

THE No.1 VIDEOGAME MAGAZINE

# EGM™

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY 1UP.COM



## Final Fantasy VII

The prequel arrives in Crisis Core

# Revenge of the PS3!

2007 sucked for PS3. 2008 will rock. Find out why inside...

FEATURING:

- Metal Gear Solid 4 •
- Final Fantasy XIII •
- Blu-ray's future •
- Home •
- and more! •

XBOX360/DS

## There will be blood!

Hands-on with Ninja Gaiden 2 + Dragon Sword

XBOX360/PS3/WII

## FaceBreaker

The next Punch-Out!!

**+** THE 1UP AWARDS:  
Our Annual Best  
(and Worst) in Gaming

XBOX360

## Halo 3 meets Pac-Man

A look at the oddest games forged in Forge

MAR. 2008 ISSUE 226

ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA™



1UP.COM



In game screenshots: "PlayStation 3", "PS3", "Empty Slot", "FLANSTATION", and "PDI" are registered trademarks and Gran Turismo is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. © 2008 Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. "Gran Turismo" and "Gran Turismo Sport" are trademarks of Polyphony Digital Inc. in some cases include trademarks and/or copyrighted materials of their respective owners. Any depiction or recreation of real-world locations, entities, businesses, or organizations is not intended to be or imply any sponsorship or endorsement of this game by such party or parties.

RATING PENDING  
**RP**  
RATING PENDING  
Visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org)  
for rating information







**GRAN TURISMO** 5 Prologue  
THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

**Don't worry. You'll get a good look at the taillights soon enough.**

With up to 16 players racing online, the competition is fierce. Lucky for you, the new interior dash view lets you experience the race like never before. Strap yourself in and get ready for the drive of your life.



PLAY BEYOND™

ONLY ON  
PLAYSTATION 3



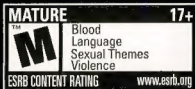
# PREPARE TO FACE YOUR DEMONS!

A hand in a blue and red gauntlet holds a glowing sword with a blue and orange blade. The background is a dark, gothic cityscape with spires and domes under a cloudy sky.

*DEVIL MAY CRY*

AVAILABLE NOW

[WWW.DEVILMAYCRY.COM](http://WWW.DEVILMAYCRY.COM)



PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360 LIVE

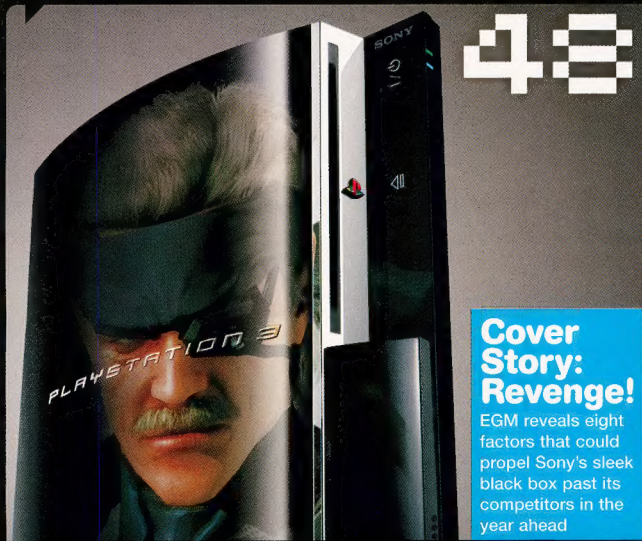






# CONTENTS

▶ issue 226 • march 2008



## Cover Story: Revenge!

EGM reveals eight factors that could propel Sony's sleek black box past its competitors in the year ahead



## 36 Gaiden doubles up



## 20 EA breaks some faces

### ▶ LETTERS

10 Disgruntled fish-petters speak out

### ▶ PRESS START

#### 16 Overachievers

Find out why worthless virtual accolades mean so much to so many....

#### 18 Foreign Object

#### 20 Preview: FaceBreaker

EA's zany new pugilism offering is more Rocky IV than Raging Bull

#### 26 Funny Business

Developers recount the shenanigans that go on behind the scenes

#### 30 Take This Job

This month: The dude who gets today's hottest tunes into your videogames

#### 34 Preview: Soulcalibur IV

Incongruous guest characters from a galaxy far, far away infiltrate the action

#### 36 Preview: Ninja Gaiden

Ryu Hayabusa leaps back into the fray on Xbox 360 and Nintendo DS

#### 40 Preview: Bully: Scholarship Edition

School's back in session on both Xbox 360 and Nintendo Wii

#### 42 Small Wonders

Five tiny titles proving that mobile gaming doesn't have to suck

#### 44 Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII

Prep yourself for the most anticipated prequel since *The Phantom Menace*

#### 46 Rumor Mill

*Dead Rising's* undead mob plots its revenge from an unlikely place

### ▶ REVIEWS

72 Reviews

74 Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors

75 FIFA Street 3

76 Devil May Cry 4

80 Turok

83 The Club

83 Advance Wars: Days of Ruin

84 Wipeout Pulse

85 Patapon

86 Reviews Wrap-Up

ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA

### ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

#### EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief

Don "Sho" Hsu

Executive Editor

Shane Silverman

Managing Editor

Jennifer Tico

Senior Editor

Crish Boyer

Preview Editor

Byron White

Reviews Editor

Greg Ford

#### News/Features Editor

Michael Donohoe

DESIGN

Art Director

Monique Conventillo

Assistant Art Director

Mike Cruz

CONTRIBUTORS

Robert Adley, John Brandon,

Kevin Conroy, Korie D'Amico,

Randy Dodson, David Ellis,

Chris Ernst, Lara Frank, Bill

Muckler, Kate Romero, Paul

"Beehiving" Semei, Evan

Swanson, Tony Walker, Dan

Whitely, Todd Zuniga

Founder

Steve Harris

### ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA GAME GROUP

#### HEAD WRITERS

Senior Vice President, Sales,

Mark Karpovich

Vice President of Marketing,

Research and Sports, Rex Jacobs

Vice President of Product,

Marketing and CTO, Norm Boehle

Vice President, Content, Simon Gil

Editorial Director, Dan "Sho" Hsu

Site Director, Sam Kennedy

Director of Finance, Vanessa Jash

Copy Desk

Copy Chief, Jason Wilson

Copy Editor, Andrew Ficht

Copy Editor, Nathan Jay Baum

#### PRODUCTION

Production Manager,

Shirley Palmer

SALES

Senior Vice President, Sales,

Mark Yamaguchi

National Advertising Director,

Ann Michig

National Director of Online Sales

and Promotions, Brent Mahony

Client Services Manager,

Tyler Robinson

#### RENTALY MANAGERS

& ADVERTISING

Regional Sales Director,

Leah C. Gilford

Account Coordinator,

Naya Eschler

Regional Sales Director, Nick David

Senior Account Executive,

Amelia Holsen

Account Coordinator,

Regional Offices

Account Executive, Stacy Cohen

Account Executive, Mary Houtchens

Account Coordinator, Adrian Ping

Regional Sales Director,

Marshall Duce

#### Senior Account Executive,

Andrew D'Amico

Account Executive,

Justin Chiswick

Account Coordinator,

Janilyn Labrador

Director, Customer Sales,

Leah Cole

Account Executive, Stacy Cohen

Account Executive,

Mary Houtchens

Account Coordinator, Adrian Ping

Regional Sales Director,

Marshall Duce





**More car. Less compact.**

**The 2008 Nissan Sentra** has more interior space than Civic or Corolla,<sup>1</sup> the fuel efficiency of 33 mpg\*\* and the safety of six standard air bags. And starting out at \$15,750,<sup>3</sup> it's a value of truly epic proportions. For more information, visit [NissanUSA.com](http://NissanUSA.com).



**SHIFT\_**innovation

\*STARTING AT \$15,750. AS SHOWN, \$18,820. MSRP for Sentra 2.0 and Sentra 2.0 SL with splash guards. Excludes tax, title, license, destination charge and options. Dealer sets actual price. \*\*2008 EPA fuel-economy estimates 25 city/33 mpg highway for Sentra 2.0 CVT. Actual mileage may vary. <sup>1</sup>Based on largest interior passenger volume. 2008 Sentra 2.0 SL versus 2007 Corolla LE and Civic LX. Nissan, the Nissan Brand Symbol, "SHIFT\_" tagline and Nissan model names are Nissan trademarks. Always wear your seat belt, and please don't drink and drive. ©2007 Nissan North America, Inc.

# CONTENTS

(CONT.)

> EDITORIAL

## Rotten tomatoes



**LAST YEAR, DURING OUR ANNUAL 1UP Network Awards ceremony, we gave Sony Computer Entertainment America representatives a bit of a shock. Walking into our party, instead of being greeted by a freshly minted mojito, they came face-to-face with a giant blow-up poster of the cover to our March 2007 issue (pictured below, not above), which hadn't gone out to readers yet at that point. The image: a PS3 getting a pasty new paint job, courtesy of a thrown tomato. The headline was "BattleStation!" and the subject was how Sony was getting beat down by just about everyone in the civilized world for not being the wonderconsole it**

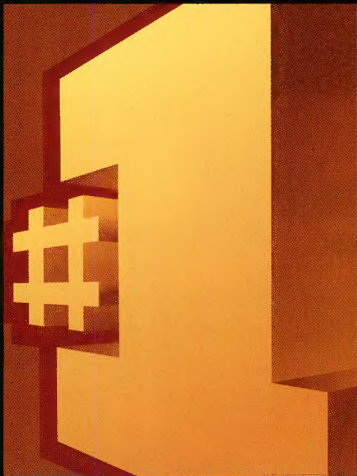


**was touted to be. It was supposed to be powerful. It was supposed to obliterate the competition. It was supposed to usher in an era of next-generation gaming that mere mortal eyes and ears could not possibly comprehend. What we got instead was a heavy Blu-ray player—and a \$600 tomato catcher.**

2008's not going to change all that, but it's certainly looking a helluva lot more optimistic for the PS3 camp. We're feeling quite good about the system, enough so that we're willing to dedicate this month's cover story to the big black machine that couldn't—but can now.

I also want to thank everyone for the outpouring of support for my editorial last month, "Banned" (you can also catch it at my blog at [egmsue.1up.com](http://egmsue.1up.com)). It certainly caused a much bigger buzz than I had anticipated. It just goes to show that honesty and integrity do matter to our readers.

—Dan "Shoe" Hsu, Editor-in-Chief



**62 1UP Network Editors' Choice Awards 2007**



**76 Devil May Cry 4**



**90 2007 Tobie awards**

> GAME OVER

- 90 EGM's Sixth Annual Tobias Bruckner Memorial Awards**  
Noted humorist Seanbaby presides over this year's crop of crap
- 93 Retro: Matters of Import**  
Long-forgotten gems from abroad get a second shot at success on the Virtual Console
- 94 Seek and Enjoy: Space Chase**  
EGM's loving tribute to *Highlights for Children* blasts into orbit
- 97 Hsu & Chan**

> THIS MONTH'S EGM EXTRAS

### EGM.1UP.COM

**2007 1UP Network Readers' Choice Awards**  
The critics have weighed in, but do the people agree?

**Halo 3's Forge keeps on giving**  
Learn more about the coolest new user-created maps and game types for *Halo 3*.

**Devil May Cry 4 SuperGuide**  
Having trouble killing the Pope? Check out MyCheats' extensive walkthrough for Capcom's killer sequel.



And check out our podcast on [EGMLive.1UP.com](http://EGMLive.1UP.com) and our message boards at [boards.1UP.com](http://boards.1UP.com).

**ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA GAME GROUP**

**Executive Assistant** - Brent  
**California Advertising Director** - Richard Tate III  
In contact: Sales and Advertising, please call 818-333-0099.

**1UP.COM**  
**Editor-in-Chief** - Dan Kennedy  
**Director of All Operations** - Adam Crilly  
**Advertising Campaign Manager** - Mike O'Rourke  
**Audience Development Manager** - Brandon Montcalvo  
**Advertising Campaign Coordinator** - Stephanie Huxford

**MARKETING**  
**Vice President of Marketing, Research and Events** - Greg Latta  
**Research Director** - Mike Pong  
**PR Manager** - Mike Pong  
**Marketing Coordinator** - Rebecca Alvarado  
**Marketing Graphic Designer** - Rebecca Alvarado  
**Marketing Graphic Designer** - Rebecca Lyons

**PROMOTIONS**  
**National Director of Online Sales and Promotions** - Brent Mathison  
**Senior Promotions Manager** - Justin Cohen  
**Promotions Coordinator** - Amy Kruger

**CONSUMER MARKETING**  
**Vice President of Audience Development** - Richard F. Collins  
**Senior Director of Consumer Marketing** - Scott Hoyer  
**Partnership Director** - Justin Clapp  
**Contentment Development Manager** - Tom Trotter  
**Billing and Retention Manager** - Dennis Siro  
**Assistant Manager** - Peter Chun  
**Coordinator** - Sonewy Jansari

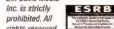
**ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA INC.**  
**Chairman** - Richard F. Collins  
**Chief Executive Officer** - Jason Young  
**Chief Financial Officer** - S.W.P. Fausan  
**VP President, General Counsel** - Brent Mathison

**IT WEST COAST**  
**Senior Technical Analyst** - Bill Schneider  
**Desktop Administrator** - Greg Austin

(Correct anyone on this list without my approval using [benjamin@ziff.com](mailto:benjamin@ziff.com))

**SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE**  
Subscription Service: 800-778-1174  
Please call 818-333-0099  
[www.ziffmedia.com](http://www.ziffmedia.com)

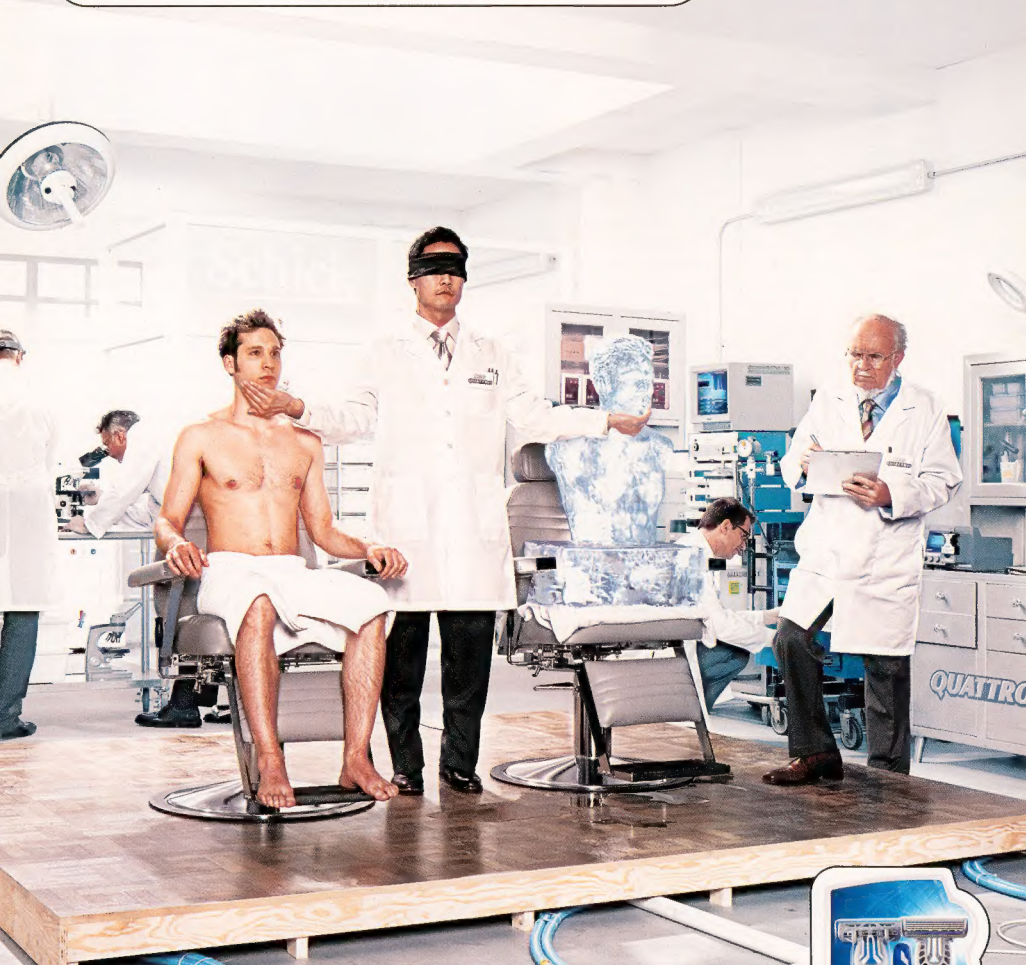
All content copyright © 2008 Ziff Davis Media Inc. Reproduction, modification, or transmission, in whole or in part, by any means, without written permission from Ziff Davis Media Inc. is strictly prohibited. All rights reserved.





Shave Lab Test #27

Rigorous tests prove no disposable shaves closer than the Quattro Disposable.



It's irrefutable. No disposable delivers a closer, smoother shave than the Schick® Quattro® Disposable. It's the first disposable with four blades and two conditioning strips, for such a comfortable shave, you can't beat it. The Power of 4® is now Disposable. [www.quattrodisposables.com](http://www.quattrodisposables.com)

Schick  
**QUATTRO**  
DISPOSABLE



# LETTERS

➤ game testing, the future of oddworld, and bulging biceps

## ▶ TRIVIAL ISSUE

This month's **EGM question:**  
Who replaced disgraced heavyweight champ Mike Tyson in *Punch-Out!!*?

E-mail the answer to **EGM@ziffdavis.com** (subject head: Trivia: EGM #226) for a chance to win something potentially awesome.



## Letter of the Month Try, try again—again

I think it is time to set the record straight about videogame testing. I have been a quality-assurance peon, a QA manager, and a producer.

In *EGM* #223 [Letters, "Try, try again..."], you said that testers work long hours for fast-food wages. This is entirely false for a few reasons! Most quality-assurance jobs start at a minimum of \$10 an hour. Maybe some of the smaller developers will pay less, but not much. When you factor in all the overtime, you are looking at wages that are equal to around \$30,000 a year. I have never personally worked in the fast-food industry, but I know that many restaurants don't even come close to that.

Either way, no matter what you do at your QA job, it is nowhere near a grease vat, a grill, or anything else to do with food preparation. Most testers I know would work for half of what they make, because no matter how you dice it, you get to play games at work all day. Granted, they are not the games you want to play (try playing a chess game for six months), but it's still playing games. Playing games for a living is far better than most other entry-level jobs you don't need a degree for.

You know how you see the car driving to work with the bumper sticker that says "I'd rather be fishing"? Yeah, we don't get much of that in the game industry, because we honestly love what we do and know it's more fun than the alternative.

—Adam

We'll concede the point that testing games beats flipping burgers any day of the week. But then, most things beat flipping burgers any day of the week.

And we should understand again that one of the real draws to game testing is that it gets your foot in the door. It may not be the most glamorous position, but it can be the first step toward more fulfilling jobs like producer or designer.

## Everything's better down where it's wetter

In *EGM* #224's Coming Soon section, you seemed to describe *Endless*



■ *Endless Ocean*: The next attack from the sinister forces of edutainment.

*Ocean's* likeness to an educational tool as a negative. But I think this is a great feature—something that will give videogames more credibility in the eyes of those who see them as little more than violent, pointless wastes of time. Teachers in schools and colleges often bring in movies to make education more exciting; maybe someday they'll bring in games like *Endless Ocean* to teach about marine life in a fun, hands-on way.

—Devon Chapman

Certainly, and when that glorious day comes, the editors of *Electronic Teaching Monthly* will no doubt fall all over themselves talking about how great such games are. In the meantime, we're relegating fish-petting sims to our new "Electronic Nongaming Monthly" section.

## From your lips to Odd's ears

What has become of Oddworld Inhabitants? Are they coming out with another great game to top off *Stranger's Wrath*? Also, what ever happened to that rumor about the sequel to *Stranger's Wrath* they said they were working on soon after *Stranger's Wrath* hit?

—Jason Kinchen

Unfortunately, it looks like the *Oddworld* series is on hold for the foreseeable future. Studio head Lorne Lanning shut down the game studio to focus on computer-animated films, like *Citizen Siege*, expected to release in 2009.

But don't give up hope! Lanning and Oddworld partner Sherry McKenna are designing games to tie in with the film property, and ➤



For writing this month's LOM, Adam will receive a free game...of our choice.

## ▶ HOW HARDCORE ARE YOU?

### Your proudest gaming moments

The next contestant in our monthly harder-core-than-thou competition arrives!

For a LAN party with my school's computer club, I baked cookies...Pac-Man cookies. I spent five and a half hours hand-cutting and decorating 60 cookies in the shape of Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, ghosts, and even some Yoshi eggs and Triforces—all homemade and delicious. Sure, the LANers probably didn't appreciate the finely crafted cookies before eating them all in a few hours...but it was totally worth it.

—Robin Basalla



■ The eater becomes the eaten.

Want to see your own story in this space? All you have to do is tell us how hard-core you are. Dish up the goods on what makes you more into games than anyone else, and send it to **EGM@ziffdavis.com**, subject head: "I Am Hardcore." Remember, it doesn't count if you can't prove it, so send photos, too!





**STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF IS STRONG.  
STANDING UP FOR THOSE AROUND YOU  
IS ARMY STRONG.**

There's strong. And then there's Army Strong. The strength that comes from not just changing your life but changing the lives of others.

Find out more at [goarmy.com/strong](http://goarmy.com/strong).



**U.S. ARMY**

**ARMY STRONG**

Staff Sergeant Jeremy Mutary  
© 2011 Army and Air Force Exchange Service. All rights reserved.



have hinted that they may return to the *Oddworld* universe once *Citizen Siege* is complete.

### The right to bearish arms

I simply cannot play *Madden 08* for one reason: The players have ridiculously small arms. I am a football player myself, and you need big arms, not only to intimidate your opponents, but to protect your arms from the brutal beatdown they take as helmets clash on your biceps. I need to see my 6-foot-4, 250-pound linebacker looking jacked as all hell in my videogames. I've tried creating my own player, and I always put their arm size and muscle definition as high as it can go, but for some ridiculous reason, they magically shrink to zero before every game. And in franchise mode, they don't let you adjust player appearance, which is also really stupid. Having a jacked-as-hell linebacker whose strength is 99 looking like a wimpy Abercrombie & Fitch model is just degrading to the sport of football.

—TDP32@aol.com

Wow, you've spent a lot of time thinking about the bulging, rippling biceps of big, sweaty men, hawking your y? If anything, *Madden 08*'s dainty arms help to balance out *07*'s insanely buff punters....

### Link to the future

I recently read something that quite literally gave me goose bumps: *Zelda* series director Eiji Aonuma is apparently not against the idea of doing a *Link to the Past* remake for what I would assume to be the Wii. Considering the fact that *Link to the Past* has long been my favorite game of all time, this came as a very welcome surprise, but is there any way of knowing if this will actually become a reality? I know we will see another *Zelda* title on the Wii before the end of

this console generation, but could it be a remake of this classic title?  
—Jesse Farris

Don't hold your breath there, champ. Aonuma's exact words were, "I'm actually very interested in what it would be like if we remade that title as a 3D game." Sounds like a pie-in-the-sky, throwaway comment to us.

### Oblivion meets itself

What ever happened to *Oblivion* for PSP? I remember you announced it was coming out in April, but then it got held back. So what happened to it? Is it still gonna happen? Or did it get canceled? It was, in my opinion, a bit ambitious....

—Rylan Doyle

Well, back in November, games retailer GameStop began refunding preorders, saying the game had been canceled, but Bethesda has remained mum on the issue. Our guess is that the studio wants to keep their options open, but the game is, for all intents and purposes, a no-go.

### Hooray us

It's obvious that developers fear negativity in the media. Ubisoft wouldn't release a demo for *Assassin's Creed*, for example, and Silicon Knights seems to be on a campaign for damage control with *Too Human*. That being said, do you guys feel like you carry enough influence to make or break a game in terms of sales? Do you feel like your reviews will persuade people one way or the other in terms of buying or not buying?

—Jennifer Robbie

Well, those are two different questions. Sure, our reviews probably persuade people, because—let's face it—we're awesome.

But "make or break" a game? Look, as we've already said and all agreed upon, we're awesome, but other media outlets *do* exist, and sometimes their opinions differ from ours. We wouldn't be so arrogant as to think we're the only voice in the business when it comes to reviews.

We're just the *awesomest*.

### Party of one

With more and more games focusing on multiplayer and online content, I'm curious as to how the industry views gamers like myself. I rarely go online with consoles, but I invest a considerable amount of time in a single-player

experience. What is the industry doing to get me more involved with multiplayer content? And how confident can I be that downloadable content will enhance my single-player experience as well as the multiplayer?

—Andrew

You're a dinosaur, Andrew. The newest generation of consoles is thoroughly connected for a reason: For many games, playing against real humans beats the pants off playing against even the most cunningly designed computer-controlled opponents.

But never fear—we don't see the industry moving all online, all the time anytime soon. You'll still have plenty of satisfying offline experiences like *BioShock* to warm that Ludite heart of yours.

### Finish the film

When I saw that the *Halo* movie was real and not just some rumor, I got excited. Now, however, I've been hearing rumors that the whole thing's been called off. Are these just rumors, or is there some truth in them?

—Nevin Walker

Er, a little of both. The film has been put on hold and restarted more times than we care to count. The latest news, though, came in October of 2007: In an interview with *Variety*, a representative for executive producer Peter Jackson said that while initial distributors Fox and Universal had pulled out of the project, Microsoft was still behind the picture and seeking a new distributor. The promised 2009 release doesn't seem too likely at this point, though.

### Jack Thompson salivates

What's stopping *Manhunt 2*'s developers from creating a code that restores the game to the original AO rating?

—Nicholas Crompton

Do the words "Hot Coffee" mean anything to you? No way Rockstar's going through that again. ☹

### CONTACT EGM

E-mail: [EGM@ziffdavis.com](mailto:EGM@ziffdavis.com)

Small mail:

EGM Letters

101 2nd Street, 8th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Subscription help:

Web: [www.zdnet.com](http://www.zdnet.com)

Phone: (600) 778-1174



THE END OF THE DEMONSTRALES THE BEGINNING OF THE AWAKENING



IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS DARKNESS.

MARCH 2008



©2007 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. God of War is a registered trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. "PlayStation," the "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.



DARKNESSREVEALS.COM





AVAILABLE NOW

PC  
DVD  
ROM  
COMING  
SPRING  
2008

PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360 LIVE

MATURE 17+

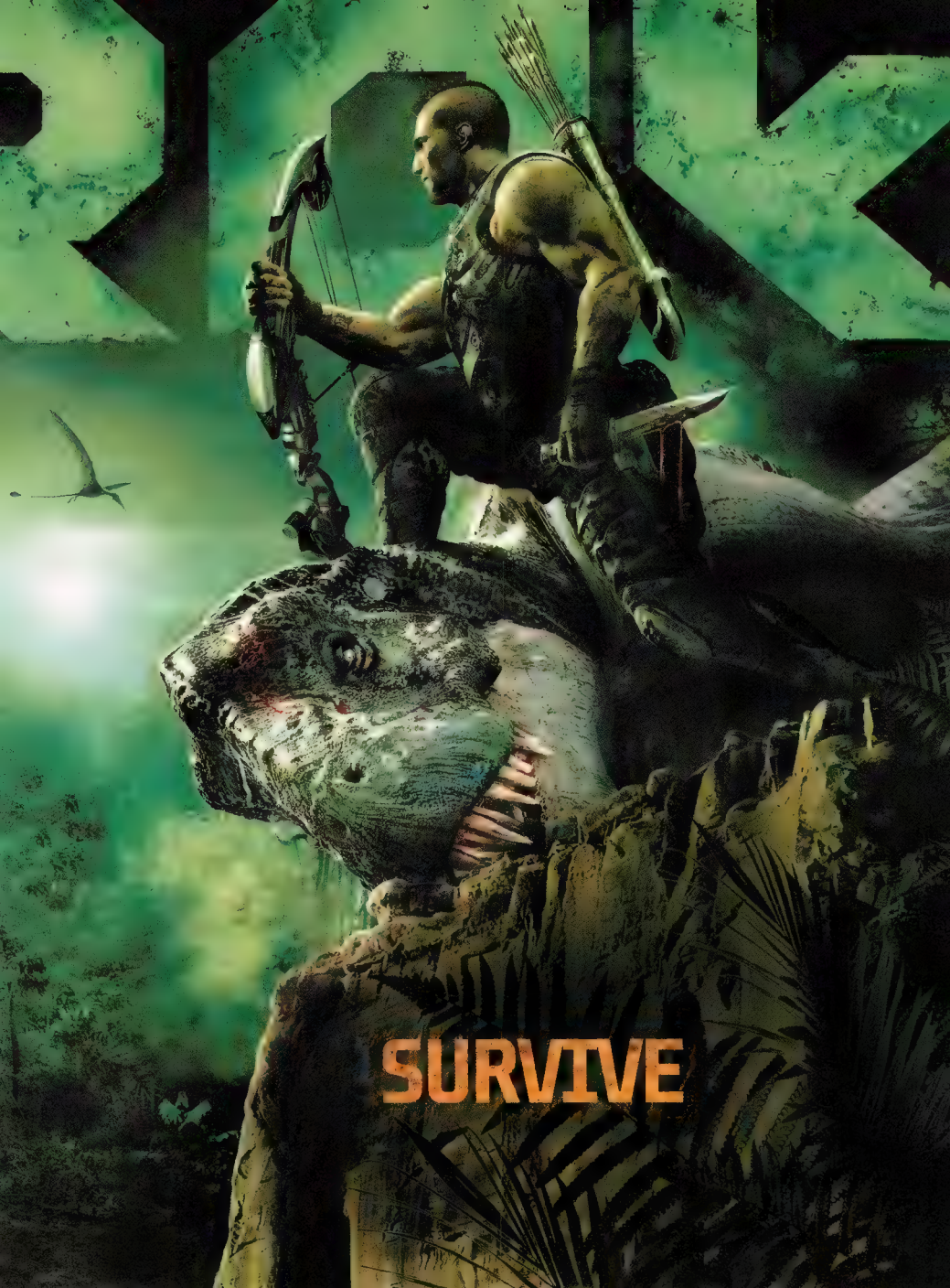
**M** Blood and Gore  
Intense Violence  
Language

ESRB CONTENT RATING [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org)

© Touchstone, TUROK TM & © ClassicMedia, Inc., an Entertainment Rights group company. All rights reserved.  
Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies.  
PlayStation, PLAYSTATION and PS Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.  
Online access requires broadband Internet service and a wireless access point or LAN.  
Certain limitations apply to Wi-Fi connectivity. User is responsible for internet service fees.

   
[WWW.TUROK.COM](http://WWW.TUROK.COM)





**SURVIVE**

# PRESS START

► features, previews, 3-foot-tall warriors, and other stuff



Photographs by R. Dobson/SFMarin, Inc.

## Achievement WHORES

Think Xbox Live Achievements are pointless? Try asking that to these gamers. By Robert Ashley

Achievements may not have many real-world rewards, but don't say they never earned you nothin': In 2007, Microsoft gave copies of *Fuzion Frenzy 2* to folks with gamerscores of over 10,000 who earned an additional 1,500 points in a two-month period. We're sure those gamers remember that accomplishment with, uh...pride?

**WAYNE ROBERTS IS A 35-YEAR-OLD FATHER OF FIVE** possessed by a compulsion to play his Xbox 360 up to 60 hours a week. He doesn't play for fun. He doesn't play for escape. Roberts plays for Achievements, the little gray bubbles that tell us when we've accomplished a special gaming task. We get them for persistence (kill 10,000 players in ranked *Gears of War* matches for the "Seriously" Achievement). We get them for displays of skill (complete *BioShock* on the hardest difficulty without dying for "Brass Balls"). We even get them for sucking (fail 10 times at one song in *Guitar Hero III* for "Blowin' It").

Roberts, like many in the online Achievements race, gets them any way he can. But it wasn't the little bubbles or their satisfying "ping" that drove him to a life of obsessive gam-

ing; it was the tiny payouts of gamerscore, Xbox Live's currency of credibility, that each unlock carries with it. "What got me started was a good friend of mine bragging that he was the king of gamerscore," says Roberts (gamertag "Il Tenshun II"). "At the time, I was a casual gamer at best, but I hate to be beaten at anything. Thus, the sickness was born."

He now has a gamerscore of over 150,000 points. At an average of 1,000 available per game, that is a lot of time on the couch.

### Earning your play

It's enough gaming to make developers sit up and take notice. Achievements seem to have an almost irresistible power for some players, a simple premise that can squeeze hours of extra play out of a game at very little cost. Though the PlayStation 3 doesn't yet have a standard system for in-game rewards (that will come with the Home online community), some games, like *Resistance: Fall of Man* and *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, have their own equivalents.

► I'll pretty much buy, rent, borrow, and play anything—as long as it can get me gamerscore.

—Professed Achievement whore David Baxley





PAGE  
**20**

Preview:  
Break-a  
you' face



PAGE  
**30**

Feature:  
Gaming's  
music man



PAGE  
**32**

News:  
Forge finds  
in Halo 3

Evan Wells, copresident of *Uncharted* developer Naughty Dog, attributes the idea's popularity to the competitive spirit among gamers of all types. "It's a chance to show off to your friends," says Wells. "The gaming community is obviously a very competitive bunch, and making accomplishments publicly viewable allows you to prove to the world that you're a hardcore gamer."

Just ask Nick Rebori (gamertag "TheLazyWolf"). The chance to compete with gamers all over the world spurred this compulsive player into chasing the top spot on the gamerscore leaderboards (find them at MyGamerCard.net). "I've always loved competitive gaming," says Rebori. "I used to spend my Saturdays at the arcade playing *Mortal Kombat* against guys twice my age. Once I was able to play all day on one credit, and when my mom picked me up, I made someone else in line give me 50 cents for my spot. For a 10-year-old, that's just about the greatest day ever."

By the summer of 2006, Rebori was entrenched at the top of the leaderboards. But he was quickly overtaken by mysteriously productive players, people using data-transfer kits to upload Achievement-laden saves from other players' Xboxes. "People were jumping up as much as 30,000 points a day," says Rebori. "They were able to unlock 1,000 points in *Ridge*

*Racer 6* in under five minutes. I spent 108 hours playing that rotten game, so I took it as a personal offense." It was the beginning of a cheating free-for-all that persists today (see sidebar).

Microsoft, in defense of its online service, figures that the vast majority of Xbox Live's 10 million members increase their gamerscore the old-fashioned way—they earn it. And as annoying as they are, the cheaters are just a part of the game. "Given the popularity of Achievements as a measure of skill and accomplishment," says a Microsoft rep, "it's no surprise that a handful of people may try to shirk the social norms of the online gaming community in order to inflate their scores."

### So meta

Chasing Achievements is a form of metagaming, says Matthew Weise of the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab (a gaming research center), "which isn't new at all." He likens it to the hardcore gaming industries who developed the speed run phenomenon. "Gamers have always taken it upon themselves to come up with new and bizarre goals," says Weise. "Achievements make that process top-down. Instead of the community, it's the developers making the 'official' unofficial goals." Weise sees Achievements making metagaming

more mainstream—so much so that it's even parodied in the *Simpsons* game (you get an Achievement for pressing start). But it's ultimately just another way to make gaming competitive. "It's the old arcade mentality," he says. "Xbox Live offers new avenues for old practices."

### Glory dazed

But completists beware: David Baxley (gamertag "xRogue 5x") has found his obsessive pursuit of recognition has turned what once was a hobby into a chore. "I used to play games for fun, but now I play solely for Achievements," says Baxley. "Before Achievements, I only purchased the games I was interested in. Now I find myself getting just as excited for the next kid's game. I'll pretty much buy, rent, borrow, and play anything—as long as it can get me gamerscore."

Baxley, along with many of his peers, finds it hard to juggle his Achievements obsession with the demands of real life. "I've been late to work on several occasions because I needed to get a quick achievement," he says, adding that he's also on two semesters of academic suspension from college. "I was participating in a gamerscore league and didn't attend class for two weeks." For gamers like Baxley, maybe cheating might not be such a terrible thing. **☹**



The obsession afflicts developers, too: Gearbox (*Brothers in Arms*) Prez Randy Pitchford has a gamerscore of over 55,000 points. His lowest moment? "I played *Bullet Witch* beginning to end three times. No reasonable person would ever do that."

## CREDIT REPORT

We rank the dirty tricks unscrupulous players use to "earn" points...

**Using in-game cheats**  
Just like the old days, many games today feature cheats that allow for invincibility, infinite ammo, etc.—all of which can easily beef up your gamerscore.

**Boosting**  
Achievement freaks join private online games made for the purpose of score boosting. "You shoot me in the head 100 times, and then I'll shoot you. Fun!"

**Account trading**  
The practice of lending profiles to pro players for expertise-required games like *Guitar Hero* is widespread. The pros sometimes get PayPal cash in exchange.

**Profile glitching**  
Several games feature glitches that transfer points from one profile to another when both profiles are loaded onto the same Xbox.

**Game saving**  
An Xbox Live update crippled the rampant practice of downloading game saves through data-transfer kits, but now sneaker methods are coming into vogue.

**Hacking**  
Elite players on the MyGamerCard.net leaderboards have hacked into player accounts and unlocked Achievements, delegitimizing the competition for many.

EASY

SLEAZY





# This is Vince Young.

## Wireless Sports Updates

Of course Vince Young is into football. After all, he did win a college championship and is currently a starting pro quarterback. So you know he keeps up on everything happening in the league on his phone's MEdia™ Net home page.

## Ringtones

As fast as he is on the field, he's even faster off it. Vince is always switching up his ringtone for the latest hip-hop track he's gotten stuck in his head. Luckily, he's got over 3 million to choose from with AT&T Mobile Music.

## Picture Messaging

Vince travels for work. A lot. So he likes to keep in touch with his mother and friends back home. And with unlimited picture messaging on his MEdia™ Max Unlimited plan, he saves a lot doing it.

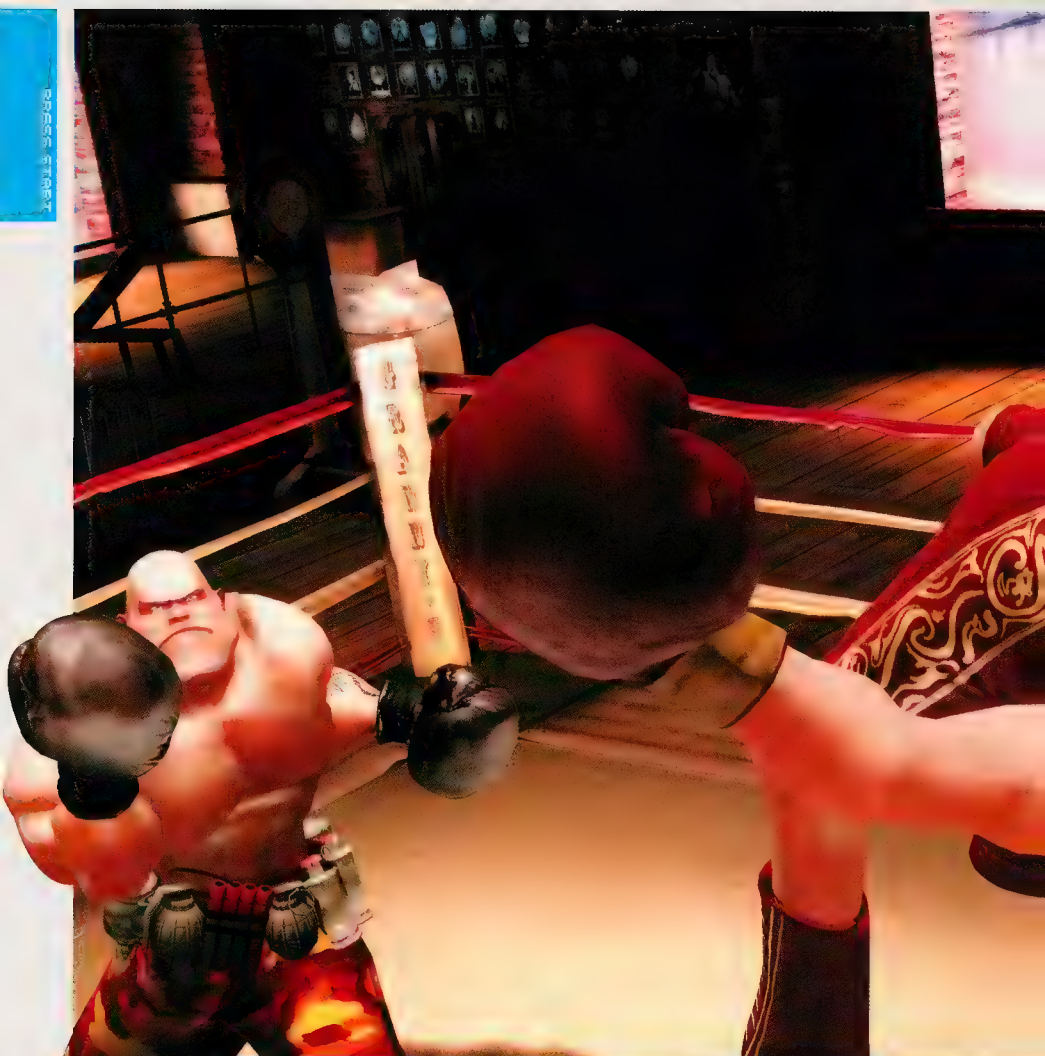
## Me/Charity

Most people don't know that Vince isn't just about football. He's also a volunteer teacher who's working to make sure every kid has access to the technology that drives today's world.

What can AT&T do for your digital world?™

[att.com/digitalworld](http://att.com/digitalworld)





PREVIEW EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK

# FACEBREAKER

Can EA deliver another ring king? By Todd Zuniga





➤ We started with a ring, three rounds, and a three-knockdown rule. But slowly but surely, we're casting those rules away.

—Gameplay Designer Todd Batty

**Platforms:**  
PS3/XB360

**Publisher:**  
EA Sports

**Developer:**  
EA Canada

**Release Date:**  
June 2007

**FROM MUHAMMAD ALI TO OSCAR DE LA HOYA**, boxers are known for routinely changing trainers. Before their career is over, some even end up bringing back the guy who originally helped them rise to the top. EA is actually doing a little of both these days, as you'll find old and new blood in the publisher's gym.

John Riccitello recently returned as CEO while Peter Moore became the new president of EA Sports—and the two are bringing a more ambitious approach to EA's sports library (which routinely sticks to known enti-

ties). It begins with the arcade-rich *FaceBreaker* (due out this June for the PS3 and Xbox 360), which aims to be our generation's answer to the NES classic *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!*

**Fresh fists**

Make no mistake: *FaceBreaker* isn't simply an EA Big-lifted version of *Fight Night*. Members of the development team excitedly (and repeatedly) delivered that message when we visited EA's Vancouver studio. "John Riccitello and Peter Moore want EA Sports to become bigger than just

simulation titles," says Gameplay Designer Todd Batty. "They want us to really push, which is such a fresh message." That new initiative has taken some time to adjust to, though, as these gamemakers weren't exactly sure what to do with their newfound freedom. "When you work on a licensed title, they give you the paint, they give you the borders. It's almost paint by numbers," says Batty. "But with this game, it was: 'Here's a blank canvas—now go!' We started with a ring, three rounds, and a three-knockdown rule. But slowly but surely, we're

casting those rules away. Do we really need rounds? A knockdown rule?" Art Director Greg Juby is also enjoying being unchained from the usual development shackles. "Doing something unlicensed allows us to do anything we want," he says. "Even on a Big version of a licensed game, you're still beholden to the licensor. We're not forced to do something based on the rules of a sport. We're able to do anything we want, and people are dying to do things like that around here."

### Punch-drunk characters

As we mentioned earlier, *FaceBreaker* won't feature any real boxers. So rather than drawing inspiration from the likes of Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard, the developers looked to another boxing legend. "Before we had any concept art or anything for characters," says Juby, "it was like, 'If we were going to make *Punch-Out!* today, what would we do?'" They even went so far as to re-create the virtual ring icons Bald Bull, Mr. Sandman, and Super Macho Man in a next-gen way. But pilfering those *Punch-Out!* pugilists was only for proof of concept—unfortunately, they won't appear in the finished game. Instead, the team will roll out 12 completely original playable characters, all with distinct looks and personalities. EA revealed to us a few members of the *FaceBreaker* roster, which includes a bus driver, a DJ, a demolitions expert, and a Latin lover. So what's the litmus test here? "The main thing was: Would I buy the action figure of that character?" says Juby.

The developers admit that creating characters in today's gaming world is quite difficult thanks to the countless number of fighters already on the market. As a guideline, they set three rules when designing their arcade prizefighters: They must wear gloves, fight in a ring, and mostly throw punches. Beyond that, it was a free-for-all, which puzzled many of the concept artists EA looked to hire. "Most of them had the idea that boxers are ugly and couldn't let it go," says Juby. "Just like in the movies, even our ugly has to be pretty good-looking. We want people to want to be these guys." They also had to avoid leaning on clichés when the character-creation process started to feel too daunting. "We didn't want bouncy-breasted, thong-wearing bimboes," says Juby. "We wanted female characters that the girls would want to be—something empowering."

Avoiding clichés meant that the >



### REVISIONIST HISTORY

The crew responsible for *FaceBreaker* is full of *Punch-Out!* lovers, none more than Gameplay Designer Todd Batty. So is his aim to replicate that character-driven blockbuster?

"With games like *NBA Live 98* or *NHL 95*, what people remember is a well-balanced game experience with great user feedback, where they understood the mechanics," says Batty. "In *live!*, they don't remember that; there was only one run animation that floated all over, or that it was really slow and unresponsive. They just remember the spirit of it. Play *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!* now, and it's laughably bad. But you still remember fondly, so as a game designer, you have to say, 'OK, what was it about that experience?' To me, *Punch-Out!* had interesting characters that had overly different gameplay challenges that had to be overcome. That's what we haven't captured in our sports titles. When I play against the team, or this person—or, in this case, this boxer—I should have to learn a new way to adapt to be successful." Our boxer hits fightscope way. When figure out how to beat him. I move on to the next guy, who does something different. That's still what we're going for. Sounds good...except for calling *Punch-Out!* laughably bad. Those are some fighting words.



It's not those *FaceBreaker*'s boxers that set a better fight than *Punch-Out!*'s ultimately weak Glass Joe (left).



It's also worth noting that *FaceBreaker* due out late '96.

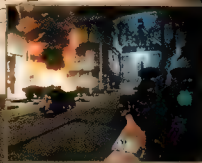


# CONFLICT

## DENIED OPS

WHILE HE'S  
COVERING  
THE ANGLES

YOU'RE  
COVERING  
HIS BACK

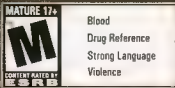


RUTHLESS

RELENTLESS

RECKLESS

[WWW.CONFLICTDENIEDOPS.COM](http://WWW.CONFLICTDENIEDOPS.COM)



PIVOTAL  
GAMES

eidos

ETA 09:00 2/12/08

green  
LABEL  
ART

FACEBREAKER (cont.)



FaceBreaker's gameplay also includes such FaceBreakers-wicked finishers that knock your opponent hilariously sky-high.

FaceBreaker crew went to some oddball sources for inspiration. The Latin lover Romeo, for example, came about when someone mentioned making a character in the vein of actor Antonio Banderas, only slimmer. Then you've got the yet-to-be-revealed fighter that—wait for it—the sock puppet Lamb Chop inspired. "A lot of the character ideas came from our Creative Director Trey Smith," says Juby, "who would hold up different images that don't even go together and say, 'What do you think?' It'd be like a pie, a robot, and something else. I didn't get it, and he'd say, 'This is the character!'"

Overall, we found FaceBreaker's roster to be varied, energetic, and sportin' just enough comedy relief without coming across as cheesy. Still, we'd like to see the final number of pugilists go higher than 12.

### Ding, ding, ding!

From a distance (the game wasn't quite ready for us to go a few rounds), we checked out a thinner, quicker Romeo battle the bullish demolitions expert Molotov. In short order, we saw an impressive flurry of dodges, parries, blocks, pushes, shoves, and of course a whole bunch of thrown punches. At one point, Molotov strong-armed Romeo into the corner, but Romeo beautifully parried by leaping over his explosive opponent like a boxing Mikhail Baryshnikov.

Even though bringing all that noise might sound complicated, EA promises it won't be. "Button combinations like in fighting games was the anti-vision of what we wanted," says Batty, who's dead-set against memorizing button inputs. And we've got faith that Batty will follow through on that vision, considering he also designed one of last year's freshest and most accessible sports games in *NBA Street Homecourt* (PS3/XB360). To keep things easy for users, tossing knuckle sandwiches will happen via button presses rather than the somewhat finicky analog sticks like in *Fight Night*. Smart move.

Floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee will also lead to some severe facial deformation. But it's much more than giving your cartoony opponent a fat lip—we're talking delivering over-the-top cranial dents and breaking jaws with such force that *Punch-Out!*'s Glass Joe would instantly throw in the towel. Similar to a Pixar flick, humor over horror has always been the goal for the game's brutality. "We wanted a fun, funny game, without being grotesque," says Juby, "so we did all kinds of deformation studies to find the line between gross and funny. We even took meat and molasses and stuffed it in a balloon and videotaped what happened." Wow, Riccietello and Moore really are letting these guys do whatever the heck they want. ☘

AVAILABLE IN LIMITED NUMBERS  
AT SELECT RETAILERS NATIONWIDE

INSPIRATION EXPRESSION CREATION

GREENLABELART.COM

MOUNTAIN DEW, DEW and DO THE DEW  
are registered trademarks of PepsiCo, Inc.



# green LABEL ART

LIMITED EDITION ARTIST SERIES



**CHUCK ANDERSON**

"Highs and lows everyone goes through..."



**DEZ**

"DEW is about excitement and adventure."



**HAZE**

"Super vibrant, pop art kind of vibe."



**PEAT WOLLAEGER**

"Vintage bottle of MOUNTAIN DEW."



**SCOTT LENHARDT & DANNY DAVIS**

"Like hanging out with a friend I hadn't seen in a while, ..."



**TROY DENNING**

"A magic elixir from a samurai's pouch."

**VOLUME 1 • 2008**

INSPIRATION EXPRESSION CREATION

**GREENLABELART.COM**

MOUNTAIN DEW, DEW and DO THE DEW are registered trademarks of PepsiCo, Inc.

# Funny BUSINESS

Merry drama from game development *By Michael Donohue*

We know games are fun, but *creating* games isn't always so enjoyable. But for all those hellishly long hours developers put in, we just know tons of funny stuff happens. So we asked a handful of gamemakers to recount all the hilarious stories that go on during development.

Pranks don't just happen while games are being made. Sometimes developers work gags into the final product. For instance, *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* features a Spanish-written headstone that tells readers they are nerds for, well, reading it.

## > SMELLS LIKE TROUBLE

Christophe Desse, an environment modeler here at Naughty Dog, is apparently allergic to the Naughty Dog studio (or perhaps he has a perpetual cold?). **Now, there's nothing wrong with sneezing 10 times a day like a normal person, but Christophe has some kind of mutated, special-weapons sneeze. Something so terrifically deafening, it's like being sneezed at by a Marine drill instructor.** As I'm sure you can gauge from his name, Christophe is very French, and it wasn't long before the nickname "Le Choo" took hold and was chimed through the office after every occurrence.

Browsing the Internet weeks later, our inspired environment lead, Rob Adams, found a picture of a child wearing a Thomas the Tank Engine Halloween costume. It started with Rob expertly Photoshopping Christophe's head onto the child's body and sending it in a company-wide e-mail. This turned into a pool to buy the actual costume! So we began a collection of money to purchase said costume in the hopes that Le Choo would come to bold fruition. Christophe, being the sport he is, agreed to wear it for one day. The costume was purchased and worn for a full working day. Smiles, laughs, and photos were had by all.

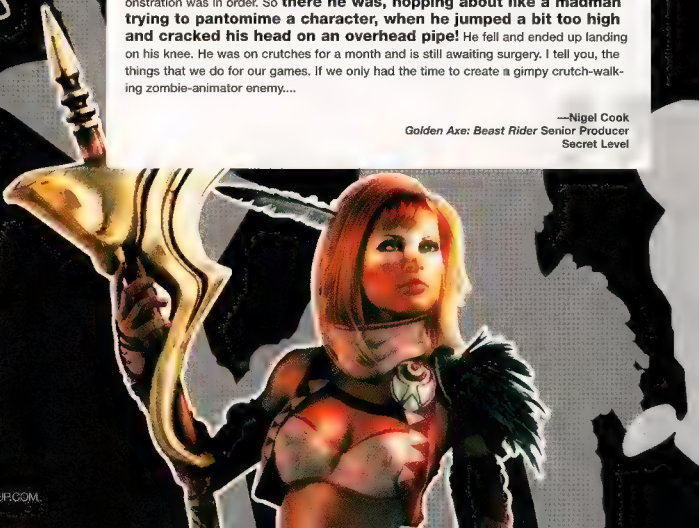


—Shaddy Safadi  
*Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* Senior Concept Artist  
Naughty Dog

## > PRECARIOUS PANTOMIME

Here's an "animated" tale: Our lead animator, a guy named Kaj, is a really energetic and passionate individual. While trying to make sure some of the animation team really understood what he was envisioning for a particular character, Kaj decided that a demonstration was in order. So **there he was, hopping about like a madman trying to pantomime a character, when he jumped a bit too high and cracked his head on an overhead pipe!** He fell and ended up landing on his knee. He was on crutches for a month and is still awaiting surgery. I tell you, the things that we do for our games. If we only had the time to create a gimpy crutch-walking zombie-animator enemy...

—Nigel Cook  
*Golden Axe: Beast Rider* Senior Producer  
Secret Level





## > CRAPPY SONG SELECTION

When we were making *Guitar Hero II*, our Project Lead Daniel Sussman went to Norway for vacation. Right before he left, he played a show with his band, and he had me and another producer come up and sing backup on some songs. One of us—probably me—accidentally muted him by stepping on his guitar pedal, and at the end of the song he made some comment about how a “big girl” stepped on his pedal. And I was like, “Motherf\*\*\*er—he just called us fat!” So I decided we had to get him back. While he was in Norway, we decided what we were going to do. I realized the most annoying thing that could possibly happen would be if our publisher, RedOctane, demanded that we put a song in the game. Then we started to think of the worst song for them to want to put in the game, one that would destroy him. It had to be Avril Lavigne—she would be the worst thing for the game.

I started drafting up an e-mail, but then I realized I had to actually had to get RedOctane involved because Daniel had to think it’s coming from them. So I called RedOctane and told them I wanted to prank Daniel, and they were all for it. So I wrote the prank e-mail and told them to send it to Daniel the day before he gets back from Norway. After that, I sent a note to everyone who works at Harmonix (excluding Daniel) saying that some of us have to act like we’re really mad and others will pretend they’re for it, because we figured if everyone was for it, he’d know it was a prank. So RedOctane sent the e-mail, and Daniel got it when he came back. Then, all of sudden, he storms into this meeting looking completely crazed and asked if I checked my mail. I said I hadn’t in a couple of hours, and then he started freaking out saying the worst thing that could ever happen is happening. **I asked him what was going on, and he yaps back, “They want Avril Lavigne in the game!” I told him “that’s terrible,” and he screams, “I will quit! I will f\*\*\*ing quit!”** I’m quitting before they let Avril Lavigne in *Guitar Hero*. *Guitar Hero* is my baby.” Immediately, people start taking sides—some of our producers starts talking about how we really need more women in the game. This, of course, pissed him off. So he went to our vice president and complained about how he was trying to push back but it wasn’t working. Our VP then asked him if he even listened to the song. This angered him even more.

At this point, we let it go a few days. During this time, Daniel was going insane. He’d call me into his office and tell me it was the worst thing that’s ever happened to him in his entire life. He’d be like, “I’m going to quit! I mean, I’m not going to quit, but I wanna quit.” I’d walk by his office and he’d be listening to this horrible Avril song with his face all contorted. I finally told him the truth at this big company lunch we had. Me and the other producer told everyone that we wanted to sing a song for Daniel, so we did a karaoke rendition of the Avril song and changed the lyrics to tell him it’s a prank. I think the lyrics went, “We weren’t trying to be mean/We lied about Avril Lavigne.” He was so shocked, he couldn’t even understand what was going on. I told him, “OK—that’s it! It’s a prank. We’re kidding.” And he asked what part. And I told him the whole thing. But he still believed that they wanted the song in, and I had to tell him that I picked the song. He was actually going to fire people because he thought they had no taste in music for agreeing to put the song in the game. The prank completely warped his mind, and I don’t think he’s ever completely forgiven me for it.

—Helen McWilliams  
Rock Band Associate Producer  
Harmonix

## > CRUEL KAMIKAZE

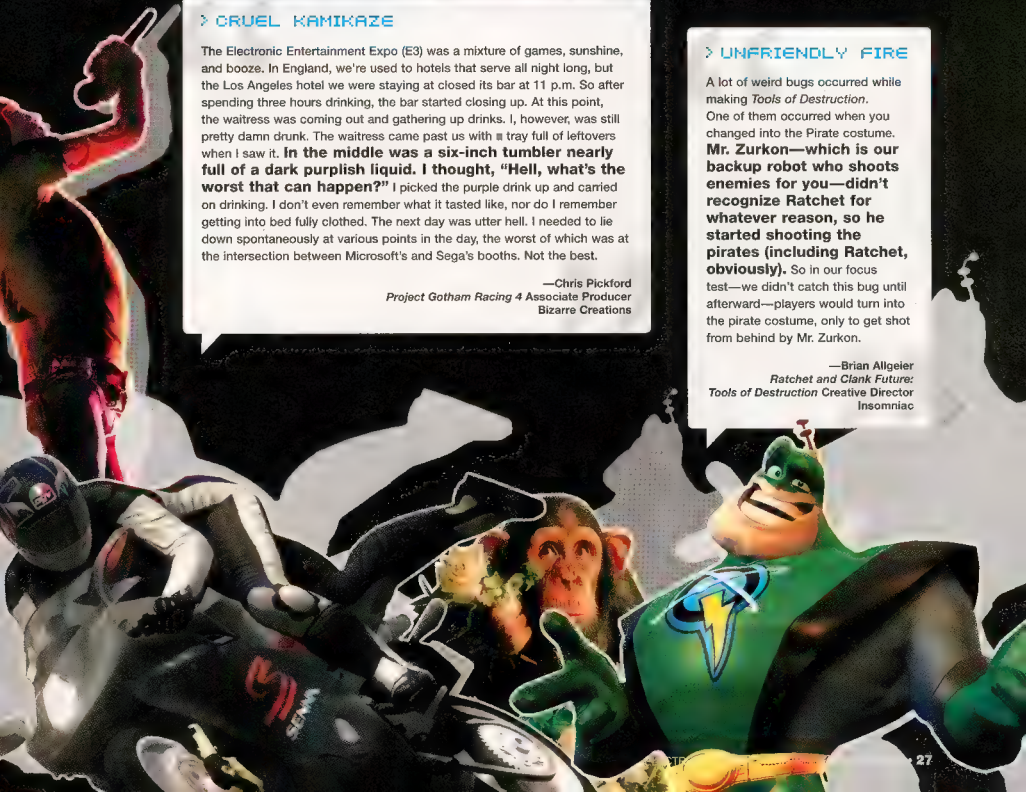
The Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) was a mixture of games, sunshine, and booze. In England, we’re used to hotels that serve all night long, but the Los Angeles hotel we were staying at closed its bar at 11 p.m. So after spending three hours drinking, the bar started closing up. At this point, the waitress was coming out and gathering up drinks. I, however, was still pretty damn drunk. The waitress came past us with a tray full of leftovers when I saw it. **In the middle was a six-inch tumbler nearly full of a dark purplish liquid. I thought, “Hell, what’s the worst that can happen?”** I picked the purple drink up and carried on drinking. I don’t even remember what it tasted like, nor do I remember getting into bed fully clothed. The next day was utter hell. I needed to lie down spontaneously at various points in the day, the worst of which was at the intersection between Microsoft’s and Sega’s booths. Not the best.

—Chris Pickford  
Associate Producer  
Bizarre Creations

## > UNFRIENDLY FIRE

A lot of weird bugs occurred while making *Tools of Destruction*. One of them occurred when you changed into the Pirate costume. **Mr. Zurkon—which is our backup robot who shoots enemies for you—didn’t recognize Ratchet for whatever reason, so he started shooting the pirates (including Ratchet, obviously).** So in our focus test—we didn’t catch this bug until afterward—players would turn into the pirate costume, only to get shot from behind by Mr. Zurkon.

—Brian Allgeier  
Ratchet and Clank Future:  
Tools of Destruction Creative Director  
Insomniac



A thousand years of  
memories lost,  
It's time to discover them.



The Next Generation RPG,  
From the makers of Final Fantasy



An immersive and deep  
gameplay experience.  
Engaging and unparalleled  
emotional story.

An epic storyline with  
breathtaking visuals as intense  
as a blockbuster action film.

See the trailers, screenshots  
and stunning game art on:

[www.xbox.com/lostodyssey](http://www.xbox.com/lostodyssey)

XBOX 360 LIVE



Microsoft  
GAME PASS



Language  
Suggestive Themes  
Use of Alcohol  
Violence

## FUNNY BUSINESS (cont.)

### > HAPPY FACE

We were really close to a deadline, and we told all the artists that we couldn't turn anything new in, because when they turn something in, it always has the potential to break the game. We went up to one of the artists and said, "We want you to make Ratchet have a happier expression on his face, but whatever you do, be careful that you don't break anything—make sure it works when you turn it in." The artist was wondering why everyone was putting all this pressure on him, especially since he already had three people tell him to be careful. So **he decided to give Ratchet an expression where his eyes and tongue were sticking out like a Looney Tunes cartoon.** This was right before our deadline, and we booted up the game. And, of course, Ratchet has this crazy expression on his face, and I think our lead programmer almost exploded. Fortunately, he fixed it before the deadline, but that was a crazy moment, indeed.

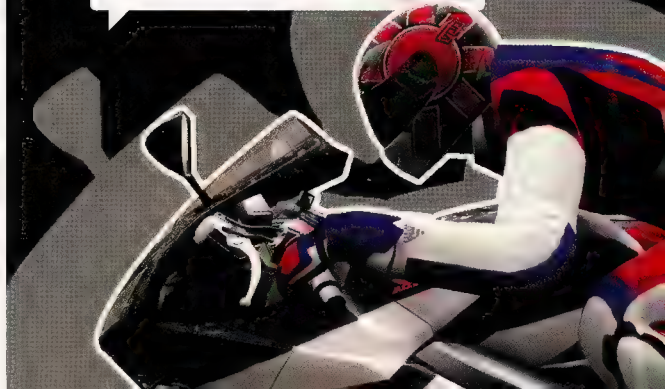
—Brian Allgeier  
Ratchet and Clank Future: Tools of Destruction  
Creative Director  
Insomniac



### > WILD WIPESOUT

When [completing] a game, you need to burn [it onto a disc] to check if everything works OK. It's pretty boring. Now, back in the old days, we needed to burn DVDs to use on the Xbox. At the time, we couldn't burn full speed because the disc would fail sometimes, so we'd just burn them at a slower speed with a guarantee that the disc would work. A few days prior to burning, we had a salesman call in, and **his novelty item was a fold-up scooter, which pretty much everyone in the office decided to buy.** This led to scooter races around the office. All was going well until someone decided to spice things up by using bins as "track obstacles." And he put them just after a corner. A blind corner by the administrative corridor...where all the walls are made of glass. Needless to say, we all went tumbling over it and into the glass, nearly knocking into the disc-burning machine. Now try explaining that to security at 3 a.m.

—Chris Pickford  
Project Gotham Racing 4 Associate Producer  
Bizarre Creations







**MAYBE THE EVERYONE'S NINTENDO CHANNEL** will be worth the wait. Nintendo President Reggie Fils-Aime recently told the *New York Times* that the upcoming Wii channel will not only let you download Wii and DS demos, but it will also let you download complete games to your DS. Yeah, we'd love to replay some classic Game Boy and Game Boy Advance relics, but let's keep the prices low, Nintendo. Even nostalgia has a price, and it's cheap.

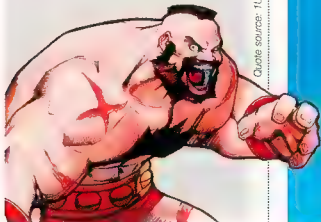


**PUBLISHERS SURE ARE COCKING THE SEQUELS**—Ubisoft announced that the jungle shooter *Far Cry 2* is coming to both the 360 and PS3, while publisher Eidos is saying why not to a 360/PS3 sequel of the open-world action game *Just Cause* (original shown above). And for those who aren't trigger-happy, publisher Namco Bandai announced *Tales of Vesperia* (a new title in the long-running role-playing game series) is coming to the 360. No word on a PS3 version...yet

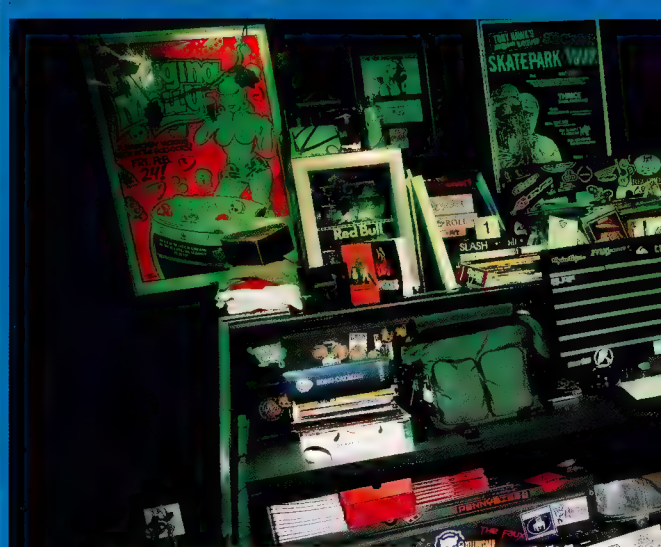
> OVERHEARD

"Compared to male characters, I have a really hard time trying to draw women. That's probably because my mind wanders and I'd rather be looking at—or better yet, touching—real women rather than drawing them. [Laughs.] Men are easier to draw as the urge to get touchy-feely doesn't really come up...."

—Capcom Art Director Daigo Ikeno explains why the *Street Fighter* series is dominated by shirtless buff dudes, Oh, and thick-thighed chicks.



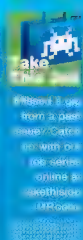
Quote source: TUP.com



> TAKE THIS JOB

# Music Executive

Our monthly look at the industry's most interesting gigs *By Evan Shamoon*



**This month's** Tom Riley, worldwide executive of music at Activision. A degree in business, plus a thorough understanding of the deal. A few-year knowledge of music is also a plus. Salary: \$90,000.

### What's a music executive?

He's got to be a business publisher's music department, responsible for everything from licensing a song to getting a band in a studio, or having composers he negotiated with a label. Riley—his name might suggest the career path to the *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* games—has worked on all sorts of projects, including working with record labels and negotiating with artists. He's always been busy, and he's got a lot of contacts in the industry. He's got a lot of contacts in the industry. He's got a lot of contacts in the industry.

### Riley's typical day

First, he sorts through his stack of mail, typically prearranged with promo CDs from bands hoping to get into Activision games. "It used to be us calling down labels," Riley says. "I've especially worked with Sony, but that relationship has been turned on its head." Then he heads to his phone, checking messages and emails. "I'm not a morning person," he says. "I'm not a morning person." He's got a lot of contacts in the industry. He's got a lot of contacts in the industry.





## 5 Lives: Evan Wells

No need to search too hard for a pretty PlayStation 3 exclusive—*Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* is one good-looking gem. But do the developers behind this beauty have any brains? We tracked down Evan Wells, copresident of *Uncharted* developer Naughty Dog to see if he's got the smarts to answer our five questions.

**1. *Uncharted* was inspired by *Indiana Jones*, so tell us the only two ways you could play *Indiana Jones* and the *Infernal Machine* on the Nintendo 64.**

**Evan Wells:** Drunk or stoned.

**EGM:** Correct.

**Lives remaining:**

**2. *Naughty Dog* isn't the only developer to have an animal in its title—name two other developers named after animals.**

**EW:** Oh boy. Cavedog? Lucky Chicken?

**EGM:** Correct.

**Lives remaining:**

**3. *Naughty Dog's* first game was *Rings of Power* on the Genesis. Name three of the 11 rings of power.**

**EW:** Oh my god! Larry, Curly, and Moe?

**EGM:** Incorrect. The rings are Thought, Evocation, Mutation, Division, Variation, Advancement, Blood, Will, Bile, Perfection, and Intuition.

**Lives remaining:**

**4. You worked on the *ToeJam & Earl* sequel (*Sega Genesis*), so answer this: What's the final ranking in the original *ToeJam & Earl*?**

**EW:** The Funkapomatus?

**EGM:** Incorrect. It's Funklord.

**Lives remaining:**

**5. You've also worked on *Crash Bandicoot*. How many *Crash* games are there total?**

**EW:** Oh my good god. I know we made four. I'm going to say nine.

**EGM:** Incorrect.

**EW:** You counting the Game Boy Advance games, too?

**EGM:** Yes.

**EW:** OK, 11.

**EGM:** Still wrong. Correct answer is 14.

**EW:** Ah, s\*\*\*.

**Lives remaining:**

**Game Over:** Well, Mr. Wells—fortune was not with you today. If only your brain were as developed as your polygons.



Photographer: Jeff Rosenberg

who wants to chat about working with him. "The Sex Pistols, Def Leppard, Weezer, Mike Diger, Slipknot—even Mike Tyson. It's deep, the depth, not really these kind of things," Wells says.

### How'd he get the gig?

Wells went freelance after ending the search for employment after being

from a workweek taught at a university. "I was thinking, 'What am I gonna do, work at another record label?'" he says. "I know Activision should be doing more indie music, so I called them after *Toy Story* & *Underground*. I pitched them something: a music department managed, kept together a business plan—what sold themselves to."

### 5 PEOPLE OF HIS TRADE

#### Music players

"I was a 50th birthday gift. I was the local electronic music scene. I was a DJ, I was a DJ, I was a DJ."

#### Site Surf

"I was a 50th birthday gift. I was the local electronic music scene. I was a DJ, I was a DJ, I was a DJ."

"I was a 50th birthday gift. I was the local electronic music scene. I was a DJ, I was a DJ, I was a DJ."

#### Networking skills

"I was a 50th birthday gift. I was the local electronic music scene. I was a DJ, I was a DJ, I was a DJ."

"I was a 50th birthday gift. I was the local electronic music scene. I was a DJ, I was a DJ, I was a DJ."

#### Life skills

"I was a 50th birthday gift. I was the local electronic music scene. I was a DJ, I was a DJ, I was a DJ."



We've put our favorite video picks for the month all in one spot, and that spot is [GameVideos.com/EGM](http://GameVideos.com/EGM).



### LULZ: Broken Pixels

The boys (*EGM's* Shane, Crispin, and Seanbaby) take on *China Warrior* and *Air Cars*. And lose hilariously.



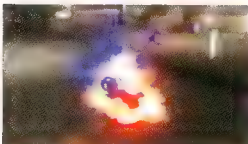
### ZOMG: Street Fighter IV Channel

Check out exclusive *Street Fighter IV* gameplay videos and about an hour's worth of interview clips from *EGM's* candid chat with *SF4* Producer Yoshinori Ono.



### WHEEEEEEE: Line Rider

See the first footage of the new version of *Line Rider*, coming to Wii and DS later this year.



### 1337: Halo 3 Epic Suicides

Some dude named Evmidget25 uses Forge to commit grenade-assisted suicide via elaborate, Rube Goldberg machine-esque means.

## > ONLINE SCENE

# Fun with Forge

Looking at five wacky modes in *Halo 3's* Forge By David Ellis

**SO, YOU'VE TRUDGED THROUGH LEGENDARY** (mostly) unscathed, and you're already a General in multiplayer. You might be asking yourself, "Is there anything left to do in *Halo 3*?" Fiddle around with Forge—the game's all-purpose map editor—and you'll tell yourself, "Yes. Yes there is." Don't believe us? Well, we've searched through the dark recesses of the Bungie.net forums to discover five of the most creative Forge creations.

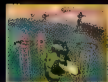


### > PAC-MAN

**Creator:** Dmiller360, AlkalineProdigy, MDK x2002x

**How it's played:** In

this Infection variant on Foundry, one player spawns as "Pac-Man" while the remaining players start out as sword-carrying "ghosts." The Pac-Man Spartan—armed with a Gravity Hammer—is completely helpless until he picks up one of the four power pellets placed at the corners of an almost perfect re-creation of the original Pac-Man maze. After that, it's whack, whack, whack, and the ghosts are dead. **Fun scale (1-10):** 9. Grabbing a power pellet and taking out the entire cadre of ghosts in quick succession is too sweet.



### > SHARK

**Creator:** Methic  
**How it's played:**

Shark takes place in the water on the out-

skirts of Last Resort. The victims spawn precariously perched on top of towers armed only with a pistol while the "shark" stalks its prey in the water with a sword and superspeed. It sounds tough for the landlubbers, but the shark is susceptible to headshots (he has no shields), so it's possible to turn the tide.

**Fun scale:** 7. While this concept is super-creative, the matches sometimes degrade into an exercise in spawn-killing the shark until everyone runs out of ammo. Then you, well, die.

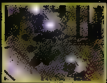


### > STORM THE BEACH

**Creator:** Trickmyster

**How it's played:** Welcome to war—in this re-creation of the D-Day landing on Utah beach, you're tasked with capturing territories while avoiding turret fire and random artillery explosions in the form of fusion coils falling from the sky. Fight back with weapon upgrades that are left behind in some of the territories.

**Fun scale:** 8. From the bullets whizzing over your head to the fusion coils exploding all around, this hellishly hectic match type offers a seemingly insurmountable challenge while also rewarding players who use their tactical minds to patiently make a strategic offense.



### > BUNGIE 500

**Creator:** Glimfleker

**How it's played:**

Take the road in this

VIP variant where you drive around in a Mongoose until you reach the finish line. Afterward, you're launched back to the beginning of the track. Don't try cheating, though—if you try to score laps by crossing back and forth over the finish line repeatedly on foot, you'll be moved to the penalty box; your only recourse is to kill yourself and accept a long respawn time. **Fun scale:** 9. This game type works best with at least six drivers. It's a perfect example of the unique experiences that can be created in Forge.



### > GRIFBALL

**Creator:** BurnieBurns  
**How it's played:**

GrifBall is like a

juiced-up version of Rugby. A bomb is placed in the middle of an empty arena for two Gravity Hammer-wielding teams to sprint to. The rest is mad chaos as the "ball" is constantly changing possession while both sides use rapidly changing strategies to score.

**Fun scale:** 10. GrifBall is a simple concept that is surprisingly deep.



**EGM Extras:** Wanna know where you can play these genius games? Easy—head over to [EGM.1UP.com](http://EGM.1UP.com) to get links to all the modes listed above.





PLAY AS MASTER NINJA,  
RYU HAYABUSA!  
SLASH AWAY AT ENEMIES!  
THROW NINJA STARS!  
CLIMB UP WALLS!  
THE ADVENTURE LIES IN  
YOUR HANDS... WITH  
THE DS STYLUS!

# NINJA GAIDEN DRAGON SWORD

**TEEN**  
**T** Partial Nudity  
Violence  
ESRB CONTENT RATING [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org)

[www.ninjadragon.com](http://www.ninjadragon.com)  
Ninja Gaiden® Dragon Sword. © 2007 Tecmo, LTD. Ninja Gaiden and Tecmo are registered trademarks of Tecmo, LTD. Team NINJA and the Team NINJA logo are trademarks of Tecmo, LTD. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo.  
© 2004 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



NINTENDO DS™

# Forced Guests

Cameos that make us scream "Yesssss!" **By Peter Dinklage**

**GUEST STARS SOMETIMES SHINE BRIGHTLY IN TELEVISION SHOWS,** but over in videogame land, the number of ridiculous cameos could permanently blind you. Or in Namco Bandai's case, light you up—the publisher recently announced iconic *Star Wars* badasses Darth Vader and Yoda will both be playable characters in this summer's *Soulcalibur IV* (PS3/XB360). You might be asking yourself, "What the hell does *Star Wars* have to do with *Soulcalibur*?" The answer? Uh...yeah, we

have no clue either. But we're not complaining. Of course, it makes absolutely no sense for Vader and Yoda to be duking it out with the *Soulcalibur* regulars, and yeah, they could potentially break the game, but it's pointless to bitch about it. Fitting or not, *Star Wars* characters are in *Soulcalibur IV*. And that's crazy cool.

Except for one little thing: Like the guest characters in *Soul Calibur II*, both Yoda and Darth Vader will be exclusive to a system (the green-skinned midget will appear

on the 360 while the breathing-impaired whiner will show up on the PS3). Though we're bummed we can't stage an epic duel between the two, we're hearing that you'll eventually be able to purchase the one you don't own via downloadable content. Not only that, but word is you may even be able to buy additional *Star Wars* characters in the future (we're crossing our fingers for golden hottie Yaddle). This sounds great; LucasArts, but please don't whore out Jar Jar Binks to *Smash Bros.*, OK?



■ We're no scientists or anything, but, um, shouldn't a lightsaber cut through steel?

## > REST OF THE GUESTS

Awarding some of gaming's most famous cameos



**Creepiest cameo award:** Michael Jackson in *Space Channel 5*.



**Fanboy heart attack award:** Everyone in *Kingdom Hearts*.



**Throw in the towel award:** The Burger King in *Fight Night: Round 3*.



**Genre fender bender award:** Hornet (*Daytona USA*) in *Fighters Megamix*.



**White House men can jump award:** Bill Clinton in *NBA Jam*.





**AS AN AMERICAN**

YOU CAN TAKE AN ORDER.

PLACE AN ORDER.

CANCEL AN ORDER.

AN ORDER CAN BE TALL.

LARGE.

OR MADE-TO.

YOU CAN QUESTION AN ORDER.

OR FOLLOW IT.

**AS AN AMERICAN AND  
A MARINE CORPS OFFICER**

YOUR ORDERS WILL IMPACT

THE FUTURE OF THIS NATION.

FEW CAN BE MARINES.  
EVEN FEWER CAN LEAD THEM.  
CAN YOU?



**MARINEOFFICER.COM**



> PREVIEWS

# Double Duty

Ninja Gaiden's man in black, Ryu Hayabusa, will be one busy assassin this spring, as he's called to both the Xbox 360 and Nintendo DS. *By Paul Sammel and Druze Indur*





■ If the past few NG editions are any indication, definitely expect some kind of downloadable content for No. 2.



## NINJA GAIDEN II

XB360 • Microsoft Game Studios • Spring 2008

**The setup:** Developer Team Ninja's outspoken leader, Tomonobu Itagaki, explains that Ryu Hayabusa's clan has been in a Hatfields-vs.-McCoys-style feud "for as long as anyone can remember. So what you're going to see is the intense conflict [with the Black Spider Clan]." As for where the action game falls in the franchise timeline, it takes place after the events of *Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword* (DS).

**The scenery:** NG2 is set in our world...sort of. While you'll hack and slash ninjas in Venice, Tokyo, and several other metropolises, "we're not trying to re-create [these cities] as is," says Itagaki. "We're changing them

around and adapting them to our game." Still, we hope the final game has some pedestrians populating its pretty-yet-currently-barren cities.

**Tools of destruction:** As you'd expect, NG2 will feature numerous sharp instruments, including Ryu's Dragon Sword, a giant scythe, and bladed gloves that would make Wolverine jealous. Though, as Itagaki explains, some will also factor into the story. "We treat the swords as important parts of the game," he says, "not just as weapons but as plot points as well. In the last game, yours became the true Dragon Sword toward the end, which unleashed its true power.

We'll be doing that throughout the course of this game as well."

**New ninja tricks:** Besides the changes to the locales and weaponry, you'll see some welcome tweaks to the gameplay. Magic (or Ninpo as it's called here) will now be used more offensively than defensively. "Also in the previous game, [magic] affected every enemy onscreen equally," says Itagaki, "like a smart bomb in an old shooter. But now, the effect differs depending on how many enemies there are, and if you jump into a throng of enemies and use your Ninpo, it'll kill some enemies, injure others, or throw them off their feet." >



Our resident assassin also now has the rather handy ability to regenerate his health. "Because he's a super-ninja," says Itagaki, "he's able to concentrate and focus his energy to regain some of [his health] back. But you can't get it all back."

On the flipside, Ryu can now use Obliteration techniques, which are like the finishing moves in *Mortal Kombat*, only less cartoony, humiliating, and showy. Though they're no less painful—one that Itagaki pulled off when

playing the game had Ryu dicing a guy like he was hosting some late-night infomercial for Ginsu knives.

**Body count:** As you can imagine, the Obliteration techniques are quite bloody, a quality the entire game shares. Unlike other action games, *NG2* shows Ryu cutting off his enemies' limbs with surgical (and graphical) precision. Not that it'll stop them. Genshin, head of the rival clan, is so focused on destroying the Hayabusa

Clan that, "if any of his lesser ninjas try but fail to kill Ryu," says Itagaki, "they'd be killed by their own boss for failing." As a result, enemies will keep coming at you, even when they've lost an arm or a leg—very nice.

**Support:** Like last year's stellar *Ninja Gaiden Sigma* (PS3), this one will also feature a female playable character. But Itagaki still refuses to provide any details regarding the series' new femme fatale.



■ *Dragon Sword* requires you to hold the handheld like a book. And while most of the controls here are mapped to the stylus, you can press any face or shoulder button to block.

## NINJA GAIDEN: DRAGON SWORD

DS • Tecmo • March 2008

**The setup:** The series' first foray on the DS actually tells the story of what happened between *Ninja Gaiden* (XB) and the upcoming *NG2*. And while the Black Spider Clan will be your main adversary in the new console game, the Fiend Clans (including *NG1*'s voluptuous pink nightmare Alma) provide Ryu's opposition here.

**The scenery:** Even though Nintendo's portable system is far from a graphical powerhouse, we're pretty blown away by what this game is spitting out. It's definitely helping set new standards for DS visuals, as *Dragon Sword* does an absolutely masterful job at blending 2D environments with 3D characters.

**Tools of destruction:** Obviously, Ryu will arrive with all the ninja essentials (sword, shuriken, etc.), but the ultimate weapon here is your stylus. Yep, in the vein of *Zelda: Phantom Hourglass*, you'll control the assassin by manipulating the DS touch screen. You'll hold the stylus down to make Ryu move, single-tap to throw shuriken, double-tap to jump, and use vertical/horizontal strokes to attack. Surprisingly, we found *Dragon Sword*'s control setup quite responsive and never skipped a beat while slicin' up foes.

**New ninja tricks:** Casting magic in this game also involves the touch screen. You'll first activate a Ninpo

spell via tracing its symbol, and then use the stylus to guide fireballs (or whatever else you've conjured up) through the environment.

**Body count:** While *Dragon Sword*'s visuals undoubtedly impress, it still manages to pack a large number of enemies onscreen (and they ain't exactly clumps, either). Plus, the game always runs at a decent clip—even when you're encountering one of the gigantic bosses.

**Support:** Ryu won't be alone in this mission, as the lady ninja Morniji makes her franchise debut. It's too bad her role falls off drastically after you play as her in the tutorial. **A+**

**EGM Extras:**  
Head to [EGM.1UP.COM](http://EGM.1UP.COM) to see videos of Ryu tearing it up in both upcoming *Ninja Gaiden* games.



RULE THE OCEANS.  
SEIZE THE LAND.  
FORGE A LEGEND.

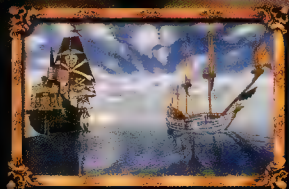


# PIRATES *of the Burning Sea*™

SET SAIL FOR MASSIVELY  
MULTIPLAYER ONLINE  
ADVENTURES IN THE  
PIRATE-INFESTED SEAS AND  
CARIBBEAN PORTS OF 1720.



Swashbuckling Sword Fights



Intense Tactical Ship Combat



Blood  
Mild Suggestive Themes  
Use of Alcohol and Tobacco  
Violence

Online Interactions  
Not Rated by the ESRB



[piratesoftheburningsea.com](http://piratesoftheburningsea.com)



# BULLY: Scholarship Edition

Bullworth Academy is making some changes to its curriculum By Bryan Intihar

**Platforms:** Wii/XB360  
**Publisher:** Rockstar  
**Developers:** Rockstar Toronto/Mad Doc  
**Release Date:** March 2007

**POOR JIMMY HOPKINS**—the freckled-face star of *Bully* spent one long year punching and slingshotting his way to the top of the student body...and now he's gotta do it all over again. This March, Rockstar is porting one of the PS2's last big hits to the Wii and Xbox 360.

The extra horsepower of these consoles will naturally equate into a prettier year on campus (even more so with Microsoft's machine). But members of the Bullworth faculty have also made some other alterations and additions for this school year.

## > DIVERSIFYING THE CLASS SCHEDULE



Expect to hit the books even harder in *Scholarship Edition*, as you'll have to excel at four additional minigame-based classes. The newcomers include Math (think along the lines of *Brain Age*), Music (playing a vibraphone and other instruments), Biology (dissecting all sorts of wildlife), and Geography (correctly placing a country/state's flag onto a map). Music and Biology were our favorites, especially when played using the Wii-specific controls.

## > MAINTAINING CONTROL AROUND CAMPUS



"We didn't want to go waggle-crazy," says Producer Jeronimo Barrera about the Wii-fied control scheme, which mostly comes into play during skirmishes; thrusting the Nunchuk and Wii Remote forward throws a left and right hook, respectively, while humiliation finishers are performed via following the onscreen cues. The new fighting mechanics work well, but aiming the Wiimote when tossing snowballs and firing your slingshot could use more fine-tuning.

## > EXTRA EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



*Scholarship Edition* features eight new missions, and look for Jimmy to get involved in some weird and wild stuff. One task has him helping a homeless Santa with making improvements to his back-alley North Pole (while fending off crazy elves that work for a competing Saint Nick), and then snapping pics of ill' rascals as they tell Santa what they'd like for Christmas. Another has Jimmy filling in for a sick musician at the town's annual rendition of *The Nutcracker*.

## > BELIEVE AND YOU'LL ACHIEVE

While the Wii version receives a new control setup, those who purchase the 360 edition will now have Mr. Hopkins to aid them in jacking up their gamescore. Barrera won't go into specifics, but he assures us that some of the Achievements here will be just as creative as the game itself. Cross your fingers that hooking up with lots of girls (or even sucking face with a dude) earns you some nice points.



## > SCHOOL COMPETITIONS

*Scholarship Edition* also introduces a multiplayer mode, where one person assumes the role of Jimmy and another plays as Gary (the game's main nemesis). You'll be able to compete (offline only) in several of the class minigames and other school activities.



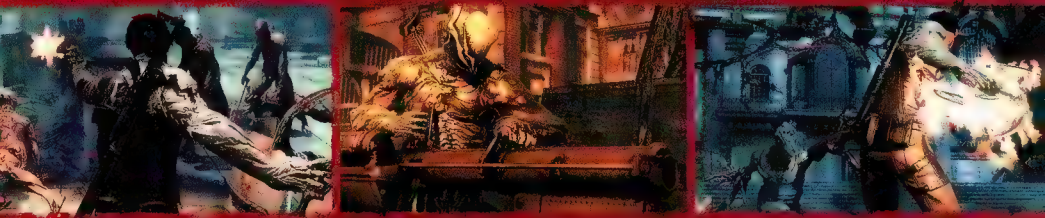


be the  
weapon.

unleash the  
power.

become the  
hero.

# darkSector



PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360 LIVE

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

Dark Sector © 2007 Digital Extremes, London, U.K. Dark Sector and the Dark Sector logo are trademarks of Digital Extremes. Digital Extremes and the Extremes logo are trademarks of Digital Extremes. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, XBLIVE and the Xbox Family logo are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.



Blood and Gore  
Intense Violence  
Strong Language

# Small Wonders

Holy crap! We found five mobile games that don't suck (and three that still do) *By John Brandon*

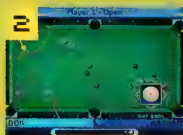


**WITH THEIR OFTEN DINKY SCREENS** and numeric-keypad interfaces, mobile phones haven't been known for delivering worthwhile gaming experiences. But as the handsets become sleeker and better developers try their fortunes in the booming mobile-gaming business, on-the-go games are actually getting—gasp!—good.

We pick the top five titles for phones and the ubiquitous iPod that just might make you switch your Nintendo DS and PSP to standby mode...at least for a few minutes.



**1 SimCity Societies**  
eamobile.com  
**What is it?** An old-school strategy game borrows from the PC version, letting you build everything from tennis courts to skyscrapers. Global-warming worrywarts can even use green sources of alternative power.  
**Why is it great?** Long commutes demand complex, detail-oriented games, and there's a lot to do in *Societies*. Graphically, it's a few steps above the blocky visuals in most other mobile fare.  
**What you need to play it:** Any Java-enabled phone will do, such as the LG VX3800 or Sony Ericsson K800i.



**2 Sims Pool**  
eamobile.com  
**What is it?** A smartly designed pool game with 9-ball, 8-ball, and trick-shot modes. Sound effects are pretty good if you pocket the iPod earbuds and go with real headphones.  
**Why is it great?** Right, pool. It might sound like loser PC retro gaming, but the iPod wheel is well suited to lining up the cue stick and thwacking a power shot at just the right angle. The visuals are also a perfect fit for the iPod's slightly rectangular high-res screen.  
**What you need to play it:** iPod (game supports Nano, Classic, and Video models).



**3 Crash of the Titans**  
clickgamer.com  
**What is it?** Crash, the original eastern barred bandicoot made famous on the original PlayStation, may be all played out on the consoles, but he's finding new life on mobile phones thanks to this beat-em-up with 50 levels, boss fights, and graphics that look good on the small screen.  
**Why is it great?** Crash beats the crap out of enemies with special moves and mask power-ups that are actually fun.  
**What you need to play it:** The game's available for any Java-enabled phone.



**4 Assassin's Creed**  
gameoft.com  
**What is it?** A hardcore platformer with lots of sword fighting, this surprisingly cinematic game has more in common with the original *2D Prince of Persia* than the so-so, ultra-repetitive PS3/XB360 version of *Creed*.  
**Why is it great?** Some of the death-defying jumps and scripted action scenes—horse carts run amok, thrilling vine catapults—will have you ignoring incoming calls until you reach the end of the level.  
**What you need to play it:** Any Java-enabled phone.



**5 FIFA 07**  
eamobile.com  
**What is it?** EA's FIFA franchise goes mobile with about 100 FIFA soccer teams, easy-on-the-eyes graphics, and music that even sounds good on a tinny, tiny mobile-phone speaker.  
**Why is it great?** The forgiving gameplay leads to some great action (quick passes and lobbs) and something the console version rarely allows: scoring a goal.  
**What you need to play it:** Any N-Gage-enabled Symbian OS phone, like the N95 pictured at the top left of the page. You read that right: N-Gage!

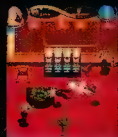
## > AND THREE GAMES THAT SUCK...



**Asphalt 3: Street Rules**  
More like ass-fault. This sloppy-handling racer's graphics will make you puke Mountain Dew. Car freaks should try EA's mobile *ProStreet* instead.



**Orcs & Elves II**  
The first-person perspective in this role-playing shooter's screens may look good in screenshots, but when you see the choppy graphics in motion...oh, not so much.



**Heroes**  
NBC's superhero drama didn't need its own mobile game, just like it didn't need horrid cartoony graphics and repetitive gameplay. We'd rather watch season two again.

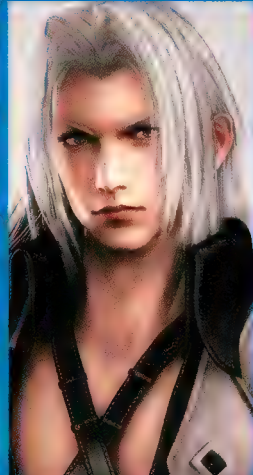
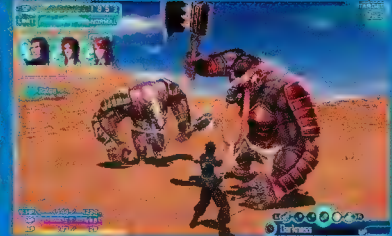


MYHUNGER.COM



©2007 Sealed Air Corporation

**HUNGER GETS  
WHAT HUNGER WANTS**



PREVIEW: HANDS-ON

# CRISIS CORE: Final Fantasy VII

A primer to this long-awaited PSP spin-off. By Torrey Walker

Platform:  
PSP

Publisher:  
Square-Enix

Developer:  
Square-Enix

Release Date:  
March 2007

**SQUARE ENIX SEEMS CONTENT TO MILK** the lucrative *Final Fantasy VII* teat till it's concave. But honestly, why craft something truly new when something old sells better?

To get you ready for the series' oft-delayed portable installment, we go ahead and answer all the necessary questions.

**When does it go down?** *Crisis Core* takes place before *FFVII* when Cloud Strife, the famed protagonist of the PS1 role-playing classic, was just a plebeian guard for the energy conglomerate Shinra Electric Power Company. As such, one character who famously kicks the bucket in *FFVII* is just kicking it here while another who goes "bats"™ insane has yet to happen upon the guano stash.

**Who's the star?** Cloud's compatriot Zack Fair may have gone out like a punk in *FFVII*, but in *Crisis Core* he wields a gargantuan sword and hands out some serious beatings along the way. Bare-armed and

spiky-haired, this SOLDIER second class really means business.

**What's Sephiroth's role?** As we hinted earlier, this premanic SOLDIER first class gets plenty of face time on the PSP screen. And quite frankly, we couldn't imagine a *FFVII* spin-off without the series' beloved villain. You can expect some other memorable characters to appear in the game, as well.

**Is there an overworld?** From what we've seen, the game proceeds, mostly as a series of missions from hub locations, making the whole exploration aspect seem contrived.

**How does your party shape up?** What party? It's a one-man show.


**What's combat like?** *Crisis Core* drop-kicks turn-based combat in favor of an action-oriented approach for the (mostly) random battles. You'll also find a slot system called Digital Mind Wave that randomly fires off

helpful status boosts during combat. It's all a bit unwieldy at first, but like Zack's hair, you get used to it.

**What about magic?** The well-liked Materia system from *FFVII* is back, and some magic can be fused to form new spells.

**And summons?** Your favorite creatures not only return to wreak havoc in this portable powerhouse—you also fight them. When summons are called forth, the game seamlessly transitions to a gorgeous video of the esper laying waste.

**Are the graphics really that good?** *Crisis Core* is easily the best-looking PSP title to date thanks to its highly detailed 3D graphics and *Advent Children*-quality 3G cut-scenes. If only Square put that much effort into the storyline (it's unintelligible). **A-**

 EGM Extras Don't forget to stop by [www.egm.com](http://www.egm.com) to see *Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII* in action.

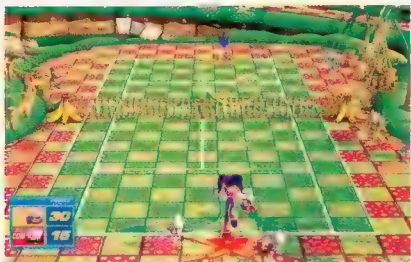




# COMING SOON

Look what's springing up in March

Photo: EA GAMES



## Sega Superstars Tennis

Wii/PS3/XB360/PS2/DS • Sega

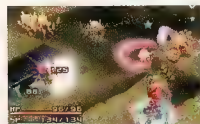
If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Nintendo must be really happy with Sega. The publisher has basically ripped off the *Mario Tennis* formula and swapped in its famous faces. And you won't find us complaining: The game sports super-simple and responsive controls plus a unique selection of minigames (just imagine taking out *House of the Dead* zombies with Sonic's powerful backhand).



## MLB 08: The Show

PS3/PS2/PSP • Sony Computer Entertainment America

From graphics to gameplay, the *MLB* series resembled a wet-behind-the-ears rookie in its first season on the PS3. As you can see from these screenshots, *08* has definitely addressed those visual concerns, thanks to much more detailed player models and stadiums (fans now even hang K signs after the home hurler tosses a strikeout). The game also gets more realistic on the field with what the developers dub the "Progressive Batting Performance" feature. This means that when you're hot at the plate, you'll get more hits. But if you're cold, just like in real life, it'll be tougher to break outta that slump.



## Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles—Ring of Fates

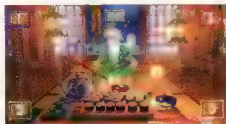
DS • Square Enix

Remember the annoying magical bucket that your party always had to carry in the GameCube original? Well, it won't be dragging you down here, which should make hacking and slashing through dungeons with three other friends much more enjoyable. It's just a shame you can't take the adventure online.

## Ninja Reflex

Wii/DS • EA Games

Whether you're tossing shurikens at cardboard cutouts of foes or catching files with chopsticks Mr. Miyagi-style, this four-player party game is all about seeing if you've got the hand-eye coordination of a silent-but-violent assassin. But perhaps the true test will come when you're faced with the prospect of dropping \$50 for a grand total of six minigames on the Wii. By our ninja calculations, that seems like a really steep price for a very limited amount of content.



## More March Releases

**Battlefield: Bad Company**  
PS3/XB360 • EA Games

**Bully: Scholarship Edition**  
Wii/XB360 • Rockstar

**Command & Conquer 3: Kane's Wrath**  
XB360 • EA Games

**Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII**  
PSP • Square Enix

**Destroy All Humans! Big Wily Unleashed**  
Wii/PSP • THQ

**God of War: Chains of Olympus**  
PSP • Sony Computer Entertainment America

**MLB 2K8**  
Wii/PS3/XB360/PS2/PSP • 2K Sports

**N+**  
PSP/DS • Atari

**The House of the Dead 2 & 3 Return**  
Wii • Sega

**Viking: Battle for Asgard**  
PS3/XB360 • Sega

**Winning Eleven: Pro Soccer 2008**  
Wii/PS3/XB360/PS2/PSP • Konami



# RUMOR MILL

Reanimating dying rumors *By Christopher Hart*



**Resurrected:**

**Rumors:**

Here's a small one you kiddos might not remember: A good while back, I had a small rumor about the Food Network cooking up a game based on the popular culinary battler *Iron Chef*. Well, it's almost ready to be served.

**A LOT OF PEOPLE ASK ME** if I ever get tired of searching for juicy scuttlebutt. Nope, can't say that I do. Digging for rumors is my life, guys. It pays my bills. It keeps me alive. But most importantly, it counts as community service for my probation charges. Hmm, maybe I shouldn't have mentioned that.... Anyway, if you still need convincing, just get a load of all the goods I gathered for you this month. And ask better questions next time.

**Back from the dead**

Now that the 360 has been out for a couple of years, we've been able to enjoy quite a few exclusive hits. One of my favorites, the zombie-infested *Dead Rising*, deserves to get resurrected. Capcom seems to agree, because my undead mole tells me: ***Dead Rising 2* will rise again on multiple systems.** Sounds exciting...until you hear this: Apparently, the game is being outsourced to a Los Angeles-based developer. Yikes!

**Break the chains**

It's finally becoming cool to like the PSP again, thanks to all the sweet nongaming things you can do with it.

But if you're not into that stuff, you can always stick to the games, like the upcoming *God of War: Chains of Olympus*. This is one title everyone will likely be hooked on. Especially since my Sony spies say that ***Chains of Olympus* will also pop up on the PS2 sometime in the future.**

**Long fight coming**

Waiting for *Street Fighter IV* is tougher than taking on both Akuma and M. Bison at once, especially now that we know it's actually real. But many of us have forgotten about the upcoming *Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix* (phew—that's a long one). The Udon Comics-created remake is taking its sweet time.

huh? Well, word is the studio didn't realize making 2D games is, well, kinda time consuming. Because of this, Capcom has forced Udon to outsource the animation all over the world in order to finish it. **So don't expect *HD Remix* to come out anytime soon**—I'm hearing it's "trying" to hit this summer.

**Wii envy**

I've told you before that Sony wants to make a **Wii-like motion controller for the PS2**, but apparently it's **really going to happen soon.** Sure, Sony dances around the thought in our cover story interview, but obviously they don't want to prematurely announce it. ❄️

**Q-TIPS**

- It's not every day that a unique shooter like *Everyday Shooter* pops up. That's why I'm hearing it'll find a new home on the PSP.
- Though it's slightly flawed, the artsy PS2 classic *ICO* is in need of a sequel. Looks like it's coming—and I'm hearing it'll be revealed very, very soon.
- My wish may come true. Nah, it's not for a *Final Fantasy VII* remake. Better—a game based on the new *American Gladiators* show may come to Wii.





YOUR NBA DESTINATION

**WEDNESDAYS**  
 AND **FRIDAYS**  
**SUNDAYS**



# Revenge of the PlayStation 3

Call it a comeback? Eight reasons why Sony's system could strike back in 2008

**IN A WHITE-BRICK BUILDING AT BOSTON'S NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY,** MBA students are hearing a tale of corporate hubris, an underdog rival that innovated its way back to the top, and TV ads starring creepy babies crying in white rooms. It's a lecture on a proud Japanese electronics giant that shrewdly rose to the top of the videogame-hardware business, only to see its fortunes flip-flop. "I contrast the marketing strategies of [Sony and Nintendo] and their products and discuss why they took the approaches they did and the results of each approach," says Professor Gloria Barczak, who figures her students can learn a lot from what Sony did wrong with the PlayStation 3 and what Nintendo did right with the Wii, which outsold Sony's new system nearly three to one in the U.S. last year. "It's a valuable lesson to examine two companies in the same industry with two different strategies and two different results."

The bigger question, though, is whether this lesson is being learned outside academia—namely at Sony HQ. The company has already made some smart moves, dropping the price of the lower-end 40GB model to \$400, getting out impressive games like *Uncharted: Drake's*

*Fortune and Fate* and *Gran Turismo Sport* by the end of last year, and hyping its winning Blu-ray format with free flick giveaways. Sony execs say such maneuvering paid off with a 1.2 million boost in North American PS3 sales during the holidays, leading to an on-track outlook for meeting a projected 11 million units sold worldwide by the end of March.

But with the PS3 still trailing behind the Wii and Xbox 360 in key categories beyond just small categories—areas such as console price, online features, and game quality—Sony's system still has a way to go to

reclaim the glory once denied. And while the PlayStation 3 may be one year away from a commercial "breakthrough," some industry analysts anticipate the PlayStation 3's long-awaited success within market by Sony's strategy to position the hardware game as the first big step in that battle by December, adding more software titles, and offering more features. The PlayStation 3 could potentially be 2008's most successful game console, but you just don't want to bet on it. *By Matt Bjork, senior editor at IGN.com*

## INSIDE: SONY'S BEST OFFERINGS

PlayStation 3 gains steam in foreign lands	..... Pg. 50
The PS3/PSP love connection	..... Pg. 51
The competition will falter	..... Pg. 52
PS3 ports start to shine	..... Pg. 53
Blu-ray is winning	..... Pg. 54
Turning gamers into gamers	..... Pg. 58
Home's grand opening	..... Pg. 57
The exclusive games	..... Pg. 60





PLAYSTATION 3

**SOLID SNAKE**

Working to put  
mustaches and the  
PlayStation brand  
back in vogue. In 2006.



# PS3 gains steam elsewhere

Has the system already beaten the Xbox 360 overseas?

## Japan: one size fits all

The ever-shifting lineup of PS3 configurations (each offering different levels of PS2 backward compatibility) just got much simpler in Japan, where Sony has discontinued everything but the bare-bones 40GB model. Expect a new model sporting a larger hard drive to be introduced later this year.

**THE PLAYSTATION 3'S UNDENIABLY SLOW START IN THE U.S.** has cast it as the underdog in the domestic console race, but it's not faring quite so poorly on a global scale. Even though Sony's plan to simultaneously launch the PS3 all over the world fizzled (the Japanese and American launches occurred less than a week apart in November 2006, but Europe had to wait until March 2007), the console has been more successful at fending off Microsoft's Xbox 360 and (to a lesser extent) Nintendo's Wii abroad. Considering that the PS3 faces the same obstacles in these territories—prohibitively high price, scant titles, and fierce competition—one has to wonder what's causing this rift between U.S. gamers and their overseas counterparts.

"When you look at a broader view of where the PlayStation 3 stands, you should start in Japan," says Sony Computer Entertainment

America Senior VP of Marketing Peter Dille. "First of all, the Xbox 360 is irrelevant—it doesn't even exist." It's a hyperbolic statement to be sure (we've seen plenty of used 360 hardware languishing in Japanese shops for less than \$175) but not without some basis in truth. To date, Microsoft has convinced only 240,000 Japanese gamers to invest in its Western-brad console, yet the company shows no signs of giving up on the region. "If you look at the Xbox 360 as a somewhat expensive outreach campaign to Japanese third-party publishers, it's worth it to Microsoft," says *Newsweek* Technology Editor N'Gai Croal. "Now 360 gets games like *Ace Combat* and *Rez* first and/or exclusively—that's a big turnaround, and even after blowing \$1 billion on the [360 hardware problems], Microsoft can still pick up the tab for its Japanese white elephant, er, console."

But the PS3 isn't finding an outpouring of love in Sony's Japanese homeland either, as Nintendo's quirky and affordable DS and Wii have all but cornered the videogame market. But Sony has sold 1.6 million systems over there (as opposed to the nearly 5 million Wii's Nintendo has moved during the same time period) despite a serious lack of games that pique Japanese gamers' interest. Once key exclusive franchise titles such as *Metal Gear Solid 4* and *Final Fantasy XIII* finally surface, expect Japanese PS3 sales

to ramp up considerably.

Besting Microsoft in Japan isn't surprising, but pulling off a similar coup in Europe could be instrumental to Sony's plan for victory. "The PS3 is enjoying tremendous success in Europe," Dille says. "Microsoft is a U.S.-based company, and for whatever reason they did not enjoy the type of success with the Xbox in Europe as they realized in North America." Although the Xbox 360 has done well in the U.K. (it's moved over 1.5 million units compared to the PS3's 500,000), the PS3 has quickly pulled ahead in France, Italy, Spain, and Belgium. "This momentum won't go unnoticed by publishers." The more PS3 succeeds in Europe, the more publishers and developers will have to consider leading development on PS3. Croal says, "Its esoteric architecture means that the best way to optimize a PS3/360 game is to lead development on PS3."

PS3 software sales have already been surprisingly strong in Europe, with *Assassin's Creed* and *Pro Evolution Soccer* (aka *Winning Eleven*) handily outselling their 360 counterparts in some countries. "In Europe, we'll soon see more and more multiplatform games that sell more units on the PS3 than on the 360," says Gearbox Software President Randy Pitchford. "As astonishing as it sounds, it's not unreasonable to expect that by the end of the year that will be the rule in Europe, not the exception."



In Italy, Konami's popular *Pro Evolution Soccer* for PS3 outsold the 360 version by nearly three times.

## ▶ MANNING HIS STATION

A senior VP talks about a "Sony that listens" in '08...



Peter Dille (pronounce it "Dill-y") is Sony Computer Entertainment America's senior VP of marketing.

**EGM:** A year ago we asked Sony Computer Entertainment America President Jack Tretton to weigh in on the Wii. He said he didn't know if it would expand the market. Clearly it did. Doesn't the Wii's success validate going in a less-pricey, less-technical direction with hardware?

**Peter Dille:** Well, if you want a less-pricey, less-technical way to enter the game market, we feel like we've got one: It's called the PlayStation 2. It's

less expensive than a Wii. We sold more PlayStation 2s than we sold PlayStation 3s [over the holidays], so clearly many consumers are price-sensitive.... If the Wii is successful in bringing in new consumers to the marketplace, that's... good for all of us. But when we talk to consumers who've been waiting on the fence to jump into PlayStation 3.... We've got a very loyal fan base—more than 40 million PlayStation 2s out there. A lot of what we're hearing is price had



# The little PSP is a big help

Tapping the benefits of the PS3/PSP love connection



**EVERYONE KNOWS THE PS3 CAN PLAY GAMES:** Blu-ray movies? Well, most people know that. But what about all the cool things you can do when you connect a PS3 to a PSP? Anyone? Yeah, thought not. Strange, too, once you realize exactly what this incestuous couple can do.

Shortly after the system's launch, some tech-savvy gamers managed to discover one of the PS3's hidden little secrets: remote play. The ability to transfer data from the PS3 over to the PSP—introduced randomly in last year's first-party exclusive *Lair*—was made public sooner than Sony expected. "It was kind of discovered almost accidentally that you could play remotely," says Sony's Peter Dille. "Frankly, *Lair* developer Factor 5 hadn't fully implemented the feature, so that wasn't the one we wanted to get behind and say, see, you can do this."

So instead of taking the time to shill this innovative feature, Sony instead quietly buffed it up in a recent PSP firmware update, this time allowing users to remotely play any PS3 game on their PSP. Again, no big mention of how cool this is... yet. "We can do a better job making sure that we merchandise [the PS3/PSP] connectivity," says Dille. "It's significant." Sure is, especially considering Sony's ambitious plans to exploit the valuable relationship between the PS3 and the PSP later this year.

We know about the games—those

make sense—but Sony is looking to turn the PS3 and PSP into the grand multimedia devices it originally intended them to be. Later this spring, the company will start moving forward on a video-download service. "Imagine a future where you can download a TV show," says Dille, "and if I wanted to access the episode of *Lost* that I downloaded to my PS3, I could pick up my PSP and access it remotely and start watching it anywhere."

Microsoft has already been providing TV and movies via the Xbox Live Marketplace, but the ability to remotely watch your downloaded content anywhere makes the PS3's upcoming store a little more compelling. No word on what type of pricing policy Sony will adopt (it's toying around with offering an all-you-want subscription service), but we do



■ Sony's planning to spruce up the not-so-hot PlayStation Store later this year.

know that you'll be able to both rent and purchase content.

Disc lovers shouldn't feel left out—soon it will be possible to watch any Blu-ray movie on the go. At this year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES), Sony announced the PS3 will be able to transfer Blu-ray content onto a PSP. Sounds cool, but we just hope by the time everything comes to fruition, consumers won't be clueless as to how it all works.

## THE LAIR!

Sony's announcement that PSP owners can transfer Blu-ray movies to their system seems like a concession that the struggling DVD movie format is dead. "But not everyone will have a Blu-ray device," says PlayStation Network Director of Operations Eric Tempel. "So [DVD] will still be a part of the picture. We'll support both."

## > PORTABLE POWERHOUSE

Have a PSP but no PS3? Here are three upcoming portable functions that don't rely on PSP's big brother...



A portable PlayStation Store will be hitting the PSP sometime soon. You know, for those who want to buy crap on the can.



Internet chat program Skype will let you turn your PSP into a phone. Almost like the N-Gage. Well, if the N-Gage didn't suck.



You'd really have to be stupid to get lost using the GPS hardware/software that turns your PSP into an interactive map.

been an issue for a lot of these folks throughout 2007, and we addressed that [during] the holidays [with a PS3 price drop]. So some of these guys—to use a metaphor—they were stepping out on us and having a bit of an affair with the Wii. It's a great way to tide them over before they have to make that commitment to a next-generation system.

**EGM:** So why didn't Sony take the PlayStation 2 and repackage it with an interface similar to the Wii? Maybe put an end to the affairs?

**PD:** First of all, you can't just say, "Oh, the Wii's selling well—let's put in a

motion-control sensor. Those things take time to develop and you've got to have the software for it as well. But at the same time, we're very confident in our plans for PlayStation 2; we're seeing great success on that platform. I think whether motion control is a long-term trend remains to be seen. If it is, you can expect that we'd find a way to bring that to our platform. If it's not, we've got three very, very healthy platforms that give consumers all sorts of ways to be innovative and play games in different ways.

**EGM:** Speaking of motion control, not many PS3 games take advantage of the Sixaxis, and the one that

required it—*Lair*—wasn't very good. In hindsight, wouldn't it have been better to launch the PS3 with a conventional controller to help lower the price?

**PD:** I'd take issue with your comments. It's a fair thing to say when the system first came out. When you do introduce a new technology like that, people have to have the time to implement it. Since then, I think there's been a ton of great products: *Warhawk's* a great one that comes to mind. *Lair* was a good one as well. It didn't review particularly well, but I don't think that had anything to do with the Sixaxis. So from



# The other guys may screw up

Can the Xbox 360 and Wii maintain their momentum?

## Another Wii on the way?

Last year, Nintendo revealed nebulous plans to release a Wii that offers DVD playback in 2008, yet nothing has materialized. Considering that it's still impossible to walk into a store and purchase a Wii, we have our doubts. Plus, the DVD-playing Q (a GameCube manufactured by Panasonic) never left Japan.



■ The Panasonic Q: sexy yet irrelevant.

## MICROSOFT AND NINTENDO

**BOTH TOOK BIG RISKS** with their respective consoles this generation: Rushing the Xbox 360 to market required a premature euthanasia of the original Xbox, while the Wii shattered industry paradigms with its unique controller and defiantly antiquated graphics. Shockingly, these gambles paid off handsomely—both systems have trounced Sony's pricey PS3 in North America. But while all signs point to Sony's box reversing: its fortunes in 2008, some industry insiders believe that its competitors could actually be headed for trouble.

The Xbox 360's popularity with hardcore gamers can't be denied: A steady stream of top-quality shooters and the user-friendly Xbox Live online service have fostered a competitive community of dedicated players. But at the same time, the "boys club" mentality has kept the console from gaining massive mainstream acceptance. So far,

Microsoft's attempts to appeal to younger and nontraditional gamers (*Viva Piñata*, *Fuzion Frenzy 2*) haven't taken off, while Sony has already demonstrated a commitment to a wide variety of game types on PS3.

Realistically, the challenges of market expansion aren't going to put the 360 in a tailspin, but the well-publicized reliability concerns surrounding the Xbox 360 hardware (namely the nefarious "red ring of death" epidemic) might. Even though outgoing Microsoft CEO Bill Gates recently told the BBC that the company is striving to make the 360 "the most reliable videogame box out there," the multitude of broken units has undoubtedly created a stigma in the eyes of many consumers.

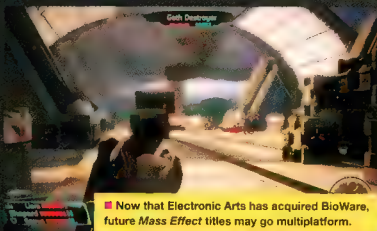
Ultimately, Microsoft Game Studios could present the biggest hurdle for the 360's chances for continued success—its first-party publishing arm simply doesn't seem capable of keeping pace with Sony or Nintendo. Its output has always seemed a bit scattershot, producing high-profile hits (*Gears of War*, *Halo 3*) and worthless throwaways (*Tenchu*, *Kingdom Under Fire*). The fact that Microsoft can't seem to maintain its relationships with its second-party partners only exacerbates this problem—in the last year alone, big-name studios such as Bungie (*Halo*), Bizarre Creations (*PGR*), and BioWare (*Mass Effect*) have drifted away from exclusive partnerships

with Microsoft in one way or another.

The potential pitfalls the Wii faces couldn't be more different. Sure, the console has been phenomenally successful with kids and nontraditional gamers; routinely selling out since its release. Yet some believe that the bubble will inevitably burst:

Obviously, the system's dated visuals make it less viable in the long run for consumers wanting a cutting-edge experience. Plus, a cavalcade of crappy Wii software could damage the Wii's long-term sustainability. Nintendo's first-party Wii games (including the endlessly enjoyable *Wii Sports* that comes bundled with the hardware) are so ubiquitous that few gamers even bother to sample other publishers' Wii fare. And the fact that Nintendo allows all manner of third-party dreck to clog store shelves (see: *Balls of Fury*, *Jenga*, *Ninjabread Man*, etc.) only makes Nintendo's own games seem even more desirable.

Don't look for that situation to change anytime soon. "The first third party to truly solve what Wii gamers want will become very wealthy," says *Newsweek's* N'Gai Croal. "But I don't believe that most third parties apply anywhere near the amount of time and resources necessary to resolve it. Sure, they'll experiment with some exclusive brands and titles, but at the end of the day, they'll treat it like the [Game Boy Advance] and the DS—licenses and brand extensions aimed at casual gamers and kids."



■ Now that Electronic Arts has acquired BioWare, future *Mass Effect* titles may go multiplatform.

our perspective I think Sixaxis is something that consumers really responded to. Yeah, I think people wanted to see it across all games. I think sometimes gamers are a little bit impatient and don't understand how game companies make the products that come to market—understand the lead times that are required—but I think what you're seeing now is not only the incorporation of the Sixaxis into software, but now of course the other thing that people were clamoring for—the DualShock capability—will be coming to market in 2008.

**EGM:** About the DualShock, w/ren the PS3 launched, Sony's message

was that rumble wasn't important. At the same time, you hyped PS3 backward compatibility as being better than the 360's. Now it's seems almost a flip-flop: Rumble's going back in, but PS2 backward compatibility has been nixed from the 40GB PS3 model. Why is rumble suddenly important and backward compatibility isn't?

**PD:** Backward compatibility: Let's talk about that first. It's important to us; if you want it there's a [model] in the marketplace that offers it, and I think our stance [on] backward compatibility stands in stark contrast to our competitors'. First of all, nobody has

pulled it off besides us. Second, when they migrated from one platform to the other, they completely stopped making software for their platform. Then they stopped making hardware. And they said, "Third parties, if you want to continue to make software for this platform, knock yourself out, but we're moving on."

What we said is, based on all of our research, price was the single biggest issue that people wanted to address with PlayStation 3. With an eye toward reducing the price, [backward compatibility] was one of the attributes that was addressed. Having said that, there's still a model in the marketplace that supports it. If



# PS3 ports will start to shine

Multiplatform games will stop hitting the system later and lousier



COVER STORY

**FOR A SYSTEM THAT HYPED SUPERIOR TECHNOLOGY** as one of its selling points—technology that came at a higher price, to boot—it was the ultimate black eye: third-party multiplatform games that ran better on the Xbox 360. It started infamously with EA Sports' football titles, followed by choppy ports of various games in Valve's *Half-Life 2: The Orange Box* compilation (which, adding insult to injury, also shipped a month after the 360 version). Sony execs blame the games' poor showing on developers' year head start with the first-to-market 360. "They developed tools for the 360 prior to getting the PS3," says Sony's Peter Dille. "And when you port from 360 to PS3, when you're going from a lower-denominator platform and trying to eke out any sort of greater efficiency, you're just not going to do it."

But developers we spoke with say the 360's head start is only part of the reason 360 versions ran better. "The 360 is not as complex or esoteric in its hardware design as the PS3," says Gearbox President Randy

Pitchford, whose studio is making *Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway*, *Borderlands*, and an *Aliens* game, all for PS3 and Xbox 360. "Plus, the 360 has enjoyed a head start creating a larger installed base and bigger lifetime ratios [software sales tied to hardware sales]." A key point: Third-party publishers pay more attention to a system's sales numbers than its specs. "For a fiscally minded entity such as a game publisher looking at high-definition game development," says Scott Steinberg, managing director of Embassy Multimedia Consultants, "it only makes sense to make a game's Xbox 360 edition the primary one, since it has the potential of appealing to the most people, as well as looking sharpest given tight turnarounds."

But now that the PS3 has gotten a healthy holiday sales boost and developers have had more time to wrap their heads around the system, the advantages of leading development on the 360 are starting to dwindle. "One thing we have done to avoid having a lead platform is we have distributed PS3 and 360 development kits and test stations evenly throughout our team," says Daniel Williford, producer of Avalanche Studios' *Just Cause 2*. Meanwhile, the first multiplatform games that perform better on the PS3 are starting to appear: Capcom's *Devil May Cry 4* takes advantage of the system's universally packed-in hard drive to minimize load times after an



PS3 owners get a slightly better ride in their version of *Burnout: Paradise*.

initial lengthy install. And Criterion Games' high-octane *Burnout: Paradise* runs slightly better on Sony's black box. "The PS3 is a more forward-looking machine," says *Paradise* Producer Nick Channon. "So we fell like if we could get the game running well on the PS3, then it was more likely that it would run well on both platforms."

Just don't expect a majority of multiplatform games to suddenly start outperforming on PS3. Rather, as developers spend more time tailoring titles for their respective hardware, we'll start to see games that claim equal but minuscule performance victories on both systems. For instance, *Dark Sector*, a third-person action game due this spring, has more vibrant graphics on the 360 but uses a smoother clip on the PS3. "It's not so much about which machine you lead on," says Criterion's Channon. "It's more about the way you develop your game.



Just Cause 2, like more and more games, is being made with no lead version in mind.

## When Did PS3 Become the Best Multiplatform System?

When *Grand Theft Auto IV* missed its October 2007 release date, publisher Take-Two laid the blame on technical issues. Industry rumor has it that those issues centered on the PS3, not only because developer Rockstar was still struggling with the system's steep learning curve but also because of its weak install base at the time.



it's important to you, you can pay the additional \$100.

**EGM:** Does nixing backward compatibility from one model kill any chance of someday offering PS2 games for download from the PlayStation Network Store [PSN], just like you sell PS1 games now?

Eric Lempel, director of PSN operations, chimes in: "We haven't talked about that yet, but there are possibilities through technology and software emulation to make that possible. I wouldn't talk about any specific plans at this point.

**PD:** Let's talk about rumble for a second. Rather than couching that as a negative—Sony flip-flopping—keep in mind that we had a legal issue there with [rumble patent holder] Immersion, but we heard loud and clear that rumble was important to gamers and took the necessary steps to make it happen. I think we get painted a lot as a company that doesn't listen or is arrogant. From our perspective, [making rumble happen] is doing the right thing by the consumer, offering

them something that means a lot to them. We'd like to put that into the good-news category and not frame it as somehow going back on our word. We'd be the first to say that we pay attention to the marketplace and want to make sure that we offer gamers the best experience possible.

**EGM:** Are you doing anything to streamline the fleet of PS3 models with various hard-drive sizes that have come out since launch? They

➤ **[Gamers] were stepping out on us and having a bit of an affair with the Wii.**

—Sony's Peter Dille



# Blu-ray is winning

Hope you didn't buy an HD-DVD player...

## What the analysts say...

"The Warner Bros. announcement of Blu-ray exclusivity will go a long way toward helping consumers make up their minds about which format to support in the coming year. My guess is that the PS3 will be priced at \$299 late in the year, making it a very inexpensive alternative for high-definition movie playback, with the game console essentially thrown in for free."

—Wedbush Morgan Securities Analyst Michael Pachter

## THE START OF THE YEAR BROUGHT DEFINITIVE EVIDENCE

that Blu-ray is on its way to becoming the reigning HD media standard—and that HD-DVD is rushing toward a date with Betamax, Laserdisc, and MiniDisc. In January, Warner Bros.—one of the three remaining major movie studios in the HD-DVD camp—announced it would jump ship to support Blu-ray, leaving Paramount and Universal to hold down the HD-DVD fort. Shortly after, the *Financial Times* reported that Paramount could follow, citing a clause in Paramount's contract with HD-DVD overseers Toshiba that allows the studio to dissolve the relationship specifically if Warner defects. Though Paramount quickly issued an official denial of the claim, the wording of the denial

(“Paramount’s current plan is to support the HD-DVD format”) left room for a future move. Meanwhile, Universal declared it was no longer exclusively supporting HD-DVD.

Perhaps most relevant to gamers, though, was a Reuters story quoting Albert Penello, group marketing manager for Xbox hardware, about the fallout of Warner’s defection. Penello revealed that Microsoft would “consider” supporting Blu-ray. “It should be consumer choice, and if that’s the way they vote, that’s something we’ll have to consider,” he said. “I want consumers to have a voice in this.” (He later said he was misquoted.)

Regardless, all the new-year studio news is a very big deal for Blu-ray. Barring any shocking developments, it appears that the HD format war is now effectively over.



## > READY FOR LIFTOFF

Nobody's going to argue that 2007 was a great inaugural year for the PlayStation 3. But looking ahead, the system has reasons for optimism.

**2007**  
January

**243,500**  
(units sold)

Monthly sales of PlayStation 3 hardware start the year off with a respectable number.

May

**81,600**  
(units sold)

Launch momentum fades as PS3 sales hit their low for the year.



■ New Line Cinema (a Warner Bros. subsidiary) announced that it was canceling planned HD-DVD versions of *Hairspray* and *Rush Hour 3*. But that's OK—if you really want to see John Travolta in ultra-high-def drag, Blu-ray'll do just fine....

can be confusing to consumers, particularly once you started cutting out features like backward compatibility....

**PD:** The “feel” is really a function of some [models] coming and going, just existing in our recollection over this last short year. I think our theory all along is that there’s two [models] at any given time, and that’s happening now because the 60 [GB unit] has kinda gone away. We think that’s the way consumers are responding to this. The split between the 40 and 80 [GB models] is pretty close to 50-50. Frankly, you could do another article on that, because it was our

expectation that—given everyone’s focus on price being the biggest issue—the \$399 [40GB model] would have a much higher share of business.

I think we can do a better job—and we’re already looking into it—at coming up with more marketing, consumercentric ways to refer to these different units, rather than just refer to them by their hard-drive capacity. I think we can take a page from other companies here. Apple does it. Microsoft does it. We do it on our PSP line with the *Star Wars* Entertainment Pack....

**EGM:** Analysts tell us that having Blu-ray is great and all, but the PS3

is still overpriced. How confident are you that the \$400 price for the low-end model is the sweet spot?

**PD:** I don’t know that \$400 has ever been a sweet spot for a game console. It is expensive. It is coming down, but the other thing that we keep telling people: 10-year life cycle. We just passed year one. We’re certainly not here outlining the road map for future price reductions, but as you get to the manufacturing efficiency that you’re able to achieve when you’re doing the kind of volume that we’re doing today, and layer on top of that the presumed manufacturing efficiencies that





will come from Blu-ray becoming a standard across all consumer electronics products, it stands to reason that over the next 10 years, there will be other price moves.... We're seeing consumers respond to this and appreciate the value that the PlayStation 3 represents at this point in time right now.

**EGM:** What about when *Grand Theft Auto IV* comes out this year? It'll be huge, and people who might be waiting on the sidelines to buy either a PS3 or 360 to play it will just get the system that's cheaper. Say Microsoft drops the 360 price even more. Wouldn't that bring

about a PS3 price drop, just to keep people loyal to the PS3 for *GTA4*?

**PD:** No. I can assure you that we don't approach the market by paying too much attention to what our competition is doing. We've got our own plans. We'll execute that plan and we're very confident in it. *GTA* is going to be a great product this year, but we're frankly focused on another big

product that's coming out from a third party called *Metal Gear Solid 4* that's going to be exclusive to our platform. We've got a great first-party lineup of software. This is a year that's got a lot of games that consumers have been clamoring for, whether it's *Metal Gear Solid* or *LittleBigPlanet*, *Resistance 2*, *Killzone*, or *Gran Turismo*. We have a great lineup of software and *GTA* will be one of those as well....

➤ **I don't know that \$400 has ever been a sweet spot for a game console. It is expensive. It is coming down....**

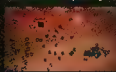


# PS3 empowers the players

LittleBigPlanet is part of Sony's push to turn gamers into gamemakers

## Outdeveloping the pros?

We asked Naughty Dog's Amy Hennig if she was at all worried that users might get too good at creating games, (see: garage developer Jon Mak, who created *Everyday Shooter*): "I don't think there's any reason for developers to feel threatened or diminished by user-generated content. The bigger issue is the potential lack of quality."



■ *Everyday Shooter*

**IF YOU'VE SPENT A HOLIDAY CREATING CUSTOM MIIS WITH THE FAMILY and Wi-Fi-ing them to some friends, you've had a taste of it. If you've killed a few hours (and ideally a few buddies) messing around in *Halo 3*'s Forge editor, you're practically a pro. User-generated content—in which the gamer creates and shares his or her own levels, characters, and more—has always been a tempting, empowering prospect. And it's been in practice for years: Which of you fogies remember molding the perfect track in *Excitebike* (NES)?**

But with the current crop of consoles sporting impressive power and easier-than-ever online connectivity, this subgenre is primed to take off. Thanks to a few key products (notably *LittleBigPlanet*), Sony looks to capitalize on that charge. "I believe that [user-generated content] is a natural evolution as players become more sophisticated with [regard to]



■ The big question: Will *SingStar*'s user videos be more 2001 Britney or 2008 Brit?

the types of options they expect, from their broadband-connected consoles," says Rockstar Producer Jeronimo Barrera. "I think it's going to stretch beyond user-created levels to more community-driven content."

Sony's *SingStar* (due in May) looks to embrace that community route. Set up a PlayStation Eye camera as you croon in this karaoke game, and it will take pictures and video of your performance. You can then unleash this on the public for glory or ridicule.

But while this *American Idol*-meets-YouTube approach will satisfy some gamers' wannabe-celebrity complexes, it's not what most people think of when it comes to user-made content. Hardcore PC players have been making mods—collections of new weapons, levels, and match types—for their favorite games for years, a trend that has surfaced in the PS3's recent *Unreal Tournament 3* (although a PC is needed for the creation process). "There may not be a ton of people creating mods, but there [are] a ton of people who want to download mods and try out

some new things that other people created," says Eric Lempel, director of operations for the PlayStation Network. "It's something we've wanted to do for a long time on our platforms, but technology just wasn't quite there yet."

And that's what has people stoked about this September's *LittleBigPlanet*: "We've really stretched the power of the PS3," says LBP Technical Director Alex Evans, "to hide all the complexity of creation and make it feel really easy, natural, and physical." What that leaves is a fledgling developer's dream: a user-friendly platform editor with a wealth of options and power. Up to four players can collaborate online to set objectives and drop-created objects into a whimsical, physics-rich worlds. When done, they can share their masterpieces with the PSN community. Ideally, the whole process will be fun, not just the try-it-out part.

According to Amy Hennig, game director at *Uncharted* developer Naughty Dog, it's this balance that Sony must nail to succeed in the creativity-empowering circle (a tall task, as Nintendo's upcoming *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* also features a stage editor). "We're talking about content-generation as play—not just as a prelude to gameplay... The goal is to give [players] constrained tools, templates, and parameters that they can modify—to give them a playground for their creativity so that it's fun, not a chore."



■ In addition to LBP's in-game options, users can create and upload their own sticker designs.

**EGM: Speaking of third-party exclusives, you have big ones like *Metal Gear Solid 4* and *Final Fantasy XIII*. But what are you doing to secure more now that most third parties are shying away from exclusivity deals?**

**PD:** First of all, we should all get comfortable with the fact that the world has changed a little bit. The costs of development and the need to amortize those across global platforms is here to stay... Having said that, even in this environment where we know that third parties are going to approach the market in a cross-platform fashion, you can look

at what we've accomplished to date with some of the exclusives. We'll continue to have those discussions going forward. I think our approach is a little bit different than our competition: It's not just as simple as writing the biggest check. It's talking to them about how they can host their content on our platform, how we approach online. And then there's also different ways to skin the exclusivity cat that we've got, whether it's the deal with *Unreal Tournament* and the technology that goes into that—which not only shows up in *Unreal* but in other games that are based on that engine—or the exclusivity that you can have for a period of time vis-à-vis

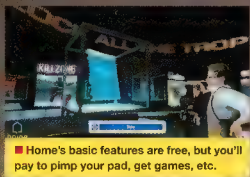
something like *Haze*. We'll continue to have conversations with third parties about it when it makes sense for both parties involved.

But taking two steps back, we know that the third-party community would start to approach the market in a cross-platform fashion, [so] we made sure several years ago that we had a worldwide studio organization that was able to crank out more software across more platforms than any other publisher in the industry. We've got a bigger development organization than Microsoft and Nintendo combined. We're supporting PlayStation 3, PlayStation 2, [PSP], and some really great games for the PlayStation



# Home unlocks its doors

The PS3's free online network might finally outdo the competition



■ Home's basic features are free, but you'll pay to pimp your pad, get games, etc.

"IT WORKS!" EXCLAIMS ERIC LEMPEL, THE PLAYSTATION network's director in operations. He's being cheeky today, referring to the PS3 online network's hitch-free run over the holidays while rival service Xbox Live suffered from hiccups that left Xbox 360 gamers feeling decidedly disconnected.

But it's smooth-sailing PSN really, worth bragging about when the service itself—regardless of whether it's free—still lags behind Xbox Live in so many areas, from cross-game friends lists to a centralized Achievements system? "That's something we're working on," Lempel says. "But we don't want to just throw things out there first and figure out how to get them together later on."

Later on, of course, when Sony releases Home, its online service that promises to deliver everything 360 gamers can get on Xbox Live—except with a virtual-world vibe inspired by *Second Life* and *World of Warcraft*, Home owners can set up house in their own virtual apartments, gossip with other players in

public spaces, play simple arcade games, display Achievement-like 3D trophies from PS3 titles, watch demos in theaters, share movies and music with pals back at the apartment, and much more, all for free. PS3 players who'd rather bypass Home's comp can initiate multiplayer games, chat with friends, etc., from the system's Cross Media Bar.

Sony isn't saying how much of the Home experience will be ready once it launches in beta form later in the first quarter or even when the service goes live for real this spring, but we expect that most of the pieces will be in place. "It would be a shame from our perspective to screw up that first impression," says Sony's Peter Dille, "and then have people say, 'Aw, that wasn't great.'"

Developers we spoke with were excited about Home's possibilities—namely that the service will let them set up virtual spaces dedicated to their games. "It's where a franchise like *Uncharted* can continue to live, evolve and grow between game releases," says Naughty Dog's Amy Hennig. "But it'll be more engaging than say, visiting an official website, because so much of the experience will be driven by customizable content and user interaction." Some of that interaction, she says, will involve the developers themselves, who will visit Home's public spaces to share behind-the-scenes material.

At the same time, however, game-makers are eyeing the grand opening

of Home with strained enthusiasm. "Keeping these spaces alive and fresh introduces a whole new set of asset-creation tasks for the development team," Hennig says. In other words, someone at the game studios has to build all this virtual crap. One developer creating a major exclusive game for the PS3 has already told us they're not supporting Home because they're too busy finishing their game. "Hopefully it won't be too much of a burden—as long as we continually keep the Home space in mind [throughout development]," Hennig says. "We build so many assets for the game, it should be fairly easy to create Home-specific versions of our models, textures, etc., as needed. And of course, we can always partner up with outside agencies to take some of the content-creation burden off the team."

Sounds ambitious. Well, see if Lempel still shouts "It works!" when Home has its full launch this spring.

## What the installers say

"Outside of the price drops, Home is the first thing that really has me talking PS3 to my customers. I know it was pushed out all the right reasons, but sooner is better than later. I'm not saying just it, but it might be time to open up the beta to a less-exclusive clientele."

—Anonymous GameStop Assistant Manager



■ Home's directional audio means chatty denizens get louder as you approach them.

Network. So we knew that the obligation is ours to differentiate our platform.... There's some really great stuff in the pipeline coming forward, some of which we've announced and some of which we look forward to sharing with you guys soon.

**EGM:** Nintendo of America President Reginald Fils-Aime was quoted as saying the one game he wished the Wii had was *LittleBigPlanet*. What exclusive game from your competitors would you like to see on the PlayStation 3?

**PD:** Huh. Hadn't thought about it. I'd hate to give you a knee-jerk answer....

**EGM:** Well, an obvious one would be *Halo 3*, which helped the 360 outsell the Wii back in September....

**PD:** I think *Halo's* a great product. If you're a consumer and you're interested in playing first-person shooters and that's all you want to do, then maybe the 360's a good bet for you. Not only *Halo*, but *Gears of War* is another great product. Our view, however, is that's kind of a narrow offering. PlayStation's always been

a brand that stands for innovation across all types of game genres and is open to multiple consumer segments. That's why you saw just this last Christmas games that ranged from *Uncharted* down to *Ratchet*. It would have been easy to hold *Ratchet* for later in the cycle and say, well, that's when kids come on, but our approach is, there's kids that are playing PlayStation 3 now, and that's also a great game that you can play with the whole family. Like I said, there

➤ I think we get painted a lot as a company that doesn't listen or is arrogant.

# The games

Sony may finally have the exclusive answers in 2008

## What the readers say

"I'm not completely sold on *Metal Gear Solid 4* being the saving light for the PS3. In Japan, probably. In Europe and America? It will sell well, but it's not a system seller, the same way that *Grand Theft Auto* was for PS2 and *Halo* was for the Xbox. It just isn't that mainstream, and mainstream equals big numbers and sales."

—Anthony Amendola

**BLU-RAY, THE USER-CREATED CONTENT OF LITTLEBIGPLANET, PSP CONNECTIVITY,** setting up shop in Home—these features and more will undoubtedly help contribute to 2008 being "the year of the PlayStation 3." But all of these factors combined don't come even close to the biggest difference-maker: the games. Software is—and will always remain—the one constant in a system's success rate. And if you were to compare the PS3's current library to that of its family members at the same time in their respective life cycles, it shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone that Sony's third console is currently bringing up the rear this generation.

But times, they could finally be a-changin'. One look at the PS3's exclusive '08 lineup and you'll find plenty of heavy hitters, with each possibly providing an answer to something you'd find on the competing machines.



■ *MGS4* will have some multiplayer maps, but the full online package comes later.

## Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots

Konami • June 2008  
PS3's answer to: *Splinter Cell: Conviction* (X360)

Just as Ubisoft's stealthy hero is going through changes (look for a *Bourne Identity*-esque makeover for Sam Fisher's next mission), Solid Snake's following suit. And we're not simply talking about his rapid transformation into a geezer. Even though *MGS4* is being billed as Snake's swan song, in many ways this game is a fresh new start for the franchise. The developers have completely reworked the cumbersome controls, created real-time battlefields on which you're free to support either side, and added moments of intense shootouts (à la *Gears of War*) in between sneaking around—not to mention all the work they've done to improve the online mode.

So while *MGS4* is shaping up as a huge step forward, the people at Kojima Productions are also well aware of the game's importance to

the platform. "The pressure of developing a killer triple-A title for the PlayStation 3 has pushed our team to the limit," says Assistant Producer Ryan Payton. "Most of us have spent the better part of three years [working] to deliver this game, but it feels worth it when you see the building excitement for the title."

In many ways, *MGS4* has become the early poster child for the console. And if the insane wait to play the demo at last fall's Tokyo Game Show is any indication, this iteration should do much better saleswise than *MGS3* (which got lost in the holiday '04 shuffle between *Halo 2* and *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*). Also, this one has the advantage of being the first series installment on the powerful PS3, so that should heighten gamer interest. "I think it's interesting how *MGS4* is not only the spiritual successor to *MGS2*," says Payton, "but it's also releasing relatively early in the hardware's life span and represents what the PlayStation 3 is capable of, similar to what *MGS2* did for the PlayStation 2."

## Gran Turismo 5: Prologue

Sony CEA • Spring 2008  
PS3's answer to: *Forza Motorsport 2* (X360)

Competition doesn't seem to bother developer Polyphony Digital. And when asked about the likes of *Forza*, the *Gran Turismo* maker doesn't shy away from explaining why they



■ The game will include some kind of "Metal Gear encyclopedia" to help people understand the franchise's utterly complex fiction.

are great games on every platform, and I mean this sincerely. It's a great time to be a gamer, because you really do have some great choices. If you wanted to play the Wii and that style of game, that's there for you. If you wanted to play first-person shooters and that's all you wanted to do, then maybe the 360 is the way to go. But if you want a system that has the variety and is going to stand the test of time and be around for 10 years and have a free online gaming service versus paying a monthly fee, we think PS3 is a pretty compelling proposition.

**EGM:** But really first-person shooters are important to you guys.

**Two of your biggest first-party games this year (*Resistance 2* and *Killzone 2*) are shooters....**

**PD:** They're all important, and that's my point. We're not just focusing on one genre or another... *Warhawk* was a [great game that] delivered a slightly different experience. We're not going to abdicate any genre to anybody. But we'll also make sure that we offer the depth and breadth that we think is not available on other platforms.

**EGM:** You mentioned your free online service, and we know you're getting ready to release an early version of Home. But why haven't

**you beefed up PSN in the meantime with features like cross-game friend lists to compete with Xbox Live?**

**PD:** I think it's easy to armchair quarterback, but we're not holding stuff back and saying, "Let's make them wait." What we're doing is working on improvements to the service every day. Again, it stands to reason when you launch a service on day one against a service that's been out for five or six years, you're going to be behind where the other guys are. What we've always said is the service that got launched on November 17 of [2006] wouldn't represent what this thing will look like a day later



believe they belong in the pole position. "I think our tremendous dedication and passion for automobiles and driving really sets us apart," says Producer Taku Iwasaki. "It's also important to note that no other game developer works with the auto industry—car manufacturers, race drivers, content providers—as closely as Polyphony does. These strong relationships are clearly reflected in the world of *Gran Turismo*. They clearly have a great relationship with consumers, too, according to Sony: the franchise has sold more than 47 million copies worldwide since its 1997 debut. A series with that kind of sales power could do wonders for the PS3's hardware growth.

Even though this one isn't a true sequel (hence the subtitle), it's still come packed with several attractive options. The series finally goes online here (supporting up to 16-player races), plus introduces what Polyphony calls GsTV, "featuring exciting automotive and motorsport programming," says Iwasaki.

### Resistance 2/Killzone 2

Sony GEA | Fall 2008  
PS3's answer to: *Halo 3* (XB360)

Hey, when you're facing a monster like Master Chief's latest entry (*Halo 3* recently broke the 3-million-unit mark in sales), it may just take two top-of-the-line first-person shooters to compete. And even though the *Resistance* and *Killzone* properties



■ Sony tells us that issues with the online play caused *GTS* to miss this past holiday.

continue to catch the interest of many gamers, they both have a long way to go before becoming as iconic and lucrative as the *Halo* brand (maybe Sony should start talking to Dr. Pepper and 7-11 about some cross-promotional deals this fall?).

*Resistance 2* details are finally "tracking in," aside from the standard story mode, the follow-up to developer Insomniac's PS3 launch title will have a totally separate 3-player online co-op campaign. And on the multiplayer front, the number of combatants has increased to 60. If you take into account Insomniac's track record with the *Spyro* and *Batchelot* series and how those respective first sequels turned out, the outlook is good for this shooter.

*Killzone 2*, meanwhile, burst onto the PS3 scene amidst controversy. (Was the initial footage shown at a trade show real? No.) But after checking out the demo last summer, this sequel is still shaping up as one of the best-looking titles for the console. We only hope the developers have addressed some AI issues, not

more jumping over cover and stepping directly into gunfire. OK?

### Final Fantasy XIII

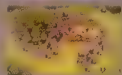
Square Enix | Late 2008  
PS3's answer to: *Mass Effect* and *Final 2* (XB360)

If you don't think software—let alone one key title—can have a big effect on the fate of a console, just ask Nintendo. When Square decided to release *Final Fantasy XIII* on the up-and-coming PS3 instead of the Nintendo 64, it was a gigantic blow to the system. The N64 really never recovered, while Sony's system flourished thanks to securing one of the greatest role-playing games of all time. And the FF train still hasn't left the Sony station: every single "true" sequel has remained PS-exclusive.

This stunning RPG will act as a first piece in Square's ambitious (yet horribly named) *Fabula Nova Crystalis* project, which even includes another exclusive FF title for the PS3 (*Versus XIII*, which is due out much later). The game will

### Final Fantasy XIII

line up here, Sony is quick to hype original PSN Store games—such as the upcoming strategy title *Final Fantasy Monsters* below—that you can't find on Xbox Live Arcade. It's not fair as far as us gamers go, but it's a week, says John High, director of external marketing. "Some of them will be mass-market."



■ Taking a page from *Halo 3*, *Killzone 2* will offer some type of prerelease beta.

or a year later. There's tremendous improvements that have been made to the PlayStation Network in the fact that it's been up and running, and we're working on a lot more of them. We know people are clamoring for Home. We would have liked to have that out in the marketplace by now. I think, though, that we have a long reputation across the corporation...of not just launching stuff out there that's not ready for prime time....

What we really want to make sure you guys and ultimately your readers understand is that we hear you and we're working on it. It's easy to assume, and it might be because of history or the way we engaged with

the press historically, that, "Oh, Sony doesn't listen. They've got their mind made up and they're not going to do this. It's not important to them." It's really important, and we're working on it, but it's not something that you can just go back into your closet and bring out to the next room the next day. Some of the stuff is being implemented across a worldwide network and it takes a little time.

**EGM:** We've noticed a few times during this interview that you've seemed concerned about people perceiving Sony as arrogant or a company or that doesn't listen. Has what happened to the PS3 had a humbling effect on the company?

**PD:** I don't think that anything that's happened with the PS3 has been terribly unexpected from our

✦ I don't think that anything that's happened with the PS3 has been terribly unexpected from our perspective.

## Answering the Wii

You'll notice that all the PS3 titles mentioned here are best suited to combat Xbox 360 games. So what's Sony's plan of attack against Nintendo's system? Apparently not much. "It's not clear to us that [the Wii] really is the way people want to play first-person shooters or sports games," says Sony's Peter Dille. "It's a different way to play those games, but we don't really think it's the replacement way to play them."

surely be a sales slam dunk when it arrives in the U.S. and Europe, but it should really fire up PS3 sales over in Japan—only *Dragon Quest* games rival *FF*'s popularity in that territory. Just cross your fingers *FFXIII* actually hits its 2008 release date (rumors of a delay continue to run rampant).

## SOCOM: Confrontation Sony CEA • Fall 2008 PS3's answer to: *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2* (XB360)

Yeah, yeah—we know the last *GRAV* installment landed on both the PS3 and 360, but the game was definitely a much bigger deal (especially among online gamers) for Microsoft's system. Luckily, PS3's 2008 comeback trail should include a tactical, squad-based beast of its own. And it just happens to come from the same franchise that convinced so many people to go online with their PS2s. "Our goal is to make *Confrontation*

the leading online console game just as previous versions of the series were," says Seth Luisi, director of development for Sony CEA.

Developer Slant Six Games will spearhead the project (longtime *SOCOM* maker Zipper Interactive is apparently working on another game in the series), and since this will be an online-only affair, Luisi tells us a lot of the effort is going into the game's clan and community aspects. He also promises us that, by the time *Confrontation* launches, we'll see much prettier battlefields than those initially shown. "When I introduced the game to the press last May," he says, "it was extremely early in development and the team had only been in full production for a few months. As with any project, the game has evolved significantly since then and when we reintroduce *Confrontation*, I don't think anyone will be disappointed."

## Infamous Sony CEA • Fall 2008 PS3's answer to: *Crackdown* (XB360)

While the *Metal Gears* and *SOCOMs* are important, the PS3 will also need some exciting original properties to complete its comeback. *Infamous* could be one of those games. It comes from the folks at Sucker Punch (of *Sly Cooper* fame), but it's definitely quite a departure from the developer's previous work. You won't

find any cartoony backdrops or furry characters here: *Infamous* takes place in a gritty, open world where you play an unassuming bike messenger who suddenly realizes he's got some pretty wicked powers.

A major emphasis for Sucker Punch here will be evolving the whole "good-versus-evil" mechanic in character development. "It's really a minute-to-minute part of game play," says Producer Brian Fleming. "Sure it's cool to have people love you. But when you have the power to command giant lightning strikes, you need to be thoughtful if you want to be a truly great hero. It's not a binary I chose the goody-goody person answer to a question."

*Infamous* does remind us of open-world crimefighter *Crackdown* (they're both original titles set in big cities with heroes sporting ever-increasing abilities), yet Fleming promises their game will go many steps further. "Our part of the bargain is to tell a great story, develop compelling characters and situations, and empower the player to experience them all firsthand," he says.



Like *Warhawk*, *SOCOM* will be available via download or in stores.



Look for some of *Infamous*' powers to involve the PS3's Sixaxis motion controls.

perspective. We knew we weren't first to market. We knew we were the most expensive system. We also knew what our hardware supply was when we were launching. You can look at those cards and know how it's going to go. I think the change in tone, if I could maybe even take a little credit for it, I think we had a philosophy of dealing with the press going back to the last cycle that's different from how we're engaging the press now. I think we have a more open approach to our management team. To the extent that the PS3 had issues that people want to talk about, it's important for us to talk about them, and to articulate our point of view on it. We don't want

to make it combative, but when you launch 200,000 units into the North American market at launch, it stands to reason that you're not going to have enough to go around. If that ends up being something that gets positioned as less than successful, we understand that.

**EGM:** Yeah, but there were also quite a few PlayStation 3 boxes

left sitting on store shelves at the launch and after...

**PD:** Ah, well, that's part of it. Prices come down over time and games get released over time. We're looking at having just completed a really successful holiday. I think our attitude has always been one of confidence, and that hasn't really changed as we sit here in January of '08. 🍀

➤ **Our attitude has always been one of confidence, and that hasn't really changed.**



*"...a hectic, noisy symphony of destruction.  
We wouldn't expect any less."*

- GameInformer.com

*"...has the intensity of a wartime  
battlefield down perfectly..."*

- IGN.com

*"I walked away impressed by the  
refinement and intensity that Frontlines  
brings to multiplayer matches."*

- PC Gamer

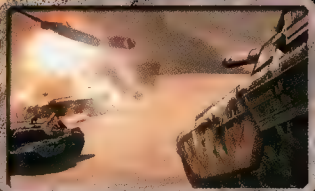
AVAILABLE NOW

# FRONTLINES

## FUEL OF WAR

WWW.FRONTLINES.COM

BATTLE ONLINE IN MASSIVE 32-PLAYER MAPS

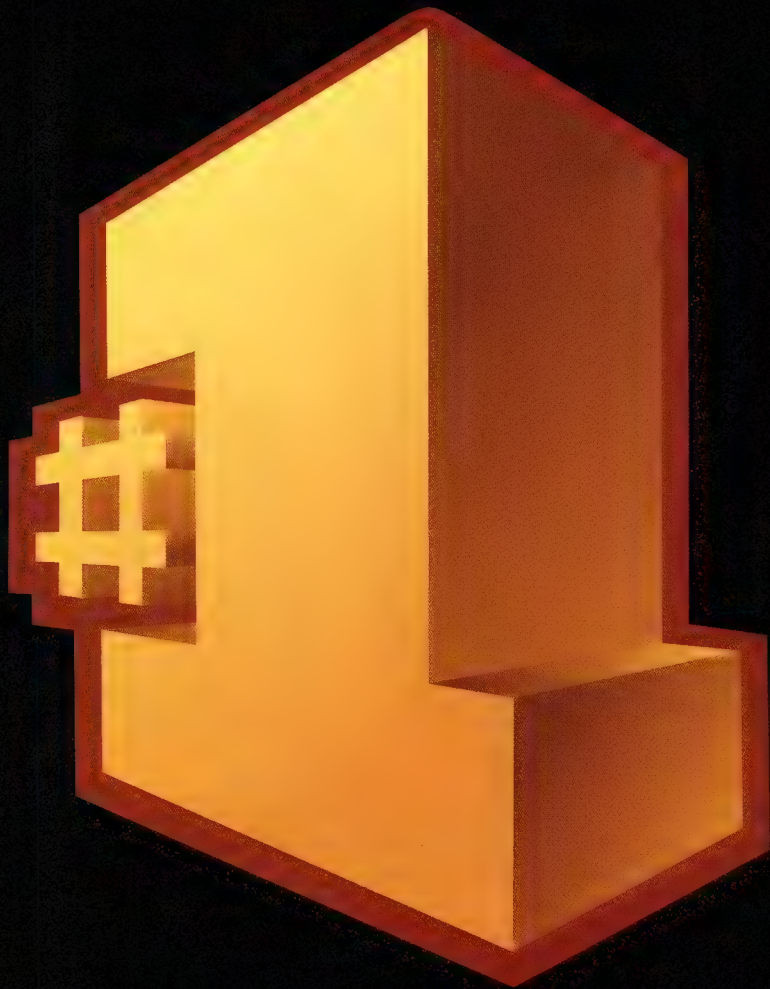


FLY, DRIVE AND SHOOT 60 WEAPONS AND  
VEHICLES IN AN OPEN WORLD



© 2009 THQ Inc. Developed by Kaos Studios. Frontlines: Fuel of War, Kaos Studios, THQ and their respective logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners. Microsoft, Windows, the Windows Vista Start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logo are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies, and "Games for Windows" and the Windows Vista Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft. MMX, the MMX Logo, GeForce and "The Way It's Meant to Be Played" Logo are registered trademarks and/or trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation in the United States and other countries.





# 2007 1UP NETWORK EDITORS' CHOICE AWARDS

**IT'S A REGULAR JUSTICE LEAGUE OF GAMING EXPERTS:** The 1UP Network—built from the staffs of *EGM*, sister PC mag *Games For Windows: The Official Magazine*, and 1UP.com—marshalled its forces to sort out the great from 2007's nitty-gritty. And then we went a step further to include you, the readers, in the voting fun.

The result: Two-double-oh-seven seen from every perspective, starting here with our console Game of the Year Awards. For the PC-gaming side of things, pick up the March issue of *Games for Windows: The Official Magazine*. Then go to 1UPawards.1UP.com to see how you voted in genre-specific categories.



EDITORS' CHOICE

WINNER



2007 1UP NETWORK AWARDS

## Person of the Year: Ken Levine



Ken Levine: Handsome for a man.

President and creative director of 2K Boston, Ken Levine is the big daddy of the developer that brought you *BioShock*, the undersea shooter that's casting a wide net for our awards this year. But that's not the only reason we're picking him as 2007's person of the year. A veteran of just about every media industry—including the movie biz—Levine drew on his background to push storytelling in games a step further, creating a highbrow fantasy that's as much about how games manipulate players as it is about blowing s\*\*\* up. "I tend to find inspiration in strange places," Levine tells us. "The *Manchurian Candidate* obviously had a really big impact on *BioShock*, and that movie's over 40 years old. But it was so far ahead of its time. It has so much to teach us about narrative even now."

Easygoing and well-spoken—as well as a hardcore gamer himself—Levine served as the perfect ambassador for gaming in 2007. He deftly defused any mainstream outcry concerning his game's potentially controversial "harvesting" of little girls. And he showed that gamemakers, players, and the games themselves all have a thoughtful streak that belies their Mountain Dew-fueled image. Plus, Levine still makes time for the important things—like when we caught him buying comic books during a major 2007 game-industry trade show. "Hey, it was Wednesday, man," he tells us. "I had to go get my comics."

True to form, Levine plays down his creative process, instead chalking his success up to a life spent consuming media. "It's like the whole media world is a big salad bar. You take a little bit from here and a little dab of this, and you put it in a stew with what you're thinking of for the game," he says. "I don't think I'm as much of a creator, an inventor, as I am a chef. I mix things together and get new flavors you don't expect."

For more food for thought from Levine, see his take on our award categories throughout this feature.

EDITORS' CHOICE

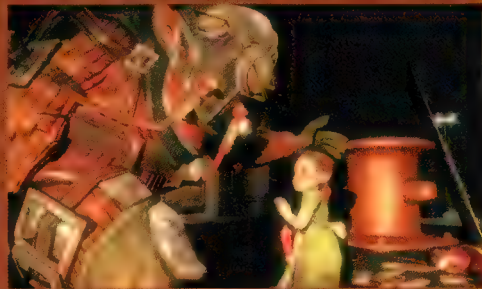
WINNER



2007 1UP NETWORK AWARDS

## Best Audio Design: *BioShock (XB360)*

This first-person adventure is as much music to our ears as it is pleasing to the eyes. From the bellowing roars and subwoofer-pulsing stomps of a seeing-red Big Daddy to the old-timey tunes of crooners Perry Como and Billie Holiday that creepily play throughout the decaying, fathoms-deep city Rapture, *BioShock* succeeds in an area where many games fail or downright ignore. Just think back to how much harder it was to harvest a little Sister after hearing her "No, no, no!" scream. How many games have audio that leaves you with a guilty conscience?



### > KEN LEVINE'S TAKE

"My parents never really understood exactly what I was doing all these years. They sort of thought I was making *Pac-Man*-type stuff. I think with *BioShock*... there were things in the game [like the music] that they really connected to, and I think it helped them understand what I was doing and, strangely enough, really helped my relationship with them. It sucks when your parents don't get what you're doing, you know? My father-in-law was pushing me to make a bird-watching game for a very long period of time. That's our next title, *Bird-Watcher USA*."



Runner-up: *Everday Shooter* (PS3)

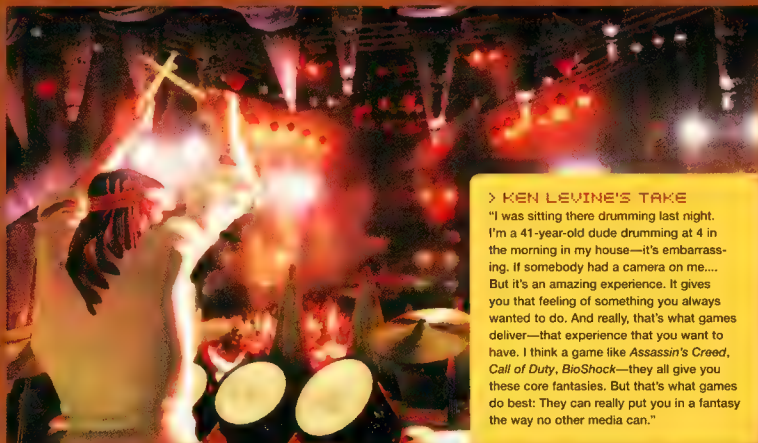
EDITORS' CHOICE

WINNER

2007 1UP  
NETWORK  
AWARDS

## Best Multiplayer Experience: Rock Band (PS3/XB360)

*Rock Band* is not designed for solo shows—it's the band or bust for this all-too-lifelike music game that transforms rhythmless scrubs into record-selling rock stars. Sure, *Guitar Hero* popularized playing along to your favorite tunes, but *Rock Band* cranks up the fun by adding three other musicians to the mix. The result is an experience that successfully emulates the thrill of jamming, only without the trouble of actually having any real musical talent.



### > KEN LEVINE'S TAKE

"I was sitting there drumming last night. I'm a 41-year-old dude drumming at 4 in the morning in my house—it's embarrassing. If somebody had a camera on me.... But it's an amazing experience. It gives you that feeling of something you always wanted to do. And really, that's what games deliver—that experience that you want to have. I think a game like *Assassin's Creed*, *Call of Duty*, *BioShock*—they all give you these core fantasies. But that's what games do best: They can really put you in a fantasy the way no other media can."



Runner-up:  
*Half 2* (XB360)

EDITORS' CHOICE

WINNER

2007 1UP  
NETWORK  
AWARDS

## Best Narrative: *BioShock* (XB360)

In a year when even war games pack an extra clip of heady concepts (*Call of Duty 4*'s fatal irradiating of your hero made us go "Whoa!"), *BioShock* went a step further and truly brought interactive storytelling into a realm where writers in other mediums may never tread. The game's gasp-inducing "would you kindly" reveal is both a postmodern commentary on the typical role of game players as well as a blindsiding twist only possible in a videogame. And that's what we call going deep.



### > KEN LEVINE'S TAKE

"Our special strength as a medium is not showing and telling the player a very specific story through cut-scenes, just the way a movie does. Our strength is to put [players] in a storytelling narrative space that's open to their exploration. It's always better for a player to feel like he discovered something himself, in terms of narrative, rather than presenting it. There's a lot of examples in *BioShock*.... Every little corner tells a story. In *Portal* there's a lot of really nice stuff where you look around and you see the perfect little world that they've built peeked away. I really like the opening of *Call of Duty 4* when you were being abducted and executed. Games are starting to learn that it's more about narrative than it is about story."



Runner-up:  
*Mass Effect*  
(XB360)





## Biggest Innovation: Portal (PS3/XB360)

The plucky *Portal* is built around a simple concept anchored by the best firearm since you hurled Hondas with big-brother *Half-Life 2*'s gravity gun. Shoot your specialized peice here and it tags a portal on most surfaces. Take another shot and you get a second portal and a magical linked pathway between them. The beauty is that the spatial puzzles that ensue—like sending rockets through seemingly impossible routes or using your momentum to leap through floors—prove to be class-A mindbenders. But the real draw here—making an infinite loop that'll have you free-falling till you yak.



### > KEN LEVINE'S TAKE

"The *Portal* mechanic is something that hooks your brain in a way that can be very pleasurable.... People think gamers are mouth-breathing inbred ignorami. [*Portal*] puts the lie to that. It doesn't underestimate its audience. It's not about a hero who shoves the grenade down the alien's throat and says some clever catchphrase and watches them explode. It challenges the audience...and shows that gamers can appreciate things that would confound a lot of audiences in other media."



Runner-up:  
*Halo 3: Forge*  
(XB360)



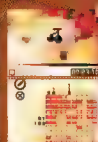
## Casual Game of the Year: Cooking Mama 2: Dinner with Friends (DS)

*Bejeweled* clones and crosswords may be wonderful time-wasters for the casual crowd, but they hardly qualify as innovative. So it's nice to see a game like *Cooking Mama 2*—simple to play but also highly original and fun. This sequel doesn't go crazy with the new stuff; you still cook a variety of traditional foods, with step-by-step recipes broken down into minigames. But its quirky sense of humor and unexpected highlights—deboning an eel so you can win new eyeglasses for Mama, for example—make it the casual game you aren't embarrassed to be addicted to.



### > KEN LEVINE'S TAKE

"There are certainly games that I enjoy playing that are non-core games. [PopCap's PC game] *Peggle*, I think, was a really extraordinary product. I played a lot of *Puzzle Quest*, too. Deep down, I'm a pretty serious nerd, though, when it comes to gaming. I think that if I was asked to design a casual game, would that be the best idea? I don't play a huge amount of them. But I appreciate what they've done for the industry, because I think they're a great gateway to us, the kind of stuff we do...."



Runner-up:  
*Peggle* (DS)

### > L'IL' AWARDS



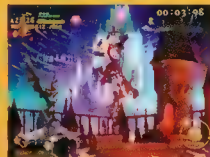
#### Guilty-conscience award: Nuking the Companion Cube

Your mission to serve, protect, and eventually obliterate *Portal*'s heart-draped box came off as the perfect parody of videogame crate puzzles. Alas, Weighted Companion Cube, you go where we cannot follow.

#### Coolest cameo:

#### Futurama characters in The Simpsons Game

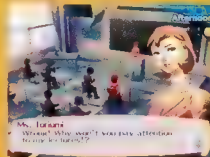
We were so stoked to see Dr. Zoidberg that we didn't mind Matt Groening plugging his other show.



#### 2D's still got it:

#### Odin Sphere

This PS2 action-roleplayer disses the third dimension and looks beautiful doing it. The lush hand-drawn art is like something out of an alternate timeline where 3D gaming fizzled and 2D continued to evolve.



#### Most controversial game that created no controversy:

#### Persona 3

Rockstar's Hot Coffee sex scandal and *Bully*'s boy-on-boy kissing's got nothing on this PS2 roleplayer's suicide-infliated battles or subplot involving teacher-student dating.

#### Best first-person cuddling:

#### Couch time with your sweet lady in The Darkness

This supernatural shooter has its faults, but no game creates a stronger love connection between hero and damsel. Chalk it up to five minutes spent canoodling on the couch in front of a flickering TV.



## Best Level Design: Super Mario Galaxy (Wii)

Nintendo's mustachioed mainstay has hopped and bopped his way through all manner of obstacles during his legendary career, but *Galaxy* thrusts Mario into completely unfamiliar territory—outer space. The sheer number of unique planetoids you'll traverse would make Carl Sagan proud, and each of these wickedly creative levels offer gameplay surprises, such as exhilarating zero-gravity platforming and gimmick-free uses of the Wii Remote. Plus, many stages come with clever bonus strategies that you'll only find when playing with a friend in Co-star mode...



### > KEN LEVINE'S TAKE

"[*Super Mario Galaxy*] is a very modern-feeling game. It's really forgiving in a lot of ways, which I like. Maybe I'm just getting old. But it also does things that you just can't do anywhere else. It just feels like the natural evolution of *Super Mario 64*: a little more forgiving, a little more clever, and you can play it in bite-sized chunks, so it feels really friendly to the gamer. It doesn't bore you with endless cut-scenes or anything like that. It's a pure, unadulterated game you can play without any work to get into it. It's really, really fun."



Runner-up:  
*Portal* (PSS, XB360)



## Best Artistic Direction: BioShock (XB360)

It's not just that the water effects, rust, lighting, fire, enemies, shadowing, weapons, etc., etc., all look so good (and they all look really good). It's how everything comes together to create such a nightmarish atmosphere in a world that's completely convincing—no small feat considering that we're pretty sure most of the game's players never visited an art deco underwater city stuck in a time before most of us were born. The realm of Rapture is more than just a dripping-wet place in *BioShock*—it's another character in a game full of hard-to-forget characters.

### > KEN LEVINE'S TAKE

"Architecture came about as something very important in this game. Growing up around New York, I'd always loved [the art deco] period and the buildings that came out of that period: Rockefeller Center, the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building.... They were always incredibly evocative, and I thought they would model really well in a videogame. They're very polygonal in their structure. I talked to my art guys about it!... Once we really decided to push for it, the team really latched on to it, really ran with it. You have this whole great period of architecture and fashion and music, and we decided to leverage that to the hilt."



Runner-up:  
*Odin Sphere* (PSS)

### > LIL AWARDS (cont.)



#### OCD award:

**Collecting Crackdown's orbs**  
Your goal in this open world may be to clean the city of scum, but who are we kidding? Catch a glimmer of green on that skyscraper in your peripheral vision and you're taking a tower-scaling diversion.

#### Catchphrase of the year: *Portal*'s "The cake is a lie"

Most game finales give you a princess or the pleasure of saving the universe, but *Portal* promises nothing more than buttercream-frosted empty calories. You'll have to watch the closing credits to get a taste.



#### Filling tomorrow's landfills: Rock Band peripherals

Living that rock 'n' roll fantasy—courtesy of MTV Games' superfun supergroup simulator—is fine and dandy today. But if we start seeing what we expect will be annual updates to all those plastic instruments, we'll have to start lobbing last year's models into the neighbor's yard to make room in the den.

#### Outstanding achievement in the field of Achievements:

**Press Start in The Simpsons**  
With so many 360 titles requiring you to collect X number of doohickies to increase that gamescore, who wouldn't welcome the laziness it takes to earn five points for simply hitting the Start button?



#### Best downloadable content: *Pac-Man: Champ Edition*

After almost 30 years of offshoot adventures with random Pac-man relatives, we finally get a real *Pac-Man* sequel (via Xbox Live Arcade) that tweaks the pellet-gulping formula in just the right manic ways.



# DYNASTY WARRIORS 6

A THOUSAND MEN. ONE TRUE WARRIOR.



New Ranbu attack system, motion-capture, and 60 frames per second deliver lightning-fast combos and true cinematic kung-fu action!



Swim and climb to evade enemy units. Advanced enemy AI and their packs of dogs are prepared to track you down.



New character designs, new weapons and new lands to conquer.

[WWW.KOEI.COM/DWG](http://WWW.KOEI.COM/DWG)



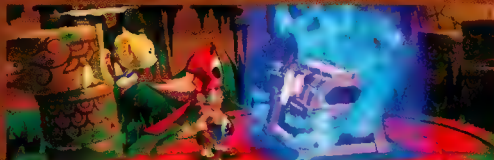
PLAYSTATION 3





## Overlooked Gem: Zack and Wiki: Quest for Barbaros' Treasure (Wii)

Every fall gaming season has its great tragedies: brilliant titles lost in the shuffle of publishers trying to grab as much of the holiday pie as possible. *Zack & Wiki* had the odds stacked against it even steeper, with cutesy box art that screams "anime shovelware" and a name that's too close for comfort to the Disney Channel's *The Suite Life of Zack & Cody*. But below its childish exterior lies a fascinating, deviously challenging puzzle-adventure rooted in classic LucasArts point-and-click adventures. It's not too late to take a chance, although fans of the Disney Channel show can walk on by.



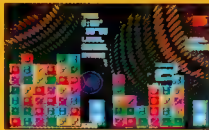
### > KEN LEVINE'S TAKE

"I played a game on the PSP which I loved called *Jeanne D'Arc*, which was one of the best tactical turn-based games to come out in a long time. I'm not sure if it was up for any game of the year stuff, but I really enjoyed that.... I played a lot of PSP games and DS games for 20 minutes before I could go to bed. It was just an insanely good year...it's hard to settle on anything."

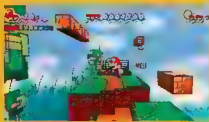


Runner-up:  
*Hotel Dusk: Room 215* (DS)

### > LIL' AWARDS (cont.)



**Better the second time around: Planet Puzzle League**  
Falling-block puzzle purists have worshipped *Tetris* since its 1996 Super Nintendo debut, but this Yoshi-free DS remake improves upon perfection with online multiplayer and touch-screen play.



### 5D game of the year: Super Paper Mario

It's a topic just begging for a physics student's undergrad thesis: Games that mix 2D and 3D. PSP puzzler *Crush* did it great, but *Super Paper Mario* combined both dimensions in revolutionary ways.



## Game of the Year: BioShock (XB360)

No other game in 2007 captured (then beat) up, mutated, frightened, and absolutely f\*ed with our imaginations better than *BioShock*. Nothing is by the book with this game: from the lost-in-time underwater world of Rapture (a grandpa's favorite radio stations) to the twisty storytelling that'll have you smiling and cursing the developers (including those manipulative, sadistic writers at developer 2K Boston) at the same time. *BioShock* is an amazing experience, from that first-chilling-toe-dip all the way through to the nightmare-ending reemergence into fresh air.



### > KEN LEVINE'S TAKE

"[Two years ago], we didn't really know anything about [*BioShock*'s] story or world. Everything evolved from the concept of these different A.I. types, which eventually became the Big Daddy and the Little Sister. That sort of economic relationship of those A.I. types, that one was gathering resources and the other was protecting her, just got me thinking about the extremist potential of capitalism. I didn't want to do a screed about capitalism. I run a videogame developer that's part of a major corporation—I'm not gonna pretend I'm driving the Good Ship Greenpeace. But like everything else, we want to talk about extremes. This game is about extremes." ❧

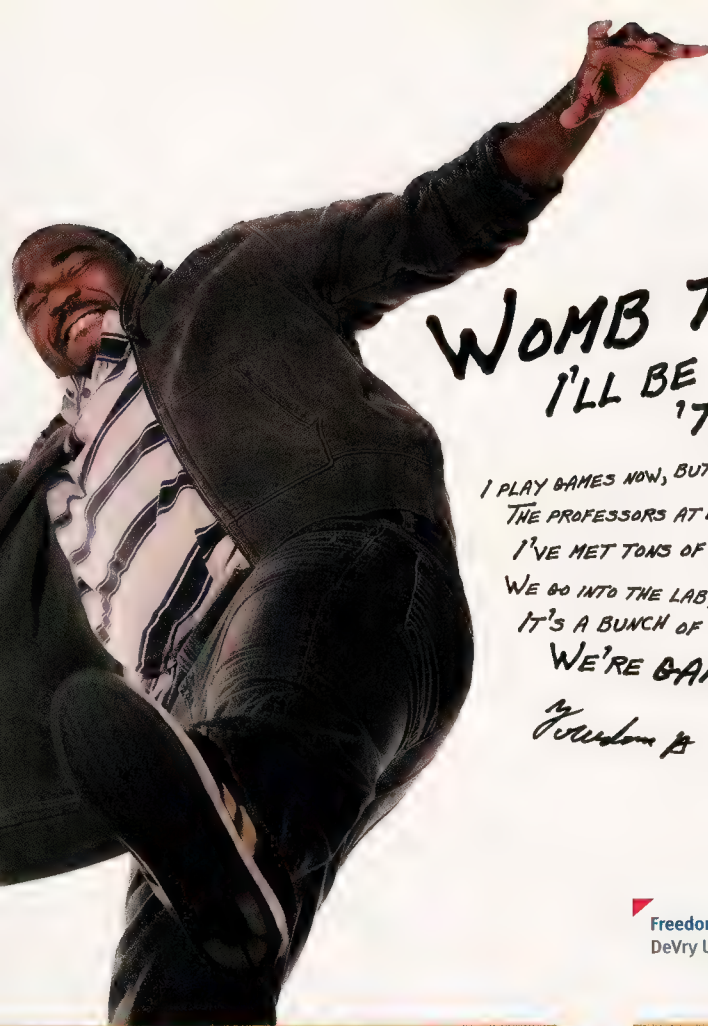


Runner-up:  
*Super Mario Galaxy* (Wii)



Passing the Bruckner: Fans of the awful will find our annual Tobias: Bruckner Memorial Awards, honoring the year's worst, on pg. 90.





**WOMB TO TOMB,  
I'LL BE A GAMER  
'TIL I DIE.**

*I PLAY GAMES NOW, BUT ONE DAY I'LL MAKE THEM.  
THE PROFESSORS AT DeVRY ARE VERY IN-THE-KNOW.  
I'VE MET TONS OF GAMERS AT DeVRY.  
WE GO INTO THE LAB, TALK ABOUT OUR IDEAS.  
IT'S A BUNCH OF LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE.  
WE'RE GAMERS FOR LIFE.*

*By Freedom A. Evans*

 Freedom A. Evans  
DeVry University '09

90% of DeVry grads in the active-job market\* find careers in their areas of study within 6 months of graduation—in fast growing fields like Business, Information Systems and Healthcare Technology. Classes start soon, so find out about the DeVry program that is helping Freedom find his game plan for success.

**Call 1.877.31GAMER or log on to [DeVryGamerNow.com/EGM](http://DeVryGamerNow.com/EGM)**

**DeVry**   
**University**

**We major in careers.**

\*System-wide for the 10-year period ending 2/07.

Accredited by The Higher Learning Commission of the North-Central Association (NCA), [www.ncahitc.org](http://www.ncahitc.org).

Programs vary by location.

DeVry University operates as DeVry Institute of Technology in New York.

©2008 DeVry University. All rights reserved.



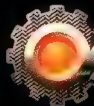
The Platform *Evolved.*

AMD's First Comprehensive PC Platform.

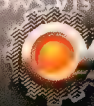
iBuypower recommends  
Windows Vista™ Home Premium



iBuypower recommends Windows Vista™ Home Premium



GLX - Ultra

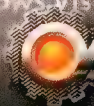


LX - 850



FREE SHIPPING

Color Options



FREE SHIPPING



15.4" Wide Screen 16:10 WXGA TFT LCD 1280x800 Display

**GENUINE Windows® Vista™ Home Premium**

AMD® Turion™ 64 X2 Mobile Technology

AMD® PowerNow! Technology

HyperTransport Technology

Enhanced Virus Protection Technology

ATI Mobility Radeon HD 2600 256MB w/HDMI

2GB DDR2-667 Memory

Removable 8x DVD±R/±RW / CD-RW Drive

160GB 5400RPM Ultra-ATA 100 Hard Drive

10/100/1000 MB Ethernet LAN & 56K Modem

Wireless 802.11g 54Mbps Mini-PCI Network

Built-in 1.3 Mega Pixels CMOS Camera

4x USB 2.0 & 1x Firewire IEEE-1394 Ports

4-in-1 Built-in Media Card Reader

High Performance Li-Ion Battery; Free Deluxe Carrying Case

AMD® Turion™ 64 Mobile Technology.

\$999

17" Wide Screen 16:10 WSXGA+ TFT LCD 1680x1050 Display

**GENUINE Windows® Vista™ Home Premium**

AMD® Turion™ 64 X2 Mobile Technology

AMD® PowerNow! Technology

HyperTransport Technology

Enhanced Virus Protection Technology

512MB ATI Mobility Radeon HD 2600 Video

2GB DDR2-667 Memory

Removable 8x DVD±R/±RW Drive

160GB 5400RPM Ultra-ATA100 Hard Drive

10/100/1000Mbps Ethernet LAN & 56K Modem

Wireless 802.11G 54Mbps Mini-PCI Network

Built-in 1.3 Mega Pixels CMOS Camera

3x USB 2.0 & 1x Firewire IEEE-1394 Ports

3-in-1 Built-in Media Card Reader

Free Deluxe Carrying Case

AMD Turion™ 64 Mobile Technology.

\$1149



AMD Phenom™ processors offer multi-core performance for life-like gaming, crystal-clear digital media and serious megatasking.

Run all your gadgets quickly, seamlessly and simultaneously.

Video & photo editing, content creation and audio mixing.

AMD PowerNow!™ for longer battery life.

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



### Gamer Mage 550-SLI™



Asus M2N-E SLI™ Dual PCI Express Motherboard  
**GENUINE Windows® Vista™ Home Premium**  
 NZXT® Hush Silent Gaming Case + 500W SLI™-Certified Power Supply  
 Silent & Overclocking Proof CPU Cooling System  
 Corsair 2GB DDR2-800 Memory  
 500GB SATA II 7200RPM Hard Drive  
 2X NVIDIA® GeForce™ 8500GT 512MB Video - SLI™ Enabled  
 20x Double Layer DVD±R/±RW Drive; 16x DVD-ROM Drive  
 8 Channel Surround 3D Premium Sound  
 10/100/1000 Mbps Ethernet LAN  
 Logitech X-230 2.1 Configuration Speakers System  
 Logitech Deluxe Keyboard & Optical Mouse  
 Add ViewSonic® 20" Wide VG2030WM TFT LCD Monitor @ \$258

AMD Phenom™ Quad-Core Processors	
9600+	\$1019
9500+	\$969
AMD Athlon™ 64 X2 dual-core Processor	
6400+	\$939
6000+	\$919
5600+	\$899
5200+	\$869
5000+	\$859
4800+	\$839
4200+	\$819

**\$819**

### Gamer Mage 760-SLI™



Asus M2N-E SLI™ Dual PCI Express Motherboard  
**GENUINE Windows® Vista™ Home Premium**  
 Eagletech® Viper Gaming Case + 500W SLI™-Certified Power Supply  
 Silent & Overclocking Proof CPU Cooling System  
 Corsair 2GB DDR2-800 Memory  
 320GB SATA II 7200RPM Hard Drive  
 2X NVIDIA® GeForce™ 8600GT 512MB Video - SLI™ Enabled  
 20x Double Layer DVD±R/±RW Drive; 16x DVD-ROM Drive  
 8 Channel Surround 3D Premium Sound  
 10/100/1000 Mbps Ethernet LAN  
 Logitech X-540 5.1 Surround Sound Speakers  
 Logitech Deluxe Keyboard & Optical Mouse  
 Free Wireless 802.11g 54Mbps Network Adapter

AMD Phenom™ Quad-Core Processors	
9600+	\$1119
9500+	\$1069
AMD Athlon™ 64 X2 dual-core Processor	
6400+	\$1039
6000+	\$1019
5600+	\$999
5200+	\$969
5000+	\$959
4800+	\$939
4200+	\$919

**\$919**

### Gamer Mage 350SE



Asus M2N-E SLI™ Dual PCI Express Motherboard  
**GENUINE Windows® Vista™ Home Premium**  
 Eagletech Sidewinder Gaming Case + 800W SLI™-Certified Power Supply  
 Corsair 2GB DDR2-800 Memory  
 500GB SATA II 7200RPM Hard Drive  
 2X NVIDIA® GeForce™ 8800GT 512MB Video - SLI™ Enabled  
 20x Double Layer DVD±R/±RW Drive; 16x DVD-ROM Drive  
 8 Channel Surround 3D Premium Sound  
 10/100/1000 Mbps Ethernet LAN  
 600Watt Surround Sound Speakers  
 Logitech Deluxe Keyboard & Optical Mouse

AMD Phenom™ Quad-Core Processors	
9600+	\$1379
9500+	\$1329
AMD Athlon™ 64 X2 dual-core Processor	
6400+	\$1299
6000+	\$1279
5600+	\$1259
5200+	\$1229
5000+	\$1219
4800+	\$1199
4200+	\$1179

**\$1179**

### Gamer Mage 550-Pro



Asus M2N-E SLI™ Dual PCI Express Motherboard  
**GENUINE Windows® Vista™ Home Premium**  
 NZXT® Lexa Gaming Tower Case + 800W SLI™-Certified Power Supply  
 Silent & Overclocking Proof CPU Cooling System  
 Corsair 2GB DDR 2-800 Memory  
 750GB SATA II 7200RPM Hard Drive  
 2X NVIDIA® GeForce™ 8800GTS 512MB Video - SLI™ Enabled  
 20x Double Layer DVD±R/±RW Drive; 16x DVD-ROM Drive  
 8 Channel Surround 3D Premium Sound  
 10/100/1000 Mbps Ethernet LAN  
 Logitech Deluxe Keyboard; Optical Mouse  
 Free Wireless 802.11g 54Mbps Network Adapter

AMD Phenom™ Quad-Core Processors	
9600+	\$1699
9500+	\$1659
AMD Athlon™ 64 X2 dual-core Processor	
6400+	\$1629
6000+	\$1599
5600+	\$1579
5200+	\$1549
5000+	\$1539
4800+	\$1519
4200+	\$1499

**\$1499**

### Gamer Mage 400-Ultra



MSI K9A2 CF-F AMD 790X CrossFire Dual PCI Express Motherboard  
**GENUINE Windows® Vista™ Home Premium**  
 Eagletech® Dragon Gaming Case + 800W SLI™-Certified Power Supply.  
 Silent & Overclocking Proof CPU Cooling System  
 Corsair 2GB DDR 2-800 Memory  
 500GB SATA II 7200RPM Hard Drive  
 2X ATI Radeon HD 3870 512MB Video - running Cross Fire  
 20x Double Layer DVD±R/±RW Drive  
 8 Channel Surround 3D Premium Sound  
 600Watt Surround Sound Speakers  
 10/100/1000 Mbps Ethernet LAN  
 Logitech Deluxe Keyboard & Optical Mouse  
 Add ViewSonic® 20" Wide VG2030WM TFT LCD Monitor @ \$258

AMD Phenom™ Quad-Core Processors	
9600+	\$1319
9500+	\$1279
AMD Athlon™ 64 X2 dual-core Processor	
6400+	\$1245
6000+	\$1225
5600+	\$1205
5200+	\$1175
5000+	\$1165
4800+	\$1145
4200+	\$1125

**\$1125**

Toll Free 888.462.3899



# REVIEWS

> colorful slimes, in-tune chimes, dino mealtimes, and pandora



## > CONTENTS

- 74 Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors
- 75 FIFA Street 3
- 76 Devil May Cry 4
- 80 Turok
- 83 The Club
- 83 Advance Wars: Days of Ruin
- 84 Wipeout Pulse
- 85 Patapon
- 86 Reviews Wrap-Up

## > THIS MONTH IN REVIEWS

# Drumming Up Support

The little guys stand tall



**PATA PATA PATA PON.** In this month's upset special, we have the PSP's rhythm-action-real-time-strategy gem *Patapon* taking the Game of the Month crown over anticipated titles like *Devil May Cry 4* and *Turok*. Even though I wasn't on the review, I had plenty of hands-on time with it and couldn't help but adore it, from the game's charming art style to the characters' gung-ho attitude. Maybe it's that whole "root for the underdog" thing (except when it comes to my powerhouse Patriots, naturally), but I always love seeing an out-of-nowhere game get some love—kind of like the virtually unknown *Hotel Dusk* (*Hotel Dusk!*?) getting a 10 from us. And given this month's scarcity of releases, it's a good time to try something different.

Another thing I enjoy: being a tease. With that in mind, you can look forward to a big change next month.

—Greg Ford, Reviews Editor

## > HOW WE RATE

- 10 to 9 Excellent
- 8.5 to 7 Good
- 6.5 to 5 Average
- 4.5 to 3 Bad
- 2.5 to 0 Terrible

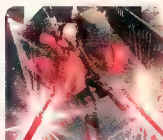
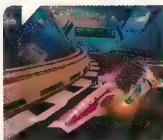
## > SCORES AND AWARDS

**Reviews:** You can also find the lead EGM review on 1UP.com. The second and third reviews—you'll find those here.

**Awards:** We dole out awards to games based on their scores. Platinum: all 10s; Gold: 9.0 average and up; Silver: 8.0 average or higher. Game of the Month goes to the highest-scoring game with unanimously "Good" scores, and Shame of the Month is the reverse. Simple.





PAGE  
**76****Devil May  
Cry: But not  
likely**PAGE  
**83****The Club:  
Members  
only?**PAGE  
**84****Pulse: We  
can feel a  
strong beat**

## THIS MONTH'S REVIEW CREW

It's not you—it's them



### Dan "Shoe" Hsu

Editor-in-Chief

Everyone's gunning for Shoe in the new *Advance Wars*—mainly because he won't stop taking trash around the office. He has a pretty good multiplayer record overall, but Ryan Scott did beat him once in recent time....

**Now Playing:** *Call of Duty 4*, *Advance Wars: Days of Ruin*  
**Blog:** [egmshoe.1UP.com](http://egmshoe.1UP.com)



### Shane Bettenhausen

Executive Editor

After the departure of longtime intern Brooke, Shane's been forced to fetch the staff's requisite morning coffee, ship outgoing packages, and work on the dreaded Table of Contents. Wholly unacceptable.

**Now Playing:** *Crisis Core: FFVII*, *Patapon*, *Wipeout Pulse*  
**Blog:** [egmshane.1UP.com](http://egmshane.1UP.com)



### Jennifer Tsao

Managing Editor

The other EGMers say they don't hear it *pata pata pata pon* but Jennifer's absolutely, positively sure *pan pon pata pon* there are tribal drums beating loud *chaka chaka pata pon* and clear throughout the day. She's not crazy!

**Now Playing:** Isn't it obvious?  
**Blog:** [egmjennifer.1UP.com](http://egmjennifer.1UP.com)



### Crispin Boyer

Senior Editor

The postholiday gaming lull has given Crispin time to catch up on his exposure to Vitamin D, while post-oil spill surfing in the San Francisco Bay Area has given him time to catch up on his exposure to petroleum-based carcinogens.

**Now Playing:** *Mario Galaxy*  
**Blog:** [egmcrispin.1UP.com](http://egmcrispin.1UP.com)



### Bryan Intihar

Reviews Editor

The Browns barely miss the NFL playoffs, the Buckeyes lose in the BCS title game yet again—it was definitely one rough month for Bryan. But at least he can always rewrite history with a few games of *Madden NFL* and *NCAA Football* (poor guy).

**Now Playing:** *Devil May Cry 4*  
**Blog:** [egmbryan.1UP.com](http://egmbryan.1UP.com)



### Greg Ford

Reviews Editor

A month with no reviews? No problem. Ford found room in his heart for some portable love, finally digging into *Zelda: Phantom Hourglass* and *Dracula X Chronicles*. Coincidentally, this marks the first time he's actually wished for a longer commute.

**Now Playing:** *Mario Galaxy*  
**Blog:** [egmford.1UP.com](http://egmford.1UP.com)



### Michael Donahoe

News/Features Editor

Michael discovered he adores two things this month: war and dino. You could call Michael a bit of a player, however, because he claims his one true love is a box. Hopefully, one day he'll love a real human being.

**Now Playing:** *Final Fantasy Tactics* (indefinitely)  
**Blog:** [egmhoe.1UP.com](http://egmhoe.1UP.com)



### Sam Kennedy

1UP.com Site Director

With a lot of his time spent improving 1UP's websites lately, Sam has been squeezing in game time on his PSP. And with *Wipeout Pulse* this month and *God of War* and *Crisis Core* right around the corner, he'll be on it a while.

**Now Playing:** *The Orange Box*  
**Blog:** [capnsamak.1UP.com](http://capnsamak.1UP.com)



### James "Milkman" Mielke

Executive Editor, 1UP.com

Milkman's still reeling from the news that Darth Vader and Yoda will be in the PS3 and XB360 versions of *Soulcalibur IV*, respectively, but not enough to stop him from firing up his lightsaber when the game ships.

**Now Playing:** *Devil May Cry 4*  
**Blog:** [milkman.1UP.com](http://milkman.1UP.com)



### Nick Suttner

Associate Editor, Reviews

Nick would like to take this opportunity to sing the addictive praises of the recent XBLA release of *GripShift*. Give it a shot. Also keep your eye on the 2D, multiplayer, level-creating awesometacularity of the upcoming gem *N+*.

**Now Playing:** *Patapon*  
**Blog:** [rocksolidaudio.1UP.com](http://rocksolidaudio.1UP.com)

## Also on deck...

**Jeremy Parish**  
Features Editor  
1UP.com

**Andrew Pflister**  
Reviews Editor  
1UP.com

**Ryan Scott**  
Reviews Editor  
Games for  
Windows: The  
Official Magazine

**Ray Barnholt**  
Staff Reviewer  
MyCheats.com

**Tyler Barber**  
Staff Reviewer

**Andrew Fitch**  
Staff Reviewer

**Gord Goble**  
Staff Reviewer

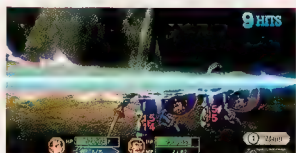
**Joe Rybicki**  
Staff Reviewer

**Todd Zuniga**  
Sports Guy  
Staff Reviewer



The Review Crew is the 1UP Network's ensemble cast of writers from all of our publications, both online and in print. We believe that games are more than the sum of their parts, so we tackle them subjectively, as experiences.

Head over to [ReviewCrew.1UP.com](http://ReviewCrew.1UP.com) to meet all of the 1UP Network's expert reviewers. And check out 1UP.com for reviews of games we didn't have enough time or room for.



Wii

# DRAGON QUEST SWORDS: THE MASKED QUEEN AND THE TOWER OF MIRRORS

■ Publisher: Square Enix ■ Developer: Genius Sonority/Eighting ■ Players: 1 ■ ESRB: Teen



**The Good:** Fighting big bosses up close  
**The Bad:** Uneven sword motion sensing  
**Eurotrip:** Overdone British, French, and German dialects fill characters' dialogue

By the power of Lameskull

➔ **RAY:** Square Enix's venerable role-playing game series goes first-person in *Dragon Quest Swords*, which puts you in an arcade-like quest with your Wii Remote as a virtual sword and shield. But it's more proof that developers still have a way to go before the Wii gets a sword-based game that feels at least halfway natural. Having to hold the controller faceup and swing it in straight lines is way too robotic, and it isn't too successful with diagonal slashes, either (the game even warns you that you'll have trouble with them).

The typical *Dragon Quest* look and feel are strong here, making things somewhat enjoyable as you strike down familiar creatures, but the fun fades when you go through level after

level, fighting the same monsters in the same predetermined spots. The brief quest doesn't tax your patience (or forearm) as long as it could have, but that has little to do with the actual frustration you'll encounter.

➔ **JEREMY:** Wii motion controls are great when they help transform complex interfaces into something simpler and intuitive. *Swords*, alas, is the other kind of Wii game: one built on the premise that replacing substance with flailing is a satisfying trade-off. It plays like a dumbed-down *Dragon Quest*, with a single town and on-rails dungeons but nevertheless a need to go through the experience-points grind for levels. It's too poky and awkward to work as a new-age light-gun shoot-

er, too shallow to work as an RPG, and too mediocre to merit attention.

➔ **A. FITCH:** RPGs will always be my first love, but I'm a busy dude who doesn't have the copious free time I had in my younger, *Final Fantasy*-obsessed days. That's why I love the concept of *Swords*: It condenses the often-bloated role-playing experience into manageable bite-sized chunks, with just enough story exposition to keep the player moving forward. Why, then, did the developers sabotage it with so much unnecessary grinding? The classic *Dragon Quest* touches, like the ubiquitous cute lil' slimes, had me hooked at the start, but the constant backtracking taxed even this hardcore *DQ* nut. ☹





PS3/XB360

## FIFA STREET 3

■ Publisher: EA Sports Big ■ Developer: EA Canada  
 ■ Players: 1-8 ■ ESRB: Everyone

### Who's got the yellow card?

➔ **TODD:** This third in the series isn't the charm for the arcadey *FIFA Street*. To wit: its one-and-done single-player experience, one meaning one hour. The gameplay's passable, and I had a few thrilling moments (bicycle kicks and wall-climbing dribbles), but this game lacks the creative and dramatic spark needed to keep it in my system after a few kicks. The game modes are too limited: You won't find any tournaments, created or otherwise, and the snooze-filled Street Challenge rotated me through the same boring rule sets time and again. This is a "street" game—let's take some chances! Spot my opponent three goals, or make me play a man down. Something—*anything*—to mix it up. Though, really, what I'm angling for is a narrative (but I guess the game would need create-a-player for that). This play-and-unlock system is past-gen thinking on a now-gen pitch. I like the art direction and the back-end stat tracking, but otherwise *Street 3* is a novelty. I'll stick with *FIFA 08*.

➔ **BRYAN:** Ronaldinho, Gattuso, Crouch—all it takes is a glance at *Street 3*'s box art to see that it has star power. But what a shame they play such an uninspired brand of soccer here. From the lack of defense to the dumber-than-dirt goalkeepers (you're supposed to toss the ball to the guy on your team, OK?), matches simply consist of who can get down the field the fastest while jamming on the trick buttons. The new *Incredibles*-esque visuals and accessible dribbling mechanics are welcome, but this arcadey pitch still needs grooming.

➔ **ANDREW P.:** I was recently of the opinion that *Mario Strikers Charged* might have been a bit too crazy for its own good. Thank you, then, *Street 3*, for proving that idea wrong. The stylized character design and downbeat soundtrack (I liked it, at least) deliver a nice façade, but the game is too reliant on offensive trickery—it seems like you're supposed to do more fancy dribbling than goal scoring (or mounting an effective defense). Like most arcade sports games, the "play and forget it" approach is fine. But *Street 3*'s lack of energy and strategy gives you no reason to go back.

**The Good:** Simple controls, stylized graphics  
**The Bad:** By-the-books single-player mode, brain-dead goalkeepers  
**Bizarre:** The techno-laden soundtrack. Is this a German disco light show or something?

## If You Purchased Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas Before July 20, 2005

### You May Be Eligible for Benefits From A Class Action Settlement

If you purchased the video game *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* ("GTA:SA") before July 20, 2005, you may be part of a class action Settlement. This Notice is just a summary. For more complete information, you should read the full Notice. You can get a copy of the full Notice by calling the number or visiting the Web site below.

#### What is the Class Action Lawsuit About?

The lawsuit claims that Defendants, Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. and its subsidiary Rockstar Games, Inc., manufactured and sold *GTA:SA* with hidden content that, if unlocked by the user, could display scenes of a sexual nature, which became known as the "Hot Coffee" scenes. The lawsuit claims the marketing of the game with this content under an improper rating violated Consumer Protection laws.

#### Who is Included?

The Class includes everyone who bought *GTA:SA* before July 20, 2005. Resellers are not included in the Class.

#### What Are the Terms of the Settlement?

Class members who meet certain eligibility conditions may be able to claim cash payments ranging from \$5 to \$35, and/or to exchange the game for a copy without the content at issue. For full details about the qualifications to make a claim you should read the full Notice.

#### Who Represents Me?

The Court has appointed attorneys to represent the Class. You may hire your own attorney, if you wish. However, you will be responsible for that attorney's fees and expenses. Class Counsel will ask the Court for an award of attorneys' fees and reimbursement of expenses in the amount of \$1,000,000. This amount includes approximately \$955,000 in attorneys' fees and approximately \$45,000 for reimbursement of expenses. Defendants have agreed to and will not oppose this request. The Court may consider the request at the Final Approval Hearing on **June 25, 2008 at 10:30 a.m.**

#### What Are My Legal Rights?

- If you wish to stay in the Class, you do not have to do anything. If you want to get a benefit you must file a claim as explained below. If the Court approves the Settlement, you will be bound by all the Court's orders. This means you cannot sue the Defendants covered by the Settlement in the future.
- If you qualify, you must complete a claim form to receive any payment. Depending on the kind of proof of purchase you have, you may be eligible for different amounts of cash payments. You can get a Claim Form by calling the toll-free number or visiting the Web site below. Claim Forms must be postmarked no later than **May 16, 2008**.
- If you do not wish to be a member of the Class, you must submit a letter to the Settlement Administrator indicating that you do not want to be a member of the Class postmarked no later than **April 25, 2008**. If you request to be excluded from the Class you cannot make a claim for a cash payment under this Settlement.
- You can tell the Court if you do not like this Settlement or some part of it if you do not exclude yourself. To object or comment, you must send a letter to the Court postmarked no later than **April 25, 2008**.

#### Will the Court Approve the Settlement?

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing on **June 25, 2008 at 10:30 a.m.** to consider whether the Proposed Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate and the motion for attorneys' fees and expenses.

### For a Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement and a Claim Form

Call toll-free: 1-800-409-0328

or Visit: [www.gtasettlement.com](http://www.gtasettlement.com)

Or Write: GTA: San Andreas 1st Edition Settlement Administrator,  
c/o of Rust Consulting, P.O. Box 1912, Faribault, MN 55021-7167









■ Nero's devilish right hand allows you to grapple with foes...even the bosses.

PS3/XB360

# DEVIL MAY CRY 4

■ Publisher: Capcom ■ Developer: Capcom ■ Players: 1 ■ ESRB: Mature



**The Good:** Pinpoint control, lovely visuals  
**The Bad:** Serious backtracking, recycled bosses  
**Surgically Enhanced:** Trish and Lady's décolletage

## Slash your way to hell...and back

➔ **SHANE:** Coming into this sequel, Capcom's pioneering slash-'n'-shoot franchise teeters on the edge of losing its triple-A status. The last two games felt like slight missteps—*Devil May Cry 2* was a lifeless, repetitive reread while *DMC3*'s absurd difficulty curve made it impenetrably tough for most gamers. The good news? In many crucial ways, *DMC4* feels like the return to form that fans so desperately desire. But at the same time, an obnoxious design choice keeps it from being an unqualified success.

From the outset, *DMC4* pulls some surprising punches—benching cocksure, wisecracking Dante in favor of decidedly emo newcomer Nero may seem like a dumb move, but the gamble actually pays off. Nero's truly the

star of this quest, and you control him through nearly two-thirds of the game as he attempts to rescue his lovely lass from a corrupt theocracy. It's a far more serious and earnest adventure than you'd expect, even if the "angels" you're fighting look more like Gundams. And Nero offers a remarkably different style of play thanks to the Devil Bringer, his demonically enhanced right arm. Its various uses include tossing foes around, pulling off unique finishing moves, and grappling across chasms—all of which add some depth to the proceedings.

Nero's new proclivities definitely tweak the formula, yet the fundamental *DMC* gameplay remains wonderfully intact. Few games boast such excellent controls—you'll instantly find

yourself pulling off impressive combos thanks to the tight, responsive, and intuitive setup offered here. And you'll feel a real incentive to master combat, as the game constantly rewards stylish play with a branching tree of unlockable skills and attacks that expand your death-dealing repertoire.

Like its predecessors, *DMC4* unfolds in a strictly linear fashion, with a diverse mix of combat, puzzle solving, and platforming in each of its 20 stages. Even though it's divided into chunks, the game world stands as one interconnected, realistic realm packed with dense jungles, abandoned mines, and massive castles. But unlike the past games, this one takes an overly frugal approach to level design: Once you've battled

## Multiplatform Showdown

Although *Devil May Cry 4* was originally announced as a PlayStation 3 exclusive, publisher Capcom later changed its plans and opted to simultaneously release it on both PS3 and Xbox 360. But we've all seen multiplatform fare that fails to deliver a consistent experience across the two consoles...how do these two versions stack up?

	PS3	XBOX360
<b>Loading times</b>	Required hard drive install minimizes in-game load times to 2 seconds or so	No install; in-game load times vary from 3 to 10 seconds
<b>Controller</b>	Offers a silly Sixaxis motion-controlled camera, better trigger buttons	Default rumble is a boon, but those bumpers feel kind of iffy in the heat of battle
<b>Achievements</b>	Surprisingly, this version offers full Achievements and online leaderboards, but no Home interactivity	Sports the expected Xbox Live Achievement and online leaderboard integration
<b>Graphics</b>	Completely lovely...except for a few bits of slowdown and flickering shadows	Suffers the same bouts of sluggishness as its PS3 cousin; opening cinema looks slightly worse



▲ Lady's heeling cameo in *DMC4* feels like a tease. Check out that bayonet!



through the holy empire as Nero, you get to trudge back through it all over again (including the bosses) as Dante. Sure, this crimson-clad badass controls like a dream—his godlike strength, agility, and special attacks erupt with a fury that Nero simply can't match—but having him merely retrace the other hero's steps feels like a missed opportunity. And just when it appears that no further corners could be cut, the game's penultimate stage parades the game's big bosses back out for an unprecedented *third* battle. Seriously, Capcom? They're good bosses, but not *that* good.

Although it dips into the recycling bin a bit too much, *Devil May Cry 4* still remains a must-play title for action-adventure gamers. Its gorgeous trappings, addictive combat, and well-balanced difficulty make it

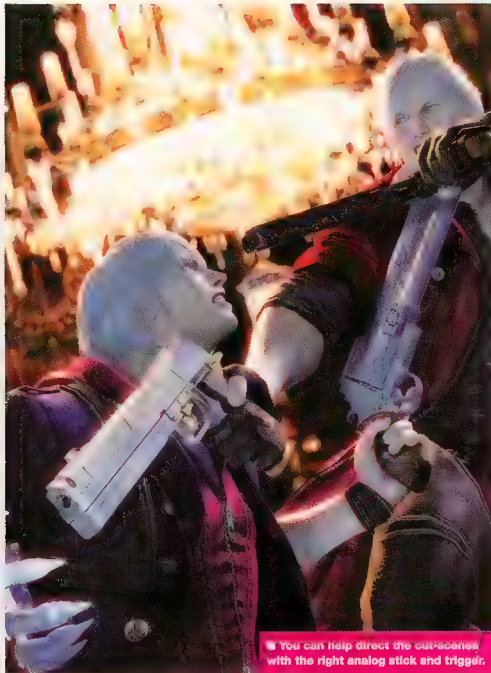
the most satisfying *DMC* in years, and Dante's such a killer character that you'll actually want to tackle the game on a tougher difficulty in order to fully explore his amazing arsenal and unlock a plethora of bonus content.

➔ **MILKMAN:** Shane is right. *DMC4* goes a long way toward fixing past transgressions by providing some truly amazing combat. There's no shortage of brutality here, even though the spotlight primarily shines on newcomer Nero. While he looks a lot like Dante, his Devil Bringer (and Buster) techniques make for enemy-smashing good times and distinguish him from the sword and gunplay antics of his counterpart. It's a good thing too, since his set of Blue Rose pistols takes a distant backseat behind the Devil Bringer and his Red Queen

sword. That's OK, though, since you eventually unlock a criminally overpowered Dante later in the game. What's less OK is the occasionally counterintuitive level design.

It's a shame that no one on the dev team could see this, but despite the fact that *DMC4* has some excellent, almost *Zelda*-like level progression and puzzle-solving, it also has its fair share of "What the hell do I do now?" moments. Most action games like this have you forging ahead to the end of the level, where you beat the boss and then run through to the next area. With *DMC4*, I left my PS3 on overnight one time because I didn't realize that after beating the boss I had to run all the way back to the beginning of the level, and I didn't want to have to replay the stage. And what's up with having to hit four giant keys down a





■ You can help direct the cut-scenes with the right analog stick and trigger.



hallway to open a door? It's a good thing the combat consistently amazes, because the stage design doesn't. The preset camera angles still vex at times, but the game is so beautiful, you'll cut it some slack.

*Devil May Cry 4* is easily the best *DMC* since the original—and it's loaded with massive replay value—but some puzzling design choices ensure that Capcom still has plenty of work to do.

➔ **BRYAN:** Outside of *Heavenly Sword* and *Ninja Gaiden Sigma*, this round of consoles has been sorely lacking in the action-adventure department where, like an episode of *Project Runway*, it's all about style. Luckily, *DMC4* goes a quite a long way to help fill that genre void.

Since this game's unveiling, I hadn't

been sold on the idea that rookie Nero could step into the lead role here. But those concerns quickly vanished after a few missions, and it all stems from the hero's powerful right arm. Whether I was using it to literally tear foes apart or slam down the towering, hotter-than-Hades Berial boss, the Devil Bringer adds a wonderful new wrinkle to the franchise's already stellar combat system. I enjoyed playing as Nero so much that I actually was disappointed when forced to switch over to Dante. But the series mainstay also brings along some welcome additions, including the ability to toggle through his four fighting styles on the fly (which for skilled demon slayers will equate into some killer combos) and fabulous new weapons like his exploding roses and the devastating, ever-transforming Pandora.

## Dante's Wonderful Toys



### Gilgamesh

Dante snags three weapons from felled bosses, but this set of spiked gauntlets and boots fails to impress. Limited range makes them useful only to masters of the Royal Guard style.



### Lucifer

The far cooler Lucifer backpack grants Dante the ability to toss an unlimited number of exploding blades at foes. And he clenches a rose in his teeth while using it, just for style.



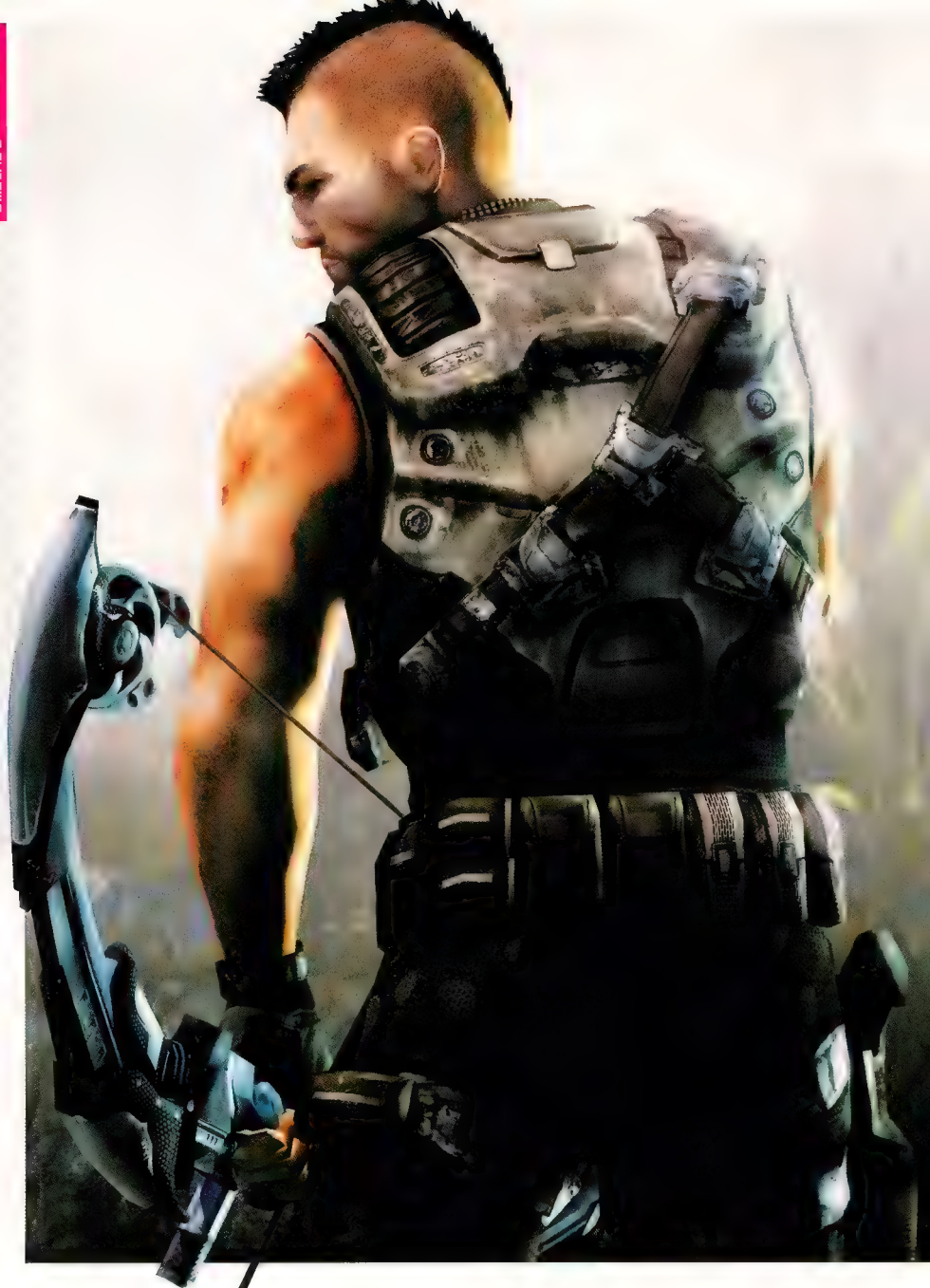
### Pandora

By far the coolest weapon in any *DMC* game, this crazy suitcase transforms into a host of different firearms including a rocket launcher, laser rifle, and a gyroscopic missile array.

While the *DMC* series has never disappointed with its hacking and shooting, it doesn't have the best prep for delivering the most well rounded offerings. This installment also represents a major step forward in terms of offering a well-balanced experience for all gamers. Unlike *DMC3*, No. 4's difficulty feels *just right* thanks to smart placement of save spots and checkpoints.

On the visual front, the game turned out to be quite the looker. The two-plus years in the development cooker has helped *DMC4* overcome its rocky first showing, producing some gorgeous set pieces with oodles of enemies and relatively few hiccups in the action. And you'll be hard-pressed to find better fighting sequences than those in this one's beautifully choreographed in-game cut-scenes. 🌟

EGM Extras:  
Dry your boss-fight-induced tears with our *DMC4 SuperGuide* at [EGM.1UP.COM](http://EGM.1UP.COM)







■ You'd think that guns would work best on dinosaurs. Well, you're not too sharp—knives work better.

PS3/XB360

# TUROK

■ Publisher: Touchstone ■ Developer: Propaganda ■ Players: 1-16 ■ ESRB: Mature



**The Good:** Lush jungle environments, interesting premise  
**The Bad:** Frustrating aiming issues, uneven difficulty, stealth bits  
**Best Performance:** Ron Perlman

## Jurassic Parkinson's

➔ **JOE:** *Turok* has a bad case of the shakes. Shoot a gun and the screen shakes. Get hit and the screen shakes. Draw your bow for too long and the screen shakes. Immersive? Maybe. Annoying? Yep. If I'm sighting on a bad guy and my aim gets knocked way off every time I shoot or get shot, well, I get a little frustrated.

Surprisingly, though, this issue doesn't damage *Turok* beyond redemption. This is largely due to the interesting story, solid writing, and fantastic voice work, which all move the game along to a satisfyingly climactic ending. Having to deal with two factions of enemies makes things a bit more interesting than in your average first-person shooter; both the human soldiers and the carnivorous

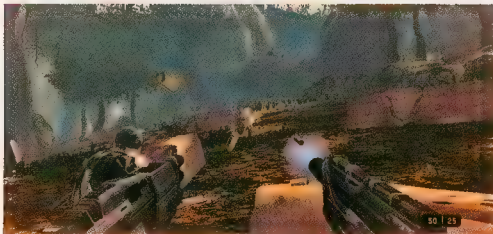
dinos will come after you, but they'll also take on each other if you stay hidden. (Dinos even appear as third parties in the smooth, feature-filled multiplayer, which is a nice touch.)

But this ties into one of my biggest gripes with *Turok*: The game handles stealth with absurd clumsiness. Sometimes enemies see you, sometimes they don't, and I couldn't find an obvious reason why. It feels as though something in the game isn't working the way it should—a feeling that's compounded by seriously unbalanced difficulty and graphical glitches that plague the PS3 version (though the 360 version runs much better).

These issues guarantee that *Turok* isn't going to win any awards, especially considering 07's stellar FPSes.

But the unusual premise, solid writing, and varied play make it worth a look.

➔ **NICK:** I never, ever thought I'd be saying this, but I had more goofy fun with *Turok: Evolution*. Sure, it was a complete mess, but it clung fiercely to the over-the-top *Turok* spirit, if nothing else. While the dinosaurs make for some refreshing enemies in this franchise reboot and the production values have their moments, *Turok* never makes good on any of its more ambitious ideas. It tries to stretch its legs with some interesting lure mechanics (like shooting eggs or flares to get dinos' attention), but winds up crippling them completely by having far too few checkpoints (you'll inevitably forgo the more interesting



options in favor of efficiency when the going gets rough).

And while the throwaway story isn't particularly harmful (Joe must have a soft spot for humbly badass Native Americans), the useless squadmates that tag along serve little purpose other than to destroy any welcome

tension that comes from hunting alone. I had some fun, sure, but shooter standards are indeed high and my tolerance is short for anything with dinosaurs that isn't awesome.

➔ **MICHAEL:** Wait a minute, Joe—you think the plot is interesting? Interesting

## Even More Ways Tu-Rok

If there's one thing inarguably absent from this new *Turok*, it's a sense of over-the-top, violent whimsy. Specifically, where's the *Cerebral Bore gun, guys?* We spitballed a few ideas that we'd put in it/when we ruled/rule the world:

### Southern-Fried Bruckinator

With respect to *Ratchet & Clank's* Transmorphic and our very own Tobies (page 90), we want a weapon that transforms our enemies into miniaturized versions of everybody's favorite misplaced frontiersman from *Turok: Evolution*, Tobias Bruckner.

### Neutral Egg Grab

Sure, *Turok* has a neutral capture-the-flag multiplayer mode of sorts and dinosaurs on the map, but where's the synergy? Make the flag a dino egg with a bunch of angry relatives tromping around and baby, you got a stew goin'.

### The Infamous Raptor Rex

Never heard of the fabled Raptor Rex? Jeez, kids these days. Well, it's a raptor riding a T-Rex, with a whip and a cowboy hat, and we want it in the game. We want to see it, we want to be it, and we want to kill it.



in that it manages to combine all the clichéd science-fiction plots (space marines get stranded on an island—yawn) when it could have easily come up with a hook that isn't as old as the dinosaurs? If so, then yes, I totally agree with you. But even though *Turok's* story is pretty darn prehistoric, dicing up dinos with a knife is extremely gratifying. And that's what makes *Turok* stand out from other FPSes. Deciding whether to fend off those carnivorous foes or sic 'em on your human enemies adds a teensy bit of strategy to the otherwise typical run, gun, and reload approach.

And I do agree with Joe (for real this time) that the dinos spice up multiplayer. Just like it's fun to exterminate the reptiles in single-player, it's even more fun to pick off losers getting attacked by the beasts. 🦖





PS3/XB360

## THE CLUB

■ Publisher: Sega ■ Developer: Bizarre Creations ■ Players: 1-8 ■ ESRB: Mature

REVIEWED

### Stick with the guest pass

THE VERDICTS  
(OUT OF 10)

A. FITCH  
6.5  
AVERAGE

TYLER  
5.5  
AVERAGE

GORD  
6.5  
AVERAGE

**The Good:** Smooth online, multiplayer  
**The Bad:** No story mode or innovation  
**Why Does a Game Clearly Aimed at Men:** Have no female eye candy?

► **FITCH:** *The Club's* premise seems straight out of a cheesy mid-'90s action flick: A group of eight gun-and-grenade-totin' thugs compete in an underground blood sport for the amusement of a disembodied British voice. And this online third-person shooter's gaming inspiration also stems from the mid-'90s: the classic PC fragfest *Team Fortress*.

*The Club's* lackluster single-player mode is a series of repetitive beat-the-clock challenges, but the imaginative multiplayer-match options are well worth playing. I especially liked Hunter Hunted, which pits one player against the seven other combatants. Get killed, and it sets off a deadly game of tag—a welcome change from the typical deathmatch convention of

most shooters. Online play also flows smoothly, as I experienced no lag—other than constantly getting blasted to hell by Tyler. The weak single-player deserves a cap in the ass, but the poor-man's *Team Fortress* multiplayer left me surprisingly satisfied.

► **TYLER:** Although I crushed in multiplayer, I can't say it was all skill. Most of the shooting boiled down to an awkward close-range ballet. And in *Team Fortress*, at least the grenades work. *The Club's* throw-and-hope grenades are completely useless. Offline, however, the game's focus on urgent shooting sets the stage for a nostalgic triathlon of a fighting game's plot, a beat-em-up's generic thugs, and a light-gun game's choreographed ene-

mies. Luckily, concise, linear stages keep combat fatigue to a minimum.

► **GORD:** *The Club* certainly brings nothing innovative to the venerable shooter genre. The gameplay, bereft of inspiration beyond kill or be killed, panders to high-twitch robo-humans like Tyler but otherwise slobbers along repetitively. The enemies—a typical collection of lowlifes, crazed madmen, and the like—aren't nearly as intelligent as they are crazy numerous. And the weapons? Expect machine guns and grenades on the menu. Redemption comes in the form of the varied, lag-free online experience, an interesting mix of kill zones, and speaker-busting audio effects. That's just enough for ■ quick fix.



DS

## ADVANCE WARS: DAYS OF RUIN

■ Publisher: Nintendo ■ Developer: Intelligent Systems  
■ Players: 1-4 (2 online) ■ ESRB: Everyone 10+

THE VERDICTS  
(OUT OF 10)

SHOE  
8.5  
AVERAGE

RYAN  
8.0  
AVERAGE

MICHAEL  
6.5  
AVERAGE

**The Good:** Dark storyline, deeper strategy  
**The Bad:** Way too much (thankfully skip-pable) talky-talky  
**A Series First:** True online play!

### Nights of strategizing

► **SHOE:** Happy-go-pukey storylines make way for gritty, postapocalyptic death and destruction in the newest chapter in this turn-based strategy series. Tactically oriented units and gameplay also court a more sophisticated audience. For example, the Flare can reveal hidden units in the Fog of War, and the Rig (formerly the APC) can build temporary airports or naval ports. More significantly, Commanding Officers now join the fight on the battlefield, offering boosts for nearby troops.

The game loses a lot of features from *Advance Wars: Dual Strike*, however, including dual-screen matches, experience points, and Survival and Combat modes. Most of that stuff's just fluff, but the missing elements do

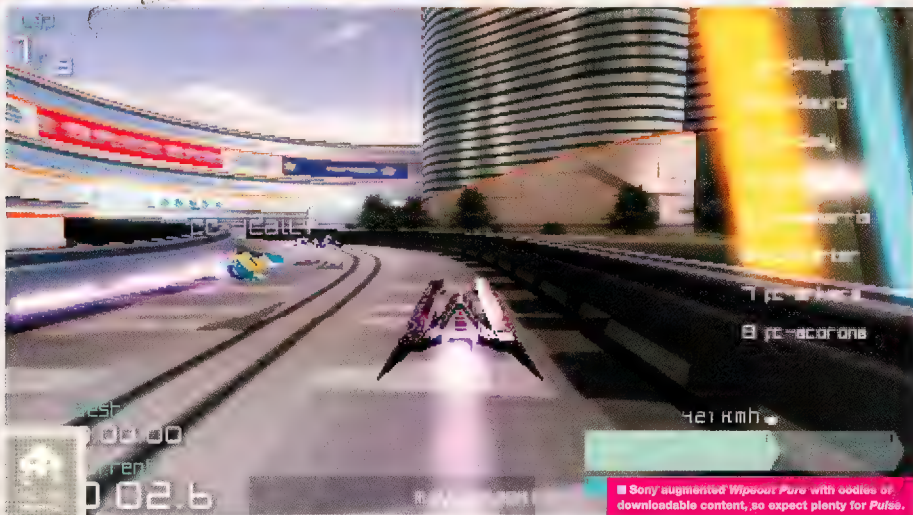
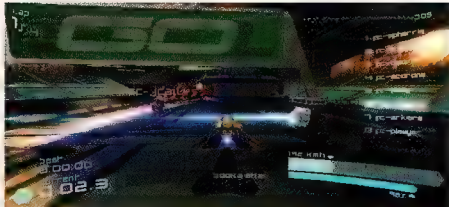
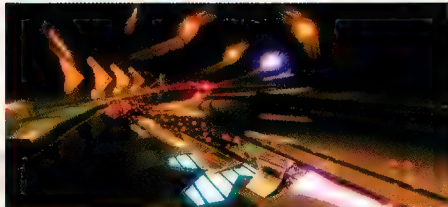
make this sequel feel less beefy.

But I'm happy to trade the fluff up for the new 1-on-1 online mode. It worked flawlessly for us and even includes lo-fi voice chat. Online play alone will make this cartridge a near-permanent fixture in my DS.

► **RYAN:** Hell, online play alone makes this the pinnacle of the *Advance Wars* series to date, even if the voice chat's about as clear as a conversation at a McDonald's drive-thru intercom. The new units—particularly those with midfield deployment options (I love the seaplanes)—add notable substance. Radial CO powers bug me, though; unless you make extensive use of your CO unit, moving and attacking in light swarms, the bar rarely fills up. But I'm

more than fine with the back-to-basics approach—good riddance to those dumb dual-screen battles!

► **MICHAEL:** Wow, war sure is depressing. Previous *Advance Wars* games had me chuckling along with the combat, while *Days of Ruin* has me questioning why I'm even fighting to begin with. Well, the answer to that question is obvious: War—while disheartening—is damn fun. I'm also stoked the developers chose to chuck the stuff that didn't work (game-breaking tag-team commander powers and annoying dual-screen battles) for a lean (but certainly not lacking) revamp. So don't be turned off by *Days of Ruin's* new apocalyptic aesthetics—you'll still find joy in the battle.



■ Sony augmented *Wipeout Pulse* with odds of downloadable content, so expect plenty for *Pulse*.

PSP

# WIPEOUT PULSE

■ Publisher: Sony CEA ■ Developer: Sony CEE (Studio Liverpool) ■ Players: 1-8 ■ ESRB: Everyone 10+



**The Good:** Awesome online play, plenty of customization

**The Bad:** Not very open to newcomers

**Makes You Want:** *Wipeout HD* on PS3

## Pulse-pounding racing at 140 bpm

➔ **SAM:** *Pulse* is the type of sequel that clearly caters to its fans—the enhancements you see here will have hardcore *Wipeout* players raving and casual players or newcomers wondering what the big deal is with this futuristic racer. Sony has slightly improved the visuals over its predecessor *Pure*'s and has tweaked the A.I. (the racers are much more aggressive here), but the gameplay remains largely the same. New to the series are the Mag Strips, which lock the vehicles to the track and allow for gravity-defying turns and loops, but that's about it.

*Pulse*'s career mode is perhaps its biggest achievement, with a progression system set up in grids that unlock as you go. Each event offers a different type of challenge—including

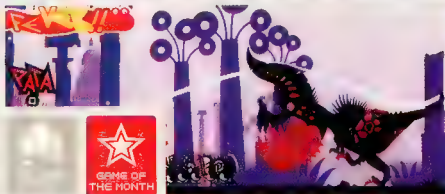
Elimination, where you have to take out your opponents, and Zone, where you have to last as long as you can before self-destructing. Once you add in the online play, rankings, downloadable ship skins, and stats galore, you'll find plenty to obsess over.

➔ **MILKMAN:** As one of those long-time fans of the *Wipeout* series, I'm thrilled that Sony has made *Pulse* harder, faster, and stronger than the excellent *Pure*. But is it better? I like the fact that *Pulse*'s career mode is more open-ended, but the overly brutal A.I. makes it almost impossible to concentrate on getting through the curves alive, let alone placing in the top three spots. Multiplayer events things out somewhat, but despite

*Pulse*'s cool online features, this game was made for the hardcore players.

➔ **SHANE:** Who are you people, and why in the hell are you casually dismissing *Pulse* as a "for fans only" indulgence? Not only is this the finest *Wipeout* since 1996's *XL*, but it's also the most feature-rich PSP game ever produced. Responsive control, creative track design, and chic graphics come standard-issue with this series, but the additions like online play (that ties into your PlayStation Network account to track progress), custom soundtracks, and a user-friendly ship editor significantly pimp out this futuristic ride. And you guys know that you can manually adjust the enemy A.I. before each race, right? 🚀





PSP

# PATAPON

■ Publisher: Sony CEA ■ Developer: Pyramid/Interlink ■ Players: 1 ■ ESRB: Everyone



**The Good:** Unique, challenging, and cheap (\$20).

**The Bad:** No pausing, vague objectives, forced backtracking.

**Headphones:** An absolute must.

Tap your foot to a tactical wonder

➔ **NICK:** *Patapon's* colorful, minimalist visuals may be reminiscent of the charming *LocoRoco*, with a concept that borrows elements of both the rhythm-action and real-time-strategy genres, but it still manages to never feel even remotely familiar. And that's just dynamite. By hammering out a regular stream of rhythms, simple tactical commands are issued to a small army of Patapon warriors—advance, attack, defend, etc.—who'll carry them out against legions of wild beasts, huge bosses, and villainous Zigapons.

Each level feels like a series of carefully plotted rock-paper-scissors matches, accented with various squad customizations you'll decide outside of combat. *Patapon* poses a serious challenge over its 15 hours (some

arcane objectives and explanations don't help), but the understated depth, astounding rewards (both literal and whimsical), and elegant difficulty curve stick with you to the end. Along with a beat you'll take to your grave....

➔ **SHANE:** *Patapon's* guilty of some serious bait-and-switch shenanigans, but I'm actually relieved that they're not merely a rhythm-action game. Jamming buttons along with the beat represents only a fraction of the game's true depth—beneath those trappings lurks a shockingly nuanced tactical RPG. The sophisticated silhouette visuals, funky tribal tunes, and immensely customizable Patapon troops combine to offer an endearing and addictive quest that's perfect for

enjoyment in bite-sized in chunks. The sequel's begging for some sort of multiplayer interaction, though.

➔ **JENNIFER:** This is the least-portable game I've ever played. The *slightest* distraction in the outside world will make you fail, and you can't pause the up-to-10-minute-long missions except by putting the PSP to sleep. Add to that the repetitive nature (to level up, you must play the same missions over and over), and *Patapon* becomes tough to love. But hey, art can't always be easy. The music here is simply fantastic and the gameplay so original and sophisticated that even with its faults, *Patapon* is as hypnotic as your troops' war chant. All serious gamers should check this one out. 🎮

# REVIEWS WRAP-UP

The games that were too late...or too little

## XB360

### LOST ODYSSEY

■ Publisher: Microsoft ■ ESRB: Teen

With its futuristic yet strangely gothic architecture and midriff-bearing, man-pretty hero, *Lost Odyssey* tries hard to capture the *Final Fantasy* look and feel (some of its creators worked on that legendary series). And while we didn't get the U.S. version by press time, we spent a lot of time with the import version and came away with the distinct feeling that we've played this game before. Blend levels and a dated-feeling combat system do the game's unique storyline a disservice.

➔ **BOTTOM LINE:** Don't expect a huge leap in role-playing game design here.



## Wii

### NO MORE HEROES

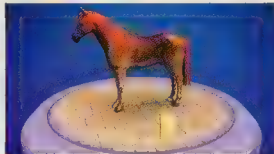
■ Publisher: Ubisoft ■ ESRB: Mature

The guys behind *Killer 7* waggle onto the Wii with a button-mashing assassin epic (which we played the import of). Testosterone-filled killer Travis Touchdown slices and suplexes his way through a mysterious assassins' organization to reach rank No. 1. Fighting through waves of identical thugs with motion-controlled finishing strikes and body slams never gets old. Unfortunately, the busywork missions between the stages do. Loads of style and ridiculous dialogue round out this mature escapade for the hardcore.

➔ **BOTTOM LINE:** This rollicking actioner does out the goods. Full review next issue.

### Electronic Nongaming Monthly

This month's nongame: Atari's creepy equestrian lovefest, *My Horse and Me*, for the Wii



**Why isn't it a game?** Well, to be fair, it features plenty of gamey elements—race times to shoot for, doodads to collect, things to...er, jump over. But without any real motivation or consequence for doing or not doing them (unless you're the world's biggest fan of unlocking horse-related minutiae), it's something we can't in good conscience give the traditional review treatment to.

**So...it is fun?** No! It's actually terrible. We fully believe concepts like these can work—people seem to like their tiny virtual dogs—but a bad game with motion

controls is a *baaad* game. As in riding your horse feels like maneuvering a broken tank, or perhaps a character from *Resident Evil 1*. And when you're up against timed goals that assume the controls aren't horrendous, even the intended audience of wee girls will projectile-vomit in frustration. The most fun I managed to squeeze out of it was spraying the horse in the butt with the cleaning hose for a solid minute and calling over coworkers to watch. Also, watching the sponge contour to the smooth horse body as you wash it down (what?!). Actually, scratch that; what I enjoyed the most

was the completely unrelated "spot the difference between two scenes" minigame I found buried in the menu.

**Bottom Line:** Even if you're someone who appreciates "all the excitement and fun of the equestrian life," cares about the official Fédération Équestre Internationale license, and enjoys rewarding gameplay features such as "time management," it's tough to imagine your time wouldn't be better spent looking at pictures and videos of horses online. You'd still probably have a easier time riding a real horse.

—Nick Suttner





DS

## APOLLO JUSTICE: ACE ATTORNEY

■ Publisher: Capcom ■ ESRB: Teen

If finding pleasure in this new courtroom saga by the makers of *Phoenix Wright* is a guilty offense, then lock us up. *Justice* incorporates everything that made the original *PW* trilogy a hit (engaging characters, plenty of twists, and knee-slapping dialogue), along with several DS-specific features. And since this is the first game in the series built specifically for the specialized Nintendo handheld, the production values are no longer cheap.

➔ **BOTTOM LINE:** We only had a chance to play the first case, but that was all we needed to experience to know that *Justice* is a worthy addition to the *PW* series.



PS3/XB360

## CONFLICT: DENIED OPS

■ Publisher: Eidos ■ ESRB: Mature

We were able to blast through several levels from a near-final version of *Conflict*, the newest iteration of last-gen's successful budget swath of titles. The basic quality may surprise you—satisfyingly destructible environments, novel hot-swapping dual-character control, visual polish—but a bizarrely counterintuitive control scheme, obnoxious use of the Mature rating (nonstop cussing), and a price point that's a long way from budget (\$50) take it right back off the radar.

➔ **BOTTOM LINE:** Considering the number of more interesting shooters out there, *Conflict* is a textbook example of too little too late.



Wii

## BOMBERMAN LAND

■ Publisher: Hudson ■ ESRB: Everyone

The fuse for this minigame-filled *Bomberman* outing was lit eons ago (it was originally shown off two years ago), and it's obvious the extra time might have saved it from bombing as hard as failed series reboot *Act Zero*. Like *Bomberman Land Touch!* for the DS, *Land* adds a very simple (but harmlessly entertaining) role-playing-game-like story mode that follows Bomberman's adventure in a fantasy theme park.

➔ **BOTTOM LINE:** *Land* has a handful of fun minigames and an armful of crappy ones. But, hey, at least you can still play the classic battle mode.

**Say what, EGM?**

Guess the games below based on their cover art and the school's school ID.

**1** "This is an interesting way to make a puzzle game. At first it seems like an action cart, but it's much more than that. The graphics are nothing to sneeze at. The puzzles are intelligent..."

**E** "Choppy, choppy, bad, bad... The many racing options and great soundtrack are welcomed. The Mode reaches a new level of realism. Watch out for that ATV! Ahhh!"

Address: 5000 University Boulevard • Winter Park, FL 32789  
Phone: 800.226.7625 • Fax: 407.839.2267  
Website: www.schooldesign.com

DEBBIES IN: COMPUTER ANIMATION > DIGITAL ARTS & DESIGN > ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS > FILM > GAME DEVELOPMENT > RESOURCES ARTS > SHOW PRODUCTION & TOURING



## SCHOOL OF GAME DEVELOPMENT

800.226.7625 | 3300 University Boulevard • Winter Park, FL 32789

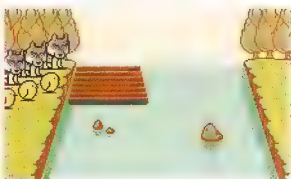
Financial aid available to those who qualify • Career development assistance • Accredited School ACC

ONE OF THE  
TOP FIVE  
GAME-DEGREE  
PROGRAMS  
IN THE WORLD

FULL SAIL  
Real World Education

Electronic Gaming Monthly

1 Year Free Trial



DS

## PROFESSOR LAYTON AND THE CURIOUS VILLAGE

■ Publisher: Nintendo ■ ESRB: Everyone

While the heart of *Professor Layton* is its brain-busting, stylus-heavy logic puzzles—with their solutions driving the story along—you navigate the incredibly detailed environments adventure game—style. The art is decidedly in the style of French animation (think *The Triplets of Belleville*), and the score—tinkling glockenspiel on top of accordion—gives the game a surprisingly haunting, even melancholy atmosphere.

➔ **BOTTOM LINE:** We didn't get a chance to play the U.S. release, but the Japanese import we got our hands on is so good, it would be tough to mess it up in translation.



DS/PSP

## DUNGEON EXPLORER: WARRIORS OF ANCIENT ARTS





■ Publisher: Hudson ■ ESRB: E10+ (DS)/Teen (PSP)

*Dungeon Explorer* (TG16) was a tough but generally fun *Gauntlet* rip-off; the portable remakes are more like *Diablo*, trading brisk, accessible gameplay for slow-paced experience-point grinding and character-building. Too slow—and dull 3D graphics make things even pokier. Not to mention all the uninteresting story sequences.

➔ **BOTTOM LINE:** "Explore" rhymes with "bore" for a reason, it seems. Both the DS and PSP have better role-playing game offerings, so stick to the original *Dungeon Explorer* on Virtual Console. It's cheaper and more entertaining.

# THE SALES CHART

Amazon.com's Top 20 for Dec/Jan

#	Name	Platform	EGM Scores
1	Super Mario Galaxy	Wii	9.5 10 10
2	Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	XB360	9.5 8.5 9.5
3	Wii Play (with Wii Remote)	Wii	4.5 6.0 5.0
4	Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes ■ Day!	DS	8.0 7.0 6.0
5	Assassin's Creed	XB360	7.0 6.0 4.5
	 One of the coolest (and most confusing) parts of <i>Assassin's Creed</i> is its story. If you wanna know more, the upcoming DS game is a prequel.		
6	Rock Band Special Edition	XB360	9.0 9.5 9.0
	 Remember, the music doesn't stop with the disc. Harmonix has been updating both Xbox Live and the PlayStation Network with plenty of new hits.		
7	Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games	Wii	6.0 7.0 6.0
8	Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	PS3	9.5 8.5 9.5
9	Halo 3	XB360	10 10 9.0
10	The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	DS	8.0 9.0 9.0
11	New Super Mario Bros.	DS	9.5 10 8.0
12	Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day!	DS	8.5 9.0 9.5
13	Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock	PS2	Not Reviewed
14	Mass Effect	XB360	9.0 9.5 9.0
	 Political site Townhall.com thinks <i>Mass Effect</i> is an interactive porno. Y'know, when we write articles, we like to do research. These guys should really try it.		
15	High School Musical: Sing It! Bundle with Mic	Wii	Not Reviewed
16	Dance Dance Revolution: Hottest Party Bundle	Wii	Not Reviewed
17	Carnival Games	Wii	Not Reviewed
18	Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock Bundle	Wii	Not Reviewed
	 The Wii version of <i>GH3</i> had some sound problems, so Activision has set up a replacement-disc program to appease all the disappointed rockers.		
19	Mario Kart DS	DS	9.0 8.5 8.5
20	Mario Party DS	DS	6.5 6.5 6.5





I know this guy  
on my block.  
Every time I see him  
he asks me to get high.  
And every time I  
tell him that

**I'm not into that.**

He says all the  
kids are doing it.  
If that's true,  
then why can't he find  
someone else to  
do it with?



[abovetheinfluence.com](http://abovetheinfluence.com)

# GAME OVER

> press continue for crappy accolades, exotic imports, and intergalactic escapades

> SEANBABY'S REST OF  
THE CRAP PRESENTS

## EGM's Sixth Annual Tobias Bruckner Memorial Awards

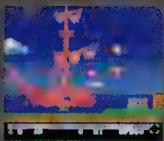
**THE TOBIAS BRUCKNER AWARDS** are an annual event honoring the year's most impressive failures in videogaming. Before we begin, let's take a look at the history of Tobias Bruckner. Born in 2002 in a game called *Turok: Evolution*, Tobias was a Southern gentleman who joined the dinosaur cavalry and issued himself orders to hold position and wait for Turok to arrive. Only he and God know how he became half-robot or how his pre-Civil War Southern culture perpetuated in a world of dinosaur-head mounted lasers, but they both agree that Tobias set the very concept of ideas back 50 years.

Some say Tobias was born during a dark age of gaming following several Todd McFarlane projects. Todd McFarlane, of course, was the eccentric conceptualist who created games by brooding for days about darkness and man's place in it before bursting into 10 furious seconds of character design. "What about a pirate?! With a peg leg and eyepatch! Done! And a bat with a...a pants!" Because of this, soon the character-design bar was towered so far that Tobias Bruckner managed to crawl out of someone's brain. And following that, designers got so lazy that characters were not even designed until several months after the release of the game. It's why the original *Tomb Raider* was a four-foot breast racing against spiders and Spartans in a monastery cave.



TOBIAS BRUCKNER  
MEMORIAL AWARDS





PAGE  
**93**  
Retro: Virtual  
Console hits  
from abroad



PAGE  
**94**  
Geek and  
Enjoy: In-  
sider speaks



PAGE  
**97**  
Comic: Hsu  
& Chan bring  
the funny

## The In Your Face, MOM Award



If you eliminat[ed] literally millions of more important things, one could say that 2007 was the year of the videogame-school commercial. No longer content

to tantalize us with dreams of business management or a degree in gun repair, daytime TV now promises us that we can find a career out of video games. Little did we know that the design process was two excit[ed] men on a break-room couch whose boss pops in to say, "Hurry up and tighten the graphics on that exciting diversion!"

**Videogame Career Man 1:** "Sure, boss! We decided to use the level 1 sound effect here!!"

**Videogame Career Man 2:** "Can you believe we get paid to do this? I mean, earlier today I thought this building was the post office!"

**Videogame Career Man 1:** "You think that's crazy? I'm designing a rendered cinematic with a PlayStation One controller! And my major was hamster repair!"



ACHIEVEMENT UNLOCKED  
Oh God... what have I achieved?

## The I Have Achieved... Oh, God... What Have I Achieved? Award of Achievement

Years ago, we measured success in videogames by high scores. When games moved to the home, gamers were forced to measure success using water displacement. Then the Xbox 360 invented the Achievements. Now, they're everywhere: A few PlayStation 3 games have borrowed the concept, and even Wii's *Metroid Prime 3* publicly celebrates your meaningless in-game success. So long, existential crisis! I hope cell phones start doing it next.

**Achievement unlocked:** "2nd Base" — Engage in anything-on-genital contact with a person at this phone number.

**Achievement unlocked:** "You Want Free Pot Sticker?" — Order Mongolian Beef 15 times from this number.

**Achievement unlocked:** "Who the Hell Is Gina?" — Have a "2nd Base" Achievement from this number discovered by your girlfriend.

## The Uwe Boll Award for Continued Uwe-Bollence

Uwe Boll continued to turn videogames into movies, and in 2007 he brought us *BloodRayne 2* and *Postal*. Check your local nothings for showtimes. There's a longish story about how we almost fought, and when it fell through I responded by calling him names and critically crushing every terrible film he's made. I approached him at the premiere party of *Postal*, since after what I said about him, giving him the chance to punch me was the right thing to do. Instead, he was very friendly and eager to respond to most of what I said in the article as if my jokes were actual questions instead of, you know, jokes. Some of that could have been my fault by not labeling the irony or sarcasm properly, but as the subject turned to the topic of the night, *Postal*, he told me that the scene he wrote where Verne Troyer's ass is sexually assaulted by hundreds of CGI monkeys was his "Monty Python moment." He continued, "You know, over zee top." I think I now begrudgingly respect the balls it takes to say something like that. I sure wouldn't. Make no mistake about it, his movies are impossibly bad, but watch how when describing it on paper, *Postal* is crazy awesome (spoiler, as if that would ever affect you): In the final scene, the hero's morbidly obese wife is having sex with two men dressed as American Gladiators, who all explode. And when her fat hand lands on his car, he explodes through the broken windshield and, for no reason, feeds it to his dog. I think I love Uwe Boll?



Uwe Boll, Seanbaby, and his girlfriend discuss comedy at the premiere of *Postal*.

## The Start, A, B, X, Y, B, R, Start, Start, Start! There's No Way to Skip This?! Award



*Super Mario Galaxy* surprised no one with either its greatness or its fantasticsness. However, many people had no idea that their videogame would be surrounded by so much talking. Here you go, new generation of casual Wii gamers! Welcome to our world of unskippable cut-

scenes. Publishers should really start putting labels on their games to warn consumers what the percentage of pure videogame is inside. Like fruit juice does. Or like McDonald's used to until we realized that "Contains 25 percent human foot" was exactly what it sounded like. Forcing a movie into a game is so clumsy and counterproductive. I mean, try thinking about it from the other media's point of view. Can you imagine a movie pausing and telling you that you can't see Meryl Streep cry until Karnov can defeat the Guardians of Madison County? But before we get back to our feature, how much would you at home pay for this deluxe set of stainless steel knives? Select your vehicle and find out by causing \$1,875,000 worth of damage to Suzanne Somers and special guest Connie Francis!

### The Unearthed Horror Award



For people with properly functioning senses of rad, the Wii Virtual Console is a marvel of modern entertainment. Before it existed, getting all these amazing classic games in one place would have taken a PC and an Internet search at any time after 1996! But of all the great titles

available for the Virtual Console, one stands out: *China Warrior*. It's the story of a child's giant drawing of Bruce Lee fighting against potatoes. You're probably wondering why it's called *China Warrior*, and not *Chinese Warrior* or even *Bruce Lee Man vs. Potato*. And the reason is simple: Some people are much stupider than others.

### The Press Start to Skip: Most Unread Game Award

*Puzzle Quest* is an addictive RPG where battles are represented in puzzle form. Being sympathetic to the game's writer, making sense of a scene where an Elf and a giant scorpion sit down and decide their fate with a game of *Bejeweled* is like handing someone a bucket of fish and telling them to invent a new number. So it's understandable that they failed. What's strange is how boringly they did it. I think *Puzzle Quest* uses the same writers as the phone book. These a\*\*holes couldn't write a stop sign. Luckily, some progressive game-development genius added an option to skip these scenes, none of which are ever more than three letters away from, "A monster appears! Its banter teaches you more about the main sorcerer's castle or cavern. You respond with *Bejeweled*. Begin!"

### The Stagnant Technology Award



When the makers of *Mass Effect* imagined the future, they imagined political intrigue between alien races, instant travel between distant star systems, and elevators that haven't increased in speed since 1968. For every one tough decision you make in this epic space drama, you spend 34

minutes waiting for your team to ride the epic space elevator. To make matters worse, in the main area there are magical tanning beds lying around that can warp you anywhere you want to go—so we know these people have faster-than-elevator technology. But you somehow manage to always be in parts of the universe equipped with WWII-era elevators.

"Shepard to Joker: The people of Ferros are going to have to be happy with spikes through their chest cavities. \*ding!\* I'm in the elevator, and this dick UPS guy just got in and hit every single button. \*ding!\* Oh, Jesus—he heard me, and now he's going on and on about how he's just trying to make a living. \*ding!\* Go ahead and park the spaceship; we're going to be here awhile. \*ding!\*"

### The Least Wanted or Surprising Sequel Award

*Fuzion Frenzy 2* — Thanks a lot, asses. Now I can catch up on my unhappiness.



### The Forsooth, 'Twas You Who Killed My Sister Award for Excellence in Theatrics

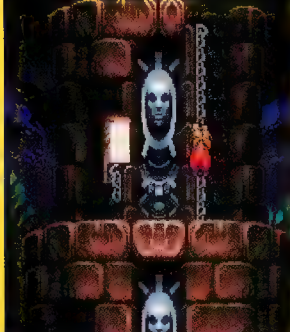
Did anyone play *Two Worlds*? It was this insane *Oblivion* rip-off made by Polish people and set in a world based on other games based on clichés. With the Renaissance Faïre-inspired writing and voice acting sucking in all directions, the cut-scenes sound like a beginner's class exercise from a *Dungeons & Dragons* as a Second Language course. To the creative team's credit, I think having the main character respond to the discovery of his sister's murderer with robotic disinterest was a unique and daring approach. "Hark, 'tis my wife's rapist approacheth. Hold, what's this fortune????!! A silver piece shines at mine feet! And with that, I shall depart and fare thee well, friend!"

### The Desperate Gamble That We're All Idiots Award

Data Design Interactive released four budget games late last year: *Ninjabread Man*, *Anubis II*, *Rock 'n' Roll Adventures*, and *Billy the Wizard*. Actually, that's only two games if you consider that *Ninjabread Man*, *Anubis II*, and *Rock 'n' Roll Adventures* are the exact same game with modified graphics. I'm not even exaggerating. If that weren't criminal enough, they put out a press release stating that within three days, two of them were sold out! When this claim was double-checked with eyeballs near retail shelves, many people noticed an error in the data. No one can say for certain how many copies were sold, only that it was a much smaller number than "all." Keep in mind that this game they repainted three different ways and then lied about was a broken mess to begin with. Plus, one of them is named *Rock 'n' Roll Adventures*. What are they, 5 years old? And in 1972? Tobias Bruckner, you might be off the hook. I think next year, this could be called The Data Design Interactive Awards: *Rock 'n' Roll Adventures*.







RETRONAUTS PRESENTS

# Matters of Import

Dated Japanese games that deserve American makeovers *By Jeremy Parish*



Above (clockwise from bottom left): *Mother*, *Dracula X: Rondo of Blood*, *Parodius Da!*, *Terranigma*



To check out more retro jabber-jabber, set your browser to [bonusstage.1UP.com](http://bonusstage.1UP.com) to watch 1UP's video podcast.

**THE WII'S VIRTUAL CONSOLE SERVICE HAS DONE** what we had longed for but dared not hope: It's brought great games to America for the first time. *Sin and Punishment* (N64) and *Super Mario Bros.: The Lost Levels* (NES) are a good start, but we'd like to see Nintendo go full-tilt and really commit to making VC an import-lover's wonderland with the following must-have classics.

## Famicom (aka NES)

**Mother:** The predecessor to the Super Nintendo role-playing game classic *Earthbound* is dated, but still has a strong fan base—and since Nintendo actually translated it for U.S. release back in the day, the only thing keeping *Mother* from a Virtual Console release is sheer spite.

**Rekka: Summer Carnival:** One of the rarest and most expensive games ever, brilliant shooter *Rekka* did things with the system's humble 8-bit hardware that most people never thought possible.

## PC Engine (aka TurboGrafx-16)

**Dracula X: Rondo of Blood:** Konami finally graced us with this long-awaited *Castlevania* masterpiece with PSP's *Dracula X Chronicles*, but the collection's direct port? Well, it sucks, to put it kindly.

This classic deserves nothing less than a high-fidelity VC reissue.

**Parodius Da!:** We've all played *Gradius*, but Konami remains curiously reluctant to bring its in-house *Gradius* satire *Parodius Da!* to America. We can't imagine why; the series is packed with top-notch shooting and tons of customization. And also Vegas dancing girls the size of skyscrapers. Sounds like a winner to us.

## Mega Drive (aka Genesis)

**Monster World IV:** A near relation to *Adventure Island* (it's a complicated lineage), *Monster World IV* is a gorgeous, engrossing adventure game in the *Zelda II* mold. Why a game this good never came to America is a mystery, but there's no time like the present to rectify the sins of the past.

**Pulseman:** Technically speaking, *Pulseman* (an early action game by *Pokémon* creator Game Freak) wasn't import-only; it was released for the Sega Channel, way back when. But it never saw a retail version, and the English version is, frankly, impossible to acquire legally. Happily, this one seems like a question of "when," not "if."

## Super Famicom (aka Super NES)

**Terranigma:** Enix's follow-up to *Soul*

*Blazer* and *Illusion of Gaia* should be a snap to bring over—it's a text-heavy game, yeah, but since it was translated for a European release the only thing holding it back from the eager American audience is Enix's general cussedness.

**Umihara Kawase:** If you dig the swinging hijinks of *Bionic Commando*, then *Umihara Kawase* is the game for you. This obscure title features rather impressive grappling physics and dozens of superhard (and surreal) stages to master.

## Nintendo 64

**Bakuretsu Muteki Bangai-O:** Treasure's unconventional shooter *Bangai-O* eventually made its way to America on the Sega Dreamcast, but it's a little bit hard to find these days—so why not give us the original N64 version? They wouldn't even need to change the Japanese text; it's not like the English translation made any sense.

**Doshin the Giant:** A quirky adventure similar to *Black & White* (PC), *Doshin* put players in the role of a friendly giant whose actions affect the villagers of a tiny island, who in turn affect the giant's own nature. The GameCube remake was translated for Europe, so it shouldn't be hard to bring it over here. 🎮

# Space Chase

Scanning the galaxy for intelligent clues

By Michael Donohoe

Mudron

Set your phasers to find—hidden inside this illustration of a crazy intergalactic cantina are 20 references to space-themed videogames. Some are easy to discover, while others will stretch your wits to the outer limits. So if you want to find 'em all, you're really going to have to comb over this drawing.



**How it works:** Peruse the photo to discover hints that represent specific videogame titles. For example, the picture above of a dude getting invaded by invaders is, yep, *Space Invaders*. Now go find the rest!



**EGM Extras:** Think you found all the games? Head over to [EGM.1UP.com](http://EGM.1UP.com) to get the solution.









# P.S.: III

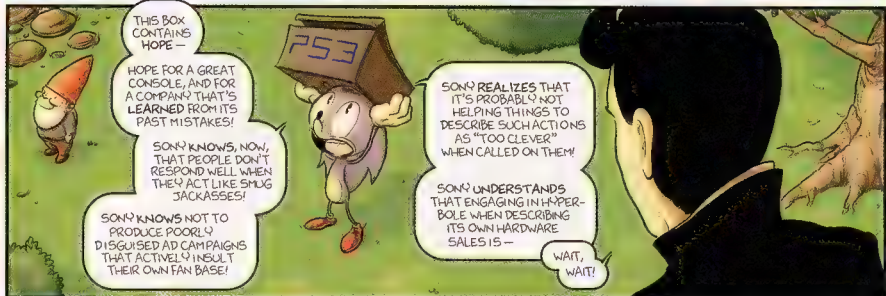
By Jeremy "Norm" Scott



DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S IN THIS BOX?

KNOWING YOU, IT'S EITHER A PLAYSTATION 3 OR A DEAD FROG

DON'T OPEN THAT IN THE HOUSE



THIS BOX CONTAINS HOPE —

HOPE FOR A GREAT CONSOLE, AND FOR A COMPANY THAT'S LEARNED FROM ITS PAST MISTAKES!

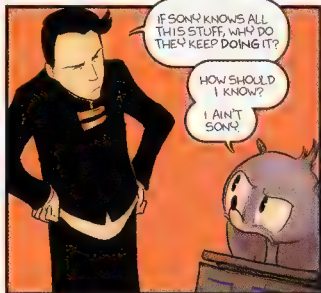
SONY KNOWS, NOW, THAT PEOPLE DON'T RESPOND WELL WHEN THEY ACT LIKE SHUG JACKASSES!

SONY KNOWS NOT TO PRODUCE POORLY DISGUISED AD CAMPAIGNS THAT ACTIVELY INSULT THEIR OWN FAN BASE!

SONY REALIZES THAT IT'S PROBABLY NOT HELPING THINGS TO DESCRIBE SUCH ACTIONS AS "TOO CLEVER" WHEN CALLED ON THEM!

SONY UNDERSTANDS THAT ENGAGING IN HYPERBOLIC WHEN DESCRIBING ITS OWN HARDWARE SALES IS —

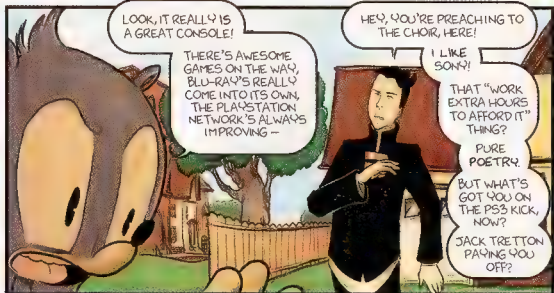
WAIT, WAIT!



IF SONY KNOWS ALL THIS STUFF, WHY DO THEY KEEP DOING IT?

HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

I AIN'T SONY!



LOOK, IT REALLY IS A GREAT CONSOLE!

THERE'S AWESOME GAMES ON THE WAY, BLU-RAY'S REALLY COME INTO ITS OWN, THE PLAYSTATION NETWORK'S ALWAYS IMPROVING —

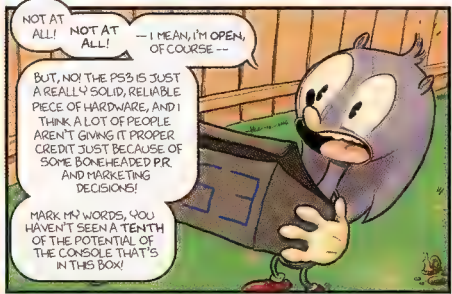
HEY, YOU'RE PREACHING TO THE CHOR, HERE!

I LIKE SONY!

THAT "WORK EXTRA HOURS TO AFFORD IT" THING? PURE POETRY.

BUT WHAT'S GOT YOU ON THE PS3 KICK, NOW?

JACK TRETTON PAYING YOU OFF?



NOT AT ALL! NOT AT ALL!

— I MEAN, I'M OPEN, OF COURSE —

BUT, NO! THE PS3 IS JUST A REALLY SOLID, RELIABLE PIECE OF HARDWARE, AND I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE AREN'T GIVING IT PROPER CREDIT JUST BECAUSE OF SOME BONE-HEADED PR AND MARKETING DECISIONS!

MARK MY WORDS, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN A TENTH OF THE POTENTIAL OF THE CONSOLE THAT'S IN THIS BOX!



THERE'S NOTHING IN THIS BOX.

WELL... YEAH, I STILL DON'T HAVE FOUR HUNDRED BUCKS TO BUY ONE.

FIGURE MY TURBO-GRAPH'LL LAST A COUPLE MORE YEARS.

END

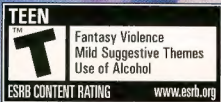


NEW ERA. NEW SWORD.

# DRAGON QUEST

# SWORDS

The Masked Queen  
and the Tower of Mirrors



Wii

SQUARE ENIX





Available  
February 26

## HOLD YOUR OWN.

Be the hero. Slash, parry and blast your way through a land filled with trademark DRAGON QUEST® foes using real-time sword action. Raise your sword, prove your worth and return order to your kingdom.

[www.square-enix.com](http://www.square-enix.com)

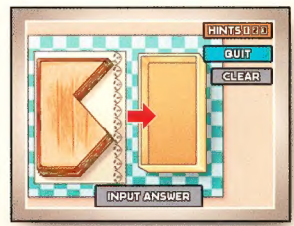
© 2007, 2008 ARMOR PROJECT/BIRD STUDIO/SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. All Rights Reserved. DRAGON QUEST, DRAGON QUEST SWORDS, THE MASKED QUEEN AND THE TOWER OF MIRRORS, THE MASKED QUEEN AND THE TOWER OF MIRRORS logo, SQUARE ENIX, and the SQUARE ENIX logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of Square Enix Co., Ltd. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.





Using scraps left over from your breakfast, you've managed to cobble together a rather oddly shaped sandwich.

How many times must you cut the sandwich in order to make it fit neatly in the container?



NINTENDO DS

Text keyword "Layton" to 49737 for the answer and a free wallpaper, or visit [ProfessorLaytonDS.com](http://ProfessorLaytonDS.com) to explore this unique Nintendo DS adventure filled with riddles, puzzles and hidden treasure.



Standard text message rates apply.  
 © 2007 LEVEL-5 Inc. TM, © the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection logo and the Nintendo DS logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2008 Nintendo.

PROFESSOR LAYTON  
 and the  
**CURIOUS VILLAGE.**  
 Solve your way in.



Made with love by

# RETROMAGS

Our goal is to preserve classic video game magazines so that they are not lost permanently.

People interested in helping out in any capacity, please visit us at [retromags.com](http://retromags.com).

No profit is made from these scans, nor do we offer anything available from the publishers themselves.

If you come across anyone selling releases from this site, please do not support them and do let us know.

Thank you!