

**WORLD EXCLUSIVE: HANDS-ON WITH ZELDA**

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The #1 Videogame Magazine **MONTHLY**

THE LEGEND OF

# ZELDA

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**PLUS: MARVEL NEMESIS • TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND  
MATRIX: PATH OF NEO • 50 CENT: BULLETPROOF**

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**TEEN**  
**T**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
**ESRB**

Violence  
Language

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BATMAN BEGINS IN THEATRES SUMMER 2005



BE THE REASON PEOPLE ARE AFRAID OF THE DARK.

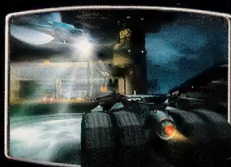
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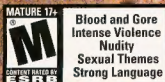
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Language  
Sexual Themes  
Violence

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—or whatever the hell it ends up being called—is coming soon. A grown-up Link is going to take a defibrillator to the GameCube to bring it back to life and get you back to rescuing princesses. Go check it out.

## REVIEW CREW

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## editorial



The people in the audience watch in anticipation as three videogame cars race around in a prerecorded movie on the big screen. A yellow car, blue car, and black car all zig here, zag there, jockeying for position, then at the very end, the yellow car pulls ahead and crosses the finish line. One-third of the crowd—the lucky ones wearing a yellow badge given to them earlier at random—goes wild. They just won a free HDTV from Microsoft during its keynote speech at the Game Developers Conference this past March. The blue-

and black-badge guys give the winners the ol' stink eye.

I was in attendance that day, and I was one of the yellow-badge guys. Am I allowed to accept this expensive television as a journalist? It's a gray area, since Microsoft didn't offer me the television specifically—it was a random contest in a room mostly full of industry folk. But in the world of journalistic integrity, gray is bad. How I view it: If it's not something I'd be happy to announce to my readers, then it's not something I should do. For example, another game company once offered me a \$400 gift certificate for helping it out on a charity event that had nothing to

do with *EGM* or any coverage we were doing. I turned it down.

So I gave up my HDTV, even though I don't have one at home and have been saving for one for what seems like years. While I was glad to see some of my fellow journalists turn their heads as well, I know of many others who didn't. I won't judge them (like I said, it's a gray area), but my peers should understand that if we're to be taken seriously as journalists, we have to start acting like journalists. And for our readers: As long as you put your trust in us, you can read comfortably knowing we'll respect and honor that trust.

—Dan "Shoe" Hsu, Editor-in-Chief





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## the review crew



**DAN "SHOE" HSU, Editor-in-Chief**  
Shoe's broken wrist (see last issue) is on the road to full recovery. He learned that playing videogames actually speeds up the healing process. Nothing like a little *Halo 2* death-matching to get your righty back on track.  
**UP.com Blog:** [gameplay](#)  
**Now Playing:** *Jade Empire, Sullenier Cell Chaos Theory, Meteos*  
**Fave Genres:** Just about everything

**MARK MACDONALD, Executive Editor**  
Mark would like to address the sidekick enemies in both of his review games this month: Please stop. All life, even the nameless, faceless foot soldiers, is precious. "Sides, killing you is part of Mark's job, so it's like taking food out of his mouth."  
**UP.com Blog:** [mark](#); **UP.com GRAND OPENING APRIL 25!**  
**Now Playing:** *Dracula X, The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, Shooters



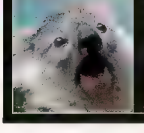
**JENNIFER TSOO, Managing Editor**  
The recent spate of portable puzzlers has Jennifer's physical-activity level at an all-time low. The gym just can't compete with *Lumines* and *Meteos*! So she pulled out her dancepad and vowed to get dancing—a righty aitch beats this one level.  
**UP.com Blog:** [jennifertsoo](#); **UP.com**  
**Now Playing:** *Motus, Lumines, 2007 Extreme (soon)*  
**Fave Genres:** RPG, Adventure, Rhythm-Action, Puzzle

**CRISPIN BOYER, Senior Editor**  
A chit wind blew through this month's reviews, leaving Cris with just one good game to play (*Area 51*). He had to enjoy ancient Chinese epic *Jade Empire* viciously because he was slow to cry shotgun when Demian doted out review duties.  
**UP.com Blog:** [crispin19](#); **UP.com**  
**Now Playing:** *Jade Empire, Area 51, Wipeout Pure*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, RPG



**SHANE BETTENHAUSEN, Previews Editor**  
Multiplayer gaming gets a bit...competitive at *EGM*. Over the years, Shane's lost a few bucks to Shoe on *Soul Calibur*, *Tetris Attack*, and various *Street Fighters*. Finally, he's found his goldmine—Nintendo's rad new DS puzzle *Meteos*: Pay up, Shoe!  
**UP.com Blog:** [egmshane](#); **UP.com**  
**Now Playing:** *Haunting Ground, Kirby: Canvas Curse, Meteos*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, RPG, Fighting, Karaoke

**DEMIAN LINN, Reviews Editor**  
At first, Demian was afraid that the PSP's media capabilities would make our ramin lilliterate (OK, maybe just the few thousand people who own one). But then inspiration struck, and Lin Carter Burton saved the day once again.  
**UP.com Blog:** [egmdemian](#); **UP.com**  
**Now Playing:** *Wipeout Pure, World of Warcraft (PC)*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Hockey, Racing, Fighting



**BRYAN INTIHAR, News Editor**  
Two so-so movie sequels and one very crummy game couldn't stop Bryan from being the biggest *Matrix* lover. So who better to check out the new game...and meet the creator's lovable pet koala?  
**UP.com Blog:** [egmbryan](#); **UP.com**  
**Now Playing:** *Jade Empire, Wipeout Pure*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, Sports

## The Contributors

- **MARC SALTZMAN** pulled the main guys on both sides of the violence-in-videogames debate—and he only got one black eye.
- Former *EGM* editor **SHAWN SMITH** played around with a bunch of luxurious game peripherals. Check out who one saved him a trip in the little boy's room.
- On game-store clerks help clueless customers shop smart? We spent **GAMIE SHEPHERD** into four stores to play dumb.

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## Guest Reviewers

**ROBERT ASHLEY**  
Robert has been busy doing some facial hair experimenting. A mustache is more than a killer fashion statement; it's a lifestyle.

**SHAWN ELLIOT**  
Shawn wants us to print his website. All life, even the nameless, faceless foot soldiers, is precious. "Sides, killing you is part of Mark's job, so it's like taking food out of his mouth."  
**UP.com Blog:** [shawn](#); **UP.com**  
**Now Playing:** *Jade Empire, Sullenier Cell Chaos Theory, Meteos*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, Shooters

**GREG FORD**  
Ford thinks he has artistic talent, not that he's spent hours on *Pico-PIK*. The Louvre Museum waits patiently for his next masterpiece.

**JAMES LEE**  
James lived seeing himself in *THUG X Remix* and over made it a cameo in *Jade Empire*. The Topso Tiger works. Thank you, Chuck Norris!

**ANDREW PRYSTER**  
For those who care, you might remember him from such magazines as *CMJ*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *This Is Slouch City!*

**JOHN RICCARDI**  
Japan welcomed John into their culture. He even makes peace signs like a Japanese girl for photos, but he does it a bit differently.

**GREG SEWART**  
After a year spent in the sweatshops of game development, Sewart returned to what he does best—drinking Shoe to let him write for *EGM*.

As always, we share our videogames with our little sister publications **OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE** and **UP.com** to help us with the reviews.





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# Letters

ranting, raving, and some a '71 dodge van



Old man Balthazar Guinness of Analog Boutique, photographed in 1898.

## Shop talk

When consumer-rights activist Giunta Core complained about corporate game stores pushing "presales, warranties, magazine subs, and discount cards," (see the letters section in *EGM* #191), clerks took notice.

## Stiffly working

I work for a certain retail chain (although I won't say which), and it isn't just the customers who're sick of all the add-on

between then and now, the environment changed. As annoying as it is for you to have to sit through a sales pitch, imagine how degrading it is for those of us who have to give it with managers breathing down our necks.

Some of the add-ons make sense—discount cards for pre-owned games, warranties on the games themselves (you should see the way some people treat their discs), and so on and so forth. It's the corporate "sell 'em or else" attitude that makes it such a burden. And trust me, the so-called commission we get isn't exactly inspiring.

Unfortunately, that's the price we pay for life in a capitalist society. Even the national specialty shops are hard-pressed to compete with superstores that undercut prices simply because they can make up for the difference elsewhere. Just understand that we hate the add-on attitude as much as you do. Game store clerks are avid gamers just like all of you

**"No 'on commission' stuff here—just our jobs on the line."**

—Seth Longland

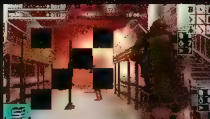
sales. When I first started with the company a few years back, making people happy was our priority, along with pushing pre-owned products (since we make so much more money on 'em). At some point

out there, and we have no problem talking shop (assuming we're not too busy). Don't let the crappy business part at the end of the transaction dissuade you.

—C-Dawg

## POST OFFICE

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



Unlucky number: Sony now promises to repair PSPs with 13 or more dead pixels.

**PS!play date**  
Dead-pixel woes? *Wipeout: Pure Bliss?* Second thoughts when the register rang up \$300? Posters at boards.1UP.com rate PSP's launch.

SlitCkilla: I sat home and played PS2—basically the same thing, but better.

Evil\_Dude: I've learned not to be Sony's tester. [I avoid] the first wave of hardware.

MaleficentOgre: Dude, you can't fit DVDs in this bulls\*\*t!

Rudiger: The clerk at the counter looked like Richard Simmons and showed me how to insert the Memory Stick.

KillerZombie: Had you bought a DS, he could've showed you how to touch Yoshi.

Xavvi: I like my portables like I like my men: black and lasts three hours.

LiquidusSnakus: I don't buy first-generation Sony hardware, so I sat at home and made fun of the people who were bidding on PSPs for \$900-plus on eBay.

Frightwolf: EB Games said PSP sales were prouder only so when they asked for my name I said, "Smith."

Mr Glub Glub: The PSP is a pixel serial killer. Seriously, though, I just can't afford it right now; I'm saving up for surgery.

Erdricks Boxers: Don't tell me you're

finally having your lips removed from [Mario creator] Miyamoto's joystick.

Ninjimbo: When was the PSP released?

Maximum X: Mine was plagued with 13 dead pixels. I was, however, able to trade it in.

Ultraman J: It's been a huge hit among my older coworkers. When I used to bring my GBA SP to work, it didn't even elicit a single "Let me see that thing."

NoFckYo: I'll be getting ore as soon as I can find someone to buy one of my kidneys.

Kusal: Do you accept Visa?

RoboMan2-I was broke, so other than an employee asking me to please remove my tongue from the Plexiglas display, nothing.

## Letter of the month

### All-ages atlibi

Last month's little page full of boobies, butt, and tidd [seen in an ad for cell-phone screensavers] made me look over this month's issue before handing it to wee folk in the household. I appreciated the apology, but little did I know that 30 minutes later, I would have to answer two new questions: "Dad, what is pily-see?" and "What does WTF stand for?" My first question was where did he get this, and, once he pointed it out [in the most recent ad], I had to think of something fast. I first explained WTF stood for "Well, that's funny!" As for the pily see, I had to settle for "Well, mommy and daddy will discuss this when you get older." I don't know if this sizes up for Letter of the Month, but watching my kid run around and say "WTF!" after someone cracks a joke is priceless.

—Justin



Congrats (and condolences), Justin.

Sometimes humor is all it takes to make our Letter of the Month and score a free game of our choosing.

### Working stiff

I've worked with a major retailer for three years now. When I was hired, I made \$6.25 an hour. Now new hires start at a measly \$5.15. Used to be, I was encouraged to sell magazine subs, presales, and the like. Now, should we fail to sell enough subs and reserves, we simply get fired. No "on commission" stuff here—just our jobs on the line.

Still, I'm sick of people complaining about the state of game sales. It's because I enjoy working in the industry so much that I make the sales pitches. As a matter of fact, subscriptions and preorders help you, the gamer. The subscriptions get you discounts, and pre-purchasing a game is

like putting it on layaway and paying it off at your leisure.

Listen, I hate the "buy this, buy that" business as much as anybody, but the times they are a-changin'. So next time that clerk makes the pitch, keep in mind that he's probably earning minimum wage and wants to keep it. Refuse the offer if you want—that's your choice as a customer—but at least understand where we're coming from.

—Seth Longland

### Working-class hero

Giunta Core, I totally agree. I work at an EB Games, and what my man speaks is truth. My district manager, for example, >

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ALL 4 ONE. ONE 4 ALL.

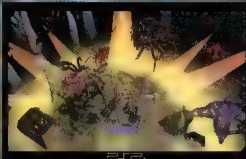
# UNTOLD LEGENDS

BROTHERHOOD  
of the BLADE



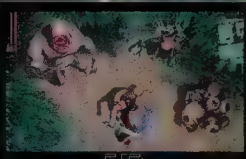
#### Action RPG Combat

Wield your blade and cast powerful spells in this action-packed, hack 'n' slash RPG.



#### Wireless Multiplayer Gameplay

Connect directly to other PSP handheld systems and play with your friends.



#### Original Fantasy Adventure

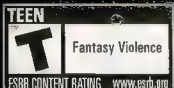
Battle powerful creatures and save the city of Aven to unravel the mysteries of an ancient planet.



*Untold Legends™: Brotherhood of the Blade™* is classic RPG action available at launch for the PSP™ handheld entertainment system. Choose from among four unique character classes and journey to the fantasy world of Aven to battle powerful creatures and unravel the mysteries of an ancient planet. Experience on-the-go hack 'n' slash combat or join cooperative multiplayer battles via wireless gameplay as you venture through beautiful 3D environments and discover rich treasures in this completely original fantasy adventure.



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## BONUS GALLERY

Going the extra mile for love of the game

**Stand-up gamer**

I built a custom arcade cabinet specifically for console games. It stands 6'2" tall, and is 30 inches wide and 36 inches deep. It features dual universal arcade controls, a 27-inch S-Video display, a 2.1 speaker system embedded in the machine, and a hinged cabinet door to house PS2, Xbox, and GameCube. I built the cabinet from scratch using store-

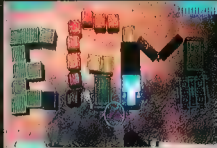
bought materials and plans from the Internet, tweaked to my taste. Including all the electronics and hardware, I spent less than \$500. To put that into perspective, prefab cabinets go for as much as four grand. The funny thing is that even though it can play anything, all people ever want is *Pac-Man*.

—John Garblich

**Red ink**

Old-school gaming graffitied onto my arm: This *Galaga* tat is still a work in progress. It'll be a half sleeve soon enough (it all depends on whether or not I can sell my '71 waterbed-in-the-back, mural-of-your-mom-and-a-dragon-on-the-side Dodge van).

—Aaron Stoddard

**What's that spell?**

We whipped this up in game, if only to show some love. The Novemberist put most of it together, and Psycho Case tweaked the angles. Some of the objects began to disappear, so that's why one of us is in the G. We're happy with how it came out, and are both glad to be a part of EGM's *Halo 2* clan.

—Psycho Case and The Novemberist

► told me that we needed X number of *Doom 3* proorders by the end of the weekend. Now, I can't speak for others, but I don't dig persuading people into buying crap that they don't want or need. I'll still pitch the preorder since I have to, but could care less whether or not someone's actually down.

Another thing: Our store has to hit a certain dollar amount in trade-ins for the day, which means I have to tell everyone who stops in the store to head home and bring back some ghetto-ass games. Basically, it's a bunch of BS. Gamers know what they want, and when they come into a specialty store, they know exactly why they're there. Hell, I'll pass on these filthy store secrets so long as the bigwigs aren't around. Why? Because I'm a gamer, too. I don't want to beg you to buy a one-year replacement warranty on a game you'll play for three days only to trade in for the newest title two weeks later.

I also enjoy chitchatting with customers, but woe if the boss should see that the customer has been having a nice, fun

conversation with me, because I should've spent the time shilling that replacement warranty, two months of free magazines (that automatically get charged to your credit card if you don't cancel by phone), a discount card, and a strategy guide for the game that even your fingerless granny could figure out.

—James Juden

**Smart-ass speaks**

When Editor-in-Chief Dan Hsu wrote that Sony's overpriced PSP is a better designed machine than Nintendo's indestructible DS (Editorial, EGM #191), I had to wonder whether he was talking about the same machine that (Sony CEA) President Kaz Hirai claimed gamers were playing wrong when it continually broke in their hands.

—Brandon Sawmiller



■ PSP: Handle with care (i.e., no Kool-Aid and crayons).

when twoooot—!—the power goes out. So here I am sitting in the dark staring at a lantern. Looks like I'll be making Sunday mass regularly now.

—Josh Wright

You had us up to the whole scribbling-by-firelight-and-somehow-sending-it-via-email bit. Nice try, Father O'Callahan. See you next Christmas.

**Republican commando**

I wanted to point out an error in May's Grudge Match (Arnold Schwarzenegger as Commando versus *Star Wars Republic Commando*). As a resident of California and an avid Arnold fan, I feel it

is my duty to correct you. You quoted the one-man army as having said, "I eat Green Berets for breakfast, and I'm very hungry right now!" when in actuality, the mountain of muscle said, "I eat Green Berets for breakfast, and right now I'm very hungry!" An honest mistake, but I could not let it stand.

—Derek Matthias

**Midnight Club: Politically Correct Edition**

I'm offended by freelancer Kevin Gifford's use of the term "ricemobiles" in his story on *Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition* (EGM #190). Call me overly bitter, but the term has clear racial undertones and its inclusion was wholly inappropriate. I'm a longtime subscriber so I won't even hazard an empty threat, but let's keep the racial slurs out of my previews and play nice.

—Mike Lew

Now that you mention it, Mike, nobody says much about mayonobies, curry cruisers, slubber burners, tea toboggans, or sorghum sleds...

**Lingering doubts**

I'm confused. An article in your April issue (EGM #190) claimed that Nintendo is offering a visually made-over version of *The Wind Waker* as part of a preorder bonus. Then, your May issue featured letters from

mad readers, but no explanation as to whether or not the offer was a gag. To complicate matters, a clerk at my local GameStop insists it's true. Which is it?

—Josh Pittenger

Yes, Josh, you are confused. ☹

## GAME DESIGN-O-RAMA

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

PlayStation 2

Learn to dance, sing, and rake in the dough just like your favorite talentless teen pop stars! Who says you need a pseudopretty face or passable voice for fame, fortune, and a Hollywood career? All it really takes is a rich pappy, sexy sister, some lip-synching, and a catchy song. But don't miss a beat: if the audience finds out you're a phony, ratings drop and your career collapses!

Available on PlayStation 2 this September. Microphone accessory not needed.

—Dave Healy

ASHLEE SIMPSON KARAOKE

Learn to dance, sing, and rake in the dough just like your favorite talentless teen pop stars! Who says you need a pseudopretty face or passable voice for fame, fortune, and a Hollywood career? All it really takes is a rich pappy, sexy sister, some lip-synching, and a catchy song. But don't miss a beat: if the audience finds out you're a phony, ratings drop and your career collapses!

Available on PlayStation 2 this September. Microphone accessory not needed.

—Dave Healy



# REMIXED FOR THE PSP™

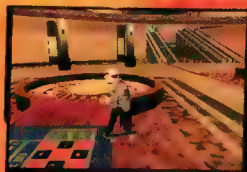
HANDHELD ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

# TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2

## REMIX

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PSP HANDHELD EXCLUSIVES

4 PERSON  
WIRELESS MULTIPLAYER



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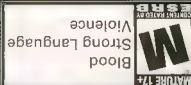
TEEN

T

Blood  
Crude Humor  
Language  
Suggestive Themes  
Use of Alcohol  
Violence

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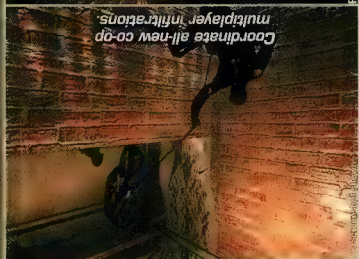
BRING THE BATTLE CLOSER. NOW!

What if an algorithm could crash the stock markets, black out New York, and hijack ballistic missiles? This is 2007. This is reality. The one programmer who has the key to this algorithm has vanished. Find him at any cost. Bring the battle closer to the enemy - bring it to their soil before the chain of chaos becomes unstoppable. You are Sam Fisher. You are a Splinter Cell.



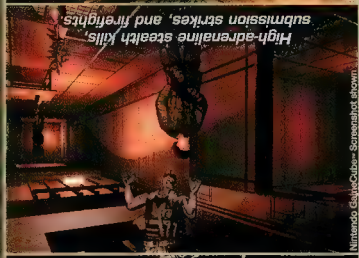
All-new, shockingly innovative spies vs. mercenaries online battles.

PlayStation 2 screenshot shown



Coordinate all-new co-op multiplayer infiltrations.

Xbox screenshot shown



High-adrenaline stealth kills, submission strikes, and firefights.

Nintendo GameCube screenshot shown



Unpredictable enemy encounters through multipath levels.

Game screenshot shown



ROTATE 180°

"It's Simply Brilliant."  
 10 out of 10  
 9 out of 10, 9.5 out of 10  
 Electronic Gaming Monthly







## press start

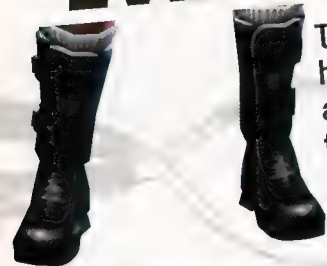
gaming news, previews, a peripheral to piss in, and other stuff



# EXTREME MAKEOVERS

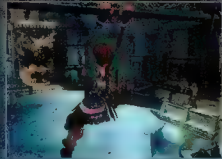
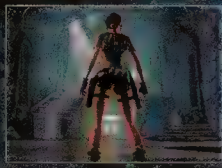
The troubled **Tomb Raider** and **Matrix** series have gone under the knife. But was the surgery a success? We peek under the bandages to find out...

*By Crispin Boyer & Bryan Intihar*



IT LAUNCHED IN LATE 2003 FOR \$300 AND SOON TUMBLED TO \$200. NOW THE N-GAGE CELL-PHONE GAME SYSTEM IS GETTING EVEN CHEAPER. NOKIA IS DROPPING THE PRICE OF ITS





■ Bluetooth headsets have never been sexier.

■ PS2/XB

# TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

## Before the makeover

She didn't get fat. She didn't turn into a psycho witch. She didn't erase last night's *SportsCenter* off TiVo. Yet Lara Croft still got dumped (by millions of gamers who saw their relationship with the teeny-shorts tomb raider start with a bang and fizzle into disappointment. The series, which has had six installments since it launched on Saturn and PlayStation in 1996, peaked critically and commercially with the second game. By the third, nearly one in four PlayStation gamers owned a *Tomb Raider* title. "It was the only game in town," says Chip Blundell, VP of brand marketing for publisher Eidos.

Then players wised up: Dumb. Core Design was churning out clunky

that weren't changing with the times. "*Tomb Raider* as a brand sold 30 million copies," says Blundell, "so I understand why they used a formulaic approach to the design.... But during that period, we had incrementally declining review scores because the competitive landscape was changing and we were still riding the *Tomb Raider* wave."

*Angel of Darkness*, 2003's PS2 debut of the series, was Core's big chance to revitalize Lara's game. Instead, it suffered from archaic control and ill-conceived tweaks such as weak role-playing and stealth elements. "*Angel of Darkness* was the lowest-reviewed game of the series," Blundell says. "That's where we hit rock bottom." >

## Post-op Anatomy: Unwrapping the New Lara

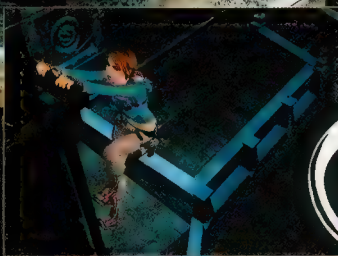
**Her face:** *Legend's* artists gave Lara a much more emotive mug with, they promise, proper lip-synching this time.

**Her pulch:** All of Lara's gear, guns, and grenades are now visible on her costume rather than stuffed away in a magic backpack with infinite space.

**Her gear:** Gizmos include a shoulder-mounted flashlight, binoculars, and a magnetic grapple (we're hoping that means she can zip to distant ledges).

**Her bod:** You want a wet, dirty Lara, you got her. Take her swimming or tumble in the tomb dirt and her character model will get damp and grimy.

**Her old self:** Lara's new body is twice as detailed as this *Angel of Darkness* model's.



## “Block-and-switch puzzles are not what gamers want today.”

—Eidos' Chip Blundell

### After the makeover

And that's when Eidos decided to start over. The publisher fired developer Core, demolished all the groundwork laid for the next two planned sequels, and handed the franchise to Crystal Dynamics, makers of the *Legacy of Kain* games. Eidos looked at everything that was wrong with the series and gave Crystal a breakdown of everything players thought was right or needed fixing. Lara Croft creator Toby Gard—who left Core after the first game—joined the team to help rebuild the series. “I’ve certainly been given the opportunity to push Lara back in the direction I think she needed to go,” Gard says.

That direction, we are promised, involves a long-overdue control overhaul (*Prince of Persia*'s elegant scheme was mentioned several times) and a heavier emphasis on action “with a side portion of mayhem,” Gard says. That

doesn't mean Crystal is turning the series into a mindless shooter; puzzles will still be a big part of Lara's landscape. But “classic block-and-switch puzzles are not what gamers want today,” says Blundell. “They want dynamic problem-solving using the environment and the gadgets and tools at your disposal. It's much less linear.” Imagine, for instance, using a grenade to set off a chain reaction that changes the environment.

Above all, Eidos and Crystal are trying to make Lara a character that jilted lovers will embrace again. “I got the feeling that throughout the games, films, and comics, many people have invested Lara with many, sometimes conflicting, qualities,” Gard says. “I really came here with the goal of sorting that out and defining Lara as a clear, concise character. While we are trying to keep as much consistency with the past as we can, it's

more important that we clear the way for Lara's future.”

### Chances of recovery

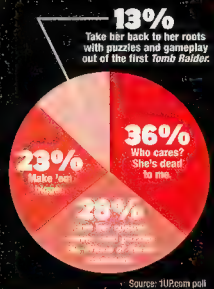
Eidos is still keeping much of this future secret until May's Electronic Entertainment Expo. We know Lara will raid tombs, hunt for moldy doodads, and battle a new nemesis. We know that stealth gameplay is out and her signature leaping gunplay is back in. And we like what we're hearing from Eidos, which has spent the last two years researching how to fix the franchise (they even solicited ideas from *EGM* and other gaming media).

Of course, gamers have heard these kinds of promises before. *Tomb Raider: Legend* will not sell on hype alone when it launches sometime in 2006, and Eidos knows this. “The game itself is going to have to convince people to purchase it,” Blundell says. “Nothing else.”

“The vistas that Lara will explore in this game are going to take your breath away,” says Croft creator Toby Gard.

Legend has only been announced for PS2 and Xbox, but PSP and Xbox 2 versions are a safe bet.

### What do you hope Lara's new makers do with her?



## REMAKING LARA'S GAME: THREE FAMOUS DEVELOPERS GIVE IT A GO...

### David Jaffe, director of *God of War*

“Forgel long gameplay. Go with a five- to 10-hour experience that feels like a blockbuster summer movie. Hire a badass writer—maybe Dan Brown of *Da Vinci Code* fame—and do everything special case so it feels like a movie. I would so freaking love to make that game! It really could usher in a new kind of game for a new kind of audience! Oh, and for the love of God, put controllability at the top of the things to fix list. And do not simply rip off *Prince of Persia* and stick Lara in the place of the Prince!”



### Ted Price, founder and CEO of *Ratchet & Clank* developer Insomniac Games

“Please, please change the pacing. Sure, staring at Lara's ass is fun, but after many consecutive years of wandering around and experiencing the same slow exploration and puzzle-based gameplay...I want a superlative kill ratio! To accomplish [that], please replace the control scheme with something that actually works for a third-person action game. How about giving Lara herself an extreme makeover? Chop the ponytail, give her a breast reduction, and clothe her in something other than the short shorts and tank top.”



### Yannis Mallat, executive producer of the *Prince of Persia* series

“Look back at what made the whole thing thrive in the first place. This is what we've done with *Prince of Persia*. She should have the freedom to really explore the entire world, not just specific confined maps. Getting contextual may be the key... We want her to surprise us by touching...some nice materials during the game. Contextual sensuousness. Erotic titillation. We don't want to think any more but to please and be pleased.” [Uh, OK—EJ >]







IT CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE.  
THE NEW LONG-LASTING AXE EFFECT.



PS2/XB

# THE MATRIX: PATH OF NEO

Publisher: Atari  
Developer: Shiny  
Release Date: Winter 2005

## Before the makeover

It's not the fact that Atari sold nearly 6 million copies of *Enter the Matrix*—the first game based on the Wachowski brothers' hit-or-miss sci-fi movie trilogy—that makes us say “whoa.” What’s stunning is that the publisher achieved such eye-popping sales figures with a game that most critics panned (one of our reviewers described it as a “polished turd”). Harsh words indeed, but it’s hard to disagree: *ETM*’s copious crash bugs, wildly inconsistent visuals, and boring level designs had most gamers wishing they had swallowed the blue pill instead.

Even Shiny President Dave Perry, whose studio handled the project, wasn’t

to go on the game, and faced a firm launch date in order to coincide with the May 2003 theatrical release of *The Matrix Reloaded*. And he also learned one very valuable lesson: Never make a *Matrix* game in which you don’t play as the character everyone wants (and expects) to be.

## After the makeover

“If you buy a *Batman* game, you expect to be Batman,” says Perry. “If I convince you that you shouldn’t be Batman, then you expect to be Robin. But we didn’t even have that [in *Enter the Matrix*].” Instead, the game stars Niobe and Ghost, two supporting characters from the second and third films that fans knew and cared little

about that finds Neo duking it out with hundreds of Agent Smiths in a park, *Revolution*’s final battle in which Neo and Smith do their Superman thing, plus several more. And before each major event, you’ll be treated to recut footage of the films and side stories from *The Animatrix* to better illustrate Neo’s perspective on the given situation. Also, the game’s conclusion should surprise some folks. “The *Matrix* trilogy ends with Neo letting himself die, but that’s a bad game ending,” says Perry. “The Wachowskis knew that, so they came up with a plan for a better ending [in *Path of Neo*].”

But there’s more to this franchise makeover than letting you play as Neo and re-creating those classic *Matrix* moments. “The goal of the game is that you are actually ‘The One,’” says Perry. “This means that if you choose not to do something Neo would do, that’s OK.” This idea of a customizable hero will be expressed mainly through the totally revamped combat system, which now resembles the hot-dogging slickness of a *Devil May Cry* rather than *ETM*’s snore-inducing fistfights. As you progress from computer hacker Thomas Anderson to the savior of Zion, you’ll learn some abilities automatically (such as sword fighting and

flying), while others you’ll pick and choose—much like in an RPG—to upgrade. So eventually, it won’t be uncommon to rattle off five lightning-fast punches to an enemy’s grill, then knock him up in the air, slam him into a wall à la *Mortal Kombat*’s Raiden, pull out your guns, and proceed to fill the knocked-out foe full of lead as he slowly falls back to Mother Earth. And it should be easier to master these moves this time around, as the game will include training programs. Aside from stepping into the dojo for the now-famous showdown with Morpheus, you’ll practice in all-new backdrops inspired by the Wachowski brothers’ favorite kung-fu movies.

## Chances of recovery

Now this is the *Matrix* game that Shiny should’ve made from the beginning (and released in conjunction with the third movie). The premise is right on, the combat seems deeper, the visuals are much prettier, and, more important, Shiny has no pressure to get this one out the door. But will the fans still care? The third *Matrix* flick, *Revolutions*, grossed only half of what *Reloaded* did...have half of the potential *Path of Neo* fans already been burned by *Enter the Matrix*?

# “I would’ve scored [ETM] somewhere in the 60 percent range.”

—Shiny President Dave Perry

satisfied with the end result. “I would’ve scored it somewhere in the 60 percent range,” Perry admits. Yet he’s quick to point out that *ETM* didn’t have the smoothest development process, as Shiny was sold to another publisher, got evicted from its offices with only two months left

about (especially Ghost). But that ain’t the case here. As the subtitle says, you’ll finally don the sunglasses of main-man Neo and relive his finest moments on the way to becoming “The One.”

The game has got ‘em all: the original flick’s lobby scene, *Reloaded*’s big bury



HEADING TO THE BIG APPLE THIS MAY? IF SO, YOU SHOULD SWING BY ROCKEFELLER CENTER AND VISIT THE NINTENDO WORLD STORE. ASIDE FROM HOUSING A SLEW OF NINTENDO



Everything looks cooler when wearing shades. Well, maybe except for that first *Matrix* game...



Here, you'll have to save Morpheus before Agent Smith talks him to death.

## GLITCHES IN THE MATRIX

Characters getting stuck in walls, missing sound effects, game-ending bugs—*Enter the Matrix* was anything but “The One” we hoped for. So why all the problems? Shiny President Dave Perry says that unexpected complications (changing publishers, moving offices) and having to have the game on store shelves the same day the second *Matrix* film hit theaters left Shiny with only 24 hours to go from alpha to beta, which in the world of game development is when all the polishing and bug fixing takes place. For *Path of Neo*, he’s scheduling six months for that same process. Good decision. **A-**



Shiny says that it's looking into making a PSP version of *Path of Neo*.

### Makin' Some Changes

IN	OUT
Neo	Nobe and Ghost 
Riding in a helicopter	Driving and hovercraft missions
Training programs	Button-mashing
Protecting Trinity 	Protecting a bunch of no-names
Serious bug testing	Game crashes (we hope!)



MERCHANDISE: THIS TWO-STORY BUILDING WILL FEATURE DEMO STATIONS FOR BOTH NEW AND UPCOMING TITLES, PLUS A COMPLETELY REMODELED POKEMON CENTER... >>>



A PSYCHIC ADVENTURE  
FROM THE MIND OF  
TIM SCHAFFER

# PSYCHONAUTS

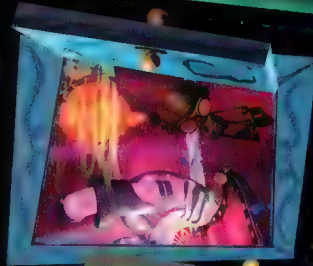


AS IF THE  
VOICES IN YOUR HEAD  
WEREN'T ENOUGH...



"...a game ahead  
of its time."  
-Xbox Nation

"...as groundbreaking  
as it is genius."  
9.5 OUT OF 10  
-Play



"...an instant  
classic."  
-Electronic Gaming  
Monthly

"...incredibly creative,  
wonderfully humorous,  
and refreshingly  
original."  
-GameSpy



Telekinesis, Clairvoyance and Pyrokinesis make the brain the ultimate weapon. Now Psychonauts makes the brain the ultimate battlefield in a twisted adventure through the beautifully demented minds of misfits, monsters and madmen.

Report to [PSYCHNAUTS.COM](http://PSYCHNAUTS.COM) to start your adventure.



Cartoon Violence  
Crude Humor  
Language



PlayStation 2



PC  
CD



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# EGM INTERNATIONAL

Where people still get excited about the arcade

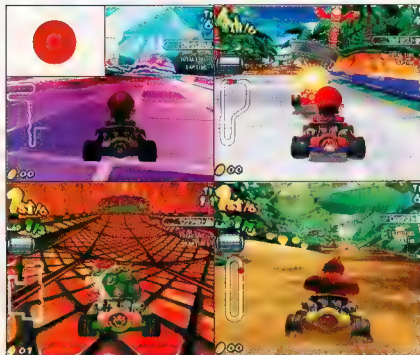


## ■ Arcade MARIO KART: ARCADE GP

**Mario? In arcades?** Why not? After the pudgy red guy's preposterous turn in *NBA Street V3*, we're not even batting an eye anymore. *Arcade GP*, set to debut in Japanese game centers this fall, differs slightly from the GameCube chestnut *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!* Although the two-man teams are gone, the Nintendo-themed courses, crazy items, and rubber-band A.I. are in full force across the game's 24 courses.

**Why would I want to play this over *Double Dash*?** A few reasons. First, this Namco-developed racer (which, yes, features Pac-Man as a selectable driver) lets you use a rewritable "player info" card to unlock new tracks and save any items you earned during a play session. In other words, you can pick up nothing but red shells in a single-player grand prix, then use them later to piss off all your friends in four-player matches. Cute, huh? Every station also has a Namcam2, a small camera that snaps your picture before the race and displays your face on top of your kart during the competition.

**This is the first Mario arcade game since forever, isn't it?** Yep—the first since the original *Super Mario Bros.* in 1985, actually. No word on a U.S. release of *Arcade GP* yet, but considering the number of *Mario Kart* freaks across America, it could be just a matter of time.



## WHAT'S PLAYING IN THE

### COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

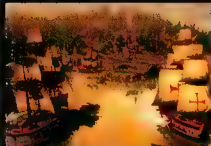
**World Wars, Beethoven flicks, Billy Joel rehab stunts**—some things just seem to demand sequels. Games are no exception, but the follow-up path is fraught with peril. Will it triumph or drunkenly brag that it was once married to an uptown girl?

#### SWAT 4



The *Rainbow Six* titles tend to grab all the squad-based shooting glory, but I'd rather spend my money on Sierra's recent *SWAT* entry. This one sure looks pretty, but what makes it good is the gameplay, and what makes that so gripping is the fact that nothing is scripted. Every time a mission is loaded, enemies are randomly yet intelligently placed throughout the level. Couple that with great real-world locations and the added challenge of having to obey actual police guidelines, and you've got a highly replayable thriller.

#### Age of Empires III



The 500-gazillion-ton gorilla of historical real-time strategy gaming, developer Ensemble could ship a box full of cedar chips and mouse skulls, call it *Age of Empires: The Habitrail Years*, and still make billions. Luckily, it isn't. The studio is promising a late '05 release for this one, which takes place between 1500 and 1650. A big focus will be colonization; you'll start with a home city back in Europe that will support your efforts to conquer the New World. While there will be numerous gameplay tweaks (no more drop-off centers for resources!), the most obvious change is in the updated graphics.

—Robert Coffey,  
Computer Gaming World

## UNDER THE RADAR

### RIVIERA: THE PROMISED LAND

As the stream of worthwhile GBA software slows to a depressing trickle, this upcoming RPG from Atlus could be reason enough for the post-preschool set to bust out their antiquated handhelds. You play the role of a holy avenging angel called down to cleanse the world of evil. Along the way, you'll explore dungeons, beat down legions of beasts in turn-based combat, uncover ancient relics, and, best of all, make time with a cadre of God-fearing hotties who join your quest. What's wrong with a little dating in the name of salvation?

Platform: Game Boy Advance  
Publisher: Atlus  
Developer: Sting  
Release Date: June 2005





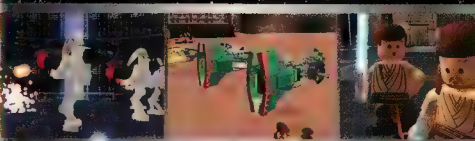
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# HEAD TO

## We grill the guys on both sides of the violence-in-videogames

### THE ANTI-VIOLENCE CRUSADER: JACK THOMPSON

He's the man coming after the videogame industry with a holy vengeance. And chances are you've seen infamously outspoken trial lawyer Jack Thompson on *Oprah*, *60 Minutes*, or *Nightline*, or at least heard some of his sound bites. Thompson, who represents the families of two Alabama cops shot to death by a teenager who played the *Grand Theft Auto* series, believes violent games can encourage and train players to murder.



**EGM: Videogames with mature content are clearly labeled on the box. Isn't a voluntary ratings system a responsible move by the videogame industry?**

**Jack Thompson:** The ESRB [Entertainment Software Rating Board] doesn't work because, as the [Federal Trade Commission] and various private individuals and organizations have found, retailers are not abiding by [the ratings]. They're selling these games to kids under 17 despite the rating label. In fact, it's a counterproductive sales tool because millions of kids want the Mature-rated games. Rating labels that have no practical impact are ineffectual and counterproductive. That's why another attorney and I sued Best Buy in November of 2004, so they agreed now to ID anyone who presents a game to a cashier and appears to be 21 years of age and under. We moved the bar four years forward, so it is less likely kids under 17 can buy these things.

**EGM: But how often do M-rated games end up in the hands of kids in stores?**

**JT:** Many stings have found that up to 50 percent of kids under 17 were sold M-rated games. And with 14-year-olds, between 70 to 80 percent of them were able to buy titles like [*Grand Theft Auto*; *San Andreas*]. Some videogame companies don't want retailers to abide by these ratings. It's a charade—they say to parents and Congress, "Don't sell M-rated games to anyone under 17," but they do. The videogame industry says one thing and does another.



While kids do manage to buy M-rated titles, the Interactive Entertainment Merchants Association says it's been working with stores to reduce such sales 10 percent a year.

**EGM: Who are you referring to, exactly?**

**JT:** Game publishers, console manufacturers, and retailers. They're all in cahoots with one another to have a rating system that doesn't work. The ESRB system is not

bought "copycat liability" insurance to protect them. If they don't think this is going to happen, then why are they buying it? This third solution is to scare the dickens out of the videogame industry to stop

**“...there is going to be a Columbine to the factor of 10...”**  
—Anti-violence crusader Jack Thompson

a warning label—it's a rating label. It should say "Do not sell this game to anyone under 17."

**EGM: What are you proposing to fix this?**

**JT:** We need a three-legged stool: education, legislation, and my approach, which is to do the right thing. This includes representing bereaved third parties so they can sue those responsible for actions that have resulted in death. Family members who miss their loved ones—this is where the breakthrough will occur. The industry fears this, so they've all run out and

marketing and selling inappropriate games to children. My goal is to save lives.

**EGM: Your attempts to compensate victims of alleged game-related deaths have been unsuccessful so far. Why do you think this is?**

**JT:** Lawyers tend to be to the left of normal people, and judges tend to be the left of the lawyers. Federal judges tend to be the left of them. So you have a bunch of First Amendment absolutists who block these kinds of lawsuits.

(Thompson continued on pg. 32)



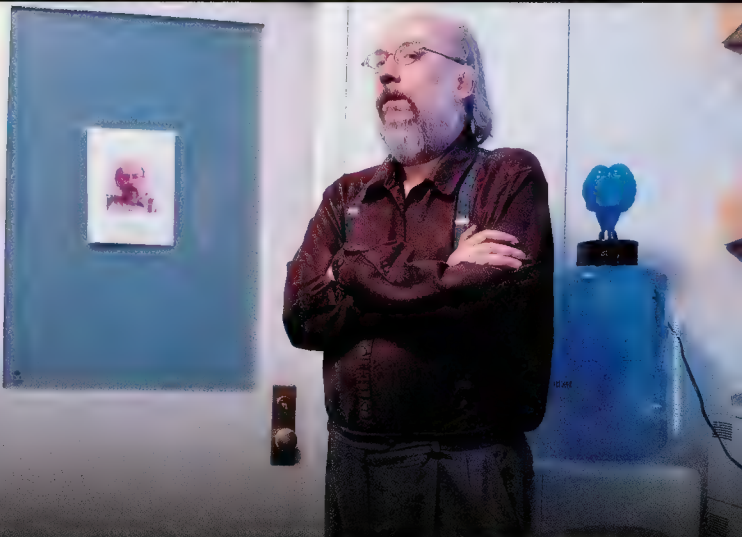
# HEAD

debate. You decide who to believe

**V**ideogames are educational." "Oh, they're educational all right—they teach our kids to kill." "Games improve players' problem-solving skills." "Hopes, they just make them more aggressive." "Games help kids socialize." "Forget it. They turn kids into loners." Oh, sweet irony—the pundits who debate videogame violence often seem on the verge of risticuffs themselves. We've heard the arguments everywhere from *Law & Order* to *60 Minutes*, and we figure it's time for a fresh perspective. So we've granted equal time to the front men on each side of the debate. We'll let you decide who got the bloody nose... —Marc Saltzman

## GAMING'S CHAMPION: HENRY JENKINS

Director of comparative media studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and author or editor of 12 books (including *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games*), Henry Jenkins has spent much of his career promoting videogames' educational value. Along with his many TV appearances, including a guest spot on *Donahue*, Jenkins has testified before the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee on violent entertainment and youth culture, and helped overturn a federal court decision that videogames were not protected under the First Amendment.



**EGM:** Let's get right to it: Is there any evidence that playing violent games causes aggressive behavior?

**Henry Jenkins:** If you read what this media researchers have found, none of them believes games can turn a normal kid into an antisocial menace, someone who can be involved in a school shooting. None of the reports are asserting that level of transformation. A lot of time and effort has been spent on that old "monkey

contributing factors are mental illness, kids going off mood-altering meds, domestic violence, broken families, poverty—these are much bigger factors that can cause school shootings.

**EGM:** This is not what others have said. Crusading lawyers such as Jack Thompson cite reports of a correlation between playing violent videogames and acting out violently.

support their cause. Also keep in mind these studies can be methodologically dubious; in order to produce a study that is scientific you need to strip away all other media, the social context, and the background of the person, so it's virtually impossible.

**EGM:** Do you think the Entertainment Software Rating Board is doing a good job rating games?

**HJ:** The ESRB provides a lot of information, but one of the problems is that a game may be more violent depending on who is playing it. You can play *Grand Theft Auto* for 100 hours and not club anyone with baseball bat [in the game], right? It's not like a movie where the experience is the same for everyone. Yes, the ESRB is fair and accurate to tell you about [mature] elements, but a bigger problem is getting parents to pay attention to that.

**EGM:** Why do you think that is?

**HJ:** There is a misperception among parents about what games are. Parents still assume they're for kids, and they buy them for their kids. The reality is that [games] appeal just as much to adults at the present time and much of the content is inappropriate for kids. But still, parents are buying something called *Grand Theft Auto* for their kids, with gangsters and prostitutes on the box, so maybe this isn't the best thing for your 9-year-old? Parents need to bear some responsibility. It's a challenge.

**EGM:** And if parents don't bear the responsibility, should the government step in with enforceable ratings? Where's the harm in that?

**HJ:** No. Education is the key, not legislation. If you heavily regulate the industry it will narrow what games are in the market, and retailers will only carry content that is suitable for the youngest of players. Retailers won't carry a Mature-rated game

(Jenkins continued on pg. 33)

## "How many violent criminals cite the Bible in their criminal action? Should we ban the Bible?"

—MIT Director of Comparative Media Studies Henry Jenkins

see, monkey do" hypothesis—that the more media you consume the more violent you become. But it doesn't play out. The surgeon general found games were not an essential factor in school shootings. Criminologists say the same thing. The

**HJ:** I don't think any serious researcher is claiming a correlation, no. Trial lawyers and activists bunch all these studies together, even if they're contradictory, and take anything from them that remotely looks [to any causation or correlation to





(Thompson continued from pg. 30) State courts, however, are far more responsive to parents. I suppose federal judges by and large don't have a problem with mental molestation of children with murder simulators.

**EGM: You once compared Doug Lowenstein, president of the Entertainment Software Association, to Saddam Hussein.**

**JT:** If I did, I want to apologize to Saddam Hussein. Doug is a propagandist to whom the facts don't matter. He's paid to lie and he does it very well. Doug is paid a handsome salary, probably seven figures, to say there are no studies that indicate [violent games have] an effect on anyone. If this is true, why is the military using them to create killing simulators?

**EGM: Let's talk about this. Isn't there a difference between training and acting out?**

**JT:** A cyberterrorism expert has found that games such as [THQ's] *Full Spectrum Warrior*, or *Full Spectrum Command* as it's known in the military, is being used by al Qaeda to train their troops. These games don't just teach skills—they break down the inhibition to kill. We've been trained by society and our parents not to kill another

person, so the way you break that down is to put a soldier in a VR setting, which will be far more effective in the long run.

**EGM: MIT's Henry Jenkins says many researchers don't buy the "monkey see, monkey do" hypothesis.**

**JT:** If Henry doesn't think education has an effect on anyone he should stop being a professor. You can modify behavior. The very same people like Doug [Lowenstein] who say games can't encourage anyone to do anything are the same people who tend to get upset about tobacco ads because they encourage kids to smoke. So why are [mature] game advertisements shown on TV when X percentage of kids are in the audience? This is because ads for *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* may persuade them to buy games. And how is it that 10 hours of being immersed in violent behavior doesn't have an effect? It's nonsense to think otherwise.

**EGM: But tens of millions of these GTA games are sold and there are very, very few reports of actual violence associated with them. Aren't the criminals just blaming a game as a scapegoat? Aren't other factors at play here?**

**JT:** First of all, we don't know how many people have acted out violently because of these games, but after I appeared on *Good Morning America*, a Gallup poll found 71 percent of all U.S. teenage boys who played *Vice City* were twice as likely to have been engaged in an act of violence. Also, aggressive behavior may be expressed verbally—not everyone goes "postal" or "Columbine." There have been dozens of studies that show even short-term exposure of these games to teens has an effect on violence, aggressiveness, and bad behavior that goes from bad speech to killing people. It's a wide spec-

trum. Videogames can be the final causal link in a chain of factors that can result in a Columbine.

**EGM: Shouldn't parents—not government or game publishers—bear the responsibility to protect that?**

**JT:** Both government and home have shared responsibilities here. Parents are negligent in letting kids play these games for hours at a time, but even if we do everything right to keep a kid away from these games, his classmates are playing them. He could just play somewhere else. We have an aggressive industry taking advantage of derelict parents. The whole youth culture is immersed in this stuff.

**EGM: Does your 12-year-old son play videogames?**

**JT:** Not anything above an E [suitable for everyone] rating. Many Teen [-rated] games should be Mature because our society is more desensitized to violence. *GTA3*, which was released five years ago, now helps other games push the envelope in violence. The bar has been raised.

**EGM: But most games aren't violent.**

**JT:** Yes, I know Doug [Lowenstein] says most games aren't violent, but an incredible percentage of games that are sold are M-rated. There may be 41 *Echre* games and one *GTA*, but what do you think the sales are like for each? This is how Doug uses statistics.

**EGM: Do you play games?**

**JT:** I play them to the extent that I need to make DVD copies of the killing scenes for presentations or court. Have I played *San Andreas*? Yes.

**EGM: Jenkins claims youth violence has fallen as games rise in popularity.**

**How do you see a correlation between virtual violence and real violence?**

**JT:** Well, let's look at deaths in and around schools. In 2004, there were 48 in number. In 2003, there were 16. In 2002, there were 17. Yes, the death rate in which murderous actions have taken place has gone down, but there are other factors such as the shortening of ambulance response time, better medical techniques, and so forth.

**EGM: So, what's next on the agenda for you?**

**JT:** [A lawsuit regarding] a multiple loss of life by a teenager who played *Vice City*. We are going to sue videogame manufacturers, platform manufacturers, and retailers like Wal-Mart, Circuit City, and Amazon who continue to sell adult-rated materials to children. We're going to sue the industry for its recklessness, for being so short-sighted. Eventually there is going to be a Columbine to the factor of 10, a slaughter in a school by a crazed gamer. And when that happens, when America figures out these kids were filled up with virtual violence, Congress may ban the games altogether. You wise guys who think you're so clever about saying what kids ought to play and then putting [Mature] games in the hands of those kids, you will wish you listened to me. **36**



■ Publisher THQ insists that *Full Spectrum Warrior* "does not contain any content that could potentially be used against U.S. forces."



■ Are game companies buying "copypast insurance" to protect them? All the major publishers we spoke with said it doesn't exist.





► (Jenkins continued from pg. 31)

If you move to an enforceable system. We saw this with the comic industry in the '50s. The other way to approach this problem is to put the burden on the consumer. We have to educate.

**EGM: But what if a 16-year-old sales clerk at a game store sells a copy of *Mahant* to a 10-year-old? It happens.**

**H.J.:** I'm sure it does, but I'd like to first point out that roughly 85 percent of game purchases for those under 18 are by adults. It doesn't mean they're informed, mind you. Adults have to act more responsibly. How many \$50 or \$60 purchases would you make without doing research? It boggles my mind. Are parents monitoring what their kids are doing? Unlike the previous generation, at least many young parents today have grown up playing games, so they will know that not all games are appropriate for young kids. It's getting better. But this is why parents often make better judgments about TV, because they grew up with it and know what can be seen on it.

**EGM: Did you let your son play violent videogames?**

**H.J.:** When he was younger I monitored what he was playing, yes. Anything I let my son play I regarded as appropriate. I made decisions by looking closely at what it is he's playing. Now that my son is 25, he buys his own games.

**EGM: Do you like games like *GTA*?**

**H.J.:** *GTA* is not my taste, but the technology is groundbreaking. I like the open-endedness of it and making choices—that's exciting to me, but the fact you can kill Haitians or prostitutes doesn't seem necessary. Rockstar laughs all the way to the bank, though.

**EGM: Do you think they play up the controversy to sell more copies?**

**H.J.:** Rockstar is creating a lot of buzz, and when Jack Thompson and the public attacks the game, it sells even more copies. I'm sure Rockstar is aware these kinds of games make parents frustrated and angry, so ultimately it is making more money for Rockstar.

**EGM: Speaking of Jack, why haven't the courts ruled in favor of him?**

**H.J.:** Most of the court battles have gone the other way—that games are protected by the First Amendment. Jack is trying very hard to get the courts to rule his way. He created a lot of heat but the courts are not going with him. Periodically we see an investigation, as we did after Columbine, but our society says free expression is of important value.

**EGM: And as you mentioned at the beginning of our discussion, researchers aren't proving that "monkey see, monkey do..."**

**H.J.:** Yes. Clearly, people try things out in games they won't do in real life. Games let you explore in a fantasy environment, but their behavior doesn't map out onto the real world. Shooting an actual gun is very different [from shooting in a game]. Kids are very good at knowing the difference between fantasy and reality. Actually, all animals are very good at that—monkeys can make a clear distinction between play-fighting and real fighting as they have signals that make this basic distinction. It's a basic mechanism. It takes an enormous effort to bring fantasy into reality, but that said, a kid who is at risk because he is mentally disturbed is another thing. Does a game turn normal kids into violent criminals? No. How many violent criminals cite the Bible in their crim-

inal action? So should we ban the Bible? No, because we see it as culturally valuable, and games are not.

**EGM: You said there is a big difference in shooting a real gun and doing it in a game, but doesn't the military use simulators to train the Army?**

**H.J.:** Training is not the same as causing them to do it. This is separate from influence; games can be a resource, a tool that could be used in hundreds of legitimate ways. But we don't get rid of every tool out there. You don't ban flight simulators after 9/11. What about maps? Paper and pencils? Where do we draw the line?

**EGM: But isn't just one school shooting one too many?**

**H.J.:** I'm not making light of these losses, of course, but we would expect violent crime to be on the rise if games were a causal factor. That's not true. Violent crime is actually down.

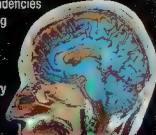
**EGM: You said that broken homes and other dire social situations can breed violent tendencies in people. What about critics who claim that repetitive exposure to violent games can be the last thing that pushes these individuals over the edge?**

**H.J.:** The key word here may be "individuals." Let us suppose for the sake of argument that they are right—that a game may in some individual case be the final straw that pushes someone over the edge when experienced alongside a range of other social, cultural, psychological, and economic factors. That is a question best judged by the people closest to that child—their parents, their teachers, others responsible for their welfare. Where that protection breaks down, the problem lies in the social support structure around the child.

In a free society, there is always a balancing act between the need to protect us from social harm and the need to protect our rights to free expression. And this becomes a statement of our values. [Moral reformers] see games as having no cultural value whatsoever and thus see no harm caused by banning everyone from accessing them in order to protect the individual. I, on the other hand, see games as an emerging medium of expression, one which already is culturally valuable on its own terms and one whose full potential has not yet been realized. I see something in games and game culture which is worth defending, even if I am often disappointed with individual titles. **✶**

### Playing with Your Head

Recent brain studies at the National Institutes of Health seem to spell trouble for Jenkins' cause. They propose that teenage brains are still not fully developed, and thus teens are more susceptible to picking up violent tendencies from playing violent games. "Many people are making big interpretive leaps based on very limited and provisional evidence," Jenkins says, "and they are doing so for the most part in ways that are clouded by prejudices and biases that have nothing to do with the data.... It is a very bad idea to dump such research into a courtroom in the hopes of confusing and intimidating jury members."



# IMPENDING DOOM

After years in Hollywood purgatory, the first-person death simulator is finally hitting the silver screen

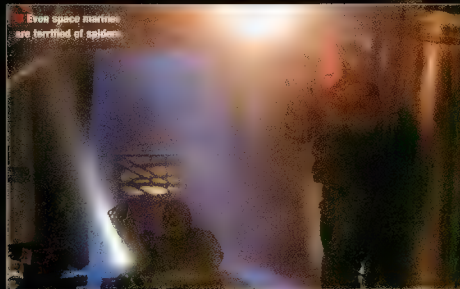
**F**or nearly four cold winter months, Prague was hell on Earth as shooting took place for the cinematic rendition of id Software's acclaimed first-person shooter franchise, *Doom*. The film, which comes to theaters on August 5, stars Dwayne "The Rock"

Johnson, Karl Urban (best known for his role as Rohan warrior Eomer in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy), and Rosamund Pike (one of 007's love interests in *Die Another Day*). And of course, it wouldn't be *Doom* without a whole lot of nasty-looking demons, which meet up with these pretty faces for a little old-fashioned inter-dimensional warfare.

Stay tuned for much more on our trip to the film's monstrously creepy set—including additional pics and interviews with the cast—in our August issue. **✪**

—Evan Shamoon

■ Universal has put Director Andrzej Bartkowiak (*Romeo Must Die*)—along with producers Lorenzo di Bonaventura (*Constantine*) and John Wells (*ER*)—in charge of the demonic shooter's big-screen debut.



Even space marines are terrified of spiders.



With a few exceptions, *Doom* includes an interdimensional wormhole was built specifically for the *Doom* movie.



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## GAMES GET FLOORED

New "Walk of Game" exhibit gives your heroes the star treatment

**I**ve-a been chasing after stars my whole-a life, and now someone is actually giving me a-one," said the face of videogames himself, Mario, at the grand unveiling of a new San Francisco installation honoring Nintendo's plumber and five other videogame icons. Called the Walk of Game and housed at the Metreon entertainment complex (sort of a mall from the Day-Glo future), the exhibit sets in stone—or, rather, the facility's floor—star-shaped tiles immortalizing industry visionaries, games, and characters picked by the public at [www.walkofgame.com](http://www.walkofgame.com).

In addition to Mario, this year's winners

include Atari founder Nolan Bushnell and Nintendo design god Shigeru Miyamoto; characters Sonic the Hedgehog, Mario, and Link; and the game *Halo*. (In case you're wondering, *Halo*'s award was accepted by its audio director, Marty O'Donnell, and not by the actual planet-size galaxy-destroying space ring from the game.)

Keep an eye on Walk of Game's site to vote for next year's inductees. Meanwhile, Nintendo is petitioning the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce to create a videogame section on its famous Walk of Fame. You can support the cause at [petitionspot.com/petitions/walkoffame](http://petitionspot.com/petitions/walkoffame).



■ Cock of the Walk: Industry icon Nolan Bushnell personally guards his star 24/7.

## OVERHEARD

"[The PSP is] going to be [an iPod killer]. Sony desperately wants to own the music download business...so when

Sony puts a hard drive into the PSP—not 'if' but 'when'—the iPod is going to see some serious competition."

—Webuch Morgan Securities analyst Michael Paschke, *Forbes* magazine's top software earnings estimator in 2004, makes a bold prediction to *The Hollywood Reporter*

"One approach [to designing game systems] is, 'Hey it's all about the hardware.' Take a supercustomized approach with a lot of Ph.D.s and you can design your hardware to win at science fairs. Lots of blue ribbons. Forget the fact that it's hard to program [for]—this is cool!"

—Microsoft bigwig J. Allard makes a thinly veiled swipe at the Sony codeworded Cell technology that will power the PSP



## THE HOT SEAT: A SUPREME BEING



David Jaffe—he ain't just a good ol' boy from Alabama with a thing for *Metal Gear* and *Zelda*. He also directed *God of War*, which already has folks mentioning it and "Game of the Year" in the same breath. But can he handle the Herculean challenge of our Hot Seat?

### Truly Favorite Franchise



Metal Gear  Legend of Zelda

David Jaffe: "I'd rather be Solid Snake than a little guy running around in tights. But I love Link."

### Greek Hero



Kevin Sorbo as Hercules  Harry Hamlin as Perseus

D.J.: "I think he takes it seriously. I like my Greek mythology straight-up-serious, not funny and campy."

### Proper Course of Action



D.J.: "The world is more appealing; it's more fun and cooler. *Ninja Gaiden* seems more repressed."

### Bigger Greek Tragedy



D.J.: "Troy, because I don't want to see Brad Pitt in a skirt."



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PlayStation 2



DARKWORKS



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PlayStation 2

# AFTERTHOUGHTS: GOD OF WAR

Revisiting the adventure that has everyone going Greek

**I** *God of War* Director David Jaffe gets a visit from Mr. Reaper anytime soon, you won't find him complaining. "This is the game that was born with me as a 10-year-old kid watching *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in Alabama," he says. "Now I'm like, 'I have nothing else on the plate. I've had a great life.'" But before *Death* comes a knockin', we learned a little more about how Jaffe created this soon-to-be PS2 classic.

—Bryan Intihar and Crispin Boyer

**EGM:** Why make a videogame set in mythical Greece?

**EGM:** Speaking of sex, what's the deal with *God of War's* much-talked-about threesome minigame?

**DJ:** From a creative standpoint, I wanted to show Kratos as a character who is very base, very animalistic, and that doesn't just apply to things on the battlefield—it applies to the bedroom as well. He's almost like the Hulk in a lot of ways; he has a very simple code of ethics and it's all about satisfying his urges. I also thought of the idea from a mechanical standpoint. Kratos is a tortured soul, and if you read his journal in his bedcap, he talks about the women he picked up in Crete and which one kinda reminds him of his

**EGM:** Some of the reviewers felt that the game could've used a couple more boss battles. Do you think that's a legitimate gripe?

**DJ:** It's a valid comment. But for what it's worth, we really didn't look at them as bosses. We looked at the whole thing as if we were writing a movie or story. So we put these events in where we felt they made sense. To me, it was like "I would rather have fewer of those encounters if they are unique and interesting" versus "OK, just to say we have more bosses, here's a giant Cyclops and he's the same as the normal one but with two extra attacks and 1000 hit points."

**EGM:** So it sounds like there are plans for a sequel?

**DJ:** I'd love to see Sony continue the franchise. I'd love to see Sony support it, assuming players support it and like it. And if they do make more *God of Wars*, I'll be involved.

**EGM:** What about creating an action-adventure game for PSP?

**DJ:** I want to work on PSP so bad. I can't wait. I don't have the final design worked out yet. I can't even tell you what genre it's in, but whether it happens or not depends on a lot of schedules falling into place. We have to agree on a design.

**"This is the game that was born with me as a 10-year-old kid watching *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in Alabama."**

—Director David Jaffe

**David Jaffe:** The desire to do an action-adventure game came first, but I've always loved Greek mythology. My wife calls the subject "little boy's dreams," with its big monsters, fantasies, and sex. I also enjoy the adult stuff, like the politics and violence.



**Die-hard *God of War* players should try calling 1-800-613-8940. Why? Oh, you'll see.**

[dead] wife. And one of the inspirations for the game was *Heavy Metal Magazine*, and I love how they mix great fantasy epics with over-the-top sex and violence.

**EGM:** You'll also do a lot of pounding outside the bedroom—what's the biggest combo you've heard of?

**DJ:** We did a contest and one guy claimed to pull off a 1300-hit combo. We never expected that.

**EGM:** Any suggestions for racking up some killer combos?

**DJ:** Basically, the combo meter has a half-second window. If you don't make any contact, your hit count will return to zero. But if you roll, you can keep the combo going.

**EGM:** In the game's extras, there's early footage of a boss that was supposed to guard Pandora's box, but it didn't make it into the final product. What else got axed?

**DJ:** The elevator [also featured in the extras portion] was one. There was a scene with the Titan chasing Kratos, but we had to cut it. We also lost a particular Greek character that I loved, and hopefully, we're fortunate enough to go back to this world and include the character.

**EGM:** Is it an enemy?


**DJ:** It's something in Greek mythology that's pretty cool.

**EGM:** Kevin Sorbo?

**DJ:** Right, right. That's it, sure.

## What's Next for Ol' Whitey?

If you're not one for spoilers, you may want to finish *God of War* before reading what's ahead. Still with us?

OK, here we go: According to Director David Jaffe, the game contains seeds to three more stories; many of which are revealed only when you've beaten it in god mode (the hardest difficulty). You'll learn the fate of the Titan in the desert, and more importantly, that Zeus is Kratos' pop (and he ain't too happy about the thunder god abandoning him). Jaffe adds, "I do have the very final level of the whole series in my head. It's awesome. It's very cool." 





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# ONLINE THIS MONTH

Nine new **Halo 2** maps prepare to assault your Xbox

■ Lots of the new maps were made with specific modes in mind. Territories fans, you'll see some stages made just for you.

Just when you thought you were out, they throw you back in with a couple of shotgun blasts to the chest. New content for *Halo 2* is finally coming, and you don't even need to be on Xbox Live to nab it. On June 28, the *Halo 2 Multiplayer Map Pack* will be available in stores for \$19.99 and will contain nine new levels, gameplay tweaks and fixes, and two videos: an animated side story and a documentary with interviews, strategies, and map fly-throughs. If you're on Live, you'll

get to download the gameplay tweaks and two maps (Containment, Warlock) for free, and you'll have the option to buy two more (Sanctuary, Turf) for \$5.99—all available in late April. The five remaining maps will be downloadable on June 28 for \$11.99.

By Xbox standards, this is quite an impressive package—no one's ever offered nine maps in one shot before. But similar PC map packs offer way more levels for far less dough. So to combat the critics, developer Bungie will eventually be giving away

all the maps (but not the movies) for free download sometime in late summer.

## The maps

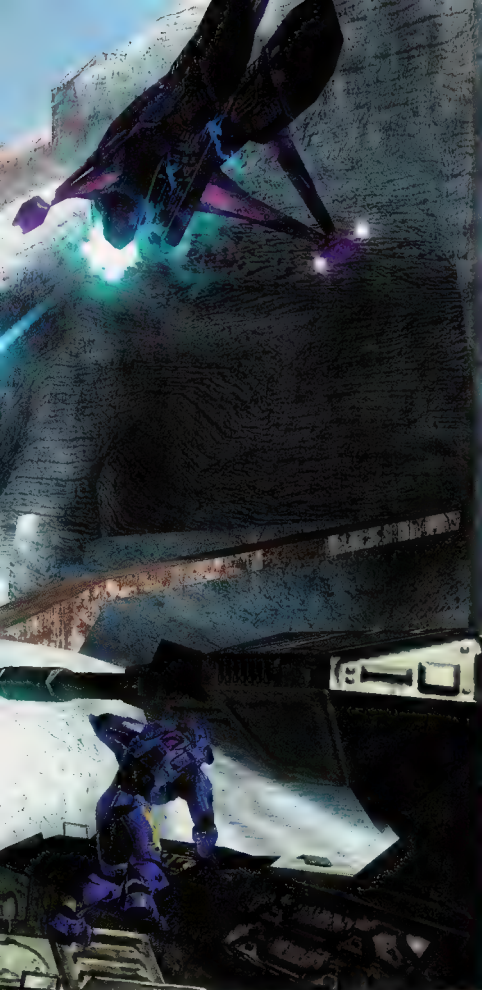
You'll see some remakes of *Halo 1* maps (sorry, no Hang 'Em High—"it just wasn't fun with the *Halo 2* physics, gravity, and weapons," says Bungie Studio Manager Pete Parsons), but mostly new locales like run-down cities, active train stations, and foggy swamps. Most have interactive bits, like switches that open gates to bases.

## The tweaks

Hardcore *Halo 2* fans, listen up—with the new patch comes some big changes. Bungie wiped out all major glitches and bugs (including through-the-wall flag captures—even the suspend-modem cheat won't work well anymore). Your virtual murders' names will have to change, too—brute shots, grenades, and melee attacks all do more damage, for example. Need more specifics? Go to [www.bungie.net](http://www.bungie.net).

—Dan "Shoo" Hsu





### Say Halo to the New Maps

Here's a quick rundown of five of the nine new multiplayer stages.



■ **TURF:** How about a little *Black Hawk Down*-style urban warfare? Tight alleys, rooftop firefights, and more.



■ **WARLOCK:** The small, circular *Wizard* stage from *Halo 1* gets a *Swan*-like makeover, only without the sobbing.



■ **ELONGATION:** Another blast from the past...this *Longest Yard* redux gets a graphical update and moving crates.



■ **CONTAINMENT:** This is one of the largest *Halo* maps ever, with two bases, several vehicles, and lots of cold.



■ **SANCTUARY:** A small, picturesque stage with trees and waterfalls—perfect for that fraggastic vacation.

■ Nine maps and some bonus movies for \$20? PC gamers will be laughing their heads off.



### WHAT'S UP AT



1UP.COM



The **Electronic Entertainment Expo**—it's where all companies come under one roof and offer industry folk like us a sneak peek at their upcoming games. So on May 16-20, set your browser to **1UP.com**, as our online cohorts will be reporting from the show floor with hands-on impressions, game footage, developer interviews, and interactive booth tours.

### EGMEXTRAS.1UP.COM

Sometimes, precious words get cut because they won't fit into our magazine, but thankfully they find a home here. This month, check out our complete conversation with *God of War* Director David Jaffe, who explains how the game's cyclops almost sported a giant wang.

### CHEATS.1UP.COM

What?! Have you been cheating on Xbox Live? "No, baby, it's not like that!" Read how these bastards are exploiting bugs in *Halo 2*, along with the usual laundry list of tips, tricks, and strategies.

### Featured Club: Metrossexual Gamers

You're going to wear that while playing *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*? Visit [metrossexualgamers-club.1UP.com](#) to discuss games or how to correctly apply hair gel. (Start from the back and work your way forward. Trust 'em, you'll look fabulous.)

### Featured Blog: Thierry Nguyen

Linguists have declared his name unpronounceable, so at the office we just call him "Scooter." Visit [scooter.1UP.com](#) to read what's on the mind of this *Official PlayStation Magazine* editor and *EGM* contributor.

# NEXT-GEN CONSOLE REPORT

## The rise of the \$70 game?

**A**n extra Abe Lincoln for that limited-edition copy of *Halo 2*. Another \$10 for the 15th anniversary collector's edition of *Madden NFL 2005*. Five bucks more for the collectible *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*... You may not realize it, but purchasing these "special" packages did more than reward you with bonuses like making-of DVDs and versions of older games—you also participated in a grand experiment to see if consumers would be willing to pay more than \$50 for a red-hot console title. And the results thus far? "EA sold something like 800,000 of the special *Madden* and couldn't make enough of them to satisfy demand," says analyst PJ McNealy of

American Technology Research. In other words, gamers voted with their dollars and told publishers that they were willing to pay a premium price for a premium

Revolution titles. Next-gen games may not include bonus DVDs or pack-in figurines, but publishers argue that they will feature something even better:



increased visuals and huge amounts of content that will cause production costs to skyrocket. Those are costs that publishers hope to pass on to consumers, much as rising oil prices lead to increases in the price of gas. Activision has already gone on record saying that it will charge at least another \$10 for next-gen software. Bobby Kotick, the company's CEO, recently told

game package. So leave it to the publishers to take that idea to the next logical step: charging a premium for Xbox 2, PlayStation 3, and

investors that gamers shouldn't complain—they've been paying \$50 for games for over a decade. Movie ticket prices, meanwhile, have steadily risen during the same time frame.

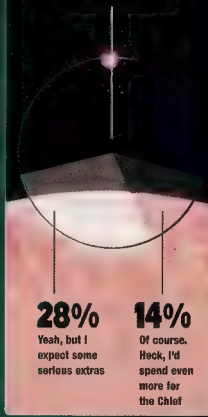
Does this mean you won't be able to find games for less than \$60 or \$70 for the next-gen systems? Hardly.

Publishers may try to sell launch titles at such a price because they know early adopters will pay it, but down the road, a higher price isn't going to work for every game. "The big blockbusters in our business today—the *Halos*, *Grand Theft Autos*, *Maddens*, and *Dooms*—can command a wave of high-end pricing because the fanaticism around the launch of these games is an event," says Steve Allison, Midway's chief marketing officer. Indeed, one analyst, Michael Pachter of Wedbush Morgan Securities, believes Rockstar left money on the table last fall when it shipped *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* for \$49 instead of \$59. But for all those non-*GTA* games, Allison believes publishers are kidding themselves if they think consumers won't have sticker shock over \$60 games. "A publisher who has a good to average game will still be lucky to get

Would you pay \$70 for Halo 3 on Xbox 2?

58%

\$70 for one game? Now that's crazy talk



**"A publisher who has a good to average game will still be lucky to get \$49 in the next generation."**

—Midway's Chief Marketing Officer Steve Allison

**In Other Next-Gen News...** During his keynote speech at this year's Game Developers Conference, Microsoft executive J Allard revealed that Hollywood filmmaker James Cameron, best known for blockbusters like *Titanic* and the first two *Terminator* flicks, is getting into game development. He added that Cameron plans to release a next-generation title (presumably for Xbox 2) alongside one of his upcoming movies. So what's the game all about? Early word is that it'll be based on his live-action adaptation of the *Battle Angel* graphic novels (due to hit movie screens in 2007).



\$49 in the next generation," he predicts.

Some enterprising publishers may come up with entirely new business models for next-gen games. With the introduction of services like the upcoming Xbox Marketplace, which will allow users to buy new game levels and items online for a small fee, publishers could conceivably charge less up front but make additional revenue through micro-transactions. As in, you pay \$40 for *Halo 3* in the box but then ante up another \$20 for a flamethrower and bonus maps.

"There's going to be a lot of experimentation in the next gen with publishers trying to upsell consumers," says McNealy. "The result may be that consumers will spend hundreds of dollars inside one game." That might make sense for additional content, but let's just hope that Microsoft doesn't start charging per machine gun bullet in *Halo 3*. ☛

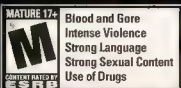




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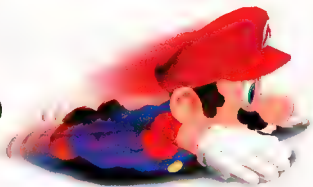


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# NINTENDO:



PAST



PRESENT



FUTURE

Talkin' shop with a butt-kicking executive from the house that Mario built

**R**eggie Fils-Aime, Nintendo's executive vice president of sales and marketing, is anything but your stereotypical corporate suit. Just look at how he introduced himself to the gaming industry one year ago: "My name is Reggie, and I'm about kicking ass; I'm about taking names." And even though his job requires him to play the part of evangelist, Reggie ain't afraid to say when Nintendo has made a boo-boo. We recently sat down with him to discuss the new portable war, the company's next-gen outlook, and...ah yeah, what about Nintendo kicks ass.

—EGM and 1UP.com staff

**EGM/1UP:** You've sold a lot of DS units since last November's launch, but we

DS—pretty damn strong. Look at the sales of *WarioWare: Touched!*—exceptionally strong after only three weeks. Personally, I think *Need for Speed* is quite provocative. Essentially, you use the touch screen to trick out your car, which is pretty damn cool. You can't do that on a PSP. And for the hardcore fans, we've got *Advance Wars* and *Mario Kart*—the games are coming.

**EGM/1UP:** OK, the games are coming, but do you feel you missed out on a great window of opportunity before the PSP launched?

**RF:** I'll frame it this way: Would I love to be sitting here on a pile of 100 great DS games and meeting them out once per month? I'd love to do that. Unfortunately, that's not the way the business works. But what I can tell the owner of a nice, shiny

**EGM/1UP:** Several DS titles look like flashy 2D games or beefed-up GBA games. In terms of visuals, when will we see something on DS that competes with the PSP?

**RF:** The hardware is hugely capable of more than what we've seen. Any time a new piece of hardware comes out, it takes a while for developers to realize its full potential. Look at *Resident Evil 4*: If we could have shown that game the day we launched GameCube, it could have been a different story. So there's a lot more capability in the DS, and *Nintendogs* is an example of that.

**EGM/1UP:** Could *Nintendogs* be the left-field hit that puts Nintendo back on top?

**RF:** [Laughs] I think that's a tall order for that game. But *Metroid Prime: Hunters* kicks ass. Eight-person *Mario Kart* kicks ass. *Advance Wars*, based on what I've seen, kicks ass. We have a number of games that will get the core gamer hugely excited. But we also have great games for my 9-year-old little girl.

**EGM/1UP:** What you said earlier about *Resident Evil 4* was interesting. Looking forward, are you planning on having games of that caliber at the launch of your next console, code-named Revolution?

**RF:** That's the goal. That's why we're going to be working hard with third-party developers. That's why we're going to spend a lot of time on both pre-development kits as well

as final development kits. You know it's critical, whether it be first- or third-party [games], that the launch lineup is strong.

**EGM/1UP:** In a recent interview, Nintendo President Satoru Iwata said that Revolution's unique make-up could keep third parties from supporting the system. Why alienate them?

**RF:** I wasn't there when he made that comment, but I know Mr. Iwata well enough and I know that he's got a very strong relationship with third-party publishers. The fact is that our systems by definition are always pushing the envelope on innovation. And if you've been around the industry, you know that creating games for systems that are

**"Look at *Resident Evil 4*: If we could have shown that game the day we launched GameCube, it could have been a different story."**

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

really haven't seen that killer app yet or a steady flow of software. Where are all the DS games?

**Reggie Fils-Aime:** It's interesting, you look at the sales we've had for *Super Mario 64*

DS is that there are a number of great games across a range of tastes. And we've got more games coming that are going to get that purchaser to say, "A worthwhile \$150 spent."

## Inside the Revolution

While the look of Nintendo's next-gen console (code-named Revolution) remains shrouded in secrecy, the company has recently provided some details on the guts of this anticipated machine: The power of the Revolution will come from two sources: a processing chip (code-named Broadway) from IBM and an ATI-produced graphics chip (called Hollywood). The new console will also feature built-in Wi-Fi and be backward compatible with the GameCube—the latter being a first for any Nintendo home system.







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way of marathon gaming sessions. But alas, that ratty couch, tangle of cables behind your A/V receiver, and nagging pain in your bladder always seem to

get in the way. We're here to help with this roundup of accessories built with your comfort and convenience in mind.

—Shawn Smith

## PMX Rocker • Pyramat • pyramat.com • \$850

This posh leather rocking chair is made specifically for gamers and will cause envy amongst your peers—plus show your girlfriend that gaming accessories can, in fact, be cool. The built-in wireless speakers and bumpin' sub round out the package, but for a rather steep price. Sit and game like a celebrity, or be gently rumbled to sleep.



## Internet Urinal • ThinkGeek • thinkgeek.com • \$5

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## Phoenix Revolution Gamerster • gamesterusa.com • \$25

Like different pads for different reasons? The Phoenix gives you a one-stop shop for a variety of custom PS2 pad types. Move the D-pad to the far right, the buttons to the middle, or any other *do-it-yourself* combination that'll keep your gaming experience customized and hassle-free.

## Play Link • Logitech • logitech.com • \$99

No need to mess with network cables or other dorky things with this wireless access point for your Xbox or PlayStation 2. According to Logitech, there are just two steps to installation: Plug one transmitter into your broadband modem or router, then jack the other directly into your console's Ethernet port. Bingo—your console is connected wirelessly, without any additional software fuss.



## Theater Experience Nyko • nyko.com • \$79

As much as the PSP is a portable console, it's also an on-the-go audio and video wonder station. The PSP media lover will dig this handy package, which includes a protective metal case, viewing stand, speakers, and an extra battery pack. It's perfect for enhancing your favorite flicks...or your prize collection of Jacko concert clips.



## Cold Comfort

While the other products shown here are supposed to make it easier for you to game, this 14k gold, jewel-encrusted PSP case by Simmons Jewelry Co. (as in Russell "Def Jam" Simmons) is the antithesis of that idea. Complicated beyond excess, it's made for those who have a hearty hankering for billing. Call 212-397-0981 if you think your bankroll can afford such a pricey hit.

**Cost:** 140 times the cost of the PSP itself (\$35,000). ❄️

## 315 Sound Console • Zvox • zvoxaudio.com • \$199

If you're tired of fishing behind the entertainment center for the right plug, maybe it's time to downsize your A/V setup and nab something easier to maintain. The 315's sound quality easily rivals that found in many expensive 5.1 bundles, yet the unit costs under \$200 and is a snap to get up and running (you only have two plugs to worry about).







ADVENT RISING

# SOMETIMES THE HUMAN RACE HAS TO START OVER...



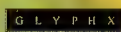
The unique premise of *Advent Rising* is to uncover a mythical race. A race believed to exist only in fairy tales and legends.

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A new concept of Humanity.

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Xbox

# AFTERTHOUGHTS: DOOM 3

## Talking through our fear of a pitch-black planet



The Swan has found its next contestant.

**D**oom 3, developer id Software's razzle-dazzle reworking of the Satan-in-space shooter that started it all, captures hell with more head-banging brio than most '80s heavy metal album covers. But if the game were a band, who would it be? "Man, that's tough," admits not-so-longhaired Lead Designer Tim Willits. "Ozzy is crazy, funny, and talented, but..."

—Shawn Elliott

**Doom 3 for Xbox?**  
**TW:** Very closely. More so than other titles because the levels had to be shorter and we needed more of them. It gave us the opportunity to carefully look over the single-player campaign and cut out some of the dead parts. As a result, it's a little tighter, kind of like a director's cut. And we collaborated on the cooperative stuff, too.

**EGM:** Let's try this instead: What movies and books inspired *Doom 3*?  
**Tim Willits:** Some of our artists are big into anime; others love bad, bad horror movies. But I can't say that one thing or another inspired us [besides the original *Doom*] because we have so many people here, and one of the great things about id is that everyone has the chance to contribute to and participate in the design and creation of the game.

**EGM:** Co-op supports system link and online only. Why no spitscreen?  
**TW:** We did all we could to get *Doom 3* to run well on Microsoft's console. Can you just imagine getting it to run twice on a single screen?

**EGM:** Can you pinpoint bits and pieces?  
**TW:** The transport shuttle is all anime; even some of our weapons have an anime feel to them because our modeler is big into anime. And then we're all serious fans of the *Aliens* series.

**EGM:** How were you able to make a game that looks so much better than most Xbox games? What do you know that other developers don't?  
**TW:** [Laughs] John Carmack [id's master programmer]. When John started work on the *Doom 3* engine a while back, he had Xbox in mind. He can look into the future and predict where hardware will be at any given time. But it definitely took many years to do—you can't just take the latest, greatest PC engine and stick it in Xbox; that's just not gonna work.

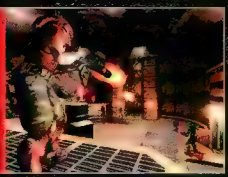
**EGM:** Speaking of extraterrestrials, wasn't *Nine Inch Nails* front man Trent Reznor supposed to do *Doom 3*'s music and sound effects?  
**TW:** Things just didn't work out. He wouldn't have had time to wait for us if we had a technical problem—he's got stuff to do, we've got stuff to do.

**EGM:** What do you say to all the people who wonder why the future has droid and teleportation tech, but no duct tape for attaching a light to your gun?  
**TW:** You know, we actually had the light mounted on the pistol at one point, but it wasn't as much fun.

**EGM:** How closely did you work with *Vicarious Visions*, the codewriter of

**EGM:** What do you say to all the people who wonder why the future has droid and teleportation tech, but no duct tape for attaching a light to your gun?  
**TW:** You know, we actually had the light mounted on the pistol at one point, but it wasn't as much fun.

**You're Never Alone**  
How does id think *Doom 3*'s multiplayer mode stacks up against other big Xbox shooters? "Only time will tell," says Lead Designer Tim Willits. "I think that co-op will probably prove more fun, but we'll have to wait and see how people feel. Again, our biggest focus was polishing the single-player experience."



**EGM:** What about critics of all the closets that open to release creepy crawlies only after players pass them?  
**TW:** I'm not worried about monster closets. If they wanna complain about monster closets, they can complain about monster closets.



Online co-op: Take that, Halo. **EGM:** We suppose John Carmack would crap if it had shady special effects.

**EGM:** Any chance we'll see the still PC-only *Resurrection of Evil* expansion pack on Xbox?  
**TW:** We're always considering which consoles and platforms we'll put our products on, and have looked at *Resurrection of*

**"I'm not worried about monster closets. If they wanna complain about monster closets, they can complain about monster closets."**  
—id Software Lead Designer Tim Willits

*Evil*, but currently have nothing to announce. Well, we do have some downloadable content that we're working on in the form of multiplayer maps.

**TW:** John's so funny—we went to see *The Incredibles* and he complained about some of the rendering. We're like, "Dude!" But yeah, Stan Winston Studios is handling effects for the *Doom* film, and they are the group that did *Aliens* and the original *Star Wars*, so...

**EGM:** You've also got the *Doom* movie out this year....  
**TW:** Yeah, we helped introduce the game to the writer. There are some *Doom* rules that Universal [the film's studio] had to follow, so we've been very happy with that. Plus, the production staff is top-notch.

**EGM:** So back to *Doom* being a band....  
**TW:** Led Zeppelin, because the franchise has survived for so long and has such a hardcore fan base. 🤘



PS2/XB

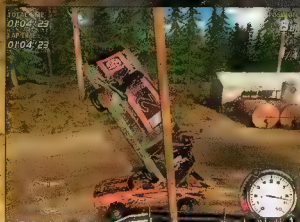
# SHOW AND TELL: FLATOUT

Publisher: VU Games  
Developer: Bugbear  
Release Date: June 2005

## Wanted: crash test dummies

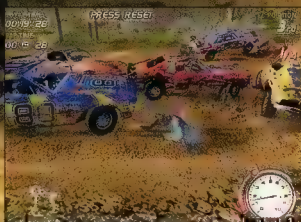
**T**he *BurnOut* series reminded us that racing games don't have to be complex lessons in adjusting gear ratios and tweaking suspensions, and *FlatOut* takes that concept a step further. Here, you're

encouraged to knock rival racers off the road, through the windshield, and into trees for extra points. *FlatOut* Producer Jussi Laakkonen explains the finer points of his sadomasochistic racer.



### How to Get Ahead

**JL: Jussi Laakkonen:** Time to fly, buddy! To effectively overtake your opponents, don't try to skillfully steer around them—go through them instead. Ram them with full throttle and a nitro boost, then watch as they're brutally tossed off the track.



### Find a Crosswalk

**JL:** Nasty crashes send your driver flying out of his car and into grave danger. In a best-case scenario, you'll get some nasty road rash...with a bit of bad luck, you might hug a pine tree...and if you're really unfortunate, you end up like this.



### The Majesty of Flight

**JL:** *FlatOut*'s tracks offer plenty of wild shortcuts. This, however, is not one of them. Instead, this is what happens when you attempt to drive through a tricky shortcut but end up slamming into a post and launching yourself skyward.

### Fun With Physics

**JL:** *FlatOut* offers 12 insane multiplayer minigames, all designed around using the game's complex crash physics. For example, you can unwind after a hard race by crashing at top speed and vaulting your driver into the mouth of a massive clown, down a lane of bowling pins, or even toward a colossal dartboard. It's not just for fun, either: The credits you earn here can be used to upgrade your ride in the normal game.



## NEWS TIDBITS THAT ARE FULL OF DRAMA

### One Day at a Time

Time is crucial when you take on the role of Kiefer Sutherland's tough-as-nails counterterrorism agent Jack Bauer in Sony CEA's *24: The Game* (due out on PS2 this fall). Blending stealth, shooting, driving, and puzzle solving, this one tells an all-new story (set in 24 hours of real time) between the second and third seasons of the hit Fox series.



### PS2s No Longer for Sale?

Well, it could've happened. In March, a federal court ordered Sony to stop all U.S. sales of its console and pay immersion Corp. almost \$91 million for patent infringement (which involved the vibration technology found in the PS2 controller). But since Sony is appealing the case, the injunction has been put on hold. "Even if Sony loses [the appeal], they'll pay up," says analyst Michael Pachter of Wedbush Morgan. "If they win, the injunction is void. In either case, they won't stop selling PS2s."



# TOUGH CUSTOMER

We play dumb to watch clerks to see who helps us shop smart

**T**he average *EGM* reader scoffs at the thought of asking game-store counter jockeys for advice; you know-it-all don't need

their help. But what about your non-gaming friends, your grandma, your significant other—anyone who relies on over-the-counter know-how? We

sent our spy, posing as a clueless girlfriend shopping for her gamer beau, on a quest for flimflam advice at four major game retailers. An unscientific

survey? Surely. But some of these clerks' comments are good for a laugh, too.

—Carrie Shepherd

## GameStop

**Spy:** Which gaming system is the best to buy for my boyfriend?

**Clerk:** PS2 and Xbox, depending on what type of games he likes to play. [Launches into enthusiastic speech on the merits of each system.]

**Spy:** And for online gaming?

**Clerk:** Xbox.

**Spy:** Which is the most powerful?

**Clerk:** Xbox.

**Spy:** What about the GameCube?

**Clerk:** The GameCube is more geared toward younger kids.

**Spy:** Does it play movies?

**Clerk:** No, but both the PS2 and Xbox will play DVDs.

**Spy:** My boyfriend said something about progressive scan? Whazzat?

**Clerk:** They all have that, but PlayStation was probably the one he was thinking of because they've been talking about that recently.

**Spy:** What about the handhelds?

**Clerk:** Would you recommend buying a DS or waiting for the PSP??

**Clerk:** The PSP is really good, but it's gonna be really hard to find and really expensive. It's gonna have everything: movie player, MP3s—you can even make your own movies for it!

**Customer appreciation:** This guy knew his stuff—he even made the right call on which systems support graphics-boosting progressive scan. Will the sales associate at a giant toy-store chain be as tech savvy?

## Toys 'R' Us

**Spy:** My boyfriend says more polygons are better. What are those?

**Clerk:** Let me ask about that. [Asks a coworker, who also doesn't know. Calls "Mike" on intercom. D'oh. Mike doesn't know, either.] I don't know what that is. I know megabytes! I know the PS2 has more.

**Spy:** Do any of these hook to a PC?

**Clerk:** I don't know that, either. [Asks coworker.] Oh yeah, both do.

**Spy:** All of them?

**Clerk:** No, PS2 and Xbox do. The GameCube doesn't.

**Spy:** What about sports games?

**Which is the best for them?**

**Clerk:** The PS2 is the best for sports; it has better graphics, like *Madden 2005*, *MVP 2005*. There's also *NBA Street*, which is basketball.

**Spy:** And for portable games, should I get a DS or wait for PSP??

**Clerk:** [The PSP] has music; it's like an organizer. It's a Palm reader—you play your PS2 games on there, you can download from the Internet. I would recommend waiting for it. Everyone's waiting for it.

**Customer appreciation:** Palm readings? Since when did the PSP become a hotline to Ms. Cleo? Oh, and for the record, the Xbox has more megabytes in its memory and can pump out more polygons—and it's the only console that can hook up to a PC (through the Xbox Media Center).

## Best Buy

**Spy:** Do I need anything besides the system and a couple of games?

**Clerk:** They come with the cables and one controller.

**Spy:** When are the new systems coming out?

**Clerk:** Sony just came out with a new version of the PlayStation. It's smaller, more compact, that's about it. Xbox—they haven't mentioned anything about something new coming out.

**Spy:** So are the prices of these systems ever going to come down?

**Clerk:** No. When the PS2 came out, the price of the old one didn't go down.

**Spy:** Is the GameCube just for kids?

**Clerk:** It's more for toddlers and a little bit above that. For an adult, I would recommend the others. The graphics [on the GameCube] aren't as good as an adult would be into. And they have more kids' games than they do adult games.

**Spy:** Does Nintendo make games for the other systems?

**Clerk:** The old Nintendo games sometimes come out for Xbox and PS2. I don't know which games, specifically, but a lot of them do.

**Customer appreciation:** So, forget the boyfriend. I'm gonna pick up this GameCube for my toddler, along with this copy of *Resident Evil 4*—which clearly has graphics only a baby could love. Might as well grab a few Mario games for Xbox or PS2 while I'm at it.

## EB Games

**Spy:** Can you surf the Web on any of these systems?

**Clerk:** No [clearly disgusted].

**Spy:** How about movies? Can I watch movies on any of them?

**Clerk:** [Deep, horrified sigh] Yes, but you'll need to buy an extra remote for the Xbox.

**Spy:** How about sports games?

**What's the best sports game?**

**Clerk:** *Madden*. [Looks down, deperate to wait on someone else.]

**Spy:** Is that that football hockey game?

**Clerk:** What? It's football. Hockey is a different sport. [Looks down and starts writing, hoping I'll go away.]

**Spy:** [Picks up *Mantum*.] Is this game good?

**Clerk:** Um, it's different. [Backs away.]

**Spy:** Should I get a DS or wait for the PSP??

**Clerk:** Wait for the PSP [i.e., get the hell out of my store].

**Customer appreciation:** A veritable videogame expert, but this guy was clearly hoping to wait on someone who knew as much about games as him. Unlike the friendly, upbeat GameStop employee, he couldn't wait for me to leave—even though it was the only store in town with Xboxes and PS2s in stock. At least he sold me a magazine (probably hoping that I would bone up on the subject matter before my next visit).



# THE SALES CHARTS

FOR FEBRUARY

# 2005

## TOP 10 BEST-SELLING GAMES



- 1 Gran Turismo 4 • PS2 • Sony CEA
- 2 NBA Street V3 • PS2 • EA Sports Big
- 3 Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas • PS2 • Rockstar
- 4 MVP Baseball 2005 • PS2 • EA Sports
- 5 The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap • GBA • Nintendo
- 6 NBA Street V3 • XB • EA Sports Big
- 7 Mercenaries • PS2 • LucasArts
- 8 Resident Evil 4 • GC • Capcom
- 9 Champions: Return to Arms • PS2 • Sony Online
- 10 Madden NFL 2005 • PS2 • EA Sports

## TOP 10 PS2



- 1 Gran Turismo 4
- 2 NBA Street V3
- 3 Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas
- 4 MVP Baseball 2005
- 5 Mercenaries
- 6 Champions: Return to Arms
- 7 Madden NFL 2005
- 8 Xenosaga: Episode II
- 9 NBA Live 2005
- 10 World Championship Poker

## TOP 10 XBOX



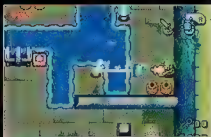
- 1 NBA Street V3
- 2 Mercenaries
- 3 MVP Baseball 2005
- 4 Halo 2
- 5 Need for Speed Underground 2
- 6 The Punisher
- 7 World Championship Poker
- 8 Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath
- 9 Major League Baseball 2K5
- 10 Madden NFL 2005

## TOP 10 GAMECUBE



- 1 Resident Evil 4
- 2 Star Fox: Assault
- 3 NBA Street V3
- 4 Super Mario Sunshine
- 5 Mario Party 6
- 6 Super Smash Bros. Melee
- 7 Sonic Mega Collection
- 8 Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker
- 9 Need for Speed Underground
- 10 Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour

## TOP 10 PORTABLES



- 1 Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap • GBA
- 2 Super Mario 64 DS • DS
- 3 War!oWare: Touch! • DS
- 4 Kingdom Hearts: cOm • GBA
- 5 Pokémon FireRed • GBA
- 6 The Incredibles • GBA
- 7 SpongeBob: The Movie • GBA
- 8 Yu-Gi-Oh! Tournament 2005 • GBA
- 9 Pokémon LeafGreen • GBA
- 10 Namco Museum • GBA

## TOP 10 RENTALS

FOR THE WEEK ENDING 3/20/05

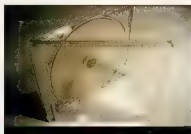


- 1 Gran Turismo 4 • PS2
- 2 GTA: San Andreas • PS2
- 3 Star Wars: Rep. Commando • XB
- 4 Fight Night Round 2 • PS2
- 5 MX vs. ATV Unleashed • PS2
- 6 NBA Street V3 • PS2
- 7 Mercenaries • PS2
- 8 Robots • PS2
- 9 Mercenaries • XB
- 10 NFS Underground 2 • PS2

## ON THE AUCTION

# Block

We take another look at online auctions...and laugh at the suckers who bought this crap.



**Item:** The "crystal" version of *Crystal Pepsi: The Game* for PS1. It even came with a map of Crystal Pepsi Land! Idiot.

**Winning Bid:** \$15



**Item:** We know the cosplayers love their *Final Fantasy*, but spending this much cash on a rare *FFIX* art book is pushing it.

**Winning Bid:** \$75



**Item:** A haunted NES? It sounds to us like an excuse for stinking at Nintendo games: "I can't rescue Zelda; my NES is haunted."

**Winning Bid:** \$225



**Item:** A woman sold her son's PS2 as punishment for drinking her \$150 bottle of champagne. Is it a BS story to attract attention? Either way, someone bought it.

**Winning Bid:** \$122

Source: NPD TRSIS Video Games Service. Call 616.625.8100 for questions regarding this list.

Source: Backlist.com Video

ATTENTION ALL PIGSKIN FANS: IF YOU USE VERIZON WIRELESS AS YOUR MOBILE PHONE SERVICE PROVIDER, YOU CAN NOW PLAY TECMO BOWL WHILE ON THE GO...



# SONS OF THE GLITCH

Meet the rotten cheaters ruining your online neighborhood

**H**aloGuy343 can't move. For 30 seconds now he's been immobile and unresponsive to simple commands. His friends can't help him—in fact, they're suffering from the same syndrome. But the problem's not physical; it's their *Halo 2* online game. Some new guy joined in and everything just froze up. A few seconds later the clog comes unclogged, but there's a new problem: Everybody's dead.

Well, everybody except the new guy. He not only survived the ordeal but also walked away with a handful of kills.

Sound familiar? If you're playing *Halo 2* online, it just might make your blood boil to hear us talk about it. Our newcomer friend is using a trick that folks can play

with certain types of broadband modems, and it's as easy as pressing a button. The modem glitch is one of several sore spots among Net gamers that can be attributed to a burgeoning breed of online players: the cheaters.

## Excuses, excuses

Fussing with the network, exploiting programming loopholes, and taking advantage of the honor system are a few ways these jokers get their online jollies. But with Microsoft, Sony, and a glut of angry developers cracking down on online cheaters (Xbox owners can even get their Gamertags revoked for violating the Xbox Live code of conduct, you take the risk? Surprisingly, it's not always about just being a dick. "It's frustrating," says Duncan Arley, whose cheating ways date back to 16-bit Game Genie hacks. "To lose consistently to people who got better than you by playing six to eight hours a day while you're at school or work—some people cheat just to even the playing field." Latecomers are especially disadvantaged, says Arley. "Nobody wants to turn on their new game and be killed 50 times in a row by people who have had

the game longer. I know many people who cheat not to boost their win column, but to keep it from being ruined in their first few days of having a game."

While the fragologically challenged are looking for a leg up on the professionals, there's another world of subversive ranker-uppers thriving behind the scenes, away from the public games. You won't find hardcore glitch junkies like Joe32 in *Halo 2*'s Rumble Pit, the online equivalent of a high-school bike rack, where players match up for quick brawls. "We used to use rank-up glitches in *Halo 2* so we could get our 'wings,'" he says. "But in my clan, we don't cheat in [public] rank-up games. I have been in other clans where all we do is cheat, though."

## Glitchin' for a fight

Turns out cheating is common ground for lots of gamers like Joe32. The social aspect of sharing glitches in live chat or in online forums is what keeps some cheaters going. The TeamKill and Cheat Community ([www.tkc-community.net](http://www.tkc-community.net)) is one hardcore band of glitching gamers dedicated to developing new ways to mess with the online medium. Their motivation ranges from a flat-out "just wanting to annoy" to a more altruistic "prolonging the game experience," but—just as in any social club—their communal attitude is fueled by a common interest: cheating.

Cheaters banding together to exploit rank-driven games really irks developers like Zipper (*SOCOM II*) cofounder Brian



Self-proclaimed glitcher and "creative player" Joe32 says to stop whining.

## Banned Together

Here's a breakdown of Microsoft's punishment scheme for reported cheaters.

**First offense:** 24-hour ban from Xbox Live.

**Second offense:** 1-week ban from Xbox Live.

**Third offense:** 2-week ban from Xbox Live.

**Subsequent offenses:** Bill Gates remotely detonates your Xbox!

\*Microsoft: "We do not disclose specific details of our enforcement actions. Microsoft may, at its discretion, suspend or ban users who violate our terms of service."

Illustration by L. Odom

>>> HERE'S A LITTLE "DID YOU KNOW?" FOR ALL THE SPORTS: ACCORDING TO EA TIBURON VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING TODD SITRIN, SEVERAL COMPANIES THAT HAVE NEVER MADE





Using grenades and jumping on friends' shoulders can help you get ridiculously high and reach far-off boundaries in *Halo 2*. Players like Joe32 call it creative thinking. Victims of sniper fire that seems to come from another world call it cheating.

### Cheaters Sometimes Win

More than half of the gamers polled on 1UP.com said they know several cheats. With role models like these, it's no wonder kids go looking for trouble.



#### Ashlee Simpson



**Cheat:** Pulled a Milli Vanilli on SWL



**Penance:** A second season on MTV



See that guy over yonder? If you're out of ammo, a handy *Halo 2* glitch lets you dash across the level and settle his hash with a plasma sword.

Soderberg, "That's the worst thing about cheating," he says. "Even if you have the ability to vote out cheaters (on open matches) like we do in *SOCOM II*, they can still set up their own games to move up in rank through exploits or glitches." Since the game went live, it's been Soderberg's business to identify glitches and cheats and come up with fixes.

But Joe32 says it's not just about hacking the software and gaining status in the rankings. He and his friends spend most of their time finding off-limits areas and exploiting programming bugs—trying stuff just to see if it can be done within the existing limits of the game. He and Arley both say the line that separates cheating from regular gameplay isn't exactly clear-cut, so not all gamers who exhibit cheater tendencies know they're doing it; normal game features sometimes just make it too easy to bend the rules. "It's very common to see cheating in games that allow spectators," Arley says. "One person will play the game while the 'spectator' informs his

partner of enemy positions and weapon locations." Other gamers give themselves an edge by using a mouse and/or keyboard with today's USB-friendly consoles, which increases accuracy and cuts response time—it can be an insurmountable advantage. But, as one anonymous cheater explains, "It's not illegal—it's just using the best equipment available. Anyone can do it!"

### Above the law

Since most online games rely on some type of honor system to limit cheating, Soderberg believes game creators will never be able to eliminate hacks through programming alone. "It's impossible to anticipate all of the cheats that will be used in an online game," he says. "Players will continue to find ways to exploit some newfound glitch. You just can't test enough prior to releasing a game to catch everything." He says their best current recourse is tackling glitches one at a time. "Improvements in 'self-policing' features,"

he argues, "client patching and server-side detection and fixes will continue to make cheating less prevalent."

It's true—just ask *Halo* series maker Bungie, which is already attacking our little modern glitch mentioned above: "Can't say how, but we've implemented several fixes to help alleviate this problem," says a rep for the developer. "We can't stop people from pressing 'suspend modem,' but we can make it less worthwhile." Good thing, because cheaters are coming up with new tricks as fast as gamemakers can address the old ones. And while the intentions of guys like Arley and Joe32 aren't to hurt the online community, there are certainly plenty of guys out there with more malicious aims in mind. "There's a hardware cheat device built specifically for *SOCOM II* called the Warp Card," Soderberg says. "This device provides the player with a foot pedal that causes opponents to freeze momentarily, providing an easy kill. We're working on a patch." ❧

—Jan Duulak



#### Sammy Sosa



**Cheat:** Packing some cork



**Penance:** Two paychecks, a trip to Baltimore



#### Bill Clinton



**Cheat:** Monica Lewinsky



**Penance:** Emancipation, a pratty book deal

# COUNTDOWN TO 2001 TOP 10 CULT CLASSICS

**W**e continue the march toward *EGM's* 200th issue, conquering all enemies in our path and placing them in numbered lists for all to see. This month, we look at cult classics—games that have overachieved in the critics' eyes but underperformed in the mainstream. As always, feel free to tell us just how very wrong we are on 1UP.com's *EGM* boards.

## 8 R-Type Delta • PS1 • 1999

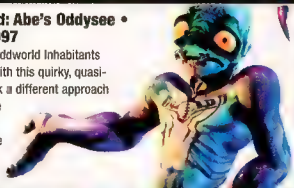
The lack of fanfare that accompanied this challenging yet rewarding game's arrival served as a depressing signal that the good ol' days of 2D shooters were coming to an end. **What's next:** The last game in the series was called *R-Type Final*. Draw your own conclusions.

## 5 Tetris Attack • Super NES • 1996

Its frantic pace and addictive nature made *Tetris Attack* (arguably) the greatest puzzle game of all time. The game has also appeared as *Pokémon Puzzle League* for Nintendo 64 and in the Japan-only *Nintendo Puzzle Collection* for GameCube. **What's next:** Nintendo still has no plans to release its *Puzzle Collection* in the U.S. Boo!

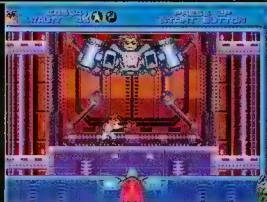
## 10 Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee • PS1 • 1997

Developer Oddworld Inhabitants burst onto the scene with this quirky, quasi-political game that took a different approach that refreshed the stale platformer genre. **What's next:** Sadly, the studio is calling it quits for a while.



## 7 Gunstar Heroes • Genesis • 1993

Developer Treasure has built its reputation on adrenaline-packed 2D games like *Heroes* that feature untraditional gameplay concepts, off-the-wall stories, and epic boss battles. **What's next:** The Internet tells of a mysterious new *Gunstar Heroes* game for a portable system. Stay tuned.



## 9 Samurai Shodown II • Arcade • 1994

While *Street Fighter* and *Mortal Kombat* were slugging it out for your hard-earned quarters, the weapon-based SS2 quietly made a name for itself while tucked away in the dimly lit corner of the arcade. **What's next:** *Samurai Shodown V* (XB) is slated for release later this year.

## 6 Dragon Force • Saturn • 1996

Strategy-RPG fans have an unspoken bond, as if they and they alone understand and appreciate the game's nuances. This game helped solidify that camaraderie. **What's next:** A graphically updated version comes to PlayStation 2 this fall.

## 4 Phantasy Star • Sega Master System • 1988

Sure, Nintendo's first console had *Mario* and about a gazillion other block-busters, but it didn't have *Phantasy Star*, a role-playing game for Sega's 8-bit system that spanned the solar system and featured dungeons so difficult you had to draw your own maps. **What's next:** The offline mode in *Phantasy Star Universe* (coming to PS2 this fall) will have to serve as an unofficial *Phantasy Star V*.



## 3 NIGHTS • Saturn • 1996

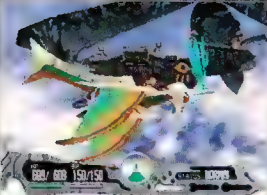
No, we aren't suffering from short-term memory loss. Last issue we included *NIGHTS* on our Top Ten Most Overrated Games list, and we stand by that call. But just because it's overrated doesn't mean it can't be a cult classic, and this is a great game with wonderful visuals (for the time) and an interesting take on burgeoning 3D game ideas. **What's next:** Pleas for a sequel remain unfulfilled. Keep hope alive.

## 2 Ico • PS2 • 2001

Likewise, despite the hyperbole, *Ico* is one of those remarkable experiences that are sadly in short supply these days. Critics adore *Ico* and its ardent fan base cites it as an example of how gaming has the potential to be truly artistic. **What's next:** *Ico's* makers bring us the just-as-peculiar *Wanda and the Colossus* (PS2) this holiday season.

## Panzer Dragoon Saga • Saturn • 1998

Only a few thousand copies of this superlative RPG were made available to U.S. Saturn owners. And nowadays, the only way to get a hold of it is by selling some blood and then hitting up eBay. But it's totally worth it. **What's next:** We're hoping a follow-up to *Panzer Dragoon Saga* will come to the next-gen consoles.



### Honorable Mentions

■ *Phantasy Star Online* series • DC/GC/XB • 2001/2002/2003



■ *Devil's Crush* • TurboGrafx-16 • 1990

■ *Valkyrie Profile* • PS2 • 2000

■ *LandStalker* • Genesis • 1992



# Get more action this weekend.

**\$16.99**

PS2 and Xbox  
Wireless  
Controllers



**\$29.99**

Yoda Wireless Controller

**STAR WARS**



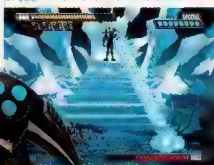
**\$29.99**

TV Game:  
Mortal Kombat



**\$24.99**

TV Games:  
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Teen Titans  
Collectible  
Card Game



Buy 3 Booster  
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Card Game



EXCLUSIVE  
COMING SOON

The Wayans Bros. presents  
The Dozens Collectible Card Game

Get more out of your game. **THE NEW**

**BLOCKBUSTER**

# THE RUMOR MILL

## Gossip you can trust

**A**s a professional rumormonger, I pride myself on having the inside scoop. But I'm sure there are some folks reading this mag who believe I'm so full of it. Well, I'll let the evidence speak for itself: Recently, developer Silicon Knights (*Eternal Darkness*) announced that it is creating next-gen software for Sega, while Nintendo revealed that its upcoming console would also play GameCube software—both of which yours truly reported nearly one year ago (peep Issue #181). Now, I'm not one to brag...OK, maybe I am, but rest assured I'm doing my best to keep the BS to a minimum. And if you think I'm slacking, tell me about it—send an e-mail to [quartermann@ziffdavis.com](mailto:quartermann@ziffdavis.com).

—The Q



■ How does The People's Champ feel about some new competition? Just bring it!

pugilists rather than going after WWE-retirees or those jabronis who consider themselves "extreme" and battle in their parents' backyards.

### It's good to play together

Aside from *Final Fantasy XI*, massively multiplayer online role-playing games haven't had much success on consoles. Actually, there hasn't been a whole lot to choose from (those *EverQuest* games—uhh, no thanks). That should change soon, as a little birdie told me that a handful of companies are eyeing PS3 and Xbox 2 for MMORPGs. The winged one even mentioned that Blizzard, the new genre darling, has something in the works. A console version of *World of Warcraft*, perhaps?

### Metal Gear Solid 4 happenings

Not too long ago, *Metal Gear* creator Hideo Kojima revealed that the next game in the



■ Solid Snake—lord of his dear ol' dad getting all the glory.

### With the touch of a button...

This past March, Microsoft gave us a glimpse at the future of its Xbox Live service: all-new gamer stats, a virtual marketplace, the ability to sell in-game content that you've created, and much more (see next issue for the full scoop). Well, I betcha a shiny quarter that the Xbox 2 controller will sport an Xbox Live button that gives you instant access to all these features—even during the middle of playing a game or watching a movie.

## MGS4 may be officially announced as early as this May, presumably for PS3.

### Change of plans

While mums the word on software for Nintendo's next-gen machine (code-named Revolution), folks won't stop yappin' about what they've got in store for PlayStation 3 and Xbox 2. But listen to this juicy piece of scuttlebutt: I heard that as soon as several big-time gamemakers actually saw the capabilities of Sony's upcoming system, they decided to move their Xbox 2 projects to PS3. Sorry, Xbots.

stealth-espionage series would star Solid Snake (instead of his papa, as in *MGS3*) and that he wouldn't direct it. Well, here's some more info: *MGS4* may be officially announced as early as this May, presumably for PS3. And something else to think about: If Kojima is playing only an advisory role, then what's keeping him so busy these days? Very interesting...

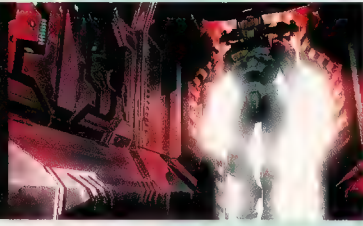
### Watch out, WWE

Even though professional wrestling doesn't garner the kind of TV ratings it did back in the late '90s, the games based on this fake sport—whether good or downright dreadful—keep selling like crazy. It appears that two big-time publishers (cough, EA and Rockstar, cough) also want a piece of this profitable man-pretzel and will each unveil brand-new wrestling franchises in the near future. Both games will also use fictitious

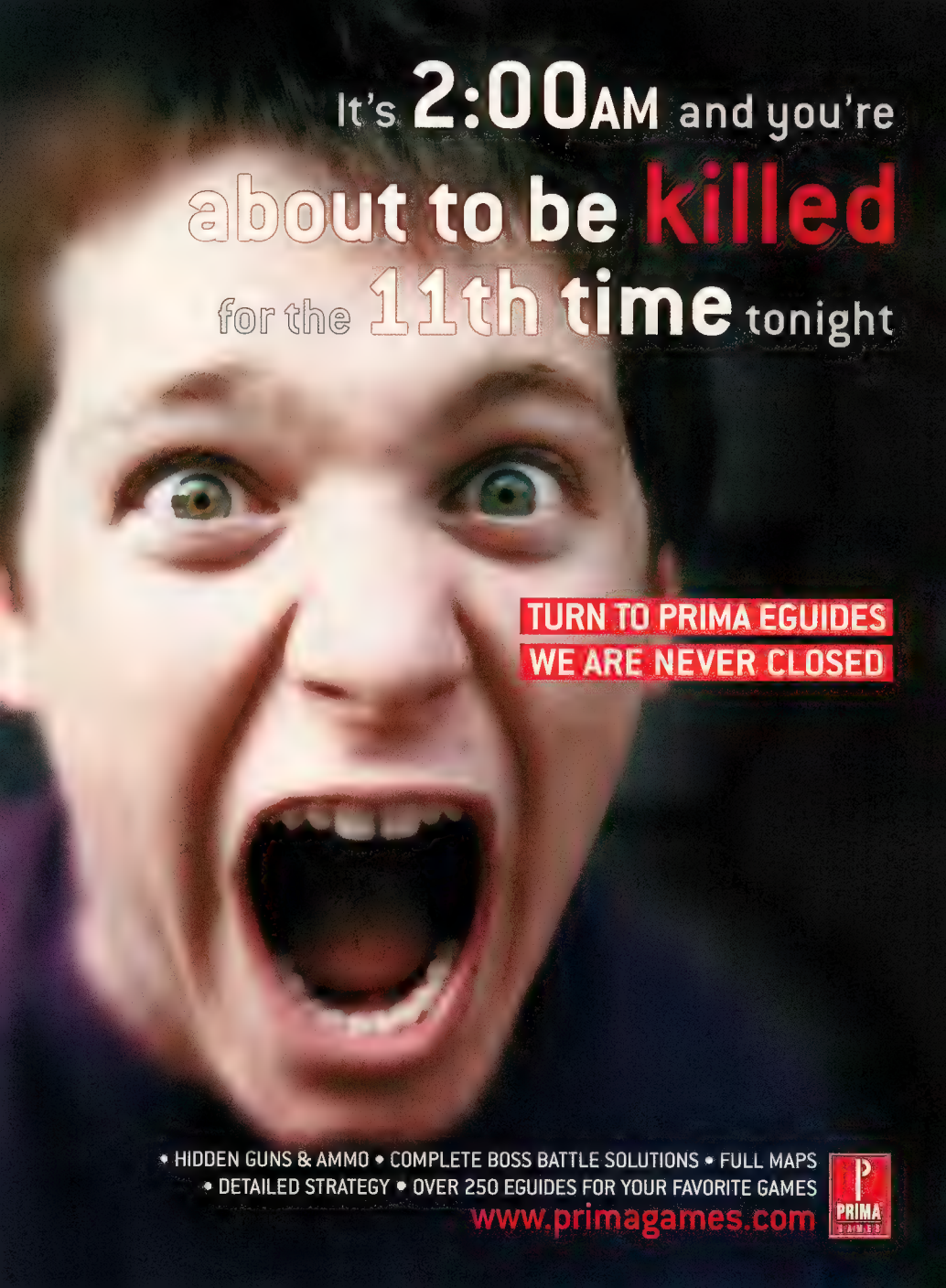
### Believe It or Not

**Q:** Does Microsoft plan to release *Halo 3* on Xbox 2 around the same time the PS3 lands on store shelves?

**A:** It certainly ain't a bad idea. Think about it: How do you combat the launch of your main competitor's new (and reportedly more powerful) console? You give gamers the one Xbox-exclusive franchise that Sony hasn't been able to match. Maybe the real question is, can developer Bungie push out another *Halo* that quickly? Remember, it took the studio three years to follow up on the original; this time, it would have only two years—all while learning the ins and outs of new hardware. ☞







It's **2:00AM** and you're  
**about to be killed**  
for the **11th time** tonight

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# THE HOT TEN

You can't wait to play these games...but you'll still have to

Disagree with the list? You're the ones who created it. Choose and/or lose at [egm.1UP.com](http://egm.1UP.com).



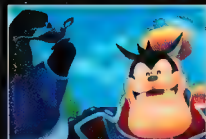
■ *FFXIII's* Ache tries of waiting for a release date and, uh, picks her nose.

**1** The Legend of Zelda  
GC • Fall 2005

**2** Final Fantasy XII  
PS2 • Fall 2005



**3** Castlevania  
DS • Fall 2005



**4** Kingdom Hearts II  
PS2 • Fall 2005

**5** Perfect Dark Zero  
XB2 • Fall 2005

**6** Animal Crossing  
DS • Summer 2005

**7** Conker: Live & Reloaded  
XB • June 2005

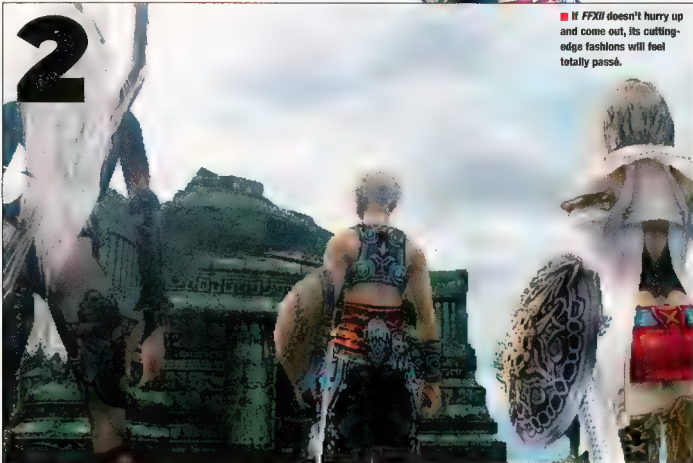
**8** Dirge of Cerberus: Final  
Fantasy VII PS2 • Fall 2005



**9** Mario Kart DS  
DS • Fall 2005

**10** Grand Theft Auto PSP  
PSP • June 2005

**2**



■ If *FFXII* doesn't hurry up and come out, its cutting-edge fashions will feel totally passé.

## FINAL FANTASY XII

PS2 • Fall 2005 — With *Final Fantasy XII*'s release date pushed well into fiscal year 2006 (which began April 1), publisher Square Enix will have its hands full with top-tier PlayStation 2 releases this fall. If *FFXII*, *Kingdom Hearts II*, and *Dirge of*

*Cerberus: FFXIII* all ship close together, plan to spend most of the holiday season holed up with your PS2. Also, we're aware that updates have been rather infrequent for these titles, and we hope to offer some sweet new info on all three next month...



## ANIMAL CROSSING

DS • Summer 2005 — You may have noticed that the denizens of *Animal Crossing* are all about accessorizing. In fact, hats seem to be all the rage: We've seen a pirate hat, sombrero, proper Mario-style cap, and even a dashing custom-created hat. If we know anything about gamers and customizable logos, *AC* police dog Copper might need to enforce a few obscenity laws when the game goes wireless.



## CONKER: LIVE & RELOADED

XB • June 2005 — The developers at Rare working on *Conker* love their fans: They answer questions (on [www.rareware.com](http://www.rareware.com)) other guys wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole. One fan asked why *Conker* couldn't come out on GameCube. Rare provided a very good reason: "It begins with an M and ends with an I:icrosoft Game Studios Owns Rare." They also offer some hints about a possible *Conker* sequel.



# COMING SOON

School's out and so are these games



Yoshi's been hitting the bottle again in *Yoshi Topsy Turvy*.

**JUNE 2005**



**Armored Core: Formula Front**  
Atagetec • PSP — Too busy to command your own robots? *Front's* automated mecha battles fit your on-the-go lifestyle.



**Batman Begins**  
EA • PS2/XB/GC — Holy release date, Batman! *The Dark Knight's* stealthy adventure drops alongside the new flick.



**Bomberman DS**  
Ubisoft • DS — Bombing your way across two screens with seven other wireless players could quickly ruin friendships.



**Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth**  
2K Games • XB — Fighting unspeakable evil with 1920s weaponry ain't easy—at least in this grisly horror-adventure.



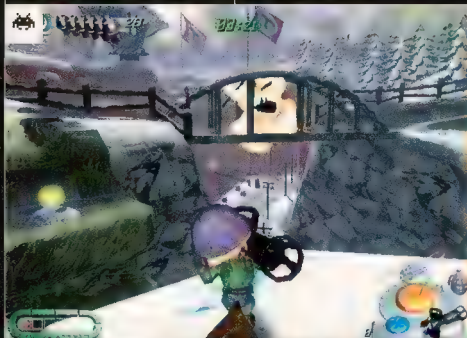
**Delta Force: Black Hawk Down**  
NovaLogic • PS2/XB — Play with 32 (PS2) or even over 50 (XB) online soldiers in this ambitious shooter.



**Fantastic Four Activation** • PS2/XB/GC — Suit up and fight evil in this brawler that l'il kids will say "totally rips off *The Incredibles*."



**Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life**  
Natsume • GC — People call this animal husbandry series "girly," but really, they're just jealous of your prize sow.



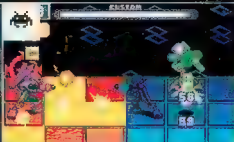
**Conker: Live and Reloaded**  
Microsoft • XB — Looks like *Conker* decided to use broadband for something besides squirrel porn—this Nintendo 64 remake delivers violent multiplayer Xbox Live fun. Antisocial players can still enjoy the perverted cartoon rodent's solo romp, as well.



**Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas**  
Rockstar • XB — If you were one of the many who picked up the *GTA3* double pack (*GTA3* and *Vice City*), you won't feel complete without this gigantic sequel. Try to complete *San Andreas* and watch it suck out every waking hour from your life.



**Medal of Honor: European Assault**  
EA • PS2/XB/GC — This return to the European front features an "in the zone" bullet-time mode and squad control.



**Mega Man Battle Network 5**  
Capcom • GBA — So far, 2005 has been nearly bereft of *Mega Man* releases. Pick up the slack, Capcom! One a month!



**Rainbow Six: Lockdown**  
Ubisoft • PS2/XB — Similar to when your squad raided terrorist-filled embassies in the past, but with a slew of new options.



**Yoshi Topsy Turvy**  
Nintendo • GBA — Mario's loyal dino returns to his platforming roots in this odd tilt-sensor-controlled outing.

» DS BECOMES A BIT MORE PUZZLING... BUT IN A GOOD WAY, AS NINTENDO WILL BRING METEORS: THE PLANETARY PUZZLE GAME FROM THE LUMINES CREW TO THE U.S. ON JUNE 27.

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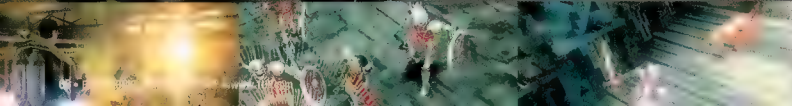
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Mild Language  
Sexual Themes  
Violence

# PREVIEW UPDATE

# 2005







# 05

## A fresh look at the hottest games headed your way this year

By Shane Bettenhausen, Shawn Elliott, & the EGM Dream Team

**S**o far, 2005 has been an abnormally robust year for gaming. If we were forced to pick a Game of the Year right now, it'd be a perilous choice between *Resident Evil 4*, *God of War*, and *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*, and the year isn't even half over yet. To think that most of the year's killer games will ship during the fall...the mind boggles. To bring order to the chaos, we offer a sampling of the year's most promising titles, and we've asked each game's developer to explain why you should care about their game. >



# 50 CENT: BULLETPROOF

PS2/XB • VU Games • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** We've worn the costume and walked the dogs (G-Unit clothes and shoes), drunk the beverage (Formula 50), and watched the adults-only DVD (*Graupie Love*). Now, if the multiplatinum MC-cum-multimedia mogul has his way, we'll become the man. Or at least his larger-than-life, louder-than-bombs character in *50 Cent: Bulletproof*, locked and loaded for a fall release. Not that heavy hyperbole is needed. We are, after all, talking about a survivor who's been shot not once, but nine times; a man who half-seriously complains that his hoodie, an SUV, and more armor plating than some military hardware, hasn't done it.

*Bulletproof* was a no-brainer when you look at 50's persona and muscle," says Executive Producer Andre Emerson. "His background (which includes losing his mother at an early age and a crack operation that grew to gross over \$5,000 a day) was a perfectly natural fit for a shooter. Plus, it's another outlet he wanted to explore." And while the impresario may want you to dress sharp, drink smart, and play what he's calling "the hottest game for the next two years," he wants more: namely your money. Look no further than the tentative title of his forthcoming film, *Get Rich or Die Trying*. *Get Rich* screenwriter Terence Winter

who had spent research time on the road with 50 during his '03 *Rock the Mic* music tour, was a shoo-in when the time came to choose *Bulletproof*'s storyteller. "50 really wanted us to work with Terry," explains Emerson. "This is a guy who had insight into his life. And from a pedigree standpoint, you can't go wrong with an Emmy-winning head writer and producer from [HBO hit] *The Sopranos*."

"Terry's two stories are complementary," Emerson continues. "The film tracks the dramatic rags-to-riches aspects of his life, whereas the game is an exaggerated take on the action in it. Here, it begins with him as a big-time

hustler involved in gang activities, doing whatever it takes to get by, and then getting shot nine times." This alternate-reality take on 50's life—had he not chosen to give up dealing dope for a rap career—takes the player to the heart of L.A.'s seedy underworld. "As things unfold, what on the surface seems like a straightforward revenge story becomes bigger and deeper," says Emerson.

To control tensions, the team is taking a wider outlook, at least insofar as levels, creating in a round order (who says all hard-knocks games need follow the *Grand Theft Auto* formula?). As Emerson has it, the freedom is in how Fiddy han-

## CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

PS2/XB/GC • 2K Games • July 2005

**WE SAY:** To go along with the release of Tim Burton's trippy film update, 2K Games readies the hottest candy-themed adventure since *Skittles RPG Darkened Sky* (GC). You'll play as Charlie, the lone virtuous golden ticket holder, in an attempt to stop the other four warped contestants from destroying Wonka's chocolate factory during the guided tour. The game sports a neat style, but we doubt it'll be able to match the trippy creativity of *Psychonauts* (XB).

"While *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*'s story and characters are well known, the creativity of the universe is something that gamers are going to love exploring."

—Producer Melissa Miller





50 faces of... hood from the dreaded "Stolen Regals" gang. Hide the cream cheese. It's a joke...please don't have us killed, 50.)

#### A Hood to Call Home

Between praxis, 50 latches the subway (his hood sanctuary), ghetto getaways with every enemy, musters cock ask, or, provided, he's lush with scratch. All crooked doctor, riddles painkillers and power-ups, every corner, a music bootlegger sells mixtapes and MTV videos in another. Interscope labmates Dr. Dre and Eminem (named as Grizz)—an arms broker, offering bigger clip capacity, better fire rates, accuracy, and ammo—and McVicar—a corrupt cop with inside intel, respectively. Once, Edov's finished, wheeler, and dealer, a catching in his crib, mixing made-for-the-game restyles over equally exclusive beats.



## SAMURAI WESTERN

PS2 • Atlas • June 2005

**WE SAY:** Atlas delivers an Old West–themed take on samurai slash-em-ups like *Bujingai* and *Devil May Cry*, and fortunately for a swordsman in a world of six guns, he has some fancy moves up his oversized sleeves. A simple one-button dodge will project your man Gojira from the cross fire, though if you feel like showing off, you can bat speeding bullets and flying knives right out of the air with your katana. Copious gore, a wacky story line, and tight control could make this the spiritual successor to PS1 cult fave *Rising Zang: Samurai Gunman*.



"We thought that having the sword go against the gun—an unimaginable matchup—would be a great way to express superhuman actions in order to create a fun game." —Producer Yoshihiro Terasawa

Only a cowboy samurai could ferry bullets with a sword at point-blank range.

# 50 CENT: BULLETPROOF (CONT.)

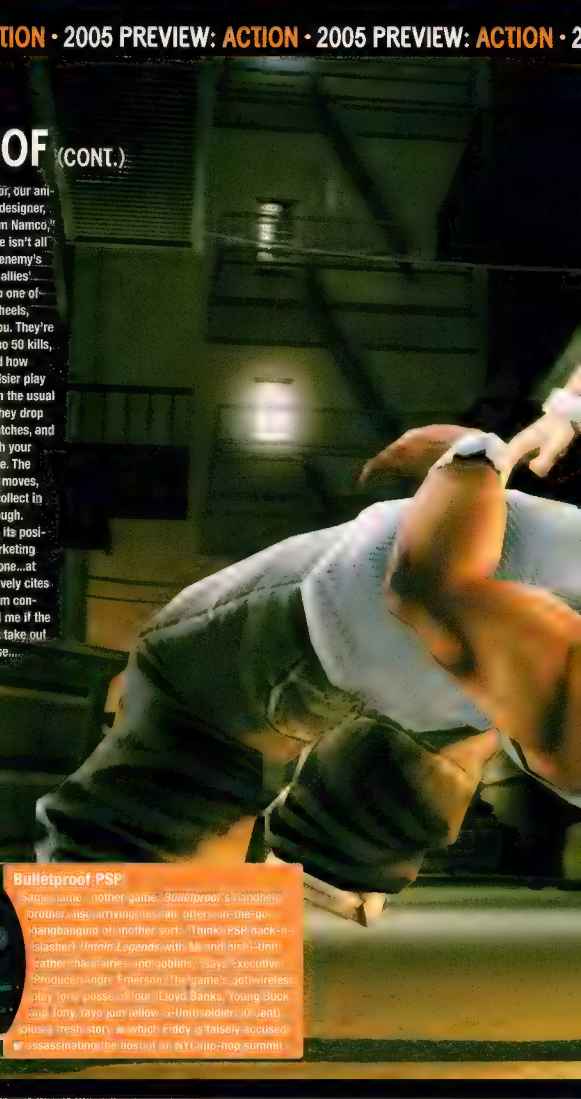
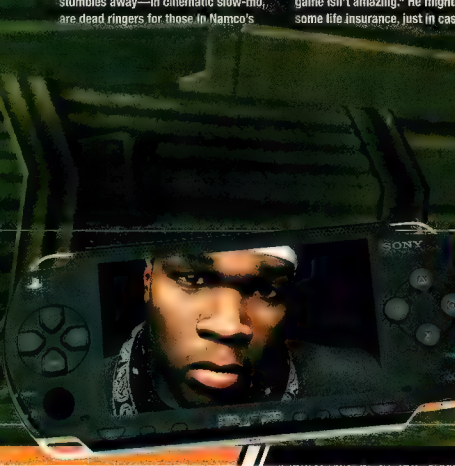
dies here and now: "When he takes a human shield, [the hostage's] health diminishes over time, and they'll also absorb all frontal attacks. From this position, 50 can pistol-whip 'em, hold their faces on hot stoves and engine blocks, shove their heads through glass, or hurl 'em off of high-rises...we're trying to keep the pace flowing so it's not as framed as in *The Punisher*." However, like that other vengeful vigilante, 50 leans on heolgans for information. Asking questions first and shooting later saves time but isn't vital. "If you don't want to interrogate enemies, you don't have to," Emerson explains, "but if you want tips on where a high-level foe may be hiding, you can beat it out of his henchmen."

*Bulletproof's* hard-bolled bang relies less on shock-of-the-new firsts than on subtle refinements to the tried and true. "Counter kills," coup de grâces that send the camera circling around the seriously screwed-up scene—50 jockeying a mobster's shotgun into his teeth, 50 shoving a merc from behind and shooting him as he stumbles away—in cinematic slow-mo, are dead ringers for those in Namco's

*Dead In Rights*: "Our art director, our animation director, our lead level designer, and our world artist are all from Namco," says Emerson. Here, the feature isn't all flash: "Not only do you get an enemy's weapon, but it also affects his allies' morale. They see you do this to one of their own, it puts 'em on their heels, changes how they approach you. They're making decisions based on who 50 kills, what weapon he's holding, and how much health he has." Plus, ballsier play produces better rewards. When the usual underbelly scam drops dead, they drop loot, too—chains, wallets, watches, and cash—and the more outlandish your moves, the more loot they leave. The more loot they leave, the more moves, music, and movies Fiddy can collect in his cash-rules-everything borough.

Not that *Bulletproof*, despite its position in a larger multimedia marketing play, is motivated by money alone...at least not for Emerson, who gravely cites fear as the fire in his pants: "I'm concerned that 50 will actually kill me if the game isn't amazing." He might take out some life insurance, just in case...

**Bulletproof PSP**  
Same as the other game, *Bulletproof's* handheld brother also carries no mission, offering the gangbanga of another sort. "Think PSP rock-n-roll slasher *Unlabeled Legends* with 3A and next-time leather hair games and jobs," says executive producer Andre Emerson of the game's got-wireless play (one passion of Lloyd Banks, Young Buck and Tonyayo jam fellow G-Unit soldier 50 Cent), plus a reshooter, which Fiddy is falsely accused of assassinating the host of an NYC hip-hop summit.



## STUBBS THE ZOMBIE

XB • Aspyr • Fall 2005

WE SAY: Alex Seropian, one of the guys behind Microsoft's flagship *Halo* franchise, chose to do something different with his new studio, WideLoad Games: *Stubbs the Zombie*. Stubbs, a small-time salesman brutally murdered in the '30s, rises from his grave in the middle of futuristic Punchbowl City. From here, he'll recruit humans into his zombie army by eating their brains, and possess their minds with his detachable hand. A creative reversal of the zombie genre? We're intrigued.

"It's a game that revels in chaotic action without being a simple run-and-gun affair. Plus, you get to eat people's brains. Gamers, gorehounds, and gourmands have been waiting for this since time immemorial."  
—Producer Alex Seropian



Stubbs features some...  
...shrieking combat.





► This is what happens when you ask 50 if he heard the new Ja Rule track.

## 50 CENT: THE INTERVIEW

The MC speaks out (through an eloquent PR filter)

**EGM:** Tell me what you thought the first time you saw yourself as a videogame character.

**50 Cent:** The first time I saw myself in the videogame, I was really excited about it because it looks so much like me—it blew me away. The graphics they had in the trailer were so much more cutting edge than what I've seen before. I actually called my son to talk to him about it.

**EGM:** What are some of your favorite features of the videogame?

**50C:** I haven't seen a videogame with as much detail to it before. They've created something that I'm really proud to be a part of. I feel like it'll be the most exciting game this year—maybe for a few years before they find something better than this. There's what happens when people actually enjoy what they do. Just the whole style of it.

**EGM:** Do you think that the game captures you?

**50C:** The videogame definitely captures the essence of who I am. I get a chance to use my imagination. This is not the reality of what I actually do in the street—it's just a game, but it has so much detail that it feels real.

**EGM:** Talk about your relationship with Terry Winter.

**50C:** Terry Winter is a great screenwriter. I was blessed with the opportunity to work with him on my new film tentatively called *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*. We won an Emmy for writing [on] *The Sopranos*. I have a great director, too: Jim Sheridan. The film is being produced by Paramount/MTV. I'll be shooting for 14 days [in] exteriors in New York City, and then [for] two months in Toronto, Canada.

Terry was with me for about two months. He stayed with me the whole time on *The Rock*, *The Mike Myers* and then a little after, and I had a chance to

talk to him about my life story and what people rail across. What he did was take those experiences and created characters. Some of those characters have behaviors from more than one person in my life, so I get a chance to look at the film and know where he took the behaviors from, so it's a little more exciting for me. The film's almost the exact story; it's a collage—it's difficult for you to put 20 years of your life into two hours of viewing time.

Terry was the perfect one to put the actual theme to the videogame. I'm as excited about the videogame as I am about my new album *The Massacre*. I'm anticipating the same success with the videogame because it has so much quality to it. I believe in maintaining consistency where everything you associate yourself with makes consumers comfortable. *Bulletproof* is definitely something I'm adding to the things that I've done that is going to enhance the possibilities—people are going to believe there's no limit to what can do when they see the game.

**EGM:** Will other members of G-Unit be in the videogame?

**50C:** Actually, Banks and Buck are both in the game. I need to get Yayo and Olivia in there! Actually, I got a phone call today from Banks about going to take photographs and shots so they can get his character really looking like him. The details in the videogame are so incredible—I think the general public is going to be blown away by it.

**EGM:** What connection do you see between music and videogames?

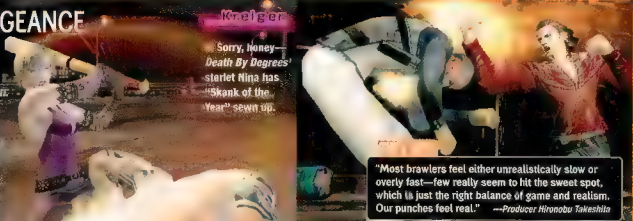
**50C:** I think music, particularly hip-hop music, is the closest music to the youth. It changes more rapidly because some kids have low attention spans—one thing's hot, then the next thing's hot, then the next thing's hot.

Videogames have always been exciting, and to tie them together is really

## BEAT DOWN: FISTS OF VENGEANCE

PS2/XB • Capcom • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** Just when you were sure old-school brawlers were history, Capcom attempts a revival with *Beat Down*. As Raven, former enforcer for a powerful crime family, you'll pummel your way through your ex-employer's empire. The fistcuffs seem pretty standard, but at least the game's "negotiation system" offers a new twist on the genre. After beating an opponent senseless, players can choose to take him out of the picture permanently, sway him to your side, or swipe his cash and move on.



"Most brawlers feel either unrealistically slow or overly fast—few really seem to hit the sweet spot, which is just the right balance of game and realism. Our punches feel real." —Producer Kōnosuke Takekishi

## 50 CENT: THE INTERVIEW (CONT.)

simple thinking. A simple man thinks, "What's better than one good woman?" "Two good women!" "Ménage à trois!" You see what I'm saying? It's simple thinking to have a great videogame match up with great hip-hop music. It's perfect! We can all there and enjoy the music while you play the game, and it's a whole new experience.

**EGM:** Will you be recording new music for the videogame?

**50c:** Absolutely. There will be 15 new freestyles that [players] haven't heard before in the videogame to add a little excitement to it. I have so many ideas that I've already started working on it.

**EGM:** What do you think about Eminem and Dr. Dre guest-starring in the game?

**50c:** Ah, that's hot, because we're a team. I always love to participate with them on any project. They're perfectionists. They understand that I don't want to put anything together that isn't 100 percent the best possible product to release to the general public. What you hear when you hear 50 Cent records is 50 Cent up to Dr. Dre and Eminem standards.

**EGM:** How big do you think the game is going to be?

**50c:** I think the game is going to be huge! It's definitely going to be the biggest game that you'll see in the next two to three years, then someone else will copy everything we've done and say, "This is the answer to *Bulletproof*!"

**EGM:** Do you like the title *50 Cent: Bulletproof*?

**50c:** Absolutely. It feels like an action film, and that's what it is—everything that you would see in an action film is in the videogame. You get a chance to control it and go through it. That's more entertaining than just watching it happen, because every time you play it, it has a different outcome.

I'm as excited about the videogame as I am about my album, and that's a big statement for me because music has always been my priority, and I've always been anxious to see how the general public will embrace my music.

**EGM:** What's the theme of the game?

**50c:** The videogame itself is Terry [Winter, writer of the game's script] using his imagination with the facts that he received when he was with me on the *Rock the Mic* tour and imagining what things would be like if I was in a different setting. It's almost like a new screenplay to my life, away from the actual screenplay he wrote for the film.



### THE SAY

"We've got 50 Cent, G-Unit, Eminem, Dr. Dre, action, guns, freestyle, music, and videos. If this doesn't sound good to you...\$... keep your money then." —Producer Andre Emerson

Why does 50c have the French flag on his shoes? Talker!



## THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND

PS2/XB • Midway • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** *Ties That Bind* hopes to outgrow its forerunner (both literally and figuratively) with even more gruesome horror action. This time, ex-con Torque will be roaming the mean streets of Baltimore as opposed to being cooped up inside Abbot State Penitentiary, and the new demonic creatures he'll face personally urban social problems such as poverty and street riots. The first game's hyped-up "morality system" didn't actually affect much, but now, whether you're nasty or nice actually alters both the narrative and Torque's available attacks.

Witness: Horrorshow at the Smucker's jam factory.

"It's a uniquely American and action-oriented take on the horror genre. We want to give players control over how they play the game while still featuring really frightening and disturbing horror moments." —Producer Noah Heller



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# ONIMUSHA 4

PS2 • Capcom • Winter 2005

**WE SAY:** *Onimusha* creator Keiji Inafune is a liar, plain and simple. During the development of *Onimusha 3*, the man behind Capcom's soul-sucking action series professed that the game would be the franchise finale. And although he left the team, the demon-hunting continues.

"We're going back to what *Onimusha* is all about," says Producer Yoshinori Ono. "But at the same time, we need to evolve [the franchise]." Like the original, No. 4 is set completely in feudal Japan and will sport a much darker, creepier backdrop than the last game's—so you can forget about time traveling to present-day Paris for fine wine and cheeses. Here, warlord Hideyoshi Toyotomi assumes Oda Nobunaga's role as the resident bad boy, and five different warriors (all with unique abilities and weapons) take on this new leader of the undead Genna army.

Gameplay is going through some changes as well. For starters, you're no longer hacking and slashing solo, as one other character will always accompany *Onimusha 4*'s blond-haired leading man Hideyasu Yuki into battle. You'll be able to give this A.I.-controlled ally specific commands (attack, protect, etc.), team up for terrifyingly bloodastic attacks, or better yet, take complete control of your fellow demon slayer while the computer assumes the role of Hideyasu. This one will also offer a more open-ended experience than previous installments. "Up until now, the game map was almost like a straight line where you kept pushing on forward," says Ono. "This time around, the player is able to decide where they want to go from the very start. You can look around on the map and see what [items] might be hidden here and there." Other alterations to the series include an RPG-esque level-up system, the ability to control the camera via the right analog stick, and "tests of valor"—minigames that reward you with rare weapon upgrades.

Frankly, we think the series is back on track: With its traditional Japanese setting, gripping gameplay, and a total lack of French time-travellers, *Onimusha 4* should lure lost fans back to the fold.

■ Sure, there were tons of blend, surfer-dude samurai...

"In our attempt to reset and redo the game, we did want to go back to the basics and create this creepy, weird, dark, and gloomy Japanese scene to create this horror atmosphere."  
—Producer Yoshinori Ono

**You Got My Back?**  
When we asked *Onimusha 4* Producer Yoshinori Ono about the new 2-player co-op mode we replied with a slight grin on his face... you'll learn more about the game this October but that's a very smart question. So, same like a yes? In its.



# MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE

PS2 • Atari • September 2005

**WE SAY:** In *Getting Up*, players take on the role of Trane, a new, big graffiti artist trying to make his mark in a city where freedom of expression is just a myth. The game seems to be the love child of *Grand Theft Auto* and *Jet Grind Radio* (DC), as Trane runs, jumps, and fights his way through 20 levels and distinct environments, tagging everything in sight in his efforts to fight the power. We hope that the combat, exploration, and evasion excel, because JGR without skates sounds a bit dull.

"We're pushing the boundaries of what gamers expect. Trane isn't packing a 9 mm—he's using his street smarts, his athletic prowess, and his artistic abilities to bring about a revolution."  
—Lead Designer John Manley





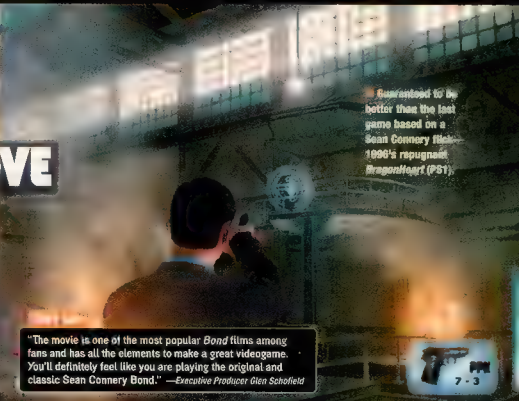


# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

PS2/XB/6C • EA Games • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** Unlike Austin Powers, James Bond was never one for time travel. Then again, never say never. With Pierce Brosnan stepping down from the film role, the developers at EA looked into Bond's past for its digital leading man—Sir Sean Connery, the original Bond.

This third-person action game will include plenty of signature moments from the 1963 film: a remarkable sniper scene, a high-speed boat chase, and the movie's famous hand-to-hand duel in a cramped train compartment onboard the Orient Express. "The overall fighting and shooting styles we really tailored to Sean Connery's Bond," says Producer Glen Schofield. "We've studied Connery as Bond extensively and found his style to be more physical, so we've added that style of gameplay to the game." That gameplay better be thrilling—to younger gamers, Connery is more codger than hero.



■ **Reassessed to be better than the last game based on a Sean Connery film, 1963's repugnant DragonHeart (PS2).**

"The movie is one of the most popular Bond films among fans and has all the elements to make a great videogame. You'll definitely feel like you are playing the original and classic Sean Connery Bond." —Executive Producer Glen Schofield

■ **Special guest star: Thunderball's ratty jetpack.**



# KILLER 7

PS2/6C • Capcom • June 2005

**WE SAY:** It's seven assassins named Smith versus an army of specters, but none of it is quite real...the seven killers are all splintered after eggs that a wheelchair-bound protagonist projects into the world while waiting in a room somewhere safe.

Capcom's postmodern action-adventure—all "blood, swearing, and craziness," says Producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi—looks positively trippy, yet sports weird, almost too-basic gameplay. Your killers walk the straight and narrow, traveling preset paths until hitting a fork, at which point you send them left or right. Maybe the gunplay will be enough....



"I imagine that *Killer 7* will be somewhat intimidating for players at first; You can't really comprehend what is up from down in the game, but that 'unknown' aspect of the game is part of its charm." —Producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi



■ **Just as in Resident Evil 4, combat's all about aim.**



# GAUNTLET: SEVEN SORROWS

PS2/XB • Midway • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** An '80s arcade staple, *Gauntlet* returns with a fresh style (you fight the Incan empire) and reworked action-RPGs gameplay. You're not just hunting for keys anymore—deep character development, plentiful weaponry, and magic combos bring the dusty series up to date. You can also expect four-player online action. We have to wonder, though, if the world truly needs another repetitive *Champions of Norrath*-style hack-n-slasher.



■ **This red warrior needs fashion advice...badly.**

"When's the last time you saw a bad guy in golden full-plate armor with a big sun-skull icon on the belt and a big lizard helmet? Oh, never? Bam! Hell yeah, let's hear it for the Incas, woo!" —Lead Designer Josh Sawyer

■ **The Valkyrie summons a swarm of doves to, uh, woe enemies!**



# BATMAN BEGINS

PS2/XB/PC • EA Games • June 2005

**WE SAY:** "Batman is like Santa Claus or Abe Lincoln," says JT Petty, the writer behind the *Batman Begins* game. "He's become an American myth. I don't think disliking Batman is even an option." However, there can be good *Batman* games and bad *Batman* games. And people certainly don't like the numerous bad ones. Here, EA's certainly hoping to craft something worthwhile with the caped crusader.

Of course you'll have the Batmobile (with its own separate levels) and the utility belt, but expect more stealth than brawling. In fact, fear will be Batman's greatest weapon. By stalking enemies from the shadows and causing some "unexplained" environmental phenomena, Batman can shake enemies up so much that they can hardly aim straight. If you play your bat-cards right, you can even turn enemies against each other. At that point, roughing them up with Bruce Wayne's brutal martial arts should be cake.

*Splitter Cell* vets will feel right at home here, and for good reason—some key *Begins* team members worked on Ubi's stealth hit. We're still not sure how well Sam Fisher's genre will work for *Bat*: Slow-paced spying, simple combat (assuming you freak your foes out first), and a total lack of bosses will shock fans looking for a *Bat*-brawl.

"In *Batman Begins* we are challenging the player to become the hunter. This game is completely based around the concept of using fear as a weapon." —Producer Fred Scanlon

# CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS

PS2 • Konami • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** *Castlevania* fans will finally get their 3D successor to revered PS1 hit *Symphony of the Night*. With tons of unique weapons, a complex world to explore, and nonlinear gameplay, *Darkness* will feel quite different than the straight-up action of 2003's *Lament of Innocence*.

A reworked combo system (vaguely reminiscent of *Dynasty Warriors*) and new "innocent devil" summons—monsters that you tell to fight, protect, or assist you—further deepen the gameplay.

"In previous *Castlevania* games, it's always been one character battling to the end—here, you must fight alongside the innocent devils in order to get through the game." —Producer Koji Igarashi

# WITHOUT WARNING

PS2/XB • Capcom • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** Terrorists have taken over a chemical research plant, and the fate of millions now lies in the hands of six people trapped inside. Taking place over the course of a 12-hour period, *Without Warning* has players switching between six different characters who experience the battle across the same timeline but from their own distinct viewpoints. The game's got a neat hook: Every action performed as one character affects the progress of the others. In a clever bit of *Pulp Fiction*-meets-24 head-trip editing,

"Set over a period of 12 hours, the game takes you through the stories of six different people during a terrorist assault. This really draws the player into realistic, emotionally charged situations." —Director Adrian Smith

The fashion police euthanize an acid-wash victim.



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# THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

PS2/XB/PC • VU Games • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** Picture the Hulk, Marvel's freakishly strong, solid green mass of muscle, in a sandbox. Not a kiddie sandbox with playtime buckets and shovels—the guy needs a little more room. More like a few square miles of badlands and urban landscapes to run and leap across.

Radical Entertainment created these open “sandbox” environments for *The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction* so you, as the Hulk, could do your own thing. So what's possible in these huge areas? “Hulk smash!” immediately comes to mind, but how will Hulk smash? The development team claims to have a hulkling 150 moves, many of which turn your environment into weapons. You can, for instance, commit grand Hulk auto by slamming your fists into a car and snapping it in half—Instant steel boxing gloves!

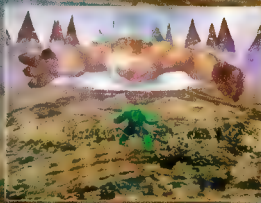
Sure, sticking a character in a *Grand Theft Auto*-style adventure is hardly original, but bustin' stuff up as the Hulk is a fantastic stress reliever. Plus, amidst the destruction—and a familiar mission-based structure—you weave the Hulk through an original story. Paul Jenkins, a guy good enough at writing about the Hulk (and Spider-Man) to win awards for it, is doing the honors. Hell, odds are it's better than 2004's *Hulk* flick.



Why steal a car when you can play catch with it?

THEY SAY:

“Destroy anything—that is our core concept. The cool thing in this power fantasy is that destruction at this scale is as fun as you imagine it would be.” —Producer Vlad Cernil



When old Hulk start fighting MechAssaultRobots?

# SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR

PS2/XB/PC • Sega • September 2005

**WE SAY:** PC vets know all about *Rome: Total War*, a robust strategy title that gave players tactical control over the vast Roman empire. *Spartan: Total Warrior* brings the series to consoles, but refocuses the chaos to a more personal scale—you control one lone warrior fighting alongside his countrymen against legions of enemy soldiers and mythical creatures (it's a bit like *Dynasty Warriors: Roman edition*).

It's a pure-action affair: You'll pummel undead armies, blow up siege engines, and even face off against a massive Hydra. So far, we're impressed, but how on Earth can it compete with *God of War*?



Uh-oh, looks like the bear ran out of the toga party.

“The sheer scale of the epic battles in which the player can take a pivotal role is amazing: You'll see thousands of detailed A.I. combatants fighting it out, with over 150 onscreen at any time.” —Producer Ian Roxburgh

# STARGATE SG-1: THE ALLIANCE

PS2/XB • TBA • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** Alongside a squad of soldier-explorers (brought to life by the hit Sci-Fi Channel show's actors and self-sufficient A.I.), you'll trade bullets with the Flaeken, “überbadies the Ancients bottled up thousands of years ago—it's a story line that fans of the show will love,” admits Producer Radek Majder. We're not quite convinced that non-fans will bother investigating this licensed shooter, but perhaps the four-player co-op action (each character class has unique weapons and abilities) will lure them over.

“First, we're making a good game irrespective of the license. Second, we're staying true to spirit of the show. Having 60-some *Stargate* freaks working on the game helps, too.” —Producer Radek Majder

We're not sure if MacGyver (who's in SG-1) built that ship outta household objects, but we hope so.



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# BURNOUT REVENGE

PS2/XB • EA Games • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** *Burnout 3* wooed racing fanatics and casual reckless drivers alike with its blinding sense of speed and mesmerizing crashes, but polishing that gem took a few years of development. Is this speedy sequel more of an update than an overhaul? According to Executive Producer Matt Webster, *Burnout: Revenge* won't fall victim to the quick-sequel trap: "People are expecting an incremental upgrade, but we're not in the business of change for change's sake."

On the surface, *Revenge* aims for a more realistic look than its predecessors. Back-alley grit and grime under overcast skies help lend credibility to the series' first real-world locations. But under the hood, the developer hopes to ratchet up the aggression with more paint trading, more explosions, and more takedowns.

Expect changes to the traditional *Burnout* course design formula. Claustrophobic, traffic-choked obstacle courses replace the wide-open race tracks of previous games. This might bring on bad memories of *Burnout 3* races lost to busy intersection traffic, but this time around (though the details haven't been finalized) you'll be able to hit bystander cars without crashing. In fact, you'll take down noncompeting cars and use them as weapons against your foes. When you do crash, though, you'll be able to control your burning wreckage (as seen previously in crash mode), using it to exact revenge on your opponents.

Besides narrowing the tracks and adding more obstacles in your path, *Burnout 4* emphasizes more vertical elements: Ramps and overpasses allow astute drivers to soar over the competition or land directly on them for death-from-above takedowns.

No matter how radical the makeover, *Burnout 3* will certainly be a tough act to follow. "The greatest challenge will be in beating the success that we had with *Burnout 3*," says Webster. "That's our benchmark. That's our goal. We have to beat it." We don't doubt that he can...but we also have to wonder if he'll be able to do it on such short notice.



Associate Paula Absher's daring commute to the American Idol taping.

## THEY SAY

"It's all about high-speed driving, hitting traffic, causing carnage, and giving the player an experience similar to the car chase sequence in *Dad Boys II*."  
—Executive Producer Matt Webster

Revenge's real-life locales offer a far grittier auto-carnage backdrop.



# L.A. RUSH

PS2/XB • Midway • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** This new *Rush* drives into SoCal offering a much more open-ended experience than the arcade *Rush* classics. It takes a page from mission-based games such as *Driver*, tasking you with recovering stolen cars or taking out a rival's construction site. And you should look damn good doing it. "We're the best-looking open-city vehicle game to date," boasts Midway Senior Vice President Steve Allison. "We've also got an incredible slow-motion crash cam that gives *Burnout* a real run for its money." OK...look up. Draw your own conclusion.

"We have the cool shortcuts, huge jumps, the over-the-top cars, the forgiving physics, and the race course exploration that made the *Rush* games so popular in the arcades and on previous consoles."  
—Midway Sen. Vice President Steve Allison

That's one way to break into show business.





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# CALL OF DUTY: BIG RED ONE

PS2/XB/PC • Activision • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** Fresh off its victory in the '04 military shooter marketplace, *Call of Duty* regrouped for a second strike against EA's ailing *Medal of Honor* series. And from what we've seen...it's likely to win again.

The seemingly odd subtitle "Big Red One" is a reference to neither a zesty cinnamon gum nor a mysterious red soda, but rather an allusion to the game's new focus: It's the nickname given to the 1st Infantry Division, the oldest continuously serving division in the U.S. Army and the most decorated unit of World War II. According to Thaine Lyman, executive producer at Activision, "The 1st Infantry Division went just about everywhere and did just about everything. This allows us to really tell the story of this one squad."

Previous *Duty* games have always showcased a sample of troops from various countries. In *Big Red One*, gamers will play as one member in the 1st Infantry Division, experiencing the horrors and triumphs of WWII through his eyes from beginning to end. Over the course of the game, players will experience a variety of crucial battles. The Fighting First will face off against Vichy forces and German Afrika Korps in North Africa during "Operation Torch," push into Sicily as part of "Operation Husky," and battle their way ashore at Omaha Beach on D-Day.

*Big Red One* won't skimp on the epic, over-the-top scripted battle scenes fans expect, yet the developers still hope to shape a more open-ended, unpredictable war experience that relies on scripting only for dramatic flair. First off, the AI for both enemies and friendlies has been completely overhauled (adapted from the excellent *Call of Duty: United Offensive* for PC), allowing for speedier, less predictable actions in the heat of combat. Also, you'll find that vehicles are now integral to missions—you'll be hopping in and out of all sorts of jeeps, tanks, and half-tracks in order to complete objectives. Activision is also putting a lot of extra work into *Big Red One*'s multiplayer capabilities, with both split-screen and online (PS2/XB only) gameplay supported.



## How Real Can It Get?

Activision has pulled out all the stops to make *Call of Duty: Big Red One* as realistic an experience as possible. Individual motion-capture actors were used for characters, giving each one not only a unique voice, but unique body language as well. And it's not only the gunfire. As the most hyper-realistic shooters, actual war recordings bring a sense of authenticity to the game. Activision even sent the developers out to the desert to get plenty of hands-on time with real WWII weapons.



They don't only shoot at you...and then take you out of the game.

"*Big Red One* gives gamers the most exciting, most comprehensive, most immersive *Call of Duty* experience with a great, new twist of getting to play in one of the most historic and legendary divisions ever." —Creative Director Christian Bush

# DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN

PS2/XB • NovaLogic • Summer 2005

**WE SAY:** Sick of all the WWII and Vietnam shooters? Us too. Try this: *Delta Force* delivers team-based raids against Somali warlords in and around Mogadishu in 1993. Forget single-player, it's all about online play: On the PS2, the game supports up to 32 players, while Xbox players will be able to fight with or against a whopping 50 players over Xbox Live.

"We're bringing the console first-person shooting genre kicking and screaming into areas only PCs have been able to go in so far, and a lot of gamers are going to be shocked with how much fun it is." —NovaLogic spokesman Marcus Beer

It's *Delta Force* and not the U.S. Army's Special Forces. *Delta Force* is a game.



If you've ever wanted to be the bad guy downing the Black Hawk...

NotChies



# MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

PS2/XB/GC • EA Games • June 2005

**WE SAY:** Don't call it bullet time. The supersoldiering you'll perform in WWII shooter *Medal of Honor: European Assault* is based on bona fide accounts from actual vets. Or so says Executive Producer Dan Winters: "Our military advisor, retired USMC Capt. Dale Dye, told us of a time in Vietnam when he and his squad ran across a machine gun nest. They took cover and returned fire. Suddenly, he saw his point person go down, and went into what he calls 'gut check'—a zone where all he could focus on was getting to the point person and bringing him back to safety. He ran about 10 yards through flying bullets, picked up the man—who weighed more than Dale himself—and carried him back to cover where he could be treated. The odds were totally against him, but he didn't think twice." *Assault*'s all-adrenaline rally made simulates that do-or-die determination. Skillful shooting and fearless behavior fill a meter, similar to building courage and confidence. Once it maxes out, you're a one-man army—invincible, with unlimited ammo and unrelenting accuracy. "Essentially, we wanted to capture the moment when a soldier calls up something phenomenal within himself and suddenly is capable of doing the seemingly impossible."

Hero William Holt and his squad will need all the firepower they can muster as they fight on fronts from France to Soviet Stalingrad, often facing over 50 onscreen foes at a time. Sometimes, however, the best strategy might be to stay well away and take an altogether different path to glory. *European Assault* is "less of a linear roller-coaster ride," Winters explains. "It's an entire theme park to explore."

While *European Assault*'s gameplay is certainly inventive, we're concerned about the game's drab, lackluster visuals. If EA wants to compete with Activision's similarly ambitious new *Call of Duty* (look left), it had better craft some more impressive looking graphics.

**THEY SAY:**

"If you think about it, most of the games we have seen in the WWII shooter genre are very linear, basically on rails—including previous *MOH* titles. *Medal of Honor: European Assault* changes that."  
—Executive Producer Dan Winters



**Who's That Girl?**

Bringing the series back to the European theater allows for the return of one of the franchise's best-loved characters, *Medal of Honor: Underground's* (PS2) spunky female heroine, Annie. This sexy French freedom fighter joins William Holt as an invaluable squadmate through several of the game's missions.



■ Nothing's hotter than chicks (and down Nazis) with machine guns.

# STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II

PS2/XB • LucasArts • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** This follow-up to last fall's multiplayer shooting hit takes the combat in a new direction—skyward. You'll fly over 30 craft in massive interstellar battles, including the classic Rebel fleet-versus-Death Star fight. It's not all retro thrills, though: A third of the ships (including the new V-wing) hail from *Revenge of the Sith*. *Battlefront*'s force is still strongest online, with up to 16 players communicating tactics via headset (and crying when their Star Destroyer goes belly-up).

■ Remember when Star Wars movies were good?

"With *Star Wars Battlefront II*, we're giving the player the opportunity to take the battle into space—it's a big addition to this sequel. You'll be able to fight amongst the stars and dogfight other starfighters."  
—Producer Dan Pettit





# SOUL CALIBUR III

PS2 • Namco • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** Fighting-game faithfuls who still can't stomach Namco's decision to make *Soul Calibur III* a PlayStation 2 exclusive will have to come to terms with this bracing reality: Sony specifically engineered the deal (Sony's even publishing the game itself in Europe), so chances of an Xbox or GameCube release are nonexistent. And even though Nintendo's beloved *Link* won't be prancing around the arena, *Calibur III* should still be one hell of a fighting game.

Three new warriors join the fray: Setsuka, a demure geisha wielding a parasol; Tira, a wild lass with a razor-sharp hula hoop; and Zaslamel, a mysterious knight equipped with a deadly scythe. In addition, all the previous *Calibur* contestants return (even Hwang and Rock), several sporting new looks and moves—prissy fencer Raphael is now an undead vampire, while Nightmare has been reduced to merely an animated suit of armor.

This series has always offered a meaty single-player experience, but this update aims even deeper with several new options. Scope the new character creation mode, where you choose the gender, occupation, look, weapon, and fighting style of your own homemade pugilist. You can also choose to follow the usual story line of each preset character through tales of the soul mode, a expanded take on the classic *Soul Calibur* weapon master experience. Here, you'll journey across the land, collecting new weapons, outfits, and hidden bonuses by overcoming various duels and challenges. There's even a bizarre (and probably lame) new mode called chronicles of the sword that casts you as a manager of sorts, coaching your customized character through a series of A.I.-controlled bouts.

Still, we expect the true draw here to be the good old-fashioned versus mode, and a bevy of new moves and stages (some of which feature breakable floors and multiple tiers) should satisfy fans awaiting their next *Calibur* fix.

"We're happy to see the Ivy hasn't toned down her wardrobe in lieu of new PC2 decency regulations."

"It's definitely nothing like any other fighting game you've seen. The dramatic battles between new and classic characters feel as if you're watching the story of *Soul Calibur* unfold right before your eyes."  
—Producer Hiroaki Kotayachi

# 2005 PREVIEW: ROLE-PLAYING • 2005 PREVIEW: ROLE-PLAYING • 2005 PREVIEW: ROLE-PLAYING

## MAKAI KINGDOM

PS2 • NIS America • July 2005

**WE SAY:** Similar in tone to NIS' cult-hit tactical RPG *Disgaea*, though not directly related, *Kingdom* puts you in control of Lord Zetta, the king of the netherworld who's accidentally destroyed his kingdom and seeks to reestablish it on another planet. This time around, all the battle maps will be randomly generated, and your forces can pilot vehicles. Our most requested feature: A hellishly funny script like that of *Disgaea*.

"Unlike previous tactical RPGs, *Makai Kingdom* will feature inclusions of vehicles, facilities, randomly generated extra maps, and a Kingdom creation system that will add new strategic dimensions."  
—Director Yoshinobu Kobayashi



# MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

PS2/XB/GC/PSP • EA Games • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** Capcom's *Marvel vs. Capcom* series proved that the classic comic-book crossover concept works just as well in game form: Having *X-Men's* Storm catfight with *Resident Evil 2's* Jill Valentine settled plenty of long-standing fanboy arguments. (It only they'd make a *Star Wars* Star Destroyer versus *Star Trek's* Starship Enterprise sin, we could finally end that decades-old war.) But those 2D fireball fests aren't exactly modern anymore. Perhaps it's a good time for EA to collide worlds in a modern 3D fighting contest—*Marvel Nemesis*.

Don't expect *Virtua Fighter* meets *The Fantastic Four*, however. Developer

Nihilistic is likely taking the ADD-friendly approach to combat exemplified by games like *Power Stone* and *Super Smash Bros. Melee*. "A big part of what makes the game so exciting is the unique superhero abilities and how they just rip apart their environments in battle," says Producer Dan Ayoub. Tossing objects—or, even better, tossing opponents through objects—will aid you more here than memorizing strings of complex combos.

Also, don't expect a Capcom-esque stable of well-loved franchise characters taking on Marvel's finest. Rather than unearth some moldy EA-created faces (Poltgory? James Pond? Uh... John Madden?), the developers teamed with Marvel to design an all-new roster of heroes. Obviously, these newcomers lack the same attachment and nostalgia factor as, say, Peter Parker or Wolverine, but at least you can get to know them in a new comic series before the game ships (see sidebar). "People don't realize how difficult it can be to bring a character to life, and we didn't have just one, but a whole family we wanted to create," Ayoub explains. "I'll definitely be a tough sell, but who knows, perhaps in time we will accept Electrical Socket Man (real name: Ohm) into our lives. And maybe even...love him?"

"I think that superhero games have been waiting for the same transformation from the ordinary to the spectacular. We worked hard to deliver a true superhero fighting experience, to make the characters 'feel' right."  
—Producer Dan Ayoub



## Funny Pages

Your first hands-on experience with the synergistic project will come in *Rise*, when the first issue of Marvel's six-part *Imperfects* comic hits stores. In it, Ohm, voiced like Spider-Man's Uncle Ben, and Iron Man face off against the original EA characters, one of whom will be revealed each month.

■ Spidey smacks down Ohm, the first original character revealed for *Rise of the Imperfects*.

# DRAGON QUEST VIII

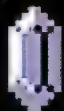
PS2 • Square Enix • Fall 2005

**WE SAY:** This legendary Japanese role-playing series, not seen on these shores since part *VIII* (PS1) four years ago, returns to America in high style with this epic eighth installment. With whimsical, anime-inspired visuals (contributed by *Dark Cloud* developer Level 5), character designs by *Dragon Ball Z* creator Akira Toriyama, and a sweeping orchestral soundtrack, *Dragon Quest* should finally be snazzy enough to appeal to image-conscious U.S. RPG fans weaned on *Final Fantasy VII*. Based on what we played of the Import, we're officially stoked.

"We are finally able to announce the North American version of *Dragon Quest VIII*. There's still time before the release, but please do look forward to this game. The world of *Dragon Quest* awaits you!"  
Scenario and Game Designer Yoji Horii



# IT'S A SECRET





# TO EVERYBODY.

By Mark MacDonald

## Not quite everything you wanted to know about the new Legend of Zelda (but we weren't afraid to ask)

**E**iji Aonuma is an expert at keeping secrets. And he's very sorry about that.

First the Nintendo producer kept his lips zipped about the look of his upcoming GameCube project. After insisting to *EGM* only months earlier that the next *Zelda* would retain the same fluid, cartoony look as 2002's *The Wind Waker*, he suddenly revealed the game last summer in all its radically revamped, shockingly realistic glory. "Oh, I'm very sorry about that," he said with a chuckle when we called him out on it afterwards. We told him we could think of one way he could make it up to us.

And a year later, he has. For the first time in our 16-year history, *EGM* was invited to Nintendo's world headquarters in Kyoto, Japan, for an exclusive peek at the

new *Zelda* and an extended chat with Aonuma. Finally, we thought, he's ready to come clean, to spill the beans, to answer the long list of questions that still before its release this fall. We could almost hear the trademark chimes that sound whenever a secret is finally revealed in *Zelda*, "deedoo-deo-deo—I'm very sorry!"

Wait. That's not how it's supposed to go. "I'm sorry, but that's confidential." All right, so the game's basic theme must remain a secret. How about the proper title? "Sorry, but I can't elaborate on that." That wolf in the video trailer and on our cover? "I apologize." The goron boxing? "Himm...sorry."

In retrospect, it's not much of a surprise. *Zelda* as a franchise and Nintendo as a company are both famous for, and to some

degree because of, their well-hidden secrets. In fact, the Nintendo spokesman in charge of handling the Japanese gaming press stopped in midway through our visit, and it wasn't a social call; he wanted to learn anything he could through our interview. Even *he* knows almost nothing about the game, and it's his job to know.

So although the larger questions must remain unanswered for now, for a game we know so little about, the various bits of info we were able to worm out of Mr. Aonuma represent a veritable treasure trove to *Zelda* fans: plot details, a possible two-player mode, new character sketches and screenshots, a fishing minigame, and, most importantly, our own hands-on impressions. Aonuma still has his secrets, but from what we've seen of the next *Zelda*, he has nothing to be sorry about. >

**EGM:** Let's start at the beginning, or at least the beginning as far as the public is concerned. Were you at the Nintendo press conference [during the E3 industry trade show in Los Angeles] when *Zelda* was unveiled for first time, and everyone who saw it just went nuts?

**Eji Aonuma:** Actually, as soon as I arrived at my hotel in L.A., Nintendo people were congratulating me, saying "Nice job!" and patting me on the back. I was like, "What? What did I do?" Then I learned that the *Zelda* video [had already been shown] without my knowledge. So I found [Zelda creator and Nintendo honcho Shigeru] Miyamoto and asked him, "Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you schedule it so I could be there?" He just said, "Oh, sorry, I forgot." Just like that. [Laughs] Later on I saw a video of the unveiling, though—saw people standing, clapping their hands, even crying. I was very impressed.

**EGM:** Why do you think the audience had such a strong reaction? It was crazy, even for a *Zelda* game.

**EA:** Well, [it might not be the answer you're looking for], but actually that kind of reaction was partially expected. I worked on editing that trailer myself, and I specifically wanted people not to realize it was a *Zelda* game at the very beginning. What we showed was simply a horse, gradually



building to the close-up, and then people finally realize it's Link, it's a *Zelda* game. If people didn't get excited then, I was in trouble. [Laughs] I knew that there was demand for a photo-realistic *Zelda*—that we couldn't deny.

festival, but this year, the chief orders this young man [Link] to go instead.

On the way to the festival, Link is going to encounter some kind of accident, which eventually leads him to the main adventure.

**EA:** We really don't know about what we're going to do with the title at this point. [It could work the other way around]—maybe there will be some kind of mystery about the title, and somewhere in the course of the gameplay, you'll realize its meaning.

## "I knew that there was demand for a photo-realistic *Zelda*—that we couldn't deny."

—Zelda Producer Eji Aonuma

**EGM:** On to the game itself: What can you tell us about the setting for this new *Zelda*?

**EA:** At the very beginning, Link is this cowboy living in [a small rural community called] Toaru Village—not in [the usual *Zelda* kingdom of] Hyrule, Hyrule does exist, but it's a long way away. Actually, they raise cows in Toaru to sell to the kingdom of Hyrule. The two places have a friendly relationship with one another. There are several other villages, and every year the kingdom of Hyrule gathers them all together for a kind of festival where all the villages can communicate with each other. Each year, the chief of the village is supposed to attend the

**EGM:** Will this *Zelda* be about rescuing the princess again?

**EA:** Yes, the story will involve Ganon, and the story will involve Ganon, but of course the plot won't be identical to [those in] past *Legend of Zeldas*.

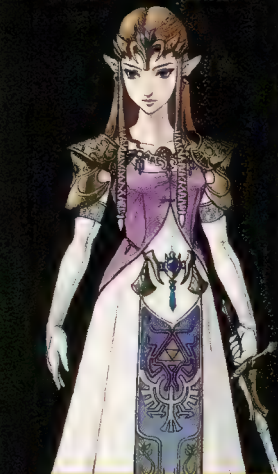
**EGM:** Where does this *Zelda* fall in the overall series timeline?

**EA:** I can't really go into that, partially because I want to keep it a secret, but also because we haven't decided yet. There are some kinds of...unstable, uncertain ideas we're working on. Depending on what course we choose in terms of development, the final ending may change.

**EGM:** From what we've played, the combat feels exactly like it does in *Wind Waker*—we noticed you can still smash shields, knock off helmets, etc. Do you have any changes planned?

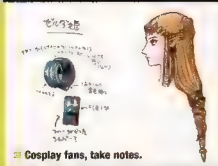
**EA:** [Remember how] in *Wind Waker*, if the enemy comes within a certain range of Link and you press the A button [at the right

(interview continued on pg. 90).



### All Grown Up

Though she may change a bit before the final game, these sketches offer a first glimpse at what Princess Zelda will look like. Notice the incredible amount of detail, right down to the tiny Triforce on her earring. She also looks equipped for battle—maybe she will join the fight at some point?



2 Cosplay fans, take notes.

**EGM:** Is it safe to say there is some major gameplay element we still don't know about, like the sailboat in *Wind Waker*, that will remain secret until just before the game comes out?

**EA:** You're right. [Laughs]

**EGM:** Is that why the game name still doesn't have a subtitle? Will the full name give something away?



■ Secretive asian man: After working on dungeons in the Nintendo 64's *Ocarina of Time*, Eji Aonuma took over as director on *Majora's Mask* and GameCube's *Wind Waker*.





Parts of Toaru Village had small gardens of pumpkin-like plants, some filled with rupees or hearts.

## HANDS-ON REPORT PART ONE: TOARU VILLAGE

Ah, the tranquil hamlet that kicks off nearly every *Zelda* game. The one thing that stands out about Toaru Village (Japanese for “unspecified”—the English name is to be determined) is, like everything in this new *Zelda*, the sense of realism. And we aren’t

just talking about the graphics: Innspeople go about their business, cats and chickens wander here and there (one attacking the other if they get too close), birds scatter out of the tall grass as Link approaches. The sense of scale is impressive; maybe

it’s just a reaction to *Wind Waker*’s squat characters, but everything seemed taller, bigger, more spread out.

As in the last game, Link starts without a weapon or his trademark green outfit. “If someone happened to see this scene without knowing what

game it is,” says Aonuma, “they probably wouldn’t even guess it was Link in *The Legend of Zelda*.” Upon closer inspection, however, one detail is a dead giveaway: On the back of Link’s left hand are three dark triangles—*Zelda*’s Triforce symbol.



### Stick It to 'Em

Eventually Link gets a wooden sword and learns combat in a familiar scarecrow-bashing tutorial. As before, the L trigger locks on targets and B performs different attacks, depending on the direction of the analog stick. But if you don’t lock on you can now swipe your sword as you move around, without stopping (handy for clearing tall grass, no doubt), and Link has a special new coup de grace: Press A for a jumping downward thrust to finish off enemies you’ve knocked over.



### At Home on the Range

Another early minigame teaches the player how to ride horseback. As in previous games, you can simply push in the direction you want to go for a slow trot or hit A to apply the whip for a burst of speed. You can also see where “Cowboy Link” (Aonuma’s name for our hero before he earns his green duds) gets his name—the goal here is to round up and force all of the grazing animals into the barn before time runs out. It’s a little tougher than you might think.



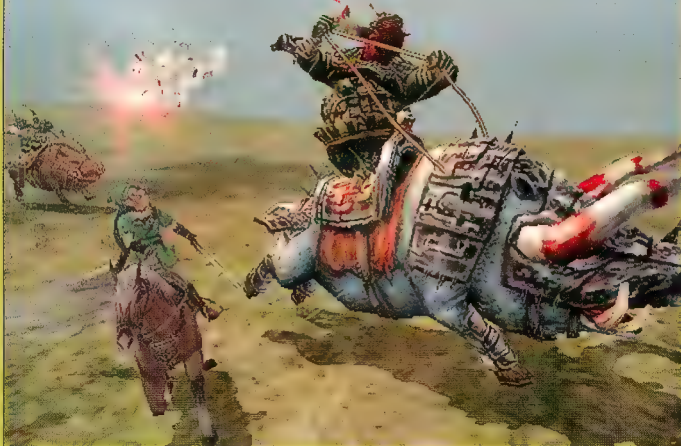
### Flying the Coop

Good news: Chicken-gliding is back! Just grab one of your fine-feathered friends, find a tall building or cliff, and jump off—Link floats slowly down, which enables him to reach areas he couldn’t otherwise. This technique came in handy during our demo: A pregnant woman asked Link to retrieve a baby basket on the other side of an otherwise unscalable fence. After getting it, he slowly (move too fast and you’ll be scolded) escorts her back to her home with it. What a guy!



## HANDS-ON REPORT PART TWO: BOSS FIGHT!

Reminds you of  
*Lord of the Rings*?  
Never heard of it.



### Horseback Attack

Horseback riding has an expanded role in this new *Zelda*—as Aonuma tells us, fast transportation is basically a requirement from the very start of the game

because of the larger environments. The second scene we played proved his point with a full-speed boss fight; Link chased down this big-horned baddie

atop his bigger-horned steed, first slashing him to remove all his armor and then pelting him with arrows. A very cool and very challenging concept for a boss.



### Fighting the Horde

Other mobile enemies swarmed Link, trying to distract him from his true target. Horseback combat felt smooth and natural; as always, you can lock on to targets or go into first-person and aim manually, slinging arrows with X (or the R trigger for exploding bomb arrows). Link's head tracked nearby foes, and he pivots in whatever direction you point to attack with his sword. He could also dismount anytime and the enemies would circle, making passes until he knocked them off their battle-boars or killed them right in the saddle. (Aonuma told us that in the final game, Link can even steal some of the bad guy's rides.)

The scenery was lovely—rolling hills with the shadows of clouds floating past—but sparse, with only a fence now and then to break things up. Then again so too of our attention was on the enemies—seven or eight (counting their boars) on screen at once, without a hint of slowdown.



### Steeple Chase

As in the earlier cattle-driving minigame, you can make Link's steed trot in any direction simply by pushing on the analog stick. You can also whip his horse with the A button for a boost (an action again limited to six times, with a corresponding meter that slowly regenerates). Speed is

important; unless Link is moving fast enough to automatically jump over the same wooden fences the boss leaps over, he'll slam into them and stop completely. So that's three things you need to worry about: keeping up with the boss, attacking him, and avoiding his minions.



(continued from p. 88)  
time, sometimes Link will do a special attack? We think that worked very well, so we're thinking about intensifying that aspect with this game. We've already added some things, like a jumping downward stab. We're going to incorporate more

**EA:** About the setting. In *Wind Waker* it was the ocean. I really cannot tell you what kind of setting we're going to adapt for this new *Zelda*, but I can say we are really trying to expand the sense of scale. Before, whenever we made 3D games, we shied away from using too many big objects. If they,

this is a huge land they're playing in, and without a horse, it's impossible for you to explore. Also, sometimes you're going to see something that's just vast, even though it's not [involved in gameplay]—something huge or something very tall. We want to realize [that sense of awe] by presenting things realistically.

reasonable, rational background explanation in order to persuade people to understand why this is better than the others. It's not very easy. In my mind it's the *amateurs* you get from one visual that are different from another [style]. Whenever we work on a game, we have [lots of] internal discussions about what kind of graphical style we need to adapt. Graphics are very important.

**“People are going to see that this game is pretty different from *Wind Waker*.”**

of those cool-looking performances [and a few other changes]. People are going to see that this game is pretty different from *Wind Waker*.

**EGM:** Besides combat and the graphics, how else will this game will be different from *Wind Waker*?

aren't necessary for specific gameplay ideas, they become a kind of obstacle. But in this game, we are trying to be more realistic. [In] this horse-riding battle, you can see it [takes place on] a huge land, even if [it's mostly empty landscape]. That's why we need the horse from the very beginning of the game. We want people to feel that

**EGM:** I know you get so many questions about the graphics for *Wind Waker* and now this new *Zelda*—do you get tired of talking about the graphics all the time?

**EA:** No. After all, I have a designer's background myself, so I know how important the visuals are. A change in graphics can give a perfectly different impression to game users—I know all about this. But I should say it's not very easy for me to explain why [we] use this visual style here, why [we use] that graphic style in other games. I'm kind of forced to make some

**EGM:** Looking back, what do you think about the reaction to *Wind Waker*'s cartoon-style graphics?

**EA:** I know that before the game shipped, there were many debates and arguments about the graphic style. But as soon as we launched *Wind Waker* and people started to play with it, they said: “We understand now. This is the reason why you used this graphic style this time.” Likewise, we're very hopeful that when we launch this new *Zelda* game, people are going to appreciate





■ "Cowboy Link chats with Toaru Village's mayor."

■ without any further questions [and] think "OK, that makes sense."

**EGM:** True, once most people actually play *Wind Waker*, the visuals don't bother them, but do you think ■ a lot of people never even picked it up just because of how it looked?

**EA:** Well, yes, that's unfortunate, but it's true that [with] graphics... people like certain graphics, and people don't like certain graphics. It's very clear for each different

**EGM:** Let's move on to things we've seen in the two video trailers you've released so far [check [Zelda.com](http://Zelda.com) if you missed them]. What's with all the cats, for example?

**EA:** We're thinking about incorporating some ideas where Link can communicate with animals, one way or another. I can't elaborate on specifically how, [But] the reason you can pick up cats early in the game in Toaru Village, for example, is [because] we wanted people to understand you can



■ In *Wind Waker*, Link's faithful horse of choice, Aeramus, wouldn't sit.

**EA:** You may be right—it's one of those [mechanics] where, after solving riddles, what's invisible can become visible. But—once again, I can't elaborate on how that works in that specific case. Please look forward to the actual game. [Smiles]

**EGM:** And that shadowy figure on our cover with his or her back to Link?

**EA:** Very sorry, but we'd like to keep it secret. People can take your cover as a big mystery. We're not sure when we want to

## "A change in graphics can give a perfectly different impression to game users—I know all about this... graphics are very important."

individual. So we're sorry for that, but what I can tell you is, we are pretty confident that we were right about the [cartoon] approach for *Wind Waker*. Without that approach, we couldn't tell enough about the story. So whenever people have some doubts, all I can say is—this is a very Japanese expression—"You may think it's a trick, but try it and see."

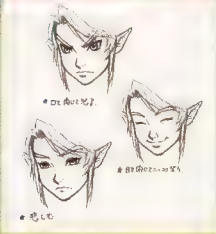
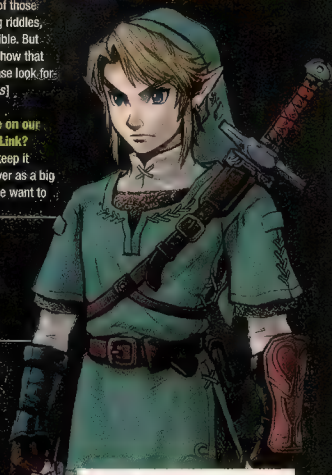
touch the cats, you can play with them. After leaving that impression, it'll become easier for us as developers to have complex ideas afterward, where the players are willing to approach the animals.

**EGM:** What about where all the ghosts appear? Is that Link using the Lens of Truth item to see invisible stuff?

break that information—maybe [at the next E3 show] in May or maybe not. As a hint, you can also see a kind of castle in the background scenery...

**EGM:** *Wind Waker* had a fantastic connectivity feature where a second player could play on a Game Boy Advance hooked up to the GameCube to help Link. Are you planning anything similar for this *Zelda*?

**EA:** Well, I liked the connectivity in *Wind Waker* very much, and I'm hopeful that we can create that kind of play experience for other games. What's cool about *Wind Waker*'s connectivity is that you can get some additional information on a real-time basis. Even though it may not be "real" real time, somehow we may be able to reproduce a similar game experience. Maybe a second character [in this new *Zelda*] can get access to certain information and help the main player. As far as the character the other player controls—"Tingle"—found out some American people didn't like him very much. So, we need to think about what kind of character we're going to use. [Laughs]



### Emotional Range

Check out these sketches of Link's different emotions: You don't need to know Japanese to see that he's happy, angry, and sad. Just because he's lost the baby-cartoon look doesn't mean his face won't be just as expressive as it is in *Wind Waker*.



## HANDS-ON REPORT PART THREE: GONE FISHIN'

■ Kickin' back with a couple low-cold blue pettios—(it doesn't get any better than this.)



Although angling has a proud history in the franchise, the team at Nintendo couldn't find a good fit for fishing in *Wind Waker* (despite the ocean setting), and it wasn't originally planned as a part of this new *Zelda*. But unknown to Aonuma, one of the programmers was working on it on the side as a pet project. "It's the same program that made the fishing event in *Ocarina of Time*," says Aonuma. "He loves fishing in his private time."

Which is probably why, at this point, the gameplay feels much like it does in the N64 classic: Tap B to wheel back and fling out your lure, then press Left and Right on the analog stick to jerk it back and forth or tap B to slowly reel it in. One welcome change is with the camera controls—pressing the C stick Up or Down zooms in on the lure so you can spot fish silhouettes in the water.

Once you have a bite, you need to reel the line back in

as the fish thrashes and tugs on the line in the opposite direction, all while the controller vibrates like mad.

As for how fishing will be integrated into the larger game, it's still under consideration. "[It might just be] a minigame, like in *Ocarina of Time*," says Aonuma. "But I'm thinking about the possibility of making it related to the overall scenario [as well]. One of the wildest ideas is you could fish for a boss, then fight against him."

**EGM:** So would this new system use the same GBA-GP Link cable setup?

**EA:** No, we really want everything to be realized with a GameCube and a disc, nothing else. [With connectivity], the downside is you need the Link cable and you

would need to incorporate voice acting.

Having said that, however, I'm [still] thinking about [it]...some kind of voice reaction, even a simple one—like "yeah" or "oh," just like that. Maybe we can expand it from there.

the dungeons. Other than that, we're thinking about incorporating some other elements in terms of the game system itself. But once again...that's one of the most important and crucial elements [we're not talking about yet].

that kind of stealth action. Maybe it's because I liked it when I was a child...the feeling of walking around and doing something secretly.

Since most of the time in *Legend of Zelda*, players have to engage in sword

**"[With connectivity], the downside is you need the Link cable and GBA...we really want everything to be realized with a GameCube and a disc, nothing else."**

need the GBA. For those who don't have everything, the idea of creating something through connectivity, even if it's very good, is [pointless]. So what I'm thinking is, maybe we can reproduce a similar gaming experience without the cable or GBA.

**EGM:** In the movie trailer and on our cover, we see a wolf howling—can you tell us anything about that? There's some speculation maybe Link is a werewolf...

**EA:** Hmm...sorry, confidential.

**EGM:** In the early version we played, we didn't notice any voice work—just the usual yelps and grunts and so on. Is that the plan for the final game?

**EA:** Last year, I was asked that same question by the press, "Will *Zelda* have voices?" My answer was, "Let me think about it." But as soon as those articles were printed, Mr. Miyamoto immediately rejected the possibility. Seriously, as far as this new *Legend of Zelda* game is concerned, we really cannot see the whole reason why we

**EGM:** Why not just give everyone real voices? More and more games are doing it these days, and it would seem to fit in nicely with *Zelda*'s new "realistic" motif.

**EA:** Well, for example, if every single character talks with each other with actual voices, it may be interesting at the very beginning, but maybe not so interesting when the game is in progress [and you grow accustomed to it]. But, for example, if all the communications are [via] text, and then someone suddenly speaks in voice, and all throughout the game there's only one or two characters who use voice to communicate instead of text, that should [stay] interesting.

**EGM:** Will the overall game still follow the familiar *Zelda* mold? You have a town or towns, then a dungeon, find an item, fight a boss, and so on?

**EA:** Well, the basic structure is just like that, yes. As with any adventure game, the area you can explore gradually expands. So, we have the [overworld], [and] we have

**EGM:** *Wind Waker* has some stealth elements early on—any plans for more of that in this game?

**EA:** I really don't know why, but I love

fight; it's very active and looks cool, but once again, in terms of making a good contrast, I think working in some quiet, silent, and stealthy moves is a very good idea. So,







## ZELDA SECRETS! HAVE YOU EVER...

### ...Completed the Original Zelda Without Ever Getting the Sword?

Yes, it's a huge pain in the ass, but it is possible. Well, almost—you need the sword to defeat the final boss, Ganon. Otherwise, you can get every item and heart container using only items to attack—the boomerang, candle, bombs, etc. Try it!



### ...Found the Secret Room in the Super Nintendo's A Link to the Past?

This rupee-filled cave, created to honor Nintendo Power magazine contest winner Chris Houlihan, can only be found by making a complicated series of dashes within a certain time limit. Google Chris' name for details.



### ...Attacked the Chickens?

For some reason, ever since *A Link to the Past*, chickens and chicken-related violence have become a *Zelda* tradition of sorts. Try smacking them over and over to unleash the feathered fury. Some say this is how Colonel Sanders went out.



### ...Seen the Horrible Philips Zelda Games?

*Zelda* has some serious skeletons in its closet, and they don't mean Staffs. Three hilariously awful games (not developed by Nintendo) were quietly released for the short-lived CD-I system. One of them, *Zelda's Adventure*, goes for upward of \$100 on eBay.



### ...Made Your Own Zelda?

Head to [ZeldaClassic.com](http://ZeldaClassic.com) for a kick-ass free PC program that allows you to make your own *Zelda* adventure or play other user-made quests, some patterned after other Nintendo classics like *Metroid* and *Super Mario Bros.*



I'm willing to incorporate some of those stealth-game ideas.

**EGM:** The very first time we saw a realistic *Legend of Zelda* for the GameCube was way back in 2000 when the system was first unveiled. Is any part of that early demo, any assets or any ideas, being put to use?

**EA:** I believe there's nothing that they're working with [from that demo]. As a matter of fact, the staff members who did that video have moved [on] and are working at [Nintendo in] Tokyo.

**EA:** Whenever I think of a very photo-realistic Link—for example, if a live actor is going to do Link—I wonder if he can actually look cool. Link in that attire, especially with the green cap and all that—can anyone look cool in that? Or maybe everyone would look like Tingle? [Laughs]

**EGM:** Funny you should mention Tingle... [We show him this picture of a Zelda fan dressed as Tingle, right]

**EA:** [Laughs] How old is he?

again. Even though we aren't going to reproduce the same thing in the next *Zelda* game, I'm thinking about incorporating something like it.

**EGM:** After *Wind Waker*, you joked that maybe you wouldn't work on the next game. But here you are.

**EA:** In fact, when we finished *Wind Waker*, I asked Mr. Miyamoto, "Please give me some other assignment." He said, "Let me think about it." [Finally] he told me, "OK, you'll be the producer on the next *Zelda*." I said, "What? I want-

## "Mr. Miyamoto immediately rejected the possibility [of full voice work for the next *Zelda*]."

**EGM:** Speaking of realistic *Zelda*, I don't know if you'll recognize this. [Shows screenshot below]

**EA:** No...is that really *Zelda*? [Laughs]

**EGM:** Yup. It's from the CD-I game *Zelda's Adventure*. Very realistic, though, don't you think? [Everybody laughs]



■ *Zelda* for the CD-I: a little too realistic.

**EGM:** Hard to say, could be anywhere from his early 20s to 30 or so....

**EA:** I'm pretty sure men over 30 shouldn't do this. [Laughs]

**EGM:** OK, so maybe not the CD-I games, but is there anything from other *Zelda* titles, such as *Four Swords* or *The Minish Cap*, you've enjoyed and want to bring to this new title?

**EA:** The kinstone idea in *The Minish Cap* was proposed by Capcom, and that was great. [Kinstones are medallion-like items you find one half of and match with halves carried by other characters to uncover chests, caves, or other secrets.] Even though you've passed through the world before, [by matching kinstones] you find there are still unsolved mysteries here and there, so you explore the same areas once

ed [something else]. But he told me, "Rather than working on the details, you can coordinate and supervise and concentrate on making it a better game." [So] I was interested in taking the assignment.

**EGM:** Nine years of nothing but *Zelda*. You must be always thinking about it, at lunch, in your dreams....

**EA:** I'm really not tired of making *Legend of Zelda*, even after all these years. But do I dream about games? I don't think so. Then again, when I'm taking a shower, my mind is often occupied with *Zelda*. Without realizing it, I'll just keep the shower running. My wife winds up very upset—but that's a kind of routine I need to have. [Laughs] That's nothing new. What I've been doing in the past, I'll probably be doing the same in the future. ♣

C20



EVERYONE  
**E**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

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# POKEHOLIC?

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## DIRECTORY

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■ **Meet the BGC:**  
This rifle is almost too effective—once you find it, you won't need to switch to any other weapon.

■ **Stan Winston Studios,** monster maker for the *Aliens* and *Predator* flicks, designed *Area 51*'s critters.

**Scan This**  
If you're the kind of gamer who likes to know who you're shooting and why, keep an eye open for scannable objects hidden in *Area 51*'s swarms of labs and caverns. Scrutinizing these items with your portable scanner doohickey unlocks secret files and videos that do a lot to explain the game's tough-to-follow plot.

■ PS2/XB

# AREA 51

ONLINE (PS2/XB)

## Puts the guns back in E.T.

**CRISPIN:** Don't come to *Area 51* expecting one giant leap for shooterkind. You've blasted run-amok mutants like these before. You've believed in little gray aliens for years. You've heard David Duchovny's one-pitch voice drone on about secret labs and government conspiracies. (Get this man some caffeine!) *Area 51* just sucks all these sci-fi staples together into some kind of cliché black hole that also happens to look killer and deliver serious scares and thrills.

The single-player mode is at its best early on, after a smart setup that even pokes fun at the animatronic animation of the light-gun arcade game on which *Area 51* is based. You're sent tumbling in the dark with a squad of buddy grunts who get gobbled up one by one. Glow-eyed

monsters lope out of shadows you can barely pierce with your flashlight (fans of *Doom 3* on Xbox know the drill). Eventually, the game settles into by-the-numbers gun battles set in increasingly fantastical environments that look spectacular in both console versions.

You never pilot any vehicles or spend much time in turrets. Instead, you get one nifty power that saves *Area 51*'s world from becoming too me-too: The ability to quick-change into a brutish mutant who can suck health from enemies. Careful management of your mutant side is crucial in later levels, when the little gray aliens pour on the minions. That's when the combat gets so intense, we swear Duchovny's voice almost raises an octave.

**SHAWN:** Space cadet Marilyn Manson phones in his lines, and near-comatose David Duchovny has seen way too much paranormal poppycock on TV's *X-Files* to be jazzed by more. Whatever, it's *Area 51*'s physics that make you believe in its make-believe. What should happen will—water coolers sprinkle and vending machines spit soda when shot; little gray men get acquainted with Earth gravity as grenades send 'em sailing.

Its truth-is-out-there atmosphere will make you believe, too—these otherworldly environments are *Star Wars* to *Halo 2*'s Sci-Fi Channel-series set design. And if its rapid-fire action doesn't sell you 100 percent, it should at least make you suspend your disbelief with a jolt-laden mix of through-the-scope exchanges, midrange rat-a-tat,





■ *Jade Empire's* Henpecked Hero likes him some liquor.

## 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. **5.0 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 each month gets a star.



**SLAVE OF THE MONTH** — The lowest-rated game with unimpeachably bad scores.

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### ESRB KEY (Also check out [www.esrb.com](http://www.esrb.com))

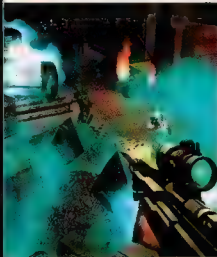
**S-Everypone:** Saccharine fun for the whole family: dancing, elves, rampant shirley, and possibly Smurfs.

**T-Teen:** Like *Pic-13* movies, *Tee* games often feature fellicious, mild violence, and madcap antics.

**M-Mature:** For the 18-and-over crowd, intense violence, gore, pillaged sex, drugs; parents no likely.

## Alien Nation

Just like the solo campaign, *Area 51's* ample multiplayer options are solid but nothing revolutionary—just what you'd expect from modes created by a couple of old-school *Doom* series designers. Sixteen-player death-matches and capture-the-flag battles unfold at a lightning pace (change into a mutant and you really zip around). Like the Xbox version, the PS2 game supports voice chat—a must for the strategy-intensive hill-capture variation. The standout mode here, however, is Infection, which has a lone mutant trying to contaminate all the humans, converting them to his side. So, just as in single-player, it's the mutants that make multiplayer special.



and up-close mano a mano. Yup, *Area 51* makes do without the vehicles and vast battlefields of today's shooter status quo, just fine.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—JDE:** The story of *Area 51* is a bit too convoluted for its own good. If the effort that went into the technology—the amazing graphics, smooth animation, and nifty visual effects of both console

**Good:** Great visuals, creepy atmosphere  
**Bad:** Clichéd story, run-of-the-mill gameplay  
**Someone Wake Up:** Voiceover star David Duchovny



■ *Independence Day's* producers must have had a fire sale.

versions (they're identical)—had been applied toward the plot, this could have been one of the great story-based first-person shooters of the current generation. As it is, we're left with a lot of conspiracy-theory blather and inside jokes sprinkled throughout a

nicely paced, occasionally innovative, and ultimately satisfying shooter. I'm not sure it'll have legs online, though; the insane, race-for-the-best-weapon school of multiplayer design seems to have gone out of fashion. The unusual Infection mode (where one mutant player gradually infects everyone else) is certainly worth checking out, though—and even the ridiculously fast deathmatches are a nice change of pace from plodding WWII shooters. **B-**



THE VERDICT'S  
OUT OF US

**8.0 8.0 8.0**

CRISPIN

SHAWN

JOE

Publisher: Midway  
 Developer: Midway  
 Players: 1-2 (2-16 online)  
 ESRB: Mature

[www.area51-game.com](http://www.area51-game.com)

■ Obligatory title explanation:  
The "DUB" in *DUB Edition*  
refers to *DUB Magazine*. Duh.



■ PS2/XB

# MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

Gentlemen, start spinning your rims

**DEMIAN:** If you played the last *Midnight Club*, I bet you came across at least one street race that was so damn hard, your controller went airborne.

*DUB's* not like that. You won't win many races on your first try (there's always a tricky part four-fifths of the way through any track made to mess you up), but the progression is mostly steady. The driving itself is more forgiving, too: Hit a tree while breaking triple-digit speeds on a sports bike and poof! A shower of splinters swirls in your wake.

And though the racing may be all high-speed blurs and impossible rooftop jumps, the cars and motorcycles themselves are obsessively true to life—and tuner culture. You can tweak everything from mud flaps to exhaust tips, and though you can chop the top and put wheelie bars on a '57 Bel Air, you can't mangle a Lotus Elise in the same way. Pulsing neon on the undercarriage, though—no one will deny you that.

*DUB's* open-city checkpoint races are full of alternate routes and shortcuts, but even so, more

variation in race types would be nice in career mode (this isn't a problem in multiplayer, which includes tag, capture the flag, and other game types). *Burnout 3* is still my favorite arcade racer—its drive-dangerously-to-earn-turbo mechanic puts it above the rest—but *DUB* is right up there with *Need for Speed Underground* as the choice for those who live to tune and tweak to live.

**SHAWN:** *DUB's* big-city venues are both lead-footed fantasy and navigational nightmare. When checkpoints mesh like gears in a Teflon-coated transmission, downtown, with all its alleyways and expressways, trumps Daytona. Where no clear lines connect the dots through gridlock and cloverleaves, it's a trial-and-error rat race. Once a collision shunts you down a side street, don't bother doubling back—if you're not in first, you're a failure.

It isn't all thumping through the Thomas Bros. (map book, that is) at 200 mph, missing the last off-ramp on an empty tank and full bladder. *DUB's*

automotive makeovers are ballin' bliss. The competition does fast and flashy, but squeezing between cars in slow-mo and then reentering traffic (and time) at full tilt? *NSFU2* can't catch that.

**JAMES:** I love tricked-out cars so much, sometimes I think maybe I was conceived in the backseat of a souped-up Honda Civic. Unsurprisingly, I was a big-time *Midnight Club II* fan, and with *DUB*, the days of itchy nitrous trigger fingers and high-beaming drivers to race are back.

*DUB* redlines on the gorgeous meter. Everything blurs and tunnels to help convey a giddy feeling of speed—and then you hit the nitrous. The new zone feature helps keep it all in check, though, slowing down time so you can slice through traffic or just have a second to blink. And the online multiplayer is like *Mario Kart* with grown-up cars: You race around and collect power-ups, then zap your opponent with reverse steering or encase him in a block of ice and laugh across the finish line. 🏁

## What's the Diff?

Online voice chat is the Xbox version's main advantage over the PS2 *Dub*, although PlayStation owners get more in-depth stat tracking, online and support for the sweet GT Force Pro wheel. Otherwise, the minor graphical and control layout differences aren't a factor.

## New Upgrades Available!

*DUB* adds three special car-class-specific moves to the *Club* formula:



**What's it do?**  
Slows down time for a few moments so you can take that sharp right at 150 mph.



**What's it do?**  
Oncoming traffic bounces off you like billiard balls off a run-away 18-wheeler.



**What's it do?**  
Sends out a shock wave that'll clear the road ahead of Sunday-driver traffic and competitors alike.

**Good:** Fast racing, a soundtrack that's actually pretty decent  
**Bad:** Not much variety to the race types in career mode  
**Gumballs:** Car that reminds us of an unprintable Sir Mix-A-Lot lyric



THE PRODUCTS  
OUT OF 10:

8.0 9.0 9.0

DEMIAN

SHAWN

JAMES

Publisher: Rockstar  
Developer: Rockstar San Diego  
Players: 1-2 (2-8 via system link or online)  
ESRB: Everyone 10+

www.rockstargames.com





Jack Slate's disregard for fire codes is a disgrace to the force.



PS2/XB

# DEAD TO RIGHTS II

## Dead on arrival

**G. FORD:** *Dead to Rights II* gets the expected sequel tweaks (improved graphics, no more so-so minigames), but when a game built on nonstop action—as in, you don't even have to stop and reload your guns—turns out to be an 11-plus-hour experience in tedium and boredom, well...that's just a shame.

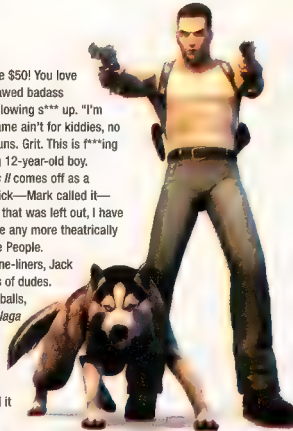
What we have here is a title that tries hard to impress with its flash, yet stumbles over fundamentally busted gameplay. This third-person action-brawler once again puts you in the shoes of cop Jack Slate, who's armed with a standard array of weapons and his loyal mutt. But while the arcadey setup and action may inspire you to run around guns a-blazing, turns out that strategy leads to almost inevitable death (unless you play on Easy difficulty...which is *too* easy). So the action becomes a war of attrition as you lean around corners and pop out from behind cover, taking potshots at the seemingly endless waves of mindless and generic enemies. And that gets old, no matter

how many slick-looking slow-mo bullet-time jumps or disarm moves you pull off along the way. Throw in a slow camera, poor targeting system, lack of midstage checkpoints, plenty of backtracking, and bad load times, and you have a game that's almost continuously no fun to play. Pass.

**MARK:** *Dead to Rights II* is the videogame equivalent of a late-'80s action movie: mindless and creatively bankrupt, filled with sex, profanity, cheesy one-liners, and over-the-top violence. And, if you've got the right mindset, a fairly good time. I can't argue with any of G. Ford's gameplay beefs—it's repetitive as hell, the backtracking is annoying, and the targeting can be screwy—except for one: I never got tired of all the different ways you can take guys out. Use the dog, explosives, pieces of the environment, bullet time, various guns, or your fists in the surprisingly solid bare-knuckle beat-em-up sequences. Nothing polished or original, but a decent rental if you can enjoy a big, dumb ride.

**ROBERT:** Hey, you with the \$50! You love this crap, right? Square-jawed badass kicking down doors and blowing s\*\*\* up. "I'm Jack Slate, bitch!" This game ain't for kiddies, no sir! Strip clubs and shotguns. Grit. This is f\*\*\*ing edgy—if you're a giggling 12-year-old boy. Otherwise, *Dead to Rights II* comes off as a straight-to-video action flick—Mark called it—sans gratuitous T&A (why that was left out, I have no idea). If this game were any more theatrically macho, it'd join the Village People.

In between ridiculous one-liners, Jack shoots dudes, lots and lots of dudes. It's kinda like *Galaga* with balls, except people still play *Galaga* after 24 years, and *Dead to Rights II* will be forgotten by the end of next week. The game works, but it's so lifeless and cold it gives me the creeps.



### A Dog-Eat-Man World

Probably *Dead to Rights II*'s coolest feature is your ability to easily control Shadow, Slate's K-9 companion. Not only can you have him fetch guns for you when you're running low on ammo, but you can sic him on enemies. Granted, they don't bother moving when they see him coming, but it's always amusing when he mauls them *When Animals Attack* style. Oddly enough, Shadow drains your adrenaline meter (which also fuels your slow-mo jumps) when attacking enemies, which only adds to the frustrating wait-behind-cover-while-the-meter-recharges game.



**Good:** Getting naps from your kids.  
**Bad:** Boring, uninspired gameplay.  
**Howe Does:** The comical cut-scenes.



Publisher: Namco  
 Developer: Namco  
 Players: 1  
 ESRB: Mature

www.namco.com



PlayStation 2

# HAUNTING GROUND

More Resident Evil 1 than Resident Evil 4

**Good:** A horrifying nightmare brought into game form.  
**Bad:** Constantly backtracking to escape enemies.  
**Award:** Bounciest Boobs Ever!

**SHOE:** Tamagotchil... *Titanic*. Olsen twins with reasonable amounts of makeup on their faces.... Sorry—I'm just having one helluva 1990s flashback from playing *Haunting Ground*. Running away from tireless creeps while wandering about a terrifying castle, finding clue A to get to key B, which leads to door C to find clue D (etc.) harkens back to the decade-old days of playing *Resident Evil* and *Clock Tower* on the PS1. Shouldn't I be on a more evolved adventure on my space-age PS2?

But I can't complain about the art direction. You truly feel the young protagonist's horror when she looks hopelessly at the screen or shakes and cringes when frightened. And as she gets more panicked, the screen starts to blur and the controls go mushy—pretty cool the first few times you experience this (it's like playing a game inside a nightmare) but incredibly frustrating later on with tougher opponents you're constantly running away from when all you want to do is solve the puzzles to finish the game.

**SHANE:** *Haunting Ground* pares down the survival-horror experience to its most



basic, frightening form—running for your life. When one of the game's persistent killers is hot on the trail of defenseless protagonist Fiona, the game descends into madness: Impressive "panic effects" distort time, corrupt the visuals, and muddle your control, making your untimely death, dismemberment, consumption, or implicit rape all the more disturbing. Just how scary is *Haunting Ground*? Scary enough to give Shoe nightmares. Really.

Unfortunately, none of the game's other aspects can match the striking quality of these chase sequences, but a few creative puzzles (namely those utilizing your trusty mutt Hewie) help to break up all that running and hiding. *Resident Evil 4* has nothing to worry about, but scary-movie nuts should definitely spend an evening or two here....

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—GIANCARLO:** There isn't any real reason why this game should exist with the progress the survival-horror genre has made. It basically uses old design concepts from the *Resident Evil* games but tries to make them feel fresh by throwing in an almost totally useless pet dog and a panic attack, which succeeds more as a comic device than as some kind of innovative gameplay feature. Plus, *Haunting Ground* just puts too much emphasis on randomly walking around to find and solve puzzles instead of really funneling you in any particular direction. But if you like old-school survival-horror action, then go ahead, be afraid.



THE VERDICT

7.0	6.5	5.0
SHOE	SHANE	GIANCARLO

Publisher: Capcom  
Developer: Capcom  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Mature  
www.capcom.com

PlayStation 2

# ENTHUSIA: PROFESSIONAL RACING

Happiness is a warm engine



**Good:** Great graphics and an impressive physics engine  
**Bad:** Low tolerance for novice racers  
**Guitar-accular:** The cheesy McCheese soundtrack

**ANDREW:** There's a stark difference between a racing game and a driving game. *Enthusia* is the latter—a game focused on precision and technical skill, where "realistic" is a more marketable way of saying "unforgiving."

But if you know what you're getting into, *Enthusia* delivers. While not quite as exhaustive as *Gran Turismo 4*, *Enthusia* offers a large garage of winnable, tunable, and upgradeable cars, and the weekly format of ranked races keeps progress moving at a steady rate. Cars are won (via post-race raffle) frequently but take some time to "level up," and switching cars makes you skip a week of racing, which can have an adverse effect on your rank.

The courses are designed to challenge your reaction time and are littered with hairpin, uphill, and S-turns. Starting out with the incredibly demanding driving revolution mode quickly sharpens your skills and makes sure that drivers are up for the challenge. Once you "get it," the game is rewarding.

But true to its name, *Enthusia* is only for the true car enthusiasts. Anyone else will be giving Konami \$40 just to tell them that they're an awful driver.

**DEMIAN:** Might as well get the obligatory *Gran Turismo 4* comparisons out of the way: On the track, *Enthusia* feels about as accurate a sim as the big boss, and that's saying a hell of a lot. It doesn't look quite as nice or have nearly as many cars or tracks as *GT4*, but it's still an excellent, excellent driving game.

But in this case there actually is a

game that goes along with the driving; that's what sets *Enthusia* apart. Its complex points and ranking system (briefly: winning with a lower-powered car earns more points, more points means access to higher race classes—but you have to keep winning to stay at the top) is the part you'll likely either love or hate. It took some getting used to, but I dug it.

The concentration required to go six or so laps pinging out your Toyota "Hachi-fuku" Trueno to godly levels without having to worry about switching cars to meet that FF challenge or eating dirt on the rally tracks. In the game's *Enthusia Life* mode, you don't worry so much about selling cars, buying parts, and racing for dollars; rather, you win races for points that level up both driver and vehicle. Hence, the pacing of your game's progress is more deliberate and satisfying. It's addictive and...yes, brings out the enthusiast within.

**TURBO:** *Enthusia*: You'd figure that with *Gran Turismo 4* still burning daily rubber on my PS2, *Enthusia*—with its hardcore driving-simulation physics, oppressive no-frills locales, and huge selection of Japanese imports—would be the last game I'd want to play, much less champion. But finally, here's a racing sim that lets me focus an entire racing career on just one car. Now you can spend 10 hours pinging out your Toyota "Hachi-fuku" Trueno to godly levels without having to worry about switching cars to meet that FF challenge or eating dirt on the rally tracks. In the game's *Enthusia Life* mode, you don't worry so much about selling cars, buying parts, and racing for dollars; rather, you win races for points that level up both driver and vehicle. Hence, the pacing of your game's progress is more deliberate and satisfying. It's addictive and...yes, brings out the enthusiast within.

THE VERDICT

8.0	8.5	8.5
ANDREW	DEMIAN	CHE

Publisher: Konami  
Developer: Konami  
Players: 1-2  
ESRB: Everyone  
www.konami.com



PlayStation 2 ONLINE

# COLD WINTER

February fashion must: full metal jacket



Like all the enemies in *Winter*, this one's a bleeder.

THE VERDICTS  
OUT OF 10

7.0	6.5	7.0
SHAWN	G. FORD	JAMES

Publisher: VU Games  
Developer: Swordfish  
Players: 1-2 (3-4 w/MultiTap, 2-8 online)  
ESRB: Mature  
[www.coldwinter.com](http://www.coldwinter.com)

**Good:** Blood-boiling shoot-outs  
**Bad:** Warmed-over multiplayer  
**Ugly:** Fragg'd foes look like crushed tomato crates



**SHAWN:** Never mind *Cold Winter's* purportedly true-to-life take on "dirty espionage" (as opposed to 007's suit-tie-and-martini suave); it too ends in a chromed-out, black-science bunker beneath the earth. What the game does that shoot-em-ups with the same combustible-barrel-blasting conventions don't is blow up a mile-high with Hollywood brio. Good times with gunpowder or wet-fuse folly—it all depends on the Fourth of July's place in your holiday top 10. So yeah, it's more of the same shoot-or-be-shot stuff, but hey, those signboards swing, chicken coops splatter, and burning debris sets other flammables on fire.

*Cold Winter* scores with the cause-and-effect physics of a PC game but seldom capitalizes on the unscripted chaos. (I once pushed a propane tank downhill, then plugged it as it nudged the ne'er-do-wells below, but that's about it as far as destructive Rube Goldberg devices go.) Overturning tables to create cover is a nice touch, but with so many safe spots already available (and a bottomless tin of Band-Aids, I never needed it. Still, thumbs up to the baddies for similarly playing smart.

school age. And after playing through this *Cold Winter*, I can't help but think it will suffer a similar fate, namely getting lost among other competent but forgettable shooters. It's not a bad game—it has nice graphics, a solid physics engine, and enemies that go down in over-the-top bloody fashion. Problem is, it lacks the wow moments, steady intensity, and gripping story that make the best games stand out. Multiplayer runs fine but offers nothing noteworthy (besides a clunky interface), delivering the typical collection of deathmatch, CTF, and domination matches. *Cold Winter* is a fine diversion, but better options exist, notably the recent *TimeSplitters: Future Perfect* and *Project: Snowblind*.

**JAMES:** After sitting through F-bomb-laden torture scenes (fingers being broken, people getting stabbed in the eye with pencils, etc.), taking out bad guys by shooting off their appendages is less shocking than it sounds—though it never stops being disturbing. But life's a breeze if you can live through a rocket to the face and have unlimited health packs. Smart enemies love to take cover, but when gunfights turn into aerobics class (I stand, shoot, squat behind cover, repeat—and my foe follows suit), it gets to be a little too much of a workout.

**FORD:** Cold winters—a common occurrence for native New Englanders like myself—start to blend together after you get past the snow-day-hoping elementary-



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Xbox

# JADE EMPIRE

## The Empire strikes back



Jade's characters look great—I'd give a nice if your main guy (or gal) actually had a voice, though.

**JENNIFER:** BioWare has done it again. These masters of the role-playing genre wowed us with the brilliant *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*. I wasn't convinced they could do it again, especially without an established franchise to sustain the stories for which the company's games are so renowned. And changing up the combat? Inventing a fast-paced real-time system instead of relying on the tried-and-true turn-based battles of *KOTOR* and *Baldur's Gate* (PC) was risky, to say the least. But big risks reap big rewards, and I'm now a believer.

Let's start with the graphics, *KOTOR*'s biggest weakness. *Jade Empire* envelops you in its visual splendor. Each environment lusher than the last, the game never gets lazy. Right through to the last cut-scene, you're rewarded with creatively designed, gorgeous levels—eye candy in the truest, best sense. It made me question my curmudgeonly belief that good graphics don't make good games.

Luckily, *Jade Empire* has much more than good graphics. Impressive, emotional, moving, with all the twists and turns BioWare plots have become famous for, the story rewards those gamers who enjoy involved cut-scenes and cunning dialogue trees. It's in the story and character development that the choices in your character's alignment—the Way of the Open Palm versus the Way of the Closed Fist—really hit home. I thought playing a selfish, egotistical, heartless Closed Fist master would be a fun sort of lark; I didn't realize some of my crueler decisions would stick me with a very real sense of guilt. I even replayed the ending, changing choices to redeem myself slightly (but I must say, the evil ending was better).

But the graphics and story aren't actually this game's deepest point. It's the combat and character development that will please all comers. When you start the game, your character clearly has a lot

of potential, but you're still a chump student with something to prove. Slowly, steadily, and with an astonishing amount of potential for individualization, your character becomes a martial arts master. The intuitive system enables all players to develop unique fighting tactics. As you gain awareness of the complexities of the system, your character obtains additional fighting styles and upgrades existing ones. Both learning curves arc perfectly through the game. On top of that, it's fun simply to watch yourself fight; the combat animations evoke the best martial arts movies.

The length (I powered through in 17 action-packed hours) might be a weakness, or a refreshing liberation. Occasionally, too, I was frustrated that I couldn't save after a long cut-scene plopped me into a death-wish battle. Then there's all that loading.... But I can't fault the game for not being perfect. Being profoundly brilliant is quite enough.

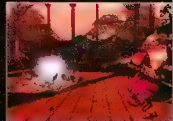
### Stop and Smell the Lotus Blossoms

Impatient gamers might not get to all the copious optional quests. But many of them are really worth the effort—and the rewards. Here are just a few of our favorites:

#### The Outlander

Requires logic—and maybe a bit of luck.

**Reward:** Mirabelle, the Outlander's gun, a weapon style that's slow but very effective against creatures immune to magic  
**Found in:** Chapter 3



#### An Ancient Game

Prove to the old masters that you understand their ancient philosophies.

**Reward:** Open Palm goody-goodies earn Stone Immortal style. Closed Fist baddies get Tempest.  
**Found in:** Chapter 2



#### Meditation Wheels

Not an actual quest, but worth completing thoroughly (find both cogs to fully repair the wheels).

**Reward:** Communion of the Dragon, a +5 bonus to health and +15 bonus to chi  
**Found in:** Chapter 6



**Good:** Glorious graphics, fast-paced fighting  
**Bad:** Reading is fundamental. Perhaps a bit too fundamental  
**Simpsons Fans:** Pay attention when you're in the tavern



THE VERDICT (OUT OF 10)

**10 9.5 8.5**

JENNIFER BRYAN SHOE

Publisher: Microsoft  
Developer: BioWare  
Players: 1  
Rating: Mature

jade.bioware.com



## Strength of Character

It doesn't really matter which character you choose, as you can upgrade the skills and stats that'll let you play how you want to. Here's how we ended up customizing three of the predesigned starting characters...



**Character:** Scholar Ling  
**Starting Type:** Magic  
**Played By:** Jennifer

**Thoughts:** I purposely bumped up Scholar Ling's chi so she'd have plenty of magical energy. What I didn't realize was I'd need all that energy to heal her—she couldn't take too many hits. Magic was sure useful, but I found myself relying more on the fast martial styles.



**Character:** Tiger Shen  
**Starting Type:** Strong  
**Played By:** Bryan

**Thoughts:** Sure, this big oaf packs one helluva punch, but at first, he was way too slow for me (I almost changed characters a few hours into the game). But once I was able to upgrade the speed of his martial styles, I had the best of both worlds—a fighter who was fast and oh-so deadly.



**Character:** Wu the Lotus Blossom  
**Starting Type:** Balanced  
**Played By:** Shoe

**Thoughts:** I started off with lots of focus because I wanted to be a weapons fighter, cracking skulls with a bamboo staff. Then I realized I almost always had enough focus for each battle, so I upped my chi instead. Like Jen, I needed it to heal often (especially during boss battles), but I loved transforming into the Jade golem and going "Hulk smash!" on everyone.



**BRYAN:** While Jen chose the wicked route through *Jade Empire*, I went the way of a kung fu fighting Goody Two-shoes. Yet it doesn't matter which moral path you follow here. The result will be the same: an innovative, emotional, and visually arresting gaming experience that shouldn't be missed.

What really makes this trek through mythological ancient China stand out from the rest of the RPG pack is indeed the combat. BioWare has freed itself from the shackles of turn-based battles to produce an ingenious real-time fighting system that involves as much strategy as it does quick reflexes. Sure, the idea of dodging and blocking may initially seem as foreign as the game's setting, but you'll soon be leaping over foes while mixing up your karate chops, weapon strikes, and magical attacks like a true master. And you'll be able to learn and upgrade a great number of fighting styles throughout, which makes enemy encounters rarely

feel stale and repetitive.

Also, just when I thought BioWare couldn't top *KOTOR*'s "holy s\*\*\*\*" narrative, I found myself delightfully cursing once again. The story is full of surprises and, even playing as an all-around good guy, I struggled with the plot-altering choices along the way. Jen is right on about *Jade*'s length, too. You can jet through this one fairly quickly, but if you demand 40-plus hours from an RPG, there are plenty of side quests to keep you and obsessive-compulsive types (I'm looking at you, Shoe) surprisingly busy. And I'll put up with frequent load times for a game this damn pretty—and so should you.

**SHOE:** Uh-oh, that déjà vu is hitting me upside the head again (see my *Haunting Ground* review, p. 100), but this time, it leaves a bigger bruise. I was hoping for so much more than a Chinese *Knights of the Old Republic*, but for 70 percent of *Jade*

*Empire*, that's what I got—same style menus, dialogue trees, clunky animations, good/evil character development.... It's not at all bad (well, except for those clunky animations), but *Jade* really deserves to have its own distinct personality separate from anything we know from *KOTOR*. At least the new combat system is fresh and puts you in total control—you'll rarely tire of even the most minor of skirmishes.

You have to chat to a lot of people in *Jade*, so if you got tired of all that talky-lalky in *KOTOR*, it'll get on your nerves really quickly here, especially with all the Confuciusizing thrown in. (This may not be so bad for you, however, as I made sure to play out every single optional subquest available to me.) But once you get to the last third of the game, things really pick up as the story line goes into overdrive and you learn a certain transformation power that really proves bigger is better. ✪

Pariah's replenishable med pack works a bit like Halo's overshield, forcing you to find cover in the heat of battle.



Xbox

IGN

# PARIAH

## The next first-person fix?

**SHAWN:** It's not the postcard-from-another-planet panorama—badlands, towering forests, and industrial inventions—fog-free as far as the eye can see. It's not even how the glass faceplate on the first guy I shoot shatters like a fishbowl hitting the floor. It's when two of the surviving coons in his squad split up and spit suppressing fire from cover as the third haelines into a bull rush. It's the juking and hide-and-seek games, the closing in as I reload and relocating when I let up, that makes Pariah compulsively playable offline, even if the otherwise astute A.I. gets stupid around snipers. That, and the weapons. Each of bad-medicine man Jack Mason's boomsticks is upgradeable in three stages. Save up for the heat-seeking salvo or splurge on the Star Trek-style healing tool, power up a few favorites or spread points evenly across the entire arsenal—it adds some forward-thinking strategy to the deal and deepens tactics, too.

The same system carries over online. Pariah isn't as hassle-free or fun as Halo 2, but its have-

at-it-your-way philosophy is impressive. Tivo still gives me trouble, but here I am in the game's easy-going mapmaker mode, building a battlefield where one team's vehicles balance out against the other's fortified bunker. And as you read on, remember: Mark and Che wear Master Chief Underoos.

**MARK:** What the? Are we talking about the same game, Shawn? In the Pariah I played enemies walk off cliffs, don't react when shot in the head (though their helmets go flying), and launch rockets into walls three feet in front of their faces, even on the highest difficulty setting—sometimes dying in the process. I'll grant you the cool weapon upgrades and an interesting health regen system, but the short-bus A.I., half-ass story, and so-so graphics banish this Pariah off my must-play list.

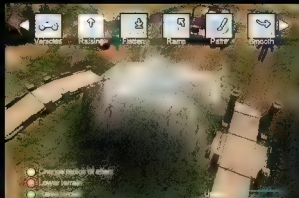
Online the game fares better, with a high max-player count (on dedicated servers only, though) and huge indoor/outdoor levels that work well for team games. The vehicles, two-weapon limit, and

sci-fi setting beg unfavorable comparisons to Halo 2, but at least the level-building utility offers something cool you can't get (almost) anywhere else.

**TUPCOM—CHE:** If you've played one sci-fi shooter, you've played 'em all. Nothing echoes this sentiment quite like Pariah, a story-driven shooter that never really comes together as a satisfying package. Sure, it's got an interesting story—the main character's a combat medic who has to escort and rescue a woman infected with a new strain of a virus—but stilted dialogue and confusing out-scenes get in the way. And while there's plenty of run-and-gun action, it's nothing you haven't already experienced elsewhere. On its harder difficulty levels (you'll breeze through anything less), Pariah's A.I. soldiers do offer plenty of challenge but will just as often stand there as fodder for your heroics. Pariah is at its best online, where its team-game modes and incredibly cool map editor redeem its lackluster single-player game.

### Violent Cartographer

Prepare for a new pastime. Pariah's easy-as-pie mapmaker mode lets you push, pull, lift, lower, and otherwise sculpt environments like so much Silly Putty; drop in prefab bases and bridges; adjust lighting, weather effects, and terrain type; position turrets, land mines, and drones for base defense. Sharing your creations to the world over is as simple as logging onto Live.



**Good:** Easy-to-use map editor, excellent online play  
**Bad:** Short single-player campaign, some choppy performance  
**Beware of:** Strangers with stacked maps



THE VERDICTS  
 based on 7

9.0 6.5 6.5

SHAWN

MARK

CHE

Publisher: Groove Games  
 Developer: Digital Extremes  
 Players: 1-2 (2-16 via system link and online)  
 ESRB: Mature

www.pariahgame.com



DELTA FORCE

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3 Intec Pro mini Wireless Xbox Controllers

Copy of Delta Force -  
Black Hawk Down on Xbox



## FOUR 2ND PLACE PRIZES

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An Xbox Live! Starter Set

3 Intec Wireless Xbox Controllers

An Intec Game Sound System

An Intec 5.4" Game Screen

Copy of Delta Force -  
Black Hawk Down on Xbox



## OTHER PRIZES

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10 Delta Force - Black Hawk Down  
Travel Mugs

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And behind door no. 2 we have a terrorist!

PARKER GRAY EDWARDS

Xbox

IN LIVE

# CLOSE COMBAT: FIRST TO FIGHT

Situation normal somewhat fudged up

**Good:** Great graphics, OK online options

**Bad:** Brain-dead evilbers

**We Won Some, Lost Some Online Against A Real Marine Squad**

**CRISPIN:** First to Fight technically packs everything you need to play soldier (in this case, a U.S. Marine). It has decent-looking urban war zones, an easy-to-use squad interface, and lots of intense fire-fights. Thing is, the game is such a generic experience, I wouldn't be surprised if it came in a plain yellow box labeled "Video War Game."

Like Shawn says, the action here feels canned, with bad guys often glued to their positions like they're mated from shooting-gallery cardboard. Wing 'em and they get all goofy, walking in circles as if they're sulking. It actually makes the online cooperative mode more fun—you and your three squadmates will find lots to laugh at. Nothing funny about the deathmatchs, though. They're so sluggish that it's like battling underwater.

**SHAWN:** It says it on the box, "Based on a Marine Corps training tool." And despite my laugh-out-loud time on a driver's ed trainer—the one where high dogs and tricyclists insisted on crossing my predetermined path at metronomic intervals—that seems like

a sure enough shot.

Fire it up, though, and I start hearing that patented grin-and-berate-it gallows humor of the proud few in the back of my head: "Watch that alley. Here comes 'back to business' Ahkmed, sure as the daily express, but don't worry—he'll sling his AK and walk in circles while you cripple him." And then there's my mental AWOL fire team, alleged to offer 360-degree security around, behind, and above our sector, but who light me up when I order 'em to put suppressing fire on our flank, then let Fedayeen blast me from behind. But damn if it don't look good. If the USMC is getting its dollar's worth anywhere in this one, it's online. In co-op, even friendly fraggers Crispin and Che shot me fewer times than my CPU squad.

**CHE:** Why does this game exist? No, really, I wanna know. With all the squad-based tactical shooters on Xbox (there are literally more of these than I have fingers to count), what makes *Close Combat* think it has a chance in hell of competing this late in the game? Sure, *Combat* looks sharp; its graphics are impressively detailed, down to the rough-hewn cobblestone streets. But where's the beef? There's practically zero enemy A.I. in the game; you and your brain-dead Marines basically line up tangos and drop 'em one after the next like so much target practice. To make matters worse, the twitchy controls in the "authentic" iron-sights aim view ruin what could have been a decent online shooter.



THE VERDICTS OUT OF 10	5.0	5.5	6.0
	CRISPIN	SHAWN	CHE

Publisher: 2K Games  
Developer: Duxium Studios  
Players: 1-4 (2-3 online)  
ESRB: Teen

www.firsttofight.com

Xbox

IN LIVE

# WWE WRESTLEMANIA 21

Flailing against the ropes



Sweet chin music: hurts Shawn Michaels as much as it hurts you.

**Good:** Decent graphics, voice acting added to career mode

**Bad:** Plays just like the last one, crappy A.I., linear career mode

**Greatest Wrestler Name:** Half Man, Half Amazing

**CRISPIN:** Pro wrestling games have become much like the WWE itself—boring and predictable. No matter how many different developers take a shot at the WWE license, the games come out feeling like the same sluggish button mashers we've been playing for 10 years. Same control scheme, same awkward animation, same slow, boring matches—a decent create-a-wrestler mode and actual voice acting are the only real highlights of this year's Xbox experience.

Alas, career mode takes a step back: Early on, you'll be forced to play tag-team matches, which is a very bad thing because the game's A.I. is complete crap. Two CPU opponents will take turns throwing each other out of the ring or your loose-cannon A.I. partner will go and get himself disqualified. Don't count on any help when you're in a jam, either.

The online mode may add replay value, but the Net games I played were plagued with major lag. Even if publisher THQ manages to fix that, the game just isn't fun enough to be worth your online time.

**BRYAN:** For presentation, 21 can't be beat: The WWE superstars look authentic, the cut-scenes play out in true soap-opera fashion (no awkward dialogue pauses like in the PS2 *SmackDown!* series), and the commentators dish out sound bites and even reference prior bouts.

But pick up the controller and this one hits the mat hard...and I mean very hard. The A.I. should've signed up for MTV's *Tough Enough*, as these guys need some serious schooling. They act like complete

jobbers in singles action, and during tag-team matches, your computer-controlled partner will cause head-scratching DQs. And when you consider the game's sluggish pacing, robotic animations, and overall lack of in-ring excitement, 21 becomes a questionable purchase even for the devoted WWE follower.

**TUP.COM—KAREN:** The fellas at Studio Gigante definitely studied their thuganomics—John Cena's muscles have never pulsated this realistically in past WWE games. The new voiceovers really help nail the spectacle, and the cut-scenes are adorably cheesy—just like on television.

But 21's gameplay doesn't match its looks, although this PPV installment is an improvement. The A.I. is less asinine (it's not great, but I don't hate it as much as Greg S. does), the control response time is shorter, and the new reversal system works well—almost every move has a unique counter, though you'll only use a fraction of 'em against the CPU (that's what Xbox Live is for). For a fighting game, 21 is mediocre, but as a WWE fan, I'm definitely serviced.



THE VERDICTS OUT OF 10	5.0	6.5	6.5
	GREG S.	BRYAN	KAREN

Publisher: THQ  
Developer: Studio Gigante  
Players: 1-4 (2-3 online)  
ESRB: Teen

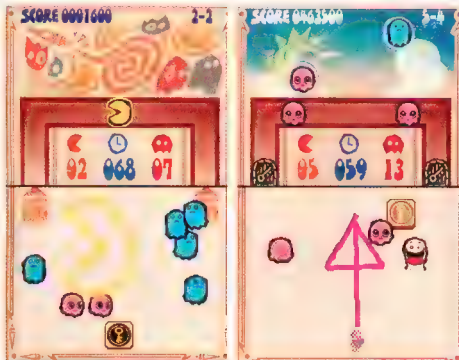
www.wrestlemania21thegame.com



DS

# PAC-PIX

Drawing power



Ignore the perfect Pac-Man (left)—strangely, most people's hand-drawn Men have big overbites.

THE VIDEOScored in

7.0	6.5	7.0
G. FORD	SHANE	JOHN R.

Publisher: Namco  
Developer: Namco  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Everyone

www.namco.com

**Good:** Creative use of the touch screen  
**Bad:** Too one-dimensional, over too soon  
**If Only:** Our Eric A Sketches had this power



**G. FORD:** Now this is more like it. *Pac-Pix* is a genuinely fun game that makes clever use of the DS' touch screen. In order to clear each level of ghosts in this action-puzzler, you have to put your doodling skills to use as you quickly try to sketch something that resembles Pac-Man...and the misshapen blobs I ended up with are testament to the fact that it ain't easy. Once completed, your creation springs to life and begins waka-waka-ing across the screen, eating any ghosts in his path, changing direction only when you put a wall in his way. There's even a little strategy: The bigger you make your 'Man, the slower he moves. It's simple and fun.

Just when things start to get stale, you get some creative bosses to tackle and new techniques to learn. Eventually, you're bouncing crudely drawn arrows off of mirrors to hit targets in the top screen and drawing fuses from oddly sketched bombs to nearby candles.

Still, the game could have used more variety and levels—but it's addicting while it lasts. Just like the gimmicky-but-fun *Pac-Man Vs.*—and even the original *Pac-Man*—*Pac-Pix* is best enjoyed in short doses.

**SHANE:** It's not too surprising that the intrinsically weird DS hardware plays host to some downright abnormal games.

Between *WarioWare Touched!*, *Yoshi Touch & Go*, and now *Pac-Pix*, there's more odd-ball esoterica than normal titles on this system. And like *Wario* and *Yoshi*, this bizarre *Pac-Man* drawing exercise becomes weirdly addictive despite its simplicity.

And although it seems more like a gimmicky minigame than a full-fledged title, you'll find a few hours of fun here. Sketching Pac-Man retains its charm for only a few minutes, but the other game-play elements—the aforementioned arrows, bombs, and mirrors—and some creative, tricky bosses help keep players guessing. The varied levels can't quite make up for the samey visuals and lack of options (why no multiplayer?), but overall, *Pac-Pix* provides an enjoyable distraction.

**JOHN R:** *Pac-Pix* starts off a bit on the easy side, but once you gain the ability to shoot arrows and plant bombs, the stages get a lot more challenging and interesting. But sadly, the adventure is over before it ever really begins—those two abilities are all you get, which is a shame, because with a bit more depth, this otherwise good game could've been great. Hardcore players will finish both quests ("books") in a day or two, but everyone else should be able to get a couple of weeks out of this, at least.



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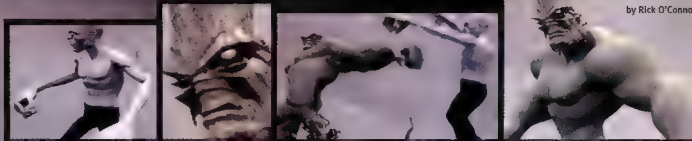
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by Rick O'Connell



All that skating fun in the sun will leave some embarrassing tan lines.

PSP

# TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 REMIX

A clean landing (+1,000 points) onto PSP

**Good:** New levels for story and classic mode  
**Bad:** Jackass plotline starts to wear thin second time around  
**Our Favorite Playable Character:** Wise Man/our irrem (tie)



**JAMES:** I survived the World Destruction Tour on the Xbox, but I was willing to relive the pigeons dumping on bikini girls, gurney races, and Ben Franklin doing a Natas spin all over again on PSP. And I'm glad I did, because *Remix* spit-shines *THUG2* enough that I can see my reflection in it. Literally—I uploaded a picture onto the PSP and used the game's face-mapping feature to put my mug on the main character. And let me tell you, seeing your digitized face in a game is way cooler than any unlockable dude, including founding fathers.

But *Remix*'s supercombo doesn't end there—the slightly tweaked controls hardly take any getting used to, and this portable version of *THUG2* actually has more levels than the original. The game's periodic shift to nighttime doesn't bother me nearly as much, either; at least I can still see what the hell I'm grinding on in this version. The new levels (including my ol' college town, Santa Cruz) and fun Wi-Fi play kept my return visit from going stale.

**JENNIFER:** Grizzled fans like me might initially doubt it, but this game proves



that the tough-as-steel-beams *Hawk* infrastructure can withstand the weight of quite a few rehabs before it buckles. (Though some of us are wearin' hard hats, if you get my drift...) This *remix*'s new levels are essential for those who already played through the console *THUG2*. It's too bad they didn't blow my mind—an amusement-park level (Santa Cruz) with only one measly ride to grind, and, um, some office building in Atlanta? I didn't really love exploring them, and I found myself wanting simpler goals that rewarded me for just skating well. But hey, those steel beams still deliver a smooth ride, with slick graphics and controls that rival their console counterparts.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—JOE:** It's fairly shocking that a game this fast works this well on a handheld system. If you've played any of the recent *Tony Hawk* games, you will have exactly zero learning curve; *Remix* controls, plays, and looks virtually identical to *THUG2*. Unfortunately, that means the on-foot stuff still feels somewhat stiff and out of place. You'll be forced to do a fair bit of running around, too, as hunting down hidden items is a common theme in the game's mercilessly wacky story mode. Beyond that, it's every bit as addictive as its big brothers, with the addition of four new levels and a couple new multiplayer games (capture the flag and goal attack)—though the levels are a bit too big for certain game modes in the four-player-maximum Wi-Fi play.

Publisher: Activision  
 Developer: Shiba  
 Players: 1 (2-4 with Wi-Fi)  
 ESRB: Mature

www.activision.com

THE VERDICTS OUT OF 10

**9.0 8.0 8.5**

JAMES      JENNIFER      JOE

PSP

# WIPEOUT PURE

Speed skills



The unlockable Zone team ship (shown) is almost required to beat the later race classes.

**Good:** Sleek, shiny, and superfast  
**Bad:** Few tracks, fewer bonuses  
**Sony Says:** "The amount of downloadable content [will be] huge"



**SHAWN:** The twisted-ribbon tracks, the roller-coaster altitude changes, the design-college cool—that I get, that I've done before. Riding one of *Wipeout*'s shark-nosed rockets through an eye-tickling technopolis took me back to the series' PS1 glory days. At full steam (especially in the professional Rapier and Phantom classes), it's racing as protracted suicide, even with the high-performance handling—that trademark air-brake cornering that makes zipping forward by sliding sideways second nature. The thing I don't get is, how the hell is this happening on a handheld?

While I can't argue with console-quality death racing on the way to work (*Wipeout*'s weapons blaze even if I wish I could disable them after being blasted from gold to bronze), I can complain (at least a little) when the critic picks the technophile in me. A handful of championship cups that leap from fail-safe Sunday spin straight to sheer lunacy, no tuning and tweaking, just a few unlockables (not counting concept art)—I see the stick but want the carrot, too. Sony says more tracks and ships are in the making, but I'd rather earn them now than download them later.

**DEMIAN:** Every few minutes, I have to remind myself: Relax the death grip. Unclench the jaw. *Wipeout* is that intense, whether you're in a Zone race (a solo run in an increasingly faster ship that always ends in a fiery death after one too many wall bumps), one of the incredibly challenging Rapier- or Phantom-class race

series, or best of all, an ordinance-heavy Wi-Fi battle with friends.

Glad as I am that Sony is planning to offer downloadable tracks and ships, I'm with Shawn in that I wish they were in the game now. I'd much rather spend my time unlocking new stuff than trying to beat Rapier Beta tournament again. (Hot tip: It's cake with the Zone ship.)

**SHANE:** Has it really been nine years since *Wipeout XL2*? When you start feeling pangs of nostalgia for PS1 games, the truth is unavoidable—you're old. Luckily, Sony's hovercraft racer isn't quite ready for the scrap heap: *Wipeout* gets another shot at success with this impressive PSP offering. *Pure* revives the speed, style, and grace of *XL* while cherry-picking the worthwhile features—hyperfast Zone mode, a wide assortment of creative weapons, and looping, twisting tracks—from *XL*'s diminishing-returns sequel. This is the prettiest, most visceral racing experience on the PSP to date.

Sure, the difficulty curve's a bit on the harsh side, but at least you won't breeze through the game in an evening.



THE VERDICTS OUT OF 10

**8.0 8.0 8.5**

SHAWN      DEMIAN      SHANE

Publisher: Sony CEA  
 Developer: Sony CEE  
 Players: 1 (2-8 with Wi-Fi)  
 ESRB: Everyone

www.wipeoutpure.com



PSP

ONLINE

# TWISTED METAL: HEAD-ON

More of a fender bender



Who will win? Red Knight Rider on steroids or wheels-for-arms Axel?

THE VERDICTS  
OUT OF 10

7.5	6.5	6.0
ROBERT	SHAWN	BRYAN

Publisher: Sony CEA  
Developer: Inoq  
Players: 1 (2-8 via Wi-Fi and online)  
ESRB: Teen

www.playstation.com

**Good:** Expansive, destructible levels; explosions ringing in your ears  
**Bad:** D-pad combos, monotonous attack patterns  
**Making a Case for Cheapest Boss Ever:** Tower's foot



**ROBERT:** You know that kid, the one who always played by himself at recess, crashing Hot Wheels cars into each other? Well, this game is what he imagined, a demolition derby clattering with the sounds of machine-gun fire and industrial demolition, a strange place where cops, army men, and evil cunks seek to murder each other for no particular reason.

*Twisted Metal* has circled the block a few times, and it shows. I resisted its archaic control scheme (the *Mortal Kombat*-style D-pad combos for special moves). I scoffed at the charmless characters and simple jousting patterns. But as the later, larger levels opened up and I started getting a feel for the combat, *Head-On* grew on me. I really love the Monaco level, a racetrack (full of race cars) wrapping around the tiny Mediterranean city/country. Despite some early networking problems at release, the game's online play has since become more reliable—*Head-On* is a great café game.

**SHAWN:** Moscow, Paris, Cairo, Monaco—I like the gigantic go-anywhere-you-should-and-everywhere-you-shouldn't settings. The Eiffel Tower as take-off ramp, the Acropolis as NRA assembly and crash derby in one—I like smashing world monuments like so many mailboxes. (Is my PSP

wearing a mullet wig or is that *Twisted Metal*?) I like the combo moves, the specials, and the whole fighting-game-on-wheels feature set that made me a fan when the series first rolled off the line. But I don't like how car combat is too pell-mell, too haphazard, with its lock-on missile showers and spastic speed, to get you into that fighting-game groove in which know-how trumps catches. I've changed, but *Twisted Metal* hasn't; maybe that's why this time I like it without loving it.

**BRYAN:** Huge interactive environments, spectacular means of destruction, a hot-headed clown—yep, this is *Twisted Metal*. So why am I—a longtime fan of the series—'not feelin' very homicidal behind the wheel? Aside from the new minigames (which are either lame or damn near impossible), *Head-On* hardly advances the demented demolition derby form. I mean, how about introducing some new weapons or an original cast of born-to-be bad drivers, or better yet, tweaking the controls? And why have backdrops that resemble the "Around the World" putt-putt course from the 1967 Goldie Hawn flick *Overboard* rather than *Twisted Metal* Black's grittier scenery? This one may mildly entertain those who've never been *Twisted* before, but series vets should simply drive away.

PSP

# SPIDER-MAN 2

Not actually that amazing



THE VERDICTS  
OUT OF 10

6.0	7.0	6.0
JAMES	MATT	SCOOTER

Publisher: Activision  
Developer: Vicarious Visions  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Teen

www.activision.com

**Good:** New boss battles, great-looking cut-scenes  
**Bad:** Camera problems, doesn't take very long to beat  
**Strange Minigame:** Play a game of *Simon* to defuse bombs



**JAMES:** I'm gonna have to roll out the old "with great power comes great responsibility" cliché here and say that while the developers at Vicarious Visions used the PSP's great power to make some amazing cut-scenes, they kind of shirked their responsibility to include great gameplay. Gone is the home console version's best feature—the free-range, open-city web-swinging—instead, Spidey simultaneously fights crime and a bad camera, usually indoors in environments reminiscent of *Spider-Man 1*'s.

I'm underwhelmed by new additions like the semi-2D side-scrolling level, and a little disappointed to see that you still pimp out your Spider-Man with new combos and enhanced abilities bought from some silly store. I like that the boss fights are challenging, but when tips pop up pre-battle ("Jump on Rhino: Press L") it's like the tutorial mode never quite ended.

With extremely short missions and a simplified combo list, *Spider-Man 2* is designed to be played in quick bursts; if you don't take the hint and go for it in one sitting, you'll finish in about six so-so hours.

**TOPGUN—MATT:** Nevermind James, he hates everything. This *Spider-Man* feels like a highlight reel of some of the best moments from the console games. You get boss battles with villains like Rhino and

Shocker, fights with random thugs on rooftops and in warehouses, and the occasional save-the-hostages mission—but like any good highlight film, each mission is extremely short, usually taking five to 10 minutes to complete. The levels look great and can be pretty fun, though, and they certainly have a lot more variety than those in *Spider-Man 2* for DS, so with the exception of the short length, occasionally funky camera, and lack of the cool swing-anywhere-you-want movement from the console *Spider-Man 2* games, the PSP version holds up admirably.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—SCOOTER:** Yeah, so this *Spider-Man* is odder more like *1* than *2*. But then, I like the straightforward, mission-based *Spider-Man* games, so I don't mind that change. My main issues with this version are its lack of depth and horrible camera. The missions are short and somewhat varied, but overall combat and your upgradeable skills are pretty simplistic, and the camera makes any aerial level (like chasing a helicopter, fighting Vulture, etc.) pretty much suck. Besides that, it's a solid action game that does what it sets out to do and looks good while doing it. I also give *Spider-Man* kudos for managing to make the simultaneous boss fights against Shocker and Rhino pretty cool, even though I'm sick of fighting Shocker yet again.

# REVIEWS WRAP-UP

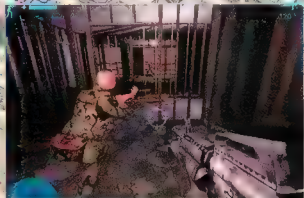
The games that were too little or too late

## FOUR FOR \$20: ATTACK OF THE BUDGET TITLES

A pair of war games, some old-time survival-horror, and drug abuse on the cheap



**Super Army War** • GBA • Atlas • ESRB: T — While we can't say you'll get more enjoyment out of *Super Army War* than the lotto ticket, pencil toppers, travel-size baby powder, and Taco Bell bean burritos you could pick up for the same price, you probably won't get less, either. In short, it's arcade classic *Chaplinier* with simplistic strategy tacked on. Swell idea, but the back and forth flying still gets boring fast.



**Combat Task Force 121** • XB • Groove • ESRB: M — Flat graphics, few effects, routine missions, and A.I. recruited in Mayberry—not much elite about *Task Force*. (Then again, we once saw a backwards travel brochure that claimed the local tavern was where “the elite meet,” so what do we know?) Online play passes the physical (barely), provided you can find some competition.



**Naro** • PS2/XB • Midway • ESRB: M — In *Naro*, Class A drugs give you advantages against the bad guys: Slow down time by lighting up a joint (bullet-dodging while stoned? That's a good idea, Einstein) or watch as civilians grow gigantic clown heads and baddies turn into devils when you're on LSD. With its tedious missions, small maps, and blah graphics, *Naro* is a quick and dirty high. But for 20 bucks, what did you expect?



**Obscure** • XB • Dreamcatcher • ESRB: M — Play *Resident Evil* but as the cool kids in high school, with characters like lock-picking Stan, a three-time senior. These wimpy teenagers die off too easily, and trying to get people to join in on two-player co-op action is a bigger ordeal than finding a date for prom. *Obscure* pays homage to all those teen slasher movies, which means lots of diarrhea dialogue and a brain-dead plot. But sadly, no shower scenes.

## UNDER THE RADAR: ROLEPLAYERS

Niche RPGs for the serious swashbuckler



**Graffiti Kingdom** • PS2 • Hot-B • ESRB: E Remember *Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color* (EGM #167), the crazy coloring RPG that had EGM editors drawing disgusting phallic symbols with unsurprising zeal? This sequel of sorts still enables plenty of artistry, but the more robust coloring system is almost too complex—it actually requires creative effort (gasp). The story mode's changed, too: You now guide your creations through a cutesy platformer-type adventure. It's simple, strange, and definitely not for everyone.



**Stella Deus** • PS2 • Atlas • ESRB: T Beautiful *Stella* might've been the next great strategy-RPG, but while the basic game system is enjoyable, dubious battle rules and limitations make for an awkward fit between the gameplay and the story. Plus, “training” in unpleasantly repetitive catacombs is heavily encouraged, and item-combining busywork stands between you and the most interesting abilities. Stunning looks put *Stella* above average, but easily daunted recruits and war weary genre veterans alike may end up breaking the engagement.

## WIN THE GAME OF THE MONTH CONTEST

We've hidden at least one movie quote in this issue—spot one and you may have already won our Game of the Month. All that's left to do is e-mail the quote, the movie it's from, and the page you found it on to EGM@ziffdavis.com, **subject:**

**Movie Quote:** EGM #192. Include your full name and mailing address (no PO boxes!) in the e-mail. We'll pick three winners at random and send each of them a copy of our GOTM. This issue's prize: *Jade Empire*.







**Splinter Cell Chaos Theory** • PS2/GC • Ubisoft • ESRB: M — For PS2 owners, stealth-action has an official name, and that name is...still *Metal Gear Solid*. *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory* is a fantastic one-player game, with its intense, almost scary mix of hide-in-the-dark sneakery and Tom Clancy spy-fiction intrigue. And series fans can even appreciate the technical improvements over predecessor *Pandora Tomorrow*, like sharper graphics and a less frustrating detection system for when you're caught with your hands in the terrorists' cookie jars. But it's the multiplayer versus play (introduced in *Pandora*) that has propelled *Splinter Cell* to all-time levels of greatness, and for *Chaos Theory*, this mode's been severely castrated from what its Xbox cousin offers. It's pretty much exactly the same as what you got in the PS2 *Pandora*, with four new maps. That's it. No new gadgets, no new weapons, no new modes within this mode. We're calling a big BS on this lazy travesty.

We don't have anything consoling to say to GameCube owners, either—they're even worse off in the multiplayer department. But at least the lack of online fun isn't news to them....

## ONLINE FIGHT CLUB

When you wanna reach out and touch someone...with a kick to the jewels



**Iron Phoenix** • XB • Sega • ESRB: T — A 16-player online fighting game sounds cool—imagine wall running, magic attacks, and sword fighting blended like a Jamba Juice—but when 1-on-1 combat is clumsy, 1-on-15 fights are a mess. The online options are nice, but since the story mode was cut from the final game, offline play is limited to arena battles. Lame.



**Spikeout: Battle Street** • XB • Sega • ESRB: T — So old school you can feel the quarters slipping out of your pocket, *Spikeout* is a straightforward 3D brawler, dragged kicking and screaming into the 20th century only because of its built-in online play. There's not much depth here, and the CPU A.I. is bordering on brain-dead, but it's worth a quick spin online, provided you can find a copy. **B+**

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# REVIEWS ARCHIVE

## All organized like a good game of Tetris



Psychoonaut's Raz wonders if he left the oven on.



**BOMBERMAN 1+ MARIO KART**

Average score for the four Mario Kart games reviewed by ESN! **9.0** (out of 10)

**MARIO KART 7TH**

Average score for the 14 Bomberman games with music player modes reviewed by ESN! **7.83** (out of 10)

GAME	SYSTEM	VERDICT	SCORES (out of 10)	AWARD
American McGee Presents Scrapland	XB	■ The broken-record gameplay forces you to play through repetitive missions	6.5 5.5 6.5	
Asphalt Urban GT	DS	■ If you're looking for a great racing game for the DS...keep looking!	6.5 6.5 8.0	
Brothers in Arms: Road to Hill 30	PS2/XB	■ We salute <i>BA's</i> brainy A.I. and squad tactics—it's the best WWII shooter yet	8.5 8.0 9.0	Silver
Champions: Return to Arms	PS2	■ Hack and/or slash to find cooler stuff that lets you hack and/or slash some more	7.5 7.0 6.0	
Cold Fear	PS2/XB	■ A lukewarm zombie game, but the exploding headshots never get old	6.0 7.5 5.0	
Dead or Alive Ultimate	XB	■ The bouncing boobies of <i>DOAs 1</i> and <i>2</i> look way nicer revamped for Xbox	7.0 7.5 7.5	
Death by Degrees	PS2	■ We're grateful to have Nina on board—too bad decent gameplay didn't come with	5.0 5.0 6.0	
Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening	GC	■ The sequel gives us a new fighting-style system and some crazy combos	8.0 7.0 9.0	Silver
Donkey Kong: Jungle Beat	PS2	■ Why work when you can bang on the drum all day in this unconventional platformer?	8.0 7.0 8.0	
Donkey Konga	GC	■ (Mostly) great songs and a quality bongo controller make for a lively party game	8.0 7.0 7.5	
Doom 3	XB	■ We promise you'll jump when things go bump in the night in this beautiful shooter	9.0 8.5 9.5	Gold
Dynasty Warriors 5	PS2	■ They've improved upon the series' "hack-n-slash as a Chinese Barbarian" gameplay	8.0 7.5 8.0	
EA Sports Fight Night Round 2	PS2/XB/GC	■ We pity the fool who doesn't climb into the ring with this boxing champ	8.5 8.0 8.5	Silver
FIFA Street	PS2/XB/GC	■ Soccer has been Street-fied, and it's decent but not great	8.0 8.5 7.5	
God of War	PS2	■ Great beard of Zeus! Missing this hot action-adventure would be a Greek tragedy!	10 9.5 10	Gold
Gran Turismo 4	PS2	■ Still the best driving sim, but not a lot has changed since <i>A-Spec</i>	9.0 8.5 8.0	Gold
GunFrontier: Allied Strike	XB	■ One of Dreamcast's finest looking robot shooters. What, this is an Xbox game?	8.5 7.5 5.0	
Kesson III	PS2	■ Through cinematic and ambitious, it never manages any serious action or strategy	7.5 6.0 6.5	
Lego Star Wars	GC/XB	■ Some fun disassembly is required when you use the Force to take apart battle droids	7.0 7.0 7.5	
Mario Party 8	PS2/XB	■ Still satisfying, but the refreshed board-game antics linger like an unwelcome guest	6.0 6.5 6.0	
MLB 2006	PS2	■ The series tries to go for a hit, but it's still just a bunt compared to the competition	7.0 6.5 7.0	
MLB 2K5	PS2/XB	■ Cranks one outta the park thanks to its innovative pitching system and spiffy visuals	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
Mortal Kombat: Deception	GC	■ This belated sequel has so many extra game modes that there's even <i>MK chess</i>	6.0 6.5 7.5	
Mr. Driller: Drill Spirits	DS	■ Simple, addictive puzzle action that truly shines in its wireless multiplayer mode	7.5 7.5 7.0	
Musashi Samurai Legend	PS2	■ This swordsman swings a mean blade, but his repetitive level setups leave the fun	6.5 5.0 6.0	
MVP Baseball 2006	PS2/XB/GC	■ Slick minigames make it the best baseball sim version yet	8.5 8.0 9.0	Silver
MX vs. ATV Unleashed	PS2/XB	■ A worthy game that appeals to more than gearheads with its countless unlockables	8.0 7.0 6.5	
Nanobreaker	PS2	■ Go on a one-man blood drive in this wildy gory hack-n-slash adventure	7.5 6.5 4.0	
NBA Street V3	PS2/XB/GC	■ Only his <i>Airness</i> scores higher than <i>NBA Street's</i> new arcade-rich roundabout	9.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
Phantom Dust	XB	■ Amasa more psychic powers than Miss Ceo in a slick arena-combat game	8.5 7.5 8.0	Silver
Ping Pals	DS	■ Ill a pal and tell others not to waste an Andrew Jackson on this poor text messenger!	1.5 0.5 0.0	
Playboy: The Mansion	PS2/XB	■ It's a third-rate Sims clone, but with giant cartoon boobies	5.0 4.5 4.5	
Pocket Kingdom: Own the World	NG	■ It's the <i>Hi-Gain's</i> first online RPG, not that you can tell while playing	5.0 4.0 7.5	
Pokemon Dash	DS	■ In this mediocre Poké spin-off for tykes, rubbin' really is racing	5.0 6.5 8.0	
Project Snowblind	PS2/XB	■ The <i>MRA</i> has its poster game in this weapons-crammed futuristic blaster	8.0 8.5 7.5	Silver
Psychnonauts	XII	■ Travel through minds to cure more crazies than shock therapy in this great game	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
The Punisher	PS2/XB	■ The Punisher's spewed-out one-liners get more cringies than <i>101 violent gangbangers</i>	6.5 6.0 6.0	
Red Ninja: End of Honor	PS2/XB	■ The game's so horrible that it actually ruins a videogame with hot ninjas in pantsie	4.5 4.0 4.0	
Resident Evil 4	GC	■ Witness the near-perfect rebirth of Capcom's venerable survival-horror franchise	10 9.5 10	Gold
Resident Evil Outbreak: File #2	PS2	■ Koko the gorilla has an easier time communicating than gamers in <i>RED's</i> online play	8.0 6.5 4.5	
Ridge Racer DS	DS	■ Six-player wireless LAN races (on one cart), good graphics and bad control	6.5 6.5 2.5	
Rise of the Kasal	PS2	■ The stealth killer's easy when your nemesis A.I. partner's not getting in your way	6.0 6.0 7.0	
Sega Classics Collection	PS2	■ Awesome Sega coin-ups are "updated" into monstrosities while Sega fans weep	4.5 6.0 4.5	
Shadow of Rome	PS2	■ Blood spils, skulls spilt, and meat falls off the bone in this hot gladiator shooter	6.5 7.0 8.0	
Shining Tears	PS2	■ Dumb-as-dirt A.I. muddles this otherwise likable action-RPG	6.5 6.5 5.5	
Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga	PS2	■ It's <i>Final Fantasy X</i> plus <i>Hinokim</i> , plus <i>Med Max</i> , but with a ditherhanger ending!	8.0 8.5 8.0	Silver
Spider-Man 2	DS	■ If your spider sense is on the fritz, let us warn you to avoid this no-hum adventure	6.0 5.5 3.0	
Splitter Cell Chaos Theory	XB	■ Back with cool co-op features and graphics more shocking than Kim Jong-il's hair	9.5 10 9.0	Gold
Star Fox: Assault	GC	■ Dogs of war takes on new meaning in this Nintendo comeback shooter series	8.0 8.0 6.0	
Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic II	XB	■ The satisfying sequel continues the trend of <i>Star Wars</i> games that don't suck	8.5 7.0 9.0	Silver
Star Wars Republic Commando	XB	■ Guide a squad of three smart stormtroopers that actually shoot the bad guys!	7.0 7.0 8.0	
Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	DS	■ <i>Street Fighter III</i> + <i>Street Fighter III</i> = <i>Street Fighter Awesome</i> . But where's <i>Alpha</i> ?	8.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
Street Mario 64 DS	XB	■ 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	Silver
Tekken 5	PS2	■ The Iron Fist tournament may be getting a little rusty, but it comes with great extras	8.0 8.0 8.5	Silver
Tenchu: Fatal Shadows	PS2	■ Slick-looking stealth kills can't make up for a catastrophic camera	4.5 6.0 4.5	
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	PS2/XB/GC	■ The ultimate twitch-first-person shooter with a killer sense of humor	7.5 7.5 9.5	Silver
Tokyo Prehensile Park	XB	■ The platforming clichés in this punkosaurus have been around since the Stone Age	7.0 6.0 5.5	
Unreal Championship 2: The Liandri Conflict	XB	■ Fast-paced deamthing that's ideal for gamers bored with <i>Half 2</i>	8.5 8.0 8.0	Silver
Viewtiful Joe 2	PS2/GC	■ More of what you hopefully know and (should) love from Joe's first outing	8.0 8.0 8.5	Silver
WarOWare: Touch!ed	DS	■ Its wacky minigames keep you—and those watching you—entertained	9.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
WarOWare: Twisted!	GBA	■ Spin your GBA like a nutcase in this collection of new three-second minigames	9.0 9.0 9.0	Gold
World Soccer Winning Eleven II	PS2/XB	■ Sorry, John Madden, but this is the new poster boy for sports-gaming realism	9.5 8.5 8.5	Silver
Worms Forts: Under Siege	PS2/XB	■ Weik! fat building and stupid A.I. make <i>Worms</i> gross again	6.5 4.0 6.5	
Xenosaga Episode II	DS	■ Not <i>Xenosaga Episode II</i> , but more like <i>Xenosaga Episode I: The Deleted Scenes</i>	7.5 6.5 7.0	
Yoshi Touch & Go!	PS2	■ Draw clouds with the stylus and control the environment for Mario's green speed	7.5 7.5 8.5	
Ys: The Ark of Naphthim	PS2	■ A solid, challenging action-RPG the way they used to make 'em	7.5 6.5 8.0	

\*Games in red denote previous Game of the Month winners.

### bargain bin



## FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

■ Xbox  
 ■ Released: June 2004  
 ■ Original Scores: 8.0, 7.0, 8.0  
 If shooting at explodable barrels is the extent of your third-person strategy-shooter know-how, you obviously haven't played *Full Spectrum Warrior* yet. *FSW's* innovative new gameplay, however, did come with some flaws (sometimes your men won't follow orders), but we'll excuse a few trips while breaking new ground. For only \$20, what are you waiting for? "Alpha Team, go!"



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- 2) Drop It Like It's Hot **poly2811**
- 3) Numb/Encore **poly2812**
- 4) Milkshake **poly2813**
- 5) Bad Boys (Cops Theme) **poly2814**
- 6) Boulevard Of Broken Dreams **poly2815**
- 7) Tubular Bells (Exorcist Theme) **poly2816**
- 8) Balla Baby **poly2817**
- 9) Karma **poly2818**
- 10) Baby Got Back **poly2819**

## All Time Favorites

- 99 Red Balloons **poly2820**
- Another Brick In The Wall **poly2821**
- Barbie Girl **poly2822**
- Batman (TV Theme) **poly2823**
- Cotton Eye Joe **poly2824**
- Dueling Banjos **poly2825**
- Flintstones **poly2826**
- I Don't Want To Be **poly2827**
- Inspector Gadget **poly2828**
- Knight Rider **poly2829**
- Low Rider **poly2830**
- My Prerogative **poly2831**
- Push It **poly2832**
- Rick Your Body **poly2833**
- Ricky **poly2834**
- Saved By The Bell **poly2835**
- She Will Be Loved **poly2836**
- Starway to Heaven **poly2837**
- Stand Up **poly2838**
- The Scientist **poly2839**
- Waiting For Tonight **poly2840**
- We Like To Party **poly2841**
- Welcome To My Life **poly2842**
- When I Think About Cheatin' **poly2843**

## Top Sound FX

- I Have A Phone Call **fun1840**
- Police Horn **fun1841**
- Bling Your Phone Is Blinging **fun1842**
- Pick Up The Telephone **fun1843**
- Reggae Sing **fun1844**
- The Crazy Frog Beeps To Pick Up **fun1845**
- The Crazy Frog - Going Wild 2 Stroke **fun1846**
- Playa Tone **fun1847**
- Penguins In Trouble **fun1848**
- Don't Drop It **fun1849**
- The Crazy Frog - Motor **fun1850**
- The Crazy Frog Goes To Mexico **fun1851**
- Oh You Like Scary Movies **fun1852**
- Heads, Shoulders, Knees And Toes **fun1853**
- Monnie Your Phone Is Ringing **fun1854**
- The Crazy Frog - Funky **fun1855**
- Pick Up The Phone **fun1856**
- Mission Impossible **fun1857**
- Sweetie The Chick - I May Be Small... **fun1858**
- Flirty Laughs **fun1859**

## Realsounds

- All That I've Got - The Used **real1220**
- American Idol - Green Day **real1221**
- Breathle - Fabolous **real1222**
- Bring Em Out - TI **real1223**
- Get Some Crunk In Yo System - Trillville **real1224**
- I'm Not OK - My Chemical Romance **real1225**
- Let's Go - Trick Daddy **real1226**
- Losing My Religion - R.E.M. **real1227**
- No Problem - Lil Scrappy **real1228**
- Overnight Celebrity - Twista **real1229**
- Rack N Roll High School - The Ramones **real1230**
- Sheena Is A Punk Rocker - Ramones **real1231**
- Se Sexy (Clean Edit) - Twista And K Kelly **real1232**
- Some Cut - Trillville **real1233**
- Sponge Bob Movie - S. Bob Square Pants **real1234**
- Sunshine - Twista **real1235**
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- Welcome To My Life - Simple Plan **real1238**
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- The Crazy Frog - Original **frog834**

Wallpapers

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- frog936
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- frog938
- frog939

Animated Wallpapers

- frog931

## Color Wallpapers

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**Sound FX:** LG C1300, G4015, G4020; MOTOROLA V180, V220, V300, V400, V600; NOKIA 3100, 3200, 3595, 6010; SAMSUNG X426, X427; SIEMENS C64Z7; SONYERICSSON T226  
**Animated Wallpapers:** MOTOROLA V220, V300, V400, V505, V600; NOKIA 3100, 3200, 3595, 6010; SAMSUNG X426, X427; SIEMENS C64Z7; SONYERICSSON T226  
**Realsounds:** LG G4015, C1300, G4020, L1150, L1400; MOTOROLA V300, V220, V551, V400, V600, V180, V505; SAMSUNG X426, X427, X427M, D415; NOKIA 6600, 6200, 3650, N-Gage DD, 3200

## Animated Wallpapers

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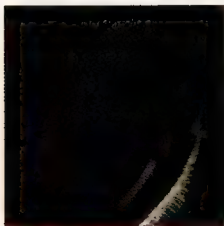
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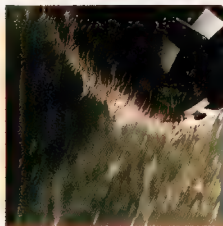
## Splinter Cell Chaos Theory

Sam Fisher's  
latest is just  
as much fun on  
the go.



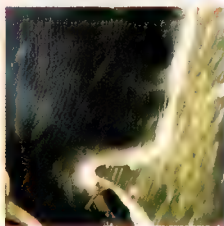
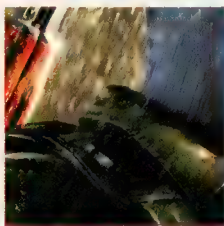
## FINAL FANTASY VII SNOWBOARDING

>Cloud returns to  
the slopes.



## WWE AFTERSHOCK

>Layeth the smack-  
down, wirelessly.



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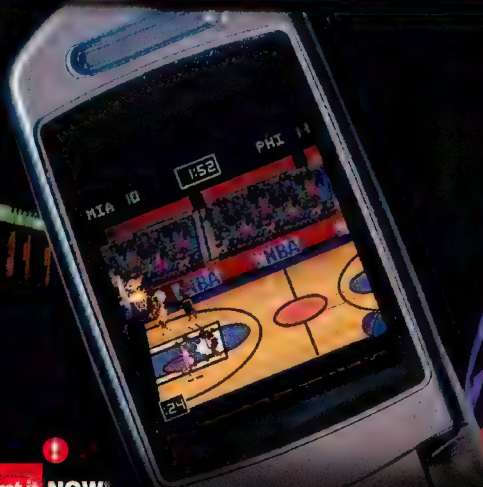


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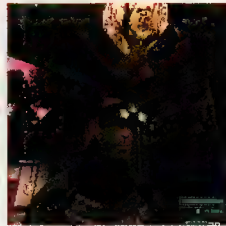
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# SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

IUP reviews the N-Gage version of Ubisoft's stealth hit



**C**haos Theory is the latest installment in Ubisoft's popular espionage series and the second *Splinter Cell* title to be featured on N-Gage. This time around, developer Gameloft didn't place Sam Fisher in a 2D sprite-based environment; rather it's managed to port *Chaos Theory* to the mobile phone in all its 3D glory—minus the power of a home console, of course. The result is a game that remains true to the look and feel of *Splinter Cell*, capturing the heart-pounding thrills in a portable format, but it's not quite perfect. To date, *Chaos Theory* is the finest display of the N-Gage's overall gaming abilities, yet there are a few areas of inconsistency that, on top of the challenging gameplay, make the game a bit more frustrating than it needs to be.

The NSA black-ops agent Sam Fisher of Third Echelon is back at it again, traveling the world on a mission to stop any threat to the safety of America. The order in which missions are played is consistent with the console releases, but modifications have been made to work within the limitations of the N-Gage hardware. Gameloft has redesigned each map, making the levels smaller and easier to navigate within the confines of a cell phone screen. This hasn't altered the gameplay in any major sense, but because *Splinter Cell* is a 3D game, certain camera issues become problematic. The manual camera rotation and the inability to zoom from your point of view away from the character onscreen make it difficult to see surrounding obstacles, especially in confined spaces

such as elevator shafts.

The manual camera system is controlled via the keypad and takes some getting used to. However, when mastered, the camera offers tight control, useful in situations where finely tweaking accuracy is important. It comes in handy when sneaking toward unsuspecting enemies, almost making up for the lack of an analog stick. All of the play mechanics of *Splinter Cell* titles remain—you can switch the lights on and off, pick locks, climb poles, and slit an opponent's throat—but it's the sensitivity of stealth maneuvering that poses a problem for this N-Gage game.

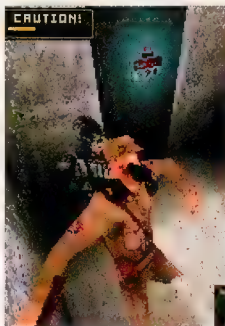
Graphically, the 3D models and variations in lighting and texturing are impressive feats for the N-Gage. There's such depth in level design and attention to detail that you'd be hard-pressed to find an N-Gage title that comes close to the quality of *Chaos Theory*.

Amon Tobin's incredibly composed soundtrack from the console versions is also nicely represented here, adding to the already rich atmosphere.

Stealth games are a sophisticated genre for the sophisticated gamer, and not all players have the patience or the attention span for the slow, finicky maneuvers of black ops. You either love it or you despise it, and very rarely are you somewhere in between. For those looking for an alternative to fast-moving genres overloaded with visual stimuli, *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory* is a brilliant change of pace.

Aside from the single-player mode, players have access to the N-Gage Arena to upload scores from each mission, as well as a multiplayer mode which uses Bluetooth wireless for cooperative play.

**IUP SCORE: 9.0**





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# WWE AFTERSHOCK

Wrestling mayhem returns to the N-Gage



Call it fake, scripted, cheesy, or ridiculous, pro wrestling is as much a performance as a soap opera. Yet amid all the theatrics, one thing's clear: The wrestling moves are a painful joy to watch, and *WWE Aftershock* captures this aspect perfectly. It's not often the animation in 3D N-Gage titles manages to convey believable motion and weight, but *Aftershock* is the exception. Developer Exient has done a fine job animating the impacts of the brutal wrestling moves—stomps, falls, runs, kicks, and punches truly look and feel painfully realistic (all the more so with the aide of N-Gage's vibration feature).

*Aftershock* sports some of today's biggest WWE superstars, including Eddie Guerrero, Chris Benoit, Chris Jericho, John Cena, Booker T, Ray Mysterio, Triple H, Edge, Ric Flair, Undertaker, and Big Show. But unlike *WWE Smackdown*, which lacks many game features because of Java software limitations, *Aftershock* features character that look distinct and can perform their famed signature moves.

*WWE Aftershock* also features multiplayer gameplay via Bluetooth and should be available by the time you read this.



## FINAL FANTASY VII SNOWBOARDING

Square Enix delivers a treat for mobile gamers

Squenix fans, your prayers have been heard! That's right—Cloud reprises his role in the snowboarding minigame from *Final Fantasy VII* on your mobile phone. Showing off the strength of today's mobile technology, *Final Fantasy VII Snowboarding* is a near-perfect port of the PlayStation minigame, from the graphics and sounds to the expressions on Cloud's face.

There are two modes in the game: score attack and time attack. In score attack, players earn points by collecting balloons, dodging obstacles (including trees, rocks, and skiing moogles), and finishing the race in a timely manner. There are three courses that correspond to different difficulty levels, and beating the advanced course unlocks the

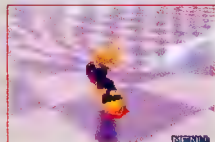
time attack mode, in which the objective is to finish as fast as possible.

The game's controls have obviously been simplified for cell-phone play, using the standard directional buttons and the OK key to jump, but the excitement remains. Cloud has two types of jumps to help him clear obstacles: a normal leap and a spin jump to weave through the crowds.

*FFVII Snowboarding* will be available by the time you read this.

Square Enix will also be releasing a mobile version of *Musashi: Samurai Legend*, entitled *Musashi: Mobile Samurai*, on mobile platforms in the near future.

For more info on these games and compatible phones to play them on, check out Square Enix's mobile site at [www.sqexm.com](http://www.sqexm.com).





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| EG59719 - Josh Gracin      | Wheels                     |
| EG59675 - Ryan Cabrera     | TRUE                       |
| EG51394 - Kaye West        | All Falls Down             |
| EG59672 - Gavin DeGraw     | I don't want to be         |
| EG65024 - Trick Daddy      | Sugar gimme some           |
| EG65017 - Snoop Dogg       | Signs                      |
| EG59673 - Three Days Grace | Home                       |
| EG65000 - CIARA            | NEXT TO YOU                |
| EG65003 - R. KELLY & JAY-Z | FEELIN' YOU IN STEREO      |
| EG59476 - Green Day        | Boulevard of broken dreams |
| EG59407 - Ludacris         | Get the f*** back          |
| EG59408 - Snoop Doggy Dog  | Drop it like its hot       |
| EG65035 - Nelly            | No-Na-No-NA                |

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|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
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| EG51729 - Dr Dre                    | F*** With Dre Day    |
| EG51725 - 2 Pac                     | California Love      |
| EG51730 - Dr Dre                    | Let Me Ride          |
| EG51795 - Ice Cube                  | No Vaseline          |
| EG51786 - Jewell                    | F*** Wit Dre Day RMX |
| EG51731 - Snoop Dogg Dogg ft Dr Dre | Nuthin but a G Thing |
| EG51724 - 2 Pac                     | How Do You Want It   |
| EG51732 - Snoop Doggy Dogg          | Gin and Juice        |
| EG51793 - 2 Pac                     | Me Against The World |
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|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| EG59541 - Lil Jon & Eastside boyz | I Don't give a F**k        |
| EG65016 - Snoop Dogg              | Let's Get Blown            |
| EG59551 - Ja Rule                 | New York                   |
| EG59667 - Nas                     | Nazareth Savage            |
| EG65007 - LL COOL J               | I'M ABOUT TO GET HER       |
| EG59685 - Young Buck              | Sharty Wanna Ride          |
| EG59474 - Ciara                   | 1 2 step                   |
| EG50930 - Sean Paul               | I'm Still In Love With You |
| EG59491 - Method Man              | ALL I NEED                 |
| EG50649 - P Diddy                 | Bad Boy For Life           |
| EG59499 - Wu-Tang                 | BRING DA RUCKUS            |
| EG65018 - Das Efx                 | Mic Checka                 |
| EG65023 - Eric B. & Rakim         | Microphone Fiend           |
| EG59690 - Sean Paul               | Infiltrate                 |
| EG59503 - Jay-z                   | Izzo                       |
| EG50649 - P Diddy                 | Bad Boy For Life           |
| EG65080 - Gang Starr              | You Know My Steez          |
| EG59506 - Busta Rhymes            | Make um Clap               |
| EG59460 - Fabolous                | Young'n Holla Back         |

## ROCK

- |                                    |                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| EG59436 - Three Days Grace         | I Hate Everything About You |
| EG52243 - Green Day                | American idiot              |
| EG52080 - Hoobastank               | The reason                  |
| EG59487 - Simple Plan              | Perfect world               |
| EG52098 - Ben Harper               | Wicked Man                  |
| EG59760 - Default                  | Wasting My Time             |
| EG59484 - Incubus                  | Drive                       |
| EG59431 - Incubus                  | Wish You Were Here          |
| EG59433 - Slipknot                 | Vermilion                   |
| EG65082 - Rage Against The Machine | Calm Like A Bomb            |
| EG65083 - Rage Against The Machine | Guerrilla Radio             |
| EG65084 - Rage Against The Machine | No Shelter                  |
| EG59479 - Aaron Lewis              | Outside                     |
| EG50210 - Green Day                | Basket Case                 |
| EG59535 - Korn                     | ALIVE                       |
| EG59482 - Linkin Park              | BREAKING THE HABIT          |
| EG50897 - Linkin Park              | FROM THE INSIDE             |
| EG50875 - Linkin Park              | NUMB                        |
| EG50909 - Coldplay                 | MOSES                       |

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# SEANBABY'S WORST TV GAMES OF ALL TIME\*



## A very special Rest of the Crap

I don't normally talk much about television, because I'm trying to break into the scientist business, and you look smarter if you brag about how you don't have a TV. Sometimes I'm so smart I don't even know what a TV is. To me, the words "Perfect Strangers" might as

well be "Tingle Dingle Banana Man" because I don't know what you're talking about. That's how smart I am.

For the purposes of this article, however, I put down my science calculator and researched television—specifically, games based on what are commonly called "shows" or "TV

shows." Or, sometimes, *See Haw*. I rated the 10 worst ones of all time. (The first five are featured here. Part two comes next month.) Each game got an Accuracy rating. This score is out of 10; a score of 1 would be the equivalent of a game about *Frasier* that isn't about making out with your

own brother, and a score of 10 would be for a game based on Jean-Claude Van Damme which uses only two buttons—one to do the splits and another to punch someone in the dong. This same game would also score an Accuracy rating of 10 if it were based on *Frasier*. —Seanbaby



### Knight Rider • NES

**The TV Show:** Michael Knight and his talking car drive the hell through whatever they want.

**The Game:** It's like a cross between *Rad Racer* (NES) and something capable of deleting the word "rad" out of things you cross it with. The only thing that saves this garbage is that they didn't bother to program a system that disapproves of you massacring innocents. Just hold down KITT's machine-gun button, because if a school bus is caught in the cross fire, so be it. The game understands that those exploded corpses shouldn't have been driving so close to your knight riding. You can turbo jump over innocent cars if you don't feel like shooting them, but this only kills them with awesome instead. TURBO JUMP!

9  
ACCURACY

If may suck, but it's still about driving the hell through whatever you want.



■ Biker, alien, child predator.

### ALF • Sega Master System

**The TV Show:** A family loves it as their alien houseguest comically wants to eat cats.

**The Game:** You're on a grand quest to get off this planet of delicious cats, and your only companions are the five repeating beeps of the theme song. You'll soon learn to hate them. No matter what kind of underwater salam-using adventures you find ALF involved in, the theme music will make it feel as though you're living the same three seconds again and again and again. The theme music sounds like it was taken straight from a recording of a robot trying to annoy his older robot brother on a really long car trip. And this raises more questions than it answers.

4  
ACCURACY

It's not very much like the show at all, but as luck would have it, that fact could not possibly be important to any living thing.



### American Gladiators • Super NES

**The TV Show:** Zap, Laser, and Turbo team up with the culmination of all of mankind's tennis-ball-launching technology to gladiate like real Americans.

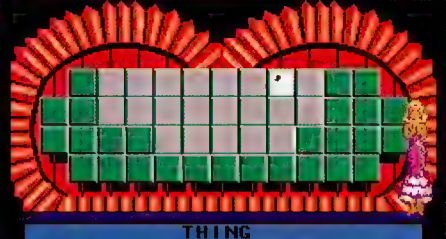
**The Game:** They did their best to make the events similar to the ones on the show, like Running Into Idiot Holding Pad and Pectoral Lube Face-off. Each lasts only a few seconds, so once you figure out what you're looking at is a tiny bikini girl in a hamster ball and you're supposed to steer her into a steam-squirling ball dock while other girls' balls smash

Nerf Crossbow versus Tennis Ball Gun: The eternal conflict rages on.

6  
ACCURACY

It's as faithful a translation of the show as you can hope for, except that it's missing one key component: I can't masturbate to this.





**Wheel of Fortune Starring Vanna White • NES**

**The TV Show:** A motorcycle pilot battles sharks along the bottom of the ocean on a quest to cure his amnesia. Right?

**The Game:** It's really her—TV's Vanna White! I'm not sure how they pulled it off, but they actually got Vanna White, star of both *Wheel of Fortune* the TV show and the cover of *Wheel of Fortune: the Home Version* to star in the game! And not only does a swamp-creature,

digitized picture of her appear each time you start, a tiny graphic fitting her vague description slowly turns letters as you play! Wow! So in summation: Vanna White is a swamp creature and has to be stopped.

**6 ACCURACY** Vanna White but no Pat Sajak? What, did the eight pixels that sort of look like Pat Sajak want too much money?



Warning: actually a racing game.

**American Chopper • XB**

**The TV Show:** Quick! Make a sweet motorcycle!

**The Game:** The game focuses more on racing motorcycles than on building them—which would normally be a smart way to go since motorcycle repair and maintenance, traditionally, hasn't translated well to videogames. Well in this case, neither does motorcycle racing. A court order won't allow me close enough to test this 100-percent true theory, but this game is so boring that if you put it in front of Robin Williams, it would turn him into a normal human.

**5 ACCURACY** Sometimes it's hard to write funny lines about videogames when they're this boring. So this line is about what would happen if a fat person sat on a chair made out of banana peels: ha ha ha. **46**  
(to be continued...)

**\* Disqualified, but Worthy, Contestants**  
As a courtesy to me, these deservedly bad TV games were left off the list since I already reviewed them once, and the editors know just enough about savage murder to not ask me to write an entirely new *That's So Raven* review: *That's So Raven* (GBA), *Monster Garage* (XB), *Dora the Explorer* (GBA), *Gilligan's Island* (NES), and *Fear Factor* (GBA).

# FINAL WORD

## What do Zelda and Tony Hawk have in common?\*



■ If *Lumines* could have only one game for the remainder of 2005, it'd be this one.

**A**round the offices, **Previews Editor Shane Bettenhausen** and **1UP.com Managing Editor (and EGM alum) Che Chiu** are constantly arguing about videogames like two frustrated (and possibly sexually repressed) nerds, so we invited them to put their thoughts down on paper in this month's Final Word....

**Your God says you can have only one offline and one online game for the rest of 2005. What would you pick?**

**Shane:** I'd have to choose the new *Legend of Zelda* for my offline option—I've been a devoted fan of the series for goin' on 20 years, and this one looks to be the best yet. And in the online arena, I'd choose *Phantasy Star Universe*: I'm sure to get my money's worth with a few hundred hours of gorgeous online RPG action.

**Che:** *Zelda's* a pretty safe choice, but like most of Link's adventures, it's fun only on the virgin run. For my gaming penitentiary, I'm gonna have to go with something with

infinite replayability—like *Lumines* on PSP. Talk about puzzle-gaming nirvana. It's one of those games that keeps on giving long after you've hit that high-score goal you initially set for yourself. Online? I'd choose *Phantom Dust* on Xbox, a highly competitive and addictive action/card-battle game with a growing community out there.

**Shane:** Picking games that are already out for the rest of 2005? How lame is that? And I've been playing *Lumines* for two months and the thrill has long since worn off...who wants to play a puzzle game for an hour to unlock new stuff?

**Che:** When will you young pups learn that newer doesn't always mean better? And if untacking stuff is the only reason you're playing *Lumines*, I'm afraid you've missed the point entirely. Have fun playing *Zelda* for the fifth time.

**Why is Electronic Arts bad for the industry?**

**Shane:** I don't actually think that EA Sports is bad. If sports fans are willing to pay \$50 for updated stats and a few tweaks, let 'em. I do feel that EA's non-sports games tend to be disappointing,

however: Most are licensed properties, and all but a scant few offer sickly produced yet highly derivative experiences that are all too predictable. Slogging through a game like *The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age* was pure pain for me—no spark of inspiration, no innovation, no reason for it to exist other than to cash in on a demographic. EA's games seem to be born in marketing meetings.

**Che:** EA's design-by-committee games often lack soul and spark. It's a multi-billion-dollar company, but would it ever invest a few million into unproven projects like Namco's *Katamari Damacy*? Sadly, not in our lifetimes. With great power comes great responsibility. I feel that as a major development force in the industry, EA has a responsibility to push the envelope of game design. It's in a position to flex its marketing muscles and promote truly creative games for the gaming masses.



■ Can we just go one Final Word without someone mentioning *Lumines*? Guess not.

development cycles, so gamers receive similar (yet good) games over and over and over again....

### "Tony Hawk needs to give it a damn rest."

**Why is Electronic Arts good for the industry?**

**Shane:** Well, let's see here...recently, it has picked up smaller, high-quality franchises like *Burnout*, *TimeSplitters*, and *Oddworld*. This goes a long way toward making EA seem like a company that actually cares about putting out creative, cool games.

**Che:** Well, as an industry insider, one reason I like EA is that because they do design-by-committee, they're always good about asking editors what they didn't like about a particular title, especially if it's gotten bad reviews ("cough" *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* "cough"). Although I don't always see its games on the path of improvement, I do like the sentiment. Hey, it makes me feel less worthless!

**What gaming franchise has got to go? Or at least take an extended vacation...**

**Shane:** I'd actually nominate three good franchises: *Ratchet & Clank*, *Splinter Cell*, and *Prince of Persia*. The games are consistent, but I really don't want to be playing one every year. It's nearly impossible for the development teams to really push the envelope with short

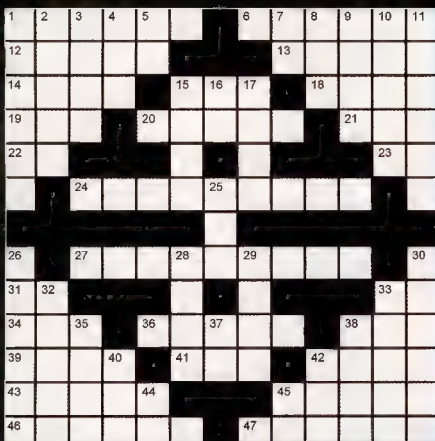
**Che:** I agree with *Splinter Cell*. Ubisoft's pretty much perfected the stealth game-play formula, so what's the point of another sequel? It's not like the series has an especially compelling story and ultra-fleshed-out characters. With *Prince of Persia*, I want the developers to bring back the magic from *Sands of Time* and ditch the ridiculous angst from the sequel. And a special request from [EGM Managing Editor] Jan Tsao that I agree with: Tony Hawk needs to give it a damn rest. You're retired in real life—let that reflect your gaming persona as well. Thanks! ☹

■ Smells like teen spirit.



# HYRULE HIJINKS

(Solution on page 124)



## ACROSS

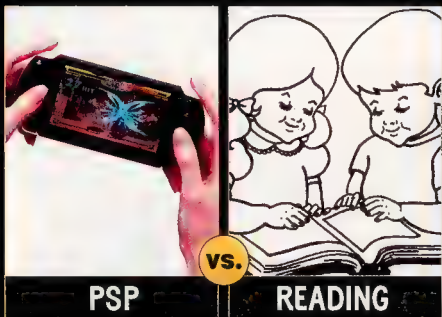
- Nintendo 64's *Zelda* mask
- Use Link's sword
- Bloody Roar*'s bunny rabbit
- Game opener
- What Link's iron boots help him do in water
- Competition for the DS?
- Resident Evil* quote: "You... the F... Aid Spray"
- Atari 2600 fiscal-themed game: *Avangers*
- Zelda* currency
- "Bouncy" *King of Fighters* gal
- Evolution Soccer*'s (arcade) obvious acronym
- PS2 karaoke title, for short
- Ocarina of Time* wall-crawler
- N64 *Zelda* bad guy
- 8-bit Nintendo's... *F-1*roid
- Like a *Sky Odyssey* double-winged-plane
- Bad guy of 17-down
- Return of the King* beast
- Object of *Get on da Mic*
- Like a preplayed game
- Shoot *Zelda*'s Gohma in this to defeat him
- Like *PSP's Wipeout*
- Final Fantasy* power move... Break
- Street Fighter* Rolento's weapon
- Magical subjects of *FFIII*
- Chubby, smiley race introduced in *Ocarina of Time*

## DOWN

- Link's baddest-ass sword
- Jennifer Garner's videogame debut
- Kooky, European PS1 jester game
- Spider-Man 2*'s Doc
- Like *Code: Veronica* or *Survivor* (abbrv.)
- Obscure '80s home computer/game system...99
- Thrown by some zombies in *Resident Evil 4*
- X-Men are the children of this, on PS1
- Die like *Chrono Trigger*'s Frog?
- Zelda*'s Deku Tree lives in this forest
- Link can do it to move some blocks in *Zelda* dungeons
- Nintendo Game Boy Advance
- NES extermination game...*erminator*
- How *Halo 2* hooks up locally
- Zelda*'s kingdom
- Tactics* or *Battle*
- One half of NES's *Rescue Rangers*
- What fruit does in *Baten Kaitos*
- Saturn RPG *Legend of*
- Like *Praxis of Jak II*
- What you must watch in *Excitebike* to keep from overheating
- Chrono Cross* kid's favorite exclamation
- Ocarina of Time*'s Zora princess
- Lose all your hearts in most any *Zelda* game
- Average, in *Mario Golf*
- Lara Croft's series, for short
- Donatello's *Ninja Turtles* staff

# GRUDGE MATCH

Darkstalkers or Dickens?

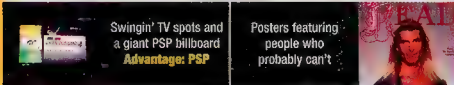


Now that folks can finally buy the handheld that puts most home A/V systems to shame, what's the point in reading anything besides the PSP instruction manual? Will commuters truly trade their Tom Clancy novel for Sony's potent portable? Let's look at the odds...

## BIGGEST SUPPORTERS



## AD CAMPAIGN



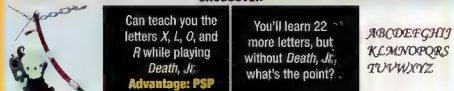
## PERSONAL BENEFITS



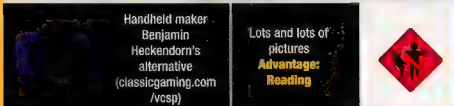
## COST EFFECTIVENESS



## CROSSOVER



## LIFE WITHOUT IT



## PEOPLE WHO SEE YOU DOING IT THINK



## WINNER: DRAW

Sorry people, but we had to call this one a tie out of fear for our lives. We love the PSP, but we've got some tough-ass librarians in our 'hood that don't take kindly to us bad-mouthing books.









### HSU AND CHAN

GAME DESIGNERS IN...  
**"THE LEDGER OF ZELDA"**

GENTLEMEN-- I APPRECIATE THE EFFORT YOU PUT INTO THIS, BUT I'M AFRAID YOUR PROPOSAL DOES NOT FIT IN WITH THE HINGE OUR COMPANY IS TRYING TO CONVEY...

ALSO, I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT ONE OF YOU WAS CAUGHT ON THE SECURITY CAMERA IN THE LOBBY URINATING ON ONE OF OUR FERNS.

HE'D BE CHAN-- JAPANESE TOILETS INTIMIDATE HIM.

BUT HEAR US OUT! WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE! RIGHT NOW, THE CUBE IS A KIDS' TOY! OPEN UP THE BACK, MR. POTATO HEADS FALL OUT! AND EYEBALLS FALL OUT!

THE NEW ZELDA IS MORE MATURE, SURE, BUT YOU DON'T TAKE IT NEARLY FAR ENOUGH!

GENTLEMEN-- THE SOLE CONCERN OF THIS COMPANY IS TO DELIVER A QUALITY PRODUCT TO CONSUMERS.

EXACTLY! THE MISERABLE, LITTLE TURDS WON'T KNOW WHAT HIT 'EM!

ROLL THE FOOTAGE!

CLICK!

A TANAKA BROS. PRESENTATION

DIRK LINKSTROM IN...

### ZELDA 2: THE ARMAGEDDON

**GANONDORRRF!**

### A COP ON THE EDGE

YOU GOT FIRE INSURANCE ON YOUR CAR, CHIEF?

YOU CROSS ONE MORE LINE, LINK, AND I'LL HAVE YOUR BADGE!

### A MAN FLEW TOO FAR

HAVE YOUR BULLET-RIDDLED CORPSE TELL GANON I WANT MY DAUGHTER BACK!

SURE, I'LL WAIT, HOW'S THAT, AGAIN?

### DRAMA!

THAT ENGINE HAS ABOUT FIVE MINUTES TILL IT BLOWS-- I'LL TAKE YOU TEN IF YOU TRY TO SAW THROUGH THE CUFFS.

STONE COLD, MAN!

### PASSION!

I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED ABOUT THE COLOR OF PRINCESS UNDERWEAR.

ATTABOX, LINK! WOOF!

THIS WAS SAVOR.

### MYSTERY!

YOU CAN CALL ME TINGLE!

HOLY!

MONEY IN THE BANK, MY FRIEND, MONEY IN THE BANK!

SECURITY!

TILL NEXT MONTH, VIDEOGAMERS!

THE END

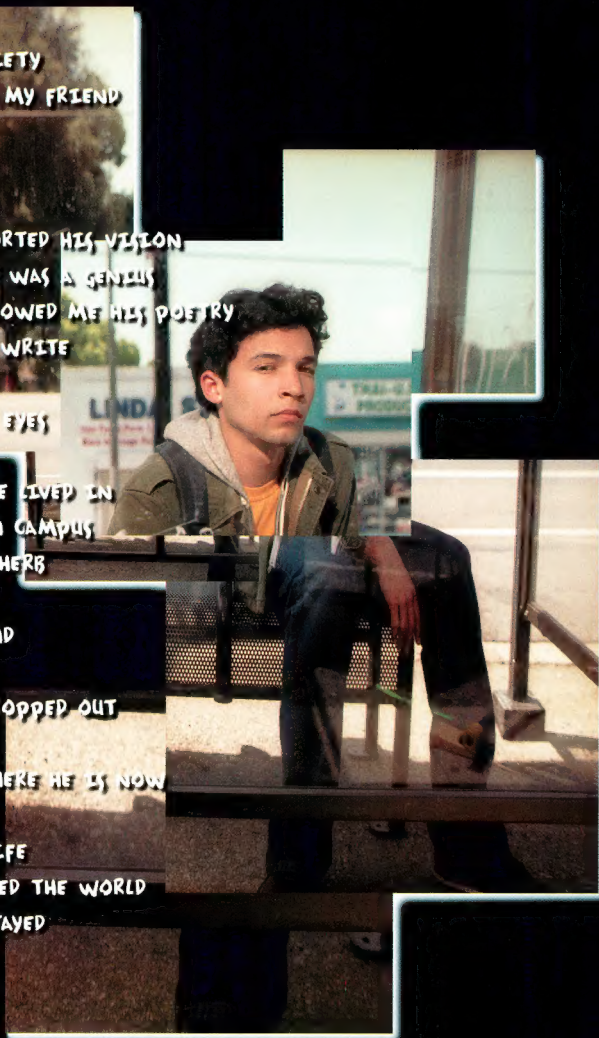


I LEARNED ABOUT SOBRIETY  
THROUGH THE ABUSE OF MY FRIEND  
IN JUNIOR HIGH  
NAME: RUSTY  
DRUG OF CHOICE: WEED  
CLOUDS OF SMOKE DISTORTED HIS VISION  
UNABLE TO SEE THAT HE WAS A GENIUS  
THE FIRST KID THAT SHOWED ME HIS POETRY  
THAT INSPIRED ME TO WRITE

THE RED VEINS IN HIS EYES  
TRACED THE TIMELINE  
OF THE PURPLE HAZE HE LIVED IN  
'TIL HE WAS CAUGHT ON CAMPUS  
WITH A NICKELBAG OF HERB

NOW I'M COLLEGE BOUND  
I STAYED SOBER  
THROUGH THE DAY HE DROPPED OUT  
OF HIGH SCHOOL  
AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW  
BUT I HOPE HE KNOWS  
THAT HE CHANGED MY LIFE  
AND HE COULD'VE CHANGED THE WORLD  
IF ONLY HE COULD'VE STAYED  
SOBER.

-JOSE



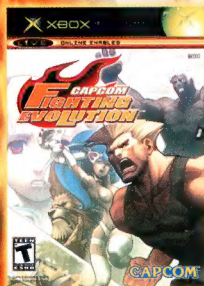


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Classics finally meet online!  
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Street Fighter® Alpha,  
Darkstalkers® and Red Earth™  
(never before released in the U.S.)**

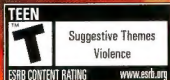


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