

Free NAG supplement (not to be sold separately)

THE ONLY RESOURCE YOU'LL NEED FOR EVERYTHING XBOX 360

360

October 2006
Issue 1

INSIDER

DEAD RISING™

It's a zombie holocaust and everyone's invited

MEGA PREVIEW

BROTHERS IN ARMS

We're on the highway to Hell

INSIDE! 360 LOCAL LAUNCH FOLLOWER OF FASHION
SAINTS ROW 360 NEWS ESSENTIAL PERIPHERALS



XBOX 360

XBOX 360... For the Fans



Worth R399 each

SAVE R500

XBOX360 Console Bundle

Includes: Console, internal 20GB Hard Drive, wireless controller,

PLUS two Xbox 360 games

R3 999

(Need For Speed Most Wanted and Burnout Revenge)

 Time Shift	 Perfect Dark Zero	 Call of Duty 2	 Top Spin 2
 Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter	 Quake 4	 Oblivion	 Kameo Elements of Power
 PGR 3	 Saints Row	 Moto GP 06	 Ninety-Nine Nights
 Just Cause	 Condemned	 Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	 Lord Of The Rings Battle For Middle-Earth II
 Table Tennis	 Tomb Raider Legend	 Superman Returns	 Enchanted Arms
 Dead Or Alive 4	 X The Official Game	 Splinter Cell Double Agent	 Dead Rising

ACCESSORIES

Control



Wireless Controller



Wired Controller



Universal Media Remote

Store



Memory Unit (64MB)



Hard drive (20GB)

JOHANNESBURG - Fourways: 011 467 1115 • Cresta: 011 476 4142 • Hyde Park: 011 325 4237 • East Rand: 011 823 3642 • Clearwater: 011 675 3648 • Lenasia: 011 852 3231
 PRETORIA - Atterbury: 012 991 6626 • Menlyn: 012 368 1080 • DURBAN - Pavilion: 031 265 1600 • MPUMALANGA - Nelspruit: 013 752 4524

WESTERN CAPE - Cavendish: 021 683 1810 • Century City: 021 551 4647 • Willowbridge: 021 914 0760 • Worcester: 023 342 1502 • NORTH WEST - Rustenburg: Opening Soon

Shop online at www.lookandlisten.co.za • Open 'til 10.30pm, everyday



Football Manager 2007



Full Auto



Test Drive Unlimited



Star Wars II
The Original Trilogy



Tiger Woods
PGA Tour 06



FIFA 06



Fight Night Round 3



The Godfather



Amped 3



Chrome Hounds



Smackdown vs Raw
2007



Hitman
Blood Money



Need For Speed
Most Wanted



Pro Evolution
Soccer 6



Burnout Revenge



Tiger Woods
PGA Tour 07



Gun



King Kong



Open Season



Prey



Need For
Speed Carbon

COMING
SOON



Battlefield
2

COMING
SOON



Gears Of
War

COMING
SOON



Crack Down

COMING
SOON

XBOX 360 Core Console

Includes:
Wired controller,
no hard drive

R2 799

[XBox 360 Console
also available with
20GB Hard Drive and
wireless controller
for R3 699]



Charge



Rechargeable Battery Pack



Play & Charge Kit

Connect



Component
HD AV Cable



VGA AV Cable

DVD • CD • GAMES • MP3 • ACCESSORIES

Look & Listen - NAG's preferred gaming retailer



Prices and availability subject to change at distributors discretion or similar. While stocks last. E&OE.



DASHBOARD

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?



8

THE BUZZ: News and 360 views from around the planet

10

FEATURE: 360 launches in South Africa

It's here, oh finally, it is here. We take a look at what's available now that the Xbox 360 has come to sunny South Africa - just in time for summer.

14

FEATURE: Dedicated Follower of Fashion

Make yourself feel pretty and follow the fashion. Even your 360 can get a new face.



22

PREVIEW: Brother's in Arms: Hell's Highway

Operation Market Garden may sound like a nice stroll in the park, but in reality, it left 18,000 Allied soldiers dead.

28

PREVIEW: Dead Rising

You can get almost anything at the mall these days, even zombie holocausts where you must use lawnmowers to survive.

32

PREVIEW: Saints Row

Grand Theft Auto in everything but name, Saints Row may just unseat GTA from its throne.



36

HARDWARE:

Peripherals for purchase and fun.

38

OPINION: The Class of 360

James Francis talks about Core vs. Premium, and whose dad would beat up whom.



**SUBSCRIBE
TO NAG FOR
R380 &
SAVE 20%**

Full Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Payment Method:

Bank deposit Cheque Postal order

Age: _____

Home Tel: _____

Cellular: _____

E-mail: _____

Bank Account details:
(use these details when depositing money into our bank account)

Tide Media - Nedbank Fourways
Account Number: 1684 112 125
Branch Code: 168 405

Once you have paid the money into our account, fax us a copy of the subscription form plus the bank deposit slip to [011] 704-4120
no deposit slip = no subscription.

Please make cheques and postal orders out to Tide Media and then post the completed form to 'NAG Subscription Department, P O Box 237 Olivedale 2158

For further information please contact the subscription office on [011] 704-2679 from 09h00 - 15h00, e-mail subs@nag.co.za or fax [011] 704 - 4120

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

EDITOR SPEAK

AND HE SAID, "LET THERE BE RING OF LIGHT"

Welcome! If you've reached us by purchasing an Xbox 360, well done and make yourself at home. If you're reading this because you found this magazine bagged with *NAG*, you can expect to find one bundled with *NAG* every month from now on.

The Xbox 360 has hit South Africa - that much is clear. The depth of the impact and its effects will take a while to truly surface in any meaningful way, but that doesn't stop people from speculating. The presumption thus far points to a positive outcome. The Xbox 360 will carve out some territory for itself, and become a stern contender against the current reigning (and mostly uncontested) console king.

In the meantime, *360 Insider* will be here to make sure you know what's to know. We'll keep you in the loop regarding all things Xbox 360 in South Africa, along with international features, previews and more. It's going to be a wild ride. The Xbox 360 already has incredible international momentum from having left the starting gates so early, and that momentum is sure to carry over a little into our neck of the woods. What this means to you, the consumer, is that you can expect to see proper support from the retailers (if they're smart), as well as continued support and enthusiasm from Microsoft itself.

So, hit that Ring of Light on your 360 and get ready. The fun's about to start!

Miktar Dracon
Editor



360 INSIDER

publisher
tide media

managing editor
michael james
ed@nag.co.za
+27 83 409 8220

editor
miktar dracon
miktar@nag.co.za

assistant editor
lauren das neves
lauren@nag.co.za

copy editor
nati de jager

contributors
matt handrahan
james francis
ryan king
jon denton

group sales and marketing manager
len nery | len@nag.co.za
+27 84 594 9909

advertising sales
jacqui jacobs | jacqui@nag.co.za
+27 82 778 8439
dave gore | dave@nag.co.za
+27 82 829 1392
cheryl bassett | cheryl@nag.co.za
+27 72 322 9875

art director
chris bistline

designer
chris savides

junior designer
emma gernetzky

office assistant
paul ndebele

360 Insider
p o box 237
olivedale
2158
south africa
tel +27 11 704 2679
fax +27 11 704 4120

internet
www.nag.co.za

printing
print ability
+27 11 236 3800

distribution
distributed free with *NAG* magazine

This magazine includes material from X360 magazine published under licence from Imagine Publishing Limited. All rights in the licensed material, including the name X360, belong to Imagine Publishing Limited and it may not be reproduced, whether in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of Imagine Publishing Limited.
© 2006 Imagine Publishing Limited



Copyright 2006 Tide Media. All rights reserved. No article or picture in this magazine may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form whatsoever without the express written consent of the Publisher. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Publisher or the Editors. All Trademarks and Registered Trademarks are the sole property of their respective owners.



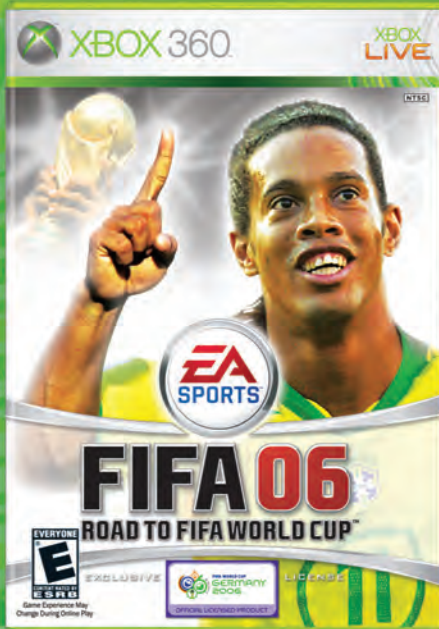
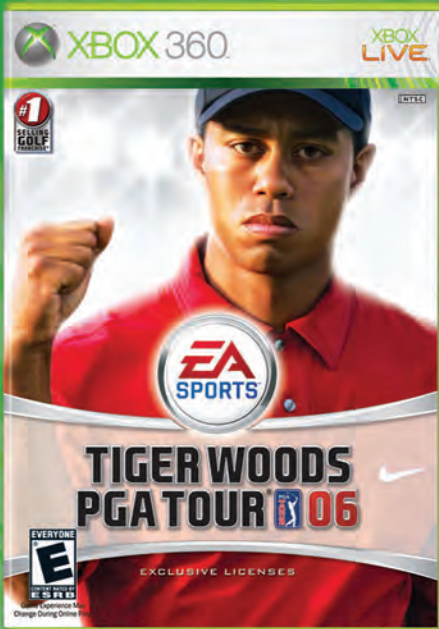
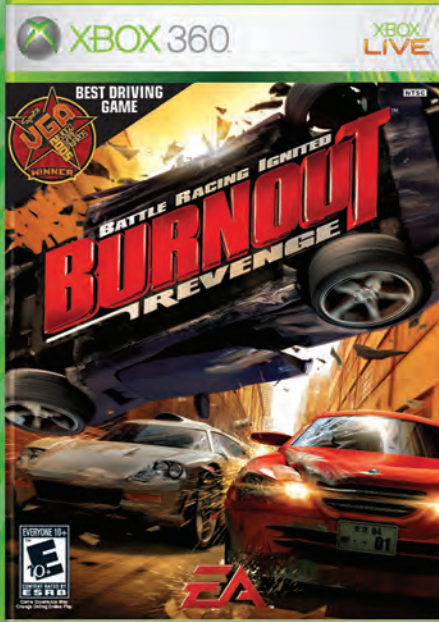
www.eaplay.co.za

2 New ToyZone Stores

OPENING SOON

in Gauteng!

watch press
for details...



XBOX 360

Fourways Branch:

Address: Shop no. 1, Fourways View,
cnr Witkoppen and Cedar Road.
Tel: (011) 467 9526/527/529
E-mail: info@toyzone.co.za

Boksburg Branch:

Address: Shop no. 18, East Rand
Value Mall, Rietfontein Road.
Tel: (011) 823 3000/700/800
E-mail: info@toyzone.co.za

Experience a MEGASTORE with an ATTITUDE.

TOY ZONE

...Get Lost!

A member of the Baby City group



RUMOUR CENTRAL

DEVIL MAY CRY 4 COMING TO 360?

Capcom's zombielicious survival/horror/action sandbox *Dead Rising* has certainly become one of the most anticipated titles for the 360. Reports from Japanese analysts mention that the success of *Dead Rising* may prompt Capcom to remove the PS3-exclusivity for other titles, such as *Devil May Cry 4*.

This shift in strategy is currently pure speculation, though it is worth noting that Capcom is currently developing *Lost Planet: Extreme Conditions* for the Xbox 360 as well as *Resident Evil 5* (which also has a PlayStation 3 incarnation). We'll have more news on this as/when it develops.

NO GAMES PLANNED FOR HD DVD

There has been a lot of speculation surrounding the DVD peripheral for the Xbox 360, though Microsoft was quick to speak out against the notion of 360 games appearing on HD DVD.

John Porcaro, group manager of online marketing communications for Microsoft, announced:

"I'm seeing lots of speculation about our upcoming HD DVD Player, and whether we have plans to publish HD DVD games. The answer is no. At this point, we haven't seen anything to suggest that next-gen DVD formats offer a better game experience than current DVD. What we do know is that these formats will bring added cost to game developers, disc manufacturing, and could even result in added costs and longer load times for the consumer, which would negatively impact the game experience."

Sony, with its Blu-ray drive in the PlayStation 3, obviously has other plans.

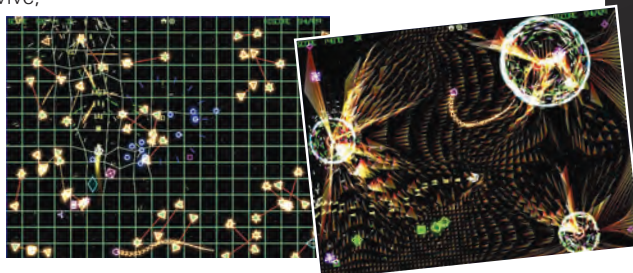
ATTACK OF THE CLONES

THIS IS NOT GEOMETRY WARS

The developers of the obscenely successful Xbox Live Arcade release *Geometry Wars: Retro Evolved* have enacted a cease-and-desist against *Grid Wars*. A free clone of (but not exactly the same as) *Geometry Wars: Retro Evolved*, Bizzard Creations feels that *Grid Wars* is taking away sales from its creation. In a recent press release, Bizzard Creations elaborated on its actions.

"As a relatively small company, with our roots in 'back bedroom' coding, we have always wholeheartedly supported the 'indie' games development community. But in order for this industry and community to continue to survive, we feel originality must be allowed to prevail. The fact is that *Geometry Wars: Retro Evolved* is our intellectual property. The game was created as an entirely original product, and as a package, bears no relevant similarity to

any pre-existing title. It is not trying to 'pass itself off' as any other game. And it is because it is an original IP that it has won awards. Just because it uses scoring, vector graphics, geometric shapes, a grid, or a particular control method, does not make it any less of an original IP, nor deem it to be 'open source'. What we are requesting is that if anyone is inspired by the simplicity and elegance of our game, can they please use their talents to originate their own ideas and not produce replicas that simply imitate and could be passed off as, and [be] confused with, the original."



POWER TO THE PEOPLE

360 DEVELOPMENT FOR EVERYONE

Anyone can develop games for the Xbox 360, thanks to XNA Game Studio Express. Available for free to anyone with Windows XP, the set of tools will allow anyone to develop for the next-generation console. To develop, test and share the games, however, you'll have to join a 'creator's club' at an annual subscription free of \$99.

XNA Game Studio Express is an integrated, seamless development environment based on Visual Studio Express and .NET. With it, you can also develop Windows XP-based games.

"XNA Game Studio Express will ignite innovation and accelerate prototyping, forever changing the

way games are developed," said Chris Satchell, general manager of the Game Developer Group at Microsoft. "By unlocking retail Xbox 360 consoles for community-created games, we are ushering in a new era of cross-platform games based on the XNA platform. We are looking forward to the day when all the resulting talent-sharing and creativity transform into a thriving community of user-created games on [the] Xbox 360."

You can find out more at msdn.microsoft.com/directx/xna.



HIGH-DEF, SCHMIGH-DEF

Andre Vringnaud is the director of technical strategy for Xbox Live. Recently he posted on his blog, "1,080p Meaningless this Generation", and gave his thoughts on whether the PlayStation 3's 1,080p high-def is really worth it.

"There's been a lot of interest in the PS3 due to its stated 1,080p output for both games and movies (via Blu-ray). What's interesting is that a lot of folks don't realise how meaningless 1,080p actually is in this generation."

"Let's take games first. The PS3 has roughly the same pixel-pushing capabilities as the Xbox 360. Don't take my word for it; it'll be obvious soon enough over the next year. Even if this weren't the case, consider [that] we now live in a multi-platform development world, and that the current sweet spot developers are targeting is 720p, due to the extremely similar system specifications. Simply put, a developer who is planning to release [its] game for both the Xbox 360 and the PS3 will aim for a common attainable ground. In fact, I'll stick my neck out and predict that that you won't see any 1,080x games for the PS3 this year."

You can find out more at the blog at http://ozymandias.com/archive/2006/08/14/Home-Theater-Magazine_3A00_-No-Difference-Between-1080i-and-1080p-for-Movies.aspx.

IN THE CARDS

GAMERCARD GENERATION

If you want to share your Xbox Live Gamercard, or just impress people with your Gamescore, check out www.glop.org/gamercard/. On the Website, you can select from a whole range of templates and get your own Gamercard that you can place on your Website, blog or in your forum signature. There have been many Gamercard generators before, but this particular Website has a nice range, look, and even includes various designs from other Websites. So, go ahead, get a little vanity and choose a Gamercard that suits you.

An Xbox Live Gamercard shows both your Gamescore (which is the total of your points gained through Achievements) and a list of your recently played games. It also shows your chosen avatar and name.



FREE GAME WITH LIVE VISION

The upcoming EyeToy-like camera for the Xbox 360, called the Xbox Live Vision, will come packaged with a free 'gesture' game called *Totemball*. The Live Vision gives 360 owners access to video chat while playing a game, in addition to face-mapping functions for supporting games such as Activision's *World Series of Poker*.

In *Totemball*, developed by Strange Flavour and Freeverse Studios, arm gestures from the player will help the onscreen totem pole character you control to reach a goal within a time limit. Freeverse previously worked on 'gesture' games for the Macintosh, using the Apple iSight camera. While no official price has been announced for South Africa yet, the Live Vision is listed in the United States at an estimated \$39.99 (roughly R279). The Live Vision is expected to go on sale in September internationally.



Meet the Family



The 360 is here and it brought some friends!



If you are reading this, you could only be one of four people: (1) a person who has a 360; (2) a person who will be buying a 360; (3) someone who is interested in buying a 360; (4) or someone who has stolen this magazine from one of the first three. In any case, Microsoft's next-generation console, the Xbox 360, has now officially been launched in South Africa. The 360 has enjoyed unprecedented success since its international launch in November last year, which means South Africa can only benefit from the worldwide interest that has already been established. Local players in the South African gaming industry have taken to the 360 with gusto, giving us a wide range of titles and support, which is always a good thing. To celebrate the local liftoff, *360 Insider* will be taking a look at what's available for you to purchase and enjoy. What will be mentioned here, however, is by no means a complete catalogue of launch titles. Rather, it's a look at some of the more specific and interesting titles for the 360 and who would enjoy them. For that, we'll need the help of our fictional 360 family, the Waltons. Say hello to Mom, Pop, Gran, Gramps, Billy, Sarah, little Tommy and their loving dog, Scraps.

Mom

Xbox Live Arcade

The library of affordable casual games available on Xbox Live Arcade keeps expanding, and now includes card games such as *Uno*, *Texas*

Hold 'em and *Poker*, along with retro nostalgia such as *Frogger*, *Street Fighter II* and *Gauntlet*. Newer, fresher experiences such as the titillating lines of *Geometry Wars: Retro Evolved* keep the appeal broad. Classic casual games such as *Astropop*, *Bejeweled 2* and *Zuma* will easily consume hours of existence, and there is even *Bankshot Billiards 2* for Pop.



Gran

Condemned: Criminal Origins

A gritty, edgy *Silence of the Lambs*-style experience resides inside *Condemned* - a horror game of psychological nature. First-person but mostly devoid of guns, *Condemned* places emphasis on puzzle solving and in-your-face melee combat. You have to search for fingerprints or other evidence, while watching your back. Enemies are cunning. They will hide and flee, popping out from behind concealments. The cerebral nature of the game means only the more refined will appreciate it, though a half-senile grandmother could also gain much enjoyment from *Condemned*.



Pop

Project Gotham Racing 3

Racing around London with the beautiful visuals, Bizarre Creations has imbued *Project Gotham Racing 3* with never getting old, and if it does, you can always go create your own routes through Los Angeles, New York or Tokyo. *Project Gotham Racing 3* continues the stalwart legacy of the *Project Gotham* series and moves it up a notch. Aside from the Career mode, there are several online options, including the ability to watch the best *Project Gotham Racing 3* players from around the world racing live. While not as technical as the defiant racing simulators out there, *Project Gotham*

Racing 3 is still a solid, quality racing experience with lush visuals that beg the use of the Photo mode.

Test Drive Unlimited

Over 1,600km of Hawaiian roads and highways on the island of Oahu tempt racers from around the world, and rightfully so. *Test Drive Unlimited* not only lets you purchase a tropical getaway, a house of your choice, but also exotic cars and new clothes. From there, you use your faithful GPS to find races around the island, either offline or online. You can form clubs to race with and drive a large variety of vehicles, including brands such as Alfa Romeo, Ducati, Ferrari and more - including motorbikes.



Gramps

Call of Duty 2

You don't have to tell war-stories anymore, just fire up *Call of Duty 2* and be there. Spanning several theatres of World War II, you play as a soldier for the Red Army, the British Army or the United States Army. As a first-person shooter, *Call of Duty 2* remains the pinnacle of action-history, giving players the chance to see through their own eyes battles such as the Battle of Normandy, Pointe du Hoc and other key points of history. For multiplayer (on Xbox Live), *Call of Duty 2* is fully-featured with Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, as well as other game modes.



Billy

Dead or Alive 4

There are many reasons why one would play *Dead or Alive 4*, a fighting game that involves busty broads and nimble ninja. The game is a technical achievement with striking visuals and crisp imagery, as well as being an involved and complex fighter that requires concentration and ability. *Dead or Alive 4* even includes a new character to the series, a female Spartan super soldier, called 'Spartan-458', who arrives fresh from the Halo universe. Online, players can duke it out in round robin and purchase items from the Zack shop such as new avatars to use online or different lobbies for hosting multiplayer games.



Ninety-Nine Nights

Much like *Dynasty Warriors*, *Ninety-Nine Nights* involves tearing into large armies of enemies as a one-person equaliser. The story involves witnessing (and participating in) a fantasy war from the viewpoints of several different characters, while the game is mostly an extravaganza of enemies and obscenely powerful attacks. There can be hundreds of enemies onscreen at one time to wade through, and each character you can choose has a very different play style. The game borrows heavily from *Kingdom Under Fire*, which was also developed by Phantagram for the original Xbox.



Tommy

Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy

There are certain constants in the universe, such as horses and the idea that 'Star Wars + Lego = Awesome'. Spanning the original Star Wars trilogy this time (*Lego Star Wars I* spanned episodes 4 to 6), you can create your own *Lego Star Wars* character by mixing multiple character parts together. The game is a fun 'shoot stuff while running through the level' style experience, bolstered by the cooperative mode where anyone can pick up a controller and join in. From there, it's pure Wookiee and droid bliss.



Scraps

360 Wireless Controller

Ah, happy doggy Scraps likes nothing more than chewing, and the Wireless Controller makes the perfect chewing toy. Scraps can run around as much as he likes, and he won't pull the 360 off its perch.



Sarah

Kameo: Elements of Power

Visually, *Kameo* is the pretty girl at the party. Lush, colourful visuals fill the screen, while the fantasy art style of the game remains warm and inviting. At heart, *Kameo* is a platformer with many interesting twists and turns, such as *Kameo*'s own ability to instantly change into one of several Elemental warriors, including a dragon. Each warrior has its own abilities, both to attack with and to solve puzzles in a level. *Kameo* can also be played cooperatively on Xbox Live, and is one of the more fun and inventive games for the 360.



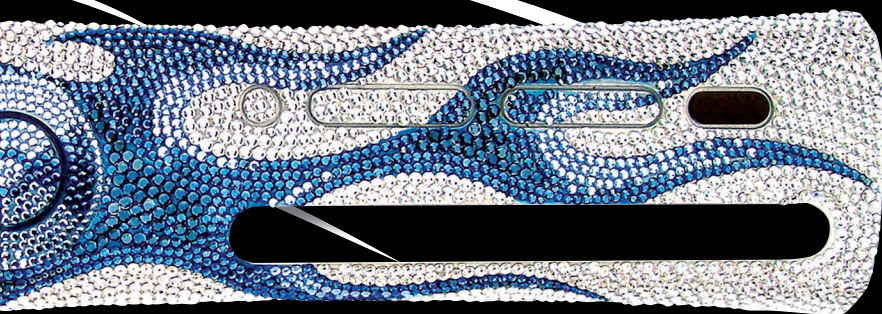
360 Insider would like to thank the Waltons for helping us with this article, especially the incontinent Scraps who left us many presents in, out and around the office.





Dedicated Follower of Fashion

It's sleek, it's sexy and it's better looking than the original Xbox... but is the 360 really less of a console and more of a fashion icon?



Bearing in mind that we've been gaming since we hit puberty, one thing we've come to accept is that gaming isn't fashionable. Despite all attempts to make it so, gaming just isn't 'cool'. At least, it didn't used to be. With the advent of consoles like the PlayStation though, companies like Sony have tried to make us believe that geek is the new chic by linking their machines to DJs, bands, celebrities and clothing, all in an effort to make it a brand rather than a console - the Coke of the gaming generation, if you will. Not surprisingly then, it didn't take long for Microsoft to try doing the same thing, and with the original Xbox giving it a firm footing in the world of videogames, the next step was one not just of progress, but of style too.

When the 360 was first revealed, we were all shocked at how different the design was compared to the original Xbox. It was sleek - even sexy - but the main point was that it had style, and definitely wasn't your normal gaming 'box' that we'd become accustomed to. This premise of style has grown as we've got accustomed to the Xbox 360 brand and features like customisation have been announced. It was

Dedicated Follower of Fashion



obvious from the word go that the 360 was designed to appeal to a much bigger market than the hardcore gamer. Concisely, it's a home media centre with style. One that would not look out of place in a family's living room or an uptown bachelor's pad.

"From the start we wanted to design a console that would be appealing worldwide and elevate the design aesthetic higher than has typically been seen in game console design," explains Don Conner, director of the Xbox Platform Experience, Microsoft. "With this in mind, we hired a variety of firms in Europe, Japan and the USA to do concept designs, which we refined over many months to get to what is the final design. As part of that design exercise, we hit upon the iconic look we have today and were immediately drawn to it."

Of course, good old Microsoft didn't want to alienate its hardcore followers, but rather offer them added value with features that they would enjoy, features that would also appeal to a more mainstream market. Neil Thompson, director of UK and Northern Europe Home Entertainment Group, Microsoft, explains: "First and foremost, Xbox 360 will always appeal to gamers. However, what we have noticed is that because of all the additional features, it is encouraging users who normally

“Designed to appeal to a bigger market than the hardcore gamer”

wouldn't be such early adopters. Other users may have used the Xbox 360 to show off their photos to their family, and this interaction has then led to them trying some family games on Xbox Live Arcade."

With the colourings to match, the 360 launched itself as a product for the iPod generation, becoming more of an icon than a product, a lifestyle brand over a gaming one. However, how successful has that concept been? Do all the cool people own one or want one? Has it climbed that brick wall separating the gamer from the fashionable type and then smashed it down with a hefty sledgehammer?

"Absolutely," says Mark Stanley, senior vice president of marketing for peripherals manufacturer Intec. "All the hype that was given to this unit in the months leading to launch elevated it from a simple next-gen gaming machine to 'urban idol' status."

Indeed, the customisation concept has

really taken off, as expected if you look at how in the last five years or so the mobile phone customisation market has grown from strength to strength. Just by checking out your local shopping mall on a Saturday, you'll be able to see that almost all ages and walks of life like the idea of customising their phones. By tapping into this market, Microsoft has allowed the 360 and the gaming experience to become much more personalised. By promoting and encouraging individuality through Faceplates, Themes and Dashboard configurations, users are beginning to feel attached to their Xbox 360s and eager to share their experience with others. This constantly changing and organic gaming environment helps change the nature of the console itself, transcending a mere product and again helping to propel the 360 to iconic status.

Design For Live

It doesn't end there, though. Companies such as Joytech have a strong belief that Xbox Live will also help customisation to grow even further in coming years. "The true growth will come through Xbox Live," says Alex Verrey, PR and communications manager, Joytech Europe. "The nature of the console affords Microsoft the opportunity to update the system's firmware at will with

Fashion Victim

In the world of fashion, anything goes... or does it? Don't get carried away now...

When it came to the idea of brand extension for the 360, Microsoft didn't just give the thumbs up to a clothing range. Sunrise Identity, the company that runs the Xboxgearstore site for the big MS, will make almost anything 360 branded if a customer requests it.

"There's nothing we can't do," states Jackie Vanraaphorst, the company's programs manager. "We've been known to do things like skateboards and surfboards, but we mainly get calls for products for corporate events. So, most of our orders are for straightforward 360 branded products like stickers, memory cards, journals..."

"We don't get that many odd requests really," she continues. "Gamers are more interested in gaming merchandise rather than hardware. We also run the Bungie merchandising site, and that's where we get them. That's a really hardcore audience and they want to get their hands on anything *Halo* related."

So, fashion sells. Even so, how many of you want to play Frisbee with an Xbox 360 branded 'flying disk' or carry around your Xbox 360 water bottle? Oh, and what's the point in a retractable badge pull? Anyone?



HIPTO THE BEAT/Lifestyle photo sets like these make us laugh. Apparently, we're supposed to want to be like them. Of course!



CRAZY YANK/This guy's clearly American. You can tell from his 'trendy' clothes and 'huge' mouth. What's this meant to say?



YOU SAID IT/Why is he pulling that stupid face? He's lucky we're not our mothers, or we'd make a remark about the wind changing



new features and improvements. When the Xbox 360 camera is introduced, gamers will be able to capture their own photos and use their images in GamerCards whilst using the camera to chat in real-time with other players. Dashboard enhancements and themes will continue to flourish I believe, so that within a few years the ability to change every nuance of the front-end interface may make it entirely possible for your gaming experience to not only be tailored to your preferences, but appear near unrecognisable from your best friend's system."

New ways to jazz up your console are already appearing, and none of these came from the mind of a Microsoft designer. One trend that's growing all the time is to 'bling' out your machine, something that companies like Crystal Icing and Bling my Thing excel in, covering everything from mobile phones to consoles in crystals.

"The customisation market is huge!" exclaims Gina Smith, president of Crystal Icing. "We receive so many requests for unique designs, whether they want their name put on an item or their very own custom design. Showing off your personal piece of art is something people love and are proud to say they created, and it makes boring devices something colourful and fancy. When

we saw that the new Xbox 360 had those awesome removable plates, we figured, why not? We released our 'White Heat' faceplate right around the same time that the 360 was released, and we had a huge response. We hope to keep customising them in the future, and continue to receive orders from all over the world."

Then, of course, there's the modding community. These people are loving the 360, and proudly show off their own designs all over the Web. However, if Microsoft doesn't condone this and modding your 360 voids your warranty as well, what's the appeal of opening up a console worth as much as your kidney and messing around with its insides?

"Because it's all about individuality and possessing something different," explains Tom Nile, chief moderator on the Max Console Website. "There will be ten million 360s that all look similar soon. We all want to be unique and console modding is turning into a hobby, just like people pimp out their cars."

Scot Maki, who calls himself the 'head llama' (and yes, that's how they spell it) at modding site Llama.com continues: "We all strive to be unique and distinguish ourselves in some way. Some do this in the clothes they wear, the car they drive, or the way their hair is cut. When all consoles are identical, console

You've Got The Look

Something this good-looking doesn't just happen overnight...

The design for the Xbox 360, as we know it, didn't just pop out of thin air. It came from an amalgamation of differently styled models. Roughly seven designs made it to the prototype stage, all coming from different firms across Europe, Japan and the States, and from there the final design was whittled away.

Microsoft wanted to move away from the original Xbox design, instead creating a console that would look good in any entertainment centre of any room in any type of home. It had to look stylish, ageless and appeal to the mass market of home entertainment consumers, not just gaming types.

"We looked at a selection of radically different design approaches, and once we found a general direction we liked, we worked to refine it over many months," explains Don Conner, director of the Xbox Platform Experience at Microsoft. "Our goal was not really minimalist, but rather something simple and iconic that would be a suitable design aesthetic for many years. Our Xbox 360 design is a much more distilled expression than the original Xbox, but it's also more expressive, which runs counter to the spirit of modernism. Our fundamental geometry – the console's 'inhale' gesture – is also much more complex than it looks. Within this, the details are very pure, which gives the design its contemporary, 'neo-modernist' feel."



modding is an attractive platform for some customisation. If gaming is important to you, you may decide that some time spent making your gaming machine unique is time well spent."

Designs differ wildly, from original paint jobs to adding LEDs and even windows. Daniel Whitehouse, a full-time modder, created a water-cooled 360, which he believes is currently the only one in the world. "With my latest 360, I've created the world's first and only all internal water-cooled 360," he explains. "Various forums debated whether this would be possible due to lack of space within the 360, so I decided to pull off the impossible and everything turned out great. Not only did I succeed, but I added a window, lighting, and a very fancy paint job. My reasons behind doing this were because I wanted to make something unique like all modders, but also because I'd heard about the 360's overheating issues and decided water-cooling would be a good idea and keep my console alive for a lot longer."

Of course, customisation and modding are going to appeal to a wider audience, but it's still quite a specific 'demographic' and it's obvious that Microsoft wanted to throw the net even wider. Not surprisingly though, it has already managed this through very fashion-orientated marketing and by creating partnerships with other iconic companies

in different markets. The 360's hardware and logo designs were aimed to create a fashionable lifestyle brand that would appeal to everyone and its advertising and sponsorship decisions certainly mirror that. Working with companies like Adidas and Epic Records, sponsoring the World Cup as well as sporting teams such as the American Le Mans race, are some things Microsoft is doing to help get the brand better known to new audiences.

Console Coordinated

Around launch time, stylish products began to appear with 360 logos, and Microsoft even brought out a clothing range. Although this has been more of a success in the corporate field, the company still focused on new and fashionable designs for its clothes, in order to appeal to fashion fans rather than gamers.

"We have access to thousands of vendors all the time, so we see the newest and coolest things that come out in our industry," explains Jackie Vanraaphorst, programs manager at Sunrise Identity, the vendor that runs Microsoft's Xboxgearstore Website. "Xbox really wanted to try to capitalise on some of the newer and more unique apparel. We have a really great team here with a lot of experience in this industry, so they know what's cool and what's not."

This isn't an easy job however, as Chris

Dedicated Follower of Fashion



“ The 360 launched itself as a product for the iPod generation ”

FACETHEFACTS/ Joytech offers a wider range of alternative 360 faceplates that you can use if you're bored of the plain old white one - Ryan's got the tan army camo one. It looks good! Really!

Birch, creative director of gaming fashion label Joystick Junkies, can confirm. "Doing a merchandise range like that is always really difficult," he says. "People who aren't gamers have to walk into a fashion store and go 'Wow, that's a great T-shirt!'. The main market is people who want a really nice T-shirt. It's got to stand up to all the major cool lifestyle brands that people are buying around the world."

Birch doesn't think it's going to create a huge buzz in the fashion world, but as brand extensions go, he thinks Microsoft has made a good attempt. "I think as a brand extension it's doing a nice job. I think it's good that Microsoft is doing something different rather than just corporate clothing, and it's helping to make [gaming] much more acceptable," he says.

Of course, Microsoft's whole range of Xbox 360 branded products was supported with suitable 'lifestyle' orientated advertising that showed people from all walks of life laughing together, wearing the branded clothes and posing in a 'hip and funky' manner. From the buzz that was heard about this campaign, the range does have its appeal, but it hasn't made the big splash that was hoped for... yet, at least. So, as Microsoft continues to make the most of its 12-month lead on the competition, offering new customisation

options and pushing the 360 as a 'lifestyle' brand, what exactly can we expect looking towards the future?

Microsoft is keeping its cards close to its chest. There are some concepts, however, that could lead to a widening appeal of the machine. With *Project Gotham Racing 3* there was Gotham TV where people could watch races without having to pick up a pad and 'become' a gamer. Similarly, with *Viva Piñata*, out later this year, non-gamers will be part of the 360's brand extension by watching the TV show or buying the toys and other merchandise that are bound to appear in stores.

Furthermore, with the release of the HD DVD drive, which, even if bought alongside a Premium 360, looks set to be much cheaper than the PlayStation 3 option, the 360 is going to appeal to film fans just as much as gamers.

With the 360, Microsoft is looking at new areas to spread its reach. It might not have a sudden overnight boom of non-gamers rushing into stores, but this move towards fashion and lifestyle is helping more and more people become aware of the platform. Even if people just pick one up and check out its features, over time they'll become more comfortable exploring everything it offers. Either way, the 360 is making itself known as more than just a games console.

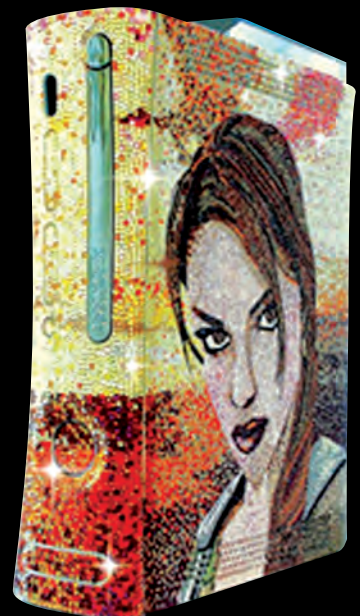
Mods And Rockers

Rockstar and Eidos put on their glad rags

Well-known modding site Llama.com has been so successful with past modded consoles, that Rockstar commissioned the company to make a one-off Rockstar branded Xbox 360 mod. With the logo on one side and a window on the other, this console was handmade by the team and then painted in silver and Rockstar's well-known bright orange. Although Rockstar hasn't confirmed this, rumour has it that this snazzy piece of kit was being shown off behind closed doors at E3 this year.

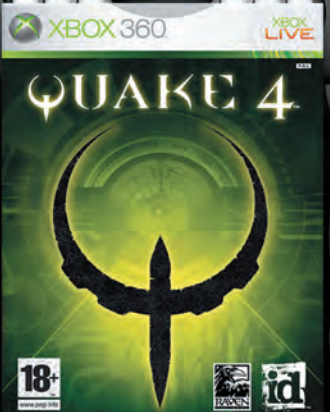
Eidos took things a step further recently. Promoting the launch of the latest *Tomb Raider* game, the German office contacted Berlin-based Bling My Thing and commissioned some Swarovski crystal-covered consoles. Both a PS2 and a 360 were 'blinged' to the max - one with the logo and one with Lara's face on it.

The bejewelled 360 is now worth around €3,500 and has now made a home for itself in the company's Hamburg office, alongside the special edition PS2.





XBOX 360™



THE BEST LAND FIRST INVADING ALL STORES NOW!



ACTIVISION

AT&T

megarom
interactive

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA
more @ www.megarom.co.za

Release date/ Q1 2007

BROTHERS IN ARMS: HELL'S HIGHWAY

War is hell, especially on a highway to nowhere

Upon finding out that the latest in Ubisoft's excellent WWII series, *Brothers In Arms*, was to take place during Operation Market Garden, we thought it best to check a couple of facts. You see, as far as our hazy memories of school history lessons tell us, Market Garden, an attempt to secure the bridges over the main rivers of Holland, was a campaign the Allied forces lost. Now, Hollywood, EA and American teachers may tell us that the USA won the entire war on its own, but, as Market Garden proved, that is far from the truth. In fact, this Allied failure was the scene where over 30,000 soldiers on both sides lost their lives, and was eventually an exercise in futility. Not the usual videogame fare, is it?





NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/Ubisoft
Developer/Gearbox
Genre/FPS
Players/TBA
Xbox Live/Yes

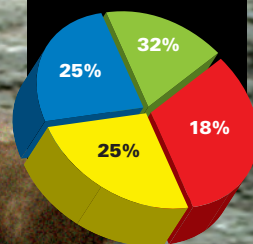
Briefly

The third iteration of the massively successful *Brothers In Arms* series, with improved graphics, multiple teams and much more.

IN THE PIE

What you'll find on the highway to Hell...

- Physics
- Bazookas
- Gung-ho patriotism
- Master Chief baiting



Brothers In Arms has never been about towing the line. The first in the series, released just last year, took WWII FPS in a direction that *Medal Of Honor* and *Call Of Duty* had previously ignored. Not just a glorified duck shoot, *Brothers In Arms* focused on the tactical and emotional reality of being in a squad of soldiers, namely the 101st Airborne, and asked players to use not only their skills with a rifle, but also their brains. Outmanoeuvring opponents, directing your team-mates to cover, using sweeping flanking tactics... these are the things that define *Brothers In Arms*, and they're set to return in Gearbox's retelling of the Market Garden operation – *Brothers In Arms: Hells Highway*.

When taking those first steps out onto the battlefield, the graphics immediately hit you. It almost seems trite to mention the visuals when previewing a game. This is Xbox 360 after all, and the games are expected to look great, but Gearbox has really raised the bar. Textures, decals, physics, lighting, explosions, smoke – aside from a tiny bit of HD 'hyper-detail', it looks almost real. Especially impressive is the expressions the characters display on their faces. Not only when they're talking, but during

every moment of conflict. Just two years ago, people were in awe of the facial expressions in *Half-Life 2*. *Hell's Highway* makes them look robotic.

None of this would matter, of course, if there wasn't an extremely solid game engine underneath all the high-definition fireworks, and fortunately, there is. As in *Road To Hill 30* and *Earned In Blood*, the circular reticule for ordering troops is crucial for success, and can be flicked around the battlefield with ease. Your team-mates are more intelligent than ever too, effortlessly using cover and always finding their way around obstacles. Every decision is vital to the survival of your men, your side and, obviously, yourself.

Fighting for freedom

It's not just the Allies that have smartened up since *Earned In Blood*, either. As expected, the enemy AI has undergone an overhaul, now completely self-aware and emergent, so each skirmish will play out like its own set-piece. There's absolutely minimal scripting. The AI takes control of the enemy troops, so you could literally replay the same section a hundred times and the enemy would never react in the same way. This is what next-generation gaming should be about: organic, immersive experiences that give the player complete freedom of choice in how they approach each situation. We're all for linearity in narrative, but there should always be room to move within the linear guidelines. It just makes for a far more entertaining time.

NO 1 IN TEAM

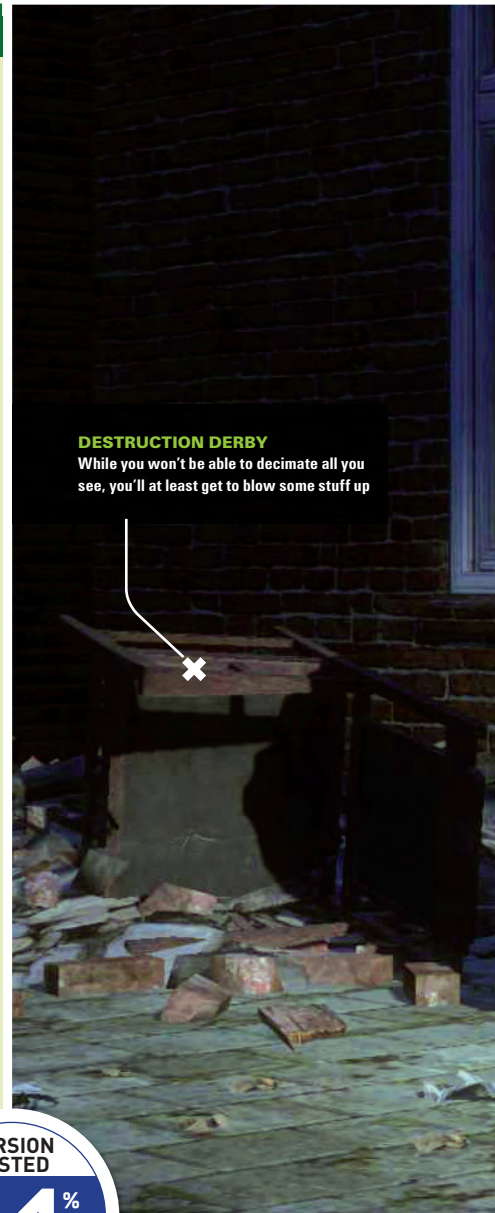
Of mortars and bazookas and men

Yes, as well as your normal squad of chaps, you now have access to heavy fire teams such as mortars and bazookas - perfect for tearing a nice hole in the armour of a panzer tank, or an even bigger hole in the face of an enemy. Lovely stuff.

DESTRUCTION DERBY

While you won't be able to decimate all you see, you'll at least get to blow some stuff up

“ Your every decision is vital to the survival of your men ”



VERSION TESTED
44%
COMPLETE



ARMY OF TWO/ They don't call them brothers in arms for nothing. These two are actually brothers (this may or may not be true)



WEAPON OF CHOICE
All of the game's weaponry will once again be accurate to the era

WE ALL STAND TOGETHER
The focus here is very much on the men rather than the action. It's all about the emotion...

LOSER!

I fought the battle...

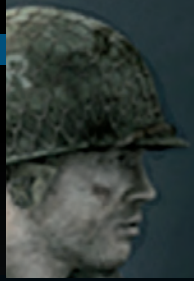
And the battle killed 18,000 people.

As we've already mentioned, Operation Market Garden wasn't exactly the success that the Allied Forces planned it to be. The objectives (focusing on clearing bridges occupied by German forces) were never met, the whole thing fell way behind schedule, and the operation left over 18,000 Allied soldiers dead. How Gearbox puts that into the context of a game should be interesting,

especially since the 101st tale is particularly bizarre. The division was left for two days with no ammo because of bad timing and, even worse, one of the bridges it was supposed to take was blown up just as the attack began. Suffice to say, the finished product should be pretty damn bleak...

~~~~~  
The moral of the story? The US doesn't always win.





## TALKING TO RANDY PITCHFORD

Gearbox's CEO talks about everything *Hell's Highway*-related that you ever wanted to know: real bodies, advanced physics, oh, and war of course...

***Hell's Highway* gives the player a 'real' body within the game world. Why has this taken such a long time for it to happen?**

**Randy Pitchford:** The idea is that the player character is no longer a floating camera with a picture of a gun bolted to it at the bottom of the screen. The player character is an actual character in the world. You can see your own shadow, your own body and your hands and feet. You can look down at your chest and see how many grenades you have left. When you jump over a wall, if you look down, you can see your hand on the wall and your legs swing over. There are tons of examples of where the first-person actor really puts you in the world. It's great. It really enhances your overall immersion.

**How are you addressing criticism of the previous games being too linear with *Hell's Highway*?**

**Randy Pitchford:** This chapter of the game is really exciting for us! The addition of new units really gives the player a far more diverse experience. Depending on the enemy they face, they will now be able to choose among many different ways of approaching the situation.

The maps are far bigger than before. A typical *Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway* mission area is at least four times the size of a mission area in *Brothers In Arms 1* or *2*.

The scope of the combat is larger as well. There are more Allies and enemies involved than ever before. The whole sense of scale and scope is strongly multiplied over the previous *Brothers In Arms* games. It's fortunate that we have the next-generation technology to support the demands of the historical operation. As the leader of a recon team, Baker gets a jeep this time around.

**Will the player get to control the car or will it be similar to the way tanks operated in the first two games (i.e., you can mount a turret, but the driving is done by someone else who needs orders from you)?**

The paratroopers were infantry, so they got around on foot. However, when Baker becomes part of a Recon unit, he gets a jeep. Therefore, the recon guys can get around in jeeps. Still, driving around isn't what being a 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne

paratrooper is all about. It's about squad fighting and killing the enemy.

**Three teams are a lot to command. How will you stop it being too much work for players?**

**Randy Pitchford:** The command system has always been very elegant and easy to use, but we've enhanced it with some new capabilities that allow the player to coordinate sneak attacks, or group teams together to make it easier for them to manoeuvre together over distances. We are always very careful to ensure that it's very clear and intuitive, and yes, although a player will have more choices, they will not feel overwhelmed in any way.

**How will the advanced physics of the game affect the actual gameplay?**

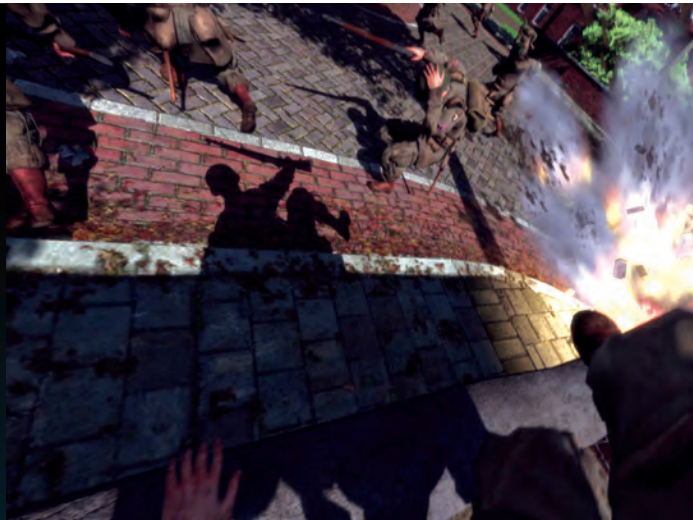
**Randy Pitchford:** Soft cover, like wooden doors and fences and woodsheds, can be destroyed — torn apart by fire. This adds a huge tactical element to the game, as a player will now need to carefully decide where to place his/her men and will no longer be able to hide behind some cover waiting for the enemy to make a mistake. Engagements will be brutal and you will need to react quickly to keep your men alive!

**The animation really looks amazing...**

**Randy Pitchford:** We are still working on this, but you are right, it is amazing what the team has already succeeded in doing. Animations are an important part of how characters become more real, and *Brothers In Arms* has always wanted you to feel like the men who fight with you are in fact your brothers. We are really working to ensure that all the characters in the game have a personality.

**This is the third game in the series. WWII is far from over. How will the series continue?**

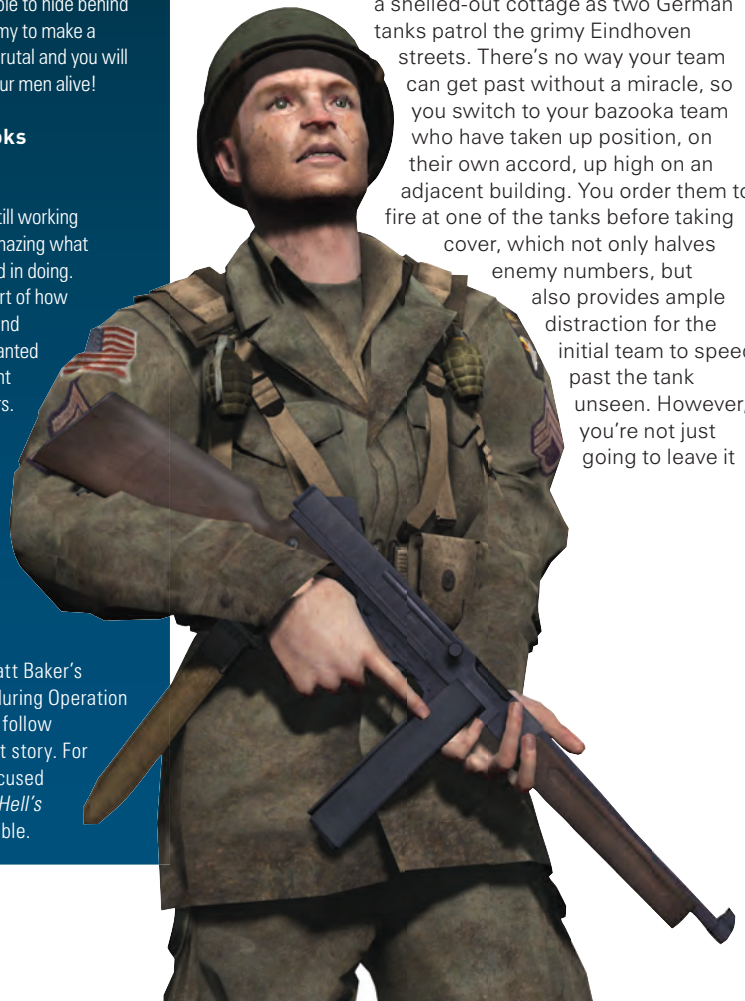
**Randy Pitchford:** Sgt. Matt Baker's story doesn't end in Holland during Operation Market Garden. We intend to follow through, but that is a different story. For the moment, we are really focused on making *Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway* the best game possible.



**HELP ME/** To be honest, we don't really know what's going on here, but when everything goes blurry, you're normally hurt, or drunk. Probably both

Moreover, choice is something that Gearbox is focusing a lot of its energy on for *Hell's Highway*. Whereas in previous *Brothers In Arms* games you only had control over your fixed squad, *Hell's Highway* now allows you to switch between different types of troops depending on the situation. You have access to bazooka teams (perfect for enemy tanks, or if you just fancy making an almighty mess), and mortar teams for distanced attacks, pinning an enemy in position so you can use a strike team to move in and eliminate. The possibilities aren't quite endless, but they're far greater than before.

Picture the scene. You're held up in a shelled-out cottage as two German tanks patrol the grimy Eindhoven streets. There's no way your team can get past without a miracle, so you switch to your bazooka team who have taken up position, on their own accord, up high on an adjacent building. You order them to fire at one of the tanks before taking cover, which not only halves enemy numbers, but also provides ample distraction for the initial team to speed past the tank unseen. However, you're not just going to leave it





ARM BAR

### Liveaware

Online multiplayer including a more tactical approach to deathmatch  
 No doubt some online co-op too – tag-team soldiering!



## It's all getting a bit too personal for our liking

**1 There you are.** Just in time for a quick chat. It all seems fairly safe and innocuous. This war business isn't as bad as everybody says, is it? Seems all right to us...

**2 Uh-oh.** Under fire. Time to get the men into position. Cover will be used

intelligently, with no one firing unless you tell them to – in stealth mode that is. This, if you ask us, has got to be the best thing to do when under heavy fire.

**3 It only** takes a few minutes of *Brothers in Arms* action for all hell to break loose. This is business – pretty awful really, isn't it?



there though, are you? With the tank facing the other way, why not creep up behind it and lay an explosive charge on its underbelly? The choice is yours, but we'd definitely recommend it!

Further upping the *Brothers In Arms* ante is the inclusion of far more vehicles than in previous games. While in the past, players spent time in a tank, now you'll have access to military jeeps (perfect for slicing through the terrain and dishing out all manner of Nazi death), and another fascinating ingredient in the *Hell's Highway* pie. Quite how these jeeps will be used in gameplay is not yet known, but we're definitely hoping for full 'Halo style' integration, so you can hop in and out of a jeep at any time when the situation requires it.

Still, as long as it's more than a boring 'on-rails' shooting section, we'll be more than happy. Indeed, hopes are high for a more seamless and less disjointed experience than the previous games. For starters, level loads between missions have been completely eradicated, so it will play far more like *Half-Life 2* – one continuous stream of excellence. The developers are focusing on pacing and game length to ensure the *Hell's Highway* experience is simultaneously cinematic

and entirely congruous. There's no reason why this won't be the first truly great shooter on the 360.

### Don't let us down

Nevertheless, we need to see more of *Hell's Highway* before we'll be entirely convinced. We need to see that those physics aren't just for show and do have a genuine impact on gameplay. We need to see more examples of the multiple team dynamic in action. If it turns out to be little more than a gimmick, then it would be an opportunity wasted. Perhaps most crucially of all, we need to see just how the developers are going to handle the subject matter. As discussed, Operation Market Garden is not your typical WWII game fare. There's every chance that the story could finish in tragedy – brave for a mainstream videogame. As long as Gearbox doesn't bludgeon us with an over-patriotic 'retelling of events', then this could make for an extremely intriguing plot. We'll keep our fingers crossed.

There's no point denying it, we're very excited about *Hell's Highway*. With the pedigree of two excellent games behind it, an incredibly strong showing at E3, and a steady stream of new information arriving almost daily, it's plain to see that

Ubisoft has high hopes for *Highway*. In addition, when Ubisoft really gets behind one of its products, it tends to turn out pretty well. *Prince Of Persia*, *Splinter Cell: Double Agent*, *Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter*... the list really does speak for itself.

As long as Gearbox doesn't fall into the trap that many other developers have fallen into, that of HD-defying everything in sight but not making any worthwhile gameplay alterations, we're sure that *Hell's Highway* will be another triple-A title to add to Ubisoft's list. Game of the Year 2007? Well, Master Chief may have something to say about that. **Jon Denton**

**FACT:** Sadly, 31,186 soldiers lost their lives during World War II's Operation Market Garden. Not a pleasant time at all.

## HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Hell's Highway is looking superb and is the game *Brothers In Arms* was always meant to be. The 360 is the machine to finally do the franchise justice.

Thriller?



Release date/ 8 September 2006



## NEED TO KNOW

**Publisher/**Capcom  
**Developer/**Capcom  
**Genre/**Survival horror  
**Players/**1  
**Xbox Live/**No

## Briefly

Frank is a freelance photographer investigating a minor riot in Colorado, but when he asks to be dropped off on the roof of a shopping mall... you know what happens next!



**MOBILE BEAVER/**Otis will give you updates via your two-way radio. Fact of The Month: mobile phones actually looked like this in the mid-nineties

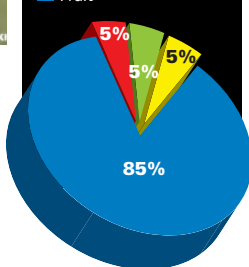


**SLEEP TIGHT/** These benches serve as save points. You don't have to hold an apple while doing so. We just thought it made Frank look cool

## IN THE PIE

Killing zombies with...

- Spades
- Katana
- Golf clubs
- Fruit



# DEAD RISING

Live and let die in this king of zombie games

If there is anything better than ramming a sickle into the side of a zombie's brain before yanking its head clean off its shoulder, we have yet to see it. Out of all the games available on the Xbox 360, there is nothing quite like it. The animation as protagonist Frank yanks the sickle back out of the skull makes you feel like a real beast of a man. The move kills the zombie immediately as its headless corpse flops to the floor, and most importantly, it makes an incredibly satisfying squelch noise with a crunch of bone. It's just... perfect.

"But that's sick!" you might think. Perhaps you prefer slicing zombies in half with a katana then. How about hitting golf balls at their faces from a safe distance, or using plates as nose-breaking Frisbees? Plant pots, HD-TVs, guitars, skateboards, hockey sticks, footballs, nightsticks, rubbish bins, and chainsaws, everything that comes to hand doubles up as a weapon, even zucchinis. This is the shopping mall, this is your playground, and this is the arsenal with which you fight. Pacifists will moan. They could always use water

guns to tickle the zombies as they bite a huge chunk from Frank's rugged face. Then again, pacifists should probably play *Dynasty Warriors 5*.

Weapons! That's what Dead Rising is about. The comic book violence is triggered by the huge array of weapons lying around you. Yet, it's not all blood and thunder. Okay, that's a bit of a lie. It is mostly blood and thunder, but you still have to judge the range of your weapon, its capability, the overall danger and so forth. Swinging wildly at a zombie's face with a plant pot might be great fun, but when you have to stand on his toes to do so, it's probably safer to throw the plant pot, and then run to find a better weapon. It's not as stupid as you think, yet not demanding enough that you can't cause mayhem with whatever comes to hand.

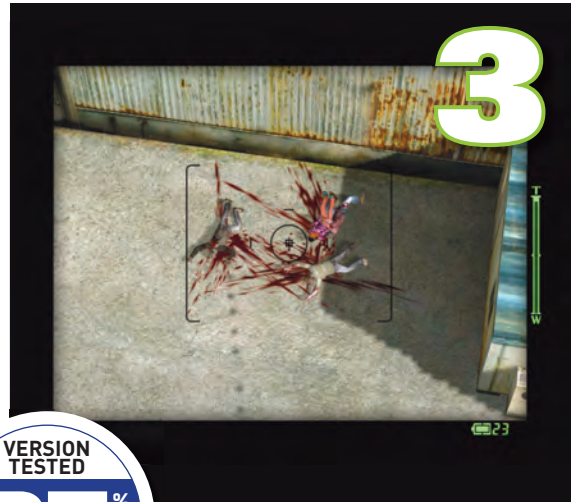
“ Strike a balance between weapons for hitting and food for eating ”



### WEAPON OF CHOICE

#### Sickles, lawnmowers and... water guns?

Guns can be thrown once they're out of ammo, battle axes can be swung around in a crowd clearing spin attack, while Frank can also hop on skateboards, as well as use them as weapons!



### CLICK YOURSELF UNDER

#### Become a modern day Kevin Carter! (Look on Wikipedia)

**1** As you hitch a ride on a helicopter into Colorado, you watch as a 'riot' unfolds on the streets. A woman is trapped on a Colorado rooftop, and when she spots you, she waves for help. You can't do that. However...

**2** ...you can take pictures! Oh dear. Snap the woman as she tumbles off the

rooftop for a huge PP bonus. There are different categories of pictures to snap such as Drama, Brutality Horror and Erotica.

**3** The final, sorry mess. *Dead Rising* doesn't shy away from gore and doesn't hesitate to throw buckets of claret about. Beat Jeff's wife to death with a golf club to see what we mean (you'll see).

VERSION TESTED  
**95%**  
COMPLETE



### Well equipped

Because Frank wears Magical Videogame Pants, he can cram pretty much anything he wants down his trousers. At any time, he can have all sorts of items stuffed down his pants. A sledgehammer, a coat hanger, a breadstick, a bottle of wine and a pistol can all co-exist happily in the sweaty loins of Frank's Magical Videogame Pants. It beats stuffing socks down there, we suppose. The idea? To strike a clever balance between weapons for hitting and food for eating. When you get sandwiched between two groups of zombies and you only have a pie, it's panic time. A lot of *Dead Rising* is about inventory juggling and struggling to survive, not to mention the magpie in you that simply has to investigate whenever a new item is flagged on the screen. Magpies don't wear Magical Videogame Pants, but you do, so there's plenty of chances to try out the weapons you find.

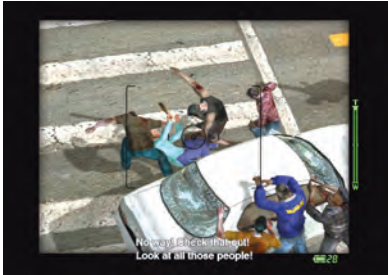
And yes, there's a plot. As has been mentioned approximately nine million times, this is George Romero's *Dawn Of The Dead* (nine million and one) in

videogame form. It's spruced up with the photography side missions and is garnished with a storyline plucked straight from My First Videogame Plot. We'll be damned if Romero doesn't sit down with a pad and notice similarities to his 1978 opus. "Look, a rag-tag bunch of survivors fighting zombies in a shopping mall!" he might say excitedly, waving a wrinkly hand towards the screen and coughing slightly.

Back to *Dead Rising's* My First Videogame Plot and we're introduced to Frank, freelance photographer with a boxer's nose, in the backseat of a chopper flying towards Colorado. In a brilliant, sweeping sequence taking in the carnage as it unfolds around the last few survivors on Colorado's streets, you control Frank's camera and snap away at the mess below. A guy makes his last stand on top of his car. The petrol station explodes as fiery figures stagger away and collapse. You get a sense of the chaos and confusion. Then Frank, like all freelance photographers who have never seen a zombie movie before might do, asks to land on the mall rooftop. "See you in 72 hours!" he says.

# PREVIEW

**AWESOME/** You can wear a Servbot mask! "Why does everyone think that's so great?" said one onlooker. Oh dear!



## CUT!

### Headwear equals comedy

You can dress up in different attire as you traipse through the shopping mall, putting on casual clothes, sharp business suits or skin-tight Speedos. The best of all is when you visit the ground floor toyshop. You can even stick a Servbot head on your head, which gets dirtied up nicely with the zombie blood splashing on Servbot's smile.

“ There’s no real horror in this particular shopping mall, but there’s a huge emphasis on survival ”

From there, you take your first, tentative steps into the mall, meet the first survivors and watch as a poodle somehow unleashes an army of zombies in the mall (you’ll see, it makes sense). This is what is known as the poop hitting the fan, as you scramble for safety while zombies scramble for flesh. There are no weapons at this point, so it’s all fat fists and flailing arms as you bolt for the safety of the stairs. At this point, you’re hit with the freewheeling sense of fun unique to videogames. Remember the scene in George Romero’s *Dawn Of The Dead* (nine million and two) where Peter and Roger run rampant through the mall, killing zombies with huge grins on their faces? *Dead Rising* is that scene, blown up and spread over the course of a videogame.

We’ve mentioned the need to juggle weapons, but what makes it even more important than we realised is the saving system, which isn’t unforgiving, but doesn’t really give you a safety net if Plan A fails, Plan B fails to materialise and a hastily improvised Plan C is the only thing stopping zombie teeth

chomping on your neck. There’s a central ‘safe’ room where you can go to advance the plot, talk to survivors and save the game. It makes sense, but it also means when you step into the mall, the only way to save is to make the long trek back to the safe room in one piece. When there are thousands of zombies between you and the lift that takes you back to the air ducts and the safe room, it makes things tense. There’s no real horror in this particular shopping mall, but there’s a huge emphasis on survival.

### Prepare yourself

You can’t just run the gauntlet either. Barge through the masses of brain-dead without something to defend yourself, and you’ll be grabbed, pulled about and eaten. So take a decoy! There are survivors throughout the mall, and elderly janitor Otis will give you updates on where to find survivors. You can follow Otis’s directions, or you can find some survivors yourself, such as the teenagers who have boarded themselves up



**PEE PEE**

PP tracks Frank's progress throughout the game, adding a gentle RPG whiff to the overpowering stench of zombie blood. Only a delicate whiff, mind

**CALM DOWN**

Clunk friends over the head with errant golf club swings and they'll soon defect and start fighting back. Just like real life! Hooray!

**THICKER THAN WATER**

Carelessly swing a baseball bat around your head like a stripper swings her knickers, and you'll be collecting more blood than the National Blood Service

near the fountain. When you find them, they stupidly attack you, thinking you are a zombie. A few wise words with the chainsaw later and they're behaving again. It's never straightforward with survivors; some need piggyback rides, some refuse to leave without partners, some are slow runners, some insist on having a weapon. You would think that they'd be happy just being with a man wearing Magical Videogame Pants.

Even when you think you've seen it all, there are cool touches to surprise you. Having left the teenagers at the fountain at the hands of the zombies so you could use the distraction as a getaway, they actually shot themselves rather than face a hellish afterlife as shuffling zombies. When nighttime arrives, the zombies come out in force - complete with hellish red eyes. Worse than that

are the fellow survivors who aren't interested in surviving, but only in killing. Then there are the boss battles as well...

All *Dead Rising* needs now is slight AI sharpening for your human companions, a gentle kick of persuasion where lines of code fail them. We couldn't get Jeff to climb a simple step so we could shove his fat behind into the ventilation shaft where he could scramble to safety. Therefore, we beat him to death with a golf club instead. Admittedly, that's slightly stronger than a 'gentle kick of persuasion', but if the AI

was up to speed, Jeff would have survived. Regardless, *Dead Rising* is going to be brilliant. There's no way it can't be anything but brilliant. With a plot threaded through the game for the casual zombie slayer, hot females for the chauvinist, and sheer carnage for the plug-in-and-play-for-five-minutes gamer, who just wants to unload frustration after a hard day at work, *Dead Rising* has it all. **Ryan King**

**CARE BEAR/**  
Stylish headgear makes for fancy zombie killing

**FACT:** The myth of zombies came from Haitian folklore, where voodoo sorcerers known as 'bokor' would resurrect the dead. Haitians believed this, and thus the zombie was born.

**HOW'S IT LOOKING?**

It has never looked like anything less than a stellar triple-A title, and with *Dead Rising* within biting distance of the finish line, it's still looking absolutely stunning.

Thriller?



**CHEAP SHOT/** This portly guy seems to have had one too many burgers from Steers



- Liveaware**
- Group deathmatch for up to 12 players
  - Catch The Pimp team battle
  - Hunt The Medallion

**Release date/** September 2006

## NEED TO KNOW

**Publisher/** THQ  
**Developer/** Volition  
**Genre/** Action  
**Players/** 12  
**Xbox Live/** Yes

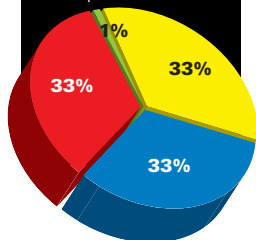
## Briefly

Open-world gangster japey abounds in THQ's epic next-gen offering, without resembling any other game whatsoever...

## IN THE PIE

The Saints are all about...

- Beating
- Burning
- Shooting
- Pimp Hats



# SAINTS ROW

THQ unveils Saints Row's multiplayer mode and it looks solid

**G**rand Theft Auto clone - there, we've said it. We know it's obvious and we're aware it has been said before, but in order to say anything original about *Saints Row*, we must first purge our souls of all such lazy criticism. With that unpleasant business out of the way, we're happy to admit that the more we see of *Saints Row* the more we like it. The game has advanced in leaps and bounds since its unveiling at E3 2005, and plagiarism or no plagiarism; this is looking like a highly polished and ambitious product.

With so much energy being ploughed into spotting the similarities, most people have lost sight of what's really important: what *Saints Row* is adding to the open-world format. An in-depth session with the final code will no doubt reveal a host of new features, but for now, we'll have to make do with *Saints Row*'s multiplayer function, unveiled by THQ at a recent event.

After using the game's character creator to create the most inappropriate-

looking gangster we could manage, we were treated to three multiplayer modes, the first being a conventional all-against-all deathmatch. Set in a large sandy arena ringed by seats and speckled with various items of cover, the playing area was uncomfortably exposed. Coupled with the fiddly aiming (another trait that *Saints Row* shares with *GTA*), gaining control of the situation virtually demanded some up-close combat, and after stumbling upon an electric car and an Uzi tucked away behind some crates, this suddenly seemed like a rather good idea.

The second mode was an interesting take on Capture the Flag, with all the players dropped into a section of the

“ The challenge of Catch The Pimp proved to be most rewarding ”





1

## WHILE YOU WAIT

### Pre-show carnage

While we waited for others to join, our character was dropped into a lobby area, which took the form of a warehouse packed with potential cover in the form of crates, boxes and barrels. Each character was already armed, allowing us to shoot things, jump up and down, run around in circles and be excitable.



3

VERSION TESTED  
90%  
COMPLETE

## THE JOY OF DEATH

### New approaches to murder, mayhem and fraud

- 1 Aim that** rocket launcher at the elevated train tracks and let rip. The track will collapse to the ground, along with, if your timing is good, a train. Handy for getting out of a tight situation.
- 2 Should you** find yourself short of crack money, you can collaborate with one of your burnout friends to stage an accident and claim the insurance money. It's better than stealing as you get to run someone over.
- 3 Some missions** will require you to have a certain level of respect. You can gain this in sub-games, one of which involves killing pimps and stealing their girls. They call it Snatch, but we'd call it Pimp Whack.



2

city littered with gold medallions, and tasked with collecting as many as possible and carrying them to a drop-point. Simple stuff, were it not for seven angry enemies all with caps ready to be popped into the nearest ass. The buildings and multiple routes presented by a cityscape introduced a much-appreciated tactical element to the ensuing chaos, and despite initial confusion as to what we were supposed to be doing, it was roundly agreed as superior to the deathmatch.

The best, however, was left until last, with Catch The Pimp. The eight players were split into two teams, and dropped on opposite sides of a building. One person was named as the pimp and had to be escorted by his/her allies to one of two exits, while the opposing team had to kill the pimp. It was the most compelling scenario by far, with real tactical consideration needed to

foil the escape. Our one criticism was that with an even number on each side, it was difficult for the defending team to cover both exits without being outnumbered by the enemy, but this only placed greater emphasis on skill, and the challenge proved to be most rewarding.

With several more modes promised for the finished game, the multiplayer mode is an extra dose of fun in an

**THE HUMANITY/**  
We don't know whether to admire the fire effects or gag at the burning corpse



already entertaining game. We doubt that *Saints Row* will become an essential Live experience. The controls were too fiddly and the accuracy too unforgiving, but it's one more reason to fork out some cash, and another step towards shaking off the shadow of its predecessor. **Matt Handrahan**

**FACT:** Saint Dismas is the Patron Saint of criminals. He was crucified alongside Jesus and was the only criminal to ask for his blessing. Wow! Xbox 360 gets religious!

## HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Some will never get past its similarities to a certain Rockstar classic, but this is a professional job with few cracks. Open your mind and it could be highly rewarding.

Thriller?



# XBOX 360



Xbox 360 will have the greatest games line-up ever.

Microsoft have put the most powerful and programmable next-generation system into the hands of the world's greatest game designers.

In designing Xbox 360, they created a complete development platform that harmonises powerful hardware, powerful software tools. This complete platform lets developers focus on creating games rather than wrestling with technology.

Xbox 360 redefines what games look like, sound like, feel like, and play like to engage you like never before.



XBOX 360

### CORE SYSTEM

**Includes:** > Console (Standard finish DVD tray) > Wired controller > Power supply & cord > Instruction manuals > Composite AV cable > **Note:** A Memory Unit (or hard drive) is required for game saves (59523)

**R2 699<sup>95</sup>**  
TERMS R161pm x 24 MONTHS



XBOX 360

**Includes:** > Console (Exclusive chrome DVD tray) > 20GB hard drive > Wireless controller > Ethernet connectivity cable > Component HD AV cable > Headset > Power supply & cord > Instruction manuals > 2 x AA batteries for wireless controller (59524)

**R3 699<sup>95</sup>**  
TERMS R221pm x 24 MONTHS



+



OR



OR



XBOX 360 (59524)  
+ CALL OF DUTY 2 (59658)  
OR QUAKE 4 (59659)  
OR TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND (59660)

**R3 999<sup>95</sup>**  
TERMS R238pm x 24 MONTHS



+



+



+



XBOX 360 (59524)  
+ NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED (59728)  
+ TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 06 (59725)  
+ FIFA 2006 (59735)

**R4 199<sup>95</sup>**  
TERMS R250pm x 24 MONTHS



+



+



OR



XBOX 360 (59524) + WIRELESS CONTROLLER (59526) + PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3 (59666) + PERFECT DARK ZERO (59665) OR KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER (59668)

**R4 599<sup>95</sup>**  
TERMS R274pm x 24 MONTHS

# The next generation of gaming is here.



**X-MEN 3  
THE OFFICIAL  
GAME** (59661)

**R299<sup>95</sup>**



**KAMEO:  
ELEMENTS  
OF POWER**  
(59668)

**R299<sup>95</sup>**



**DEAD OR  
ALIVE 4**  
(59667)

**R399<sup>95</sup>**



**QUAKE 4**  
(59659)

**R399<sup>95</sup>**



**CALL OF  
DUTY 2,  
GAME OF  
THE YEAR**  
(59658)

**R399<sup>95</sup>**



**TONY  
HAWK'S  
AMERICAN  
WASTELAND**  
(59660)

**R399<sup>95</sup>**



**FAR CRY  
INSTINCTS,  
PREDATOR**  
(59332)

**R399<sup>95</sup>**



**PERFECT  
DARK  
ZERO**  
(59665)

**R299<sup>95</sup>**



**PROJECT  
GOTHAM  
RACING 3**  
(59666)

**R499<sup>95</sup>**



**MOTOGP '06**  
(59672)

**R499<sup>95</sup>**



**OBLIVION IV:  
THE ELDER  
SCROLLS**  
(59656)

**R499<sup>95</sup>**



**NINETY-NINE  
NIGHTS** (59673)

**R499<sup>95</sup>**



**SAINTS  
ROW**  
(59671)

**R549<sup>95</sup>**



**ENCHANTED  
ARMS** (59664)

**R599<sup>95</sup>**



**JUST  
CAUSE**  
(59651)

**R599<sup>95</sup>**



**GHOST  
RECON  
ADVANCED  
WARFIGHTER**  
(59663)

**R599<sup>95</sup>**



**TEST DRIVE  
UNLIMITED**  
(59662)

**R599<sup>95</sup>**

**BUY ALL  
3 FOR R699<sup>95</sup>**



**TIGER  
WOODS  
PGA  
TOUR 06**  
(59725)

**R399<sup>95</sup>**



**NEED FOR  
SPEED  
MOST  
WANTED**  
(59728)

**R399<sup>95</sup>**



**FIFA 06**  
(59735)

**R399<sup>95</sup>**



**PREY**  
(59670)

**R499<sup>95</sup>**

Available at all stores  
from 30 Sept 2006

Shop online at [www.incredible.co.za](http://www.incredible.co.za)

Prices include 14% VAT. Prices stated herein are recommended retail and are subject to change. Credit approval is subject to the terms and conditions as stipulated on the application forms. All standard terms and conditions of Incredible Connection & suppliers herein apply. E&OE.

**Incredible  
CONNECTION**  
INCREDIBLE CALL CENTRE 0860 011 700

# HARDWARE

PERIPHERALS AND OTHER COOL STUFF



## WIRELESS HEADSET

There were some complaints about the current headset that comes with the 360 (if you get/got a Premium with it), so Microsoft has responded by announcing the Wireless Headset. This headset enables wireless voice chat without the little cable running from the controller to the headset. In fact, reports indicate that the Wireless Headset will connect directly to the Xbox 360. No mention has been made yet if the Wireless Headset will work with the upcoming Wireless Gaming Receiver for Windows. The Gaming Receiver is a USB device that lets you use Xbox 360 wireless accessories (especially the wireless Xbox 360 Controller) on any Windows-based computer.

## FACEPLATES - VARIOUS

The Xbox 360 is customisable both inside and out. You can change the dashboard themes and even use your own images as backdrops, while on the outside you can replace the faceplate with one of your choice. Faceplates are made by a variety of vendors and come in any colour or pattern available. In South Africa, faceplates may not take off as they did overseas, but time will tell.

The faceplate pops off by pulling at the bottom (the side with the Ring of Light) and a new one snaps onto the front.

If you are handy with a printer and scissors, you can even design your own faceplate if you purchase a clear faceplate. With free software found at <http://www.nyko.com/nyko/products/?i=69>, you can design and print out your own faceplate backing, which you wedge in between a clear faceplate and the 360 itself.

Faceplates are purely aesthetic - that little touch to make the 360 yours.





### VGA CABLE

Cannot afford an HD-compatible TV? The official VGA Cable lets you plug your 360 into a standard PC monitor (wonderful for LCD monitors). The VGA Cable outputs HD resolutions up to 1,280 x 1,024. The cable is over two meters long, shielded, and can also output Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound.

### WIRELESS NETWORK ADAPTER

Cables are fine and dandy, but why not complement the wireless controllers by making the network wireless as well. The Wireless Network Adapter plugs into one of the USB ports on your 360 and acts as a wireless network card, letting you connect to any wireless router or network, and saving you the heartache of tripping over a network cable and landing on your dog.

### PLAY & CHARGE KIT

Wireless controllers need to have their batteries recharged - usually right in the middle of a bossfight. The Play & Charge Kit comes with a rechargeable battery pack and a connection cable that attaches to the 360. This charges the battery pack while you play, and when it's full, you can just detach the cable for freedom.



### LOGITECH DRIVEFX AXIAL FEEDBACK WHEEL

The DriveFX attaches to a surface using a dual-point clamp system, keeping it sturdily in place. The steering wheel turns 200 degrees, with a fair amount of force feedback provided by an external power supply. Rubber grips on the hold positions of the wheel maintain a comfortable ride, while at the back of the unit a plug for the Xbox Live Headset keeps you in voice-communication while driving. On the face of the wheel resides all the 360 buttons, including the Guide button. The construction of the wheel is solid, using a 'solid mould' technique to make the entire unit one sturdy lump. The foot pedals connect to the wheel and the entire setup seems ideal for *Project Gotham Racing 3*, although the dead zone on the wheel cannot be calibrated.



### XPLODER MEDIA CENTER

If there is any kind of crack or niche left exposed on a console, Blaze is there with a product in hand. The Xploder Media Center is such a piece of software, bridging a few gaps left in Microsoft's console, as long as you have Windows Media Center XP installed on your PC.

The main gambit of Media Center is that it removes the file type limitation of the Xbox 360's movie-playing capabilities. Media Center adds support to play DivX, Xvid, MPEG-1 and 2, as well as AVI. You run the Movie Stream application on your PC, and select the movie you wish to play via your networked 360.

The included software also includes MP3 music management, allowing you to rip your CDs to MP3 easily, complete with online Album, Artist and Track Name auto-complete. From there, the music can be streamed via network to the Xbox 360.

Included with the kit is an Ethernet X-Link Cable, three meters long and perfect for purchasers of the Core system who didn't get a network cable.

### ULTIMATE CARE KIT

While not as exciting as something that lets you cheat or play movies on your 360, the Ultimate Care Kit is still rather useful. It contains a variety of things that can help troubleshoot as well as clean and maintain your 360, along with its discs.

Inside the kit you get one multifunctional DVD, repair polymer, a repair sponge and some cleaning cloth. The DVD itself has a laser lens cleaner on it that removes dirt and grime from the laser lens inside the 360. This kit can actually also be used with a PlayStation 2 and a regular DVD player. The DVD can also run a sound test and a video test. Several screensavers have also been included, viz a fireplace, an aquarium and fireworks.

The DVD repair involves using the polymer to fill in scratches, smoothing them out using the included sponge, cloth and etc.



## CORE OR PREMIUM?

By James Francis

**S**o you've decided to get an Xbox 360. It's definitely a great machine to own, and thanks to a later launch, South Africans have a nice selection of games to choose from when they pick up the console. There's also the excitement of playing against friends, playing online and playing on a crystal-clear HD television. However, Microsoft decided to release two products instead of one. There are two options in the Xbox 360 family: the Core and Premium units. At the grassroots level, these machines are the same. There is no difference between the Core and Premium in terms of performance or which games they can play. The difference is in what you get in addition.

The biggest difference between the two is that the Premium ships with a hard drive. The deal is sweetened with the wireless controller and headset, which are pretty awesome, but the main catch is the 20GB of storage. While no 360 game requires the use of the hard drive yet [except for save games], there's little doubt that this trend will change in the next year or so. It's just too useful not to use.

There's already a practical limitation in getting a Core unit. Live, the Xbox's online service and the cornerstone of Microsoft's console strategy, requires a hard drive. So, if you own a Core without a hard drive, you can't join online games. Getting online with a 360 is as easy as connecting the console to your broadband modem and setting up the network addresses. Playing online will cost you \$24.99 a year – less than R200! But you need the hard drive, especially if you plan to download the demos that are frequently released online.

So why go online? You never needed to with a PlayStation 2. True, but how often did you wish you had someone to have a quick game against? When it's your game, you are usually the best at it, and friends often become unfortunate casualties of your skills. But on Live you can find a ten year old who'll burn doughnuts around you in *PGR3* while chatting to his friend about school over the headset.

Core gives you some room. The good news is that the hard drive can be bought as an accessory, which also suggests that larger models might appear on the market at some point. If you don't want a wireless controller or the headset (and skip on a month free on Live), buying a Core unit and supplying it with a hard drive and another wired controller is only slightly more expensive than a Premium unit, and less expensive than a Premium unit with two wireless controllers. At the very least, you'll need to get a memory card, and we all know that buying a second controller is inevitable. We personally love the wireless controller, but if finances are tight, starting humbly is not a bad deal.



BUY A COPY OF MOTOGP '06 SMS\* HONDA  
AND THE BARCODE TO 34107 AND STAND A CHANCE TO  
**WIN A HONDA BIKE\*\***



**A UNIQUE ANGLE ON RACING**  
XBOX LIVE



**\*\*WIN A HONDA CBR600RR**  
VIEW THE BIKE AT  
[WWW.HONDA.CO.ZA](http://WWW.HONDA.CO.ZA)



[WWW.THQ.CO.UK](http://WWW.THQ.CO.UK)

**MotoGP '06**  
[www.motogpthe game.com](http://www.motogpthe game.com)

Game and Software © 2006 THQ Inc. MotoGP, THQ and their respective logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, and the Xbox, Xbox 360 and Xbox Live logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

Competition rules 1. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 2. The prizes are not transferable and may not be converted into cash. 3. Staff members of MI Digital and the participating partners as well as their advertising agencies and their immediate family members may not enter. 6. The competition is open to readers in South Africa. 7. Prizes awarded are the responsibility of the competition sponsors. MI Digital cannot be held responsible in the event of any problems arising. 8. \*Retain proof of purchase. SMS's charged at R2. Competition closes December 2006

Jump in.





0U812



*Enjoyed by Zombies everywhere*

The Sport Reanimate Aviator [0U812] is a masterpiece of traditional Colorado precision engineering. Individually handcrafted, this limited edition timepiece is crafted from only the finest materials and assembled under the watchful eye of our master ironsmith, a family honoured tradition passed from father to son for over 200 years.



*In times of peace or holocaust nothing ticks like a Zorex*

For more information please call 10810 or visit [www.nag.co.za](http://www.nag.co.za)  
Available at the Zorex boutique in Willamette, Colorado

A NAG PARODY ADVERT