they just ignore you unless you walk into them (or you open a door and they just happen to be standing in front of you) in which case they often kill you instantly. You're telling me one, little, thick, dense robot will kill the world's greatest Superman instantly!?! Oh dear <shakes head and "tuts" a lot>. (Hey, Edd, maybe they've got crytonite in them! Maybe....Ed.).

However, the award of "Most Stupid Enemy" has to go to none-other than the dark shadow guard. (Boo! Hiss! Ed.) Armed with little pop pistols, these black clad goons wander around aimlessly (Cor! Wish I was employed by Lex! Ed) until you run up to them and grab their attention. Then the ridiculous bit comes into play - the dark shadow man will either try to shoot you (very inaccurately, I might add) and then, as he's having second thoughts about killing you, he'll scuttle off to the corner of a room, ready for you to pick him off at your leisure, or better still, if you stand close to a Dark Shadow THEY CAN'T SHOOT YOU AT ALL (saying it in capitals doesn't make it any more true. Edd. Ed.), but will instead, run around you like a chicken with feet on fire. Another example of sheer patheticness (is that a word? Hmm...I'll go get my dictionary....Ed.).

Defence:

Superman says: "Well would you shoot at Superman whilst he's standing right next to you?"



Critical flaw four:

However, the speech samples are what prove to be the most laughably inept part of the game. As a rule, they're fuzzy, indistinguishable, indecipherable and blurted out at top speeds from the speakers. Typically, when a speech sample occurs, you tend to just sit there, stunned, looking at your N64 and wondering WHY?? And just what was just said? At the start of the game, I did manage to translate a rough " ". (Nothing's in the speech marks, Edd! Ed.). I know, get the point yet? And this sets the scene for the rest of the game (you mean the starting sample sets the plot?). No, I mean the rest of the game's speech samples also prove to be terrible, so no change there. (Oh dear. Ed.). Oh dear indeed. When Lex Luthor triumphs, you'd expect him to give a good, hearty, evil laugh in true bad buy tradition. However, his pathetic "Hnnn ffh!" sounds more like someone choking on their own vomit. Actually, choking on your own vomit is more fun than playing Superman. Go choke on your own puke.

Defence:

Superman says: "Your honour, Edd refers to my supercode! Only a Superman, like me is capable of understanding it!"

Dialogue: Every so often a precious gem of text wisdom pops up from a character on the screen, exchanging a friendly banter. Unfortunately, these very gems of wisdom (presented in a STUPID typeface) are appallingly written. "Brake" is repeatedly written as "Break", the punctuation is everywhere (e.g. "If you want to save your friends. Solve my maze!") and their general content is so useless and cliched that you'll start chewing the sofa. Better still is a huge inconsistency. Sometimes, but not always, the following happens: You walk into a room. One bad guy is there (let's say it's Lex Luthor). A text box pops up. It's obviously Luthor talking - you're hardly going to be speaking to yourself, but the game decides to helpfully put at the top of the text box: "Luthor: I've kidnapped Louis!" It looks stupid. It's an inconsistent flaw.

Critical flaw five:

Multi-player Mode.

For some reason, the characters in multi-player battle mode do battle in spaceships with lasers. WHY SPACESHIPS?? (And not on foot with guns??). Proceedings are made all the more exciting as all the spaceships travel at the same speed, have identical weapons, and the levels are typically so dark and APPALLINGLY linear that you usually spend your time chasing each other aimlessly around a one way route. Grrreat. <Sarc remark>.

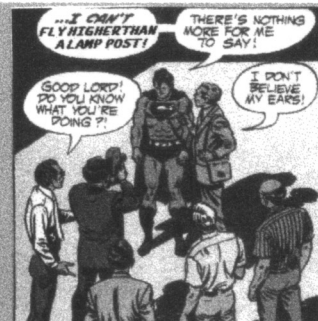
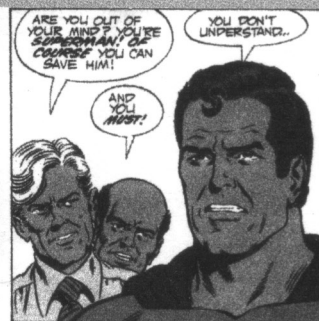
Critical flaw six: Superman.



"Oi! Edd...no! I'm not flawed! I'm SUPER!"

The VERDICT!

The United Games court of law, listened to both Superman's defense, and Edd's prosecution. The Jury shuffled out of the court-room, and then came back in again a whole minute later, reporting a verdict of GUILTY. "So, in short, jury, you're trying to tell me that Superman:The Game is nothing more than a cunningly disguised door wedge/stopper?" asked the judge. "It seems to be that way. It's boring, grey, rubbery, and tastes like chicken." replied the jury. "Well, then, it's up to Judge Mehta to taste the sentenceand that is...?" asked the judge, turning to Judge Mehta. "Hmm...did you say chicken? Let's have a roast!" And so the entire court got down to some roasted cartridge. "Can you pass the gravy your honour?" and soon the idea came to use all the Superman 64 cartridges that sat on shop shelves, not being bought, to feed starving children. "And when you've finished with that lot, I've heard there's some free cheese out in the desert! ET by Atari! " Ahh....a happy ending. <Sob>





What would any good game company do with the licenses to two of the most popular franchises in 20th Century Fox's repertoire? Naturally, churn out another First Person Shooter.

I have always thought that if there is anything the video game market needs, it's more shooters. And RTS games.

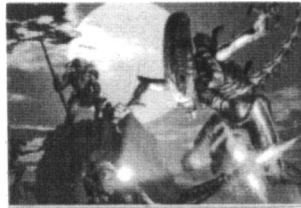
But never mind because you'll like AvP. If you enjoy the sensation you get when you trip on the stairs and one leg goes out in front of you and you quickly grab the handrail to avert a clattering death, you'll enjoy playing it. As a Marine, the claustrophobia and deadly fear you'll be forced to experience is bar none. As the Alien, the thrill of the chase and the delights of stealthy movement make for an interesting spin. And the Predator - hard as nails, stalking his hapless prey without remorse, with plenty of excellent sound and visual effects lifted out of the film, proves equally rewarding.

Visually it is a tasty treat. Despite fairly simple techniques and low-poly levels the look is very good. Particular care has been paid to the lighting, which sets the mood tremendously and for the Marine and Alien is a large part of the game. The Predator's hunt modes ignore lighting completely, which means the Predator's level experience is probably more boring than the others. For the Marine, the lights help and hinder. In areas where there is a lot of light, vision is easy. In poorly lit areas the Image Intensifier must be used however, when using it, ANY bright lights in the vicinity come out as enormous white smears on the display, making it hard to see. And it's little touches like this that adds to the atmosphere. Atmosphere that sets AvP apart from any other FPS games on the market. Atmosphere so thick at times - you can chew it!

Most people haven't screamed at a game since Doom - but in AvP you'll do it all the time. You'll gasp when you realise there's one right behind you. And if you don't literally shout in shock when a facehugger grabs you (and they will, trust me, they will!) then something is wrong with you.

The sound effects and music are half the battle where atmosphere is concerned. Most of the sound effects are sampled from the movies, which adds to the cinematic feel. All the weapons fire

convincingly and noisily. Ricochets and other ambient effects complete the mix. Hunting humans (as either a Predator or an Alien) is always a treat because on sight of you they start screaming and yelling, firing wildly at you. And the "head bite" sound is particularly bloody - imagine an apple being cored. The music is stunning to say the least - more atmospheric tracks have never been heard and it really does affect the way you play. When the music quietens, you hide in corners and wait, when the pace picks up, your adrenalin runs and you charge forward. An entire CD has been dedicated to audio tracks, so there is a lot of variety. On the downside, the shrieks the Aliens make do get repetitive after a little while.



Aliens V.S. Predator has plenty of hours of play in it, assuming you act like a man and slap it onto Director's Cut difficulty straight away. On easy you may finish it within a day or two, but you can hardly blame Rebellion for you screwing yourself out of game time. Although some find the inability to save within a level frustrating, it does prolong the life-span AND help the atmosphere along. In "Scary" games, I always find it comforting to slap quicksave just before I go around a corner. In AvP, you have to just go and deal with whatever happens, or else risk losing all the ground you've gained. You actually have something to lose and so you have a genuine incentive to stay alive. Not only that, but at the end of each level you are given statistics, and a score to beat if you want to access the cheat mode for that level - so even when you've beaten all the single-player levels AND the bonus levels, you can still try for cheats - or just try to beat your own best stats.

Or why not smack up some human opponents? Multi-player options are comprehensive, although there is a distressingly TOTAL lack of internet servers. You want a game, you're the



server. There are several enjoyable game alternatives (Alien tag is a good one - seven marines gang up on one alien. Only the alien can score, which it does by killing marines. The marine that kills the alien then becomes "it", is turned into an alien, and has the chance to score) and multi-player levels are well designed. Even if you only have a modem and no internet you can still enjoy yourself by downloading the N.E.LEV patch, which means you can do multi-player co-operative in any of the single-player levels.

AvP is a worthy addition to the catalogue of First Person Shooters and despite linear level design and general lack of innovation is stylish, moody and well implemented, with enough attention to its namesakes to satisfy the fans. It still doesn't beat the current front runner in FPS - Half-Life - but if you've played Half-Life to death and want more, why not give the old heart a good work-out with some electronic shock treatment? For only the price of a game you can give your ticker the kind of work-out expensive defibrillation machines usually charge hundreds for.

Text ©1999 Will Jenkins. Layout ©1999 Andrew Mehta. Game and screenshots ©1999 Rebellion Software/Fox Interactive. Aliens and Predator are ©1999 Twentieth Century Fox. Want to use Will's article? Then see FREE LICENSING OUT - on page 26!

I'd rate it Brill Blue, but nobody uses the word 'Brill' any more, do they?



Brill Blue



Once upon a time you had a life. You used to belong somewhere. Now you're an outcast in a parallel universe.

Make friends, make enemies..it's your call!

Outcast or Unsurpassed?

Well I would take this chance to explain the plot in detail, but that would take all day so I'll sum up the very start of it. The American army has got themselves in a pickle (again). They've been toying around with entering into parallel universes you see, and when they do it, they send a probe through. This all seems fine until some alien gromit comes along and smashes up the probe causing feed back which makes a Black Hole open up at our end.

Subsequently things start getting sucked into this Black Hole. When it starts growing exponentially the army call in Cutter Slade, who is (or was) one of their best operatives, and charge him with the mission of protecting the scientists they send through to fix the damaged probe. Gasp(!), well there you have it, the initial plot! I won't spoil the rest for you ..hehe.

Outcast is one of the largest, most complex, games around at the moment. It will take you absolutely ages to finish, and then, until the end of your life to talk to everyone and find every last box or key. The game basically involves you (Cutter Slade) walking or riding about in any of six lands, all with names that have too many "A"s and "Z"s in them for their own good. You have to talk to the numerous denizens and solve problems and puzzles for them in exchange for information about "mons" which appear to be components from the probe, and help in bringing down the ruling (and evil, natch) tyrant: Fae Rhan, who is, for some reason, trying to stop you and kill you at every turn - the goat!

There is most definitely more than one way to play the game. For instance you can run around shooting everything that shows its face, which although fun,

will probably see you die a little earlier than you had previously anticipated. Or, alternatively, you can be nice to all the citizens (keeping your weapons hidden when near them) and run away from any soldiers using all the stealth of a sneaky thief. On the other hand, you may prefer to be nice to all the citizens so they give you loads of stuff, and then go and shoot the sh-AHEM! (Ahem indeed! Ed.) ..out of all the soldiers - which is what I did. As long as you remember to run away before you get overwhelmed you should be okay. Personally, I reckon the latter strategy yields the most fun.

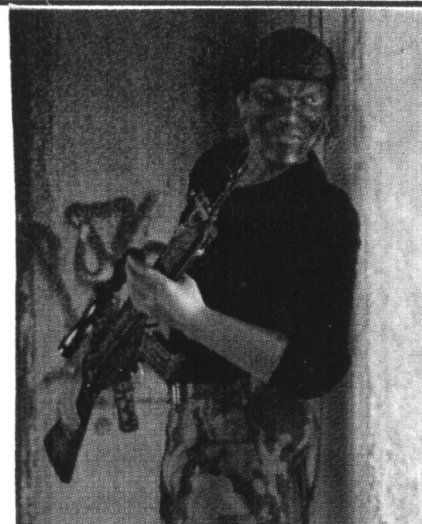
By now you are probably saying,

"Oh shut it, will you? What's so good about this game - it sounds a bit weird to me!?!"

Well, it is so large that it will keep you going for a long time, so if you like to complete all your games and take time over them, this is for you. Also it is a very pretty game. At times you feel you could just look over the scenery and have a picnic in front of your monitor because it is all so peaceful and beautiful - especially in Shamazaar. The game also tries its best to keep you entertained all the way through. For instance, if you are starting to get bored, some soldiers are probably waiting just around the corner for you. The game is also very diverse. One minute you will be blowing soldiers up, the next you could be playing sing-along with some beggar in an alley or looking for straws sticking out of a swamp!

As for the bad things - are there any?

Well for starters, you need an absolute monster of a PC for it. It was a bit jerky (but playable) on my PII 400, 64MB of RAM at 640x480 even with a huge frame around the screen! Another problem with the game is that, even with it's training level, it drops you straight in



This army gear cost a packet! The mud-esque Max Factor Army face finger paints took up the bulk of that cost!

the deep end of the game, and without any arm-bands too! You won't understand anything for the first four hours of play or so! The game also seems to just leave you with no idea of where to go next, however, I found that I soon had it figured out after a good night's sleep

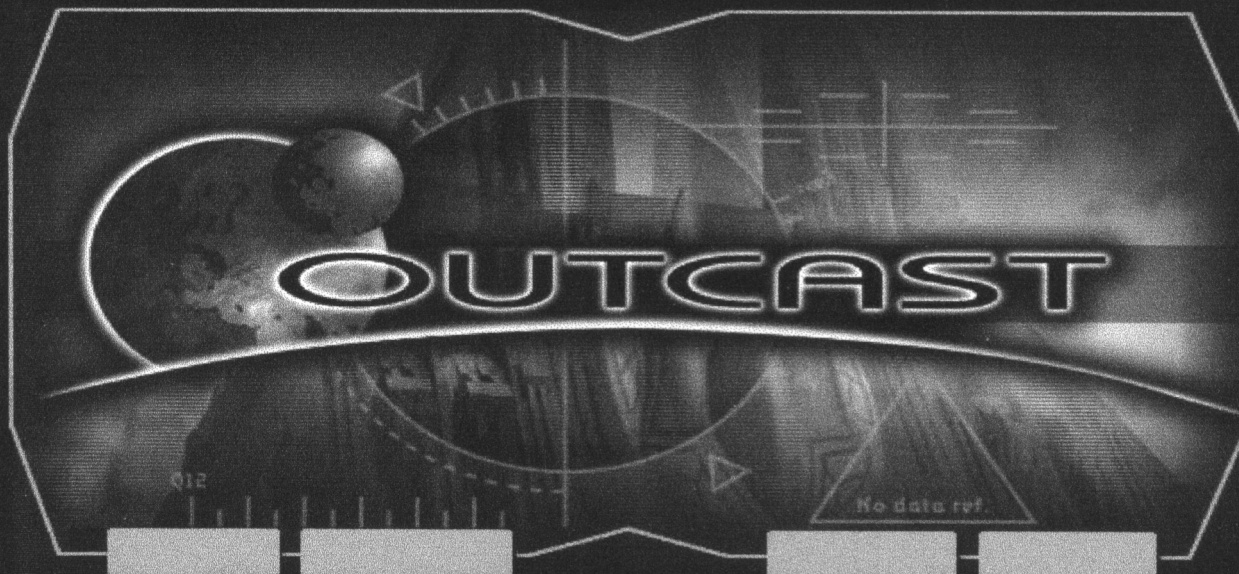
All in all, Outcast is a game that should appeal to those who have a lot of time on their hands and are a bit partial to the odd Role Playing Game. Outcast looks lovely, is big, has a diverse range of gameplay on offer, and, well....what other game has so many letters from the beginning and end of the alphabet? That alone will keep you busy for a fair while....now just how do I pronounce Shamazaar?

Text ©1999 Mark Butler. Edited by Andrew Mehta. Layout ©1999 Andrew Mehta. Outcast ©1999 Infogrames / Appeal. Developed by I-Motion. Want to use Mark's article? See the TEAM Pages.

If this game were a joke, it would be a long but funny one, with elephants in it.



Brill Blue!



THE WEAPONS:

Cutter has six instruments of destruction to play with, these are:

The HK-P12:

This is a bog-standard pistol, which can be upgraded to carry more ammo.

The UZA-AH:

This weapon acts very much like a machine pistol, and it is extremely satisfying to use!

The SLNT-B:

Basically a sniper rifle, the SLNT-B, only shoots sleep darts, <sigh!>, but it is still pretty tasty for putting down targets at a nice distance.

The HAWK MK8:

Also known as the perforator gun, <evil grin> (See? You like it already..), the HAWK_MK8 is basically just a really big gun. Tasty.

The LN-DUO 500:

And this is your grenade launcher/mortar. At first it fires prox mines, but it can be upgraded to shoot grenades and then shells. It is also known as the boomer gun - can't think why though.

The FT-74:

This little beaut is a flamethrower. Burn, baby, burn!

The Interface:

The interface in this game seems extremely intelligent. For when you are walking around, the action function is used to jump, but when facing someone, the little icon will automatically change to "Talk" mode. Further still, when you come into contact with water, the action function is used to dive. It is a little reminiscent of the interface that Zelda: Ocarina of time used - nice! But it also looks very different, as it is in the form of a projected HUD (fighter plane style) that is displayed in front of your view whether you are in first or third person. It displays the directional bearing, the action you have currently got available to you and your health.

The Map:

Now this is pretty smart as when you first activate it in a new area it scans the terrain with pretty green grid lines and it looks very nice indeed. Once this is done when you turn it on it appears in the bottom left of your screen and basically shows all the major terrain features, with little dots for people overlaid over the top. Red dots for soldiers, blue for people and yellow for twon-ha (horse like things with two legs).



"Can I have a ride on that funny looking horsy?"

"The Twon-ha are the native version of the horse/donkey. And you can ride them - but no! Wait! There is a terrible price to pay! They can only be approached and ridden if you are holding a rag soaked in the mother's sweat."

"Erugh, I don't think I want to ride after allbye now!"



Stargate anyone?

The Daokas are portals that the natives use to get around the place. They look distinctly like the Stargates from, uh..... Stargate. You simply step into the rippling portal and then - Tada(!) - you are magically transported to wherever the portal goes. Luvly juvely.

Zoom:

Nope. Sorry. The game does not have a boost but it has a lovely pair of binoculars for all your bird watching needs. Oh yes, this deluxe model also includes an adjustable zoom function and X-ray vision mode (note: the company does not accept responsibility for the utilisation of this function). If you are tired of losing sight of that evasive, hairy critter, then the spanking new lock-on function is just for you. Yes the E.V.D. field glasses are the essential equipment on any excursion into an alternate dimension.



A stroll in the countryside:

There are six lands in Outcast and these provide a diverse range of terrains on which the action takes place.

Ranzaar is where you start off your journey. It acts as a kind of training world to get you started.

Best known for: snow, being small.

Shamazaar is the first proper area that you enter; it is definitely the prettiest country.

Best known for: temples, farms.

Okasankaar is an area of water and boats, which are used instead of taxis. Lots of fishing goes on here.

Best known for: fishing, boats, and being wet.

Talanzaar is the big city, complete with beggars, patrols, market places and star wars fans.

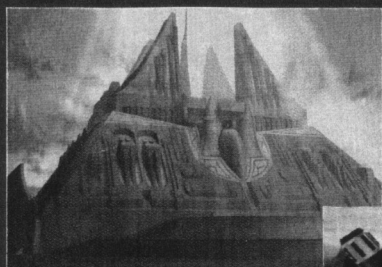
Best known for: money-grabbing gits, bad singing and being dry.

Okaar is full of trees. Yep, you guessed it - it's a big forest, with the mandatory lost tribes and monsters.

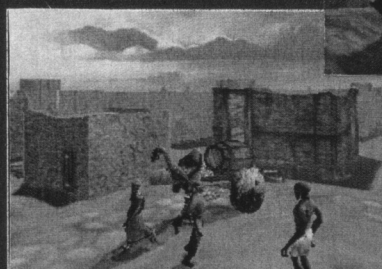
Best known for: uh, lost tribes, trees and monsters.

Motazaar is the high country. This is by far the most action packed of the levels on offer, with loads of big shoot-outs with the local constabulary.

Best known for: prisons, mines, mountains and being brown.



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SNK's

NEOGEO Pocket Colour

The Dreaming is over. A new handheld console to rival the Gameboy has arrived. A 16-bit CPU is at the heart of it, it's in full colour, has an amazing line up of games..... and it's from SNK. Weren't expecting that were you? The NeoGeo Pocket Colour is available in the U.K. now. And it promises to be amazing. United Games shifts through the hype, to see just how credible that claim to amazement is.



THE MACHINE ITSELF:

On first impressions, the NeoGeo Pocket Colour may seem like a large block of plastic, available in a variety of different snazzy designs that distinguish it from it's main rival, the Gameboy. However, upon holding the machine in one's hands, it feels surprisingly ergonomically designed, fitting the contours of your hand perfectly. The machine plays host to two action buttons and a directional button, however, the latter of which isn't the traditional cross-like D-pad we're all used to. Rather it comes across as a small action button, that can be pushed in one of eight different directions, with each directional push giving a satisfying click. It may sound weird, but trust me on this one, it works really well.

STATZ:

The NeoGeo Pocket Colour boasts a crystal clear colour screen, a 16-bit processor (for faster, more powerful processing), 40 hours of battery life, and is capable of displaying 146 colours on screen at any one time, from a palette of 4096.

You may not actually realise it, but the NeoGeo Pocket was launched in the U.K. last year, jointly distributed by SNK and Fire International. Although specialist shops got their mitts on the machine, and you could order them direct from Fire or SNK, they never really appeared in the shops that much. But now SNK are keen to promote this new colour update, to rival the monopoly the Game Boy currently holds over the handheld market.

So, here we have an ultra-stylish, 16-bit, portable, colour games console. Hang on just a moment....wasn't the Atari Lynx 16-bit?? What happened to that? What if SNK's new machine falls to the same fate?? Well, rest assured that that's not going to happen. Not only is SNK putting a lot of marketing might behind this colour update to ensure it is a success, but loads of developers are jumping on board to make games for it. And these aren't just any old developers churning out Lola Bunny-esque mediocrity. Oh no, Namco have converted Pac-man to the machine, SNK have their own Metal Slug, and Capcom are bringing out SNK V.S. Capcom - the beat 'em up! Oh, and then there's Sega....

SEGA'S VENGEANCE:

Yep, Sega has decided to fuel SNK's wonder machine with a Sonic title. It seems Japan HQ want revenge on the Gameboy for killing* the Game-Gear!

With the legendary Pac-man and now even Sonic coming out for the NeoGeo Pocket Colour, it looks set to be ultra-successful. But the Sega connection doesn't end there. Oh no. SNK are also releasing a link-up device that allows the NeoGeo Pocket Colour to be linked up to a Dreamcast machine! However, currently, only one title makes use of it: King of Fighters R2. You see, King of Fighters R2, not only lets you fight a variety of opponents, but also lets you build up character experience as you fight (i.e. the more you fight, the more experienced your fighter becomes, and the more experienced your fighter is, the better he/she is at fighting). So let's just say you buy the Dreamcast version of the game, King of Fighters 99: Dream Match. Well, you're probably going to be quite miffed that you can't use your newly acquired rock-ard fighter, whose experience you have been building up for sometime. Cue the NGPC-to-Dreamcast link up device!!! It will be possible to load your developed fighters from your NeoGeo Pocket Colour into the Dreamcast game! Then you can give your mate a major thrashing in two player mode!! It sounds excellent doesn't it? This is exactly what we like to see in the market place - a new rival with new ideas. Still, in the peak of Pokémon fever, can the NGPC survive? We think the answer is a resounding yes. SNK and the marketing bods in charge of distributing the machine, Interactive Ideas, have clearly targeted a more mature gamer, appealing to those who may see Pokémon as purely kids fodder, and wish for something a little more substantial. Pokémon has been universally acclaimed as great, but as with most Nintendo products it's in the guise of cute animals and a cartoon series. Can the older end of the gaming spectrum really enjoy such games, without hiding from jeering mates, and insisting that it isn't their's and they're merely "borrowing" the machine off a friend? Well, according to SNK, it's "Game over boys. Handhelds just grew up." and whilst the games available are accessible to all ages, targeting the higher age group gets sales from the lower age group as well, in much the same way that J17 appeals to younger women, who aspire to be 17. (Erm..whatever, Ed.). Well, you get my idea. The bottom line is that the NeoGeo Pocket Colour is the first tough competition we've had in a long while, it has enough good games coming out to be recommended, and looks like staying around for longer than the Atari Lynx ever did. The Gameboy at last has some serious competition. It'll be interesting to see how Nintendo respond....

NEOGEO POCKET COLOUR Round Up:

The NeoGeo Pocket Colour: Available in Platinum Silver, Blue, Aqua Blue, Anthracite (As in Coal-black. Ed.), Clear, and Stone Blue. It retails for £69.99.

NeoGeo Cup 98 Plus: Don't know much about this one, save it's an arcade football game with a managerial aspect.. in that you can earn money to spend on your players.

Neo Turf Master: A golf sim.

Neo Mystery Bonus: Casino series

Neo Dragon's Wild: Casino series

Neo Cherry Master Colour: Casino series

Pocket Tennis: CVG called this "Excellent fun" and "Addictive" with one player, and "Simply brilliant" with two players. Think Smash Courts on the PlayStation and you should know what to expect.

Pac-man: We saw video footage of this, and noted that the screen was scrolling, so it was hard to see some ghosts coming, but we have since been informed that you get to choose from a full screen maze, or this other scrolling view. This is the classic pellet-munching, maze-navigating, ghost-avoiding arcade game, with that video game icon Pac man at the helm of it all. Top stuff!

Metal Slug: First Mission: A great show piece for the NeoGeo, this shoot-em-up, like it's Arcade big brother is loads of fun and has a sense of humour too!

Crush Roller: I had a quick go on this game at ECTS. You basically take the role of a paint cloth and have to travel around a maze, avoiding two blue enemies, whilst trying to make your trail of pink cover the whole screen. Paint the town pink indeed! A nice alternative to Pac-man.

King of Fighters R-2: This game is mad! It's a beat-em-up, but it's really surprising the number of moves you can get out of just two buttons! It's also compatible with the Dreamcast title King of Fighters 99: Dream Match, which, at time of writing, has yet to be released. See Sega's Vengeance for more info.

Samurai Showdown: A sword battle with 15 characters on offer, each able to win special "graphic cards" which enhance their abilities.

Fatal Fury Contact: Another beat-'em-up from SNK<sigh>. However, I had a quick go at ECTS (playing as Xiingfei) and it was pretty damn decent! It features a "Power Gauge Level" which, as the press release says: "Allows a series of increasingly complicated moves to be pulled off under certain conditions, resulting in some superb combos". Top stuff!

Puzzle Bobble Mini: The great puzzler Bust A Move, also known to some as Puzzle Bobble, makes it's debut on NeoGeo Pocket Colour! A great puzzle game!

BioMotor Unitron: Once again, I had a quick go on this at the European Computer Trade Show. Like Virtual On, you take control of a battling robot. However, unlike Virtual On, it's not solely an action title. Rather this is an RPG. You enter your name, have a chat with your partner via a text box, (this sets the plot) and then you're presented with various different options such as visiting a shop, viewing the world map, or entering the Battle Arena. I chose to enter the Arena, only to be informed my Unitron wasn't ready for battle. Unfortunately, that's about all the experience I have of this title, but apparently there are five worlds that must be conquered, and you can find and buy parts to make your Unitron robot more powerful. It also features a Random Dungeon generator, which I would guess randomly generates dungeons, so they're different every time.

HELP US!

Well, it's all very good us knocking up a quick reference games round up from what we know, but what we really need are NGPC reviews. Do you own a NeoGeo Pocket Colour?? Would you be willing to contribute an article to United Games?? If so, then please see THE TEAM pages for information on submitting articles! Thankyou!

*Actually, officially, Sega killed the Gamegear themselves to concentrate on MegaDrive and Saturn titles.

Ha

A NEW KING COMES TO THE FORE!

"Ahh....my loyal subjects." began the King of the Handheld Kingdom. "I feel it has become necessary for me to inform you of the new developments that effect peasants, noblemen and clergy-men alike. Not to mention, the young, fresh-faced milk maids. You may argue this is the 20th century, and the nineties at that! But to me, it's still Medieval times...even if I have traded in my sceptre for this rather nifty dual light sabre. Swoosh, zoom! Ha-ha! Feel my wrath." said the King, swishing the sword around in the air, coughing, and collapsing to the floor. "Call the Royal Medic!!" A nearby nobleman finished off the King's speech. "What your majesty meant to say was that we are proud to launch the new guide to the handheld market. Not just Gameboy reviews, but news on the likes of the VM, NeoGeo Pocket Colour, WonderSwan and the Sony Pocket Station."

<A few hours later, the King recovers> "Ah-ha! I must inform you outsiders that my Kingdom is in mourning!" he said, addressing the readers of United Games. "One of the Bravest Knights to come out of Japan was due to grace our Kingdom, but alas, I have heard PocketStation has been...." the King pauses mid-speech, wiping away a tear, and composing himself "...murdered! By brutal savages!" Just then, a messenger burst through the door, with the official report: "Quick man, let us

Handheld Kingdom

New 32-bit Gameboy due for release in America before the end of 2000!!



Yes, it's true. Nintendo are developing a new Gameboy, featuring a 32-bit RISC CPU produced right here in good old Blighty - well, Cambridge to be precise. The machine will be backwards compatible with Gameboy and Gameboy Colour machines, but will also be capable of linking up to Nintendo's next generation machine, in much the same way Sega's Visual Memory links up to the Dreamcast.

Nintendo have teamed up with games developer Konami, responsible for such hits as Probotector, Metal Gear Solid, and Silent Hill, in order to produce new software for the Gameboy Advanced (as it's been dubbed). The amalgamation of the two companies has been named Mobile 21. Yes, it does sound like some new type of petrol, but honest to God, it's the name of their joint venture. Mobile 21 therefore will no doubt be responsible for the majority of launch games, but our informants tell us that Mobile 21 will also be beavering away on

titles for Nintendo's Next Generation machine that make full use of the home unit to handheld link up.

The company supplying the 32-bit memory-embedded chip is called ARM. Or Advanced Risc Machines, and are based in Cambridge, England! CVG magazine reported Nintendo's dealings with ARM, waaaaay back when in 1996. Their article points out, and I quote that "While ARM technology does not allow the fastest microprocessors in the world, they have the best speed to price ratio, and the best speed-to-power consumption ratio." Indeed, taking a look at the machine's specs reveals that the machine should be able to provide 20 hours of gaming, just on two AA batteries!

Still, all of this sounds wonderful...but just why would you want to upgrade from your current Gameboy in a year's time?? Well, not only will this newer model be compatible with the next generation

Nintendo machine, but it also acts as a "personal communications terminal" to quote the press release. What this means is that you will be able to link the machine up to a cellular phone in order to access the Internet, download gaming software, chat, check emails, and participate in multi-player games.

Furthermore, Nintendo are even planning a new Digital Gameboy Camera for the new machine, that allows you to see who you are battling when in multi-player mode. It sounds absolutely amazing, but no visual shots of the machine or any games have yet been released. We know it has a 32-bit chip, but whether the emphasis will remain on 2D games, or whether we'll see a PlayStation-in-my-pocket remains to be seen. Still, if it's ever to sell, it needs to be reasonably priced, so don't expect too much, as Nintendo need to keep costs down. Having said that though, we reckon SNK are wetting themselves.

know of any news!" The messenger cleared his throat and read from the scroll: "The Pocket Station lives - oh mighty King!" "Great happiness" said Duncan, the handheld King. The messenger continued: "But due to the savages' current occupation of the woods, the Pocket Station is waiting for the launch of PlayStation 2 before being

released in Europe....the logic is, sire, that with the strength of the PlayStation 2 behind it, the PocketStation can only triumph over these savages!" "Oh! Bravo! Bravo! Well done PocketStation!" applauded the King, before retiring to a nice quiet game of Pac-man on his new, trusty, NeoGeo Colour Pocket.

GAMEBOY ADVANCED. SPECIFICATIONS.....

- **CPU:** Memory embedded 32-bit RISC CPU (CPU core design by ARM)
- **LCD:** Reflective TFT Colour LCD
- **Display Size:** 40.8mm x 61.2mm
- **Resolution:** 240x160 pixels
- **Maximum colours to be displayed simultaneously:** 65,000
- **Size:** Approximately Height 80mm / Width 135mm / Depth 25mm
- **Weight:** Approximately 140g
- **Power Supply:** 2 AA Alkaline batteries
- **Battery life:** 20 hours continuous play
- **Launch date:** August 2000 in Japan, Christmas 2000 in North America and Europe.
- **Suggested Retail Price:** To be announced (tba).

Just what is 32-bit POWER???

Although the screen of the Pocket Station is more akin to a Tamagotchi screen than a Gameboy Colour screen, it should be noted that the power-house behind Pocket Station is an ARMT7T 32-bit RISC processor. We often judge a machine's power on it's CPU's bittage, which can seem quite odd really. Whilst yes, 32-bit code is faster than 16-bit, because you are processing more information in the same space of time, the increase in bits really only helps with the chip's accuracy for number-crunching work.

You see a digit can only be as long as the machine's CPU bittage. 8 bit machines can only process numbers that can be accurately represented by eight binary digits (binary digits are either "1"s or "0"s) and such machines deal with larger numbers by using a mantissa and exponent, that is a number, and then a "power to" like, 8 to the power of 10. Or 8x10. Still, the lower the bittage, the more the answers are rounded at the ends and thus give a less accurate result. The more bits a machine has, the bigger numbers it can crunch accurately. So at the end of the day, a machine's bittage is all to do with number-crunching mathematics, and

getting accurate results. A CPU's bittage doesn't necessarily go hand in hand with the machine's graphical capabilitiesor does it? Think polygons for a moment, and you begin to realise that all those triangles making up your Soul Calibre fighters on your new Dreamcast console are constantly having their positions calculated.... Therefore, a higher bittage does of course mean that it is possible to have more polygons on the screen at any one time without any nasty errors.

So on the one hand, the main CPU is merely a number crunching entity that does not directly effect the graphical performance of a machine, however, the more accurate a chip is at mathematical work, the easier it is for it to produce polygons. All in all that means that the Gameboy Advance, with it's 32-bit chip, could be the first polygon generating handheld machine. But on the other hand, it could just make way for slicker 2D games, with the 32-bit processor just included for internet processing. We'll just have to wait and see. For the moment, all we know are the specifications Nintendo and Cake-Media gave us, above. Have a read, and speculate for yourself.

Pocket Station: A definition. For those not in the know...

The Pocket Station works in much the same way as a Sega Virtual Memory system. Although primarily a memory card, it features an LCD screen that can play host to mini-sub games downloaded from PlayStation game titles. You can then play these games on the go. The Pocket Station also features clock and calendar functions. See "A New King Comes to the Fore" box-out.



WOTCHA MATEE!

I'm the King's Jester, and I'm responsible for all the fun and games going down in the Kingdom. Each issue, me and my friends will bring you all the latest, greatest, handheld reviews. We're the greatest innit-innit?? So 'ere's my first lackey Ken Flatt, with his verdict on WWF:Attitude on the Gameboy! Yowzer.....yeah, an' all that....

GBC WWF Attitude

Are!!! You!!! Ready!???
I said ARE!! YOU!!
READY!!!!???

Then for the thousands in attendance and the millions watching at home, and for United Games, I present to you my first games review since the demise of Exploding Carrot. Llllllllllllllet's Get ready to <...snip! Ed.> it!!!!!!

Sports Game
(Yes wrestling is a sport!).
Type 3 GBC Cart
(Gameboy Colour only).
Continues:
Password System
Players:
1 or 2 armchair warriors!

Like most of the Bristol Posse I am a WWF nut. I have so much WWF stuff - particularly DX items, from a football Jersey to a plush toy of Triple H that speaks when you throw it on the floor. Being impatient at Acclaim's UK release date of the N64 Attitude game I thought it'd be pretty good if I bought the Gameboy version. I am pleased with the choice of characters in the game. All of 1998's DX are here (except Chyna) and even Taka Michinoku is here too. I dunno why they kept Sable though.

Play-wise the game is okay-ish. It's a real button basher and it does seem at times that the CPU opponents don't like to lose - They even get early three counts at times. You also seem to be limited on the amount of moves you can do. The special trademark move that each wrestler has makes up for it, but only a little bit. The grappling can get tedious and reverts back to the problem that WWF Royal Rumble on the SNES had back in 1994. Still, compared to the first Gameboy WWF game that Acclaim did you can see the series has evolved. WWF Attitude is great to have as far as a portable wrestling game goes. It provides novelty value and some good laughs but not on a long term basis, unfortunately.

Verdict: Dull Grey

For die-hard WWF fans only.

WWF Attitude is ©1999 Acclaim Entertainment. This article is ©1999 Ken Flatt. This has been a shortened version. Full review available from United Game's Game eXtra service.

Woah...great review Ken. Totally. If you've got any reviews for the gaming Jester, or handheld related banter, maybe even some handheld cheats, send 'em in, and the Jester will do the rest. Until next we meet, fellow knaves.... adieu!

**The Jester, Handheld Kingdom,
PO BOX 61, West Swindon, SN5 9GR.**

Ken's



MOSH Pit

Yo Bro!
Welcome to my Mosh Pit, for all things Arcade!



Kenshin Flatt's the name and welcome to my Mosh Pit!

Hi! You may not know me, or you may even actually remember me. I was famously known for my oddly titled Exploding Carrot fanzine of two years ago. I now return to Video Games journalism with my very own page in this 'ere zine. So sit back and enjoy the ride!

RACE ON
Company: NAMCO
Players: 1 - 2
Genre: RACING GAME
£1 a credit

Yet another Namco racing title hits the arcades and this time it's not all that serious when compared to your average racer. The game's not just about winning. It's aimed at having fun by having your photo taken and put into the game when you're driving around. This is all possible thanks to the screen capture technology feature, which photographs your face as your player icon. This icon then appears in a box over your car throughout the race.

side is Red and Player 2's is Green. You've got trucks, buggies, drag racers and the like.

There's some nice tracks to this ranging from a Grand Canyon to a Fairground and they are exceptionally enjoyable to race on. Whilst this is a playable and amusing racer, the screen capture feature is responsible for most of the game's appeal. However, I found Race On enjoyable for the main fact that it's more comfier to drive than the rather awkward Ridge Racer.

There are a selection of vehicles available. Player one's

ALPINE SURFER
Company: NAMCO
Players: 1
Genre: SNOWBOARDING
£1 a credit

A classic arcade title that seems to be popping up here and there on my travels is this lovely Snowboarding gem. Like Alpine Racer you take to the snow once again. Only this time you've got a board.

I like coming back to this game every time I can get the chance to. There's always the urge to get on that board and slalom downhill whilst pulling off some wild stunts to impress anyone watching. Pulling off stunts requires timing and quick movements of you on the board rather than just

This would be pretty outstanding on a console like the N64 now that some of the upcoming games will be usable with the Gameboy Camera. Race On would be well suited to that category.

Overall this racer is worth a shot. Just don't expect anything more than a one-night-stand from it as far as long term play is concerned.

KEN SAYS 3/5

doing joystick motions like on Cool Boarders. It's like you're doing the stunts for real!

Like most modern racers with the Namco label on it, this is a quid a go and can get costly when it comes to practise. I'll give it that. Alpine Surfer is damn hard when it comes to finishing the course before the timer runs out. It also seems that if you even miss one ramp or crash at least once it will cost you.

Overall Alpine Surfer is a fun game. Even at a quid a throw it's something you'll come back to for attempting stunts and jumps. It looks great, is great, and has a great feeling through and through.

Ken Says 3/5

Ken's been trying to tame the wild animal that is Tekken TB, and if he's successfully got it jumping through hoops of fire, we'll have a review next issue. We can hardly wait. "Oil What ya' doin' with my Tekken Coin-Op? No! Not the hoop of fire!!"

RETRO ZONE

Welcome to the Retro Zone!!!

This is the part of United Games where we take a look at all the older titles that are either gathering dust in a second hand shop, lying dormant in your attic, or suffocating beneath several meters of sand in the middle of the Nevada desert (E.T. by Atari).

Well, I never owned the ill-fated E.T. for the Atari 2600/VCS and I never sold any of my stuff to a second hand shop. Nope. Instead, those old games

and consoles litter the house like...er...erm... litter would litter a ...erm...very littered place (yeah, that'll do...). As such, me and my esteemed colleague, thought it was time to brush the dust off the old machines, and give 'em a go. Of course, they were MY machines....and I had fond memories of every game I pulled out. It would, therefore, be interesting to see if these games lived up to my memories. Retro gaming - the forgotten dream? Or the forgotten Nightmare? All would be revealed in the

REVIVAL OF THE UN-DUSTED SPECTRUM!

Starring:
Andrew Mehta
The man who never sold a game in his life.

Co-starring:
Ben Evans.
The Retro Skeptic.

Chapter 1:

If you're dealing with a skeptical friend, the main aim is to impress them, and seeing as they're used to the latest cutting-edge graphics, if you start playing first to show them what's up, they are going to get extremely bored...because they're not particularly interested in what's going on. As such, I decided, the first game should be a two player game. Out came Barbarian. A quick reading of the inlay card reminded me how to decapitate, and that was all I needed to know...hahahaha!!! I was on keyboard, and Ben was on the joystick.

Mistake Number 1:

Now, when you're trying to get your mate to like a 2-player game, the first thing to do is let them win a little. Afterall, winning is an incentive for more play. Alas, I decapitated the fool! Bwoarhahaha!

Mistake Number 2:

But would Ben let this initial loss put him off forever? No - the fiend came back and decapitated me in the next game!

About the Game:

Well, whilst you could easily get the impression, that head decapitation is the best way to go, (which it is) it's often tough getting there. In both games it took a while to break through the other player's vicious attacks in order to get close enough to their head, and the rolling attack became just plain annoying - but a great way to keep your opponent down. All in all Ben liked the game, as it's the closest thing to Street Fighter 2 I own. Bring it on!!

About the hardware:

I seem to recall the joystick was playing up a little. This gave Ben the excuse that I only beat him on the first go because he was using the dodgy joystick. As such, for the second game, we swapped controls. Yes...the joystick was dodgy, so I unplugged it, wound the wire back up, put it away, and produced another joystick. "This one is for the Atari VCS...but it works on a Speccy too!" I said, plugging it in. Ben was a little pissed he had gone an entire round not knowing we had another joystick. Hahahaha!

Loading....

The next game to be loaded was Quick Draw McGraw. "I used to have this game!" said Ben, and suddenly I realised that Ben might not be the Retro-skeptic that I once assumed he was. Anyway, it turned out it wasn't the same game he had owned, but it was a similar-looking Hanna Barbera title. Anyway, we loaded the tape deck, and watched the lines scroll up and down. Well...actually, we didn't. Well...for a few seconds we did...and then there was nothing. A few more attempts were to no avail. It wouldn't load. Doh! "Never mind!" I said "That's all part of the fun! You never know which will load, and which won't! Look! Let's try another!" and so we had a look around, and Booty from Firebird looked quite appealing. This may sound odd, but I've never played that game before. That's because I bought it at a time I was going off Retro games. So I purchased it, and then it sat there unplayed, as I got stuck into Sonic R and Megaman X3 (I love that game...sniff). However, unfortunately, not even Booty would load. I checked the tape player's volume levels and we tried a few other games, that Ben fancied the look of, but once more to no avail. They wouldn't load, Doh!

Taken for a Ride:

"Look," I said. "Let's just go with a game I know will load for sure...it's my favourite and all!" and with that, I rummaged through the box of old tapes, to produce the crystal in the rough - Rider!!!

I absolutely loved this game!! It's probably the one I have the fondest memories of, besides Bomb Jack, that is! Anyway, we loaded it up - and oh joy(!) - it worked! I quickly explained what the aim of the game was. Your character descends the screen with a parachute...you have to land on one of the bikes passing beneath you. Once on the bike, you move onto the second part of the game, which plays very much like one of the old LCD car/bike games! Anyway, I went first, landed on a bike, and started the second half of the game. I avoided the mines, but for some reason, things just weren't going right at all! Finally I died on that part of the game. Ben pointed out that I had

been ignoring the left and right signs. "Those are left and right signs?" I said, looking perplexed, but also quite embarrassed that I had to have such basic things pointed out to me by another person, when it was a game I had owned for years! Anyway, it was Ben's turn, and he couldn't land on a bike, which was kinda funny. Eventually he got it, and showed me how to get the hang of the second section. Naturally, I soon picked up the idea, now able to make out the small "L"s and "R"s printed on the posts that littered the playing field. So, all ended quite happily there. I think Rider is a bit of a Groovy Green...stripped bare it's nothing special at all, but whilst playing, it just seems really cool and groovy! And addictive.

The Bomb that never was:

So far so good. Although Ben's Retro Skepticism had prevailed via criticisms of many of the game's loading abilities, he had liked most of the games that had loaded up. Time to see if he liked one of my other favourites, Bomb Jack! Now this game was the bomb in my opinion (oh har-har! Very funny! Better defuse it! Ed.) Oh be quiet! I'm not talking to you, I'm addressing the reader (yes, and I think the reader deserves better puns than that, alright?). Tsk...okay. Sorry readers. Anyway, we loaded it up, and the squiggly-line screen border was extremely mesmerising. "Look at all those amazing colours!" I exclaimed. "Urg...I can feel a headache coming on" replied Ben. Then - puff! The lines were gone...red...cyan...red...cyan...and then out. Nothing. It hadn't loaded. "That's pants," said Ben "...and smelly ones at that."

And so that concluded the Retro Games session. As soon as I allowed Ben to leave, he whizzed up the stairs to the United Games office, to play the demo of Fifa 99 one more time. Oh dear, oh dear. It looks like our friend didn't learn anything. The Spectrum rules...and we should have all bought C5s. Amen to that.
(Er...Ed.)

NEXT ISSUE: REVIVAL OF THE UN-DUSTED NES!!!

END ZONE

Welcome to the end!

Blimey, well it's been mad trying to get this issue done. All the late nights, typing away at a P.C....all the phone calls to the shops...the running up the hill to the printing centre, Service Point, and so forth - I'm just here, sitting in my chair thinking <Phew!> It's all over.

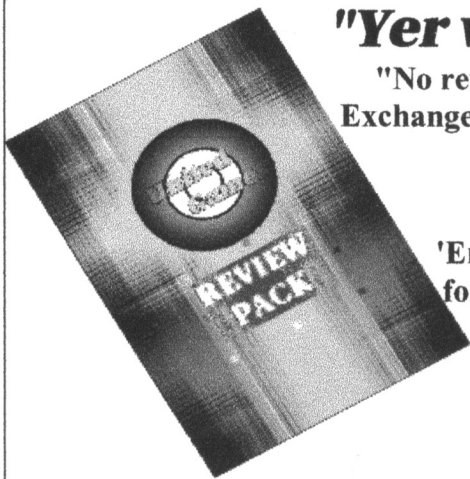
Or is it??

This maybe United Games Volume #2, but it's Issue number 1, which means this is just the beginning! Due to the demands of my A-level course, the number of pages of the next issue will be cut down slightly, but don't fear...it won't be a major thing, just enough to ensure we can deliver a quality magazine without the beginning being out of date by the time we've completed the end. Hohoho!

In previous issues, we've had a section called Fanzine Zone, where we've plugged other fanzines on the market. It's not in this issue, because we didn't have the space to waste a page on the section, but I can quickly mention them

United Games Fanzine is written for fans by fans!

If you want to contribute an article of any type...not just reviews, then the FREE review pack is for you! It'll tell you all you'll ever need to know about how to contribute to United Games. And who knows, your article might appear in the next issue of this magazine. Whether that happens or not we can guarantee it'll be available via our Game eXtra web site and postal service (see page 14). So if you're interested in contributing to this magazine...perhaps just as a one off, then pick up your FREE Review Pack!



"Yer what matee??"

"No review packs in your local Computer Exchange or Pink Planet store?? Well that's

TERRIBLE!!

'Ere! I'd send a S.A.E. off in the post for one...always a sure-fire method!"

I WANNA REVIEW PACK!

**PO BOX 61,
West Swindon,
SN5 9GR**

here, if you'd like. If you'd rather I didn't....DON'T LOOK BELOW!!!

BELOW:

EGN: This is a Nintendo fanzine ran by our N64 co-ordinator, Edd Morris. It's a great little 'zine and costs £1.

Write to: EGN, Lansdown, Roman Road, Hereford, HR4 9QW.

Pokédex:

For those with Pokémon fever, or those simply curious to know what it's all about, Pokédex is well worth a look. It's full colour and only 50p!!

Contact: Tracey Dopson at 8 Dunkerry Road, Windmill Hill, Bedminster, Bristol, BS3 4IB

Retrogamer:

Keith Ainsworth's Retro gaming fanzine is still going! Whether you're into old games or just want to know more about the industry's past, this is the one for you. It costs £1.50.

Write to: 52 Kingfield Road, Orrell Park, Liverpool L9 3AW.

Btw -United Games will soon be online at

www.game-extra.co.uk

P.S. - Thanks for buying the mag!!!

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MORE CREDITS ON PAGE 27.

WANTED!

PlayStation Co-ordinator to become a member of the Team. We're a fanzine, and don't pay - sorry!

We also want some letters from you readers for our Janitor to deal with, and finally, if we're also looking for companies willing to place adverts for a small fee. Advertising space is free if you distribute our magazine.

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by VideoGraphics

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