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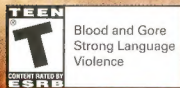


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Football Cleats

Electronic Locking
Rear Diff

The All-New 265-hp Nissan Frontier



SHIFT_capability



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COVER STORY: THE YEAR OF THE PORTABLES

Smaller is better (or at least that's what we keep telling ourselves). That's why we're bringing you info on all the hot new portables, including the PSP, the Nintendo DS and dark-horse contenders Gizmondo, Tapwave, and N-Gage. We've got all the info, plus a look at the most exciting games to watch for on each platform.

LETTERS

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editorial



I don't care what you do in the privacy of your own home; just don't involve me in your filthy sins. If you're GameSharking or Action Replaying it, using cheat codes or whatever because it'll help you get more enjoyment out of your single-player games, that's fine. But when you bring that crap online, that's when you're ruining the fun for other gamers...and for what, just so you can have a higher ranking? Seriously? Just to have a bigger number by your name? Think about how

sad that is.

We see it in *SOCOM I* and *II* for PS2, *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow* for Xbox, and now *Halo 2* on Xbox. People take advantage of glitches to do things they're not supposed to do, just to ensure an extra notch in the win column. What also results is a pissed-off gaming community (and fewer people playing the game as a result) and overworked developers who should be spending their time creating new modes, maps, or even games...not fixing obscure programming loopholes that people playing the right way would never normally see. And you know what? You

don't even get the respect that usually comes with a high ranking. Everyone recognizes you're cheating (check the message boards at bungie.net), and you yourself know how you got there. So what's the point?


So you cheatin' types, help me understand this, seriously. Why is it more fun to win by tricking out a game rather than facing your foes head-on in legitimate matchups? Cause I honestly don't get it. Send your comments (anonymous or not) to EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject head "I'm a cheater."

—Dan "Shoe" Hsu, Editor-in-Chief

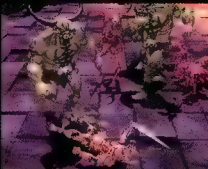
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>THE BEST GAME COVERAGE

The screenshot shows the 1UP.com website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for HOME, PLATFORMS, MAGAZINES, GENRES, SOCIALIZE, GAMES, CHEATS, and WHITE. A search bar is on the right. The main content area features a large article for Halo 2 with a sub-headline: "Halo 2: Xbox Dan Hsu played the Xbox's biggest game ever, and he'd like to tell you all about it!". Below the article is a "User Hype" section with a "Write Your Own Hype!" link and several user comments, each with a "Full Hype >" link. On the right side of the page, there are several utility links: "Rate This Game", "Create Club", "Message Board", "Print a Game", "Add to a Collection", "Track This Game", "Add to Wishlist", "Add to Faves", and "Occasion Yourself an Expert". Below these are sections for "PEOPLE WHO OWN THIS GAME" and "People Who Own This Game" with user avatars and names like "Halo Champion 117", "Bunbun", "dapper", "Tribunal", "Keeprate1X", "Solid Cloud", "Halo 2", "collegemur", "McKenna", "smoking", "Lashleigh", and "mikayb".

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Dan's Desktop Picture

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- John Cio San Francisco 39280
- Sam Kennedy San Francisco 30885
- Mike Ng San Francisco 39610

Money plays...so not money?

Dan's Games

Collection	Tracked Game	Wish List	Fave
1UP	IUP Rank	Trade	Play Online
1UP	Expert	Value	
1UP	Ulimia VIII: Pagan (Add to Fave)	0	0
1UP	Ulimia VII: The Black	0	0
1UP	Ulimia VII Part II:	0	0
1UP	Serpent's Isle (Add to Fave)	0	0
1UP	Ulimia VI: The False Prophet (Add to Fave)	0	0
1UP	Ulimia V: Warriors of Destiny	0	0

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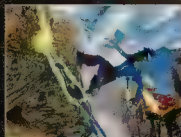
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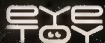
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Letters

hard rock, hard bosses, and a hard body



Gone fishin'

What the heck? In the name of all that is holy, what happened to Hsu and Chan? I didn't see them in EGM #185! Are they ever coming back? Stop playing this cruel game, you vicious wolves!

—Mike Arce

Hsu and Chan merely ducked out temporarily to make room for Norm Scott's "Bad Ways to Go." As you can see by turning to the back of this issue, none of the gristy fates described in our Halloween feature befell the comic duo. Now relax and take a deep breath....

All's not well that doesn't end well

I'm writing to express my disappointment with the ending of *Halo 2*. The end of the first *Halo* left you feeling like you had done something good in the world. You confronted the Flood, destroyed Halo, and escaped before being destroyed along with it. The sequel just doesn't give you that feeling of accomplishment.

I can understand the developers intended to leave you wanting more, and they succeeded. But the original game left us wanting more while making us feel like we'd done something important. Don't get me wrong, *Halo 2* is still a fantastic game...but I believe that a game is only as good as its ending.

—Danny Rivera

You're not the first one to mention this, Danny. Developer Bungie has responded publicly on its website that "*Halo 2*'s

Letter of the month

Sure beats an apple

My government teacher noticed that I was reading a copy of EGM at school—I've barely had time to read it otherwise. Surprisingly, he then asked me about the new *Splinter Cell* game. Before long, I come to find out that the man owns an Xbox and has never played *Halo* before. So, I loaned my copy of the game to my 36-year-old teacher so my good deed for the week. The world is a better place with adults like him playing and enjoying *Halo*. Seriously.

—David Trussell



The greater the percentage of Earth's civilians who have training with plasma weaponry, the better prepared our planet will be for alien invasion. Way to recruit 'em, David.



Congratulations, David Trussell. Your valorous good deed has earned you the Letter of the Month and a free game of our choosing. Make sure to let your teacher play it when you're done...it might just save the world.

Alternating current/ direct current issue

The other day, my friend comes up to me and says that she's going to Florida because AC/DC front man Brian Johnson was gonna be there signing autographs. I knew I had to get one, so I ran and grabbed the first thing I saw, my newest copy of EGM, and gave it to her. Three days later, she comes back and returns the mag—signed by Brian himself. Once again, you guys really helped me out. Thanks!

—Neil Davis

Evicted residents

I was shocked to learn that Capcom went back to scratch four times while developing *Resident Evil 4* (EGM #186). Big props, though, for them not pushing out a lemon like *Enter the Matrix* just to make money.

—Jared Thornbahn

ending is a cliff-hanger. Intentionally." Doesn't help much, does it?

Argh, the memories

You know that feeling you get when someone hits you in the face with a really big shovel? That's how I felt when I lost two memory cards to the PlayStation Underground Holiday 2004 demo disc. I went to post the problem on my message boards to see if anyone could help. There were about 100 different posts of people having the same issue. I found out it was the *Viewtiful Joe 2* demo that was causing the problems. They called it a "glitch." I easily lost over 1,000 hours of gameplay for...what? Ten minutes of *Viewtiful Joe 2*?

After the initial feeling of shock, followed

by anger and then sadness, I actually felt kinda happy. I now have a good reason to replay all of my games (I'm thinking about playing them in alphabetical order) and reconnect with those that have been collecting dust. So, I can spend my money on a new game instead of a new memory card for all those upcoming holiday save files. Looks like 2005 is going to be a very busy year!

—Jenna Villegas

Since not everyone who lost their saved games is as upset about it as you are, Sony figures they owe ya one. Victims who didn't destroy their disk in a blind rage can send it back to score a free game—call 1-800-345-SONY for details. ▶

POST OFFICE

Ranting and raving from our message boards. boards.1UP.com (look for *Electronic Gaming Monthly's* forums)

Hardest boss to date Gamers on the 1UP.com message boards relive traumatic boss fights that haunt them to this day.

D3adcell: "Devil May Cry has some of the toughest bosses I've seen. Nero Angelo takes the cake on his final form in Dante Must Die mode."

H-Crusher: "Jagulo, from the original *Ninja Gaiden* on the NES."

Halfbreack: "Speaking of *Ninja Gaiden*, it took me about three days to beat Rachel's sister Alma in the Xbox version of the game."

Absalom Jones: "Toughest boss? Bowser of *Super Mario* fame—I sent him flowers, I promised him a cab ride home, and he still wouldn't give me the time of day."



Videogame confessions Gamers share their dirty secrets.

Thazodlak: "First, I've never beaten the original *Super Mario Bros.*—and I'm still trying. Second, I've pictured girls in some videogames naked."

BnD_MsTr: "1) I use strategy guides. 2) I suck at most games. 3) I never beat *Super Mario Bros.* either..."

CloudStrike999: "I loved that *South Park* shooter on the Nintendo 64."

Michaelicious: "After playing *Beyond Good & Evil*, I spent a month trying to hook up with a woman who looked like the main character, Jade."

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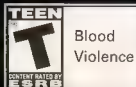
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> The ultimate RPG

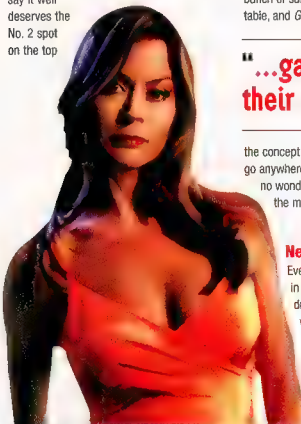
I'm a fan of role-playing games, but they always seem to be missing something. What one game doesn't have, another does. If only you could incorporate the dark/light personality decisions from *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* and great combat system of *Fable* into the massive, free-roaming environment of *Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind*, then string it all together with a *Final Fantasy*-caliber story line, you'd have an RPG to end all RPGs! I know it's a dream, but why not? I'd bet a ton of cash that gamers would be ecstatic.

—Mike Leister

Don't think the idea hasn't occurred to anyone yet, Mike. The more ambitious the game, the tougher it is to pull everything off successfully. Even so, you can bet someone out there is planning that ultimate RPG as we speak...and you can bet it'll be covered in future issues.

Gaming by the seat of your pants

I recently purchased the AK Designs Rocker chair (reviewed in *EGM* #186) and I must say it well deserves the No. 2 spot on the top



10 list of holiday gifts. Not only is it extremely comfortable, but it holds secret gaming powers.

I was stuck on a certain Dark Temple boss in *Metrod Prime 2: Echoes* the same day I got the AK. I put together the chair and took a seat to begin playing, then BAM! I murdered that dang boss in a skinny minute. I jumped back with so much joy—I was awestruck that the chair didn't fall over and fling me off! Thanks for letting everyone know about this chair.

—Drew Baker

Need for personality

I've noticed a disturbing trend with EA lately: Its games seem to be more and more devoid of soul or personality. Sure, the production values are some of the best in the business, but can you think of a single memorable character or story line from a recent EA game? I couldn't wait for *Lord of the Rings: The Third Age*, until I found out that the game is lacking in story and has character interaction with B-rare copycats of the real fellowship.

Need for *Speed Underground 2* has street lingo that sounds like it was written by a bunch of suits sitting around an executive table, and *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* hypes up



Sasquatch Watch

Ryan Chacon risked life and limb in *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* to send in this photographic evidence of the fabled *San Andreas* yeti. If you happen to spot this elusive creature, snap a shot and send it in!

outfits. Then they call us guy gamers "pathetic nerds" and "geeks who can't get dates." I'm writing to tell these females to cut these geeks some slack! Chances are, these guys tried getting dates before but fell flat when girls turned

School spirit

Hi, I'm a 12-year-old boy who lives in Southlake, TX—home of the Carroll Dragons, the No. 1 high school football team in the nation! Now, I love pro football games, but why

"...game girls are exciting to look at and don't look down their noses at the lonely males gawking at them."

—Chris M.

the concept of being a bad guy but doesn't go anywhere with it. With efforts like this, it's no wonder the mainstream doesn't view the medium as art.

—Jonathan B.

Nerdy blues

Every so often, a girl gamer writes in complaining about guys drooling over hot digital women with unrealistic proportions waltzing around in scandalous

them down and rubbed their supposed nerdiness in their face. They play these games not just for fun, but because these game girls are exciting to look at and don't look down their noses at the lonely males gawking at them. So, the next time a geeky-looking guy asks you on a date, you can decline if you wish—just don't humiliate them. It's your fault these male gamers turn out the way they do!

—Chris M.

Hear that girls? Your harsh, social rejection of nerds is only creating more awkward, socially inept nerds. Can't you see? It's a vicious cycle!

can't they just make one high school football game? I mean, come on! These game developers may think that we don't care about high school football, but one of our games against Denton Ryan was on ESPN, ESPN2, CNN, and several other TV stations. So by now you probably feel my pain and know how I feel.

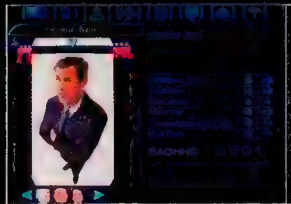
—Coleman Latham

You're not the only one who's thought of the idea, Coleman. PetitionSpot.com has a high school football petition targeting EA Sports...though there seems to be much more interest in the "Bring Full House to DVD" petition.

■ Need for *Speed Underground 2*'s Brooke Burke devoid of personality? No way!

GAME DESIGN-O-RAMA

Got proof that game design is best left to the pros? Send your concept (with art) to EGM@ziffdavis.com, subject: design-o-rama



POLITICIANS OF THE OLD DEMOCRACY

Behold, the mighty *POTOD*. *Politicians of the Old Democracy* is a game of political intrigue and awesome power struggles. Start the game by selecting any U.S. president, then guide him through his first term in office by selecting from various policies with the revolutionary "left side/right side" political-

alignment system. Whether you choose to become a Democrat or Republican, the fate of America is in your hands.

—Bren Kwib

Now, we're not going to get into any political commentary, but everyone check out what Bren thinks of W's stats....

Oops!

In our holiday buyers' guide (*EGM* #186), we recommended a GameFly gift card for \$30. Turns out the deal's even sweeter. A card for one month of gift rentals is only \$20.

Another minor error in the same issue on page 81, we confused *Metrod Prime Hunters* Designer Richard Vardi with Rich Brody, who turns out to be a Yiddish lyricist. Our apologies to both parties. #6

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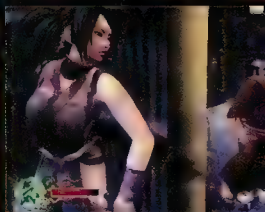
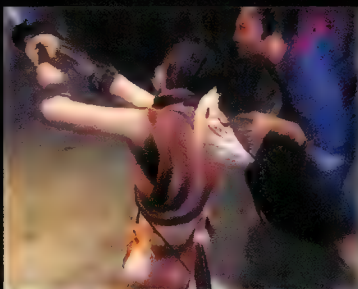
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-Japanese proverb



PlayStation 2





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gaming news, previews, relationship advice, and other stuff



LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE

Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo set up camp and provide intel on their next-gen console battle plans

Mario preparing bob-omb air strikes, squads of Master Chiefs piling into Warthogs, an army of Jaks (and wise-cracking sidekick Daxters) all locked and loaded—

must be a next-gen console war a-brewin'. Even though the real shots won't be fired until late 2006 (analysts believe Microsoft will launch Xbox 2 at the end of 2005, with Sony and

Nintendo releasing their new systems one year later), we headed to each company's HQ for an early briefing on its next-gen strategy. And with publishing powerhouse Electronic Arts offering

a peek at what these next-gen games could look like, we can't help but be excited about the future. War: This is what it's good for.

—Bryan Intihar and Mark MacDonald

»» SONY RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE COMPANY IS TEAMING UP WITH GRAPHICS CHIP MANUFACTURER NVIDIA TO CREATE A GRAPHICS PROCESSING UNIT (GPU) FOR PS3, WHICH

SONY

Next-gen battle plan: overwhelming force



The current console leader isn't in a rush to release a new home system, but Sony Computer Entertainment America President Kaz Hirai says that when the next-gen machine does come our way, it will pack some power.

EGM: Sony announced last July that it would unveil the "next-generation PlayStation" by the end of March 2005. Is that still the plan?

Kaz Hirai: As far as I know, yes. I spoke to [Sony Computer Entertainment Interactive President and CEO] Ken [Kutaragi] a few weeks ago, and that's what he told me.

EGM: What will we see at this debut?
KH: If I told you, I think Kutaragi would take me and you out to the parking lot and shoot us. [Laughs] But, no—joking aside, we've not really talked that much in detail about [the debut], both internally and externally. I can promise that it'll be a huge event.

EGM: Sony also said the new console would be at the Electronic Entertainment Expo [aka E3, May's annual gaming trade show]. How will that showing differ from the debut?
KH: Once we nail down the details of the premiere event, that'll probably determine what we talk about or show at E3.

EGM: When we spoke at the last E3, you mentioned that your next console must "offer a quantum leap in the user's experience." What's your definition of a quantum leap?

KH: I use that phrase very loosely because to some people, a quantum leap would be graphics, to others it'll be how seamlessly integrated the experience is from the online perspective. So the phrase could mean a lot of different things to different people. At the end of the day, we are going to provide a

KH: Online is going to be an integral part of any console going forward. It's almost going to be like an air-conditioner or an airbag in a car: It used to be nice to have, it used to be somewhat of a luxury option; now it's standard in almost every car—you almost take it for granted. It's an integral part of driving a car, basically, and I think online is going to be that way as well.

EGM: How do you feel about downloadable content?

"We were never the first to market. Remember Saturn? Remember Dreamcast? That was supposed to be 'the' next-generation online console and we saw what happened there."

—Sony Computer Entertainment America President Kaz Hirai

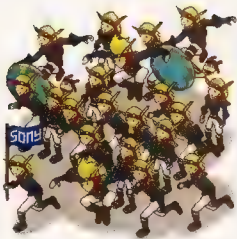
palette from a technology and platform standpoint so that the content creators can take advantage of those palettes and create what they believe in a quantum leap. We just want to make sure that if we provided four colors with the original PlayStation and we provided 12 colors on PS2, with the next generation we're providing all 64 colors like the big Crayola box that we all wanted to have in elementary school.

EGM: Do you think online will play a bigger role with the PS2 successor?

KH: Going forward, because we want to make online even more of a mass-market proposition, we're looking to come out with other devices that you can store data from your downloads [on] that's more affordable than what we have currently in the market in the form of the HDD [PS2 hard drive].

EGM: What's the likelihood that your next home system will be backward compatible?

KH: As long as adding backward compatibility doesn't come at a substantial cost or



take away some other functionality, I don't see any reason why we shouldn't or we wouldn't want to do that with the next-generation PlayStation.

EGM: Most in the biz feel that Xbox 2 will launch in 2005. Do the moves of the competition affect when you'll release your next console?

KH: We've always stuck by what we believe is the right game plan for ourselves, and more importantly, for the third-party publishing community, retailers, and consumers. We don't go changing consoles every three, four, or five years. [Actually, PS2 launched roughly five years after the original PlayStation. —Ed.] We're not concerned with who's coming out first or who's coming out last. And if you look back at history, we were never the first to market. Remember Saturn? Remember Dreamcast? That was supposed to be "the" next-generation online console and we saw what happened there.

What EA thinks its *Need for Speed* racing series can look like on the upcoming wave of consoles.



Incomplete Transaction

Last spring, Hirai pledged that Sony would grow the PS2 online community with features such as eBay-style auctions for in-game data so, say, you could buy and sell *Gran Turismo 4* cars. Unfortunately, nothing like that has come to fruition. He says auctions and additional online features remain in the works. "We want to get it right the first time around. We're not going to jump the gun and bring out something we're not happy with." >



■ A developer within EA tells us that, yes, games on Xbox 2 and PS3 will look as amazing as this concept image of Madden, which the company showed during a recent financial meeting.



Unfulfilled Fantasy

Mere weeks after Kim told us how excited he was for *True Fantasy Live Online*, the company canned the project. So what happened? "Any massively multiplayer game is a pretty ambitious undertaking," professes Kim. "But at the end of the day, in terms pulling off that vision, we didn't feel like we could make that happen, not to the level that we feel we have to deliver on the first-party side."

MICROSOFT

Next-gen battle plan: stay one step ahead



Even though Microsoft Game Studios General Manager Shane Kim won't confirm a late 2005 launch

for the Xbox successor, he's confident that the console will break boundaries like the company's first entry.

EGM: A built-in hard drive, a broadband Internet connection, progressive scan—these are all great features that target a relatively small audience. Do you think Xbox was ahead of its time?

Shane Kim: I don't think we're ahead of our time, but rather we led the transition into this generation and have been a leader in terms of what's possible from a game standpoint. We have no regrets in terms of the investments that we've made in any of those areas because they're going to be pervasive parts of the gaming and entertainment experience going forward.

EGM: Will the next console be as ahead of the technological curve as Xbox?

SK: Well, I think we always want to see the underlying hardware be as powerful as

possible, see that power in the hands of the creators. But no matter what the hardware looks like, it comes down to the creators.

EGM: EA recently released images of *Madden* and *Need for Speed*, saying

"One thing we like to talk about is blurring the lines between single-player and multiplayer gaming."

—Microsoft Game Studios General Manager Shane Kim

that visuals of this high quality will be possible on the next-gen consoles. How accurate is EA's assessment?

SK: I haven't [seen the images], but I heard they were very impressive and are pretty good indicators of what's possible. But even without seeing them, I would like to believe that we're going to be able to exceed that.

EGM: How would you like to see Xbox Live, Microsoft's online gaming hub, grow in the next few years?

SK: We've got a great foundation, and I think there is the ability to make it more accessible to a broader audience, and that comes in lots of different forms, like usability and the kind of content that's available. One thing we like to talk about is blurring the lines between single-player and multiplayer gaming. I think that's going to be a trend that you're going to see.

EGM: One of the major features of Xbox Live is downloadable content. Now let's say your next system won't have a hard drive, as some are reporting. Is there technology available, whether it be some special memory or flash card, which would allow you to support this feature?

SK: Absolutely. And I think you have to be able to make sure you enable those scenar-

ios, especially if you're as committed to downloadable content as we are. The other thing is that you make sure your definition of downloadable content is broad enough, because content doesn't just have to be the large downloads that we're more familiar

EGM: Then you're telling us that there are more first-party titles planned for Xbox other than those three games?

SK: I didn't say that. I'm just saying, you know, that there's lots of good reasons why anybody would consider holding off on

with today. Things will get smaller and people will be able to buy items in smaller quantities and sizes in the future as well. So that will put less strain on the storage requirements.

EGM: Sony and Nintendo have both stated that they will unveil their next systems in 2005. When will we hear some concrete news about Xbox 2?

SK: Unfortunately, I can't talk about any [specifics] with respect to our next-generation console.

EGM: Well, we had to ask. A lot of industry folk feel that Microsoft is abandoning the Xbox platform after April. Can you tell us what major first-party games you have planned for the second half of 2005?

SK: Gosh, I think Xbox has got a great future. Just because we haven't announced anything beyond *Conker*, *Jade Empire*, and *Forza [Motorsport]* doesn't mean [we're abandoning the Xbox platform].

EGM: So why haven't there been any new game announcements?

SK: Well, we're still pretty far out from those [second-half] titles. You could argue that [the holiday] isn't the right time to announce things for the summer or fall.

announcements. There are definitely cases where you can start talking about titles too early, and it can come back to bite you a little bit. The marketing guys are always trying to figure out when is the right time to start launching the buzz.

EGM: Moving on to Rare, Microsoft spent a lot of money to acquire this developer, but so far, we've seen only one game [*Grabbed by the Ghoules!*] from the studio. What would you say to the studio who has lost confidence in Rare?

SK: I was at Rare last week, so I'm very bullish [about the studio], especially after visiting and seeing it even more closely and talking to the guys there. They didn't lose any of that creativity and expertise overnight just because they became part of Microsoft. [Laughs] People should have a lot of faith in [Rare's] future, and I can tell you that from what I've seen and what's in the pipeline, Rare fans should be absolutely excited about what's coming.

EGM: So you just visited Rare—can you tell us how *Perfect Dark Zero* is looking these days?

SK: I have no idea what you are talking about. [A member of Microsoft's public relations department laughs.]



...WAITING FOR A SLIMMER XBOX? DON'T BOTHER. "FOR US, IT'S NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT CHANGING THE FORM-FACTOR AND USING THAT TO DRIVE OUR SUCCESS," KIM SAYS. ...



NINTENDO

Next-gen battle plan: innovate and “kick ass”



• This fall, before Nintendo puts all its efforts into the next gen, the company will bring a new Legend of Zelda to GameCube.



Nintendo is looking to release its next console around the same time as Sony (late 2006), and like its latest handheld, the company is thinking way outside the box. And according to Nintendo Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing Reggie Fils-Aime, Mario and his friends are more than ready to kick some booty.

EGM: What's your strategy heading into the next generation of consoles?

Reggie Fils-Aime: Last E3, we talked about Revolution, the code name for our next home console system. And we talked about that we believe what the consumer wants is something innovative, something new and different. We've gone on record saying we'll be sharing much more detail [on Revolution] come E3, and that's our timing. We think sharing it before then, frankly, shows too much to our competition. Which, unfortunately for us, have a legacy of taking smart ideas that we develop and bringing them to the marketplace rather quickly.

EGM: What kind of innovation are we talking about?

RA: Well, the concept of a home system today is defined as hardware that you tether to a box, and you are tethered to it via a controller; we think that's an old paradigm. We think that the consumer wants something much more innovative than that. Coupled with the concept of strong community and immersion into the gameplay, we think that's what we need to deliver on from a consumer proposition standpoint.

last E3 with DS. We let people see it, touch it, get a strong reaction to it. Certainly that's what we're looking to do with Revolution.

EGM: What about the role of online with the next system?

RA: What I would say is we are certainly working to deliver a sense of community, is it going to be executed online? We're not sure—I'm not so sure. I'll be able to certainly say more over the next couple of months as I spend quite a bit of time with

based online experience. We will share much more come E3.

EGM: A recent Nintendo patent involved a machine that would allow you to surf the Web, watch television, and play games all at the same time. Does that have to do with Revolution?

RA: We create new technologies and apply for patents all the time. So I wouldn't assume any patents that we create are for Revolution. But we're going to continue to

“Look at what we did last E3 with DS. We let people see it, touch it, get a strong reaction to it. Certainly that's what we're looking to do with Revolution.”

—Nintendo Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing Reggie Fils-Aime

EGM: What can we expect from Revolution's debut at E3? Playable games? Technology announcements?

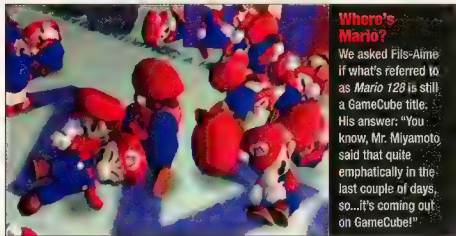
RA: That we're going to go there and kick ass and take names. I'm not gonna tell you any more other than look at what we did

[Nintendo President] Mr. Irwata and [Mario creator] Mr. Miyamoto. I know Mr. Miyamoto has made comments about online specifically, but there's a lot of work to be done. And as we, from a Nintendo of America perspective, look at the way technology is moving, we're certainly providing a point of view as to other ways to deliver a sense of community that, frankly, better fit with where today's consumer is going.

innovate, and we're going to continue to push the envelope in what we can provide to the gamer, to the consumer, that in the end delivers on three things that we believe drive this industry: great immersive games, new experiences, and value.

EGM: What will it take in the next cycle to catch Sony and become No. 1?

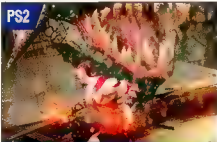
RA: We need to deliver an innovative experience that the consumer wants. We need to deliver it at the same time as our competition when the [console] transition happens, meaning we can't be late to the market. And we need to fully enroll the best third-party developers to make great games for our system. If we successfully execute those three things, I guarantee you we will have a great system, huge volume, high profitability, and a great proposition. But we have to do all three. >



• A PORTABLE SUPER SMASH BROS.? MAYBE. "I WOULD LOVE TO SEE [THE SERIES] ON DS," SAYS FILS-AIME. "WITH WIRELESS PLAY CAPABILITIES, IT COULD BE HUGE FUN." WE AGREE. ...

THE CURRENT BATTLE

The big three still have plenty of ammo left in the current fight for your living room



PS2

God of War

March 2005 — This slick *Devil May Cry*-inspired actioner transports you to a time when Greek gods ruled. Sony CEA President Kaz Hirai says, "It's a very exciting title that we have high hopes for. If you're looking for red meat, you've got it here."



PS2

Rise of the Kasai

March 2005 — The follow-up to the cult hit *The Mark of Kri* hacks and slashes its way to PS2 this spring, with sliney hero Rau teaming up with his little (and just as deadly) sister Tai. Sadly, the two-player online mode has been canned.



XB

Forza Motorsport

April 2005 — It's about freakin' time Xbox owners got their own *Gran Turismo*. This driving simulation includes rides from all the big-name manufacturers, including BMW, Porsche, and Ferrari. And unlike *GTA*, it's playable online.



PS2

Gran Turismo 4

February 2005 — Even with its online features getting axed during the last few months of development, *GT4*'s 650 vehicles, realistic driving physics, and countless customization options should be enough to get your PS2's motor running.



GC

The Legend of Zelda

Fall 2005 — Like a proud papa, several fanboys shed a tear when they first saw Link all grown up and looking ever so manly in this most-wanted *Zelda* adventure. Nintendo exec Reggie Fils-Aime professes this one "will deliver on the high expectations."



XB

Jade Empire

March 2005 — Developer BioWare traded in its lightsabers (*Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*) for fists of fury with its next action-RPG, which plunges you into ancient China. Microsoft's Shane Kim expects *Jade* to be "the definitive RPG for the platform."



GC

Mario Baseball

Fall 2005 — Few jocks can call themselves three-sport star athletes, but that's exactly what Mario has become on GameCube. The plumber will step to the plate with a story-driven challenge mode, a host of minigames, and a baseball encyclopedia.



GC

Kirby (working title)

Fall 2005 — Unfortunately, all we know so far about the pink marshmallow's next starring role is that Nintendo's calling it an action-adventure title, and that at least one of the game modes will support up to four wannabe suckers.



XB

Conker: Live & Reloaded

March 2005 — Looks can be deceiving, as this cute and cuddly platformer (which first graced the Nintendo 64) is full of potty humor and profanity-filled dialogue. The team-based multiplayer mode has also been totally rebuilt and will include online play.



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SNAKE TALES

Metal Gear's papa talks Snake Eater secrets and the future

If we get bad reviews or bad comments [about our game], we become very depressed," jokingly admits *Metal Gear Solid* mastermind Hideo Kojima. Fortunately, the overwhelming response to *MGS3: Snake Eater* (PS2), the latest edition in Konami's storied stealth-espionage series, has left him with little reason to pop some Prozac. But as much as we enjoyed this sneakfest, it left us with several burning questions. Here's what Kojima had to say on:

The Boss and The Sorrow's Offspring

Hideo Kojima: Their child is in *Snake Eater*. [makes a motion of twirling imaginary revolvers]

The End's Parrot

HK: Yes, the parrot from *MGS3* is related to the parrot you see in *MGS2*. It's like the grandfather of the one from the earlier game. " [In case you missed it, Emma, Otacorn's kid sister, has a pet parrot in *MGS2*. —Ed.]

Colonel Volgin's "Kuwabara, Kuwabara" Chant

HK: It's like a little spell. There was this historical figure in Japan called Mr. Kuwabara who was afraid of lightning. So Volgin, with all his electricity, doesn't want any rain or lightning to hit him.

Snake Eater's Bosses

HK: Some that didn't make it in were a moss guy and a lizardman.

The Camera

HK: We're aware that the current camera system limits us in terms of expression. So we don't know [in future *MGS* games] if it would be right behind the character, but we think it would change.

The Next *MGS* for Consoles

HK: In *Snake Eater*, you never get the chance to meet Otacorn or Meryl [Solid Snake's red-haired love interest from *MGS1*], and I'd like to give them a chance to do their thing again. If we were to have another game, most likely it would be one set in the future rather than where *Snake Eater* left off.

GRUDGE MATCH

It's not you, it's me



HALO 2

YOUR GIRLFRIEND

It's happened before: She wants to cuddle while you've got virtual worlds to save. You might normally fly the flag of surrender to avoid a confrontation, but this is *Halo 2*, gents—what would Master Chief say to your sensitive-male kowtowing? Let's look at the facts, to help devise a make-up or break-up strategy.

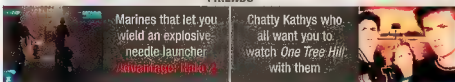
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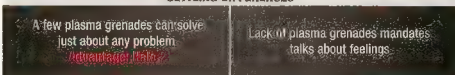
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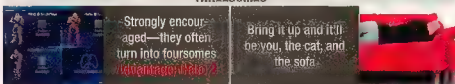
FRIENDS



SETTLING DIFFERENCES



THREESOMES



FINANCIAL LIABILITY



WINNER: HALO 2

We're definitely no Ann Landers, but it's pretty clear which relationship is better for your continuing happiness. So turn on your Xbox and resign yourself to the couch—trust us, it's better this way.



BLOODSHED WAITS AT THE END OF THIS RAINBOW

Military types shooting holes in terrorists doesn't quite have the novelty it used to, but *Rainbow Six: Lockdown* hopes to reinvigorate the genre this spring. While the single-player experience features the same squad-based, first-person shooting *Rainbow* fans have come to love, the

innovative, Xbox Live-only career mode allows you to customize your unit's look, earn money for new weapons, and acquire special skills as you play. And while PS2 owners will have to settle for a standard-issued versus mode, they'll receive extra missions.



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Blood
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence

PlayStation.2



FIRST LOOK: MEDAL OF HONOR: DOGS OF WAR

Platforms: PS2/XBOX
 Publisher: EA Games
 Developer: EA L.A.
 Release Date: Mid-2005

Wage war your own way in EA's next WWII tour of duty

If you play through a pile of WWII shooters, catch a few reruns of *Hogan's Heroes*, and watch *Saving Private Ryan*, you can assemble a basic impression of what surviving World War II was like. You have your triumphant Allied tanks, your hilarious pratfalls at POW camps, and your Matt Damon soldier-boy type who sacrifices himself for the cause. These re-creations offer up slick entertainment, but not a complete picture of the war. "Many games overlook the early war period, after Dunkirk and before D-Day," says *Medal of Honor* executive producer Dan Winters. "But to do so ignores vital and thrilling scenarios from the dark period early in the war, when an Allied victory was by no means certain."

Along these lines, EA's upcoming *Medal of Honor: Dogs of War* attempts to inject some reality into the conflict. The first-person shooter series returns to Europe this time (after a disastrous trip to Japan in 2003's *Rising Sun*), casting you as a single army lieutenant leading a hand in WWII's critical early battles, starting with a surprise commando raid on the German-held port of St. Nazaire.

Dogs of War, however, marks a step away from the scripted shooting-gallery feel of previous entries: Instead of acting by themselves, both Axis and Allies work in



Yep, that's a Nazi alright.



The dudes sporting the salad-bowl hats are on your side.

squads, each with their own battlefield objectives. You control your squad's movements during combat, and you're free to choose what type of squad you're heading up before most missions—whether it's an infantry crew, sniper team, or heavy-weapons outfit. Where you lead your boys is entirely up to you: "Dogs of War is a far less linear experience than its predecessors," says Winters.

This squad-based approach will likely render *Rising Sun*'s "enemies lining up to be shot" phenomenon a thing of the past, but it'll also help make hostiles seem much more alive than before. Instead of Aryans bull-rushing you on sight, you'll find enemy squads laying down suppressive fire, plant-

"Dogs of War is a far less linear experience than its predecessors."

—EA LA Producer Dan Winters

ing explosive charges, or teaming up with other squads to accomplish their objectives. "Since these squads react not only to their own scripting, but also dynamically to the player's position and actions, the enemy behavior is different every time, often dramatically," explains Winters.

If this makes *Dogs of War* sound complicated, don't throw your helmet down yet—this is still very much an arcade experience

More serious sins like Ubisoft's upcoming *Brothers in Arms* probably don't have "nemeses," superpowered SS guards that hunt you down in certain stages. They also don't have a "Rally Meter" that fills up over time and lets you unleash an "adrenaline-fueled attack on the enemy," as Winters puts it. Who knew that WWII infantrymen could pull off crazy special attacks? **B+**

—Kevin Gifford

This isn't an army of one—here, you control an entire squad of soldiers.

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Multiple Fighting Styles to Choose From

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the game begins,
the badass meter
is likely to
flat-out shatter!"

—PSM



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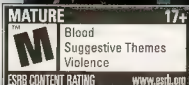
GUNSLINGER STYLE
Shoo away enemies from all angles

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PlayStation 2



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■ PS2

SAMURAI WESTERN

Wasn't this a movie? Nope—you're probably thinking of the already-forgotten Jackie Chan vehicle *Shanghai Knights*. This game, starring purebred samurai Goujrou as he hunts down his gunslingin' brother in the Wild West, has a much stronger pedigree: The folks behind the *Way of the Samurai* series are developing it.

"People liked the simple swordfighting in our other games," explains Planner Tomonori Kawanishi. "But we're speeding it up for the Western motif, because how can you dodge bullets if you're swiping at someone so slowly?"

Good point. Will we see it here? *Rising Zan* (PS1) was the last samurai-Old West game released Stateside, but maybe *Way of the Samurai 2* publisher Capcom will give this lonely cowpoke a chance.



■ PS2

FU'URI NO BAKUMATSU-DEN

I can't begin to pronounce that. No worries, most of us can't, either. While Americans were busy fighting each other in the Civil War, Japan had a crisis of its own: Groups of samurai were trying to overthrow the shogunate and build a modern, Western-style government. This is called the *bakumatsu* period, and this free-roaming action-RPG lets you play out the story from both sides of the conflict.

How's this chop-socky rebellion work?

Imagine a game similar to *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* with fewer +2 broadswords and more 3-foot-long *uchigatana*, and you've got roughly the right idea. Got a yen for it? Then pray to the gaming gods that someone picks it up for a U.S. release.

WHAT'S PLAYING IN THE

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

It's end-of-the-year time as I write this (not end-of-the-world time, that's April 24), and there just isn't enough to look forward to in PC gaming. But that's because the best stuff is finally being released. Hoovey!

Half-Life 2



After more than five years in the making, you can finally play what may be the best first-person shooter ever. As gun-toting scientist Gordon Freeman, you plow through a game that relies as heavily on thrilling scripted moments as the first. If there were ever any doubt that developer Valve crafts the best FPS levels in gaming, *Half-Life 2* stomps those doubts dead, especially with levels that rely on the most incredible physics engine you'll ever see. No game creates such a believable, compelling world.

Vampire: The Masquerade—Bloodlines



Bloodlines uses *Half-Life 2*'s bright and shiny Source game engine to create the most unbright and unshiny game world you could imagine—a dark and desperate netherworld burning with loathing, suspicion, and fear. And that's just fine. This huge, blood-sucking RPG (roughly 50 hours of play) redeems a license that made the leap from pen-and-paper to PC and landed smack on its undead face some four years ago. *Bloodlines* incorporates first- and third-person action, stealth play, logical puzzle solving, an intense game world, hardcore roleplaying, significant replayability, and more.

—Robert Coffey,
Computer Gaming World

PREVIEW GALLERIES: LET IT BLEED

THE SUFFERING 2

PS2/XB • Midway • Fall 2006 — The second installment of this gore-soaked horror shooter deepens its impact by borrowing a page from LucasArts' epic RPG *Knights of the Old Republic*—this time, protagonist Torque can play as either a hero or a villain, each with unique powers and a different visual appearance. Either way, expect plenty of the membered limbs and nightmarish abominations.



TENCHU: FATAL SHADOWS

PS2 • Sega • February 2005 — Three publishers, six years, and five games later, these stealth assassins keep on truckin'. This latest chapter finds saucy female ninja Ayane on a quest to rescue her male counterpart Bikkuraman from enemy hands. Along the way, she recruits a fresh-faced young gal, Rin, to assist in the death dealing. Expect plenty of lipsticking, throat slitting, and female empowerment.



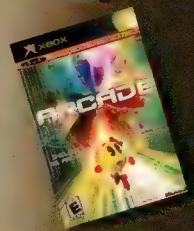
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AFTERTHOUGHTS: HALO 2

New maps, dodging the sword, and grabbing the flag through walls: You've got multiplayer questions, Bungie has the answers

In the world of videogames, two months is a lifetime. Unlucky games can end up in the shallow grave of a bargain bin, while even great titles are typically cast aside to make way for the Next Big Thing after just a few weeks. And yet here we are, two months after the release of *Halo 2*, still hopelessly addicted to its fantastic multiplayer game. In fact, in some ways, the Xbox's premier first-person shooter has gotten better with age: Players know the maps, teams have strategies, and the ranks next to people's gamertags actually mean something. What better

EGM: That was my next question. A lot of people are under the mistaken impression that the game lists the date "February 9" in the credits if you finish it on Legendary difficulty...how did that rumor get started?
B.J.: I honestly don't know what it is, where it came from, who started it. But everyone's latched on to it. [Some people are saying it's the date for] *Halo 3*, or it's a new downloadable campaign, or it's the real ending of the game. A lot of people think that the game is not over and there's an entirely new mission that is going to be downloaded for single player, or there'll be an add-on disc that will be sold, or it's a

works in the game engine, it's not possible for us to download an entire single-player mission.
EGM: You must get all kinds of stupid rumors....
B.J.: I've heard a lot of crazy stuff. Like, in one of the featurettes on the [collectors' edition] DVD, there's a segment of video that was taken very early on. And at that particular point in time, the Elite models [in multiplayer] were all Arbiter models. Now people think the Arbiter is an unlockable character—like if you beat the game on Legendary in like two hours, you can play as the Arby in multiplayer. [Laughs]

what they want and play with random strangers. Those people have really valid complaints, no question about it. But we made a conscious decision to stick to our guns. Because doing it any other way would have not only pulled too many people out of matchmaking to make it effective, but it also would have taken our time and focus away from making this matching system work.
EGM: It's also the more people you have playing matchmaking games, the less lag there is for everyone, right?
MM: Exactly. You know, you go on [Internet] forums and you see people saying, "How come Bungie can't give us our custom game browser—there are 100,000 people playing it on Xbox Live right now!" But designing a system for Friday nights when there are 100,000 people on, that's just irresponsible. We have to design for the low end, because people still want to find a good game when there're only 10,000 people on at 5 in the morning. 'Cause if you take that [pool of] 10,000 people and divide it up into our nine matchmaking playlists, then subdivide it by rank, subdivide it by who you'd have a good connection to...the pool of people you have to play against is actually a lot smaller than you think.

"People have really valid complaints [about the matchmaking system], no question about it."

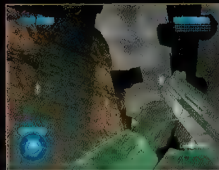
—Bungie Multiplayer Lead Max Hoberman

time, then, to sit down with the developers at Bungie and discuss the ups and downs of *Halo 2*'s still-evolving online experience. For more of the interview, head to egmextras.1UP.com.
EGM: So you guys must be busy getting ready for February 9, right?
Community Manager Brian Jarrard: [Laughs] Honestly, I don't know where that date ever came from.

cliffhanger [ending], yes. But that doesn't mean that we have the rest of the game already done and can just hand it to you in February or whatever.
EGM: Bungie has already said there won't be new single-player levels added on later.
B.J.: Yeah, we've confirmed that. It's not possible. It won't happen. Within the confines of how the downloadable concept

EGM: Have all the complaints about how you can't browse through custom games died down since release?
B.J.: I [think] people warmed up to it. It's very jarring at first. People don't like change. Same thing happened with our [early test version]. But after a month, even our most vocal opponents started saying, "OK, this kind of works. It's fun."
Multiplayer Lead Max Hoberman: [Players] want to be able to play exactly

EGM: What are the complaints you've heard you feel are valid?



Descend in Ascension to find this tricky little hiding spot. Great for Oddball.

Halo 2 Multiplayer Frequently Asked Questions (Now with answers!)

How do I stop the "friends" on my friends list from joining my custom game online?

As party leader, go to Game Setup, then hit X for privacy options.

What do those symbols mean in the bottom center of my screen?

For capture the flag, the yellow flag means your team's flag is loose somewhere but not in the enemy's hands. A red flag means the other team has your flag. Go find it! In territories, status bars show who's controlling the plots.

Why do I have so many different rankings?

You get a separate rank for each match-making game type (rumble pit, head-to-head, etc.). The highest number of all those is your one overall ranking.

Does it count as a loss if I quit out of a ranked game early?

Yes. You automatically get last place.

What's the highest level possible?

50.

Content Manager Frank O'Connor: The ones I would agree with are things like sometimes the plot was difficult to understand. There were technical issues that we knew about. I mean, we made some compromises [graphics that pop in during cut-scenes] to have no loading.

B.J.: One thing that, oddly enough, seems like it kind of backfired, at least for some subset of the audience, is that we only ever talked about Covenant coming to Earth and you defending it. And we now know that's only two levels in the entire game, and that kind of backfired, because we find a lot of people have been bitching and saying, "Why am I not fighting on Earth? I thought I got to defend Earth. Why can't I defend Earth?"

EGM: We've heard that one a lot...

B.J.: And we thought [how it is now] was really cool! Because you think you're gonna get this, and the game goes off and does other cool things. But some people are like, "I don't give a s---" about the Covenant! I want to play on Earth! I want the stuff [in the demo] two years ago!"

EGM: We also kept hearing the needler would be more powerful, but it still seems underpowered.

B.J.: Personally, I like needlers mostly as distraction or diversion weapons, because I can try to spam the map, spam a bunch of needlers at someone to kind of freak them out and piss them off.

Why can my opponents listen in on my team-only chat?

Team chat (White button or Up on the D-pad) will always go to your teammates (or all players in a free-for-all). But proximity voice is always on, no matter what, so enemies can hear you if they're close enough. If you're really clever, you can use this to your advantage....

Do I have to hold the Team Chat button down the entire time I'm talking?

No. Hit it once and chat away. After you stop, you'll hear a brief static click to indicate the chat has closed.

How come my entire team's lagging, but the other team's not? (Or, how come enemies seem to do things in front of me without me seeing?)

They may be cheating. Leave appropriate feedback on them in the Players menu (next to your friends list), then report them on bungie.net. They could get banned if proven to be cheaters.

MH: The needler was more powerful in the beta, so we actually had to cut it down a bit. If you had dual needlers, it was just instant death. But now, I think by itself the needler isn't very effective, but dual-wielded I will gladly run around with it. It's not as powerful as any of the pistol combos or the plasma rifle, but it's still really effective.

EGM: On the other end of the spectrum, you have the energy sword...

B.J.: A lot of people think that the sword is too powerful, [that it] can't be stopped. And I think that's a misconception, because people who know how to play now, clearly there are a number of different combinations and ways to beat the energy sword.

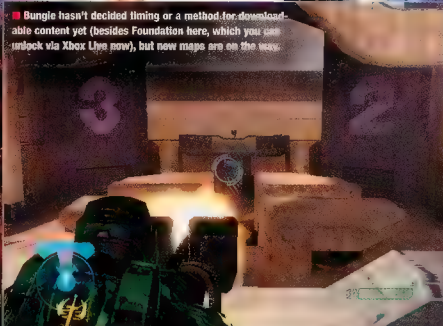
EGM: Is there a good method for consistently dodging the sword?

FB: Usually when you move around an attacker, you circle-strafe [move around the target in a curve], right? The trick is with avoiding the sword is [to not] circle—just go straight [left or right]. Don't keep looking at the guy coming at you. You go completely lateral. Trying to train yourself to unthink all that circular strafing is really hard. But when people do it, the sword is negated. I'm good with the sword, but I'll go up against someone who knows that dodge, and I just go whiffing past them, like four, five, six times while they kill me. >

■ The Master Chief (not to scale) watches over the Earth (also not actual size).



■ Bungie hasn't decided timing or a method for downloadable content yet (besides Foundation here, which you can grab via Xbox Live now), but new maps are on the way.





▶ New versions of Halo 1 maps Hang 'Em High (two-tiered here) and Wizard (inset) were in the works for Halo 2 but eventually got cut. Perhaps they will resurface as new downloadable maps in the future?

▶ **EGM:** What about the submachine gun—is it worth it to fire in bursts rather than just hold it down?

BJ: Absolutely. [That's] much more accurate. If you hold it down, it's like the old battle rifle from *Halo 1*. I hate to use the term "newb," but the less experienced players just run in there and hold the trigger all the way down, and I can just run around in circles and just "dot, dot, dot, dot" and the guy'll drop.

EGM: So last month we talked a lot about things that got cut from single

wanted it, but with all those crisscrossing walkways...we just didn't have enough time for the artists [to polish it up]. And we knew doing them later as a downloadable level was always an option, though I haven't really committed to that.

EGM: What was headhunter mode, and why'd it get cut?

MH: Ah, good old headhunter. [Laughs] So our original array included race and headhunter [game types], but not territories. Race [in which you raced other player in vehicles] we decided wasn't worth the

EGM: Based on personal experience, territories doesn't seem too popular. Why do you think that is?

MH: Making a good game is not just about the game rules—you also have to design a map around that. [For example], Zanzibar was 100 percent designed around single-flag CTF. And by the time we got the rules for territories set, all the maps were basically done. So territories could actually be a much better game than it is with a map designed for it. And I'm not going to commit to anything, but downloadable content is certainly going to

game modes, vehicles, or weapons?

MH: New games are not an option. Weapons and vehicles are possible, but not very likely. One of the big reasons is that the engine was designed to support downloadable maps and not downloadable items. There's a bit of wiggle room there, but it's unlikely. In addition, weapon balance is really challenging, so we're reluctant to throw anything new into the mix.

EGM: Will we see more downloaded patches to address bugs or glitches?

MH: There are a lot of things I wish we could tweak, but we're pretty limited. Changing your existing maps is not really an option. And game-engine changes, the Live Team doesn't really allow updates except in the most extreme, problematic cases—they don't want it to turn into a situation [like the PC model], where games are constantly patched. Also, the game engine is so complicated that even the slightest change can have crazy, unforeseen consequences. Just look at Foundation.

EGM: That's the multiplayer map you opened with the *Halo 2* downloadable

"Zanzibar is awesome. I consider it the pinnacle of our multiplayer maps."

—Bangie Multiplayer Lead Max Hoberman

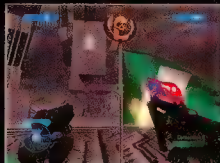
player, let's talk about multiplayer. Any maps that didn't make it?

MH: Our original plan was to port four maps from *Halo 1*: Beaver Creek, Blood Gulch, Wizard, and Hang 'Em High. And we actually got to the point where we got both Hang 'Em High and Wizard in the *Halo 2* engine but looking really ugly. Hang 'Em High, you know, great level, we really

trouble. Fundamentally, *Halo* is about killing, and race is so gimmicky, so far from that, [in] headhunter, the basic game was, you kill someone, [but] you don't actually get credits for the kill; instead, they drop a skull. You pick up the skull and you have to go back to some central location, deposit it, and you get a point. And if you kill someone who's carrying these skulls, you can take their skulls. And the more you deposit at once, the greater your multiplier. It's actually based on a game from [the Xbox party game] *Fuzion Frenzy*. It was an interesting game, but it was also very confusing trying to represent how many skulls people were carrying and showing what the multiplier was when you deposit the skulls—it was just this really chaotic, confusing game. And we had to decide between headhunter and territories, and we just decided territories had more potential.

present some fun opportunities to explore some of those things. And the same thing with assault.

EGM: You mention downloadable content; any plans other than maps? New



▶ Will one of the new downloadable maps be built with the territories game mode in mind?



The Bone Collector

Since we ran a bit last month about the skulls hidden in single player that grant the player special powers, a whole mess more have been found. These little Easter eggs can give the Master Chief stealth camouflage, make all enemies invisible, recharge your shields with melee attacks, and more. Unfortunately, finding the skulls is so complicated to explain here—check highmapcha0.org, the Internet's best site for *Halo* trickery, full details on the skulls, plus about 10,000 other glitches, experiments, and general tomfoolery.



■ Draw a console or spectacle and boost here to fly up the walls in *Colossus* and get to this little sniper perch (inset). Look for other spots on the map where you can do this, too.



▶ patch—it was originally supposed to unlock automatically when you finished the game, right?

MM: Yeah, you beat the game on any difficulty. [and it was supposed to] show up on the multiplayer map list. But there ended up being this bug where you could only

EGM: Let's talk about some of the other glitches. There's a way to fly across a level if you target someone with the rocket launcher and switch to the sword and attack really quickly.

MM: Yeah, just a bug. Unbelievable that no one caught it. I haven't seen anyone using it to their advantage yet in multiplayer. If it ever turns so horrible that it's just com-

MM: Oh yeah, that one sucks. We're keeping a running list of things we'd like to fix like that, but nothing is as easy as it seems.

EGM: Other things on that list?

MM: Oh, God, it's a long list. I guess the biggest thing that at least I cry about is the ability to pass multiplayer objects through walls. [If, say, a CTF flag is close to a wall,



Accessorize!

Two items for the *Halo* lover in your life: For splitscreen multiplayer who all want to chat online (or solo players with tender ears), a speaker-phone-like attachment for your Xbox Live mic from Nyko called the Speaker Com (\$20) works great. And for PC gamers who just can't wrap their thumbs around the Xbox's dual-stick controller, there's the Smart Joy Frag adapter, which allows you to hook up a keyboard and mouse to your Xbox (\$30 at ik-sang.com). In our tests, the adapter was great (after some tweaking) for sniping and longer-range combat, but it had some problems with vertical movement and *Halo 2*'s slight autoaiming up close.



"A lot of people seem to think that the energy sword's too powerful—I think that's a misconception."

—Bungie Community Guy Brian Jerrard

unlock the level if you activated a training event in the final level. Which is absurd, but it's a good illustration of how interconnected and complex everything is. There's stuff we'd love to fix, but is it worth the time and the risk of breaking something else?

pletely ruining the online game, then there's a possibility we'll do something about it.

EGM: The glitch on *Colossus* where you can launch a flag across the map by using the conveyor belt?

you can grab it from the other side by getting close and holding X.) That one actually we knew about. We were looking back, and that was bug No. 492, which was discovered in March of 2003. Apparently, fixing it in a way that doesn't slow the game down significantly is actually a really difficult problem. But the programmers put it off and put it off, but then at the last minute we had to make some really difficult cuts and that one was really painful. That one I really regret. We always expected it to get fixed; there just wasn't time.

EGM: Back to single player, are there secrets that still haven't been found?

FO: Certainly not in terms of skulls [see sidebar]—I think I've read every one but one, and that's bound to be out there somewhere. But there's some other cool stuff.

EGM: So what's next for Bungie?

MM: [Part of what I'm doing now] is planning for what comes next. I'll be working on very similar stuff to what I did this time around. And there's a lot of planning we need to do for our next game....

■ A cool tip from Bungie: You can take a short-cut up to this sniper ledge on *Lockout* by jumping here and crouching just before the ledge.



EGM: Is that the next *Halo* or the other project Bungie is working on? "Something different," as Bungie Studio Manager Pete Parsons called it?

MM: Sorry, I don't think I can say anything more specific or I'll get in trouble.

[Smiles] ☺ —Mark MacDonald

Tekken's Nina Williams is even deadlier undercover.

As a covert operative of the CIA, Nina Williams enters an underground fighting tournament to track Komera, a shadowy, underworld organization. Functioning as the "sweeper" of her cell, Nina finds herself tracking a stolen high-tech weapon through a variety of locations to reveal a conspiracy on a global scale. Nina must now face a multitude of deadly enemies, as well as her own past, in order to save the world.

TEKKEN 5

Be the first to play the Tekken 5 demo - included in Death by Degrees!

TEKKEN'S NINA WILLIAMS IN

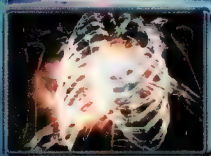
DEATH BY DEGREES



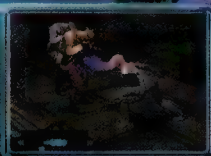
Control Nina with an intuitive, 360-degree combat system



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www.deathbydegrees.com



PlayStation 2

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Blood
Intense Violence
Language
Suggestive Themes
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

XENOSAGA EPISODE II: JENSEITS VON GUT UND BOSE ^{*}(OR, BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL, FOR OUR READERS OUTSIDE OF DEUTSCHLAND.)

Platform: PlayStation 2
Publisher: Namco
Developer: Monolith
Release Date: February 2005

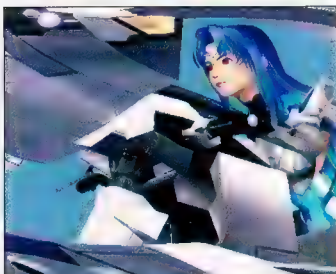
Space opera encore

Namco's original *Xenosaga* was a love-it-or-hate-it experience—its slick production values and *Final Fantasy*-style gameplay were a hit with RPG fans, but many gamers simply couldn't sit through its

unbelievably long (we're talkin' like 45 minutes a pop) cut-scenes.

Nevertheless, *Xenosaga* racked up substantial sales, so the developer braved forward with the second chapter in the planned five-part epic.

Returning players will find some surprising changes in this pretentiously subtitled sequel—nearly every facet of *Xenosaga*, from the visuals to the gameplay, has received substantial tweaks. —Shane Bettenhausen



More Realistic Characters

You might not recognize *Xenosaga*'s heroines Shion and KOS-MOS at first glance—the game's ladies (and to a lesser extent, the dudes) look far more realistic (not to mention sexier) than their big-eyed anime-style representations in the first game. "We wanted to reach a wider audience with part two," explains Producer Tomohiro Hagiwara. "We felt that some users might not have tried the first game because of its specific style, and we wanted characters that could better express emotions for part two."



Shion's new character model sports more realistic proportions.



Streamlined Battle System

The first game's combat presented few problems, but Namco tinkered with the mechanics anyway. "We felt that the moves and animations took too long," says Hagiwara. "So we worked very hard to make battles faster and more seamless." The team also beefed up the total number of moves, created flashier effects for special moves, and introduced a new combo system in which one character can knock a foe into the air or onto the ground, then have an ally deliver a brutal finishing blow.



You can now target body parts on enemies to set up combos.



Let's Recap

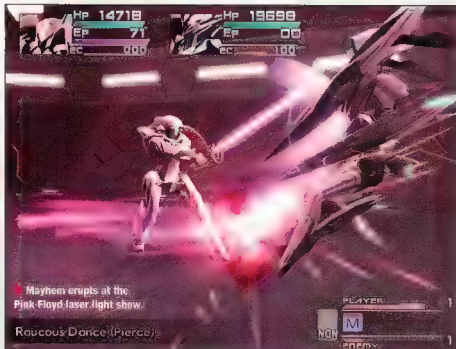
Let's say you never got around to investing 80 hours into finishing the first *Xenosaga*. Or maybe you...well, forgot every detail of its dense story line in the two years since you played it. You're in luck—Namco will offer a re-edited, four-hour-long DVD of the first game's highlights as a preorder incentive for the new game. Also, if you did finish the original game, be sure to dig out your memory card save in order to unlock some saucy new outfits for the characters in part two....

■ Chaos Investigates alternative fuel sources.



Scenic Walking Tour

Traversing the worlds of *Xenosaga* hasn't really changed much: You still spend a lot of time confined to the innards of massive spaceships. But luckily, you will get more chances to see the sights on away missions, where you'll hoof it through dungeonlike areas, engaging in random battles and solving incidental puzzles. Expect more varied environments to scamper through, along with field maps on which you'll pilot the massive 100-foot-tall E.S. mecha suits.



■ Mayhem erupts at the Pink Floyd laser light show.

Robots on Parade

Xenosaga never really made the most of its massive A.G.W.S. robots—they were under-utilized and overpowered...not much fun. Part two promises to do its metal monstrosities justice. "We definitely want to strengthen the appeal of the E.S., our new robots," says Hagiwara. "You get them quite early; they're more balanced in combat, they are an integral part of the story, and they are just plain huge—with the E.S. you'll fight colossal enemies that the human characters could never even hurt."



■ Futuristic Japanophile Jin fights with an antique samurai sword.

Brotherly Love

The ragtag cast of playable characters from the first chapter returns here, along with one new party member—Jin Uzuki, Shion's older brother. "He appeared in the ending of *Xenosaga*, but you couldn't actually play as him," explains Hagiwara. "He's totally into the traditional Japanese fighting style—even the giant robot he pilots wields a samurai sword." Plus, if you use Shion and Jin together in battle, they can whip out some powerful special attacks as a duo.



■ M.O.M.O. checks out Jr's fabulous earring.

Pop Less Popcorn

To assuage everyone's greatest fear—yes, Namco has cut down on the number of noninteractive cinema scenes in *Xenosaga II*. "The first game had about eight hours of movies and this one has around five," claims Hagiwara. "Also, the first one had a lot of irrelevant scenes that were part of the movies, so in this one we really want to focus in on the story and increase the quality of the movies themselves." Time your bathroom breaks accordingly. ☹





Photography: Al Smith

CELEBRITY GAMER: DAVID CROSS

Meet the clown prince of videogame voiceovers

From cocreating the sketch comedy series *Mr. Show* to taking a starring turn as the "never-nude" Tobias Funke on the Emmy Award-winning sitcom *Arrested Development*, funnyman David Cross' life reads like a running joke. The same goes for his career in videogames, which includes playing a smart-ass marine in *Halo 2* (XB) and *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*' (PS2) resident geek Zero. We recently asked the comedian how it feels to be the latest poster boy for interactive entertainment.

—Scott Steinberg

EGM: Your character Zero is funny and all, but why not voice *GTA: San Andreas*' headliner CJ?
DC: Truthfully, I'd been begging Rockstar to let me play a character in a *Grand Theft Auto* game. When the company finally called, I said I'd do whatever they wanted. Then I got into the studio and

found out I was playing a nerd for the f***ing millionth time. Go figure.

EGM: If any game is screaming for a Ronnie Dobbs cameo [the fleeing-from-the-law redneck who Cross played in the film *Run Ronnie Run!*], it's *San Andreas*. What happened?

DC: If I controlled everything—outside my own mind, that is—Ronnie would have his own game. I'd have to go back in time, though, and make him a movie star to do it; the character wasn't that popular.

EGM: How'd the *Halo 2* sessions go?

DC: Great, considering I just did it to entertain myself. It's like dickin' around with your friends at a bar. There's no one in the booth telling you what to do.

EGM: Are you excited by all the male groupies that you'll start attracting courtesy of these cameos?

DC: Are you kidding? It'll be awesome!

What could be sexier than having the readers of *GameTown* or *Electronic Doodad Quarterly* drooling over me?

EGM: What's more fun: doing voiceovers for games or clowning around on television?

"If I were [in *GoldenEye 007: Rogue Agent*], I'd be Doctor Pussy."

—Comedian David Cross

DC: I like one of them—and I'm not going to tell you which—at 92 on a scale of 1 to 100. And I like the other at 92/1/8.

EGM: United States senators and industry-attacking lawyers from Florida want to know which you prefer: first-person murder simulators or prostitute-murder simulators?

DC: Murdering prostitutes, but for real. I



Cross gets nerdy as *GTA*'s Zero (above) and wise-crackin' as a *Halo 2* marine (below, left).



killed half a dozen en route to California and will continue to do so when I return to New York. Forget simulators. It's about making the world a better place.

EGM: We're gonna pretend that your in-house drummer hit a rim shot after you

said that out loud. Last time we spoke, you said that the Nintendo 64 first-person shooter *GoldenEye 007* was one of your favorite games. Are you secretly in *Rogue Agent* (PS2/XB/60), too?

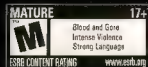
DC: Nope, but if I were, I'd be Doctor Pussy. I'd just get rid of the "Octo" entirely. I don't know if I'd be a suave, pimplike guy or a cowering runt. But I'd be a doctor, and that's respectable. ☹

TRY AND
GET OUT
ALIVE

RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK

FILE #2

SPRING 2005



PlayStation 2



CAPCOM

www.residentevil.com

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Online play requires internet connection, Network Adaptor (for PlayStation2) and Memory Card (BMB) (for PlayStation2) (each sold separately).

SHOW AND TELL: IRON PHOENIX

Platform: Xbox
Publisher: Sammy
Developer: InterServ
Release Date: February 2005

Everybody—well, at least 16 guys—were kung-fu fighting

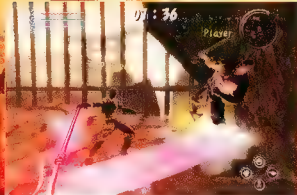
0 ne-on-one online fighting—that's so 2004. Sammy's upcoming Xbox fighter *Iron Phoenix* turns up the Internet dial to

16 (combatants, that is). Gameplay melds the hard-hitting over-the-top chop-socky of *Mortal Kombat* with

the chaos and agility of *Power Stone* (Dreamcast)—the environment plays as much of a role in your victory (or defeat) as the weapons you wield.

Producer Brian Urquhart helps explain what you can expect from this brand of bloodshed.

—Bryan Intihar



Rage in the Cage

Brian Urquhart: Want some instant mayhem? Try Ring Challenge, where 16 players face off in head-to-head matches staged in cramped arenas. Whoever can rack up the most kills emerges victorious. Be sure to keep an eye on the radar in the upper right-hand corner to avoid surprise assaults from the rear.



Synchronized Slamming

BU: Here is one of the most devastating attacks in the game, the Team Kill. This attack must be orchestrated among team members for a simultaneous "area of effect" attack damaging all opponents within range. It takes some effort to coordinate, but if you can successfully pull it off...expect mass carnage.



Davey and Goliath

BU: Giant Kill mode pits two teams of up to seven players against two players controlling superstrong "Giants." Communication and coordination are key to success here—the front line fighters should attack with a combination of light and heavy weaponry to throw the Giants' defense and counters off balance.



You're the One That I Want

BU: Find some guy you really hate in a 16-player game? Challenge him to a head-to-head duel to the death, called a Bloodlock, right in the middle of the fray. Don't worry, no one else will be able to interfere. Bloodlock is effective for eliminating that dominant opponent who is dropping your teammates like bad habits on New Year's.



Bloody Teamwork

BU: Special moves and combos can only get you so far in team games—you'll have to strategize with your teammates in order to succeed. Here, Mia is getting her ass kicked by three opponents. But she can turn the situation to her benefit if she tells her teammates to set up an ambush, then leads her pursuers into it.

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PlayStation 2





ONLINE THIS MONTH

Welcome to fight club

Today's consoles (sans GameCube, of course) have recently been hit hard with a fistful of online fighting games, and

we've clocked some serious time comparing and contrasting them. Here's our two cents on which ones pack the biggest punch—and which

ones hide glass jaws. The more stars you see (on a scale from one to four), the better the game's online climate and community. —Ryan Scott



Mortal Kombat: Deception (PS2/XB)

Deception is fundamentally identical to its 2002 predecessor, *Deadly Alliance*—which could be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on your tastes. The forums at www.trmk.org make for a handy community hub no matter which version you own, and the game runs remarkably smoothly across the board. Good luck finding any chess kombat challengers, though.
Online Verdict: ★★★★★



Capcom vs. SNK 2: ED (XB)

This epic clash of the 2D-fighting titans features a monstrous roster of nearly 50 face-breaking characters and one of the steepest learning curves in the genre. Still, if you can acclimate yourself to the title's highly technical gameplay, you'll find some tense challenges with fairly reasonable lag. *Capcom vs. SNK 2: ED* also has an extremely active online community, which you can usually find chatting in the forums of www.shoryuken.com.
Online Verdict: ★★★★★

Dead or Alive Ultimate (XB)

DOA2 is one of the better 3D fighters this side of *Soul Calibur*. Unfortunately, the game's Xbox Live support has its ups and downs; online matches utilize a sort of hotspot tournament setup, but lag increases as more spectators join. The less attractive piece of the *Ultimate* package, the original *DOA*, is, unsurprisingly, a virtual ghost town.
Online Verdict: ★★☆☆

Guilty Gear X2 #Reload (XB)

The *Guilty Gear* franchise might not be as prolific as Capcom's *Street Fighter* dynasty, but it manages to maintain a healthy cult following. The message boards at www.gamecombos.com are a good place to research strategy and find some good online competition, but be warned: There's some occasional, fickle lag to deal with here.
Online Verdict: ★★★★★

SVC Chaos: SNK vs. Capcom (XB)

Everything about this one is mediocre at best. The engine is antiquated, the character balance is questionable, and the whole package feels like an unpolished rush job. It's fitting that *Chaos* has the worst slowdown issues of the bunch. Don't bother looking for a thriving community either—it doesn't exist.
Online Verdict: ★☆☆☆

The Competitive Edge

If you'd like to hook up with some of the world's most solid, top-tier fighting-game enthusiasts, there's simply no better place to go than www.shoryuken.com. While the site is ostensibly *Street Fighter*-focused, the forums host a wealth of challengers and strategies for just about every online fighting game to date.



WHAT'S UP AT



Fan-lastic



We hear the internet's are pretty popular these days, so we're jumping on the bandwagon. Head to [egmextras.1UP.com](http://egmextras.1up.com) and read about even more fan-made games. Also check out the extended version of our *Child's Play II* feature from last issue (#187), where today's tykes tell us how lame and boring yesterday's classic games can be.

1UP.com Club in the Spotlight: Nintendo Gamers Unite



If you list shrooming as one of your favorite hobbies (we mean in games, of course), then you should definitely visit this Nintendo-loving club ([ngu.club.1UP.com](http://ngu.club.1up.com)). According to its creed, NGU is the place to "chat about the greatest videogame corporation on the face of the planet." No bias there.

Tricked Out

You may not realize it, but what you're holding in your hands is a collector's item. Why is that? Well, it's the last time you'll see a tricks section in our mag. Now don't get all crazy and cancel your subscription. Here's something even better—[cheats.1UP.com](http://cheats.1up.com), which features more tips and strategies than we could ever cram into an issue.



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PlayStation 2



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DOOM 3

Platform: Xbox
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Vicarious Visions
Release Date: March 2005

All hope abandon, ye who enter

Everybody knows how to get into hell—rob a bank, be slothful, covet thy neighbor's wife, all that jazz. Activision is streamlining the process for Xbox owners this March with *Doom 3*, a part of

the sacrilegious PC first-person shooter. The road to hell is a long one, though, fraught with both peril and piles of bloody corpses. Here's a quick look at what to expect on your journey to its center.... —Kevin Gifford

Rains of Fire
Darkness
Shotgun Blasts
Beams of Light

Circle 1: Rains of Fire

Although *Doom 3* has a story to discover, it (and a few occasional puzzles) plays second fiddle to pure, visceral shooting action. Your trigger finger will be tested.



Circle 2: Darkness

Doom 3 is a dark, dark game—its hellish landscapes are almost never fully lit, creating an atmosphere closer to *Resident Evil's* than *Halo's*. Imagine bumping around a carnival fun house at night, and you're close.

Circle 4: Beams of Light

Shed a little light on *Doom 3* with your trusty flashlight, the only source of illumination in many of the game's inky black chambers. You can't hold a weapon and the light at the same time, leading to the classic conundrum: Do I really want to see what's over there before it kills me?

Circle 3: Shotgun Blasts

Demented zombies and malicious imps have a habit of sneaking up behind you and rending your face. Therefore, do not expect to use a sniper rifle often in *Doom 3*—it's mostly close-quarters combat, preferably with a shotgun or chain saw in hand.

Armies of Death



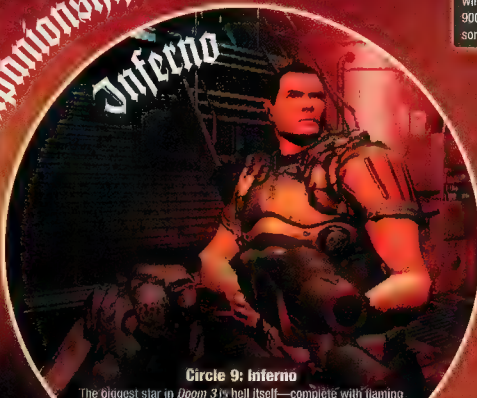
Circle 5: Armies of Death

Prepare to waste a legion of zombies—fat ones, flaming ones, even gun-toting undead ones smart enough to take cover. As the game wears on, though, the Martian base's teleportation technology unleashes far nastier demons to chain-gun to death.

Circle 6: Forgotten Memories

Gamers old enough to have played the decade-old original *Doom* are in for a nostalgic treat. Not only do memorable enemies like Imps, lost souls, and cacodemons return, but crafty players will also find the all-powerful BFG 9000 (short for big f***ing gun) hidden somewhere in the base.

False Companionship



Circle 9: Inferno

The biggest star in *Doom 3* is hell itself—complete with flaming pits, random screaming, and a death-metal voiceover telling you how horribly you're going to die. Survive it, and you'll save humanity...and be set for life as a televangelist. *A+.*

Circle 7: Surprises

It's almost a shock to see this high-spec PC game run on the Xbox, but it does—and it runs pretty well, too, almost never slowing down or getting choppy. The developers at Vicarious Visions (the outfit behind tons of cartoon-license GBA games) must have signed away their souls to achieve the feat.



Circle 8: False Companionship

Xbox Live online play is pretty light (just a simple four-player deathmatch), but it includes one feature the PC version doesn't have: a two-player cooperative mode that lets you and a friend raise hell against everything the netherworld has to offer.

Forgotten Memories

Surprises



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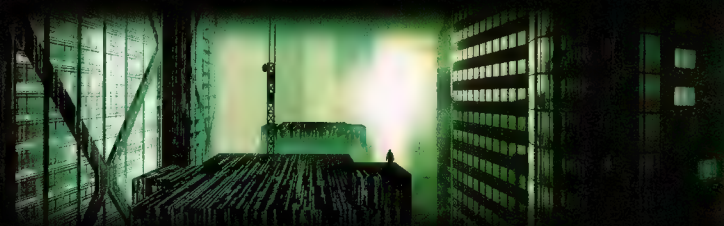
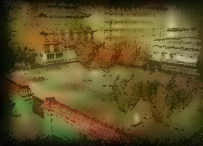
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I know why, night after night,
you sit in front of your computer.

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FRAME 18



■ Little Sound DJ

Ready to Rock?

You don't need any formal musical training to pump out the jams—just a PC, an old Game Boy (or GBA), and a tune-creation program such as Little Sound DJ (www.littlesounddj.com) or Nanoloop (www.nanoloop.de). Advanced artists build custom mixers and other gear to facilitate live shows.

Illustration by John Sanchez

BLEEP-BLOOP BOOGIE

Hipster rockers and their Game Boys make sweet tunes together

Dance, game boy, dance. That's the mantra behind chip music: groovy new electronic tunes composed with funky old Game Boys and GBAs. From New York to Norway, a generation of video kids are hotwiring their handhelds to create homebrewed 8-bit bop.

Don't laugh. These microtunes—often inspired by old-school game music—are spanning dozens of sites, impassioned practitioners, and full-fledged concerts that draw hundreds of retro hipsters. "If I get an appropriate crowd, people are pretty stoked," says Jason DeGroot—aka "6955"—a 29-year-old Tokyo chip tuner who's played live shows on his custom Game Boy Camera setup in clubs and on the street since 1999. "I get the best reactions at rock shows." They've even garnered the breathless

endorsement of Malcolm McLaren, the guy who created the Sex Pistols. As Jeremiah Johnson—a 24-year-old Game Boy musician nicknamed Nullsleep—says, "We're sharing a common love for classic videogames and an approach to music that reflects this obsession."

Chip-hop is about as much of a do-it-yourself musical revolution as you can find. To compose the stuff, aficionados have coded their own programs, like Nanoloop and Little Sound DJ, which transform Game Boys into plug-n-play music machines. Some musicians have gone so far as to bust into their dusty Nintendo Entertainment Systems to unleash more old-school music. "It involves hacking up NES cartridges and soldering in reprogrammed ROM chips," says Johnson. "At least it keeps every day

an adventure."

Johnson, a 24-year-old New York City computer technician, cofounded a collective called 8bitpeoples, which freely distributes the quirky tunes via its website (see below). Highlights include everything from *The 8-Bits of Christmas*, featuring a Game Boy version of "Let It Snow," to Nullsleep's freaky spin on Depeche Mode's classic "Enjoy the Silence."

So will the chip-hoppers go high-tech with the release of the Nintendo DS? Not likely, says Johnson. "It's mostly sample-based and has a lot more audio channels to work with, so it's not as interesting of a music-creation platform. I'll still be using an old Game Boy to write rockin' chip tunes for the foreseeable future."

—David Kushner



■ "I get a lot of people looking over my shoulder at my setup and freakin' out," artist 6955 says of his live Game Boy concerts.

SITES FOR SORE EARS: FIVE REPOSITORIES OF ROCKIN' CHIP TUNES

Nullsleep (www.nullsleep.com)
Jeremiah Johnson's homepage, featuring links to chip tunes and Game Boy music utilities.

Bitshifter (www.bitshifter.cc)
Another Game Boy rocker's homepage.

6955 (6955.org)—Jason DeGroot's website, with pics of his homemade Game Boy—music rig.

Micromusic (www.micromusic.net)
The European hub for chip tunes scene.

8bitpeoples (www.8bitpeoples.com)—This hub for Game Boy artists hosts dozens of downloadable albums, including...

Depeche Mode Gigamix
Artist Nullsleep gives four Depeche Mode tunes the bleep-bloop treatment.

My Fierro—Game Boy rocker Mesu Kasumal loves the '80s, as you can tell from these remixes.

Axel F—Various artists pay chip-tune tribute to the synth-a-rific *Beverly Hills Cop* anthem.

My Girl, the Princess
Classic videogames inspired this album from chip-tropper Ruger.

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 - 907216 - Ciara - 1, 2 Step
 - 907227 - Young Buck - Shorty Wanna Ride
 - 907225 - Jay-Z - 99 Problems
 - 907260 - Nelly - Till Ya Head Back
 - 907291 - Chingy - Balla Hater
 - 907614 - Destiny's Child - Love My Breath
 - 906849 - Lil Jon & The Eastside Boyz - What U Got On
 - 900808 - 50 Cent - In Da Club
 - 904433 - 50 Cent - P.I.M.P.
 - 904193 - Akon - Locked Up
 - 903010 - Alicia Keys - Diary
 - 904169 - Aaliyah - My Happy Ending
 - 903720 - Bustle Boys - CH-Check It Out
 - 900403 - Beyonce feat. Jay-Z - Crazy in Love
 - 900684 - Black Eyed Peas - Let's Get It Started
 - 901029 - Brinkley - I Miss You
 - 901641 - Brinkley Spears - Toxic

- 900043 - Chingy - One Call Away
- 909576 - Chingy - Right Thurr
- 905282 - Ciara feat. Patey Pablo - Goodies
- 900459 - Coldeley - Claps
- 903127 - D12 - D12 World
- 903124 - The Darkness - I Believe in a Thing Called Love
- 901241 - Del League - Four Some Sugar on Me
- 900015 - DMX - Party Up
- 904856 - Dr. Dre - Still D.R.E.
- 900018 - Eminem - The Real Slim Shady
- 907206 - Evanesence - Bring Me to Life
- 904362 - Franz Ferdinand - Take Me Out
- 907031 - Franz Ferdinand - The Fire
- 907115 - Good Charlotte - Pedestrian
- 905949 - Green Day - American Idiot
- 907104 - Green Day - Boulevard of Broken Dreams
- 907110 - Green Day - Lemmings
- 900033 - G-Unit - Sium! 101
- 901674 - Hoobastank - The Reason
- 904949 - Incubus - Megalomania
- 905142 - Incubus - Talk Shows on Mute
- 900461 - Inner Circle - Cops

- 900034 - Jay-Z - Big Pimpin'
- 901672 - Jay-Z - Dirt Off Your Shoulder
- 904639 - Jet - Are You Gonna Be My Girl
- 904641 - Jet - Cold Hard B****
- 903130 - J-Kwon - Tipsy
- 907210 - Kanye West - The New Workout Plan
- 904240 - The Killers - Somebody Told Me
- 906241 - Lil' Flip feat. Lea - Sunshine
- 904748 - Lil Jon & The Eastside Boyz - Get Low
- 904156 - Linkin Park - Breaking the Habit
- 907027 - LL Cool J - Headsprung
- 904182 - Ludacris - Diamond in the Back
- 907230 - Lumidee - Never Leave You (Uh Ooh, Uh Ooh)
- 901920 - Maroon 5 - This Love
- 906240 - Mase - Breathe Stretch Shake
- 900420 - Nelly - Air Force Ones
- 907028 - Nelly - My Plzoo
- 904183 - Nikesibak - Feeling Way Too Damn Good
- 901166 - No Doubt - It's My Life
- 907171 - Robyn & B.G. - Hypnotize
- 900702 - Rufus Wainwright - Hey Get
- 904750 - Patey Pablo - Freak-A-Leak

- 901245 - Puddle of Mudd - Blurry
- 901990 - Sir Mix-A-Lot - Baby Got Back
- 904667 - Shinedown - Duality
- 905196 - Snoop Dogg - Nuthin' but a 'G' Thang
- 905296 - Switchfoot - Meant to Live
- 901807 - System of a Down - Chop Suey
- 907514 - Terror Squad - Lean Back
- 907230 - Theme - Aggression (DJays - Face the Love of Uffaly)
- 900274 - Theme - Dukes of Hazzard
- 900308 - Theme - Eagle Rock
- 900081 - Theme - Knight Rider
- 907042 - Theme - The Legend of Zelda 2
- 900082 - Theme - Super Mario Bros
- 900945 - Theme - Tetsu
- 900805 - Three Days Grace - I Hate Everything About You
- 902995 - Twista - OverNight Celebrity
- 907105 - The Used - Take It Away
- 900403 - Usher - Confessions, Pt. 2
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Meet the Parents...



Brian Boyd
Age: 38



Majita Dalton
Age: 35



Anita Sarko
Age: 44



Anne Saunders
Age: 59



Audie Toledo
Age: 36

FOCUS GROUP: PLAYING THE 'RENTS

We round up five parents and force them to play those damn videogames their kids like so damn much

The Fresh Prince gave it straight: "Parents just don't understand"—especially when it comes to videogames. After all, who hasn't heard Mom or Dad gripe about the violence, mayhem, and unholy imagery in your "game tapes"? So we set out to educate the 'rents, recruiting a group of five New York City parents—carefully screened to know nothing about today's games—for an evening of forced playing. Our goals were three-fold: to learn about ourselves through their eyes, to have a little fun in the process, and to totally bust them for saying dirty words we can't print in this magazine. Remember last month when we had children play classic games? (Read the full story at egmextras.1up.com.) Turns out it's not just kids who say the darndest things...

—Joshua Fruhlinger

THE GUY GAME

PS2/XB • Global Star

Bobbies and parents don't mix, as we found out the hard way when we loaded up this too-blue-for-kiddies trivia/stripper game. Prepare to feel...awkward.

Anita: This one is called "Shut up and go to hell, mom and dad."

Anne: [Reading the package] "The Guy Game is aimed at testosterone-laden college students."

Majita: It's a frat game? [Ample breasts appear on screen.] Oh my goodness!



Brian: That's so wrong!
Audie: I'm surprised it's not those two guys from *The Man Show*.

Anita: Flash their what?
Anne: Flash their "goods."

Brian: This title will not be in our house. I was never here. [Announcer in game cracks to some bikini-clad girls, "I'm picturing you in nurse outfits!"]

Anita: I'm not! [First trivia question is: "On a standard deck of playing cards, which suit's king has no mustache?"]

Anne: There's no way. She's gonna say, like, "potato." [Girl in game gets it wrong, flashes camera.] Yeah, all right!

Anita: This is really lame.

Audie: It's a guy game.

Brian: [They get a question right.] Total luck. We have no idea.

Audie: Oh, look. The "flash-o-meter" moved a little to the right.

Anita: [Question from *Guy Game* host to a girl on screen: "How long have you been at spring break?"] Four years.

Everyone: [Laughter]

Majita: Is she gonna get it right? [They miss a question. The "flash-o-meter" remains low.]

Brian: I don't know—this game is not really interesting.

Anita: This is a game you play on the second TV.



MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

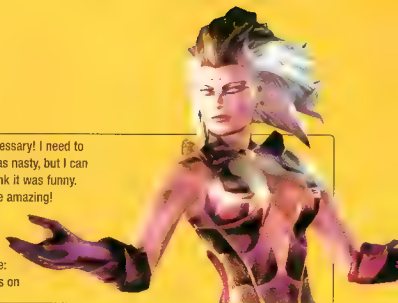
PS2/XB • Midway

Back in the day, *Mortal Kombat* thrilled players and horrified parents (and politicians) with its portrayal of blood and spine-exposing finishing moves. Today, the copious blood has returned in full 3D gory glory. What do the folks think of the gruesome update?

Audie: Are you gonna press Start?
Anita: Yeah, I pressed Start.
Audie: So you're gonna be that babe....
Anita: Ooh—what is that?!
Majita: He kicked you across the street!
Anita: What the hell? How do you know what to do?
Audie: I dunno—I'm just pressing all the buttons!
Brian: This is too much.
Majita: Sub-Zero wins...no!
Audie: [Next round, Audie finds a weapon.] She's kicking my butt now.
Anita: Yeah, but you got this thing in your hand!
Audie: [I don't know how I got it!]
Anita: Oh no, oh no! You're cutting me up! This is no good! C'mon, you've done this before!
Audie: No, I haven't! I'm serious—I've never played this before. I'm not lying!
[Anita dies...again.]
Anita: That was fun! That one I like a lot!
EGM: What did you like about it?

Anita: It feels like you connected with it. It seemed like I was doing something.
Audie: It was intense. But it was also confusing.... I was just pressing every button. I didn't know what I was doing.
Brian: [Brian and Anne start playing.] Look at that blood that just squirts out!
Anne: She forgot to wear clothes, that one.
Audie: Yeah, they're real babes.
Brian: I think it's a little ridiculous that they overdo it with the blood like that.
Majita: Look at that!
Anita: This is very cool! The moves are nice.
Majita: This game I definitely gotta get. I like this one.
Brian: It's too much....It's just way too much. Yeah, it's too violent....there's no reason to have this in my home. It ain't gonna happen.
Majita: You could turn the blood off on another one, or you could turn it green. [The match ends and a new one starts: Audie vs. Majita.]
Majita: Which one is it...do you have any suggestions?
Audie: No, not really.
Brian: You notice how the women pick women and the men pick men?
Majita: He's played this before!
[Laughter]
Anita: This one just came out, right?
EGM: Yes. Oh, look—here comes a finishing move. [One character's head pops off.]
Everyone: Ooooh!

Brian: That was unnecessary! I need to take a shower! That was nasty, but I can see why you would think it was funny.
Anita: The graphics are amazing!
Audie: Darius wins?
 Wait, who's that guy?
 I'm the bald guy?
[Another finishing move:]
 A female character falls on



“There's no reason to have this in my home. It ain't gonna happen.” —38-year-old Brian Boyd

giant spike.
Everyone: Oooohhhhh!



KATAMARI DAMACY

PS2 • Namco

We load up “the rolling, sticking, never-stopping, ever-swelling clump of stuff that makes a star out of everyone and everything” game. It makes no sense to us, either, so can the moms and dads figure it out?

Anne: What the [expletive] is this?

Brian: Looks like some twisted Wizard of Oz.

Majita: Is he shaking his butt?

Anita: Oh, he's moving the ball!

Anne: For what? This is a little boring.... I



mean, like, who cares?
Brian: The music is incredible! It's like a John Williams soundtrack.
Audie: Yeah, right—that's a huge insult to John Williams.
Brian: At least the ball didn't roll over him and squish his head and blood came out.
Majita: [King of All Cosmos appears—see screen.] Oh, look at this! Oooohhh!
Anne: He looks like Bentley from *The Jeffersons*.
Brian: The stuff he's rolling over, he's picking up!
Majita: Maybe he's supposed to knock over the cigarette boxes.
Anita: [Pointing] Oh there's a plug!
Brian: Yeah back up, back up.
Majita: What do you do with those boxes?
Anita: Maybe it's like dominos.
Majita: The purpose of this game is...? Just rolling around picking up stuff?
Anne: This is frustrating.
Majita: [Picking up a load of clothes pins] Yeah, look at that! I like this game.
Brian: Maybe there's some educational value to this for the kids.... Maybe they'll learn something. [Sees the readout for the size of the ball.] 10cm? Our kids will learn the metric system!

Brian: Oh look, there's an open *Game CD* in there that someone returned!
Anita: Make a right, make a right!

the *Straight Guy* theme song. Carson's game CD in there that someone returned.
Audie: No, it's Thom! Thom does the interior decorating.

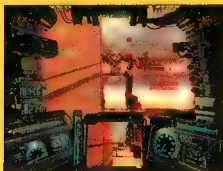
“This is a little boring... I mean, like, who cares?”

—50-year-old Anne Saunders

Brian: Yeah, through that doorway.
Majita: Oooh, you got candies! This is heaven, here!
Anne: Oh, this is cute!
EGM: She can't get those apples yet.
Audie: [Getting a load of caramels to stick to the katamari ball] If that keeps up, the ball will be bigger than him.
Anne: What's the little guy in the corner doing? The little dancing guy?
Anita: [The katamari ball levels up.] Uh-oh...what'd I just hit?
Majita: Another level! Wow!
Audie: It's getting heavy, isn't it?
Anita: You'll get that mouse eventually.
Brian: We do that in Manhattan anyway. We put out sticky things for mice.
Anita: You're doing great!
Brian: This sounds like the *Queer Eye* for

Anne: I wonder if as you roll it, you try to keep it symmetrical, if that's the goal.
Anita: [Anne picks up more things, accompanied by applause from the parents.] You're almost there. Next level!





STEEL BATTALION

XB • Capcom

With its titanic, 40-button controller, three foot pedals, and \$150 price tag, robo-blaster *Steel Battalion* is enough to intimidate even hardcore gamers. So how would the folks fare with this Xbox title that's more than just a game—it's a full-fledged mech simulator?

Anita: [At Player Setup screen] Date of birth? None of your business. [Game intro starts.] Wow, that's realistic.
Brian: [Game character says a swear word.] You don't say ass in my house.
Anita: Does this guy ever shut up?

Anne: You playing yet?
Anita: [At the Mech Start-up screen] I have no idea.
Anne: [Indicating controller pedals] The feet things! The feet things!
Majita: Look—you turned everything on!
Brian: I think you're moving. I think you moved. Maybe you have to use both hands. The left hand was definitely turning you.
Anne: Does anything work?
Anita: I guess it's that little thing. Can I



do anything? Shouldn't I be shooting something?
Audie: I'm getting a headache just watching this.
Anita: You have to read something to understand what's going on. It's not clear what you're supposed to do here.

Majita: What happens is, one child learns how to do it and then teaches all the other ones. I've never seen a kid sit down and read a book.

Anne: The gear-shift thing?
Audie: I just saw somebody. Somebody's hitting you.
Anita: I think I want to press Start.
Anne: I think the game's almost over. [Big explosion]
Brian: Oh, that's not good.
Majita: This is the most action we've seen.
Brian: Are you shooting or are they shooting you?
Anita: I'm pressing Start. Start seems to make some noise.

"With all this crap around, you'd think something would be happening." —Anne Saunders

Anne: With all this crap around, you'd think something would be happening! [An enemy robot starts attacking Anita's mech.]
Brian: You gotta get out of there. You need some reverse.
Anita: if I press Start, something... I'm open to any suggestions.

Audie: Oh wait, there's an arrow. Something to do with arrows.
Brian: The number in the upper left-hand corner is going down, I think that's her bullets. [Anita's mech explodes. The game ends.]
Anita: I feel like Harrison Ford past his prime.



PAC-MAN VS.

GC • Namco

The young *Pac-Man* years ago, but have the parents seen him lately? This update has one player guiding *Pac-Man* on a GBA while the others chase him as ghosts on the TV.

Audie: Well, this is a lot different than the original.

Majita: [My GBA] says, "Look at the TV!"
Anita: I keep thinking that I'm Pac-Man and you're the...but I'm not, um...
Majita: Am I Pac-Man now?
Audie: Did you win that one?
Majita: I guess I did. [Laughter]
Anne: Go left, go left!
Majita: [After Audie finds her on the screen and chases her.] Leave me alone!
Brian: She's got the hang of it. She's running the whole show here. Good job.
Audie: I don't have a clue where she is.
Majita: [Shaking the GBA] This is too small!
Anne: She's gonna clear the whole board.
Anita: Is this more fun than *Thing Battalion*?



POKÉMON COLOSSEUM

GC • Nintendo

Surely all parents have been exposed to the kiddie-mind-control cult of *Pokémon*. Now it's time they were forced to take part in the cutesy madness of *Pikachu's* domain.

Majita: Maybe [this is] for the kids who really like the *Pokémon*. If they buy everything, they need to get this game.
Majita: [Playing against Anita] Something's going on. I just threw something. [The big green A button on the GameCube controller catches her attention.] This one's the sexy one.
Brian: [Suddenly, the parents are more interested in the controller than the game.] What's this thing back there?

EGM: The Z trigger.
Brian: Is this how the *Pokémon* world works? No one dies?
Anne: [Explosion on screen] See, look at that. Something happened there.
Brian: [Holds up his controller, clearly confused.] Somebody's throwing spikes. It's not working. Are we playing or watching? [The parents all give up.]



DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION EXTREME

PS2 • Konami

While some of the folks recognize *DDR*, none has dared to break a sweat on its dance pad...until now.



Anne: I think I've seen this one on morning shows.
EGM: Watch for the arrows.
Majita: Oh, this is so fast!
Brian: This is hard!
Majita: Uh-oh—they're booping!
Brian: Wait! Wait!
Majita: [With a confused look] This game is my daughter's infatuation!
Anita: That was a workout!
Audie: [Checks the song list.] Oooh! Cher!
Everyone: Aah!
Majita: [Brian starts playing.] Show us what you got! Work it! Work it! Go ahead!
Audie: So far he's perfect, I guess? Got all the combos.
Brian: [Huffing] Not as easy as it looks!

Audie: [The game starts booping.] Who booped? Who was that? [Brian fails.]
Everyone: Awwwww!
Audie: I'll go and get it over with. I don't want any Cher, though.
Majita: Ooh, quick time! Do it. C'mon!
Anne: Our children would be so proud!
Audie: You see those two arrows? How am I supposed to follow that?
Majita: That had both the up and down arrows at the same time! That's a split! I can't do a split!
Audie: It's hard in these jeans, man!
Yehaw! This is gym music, man!
Anita: You did good! You cleared the song!
Audie: [Sweating] Woool! Oh my God.



Brian: It's tough. It's tough! [Thinks back to *Mortal Kombat*.] What if while you're playing, I push you and you fall on a rock and your head falls off? 🐼



TWO BROTHERS ONE MISSION

Edward and Alphonse Elric must restore their bodies by finding the legendary Philosopher's Stone which holds unlimited power. But they are not alone.

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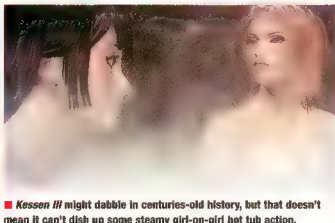
KESSEN III

Koei's Dynasty expands

In the five years since Koei's *Kessen* graced the PS2 launch with its pretty (but ultimately a tad dull) take on ancient Japanese war strategy, the publisher's *Dynasty Warriors* franchise has attained massive popularity. Each successive chapter (and its various offshoots) of this hack-n-slash-a-thon sells amazingly well both in Japan and in the States, so it's not terribly surprising that Koei is injecting some of the *DW* charm into this newest *Kessen* installment.

Kessen III casts you as historical figure Nobunaga Oda (the 16th-century warlord who unified Japan during the Warring States period) but spices up the account with a saucy new love story, a dashing villain, and plenty of larger-than-life combat. Although you can micromanage exacting details of your army (not unlike Koei's tactically taxing *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* series), you're not forced to—if you're hungry for action, let the game automatically select and outfit your troops. On the battlefield, the action plays out like a *Dynasty Warriors* game, except you command huge garrisons of warriors on horseback, slicing through vast numbers of enemies (simple button presses

make all your soldiers swing their weapons at once) as your troops march to victory. As you progress through the game, you'll eventually be able to control multiple units simultaneously, switching between them as the skirmishes unfold on different parts of the map. You can also choose to zoom in and control only your commanding officer, racking up multitool combos and unleashing blistering magical attacks.



■ *Kessen III* might dabble in centuries-old history, but that doesn't mean it can't dish up some steamy girl-on-girl hot tub action.

Platform: PlayStation 2
Publisher: Koei
Developer: Koei
Release Date: March 2005



CHARTS

TOP 10 BEST-SELLING GAMES
FOR OCTOBER 2004

- 1 **Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas** PS2 • Rockstar
- 2 **NBA Live 2005** PS2 • EA Sports
- 3 **Mortal Kombat: Deception** PS2 • Midway
- 4 **ESPN NBA 2K5** PS2 • ESPN Videogames
- 5 **Tony Hawk's Underground 2** PS2 • Activision
- 6 **Mortal Kombat: Deception** XB • Midway
- 7 **ESPN NBA 2K5** XB • ESPN Videogames
- 8 **Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door** GC • Nintendo
- 9 **Madden NFL 2005** PS2 • EA Sports
- 10 **X-Men Legends** PS2 • Activision

TOP 10 GAME RENTALS
FOR THE WEEK ENDING 11/28/04

- 1 **Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas** PS2 • Rockstar
- 2 **Halo 2** XB • Microsoft
- 3 **Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3** PS2 • Atari
- 4 **Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater** PS2 • Konami
- 5 **WWE SmackDown! vs. Raw** PS2 • THQ
- 6 **Call of Duty: Finest Hour** PS2 • Activision
- 7 **Need for Speed Underground 2** XB • EA Games
- 8 **Klonoa** PS2 • Sony CEA
- 9 **Tony Hawk's Underground 2** PS2 • Activision
- 10 **Star Wars Battlefront** PS2 • LucasArts

REALITY CHECK

Experts explain what happens when videogames get real...

Q: Blast an enemy with your stun rifle in *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow's* multiplayer mode and he's back on his sneaky feet in less than 10 seconds. Surely real-life people-stopping gear is more effective, right?

A: That depends on the person, says former tactics instructor Lewis Herrington (Lt. Col., USMC, retired). "That type of technology puts out

about 50,000 volts," he explains, "and most lasers work like harpoons or conduct via the skin, like a paste." The victim's physical stature and state of mind—such as whether he's scared, angry, on PDP or speed—make all the difference, he says, adding that "speed has been used for 50 years by soldiers." But given all that, "it would probably take three to five minutes for him to come around," Herrington says of a physically fit, 35-year-old male target, "and possibly about 10 minutes to be fully and running."



Illustration by Keith Cummings/Artists

4:00 PM



A Family Affair

Around the same time the lawsuit was filed against Electronic Arts, the anonymous "EA Spouse" wrote a blog entry about the challenging work schedules at the company. Check it out at www.livejournal.com/users/ea_spouse

LIVING THE DREAM

The reality of game development: It's not fun and games

The recent class-action lawsuit against Electronic Arts—in which an animator, suing his unpaid overtime, has filed suit on a dirty floor not-so-secret in videogame development: The dream job can be a total grind. Working like a fanatic on a game you love may pay you to the hazy of those dudes in a garage launching a billion-dollar industry for the sheer joy of it. But demanding hours, aggressive timelines, high employee turnover, and bargain-basement salaries—all realities in the game industry—mean you'd better really, really, really love it.

The Perfect Job... for the Insane Game development is a stunningly complex, you've-got-an-unpredictable-market, ever-changing-technologies, and mad opportunities-for-creative-expression—which is exactly what attracts many people. "Creativity comes from disorder," says Jordan Walton, studio manager for Sony Online Entertainment. He's spent more than 20 years making games and contends that for many in the industry, work really is play. "It's a mission, not a job," Walton says. "Frankly, I've had to send people home who were working too much. They were obsessed."

Game development is also a fiercely competitive industry, Walton calls it a "shark pool"—where only the fittest sur-

vive, and employers benefit. They can squeeze more and more work out of people without paying in pay massive salaries. According to a 2003 *Samasutra* survey, a programmer with no to five years' experience makes, on average, \$70,000 a year—the same amount programmers in other industries can earn straight out of college. "And employers get away with it," Walton says, "because every time I have an open position I get 40 to 100 resumes—over 40 from qualified people."

Crunch Drunk

The good part does not apply to the bigger picture as well, where companies jockeying to create better and more epic games are often forced into technically ambitious and tight development schedules. Making milestones isn't as easy—60- to 80-hour a day work weeks (known as "crunch") are common in the weeks and months leading up to a deadline. For all your best intentions, very often it just happens, says Tim Schafer, head of Double Fine, where the team is currently crunching toward completion of *Psychonauts* (PS2/XB). "You don't do your best work when you're in crunch mode—you're laundry is piling up, you finally can't sleep, you, your friends, have deserted you. You're just this walking shell. It's a person because you're all work all the time, a zombie. It's not a real, beneficial work state."

Yet it keeps happening, and the reasons range from potentially exploitative (the "shark pool" mentality, to, in Schafer's case, a timeline that won't give you enough prep and simple passion for making the product the best it can be). "Yes, I want to go home. I don't want to work this hard," Schafer says. "But am I willing to hurt my baby for it? That's a tough choice."

Can Things Change?

A recent survey on quality of life by the International Game Developers Association found that over half of game developers hope to leave the industry within 10 years. Over a third cite tight deadlines as the most stressful aspect of their job, and 60 percent said their families felt they spent too much time at work. In an industry where experience is a key matter, those are daunting statistics. But Kristen Forbes, mother of *World of Warcraft*'s *Van* (a Radical Games marketer of *The Simpsons: Hit & Run* and the upcoming *Scarface* game), insists that a career in the game industry doesn't have to come at the expense of personal life. Flexible schedules, profit sharing, and perks like an on-site gym and open kitchen, says Forbes, make Radical a model for the future. "The smart people are going to figure it out and get 80 many miles ahead. The rest of the industry will have to catch up or get left in the dust." —Jennifer T'Sao

A WEEK IN THE LIFE

If making games doesn't leave enough time to play them, you might think twice about joining up, too, right? We took some basic data and crunched the numbers...

168

7 days x 24 hours

- 80 hours you'll spend at work in crunch mode
- 88
- 49 time for a measly 7 hours a night of sleep
- 39
- 7 hours spent commuting
- 32
- 21 time for random stuff (like, y'know, eating and bathing)

11 hours a week to game (if that rate, you'll never finish *Blaz Blue*)

>>> THQ ANNOUNCED THAT PS2 OWNERS WILL ALSO GET A DOSE OF ARMY TRAINING (THE VIRTUAL KIND) WHEN IT BRINGS FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR TO THE CONSOLE THIS SPRING... >>>

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

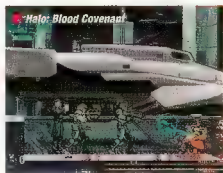
Modern classics are getting a new old look

They're young, ambitious, and quite possibly breaking copyright laws. But they don't care because videogames rule their lives.

Recently, hardcore gamers have taken their love for the most acclaimed titles of the past few years to the next level—by taking the games back in time. 2D remakes of everything from *Metrod Prime* to *Halo* now flood the Net, serving as old-school tributes to new-school titles. Here are some of the more prominent projects being worked on, each available for play on your PC whenever it's done. —Chris Baker

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 2D

Some might argue that 26-year-old Daniel Barras' homemade 2D, Super NES-style remake of the Nintendo 64 classic helped usher in the fan-game fad. "I've always wanted to make my own *Zelda* adventure," Barras tells us. "One day I just thought, 'Why don't I make the complete game?'" Though rumors persist that Nintendo has shut him down, Barras ensures that his site is out of commission on his own accord and will be back when he completes a demo of this 2D *Zelda* endeavor.



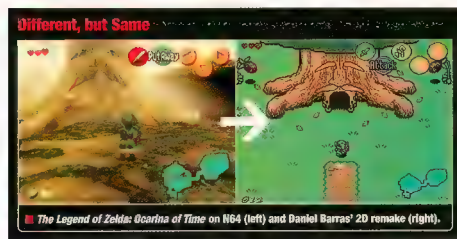
Halo: Blood Covenant

Website: www.consoletroopers.com
A few months ago, rumors of a Game Boy Advance version of *Halo* flooded the internet. The "visual proof" of a 2D side-scrolling Master Chief adventure actually turned out to be screenshots from a fan game called *Halo: Blood Covenant*, which is the work of Alessandro Marani, Domenico Neziti, Frater Sinister, and Mark Forsythe. We can't blame the masses for the confusion, though (or retailer EbGames.com, which at one time posted pics of *Blood Covenant* on its website and had many thinking the game was part of the *Halo 2* collectors' edition)—this is one good-looking homage to the Xbox first-person shooter. Don't believe us? Just go to the site and download the demo.



Shut Down

Here's early work from the fan-made yet now deceased *Chrono Resurrection*.
Nathan Lazur, a 22-year-old project director for amateur developer Resurrection Games, learned the hard way that companies value their intellectual properties. Unlike most fan games that take new titles back in time, *Chrono Resurrection* (www.opcodor.com/projects/chrono) updates 10 scenes of the 2D *Chrono Trigger* (Super NES) with next-gen graphics—at least it would have had Square Enix not hit Resurrection with a cease and desist order. "We understand that Square Enix has an obligation to protect its IP by law, otherwise it loses it," says Lazur. "Seeing as that's the case, we had hoped Square would see this project as a tribute—not a replacement—to its wonderful game."





2D illustration by Vicki Wong/Moomi.com

Codename: Gordon

Website: www.half-life2d.com

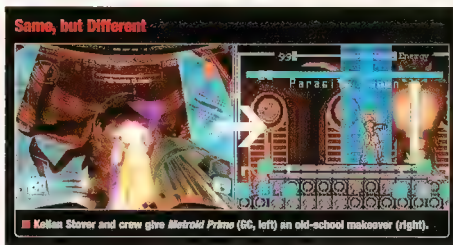
This 2D, *Metal Slug*-like tribute to the *Half-Life* series is everything any fan developer could hope for in their creation.

Conceptualized and executed by industry pro Paul Kamma of German developer Nuclearvision and Sienke Seidel, *Gordon* is fully supported by *Half-Life* developer Valve and is available through Valve's own Steam gaming service (steampowered.com). More than 600,000 people have downloaded the game. Impressive.

Grand Theftendo

Website: www.grandthefendo.com

Whereas most fan-made games you'll find on the Internet are very reminiscent of the Super Nintendo era (in terms of visuals), Brian Provinciano is going really old school with a simpler makeover for *Grand Theft Auto III*'s Portland area (development on *Grand Theftendo* started back in the middle of 2003). "As a longtime *GTA* fan, I had always planned on creating my own version as a spare-time hobby project," Provinciano stated on his website. "I really enjoy low-level programming and love tapping into the power of systems in ways no one else has done before."



"I've always wanted to make my own *Zelda* adventure"

—The Legend of *Zelda*: OOT 2D creator Daniel Berris

Metroid Prime 2D

Website: www.mp2d.co.uk


At only 15 years old, Kellan Stover leads a surprisingly robust team of other teenaged developers obsessed with adapting GameCube's *Metroid Prime* and space-traveling bounty hunter Samus Aran to 2D—and it looks to be one of the most promising fan

games available. "I've just always preferred the older *Metroid* games more," he says. "I began this project for the fact that the GameCube game wasn't a 2D side-scrolling adventure like all the previous *Metroid* titles we had seen from Nintendo." Stover and company hope to complete *Metroid Prime 2D* at some point in 2005.



Grand Theftendo

A Publisher's View

We asked Rockstar, creators of the famed *Grand Theft Auto* series, what it thinks of projects like *Grand Theftendo*. "We find it extremely flattering, and some of the creations are really impressive," says PR Manager Chris Carro. "The only thing that gets a little weird is when fans want to make money off their work, at which point they put us in the uncomfortable position of reminding them they don't own the intellectual property. However, thankfully that is very rare, and we appreciate the effort and creativity that the fans have shown and look forward to seeing more of their work." 



COUNTDOWN TO

200 GAME MACHINES

1 The hit parade toward *EGM's* 200th issue continues this month with another painfully controversial ranking: the top 10 consoles we've covered over the past 16 years (based on their game libraries, not stuff like DVD playback, backwards compatibility, etc.). Fights have already broken out in the office lunchroom over this list—check out *EGM's* message boards to join the fray.

10 **Nintendo 64 (1996)**
Yes, we know the games have fuzzier visuals than your grandma's vacation photos, but you just can't beat Nintendo's first-party lineup. The N64 *Zelda* games themselves probably received more 10s from our Review Crew than the GameCube's entire lineup.
Highlights: *Super Mario 64*, *GoldenEye 007*
Lowlights: Nearly everything not developed by Nintendo

Dreamcast (1999)
The last hope for so-called "true" gamers, Sega's final console amazed everyone with its next-gen visuals and elated the hardcore crowd with its cache of fighting games and shooters. Shame the cute VMU memory cards weren't enough to keep the system afloat.
Highlights: *Sonic Adventure*, *Soul Calibur*
Lowlights: *Who Wants to Be Up 10 a Millionaire?*, *Flougan Bros.: Episode 1*

8 **GameCube (2001)**
The little purple box's richly deserved "kiddie" image has ruined its chances against the Sony juggernaut, but it's also the only way to play all the incredible software Nintendo's released over the past three years.
Highlights: *Metroid Prime*, *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*
Lowlights: *Pokémon Channel*

7 **Genesis (1989)**
One look at this system's cool black exterior, and you can immediately tell it's for the hardest of the hardcore. The system that made Sonic also created the market for "real" sports games—several *EGM* staffers swear by the 1993 editions of *Madden* and *NHL*.
Highlights: *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Gunstar Heroes*
Lowlights: *Bustys*

6 **Xbox (2001)**
Microsoft's quixotic venture into the game biz would be sunk without *Halo*, but if you're on broadband, the Xbox Live online service is well designed and fantastically addictive for multiplayer.
Highlights: *Halo 2*, *Star Wars: KOTOR*
Lowlights: *Fuzion Frenzy*, *Kakuto Chojin*

5 **PlayStation 2 (2000)**
72 million users worldwide can't be wrong—and neither can the game library, which runs the gamut from *Grand Theft Auto*-like blockbusters to little niche successes like *Disgaea*. The only question now: Can Sony top itself again in the next generation?
Highlights: *Grand Theft Auto* series, *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Madden* series
Lowlights: Anything with "Army Men" in the title

4 **Game Boy Advance (2001)**
The last bastion of 2D gaming is also the only system on this list you can take with you anywhere...and who wouldn't want to take along the GBA's library of 20 hits (not to mention a wagonload of Super Nintendo ports)? The DS is fascinating, but our hearts and minds are still with the GBA.
Highlights: *Advance Wars*, the *Castlevania* series
Lowlights: Games based on *Disney Channel* shows

3 **Super NES (1991)**
Nintendo had a late start in the 16-bit wars (and with its next two systems), but it made up the difference with top-class 2D games and the best third-party support the big N's ever been blessed with. Too bad most SNES units you find at flea markets today are a nasty shade of nicotine brown.
Highlights: *Street Fighter II*, *Final Fantasy III*
Lowlights: *Shaq-Fu*

2 **PlayStation (1995)**
The original PlayStation's graphics haven't aged gracefully, but there are simply too many timeless classics to ignore. Besides, this is the system that essentially created the standard for modern videogames—3D visuals, mainstream-yet-hardcore gaming, and a depth unattainable by previous systems. And if you can believe it, new PS1 games are still being made today.
Highlights: *Final Fantasy VII*, *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, *FF Tactics*
Lowlights: *Eggs of Steel*



1 **Nintendo Entertainment System (1985)**
Really, how could you *not* make this No. 1? Formerly the top system for hardcore platformers, NES has taken on a new role 20 years later as the herald for the "simple is good" philosophy of game design. Hopefully, our children will love it as much as we do.
Highlights: *Super Mario Bros. 3*, *Mega Man*, *The Legend of Zelda*
Lowlights: *Taobao*, *Totally Rad*

OVERHEARD

"It's like an ICBM waiting to explode in your pants!"

—Mick "Project Conanqueror" Akiba Shiki, in the press release for the brilliantly named upcoming GBA shooter *Super Army War*.

"There is no 7- or 8-year-old child in America who will be served in any way by gaining access to these cesspools of bloodlust, degradation of women, and racial stereotyping."

—Patricia Ekkes, president and founder of *Mothers Against Violence in America*, referring to their list of the "10 worst violent video game [sic]," which includes *Halo 2*, *Mortal Combat [sic]*, and *Shadow Heart [sic]*.

"In the same paper, which is what is so ironic, you've got reviews for *Metroid Prime 2* that are off the charts. So the person unfortunately has no clue what they're writing about."

—Nintendo VP, *Resoglo File-Alice* comments on an article in the *Washington Post* that called the GameCube "doobats."



"These ninjas are about to get a little less violent and a whole lot sexier."

—Host of MTV's so-bad-it's-good show *Video Mods*, introducing a clip in which characters from BioWare's upcoming RPG *Jade Empire* humped and ground to *Christina Aguilera's* "Dip It Low."



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WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW

ON THE STREETS



PS2

DOMINATE THE MAT

• Finishing moves are the keys to victory. Build up your adrenaline meter by attacking and taunting your opponent. When you're in the right position and one of your WWE slots is full, press [L] to execute your finishing move against a greggy opponent. If you have two finishing moves, you have to perform your secondary finisher.

• You can also steal your opponent's finishing move if you have two full WWE slots. When you're in the proper position and your opponent is greggy, press [L+R] to use his own finishing move to quiet his! This never leads to get the crowd on their feet!

• Don't get greedy, though—your opponent can counter your special move by pressing [L+R]. If he counters your finishing move, you lose the WWE slot and wind up in a very vulnerable position



©2005

PS2

TAKE IT TO THE STREETS!



Depressing on your slot level is always a good sign to hang onto any teammates and succeed for two reasons: 1. because you'll never know when you might die, and 2. you can't heal yourself on the battlefield. It's always a good idea to have some backup. You can't heal your slot level, so you'll have to use the ammo you find on the floor in the game. You can also use the ammo in the crates. Some crates are marked with a red 'X' to indicate they're full. You can also use the ammo in the crates for you and the rest of your team.

When building a customized character, don't forget the City and NH Challenge modes. You'll want to work on your skills in training the correct skills in the correct position types. For example, if you're a sniper, you'll want to work on your skills in the correct position types. For example, if you're a sniper, you'll want to work on your skills in the correct position types. For example, if you're a sniper, you'll want to work on your skills in the correct position types.

SURVIVAL SKILLS

• To night vision mode, watch out for muzzle flash or grenade explosions. They can temporarily blind you, and that's at the time the enemy needs to drop you permanently.

• This is not a racing game. Spend through Ghost Recon 2, and you'll alert every enemy unit and have a fight on your hands that'll make Vietnam look like the War of 1812. On most missions, you need to move slowly, using your long-range scopes to make every enemy location and count out the best spots to engage concealed.

• No matter what you're up to on a mission, a face-to-face tank always becomes your top priority. The huge armored monsters can rip apart your whole squad with their machine gun turret or fish-powered cannon. Immediately switch to your M3A2—or call down an air strike. If you have your M29—and give them a taste of an anti-aircraft missile.

PS2

TOM CLANCY'S: GHOST RECON 2





Unlock hidden characters, upgrade your weapons and find new worlds with these sweet cheats, tips and tricks. Cut out the cards, and stash them in the game case so you can really get into the game. Check out www.cheatohlegame.com to download a coupon for \$5 off any game shown here and check out more codes for the latest hot titles.

Check out www.cheatohlegame.com to download a coupon for \$5 off any game on this card. While you're there, get the scoop on all the hottest games, and accessories!

THE PUNISHER



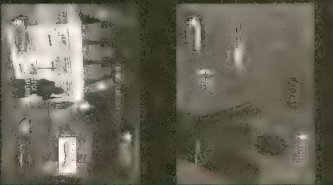
PS2/XBOX

HARDCORE STRATEGIES

• If your fire hits good, it's always a good idea to walk around with a shield in order to

keep the Punisher in tip-top shape. For one thing, you can use him to absorb wayward shots of lead and, when you get a free second, you can interrupt and break him (provided he hasn't died from lead poisoning, of course). You might have taken in the lead or managed to penetrate the shield itself!

• It's not always the best option to finish in a tingy after breaking him during a Special Interrogation despite how tempting it might be to keep your enemy to a shank or cutting his time short with a car dropped on his head. One occasion, you'll find that once broken, the thugs are more pliant and willing to talk the Punisher in any fashion possible to save their own skin. Unfortunately for them, their attempts often end in their own demise.



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POKEMON FIRE RED & LEAF GREEN



GAME BOY ADVANCE

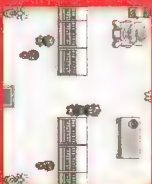
CATCH THEM ALL!

• The item, and not the common, lock you find Pokémon to all the full stats.

• Simply trade him the only genuine trade-onion back and forth with both coverslip.

• The first item both coverslip, honey, candy, or even a short article, and he just comes quickly. If things start to go wrong for you and your new Pokémon, you have a potion to use.

• As you attempt to save, save any and go down (don't even if it's when you'll Professor Oak's associates sends you. He'll have a head from you, after you acquire the items. If it's not a thing is used with the trainers along the way.



NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND 2



PC/GT/PS2/XBOX

UNDERGROUND TIPS!

• The Breakdown feature is a regular-acting nitro supply. It's not available.

• Once you have upgraded your ride to include N2O systems, Superimposed on top of your used N2O gauge is the position Breakdown gauge. There are two shades of blue used: • If you can fill how much "nitro" or Breakdown nitro you have available.

• Pay attention to your SMS because some of the messages you receive from other racers hint at the locations of the hidden races. They are worth significantly more than regular races so it's definitely worth it to track them down.

• Stalking is an essential skill. Certain types of races like Street X will demand it more than others. But it will help you collect trophies, learn to watch your nitro and fuel gauge behind you often to keep track of your opponent's position. Complete races may not worsen while trying to most, but human racers can be dangerous. Knowing where they are at all times is essential if you are spying on them from behind you.



THE RUMOR MILL

'Cause who doesn't enjoy a little gossip?



It's that time again—time for yours truly to pop open the bubbly, watch Dick Clark rocking it in Times Square (isn't he like 150 years old?) and settle on yet another New Year's resolution. Hmm, what will it be? Stop pimpin' out my lady friends in *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*? Or maybe limit my daily *Halo 2* multiplayer sessions to only four hours? Ah, forget it—I'll never be able to keep either of those promises. So I'm gonna take the easy way out and pledge to deliver even sweeter rumors than I did in '04. If you've made a resolution, too, feel free to tell me about it (the address, as always, is quartermann@ziffdavis.com). And try to make your resolutions gaming-related; you and I both know that vow to drop 20 pounds just ain't gonna happen.

—The Q

The fantasy is never over

Some of you might've already heard that Hironobu Sakaguchi, the man who created Square Enix's *Final Fantasy* series, recently formed his own development studio, Mist Walker. Well, it appears that a few of his



former mates—composer Nobuo Uematsu and artist Yoshitaka Amano—have been hired to work on an all-new role-playing game for next-gen consoles. And get this: Sakaguchi is chatting with both Nintendo and Microsoft about which system his project will call home.

Returning to Castlevania

If you haven't done so already, make sure to read our enormous handheld feature (page 72), which includes the world-exclusive first look at *Castlevania* for Nintendo DS. And speaking of vampire hunting, it looks like the Belmont family is heading back to PS2 sometime in '05. Now I don't have many deets for you to sink your teeth into, but I hear the dev team has learned a lot about level design since the last *Castlevania* console game.

EA has its GoldenEye on PS2

Word around the Ministry of Defense is that another console installment in this first-person shooter series is coming your way by the end of '05. But there's a catch—'07 is now the star and he'll only show off his gadgets and good looks for PS2 owners. Could this be the first console project where game saves are compatible between the PS2 and PSP versions?

Capcom goes retro

Sure, the games on those Namco and Midway arcade collections look crappy by today's standards, but they are still a blast to play. It seems Capcom has also caught the old-school bug and is planning to release in the not-so-distant future its very own compilation disc with a ton (and I mean a ton) of arcade classics. Very nice.

PS3 stuck in the gates

The more I chat with developers, the more they tease me about their upcoming Xbox 2 projects (not very nice of them, now is it?). Yet I rarely hear them mention what's on tap for PlayStation 3. Apparently, Sony's next console is still quite a ways off, as no one really has a clue to PS3's specs. And that's why so many in the development community are putting all their efforts into Xbox 2, which, yes, is still looking like a late '05 launch.

Totally twisted

Now, now, I know I just mentioned that little is known about PlayStation 3, but I wouldn't be a real rumormonger if I didn't have some PS3 dirt to dish. So here it goes: A friend of a friend of a friend tells me that the vehicular combat series known as *Twisted Metal* will follow up its PlayStation Portable showing with a next-gen console debut in '06. Expect it to sport a huge online mode and have an even beefier story than *TM: Black*.



IN THE HOT SEAT: LORNE LANNING



Occasionally, *EDM* chats with big-time game makers and asks their preferences on different subjects. Now up: Oddworld Inhabitants Co-Founder and President Lorne Lanning, who this January will release the first-person-shooting, third-person bounty hunting *Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath* (XB).

PlayStation 3



Abe and Munch

Stranger

Lorne Lanning: Stranger, no doubt. Everything about him is a huge step up from the Abe and Munch duo.

PlayStation 2



Daune "Dog" Chapman

Renegade's Lorenzo Lamas

Ed: Dog, only because I saw him in an airport and he had bunch of hot babes with him. I saw Lamas once, but he was riding his Hatley with a gang of fanboy posers.

PlayStation 1



PlayStation Portable

Nintendo DS

Ed: PSP looks cool—it's black and widescreen! It feels like a hip media device. Hopefully, the PSP's batteries will last.

THE HOT TEN

Thou shalt covet countless sequels and spinoffs

Disagree with the list? You're the ones who created it. Choose and/or lose at egm.1UP.com.



■ EGM readers just can't get enough of Link's chic metrosexual look.

1 The Legend of Zelda
GC • Fall 2005



2 Final Fantasy XII
PS2 • Summer 2005

3 Kingdom Hearts II
PS2 • September 2005

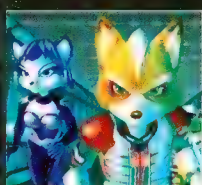
4 Dirge of Cerberus: FFVII
PS2 • Fall 2005

5 Devil May Cry 3
PS2 • March 2005

6 Metroid Prime: Hunters
DS • Spring 2005



7 Splinter Cell Chaos Theory
PS2/XB/GC • March 2005



8 Star Fox: Assault
GC • February 2005

9 Jade Empire
XB • March 2005

10 Xenosaga Episode II
PS2 • February 2005



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

GC • Summer 2005 — Link's upcoming adventure has claimed the top spot on this chart for six of the last seven months, despite the fact that Nintendo hasn't released a single new screenshot since last May. At long last, we're happy to have a

new image of everyone's favorite elf astride his beloved steed. The darker, more mature tone of the game should extend beyond just its visuals—in a recent interview, Nintendo's localization team hinted that the game may earn a "Teen" rating for violence.



METROID PRIME: HUNTERS

DS • Spring 2005 — Gamers who have thoroughly chewed through the *Hunters* demo (bundled with the DS hardware) should be just about ready for the prime cut of this multiplayer-focused *Metroid* title, but if you're hungrier for a meatier single-player adventure, you're in luck. In a recent interview, Retro (the team behind the two GC *Prime* games) expressed interest in creating a *Prime*-style adventure for the two-screen DS.



JADE EMPIRE

XB • March 2005 — Like BioWare's *Knights of the Old Republic*, its upcoming RPG *Jade Empire* will feature multiple-choice dialogue that hits you with morality choices out the yin-yang. The choices between good and evil—harmony and discord—is figuratively in your hands. Seek harmony and offer friendship with "the way of the open palm," or channel aggression and break faces with "the way of the closed fist."



**“BEFORE NORMANDY
WE WERE JUST SOLDIERS.”**

"BUT EIGHT DAYS IN HELL
MADE US BROTHERS."

- SGT. MATT BAKER



COMING SOON TO PC AND CONSOLES.

RATING PENDING

RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Visit www.esrb.org
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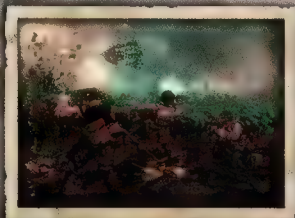
PC
CD-ROM
SOFTWARE

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BROTHERS ★ IN ARMS ★ ROAD TO HILL 30

Play it On
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gearbox
SOFTWARE



UBISOFT



■ Tekken's head hunt
Nina Williams opts for a
little freelance work in
Death By Degrees.

COMING SOON

Big games for a short month

FEBRUARY 2005		<p>Brothers in Arms Ubisoft • PS2/XB — This super-realistic contender for the WWII shooter throne has you calling plays quarterback style.</p>		<p>Champions: Return to Arms Sony • PS2 — Hack, slash, and be merry in this online-enabled sequel to <i>EverQuest</i> spin-off <i>Champions of Norrath</i>.</p>		<p>Constantine THQ • PS2/XB — We can't vouch for the quality of the Keanu Reeves comic-to-film adaptation, but the game seems fine.</p>	
<p>Death By Degrees Namco • PS2 — If fighting game character Ryu Hayabusa can get his own action title, why shouldn't <i>Tekken</i>'s Nina?</p>		<p>Demon Warriors XPEC • XB — Scope the latest from Taiwan's Xbox gaming scene—an online-enabled brawler set in 14th century China.</p>		<p>Gran Turismo 4 Sony • PS2 — Expect tons of cars, realistic physics...for crying out loud, it's <i>Gran Turismo</i>! It's coming out. You'll buy it.</p>		<p>Nanobreaker Konami • PS2 — You'll want to break machines, too, once Sony's creepy ABC and QRIO robots enslave humanity.</p>	
<p>Outlaw Volleyball Global Star • PS2 — Xbox owners used to get all the volleyball lovin', but not any more. Get ready for raunchy spiking. PS2.</p>		<p>Phantom Crash 2050 Konami • PS2 — You'd think you'd be able to hear <i>Phantom Crash</i>'s cloaked multiton mechs coming.</p>					
<p>Project: Snowblind Eidos • PS2/XB — A shooter starring a nanotech-enhanced supersoldier—sound familiar? This was initially a <i>Deus Ex</i> game.</p>		<p>Robots VU Games • PS2/XB/GC/DS — In the race to release games based on movies with absurdly simple names, this beats <i>Cars</i>.</p>		<p>Tekken 5 Namco • PS2 — <i>Tekken</i> is taking a step backward in order to go forward, removing many of the features debuted in the poorly received <i>Tekken 4</i>. Taking a cue from the competition, <i>Virtua Fighter 4</i>, <i>Tekken</i> will also allow cosmetic character customization.</p>			
Also in February							
Ghost Recon 2 Ubisoft • GC		Mortal Kombat: Deception Midway • GC		NBA Street 3 EA Big • PS2/XB/GC		Shaman King Legacy Hawk/Wolf Konami • GBA	
Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death Evolved Games • XB/GC		Motorcross Mania III Global Star • PS2/XB		Rave Master: Special Attack Force Konami • GBA		Star Fox Assault Nintendo • GC	
King of Fighters 02/03 SNK • PS2		Music Maker Magix • PS2		Sega Classics Collection Sega of America • PS2		Street Fighter Anniversary Collection Capcom • XB	
Mario Party Advance Nintendo • GBA		MX vs. ATV Unleashed THQ • PS2/XB		Shadow of Rome Capcom • PS2		Wild Arms: Alter Code F AgeTec • PS2	
						Winnie the Pooh Rumbly Tumbly Ubisoft • PS2	
						World Soccer Winning Eleven 8 Konami • XB	
						Yu-Gi-Oh! World Champ Tournament Konami • GBA	
						Yu-Gi-Oh! World Championship Konami • PS2	

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—GAMESPY

MATURE 17+



Blood and Gore
Intense Violence



PlayStation 2



THERE IS NO MERCY IN JUSTICE.



INTENSE GLADIATOR
ARENA FIGHTING



FAST PACED CHARIOT
RACES AND BATTLES



CHARACTER SWITCHING FOR
INFO GATHERING AND
PUZZLE SOLVING MISSIONS



44 B.C. ROMAN EMPIRE

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FEBRUARY 2005 A.D.

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CAPCOM



YEAR OF THE PORTABLES

The future of gaming rests comfortably in your hands



Photograph: © Getty Images/Chris Wedel

Whether you're amusing yourself on the morning commute, sneaking a few rounds in between appointments, or vanquishing demons while on the commode, portable gaming is there for you when your home consoles are out of reach. For the last 15 years, various incarnations of Nintendo's Game Boy have controlled nearly 100 percent of the handheld gaming market (selling well over 100 million units in the process). But that dominance may

finally be coming to an end—several next-gen portables that offer high-end graphical performance, multimedia applications, online play, and damned sexy bodies threaten to move the handheld war onto a completely new battlefield. As mobile gaming grows up, so will the games—read on for a detailed look at the hottest upcoming titles for the six heaviest (or is it lightest?) players.... >

—Shane Bettenhausen,
Justin Speer, and Nich Maragos

PlayStation Portable	p. 74
Nintendo DS	p. 82
Game Boy Advance	p. 92
N-Gage	p. 94
Tapwave	p. 96
Gizmondo	p. 96

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE

The clear favorite in the brewing portable brouhaha, Sony's PSP combines slick physical design, amazing 3D visuals, wireless connectivity, and multimedia playback into a pint-sized behemoth. Aimed at the older,

savvy PS2-owning crowd, the PSP isn't positioned as a direct competitor for Nintendo's kid-friendly Game Boy brand. "We're not really concerned with what Nintendo or any other company is doing," says Sony CEA

President Kaz Hirai. "We will create our own new market." Even so, the PSP is a gamble: Sony's reportedly taking a bath on the high-end hardware by pricing it below \$200, and it hopes to make it back on the software.

The Basics**Publisher:** Sony**Release Date:** March 2005**Price:** Expected to be \$199.99**Media:** UMD (Universal Media Disc), a new 1.8 gigabit optical format for games, movies, and music**Online:** Wireless functionality allows one PSP to connect with up to 15 others over Wi-Fi hotspots

This semibelievable "work in progress" screenshot proves that, for potential zombies, black is the new black.

INFECTED

Majesco • Summer 2005

The Basics: Nothing can curtail a promising career in law enforcement quite like a zombie bite to the leg. That's your unfortunate predicament at the outset of *Infected*, Majesco's upcoming PSP horror-action romp. But it's not quite as dire as it sounds—rather than succumbing to undead fever and triggering a flesh feast, this cop's blood miraculously kills the infection. So you do what any hero would do: Soak mutated monsters with streams of your death-dealing lifeblood via a vein-tapping gun. The Red Cross would be proud.

You'll prep zombie freaks for their trans-fusion by riddling them with bullets from the standard gun, at which point you'll administer a shot from the blood-powered viral gun. Doing so induces an irreversible

occurrence of "exploding in a shower of meaty chunks" syndrome, and other zombies splattered with that blood will explode in a gory chain reaction.

You're also looking to save as many innocent people as possible. If every citizen on the map gets infected, you'll face a "viral overload" and a desperate zombie charge. Preserving life and racking up explosion combos earns you points that you can use to mod your character's appearance or cash in for new weapons.

Although it might seem horrific, the game's actually played for laughs—it's from perpetually jokey developer Planet Moon, the guys behind Xbox sleeper *Armed and Dangerous*. Pumping a bloodthirsty Santa full of lead has never been funnier.

Positively PSP: The PSP's wireless-networking capabilities let you wage germ warfare in deathmatch and team deathmatch modes. The mechanics are similar to the single-player game's, but with some nasty twists: Defeating someone infects that player with your own strain of virus, turning their character into a carbon copy of you. Unless they flush your virus out in special single-player missions, they'll become a carrier and pass on your infection to someone else, who in turn passes it along to other unsuspecting saps. "It's another chain reaction...Kind of like a chain letter of evil," explains Producer Aaron Loeb. Sounds pretty sick to you. >



"We're not really concerned about what Nintendo is doing."

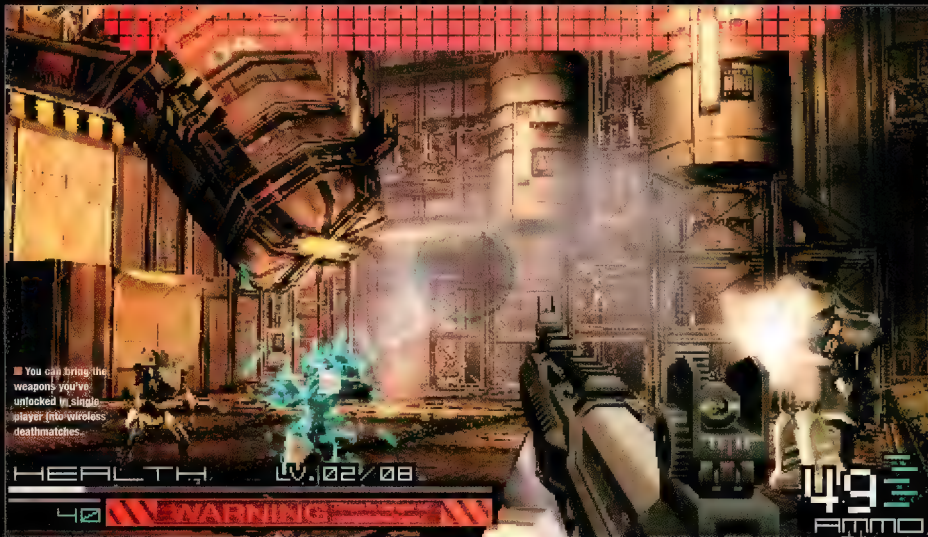
—Sony CEA President Kaz Hirai



You can take aim at the shambling zombies from either a behind-the-cap third-person view or a first-person perspective, the latter imparting the game a *House of the Dead*-ish vibe.



PLAYSTATION PORTABLE (cont.)



■ You can bring the weapons you've unlocked in single-player into wireless deathmatches.

CODED ARMS

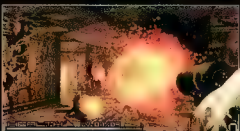
Konami • Summer 2005

The Basics: Since the Game Boy was never much for impressive 3D visuals, first-person shooters rarely made the leap from home consoles to the handheld arena. Luckily, the new generation of portables is finally up to the task—scope the detailed, fleshy graphics of Konami's *Coded Arms*, an original FPS set in a twisted virtual-reality world. You play the role of a hacker tasked with cleaning out a combat training simulator gone haywire, hunting down bugs that have taken over the system.

Positively PSP: Since the PSP doesn't have dual analog sticks, *Coded Arms* allows you to customize the controls in any way you choose—using the analog nub for movement and the buttons for aiming and strafing might be the best bet for players weaned on *Halo*. And you'll need to learn your way around the controls and play through some single-player levels before you challenge live opponents in *Arms'* wireless multiplayer deathmatches, since you bring your weaponry and items from the story mode into the fray. >



■ *Coded Arms* offers some fancy guns, like this, uh...thermonuclear spork.



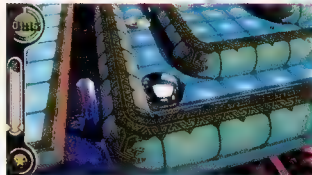
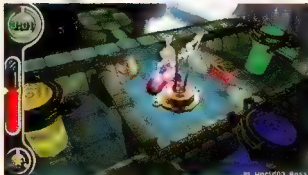
■ You'll look down the barrel at all manner of mutant beasts in *Arms'* virtual world.

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AVAILABLE ON THE PSP™ HANDHELD ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM AT LAUNCH

RATING PENDING
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awesome

Archer Maclean's Mercury™ © 2004 Ignition Entertainment Limited. Developed by Awesome Studios. PSP™ Handheld Entertainment System

 **IGNITION**
entertainment

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE (cont.)

METAL GEAR ACID

Konami • March 2005

The Basics: The world's most popular stealth franchise antos up for a new kind of adventure—tactical card-based roleplaying. Although it seems like a strange deviation for Solid Snake, this turn-based RPG doesn't require a prerequisite in *Magic: The Gathering* to enjoy. Set two years after the end of *MGS2*, *Acid* pulls Solid Snake out of retirement to combat a new national security threat. Along the way,

you'll team up with Teriko, a sultry female agent, for some doubly strategic missions in which you control both characters.

Positively PSP: Sadly, a planned wireless multiplayer mode had to be scrapped so that the game could make the PSP launch. Hopefully, the nearly PS2-quality visuals will wow us so much that we don't notice the absence of two-player card combat.



(Below) You'll command both Snake and newcomer Teriko on joint sneaking missions.



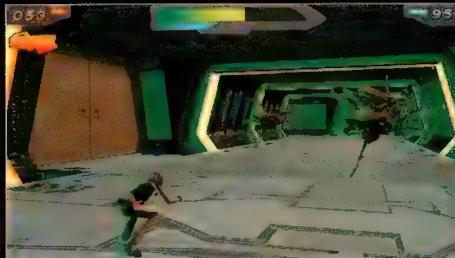
ADVENT SHADOW

Majesco • Summer 2005

The Basics: *Shadow* works as a companion piece to *Advent Rising*, Majesco's upcoming Xbox shooter (and the first in a planned trilogy penned by noted sci-fi scribe Orson Scott Card). Although not part of the central narrative, this action-adventure will flesh out the backstory of *Rising* costar Marin Steel. You take control of this midriff-baring female mercenary as she attempts to escape a dying

planet under siege by alien forces.

Positively PSP: *Shadow* ranks among the more ambitious PSP projects: Its lush 3D visuals, multiple modes of gameplay (third-person shooting, vehicular combat, and aerial dogfighting), and epic soundtrack (featuring a full orchestra and choir) prove that portable games are inching closer to their console counterparts. >



(Below) Marin successfully completed Master Chief's vehicular commandeering telocourse.



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PLAYSTATION PORTABLE (cont.)

NEED FOR SPEED
UNDERGROUND: RIVALS

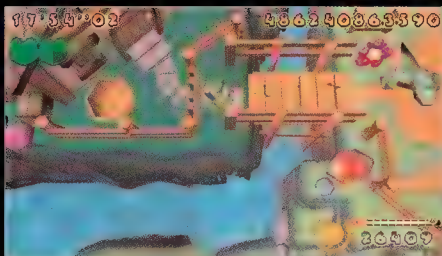
EA Games • March 2005

The Basics: All the slick city streets, tricked-out imports, and sultry ladies draped across hoods from EA's massively successful racing series drift onto Sony's new handheld, losing little gloss in the transition. Expect the focus to be on high-speed one-on-one duel races.

Positively PSP: Stunning visual effects like realistic lighting and motion trails transform the action into a breakneck blur of neon insanity when you hit the nitro. It's even more satisfying when your rocket past your friends in a wireless multiplayer game....



■ Fantasize about your sweet street rod...while riding around on the bus.



■ Frogger's visuals give kids a heads up regarding the deadly effects of hallucinogens.

FROGGER

Konami • Summer 2005

The Basics: If you last braved the freeway with *Frogger* in the decadent '80s, you've missed a lot of amphibious evolution. These days, Frogger leaps across imaginative landscapes while collecting items and mastering moves like the "swing and stomp." Hell, you're not just some random frog anymore (or even a frog at all)—you can choose from a cadre

of leaping fauna, including newcomers Berry, an acrobatic Amazonian tree frog, or Lumpy, a carefree, capricious toad.

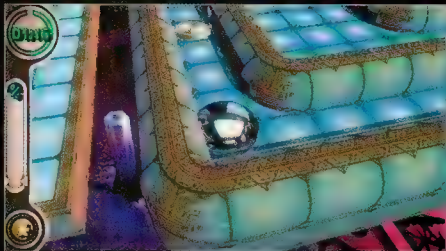
Positively PSP: The console's widescreen format actually benefits *Frogger*'s hop-happy gameplay, as it offers a broader view of the action. The PSP also allows for four-player wireless minigames.

MERCURY

Ignition • Summer 2005

The Basics: The moving-a-ball-through-a-maze videogame genre dates back to '80s arcade standby *Marble Madness*, but the concept goes back even further, to the wooden marble maze toys of yesteryear. This game hearkens back to that low-tech toy: You guide a slippery blob of mercury through various mazes by tilting the entire level.

Positively PSP: Aside from the whiz-bang graphical effects at play, *Mercury* also taps into the PSP's power by utilizing the system's USB port—attach the game's tilt-sensor module and you'll control your metallic blob by actually moving your console to and fro. Yes, you'll look a bit insane...but it's a wickedly fun exercise in creative gameplay. ▶



■ All the fun of playing with mercury, without the toxic, nerve-damaging side effects.



"With this new action-adventure Scrapland, American McGee is well on his way to becoming the PC-gaming equivalent of Alfred Hitchcock... He's stamping his brand on the game: quirky and original." **-PC Gamer**



"...combine the open-ended exploration of Grand Theft Auto with fast-paced online and offline racing and shooting." **-GameSpot**

"Scrapland is destined to become one of this years most entertaining and refreshing games." **-Game Chronicles Magazine**



NINTENDO DS

intendo's recently released handheld might not be able to push out the nearly PlayStation 2-quality visuals of Sony's PSP, but it offers unique functionality that puts it in a bizarre, innovative class of its own. Its

dual vertically aligned screens baffle upon first viewing, but developers are already experimenting with creative, functional uses beyond simply displaying maps and subscreens. Likewise with the touch-panel input—we're

already seeing games that bend the rules of interactivity and control. The Nintendo DS assuredly feels new and different, but it remains to be seen whether gamers will warm up to its distinctive personality....

The Basics

Publisher: Nintendo
Release Date: Currently available
Price: \$149.99
Media: Proprietary 1-gigabit cartridges; also plays all Game Boy Advance Games
Online: Wireless functionality allows one DS to connect with 15 others over Wi-Fi hotspots



Since he's not part of the whip-wielding Belmont family, Soma uses all sorts of different weapons.

CASTLEVANIA

Konami • Fall 2005

The Basics: If you're sick of Dracula always coming back from the dead in *Castlevania* games, you're in luck—this upcoming Nintendo DS chapter in Konami's long-running adventure series won't disturb the Count's turbulent slumber with another cop-out revival story line. A direct sequel to 2003's phenomenal (and also refreshingly Dracula-free) Game Boy Advance *Castlevania* offering, *Aria of Sorrow*, this game picks up in the far-off year 2036—precisely 12 months after pretty-boy hero Soma Cruz successfully escaped his fate at the hands of Dracula's followers. "There are those who were unhappy that Soma did not fulfill his destiny to become the reincarnation of Dracula," explains *Castlevania* producer Koji Igarashi. "Among them is Celia Fortner, the founder of a cult that believes their God to be perfectly good; therefore the existence of perfect evil is needed....

She will do everything in her power to kill Soma." Rather than wait around for a mob of crazed religious zealots to off him, Soma proactively ventures into the cult's headquarters to face his would-be assassins. Unsurprisingly, he finds his way to a familiar castle....

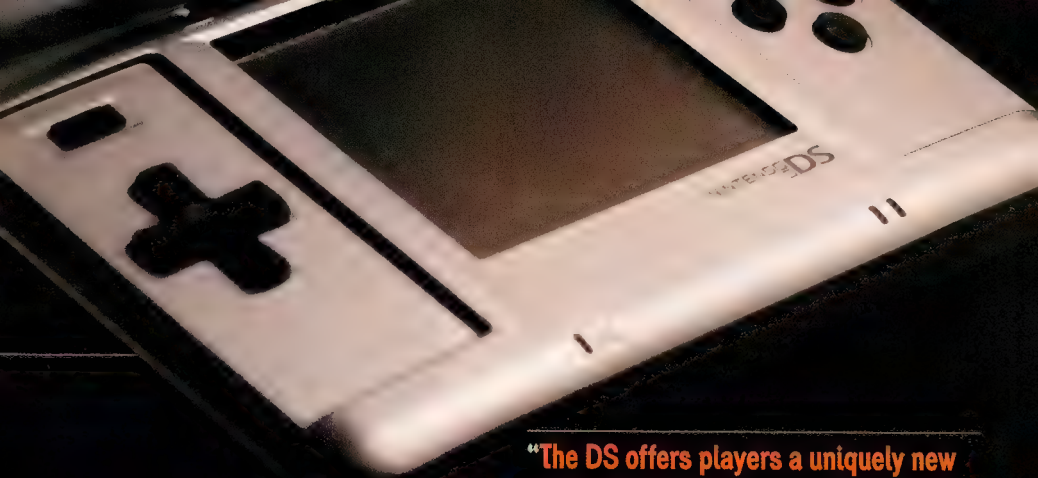
The core *Castlevania* gameplay hasn't changed much since *Aria of Sorrow*, which in turn borrowed heavily from Igarashi's watershed PS1 *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*. Soma still runs, jumps, and attacks from a traditional side-scrolling perspective, and rather than explore linear levels, you lead him through a labyrinthine map of interlocking areas, picking up items and ferreting out secrets. As in *Symphony*, the main character fights with a vast arsenal of different weapons—swords, spears, hammers, etc.—instead of the whip of old-school *Vania* hero Simon Belmont. Also, expect the return of *Aria*'s

lauded Enemy Soul system: Instead of picking up old standbys like holy water and the axe, you bust out cool special attacks by equipping orbs randomly dropped by enemies. Every foe has one, but collecting them all requires serious dedication. "I have made several enhancements to *Aria*'s gameplay systems," claims Igarashi. "There are many new unique weapons to wield, and we've increased the number of Enemy Souls you can obtain."

The DS Difference: You needn't have a degree in advanced vampirology to figure out how the DS' second screen will function here. "The upper screen will display the player's current status, along with

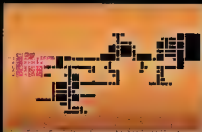
All the hip dudes will be wearing this come 2036.





"The DS offers players a uniquely new game experience."

—Castlevania producer Koji Igarashi



■ The DS' top screen will display a handy map, so you'll never get lost in the castle.

MAGIC TOUCH

Producer Koji Igarashi explains how you'll wield the DS' stylus in Castlevania:

"This time, killing bosses requires more than just steady attacks: Once you drain the enemy's hit points to zero, the Magic Seal entry screen pops up. **You** then use the stylus to draw a certain shape on the screen and "seal" the enemy. If the shape is drawn incorrectly, the enemy regains some of its energy and the fight continues."



■ Collect the right Enemy Soul and you'll be able to summon a squad of archers.



■ When the Magic Seal sphere appears on your screen, reach for your stylus. Then pay close attention to the stroke order, because you'll have to correctly draw the shape in order to beat the boss.

NINTENDO DS (cont.)



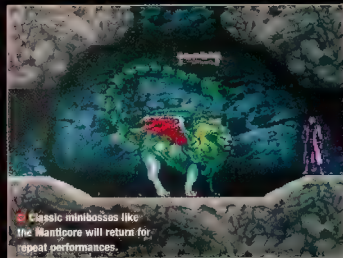
Some weapons are better at handling Enemy Souls from foes.



Soma's Special skills move enemies.



Flying Medusa heads in a clock tower? Check.



Classic minibosses like the Manticores will return for repeat performances.

their position on the overall map," says Igarashi. In a game where you're trying to remember precisely where you saw that previously unreachable platform, having a

constant view of the castle layout will be a serious boon. Igarashi's plans for the touch panel aren't quite as predictable: "Since it's a pure action game, I did not want to mix

the use of buttons at the same time as the new Magic Seal system (see sidebar on page 83).

Visually, *Castlevania* opts for a traditional 2D style, quelling gamers' fears that they might have another blurry, blocky

Castlevania 64 (Nintendo 64) to muddle through. "DS is a great portable for expressing 2D gameplay," Igarashi explains. "I've noted that the DS has better graphical capabilities than, say, the PS1, and it's up to us to push the limits of this new hardware." The team also plans to make full use of the system's vastly superior-to-GBA music capabilities. Noted series composer Michiru Yamane (the tunesmith behind the haunting *Symphonia of the Night* score) will supervise the music production and pen a few key tracks herself.

Fans of Igarashi's previous Game Boy Advance *Castlevania* titles would probably

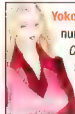
ARIA REPRISED

All of the surviving characters from *Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow* (GBA) return in this direct follow-up. Here's a quick recap of whom you'll be interacting with....

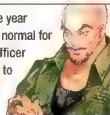
Genya Arikado: This debonair businessman (who's secretly Alucard, the star of *Symphonia of the Night*) aids Soma's quest.



Yoko Belnades: A flirtatious nun (and descendant of *Castlevania III* heroine Sypha Belnades), she works with Arikado to protect Soma.



Kammer: In the year 2036, it's totally normal for a brash Army officer to sell supplies to femme-y teens.



Mina Hakuba: Soma's previously kidnapped childhood friend is also targeted for death by the cult. Sucks to be her....



Julius Belmont: Descendant of the Belmont clan, Julius helped to seal Dracula away in the year 1999.



only lodge one complaint—the games are over too quickly. Eight or nine hours of feverish exploration and undead beat-downs, and you've probably scopped every nook and cranny of Drac's spacious abode. The potential for wireless multiplayer action would grant some serious replayability into this DS chapter. "I don't want to have two Somas running around together," says Igarashi. "But I'm hoping to find space for a versus mode if time allows." And even if there isn't room for that feature in this game, Igarashi promises to utilize the DS' wireless functionality for Enemy Soul trading and the exchange of customized maps. >

"Nintendo DS is a great portable for expressing 2D gameplay."

—*Castlevania* Producer Koji Igarashi

constant view of the castle layout will be a serious boon.

Igarashi's plans for the touch panel aren't quite as predictable: "Since it's a pure action game, I did not want to mix

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NINTENDO DS (cont.)

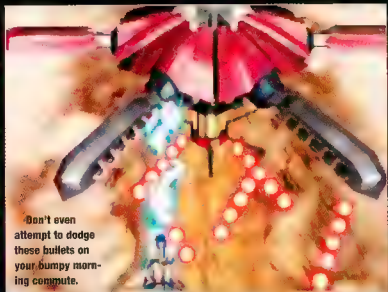
NANOSTRAY

Majesco • Spring 2005

The Basics: Veterans of the 2001 Game Boy Advance launch might remember *Friction 20*, a traditional space shooter that wowed players with impressive streaming-video graphics. The same development team now brings its hardcore shooter action to the Nintendo DS' dual-screen format. *Nanostray* offers similarly classic stick-and-move bullet-ballet gameplay, filling the screen with blazing special weapons

and legions of enemy ships.

The DS Difference: *Nanostray* uses all of the DS' specialized functions: The second screen displays your score, shows enemy radar position, and allows you to select your weapons by merely touching virtual buttons. Plus, you can wirelessly link up with a friend and tackle the game in two-player mode.



ANIMAL CROSSING

Nintendo • Summer 2005

The Basics: Mundane tasks like pulling weeds, rearranging furniture, and running errands magically become engaging when you're doing them in a videogame. This DS sequel to the breakout GameCube hit threatens to gobble up untold hours of your free time—it's tough to find the perfect curtains to match your snazzy throw rug.

The DS Difference: If you want to visit your friends' towns in the GC *Animal Crossing*, you have to lug your memory card over to their console, but in this DS version you'll be able to wirelessly connect and commune with fellow beasts on a wireless network.



MARIO KART DS

Nintendo • Spring 2005

The Basics: Mario and his cronies take to the track for another round of automotive mayhem, complete with all the powersliding and shell tossing you've come to expect from this genre-defining franchise.

The DS Difference: Predictably, the second screen doesn't do terribly much other than display a map of the current track. It's the promise of wireless multiplayer competition that truly sets this game apart from its karting fore-runners. If someone can finagle a method of using wireless routers to get true Internet races going, we're so there. >

■ Is it just us, or is this Ghost House track a bit too wide?



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PlayStation 2



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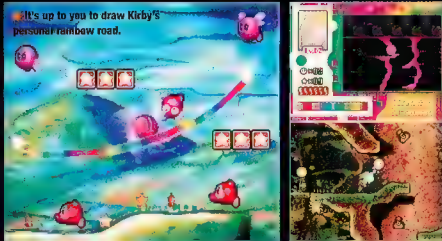
NINTENDO DS (cont.)

TOUCH! KIRBY: THE MAGIC PAINTBRUSH

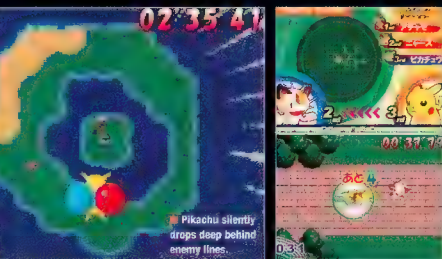
Nintendo • Summer 2005

The Basics: Amorphous yet lovable hero Kirby embarks on yet another platforming adventure. This time, he's trapped inside a painting, and it's your job to safely guide him through the picturesque (albeit enemy-infested) landscapes with the titular magic paintbrush (i.e., the DS stylus).

The DS Difference: While most of the DS installments of classic Nintendo franchises only dabble in DS' unique functionality, *Kirby* fully immerses itself in a creative new form of touch-panel control. It's up to you to draw platforms for Kirby to walk on, tap him to dash forward, and guide him to destroy enemies.



It's up to you to draw Kirby's personal rainbow road.



Pikachu silently drops deep behind enemy lines.

POKÉMON DASH

Nintendo • March 2005

The Basics: Billionaire electric rodent Pikachu scampers around a track, hoping to emerge victorious against his equally lovable *Pokémon* pals. Occasional parachuting stages (oddly reminiscent of *Pilotwings* for Super Nintendo) break up the sweaty rat races.

The DS Difference: The main racing gameplay uses the DS' touch panel fairly

well—you guide your chosen critter around the track with the stylus. Some tight turns keep the contests from being a total cakewalk, but the whole escapade feels a bit like a minigame that should have been tacked onto the upcoming proper DS *Pokémon* games, *Diamond* and *Pearl*. Still, expect some serious off-track betting on recess-time playgrounds across the nation....

SUPER PRINCESS PEACH

Nintendo • Summer 2005

The Basics: Perpetually ditzzy Peach finally catches wind of the women's liberation movement, setting off to rescue Mario in her own side-scrolling action-adventure. Whether or not grown men will be able to stomach a game in which a sassy talking parasol constitutes your main line of defense remains to be seen.

The DS Difference: Oddly enough, the top screen displays nothing but a large, animated image of the Princess that reacts to in-game events as they occur—cute, but hardly functional. All the gameplay takes place on the lower screen, where you'll be able to hop and hop with your trusty stylus.



How many girlfriends would leap over lava or pummel fish with an umbrella for their man?



An infant held aloft by three balloons—this is what you get for hiring Yoshi as a babysitter.

YOSHI'S TOUCH & GO

Nintendo • March 2005

The Basics: Helpless baby Mario and his reptilian steed Yoshi reprise their roles from the Super NES classic *Yoshi's Island* in this newfangled touch-screen platformer. In some stages, you guide the famous tyke through perilous skies, while others have Yoshi protecting Mario from the threat of kidnapping by chucking eggs at encroaching baddies.

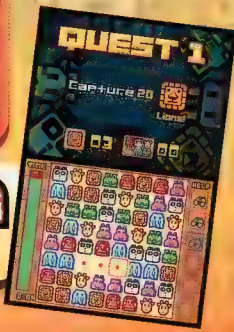
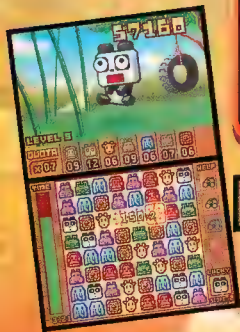
The DS Difference: *Touch & Go* breaks from the "let's-just-use-it-as-a-map-screen" trend by effectively using both displays for gameplay. One troubling prospect, though: The main touch-panel action here—drawing clouds for Yoshi to gallop across—feels an awful lot like a slower-paced variant of the central *Touch! Kirby* mechanics. >

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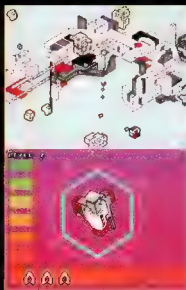
NINTENDO DS (cont.)

ATARI CLASSICS

Atari • March 2005

The Basics: This isn't just another catch-all collection of antiquated arcade hits—Atari has instead hired famed New York City graffiti artists to reimagine the visuals for 10 of its best-known oddies: *Pong*, *Asteroids*, *Breakout*, *Centipede*, *Tempest*, *Warlords*, *Space Duel*, *Gravitar*, *Lunar Lander*, and *Sprint*. Arcade purists might scoff at these newly hip remakes, but the kids will likely call them “dope.”

The DS Difference: These old-timey hits should work wonderfully on DS. Some of these titles were made for touch-panel control. *Tempest*, *Centipede*, and *Breakout* benefit from the lightning-fast response time of the stylus—it's a good approximation of the trackball and paddle controllers from the original arcade cabinets. Add in four-player wireless multiplayer and you've got a handheld renaissance.

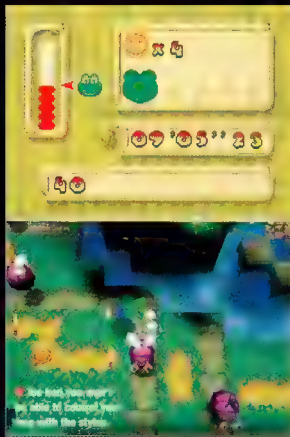


FROGGER

Konami • Summer 2005

The Basics: Having long since graduated from merely crossing traffic-laden roads, Konami's famous frog sets out on another one-square-at-a-time hopping adventure, similar to his million-selling escapades on PS1. Simple, pick-up-and-play control, attractive 3D graphics, and hidden extras should make this another amphibious hit.

The DS Difference: *Frogger* takes the easy way out with the use of the second screen—you'll find nothing but pertinent score, time, and health info there—but at least it takes advantage of the DS' wireless multiplayer capabilities for some four-player frog face-offs.



WARIOWARE TOUCHED!

Nintendo • February 2005

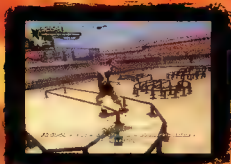
The Basics: The revolutionary microgame concept pioneered by 2003's original *WarioWare* comes to the DS, where success relies entirely on your scribbling, rubbing, and blowing skills. Once again, you've only got three seconds to figure out what bizarre, goofy action each task requires, as you rifle through over 100 all-new rapid-fire minigames.

The DS Difference: *Touched!* has you fondling and blowing on what you see, but Sega's *Feel the Magic* actually beat it to the punch, offering many minigames remarkably like the ones here. Still, the wackiness factor should be reason enough to pick it up. >



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TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2



PlayStation 2

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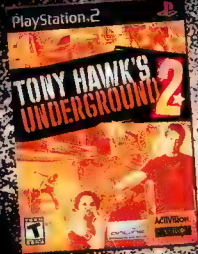
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GAME BOY ADVANCE

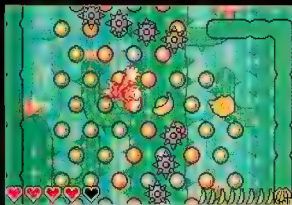
This year, the venerated Game Boy dynasty could abdicate its handheld throne to any of the scrappy next-gen portable upstarts, possibly even Nintendo's own DS. But with nearly 25

million GBAs already in American gamers' hands, Nintendo isn't about to cut support for its most successful platform. While third-party support seems doomed to an endless parade of

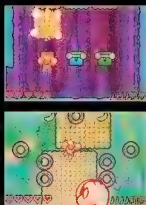
baby games and *Mega Man* titles, Nintendo plans to deliver a handful of top-quality softs in 2005. The GBA may be getting on in years, but it's not exactly ready for the museum....

The Basics

Publisher: Nintendo
Release Date: Currently available
Price: \$79.99
Media: Proprietary cartridges; also plays all Game Boy and Game Boy Color games
Online: Optional 2-player wireless link



■ *King of Swing* has deceptively simple gameplay—you only use two buttons.



DK: KING OF SWING

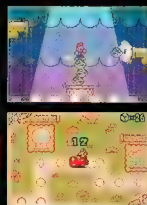
Nintendo • Spring 2005

The Basics: Nintendo's archetypal ape defends his role as "King of the Jungle" against the villainous schemes of King K. Rool in this new action-platformer hybrid. Along the way, he'll rescue several unfortunately named members of the Kong brood—Diddy, Dixie, and Funky.

Any Innovations? *DK* redefines the *DK* gameplay formula by stripping it to its barest essentials: Press the L button and Donkey Kong moves his left hand, R for his right. With these two simple motions, you'll swing your way through wild, trap-filled stages.



■ Solo play is the game's focus, but you can also link up for some quick sibling rivalry.



MARIO PARTY ADVANCE

Nintendo • March 2005

The Basics: Nintendo's annual blend of board game antics and competitive multiplayer minigames finally goes portable. And you don't have to round up a posse in order to have fun—60 single-player contests make this a perfectly acceptable party for one.

Any Innovations? The single-player focus takes the *Mario Party* franchise in a new direction, but your friends aren't totally forgotten. You can link two GBAs up to play battle games, trade items, and use special "gadgets" like a compatibility tester.

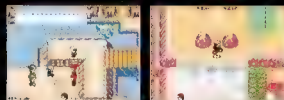


WARIOWARE TWISTED!

Nintendo • March 2005

The Basics: Ready your reflexes for another helping of microgame insanity in the vein of 2003's original GBA cult hit *WarioWare Inc.* You'll tackle over 100 humorous new challenges, with mere seconds to solve each one.

Any Innovations? This new *WarioWare* features one huge innovation—the plus-sized cartridge itself, which comes equipped with a motion sensor. Instead of using the GBA's D-pad to control the games, you tilt your system in the left or right to solve the microgames. It's wacky, riotous fun...that's probably not something you want to play on the bus.

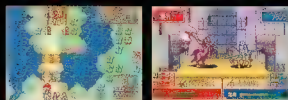


POKÉMON EMERALD

Nintendo • April 2005

The Basics: In this game, you trap innocent creatures, train them to kill one another, then rise to prominence among your peers...but it's all very cute and cuddly. Yep, it's yet another *Pokémon*.

Any Innovations? *Emerald* allows wireless multiplayer battles (via the included GBA wireless adapter), but that's not really so new...last year's *Pokémon FireRed* and *LeafGreen* offered the same deal. At least die-hard fans will find a few improvements over 2003's *Ruby* and *Sapphire*: new battle animations, new story events, and a new area to explore.



FIRE EMBLEM 2

Nintendo • March 2005

The Basics: Follow-up to 2003's strategy hit, *FE2* throws you into another tactical conflict. As a feisty princess on a quest to rescue her twin brother, you recruit an army of warriors and wage small-scale strategic battles similar to those in *Advance Wars*.

Any Innovations? The basic gameplay and visuals haven't improved much from the previous installment, but two key additions make it a deeper game: You now have a choice between two different character classes as your heroes level up, and you can also select various paths when traveling across the world map. >

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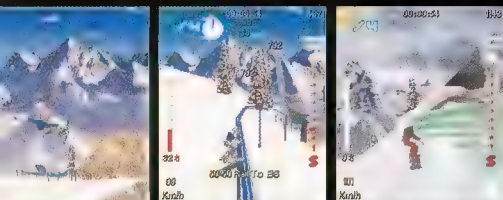
N-GAGE

After a dismal launch (the initial system design resembled a large metallic taco and required users to "side-talk" into it), Nokia's ambitious cell phone-game system hybrid gets a

second chance at life in the form of the N-Gage QD. A growing library of exclusive titles that make use of the console's multiplayer capabilities hint at the system's future direction. As Nokia's

Director of Games Solutions Gerard Wiener puts it, "Playing against a friend on the same bus is cool, but playing against your friend on another bus in another country is even cooler."

The Basics
Publisher: Nokia
Release Date: Currently available
Price: \$199.99 (free with rebates and two-year service plan)
Media: Proprietary cartridges
Online: Bluetooth technology for both local and wide-area multiplayer gaming



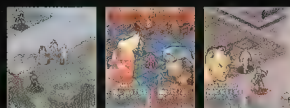
So that's what SSX would have looked like on the PS1.

SSX OUT OF BOUNDS

Nokia • February 2005

The Basics: *Out of Bounds* squeezes all the raucous snowboarding action from EA Big's hit console series onto the N-Gage's meager screen. With 10 returning boarders, 11 slippery slopes, and all the over-the-top tricks you'd expect, this should be one of the system's finest titles.

Only on N-Gage: Up to four players can compete wirelessly from anywhere in the nation, and you can download new outfits and boards, as well. Plus, if you pull off a particularly absurd super-liber-move, you can always call your friends and brag about it...on your game system.



Battles unfold similar to those in *Final Fantasy Tactics*.

RIFTS: PROMISE OF POWER

Nokia • June 2005

The Basics: Vets of the pen-and-paper role-playing scene (w/ at least those who admit to such a heritage) likely know of *Rifts*, a gaming universe set in a futuristic, postapocalyptic America. This strategy-RPG puts you in command of a ragtag party that faces off against a random gaggle of foes: mutants, gods, demons, vampires, time travelers, cyborgs, and Martians.

Only on N-Gage: Hook up with friends in the wireless N-Gage Arena for either cooperative questing or head-to-head battles.



Would the potential sequel be named *Two or One 2?*

ONE

Nokia • Summer 2005

The Basics: Not to be confused with the old PS1 shoot-'em-up of the same name, this 1-on-1 fighter eschews the fantastical fireballs and fatalities of other games in favor of bone-crushing realism. Genuine fighting styles with hundreds of motion-captured moves are available to use in real-world fighting stages.

Only on N-Gage: You'll be able to wirelessly duel other players in the N-Gage Arena, check your standings on a global ranking list, and even customize your character with personalized tattoos.

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

Nokia • March 2005

The Basics: Don't worry if you missed the last N-Gage *Splinter Cell* (it was a lackluster GBA port), "cause this is the one that you want. *Chaos Theory* impresses with a new 3D graphics engine, as well as a full complement of weapons and acrobatic moves for superspy Sam Fisher.

Only on N-Gage: Anyone who spent quality time with *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*'s revolutionary multiplayer action on Xbox and PS2 knows how fun spy vs. mercenary matches can be. This game re-creates those four-player thrills, along with two-player cooperative action.



Beats the hell out of another crappy GBA *Splinter Cell* port.



It's got a great personality, we swear.

CATAN

Capcom • Summer 2005

The Basics: Shockingly, Capcom's first N-Gage offering is not a port of one of its myriad GBA *Mega Man* games. Instead, it's the classic board game *Catan*, in which you work to build a prosperous colony while simultaneously driving out the competition. It's a race to occupy new land first and develop the civilization there before your opponents, but it's a far bit more involved than *Risk*.

Only on N-Gage: Testing your mental prowess against the AI simply can't compare to battling wits with three other players via the N-Gage Arena.

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ZODIAC

Gaming constitutes only a fraction of this pricey handheld's capabilities—it's also a PDA, mp3 player, GPS (global positioning system) receiver, and Web browser. "The Nintendo DS and the Sony PSP are definitely strong competitors in the gaming arena, but not really beyond that," says Byron Connell, cofounder of Zodiac publisher Tapwave. "We give users the flexibility of using it for gaming, multimedia, or computing."

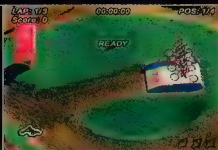
The Basics

Publisher: Tapwave
Release Date: Currently available
Price: \$399.99
Media: Proprietary cartridges; games can also be downloaded
Online: Bluetooth technology for both local and wide-area multiplayer gaming

MTX: MOTOTRAX

Tapwave • Spring 2005

This port of Activision's PS2 dirt bike sim features a nonlinear career mode in which you can race traditional motocross, indoor supercross, and undoubtedly extreme freestyle challenges. The console game's 3D visuals have been recast in a simpler, top-down 2D style, but the responsive gameplay remains intact. And it's tight control that matters most when you're pulling off flips in head-to-head wireless matches.



ANIMATED DUDES

Tapwave • Spring 2005

Talk about truth in advertising—this kid-friendly 2D side-scrolling adventure offers three different heroes, each of them more animated than the last. There's even an evil genius to defeat, because what platforming adventure would be complete without one? OK, we'll admit it—we really wanted to show some of the more promising Zodiac games like *Tomb Raider* or *Neverwinter Nights* here, but Tapwave couldn't get us screens....



HOCKEY RAGE 2005

Tapwave • Spring 2005

With a name like *Hockey Rage*, one would be disappointed if it wasn't as full-contact as possible—fortunately, that's exactly what you get. You can tackle, cross-check, or hook players on the opposing team with as much force as necessary on your way to deliver the puck into the other goal. Sixteen teams are represented for you and a friend to take sides with in the Bluetooth head-to-head mode.



GIZMONDO

The Gizmondo combines gaming with a plethora of multimedia functions—video, music, Web, GPS tracking, and a digital camera. But games won't be relegated to secondary status: "We know that the handheld market will be driven by content and functionality, and the Gizmondo will deliver on both," says founder Carl Freer. A recently announced partnership with Microsoft will surely help....

The Basics

Publisher: Tiger
Release Date: Spring 2005
Price: \$459.99
Media: Proprietary cartridges; games can also be downloaded
Online: Bluetooth technology for both local and wide-area multiplayer gaming

COLORS

Indie • Spring 2005

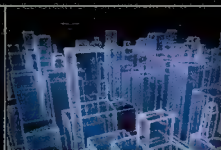
If you liked reclaiming turf in the gang-war bits of *GTA: San Andreas*, just think how much fun you'll have when you're fighting for actual territory against other human beings. In *Colors*, you can wirelessly link up with some peeps, form a posse, then attempt to invade rival ganglands in gritty, action-packed shootouts. And that land you're occupying is real, thanks to the Gizmondo's built-in GPS: You mark off your area with a GPS seeface, so if anyone intrudes, you'll be summoned to protect your piece of the city.



CITY

Indie • Spring 2005

Obviously the Gizmondo's killer app, this ambitious title uses the handheld's GPS features to place you within a virtual city modeled after the one you're already occupying in real life. So what do you do once you're virtually where you are? That part's a bit vague—you'll apparently be given small missions that encourage you to explore your urban environs and interact with fellow Gizmondo users afoot in your general vicinity. It all sounds a bit like a crazy New Age scavenger hunt...but a potentially fun one.



CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

SGI • Spring 2005

This part of the console hit puts you behind enemy lines with a squad of four soldiers during the 1991 Iraq invasion. Ten missions are available for the portable edition, starting with eliminating the chemical weapons and Scud missiles while battling the Republican Guard, and ending with leading the charge in a mission to liberate Kuwait City. Up to four players can participate via wireless connection.



Chart a Course for Adventure



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Suikoden IV

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PlayStation 2

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DIRECTORY

MULTIPLATFORM

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PLAYSTATION 2

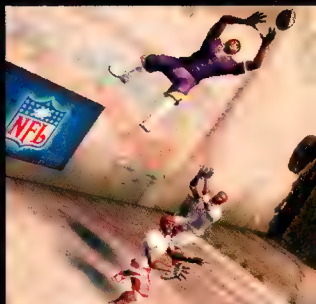
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PS2/XB/GC

NFL STREET 2

Necessary roughness

ONLINE
(PS2/XB only)



Put Me In, Coach

If you're also as serious as Madden junkie, hold on to that NFL Street 2 game save well into next fall. This time around, you can take your created wailer from Street and import him, silly tattoos and all, into Madden NFL 2006.

BRYAN: Last season's arcade, tackle-you-so-hard-you'll-come-up-breathing-snot-bubbles footballer proved that publisher EA could squeeze more dollars out of your pigskin-made wallet. And the sequel will again leave you strapped for cash.

Like the original, it's a breeze for even non-sportos to pick up *Street 2* and instantly score TDs with style, and those still wearing their high school letterman jackets will enjoy perfecting new off-the-wall jukes (think *Prince of Persia's* out-run) and launching themselves off a fence to out-jump opponents for the ball. Another nice touch is the on-field hot spots, which when tagged (via a wall move or tackle), reward you with extra Gamebreaker points or, even better,

unlock NFL legends for pickup games. Too bad playing defense—especially when trying to stop a good player's aerial attack—can still be an exercise in futility.

The most welcome improvements happen off the field. On top of challenging NFL squads, you can now "own the city": create a player from scratch, recruit teammates, and play other fictional teams in routine matchups or all-new minigames to rule the different neighborhoods of this football town. It would've been nice to see some story elements included to round out the experience, but at least this solo mode is a step in the right direction. So while I don't have a jonesin' for *Street 2* of Patrick's magnitude, it's still a very respectable follow-up.

DEBRIAN: I complained about how easy the running game was in the first *Street*, and now that EA has actually gone and done something about it, all my old bread-and-butter plays come up a dozen yards short. Parity reigns in the *EGM* offices, and Bryan whups me as often as (or more than) I whup him.

But I guess in the grand scheme that's not so bad. *Street 2's* sneaky play-action passes and wall-jumping receivers—and QBs, too—keep the air game interesting and make your play selection a bit more balanced and realistic, even if the on-field action itself is still straight-up Hollywood. The single-player game I can take or leave, but whether online or in the same living room, multiplayer is what makes the second coming of *Street* great.



■ **NFL Street 2's**
Clinton Portis: excellent
at duck, duck, goose.

THE RATING SYSTEM



At *EGM*, we evaluate only games that have been deemed final and reviewable by their publishers. Three editors rate each game independently, and we use the whole scale. **8.0** is **AVERAGE**.

AWARDS



Platinum — straight 10s. For games that are life-changing.



Gold — for games with an average score of 9.0 or higher.



Silver — for games with a mean score of 8.0 or higher.



★ **GAME OF THE MONTH** — The highest-scoring game gets one month each.



The lowest-rated game with unanimously bad scores.

DS

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N-GAGE

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GBA

116 The Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap

ESRB KEY (Also check out www.esrb.org)

Everyone (E)

Thanks for moving the lawn, Jimmie. Here are some games of innocent fun for you youngsters.

Teen (T)

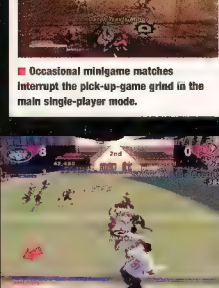
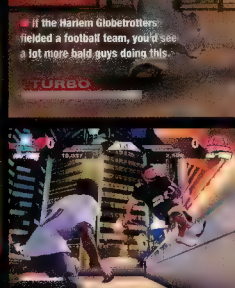
Wow! That you're 13, your mom and I figure you can handle games with fistfights and language.

Mature (M)

Wow! A man now, son. Show those cats with games of gore, violence, and hot pillaxed sex.



■ If the Harlem Globetrotters fielded a football team, you'd see a lot more bald guys doing this.



The Other Side of the Street

Aside from the conventional 7-on-7 play, *NFL Street 2* features a host of minigames. The best of the collection includes Crush the Carrier (hold on to the ball while everyone else tries to bury you), Jump Ball Battle (snag one of three balls out of the air), and Open Field Showdown (a 1-on-1 matchup in which you take turns trying to score). And all the minigames are playable online. Score!



■ Occasional minigame matches interrupt the pick-up-game grind in the main single-player mode.

PATRICK: *Street 2* ups the arcade ante—in the original, walls were simply part of the field, just one more thing you could be tackled into, but now they've become a key gameplay component. Run up and jump off the wall to make the play—Randy Moss is unstoppable using this technique, snaring balls



high in the air. It's much harder to run in *Street 2* (defensive linemen are a lot better at shaking their blockers and making quick tackles), but the wall moves help make the passing game more effective—and also risky, because DBs can wall jump, too.

Street 2 offers the kind of over-the-top, seesaw multiplayer experience that keeps you reminiscing long after the game concludes, but also has a deep, fun single-player experience, thanks in part to the new minigames. My favorite is the "ball carrier versus everyone" mode, better known in Midwestern schoolyards by a far more politically incorrect name. Still, I don't think it's the nostalgic talkin' when I say this is my favorite arcadey footballer ever. **A-**

Good: Beefier single-player experience
Bad: Playing defense is still too darn tough
Mute: The in-game tunes (they are terrrrrrible)



THESE PERSONS RATED

8.0 8.0 9.5

BRYAN DEMIAN PATRICK

Publisher: EA Sports Big
Developer: EA Tiburon
Players: PS2 (2-4 w/Multiplay, 2 online), XB 1-4 (2 online), GC 1-4
ESRB: Everyone

www.nflstreet2.com



AKIRA (in white) is just an amazing ballroom dancer.

PS2/GC

VIRTUA QUEST

Even kiddier than Virtua Fighter Kids



Goods: Responsive combat, tough bosses
Bad: Cheesy story line, simple level design
Notably Absent: *Virtua Fighter 3's* Taka-Avashi

SHANE: Even if you consider Sega's *Virtua Fighter 4* the greatest fighting game ever made (and I do), you'll be nonplussed by *Virtua Quest*. First, throw away any expectations for a serious role-player set in the detailed, realistic world of *VF*. *Quest* feels more like *Mega Man Battle Network* meets *Phantasy Star Online*—instead of an epic, world-spanning adventure, you get a short, easy brawler starring peppy kids logging in to virtual worlds to collect power chips. Cheesy dialogue, spotty acting, and the overall banality of the plot all conspire to make the *Quest* portions of *Virtua Quest* resoundingly dull.

Thankfully, the game's mechanics help to salvage the busted narrative. Combat allows spiky-haired hacker Sei to eventually command a huge arsenal of the *VF* stars' signature maneuvers. And although the rote level design rarely aspires beyond the "fight guys, get key" pattern, the standard meles remain fun. Sparring against the plentiful bosses (and *Virtua Fighters* themselves) conjures up the vaguest hint of why the parent series is so great.

BRYAN: Talk about an identity crisis. *Virtua Quest* tries to be so many different things (RPG, platformer, fighter), it's like a troubled teenage boy who needs a sit-down chat with an out-of-touch guidance counselor. Sega's game has only a sprinkling of role-playing elements, and the brawling, while featuring an impressive array of *Virtua Fighter* moves, is really just button-mashing with a fussy camera. The young 'uns may enjoy *Virtua Quest*'s simplicity, but everyone else can pass.

TUP.COM—JEREMY: You might as well rename this *My First Sega Game*. The influence of *Virtua Fighter* and *Phantasy Star Online* stands front and center in *VQ*, but its too-simple gameplay and catch-em-all action are shooting for the same young anime fan crowd as *Mega Man Battle Network* and *.hack*. Too bad this bid for a slice of the poké-pie is more clumsy than fun. And hardcore *VF* nuts, prepare to be scandalized when your heroes are outfought by a half-Pokémon trainer, half-Sora (*Kingdom Hearts*) genre-character. How could a game with so much potential end up such a mess?



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	5.5	5.0	6.0
	SHANE	BRYAN	JEREMY

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega AM2
Players: 1
ESRB: Teen

www.sega.com

PS2/XB

BACKYARD WRESTLING 2: THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

More extreme than good



Good: Idiots beating each other senseless
Bad: Gutter production values
Sad: Cameos by former ECW stars Sandman and New Jack

JOSH: You know a game's gonna rock hard when the menu beeps have been replaced by raging guitar riffs. I didn't just create a new save file; I created a new save file and rocked out to the max!

Neighborhood really nails the low-budget vibe of its license—this game's top *underground* to care about crap like graphics...and even quality gameplay. Apparently that &@#%'s for suckas. In fact, the creators must have thought the virtually no-name *Backyard Wrestlers* were too "establishment," choosing to pit you against randomly generated create-a-wrestlers instead. To please the marks they put in known wrestlers, but only in the optional challenge matches.

Neighborhood's all about the ultraviolence, so hitting people with fluorescent lightbulb tubes, shoving their faces in hot grease, and swinging below the belt with golf clubs is all fair game in a standard match which, despite the other hang-ups, can be stupidly entertaining.

PATRICK: Several key additions—more licensed fighters (including some porn stars), a much needed block button, a better body damage system, and submissions—don't even come close to saving this hybrid wrestler/fighter. The so-called Super Moves are too easy to execute, which makes the fighting tedious and repetitive. The audio is weak and kind of fades in and out during fights. With great games in the genre out there, like *Def Jam* and *SmackDown! vs. Raw*, *Neighborhood* is a rental if you have no life and a game to avoid if you do.

XBN—GREG: With *Backyard Wrestling 2*, the great existentialist Sage El Drunko has an honest-to-god game to return to. As a sequel to the execrable original, *Neighborhood* offers such finer-ies as wrestlers moving at normal speeds, powerful holds and throws fueled by a nice grappling system allowing for attacks from the front, back, and sides; and a decent complement of deadly multitiered and weapon-laden playgrounds. Go forth, *Neighborhood* proclaims, pick up the Weed Whacker, and be (bloodily) merry—and in doing so *BW2* proves itself easily three times superior to its predecessor. Though still well shy of very good.



Let's see, crazy guy with a barbed-wire bat versus a naked chick. Who will win?

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	5.5	5.0	6.5
	JOSH	PATRICK	GREG

Publisher: Eldos
Developer: Paradox
Players: 1-2
ESRB: Mature

www.eldosinteractive.com



\$85,359

SK-Movele:

One of the best parts of *Mercenaries* is just blowing 'crap up'—vehicles, statues, buildings, you name it. The explosions are spectacular.



Choppers are the fastest—and most enjoyable—way to get around in the game, but stay low or things will get foggy fast.



PS2/XB

MERCENARIES

Grand Theft Auto: North Korea

MARK: Lifting elements from *GTA* is so rampant these days it's become cliché—carjacking is the new exploding barrel. And yet, in *Mercenaries*, the borrowed features not only work, but feel perfectly natural. It makes sense that as a hired gun for various warring factions in North Korea, you can and will nab whatever it takes to get the job done. Great care has gone into all the vehicles—each one (and there are plenty) has its own quirks to master, from the lumbering treads and pivoting turret of a heavy tank to the magnetic tow cable and unique turning style of different helicopters.

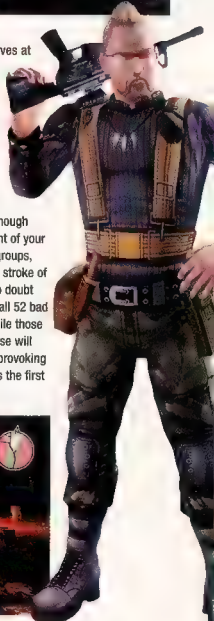
Also like *GTA*, *Mercs* offers a wide selection of missions and a refreshing amount of freedom in how you choose to accomplish them. Will you kill the target by A) calling in an air strike, B) flying in and firing a missile yourself, or C) sniping him from the surrounding hills? I won't go into options D through Z, but rest assured, they exist. Everything is supported with crisp, detailed graphics and a refreshingly classy soundtrack.

Weaknesses, yes, *Mercs* has a few. As I said, the visuals are excellent, but the price you pay is enough fog for 1,000 Spinal Tap concerts. Combat is likewise usually great, especially between vehicles, but occasionally A.I. hiccups intrude. More polish on the stealth aspects and something (like *GTA*'s radio) to fill the long drive times would have also been welcome, but I'm already into the minor complaints. These *Mercenaries* are worth hiring.

JOSH: Sure, it's a *GTA* clone without much to do between missions and a few cars that handle like cement blocks on wheels, but nothing beats the thrill of leveling a base from 200 yards with an aerial bombardment. Then again, masquerading as the enemy to rig C4 charges undetected, or hijacking a tank to assault a rival encampment is pretty cool, too. The point is that there are a ton of ways to approach most situations in *Mercenaries*, and you'll have to play it smart to save money and keep the factions happy. It may not be *San*

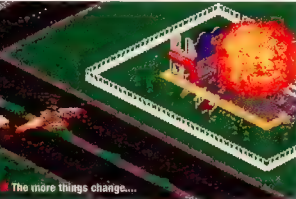
Andreas, but this soldier definitely deserves at least some of your fortune.

OFFICIAL PS MAG—JOHN: Although not necessarily its core mechanic, few things are more satisfying in *Mercenaries* than blowing crap up, and the enormous variety of methods with which you can do that makes it an absolute joy to play. The game delivers a spectacular sense of destructive freedom, while also putting enough structure in place that you never lose sight of your objectives. The interplay of the different groups, while superficially quite complicated, is a stroke of genius. Obsessively needy gamers will no doubt spend the 40 hours or so it'll take to nail all 52 bad guys, ensuring a universally good rep, while those of you who are perhaps a little more obtuse will get a perverse pleasure from needlessly provoking the ire of a particular faction. The result is the first truly great game of 2005. 🚬



Strike Force

No, *Mercenaries* isn't an update of the old Capcom top-down three-player shooter *Mercs*. It actually began its life as a new edition of the classic 16-bit *Strike* series of isometric shooters (*Jungle Strike*, *Desert Strike*, etc.). Which probably explains why *Mercenaries* works best when you are piloting a helicopter and blowing crap up, since that was the focus of all the *Strike* games.



The more things change...



Good: Aesthetics and vehicle variety, *GTA*-like freedom
Bad: Foggy horizon, minor A.I. problems
Buildings: Fully destructible, every single one. Awesome



THE VERDICTS
 (OUT OF 10)

8.5 8.5 9.0
 MARK JOSH JOHN

Publisher: LucasArts
 Developer: Pandemic
 Players: 1
 ESRB: Teen

www.lucasarts.com





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New to the series: motorcycles. Also new: classic-car paint jobs for the Europlague vehicles.



Manual aiming is a nightmare until you learn to put the tip of your gun right over the bad guy's vitals.

The End?

At two points in the game—chapters 18 and 19—you make decisions that determine which of the four endings you'll see. You get the best, longest ending if you stay in the car with Sam in mission 13 and save ace reporter Jackie in 18. Leaving both gets to their fates gets you the grimmest ending. Oh, and you don't have to replay the entire game to see the alternate finales; just redo those missions to unlock a separate story arc.

PlayStation 2

THE GETAWAY: BLACK MONDAY

Monday Bloody Monday

CRISPIN: Well ain't this a dandy stroke of luck. Before the hoods of our virtual cars have cooled in just-finished games of *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, along roars another mature-themed gangster game at 69 F-words per hour to fulfill our need for misdeeds. *The Getaway: Black Monday*—sequel to 2003's so-so, but mega-selling, thickly British caper—has driving, shooting, and dirty words (and how), just like *San Andreas*. So why not pinch it?

But here's where I slow-mo dive in front of you screaming, "Nooooooo!" because *Black Monday's* also got nothin' on *GTA*. Granted, the game's makers said they weren't making a *GTA* clone, but then they said a lot of things. For instance: that they were fixing the first game's control issues (they didn't). They said they'd address the ridiculous way you recover health by leaning against walls (it's still your main way of healing). They

said they'd add life to their true-to-MapQuest recreation of London (it's still one sterile city, devoid of fun jumps or...fun in general).

In fact, the only thing that really works here is the story, a hard-boiled, ultrablie tale shot through with flashbacks, gut-punching tension, and sometimes nearly incomprehensible British dialogue (better switch on them subtitles). The voice acting and animation are superb, thanks to the developers' use of excellent British actors and elaborate performance-capturing gizmology. All of the gritty environments have a realistic, lived-in look, as well, making *Black Monday* one of the best-looking bad games you'll ever play.

It's the gameplay that strings this story together that's the problem. You've got your shooting levels, which are nothing but brainless routines of nailing bad guys who pop from behind objects. The driving missions never get any more interest-



ing than high-speed pursuits. And the stealth levels feel like trial-and-error runs through mazes of contrived obstacles (you can only jump over or duck under objects at specific spots), prowled by brain-dead guards who often never even move.

In the end, you're stuck with a game of disparate modes—driving, shooting, sneaking, and cut-scene-watching—that never gets into the cohesive, cinematic product the developers were promising. Maybe that's why you see the words "stupidly ambitious" in the closing credits. I couldn't agree more.

KEVIN: Man, I'm amazed anyone can defend *Grand Theft Auto's* floppy-armed freaks after discovering how visually stunning all the *GTA* clones are (including the much-maligned *DRIV3R*). *Black Monday* doesn't disappoint here: Although the virtual London is largely unchanged from the original

Extras: Read All About Them

Right from the start of *Black Monday*, you can play four extra modes: race (leave opponents in the dust on the streets of London), chase (smash crooks' vehicles into submission), black cab (ferry fares around town), and free roaming (a feature from the last game that lets you see London's sites while hunting down secret cars). Collecting hidden key rings in the single-player game opens new races, characters for the free-roam mode, etc. Unfortunately, none of these extras is very compelling. Black cab lacks the craziness of *Crazy Taxi*. And it's way too easy to cheat in the races. You'll find a shortcut in one course that lets you win in 10 seconds.



Do your mark, get out, cheat!



Body damage is again marked by the amount of gore soaking through your shirt. Because that's realistic.

Good: slick visuals, intriguing plot
Bad: iffy control, crap stealth missions
This Game Is Brought to You By the Words:



THE VERDICT

7.0 6.5
CRISPIN KEVIN JOSH

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: Sony CEE
Players: 1
ESRB: Mature

www.us.playstation.com



The Brit Pack: Rating the Game's Motley Crew

Black Monday's twisting tale intertwines the lives of three unsavory heroes, whom you control at different points in the adventure. Say 'allo to...



MITCH

His job: The fifth (translation: the cop).
His skills: Can toss smoke grenades, shoot machine guns, scowl for hours.
His contribution: Mitch's straight-up shooting and driving levels are the most straightforward and dull.



EDDIE

His job: The 'ardman (translation: the tough guy).
His skills: Can wield any weapon, swing his dukes, say the C word.
His contribution: Eddie's chapters, with their mix of shooting, sneaking, and baddle-pummeling—pack the most fun and variety.



SAM

Her job: The bird (translation: the hot chick).
Her skills: She's useless in a fight but has a knack for tracking and sneaking.
Her contribution: Sam's frustrating stealth levels will make you say the F word more than the game does.

Getaway, the cars and people have an extra layer of detail applied to them, and the incredibly atmospheric dialogue and music make every mission an intense effort. *Black Monday* doesn't really achieve much that *DRIV3R* didn't, but it is beautiful from an artistic standpoint—even though *GTA: San Andreas* has already set the gameplay bar still higher.

It's important to note this visual flair, I believe, because that's the top reason why you'd want to touch *Black Monday*. Although the controls have been improved somewhat, there's a certain unevenness that will be a thorn in your side through all ten or so hours of gameplay. The camera is unresponsive and tends to get stuck behind narrow corridors, and there are too few buttons performing too many actions, especially while driving. Even worse, your mission itself is oftentimes unclear—at one point, I had to repeat one car chase several times before realizing I had to

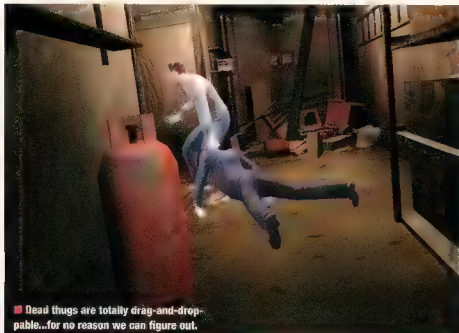
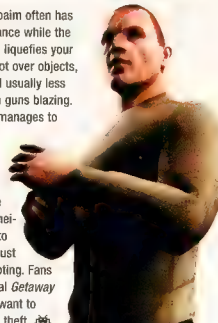
knock the bad guys off the road instead of tailing them. Forgive these faults (and the lack of an onscreen map—come on, guys), and you'll find a thrill ride of a game at hand.

JOSH: *The Getaway* takes itself way too seriously. The overly artsy camera work and self-consciously gritty story had me rolling my eyes at the start, but I eventually got hooked despite myself. The presentation, from the slick graphics to the (eventually) quality story and acting (although Crispin's right, you'll need subtitles to understand some of the heavy accents) saves the game from mediocrity.

Black Monday maintains the original's disdain for onscreen indicators, but the audio and visual cues were sufficient to keep me generally informed of my status. Further in keeping with tradition, it retains the original's awkward control, too. The lack of a reticule makes manual

aiming nearly impossible and autoaim often has you targeting enemies in the distance while the guy next to you holding a shotgun liquefies your head. You can take cover and shoot over objects, but this mechanic is unwieldy and usually less effective than running into a room guns blazing. Despite these problems, gunplay manages to remain entertaining.

The game falls short in other areas, namely the (thankfully) infrequent stealth missions. The driving portions are solid, as is the realistically modeled London, but neither aspect feels like it was used to its fullest potential—they're both just a break from the entertaining shooting. Fans of Guy Ritchie films and the original *Getaway* should check it out, but most will want to head to *San Andreas* for their auto theft. **A-**



Dead thugs are totally drag-and-drop-able...for no reason we can figure out.



You'll trade bullets everywhere from dank sewers to London's rooftops.



■ Ready...alm...mistfire: You can shoot from impossible angles with rifles, but you can blow yourself up with rocket launchers, even if the cursor shows you're more than clear.



PS PlayStation 2

ONLINE

GHOST RECON 2

Rainbow Six for the stupid, outdoorsy type

SHOE: 1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9...10. OK, I can now calmly write a professional review of this extremely frustrating, poorly programmed mess.

This military-themed shooter drops you and your completely useless computer-controlled teammates into North Korea to take on enemies that are apparently armed with cheat codes. All A.I. characters, friendly or not, can see through obstacles (including full walls) so they'll sometimes try to shoot directly through them, even if they're consistently hitting no one. Realism? Who needs it? Aiming from the third-person perspective is all busted, and squadmates have zero concept of using cover—which is OK because enemies tend to ignore them anyway, actually making the effort to shoot past them to get to you, the human player, even if your crew is closer and out in plain sight. You also have to deal with tanks and soldiers that can hit you even though you can't physically see them, trial-and-error level progression, and a choppy and extremely ugly online game.

This is a disaster that wouldn't get a passing grade in a freshman game-programming class.

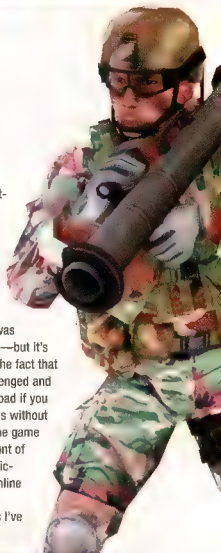
The first half of the game is more tolerable as most of these problems surface later (especially in the last stage), so I'll add a few points for those of you playing it casually, like for a couple of hours tops. Play any longer and you *will* feel the rage.

MARK: Coworkers walking by my office seemed genuinely puzzled by the PS2 *Ghost Recon 2*: Had publisher Ubisoft released a version of their new squad-shooter for the PS1, they asked? Especially in multiplayer, *Recon 2* is so embarrassingly plain, so horribly muddled, so blocky and choppy that playing it literally makes me cringe. Luckily no exciting modes, great level designs, or standout features of any kind suffocated under such an absolute abomination of a game engine.

The rest of the game doesn't fare much better. In single-player, *Recon 2* leads you down a narrow path trod by many games in the past, most of

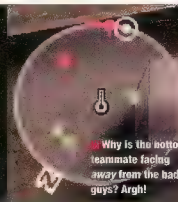
which (notably *SOCOM 1* and *2*) did it better. Yeah, *Recon 2* can be mindless fun when you're just shooting guys and blowing things up, but so can a dozen other cheaper, sharper, just plain better games.

OFFICIAL PS MAG—JOE: Ubisoft may have totally revamped a franchise that was a generally mediocre experience on PS2—but it's also been dumbed down considerably. The fact that your teammates are both mentally challenged and ridiculously awful shots wouldn't be so bad if you didn't have to plod through long missions without a single checkpoint or health-up. Still, the game has its moments: There's a decent amount of variety, which helps counteract the restrictive, invisible-wall-laden level design. Online play might save the game, if it weren't hands-down the ugliest, choppiest mess I've ever had the displeasure of playing. ☹️



On the Radar

PS2's *Ghost Recon 2* features a *Metal Gear Solid*-like radar which reveals nearby enemy positions, where they're facing, and also a bunch of the game's flaws, like foes who spawn instantaneously and mysteriously and can track exactly where you're at even if there's a large, opaque building in between you two. On the plus side, knowing where adversaries are, while unrealistic, cuts down on the frustration since they can be anywhere in the open outdoor environments. Oh, did we mention later enemies have near-perfect aim from almost any where in the level, whether you can see them or not? Yup.



Good: Decent single-player graphics
Bad: How much time do you have?
Not Bad: Lone Wolf stages (no dumb teammates)



THE VERDICTS
OUT OF 10

SHOE

MARK

JOE

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft
Shanghai/Paris
Players: 1 (2-16 online)
ESRB: Teen

www.ghostrecon2.com



Is that a testle coil in your pants or are you just happy to see me? Sorry.

PlayStation 2

FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST AND THE BROKEN ANGEL

Not gold, keep trying



Good: Sweet story for anime fans to follow.

Bad: Not much for anyone else to enjoy.

Most Useless Weapon: A pogo stick



KEVIN: Reviewing games based on movies, anime, or breakfast cereals is always a thorny affair—but I'm into the original *Fullmetal Alchemist* (airing on Cartoon Network), so I feel qualified to deliver the unsurprising news: *Broken Angel* is a great purchase for series fans...but not for anybody else.

Though *Broken Angel* has some role-playing-game elements, combat is heavily influenced by *Devil May Cry* (PS2). You, handsome shrimp Edward Elric, start at point A, there's a boss or two at point B, and it's your job to fight through the dozens of guards and other nasties in between. The problem is the "in between"—it's button-mashing at its blandest, and the hum-drum graphics don't help. What does work, though, are the anime cut-scenes and the constant postbattle bickering between the hero and his brother/fighting companion Alphonse. Series fans will eat it up (I know I did), but for the rest of you normal people, *Broken Angel* may do little more than inspire you to spend some quality time with the Cartoon Network.

SHANE: If you're staying up past your bedtime to catch the *Fullmetal* TV show, you might still dig this middling action-RPG: It closely follows the show's plot and features some genuinely funny dialogue. Straightforward level design and overly simple brawling impart a watered-down *Kingdom Hearts* vibe, but occasional underdeveloped flashes of creativity show hints of what could have been.... Unless you're a fan, hold off for the greatly improved sequel waiting in the wings.

OFFICIAL PS MAG—SCOOTER: *Broken Angel* does a better job than you might expect. It could have been another "anime dudes run and jump around" kind of game, and at times, it is. What helps it overcome mediocrity is the alchemy bit (you can transmute common objects into weapons), which makes for some mildly creative puzzles and combat sequences. I didn't watch the show beforehand, so evaluated strictly on its gameplay, *Broken Angel* ain't half bad. I do want to add the show into my TiVo queue now, though.



Publisher: Square Enix
Developer: Racjin
Players: 1
ESRB: Teen

www.square-enix.com



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A DEAL!



Would you be angry if we told you this two-turkey meek was actually the final boss battle? Even if we were lying?



PlayStation 2

SUIIKODEN IV

Gilligan's Island: The RPG

KEVIN: As the nutters who pay triple figures on eBay for previous games in the series know, there's something about the atmosphere of *Suiikoden* that nothing can compare to. It's a warm, fuzzy puppy of a role-playing game series, an odd mix between a romantic fantasy novel and a History Channel special. For a fan like me, then, it's a downer to see *Suiikoden IV* bereft of much of the series' personality—it plays less like *Suiikoden* and more like a generic RPG that happens to have a really big cast.

All the main *Suiikoden* ingredients are here, what with 108 party members to collect and the great big army base you build over time. There's superbly beautiful music, complemented by plain visuals that do the job well enough. Opinions will be divided on the simplified four-person fighting system, but I love the way it quickens battles and restores *Suiikoden IV* to the

breakneck pace of the first two titles.

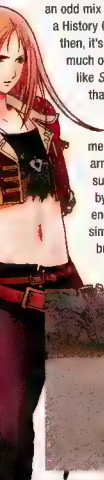
The main issue here is the generally bland story and cast. Characters often join your party for no real reason and don't help much once they're in. This, coupled with *Gil Joe*-caliber voice acting and a script that fails to convey much emotion, makes the fourth *Suiikoden* surprisingly flavorless story-wise. It still beats *Suiikoden III* by a nose, but there's a lot of unrealized potential here.

SHANE: Relocating *Suiikoden*'s established gameplay to the vast and choppy seas doesn't do it any favors—instead of exploring diverse geography on foot, you're steering a boat across a bleak, boring ocean. Sluggish controls, annoying invisible walls, and countless random battles transform pleasure cruises into nautical nightmares every time. Occasional ship-to-ship tactical battles inject some fun into the proceedings, but these strategic melees are so simple and visually uninspired that you'll ultimately tire of them.

The game fares a tad better on land, where marginally interesting towns and extremely infrequent dungeons remind you of what a normal *Suiikoden* title feels like. If you can muddle through the game's plodding first few hours, the workable story line and likable characters will probably be enough to keep you afloat till the end, but the whole experience feels waterlogged.

GMR—CHRISTIAN: I'm dumbfounded by how basic and dull this game is. Its few towns are barren, there are almost no interesting locations to explore, and the story takes far too long to get into gear. Roaming the seas looking for adventure sounds romantic, but the truth—crawling across the ocean, beset by ceaseless boring and simplistic random battles—is far from poetic. Fortunately, the game picks up a lot in the last third, and the cool *Suiikoden* touches, like having your own HQ, are still in place. These save *Suiikoden IV* from abject mediocrity...barely.

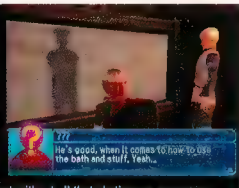
Driven to Distraction *Suiikoden IV's* weak plot almost plays second fiddle to the minigames and side distractions, which seemingly number in the bazillions. Although the cooking battles are gone, a bunch of wacky sports—including like card games and a *Beysblade*-esque top-spinning contest—have stepped up to take their place. This isn't exactly *67A: San Andreas*' level of minigame madness, but it still breaks up the monotonous story.



ZZZ: We totally know where that guy's coming from.

Like a Prayer

The goofiest addition to *Suiikoden IV* is the confessional chamber, a part of the base you build near the middle of the game. Enter the room, and a random party member will come in and confess his "sins"—who he doesn't like, what he thinks of you, and anything bad he's done lately. You only see a silhouette of the confessor, but you can usually guess his identity based on what he says—and even better, you can either forgive him or punish him by throwing tin cans and other junk on his head. It's like being a Catholic priest without all that abstinence nonsense.



Good: Quick and nostalgic
Bad: Very little personality
Still Outclassed By: *Suiikoden R.P.S.*



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)

6.5 6.0 5.5

KEVIN SHANE CHRISTIAN

Publisher: Konami
 Developer: Konami Tokyo
 Players: 1
 ESRB: Teen

www.konami.com



While everyone else is playing Halo 2, you're livin' in a mech down by the river.



Xbox

MECHASSAULT 2: LONE WOLF

ONLINE

When giant robots attack. Again

DEMAN: *Lone Wolf* will give you a strange appreciation for the hermit crab—though you can climb out of your giant robot and run around on puny human feet, you'll feel naked until you're safely (well, relatively) encased in four stories of armored plating with big ol' guns once again. The second *MechAssault* is still all about the mech battles in their city-destroying glory, but this time you'll also drive tanks, man turrets, jump-jet around in powered battle armoc...and die almost instantly if the enemy catches you in the open without a vehicle.

Unfortunately, the single-player game doesn't improve much over the last version. It's short (I beat it in about seven hours), and you're usually fighting the battle single-handedly—hence the *Lone Wolf* title. And though the on-foot sections feel tacked on and not particularly fun, the tank and battle armor bits add needed variety.

In multiplayer, though, *Lone Wolf* goes from so-so to so sweet. The vehicle-swapping aspect takes on a new importance—in most modes you'll start

out on foot and scramble to find a vehicle, then switch it for another, depending on the situation; sometimes, in the heat of battle you'll even hijack enemy mechs. Couple that with the new Conquest feature (see sidebar), and *MechAssault* should continue to be one of Xbox Live's most popular games.

CRISPIN: Blasted-to-scrap robots blow up big and nuked buildings fall hard in *MechAssault 2*, making the game just plain fun to watch. Fortunately, it's fun to play, too—although it's an often mindless sort of fun. Sure, the game's makers have ramped up its strategic elements, not the least of which is the option to scamper across the war zone in a wee suit and jack mechs five times your size. And most of the multiplayer modes (which are more enjoyable than the decent single-player game) demand a surprising amount of communication and team cohesion, especially when you throw tanks and supply-dropping airships into the equation. Thing is, when mechs go toe-to-toe, strategy

often goes out the airlock as the bots lumber in circles blasting the hell out of each other. But with explosions this spectacular, who cares?

SHOE: You're not in this game to test your shooter reflexes; you're experiencing life as a hulking, 40-foot-tall instrument of pure destruction. Step outside of your walking tank, though, and you're just a squishable ant in the giant world of *MechAssault*. The beautiful graphics and destructible environments (both upgraded from the last game) add to the ambience, but the single-player game disappoints with brevity (6-7 hours to beat) and a throw-away story that never sets the mood properly with its weak dialogue and characters.

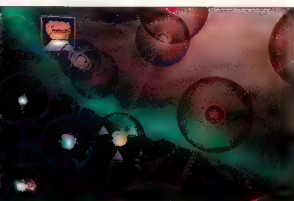
Multiplayer, however, is tons (sorry) of fun. It gets choppy when the action's chaotic, but the thrill of jacking another player's mech or getting the right support at the right time from your VTOL-flying teammate trumps anything in the first *MechAssault*...or most online games these days. **A-**



Command and Conquest

MechAssault is at its lumbering best on Xbox Live, and aside from some new game types, *Lone Wolf* brings a major addition:

Conquest mode. In Conquest, you'll ally yourself with one of five warring factions battling for territory in a persistent online world. You'll need to win a series of team battles to defend or take over a planet—and hope your comrades have held the territory by the time you log back on. The servers weren't populated enough to fully evaluate conquest when we played, but if it turns out to be mind-blowingly awesome—or doesn't work as advertised—you'll hear about it in a future edition of our reviews wrap-up column.



Good: Making stuff go boom; online modes
Bad: Single player is too short and predictable
Could Use: More sound-based strategy



THE PREDICTORS

8.0 8.0 8.0

DEMAN

CRISPIN

SHOE

Publisher: Microsoft
 Developer: Day 1
 Players: 1-2 (2-12 online)
 ESRB: Teen

www.xbox.com



Will we ever get tired of exploding barrels? Probably not.



Xbox

ODD WORLD STRANGER'S WRATH

Take a chance on a beautiful Stranger

MARK: I don't envy the marketing team charged with summing this game up in just a few words. Part first-person shooter, part third-person platformer, part story-driven adventure, set in a part-western past, part-industrial future, starring a part-man, part-lion, part...something else, *Stranger* continues the *Oddworld* tradition of melting

familiar elements into something entirely new. A little too wordy for the front of a box, eh?

But yes, much of *Stranger* does revolve around shooting one thing or another, which is a good thing since it's the best part of the game. Combat often has the feel of—dare I say it—*Halo 2*, with dual weapons and a similar (and similarly well-implemented) shield system. And while *Stranger's* robust enemy A.I. might not be quite as con-

vincing as the Covenant's, *Oddworld* provides more options in how you can choose to tackle any situation: use stealth, snipe, ram, distract, stun, etc.

Most of that freedom is due to *Stranger's* strongest innovation: live ammo. The different critters you collect (that's "live" as in "alive") and launch via your crossbow are as effective as they are unique. Send out a jive-talkin' chipmunk to lure enemies away, a skunk to incapacitate them, or go straight for the kill with a rapid-fire barrage of deadly bees. Strategy is further encouraged by a smart reward system: Captured enemies are worth more moolah alive than dead, and money is important for upgrading your character.

The story is the usual unusual *Oddworld* stuff: Serious themes like consumerism, belonging, and the environment, tackled with comedy—goofy voices, puns galore (the chickenmen town New York City), and potty humor (sometimes literally).

The overall plot is interesting, especially after a twist later in the game, but it's held back a bit by the voicework. Vocal effects make the main character's growling baritone sound more like a kidnapper's ransom call, and the different creatures' otherwise amusing banter grates once you realize every single one of them, male or female, has the *exact same voice*. Bosses are good and bad: Most are unique and challenging (especially figuring out how to take them alive), but a few duds and the disappointingly easy final showdown disappoint. One last thing while I'm complaining—the camera likes to get stuck on or behind objects.

But these shortcomings pale in comparison to what *Stranger* brings to the table. Clever and unique, with more imagination in its weapons alone than other titles manage in their entirety, *Stranger* is a reminder of the importance of refinement and innovation in gaming.



Use cash from captured and killed enemies to buy ammo, upgrades, or improve your stats.

Dead or Alive, You're Coming With Me

The Thudslug-Bolomite combo often does the trick. Sure, you could go the easy route in *Stranger* and simply slaughter your enemies, but if you're up for the challenge, capturing them alive is worth way more money. Some of the bosses even require a whole different approach to subdue, via various ammo combinations. Experimenting in combat is thus not only allowed, it's encouraged.



THE VERDICTS
OUT OF 100

8.5 8.5 8.5

MARK SHOE G FORD

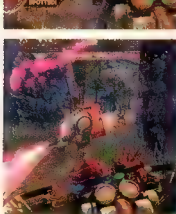
Publisher: EA Games
Developer: Oddworld
Inhabitants
Players: 1
ESRB: Teen

www.oddworld.com

Good: Refreshingly unique and imaginative
Bad: Some minor camera issues, most enemies look the same
Verdict: We love 'em but we need some variety, please!



Look for a black marketeer and a fortune-telling machine in New York City.



Fighting this miniboss is one of the best moments in the game—he stalks you through the level, slumming you with sticky goo you need to shake off.



SHOE: This month's letters section (page 18) has an e-mail from a reader who wrote in to complain about the lack of soul and personality in games of late. Well, *Stranger* is here to fill that void, and it's developer Oddworld Inhabitants who gets credit for this gem. Like every one of its previous games (all self-indulgently titled *Oddworld*-something), *Stranger* immerses players in an artful, funny, and wildly creative world filled with creatures that you'll love, villains that you'll hate, and a supporting cast that packs in that soul and personality like they're making a case to be included in a future Pixar movie. From the sarcastic townsfolk (try beating them up for some laughs) to the grammar-sensitive enemy grunts, from the dusty towns to the sun pouring in the doorways, this is creative and art direction at its best, without peer.

Mark's right, the live-ammo gameplay combined with the dead-or-alive reward system adds

a nice layer of strategy—great if you're looking for something new in a first-person shooter, bad if you like to run-and-gun with the Master Chiefs and *Doom* guys of the world. It's a mixed bag, but one certainly worth checking out if your gaming is getting as ho-hum as *EGM* reader Jonathan B's.

G. FORD: As magnificent as a game like *Halo 2* is, you know exactly what you're getting. Which is what makes *Stranger* so refreshing—a game that succeeds by creating a world so unlike what you find in most other releases. It's hard not to be drawn to its Wild West meets sci-fi setting filled with chicken people, talking ammunition, and a hero who heals himself by literally shaking off any damage. Besides the unique universe, *Stranger* packs a solid mix of third- and first-person action, a teat few games pull off. Together, these factors

help create a world that feels more organic than the hallways, terrorists, and flashbangs we're used to.

But while *Stranger* succeeds by defying the norm, it stumbles over failures that are all too familiar: Enemies on ledges often stand next to exploding barrels, begging to be shot sky-high; the otherwise-serviceable third-person action can get dicey when it comes to precision jumping; bosses are either way too hard or have easily exploited patterns; and the game is linear, which doesn't hurt the overall experience but is a shame in a world that seems to be begging for more freedom.

It's easy to forget nearly all these complaints, though, when presented with one of the game's impressive set pieces or when you take care of a screen full of enemies with the bit of strategy only a screaming chipmunk can provide. Despite its flaws, *Stranger* proves to be a highly enjoyable—and unique—experience. **A-**

Say hello to your little friends

The live ammo in *Stranger* is literally live—an assortment of bugs and rodents you can find roaming free in the wild (or held captive in crates), load into your crossbow two at a time, and fire at the enemy. Their various effects can make almost every battle a different experience:



Fuzzie: These rabid, furry little balls of hate are crucial to strategy, since they

can be placed on the ground, like a mine, or shot directly at bad guys. The Fuzzle goes nuts once a target gets close, distracting and eventually killing them.



Bolamite: When you want to use stealth or take an enemy alive, these spiderlike crea-

tures are invaluable. They spin a quick web around the bad guy, binding and gagging him for a short time. Doesn't work on many bosses, though.



Boombats: These flying creatures are rare, and you can't carry many, but that's

because they are so powerful. Launch one at or near an enemy and it'll soon explode like a grenade. Handy and lots of fun to use.



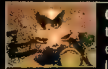
Zappflies: The one ammo you never run out of is also the most useful. Use

Zapps to stun the enemy, set off explosive barrels, trigger mechanisms that use electricity, open barrels, or stop other animals to grab an ammo.



Stingbees: These little killers act simply as bullets—they fire rapidly, like a

machine gun. Good for a quick kill when you aren't worried about taking an enemy captive. Their advanced form heat-seeks as well.



Chipjunk: Though their ability to attract enemies where they land is handy,

Chipjunks are more popular for their funny voices and random one-liners ("Oh, nice crossbow, real comby," "Hey, do I get paid for this or what?")



Sparkz Stunkz: Advanced form of the smelly Stunkz, these guys vacu-

all enemies nearby into one pile. Follow up with an explosive Boombat, and you have a great combo to use against larger groups.

PAUSED
PRESS TO CONTINUE



■ You'll learn "lightsaber forms" as you play—battle styles that'll give you an advantage in particular situations, like versus multiple foes, etc.



Birds of a Feather: Your light-side choices now affect your party members too, and you get different party members depending on your persuasion. Lightsiders will use Mira (above), while darksiders get the Wookiee, Hanharr. (It's not the only time in the game where dark side seems the cooler way to go.)

Xbox

STAR WARS KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC II: THE SITH LORDS

The good, the bad, and the Wookiees

JENNIFER: The first *KOTOR*'s revolutionary story and solid gameplay made it easy to overlook the game's many minor flaws. But with this sequel, I keep having to remind myself of all the things that are still amazing about the franchise; it's much easier to be disappointed. Yes, you visit seven worlds, but two are recycled from the first game—and many environments (especially internal ones) seem all too familiar. The convoluted story is hard to follow, yet it offers no "holy crap!" plot twist of the sort that so transformed your experience in *KOTOR 1*. The many fetch quests get dull quickly; it's disappointing that you don't get to know your party members' stories through individual quests the way you did in the first game. And while there are plenty of new graphical effects, most simply overtax the engine. Use too many fancy new Force powers at once, and you'll see major slowdown—a real disappointment.

But, hey, *KOTOR 1*'s legacy is almost impossible to live up to, and I'm happy to say that the sequel stands on its own as a rock-solid, deeply enjoyable role-playing game. Nothing beats imagining yourself as a badass Jedi exile, especially now that as you gain experience, you can train your party in the ways of the Force, teaching them to fight as a Jedi alongside you. The Force powers are still very cool, if perhaps a tad too effective; I rarely needed to strategize with mines, grenades, or stealth, as it was usually more effective to just rush in, Force a-bla-zin'. New design tweaks are subtle but enjoyable. I liked breaking down unneeded inventory items and using them to make new items, and the animations that show you gaining greater skill at, say, Critical Strike, helped me really see my character's evolution. Sure, the story isn't as kick-ass as the first game, but it still makes the stories in 90 percent of games on the

market today feel like *Highlights for Children*.

A few new problems aside—I hated being forced to use characters when I hadn't prepared for the situations they were unexpectedly thrown into, and I felt like I had to read way too much (whatever happened to "show, don't tell"?—this one's still a definite keeper).

BRYAN: Don't let Jen and Damian's Jedi mind tricks fool you. This game has its share of shortcomings, with the most glaring one being its pitiful story. While the *crème de la crème* of RPGs (like *KOTOR 1*) deliver a gripping tale that sucks you in to its world even further, this narrative is a horribly slow burn, and worse, predictable. Nothing really happens or is explained during the first 20 hours of play, and just when the developers finally decide to turn it up a notch, here comes a ho-hum finale (even more so if you're playing as a light-sider).



Good: Still one of the best role-playing games on a console.
Bad: Choppy, sloppy graphics.
Cheap, Annoying: Bosses that just regenerate...



THE VERDICT'S
OUT

8.5

7.0

9.0

JENNIFER

BRYAN

DEMIAN

Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: Obsidian
Players: 1
ESRB: Teen

www.lucasarts.com



Some *KOTOR* characters have cameos or will fight at your side, like W1 T3-M4 here.



Not good. The characters are also surprisingly shallow; you'll run out of questions to ask some of your party members fairly early (which seemed impossible to do in the first game of the series), thus severely limiting your knowledge of their backstories, and one villain gives *Episode I: The Phantom Menace's* Darth Maul a run for his money as the most intriguing yet underutilized bad boy in *Star Wars* lore. Oh yeah, and the visuals—the single biggest complaint I have about *KOTOR*—have seen only minimal improvements.

But I'm not a total hater. Two people will rarely experience *KOTOR2* in the same way, thanks to its grand number of quests that always involve some kind of moral decision. And I really dig how those choices now affect where your pals fall on the light- and dark-side scale. The combat remains solid, with new Force powers, expanded item customization, and slick fighting animations spicing

up the fray. Overall, though, don't expect to be wowed like with the original.

DEMIAN: Well, somebody had to go dark side, and it was me. At first it was tough, slaughtering innocents for their credits and leaving a single mom to fend for herself in the midst of a civil war, but then I tasted the power (Force Crush plus Force Lightning equals dead everybody; see sidebar). I even managed to corrupt most of my party members and drag them down, too—it was great.

Sure, some may argue that this is just *KOTOR 1.5* with a worse story, but you know, I'm fine with that. The dialogue choices you have to make are more complex and meaningful, the new prestige classes (übercharacter types you'll pick halfway through, like Jedi Watchman or Sith Lord) give you awesome power and a reason to explore every side quest in the hunt for experi-

ence points, and the item creation and upgrading, while sometimes tedious, make your skills more useful and your lightsaber even deadlier.

OK, yeah, it's pretty easy, and there were a couple miniboss battles in which I just hid behind something (like a potted plant) and my foe would forget all about me. And yes, Jen's right; it was kind of lame revisiting a couple planets (same maps and all) from the first game—but *KOTOR2* kept me entertained and sometimes on the edge of my seat for 47 hours. And that was just one playthrough, without completing every side quest.

Finally, the world needs to know that I managed to Force Persuade my Sith Lord gal (horrible facial wets and all) into a metal bikini to dance for a Hutt. It may have been the sorriest dance number I've seen since Elaine cut up *Seinfeld's* rug, but it was still totally awesome. I couldn't kill the Hutt afterwards either, but hey, no game's perfect. ☹

Force Powers: Our Favos

It took some effort to get over the whole prequel paradox thing (as in, if so many cool Force powers existed in the Old Republic, how come we never saw them in the movies?). But once we did, we really dug the many Force powers now available.



Death Field: Dark-siders, this is your only heal. It'll drain health from all your enemies and give you back some, but not as much as Force Heal.



Stasis Field: Affects all nroid enemies in a certain radius, paralyzing them for a few seconds. Makes an awesome combo with...



Throw Lightsaber: A powerful ranged attack. Baddies can see it coming, but when they're frozen in stasis, they can't move to avoid it.



Force Crush: This dark-side-only power is shockingly potent. Even if your enemy makes the save, he'll still be immobilized for about two rounds.



Force Lightning: At master level, this is your bread and butter; often killing a roomful of foes with one, maybe two shots. Deliciously evil.



Breath Channel: Protects your character from poisonous gases, which proves quite useful against traps, mines, and certain alien cantinas.



■ This new Party rocks with some of the most elaborate minigames yet, although you'll find lots of reshaped events, too.

Good: Slick one-player mode, fun new minigames.
Bad: The party's getting as stale as day-old bean dip.
Random Fanboy Service: You can unlock Toadette.



CRISPIN: New to this year's *Mario Party*: hard liquor and keg stands. Well, in my world, anyway. This series needs something extra—a hypnosis tape, head trauma, good old-fashioned beer goggles—to help players forget that each year's installment is kinda sorta the same thing we played in the previous game, except with the standard improvements. Aside from the new game boards and fresh hoard of hyperreflexic party games, this year's model comes with a packed-in microphone for a few gimmicky minigames, day/night cycles for the game boards (their rules and layouts change accordingly), and a retoloted single-player mode that makes it more fun (and easier) to collect goodie-unlocking stars.

So, yeah, the game once again takes a few steps forward for its couples of steps back. Players new to the series will dig it, while anyone who's partied too hard before can sit this one out. With visuals that often look as though they came straight out of a crib mobile, this series is really more for kids anyway. Just keep those youngsters away from the keg.

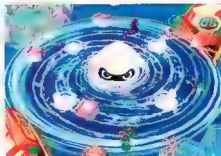
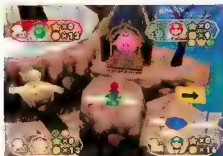
JENNIFER: Must Nintendo give us, with the precision of the finest Swiss clock, a new *Mario Party* each and every holiday season? I'd be able to muster much more enthusiasm if I had to wait a little longer between installments. Then I also might forget that each new iteration is only slightly better than, or even different from, the last. The new microphone-based minigames are more gimmicky than fun, and I hate passing the mic back and forth. It's still a fun party game, but I don't see a reason to buy it if you already have 5 or even 4.

GMR—CARRIE: I'll admit I wasn't too excited about yet another *Party*, but I'm pleasantly surprised. For me, the most aggravating thing about board games is waiting for everyone to take their turn, and *MP6* definitely feels faster—thank God. I was skeptical about the cheesy plastic mic, but the voice recognition works well. It must have been hard to come up with fresh material for the sixth version of *Party*, so hats off to the developers for succeeding. I'm looking forward to dance pad games in *MP7*.

GameCube

MARIO PARTY 6

Same as it ever was



■ (Left) As in the last *Party*, you can modify the board with special orbs, rewriting rules as you go.

THE VERDICTS OUT OF 10	6.0	6.5	8.0
	CRISPIN	JENNIFER	CARRIE

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Hudson Soft
Players: 1-4
ESRB: Everyone

www.nintendo.com



■ During play, use the bottom screen for looking at the map...or for looking at the map.

DS

ASPHALT URBAN GT

No nitrous zone, next 17 miles



Good: Smooth, pretty visuals
Bad: Uses no special DS features
Port: Of an N-Gage game. Really

CRISPIN: There's nothing inherently crap about *Asphalt Urban GT*...but everyone will forget it ever existed in a year's time (anyone remember *GT Advance* on the GBA?). Still, with the DS' spotty launch library, *Asphalt* is an OK bet—a decent racer that gets more things right than wrong.

Asphalt is almost wholly nondescript—it's your bog-standard arcade racer, complete with nitro boosts, extensive tuning options, and trucks on the road with jumping ramps attached to them. In fact, the visuals are this game's only truly standout feature: They're incredibly smooth, and the backdrops wouldn't look at all out of date in a PlayStation racer.

It's easy to cook up a laundry list of problems with *Asphalt*, though. The collision detection is awful (you can drive right through most trees), the controls are tough to master, and multiplayer gameplay requires that everyone have their own cart. On a basic level, however, the game's still fun—simple, yes, but immediately engaging no matter what kind of gamer you are. Sort of like *GT Advance*, in fact. What did happen to that game, anyway?

DEMIAN: If you yen for a great racing game on DS...keep it up, because this isn't one. Never mind that *Asphalt* uses the second screen as little more than a map display—the driving itself is depressingly simplistic. Tap the brake to start a drift and hit the nitro on long straights; that's about as deep as it gets. *Asphalt* looks pretty good (though without much sense of speed), and there are tons of cars to buy and races to unlock, but the gameplay and limited track variety mean it won't be on your playlist for long.

GMR—ANDREW: I wasn't expecting much out of *Asphalt*, considering it's more or less a port of an N-Gage game. But it's surprisingly decent racer that'll keep you entertained between sessions of PictoChat. The biggest problem (aside from the lack of analog control, which isn't *Asphalt's*...faulty) is that the horizon can get muddy, making traffic and turns hard to see. Multiplayer is amusing, if a little rudimentary, and the cop chase mode is a nice break from the standard races. If *Ridge Racer* isn't your thing, *Asphalt* is worth checking out.

THE VERDICTS OUT OF 10	6.5	5.5	6.0
	KEVIN	DEMIAN	ANDREW

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Gameloft
Players: 1 (2-4 wireless LAN)
ESRB: Everyone

www.ubisoft.com



The Splicer Island level (and associated quests) is DS exclusive.



DS

THE URBZ: SIMS IN THE CITY

Places to go, people to meet



Good: Rich game world, tons of stuff to do.
Bad: Makes little to no use of the touch screen.
DS Bonus: New area, minigames, mutated pets



JENNIFER: I'm embarrassed to admit how hooked I got on this game. As in last year's version (*Bustin' Out*, GBA), you directly control a single Sim as he/she eats, sleeps, pees, and socializes. To progress through the story, you complete goals—make friends with the town cop, find a curator for the local museum, etc. To earn money, you play minigames. Occasionally, you rearrange the furniture in your house. It's simple, mindless, and as addictive as sitting on the couch watching *Real World* marathons on MTV. In other words, I could do it all freakin' day long.

But as any *Real World* fan knows, just because something's addictive doesn't make it artistically flawless. Enter *The Urbz*. Some of the minigames are great—I'll play Moogoo Monkey just to pass the time—but others (Comic Explosion, Motocross Mayhem) are pretty terrible. The mundane day-by-day routine can get repetitive, especially when you have to retry goals (many of which must be completed at a certain time of day). Still, there's a surprising amount of fun stuff here, if you have the patience to see it all.

DEMIAN: This game has pet jackalopes, which should definitely be factored into any purchasing decision. *Urbz* has a lot in common with traditional role-playing games, but with hugs and home furnishings instead of turn-based battles and feisty princesses. Expect a whole lot of fetch quests, though, and you'll still spend too much time fussing with personal-hygiene issues. The DS' touch screen is handy for navigating menus quickly, but only a couple minigames really use it. Still...jackalopes!

GMR—CARRIE: Though it started out feeling a lot like the GBA version of *Bustin' Out*, *Urbz* for DS ended up completely blowing that game away. The story and surprising twists work to make *Urbz* feel a lot less like a Tamagotchi with care and feeding and a lot more like an actual game—like a Westernized version of *Animal Crossing*, but with a plot. The DS-specific minigames are among the weaker ones, but using the stylus to access stats and an on is very intuitive. The Rep mission adds some hefty longevity to the title, too.

THE VERDICT

8.5	7.5	9.5
JENNIFER	DEMIAN	CARRIE

Publisher: EA Games
Developer: Griptonite
Players: 1-4
Rating: Everyone
www.urbz.com

N-Gage

ONLINE

PATHWAY TO GLORY

Shockingly engaging



Your dinkie Harries (above) will earn medals and promotions...as long as he survives, that is.

Good: It's the N-Gage's killer app so far
Bad: Most people will never play it
Why: Couldn't N-Gage have had games like this at launch?



JOSH: First the Red Sox win the World Series, then a flock of Arkansas razorbacks flies past my window, now this—a good-bordering-on-great game for the N-Gage. If Betsy Michaels looks to accept my prom invitation, we're looking at the apocalypse.

Strategy fans will love *Pathway's* clever, turn-based combat, and the absence of grids gives it a more realistic feel than other entries in the genre. The single-player tactics are somewhat lacking, though, as clever use of snipers will get you through most of the campaign. In multiplayer, intelligent foes and a strict time limit force you to make better use of the entire squad—cover fire becomes very important. I just wish "move" and "shoot" weren't mapped to the same key; I frequently had men moseying up next to the enemy instead of shooting, leaving my soldier defensesless and me craving an "undo" command. Still, N-Gage owners should get this one quick...before the dead rise and all that four-horsemen malarkey kicks in.

set your guys up like traps, tucked behind a bunker, waiting for a care-less soldier to stumble into your troops' sights, because defensive fire happens automatically—short-circuiting the usual checkers game. Of course, you can always just bum-rush Rambo style with a couple of machine gunners and your fingers crossed. You'll mix up the number-pad buttons ("I said stand up, not run out in front of a tank!") and wish the enemy troops were more visible, but I doubt you'll find something better to do with an N-Gage.

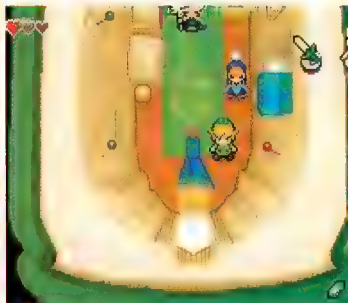
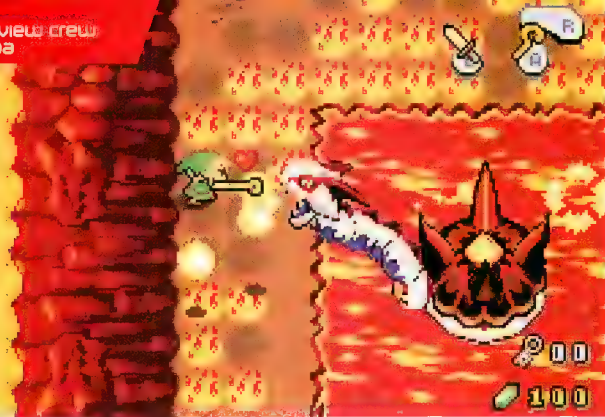
KEVIN: Miracles really do happen—here's an N-Gage title a sane person would actually want to play. *Pathway* is a decent WWII strat game by itself, but N-Gage Arena multiplayer is where it truly shines: The six-player matches are so fun to watch unfold that if you own an N-Gage, this is the killer app you've been dreaming of. Arena matches can sometimes be tough to set up, however—although local-area Bluetooth games go without a hitch. I found myself booted off long-range games on occasion due to a laggy connection (your mileage may vary).

ROBERT: I've never played a turn-based game with such meaty defense. You can

THE VERDICT

7.5	7.5	7.0
JOSH	ROBERT	KEVIN

Publisher: Nokia
Developer: RedLynx
Players: 1 (2-6 online)
ESRB: Teen
www.pathwaytoglory.com



When Link gets into a book, he really gets into the book. As in, like, walking around inside of its hollowed-out pages.

GBA

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP

Pretty good...for a little guy



SHANE: It's been nearly four years since *Game Boy* questers last smited an octocrock in an original *Zelda* game (be sure to hunt down 2001's excellent *Game Boy Color* co-releases *Zelda: Oracle of Ages* and *Oracle of Seasons* if you missed 'em), so it's high time the GBA gets its own adventure for Nintendo's perky elf. *Minish Cap* doesn't stray too far from its legendary forebears: Link's still on a noble quest to rescue Princess Zelda, amassing an arsenal of clever gadgets, exploring deep dungeons, and wreaking havoc on all manner of shrubbery along the way. It's classic stuff, and for good reason—the gameplay naturally evolves from bare-bones simple (you begin *Minish Cap* with nothing but your wits) to wonderfully complex (by game's end you're leaping, slashing, spinning, and throwing swords with ease) at a perfect rate.

What seems like the biggest gameplay innovation here—that titular, sass-talkin' cap that shrinks Link to itty-bitty size—doesn't really change the traditional *Zelda* feel. Actually, it's new items like

the gust jar and mole mits that truly enrich the gameplay: You can use these tools in various inventive ways to solve puzzles, transforming every dungeon and boss encounter into a complex, rewarding exercise in deduction. Factor in impressive visuals, catchy tunes, a metric ton of secrets, and you have another must-buy GBA title.

JOHN R: The two *Oracle* games for GBC were exceptional for their time, but *Minish Cap* wipes the floor with both of them. Never mind the fact that it looks and sounds better than practically every other GBA game out there; you'll almost never find yourself at a loss for something to do, thanks to the cleverly implemented kinestone system and the wealth of secrets packed into Hyrule's numerous, varied locales. I spent nearly 40 hours trying to find every last secret in this game, and I honestly enjoy every single minute of it.

With superb dungeons, exciting combat, and one of the coolest gameplay gimmicks ever

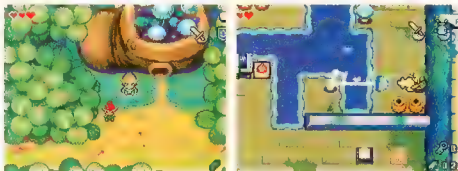
(shrinking down to Minish size), this is definitely one *Zelda* you don't want to miss.

CRISPIN: Brain-straining dungeons, elaborate bosses, funky gadgets, a supersized world—that's the stuff that makes the *Zelda* series so bitchin'. And this *Cap* brims with it, along with a clever and endearing shrinky-Link gameplay twist that makes for cool puzzles. Plus, *Minish Cap* packs little touches that'll give Link lovers goosebumps, such as an ocarina flute, militant chickens, and a great-est-hits assortment of tunes and monsters.

But I disagree with the other review guys—the new collectible kinestones are no feather in this *Cap*. You've got to nab far too many of these doodads, then trade them with townies, statues—even household pets—often for yet more kinestones. The quest really drags around the middle, too, when you must fiddle with such mundane tasks as returning overdue library books. Fortunately, the rest of the game is appropriately legendary. **A-**

Get Stoned

Minish Cap introduces a new collecting minigame into the *Zelda* canon—kinestones. Every single resident (and some inanimate objects) in the kingdom of Hyrule has a stone (or two) that Link can fuse with to unlock secrets. It's up to you to stuff your sack full of these colorful stones, so that you're always ready to hook up with the townfolk. You'll be able to unlock secret stashes of rupees, special items, and well...even more kinestones.



New subweapons like the gust jar (right) can be used both to defeat enemies and solve puzzles. Here, Link uses the jar's strong suction action to latch on to a superspirtzy mushroom.

Good: Creative dungeons; cool new items
Bad: Occasional weird pacing; unclear objectives
Prepare Yourself: For the hardest final boss in *Zelda* history



THE VERDICT
GREAT

9.0 9.5 8.5

SHANE JOHN R CRISPIN

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1
ESRB: Everyone

www.zelda.com

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REVIEWS WRAP-UP

Evil in our residence

Resident Evil 4 has lurched into the building, but not in time for us to give it a full review. After some time on the stick, though, a crazy-eyed Mark MacDonald proclaimed a little too loudly, "If you don't already own a GameCube, buy one for this game!" Which is a little weird because we all have GameCubes, and he totally knows that.

Seriously, every aspect of the game really impresses. The sprawling, creepy Spanish town looks like a vivid nightmare made real, and the tenacious, resourceful enemies offer more freak-outs than a gaggle of shambling zombies ever did. Gameplay additions like upgradeable weaponry, long-distance sniping, a new close-quarters kick attack, and a quick, one-button move to access Leon's knife round out the action. If you're still not sold, you will be if you see the game's phenomenal first boss encounter, an epic (minor spoiler!) aquatic face-off against a fishy beast that makes Cap'n Ahab's assault on Moby Dick seem like a smelt-hunting expedition.

More on RE4 next month, as well as reviews of a few other big games with the numerals 4 or 3 in their names, like...*Gran Turismo 4*, *Doom 3* (XB), and *NBA Street 3*.



Flash Gordon's Ming the Merciless is in Resident Evil 4?

QUICK HITS


Lenony Saickel's A Series of Unfortunate Events (PS2/XB/GC) is most likely lurking in bargain bins as you read this; see Seanbaby's Rest of the Crap (page 126) for more on that.... Speaking of Seanbaby, he declined to write about the budget title *Scaler* (PS2/XB/GC), claiming, "It's actually kind of good."... **CSI: Crime Scene Investigation** (XB) didn't arrive in time for us to review it, which means it's probably as bad as your gut tells you

it is.... If you're a youngster (no horseplay) or you shop for one, that new **Hot Wheels Stunt Track Challenge** game (PS2/XB, and there's a GBA version) isn't terrible.... We had hoped to review the Sega-developed mobile massively multiplayer online game **Pocket Kingdom: Over the World** (N-Gage) this month, but we couldn't find anyone else to play against. Look for our verdict next issue....


L'I'L N-GAGE GAMES

They keep making 'em; we keep playing 'em


FIFA 2005 • Nokia • ESRB: E — We'll be damned if this isn't a remarkably respectable soccer game—almost certainly the best sports game on the N-Gage. In fact, The controls work well, the action's quick, and for a change, you really feel in control of your team at all times. Bonus points awarded for the thrilling rendition of New Order's "Blue Monday" on the title screen.



Rule of Hell • Nokia • ESRB: M — The N-Gage's first M-rated game since *Red Faction* is an out-and-out clone of classic PC slash-'em-up *Diablo*, right down to the blood that flies everywhere whenever you hit a mutant hellbeast in the face. The only difference in this Chinese-developed RPG: the dialogue, which features more hilarious English than a Japanese candy wrapper.

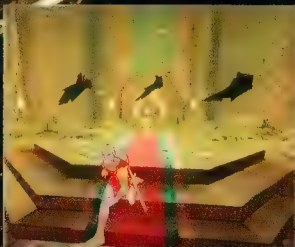


The Elder Scrolls Travels: Shadowkey • Nokia • ESRB: T — This original RPG is closer to *The Elder Scrolls: Morrowind* (XB) than you'd expect. Shame the execution's so cocked up: The 3D graphics are crudely detailed, and the fighting is so broken that serious questing is almost impossible, making this yet another N-Gage title where you wonder if anyone tried playing it before release.

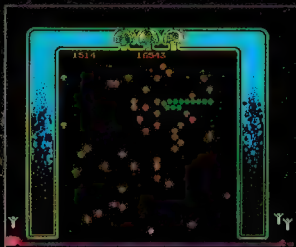




Shaman King: Power of Spirit • PS2 • Konami • ESRB: T — Against the wisdom of Mother Nature, the creators of *Shaman King* have grotesquely slitched together a button-mashing brawler with a shallow strategy game. They top it off with long, unanimated cut-scenes full of nonsense (not even the good, funny kind). Example: "WHAT?? YOU HAVE ANNOYED ME!!! I WILL TEST THE POWER OF YOUR SPIRIT!!!"



Dragon's Lair III • DVD game • Digital Leisure • ESRB: NA — The trick with *Dragon's Lair* in the '80s was that its detailed graphics helped make the super-low-fi gameplay easier to swallow. This retooling only succeeds as a novelty flashback you can play through your DVD remote. If you're into nostalgia, it's a nice little something for you to do while your Betamax player rewinds.



Mari Arthology • PS2/XB • Atari • ESRB: E Having 85 Atari games on one disc is a treat for oldsters, but mostly it just reminds you of how crappy stuff used to be. Old haunts like *Missile Command* and *Asteroids* are priceless nostalgia for 20 bones, but since the whole shebang takes up less space than a cell-phone ringtone, we'd hoped for more—maybe some 7800 love?



The Polar Express • PS2/GC • THQ • ESRB: E — All aboard the hack-job cash-in express! Unlike the fluff of the same name, this simple string of gamey tasks, like puppet pong and ice-breaking asteroids, is wholly devoid of feeling or Christmas spirit. This *Polar Express* barely runs longer than the movie, so it's really suitable only as a seasonal (and now belated) one-time rental for younger gamers.



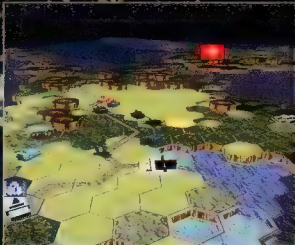
Pinball: Ball of Fame • PS2 • Crave • ESRB: E — It's a virtual game room crammed full of antique to semirecent tables, each complete with historical commentary and highly technical instructions (rollover to ramp the spinner for the ball-trap multiplier what now?). This collection is squarely targeted at ordained pinball wizards, but anyone could have a little fun with this one, and for a budget price.



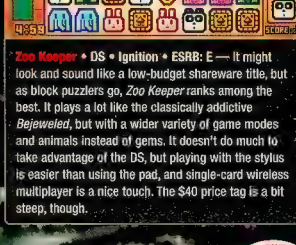
Zoo Keeper • DS • Ignition • ESRB: E — It might look and sound like a low-budget shareware title, but as block puzzlers go, *Zoo Keeper* ranks among the best. It plays a lot like the classically addictive *Bejeweled*, but with a wider variety of game modes and animals instead of gems. It doesn't do much to take advantage of the DS, but playing with the stylus is easier than using the pad, and single-card wireless multiplayer is a nice touch. The \$40 price tag is a bit steep, though.



Chicago Enforcers • XB • Kemco • ESRB: M Good premise, poor execution: That's the *Chicago Enforcers* way in this budget-priced shooter. Who wouldn't want to be a lackey for Al Capone in 1920s Chitown? Maybe discerning gamers who don't want gameplay, graphics, and A.I. almost as ancient as the subject matter. The few enjoyable moments and simple but fun Live support found here just aren't enough.



Risk Strategy 101: Modern Military Tactics • XB • Kemco • ESRB: E — This difficult-to-describe (and pronounce) Xbox cheapie is a throwback to old computer war games, but instead of goblins, you're moving what appear to be fancy *Risk* pieces around a plain hexfield battle map. It's a challenge, especially on higher difficulty levels, but lackluster visuals and story will deter all but the most diehard of nogrands.

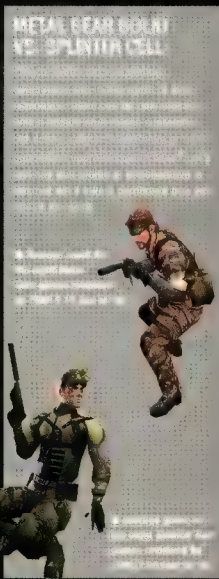


Review Crew Survivor Our fully clothed contestants are fighting hard for a spot on our Review Crew (but, like good kids, they're using words). The contest is at its midway point, but that still means lots of people are due for a bootin'. Decide who gets voted off the hypothetical island next at egmsurvivor.1up.com/ **46**



REVIEWS ARCHIVE

Minireviews for the gamer on the go



greatest hit or miss?



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

- GC
- Released: March 2003
- Original Scores: 10, 9.5, 10

Although people initially bemoaned the childlike appearance of *Wind Waker*, their mouths were shut (or more accurately, left helplessly slack-jawed) when they finally played the game. Easily one of the greatest titles to ever grace Nintendo's latest console, *Zelda* is now a steal at \$20.

GAME	SYSTEM	VERDICT	SCORES (out of 10)	AWARD
Ace Combat 5	PS2	■ Set in a super-heroic fighters so real, they could fool Uncle Sam. But why no online?!	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
Advance Guardian Heroes	GBA	■ Old-school boot-em-up crawling from fan-favorite cult developer Treasure	8.0 7.0 7.5	
Alien Hominid	PS2/GC	■ The 2D side-scrolling cartoon action thrills, the cheap one-hit kills...not so much	8.0 8.5 7.0	
Age Escape: Pumped & Primed	PS2	■ This party game is only slightly less fun than hauling feces at friends	5.5 6.5 5.5	
ATV Offroad Fury 3	PS2	■ Enhanced online options and deeper customization flesh out the four-wheeler thrills	8.5 7.5 6.5	
The Bard's Tale	PS2/XB	■ This action-RPG's satirical humor and repetitive gameplay'll make you laugh and cry	6.5 6.0 9.0	
Baten Kaitos	GC	■ An RPG with totally innovative card-based fighting and a totally crappy story	8.0 7.5 6.5	
Bilix 2: Masters of Time & Space	XB	■ Janitor cats and fabulous, leather-clad pigs! What doesn't sound fun about that?!	7.5 6.5 6.5	
Blood Will Tell	PS2	■ Handi-capable hero quests for lymph nodes, an esophagus...and justice	8.0 6.5 6.0	
BloodRayne 2	PS2/XB	■ Be a busty vampire beating on baddies in this hyperkinetic action game	7.5 7.5 4.0	
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django	GBA	■ Stock up on SPF 45 before going outside with this solar-sensor-equipped action-RPG	8.0 6.0 7.5	
Call of Duty: Finest Hour	PS2/XB/GC	■ Engage in the time-honored tradition of Nazi shooting as an American, Russian, or Brit	8.5 7.5 8.0	Silver
Capcom Fighting Evolution	PS2	■ <i>Capcom Fighting Evolution 2</i> . More like <i>Crap-com Fighting Evolution</i> . Zing!	4.0 5.5 5.0	
Dead or Alive Ultimate	XB	■ The bouncing boobies of DOAs 7 and 2 look way nicer revamped for Xbox!	7.0 7.5 7.5	
Dong Konga	GC	■ (Mostly) great songs and a quality bongo controller make for a lively party game	8.0 7.0 7.5	
ESPN College Hoops 2K6	PS2/XB	■ Too many on-court mishaps keep this baller on the bubble	6.0 7.5 8.0	
EuroToy: AntiGrav	PS2	■ Wave your hands like you care in this body-controlled hoverboarding game	8.5 6.0 7.0	
Fable	XB	■ Hack-n-slash action-RPG with Sims-style dollhouse elements	7.5 8.0 9.0	Silver
Feel the Magic: XYXX	DS	■ A stylish mix of romance and minigames that takes advantage of the DS's abilities	8.0 9.0 7.0	Silver
Fight Club	PS2/XB	■ Browsing the IKEA catalog is more fun than this cripsey cash-in fighter	2.5 3.0 2.0	
Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls	GBA	■ Spectacular remakes of the first two <i>Final Fantasys</i> shoved into one tiny cartridge	9.0 8.5 8.0	Silver
Ghost Recon 2	XB	■ Nothing remarkable about this military squad shooter, save its solid online play	6.0 6.0 7.0	
Godzilla: Save the Earth	PS2/XB	■ Then save us from having to play another <i>Godzilla</i> brawler	6.0 4.5 5.5	
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	PS2/XB/GC	■ Not quite the killer app <i>GoldenEye 007</i> (NG4) was, but single player is still fun	7.5 7.5 7.5	
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas	PS2	■ Three massive cities and hundreds of diversions make this sequel larger than life	10 10 10	Platinum
Hardcore: Generations	PS2	■ Sure, the visuals are cutesy, but this RPG will test the hardest of the hardcore	7.0 7.0 8.0	
The Gay Game	PS2/XB	■ The game part sucks, and the naked chicks, well, that's what the Internet's for	1.5 1.0 0.0	
Halo 2	XB	■ The second coming of the Xbox's savior lives up to the hype, both online and off	10 10 10	Platinum
The Incredibles	PS2/XB/GC	■ A superhero game for the little 'uns, but with a decidedly adult difficulty	5.5 6.5 7.5	
Jak 3	PS2	■ The jack-of-all-trades gameplay keeps this duo among the platforming elite	8.0 8.0 8.5	Silver
Kilzone	PS2	■ A good (if a bit choppy) attempt at a Halo-style shooter for Sony's system	7.5 8.0 7.0	
Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories	GBA	■ The cards say you'll be experiencing a lot of action-RPG ehh...which isn't so bad	7.0 7.0 7.5	
Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude	PS2/XB	■ You won't find penis jokes this unfunny outside of Spencer Gifts' raunchy aisle	3.5 2.5 1.5	
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	PS2/XB/GC	■ High production values don't make this RPG the greatest show on Middle-earth	7.0 7.0 8.0	
Madden NFL 2006	DS	■ The best handheld football game ever. Problem is, it can't say much	6.5 7.5 7.5	
Mario Power Tennis	GC	■ Mario packs so much fan service, you won't wait to return this ace of a game	9.0 7.5 8.0	Silver
Mega Man X4	PS2	■ Mega Man takes another shot at the third dimension and gets it right this time	6.5 6.5 7.0	
Men of Valor	XB	■ Decent multiplayer saves the day in this otherwise blah Vietnam-era shooter	6.0 7.5 6.0	
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	PS2	■ Venture back to the idealistic '60s for Snake's most ambitious stealth-action epic yet	9.0 9.5 10	Gold
Metrod Prime 2: Echoes	GC	■ Samus looks smokin' hot even in the dark...world, that is	8.0 8.0 10	Gold
Mr. Driller: Drill Spirits	DS	■ Simple, addictive puzzle-action that truly shines in its wireless multiplayer mode	7.5 7.5 7.0	
Need for Speed Underground 2	PS2/XB/GC	■ Brooke Burke as a street-slanger? race queen? Eh, the game's good, so whatever	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
Nio Contra	PS2	■ Konami has another decent Contra sequel in this short (but sweet) blast-em-up	8.0 7.0 7.0	
NCAA March Madness 2005	PS2/XB	■ Solid play, true-to-life ambience—this one's headed to the Big Dance	8.0 8.5 8.0	Silver
OutRun 2	XB	■ The graphics say 2004, but the arcade handling still says 1986	6.5 6.0 8.0	
Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door	GC	■ Nintendo's much-needed GC role-playing game is flat-out fantastic	9.0 9.0 9.0	Gold
Ping Pals	DS	■ Be a pal and tell others to not waste an Andrew Jackson on the poor 'tel messenger!	1.5 0.0 0.0	
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	PS2/XB/GC	■ Boy, is this Prince in a bad mood. Maybe it's because adventure #2 isn't quite as fun	8.5 8.5 8.5	Silver
Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal	PS2	■ PS2's best mascot-platforming game...with guns. Lots of guns	9.0 9.0 10	Gold
Ridge Racer DS	DS	■ Six-player wireless LAN races (on one cart) good; bad graphics and bad controls...	6.5 6.5 2.5	
Rumble Roses	PS2	■ Luscious ladies kick limits in this wonderfully smutty (yet bare-bones) pro-wrestler	7.5 6.5 6.5	
Sega Superstars	PS2	■ This EyeToy game collection is moderately entertaining for the hour it takes to beat	5.0 7.5 4.5	
ShellShock: Nam '67	PS2/XB	■ Boom-boom with the ladies after boom-booming the enemy in this grin shooter	7.0 6.0 4.0	
Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne	PS2	■ A dark RPG that's as archaic as it is excellent	8.0 8.0 8.5	Silver
The Spider-Man 2	DS	■ If your spider-sense is on the fritz, let us warn you to avoid this ho-hum adventure	6.0 5.5 3.0	
Sprung	DS	■ Hook up with young hotties at a ski resort. Slightly more fun than chlamydia	4.0 5.0 1.0	
Super Mario 64 DS	DS	■ It's a remake of one of the best platformers ever! Only it's a much harder to control	8.0 8.0 9.0	
SWG Classics: SNK vs. Capcom	PS2/XB/GC	■ SNK and Capcom go at it again, this time with spotty online and mediocre gameplay	6.0 6.0 3.0	
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2	PS2/XB/GC	■ With four-player brawlin', the half-shell heroes are half-baked, hearted, and...asped	3.0 4.0 2.0	
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	PS2/XB/GC	■ Par for the course just isn't good enough for this excellent golf simulator	8.0 8.5 9.5	Silver
Tony Hawk's Underground 2	PS2/XB/GC	■ Not a revolution, but Tony Hawk fans won't mind, and it's newbie friendly, to boot	9.0 9.0 8.5	Silver
Tro: 2.0: Killer App	XB	■ The more apt name <i>Tro 2.0: Better Than Average</i> probably wouldn't have sold well	7.0 6.0 7.5	
The Urbz: Sims in the City	PS2/XB/GC	■ The Sims' suburban theme gets kicked upturn and outside but loses something	7.5 5.0 7.0	
Viewtiful Joe 2	PS2/GC	■ More of what you (possibly) know and (should) love from Joe's first outing	8.0 8.0 8.5	Silver
WWE SmackDown! vs. Raw	PS2	■ SmackDown! goes online and adds voice acting. The rest is basically the same	7.5 8.5 7.0	
X-Men Legends	PS2/XB/GC	■ Four mutants take on a sea of baddies in this X-centric action-RPG	7.5 7.0 8.0	

LOOK TO PLAY?

CHECK THE RATINGS ON EVERY VIDEO GAME BOX

ON FRONT



ON BACK



ESRB
Entertainment Software
Rating Board
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tricks of the trade

oh tricky, you're so fine, you're so fine you blow my mind

trickster

GoldenEye. Texture like sun. Lays me down, with my mind she runs. Throughout the night. No need to fight. Never a frown. With **GoldenEye.** What? Wait, no, that's "Golden Brown," the 1982 pop smash hit by Brit punk band the Stranglers. But the sentiment is there; there's no need to fight, as we've revealed **GoldenEye's** in-game rewards. We've also got some **Killzone** and **SmackDown!** vs. **Raw** goodies for those of you who do like to fight.

NEXT MONTH, we stop the presses on **Tricks of the Trade.** Yup, you heard right. We're retiring the section since you can find much more stuff faster on our new mega site, cheats.1up.com. See you there!

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■ PS2/XB/GC

GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

Eye, **GoldenEye.** **OK,** so it doesn't have the zing to it Mr. Bond has, but the namesake to **GoldenEye: Rogue Agent** is just as tactical and daring as the **Bond** of the original Nintendo 64 classic, **GoldenEye 007.** And like the game of old, unlockables are earned based on a challenging rewards system. The following lists will give you all the requirements and know-how to access the game's various unlockables, like multiplayer maps.

Rewards

The single-player campaign is not only a great way to hone your skills, but also the key to unlocking all aspects of the game. The score you earn for each mission will determine the number of Octopi you receive. Keep in mind that the rogue bonuses (head shots, environmental kills, human shields, beat downs, etc.) will net you twice the normal points, so be sure to go for them whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Note: If you achieve one of the higher point totals (Octopi), you'll receive the rewards for it, plus those for all the lesser totals.

MISSION 01 REWARDS

2 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack: Stills, Personal

Sidearm, GoldenEye Implant

3 **OCTOPI:** MP Map: Pump Room

4 **OCTOPI:** MP Skin: Auric Elite

5 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack II, MP Modifier: Randomized Weapon

MISSION 02 REWARDS

2 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack: Stills

3 **OCTOPI:** MP Map: Carver's Press

4 **OCTOPI:** MP Skin: Dr. No Elite

5 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack II, MP Modifier: Lethal Strike

MISSION 03 REWARDS

2 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack: Stills

3 **OCTOPI:** MP Map: Bathroom

4 **OCTOPI:** MP Skin: Triad Informant

5 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack II, MP Power-up: Adrenaline

MISSION 04 REWARDS

2 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack: Stills

3 **OCTOPI:** MP Map: Midas Vault

4 **OCTOPI:** MP Model: Oddjob

5 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack II, MP Power-up: Regeneration

MISSION 05 REWARDS

2 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack: Stills

3 **OCTOPI:** MP Map: Turbine

4 **OCTOPI:** MP Skin: Xenia Onatopp

5 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack II, MP Power-up: Eye Overcharge



MISSION 06 REWARDS

2 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack: Stills

3 **OCTOPI:** MP Map: Fissure Platform

5 **OCTOPI:** MP Skin: Lair Guard

5 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack II, MP Modifier: Rapid Eye Recharge

MISSION 07 REWARDS

2 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack: Stills

3 **OCTOPI:** MP Map: Dr. No's Reactor

4 **OCTOPI:** MP Skin: Dr. No

5 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack II, MP Power-up: Speed Loader

MISSION 08 REWARDS

2 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack: Stills

3 **OCTOPI:** MP Map: GoldenEye's Retreat

4 **OCTOPI:** MP Skin: Lair Elite

5 **OCTOPI:** Level Art Pack II, MP Modifier: Turbo

■ PS2

KILLZONE

The key to being successful during **Killzone's** multiplayer mode is to know the map and how to best utilize the available weaponry. This map and these tips for Beachhead should help you gain the edge over your friends.

Sniper rifle strategies

The **51A-52 SLAR** is hidden in the southeast corner of the map, near the wall of the base, behind some weeds.

In multiplayer, the sniper rifle works exactly as it does in the single-player mode: one shot kills. The huge benefit, though, is the fact that you can strafe around with it nonzoomed and still be just as effective. Don't be afraid to line up opponents in the center of your screen to

shoot without going into zoom. In fact, most of the time the zoom just slows you down.

Hidden M327s

There are two **M327** grenade launchers on this map, both of them hidden in out of the way areas. The first one is at the bottom of the base, underground near the stairwell. The second one is near the shoreline, inside the small shack.

Although they come with only six grenades each, the splash damage and concussion effects alone make them a worthwhile pickup. In team games, this is a great weapon to have as a secondary. You can fire your main weapon as cover fire for a teammate until you run out of ammo, but instead of reloading,

you can switch to the **M327** and drop some grenades into place. Talk about effective!

Utilizing the chain gun

The **M224-A3 HSW** is hidden down in the ruined building near the base, on the eastern part of the map. It's a great weapon to pick up for several reasons, but the main one is pure firepower. It comes with 500 rounds on pickup, which is more than enough to go nuts with.

Remember that the **M224-A3** doesn't need to be reloaded. Instead, it works from the heat meter in the lower right-hand part of your screen. This is great news when fighting multiple opponents. Anytime they go for a reload, you're ready to attack with a full pack.



Health Pack



M134 Automatic Shotgun



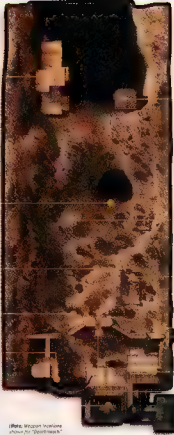
M327 Grenade Launcher



M224-A3 HSW



M327 Grenade Launcher



M327 Grenade Launcher



M327 Grenade Launcher



M327 Grenade Launcher



M327 Grenade Launcher



M327 Grenade Launcher

TRICKS OF THE TRADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA GAMES

Need some help locating certain weapons and items in *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent*? Need to gain the upper hand in multiplayer *Killzone* (or just having trouble battling the Helghast on your own)? Have no fear, Prima is here with a guide for every occasion. Check your local game store.



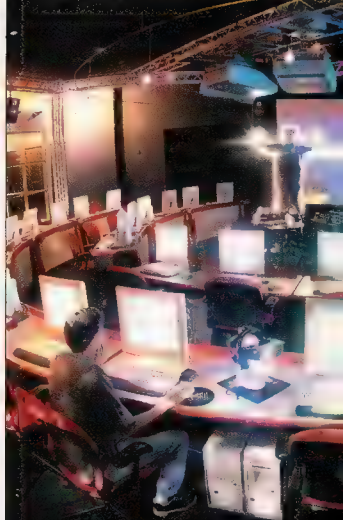
■ PS2

WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW

This table shows the first seven months of season mode plotlines and how each month's story branches.

Month	Story Type	Conditions for Reaching	PPV Win Leads Into	PPV Loss Leads Into
1A	Title Defense	Start season mode with a champion	2A (another title defense)	2B If you lose the title but have enough Superstar points for a title challenge; 2C if you don't
1B	Title Challenge	Start season mode with a Superstar with at least 60 Superstar points and accept the title challenge story	2A (a title defense)	2B if you lose the title match but have enough Superstar points for another title challenge; 2C if you don't
1C	Divs Collection (Trishie Wilson)	Start season mode with a Superstar with fewer than 60 Superstar points or refuse a title challenge	2B If you have enough Superstar points for a title challenge; 2C if you don't	2B If you have enough Superstar points for a title challenge; 2C if you don't
2A	Title Defense	Win or retain a championship from month 1A or 1B	3A (another title defense)	3B if you lose the title but have enough Superstar points for a title challenge; 3C if you don't
2B	Title Challenge	Have at least 80 Superstar points and accept the title challenge story	3A (a title defense)	3B if you lose the title match but have enough Superstar points for another title challenge; 3C if you don't
2C	Normal Story Line	Have fewer than 80 Superstar points or refuse a title challenge	3B If you have enough Superstar points for a title challenge; 3C if you don't	3B if you have enough Superstar points for a title challenge; 3C if you don't
3A	Title Defense	Win or retain a championship from month 2A or 2B	4A (another title defense)	4B if you lose the title but have enough Superstar points for a title challenge; 4C if you don't
3B	Title Challenge	Have at least 80 Superstar points and accept the title challenge story	4A (a title defense)	4B if you lose the title match but have enough Superstar points for another title challenge; 4C if you don't
3C	Divs Collection (Sable)	Have fewer than 80 Superstar points or refuse a title challenge	4B If you have enough Superstar points for a title challenge; 4C if you don't	4B if you have enough Superstar points for a title challenge; 4C if you don't
4B	Title Challenge	Have at least 80 Superstar points and accept the title challenge story	5A (a title defense)	5B (a normal story line; there is no month 5 title challenge)
4C	Normal Story Line	Have fewer than 80 Superstar points or refuse a title challenge	5B (a normal story line; there is no month 5 title challenge)	5B (a normal story line; there is no month 5 title challenge)
5A	Title Defense	Win or retain a championship from month 4A or 4B	6A if your title is your brand's top title; 6B if it isn't	6B (Royal Rumble entry)
5B	Divs Collection (Stacy Keibler)	Have fewer than 80 Superstar points or refuse a title challenge	6B (Royal Rumble entry)	6B (Royal Rumble entry)
6A	Title Defense	Retain your brand's top championship from month 5A	6A (title defense)	6C (normal story line)
6B	Normal Story Line (Royal Rumble participant)	Enter month 6 without your brand's top title	7B (WWE World Heavyweight Title challenge)	7D if you accept a shot at the US/intercontinental Title; 7E if you don't (or are already the US/IC champ)
7A	Title Defense	Retain your brand's top championship from month 6A	8A (cross-brand title unification at <i>WrestleMania</i>)	8B (Divas collection)
7B	Title Challenge (WWE World Heavyweight Title)	Win the <i>Royal Rumble</i> in month 6B	8A (cross-brand title unification at <i>WrestleMania</i>)	8B (Divas collection)
7C	Normal Story Line (Feud with Vince McMahon)	Lose the <i>Royal Rumble</i> in month 6B and refuse a shot at the US/intercontinental Title (or already hold the belt)	8C (Feud with Vince II)	8C (Feud with Vince II)
7D	Title Challenge (US/intercontinental Title)	Lose the <i>Royal Rumble</i> in 6B and accept a shot at the US/intercontinental Title	8D (cross-brand title unification at <i>WrestleMania</i>)	8B (Divas collection)

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PS2

DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI 3

The real fun in any *Budokai* title comes when you begin to build custom characters using the myriad capsules that you can collect—520 in all in *Budokai 3*. You earn capsules across the width and breadth of the game by completing sequences in dragon universe, world tournament, and dragon arena modes.

Each character has capsules that are unique. The following will get you started with the capsules and their locations for Gohan and Trunks.

Gohan

Super Saiyan
Rarity: Rare
Where to Find: Gohan Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Super Saiyan 2
Rarity: Rare
Where to Find: Gohan Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Elder Kai Unlock Ability
Rarity: Special
Where to Find: Gohan Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Kamehameha
Rarity: Common
Where to Find: Gohan Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Soaring Dragon Strike
Rarity: Uncommon
Where to Find: Gohan Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Super Kamehameha
Rarity: Special
Where to Find: Gohan Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Breakthrough
Rarity: Special
Where to Find: From Shenron (after collecting Dragon Balls)
Shop Price: NA



Trunks

Super Saiyan
Rarity: Rare
Where to Find: Vegeta Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Super Saiyan 2
Rarity: Rare
Where to Find: Vegeta Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Buster Cannon
Rarity: Common
Where to Find: Vegeta Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Finish Buster
Rarity: Uncommon
Where to Find: Vegeta Scenario
Shop Price: NA



Turning Slash
Rarity: Special
Where to Find: Unlock Trunks then buy at shop
Shop Price: 50,000



Breakthrough
Rarity: Special
Where to Find: From Shenron (after collecting Dragon Balls)
Shop Price: NA



GBA

THE URBZ: SIMS IN THE CITY

The *Urbz: Sims in the City* is chock-full of secrets and cheats. Read on...

Cheats are purchased from the cheat ninja, Heidi Shadows. She only appears in certain places at certain times, and for a total of only five hours a day.

Heidi's schedule:

1 a.m.–2 a.m. Use time machine to travel to Nov. 29, 1984 (available only after level 5)

2 a.m.–3 a.m.
4 a.m.–5 a.m.
6 a.m.–7 a.m.

Carnival
Paradise Island
Secret tunnel between the jail and the Dark Tree
Moonbase Zeta

Cheat shop inventory

(Price/Benefit)
Reasebud \$100/\$2,222 in cash
Silver-Tongue Berry Smoothie \$999/1 charisma point

Gourmet Berry Smoothie

\$999/1 cooking point
Clock Berry Smoothie \$999/1 mechanical point
Buff Berry Smoothie \$999/1 body point
Mind Berry Smoothie \$999/1 logic point
Da Vinci Berry Smoothie \$999/1 creative point
Slip of Paper \$999/Password for Club Xizzle and recipe for strawberry tiramisu



Heidi Shadows, the cheat ninja, can be found in several places but only for a short time in each.



You must consume the smoothies or reseed that you purchase to reap the cheat benefit.



The Club Xizzle password is available in several ways. But, we'll just tell you: It's "Bucket."

TOP 5 TRICKS

PS2 Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas

This is really easy money...

\$250,000 & Full Health/Armor

During normal gameplay enter this sequence without pausing:

R1, R2, L1, X, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up.

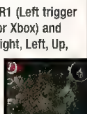


PS2/XB The Bard's Tale

Don't be a wimpy Bard!

God Mode

Hold down L1 and R1 (Left trigger and Right trigger for Xbox) and press Right, Left, Right, Left, Up, Down, Up, Down. Enter this code while in the game.



PS2/XB BloodRayne 2

If a vampire can cheat death, you can cheat the game. Here's how to unlock all powers from the start.

Enable All Powers

For this code to work, go to the Cheat menu and enter the code: Blank Ugly Pustule Eater.



PS2 Neo Contra

Another *Contra*, another cheat code. The following code will grant you 19 lives to get started.

19 Lives

At the Title screen press Up, Up, Down, Down, L1, R1, L2, R2, L3, R3.



XB OutRun2

The classics are beginning to make their way back into our homes and into our hearts. Here's a code for unlocking all cars. Enjoy.

All Cars

At the Gallery Password screen, enter DREAMING.





WHEELIE 20/03/05 12 Minutes 210 Feet Times 11 seconds

■ Get tricky with the bike.

■ PS2
GTA: San Andreas

(M) Must Be On
9V8Z-XGVG-1GWOC
990H-WK1H-EJQQM

Infinite Health

(Cars blowing up will kill you)
HR8P-EWZ-FO8Y1
VDF0-49TN-GVKDV
QVFP-YZ4Y-W4AEN
T4WR-B767-4U1KR

Infinite Cash

DW6G-VCHH-RC18R
7CKY-JUZW-FI2BE
3UZG-MFX6-AQUB7

Infinite Ammo

890H-FGA3-AW58X
ARRU-2PWQ-PMRFPW

Extra Ammo

Y30Z-MZ67-SWSRY
5G75-NBM0-12BNQ

Infinite Clip Ammo
ZPAE-MKT6-DBM1X
ZFCZ-FWQJ-HABKP

Extra Clip Ammo
XFRA-EWJY-YBSQG
A2D2-GNTV-AUH2U

■ PS2
Rumble Roses

(M) Must Be On
WU95-MBRY-1J00Q
29CQ-Q0ZV-93TG3

Player 1 Codes
W0MP-XEXW-BE4N5

Infinite
Lethal/Killer Moves
7DZB-4TZY-U86EH
GNWV-W8DK-WGH9J

No Lethal/Killer Moves
NUCZ-HZ4E-4E37G
TJ5G-79UQ-GTVX2

Lethal Move
Counter Always Fall
XG2T-HK7A-RNPCE
AZEH-2R0C-FCH3B

Lethal Move
Counter Always Empty
F0FP-W6MZ-7BAN8
60JU-UE51-K8CXQ

Humiliation

Gauge Empty
5VJ8-TWNB-K1NPN
Q140-EWR9-C6GMH

Humiliation Gauge Full
DAU8-5TJB-RFFW8
80BX-CMNN-MJTR9
95HU-8R87-15VME
WP9G-0DMN-MB42K

Enable All Costumes
E7B7-49DP-99E4W
4JAG-YF6B-Z8PV9
1EBC-B7EY-FD3NZ

■ GC
Mario
Power Tennis

(M) Must Be On
WV4D-GKVB-95VPP
83H2-HE4N-QXNYJ

Scores Once
To Win Game
EBWQ-G340-UT8R1
3TTE-FUJJ-VZTUE
E40N-6JNP-BJJD8
UUP3-HUR1-MEW0D

All Trophies Earned
7PW5-3C0B-1DAXN
23E4-JK5R-43AE5

All Minigames
Unlocked
22BR-FA2Z-3C3QC
TM0G-F6NJ-XHAD5

All Characters
Unlocked
6F2C-DE0K-X369G
E33D-VWJW-VJYRJ

VS.



■ Pippin, don't be a hero. OK, do.

■ PS2
GTA: San Andreas All Oysters Collected
289A3DFB 0CA57AE8

(M) Must Be On
98495ACF 789CFB15

Infinite Health
283CE3F7 6413F97C

Infinite Armor
283895B1 643AF906

Infinite Ammo
280948CF 0CA57A65
28094888 0CA57A65
28091340 0CA57A65
280913E6 0CA57A65

Infinite Run/Swim
086AA9A5 0CA57A56

Infinite Oxygen
28305174 DB137AAE

Infinite Mission Time
283386FF 0CA57A65

Max Money
286ABA68 B46AC23E
286ABA6E B46AC23E

Cars Take No Damage
280ED0C F8AA7AF1
280ED872 0CA57A65

Never Be Busted
285C72A0 F8AA7AF1
285C7288 0CA57A65

Don't Lose Weapons
When Busted/Wasted
2803A976 F8AA7AF1
2803A964 0CA57A65

All Snapshots Taken
289A3D51 0CA57AE8

All Tags Sprayed
287C8CCF 0CA57AB1

All Horseshoes
Collected
289A3DA9 0CA57AE8

Wanted Level
Always Zero
283D97D4 65D07A65

Wanted Level
Always One
283D97D4 65D07A65

Wanted Level
Always Two
283D97D4 65D07A65

Weather Always Foggy
187C77F7 0CA57A5E
187C7754 0CA57A5E

Weather Always
Sunny (Heat Haze)
187C77F7 0CA57A65
187C7754 0CA57A65

Weather Always
Sunny (No Heat Haze)
187C77F7 0CA57A5E
187C7754 0CA57A5E

Weather Always Rainy
187C77F7 0CA57AF1
187C7754 0CA57AF1

Exclusive

■ PS2
The Lord
of the Rings:
The Third Age

(M) Must Be On
93816D3A8261
02FF8391A489
80652C39EA11

Good Hero
Always Pippin
802C0B08B2C1

Good Hero
Always Treebeard
A8F910B8CC70 80

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SEANBABY'S REST OF THE CRAP



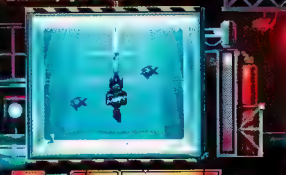
Set phasers on crapfactor 11

Since this page is based entirely around mocking games, you'd think I'd get more death threats from people in the industry. And don't get me wrong, PR people have said some ugly things to me. Like, "You don't call for three weeks and then want to know if you left your underwear in my apartment? Go to hell!" And I'm sorry, but I'll change as soon as companies stop making bad games and hiring hot, hot girls to do all their public relations.

Back to the point: It's my job to take cruel, sometimes unethically nonresearched game criticism and put it somewhere where it can rock your

face. And I'd hate crappy game developers even if my profession didn't require it, but most of the ones I meet don't hate me back. For example, at a recent party, a member of the *Lizzie McGuire* (GBA) team mentioned that my comical take on his awful mess didn't hurt his feelings. I don't know how he managed to invest so few emotions in a lame project he was given three weeks and \$200 to finish, but somehow...he did it. —Seanbaby

■ As terrifying as it looks.



Fear Factor Unleashed • GBA

To whomsoever thought to make this game, I have some questions. My first question is, you're an idiot. My second question is, if I'm overcoming my fear of being tied to railroad tracks, why am I in purple hot pants? Am I trying to derail the train at the last moment with my chested groin bulge? My third and most important question is: Why does this game start with a warning that these stunts were made for videogame use only and I shouldn't attempt them? You morons thought a show about titillation whores eating dog dongs should be translated into a game, and now your brain has the balls to warn me not to "Survive Helicopter Hooove!" in real life? I was just kicking a hooker's corpse in *Grand Theft Auto* for an hour and a half. Worry about me re-creating stunts from *that* game. Look, I've lost enough turtles by putting them on the stairs and tragically jumping on them for unlimited 1-ups to know how serious attempted videogame stunts can be.

That said, how would one even go about playing this *Fear Factor* nonsense at home? You try calling a pilot and saying, "Hi, would you mind dangling a rope ladder from your helicopter? I'm going to put on a bikini, fill my mouth with bees, and jump for it blindfolded! I'm playing *Fear Factor* on the Game Boy, only FOR REAL!" *Unleashed?* How outrageous do they think I need my Game Boy to get? The leashed version will be just fine, madman.



Lemmy Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events • PS2/XB/GC

I'll never even know if this game is good. Because at least the first hour of it is taken up with a confrontationally unskippable tutorial. Why does every single thing I put in my Xbox think I've never heard of videogames? My only good theory is that this game gets off on imagining that it's my first time. I'm *Lemmy Snicket's* sick virgin fantasy. I'm sure there are several people out there who haven't encountered the unique puzzle game mechanic of crate shoving. However, for those of us familiar with it, give us a GET TO THE DAMN GAME button. Worse, the instructions are written into the story, which is a cute way to insult my intelligence and waste my time, but it comes at a cost: Explaining how to press the A button to jump without breaking the literary flow apparently takes eight to nine paragraphs.

Nothing else punishes consumers like this. Imagine if you bought a shirt, but to wear it you had to finish a worksheet proving that you know how to handle buttons. Or a squirt gun that forced you to sit through a seminar on the fruitfulness of game conservation.

Strides in Child Abuse: At one point, the kids decide to drop a baby down a shaft and make it eat through steam pipes and asbestos until a door opens. So yes, I wear the game, but I was excited to be spearheading the most creative baby endangerment since Michael Jackson threatened to throw one out a window.



Codename: Kids Next Door—Operation S.O.D.A. • GBA

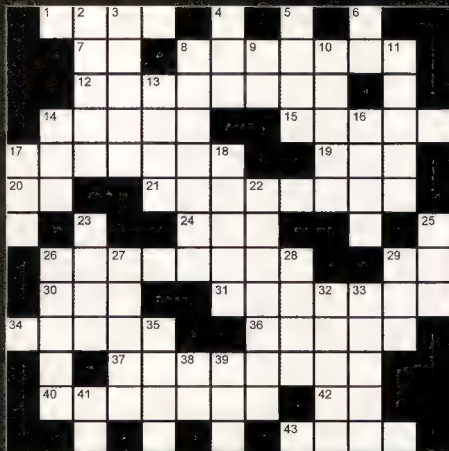
It's not unusual for me to play one of these games and only run into one type of enemy. Clearly, secret industry guidelines mandate that the first step in the bad-game-making process is NOT designing a second enemy type. But I always had that bit of doubt in the back of my mind that maybe if I hadn't just played it for 10 minutes to check if it was as bad as the box and title indicated, I would have seen something new.

I'll of course never know, because there's no one to ask. The only people who ever play these games are me and people so stupid they don't actually exist. I gave it my all this time, though, and based on 45 minutes of research, *Codename: Kids* actually has only one opponent: a man with a jumpsuit and a soda pop cannon. And it's too bad he and his clones don't attack you with strobe lights, because this is the kind of game where you hope for a seizure just to break the monotony.

Hot Tips and Tricks! During my desperate but boring attempt at finding a second enemy, I quit slowing down to kill the soda gunner and just took the hit as I ran through him. Even so, I never did. How bad did they think I was going to be at this? Honestly, it could not have been a clumsier gaming display if I'd sent my Game Boy back in time to go on a date with me when I was 15. ☹

POTENT PORTABLES

(Solution on page 129)



ACROSS

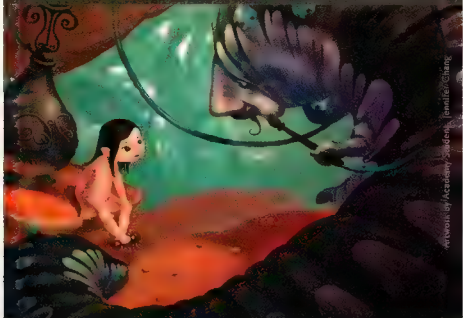
1. Remnant of a critical wound in *Fable*
7. *Manhunt* melee weapon
8. *Final Fantasy* character class
12. Rebecca dispenses it in *Resident Evil*
14. *Mega Man X* boss _ Mushroom
15. *The Hulk's* radiation rays
17. What you must do to your GBA to install a light
19. Like Windurstian leaves in *Final Fantasy XI*
20. Two-screen Nintendo portable
21. *Snake Eater* Metal Gear
24. 3 DOWN's concern
26. Master System's *Alien*
28. Prehistoric Xbox title that might be history
30. Gamer ID on Xbox Live
31. Repetitive and boring, like some rhythm games
34. PS1's *Eternal Blue*
36. What *Futurama's* Bender does for a living
37. Multitasking Tiger handheld
40. Common new-release day
42. Like some portables' communication ports
43. Go long in *Madden 2005*

DOWN

2. Slang for "hides out" in an FPS deathmatch
3. *Streets of Rage* and *Twisted Metal* characters
4. _Man of Nintendo DS *Pix*
5. EA7 organization
6. Sequel suffix
8. MLB hurler
9. Midway's *Arca*... according to the Romans
10. *Gauntlet's* little black plague
11. '90s Sega portable
13. Succumbs to 10 DOWN
14. Anna to *Tekken's* Nina
16. Talk like Catwoman?
17. WWE maneuver
18. Need to find these cards in *Silent Hill 3*
22. Seminal Nintendo portable
23. *Final Fantasy III* knight
25. Cars of NES *Pro-Am*
26. *Stuntman* challenge?
27. Lukewarm Nokia gaming platform
28. *Kya: Dark Lineage* developer
29. Great place for a handheld
32. *Prince of Persia* locale, for one
33. "Synthesized" bait for *KOTOR's* rancor
35. "... from your grave!" (*Altered Beast*)
38. EGM publisher, for short
39. Game Boy Zolfa dungeon "Cattish's"
41. *Street Fighter* Cammy's homeland



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FINAL WORD

When veteran editors attack



■ Our senior editor's dream DS game.

Senior Editor Crispin Boyer and Editor-in-Chief Dan "Shoe" Hsu have been with *Electronic Gaming Monthly* since 1996, back when game consoles were powered by steam. But instead of letting them get all old-man in Final Word, telling us about how great gaming used to be, we get them arguing about current events.

Your memory's been wiped, and you have no knowledge of playing *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* or *Halo 2*. Which game would you want to play if you could only pick one?

Shoe: Well, since I wouldn't have seen it "meat" ending, I'd have to go with *Halo 2*. Plus, I'd be dying to play multiplayer. And the hype would've gotten to me. I can't avoid the game every gamer's been talking about for years.

Crispin: Hey, if your memory's wiped, how can you remember the hype? You're not roleplaying right, Shoe—if that is your real name. I choose *Halo 2*, uh, too. *Vice City* burned me out on the GTA formula, and I was worried *San Andreas* would be the same old thing—just a lot bigger.

"I'm sure I'll eat my words when Nintendo makes a *Pikachu Petting simulator* for the DS."

Shoe: I guess it's not even a fair comparison. We've seen several GTAs on two different platforms over the last few years. We've been waiting a while for *Halo 2*, so the anticipation's higher.

OK, on the flip side, if you were forced to play through *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* or *Halo 2* again, which one would you pick?

Crispin: *San Andreas*. All my fears about it being the same old, same old were shattered when I started taking over gang ter-

ritory. This game has more "wow" moments—stuff like the casino heist missions and the various vehicle schools—than I can remember. *Halo 2*...well, that big Scarab spiderbot was cool. Otherwise, it didn't deliver as many awesome moments as the original.

Shoe: Wha-? I'd say *Halo 2* delivered more "wow" moments than the original. The Scarab, the bridge stage, the big twist... But then again, *Halo 1* had the beach invasion, the Flood...that's a tough call. But I'd pick *San Andreas*. The game gives you so much to do, and see and play.

What's the better multiplayer Xbox game? *Halo 2* or *Spallin's Cell Pandora Tomorrow*?

Shoe: *Halo 2* is more accessible and supports more players and more online features, but if you boil it all down to the gameplay, I'll give the edge to *Pandora*. *Halo 2* is solid, *Pandora* is revolutionary. *Pandora*'s only problem is the steep learning curve that'll turn off people with commitment problems.

Crispin: And that's me. The snooty *Pandora* players shut me out of their little noob-slating club from the get-go. Forget the revolutionary gameplay concept. It's just not fun to get my neck snapped 10 times for every lucky kill I get off. *Halo 2*'s just more fun for everybody.

Slippery hit of 2004?

Crispin: *Katamari Damacy* (PS2). Oh man, just mentioning the name of that loopy game gets its ridiculously catchy theme song in my head. "Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na!" Did I get the tune in your head?

Shoe: No. Now I have visions of you singing a really fruity song in a really fruity way. My votes would be *Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal* (PS2), *Olozi 2* (XB), and probably most of all, *The Chronicles of Riddick* (XB).



■ At least the DS can help you win that art-school-scholarship contest.

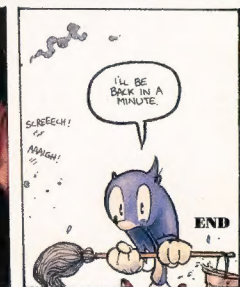
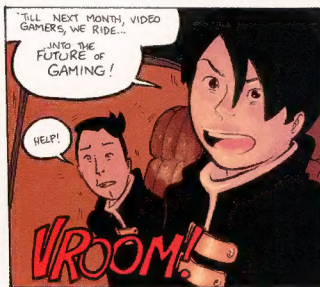
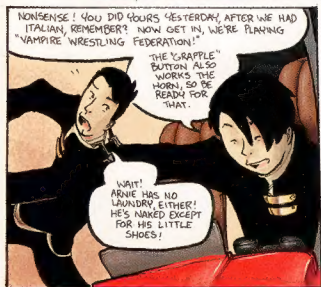
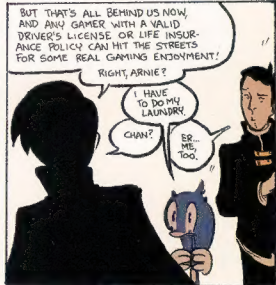
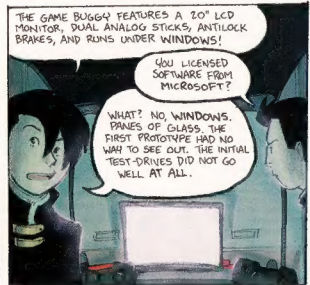
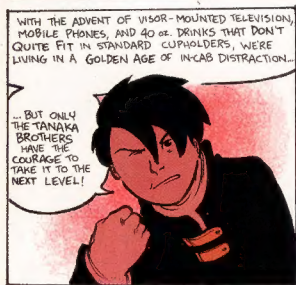
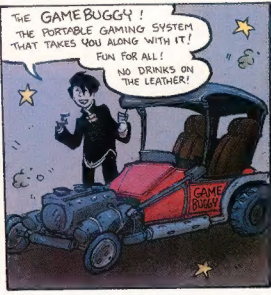
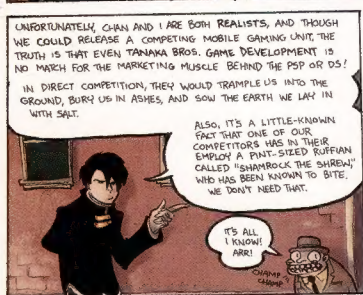
What do you think about the Nintendo DS so far?

Shoe: The launch titles are disappointing. *Super Mario 64 DS* is the best title so far, and that game is 80-percent old news. But this is just the beginning. I can't wait to see what the superstar developers do with the machine, guys like Hideo Kojima (*Metal Gear Solid*) and Will Wright (*Sims*).... Those really creative types should do some cool things with the DS' unique features (touch screen, microphone, etc.).

Crispin: Hmm. Can you say, "Virtual Boy 2"? OK, I'm exaggerating, but the DS still seems gimmicky to me. It's just awkward to use, the launch games are so weak, and I have a feeling that hardly any game makers will invent novel uses for vigorous screen rubbing. Until they do, I'm sitting this system out, Nintendo.

Shoe: Boy, I can't wait to see you eat your words when some awesome *Mario* or *Zelda* DS game comes out, instantly making it a must-own portable for real gamers. You are a real gamer, aren't you?

Crispin: Hey, I'm playing *Zelda: The Minish Cap* on the Game Boy Advance right now. It's a lot of fun and I didn't spend \$150 on a silly new system to play it. But I'm sure I'll eat my words when Nintendo makes a *Pikachu Petting simulator* for the DS and 10 million baby gamers beg their parents for the thing.



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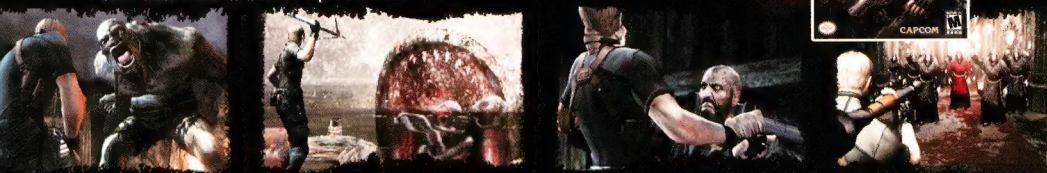
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