

# NAG



## PS Vita

We play with Sony's new toy

## Reviews

- L.A. Noire
- The Witcher 2:
- Assassins of Kings
- Duke Nukem Forever
- Brink
- + More!



# BATTLEFIELD 3

Two words, Hands-on multiplayer! Or is that three words?

JULY 2011 SOUTH AFRICA R42.00



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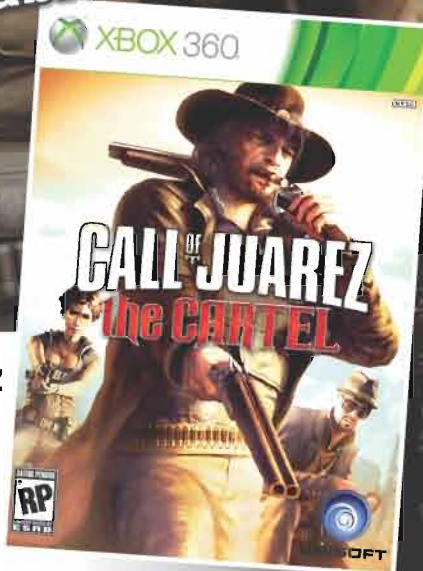
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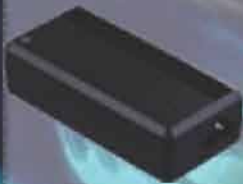
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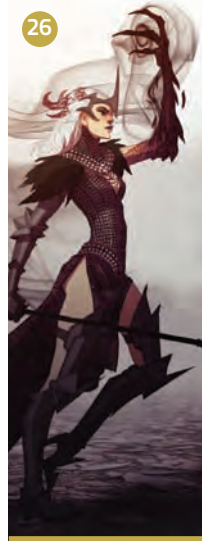
this magazine when you're finished with it.

## Regulars

- 10 Ed's Note
- 12 Inbox
- 14 Bytes
- 94 DIY – Modding 101: Case Modding FAQ

## Opinion

- 14 I, Gamer
- 16 The Game Stalker
- 18 The Indie Investigator
- 20 Miktar's Meanderings
- 72 Hardwired
- 83 Life, Hardware and Ch@ps
- 98 Game Over



## Features

- 26 **Into The Pixel 2011**  
Art! The stuff's everywhere. There might even be a feature dedicated to it on page 26. Only the art knows for sure.
- 32 **Top eight developers who have fallen from grace**  
We love games. We love the people who make games. However, when the signs of developer madness creep in, we can't help but wonder: where are their minds?
- 62 **Battlefield 3**  
Michael James was kicked out of the real-world army for putting his pants on backwards one fateful morning. That's why he enjoys *Battlefield 3*: because the pants are put on for him.
- 68 **NGL Black Ops online league update**  
10 days, 7,000 teams, 3 minutes, 57 burly men, 1 lapdog and 1 barrel of lube – and we're still no closer to the end of our *Black Ops* online league. Read on for updates.

## Previews

- 34 inFAMOUS 2
- 36 Max Payne 3
- 38 Dragon's Dogma



## Reviews

- 40 Reviews: Introduction
- 41 Short Reviews: Hector: Badge of Carnage
- Episode 1 / Terraria
- 42 Brink
- 44 L.A. Noire
- 46 The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings
- 48 LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean: The Video Game
- 50 Thor: God of Thunder
- 52 Virtua Tennis 4
- 54 Operation Flashpoint: Red River
- 56 Duke Nukem Forever
- 58 Darkspore
- 60 SBK 2011



76

## Hardware

- 70 Tech News
- 76 Lazy Gamer's Guide: PlayStation Vita
- 82 Dream Machine
- 84 ASUS P8Z68-V PRO
- 86 MSI Big Bang-Marshall
- 87 AEXEA PC1600 4GB Dual Channel Kit
- 88 Intel 5120 120GB SSD
- 89 ZEROtherm ZT-10D
- 90 ASUS SABERTOOTH 990FX
- 91 Seagate Momentus XT 500GB
- 92 GIGABYTE X58A-OC

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## NAG DVD

### Demos

Doctor Who - Blood of the Cybermen / Faery Legends of Avalon / LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean / Mount & Blade: With Fire and Sword / Space Pirates and Zombies

### Drivers

ATI Catalyst (v11.5) Win7 & Vista [32/64-bit] / NVIDIA GeForce (v270.61) Win7 & Vista [32/64-bit]

### Extras

Way too many to list. Look at the DVD.

### Musica

FamousSale.exe

### Utilities

NAG CD Database / SM Player / VLC Player

### 123 Videos

120 Game Trailers / 2 ScrewAttack Video Game Vault videos / 1 Pop-Fiction

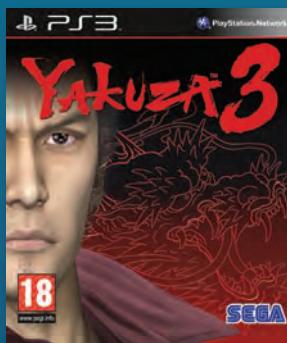


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# Parallax

Next month we're going to give you an amazing E3 supplement bagged with the magazine, free! But this is not about that. But do get it because it's going to be epic. Anyway, I came back from E3 with one week to go on this issue's print deadline – I only experienced some mild panic because I've got a crack squad of people here that can handle anything (this doesn't mean increases, so don't ask).

Between bouts of sleepiness there was just barely enough time to scribble down a few things about what I thought of my hands-on time with the E3 *Battlefield 3* multiplayer code. I'm still taking jokes about the state of the article before it was polished up by everyone that read it. This all brings me to a half-baked theory about jet lag...

Let's consider an existence where souls and the spirit world are traditionally understood. For example, your 'soul' isn't really part of your physical form but rather something that 'floats' above your head or 'around' your brain. Stay with me here – it gets crazier. Now humans, having evolved for tens of thousands of years to adapt to travelling around by either running or walking and in extreme cases riding horses, aren't used to moving around the world quickly. So a trip to Los Angeles from Johannesburg would take primitive man about 2 years and a few months travelling at around 20 kilometres a day (walking and probably some sailing). I did it in about 30 hours (including layovers). This got me to thinking that a 'soul' can only keep up at a much slower speed and it takes a few days for 'it' to synchronise again, resulting in what we call jet lag. But now that I've written it all out like this it really seems a little dumb and poorly thought out. Oh well, doesn't really matter, this is my space after all and I do feel better today and that's all that matters.

Oh, one last thing – I've just been told that our website traffic has tripled over the last few months (apparently it's because we've been putting more effort in). So, thanks for the support and if you're not visiting then go have a look and see if you like what you click. Then, if you want to talk to the most informed gaming community in South Africa visit our forums and post like a madman. We troll there often too.

Love it hard and make it last.

## NGL

Our gaming league sponsors deserve your love. I'd like to welcome both Incredible Connection and Plantronics to the NGL party this month. The reason why I'm talking about this here is because I want you to understand that when corporates sponsor something we're doing for the gamers, it benefits all of gaming and grows

the whole industry. So remember that next time you're out there spending your money. Right, blatant promoting out the way – go here for more: [www.nagleague.co.za](http://www.nagleague.co.za).

## YES, MORE MINECRAFT

A guy called Daniel sent me a letter with this image attached and some inspiration struck. Message, "Earlier this week I found myself wondering where the NAG staff created those masterpieces that strike my wallet every time I see a new issue. But if I had to take a guess, it would look something like this, (Just less pixelated). I present to you all, NAG corp., complete with pitfall and lighted walkways – my thanks to *Minecraft* (game) for assistance in this project."

To all you *Minecraft* players, send in your best creations of what you think the NAG headquarters looks like / should look like. There will be a prize for the most creative, the most impressive and the most awesome works of art (we might even feature them at rAge 2011). You can either take a screenshot or simply zip the world and mail the whole thing to us – deadline is the end of July. Send to [ed@nag.co.za](mailto:ed@nag.co.za).

## COVER STORY

There's nothing too exciting to report this month. I only had to travel 16,679.2412 kilometres (exactly) to Los Angeles and fight my way through the masses of dumb meat clogging up the convention centre where E3 was held. I had to buy new shoes because my old ones weren't up to the job (both pairs). I had to break my really excellent healthy eating plan for Burger King, beers and Jack Daniels (I blame Ubisoft). I'm still fighting jet lag – people kept asking me why I'm so pale for three days after I got back thanks to some illness I picked up from a meat stuffed airplane. Thank goodness I didn't fly economy. The bottom line, it was all worth it. Is *Battlefield 3* a *Call of Duty* killer? No idea really, we'll just have to wait and see (people will probably just buy both at the end of the day). Also, thanks to Ralph at EA and the guys at DICE for the beers and personalised dog tags.

RedTide  
[Editor]





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## Letter of the month July 2011

**From: Jaryd****Subject: The Holidays**

We all went into class and sat down when our teacher popped the question...What did you do in the holidays? Cameron got up first and said: 'I slept', a few people laughed and we went to the next person. Steven said: 'I went to a plant expo and saw a beautiful Fern. Duncan stood up and said 'I played with myself... because no one else wanted to play Monopoly'. And then it was finally my turn so I got up and began my story... In the holidays I went on an epic battle to kill my dad (who is actually a god of thunder) and put an end to the gods once and for all. There were many perils on the way like

flaming three headed dogs, flying harpies, giant Cyclops and undead soldiers just to name a few. I was then kidnapped by the C.I.A who interrogated me about some numbers in my head that were actually launch codes. I also had realistic flash backs that made me feel like I was right there in the middle of the action. I then made lots of weird contraptions and creatures as a sack boy right before I finished killing my sister about ten times using different things like grenades, exploding arrows, a group of hunting dogs, RPGs (No not role playing games) and a AK-47. I then became the president and defended my office from zombies. I then went to a

place called Azeroth and met the most beautiful Night elf called Elaina but we ended our relationship quickly as I found out she was really a 43 year old man who still lives with his mom. And that's what I did in the holidays... Oh wait I almost forgot the most important thing... On my holiday we had KFC.

**Good one! I'm seriously thinking of spending this December holiday at home in front of my computer. I'm usually in the ocean, playing golf, flying, drinking cocktails, etc. but with all these cool games on the radar I just don't see how I'm going to be able to kick back and relax when I've got things to unlock in Battlefield 3. Ed.**



The 'Letter of the Moment' prize is sponsored by Megarom. The winner receives two games for coming up with the most inspired bit of wisdom or cleverness.

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**Important:** Include your details when mailing us, otherwise how will you ever get your prize if you win...

**From: Shaderow****Subject: Development teams got no balls**

So MW3... who could have seen that coming – now is it just me or has our beloved industry become somewhat rotten? Development teams are too scared to try anything else and we are getting stuck with rehash after rehash of the same old sh1t. Now this is not a letter to smudge Infinity Ward (although they are now a skeleton crew) it's about our beloved series. I'm not against sequels, but when we arrive at Awesome game X the 14th, enough is enough. Series do need to end and rehashing them again and again will only smudge their reputation. In the end you are left with only a husk of its former glory. Why? Development teams don't have balls. But I salute the brave people like Epic Games who will end their series with a high note. Remakes are also good because they are bringing the originals back like Duke. But the heroes of the industry are ultimately giving the finger to their publishers and doing their own thing. Prime example: Goichi Suda and Shinji Mikami at Grasshopper who are working on Shadow of the Damned. The main reason I'm picking it up is because these two gaming juggernauts never rehash again and again. They throw new sh1t out there and just pray it doesn't hit the fan. So here is hoping Rehashed cash in shooter Y finally ends before its 19th instalment and we get more of: Weird ass original game X.

**LOL... I agree, I never thought I'd see the day when we get regular annual FIFA-styled updates to massive games like Call of Duty. In all fairness to Infinity Ward, MW3 is two years in the making. Remember, Treyarch Studios makes a Call of Duty game one year then the next year Infinity Ward makes a Call of Duty game. This alternating does kind of keep it fresh – kind of. It's great to see originality but game publishers need to make serious money to keep the whole industry growing and evolving. If it wasn't for games like FIFA and Call of Duty: MW2 then we wouldn't see 'risky' games like the first Dead Space and the original concepts and massive investment behind**

**something like Skylanders. Of course, as always, if you don't like something – just don't buy it. Ed.**

**From: Can't be 100% sure...****Subject: DVD Request and LA Noire ramblings**

I've been buying NAG since October 2006, have missed a few issues not by choice, anyway I don't want NAG, or maybe I do. ;) Sorry about that it's 5:30 in the morning and I clearly need some sleep, anyway to the topic at hand. I was wondering if you guys could please include the entire Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo E3 conferences on one of your upcoming DVDs, as far as I know, you guys have never done this. I think it would be cool since many of us can't be there physically, this is the next best option, maybe sort of an E3 special DVD or you could put one conference per month, oh and if possible could you slip the 3.61 PS3 update on there as well please. Thanks in advance and keep up the good work.

**We would put the conferences on the DVD but they're huge (500MB+ each), and then even at that size the video quality is rubbish. They're interesting but also filled with a lot of prancing around fluff and useless information that everyone already knows. We'll make sure you get all the best video content from E3 on the next DVD (August 2011) - it will literally blow your mind out of the back of your face. I promise. Then, we do sometimes (when there's space) put the PS3 and PSP updates on the DVD, but these are very low priority files because they're included on all new software discs anyway. So, whenever you buy a new game your get the latest update. Boom! Solved! Ed.**

**From: Marius****Subject: Platinum trophy**

How I miss the 8-bit era. Think about it, how many games have you played or loaned from a friend to play and never complete, but you kept playing because it was fun (good old Contra and how I stole my friends extra lives LOL). Sadly these days all games feature a platinum

**Shorts****[extracts of LOL n00b from NAG reader letters]**

"I do not want the gaming community to change, because without the assholes, jerks, noobs and nerd ragers, gaming would not be what it is today. And I, like many others, are enjoying the crap out of it."  
– Reghardt

"What can I do NAG? I have had to make hard decisions on what games I will miss out on. Keep in mind that I wrote all of this in a tuxedo for no reason."  
– Sebastian

"I had, in my very brief history of gaming, followed the AC series like a fat kid followed cake."  
– Ivan

"Time and time again we gamers are disappointed by developers that promise the sun and the moon and only deliver Uranus."  
– Marius

"Have some sympathy for me... I typed this entire email on my Blackberry and now I have sore thumbs."  
– Keaton

trophy (PS3) for getting every trophy in the game.

Dearest developers not all of us have time to search every corner of the game for that elusive hidden object. Now gamers score is important to some and I must admit I'm tempted to achieve 100% in some games but definitely not all of them. Besides why must I be forced to achieve certain objectives in a specific way just to get a trophy? You rave about freedom in games but yet we are still confined by the rules of trophies.

Let's face it not all games merit a replay, and some are so short that you have to replay just in order to fire all the weapons at least once. I miss the good old days where games were fun and nothing more. Where a replay was because the game keeps you excited and not because some stupid trophy demands it. Platinum trophies should be for finishing a game and nothing else.

**Come on man! Take control of your life. You'll only be free the second you start understanding that all these silly digital badges, stickers and gold guns are just there to keep you and your time invested in a particular game or brand. The only trophy that's been worth achieving in the last 27 years of gaming has been the status of 'Elite' in the game Elite. Everything else is just a LOL, although I did get the clay pigeon achievement in a Duke multiplayer game recently for killing a guy mid-air with a shotgun. That was cool and it made me laugh. Ed.**

**From: Sebastian****Subject: Copycats**

There is something that I cannot stand and never will (in the gaming industry) – copycats. Copying someone else's ideas is not all that bad, I think, but there are some things that are just awful, like every shooter trying to copy Call of Duty, or Sony and Microsoft releasing motion controls when there has already been a Wii in the market for years. This is the reason why I have always respected Nintendo, I may not like their products all that much but I respect the fact that they try to come up with their own ideas and I have never seen a Nintendo product



## NAG fan artwork

This is the cream of the crop that we received at NAG this issue. If you insert, use or create a piece of gaming artwork incorporating the NAG logo you might also end up here for your three lines of fame. Remember, don't just stick the logo on a picture – use the logo in a picture or you win squat.



**AJ van der Westhuyzen**, "I saw that art thing about 2 months ago and decided to do an artwork of my own."



**Dwayne de Kock**, "The image was done in Photoshop with a Wacom tablet."

that is clearly stolen from someone else. I used to love Call of Duty but then they started making one every year, which did not give them time to make big improvements to the game, and on top of that many other developers are now making FPS's that are exactly like or similar to that, for example: Homefront, Killzone 3 (it's almost the same but with different perks, classes and shit like that), even games like Crysis 2 or Halo have the same overall feel. I think that these developers are still going to do this until Call of Duty dies just like Guitard Hero did. However guys I do not see any sign of a linear and original first person shooter that has a multiplayer that blows our minds, and I, like many other gamers out there, am upset.

**It's interesting that each month I get a few letters like this – someone complaining about rehashed ideas and everyone copying everyone else. I do like your point about Nintendo however – very true and although their software and hardware isn't for everyone, they sure do like keeping it innovative and original (see the Wii U in the news this month). But then having said that, how many Mario and Zelda games have we seen over the years? I get your point and well done to Nintendo for keeping it real. For some originality keep an eye out for XCOM, BioShock: Infinite and Brothers in Arms – all looking hot and bringing**

**"I'll be honest. I'm a Mac user. Yes, I know, get all the booing and hissing out of the way. [Boo, hiss, LOL, okay done, Ed]"**

**some original ideas to the bench. Ed.**

**From: Jandre**  
**Subject: High standards or terrible games?**

Okay first off, I want to say what a great magazine you guys have. Now let's cut to the chase. There are so many games people think are going to be so good but they are always disappointed for example "Bulletstorm" sucked. It was repetitive with bad voice acting. Terrible! The final boss-fight was predictable. And the swearing actually got too much and at the end after the credits, "God is dead" WTF? Seriously, this game gets a big fat thumbs down from me. And for me all the "Final Fantasy" games were great until the new one epic-failed. Even Brink was a little of a let-down. People are just almost always let-down. Do they put their standards too high? Or are there just terrible games out there?

**I think everyone's standards are just way too high. To all those people that complain about stuff they don't like in NAG, simply lower your standards so we can all Oscar Mike. Ed.**

**From: Stuart**  
**Subject: Mac + NAG = :)**

I'll be honest. I'm a Mac user. Yes, I know, get all the booing and hissing out of the way. **[Boo, hiss, LOL, okay done, Ed]** Also, I never used to be much of a gamer, so I never had a reason to buy NAG. Again, I'll give you time to boo and hiss. That all changed last month when I saw your May cover with Lara Croft. I'll admit, I bought the magazine purely on seeing the cover and, drooling over Miss Croft and with eyes misted over (for whatever reason, I'll leave that to you to decide), I took the magazine to the cashier and handed over my money without a second thought. When I got home I snapped out of my initial daze and actually read the magazine. I was amazed to find that I enjoyed every moment of it, not just the pretty pictures of Lara. Because of the state of gaming (or should that be porting?) on the Mac these days, it turns out I can actually get a lot of the games you reviewed running on my system. The demo of Torchlight from the NAG DVD I loaded onto my Windows partition and ended up playing it solidly for all but 12 minutes of the demo time. I enjoyed it so much I checked it out on Steam and hey it's available for the Mac as well! So from just an enticing cover of Lara Croft, you might just have a Mac user as a regular reader!

**Excellent, I would usually mock and berate you for owning a Mac but hey, as a regular paying customer I welcome you with open arms. Glad you like the magazine and sorry about owning a Mac – must be a terrible thing to live with. Ed.**

## On the Forums

**Use StarCraft II quotes to pick up girls – we'll show you how for a modest fee. Almost everyone is welcome: <http://www.nag.co.za/forums/>**

**Question: Which game do you think will be FPS of the year, and why?**

**Echo:** Deus Ex: Human revolution. If you count that as a FPS. That or Duke Nukem Forever.

**Darranged:** Personally, Crysis 2. It just delivered on everything it promised, from visuals to gameplay. But the award will probably go to Call of Duty. Yet again.

**CaViE:** If they can pull off a proper World War 3 situation with less 'splosions and more narrative (as if), then Modern Warfare 3 can be an easy game of the year, for FPS.

**Xperimance:** Either Battlefield 3 or Modern Warfare 3. Battlefield 3 because the game looks so fantastic right now with what we've seen and Modern Warfare 3 because... well... it's Call of Duty. Nuff said!

**pArkEr:** Battlefield 3, as it looks like the first true evolution of the war shooter since Call of Duty 2.

**Azraphael:** Call of who? Battlefield 3 baby, all the way.

**spjt07:** Duke Nukem Forever because it finally came out. I would be surprised if it didn't win the award.

**Repline:** My vote's going to Battlefield 3.

**Absolado:** COD MW 3, do I have to provide a reason for a game of this calibre.

**Flangenimblick:** Duke Nukem Forever! Why? Strippers. And guns.

**5h@un13:** Battlefield 3... pfft... Call of Duty Modern Warfare 3 is tops, unless for some magical reason that they screw it up.

**MarryO+LewyG:** Modern warfare and Battlefield will serve the fans but ultimately disappoint, because everyone knows what's coming. Dues ex will be repetitive and Forever's just going to be a bunch of fart jokes at the end of the day. So I'm hoping Rage or Prey 2 step up. Call me Nostradamus.

**..Enigma..:** Duke Nukem will forever be the best FPS.

**OllieTheDog:** Battlefield 3 FTW!

**Sci\_Ghost:** While Battlefield 3 & Modern Warfare 3 look great. I am a very long standing fan of id Software, if Rage still manages to get released this year then it gets my vote.

**Changsta 187:** I believe Crysis 2 has pulled it off very well and that this game counts as being one of the most successful FPS games in 2011.

**Toxxyc:** Crysis 2. It did what it was supposed to. My favourite FPS to date and true deserver of "FPS of the year" award.

**cov1e\_stalker:** Either Duke Nukem or Battlefield 3 deserve the award, but MW3 will probably be fps of the year due to higher sales, quantity over quality.

**Miz3r:** It will be a toss-up between Battlefield 3 and Modern Warfare 3 for best Fps, my money is on Battlefield 3 though as it has had great success in previous titles it has made and has never been at the limelight of controversy like Modern Warfare has with developer changes etc. , Crysis 2 will probably win best graphics or visuals, and Duke Nukem will win most anticipated game (Literally).

**ShawniF:** Far cry 3 if it even comes out this year because Far cry 2 was simply the best game ever enough said.

**Shaderow:** I've given up shooters. There are just too many..



# Line in the sand



The biggest gaming news of the year has been the downtime of the PlayStation Network and Sony's loss of over 70 million PSN user accounts. What, you didn't know? Quick, grab last month's *NAG* and check out the Bytes section! Once you've done that, pull your head out of your butt and start paying attention to the real world – it's not as dull as you might think despite the lack of Taurens and Night Elves or whatever keeps *WoW* geeks and blinkered gamers from an ordinary existence.

Losing the personal information of your customers to hackers is like submitting to corporate hara-kiri; in this case, ritualistic suicide might be Sony's best option here. To then reveal that an additional 20-odd million user accounts on a different Sony network have been swiped (this time on Sony Online Entertainment, bringing the total to around 100 million individual user accounts) doesn't help either.

At the time of writing this (mid-May – E3 deadlines!) the PSN remains down and rumours are whizzing round the

**"It's received more mass media coverage than any other gaming industry related story in recent memory, so is Sony f\*\*\*ed?"**

Internet that it will stay down until the end of May. That would bring the current total downtime to six weeks. Maybe by the time you read this in July, we'll have finally been able to play *Portal 2* and *Mortal Kombat* over the PSN.

There is no doubt in my mind that this is Sony's biggest PR disaster to date. It's infinitely bigger than the hidden DRM scandal that the company found itself in during 2005. It's received more mass media coverage than any other gaming industry related story in recent memory, so is Sony f\*\*\*ed?

Probably not, but that's partly thanks to its legion of devout PS3 fanboys who would find reason to defend Sony for just about any discrepancy, including child prostitution and mass genocide. Perhaps the console wars have been good for something after all – building a throng of mindless followers ready to jump to the company's defence when needed. But still, this got me wondering where my allegiances lie in this whole identity theft balls-up.

Do I have a PSN account? I used to, until some limy bastard made off with it to exact revenge on a global corporate for an apparent wrong they were forced to endure. Or something. I tend to stop paying attention once entitlement attitudes and self-righteous tendencies start bubbling to the surface. Am I pissed about having my personal details potentially flung out into the ether? Not really, considering all of those details are already available on Facebook and the like. Is Sony to blame? Partially – for having lax security protocols on their servers. Do I loathe them and wish them ill? Not at all; I do, however, hope that their investigation leads them to the morons who instigated this sh1t-storm to begin with. I do not sympathise with Sony, just like I would not sympathise with Microsoft were the same thing to happen on Xbox LIVE. Do I sympathise with the hacking group that is supposedly attacking Sony on behalf of the hard-done-by consumer? Absolutely not; I would sooner sympathise with Hitler.

So which side am I on? I'm on the side that's been screwed over during this entire episode: not the global corporate Sony and not the hacking scum with an inexplicable vendetta against them. I'm with the inconvenienced and slightly miffed gamer crowd who really just wants to do what the console and PSN was meant for.

Miklós Szecsei

# Wii U

## Nintendo confirms its next home console



You've waited for it; you've read the rumours and probably already made up your mind as to how this will look, but here it is: the next Wii. Despite a few of us thinking that the console wouldn't continue the Wii's name, it will indeed; Nintendo dubs it the Wii U. What does the "U" stand for, you may ask? Nintendo of America CEO Reggie Fils-Aime likes to think that it means "Utopian", but we get the feeling that he's either not too familiar with the meaning of the word, or is more full of himself than usual. Regardless, the official stance from Nintendo is that it means "you"; as in, "this is the console for you". If by "you" they mean "everyone"; and by "everyone", they mean *everyone*; this new Wii is aimed at any person capable of holding a controller, not just endless droves of grannies, housewives and *Zelda* fanboys. To back up this new approach, Nintendo has opted to put in some powerful hardware and have a chat to anyone involved in making games to ensure they take full advantage of the extra horses they'll have kicking around. Also, if you thought that the Wii Remote was weird when it launched, then hold onto your gardening hat, because this will blow you away.

Wii U will launch in 2012.

### THE NEW CONTROLLER

It doesn't have an official name yet; Nintendo just calls it the New

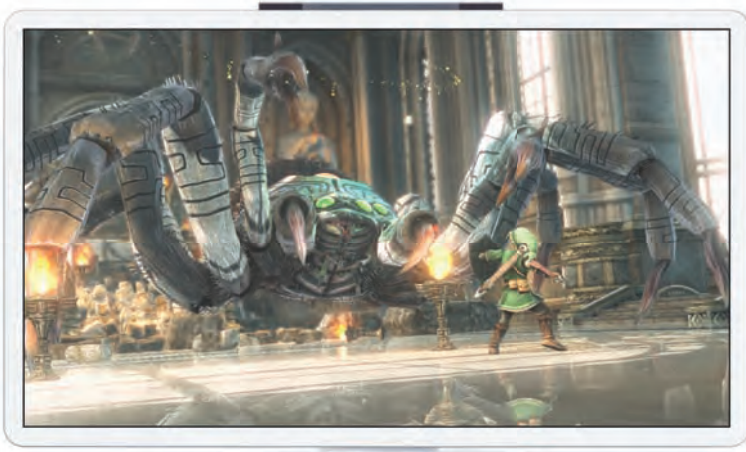
Controller. To create the New Controller, they took a regular controller and bolted on a tablet, effectively making the Wii U a gigantic, über-powerful DS. The screen has two possible functions: it can act as a secondary display for games that support it (we're not yet sure if all games will do so), displaying maps, inventory, extra controls and the like; its second function is that it can be switched to become the primary display (and thus the only one), should you have the need for the TV for other purposes. With the controller's built-in speakers, it's perfect if your annoying family wants to watch some sort of sport with big hairy men throwing balls at each other while you're in the middle of a game of *Pikmin* – simply pause the game, switch displays and resume playing.

What is clear that this isn't a portable gaming console. The controller does little processing on its own, instead it acts as a receiver for data that's streamed wirelessly from the console. It's also designed to be used "in the same room" as the Wii U, although we're not yet sure what sort of technical limit that implies.

### THE SPECS

At the time of writing, not all of the Wii U specifications were finalised, or if they were, Nintendo is keeping quiet on the matter. Here's what we know, and what we think we know:





**CPU:** IBM Power-based multi-core processor built on a 45nm fabrication process. It seems likely that it'll be a quad-core CPU with support for two threads per core. For some perspective, the Xbox 360 uses a triple-core, non multi-threaded CPU similar to this.

**GPU:** Custom AMD Radeon HD. We expect this to be along their high-end range, similar to what the 5000-series offers.

**Display output:** Full HD 1080p through HDMI. Component, S-Video and composite are also featured.

**RAM:** Unspecified IBM-proprietary embedded DRAM

**Media:** 25GB 12cm optical disc. It's been confirmed as neither Blu-ray nor DVD.

**Internal storage:** Unspecified internal flash memory.

**Ports:** 4 USB 2.0. SD Card reader. Sensor Bar power port.

**Backwards-compatibility:** Fully backwards-compatible with all Wii games and controllers. Drops compatibility with GameCube.

**Dimensions:** Approx. 46x172x270mm

**Controller:** Houses a 6.2" single-

touch screen. Also includes a Home button, A/B/X/Y, L/R, ZL/ZR, dual analogue sliders and a d-pad. Additional features include accelerometer, gyroscopes, vibration, camera, microphone, speakers, and sensor unit.

### THE GAMES

We've said it before and we'll go to the grave saying it: the games are what make or break a gaming platform. This time, Nintendo is intent to expand their market into the hardcore segment by throwing not just fancy hardware at the market, but by getting all the important third-party developers on board from the beginning. Here's a list of third-party titles that Nintendo has confirmed will make an appearance on the Wii U.

- Darksiders II
- Batman: Arkham City
- Ghost Recon Online
- Aliens: Colonial Marines
- Metro: Last Light
- Ninja Gaiden 3
- Unspecified Dirt title
- Unspecified Tekken title
- Unspecified Assassin's Creed title

That's a pretty decent list, and, together with Ninty's strong first-party franchises like *Zelda*, *Mario*, and *Donkey Kong*, we can expect tons of competition in the industry when Wii U launches.



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# Oooooooo, shiny!



Do you love games? Do you have a favourite game?

Well undoubtedly if you're reading this then the answer to at least the first question is yes. The real question however is WHY do you buy them and do you see a need to talk about them and tell everyone how AWESOME they are!

As an academic I can certainly admit to having a healthy interest in the hows and whys of game playing, as well as indulging in the odd rant about why a game simply sucks and is boring.

But generally I hate those rants – I figure if you ask someone about a game and all they can say is "That game sucks brul!" they're really not worth your time. Ask said person why it sucks and it takes a turn for the worse when the answer is "Because the graphics are s\*\*\*!" or "It looks old". To be honest, the reaction you'll get from me then is likely to be \*raise eyebrow

**"I don't play or buy games based on the hype or the marketing, or because the trailer looks cool, although I have been taken in by shiny cinematics in the past..."**

and walk away\*.

Not all games revolve around cool graphics! If that's all it has to offer then regardless of how pretty it looks I'm simply not going to play it for more than a couple of hours. I might give someone the short answer of "it sucks" (ok, no I wouldn't say that because that's not how I talk, but you get the idea), but I can certainly tell you why I think so – and that will very rarely involve graphical impressiveness.

Does that make me a game snob? Perhaps. I don't play or buy games based on the hype or the marketing, or because the trailer looks cool, although I have been taken in by shiny cinematics in the past, only to be bitterly disappointed as a result. I've reached the point where I buy games based either on recommendations by people I know actually have similar tastes and a good idea of what I like, or because they appeal to me on another level - and yes it sucks that even so, many games out there are duds. Which basically means I may not think that the game you love is ABSOLUTELY AMAZING! Sorry...

Of course I can recognise that a certain game is good – the graphics, the gameplay, the level design – but it doesn't mean I want to play it through again on the absolute hardest level once I've finished it because I just loved it SOOOO much and I feel the need to raise myself up to godlike status because I finished it on Insane Difficulty.

Meh.

Once I've finished the game, its unlikely I'll play it again unless its many years later and I'm taking a trip down memory lane, or if there's some kind of alternate storyline I want to explore.

I guess my point would be that there are other things that you can talk about when it comes to games apart from "cool graphics", and if that's your only reason for playing something, can you imagine what you're missing out on? How many of you have passed on a game as awesome as *Minecraft* for instance because it just doesn't look pretty enough? Do you know how many times I've heard, "Why are you showing all those old looking games"? You're shallow. Yes, I'm judging. Bite me.

Pippa Tshabalala

## Steering you in the right direction



Steering wheel peripherals are usually left to the domain of the racing-obsessed – the kind of gamers who wake up at 4am to watch the Grand Prix and have a mantelpiece lined with various bits of burnt tyres and charred leathers as mementos from their first-hand experiences. For this reason, such peripherals tend to be of high quality, and thus cost quite a bit of money. Well, that's soon to be no longer the case, as Microsoft plans to bring their Wireless Speed Wheel (using the term "wheel" rather loosely) to the masses at the price of \$60 – just \$10 more than the RRP for their regular wireless controllers.

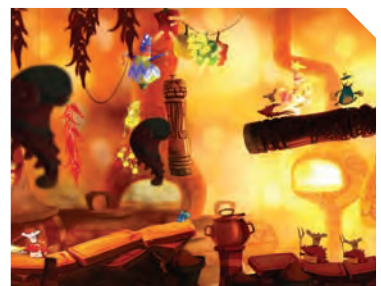
It might look bizarre, but this

wireless steering controller reportedly works quite well. To keep costs to a minimum, the entirety of the controller sits on this oddly-shaped device, replacing the traditional foot pedals with shoulder triggers usually associated with regular controllers, although these ones have a bit more play than those on the standard Xbox wireless controller. Sure, it doesn't give you the same feel that full-blown steering controllers strive for, and obviously there's no Force Feedback other than a bit of vibration, but for those who spend enough time playing racing games but don't consider themselves hardcore racing gamers, this might just be the perfect balance.

## Ubisoft Montpellier is keeping busy

*Beyond Good & Evil 2* is mercifully still on the cards, but Ubisoft has confirmed that the much-anticipated sequel to the 2003 cult hit won't be seen on this generation of consoles. Of course, they could be really sneaky and count the Wii U as a "next-generation" system, so let's just say that *BG&E2* will not be out *this year*, with a release only likely to be from late 2012 onwards.

The reason for this delay is that the development team is hard at work on *Rayman Origins*, which is a fantastic-looking side-scrolling game based on the original franchise and hopefully has little to do with those psychotic bunnies. *Origins* will feature 60 levels across 12 environments, with a focus on traditional platforming elements like puzzles, object collection and secret location. It will have support for up to four-player cooperative play.





And now for something completely different...



The *Brothers in Arms* series has always been about big, serious men engaging in big, serious warfare, but with that particular niche as flooded as the Nile in August (Now You Know!), developers Gearbox Software has decided to slip out the back and work on something a little more fun.

*Furious 4*, described as a spin-off rather than a part of the core series, takes more cues from *Inglorious Basterds* than *Saving Private Ryan*, which might upset any staunch supporters of the series. The game will allow up to four players to play together in this over-the-top action FPS. The story follows four soldiers who attempt to track down the Fuehrer, killing loads of Nazis on the way by using loads of big weapons to splatter loads of blood all over the place.

The game will also feature competitive multiplayer modes (six of them, for up to ten players), and will allow for character progression through selectable "fighting styles" that can be improved by completing challenges and gaining ranks. Is this *Team Fortress* meets *Call of Duty* with a co-op focused campaign to tie things together? Maybe, and that sounds fantastic.

## Minecraft on XBLA

It's no secret that we're slightly obsessed with *Minecraft*. The problem with the game is that every time we think we're over it, Notch introduces an exciting new feature like baking or improved farming, and we're hooked again. Well, those Xbox-only gamers who scoff at PC folk for such trifles will soon get a piece of the action with the upcoming release of *Minecraft* on XBLA in Q4 this year. It'll have (optional) support for Kinect, which sounds like a terrible, and exhausting, idea.

// *God of War* fans should be pleased to know that the two previously PSP-bound titles – *Chains of Olympus* and *Ghost of Sparta* – are on their way to the handheld's big brother in September as a collection. Both of these games are regarded as highly-entertaining and "definitely *God of War*" despite the diminutive platform, so we can think of no better way to reach out to PS3 gamers who haven't yet played them. The collection will support 3D displays for those with expensive TVs, and will have improved textures as well as support for high-definition resolutions.

// XBLA's Summer of Arcade 2011 should be in full swing by time you read this, and the line-up this year is as good as ever. Our most anticipated title, *From Dust*, from *Another World* creator Eric Chahi, leads the pack, but there's also the narrative-driven action-RPG *Bastion*; the citrus-slicing *Fruit Ninja Kinect*; the action-strategy title *Toy Soldiers: Cold War*; and the action platformer *Insanely Twisted Shadow Planet*, which features music by black metal band Dimmu Borgir.

// Telltale's *Back to the Future* series managed to pull in the voice talent of Christopher Lloyd, and for many people, that was impressive enough. Now, the unprecedented has happened: Telltale confirmed that **Michael J. Fox will be lending his voice to the final game** in the series. He'll play as Willy McFly, a descendant of the clan and the baby who made an appearance in *Back to the Future Part III*.



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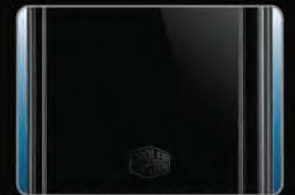
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## On game design courses



Have you heard the news? Game development courses are the new hot ticket all over the country – presumably because there's a bunch of ComSci students out there who, for some reason or other, feel that gaming is actually fun and stuff. An idea that was formerly limited to just one or two institutions is really starting to gain momentum locally, much to our collective excitement.

I never had the chance to formally study game design, but I regularly get field reports from people who do, and it's really cool seeing the projects that they're working on. For the most part, I really like these courses – they're the kind of thing that local enthusiasts have wanted to see for a long time ("What's that? I get to make games AND it counts as course credit? Huzzah!"). On the other hand, there are one or two things that I'm getting worried about with this new wave of development.

While a healthy dose of optimism goes hand-in-

**"There's a lot of stuff about game creation that academic institutions simply cannot teach you..."**

hand with advancements such as these, I think that some people are tempted to place just a little too much stock in their value. After all, being a pioneer has obvious drawbacks: you're prone to all of those start-up problems that future classes can iron out and avoid completely, while many of your educators will probably lack the knowledge and raw experience to lecture you on the finer points of game design (though most of them will be capable coders, at least). This is all quite natural for something that's still in such a state of infancy, but I get a little weirded out when people tell me that these courses represent the full extent of their game development experience.

I mean, really? Formal studies are a nice way to get some fancy lettering onto your CV, but an important part of good game development – like any other discipline – is the time spent in raw experimentation and individual efforts. There's a lot of stuff about game creation that academic institutions simply cannot teach you, not least because they work way more slowly and with far less material – you may consider that semester project of yours to be a pretty massive undertaking, but for all of its carefully outlined constraints and grading systems, it gets its socks knocked off by some smarmy hobbyist dev who works from home and idly taps out the equivalent of one of your games *every single week* (and heck, he probably doesn't even have to wear pants half the time).

I really don't want to knock today's game design courses, and I understand that some students take them as enrichment rather than something that will define their future. In fact, I'll heartily promote the great opportunities that these courses provide: they give you equipment, ideas, structure and even fellow designers to work with.

This is all incredibly valuable, but if all of your hopes are riding on what an institution shows you – if you're only a game developer when you're punching the clock, or sitting in class, or frantically working the night before your project deadline – you're squandering these opportunities and confining yourself to mediocrity. If you use these courses as a helping hand, and not a golden ticket, you may just find yourself far better off – and I think that any decent game design lecturer will be telling you the same thing.

Rodain Joubert

# Cry me a river

More details on *Far Cry 3* have been revealed, and it turns out that the game is leaving behind the dusty Savannah for its return to the tropics.

You'll play as Jason Brody, a man who finds himself stranded on a tropical island after his boat was wrecked. He wakes to find that the island is overrun by packs of gun-wielding maniacs who are rounding up civilians and killing them. While spying on a brutal murder, Brody is ambushed by one of the bad guys and knocked unconscious. When he wakes again (he must have one hell of a headache by now), Brody finds his wrists bound and the leader of this pack ironically ranting to him about insanity. As it turns out, the man is convinced that he's killed Brody before, and throws him off a cliff into the waters below, his wrists still bound and as it turns out, tied to a cinder block that's dragging him down.

The gameplay we've seen so far shows this beginning part of the game, with Brody having to pick his way through the island, sneaking up on enemies and taking their weapons to

survive, as well as stealing other loot. He's also after a little payback, and chooses to assault an enemy camp with only a stolen AK-47 and a machete. We saw a variety of gameplay including stealth, surprise attacks and run-and-gun tactics put to use. The game also showed an XP system that rewarded the player with every kill, but we're not yet sure how the full system will work. At the end of the demonstration, Brody attempts to escape the camp by hijacking a helicopter (not player-controlled) which subsequently gets shot down by enemy RPG fire.

*Far Cry 3* is only due out next year, but from what we've seen it's going to be an action-packed title with a combination of scripted and sandbox-style events. We doubt it'll be as open as *Far Cry 2*, but then, that's not really a problem.





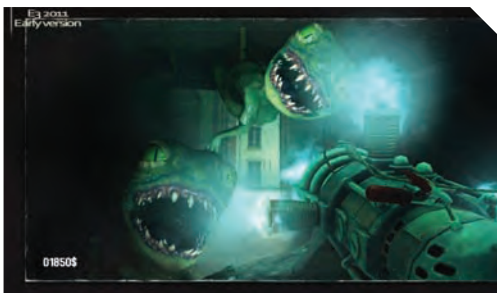
# Halo Halo



Altogether now: let's pretend to be surprised. There's a new Halo! Wow! Halo 4 was announced at this year's E3 and, unlike the interlude that was *Halo: Reach*, will be a direct sequel from *Halo 3*, once again following the exploits of Master Chief. According to Microsoft, this will be more than a mere sequel, however: it'll mark the start of a new trilogy of core Halo games. Of course, with Bungie no longer in the picture, you may wonder which studio will be running the show. It's going to be 343 Industries, which has Halo's franchise director Frank O'Connor at the helm.

*Halo 4* is due out in 2012, but we'll have something else from 343 to keep us busy until then. On November the 15th 2011, the studio will release *Halo: Combat Evolved Anniversary*, which is a remake of the first Halo title – one that gamers who only jumped onto the Xbox ship with the 360 probably never played. The game is a complete visual overhaul with seven classic multiplayer maps and Xbox LIVE support. Of course, it'll include the co-op mode that made the original so famous (and regular single-player as well).

## They came from outer space



We've already covered the Wii U elsewhere on these pages, but figured that this game deserves its own space because it's a great example of just how useful Nintendo's weird new controller can be. *Killer Freaks from Outer Space* is a Wii U exclusive sci-fi action FPS from Ubisoft that, in the single player campaign, will see players defend Earth from hordes of invading aliens. It looks to be inspired by the delightfully-schlock SF horror films of the '50s, and thankfully won't take itself too seriously.

It's one of the game's multiplayer modes that really interests us, however. It'll allow for two players to face off against each other, one using a Classic Controller and playing from a traditional first-person view, and the other making use of the New Controller to deploy mobs for the other to fight, using a top-down strategic view. If you've ever played the Unreal Engine 3-built *The Haunted*, you'll be familiar with the idea, but having this level of control sounds like a fantastic first step for both Ubisoft and Nintendo.

// If you're one of the few *Trials HD* players yet to snap every ligament in your hands due to Repetitive Strain Injury, then you're physically prepared to get excited about this: **Trials Evolution has been announced.** The game is due for release this year on XBLA (no word yet on other platforms) and will see players bust out of the warehouse to explore the wild outdoors, experience day and night conditions, play with friends and even build their own tracks. When you do make your own tracks, please don't share them with us. We like our sanity, thanks.



// The previously-detailed *ICO/Shadow of the Colossus HD* collection finally has a solid release date: September 2011. It's now been announced that **the collection will have support for 3D displays**, which is a fantastic way to honour these two great PS2 classics.

// **Mass Effect 3 will include optional Kinect features.** Don't panic, that's not to say that you'll have to wave about your arms to have Shepard perform manoeuvres during the game's more "adult" scenes (but we bet you'd love that, you perverts), but rather will allow you to give voice commands during dialogue, as well as issue verbal orders to your squad-mates during combat.



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d1g174l  
fr0n713r



Gaming addiction isn't pretty.

It starts innocently enough – the allure of the arcades and their shiny noise, new, exciting and different. The vibrating power inside your first computer, promising limitless exploration. The easy and slick delivery of brain-candy via console controllers.

You play for fun at first. It's a great distraction from school. From homework. From your parents. From society. From life. Inside a game you're anything and everything. You can do everything and learn even more. Eight years old and you hairpin corner like a professional Formula 1 driver. You've saved countless universes. Killed millions of dictators. Searched every castle.

But it's not enough, is it? It gets boring playing the same constructs, so you look to foreign imports. Pretty soon you're knee-deep in Japanese "muso" games (muso is to Japan what first-person shooters are to the West). You're zoning out to Cave shmup bullet-barrage patterns. Tweaking to the

**"You play for fun at first. It's a great distraction from school. From homework. From your parents. From society."**

world's most popular JRPG (junkie-code for Pokémon). You accept and love East-bloc travesties for their ingenuity and bad voice acting. Dabble in Swedish terraforming simulacra.

You're not stupid. Playing so many games, experiencing countless lives over and over and having to learn new concepts, conceits and mechanics at such a rapid pace has wired your brain for rapid pattern solving well beyond its original hunter-gatherer specs. You're overclocked on custom-built memetic circuitry that will only be partially understood decades from now. The problem is you're over-engineered for contemporary life. Mundane existential structures, the kind your parents know and little else unless they were very alternate-lifestyle active in the '60s, are too simplistic for you. They're solved. And a solvable system loses its allure fast. Solvable systems lack a frontier, and that's the dragon to chase.

Wired the way you are, you crave new systems to explore, new data to feed the ravenous creature in your mind. Eventually you're trawling through *Ludum Dare* entries, snuffling between the crumbs of fresh creativity and virgin gameplay concepts for anything to dull the sharp splinter in your mind. The one that reminds you every second of your existence that you've evolved in the pleochroic dimension of mind-space too fast for your own good. The faster you go, the higher you climb those infinite turtles all the way up, the more distance you put between yourself and the potential relatable entities you share existence with.

Some drop out the moment they smell that scent of the paradigm-barriered horizon. They usually go apply themselves for the betterment of society and try to 'gamification' everything. Because it's the structure they know, it has its merits, and wouldn't everything be better if it were more like a game? I dunno, would it? Or is that too much trying to force function to fit form. A friend made the valid observation that "the problem with solving the sorts of problems you've been groomed to solve [as a gamer] outside of games is much, much harder. It takes way longer. You don't get to reload from a save game. So gamers could be epic scientists, lawyers, bankers - if only they didn't have to fight everyone else's bureaucracy every day for the rest of their lives."

Those that don't drop out are left with limited options. Keep chasing that singularity (fight the pow-wah), or explore side-avenues. I hear writing for videogame magazines is a great way to earn a living when you're utterly incapable of doing anything other than be a fantastic Restoration Shaman in *World of Warcraft*.

Miktar Dracon

## Spreading Silent Hill's terror

News pours out of everybody's favourite creepy town

Ready for a whole bunch of *Silent Hill*-related info? Good, because we've got a ton of the stuff. Let's deal with *Silent Hill: Downpour* first. Anybody who's currently overly obsessed with everything 3D right now will be happy to hear that the game will feature stereoscopic 3D support. Other than Michael James in a mankini, we can think of few things more terrifying than playing *Silent Hill* in 3D – so you'd better start stocking up on spare pants right now.

With famed former *Silent Hill* composer Akira Yamaoka having succumbed to the allure of *Shadows of the Damned*, the mantle of composer has been passed along to Dan Licht, who some will know as the composer for TV's *Dexter*. The game's exclusive theme song is being created by nu-metal band Korn, an announcement that series fans are already extremely upset about. Seriously: there's a petition and everything.

A while back, the Internet caught wind of the fact that Konami was investigating the possibility of multiplayer in *Downpour*. That was abandoned, but it's resulted in the creation of an all-new, multiplayer-focused title by the name of *Silent Hill: Book of Memories*. It's been announced for PlayStation Vita. Series producer Tom Hulett had this to say about dropping *Downpour*'s multiplayer and instead using it in *Book of Memories*:

"We decided if we don't have something that is uniquely *Silent Hill* and feels good in multiplayer, we don't want to just tack it on. We don't just want to throw something in to say, 'hey, there's a bullet point.'" They "kept exploring" the idea, resulting in a new title for Sony's



handheld. Other than the fact that it's not being developed by *Downpour* developer Vatra Games and that it won't be powered by the Unreal Engine (which powers *Downpour*), we know nothing else about the title.

Finally, there's the *Silent Hill Collection*, which will offer HD versions of *Silent Hill 2* and *Silent Hill 3*. No sign of the original game or *The Room*, but it's still pretty exciting. It'll obviously include trophy support and enhanced visuals, along with "all-new voice acting." It's due out later this year for PS3, but there's talk of it eventually making its way to other platforms as well.

## Cliffy B sounds off on narrative negativity

With all the *Gears of War 3* campaign details that E3 was bursting with, it was inevitable that someone would bring up the negativity surrounding the story told in the previous pair of *Gears* titles. Many gamers write the narrative off as being shallow and meaningless – and Epic Games' Cliff Bleszinski doesn't get it. Speaking with *Destructoid*'s Jim Sterling, Cliffy B had this to say:

"Yeah, I don't get it either," he said. "People say, 'yeah, I tried the campaign, but whatever.' *Gears of War 3*'s campaign is very important to us, and we're going to have the longest damn campaign of the series in *Gears 3*. With these pulp fiction elements we're adding, you get a better perspective of characters like Cole and Baird. But yeah, I don't get why people write it off either. (Laughs) The amount of work we put into it..."

People hating on *Gears*' campaign makes Cliffy sad. Just by the way: those pulp fiction elements he's talking about



relate to the fact that there are two squads in the series' third title. We periodically get to see the action from the eyes of each team's (which are headed by Marcus and Cole) members, meaning that events play out more than once, but from alternate perspectives each time. Sounds... meaty.





## It's official: there's a sequel to Metro 2033

**M**etro 2033 stands as one of 2010's most underappreciated games. It's a gem of a first-person shooter, wonderfully atmospheric and brimming with creative design. Those of you who played and enjoyed it will be happy to learn that THQ has officially announced its sequel, called *Metro: Last Light*. It's due out next year for PC, 360, PS3 and Wii U.

Now for some details. *Metro 2033* was based on a novel written by Dmitry Glukhovsky, who also penned the novel's sequel, *Metro 2034*. *Last Light* is not based on that sequel, but Glukhovsky is apparently still working with developer 4A Games to ensure the game remains faithful to the Russian author's post-apocalyptic creation. We'll return to what's left of post-nuclear Moscow, placed once again in control of original protagonist Artyom. You'll still spend much of your time in the city's dilapidated subway system, where survivors struggle against perpetual adversity. Mutants, shifty humans, infighting between various factions and countless other dangers lurk in the metro's shadows. Stealth will once again play a big role, with Artyom able to douse light sources in a variety of ways to ensure he stays hidden from enemy view.

The developers promise the same chilling atmosphere and ever-present danger that made the first game such an oppressively immersive experience while simultaneously improving on every aspect of the original. Likewise, they aim to push their already impressive 4A Engine as far as they can take it, promising to make this the best looking FPS ever. The screenshots already look phenomenal, so they might actually deliver on that lofty promise.

## Get your damn gore outta my violence

**I**t seems that after seeing Team Ninja's *Ninja Gaiden 3* at E3, many journalists were left scratching their heads. Not at the game itself, mind you, but rather at the surprising lack of over-the-top gore that we've grown accustomed to seeing in the series. In the past, you'd see limbs fly and heads roll. Team Ninja is avoiding that this time, saying that the game is about violence, not gore.

"To us, there's a difference between gore and violence," said Yosuke Hayashi, the game's producer. "*Ninja Gaiden 2* was about gore. *Ninja Gaiden 3* is about violence ... that feeling of cutting into bone, actually killing a person. When you cut off an arm, it just becomes an object. Ryu is fighting humans, not monsters, and we want you to feel that."

So, to sum up: tons of blood is still in, dismemberment and decapitations are out. Hayashi says that this ties into the story, when Ryu has to face the extreme volume of lives he's taken. Dealing with the consequences of Ryu's violent existence has never been a theme in the series before, something that's set to change in this sequel.

### Good Old Games gets EA's good old games



// This news actually made everyone at the NAG office weep. For days, tears of joy streamed uncontrollably from our eyeholes. EA has finally decided that Good Old Games is worthy of distributing the classics that have stayed chained in EA's dungeon for far too long. *Dungeon Keeper*, *Wing Commander: Privateer* (the first of the *Wing Commander* series to be published by EA), *Ultima Underworld*, *Ultima Underworld II*, *Crusader: No Remorse*, *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri* and *Magic Carpet* are all available at [www.gog.com](http://www.gog.com) right now.

GOG say that they've got 25 classic EA titles lined up, which will gradually be revealed over the coming months. Unfortunately, *System Shock* and *Syndicate* are not included in this GOG/EA agreement right now, but hopefully they'll eventually be included in the deal. Still, maximum excite! We're still crying.

// There's a new **Fable** title due for release this year, but the word is that this next title, *Fable: The Journey*, is a Kinect-based fiasco. Players will use gestures to shoot enemies, slap them around and power up spells.

# baobab

Where IT Grows





## Distributors

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Samsung	0860 726 7864
Sonic Informed	[011] 314-5800
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If your company isn't listed here, phone NAG on [011] 704-2679.



## Support Lines

**Got a legal boxed game and need some technical help? Before you call please do the following. Update your system software, drivers and have a look online for a game patch. Just these simple tasks eliminate 93% of all problems – it's a made up statistic but probably close enough.**

**Publishers:** Activision / Blizzard 2K Games / Rockstar / Ubisoft Codemasters / NC-Soft / Namco-Bandai

**E-mail:** support@xtremems.co.za  
**Number:** 0861 987 363

**Publishers:** Microsoft Xbox  
**Number:** 0800 991 550

**Publisher:** Electronic Arts  
**e-mail:** zasupport@ea.com  
**Telephone:** 0860 EAHLP/324357

## Microsoft wants to have more of Remedy's babies



**D**id you enjoy *Alan Wake*? We did. Developer Remedy Entertainment recently admitted that they're working on a new *Alan Wake* project, which is rumoured to be called *Alan Wake's Night Springs* – an XBLA title. A new game emblazoned with the *Alan Wake* logo did not appear in amongst the madness of E3, so *Joystiq* tracked down Microsoft Game Studio's Phil Spencer and demanded answers.

Spencer admitted that even though *Alan Wake* didn't sell as well as they would've liked, they're not going to let that affect their relationship with the Finnish developer. "I don't know that they've signed it with anybody," stated Spencer when asked about the upcoming title. "I think the stuff they're doing now they wanted to incubate, Matias and the team," said Spencer. "They wanted to incubate

internally." He then went on to candidly reveal that he'd "love to work with Remedy again" and that they're engaged in "ongoing conversations with them."

And that's that. The next title to bear the *Alan Wake* name may or may not be accompanied by the Microsoft Game Studios logo. In other Remedy related news, they've recently helped produce *Death Rally* for iOS and it's been extremely successful for the studio. Managing Director Matias Myllyrinne revealed that the game, which took eight months to develop, recouped its development costs within three days of going live on the App Store. "A lot of the credit goes to Mountain Sheep for developing a great fun game. We produced it, took it forward and helped - but the heavy lifting is with the dev team as always," said Myllyrinne.

## World of [Everything Ever]

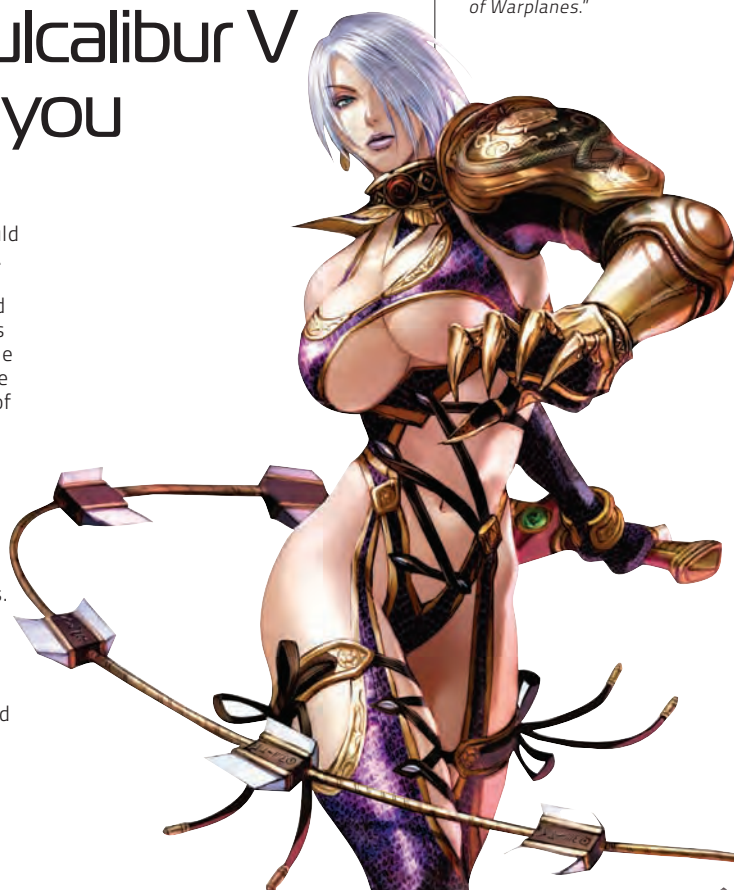
// Wargaming.net, creators of popular free-to-play MMOOMGT (Massively Multiplayer Online OMG TANKS) *World of Tanks*, have announced their next project. It's called... Wait for it... Little bit longer... *World of Warplanes*. Somebody give 1000 life points to Wargaming.net for possessing such superior imagination.

*WoW* (LOL) will once again be free to play, with a focus on team-based tomfoolery. It's set between the 1930s and 1950s on the timeline, so we imagine there'll be a generous selection of era-specific aircraft to crash into things. "We are proud to be able to develop another high quality Free to Play game for the world's gaming community," said Wargaming.net CEO Victor Kislyi. "*World of Tanks* has been extremely successful and we look to bring the same high quality if not better to *World of Warplanes*."

## Some Soulcalibur V details for you

**T**he E3 hands-on demo of *Soulcalibur V* featured only four of the fighters that would feature in the game's final roster. Two of those characters, siblings Patroklos and Pyrrha, were brand new – which a representative has stated is a trend that will continue into the full game, with half of the planned roster being comprised of all-new characters.

Character creation will be making its glorious return in the series' fifth title. The story takes place 17 years after the events of *Soulcalibur IV*. Apparently the final roster of characters will boast around 20 to 30 characters. The familiar faces among them will have aged and changed considerably in the 17 years that have passed. We wonder if the years (and gravity) have been kind to Ivy's boobs...





## How many tales would a Telltale tell if a Telltale could tell tales?

Some info on two of Telltale Games' upcoming titles

Telltale's upcoming game based on the beloved *King's Quest* series is only due out in 2012. As such, the developers are keeping information on the game close to their collective chest. They've let loose a couple of intriguing details though. When asked if the new game would star Graham and company once more, or if the new game would tell an all-new tale, a Telltale representative wryly smiled and stated that "they wouldn't want to throw away such a great, established story, right?"

Telltale then went on to reveal that Roberta Williams, the original creator of the *King's Quest* series, was approached by Telltale to work on the game. Williams, having retired from development, respectfully declined the offer, gracefully opting to instead provide advice and guidance on Telltale's revival of the series. This should come as exciting news for long-time fans.

Telltale has also eked out a few snippets of info on their upcoming interactive version of the popular comic book/TV series, *The Walking Dead*. The game will not retell the story told in the comic books and the TV show, instead opting to show gamers the aftermath of the zombie apocalypse from a new perspective: that of a criminal named Lee Everett. Lee is rid of his police escort when it is beset by the undead, allowing him a speedy escape. He then joins forces with Clementine, a seven-year old girl who will supposedly act as a sort of moral compass for Lee in a world gone zombie.

It may walk a new narrative path, but we'll still encounter familiar characters from *The Walking Dead* universe, like Lilly and Glenn – because the two tales are intertwined. While Rick Grimes attempts to make his way into zombie-riddled Atlanta, Lee and Clementine are attempting to escape the city. Don't be surprised if their paths cross at some point.



## Look & Listen



Pre-orders / [www.lookandlisten.co.za](http://www.lookandlisten.co.za)

### PC

Might & Magic Heroes VI	10th June
Tropico 4	September
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	September

### Xbox 360

Gears of War 3	20th September
RAGE	October
Batman: Arkham City	October

### PS3

Driver: San Francisco	2nd September
Resistance 3	September
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	8th November

### Wii

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2	15th July
Driver: San Francisco	2nd September
FIFA 12	30th September

### 3DS

Puzzle and Mind Gym	2nd September
Zoo Mania	2nd September
Need for Speed: The Run	18th November

### DS

Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters	17th July
X-Men: Destiny	30th September
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 5-7	November

### Kinect

Dance Party with Mel B	August
Rise of Nightmares	September
Sesame Street: Once Upon a Monster	October

### Move

Ape Escape	July
Nat Geo Challenge!	July
Child of Eden	13th September

## Fascinating

// *Star Trek* is once again trying its hand at gaming. This time it's a cooperative action adventure based on the 2009 J.J. Abrams-directed *Star Trek* reboot. The game will apparently serve as a sequel to the movie. Players take on the role of Kirk and Spock for some cooperative shooting in space. Marianne Krawczyk, a BAFTA award winner whose previous work includes *God of War* and *Shank*, is penning the game's script. Promises of "a wide variety of gameplay and all the action you would expect from the hit franchise" have been made, and there's also talk of an unspecified "legendary enemy race" appearing in the game. The game is being developed over at Digital Extremes, who are currently also working on *The Darkness II*. Expect the game to land next year on PC, 360 and PS3.



// Kinect has been performing well in the market, but it's high time for some decent games to hit the shelves.

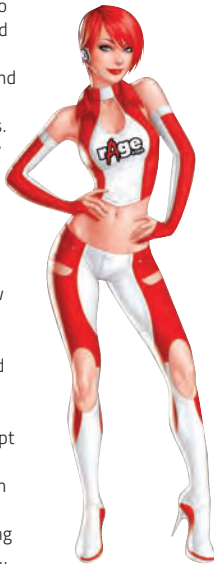
**EA Sports is going to have a go at accomplishing this** with four upcoming titles that will feature support for the arm-waving peripheral. Madden NFL 12, FIFA 12, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13 and an as-yet unannounced title will be available this year. Internet people tend to think that the last title will be *Fight Night*, with whom we'll optimistically agree.



# What's that noise?!

Thanks to the redesign we were rushed for time to come up with a new story for the badger. So, instead, we'll just tell you the truth. We're sick of him; we stole him from a stupid flash video like years ago and kept modifying him with more and more ridiculous ideas and stories. We've effectively washed away everything that was good and wholesome with our plagiarised garbage and now it's time to move on. Whoa! That felt good. Instead we're going to whore out a marketing concept and make you find Scarlett from rAge. See if you can find her hiding in the magazine...

**Clue:** It's in NAG magazine somewhere. Send your sighting to [ed@nag.co.za](mailto:ed@nag.co.za) with the subject line 'July Scarlett' and don't get it wrong or deleted it will be.



## June Winner



Werner Cilliers, Page 60

## Win!

An X-Talk Gaming headset for Xbox 360 valued at R199.99 Sponsored by Bowline and DreamGear.



# Caption of the month

Every month we'll choose a screenshot from a random game and write a bad caption for it. Your job is to come up with a better one. The winner will get a copy of *UFC Trainer* for PS3 from Ster-Kinekor Entertainment. Send your captions to [ed@nag.co.za](mailto:ed@nag.co.za) with the subject line 'July Caption'.



**NAG'S LAME ATTEMPT AT HUMOUR** / "You have a gaint spider on your head. Hold really still, I got this."



**LAST MONTHS WINNER** / "Oh no! OJ not again!"

- David Edwards

## Kinect gets its first-party on

Microsoft naturally went bananas with all things Kinect at this year's E3. In an interview with *GameSpot*, Microsoft Game Studios head Phil Spencer admitted that this is just the beginning of the massive push for Kinect to feature in as many first-party games as possible.

"It's not a mandate that everything we do in first-party has to support Kinect right now," says Spencer. "But I will say, specifically with voice, that there are some things that just seem to make navigating and playing games so much easier, that I would guess the

answer will be yes in the end, that you'll see all first-party games using some form of Kinect functionality."

However, this does not mean that every game needs to change drastically just so the Kinect logo can be placed on the game's packaging. "Whether it's voice in *Forza* or head-tracking in *Forza*, which you wouldn't say is somehow turning the *Forza* gameplay experience on its head. Rather, it's just using the advantages of what Kinect brings to make the experience better. So I think there's some specific examples where Kinect makes everything better."

## There's a dinosaur in Battlefield 3

// But it won't be, you know, a real dinosaur or anything because as awesome as that would be, having a twelve-metre creature from the Cretaceous period doesn't really fit with the whole vision DICE has for *Battlefield 3*. What a bummer. Instead we'll have to be content with a toy dinosaur that makes an appearance at some point, the purpose of which is really just a nod to the seedy underbelly of the internet: the image board 4chan.

Shortly after *Modern Warfare 2* was released, an individual posing as an Activision employee started a thread on 4chan asking people what they thought would improve the *Call of Duty* franchise. The answers all lamented the lack of dinosaurs in the contemporary military FPS. So in a humorous example of one-upmanship, EA and developers DICE have added a dinosaur to upcoming *Battlefield 3*, proving that their franchise really is superior to Activision's. DICE designer Gustav Halling tweeted about it shortly after the dinosaur's appearance in the E3 *Battlefield 3* demo, with the hash tag "#just4fun". Now all we need is a zombie dinosaur multiplayer mode in *Battlefield 3* and our lives will be complete.

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# I try to get out, but they keep pulling me back in!



Wondering what the brilliant mind behind *SimCity* and *The Sims* is up to right now? Well, after leaving Maxis following the release of *Spore*, Will Wright founded Stupid Fun Club and ran amok with all sorts of crazy ideas involving community-generated TV shows and random toy-related crap. It seems he's now returning to videogames, but not in a way that everybody's going to be thrilled about.

He's creating a videogame adaptation of a short story (called *Maneki Neko*, written by Bruce Sterling) about a karmic computer. "He [Sterling] describes a karmic computer that's keeping a balance of payments between different people, and causing them to interact with each other in interesting ways to improve their lives even though they're strangers," said Wright to *Eurogamer*. "They earn karmic points that are redeemed by having somebody else help them."

Wright says that PC, Facebook, mobile and tablet are the key platforms, and believes that the game can be developed quite quickly. "I don't think it makes sense to go through even a three or four year development cycle any more. Unless you can get something to market within a year, at least an initial version within a year, you're hosed. So that's the new model for development, which has totally changed my thinking. Almost any project I want to work on is going to be something I can at least get some version out there in about a year and then iterate from there."

That's it really. Sounds like Will Wright is all up in your social network.

## Three arrested in Spain over PSN hacks

Three supposed members of online activist group Anonymous have been arrested by Spanish police after a lengthy investigation that had officials searching more than two million lines of online chatting. The three in custody are being held for their alleged organising and partaking in the hacks that left Sony's PlayStation Network offline for six weeks. In addition to the PSN hacks, the three have been accused of hacking Spanish and foreign government websites and banking websites.

## Release List



Dates subject to change without notice

### July: Week 1

Ape Escape	PS3
Nat Geo Challenge!	PC / PS3 / Wii
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	PS3
Cars 2	PC / 360 / PS3 / Wii / 3DS
F.E.A.R. 3	PC / 360 / PS3
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	360 / PS3

### July: Week 2

Earth Defense Force: Insect Armageddon	360 / PS3
Family Party 90 Great Games	Wii
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2	PC / 360 / PS3 / Wii / DS
Onechanbara 2	360
Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D	3DS
Sports Island 3D	3DS
Sudoku: The Puzzle Game Collection	3DS
UFC Personal Trainer	360 / PS3 / Wii

### July: Week 3

Call of Juarez: The Cartel	PC / 360 / PS3
Captain America: Super Soldier	PS3
Splinter Cell Trilogy	PS3

### July: Week 4

The Smurfs: Dance Party	Wii / DS
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### July: Unconfirmed

Bodycount	360 / PS3
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## Codemasters, Epic and Nintendo websites hacked

It turns out that Sony isn't the only one who has lost user accounts to hackers. Major game publisher Codemasters suffered a similar fate to that of the Japanese corporation. During the first week of June hackers infiltrated and accessed the publisher's website as well as their online store and fan club webpage, CodeM. This allowed hackers to access the personal details of Codemasters' customers including names, telephone numbers, passwords, addresses and Xbox LIVE Gamertags. Soon after the Codemasters hack, Epic Games' website and forums were also hacked, although the intrusion was not nearly as severe. In an email to their customers Epic cautioned that email addresses and passwords "may have been obtained by hackers" and as a result all passwords had been reset. Similarly Nintendo Europe was recently forced to take down their website, including Club Nintendo, after they detected a possible phishing scam. Nintendo was quick to reassure their customers that no payment details or credit card numbers are stored on the European websites.

## Competition winners

**NAG Online Verbatim competition:**  
Christo Kruger from Claremont

**NAG April Dremel competition:**  
Gunther Jager from Raslow

**NAG March Dremel competition:**  
Wayne Burke of Zuurfontein

**NAG May Dremel competition:**  
Michael Howell from Port Elizabeth

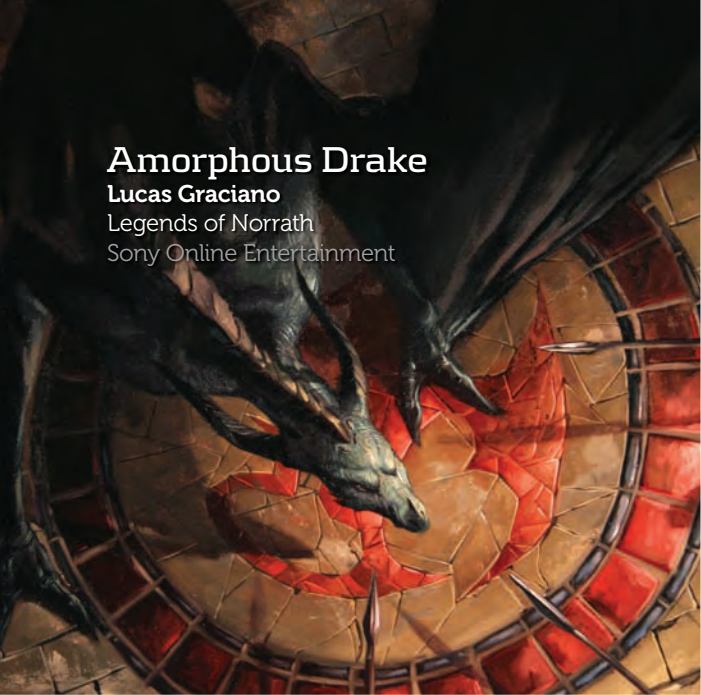
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## Amorphous Drake

Lucas Graciano

Legends of Norrath

Sony Online Entertainment



# Into The Pixel 2011

Only the best, brightest and prettiest pixels stand a chance in the gruelling artistic deathmatch that is Into The Pixel. Millions enter, few leave alive. The seventeen that survived this year, having successfully navigated the blade-trapped hallways and lava-filled mazes, are printed across these pages for your eyeballs to feast on. Go slow, it'll last longer.

Now entering its 8th year, Into The Pixel is the videogame artist equivalent of the Grammys. The collaboration between the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences (AIAS) and the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) allows notable artists from around the world to submit their work for consideration by industry

professional judges. The winners are unveiled and presented at the annual E3 Expo in Los Angeles in June. It's the only juried art exhibition that brings together experts from traditional fine art and the interactive entertainment industry.

"Now that public institutions have accepted video games as a legitimate form of art, there is no question that video game art has and will continue to have a place in the contemporary art scene," said Martin Rae, president of the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences, referring to the US federal government's National Endowment for the Arts recent announcement that they consider videogames a form of art.

Enjoy the arts! **NAG**

Miktar







## Cronos Battle

Tyler Breon  
God of War III  
SCEA/Santa Monica Studio



## Flemmeth

Matt Rhodes  
Dragon Age 2  
BioWare

/ Feature: Into The Pixel 2011 /



## Good Friends

Matthew Halpin, Andrew Matthews, Matthew  
Preece, Radek Walachnia, John Laws  
Kinectimals  
Frontier Developments Ltd



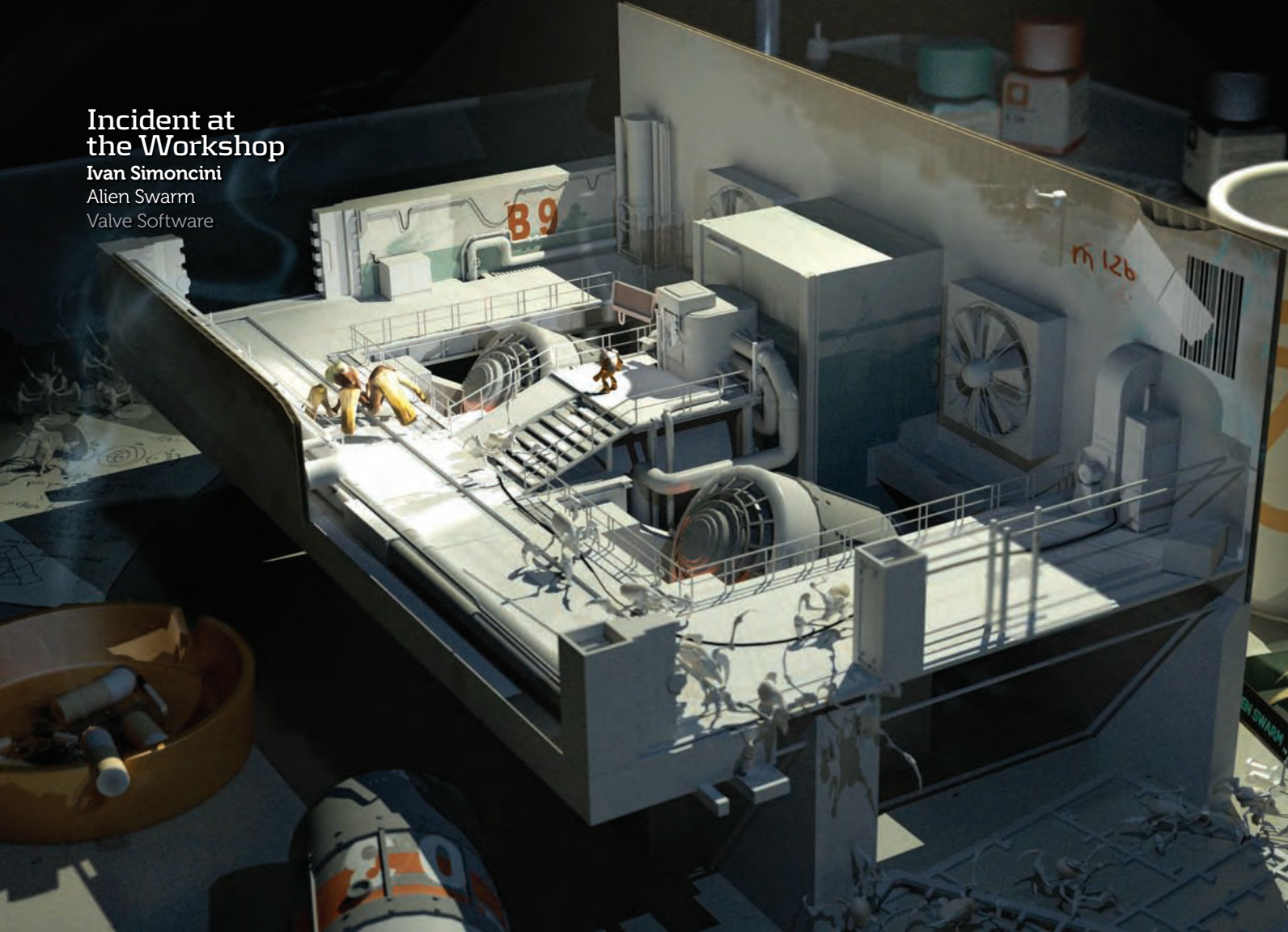
## Dead Walking

Chris Moffitt, Brad Crow, Nathan  
Stefan, Bart Tjongson  
Orcs Must Die!  
Robot Entertainment



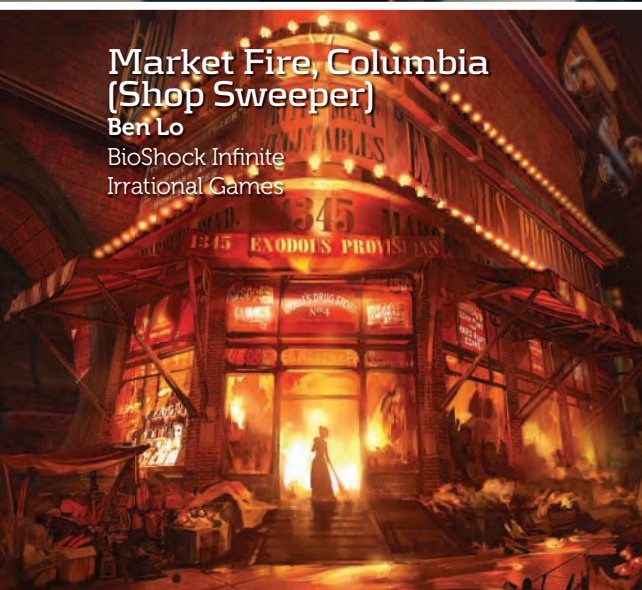
## Incident at the Workshop

Ivan Simoncini  
Alien Swarm  
Valve Software



## Market Fire, Columbia (Shop Sweeper)

Ben Lo  
BioShock Infinite  
Irrational Games



## About Into The Pixel

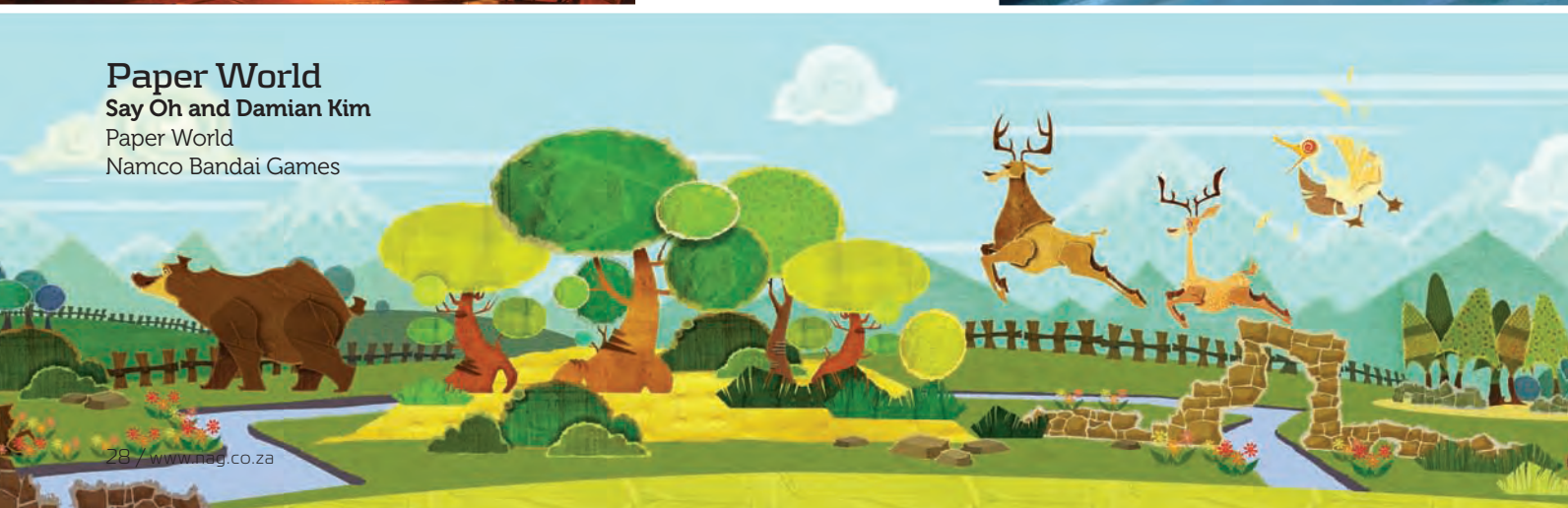
[From the press release] ITP has established itself as the one annual opportunity for computer and video game artists to receive critical review of their creative achievements by peers in both the digital interactive world and traditional fine art experts. The ITP collection has been on exhibit at GDC, South by Southwest, FMX in Stuttgart, Germany, the European Festival of Art in Nottingham England, the Toronto International Film Festival, Creative Artists Agency (CAA) and the D.I.C.E. Summit, among others. For more information on this year's Into the Pixel 2011 collection and previous collections, please visit [www.intothepixel.com](http://www.intothepixel.com).



Normandy  
Mikko Kinnunen  
Mass Effect 2  
BioWare

## Paper World

Say Oh and Damian Kim  
Paper World  
Namco Bandai Games





# GRIM EXPLOITS

WHEN THE PANTHER SHOT BACK!

a true tale of cat fa

May

ONLY 25 C

## Grim Exploits

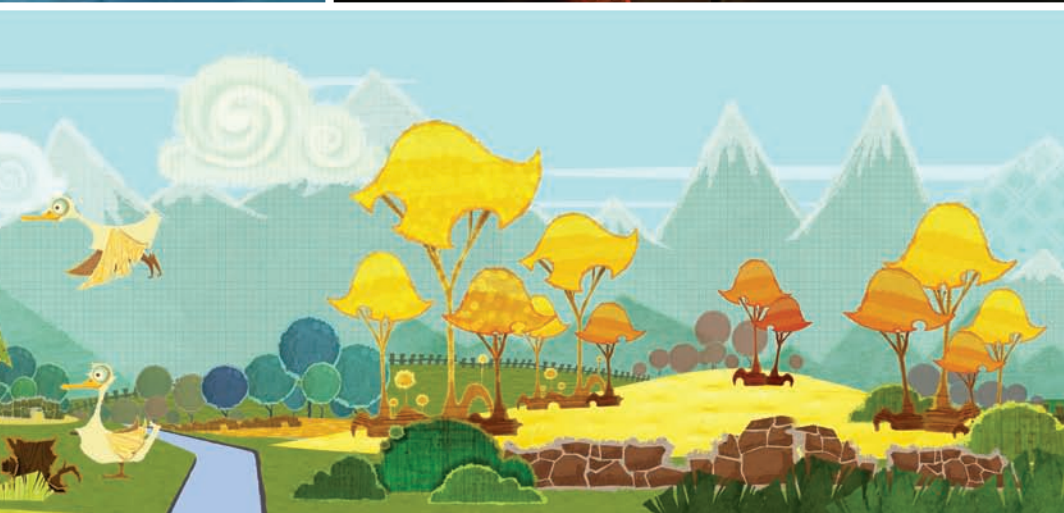
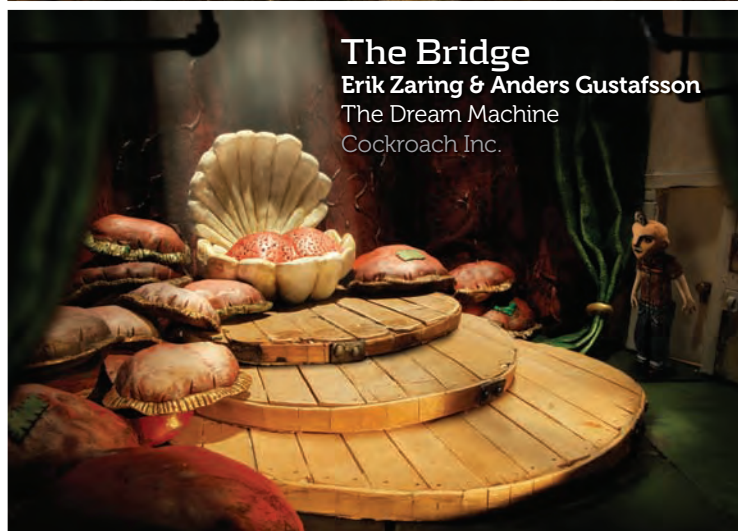
Colin Foran, Claire Hummel,  
Ryan Wilkerson  
Trenched  
Microsoft Game Studios, Doublefine

In The  
**GAZE OF THE GAZELLE**  
A STARING CONTEST - TO THE DEATH!  
**CHICAGO'S REVOLVING DOG**  
- OF SIN!

A JOURNAL OF EXPLOITS FOR DISCERNING TASTES

## The Bridge

Erik Zaring & Anders Gustafsson  
The Dream Machine  
Cockroach Inc.



## A few easy ones

Although they were packing up for E3 at the time, the guys at Into the Pixel made some time to answer a few questions. Big thanks to Debby Chen (Communications Manager, Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences).

**Q: How many submissions do you receive on average?**  
200-300.

**Q: Have you ever received submissions from artists for classic games released before Into The Pixel started?**  
Due to the nature of Into the Pixel, artwork submitted is usually from games coming out the year of or a year before the collection is selected. It would be wonderful to see some art from classic games, but we haven't seen any yet.

**Q: How much notice have you gotten so far from mainstream art critics? Has it sparked discussion?**  
We've actually gotten a lot of participation in our Into the Pixel exhibition throughout the years from individuals from the fine art community. We have several judges from the art world each year as part of our esteemed group of jurors. This year, Glenn Phillips, Senior Project Specialist & Consulting Curator, Department of Architecture and Contemporary Art of the Getty Museum and Nora Dolan, an independent curator who was curator at The Friends of Photography at the Ansel Adams Center in San Francisco and Curatorial Assistant at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. The Smithsonian Museum this year is putting together an exhibit on the history of video game art, and the United States' National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has announced new guidelines under their Arts in Media, which allows video games and mobile art to qualify for funding. This really shows the growing acceptance of video game art as a form of art.

**Q: What do judges look for in submissions?**  
Each judge looks for different things, but some of the attributes they looked for this year were a sense of scale, an interesting use of colour, a unique composition, and images that give an impression of what the final game will be like.

**Q: Have you noticed any trends to artwork submitted over the years?**  
Most of the art we receive are images of landscapes, character art, and compositions of a game's characters. However, there are many unique pieces as well as great variance within what we usually receive. The great thing about the game industry is just how wild artists can get when their imagination is the only limit.

**Q: Who are the judges this year?**

- **Glenn Phillips**, Getty Research Institute, Senior Project Specialist & Consulting Curator, Department of Architecture and Contemporary Art of the Getty Museum.
- **Nora Dolan** - Independent Curator
- **Ryan Wilkerson**, Microsoft Game Studios, Senior Art Director
- **Matt Hall**, Timbuk2 Studios, Senior Partner Production Designer
- **Brian Moore**, Microsoft Game Studios, Art Director



## Swamp Skull

Jeff Haynie

Mystery Case Files: 13th Skull

Big Fish Games

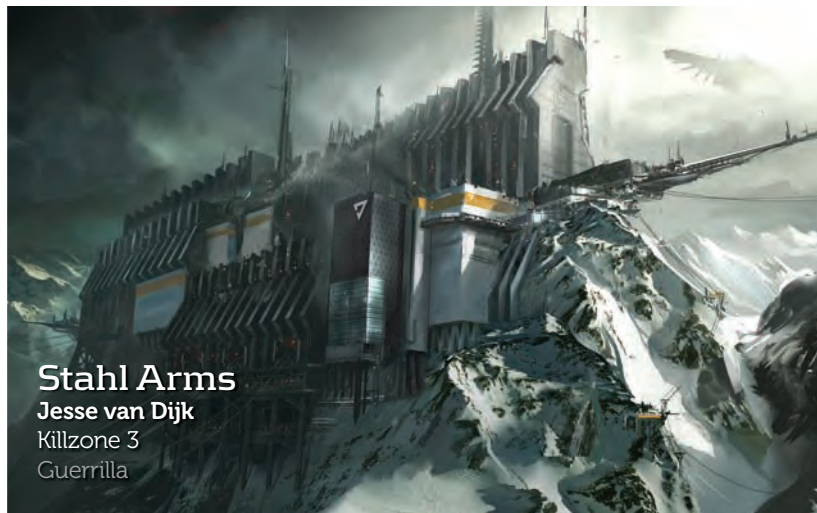


## Oktonok Cay Cannery

David Guertin

Ratchet & Clank: All 4 On

Insomniac Games



## Stahl Arms

Jesse van Dijk

Killzone 3

Guerrilla



## The Dragon Play

Brian Thompson and Hamzah

Kasom Osman

Drawn: Dark Flight

Big Fish Games



## The Cottage

Hamzah Kasom Osman

Drawn 3

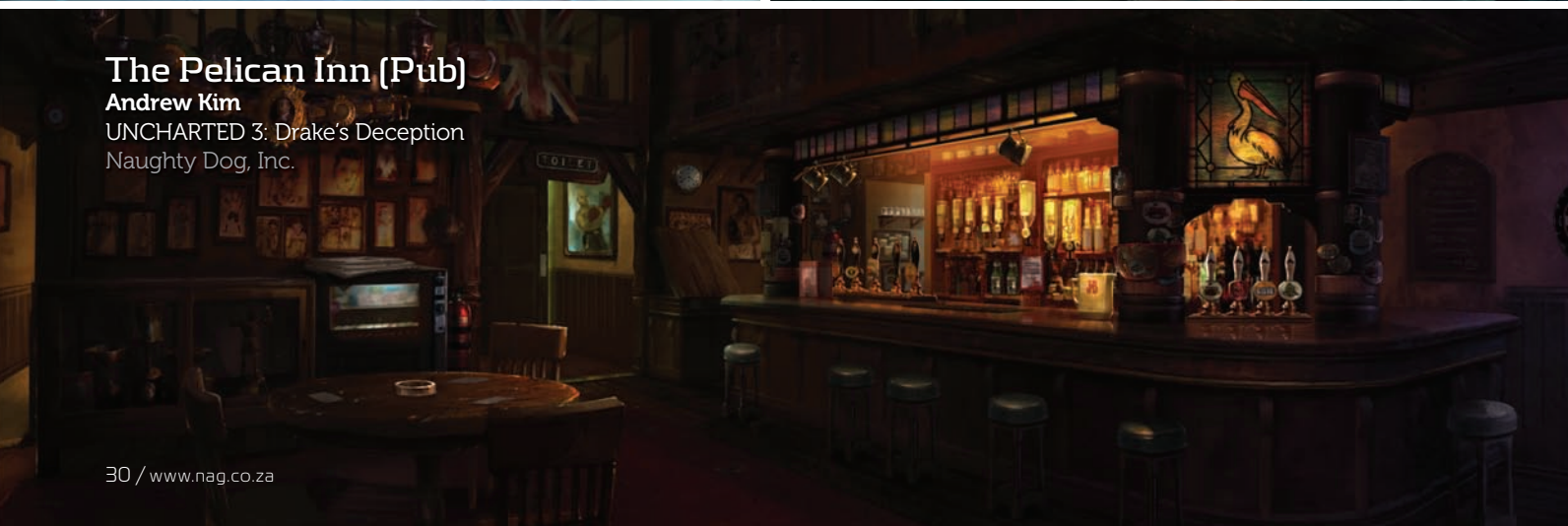
Big Fish Games

## The Pelican Inn (Pub)

Andrew Kim

UNCHARTED 3: Drake's Deception

Naughty Dog, Inc.





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Set in a parodic version of our world, it's been 12 years since Duke Nukem saved the planet from aliens. He has become a mega celebrity and now resides in Las Vegas. Duke's alien enemies have returned and the President orders Duke to stay away from them while he negotiates peace. But the aliens begin abducting the women of earth, using them as host bodies to incubate alien spawn and only Duke can defeat them. Duke is now earth's only hope to stop the alien invasion.

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# Top 8

## developers who have fallen from grace

A typical example of a person fallen from grace. Disgusting isn't it?

The modern game development industry has been trundling along for only a few decades. Unlike the film industry, which has been around for substantially longer and has seen its share of greats rise and fall with the generations it passes over, the game industry is only now starting to reach the

peak of its first generation. With that comes wisdom, experience, the promise of new-born passions and, as we'll take a look at here, a few old socks abandoned by the wayside. This is the list of the eight top developers who have risen to fantastic heights, and fallen from them so very, very far...

### 8 Sid Meier

The father of *Civilization*, Sid might look like a closet serial killer but his Canadian blood prevents him from engaging in violence. That's probably why he decided to co-found Firaxis Games – a studio that only makes sim-style management games – and stay away from anything involving gun wielding. He's at the bottom of this list because he only just qualifies as one of the fallen for putting his name on games he has almost nothing to do with and failing to do anything new.



### 7 Chris Taylor

As the lead designer on *Total Annihilation* and *Dungeon Siege*, Chris Taylor, like his friend Sid (aren't they all buddies?), does comparatively little these days but put his name on games and sit around at Gas Powered Games drinking all the best coffee and arranging things on his desk to look busy. Also, *Space Siege*. Come now.





## 6 Will Wright

This guy designed *Sim City*! He made *The Sims*! Unlike the previous two louts, Will realised that his career in the industry was going stale (following the poor performance of his last game, *Spore*) and jumped the Maxis ship to pursue other endeavours: he's producing a TV show. Entitled *Bar Karma*, this user-generated show is currently receiving poor-to-average reviews.



## 5 Warren Spector

Despite all our enthusiasm and optimism, the career path of Warren Spector makes us sad. This is the guy who's had lead roles on *Wing Commander*, *Shadowcaster*, *Thief* and *Deus Ex*, but then one day decided to drop it all to pursue a career with Disney. Now, *Epic Mickey* wasn't a bad game, and we won't shoot down the guy just for choosing to work with Disney, but it's clear that this is the wrong place for him. It's not too late, Warren! Turn back while you still can!



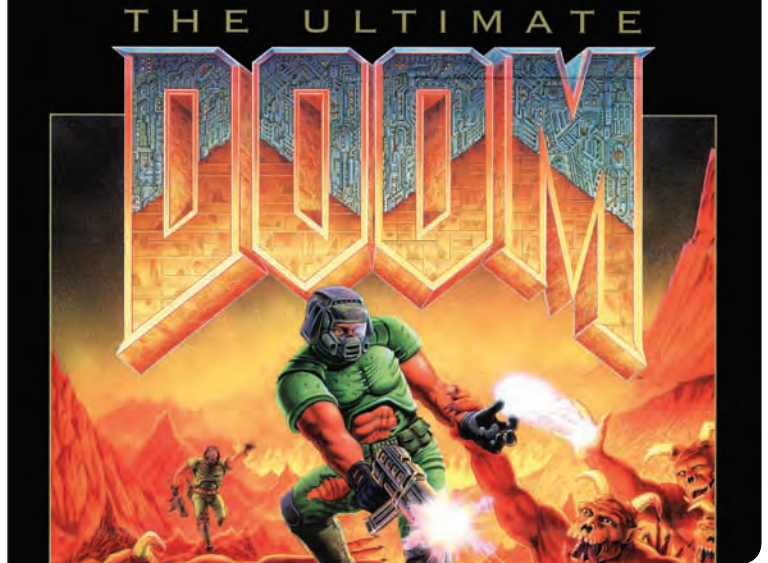
## 4 Ken and Roberta Williams

The original rebels. This couple told the world "Hey, world. You know how we're all super-cool game developers during this golden era of gaming? It's okay, guys, you can totally fail once you're up here!" Ken and Roberta Williams founded Sierra On-Line – the studio that was responsible for the development of many a childhood. Then, one day, they left. They sold up what they had and buggered off. Sometime before that, Roberta lead the design on *Phantasmagoria* and that awful *King's Quest: Mask of Eternity*. Isn't it weird how right after that, the couple stopped making games?



## 3 John Romero

Hey, look, it's John Romero, co-creator of such classics as *DOOM*, *Commander Keen* and *Wolfenstein 3D*, as well as possessor of what could be described as the best hair in gaming. Oh wait, and you coined the term "deathmatch"? You rock, dude. Tell me, what are you doing lately? Oh, you're making Facebook games. That's cool, bro. Oh, don't worry, I'll be sure to Like them. Yes, John, I'll Tweet about them too.



## 2 Louis Castle

The co-founder of Westwood Studios and important person behind most of the *Command & Conquer* series. If you play real-time strategy games, you owe about 30% of your children (future or otherwise) to this man. He'll need them to help himself crawl out of the gutter in which he currently finds himself: the world of Facebook games. He did have a go at keeping himself afloat following Westwood's sale to EA, sticking around for quite a while and then joining indie developers and Torque game development studio creators GarageGames. Since the company's closure in 2010, however, he took up a position at Zynga. He also lives in Las Vegas, which makes absolutely no sense.

## 1 Richard Garriott

You can argue all you want, but Richard Garriott is insane. After *Tabula Rasa* failed harder than almost any other MMO had done before, Lord British, as he likes to call himself (often, and we're guessing while in front on the mirror) lost his sh1t and flew into space. Unfortunately, he didn't stay there, instead deciding that this was his calling and that he wants to promote education about space travel and stuff. If you were to ask us to guess what he's doing at this exact moment, we'd tell you that he's probably standing in front of a classroom of dumbfounded schoolchildren, boring them half to death while he tells them about the magic of space. And he definitely makes whooshing noises when he breaks out the model rocket ships.



PS: All of this is meant to be taken lightly. We secretly worship every designer on these pages and without them, we'd all be doing something meaningful like balancing books or packing groceries. Don't call us haters.





# inFAMOUS 2

inFAMOUS and inFAMOUS-er.

## [ details ]

Release Date:  
**June 2011**  
 Platforms:  
**PS3**  
 Genre:  
**Action**  
 Developer:  
**Sucker Punch**  
 Website:  
**www.infamousgame.com**  
 Publisher:  
**Sony Computer Entertainment**

## [ trivia ]

// In inFAMOUS, the team originally had Zeke kill Trish but scrapped it.

// Zeke runs like Murray, from the Sly Cooper series (also by Sucker Punch).

**D**elivery boy Cole MacGrath is riding his bicycle. The package he is carrying suddenly explodes, levelling part of Empire City. It supercharges him into an electric-type superhero, full of generic rage and awesome powers. Thus a terrible evil is unleashed upon the city: a gamer with ambiguous morals.

Throughout the first game, players utilized their almighty choice to affect Cole's power growth and random NPC reactions to seeing him. Token annoying-best-friend Zeke provides comic relief and much groaning. Cole explores the city with his unconventionally strong ledge-grappling fingertips of lightning. A plot is uncovered, twists are turned and a future big-badguy known as The Beast is revealed... credits roll. Cliffhanger endings are so not cool.

Cue the sequel, finally. The Beast is here, ruining life for everyone. Cole confronts The Beast in Empire City but barely makes it out alive. Cole needs to get juiced, so him and Zeke flee to New Marais. Inspired by the real-world New Orleans, Cole must scour the city for Blast Cores which contain the energy he needs to take down The Beast, fight a local shadow organization known as The Militia, and defend against mutant Corrupted.

Cole's got some new moves thanks to the Amp, a melee weapon Zeke built to especially use Cole's unique properties. You can chain melee combos (which are sprinkled with tasteful slow-motion flair) and unleash a Finisher move once your melee gauge is full. This time Cole's

**"Like LittleBigPlanet, users can design their own missions..."**

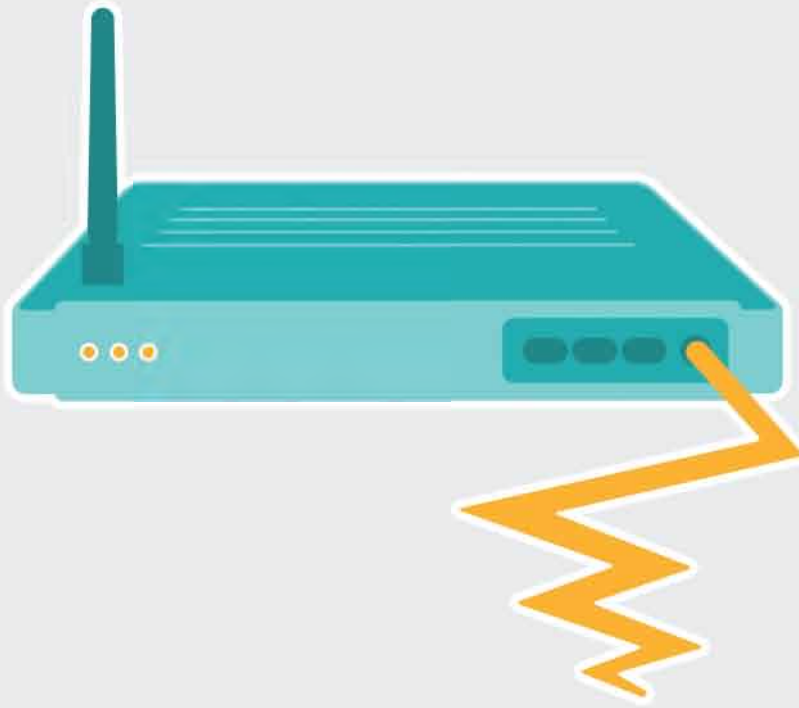
power changes elements depending on the moral path you pick: Fire for the good guys and Ice for the bad boys. Each side has its own unique moves and properties, while the standard Electric moves have been beefed up some. One new move is the Ionic Vortex, which launches everything into the air in a cyclone. There's more to be affected by Cole thanks to an improved game engine; phone booths, telephone poles and even buildings will react to his powers.

Like *LittleBigPlanet*, users can design their own missions, be it defense, escort, search and destroy, survival, puzzles, platforming, etc. As you explore the city it will seamlessly load user-content

from the Internet, colour-coding the mission makers so you can differentiate between official and unofficial content. You can also filter by genre, quality and so on. Players will have access to the same assets the developer used: characters, props, behaviours, creatures. You'll be able to create missions from scratch or remix existing ones via drag, drop, tweak, adjust. The higher the quality of your level, the higher it gets ranked by players. High-ranked content will be more likely to show up in other people's cities. Sucker Punch will also cherry-pick content, which is then guaranteed to show up for everyone. **NAG**

**Miktar**





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# Max Payne 3

Mo' Max, mo' Payne

## [ details ]

Release Date:  
**TBA**  
Platforms:  
**360 / PC / PS3**  
Genre:  
**Third-person shooter**  
Developer:  
**Rockstar Studios**  
Publisher:  
**Rockstar Games**

## [ trivia ]

// James McCaffery will return to voice Max Payne and provide full motion capture.

// The *Max Payne* movie wasn't bad but it wasn't good either.

**W**ife and daughter, killed by junkies during a drug-fueled rage. Best friend, killed by an unknown assassin. Double-crossed by a love interest, who is then killed after deciding she loves him after all. And then, insult to injury, *Max Payne* is forgotten for almost ten years, never getting the sequel it deserves. Until now, anyway.

The original games were a bizarre mutant of film noir blended into Hong Kong action cinema, sprinkled with Scandinavian mythology and left out in the sun until consumed by surrealistic-symbolic nightmares and metaphor-laden inner-monologues. And it had suh-weet third-person bullet-time gunplay. It made *Bullet Time* in games cool.

*Max Payne 3* takes a different tact with its aesthetics and narrative style. No comedic drug-induced self-referential hallucinations here. "This is Max as we've never seen him before, a few years older, more world-weary and cynical than ever. We experience the downward spiral of his life," says Sam Houser, Rockstar president, confirming that Payne is now *Serious Business*.

Taking place eight years after events in the second game, Payne is out of the NYPD and working as a private security contractor in São Paulo, Brazil's megacity of 41 million people. He's at the call of super-rich property mogul Rodrigo Branco and his two brothers, a politician and a party-loving dropout. The game will jump around this new timeline, which explains why some screenshots show a younger Max who still has a full



**"This time Payne can dive in any direction at and over any object: no pre-canned animations here"**

head of hair, while other shots show him as a balding alcoholic with serious Bruce Willitus Die Hardicus 4 syndrome. "We move backwards and forwards; we use really aggressive editing. It's unlike anything we've done in any of our games before," says Art Director Rob Nelson.

You'll still pop pills to regain health, but animated in-game cut scenes akin to TV-show *24* replace the comic-book panel styling the series was known for. Encounters are carefully crafted to avoid it becoming a corridor shooter with endless bad guys spawning out of doorways, which Rockstar admits is why this has taken so long. You still charge *Bullet Time* by killing enemies, and the kill-shot bullet-cam is back, marking the end of encounters with a full stop

so players know when to unclench. This time Payne can dive in any direction, at and over any object: no pre-canned animations here. He'll react intelligently, using the power of the *Euphoria* animation engine, by for example throwing out a hand to brace for a fall, or tucking his shoulder to roll.

There's a new cover system (of course), you can duck behind objects, pop-and-shoot as well as blind-fire. *Euphoria* is used everywhere, adding weight to bullet impacts on enemies. Plenty of guns to play with: pistols, rifles, submachine guns and the almighty sniper rifle. You'll only be able to carry three at any time, though single-handed weapons can be wielded akimbo.

**NAG**  
**Miktar**



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## Dragon's Dogma

Totally a love story about a dude and his dragon

### [ details ]

Release Date:  
**Early 2012**  
 Platforms:  
**360 / PS3**  
 Genre:  
**Action role-playing game**  
 Developer:  
**Capcom**  
 Website:  
**www.capcom.com**  
 Publisher:  
**Capcom**

### [ trivia ]

// Dogma is what you call the established belief or doctrine held by a religion or its members.

// Dogma is also a pretty sweet Kevin Smith movie from 1999 about angels.



**S**o this dragon rocks up and starts torching your fishing village. During his murderous rampage, he stops to let you know that you're "the chosen one" and then tears out your heart. Literally, not figuratively. Without your heart you're pretty much dead but for some reason you revive as "an enlightened one". Guess it's time to go find and slay that dragon. Or marry it, or something.

You pick the looks, stats and character class of your Mr. Heropants. The three classes are the speedy close-quarter combat Strider, the fireball-happy Mage and some kind of Fighter. There isn't much known about the classes yet. Combat involves combination moves and a modifier button to change the power of individual attacks. The videos make the combat look very much like *Devil May Cry*, which for an action-RPG is quite something.

Along the way you pick up three party members. You can issue orders like "Go", "Help" and "Come to me" but they'll react more intelligently than you might expect. Apparently they will learn from how you play, improving their skills as you do. When a giant griffon decides to harass your party they'll offer to boost you into the air so you can grab on to its feathers and climb around it as it soars into the sky. Are you thinking *Shadow of the Colossus*? You're right, it's totally like that, but way more free-form. If it has a body part, you can slash at it. If you kill it while high in the air, the epic fall to

**"Guess it's time to go find and slay that dragon. Or marry it, or something."**

your death is entirely your fault.

The fantasy world is open, like *Oblivion*, and there's a large main city filled with residents who follow their own life schedules. They run shops, talk to each other, walk purposefully through the streets and will be fully-voiced during dialogue. They even go to bed at night, when it's so pitch black you have to clip a lantern on to your belt so you can see.

There is a kind of ambient online element to *Dragon's Dogma*: two of your party members will be "borrowed" from other players, beamed into your game, though Capcom is quick to insist the game

will not require an online connection. Capcom also hints that people not skilled at action games will be able to make up for their personal weakness by hiring super-strong NPCs who can handle most of the combat while you watch from the sidelines.

There's a lot being said about *Dragon's Dogma*: that every decision you make will matter, the weight of your weapon and even the length of your legs will impact combat, and that micromangement will be seamless. But what about the dragon who stole your heart? We'll have to wait and see. **NAG**

Miktar



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## The reviewers

**Question: What single critical skill have computer games given you to prepare you for a real war situation? 20-30 words and please go for intelligence – I know it's hard.**

### R.A.V.E.N.



Strategic skills such as resource management, dispersal of assets, effective troop disposition and manoeuvring, importance of terrain and conditions, significance of accurate intel, in short, HQ skills!

### RedTide



I'd rock in a world with jump pads and rocket launchers.

### Miktar



Parallel-thinking and gestalt-awareness will be critical in future combat, along with a firm grasp of memetic-virii and holistic/synchronoptic outcomes. Good thing I play all games and not just ones with guns.

### Azimuth



There is no problem that a rocket launcher can't solve.

### Mikit0707



The *COD* and *MoH* games have given me a better understanding of military jargon and acronyms, which is probably useful when a CO is barking orders at you.

### GeometriX



Tactical decision-making. E.G.: running at snipers head-on does not work. Trying to throw knives at people with heavy machine guns doesn't help either.

### Barkskin



I've learnt that shooting teammates is frowned upon, no matter how annoying said teammates may be. If you do, some omnipresent commander gives you a 20 second time out – or kicks you from the war. Realism!

### Ramjet



Good team mates are the difference between life and death.

### SAVAGE



Put a silencer on your gun, and have a really big knife as backup. Oh, and in real life camping is okay, it will save your life and you don't have to worry about a kill cam.)

### ShockG



Enough lubrication will get you in and out of anywhere.

# Anatomy of a review

A quick guide to the NAG reviews section

**/1/ Totally interesting stuff:** Developer, publisher, platform, random junk and more. The number of players listed under multiplayer is the maximum number you can have in a game at one time. Local means "couch", not LAN.

**/2/ Obligatory words (i.e. a review):** This is the stuff you probably won't read before ogling the shiny pictures, glancing at the score and then flipping the page. We don't blame you – word-reading is hard.

**/3/ Screenshots:** These are the pretty pictures you'll probably stare at before peeking at the score, ignoring the wonderful review and then flipping the page. You should probably ask your mom to make your sandwiches too. Just to be on the safe side. You might cut yourself.

**/4/ Captions:** Funny. Informative. Touching. The captions are usually none of these things. Except maybe touching, when we put some innuendo in there.

**Marvel vs. Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds** 5  
An amazing dog saves the universe. Woof.

**1** [details] System: All PCs & consoles. Platform: PC, PS3, Xbox 360. Genre: Action, Fighting, Platform. Multiplayer: Local, Online. Release date: 2011. Price: £39.99. Developer: Capcom. Publisher: Capcom. Website: www.marvelvscapcom.com

**2** Despite their perceived difficulty, actually easier to get into, but better than any you remember at least regarding the representation of at least one genre. More than in any other game, the game is not a traditional game mechanic. It's a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it. The game is a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it. The game is a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it.

**3** The uniqueness of this game is not what you might expect. It's a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it. The game is a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it.

**4** Contains this great new character being pink and a beautiful boss battle.

**5** The uniqueness of this game is not what you might expect. It's a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it. The game is a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it.

**6** The uniqueness of this game is not what you might expect. It's a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it. The game is a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it.

**7** The uniqueness of this game is not what you might expect. It's a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it. The game is a mix of several genres where there are no real rules to follow and you can't really learn from it.

**69**

## THE AWARDS

**Editor's Choice:** If a game gets this award, you know it's more than just good. It means it pulled the editor away from *Call of Duty* for long enough to actually play another game – and we can't think of anything more remarkable than that.

**Must Play:** It means exactly what it says: you must play this game. Beg your parents for cash, dole out sexual favours, etc. – fight past the pain and do whatever it takes to get your sweaty paws on it. You'll thank us for it later.

**Pony:** You know how everyone wants a pony? Yeah, that's not the case here and we're not just being mean. We're trying to protect you from the horror of being punched in the nether regions by thoroughly rubbish games.

## THE SCORE BOX

**/1/ Plus:** These are the great things that make us happy.

**/2/ Minus:** These are the rubbish things that make us sad.

**/3/ Bottom line:** The waffle stops here. Hundreds of words distilled into a tiny bit of text that can either damn a game to the depths or shower it with praise.

**/4/ The Score:** It's a number out of 100. It lets you make an informed decision as to whether or not you should spend money on this game. This isn't rocket science, people.



1

/ PLUS / Very detailed / Enthralling setting / Amazing graphics

2

/ MINUS / Not enough detail / Boring setting / Rubbish graphics

3

BOTTOM LINE GOES HERE; KEEP IT UNDER 15 WORDS, 15 WOULD BE IDEAL. THANKS.

4

69



## QUICK HITS

### Hector: Badge of Carnage Episode 1

Originally released in June 2010 for the iPad, and now available on PC, *Hector: Badge of Carnage* is a classic point-and-click adventure game in which you take on the role of Detective Inspector Hector – an alcoholic, rough-talking, care-free cop who happens to be the most capable man in the Clappers Wreake police force.

In *Episode 1*, Hector will need to negotiate a hostage situation by meeting the demands of a terrorist who's hell-bent on returning the dirty, scummy, poor-as-piss town of Clappers Wreake to the glory it deserves. His demands are far from simple, however, and it'll take a fair bit of sleuthing to figure out how to get everything that's required to save the day.

The game is filled with popular culture references and its crude animations lend it a sense of charm rather than detract from it. *Hector* also has a decent amount of game time available; considering that this is just part one of a series, the future is looking bright.

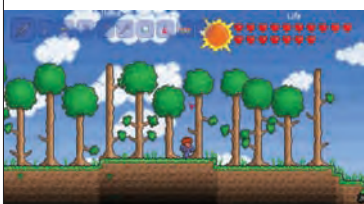


// A clever, hilarious and brazen adventure game with its roots firmly in the classics.

### Terraria

Calling *Terraria* a two-dimensional *Minecraft* wouldn't be completely wrong. With all its crafting, randomly generated worlds and smashing/collecting/placing of blocks to mould the world into whatever you see fit, it's safe to say that *Terraria*'s developer has taken a touch of inspiration from *Minecraft* in creating this colourful, side-scrolling adventure. However, whereas *Minecraft* is a creation sim with adventure/exploration elements piled onto it, *Terraria* is a side-scrolling action/exploration game with added creation elements. The focus is different, but where it's most similar to *Minecraft* is in its hellishly addictive nature.

Your *Terraria* world is littered with various usable materials, massive, loot-filled caves and an impressive array of beasties. There are also NPCs who'll move into a village of your creation and aid you in various ways should you meet certain conditions. There's a massive amount of stuff to see and do in *Terraria*. Multiplayer support makes it even more compelling.



// *Terraria* is a brilliant amalgamation of side-scrolling adventure and *Minecraft*-style crafting.

## WEB SCORES

How do we measure up? We scour the Net to find out what the rest of the world thinks.

NAG / Metacritic coverage / Game Rankings average

### Brink



65  
68  
70

### Darksport



70  
65  
65

### Duke Nukem Forever



70  
58  
45

### L.A. Noire



80  
89  
88

### Operation Flashpoint: Red River



79  
70  
75

### The Witcher 2



91  
88  
88

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### EVGA GeForce GTX 580 SC 1536MB



#### OVERVIEW

384-bit, 797MHz Clock,  
1536MB 384-bit GDDR5  
Memory 4008MHz,  
512 Cuda Cores, 2 x DVI-I  
Connector, 1 x mini HDMI, PCIe 2.0.

### EVGA GeForce GTX 560 Ti 1024MB



#### OVERVIEW

256-bit, 850MHz  
Clock, 1024MB  
256-bit GDDR5 Memory  
4104MHz, 384 Cuda Cores, 2 x DVI-I Connector, 1 x Mini HDMI, PCIe 2.0

### EVGA GeForce GTX 550 Ti 1024MB



#### OVERVIEW

192-bit, 951MHz Clock,  
1024MB 192-bit GDDR5  
Memory 4356MHz,  
192 Cuda Cores, 2 x DVI-I Connector, 1 x Mini HDMI, PCIe 2.0



# Brink

Dabba dee dabba die

**B**rink takes place on the Ark – a utopian man-made city that floats on the ocean following the end of the world. Any people lucky enough to be on the Ark before things went pear-shaped are called Citizens: they're there because they could afford to be and they'd like it very much if everyone would leave them alone. Then there are the Guests. These poor souls came to the Ark post-apocalypse seeking refuge. With little choice but to chuck them overboard, the Citizens give the thumbs-up for the Guests to stick around, provided they set up their own living spaces and don't bother the Citizens' Sunday cricket and crumpets. But, in a city designed to support five thousand, the additional forty-five thousand have wrecked havoc on the city's balance and now it's on the brink of civil war between two factions: the newly-formed Rebellion and the Ark's Security.

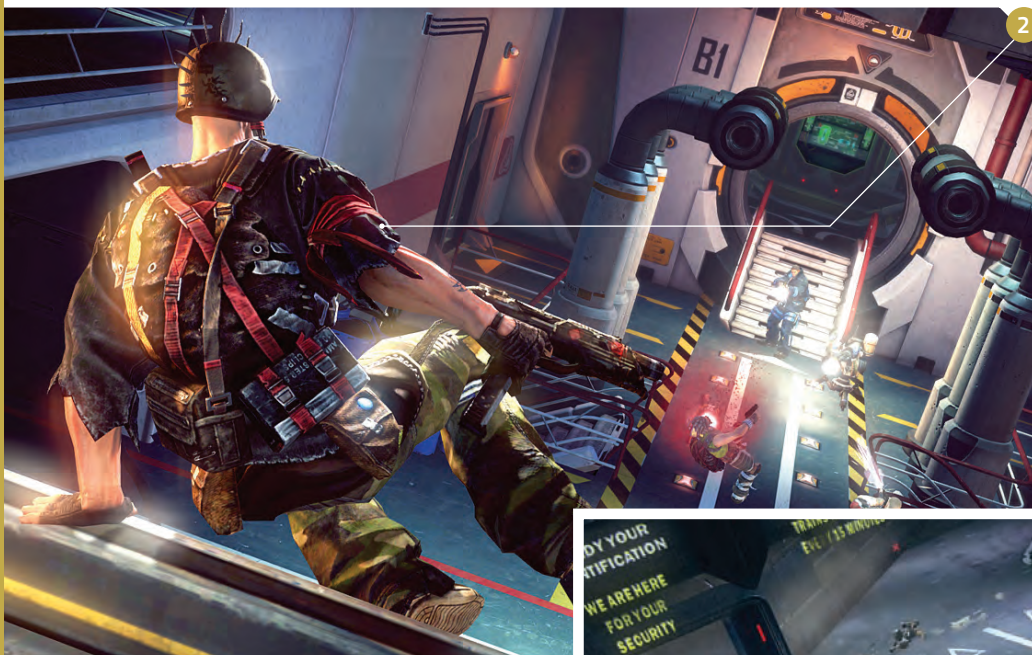
When you start up the game, you're greeted with incredibly slick presentation and a character customisation screen. Not much is available at first, but there's enough to get you excited. If your character

## [ details ]

Platforms: **360 / PS3 / PC**  
 Genre: **First-person shooter**  
 Age restriction: **16+**  
 DRM: **Internet connection required [Steam]**  
 Multiplayer: **Local: None**  
**Online: 16 players**  
 Developer: **Splash Damage**  
 Website: **www.brinkthegame.com**  
 Publisher: **Bethesda Softworks**  
 Distributor: **Nu Metro Interactive**

looks this good already, imagine how awesome he'll look once you've unlocked a bunch of stuff. Once done, you might consider jumping into a tutorial, and you'd be wise to do so. *Brink* works in a similar way to *Unreal Tournament's* Assault Mode: two opposing teams attempting to take similar, opposing objectives, but almost none of that is obvious unless you sit through the tutorial videos. *Brink* comes with a bit of a steep initial learning curve, but once you've got it figured out (which will likely be accomplished by telling the tutorials to get stuffed and learning as you go along), you'll find that the system is fairly straightforward. The simplest part of the game is learning to use its SMART movement system that gives players access to *Mirror's Edge*-like movement with about a tenth of the effort.

The point in each mission is to accomplish a number of goals that open up new sections of the map or change existing ones as you progress. Depending on the mission at hand, you might have to, say, plant explosives or hack into a terminal, while the opposing team endeavours to stop you from doing so. Often, there are ancillary objectives



/1/ At any time you can bring up the objective wheel that displays currently available objectives for your class. Choosing an objective will show you the target location from anywhere in the map.

/2/ Different body types will affect your ability to move using SMART. The Light body type can climb the highest walls and move quickly, but the Heavy struggled to climb over a couch while being able to take the most damage.

/3/ Weapon and character customisation options are unlocked by completing the four optional challenge missions at different difficulties.





that either team will have access to that will buy them time or cause additional headaches for the other guys. On top of that, the environment contains a number of capturable Command Posts at which players of the owning team can restock on ammo. There are two types of Posts: Health and Supply. The former increases the holding team's players' health bars by one pip, while the latter increases their Supply by one pip. With all of that going on, it'd be understandable if things get a little crazy, but for the most part each mission boils down to a simple objective: kill the other guys as they try to complete their objectives. This simplicity has the nasty habit of resulting in extraordinary amounts of camping (especially if you can camp an objective near a Command Post), and the Supply/buff system, mentioned next, only adds to that.

There are four classes in *Brink*: Solider, Engineer, Medic and Operative. There are no limits on the level of weaponry each has access to (this is instead determined by body type), but each has a selection of abilities (like Perks, to use a *COD* reference) that



make them quite distinct in this team-focused type of gameplay. Many of these abilities are once-off weapons or buffs (some are self-targetable, others are not) that require you to spend the resource called Supply to use. Supply slowly regenerates over time, but many of the abilities will stay until the character dies. Such examples are an Engineer's damage bonus and Kevlar armour, a Medic's health and regeneration bonuses, and the Engineer's deployable turrets. Each player can choose how and when to spend their Supply, and if you go a long time without dying, you'll often find that you've got a few buffs active at any one time, which makes you a hell of a lot tougher than someone with none. So, when a team has to lock down an area, all they need do is keep throwing buffs at each other, planting turrets and mines, and keeping each other healed. The opposing team will have a tough time breaking through such a defence, and with the absolutely bloody awful AI running the show, you'll be hard-pressed to finish a few of the available missions unless you're playing online...

About that "online" thing; good luck with that. *Brink* is stuck in a pretty ugly rut that's the result of many reviewers getting hold of code that the developers themselves call "too early" and "broken". Unfortunately, reviews based on this code went live, calling the game's AI terrible, saying that the AI-controlled players fling wildly between unfairly accurate and plain stupid. As a result, the game scored poorly in its critical first few weeks in the market. The knock-on effect of this is that it's almost impossible to find players online, which means that most of the time, you're stuck with the AI. While it's better than it was before, it's still far from good, or even acceptable.

*Brink* is the sort of game that makes you ask yourself "why isn't this better?" It's filled with potential: cool aesthetic, interesting gameplay ideas, a great setting and a ton of customisability, but falls flat on its face, down a flight of stairs and into a gaggle of passing-by nuns because of just a few glaring issues.

**NAG**

**GeometriX**

/ PLUS / Customisability / Team-based play / Great aesthetic / SMART movement works well  
/ MINUS / Poor AI / Non-existent online community / Gameplay imbalances

BUY THIS SO I HAVE SOMEONE TO PLAY WITH :(

**65**



# L.A. Noire

“Don’t you need a warrant or something?”

In a time when opportunists are more concerned with recovering from the financial impact of World War II than doing what’s considered good and right, it pays to be the guy with the gun and the badge and the right to kick down doors. It also pays to be the guy with the gun, badge and pockets lined with blood money, as Officer Cole Phelps, decorated war hero and all-round good guy, discovers in this crime drama. *L.A. Noire* is, quite simply, an adventure game, but one by the description with which people who played adventure games in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s would be familiar. While the screenshots scattered around these pages might lure you into thinking that this Rockstar-branded game is like the *GTA* or ‘40s-era “rival” *Mafia* series, *L.A. Noire* is far from it. Sure, there’s driving and shooting and running over people, but there’s much more to this game than a series of action sequences.

## [ details ]

Platforms:

360/ PS3

Genre:

Adventure

Age restriction:

18+

DRM:

Disc-based

Multiplayer:

Local: None

Online: None

Developer:

Team Bondi /

Rockstar Games

Website:

www.

rockstargames.

com/lanoire

Publisher:

Rockstar Games

Distributor:

Megarom

The main focus in *L.A. Noire* is crime-solving. As Phelps moves up the ranks in the LAPD, he’ll be tasked with attending a number of crime scenes that need his (your) attention to detail and intuition. You’ll guide Phelps through each scene, examining the evidence, looking for clues and definitely not messing around with any of that latex glove and plastic baggy stuff you see on *CSI*. This is 1947: the cops play by their own rules and when, shortly into the game, Phelps makes the rank of Detective, you’ll be the big man at each crime scene. It’s a joy to play this type of role: the sort where you can call uncooperative witnesses “dollface” and book people because you don’t like the cut of their jib. Phelps might be a good guy, but he’s a bad-ass who wants to get the job done. No number of crooked cops or menacing Mafiosi will get in his way. Now, ordinary people might have a tough time trying to crack a crime scene, so the game has a few helpful audio



clues that alert you whenever you’ve done the right thing. Each time you pass by a possible clue (about half the things you stumble upon won’t be of any use to you, which Phelps will mutter to himself), a chime will sound. Additionally, music that plays during a crime scene investigation will cut out when you’ve found all the necessary clues. This forms half of the investigation process for each case.

The second part to solving a case involves talking to witnesses and suspects. During conversations, Cole will use his trusty notepad that keeps track of all discovered clues, people, locations and objectives, to interrogate each interviewee. When Phelps asks each question on his list (which is populated as you uncover clues through inspection or interrogation), you’ll have the opportunity to call the respondent’s answer as truth, a lie or doubtful, which results in Phelps saying something supposedly appropriate for your choice. The system feels strange at first, and even later in the game once I thought I had it figured out, I’d still be surprised by the inconsistency of Phelps’ response to my choice, especially between doubt and truth. Thankfully, there’s a system in place to help you along, in which you can spend Intuition Points that Phelps acquires every few levels of experience. XP is earned by completing cases, successfully interrogating interviewees and many other actions.

There’s more to the interrogation process than simply guessing, as the





/1/ Many cases will require a combination of clue finding and player logic. If that fails you, just keep trying until you get it right.

/2/ High-contrast lighting conditions add to the atmosphere and do their bit to ensure the game lives up to its namesake.

/3/ If you're going to call someone out on a lie, you need to make sure you've got the evidence to back up your claim.



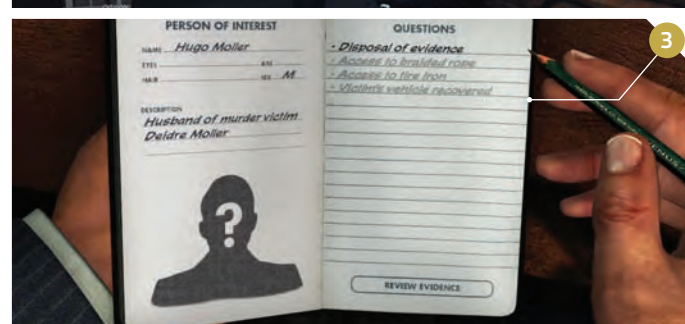
game uses an advanced system of motion capture called MotionScan that generates incredibly realistic facial animations. The upside to this is that your own ability to detect lies, by watching peoples' eye and other movements, will be put to use in this game. For pure geek points, this game scores big. The issue with the system is that it's sometimes incredibly obvious when people are lying, and you'll find yourself shifting between guesswork, instinct and meta-gaming as tools to figure out the correct response. There are also a few ugly instances where the acting is bad, and that has the unfortunate effect of breaking immersion rather than enhancing it. For the most part, however, the acting is excellent, especially that of the lead characters.

Despite *L.A. Noire's* strong adventure roots, it's not without its share of action. The game features an open-world, accurately-recreated 1947 version of a large chunk of Los Angeles around which you can drive either at leisure between investigation scenes, or during action sequences like car chases or when you need to tail a suspect. And the driving feels solid; one might challenge the historical inaccuracies with regards to the treatment of the

game's many licensed vehicles, but the end result is vehicles that handle well and aren't ever irritating to drive. There are plenty of other types of sequences: brawling; cover-based shooting; light puzzle-solving; tailing on foot; and more. Despite being rather easy, these sequences, like the driving between scenes, do a decent job of breaking up the monotony that the crime-solving falls into around the middle of the game, but there's a definite flat-spot at that point where even the extra bits struggle to help the game keep pace. Thankfully, there's a fantastic storyline that should encourage you to play through the parts of the game that tends to drag on, and, rest assured that the seemingly convoluted story comes together incredibly well as the game progresses, but it does feel a bit rushed towards the end. A better spread of key story elements would not be remiss here.

There's plenty more to talk about with *L.A. Noire*, but much of it is better left up to you to discover. It's an interesting and well put-together game that probably won't let you down as long as you don't go in expecting too much in the way of sandbox gameplay. As far as linear, story-driven adventure games go, *L.A. Noire* is great to play. **NAG**

**GeometriX**



/ PLUS / Fantastic visuals / Animations and acting / Deep and interesting story / Great core gameplay

/ MINUS / Action sequences too easy / Repetitive / A bit buggy / Story pacing

IMAGINE OF POLICE QUEST BUILT WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND A '40S FILM NOIR SETTING.

80



# The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings

Is that... Is that a wooden dildo?

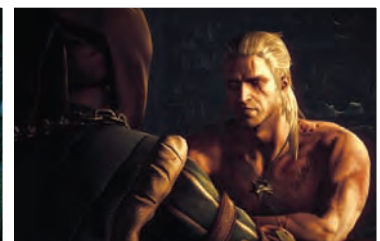
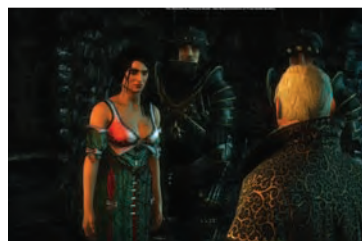
This is not your grandpappy's idyllic fantasy universe. It's not filled with happy, tree-hugging hippies and hearty, mine-raping midgets who only have to deal with adversity once every thousand years when some drama queen in implausible, uncomfortable-looking armour (which also comes in black – for Enhanced Creepy Effect™) decides that those lazy hippies, filthy minedwellers and smelly humans just don't get him, so he builds an ominous tower (which optionally comes topped with needlessly sharp ornamental spires that serve no purpose other than to freak out the locals) with a giant eye on it that rockets everyone into a terrified frenzy, which inevitably leads to a hairy-footed short guy named Elijah Wood doing a crapton of walking before tossing some shiny trinket into something fiery and going home to wait another thousand years for the next pompous wanker to put on his blackest armour and prance about toasting unicorns and murdering bunnies. This is not that fantasy universe – and if that's what you expect from *The Witcher 2: Assassin's of Kings*, you're going to be sorely disappointed.

This is a rotting fantasy world,

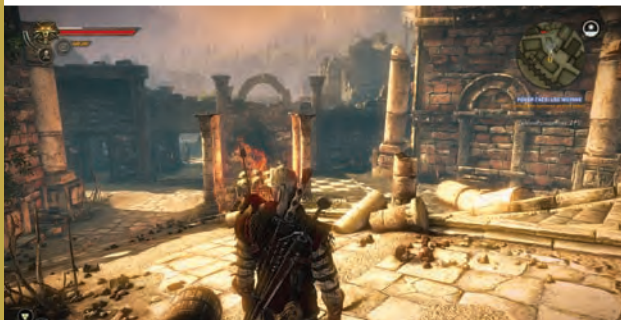


## [ details ]

Platforms:  
PC  
Genre:  
Role-playing game  
Age restriction:  
18+  
DRM:  
One-time Internet activation required  
Multiplayer:  
Local: None  
Online: None  
Developer:  
CD Projekt RED  
Website:  
[www.en.thewitcher.com](http://www.en.thewitcher.com)  
Publisher:  
Namco Bandai  
Distributor:  
Megarom Interactive



An exam?

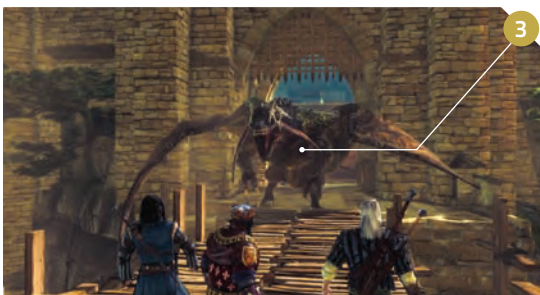
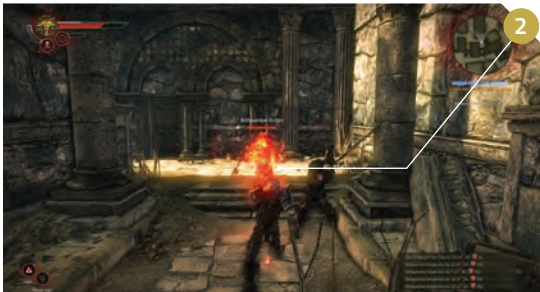


where adversity is faced daily. It's a world where humans have risen to power by virtue of the sheer numbers produced by humanity's uninhibited breeding. Humans hatefully persecute the elder races (i.e. elves, dwarves and the like) at every turn. Rape is considered acceptable, so long as you don't get caught. Just walking down the street turns into a game of chance: survival by dice roll. Racism, drugs, prostitution, slavery, avarice and other unsavoury practices reign supreme. From the lowest serf to the kings themselves, each of *The Witcher 2's* boundlessly interesting characters is a bastard in their own right. Almost everyone you meet is as likely to slit your throat as they are to offer a helpful hand. It's grimy, it's dangerous and it feels completely, worryingly believable. Once again, you're thrust into these warped fantasy environs as Geralt of Rivia, Witcher and monster slayer. Geralt's no stranger to persecution, being a sort of fantasy X-Man, a mutant granted superhuman abilities via the power of magic and torturous training. Few people see Geralt as being human – and in a world such as this, that leaves you with very few friends, even less of whom are trustworthy.

*The Witcher 2's* narrative begins in the middle of a war, with very little

explanation as to why you're fighting under the banner of Temeria's King Foltest. It's not long before everything becomes mightily complicated for Geralt and by the time the lengthy prologue chapter ends, you'll be so immersed in the narrative that you'll have forgotten that you started this game without the faintest idea as to what the hell is going on. While the story isn't particularly original, it's utterly captivating from start to finish, filled with intrigue and surprises. Sadly, one of the game's problems arises early, stemming from a lack of information on its gameplay mechanics. Other than a few tutorial textboxes that pop up to explain the basic controls and provide other (mostly useless) info, you're left stumbling around in the dark when it comes to the game's more advanced intricacies. It makes the opening hours frustratingly tough as you attempt to work out how the game expects you to play it. It's Vizima's outskirts all over again, because I imagine few players will ever progress beyond this point, most of them having an epic ragequit at some point in the prologue, high-pitched screams of "OMG I've died seventy times in the last three minutes" emanating from their frustrated faceholes. Not helping matters is the often clumsy and sluggish melee combat system, the





**/1/** As in the original game, you can take on monster hunting contracts that'll get you a tidy reward. You'll first have to acquire information on the monster you're hunting by buying and reading in-game books about them.

**/2/** Your magic spells are called Signs – one of Geralt's three specialisations. The other two are swordsmanship and alchemy. All three can be improved in the extensive character progression screen. This is the Igni Sign in action.

**/3/** *The Witcher 2* is easily one of the most cinematic RPGs out there. Some of the set pieces are absolutely astoni-OMG DRAGON.

**/4/** A moment of sensual tenderness unfolds. So much sensuality, so much tenderness.

timing of which takes some getting used to. It's easy to see what the developers intended for the melee combat, but their execution is a little off. Nevertheless, when the combat system works as it's supposed to and Geralt becomes a graceful, deadly blur of flesh, blood and steel darting from foe to foe, it's awesome to behold. Thankfully, you've also got access to traps, bombs, throwing daggers and a few magic spells, somewhat offsetting the melee problems.

It's a pity that so few people will limp through the taxing opening hours, because once the game opens up it's a truly enthralling RPG. It's a shorter, more focussed experience than the original, but it's much tighter and irrefutably more impressive because of it. Half as long, twice as bright and all that. As with the original game, the way *The Witcher 2* deals with player choice is remarkable. All too often in RPGs, player choice is a throwaway concept tacked onto the feature list, with immediate consequences that can be comfortably reset by the player with a click of the load button. Here the true, far-reaching consequences of your choices often only reveal themselves *hours* after the choice is made. On top of that, you're often left feeling like a total bunghole no matter what choice you made. It's delightfully harsh, although many people won't be able to stomach a game that so fervently desires to make the player confront the

power of their actions. It's a game that doesn't care about your feelings, doesn't want to hold your hand when you're crossing a busy street, instead forcing you to acknowledge that even the most seemingly innocuous choices can punch your heart straight out of your chest with an unforeseen price. For this supreme lack of candy-coating, *The Witcher 2* should be applauded.

The world's characters are interesting, to say the least. You're constantly being lied to, often being strung along, each character's motivation a complete mystery until their sword is at your throat. Add in distractions like arm wrestling and dice poker, together with a generous number of side quests and a worthwhile crafting/alchemy system, and you've got a world that it's easy to lose countless hours to. Just reading the in-game journal can engulf enough of your time that people might start worrying about your sanity. The game's sights, sounds and incidental details further envelop you in this continually immersive world – particularly the visuals, which no screenshot can do justice. It's the type of game that justifies a PC upgrade, because it deserves to be played with everything turned up to 11. There's so much more to say, but evil word limits prevent it. Simply put, *The Witcher 2's* gritty, mature brilliance is absolutely worth getting lost in. **NAG**

**Barkskin**

**/ PLUS /** Incredibly immersive / Brilliant narrative / Meaningful moral choices / Outstanding visuals  
**/ MINUS /** Clumsy combat system / Inconsistent difficulty

THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST, MOST IMMERSIVE RPGS EVER CREATED. ALSO – BOOBS LOL.

91



# LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean: The Video Game

[Insert *Pirates of the Caribbean* theme song here]

If you've got it nearby, pick up last month's issue right now. Flip to my *LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars* review, replace every reference to *Star Wars* and its characters with *Pirates of the Caribbean* and company, substitute lightsabers and Jedi Starfighters with cutlasses and rowboats, add in a few franchise-specific alternatives here and there to make it worthy in the eyes of Johnny Depp, and you'll basically have everything you need to know about *LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean: The Video Game*. Traveller's Tales has once again followed their proven formula, churning out a game that is arguably overly familiar, but fun nonetheless.

Here's a quick explanation of what you can expect from the game. You're offered the chance to play through LEGO versions of the four *Pirates of the Caribbean* films in any order, each one providing a handful of levels set in familiar locations from the movies. A massive roster of unlockable characters

## [ details ]

Platforms: 360 / 3DS / DS / PC / PS3 / PSP / Wii  
Genre: Action platformer  
Age restriction: 7+  
DRM: Disc-based  
Multiplayer: Local: 2 players  
Online: None  
Developer: Traveller's Tales  
Website: <http://videogames.lego.com/en-US/LEGOPIRATESofTheCaribbeanTheVideoGame>  
Publisher: Disney Interactive Studios  
Distributor: Prima Interactive



/1/ There may be a huge amount of unlockable characters, but many of them simply offer cosmetic variations on existing characters. Here's an alternate Jack Sparrow.

/2/ These games have always had massive obsessive-compulsive appeal. Must... collect... everything!



awaits you, all of which are adorable LEGO versions of the films' familiar faces. In Story Mode, you blast through the levels by solving simple puzzles, battling foes and engaging in a generous portion of platforming. Tons of secrets are tucked away in the shadows and a multitude of collectable items sit around, just waiting for your grubby mitts to grab hold of them. Your LEGO character is always joined by a LEGO companion (in some cases you're joined by more than one) and you're free to switch between the provided characters at any point to take advantage of their unique abilities - which are essential for progression. If you've got friends, you might even be able to convince one of them to join you for a bit of couch co-op and tackle the game's challenges together. The first time you run through a level, your astounding investigative skills will likely reveal to you that you're unable to unlock every secret and access every hidden area, because the available characters lack the requisite abilities to reach them. That's where Free Play Mode (which you're granted access to upon completing a level in Story Mode)

comes in. Here you're allowed to switch between any of the dozens of characters you've unlocked to reach previously inaccessible areas using their distinctive abilities, revealing all of those delicious secrets and unlocking more of the game's vast array of content.

That's it really. It's lighter on the action than *LEGO Star Wars III*, instead placing more of its focus on puzzles and platforming. The hub area that you're able to visit between levels is not nearly as impressive as the one seen in *LEGO Star Wars III*, but there's some truly excellent level design in *LEGO Pirates* to make up for that. Of the many characters in the game, Cap'n Jack deserves special mention, because his lovable swagger transitions brilliantly into LEGO form. The game's charm is undeniable (as always) and it's presented brilliantly (as always), with all the humour and cuteness we've come to expect. If you've played any of the *LEGO* titles before, you'll know exactly what you're getting with this game. Aside from the theme, it's the same family-friendly fun that the series is known for. **NAG**

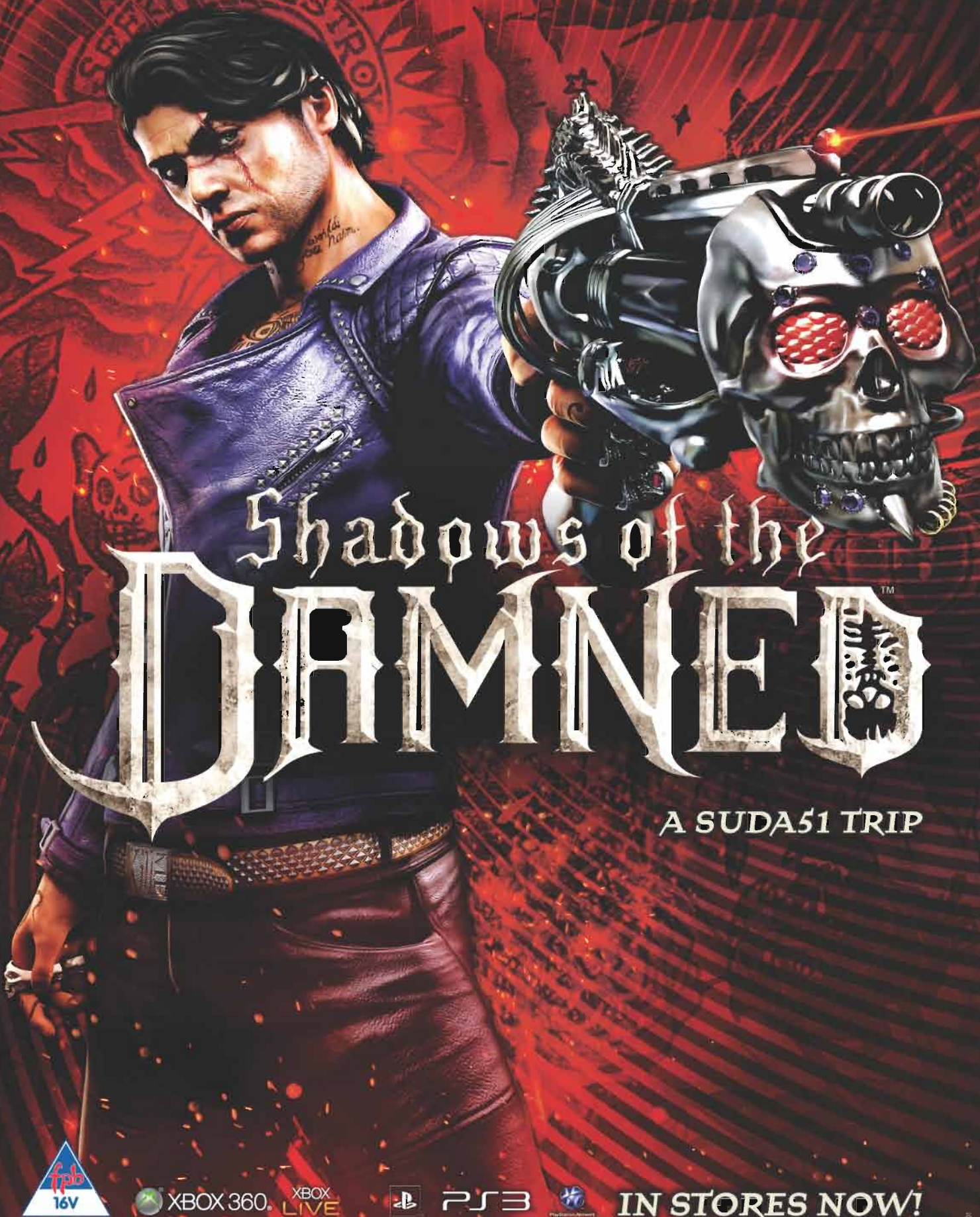
Barkskin

/ PLUS / It's fun / It's funny / Good level design / Tons of content  
/ MINUS / Same rubbish camera / Nothing new here really

ONCE MORE, WITH PIRATES.

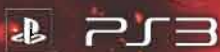
75





# Shadows of the DAMNED™

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# Thor: God of Thunder

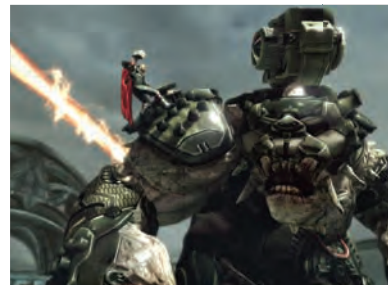
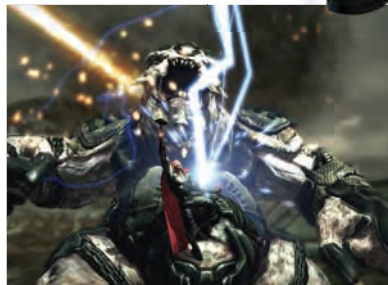
I am THOR! My game is MEDIOCRE!

It's a weird feeling, knowing that a game is going to shift a crapton of copies regardless of what I say about it, in spite of that low score you see at the bottom of this page and the hundreds of words I spend whinging about the completely lacklustre experience I've had with it. It boggles the mind really, but that'll doubtless be the case with *Thor: God of Thunder*. To those of you who actually enjoy good games and would rather not waste your hard-earned dough on yet another shameless licensed rush job, stay away from *Thor*. It's that simple. Apparently I'm supposed to tell you why that is, so here goes...

*Thor: God of Thunder* is based on the recently released blockbuster film starring everyone's favourite Marvel-interpreted thunderous god. I've yet to see the movie, but apparently it's quite good – unlike the game. It doesn't repeat the film's storyline, instead opting to carve out its own narrative. There's something in there about Loki being his usual tricky and deceptive self by successfully manipulating Thor (and you) into releasing some giant demon-type thing. Demon thing then proceeds to tear Asgard a new one

## [ details ]

Platforms: 360 / DS / PS3 / Wii  
 Genre: Action  
 Age restriction: 16+  
 DRM:  
 Disc-based  
 Multiplayer: Local: None  
 Online: None  
 Developer: Liquid Entertainment  
 (360 / PS3) / Red Fly Studios (Wii)  
 WayForward Technologies (DS)  
 Website: [www.sega.com/thor](http://www.sega.com/thor)  
 Publisher: SEGA  
 Distributor: Nu Metro Interactive



/1/ Certain collectables unlock alternate costumes for Thor. There's also a collectable that unlocks different colours for your lightning-based attacks.

/2/ Thor battles Ymir. It probably looks more impressive than it actually is.



while Big Daddy Odin has a nap or something. Honestly, I don't really care. To be fair, the story's not outrageously bad and it's actually cool to see a bunch of recognisable characters in here that didn't star in the film, but were instead lifted from the pages of the comic book. Still, it's painfully difficult to get immersed in a story as brazenly uninteresting and uninspired as the one conveyed here. The character's rich history deserves so much more than this jerry-rigged narrative.

Getting down to the actual gameplay doesn't improve matters, either. It's pretty much just a *God of War* clone, but an excessively mundane one. The Mjölfnir-infused combat system works (aside from the horribly annoying camera), but it's never really exciting, save for a few decent boss battles. You've got your basic and advanced attacks, complemented by a set of three different powers: namely Wind, Thunder and Lightning. Each of those

three can be charged up to unleash a more powerful attack. For example, the basic Lightning power causes lightning strikes to come down from the heavens and fry a set number of foes. Charged up, however, the Lightning power bathes a sizeable area around Thor in electrical energy, dealing massive damage and ruining the day of any enemy caught in its area of effect. You bash things and hurl your mighty hammer as you trudge through a series of familiar but bland environments. Along the way, you gather Valour in numerous ways. Valour acts as currency for upgrading Thor's attributes and abilities. It's all perfectly functional and it even manages to offer a dash of mindless fun for a short while. Soon enough though, you'll find it becomes tiresome and repetitive. There's massive potential for any game starring Marvel's Thor to automatically be awesome. This game manages to defy that logic. **NAG**

**Barkskin**

/ PLUS / Thor's in it / Decent combat and upgrades / Cool hammer bro  
 / MINUS / Rubbish camera / Boring environments / Visually outdated / Repetitive

AT LEAST IT'S BETTER THAN *IRON MAN 2: THE VIDEOGAME*. THAT'S NOT SAYING MUCH.





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# Virtua Tennis 4

## The arcade version

Tennis games go back almost as far as video gaming... only now the three blocks on screen have been replaced by characters that resemble real world stars, and the controls and strategies within the game are much more complex. And, as technology marches on, things just get better and better – or, at least, they should.

*Virtua Tennis 4* isn't exactly anachronistic, but it does have at least one limb securely mired in the past. This series, as opposed to the far more serious *Top Spin* franchise, has always been the more arcade-style tennis game, and the latest iteration does nothing to move away from that feel. Whether it's the straightforward control scheme or the cheesy music that somehow the developers thought

### [ details ]

Platforms:  
**360 / PC / PS3 / Wii**  
Genre:  
**Sports**  
Age restriction:  
**3+**  
DRM:  
**Disc-based**  
Multiplayer:  
**Local: 4 players**  
**Online: 4 players**  
Developer:  
**SEGA**  
Website:  
**www.sega.com**  
Publisher:  
**SEGA**  
Distributor:  
**Nu Metro Interactive**

/1/ There are many well known faces to see in *Virtua Tennis 4*.

/2/ Lots of mini-games give the player alternative activities.



was a great idea to include during matches, it's arcade all the way. But that doesn't make it feel old. Rather, that feeling comes from the fact that very little progression has been made from the last *Virtua Tennis* game to this one. The virtual versions of real world players are pretty-much the same, and the game mechanics don't seem to have changed much at all.

Sure, the world of tennis is perhaps not as fast paced as other sports, but considering that we don't get new tennis games every year, one would think that a little progression might be seen in this title... at least in terms of mechanics. But no, if you played the last *Virtua Tennis* game, don't expect too much new in *Virtua Tennis 4*.

Not that the game has no changes at all – career mode, for example, has been revamped, resembling an odd sort of board game. The mode is needlessly complex, but still offers fans a good level of enjoyment.

What is new is the implementation

of motion controls across all platforms. This is a great idea... except for the fact that it only comes into play in an odd exhibition match mode. This is odd because, unlike what one might expect, it places the player in a sort of first-person view mode, removing the necessity for movement. This effectively strips away much of the defensive strategy of the game, leaving the player with only having to swing their controller (or arm, in the case of the Kinect) to return shots. It's still playable, but this potential winner for the series could have been implemented a whole lot better.

If you like your tennis simulators to be a little less serious – and crammed with mini-games – then *Virtua Tennis 4* is the way to go. But many may not find it serious enough, rather opting for the competition. SEGA would do well to try and inject a little more technicality into the game... still, it's fun to play, and can get quite exciting at times.

**NAG**  
Ramjet

/ PLUS / Fun to play / Motion control  
/ MINUS / No real advancement / Not very serious

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A SOMEWHAT LIGHT-HEARTED TENNIS SIMULATOR, THIS IS YOUR BEST BET.

70



**THE RING IS IN YOUR CONTROL**



# GREEN LANTERN

## RISE OF THE MANHUNTERS



**NuMetro**  
interactive

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NINTENDO DS NINTENDO 3DS Wii XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE PS3





# Operation Flashpoint: Red River

Four's a fireteam

**O**peration Flashpoint, as a franchise, has always had something of a cult following. The realism of the shooter was counter-balanced by long, difficult missions, making it a game where personal taste, rather than general popularity, was a deciding factor when it came down to purchases. And, with *Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising* receiving a mixed response, it seemed like the situation would remain unchanged.

However, the latest instalment goes a long way to bringing the franchise further into the mainstream. *Operation Flashpoint: Red River* presents the player with a more approachable game, and one that is likely to gather new fans for the series.

In this game, the player will take on the role of a member of a four-man fireteam as they storm (as part of the US military) through yet another small, dusty country which has goats as its currency. The player, in the single player campaign, will be the fireteam leader, and will use radial menus to issue orders to AI squad mates. While there have been some improvements in this area, the AI team members are still fairly moronic. They're not as smart as the

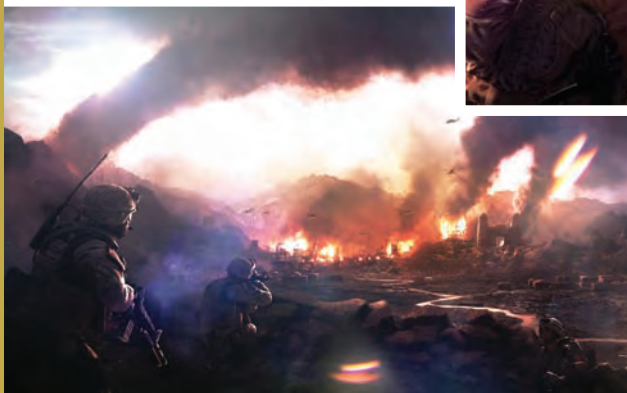
## [ details ]

Platforms: 360 / PC / PS3  
Genre: First-person shooter  
Age restriction: 18+  
DRM: Disc-based  
Multiplayer: Local: None  
Online: 4 players  
Developer: Codemasters  
Website: www.flashpointgame.com  
Publisher: Codemasters  
Distributor: Megarom



/1/ You'll need to make sure your AI team mates are in the right place most of the time.

/2/ Teamwork is essential, making it a great multiplayer-co-op title.



enemy, that's for sure, leaving the player feeling like a well-armed kindergarten teacher on a dangerous field trip.

For the game to be seen in its full glory – such as it is – it needs to be played in multiplayer. Up to four players can join the co-op multiplayer experience... and when compared to the single-player game, it's a case of chalk and cheese.

The campaign is kind of seamless between the two modes – players can do a few single-player missions, and then do the next few in co-op, and so on. During these missions, the player will earn experience for the class of soldier that they are using. There are four classes: riflemen, automatic riflemen, grenadiers and scouts. The player also has limited control over the classes' load-outs, and can determine what kind of soldiers make up their fireteam in the

single player mode.

While *Operation Flashpoint: Red River* may not be a fantastic title, it certainly is an enjoyable one – if, once again, you take on the co-op multiplayer missions. The graphics are fairly crisp, and the voice acting is good (although one can cut the testosterone with a knife – make that machete, because they're manlier – in the dialogue.) This annoying vocal pissing-contest aside, the overall experience can be fairly rewarding, if you are playing with a group of people who have the overall sense to actually cooperate. This game punishes solo-soldiers (primary reason why the single-player element leaves a lot to be desired) but, when taken on with friends, it can be tons of fun.

**NAG**  
**Ramjet**

/ PLUS / Great co-op fun / More mainstream  
/ MINUS / Single-player modes / AI

A GOOD GAME FOR FOUR FRIENDS TO ENJOY TOGETHER, BUT SOLO-WARRIORS MAY BE LEFT WANTING.

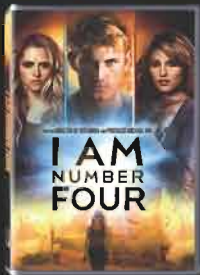
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# Duke Nukem Forever

## Always bet on Duke

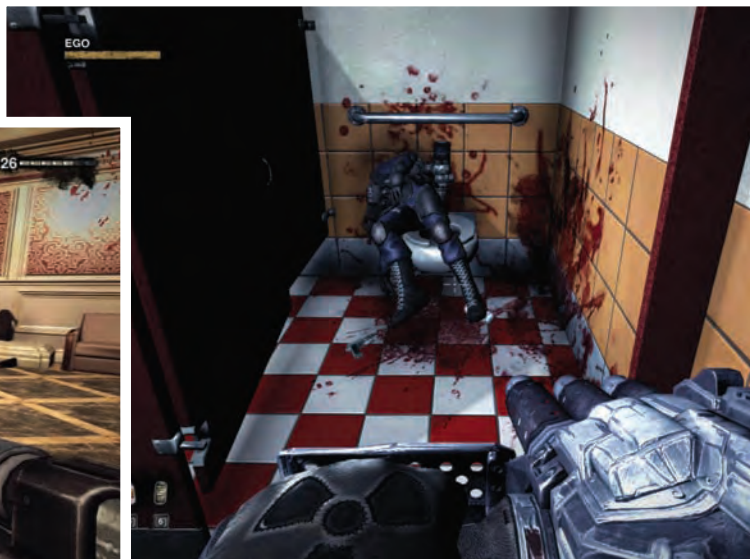
There has never before been a game like this.

It's been fifteen years since *Duke Nukem 3D*. Fifteen. For many gamers out there, and here at NAG, that represents a significant portion of one's life, if not the majority of it. This means that there are two types of people who might play this game: those who have been waiting for it all this time, and those who will treat it like any other game because the first time they picked up a controller, it had dual analogue sticks and was probably used to play a game with *Battle or Duty* in the title. As a member of the old fuddy-duddy segment, the mere fact that *DNF* exists at all is enough for me to tell people to go out and buy it right now, but luckily for you, we'll try to be a little more objective.

So, here it is: *Duke Nukem Forever*. Right from the ugly introductory video which shows you a montage of Duke's finest moments from *Duke Nukem 3D*, you're made well-aware of how

### [ details ]

Platforms:  
**360 / PC / PS3**  
Genre:  
**First-person shooter**  
Age restriction:  
**18+**  
DRM:  
**Internet connection required [Steam]**  
Multiplayer:  
**Local: None**  
**Online: 8 players**  
Developer:  
**Gearbox Software**  
**Triptych Games**  
**Piranha Games**  
**3D Realms**  
Website:  
**www.dukenukemforever.com**  
Publisher:  
**2K Games**  
Distributor:  
**Megarom Interactive**



awesome you're meant to think this man is. Once you're into the actual game, the sales pitch continues driving home the *Duke* fever. It's 12 years after the events of the first game; Duke is living it up in a Las Vegas penthouse with all the babes, booze and celebrity he could ask for. But the Cycloid mothership that brought the first wave of aliens has stuck around, and people are getting scared that the aliens are preparing for another attack. Lo and behold, they are, and once-again it's up to Duke to save the day. The first few chapters of the game see you getting yourself out of the casinos of Las Vegas and onto the streets; they're focused on how awesome Duke is and packaged into repetitive corridor shooting. Compared to the brief prologue in which you replay the final boss fight from *DN3D* with today's glorious visuals, this part of the game is tedious; only when you're outside and the game finally stops fellingating itself, does it actually start to shine. It's ironic, really, that this so-massively anticipated sequel

does better on its own merits than by shirking off of those of its prequel. It's almost like it's a good game in itself. When it achieves the correct balance between "OMG I'M ACTUALLY PLAYING THIS GAME RIGHT NOW!!!" and giving players meaningful gameplay, then it rocks as hard as Duke's abs, but there are aspects that keep cropping up that will prevent this game from ever being as significant as its predecessor.

Throughout the single player campaign's 4-5 hours of game time, you'll engage in all manner of decidedly Duke-like actions: killing familiar aliens with familiar weapons (and a few new ones), drinking beer and popping 'roids, ogling scantily-clad and eager women, and being a foul-mouthed chauvinist. Make no mistake: *Duke* is not for those sensitive to any of the afore mentioned topics. It's sexist and immature at every opportunity, far more so than *Duke 3D*. It's also firmly set in the old school of level progression and combat, but tries to throw in a few new conventions that don't sit well alongside the old: since





**/1/** Plenty of distractions exist to not only entertain you for a few minutes, but finding and interacting with these mini games and items will give you a permanent boost to maximum Ego (health)

**/2/** It might handle like a drunk mule, but the Might Foot monster truck is a blast to drive.

**/3/** Yeah, that's right; that's an underwater boss fight. Don't run out of air!



when can Duke only carry two weapons at a time? Sure, it adds a tactical element to the game, but that's the last thing one would expect to find here. When this modern approach to shooters is paired with the classic level exploration system of linear progress through isolated environments with a few hidden locations, it leaves us wondering just how many people sat in the Gearbox board room during meetings. It even adds in a few platforming sequences that are fairly amusing, especially as mini-Duke, and when you throw some solid combat on top of all of this, the result is an entertaining action experience that's neither as brainless as the likes of *Serious Sam*, nor as "tactical" as *Bulletstorm*, but forms a happy balance between the two. In fact, compared to any other first-person shooter, I'd say that *DNF* plays the most like *Quake 2*, but that could be the jump pads playing on my nostalgia.

It was mandatory that *DNF* releases with a multiplayer component, and we're pleased to say that it hasn't let us down. Mind you, our requirements were set to the level of "will we be able to shoot our friends with a Shrink Ray?" There are four modes on offer: a free-for-all called

DukeMatch; a team-based variant, Team DukeMatch; a capture-the-flag mode called Capture the Babe; and a headquarters/king-of-the-hill mode called Hail to the King. Each functions as well as can be expected, with the only notable boat-rocker being the controversial Capture the Babe mode in which players must kidnap the opposing team's babe and bring her back to their capture point. Occasionally, the babe will wave her hand in front of your face, preventing you from firing with the already-limited pistol you're forced to wield while carrying her. The only way to prevent this is to slap her. Yes, it's horrible, sexist stuff. We did warn you.

So the big question is "was it worth the wait?" It's impossible to say yes: there is *no* game that could take this long to reach our shelves and live up to all the hype leading up to its release. We're just glad that it is finally here, though, and managed to at least deliver a solid action experience. It lacks innovation, tact and subtlety, and the boss battles are way too easy, but will give you a good few hours of fun – possibly more if the multiplayer strikes your fancy. **NAG**

**GeometriX**

**/ PLUS /** Solid combat / Easter eggs / Looks good (on PC) / Decent puzzles  
**/ MINUS /** Limited appeal / Console version issues / Relies too heavily on *DN3D*'s fame

PLAY THIS PIECE OF GAMING HISTORY, EVEN IF IT'S JUST TO SLAG IT OFF.



# Darkspore

The dark of the sim

Since *Diablo II*'s mainstream appeal died off some years ago, there's been a void to fill in the action-RPG genre. Many titles have tried to copy the game, or put their own spin on things with varying degrees of success. Others have adapted to find their own triumphs by adjusting the amount of role-playing or action. On one side, you have titles like *Mass Effect* which give players plenty to do when they're not in battle but still keep the combat exciting and action-packed. Then, you have the other side: action-RPGs that only barely deserve the name because they have character progression and loot systems. *Torchlight* is a shining example of this take on the genre, and despite everything you think you know about Maxis and its giant promise cake *Spore*, *Darkspore* quite happily finds itself in this particular niche as well.

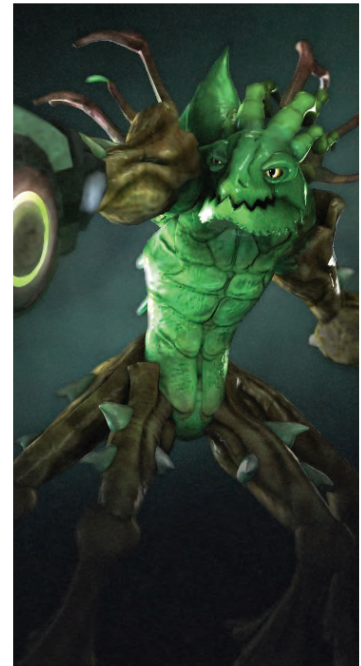
*Darkspore* borrows a fair bit of technology from its predecessor's creature phase, but not much else. The player will take control of the last Crogenitor – a race of super-beings that used to spend their afternoons making life-forms before some of their fancy new E-DNA went bad and their creations turned to the dark side. The *Darkspore*, corrupted by E-DNA, rose up and crushed their creators. Now, many years later, they have spread throughout the universe and it's up to you to save the

## [ details ]

Platforms:  
PC  
Genre:  
**Action role-playing game**  
Age restriction:  
**12+**  
DRM:  
**Internet connection required**  
**[EA account]**  
Multiplayer:  
**Local: None**  
**Online: 8 players**  
Developer:  
**Maxis**  
Website:  
**www.darkspore.com**  
Publisher:  
**Electronic Arts**  
Distributor:  
**Electronic Arts South Africa**

day. What a treat. You can gather that *Darkspore* is hardly setting itself up to be a narrative prodigy, and as you continue through the campaign you won't so much as interact with a story but simply be told of the demise of the Crogenitors and rise of the *Darkspore* by the computer onboard your ship. Thankfully, that stuff doesn't matter too much in a game like this; it's the action you're after, and that's what you shall have plenty of.

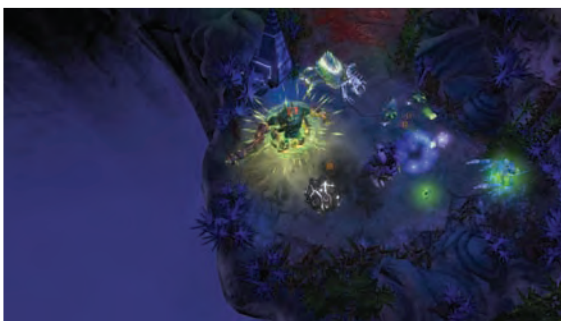
As a Crogenitor, you will have access to twenty-five heroes (each with four variants), or "living weapons", which you'll unlock as you gain levels and progress through the campaign. Think of these heroes as creatures similar in purpose to Pokémon – each has their own speciality and will be suitable for different situations or against certain enemy types. They're divided into three classes: speedy Ravagers, mighty Sentinels and spell-casting Tempests, with each archetype resulting in a collection of abilities most suited towards their particular style of play. The player then assembles up to three squads of three heroes each and takes them into each stage in the game's six worlds. The heroes cannot all be used at the same time, but each has a squad ability that can be accessed by any other hero in the squad provided the base hero is still alive. From this point on, the game presents you with a repetitive formula



**/1/** Kill enough *Darkspore* and you'll be granted a brief power called **Overdrive** that activates all squad powers simultaneously. It'll continue as long as you keep killing the enemy.







for progress: get through each area, kill different Darkspore that drop items, health and power (mana) pickups, then get to the end-level boss and attempt to kill it. The way in which squads are assembled and customised will be a little strange at first, as it's quite different to the norm in this genre, but once you've got it down pat you'll find that the whole process makes a ton of sense and feeds into the rest of the game well. In fact, the entire game feels well thought-out, and is sure to entertain those gamers who enjoy the grind and progression loops one gets sucked into in such games.

Did you catch that word "grind" over there? Yeah, that's important: *Darkspore* is all about the grinding. As you go through the chapters, you'll find yourself coming up against incredibly tough challenges that your heroes are simply too low-level to deal with. Usually that'll be in the form of the final level boss that is very often way more challenging than the rest of the level. It's a frustrating game at times, as the only way you'll be able to beat that boss is with the right squad that's been equipped with sufficiently powerful items, and the only way to get those items is to grind for them. You'll find yourself repeating levels frequently, especially later on when the difficulty gets particularly silly, and with little randomisation of

the levels each time you jump in, players with short fuses will find their keyboards broken before too long.

Those players that do manage to keep their anger bottled up or those who live for the grind and relish the idea of big rewards for their frustration will be happy here. If *Darkspore* is treated as something of an arcade game, you'll find that it's enjoyable, and each level is mercifully great to look at to ease that frustration. The game's aesthetic in general is eye-catching; it's stylised but not oversimplified and the gameplay environments stand out from the regular sci-fi crowd. Each level is a challenge all on its own, and if you conquer it you stand the chance to gain a lot for your heroes. Items cannot be equipped in the field, as each pickup represents a genetic blueprint that must be bonded to your hero in the ship's laboratory, which you might recognise as the creature editor from *Spore*. While each hero can't be altered to the extent as what *Spore* allowed you to do, but you'll find plenty of customisation in both the looks and combat departments.

*Darkspore* is special, mostly in a good way. It has its iffy bits, but it's a simple and fun game that you may find strangely alluring if the repetition doesn't bore you to death. **NAG**

**GeometriX**

/ PLUS / Looks good / Combat is fun / Tons of customisation  
/ MINUS / Repetitive / Fluctuating difficulty / Too simple for some

IF YOU'RE OKAY WITH REPETITION AND POTENTIAL FRUSTRATION, DARKSPORE WILL BRING YOU HOURS OF JOY.

70



# SBK 2011

## Back on track

Choosing your favourite superbike racing simulator these days can be tricky. With two major players in the market, it really is a case of "either or", but both Capcom's *MotoGP* and Black Beans' *SBK* franchises offer the player a lot. And both have improved by leaps and bounds over the last few years.

Take this latest iteration of the *SBK* franchise as an example. Here is a game that shows numerous improvements over its predecessor, and allows the player to experience a better level of motorbike racing simulation than before – from improved handling through to a more sensible camera.

But, at the same time, the developers have made some choices here that are a little odd; most notably, the assist system. Where the previous

### [ details ]

Platforms: 360 / PC / PS3  
Genre: Racing  
Age restriction: 3+  
DRM: Disc-based  
Multiplayer: Local: None Online: 16 players  
Developer: Milestone  
Website: [www.sbkthegame.com](http://www.sbkthegame.com)  
Publisher: Black Bean  
Distributor: Ster Kinekor Entertainment



/1/ Wet track conditions are a little less challenging than they should be.

/2/ Pulling off stunts can get you extra rewards in the SBK Tour mode.



title allowed the player to make use of assists as they saw fit, this time around the player pretty much only has three choices – low, medium and full simulation. This means that it is much more difficult for the player to tweak their experience this time around, and getting used to the new handling may be a bit more of a challenge.

The handling is far better this time around, and includes better implementation of slides, as well as a greater likelihood to come off of the bike when bumping an opponent. Speaking of opponents, the AI riders are a little more prone to making mistakes in this version, adding some more realism in that sense.

Where realism does take a bit of a dip is in wet riding. Riding a race in rain is far too similar to riding in dry conditions to be comfortable – the only real difference between the two here are braking distances, with a wet track demanding a slightly longer stopping distance.

The career mode is also largely unchanged in this version. The player

will get to create a character, using a rather limited character creation system, and will then work their way through several seasons, earning reputation and graduating up through the various racing classes.

A great new addition to the official riders and tracks is the inclusion of 17 "classics"; legendary racers who made a name for themselves in the sport. This addition really does appeal more to enthusiasts than weekend racers, but it is a very good inclusion nonetheless.

On the whole, this outing is a better experience than the previous one, but some of the tweaks and changes are a little less obvious than before. The new SBK Tour mode is very obvious, though, and will allow the player to participate in challenges that are a little out of the ordinary.

On the whole, it's a good addition to the franchise, and yet another step in the right direction for a challenging game genre. **NAG**

Ramjet

/ PLUS / Improvements / Classic riders  
/ MINUS / Assist tweaking / Wet conditions

A GOOD ADDITION TO THE SERIES, YET NOT WITHOUT ITS PROBLEMS.

79



# TOSHIBA

## Leading Innovation >>>



*Carmel Athena*

**External Interface:** Up to 480 Mb/sec  
**System Requirements:** Windows 7/Vista / XP / 2000  
Mac OS X 10.4 or later  
**Dimension:** 79 x 125 x 15 mm (L x W x H)  
**HDD Interface:** SATA  
**Power Supply:** USB Bus Power  
**Accessories:** USB 2.0 Cable  
**Assembled in China**



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# Battlefi

## PREVIEW

I spent 10 days, 23 hours, 10 minutes and 10 seconds total time playing *Battlefield 2* – just under 264 hours of my life in one game. It really feels like a lifetime ago that Regardt (former Editor of *SACM*) and I teamed up against 32 other players and slugged it out across huge maps on everything from a tank killing high-speed buggy strapped with C4 to peek-a-boo pop-up battles in a Cobra gunship. Good times man, good times. We rode together, fought together and died together and even played a little doctor, doctor when things got quiet (reviving each other with shock paddles you perverts). After playing both *Bad Company* games and dabbling in a little online *Battlefield*

*Heroes I* bid a sad farewell to the series wishing they would just make a proper sequel to *Battlefield 2* and stop messing about with free-to-play games and whatever other popular rumour was doing the rounds at the time. Nothing felt the same and I was sad. Last year news broke that there was going to be a *Battlefield 3* something and that it was a true sequel to *Battlefield 2*. Angels wept that day, I also cried a little, but I said it was an allergic reaction to pollen.

This short historic nostalgia is really only here to get two things across: I'm an obsessive and dedicated fan of the *Battlefield* series (this began all the way back with *Battlefield 1942*) and that I, like you, am hoping and praying that this really is a true sequel.

## HANDS FREE

At E3, NAG was invited to play some *Battlefield 3* multiplayer code in the private DICE booth inside the massive EA stand. We even had a bar and a comfortable couch. The good news is it's a proper sequel to *Battlefield 2* and everything has been dialled up to 11, no wait... 12.

In the first person, I played a mission in Paris (Operation Metro) where the initial objective was to take out enemy SAM sites and get into the subway. I think. It was rather loud in the booth... After choosing one of the four available and future customisable multiplayer kits (more on this elsewhere) I was dumped straight into the action and began firing at everything that moved





# Battlefield 3

[ details ]

Release Date:  
**25 October 2011**  
Platforms:  
**PC / PS3 / 360**  
Genre:  
**First-person shooter**  
Developer:  
**EA DICE**  
Website:  
[www.battlefield.com/  
battlefield3](http://www.battlefield.com/battlefield3)  
Publisher:  
**Electronic Arts**

with a red name above its head. At first it was just chaos; smoke and people running everywhere, planes screaming overhead, different guns going off all around me, shouting and a general sense of urgency in one direction. The mode we played was Rush (from *Bad Company 2*), I was told that Conquest will feature, as well as all the other favourite modes that gamers remember from *BF 2* – excellent news. Conquest was always the staple and it's a good sign that DICE felt it important to mention it was returning. So, into the war we all went... To highlight the kind of confusion right off the bat I discovered I was shooting at friendlies initially and they back at me – it was hard to figure out the where, what and how. Needless to say,

it settled down quickly and everyone headed for the objective (it was marked and pretty clear really). The map we played on was technically a single huge map but divided into four objective-based sections, the attacking team has to clear each objective before the next section opens up – sound familiar? At some point I headed in the wrong direction and crossed an invisible line starting a terminal countdown for me to get back to the objective (similar to leaving the battlefield area in previous games). The initial storming across the map and firing into the smoke as an assault soldier brought on a quick death but one of my buddies was quick to revive me. I





lay there, he stood there and nothing really happened for a while (it was a little awkward to be honest), luckily I remember that in this new game you can now opt out of being revived – helpful if you want to avoid repeat deaths in the same dirty ditch by the hand of the same dirty camper. I opted out; remembering the guy doing the presentation said there was a LAV-25 APC on the map too. After a short break I spawned and headed toward the APC, jumped in and waited for some teammates to join me for an armoured push on the objective. Right-clicking revealed an infrared high-contrast view of the battlefield making target spotting simple and somewhat unfair to the enemy. Three of us broke cover and headed in, my two mates successfully planting and defending the objective while I used the overpowered gun on the LAV. We were told that vehicles can

be upgraded (or at least your abilities to use them will) in a similar fashion to upgrading your soldier's kit abilities. This is going to open up whole new way to the play the game when it hits later this year.

Right, back to the action... After the SAM site went down, a jet blew a hole in the ground leading into a subway system, complete with tracks, trains and platforms and all the smallest details you can imagine. Here the enemy defended from behind coaches, walls, up stairwells and seemed to be coming out of everywhere. It was a close-quarters killing festival, a stark contrast from the open map we just came from up top. Here the running from tree to bush was replaced by crouching around corners and sneaking along looking down the sights. One thing I noticed was seeing a lot of my



## FROSTBITE 2

Packing a bigger punch, the Frostbite 2 engine now powers *Battlefield 3* and not only looks dazzlingly stunning but also comes with a deck of clever tricks. It's been 6 long years since *Battlefield 2* was state of the art and fans are going to be in for a real eye candy treat – this is what should impress you.

It's obviously going to look very pretty. In fact, many are of the opinion that this will be the best looking game of 2011. It'll have the appropriate laundry list of dynamic lighting, billowing smoke and special effects and so on. We've all come far enough to know that this isn't what makes or breaks a game like this – making it look good is the easy stuff. The hard stuff is the realism and feel. The animation engine has been ripped straight out of *FIFA* so vaulting over walls and going prone all look deliciously fluid and weighty – finally making *FIFA* useful for something. During the E3 multiplayer game the A.I. enemies were sometimes prone or crouching, running for cover or just shooting and reloading. The lines often blurred as you'd expect an unrealistic robotic feel when it comes to A.I. players but these guys have been helped out so much by the animation system they 'look' and 'feel' human in the way they move.

The action will play out across huge maps that go from vast stretches of desert to urban close quarters combat. In much the same way as *BF 2*, players will be able to play the game how they want to. You can go for a full frontal assault or just jump in a jet, fly high and parachute into the back of the enemy's base to plant C4 on their assets. It's a different kind of playing style and lives up to the game's title. The other (much ogled over) feature of the engine has to be the destruction. It wasn't clear during the E3 game just how much could be destroyed as the game clicked along at a quick pace so we'll just have to wait and see how that plays out. When it comes to level destruction there will need to be some kind of constraints in multiplayer games to keep the playing field balanced or maybe not – it is war after all and if I want to prevent the enemy using aircraft I'm going to bomb their runway – right? Finally we get to the audio. Part of any good battlefield scenario is noise – explosions, people barking orders and the screaming of wounded teammates. It's good to see the DICE development team listed audio high up in their engine feature list – showing commitment to this often neglected aspect of game development. EA has recently done a lot of good work with audio – *Dead Space* as the shining example. So there you have it – all the essentials covered with a few new innovations set to push the boundaries of what games look and play like.





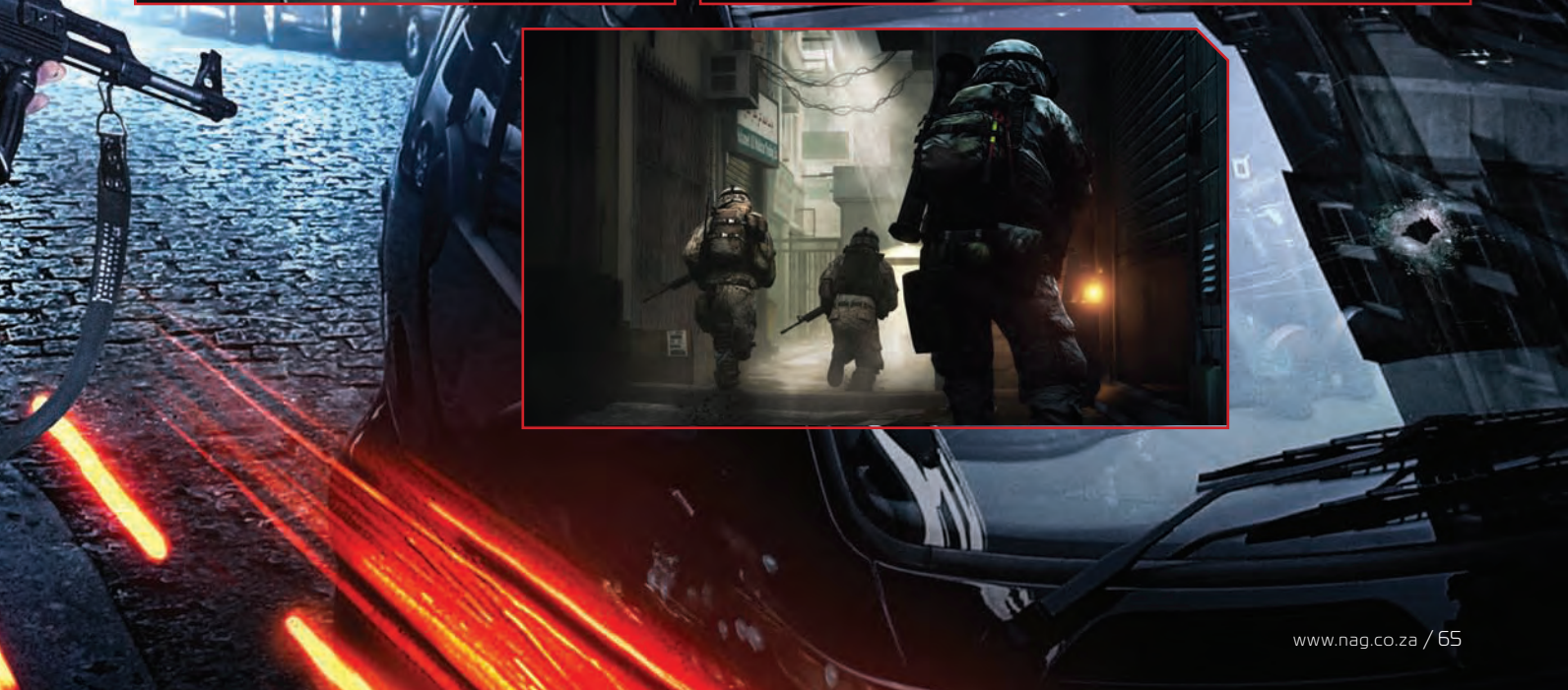


"There's nothing like a dusty crack in the morning."

[ trivia ]

// Digital Illusions Creative Entertainment [DICE] was founded in 1992 by members of a former Commodore Amiga demo group, The Silents. This is a sample of what they used to do back in the day and remember this was state of the art for a 16-bit computer at the time: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19MOjogXW4U>\*. They then enjoyed a bit of success developing pinball games for the Amiga (older gamers will remember *Pinball Dreams*). DICE also developed the cult hit *Codename Eagle*, but it was only in 2002 when *Battlefield 1942* hit the streets did they become an overnight sensation. They also made *Mirror's Edge* (when they should have been working on *BF 3*.)

\* There are a few videos online showcasing their solo and collaborative demo work on the Amiga – a gold mine for nostalgia lovers.





## CLASS ACT

At E3, DICE revealed more detailed information about two of the four different kits players will be able to select going into battle. Not a lot, but enough.

**Assault Soldier:** This is a combination of the assault class and the medic class. They're hoping to put healing back on the frontline with this combination. You'll have an assault rifle and the option to revive and heal or attach a grenade launcher if you just want to kill things – but not both.

**Support:** You'll be equipped with a light machine gun with a 'deploy-anywhere' bipod or an assault rifle with a blinding flashlight. This class can also dish out ammunition to needy soldiers. To gain assist points, the support class can provide suppressive fire across the combat area. For example, if you're being suppressed by the enemy your vision will blur and you'll have increased difficulty moving if you stay in the same place. Suppressive fire is a nice touch that will probably be appearing in future shooters from now on – who said innovation is dead.

**Engineer:** Nothing much was revealed about this class except that you can destroy or repair vehicles, oh and make holes in walls with your RPG if the need arises – like a glorified doorman really.

**Recon:** Think sniping and C4 for this class – a favourite for lone wolf players. If you're the type that enjoys sneaking around behind enemy lines and planting C4 on airplanes and detonating on take-off then this is probably the one you're going to want. More as we get it.

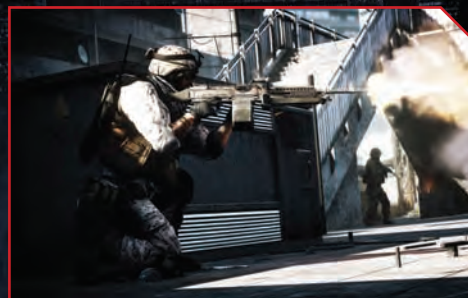


## [ trivia ]

// Besides being a massive mainstream success story, the *Battlefield* series has always had a bit of a cult following starting with *Battlefield 1942* and videos like this: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=XojBEB0Vwb0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XojBEB0Vwb0). *Battlefield 2* also shared in the fun with many vehicle stunt and C4 physics videos on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Look them up and as a guide only bother watching videos with plenty of views – there were a lot of very dull people out there who made a lot of very boring videos.

## DOG TAGS

*Battlefield 3* brings a fresh presentation on a familiar concept. For the multiplayer, new recruits can personalise their own dog tags. For example, if you're a pilot you decorate your tag with airplane artwork or falling bombs, if you're a sniper pictures of tents and toilet paper and so on. The tags also track user-selected statistics in the game so if you've revived 149 players it'll show that achievement. If an enemy manages to knife you in the back he collects your tags for his trophy wall. All good and well and something we all enjoyed doing in *Battlefield 2142*. The cool bit with *Battlefield 3* is that if I knife you now I'll collect your current dog tags, then if in a week or two I slip my blade between your ribs again I'll collect your new and updated dog tags. This is just a friendly warning to watch your back because dog tag hunting is going to be a popular sport.



feet and legs as I vaulted over low cover positions. It was a quick and fluid movement that initially felt odd but proved to be an easy free flowing way of getting around. I started watching other players and it's only when you look at previous games do you realise just how far character animation has come. They're borrowing a lot from *FIFA* for animating soldiers and it's going to blow more than a few minds – think fluid, realistic and empowering. It's also interesting to note that selecting knife or grenade visibly equipped it in my hand – ready for action, another nod to *BF 2*. So now hunting for dog tags is more of a commitment. After a bit more run-and-gun we got through the subway and back into the daylight. Our time was up and our team had won. I

wasn't sure exactly what we achieved but the ride in sure was a lot of fun.

To be honest I wasn't a big fan of the *Bad Company 2* multiplayer vibe, it just felt like it was missing all the pieces I was looking for in a proper *Battlefield 2* sequel. Yes, I'm aware it wasn't supposed to be a sequel to that but still. I know many people felt the same way and even more longed for a real deal sequel. Playing this short series of maps at E3 has left me with no doubt that this is what everyone is looking for. It's going to feel just like slipping on an old pair of combat boots and I'm personally counting the days until 25 October. **NAG**

**RedTide**  
[ <http://battlefield.ea.com/battlefield/bf2/playerstats.aspx?profileid=43787475> ]





# NGL BLACK OPS

**ONLINE LEAGUE 2011**

102 TEAMS // 4 DIVISIONS // 1 WINNER

**SEASON 2:**

28 JUNE - 8 SEPTEMBER 2011

**STEAM GROUP:**

NAG GAMING LEAGUE

**WWW.NAGLEAGUE.CO.ZA**

plantronics

NAG GAMING  
LEAGUE



*Incredible*  
**CONNECTION**



# [NGL]

*Incredible*  
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# BLACK OPS

## ONLINE LEAGUE UPDATE

It's taken 19 weeks of gaming to get to the end of Season 1, and we have the final results of each division. Have a look at the box out on the other page to see a full breakdown of the clan rankings. The last week of fixtures was a tense one with the top 5 clans in First and Second Division fighting to stay there in order to get their promotion to the next division. We have to say "GG WP" to everyone! It's been fun, it's been a bit tense at times, but it's been real. Congrats to the winners – KK (Premier), FFL Younglings (First Division), and a52 (Second Division). You guys rocked this season!

Season 2 is now underway and what a phenomenal 11 weeks of gaming it's looking to be as we build up to rAge. We opened registrations for this season and had 35 new clans join us in the league, so we've created the Third Division for all these new teams to compete in. It's going to be an interesting division to watch for sure as a lot of the clans competing here are really strong and will be looking to fight their way up through the divisions. The addition of this new division now brings the total number of clans playing in the Black Ops League up to 85.

Looking ahead then to how rAge fits in with all this, we've decided to include the Second and Third Divisions into the tournament. In addition to the top eight teams from premier and first going to rAge, we will also have the top

four in Second and Third there as well. So that's 24 clans that will play in the rAge Tournament to ultimately win their respective divisions. We are also thrilled to announce that the finals for each division will be held on the stage on sponsored PCs. Huge thanks to Thermaltake and Corex for making this possible. We <3 you.

While we're on the subject of sponsors, Plantronics has signed as a joint headline sponsor along with Incredible Connection. Thanks for your support; it's great to see companies helping to grow the local competitive gaming scene.

Thermaltake have also confirmed that they will be supplying 20 prizes for the end of Season 2, valued at between R1,500-R2,000 each. So the winning clan in each division will receive five Thermaltake products

from Corex once Season 2 ends on 8 September 2011.

In other NGL news you'll find a note from fr1dg3 about the League of Legends Online League we've recently started. We've also included details of the Season 1 winners and the prizes they received elsewhere on this page, as well as a cool little ode to Pew 2 sent to us by I3vi from iG2, which he wrote after their clan played a league game against Pew 2.

So until our next update, keep checking our website for news, join our forums and have your say, or just keep an eye on the Clan Rankings to see how the teams are doing, go to [www.nagleague.co.za](http://www.nagleague.co.za).

Thanks again to Incredible Connection, Plantronics, and Thermaltake for their support in this league. **NAG**

Lauren Das Neves [Guardi3n]





## NGL LEAGUE OF LEGENDS ONLINE LEAGUE

\$100,000 in Cash Prizes, 8 teams from around the world (3 European, 3 North American, 2 South-East Asia), 18-21 June 2011. That is the *League of Legends* season 1 finals that was held at DreamHack, Jönköping, Sweden.

On the 24th of June 2011, South Africa started its very first *League of Legends* online league. Riot Games has jumped on board and sponsored us some nice prizes for this local league and they will keep a close eye on how we get along. We opened registrations for 16 teams who have now been split up in 2 groups of 8, and the top 2/4 of each group will qualify for a single knockout tournament. It's a great mix of some very talented players and some big time facerollers i.e. myself (hey I'm proud to call myself faceroll okay, don't judge me). For those of you who are unfamiliar with how *LoL* works competitively here is a short breakdown:

- 5 vs. 5 team-based.
- Best out of 3 matches.
- EU server.
- Draft Mode (basically it gives both team 2 bans whereby they effectively ban a

champion from selection).

- First team to destroy the Nexus wins, or subsequently if the other team surrenders.
  - After 60 minutes that round is considered a draw.
- Prizes courtesy of Riot Games:

- 1st place:** \$20 RP + Triumphant Ryze + Champion Skin Bundle (whatever the next release will be) per player
- 2nd place:** \$15 RP + CSB per player
- 3rd place:** \$10 RP + CSB per player
- 4th place:** \$10 RP per player

We are in the process of setting up an NGL YouTube channel for some of the matches to be posted online, so keep an eye on the NGL site for more details coming soon. Good luck and happy facerolling to all those who are competing, and we hope we see a lot more people joining the *LoL* community in future (download the game now from [www.leagueoflegends.com](http://www.leagueoflegends.com) - it's free!).

[fr1dg3]

## NGL BLACK OPS ONLINE LEAGUE: SEASON 1 PRIZE WINNERS

### Premier Division - Konsentrasie.Knights [KtK]

- 5 x Thermaltake Armor A60 AMD Edition cases [sponsored by Corex]
- 8 x A3 custom-made Xpad Mousepads: Season 1 Champs Premier Division [sponsored by NAG]

### 1st Division - Friends For Life [Younglings] [FFL]

- 8 x A3 custom-made Xpad Mousepads: Season 1 Champs 1st Division [sponsored by NAG]

### 2nd Division - a52 [a52]

- 8 x A3 custom-made Xpad Mousepads: Season 1 Champs 2nd Division [sponsored by NAG]

## ODE TO PEW 2

(Sing to the tune of I Will Survive)  
by [iG]Bvi

First I was afraid  
I was petrified  
Kept thinking I could never live  
without Pew by my side  
But I spent so many nights  
thinking how you tanked my shots  
I grew strong  
I learned how to carry on  
and so you're back  
from cyber space  
I just walked in to find you here  
with that "Im gonna pwn" look upon your face  
I should have changed my stupid glock  
I should have made you leave your CD key  
If I had known for just one second  
you'd be back to headshot me

Go on now go lie on the floor  
just jump and up down now  
'cause you're not welcome anymore  
weren't you the one who tried to hurt me with that mp5  
you think I'd crumble  
you think I'd lay down and die  
Oh no, not I  
I will survive  
as long as I know how to change my config  
I know I will stay alive  
I've got all my life to live  
I've got all my stuns to give  
and I'll survive  
I will survive

it took all the strength I had  
not to fall apart  
kept trying hard to mend  
the pieces of my broken gfx card  
and I spent oh so many nights  
just feeling sorry for myself  
I used to cry  
Now I hold my AK up high  
and you see me  
somebody new  
I'm not that chained up little person  
still getting owned by you  
and so you felt like dropping in  
and just expect me to be l33t  
now I'm saving all my pwning  
for someone who's tanking me

## BLACK OPS ONLINE LEAGUE: SEASON 1 FINAL RANKINGS

Premier Division	Clan name	Total points
1	KtK	52
2	vegA	47
3	impi	37
4	nArk	36
5	PewPew.	35
6	oNe	31
7	iG	25
8	ASF	24
9	aE	22
10	32B	15
11	SOF	14
12	=DAC=	10
13	F	8
14	A10	4

1st Division	Clan name	Total points
1	FFL	59
2	w2F	52
3	KK	52
4	dTs	47
5	UbS	44
6	iN	43
7	BoB	40
8	ESWAT	37
9	VAMP-L	33
10	LaW	28
11	SS (Resurrection)	27
12	=DAC=	21
13	FFL	16
14	=ASF=	12
15	CraK	12
16	Vamp Hybrid	9
17	DzG	4

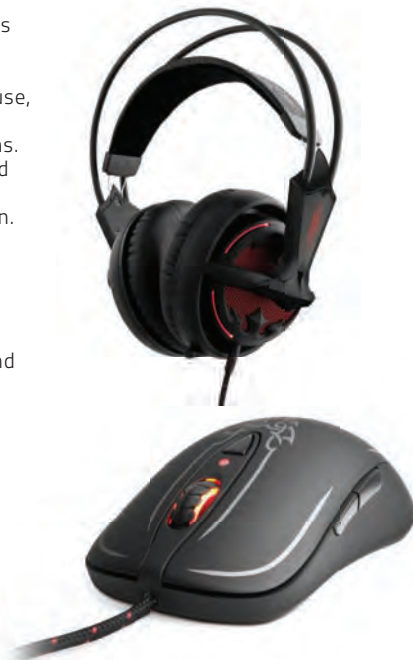
2nd Division	Clan name	Total points
1	a52	64
2	PewPew.	56
3	impi-X	55
4	Sox	51
5	ReN	49
6	SS (Redemption)	47
7	={RIG}=_	45
8	J2G	37
9	SIB	35
10	iG	32
11	CraK	29
12	BUD	16
13	DzG	16
14	Vamp EQUI	16
15	SOF	14
16	BUD	12
17	flAsh.A.	10
18	StK	5
19	flAsh.R.	5





# SteelSeries Diablo III peripherals

When *Diablo III* launches, fans of the game will be able to kit themselves out with a *Diablo III*-branded SteelSeries mouse, headset and two QcK mousepads - Witch Doctor and Barbarian Editions. The SteelSeries *Diablo III* Mouse and Headset will be sporting the *Diablo III* logo and "demon red" illumination. The SteelSeries *Diablo III* QcK Barbarian Edition includes official character artwork of the barbarian class and the Witch Doctor Edition showing off the green and purple tones that are linked to this new and powerful summoning character.



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# DID YOU KNOW?

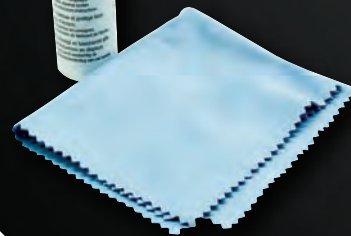
E-mail celebrated its 40th birthday in June this year. Ray Tomlinson, a computer engineer, was experimenting with a program he wrote called SNDMSG. He sent the first ever e-mail in 1971, with a message that said "QUERTYUIOP", from one computer to another one right next to it.



## Durable SCREENCLEAN Pro

We hate fingerprints and grubby marks on our shiny stuff, so when we got this we sprayed it onto our phone and our monitor. Its non-toxic, hypoallergenic, will reduce static charge and, of course, keep your screen clean.

[www.silveray.co.za](http://www.silveray.co.za) / R184.00



# THQ's uDraw GameTablet

On display at E3 in Los Angeles, the uDraw GameTablet for Xbox 360 and PS3 has been given a facelift, one in which the contemporary design now incorporates the console controls. Enhancements to this console-based artistic tool include high-definition art creation and gameplay; a stylus with greater sensitivity for more detailed results; motion features; longer drawing time; plus direct touch-screen control that incorporates pinch-and-stretch and rotation features.







**AOC T2242we LED TV**

The super slim 21.5" LED monitor and TV is ideal for your gaming desktop. Max resolution is 1920 x 1080, with a 5ms response time. It can also be wall mounted if you plan on using it as a TV, and comes with a remote control. An HDMI port means you can also hook up your console to it.

[www.aoc.com](http://www.aoc.com) / R2,799



**Mighty Dwarf Vibration Multimedia Speaker**

It's like a speaker, but it's not. Using vibration resonance technology, audio waves get transmitted from the Mighty Dwarf onto any solid surface. All you do is plug it into any standard headphone jack on your MP3 player, iPod, cellphone, laptop, PC, etc.

[www.digitalplanet.co.za](http://www.digitalplanet.co.za) / R499



**BlackBerry Torch 9800**

What's not to like about BlackBerry? The Torch 9800 has a touch screen, comes loaded with the new BlackBerry 6 OS which is so super slick, and of course we can't live without BBM.

[www.blackberry.co.za](http://www.blackberry.co.za) / R6,000

**Snippets**

**SteelSeries and Valve will be working together to design co-branded gaming surfaces based on some of Valve's award-winning games.**

**OCZ showed off a new Fatal1ty-branded 1000W modular PSU at this year's Computex.** The PSU can power a gaming rig that has up to three graphics cards.

**Thermaltake have launched a lime green NVIDIA-themed**

Level 10 GT case. So now you can pick your favourite – the original black and red or the new black and green version.

**Cooler Master has released a modified version of the CM Storm Enforcer case.** The side-panel window now has an AMD logo and a scorpion graphic on it, and red LED lighting has been used to keep in theme with AMD's upcoming Scorpius high-end desktop platform.

**Corsair will be releasing a new**

line of SSDs called the Nova 2 series. The green-coloured Nova 2 will use the SATA 3 Gb/s interface and is driven by a cost-effective controller that gives transfer rates of 260 MB/s read and 240 MB/s write.

**MSI's VGA overclocking software** Afterburner is now available on Android smartphones. The mobile app connects to the system using direct IP access via wireless, and will let you monitor and control everything that the desktop

software is able to do.

**Intel has extended the warranty** of its new 320 Series SSDs, which use the 25nm chips, to 5 years. The extended warranty term will apply to all Intel SSD 320 Series drives, including those already purchased.

**SteelSeries has just released** two new headsets - the 5Hv2 Medal of Honor Edition for PC and the SteelSeries Spectrum 5xb Medal of Honor Edition for Xbox 360.

**MSI have just released the** GT683R, the first gaming laptop to feature the recently-announced NVIDIA GeForce GTX 560M graphics processor.

**Razer have introduced their new 4G Dual Sensor System** which takes advantage of both an optical and a laser sensor, allowing for enhanced tracking accuracy. The new Mamba and Imperator will now ship with this new technology.



## What happened to our games?



I was recently talking to a colleague about the days when one bought a graphics card and it came with a game with a demo disk or something else other than a DVI to VGA converter. For some reason it seems it was decided that games are no longer attractive for customers, and right now there are very few manufacturers that bother with bundling games with their graphics cards, and those that do only do it on a few SKUs at best.

Packaging a game with a VGA card makes sense because drivers are easily and freely available on the Internet, but games are not. There's no point in packaging a driver CD with some obscure in-house fan control software that hardly anyone will ever install. Very few gamers and power users will ever want to set up a surveillance CCTV system with their new graphics cards, so that software is meaningless as well. No, what is wanted and needed is relevant and useful software. For

**"Very few gamers and power users will ever want to setup a surveillance CCTV system with their new graphics cards, so that software is meaningless as well."**

gamers obviously games. They need not be cutting edge AAA titles, they could even be indie titles, but reward the buyer with something more than just a graphics card which looks exactly like every other one on the market but with different livery.

Packaging tech demos with graphics cards used to be the norm many years ago. You'd get not only one but up to three discs with software you'd actually bother installing if only to see what your latest purchase is capable of and what it brings to your computing experience. How and why this is not happening anymore is puzzling.

Manufacturers claim that it's not cost effective and they've not found that people buy the graphics cards with games more than they do the ones without. However the problem is this is not something they were actively tracking. At no point did they ever have two identical graphics cards, one costing \$10 more with a game and one without. The numbers they speak of are based purely on a single SKU of a VGA card and tracking its numbers based on other cards in their line-up.

I suspect that if there was a GTX560 Ti, for instance, that was not only overclocked and featured a better than normal cooler, but in addition had at least two DVDs with demo HD footage, an indie or slightly older AAA title, overclocking utility and some technology demos, consumers would gladly pay the \$10 or even \$15 more. If packaging is an issue for the game, a unique redeemable code for each game via Steam or another service would do. Everything else would easily fit on a dual layer DVD which they already package as it is but currently only fill it with 300MB of data at most.

For overclockers and such, packaging various BIOS versions, (like a regular, recovery, cold boot, cold bug and extended voltage BIOS) would make our lives easier. What happens anyway is that these BIOS versions end up in the wild so those who would bother with them are only inconvenienced for a while but sure enough they will end up with them in any case.

I truly do believe that bundled software needs to come back into graphics cards and even other components; it just takes a dedicated effort from all parties involved. Users aren't just looking for "cheap", but value. A graphics card with a DVI connector and out-of-date drivers is hardly what one can consider value.

Neo Sibeko

## Quote

**"IBM has been a terrific partner for many years. We truly value IBM's commitment to support Nintendo in delivering an entirely new kind of gaming and entertainment experience for consumers around the world"**

*Genyo Takeda, Senior Managing Director, Integrated Research and Development, Nintendo Co., Ltd.*

IBM will be supplying the microprocessor for Nintendo's new Wii U system. The chips will feature IBM Silicon on Insulator (SOI) technology at 45 nanometers (45 billionths of a meter). The custom-designed chips will be made at IBM's state-of-the-art 300mm semiconductor development and manufacturing facility in East Fishkill, N.Y.

## By the Numb3rs

### # 966

The total amount of global Internet traffic will quadruple by 2015 and reach 966 exabytes per year, according to the 5th annual Cisco Visual Networking Index (VNI) Forecast (2010-2015). Cisco also predicts that the number of network-connected devices will be more than 15 billion, twice the world's population, by 2015.

## Toshiba updates the Qosmio

Toshiba's new Qosmio X770 is being marketed as a notebook for the advanced gamer. The 17" model will be available in 4GB, 6GB or 8GB RAM variants and will feature an HD display, a SSD hybrid 4GB drive, and an HDMI interface. There will also be a 3D version with a full HD 3D display that supports NVIDIA 3D Vision technology. You'll need active shutter glasses for this one.



## Republic of Gamers features strong at Computex

ASUS unveiled two new gaming products at Computex. The G53SX Naked Eye 3D gaming notebook is powered by Sandy Bridge Core i7 processors and NVIDIA GeForce GTX 560M graphics. The coolest feature is, of course, the fact that it can display 3D without having to use 3D glasses. Also on display was the CG8565 Gaming System, which includes a Z68-based Core i7 processor and an NVIDIA GeForce GTX 590 GPU. Its coolest feature has to be the overclock button, which has been fittingly labeled "Level Up".

## Tt eSports Meka G Unit keyboard

Thermaltake unveiled the Tt eSports Meka G Unit gaming keyboard at Computex. It is the first mechanical keyboard with onboard memory, individual key illumination and key map-based illumination (only those keys that a game is bound to will be illuminated, which can quickly switch to all-illuminated when text-chatting in-game). Apart from macro keys, there are 7 multimedia keys, a USB hub with two USB 2.0 ports, and two audio ports (extended from the PC sound card).



# NAG LAN @ RAGE

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# NAG



## LG's next generation 3D TV

The new CINEMA 3D TV from LG is a must-have if you're looking to upgrade your home viewing experience. Features include lighter and more comfortable glasses that don't need to be recharged, a very wide viewing angle, and a "flicker free" certification. Prices range from R39,900 for the top of the range 55LW 6510 to R12,999 for the 42 LW 4500 model.



## The force is with Razer

In collaboration with BioWare and LucasArts, Razer will be releasing a licensed *Star Wars: The Old Republic* product line, which will launch when the game does. There will be a wireless gaming mouse, a gaming keyboard, a dual-sided mouse mat (the Sith Empire on one side and the Galactic Republic on the other), and a 5.1 surround sound headset. All the peripherals will have the ability to interchange Galactic Republic and Sith Empire faction symbols.

The *Star Wars: The Old Republic* Gaming Keyboard will be a revolutionary first for gaming technology. It features a full-colour multi-touch LCD panel with a

row of adaptive tactile keys above that can cycle through skills, hotkeys and macros with matching graphics from the game for maximum competitive efficiency. Plus, you can convert the entire keyboard from alpha-numeric to Aurebesh!

"As fans of *Star Wars* ourselves, we are absolutely thrilled for the chance to create a product line for *Star Wars: The Old Republic*. The result is a spectacular collection of the highest grade peripherals that is a tribute to the franchise, its fans and gamers alike," said Robert "RazerGuy" Krakoff, President, Razer USA.



## Know your technology

### / THUNDERBOLT /

Originally called Light Peak, Thunderbolt is an interface designed by Intel that may supersede USB. So far the only products that offer this connectivity are the updated Apple MacBook Pro notebooks. Thunderbolt combines PCI-Express and DisplayPort over a serial data interface that can be carried over longer cables than PCI-Express (Up to 3M). Originally it was supposed to use optical fiber cables but the current standard uses a traditional copper cable to achieve up to 10 GB/s.

### / NFC /

Near Field Communication is a set of short range wireless communication technologies that usually operate at very short distances of 4cm or less. This technology operates at a frequency of 13.56MHz and supports data transfer speeds ranging between 106kbit/s to 848kbit/s. The technology uses an initiator and target mechanism where the initiator generates a RF field that is capable of powering a passive target. NFC is mostly used on mobile devices such as phones, tablets and other portable devices.

### / WIMAX /

A wireless telecoms protocol that provides fixed and mobile Internet access for speeds up to 40Mbit/s and could potentially reach 1Gbit/s speeds in future. The standard was formed by the WiMAX Forum in 2001 with the intention of creating a standards-based technology enabling last-mile broadband access as an alternative to cable or DSL. WiMAX has been a candidate to replace GSM and CDMA networks and thus considered for backhaul technology in 2G, 3G and 4G networks. Its chief competitor in this regard is LTE.

### / LTE /

Preliminary mobile communications standard proposed as the successor of current 2, 2.5 and 3G networks. Designed to increase the capacity and speed of cellular networks, it comes in two forms: 3GPP Long Term Evolution and LTE Advanced. Both are not compatible with any 3G system and this is supposedly the reason why implementation has taken so long even though the standards have effectively been ratified for almost 2 years. Promising downlink speeds of up to 100 Mbps and uplinks of at least 50 Mbps, LTE supports scalable carrier bandwidths, supporting both frequency and time division duplexing.



# A Fusion of Innovation, Design, And Performance



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**Cape Town:**

Tel: +27 21 555 8200  
Fax: +27 21 555 7136



## [ info ]

RRP:  
\$249 (Wi-Fi only  
model) / \$299 (3G/  
Wi-Fi model)

Website:  
<http://za.playstation.com/psvita/>

## [ technical ]

Please note: specs  
are subject to change  
leading up to Vita's  
release

CPU:  
ARM Cortex-A9 core  
(4 cores)

GPU:  
PowerVR  
SGX543MP4+ (4  
cores)

Screen:  
5-inch OLED  
multi-touch screen  
(capacitive) /  
960 x 544 (16:9) /  
Approximately 16  
million colours,

Rear Touch Pad:  
Multi-touch  
(capacitive)

Cameras:  
Front and rear

Sound:  
Stereo Speakers /  
Built-in microphone

Dimensions:  
Approximately  
182mm width x  
18.6mm height x  
83.5mm depth

## [ summary ]

Alternatives:  
Nintendo DS/3DS



# PlayStation Vita

Sony's got a lot to prove with the PSP's successor. Originally codenamed NGP, or Next Generation Portable, Sony's forthcoming handheld heavyweight hopes to right the wrongs and rectify the mistakes that were made with the PSP and its ill-fated, digitally-focussed counterpart, the PSP Go. In so doing, Sony hopes to usher in a new era of portable gaming.

Don't get us wrong: the original PSP is an excellent portable gaming system. It's just never managed to match the overwhelming popularity of its competitors - and competition is an entirely different beast in the handheld world. Having multiple consoles in your home is completely plausible - it actually makes total sense in an industry filled with platform-exclusive titles, provided you've got the cash to support such extravagance. Your dedicated home entertainment centre likely has space for multiple consoles as well. For the gamer on the go, however, there's generally only room for one portable gaming device in their pocket/backpack/

whatever, so you'd better be offering a more worthwhile experience than your competitor is.

In the handheld arena, that experience hinges on the games you offer. It's no use being the most powerful. Having a bigger screen won't get you anywhere. The main reason the original PSP couldn't compete isn't because it's not an awesome piece of hardware. Instead, it's because it doesn't have the software to back it up. Nobody wants their expensive handheld to sit gathering dust in some dark corner somewhere when it should be saving them from mobile boredom. "Yeah, I had a PSP. It was cool. But there were no games for it, so I sold it and got myself a DS instead." Those words are all too common. Sony plans to fix that with the Vita. We were given the opportunity to get some hands-on time at a press event held in London with this exceedingly impressive portable offering (along with a sizeable selection of upcoming Vita games), and this is what we've discovered.

**"We created a fat dude in a banana suit and gave him the "Zombie" fighting style. We're awesome like that."**

## /1/ BUILT TO IMPRESS

While Sony was quick to point out that the Vita prototype we toyed around with is merely a development kit and in no way representative of the device's final design, it's hard not to already be impressed by the design of it and the way it feels during gaming sessions. It's meaty and has a good, solid weight, but it's not heavy. It's covered in buttons, doodads and control mechanisms, but they never get in the way of the core experience. It's large, but not uncomfortably so. Vita's shape (and even its dimensions) will also be instantly familiar to any seasoned PSP user.

Shuhei Yoshida, president of Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios, jokes that they purposefully designed Vita to not fit in your pocket because their aim isn't to compete with mobile phones. Vita hopes to offer an all-encompassing mobile entertainment hub. Frankly, it's in a whole other league, far beyond the capabilities of a mobile phone - including Sony Ericsson's own Xperia Play. Mr Yoshida sees no reason why people can't own both the Xperia Play and Vita, because each serves a specific purpose.

## /2/ WHAT'S IN A NAME?

At Sony's E3 press conference, not

long after the event in London, the upcoming handheld's official name was revealed: PlayStation Vita. Vita is Latin for "life." It's oddly fitting considering the device's focus on augmented reality and its abundance of social networking features. A worldwide launch window was also confirmed: it'll launch "by the end of 2011."

## /3/ UNLIMITED POWER

The technological wizardry that forms the foundation of Vita is extraordinary. The games we've seen look and sound absolutely incredible in action, technically astounding works that belie their portable nature. Games like







*Uncharted: Golden Abyss* feature real-time dynamic lighting and advanced shaders. Higher polygon counts and much larger textures provide crisp, clean visuals. This all runs smoothly at a resolution four times higher than that of the original PSP. It may not seem like much, but the higher resolution is particularly important. Whereas greater draw distances would previously result in background details becoming a muddled, indecipherable blur, the increased clarity of Vita's screen means that in games like *Uncharted*, heated battles can now take place at great range rather than as close to the player as possible.

Its things like this that'll eventually be taken for granted as portable technology continues to improve, but right now it's an exciting step forward for portable gaming. Vita's exact specifications have yet to be finalised, but rest assured that it's going to be a powerful beast.

#### **/4/ VERSATILE MONSTER**

Not only does Vita pack significantly more technological brute force than the PSP (thanks to, among other things, its quad-core processor and powerful multi-core GPU), but it also comes packed with a slew of interface and design improvements. Software will

ship on NVG cards – a new proprietary flash format that'll replace UMDs. They'll come in 2GB and 4GB variants, with higher capacities planned for the future. A fraction of each card's space will be reserved for game saves and patches. The dual analogue sticks are obviously much appreciated and feel like a natural, comfortable evolution of the PSP's control scheme. Thankfully there's still a **/5/ d-pad** for those who prefer it. There's the **/6/ five-inch OLED capacitive touchscreen**: a large, vibrant window into the world of Vita-powered games. Sixaxis motion control comes standard, just in case you're not already sick of waving your expensive hardware



[ trivia ]

Vita's backwards compatibility brings a slight upgrade to your digital PSP titles: each of them will be improved and smoothed over to fit the Vita's larger screen and to take advantage of the extra power packed by this new handheld. They'll also take advantage of the dual analogue sticks (we saw this in action with *Resistance: Retribution*). Unfortunately, this backwards compatibility does not apply to the pile of PSP UMDs you've stacked in a corner somewhere, since Sony's new handheld does not support UMDs.

all over the place. **/7/ Front- and rear-facing cameras** (each capable of face and head detection, as well as head tracking) are used to good effect in some of the games we've seen so far.

Most intriguing of all is the **/8/ rear touchpad**: a sizeable section on the back of the device that adds another dimension of touch to the proceedings. We've seen some intuitive use of this touchpad in the games we've spent time with, and it'll be exciting to see how some of the more inventive developers utilise this rear touchpad in their titles.

**/9/ Stereo speakers**, a microphone, Wi-Fi, built-in GPS and Bluetooth functionality are all on the Vita's alluring feature list. Furthermore, it's been said that Vita will be available in two flavours: one with 3G support and another without.

**THIS IS THE PLAN...**

During his opening speech (and during a round-table discussion with him later that day) at Sony's pre-E3 press event, Mr Yoshida made it very clear what

Sony's goal is with Vita: to provide the "ultimate portable gaming experience" with a focus on augmented reality games and social networking.

**SAFE AND SECURE**

Following the recent, much publicised attacks on Sony's global networks, Yoshida assured us that PSN is being reinforced before thanking us for our continued support in what he admits has been a difficult time. By the time Vita hits, you won't have to worry about your digital security anymore – a reassurance made all the more pertinent by Vita's strong focus on digital content delivery.

**NEVER FORGET THE PAST**

We're told that Vita will be backwards compatible with the entire catalogue of PSP titles on PSN. If it's on PSN, you'll be able to purchase any PSP games you may have missed and download them directly to your Vita. As proof, Sony provided us the opportunity to blast some Vita-enhanced *Chimera in Resistance: Retribution* – a 2009 PSP title.



**"...they purposefully designed Vita to not fit in your pocket because their aim isn't to compete with mobile phones."**

**CRUX OF THE MATTER**

Right, now that the formalities are out of the way, let's take a look at some of the games you can expect to see on Vita:

**UNCHARTED: GOLDEN ABYSS**

Easily the most impressive (and popular – it was almost impossible to get some hands-on time with it because of the constant influx of journalists eager to get their paws on the early build) title at Sony's pre-E3 event, *Uncharted: Golden Abyss* is in development at SCE Bend Studio. With around eight years of PSP development experience under their belts, they're veterans of the handheld world, having created PSP titles like *Resistance: Retribution* and numerous *Syphon Filter* titles. *Golden Abyss* isn't a port: it's a brand-new game that takes place before *Drake's Fortune*, but is not a prequel.

Immediately apparent in our time with the title is its strange, hybrid control scheme. It's a blend of traditional button presses and analogue movement

with contextual motion control and touch mechanisms. Climbing along the handholds on a cliff face, for example, can be achieved by using the traditional control method of determining direction with the left analogue stick before tapping X to jump to the next handhold. Or you can, using your finger, drag a path along numerous handholds (each one letting off a faint shimmer as you pass over it) to have Drake automatically move along the path you've just plotted. Jumping across a chasm can be achieved by tilting the Vita in the direction you wish to jump, then tapping the ledge you want to jump to. Ladders can be climbed by alternating downward finger swipes on the rear touch pad (each swipe intuitively moving Drake's hand to the next rung) to mimic the action of climbing a ladder – or you can simply use traditional analogue controls. Tap a weapon onscreen to pick it up, or just press triangle. It may sound weird, but it all actually comes together really well, offering familiar *Uncharted* gameplay

with a unique Vita twist. The devs are working closely with Naughty Dog, sharing animation libraries and the like to create an experience that is undoubtedly phenomenal, it'll reportedly feature over two hours of motion-captured cinematics (in the same vein as its PS3 counterpart) and its got Nolan North.

**MODNATION RACERS**

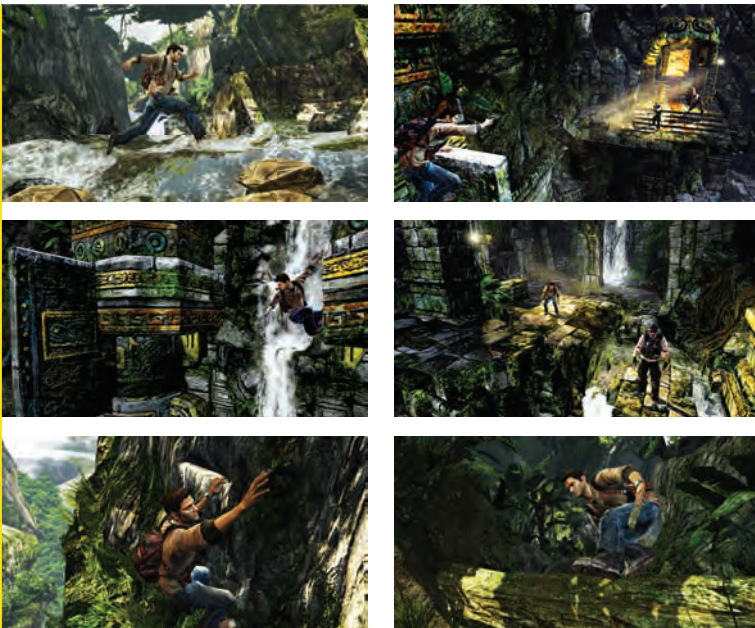
Sony are making a big deal out of the genre they're dubbing "Play, Create, Share." Titles like *LittleBigPlanet* and *ModNation Racers* come to the fore whenever Play, Create, Share is discussed – and Sony believes that Vita is perfect for these titles.

We watched as a developer literally created a track to race on and share with others in seconds, using his finger to quickly drag a meandering track across the screen. He pressed down on the front touchscreen to create indentations, valleys and lakes across the virtual world. Pressing upwards on the rear touchpad





UNCHARTED: GOLDEN ABYSS



MODNATION RACERS





[ trivia ]

During the presentation, while Sony representatives eagerly detailed the extra firepower that fuels the Vita's superiority over its predecessor, we were given an example relating to the texture quality that each handheld is capable of processing. PSP games could handle textures around 10MB in size. Vita hits the 60MB texture-size mark – a significant improvement.



Dimensions:  
**Approximately 182mm width x 18.6mm height x 83.5mm depth**

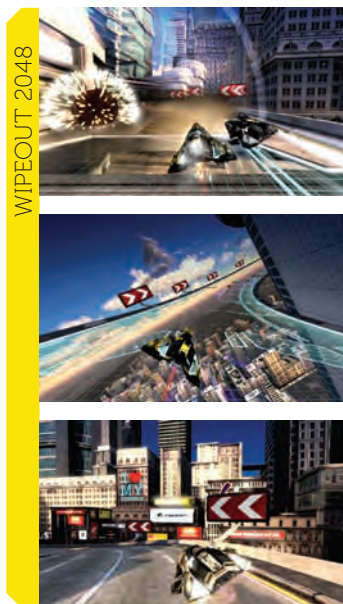


LITTLE DEVIANTS

created hills and bumps in the terrain. Tapping with his finger placed trees, houses and more using a slick touch-based UI. Seconds later, he was racing around his remarkably detailed creation in familiar *ModNation* style. It's incredibly easy to get to grips with the creation tools. The racing is fun too.

**LITTLE DEVIANTS**

This collection of 30 mini-games highlights the various new features of Vita brilliantly. One such mini-game used the camera to augment reality, displaying a real-world, real-time image captured by the rear camera and superimposing flying virtual foes on that real-world backdrop as players frantically waved Vita around to track them and shoot them down. Another level involved using the Sixaxis motion controls to steer a hovering character through a twisting underground maze, dodging obstacles and collecting stars as we searched for the exit at the bottom. A third mini-game saw us pressing on the rear touchpad



WIPEOUT 2048

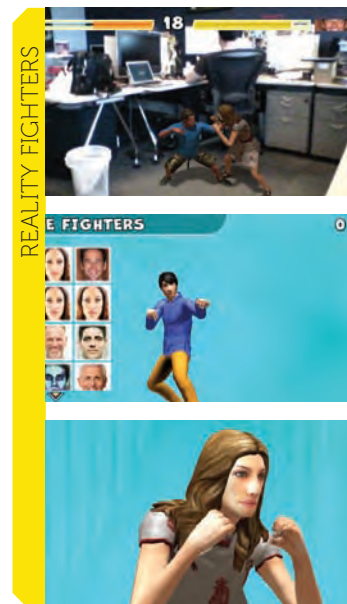
to create bumps in the terrain of a tiny level. Those bumps were used to roll a spherical character around cute, colourful levels, navigating it past enemies and obstructions to reach the end zone. *Little Deviants* is cute, colourful and perfect for quick bouts of mindless fun: ideal for this portable platform.

**WIPEOUT 2048**

It's *Wipeout*. It's the same fast, furious, futuristic racing that the series is known for, now with a unique Vita flavour. What stood out most was seeing cross-platform play between PS3 and Vita.

**REALITY FIGHTERS**

This title is augmented-reality driven. It takes a photo of you and then creates a customisable fighter in your image. You then use the camera to capture your real-world surroundings (you could use one of those nifty AR traps as well) or select from a number of preset locations (based on 360° photos taken by the devs) to create a real-world arena in which to



REALITY FIGHTERS

engage in some *Street Fighter*/*Tekken*/*Other Fighting Game*-inspired brawling. Characters are hugely customisable, right down to their fighting style. We created a fat dude in a banana suit and gave him the "Zombie" fighting style. We're awesome like that.

**SO... WHAT'S NEXT?**

Vita is unquestionably exciting. It's pushing the hardware tucked away within its innards to its full potential, creating a portable entertainment platform that is potent, versatile and packed with possibilities. We're not yet certain if we'll see extra entertainment options like movies complementing the device, but the potential for gaming alone is staggering. There's no word on pricing at this stage, but we've been told it'll be released at a "premium price point". Time will tell if Vita comes out the other side a resounding success – but we all know that it'll be decided by that most influential of factors: the games. **NAG**

Dane Remendes



ASUS recommends Windows 7.

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**Display**  
**Samsung P2770HD**  
[www.samsung.co.za](http://www.samsung.co.za)



**Power**  
**Thermaltake Toughpower 1.5KW**  
[www.thermaltake.com](http://www.thermaltake.com)



**Motherboard**  
**GIGABYTE GA-X58A-UD9**  
[www.gigabyte.com](http://www.gigabyte.com)



**Storage drive**  
**Seagate Barracuda XT 2TB**  
[www.seagate.com](http://www.seagate.com)



**Processor**  
**Intel Core i7 980X**  
[www.intel.com](http://www.intel.com)



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**CPU Cooler**  
**Cooler Master V6GT**  
[www.cooler-master.com](http://www.cooler-master.com)



**TOTAL: R47,685**



**Keyboard**  
**Logitech G19**  
[www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)



**Mouse**  
**Roccat Kone[+]**  
[www.roccat.org](http://www.roccat.org)



## Speakers 5.1

Logitech Z-5500 Digital  
www.logitech.com



## Mousemat

Roccat Alomic  
www.roccat.org



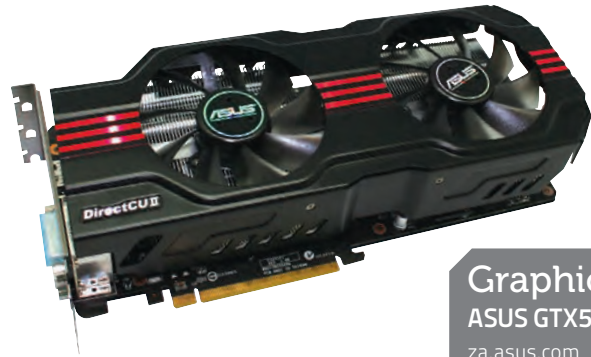
## Sound

ASUS Xonar Xense  
R2,799 / za.asus.com



## Case

Coolermaster HAF X 942  
www.sonicinformed.co.za



## Graphics

ASUS GTX580 DirectCU II  
za.asus.com

## Memory

Corsair Dominator GT  
2000C8  
www.corsair.com



# I want an iPad 2...



...and I don't know why. What would I do on the thing? I've been asking myself this exact question ever since the original iPad released, and I think I've found the answer.

While I have little love for Apple (for various reasons, but that's another column), there is no doubt that the iPad range has been a sensational hit, outselling the competitors 100 fold at the worst of times. In fact, do you know of any iPad competitors? Didn't think so, most don't. It's head and shoulders above the rest, but is that a good reason to get one? Well not really.

What about eBooks? The thought of sitting back with a tablet in your one hand, and a cup of hot chocolate in the other sounds appealing...but I already have a kindle for that. And it does a better job than the iPad ever could for various reasons. And it was cheaper. And I don't need to deal with iTunes. Speaking of iTunes... I hate that software. Not only are there hundreds of better music players/libraries for Windows, it's the principle of being forced to use something I don't want to, and that bugs me.

## "The 'iAwesome 6.0' will rule your life, and you'll let it."

So, browsing the 'Net from the comfort of my couch? With one hand? Now that sounds interesting, except for the fact that I spend 10 hours a day working on a computer, and the last thing I want to do is stare at a screen once I'm home. Did I mention I have a netbook in the house for when I actually do browse while watching TV?

One good point in Apple's favour is they do make top quality products. My old iPod 80GB Classic serves as a good example here, it's still trudging along after years of abuse (the previous owner may or may not have fed it to his dog at some point), a testament to the efforts of the Chinese factory worker who put it together. An iPhone feels more solid than a Galaxy S, and an iPad no doubt feels more solid and well put together than an Android based tablet. Speaking of which...

Android tablets, that's more my thing. Open source Android, using custom software, universal compatibility with all PCs, no iTunes telling me what to do, cheaper than the iPad... this sounds more like my device. The only problem is I already have two Android-based phones, which will do almost everything I'd want an Android tablet for. So back to my original question, what would I do with a tablet? Nothing seems to be the answer.

I could go on for a while here, but the point is the iPad and other tablet devices don't have much staying power, at least not yet. I know all too many people who have left their iPad to gather dust in the corner for months, they just never use it. These same people went out and bought an iPad 2 the second it was released; because it's the iPad 2, they have to have it.

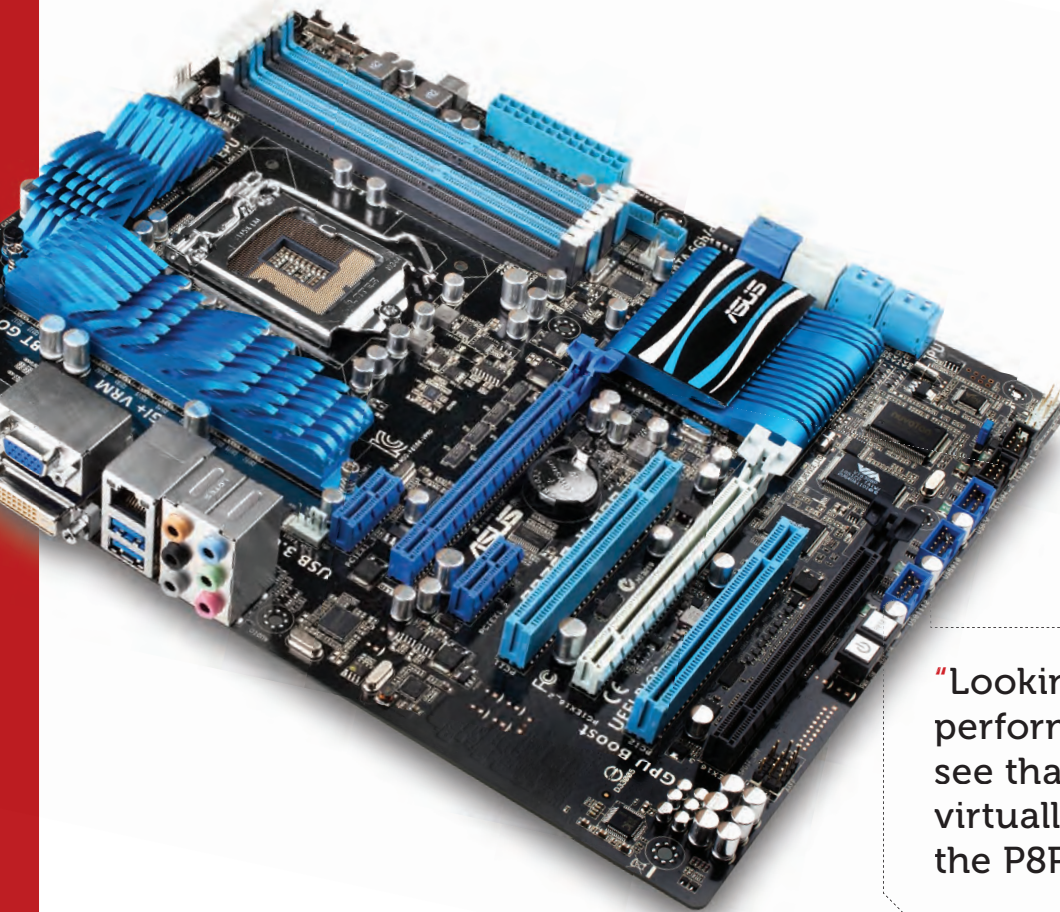
I'm going to stick my neck out and make a prediction here: tablets will see a decline in demand as people start to realise how little use they serve. Once this happens, the next generation of tablets will be totally different and actually serve a purpose. You'll get in your car on your way to a business meeting, and stick your "iAwesome 6.0" into its car cradle, where it functions as a GPS while reading you your "to do" list. It might play some classical music through your car's sound system to relax you before the meeting. Once you arrive at the meeting, you'll detach the "iAwesome 6.0" and walk up to the office breezing through the notes you've made on the "iAwesome 6.0" the night before. In the meeting you'll use a mixture of a stylus and your fingers to write down notes and add things to your "to do" list. Once you leave the meeting, you'll drive home while it reads *War and Peace* to you, pausing occasionally to allow incoming calls through. You'll arrive home and stick the "iAwesome 6.0" into its dock, grab your mouse and keyboard and start playing *Dota 3*, *COD 18: Space Warfare*, and *Minecraft*. The "iAwesome 6.0" will rule your life, and you'll let it.

Derrick Cramer



# ASUS P8Z68-V PRO

Supplier: [ASUS](#) / Website: [za.asus.com](#) / RRP: R2,499



Benchmarks	
Super Pi 8M	/ 1min56.907 / / 2min 5.175 /
CineBench 11.5	/ 7.08 / / 9.34 /
AIDA64 Read	/ 18,992 / / 33,737 /
AIDA64 Write	/ 18,419 / / 17,111 /
AIDA64 Copy	/ 20768 / / 16,627 /
3DMark Vantage CPU	/ 24,547 / / 16,441 /
Latency	/ 45.2 / / 49.1 /

Baseline: ASUS RAMPAGE III GENE

“Looking at motherboard performance you’ll quickly see that the numbers are virtually identical those of the P8P67 PRO”

Intel’s P67 chipset may have gotten off to a rocky start, but one thing’s for sure and that is it’s head and shoulders above everything else out there right now. Yes, it remains true that P67, unlike others before, is really just a Southbridge (more so than the P55) and the actual chipset is the Sandy Bridge CPU, and by virtue of being inside the CPU, delivers very good numbers.

Regardless of the reasons, it performs well and is still the premier platform to beat. Intel may disagree and state that the X58 is their enthusiast chipset, but having worked with the P67 since its release and from the numbers we’ve seen, we would have to respectfully disagree.

With concerns about P67 even before it was launched, we heard news of Z68. Not only was this supposed to be an improvement of sorts over the H61/H67 and P67, it was to offer some unique features which we hoped would include an external CPU PLL. Fortunately everything we heard about Z68 turned out to be true, apart from the external PLL. You still have very limited control over the external clock and this will be dictated by your particular CPU. Not a major issue as we have grown accustomed to this, but those who had hoped to extract some extra performance via BCLK tuning would do

better waiting for the X79 later this year.

So, our first experience with a Z68 board turned out to be with the ASUS P8Z68-V PRO. In true ASUS nature, the board is the standard dark brown PCB with a combination of deep and baby blue heat sinks and connectors. It’s not part of their ROG line so this bland look is expected and we’ve gotten accustomed to it actually. This board is virtually identical to its P67 version. So you’ll find a Reset and Power switch, the Mem OK button and the EPU switch like on most mid- to high-end ASUS boards of late. Sadly the Reset CMOS button is not present and for this you’ll have to rely on a jumper like we did last century. We have no idea why this was not placed on the board, particularly odd considering just how many features this motherboard has at its disposal.

Looking at motherboard performance you’ll quickly see that the numbers are virtually identical those of the P8P67 PRO. All results fall within the margin of error and if anything we’re glad we didn’t lose performance from the enabled features on the Z68 chipset. So if you’re looking for something magical in this chipset, and subsequently the motherboard, you’ll be disappointed. It just isn’t there. Intel’s IGP on the Sandy Bridge CPU is a vast improvement over previous efforts and dare we say, you can

actually play games with it, especially when overclocked it gives an entry-level VGA card more beating performance.

If you have heard or read about the fantastic media coding capabilities of Sandy Bridge but were put off by having to use the H67 chipset to gain access to them, you’ll be glad to learn that you can finally make use of these extensions on the Z68 board. Using the Lucid Virtu software you can use both the IGP and your discreet VGA card simultaneously. Previously on the P67 chipset, this was not possible as there was no way to use the IGP and as you may know already, had to turn to the H67 chipset which didn’t support overclocking at all.

In a way the Z68 chipset and this board by extension will give you the best of the ASUS H67 and P67 products. If you haven’t jumped on the Sandy Bridge wagon yet, you may as well buy the Z68 based boards and the ASUS P8Z68-V PRO, much like the P8P67 PRO, is a great motherboard. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko



## [ specs ]

Chipset:  
**Intel Z68**  
Memory:  
**4x240-pin DDR3**  
CPU support:  
**Intel Core i5/i7**  
**LGA1155**  
Slots:  
**3x-PCI-E 16x, 2xPCI**  
**2.2, 2xPCI-E 1x**

/ PLUS / Intel Smart Response  
/ MINUS / Z68 Chipset is near identical to P67 / Only 2 rear USB3.0 ports  
**THE P8Z68-V PRO IS AS GOOD AS ANY Z68 MOTHERBOARD CAN GET IN A PRACTICAL SENSE.**

**8**  
OUT OF 10



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# MSI Big Bang-Marshall

Supplier: Corex / Website: [www.msi.com](http://www.msi.com) / RRP: R3,999



Benchmarks	
Super Pi 8M	/ 1min57.390 / / 2min 5.175 /
CineBench 11.5	/ 704 / / 9.34 /
AIDA64 Read	/ 18,888 / / 33,737 /
AIDA64 Write	/ 18,416 / / 17,111 /
AIDA64 Copy	/ 20,623 / / 16,627 /
3DMark Vantage CPU	/ 24,781 / / 16,441 /
Latency	/ 45.6ns / / 49.1 /

Baseline: ASUS RAMPAGE III GENE

“There’s a lot to this board and some of it we do feel can be a little excessive”

**M**SI used to be amongst the big three in the world of motherboards, but now finds itself in fourth place behind Asrock who has just decided to get serious about the motherboard market, or at least cater to enthusiasts and power users, which they have largely ignored in the past.

As true as this is, one shouldn’t be fooled into thinking that MSI has fallen by the wayside, which would be untrue, as MSI has actually gotten better. It’s quite possible that the Big Bang-Marshall is the best motherboard the company has ever made. Not only is this MSI’s largest enthusiast motherboard to date, it’s probably the most feature-packed as well. This was clearly MSI making a statement, and a grand statement they made. It’s unfortunate that it had to be on the P67 platform where all the advances MSI have made will be lost because the platform is so limited.

Still, we remain confident in the Big Bang-Marshall and if this is a sign of things to come then we think MSI is going to surprise a lot of people and manufacturers. The Marshall board features an 18-phase PWM, all through high quality Renesas MOSFETS and for good measure, the increasingly famous NEC TOKIN Proadlizer decoupling capacitor has been added. The Super Ferrite Chokes (SFC) are back with Hi-C

solid capacitors to wrap it all up in the best power delivery system MSI has ever made. MSI has also added the PCI-E Ceasefire which is great for those testing out many graphics cards in a serious overclocking session as it allows one to disable selected PCI-Express slots while you test for stability or maximum clocks. You’ll also be glad to know that the Marshall board features the usual OC Genie button, a BIOS switching button, the Power, Reset and Clear CMOS buttons as well. That’s almost everything a power user will ever need.

There’s a lot to this board and some of it we do feel can be a little excessive, like the dual 12V CPU power connectors so the board can provide more than 400Watts to the CPU. This is fine for the X58 platform with Gulftown CPUs (like the 980 and 990X CPUs), but it’s not possible to have any Sandy Bridge CPU draw anything remotely close to that amount of power regardless of the overclock, voltage and load. So this is an absolutely meaningless and unwanted feature at best.

There are other downsides to this board as well. It costs more than the ASUS Maximus IV Extreme and the GIGABYTE P67A-UD7, which is a no-no because these boards are viewed as the best in the business. The high price is understandable though because MSI decided not to use the NF200 PCI-E lane



[ specs ]

- Chipset: Intel P67
- Memory: 4x240-pin DDR3
- CPU support: Intel Core i5/i7 LGA 1155
- Slots: 8x-PCI-E 16x

multiplexing chip but the Lucid Hydra chip along with an additional PLX controller to feed the board’s eight full-length PCI-Express slots. Add that to the X-Fi MB2 chip (which is actually just a ALC892 audio controller with a heat sink) and you have a very component-rich board with a matching price. Despite a record eight PCI-Express slots, there’s no 3-way SLI support at all, you can use the Hydra chip in N-Mode, to string three NVIDIA cards together but the performance is tragic at best. With a single NF200 chip the board would have featured native 3-way SLI and 4-way Crossfire and cost less. The UEFI BIOS is easy enough to use, but can get convoluted, and a more simplistic interface would be appreciated. It’s not an issue once you get used to it, but a simpler interface wouldn’t be a bad idea.

There’s a lot to this motherboard, more than we have space for and despite some of the odd design and engineering decisions, this remains a good motherboard and certainly the best showing by MSI to date. This one comes highly recommended. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko

- / PLUS / Plenty of features
- / MINUS / Over engineered

THE BEST P67 MOTHERBOARD FROM MSI, PACKED WITH FEATURES HAPPENS TO BE THEIR BEST BOARD EVER AS WELL.





# AEXEA PCI600 4GB Dual Channel Kit

Supplier: TVR Computers / Website: [www.tvr.co.za](http://www.tvr.co.za) / RRP: R1,099

If you haven't heard about AEXEA before, do not be alarmed. Prior to this memory kit, we had not heard of the company either. Despite the website address, AEXEA is an eastern company that specializes in all memory related products from USB drives, solid state drives, Flash memory and obviously desktop/notebook memory.

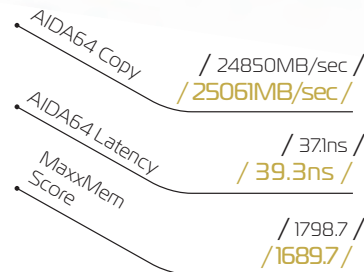
The desktop memory kit represented here is a DDR3 2000MHz CL9 set. This would have been considered a high performance set several quarters ago but as it is this is an average set actually. What makes it difficult to classify is the fact that it's rated at 2000MHz with very relaxed timings. As some of you may know, it's not really practical to run 2000MHz memory on the P67 chipset. Indeed this isn't a problem for the X58 and AMD 980/990 chipset; however neither of these provide comparable memory performance to the P67. As such, the only useable speed on our dual channel test platform was 1866MHz. As you may suspect, this is where things didn't materialize as we had hoped.

Given the 2000MHz rating

we expected to at least run 1866MHz at the timings of 8-8-8-24 but this wasn't to be. We couldn't even get the system to POST at these settings and had to relax them to 8-9-8-27. In contrast, our reference 1866MHz setting on the Transcend AxeRAM is 6-8-6-24. The difference in performance between these two sets of RAM at the same speed is massive. Do however keep in mind that this kit is significantly cheaper than the Transcend RAM. In light of that, this isn't bad performance at all.

The numbers that you see here were actually recorded with the RAM operating at 2133MHz. A speed that is easy to select on the P67 platform and one that this kit managed without any issues. In light of this, you should consider these numbers to be the best case scenario and, as always, overclocking frequencies are never guaranteed even with identical products. We do believe though these settings are easily attainable. If your budget is tight and you don't mind a little tinkering we would implore you to consider this kit. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko



Baseline: Kingston HyperX LoVo 1800C9

### [ specs ]

Size:  
4GB (2x2GB)  
Memory Type:  
DDR3  
Frequency:  
2000MHz CL9

- / PLUS / 2133MHz capable
- / MINUS / Timings will not lower much at all regardless of speed

THE AEXEA RAM ISN'T GOING TO SET ANY NEW RECORDS, BUT IT IS AFFORDABLE AND PERFORMS RELATIVELY WELL.

**8**  
OUT OF 10



# Intel 5120 120GB SSD

Supplier: Intel / Website: [www.intel.com](http://www.intel.com) / RRP: TBA



Benchmarks	
Average read	/ 266 / / 120 /
Average write	/ 131.9 / / 118.1 /
4K read	/ 19.74MB/sec / / 1.0MB/sec /
4K write	/ 37.61MB/sec / / 1.836MB/sec /
Vista startup	/ 163.060MB/sec / / 26.222MB/sec /
Video editing	/ 152.283MB/sec / / 67.980MB/sec /

Baseline: VelociRaptor 600GB

“We’ve yet to have a drive with this kind of 4K performance, at least as measured by Crystal Disk Mark. ”

It seems like an eternity since Intel first introduced “affordable” SSDs to the market in 2008. We use the term affordable loosely as these drives were well over what most people could afford, but cheap enough for those with very deep pockets to consider.

Despite the stratospheric price, the Intel X25-M was the drive that started this ever-increasing adaptation of solid state drives, helping it become what it is today. Back then we loved the drive and were convinced there was nothing faster on the market. Almost three years later, SSDs have changed, they are a lot more sophisticated, more reliable, have larger capacities and cost far less than they used to. They still aren’t cheap but we are pretty sure that a significantly higher number of people now have access to SSDs than any other time before and that’s in part because of drives such as this one: the new Intel 510 Series. In particular this 120GB model which is keenly priced and most importantly performs very well.

Unlike previous generation Intel SSDs, this one uses a 3rd party controller, in this case the Marvel 8859174 controller. An improved version of what was available from Marvel previously but still not quite a match for the recent SandForce controller one finds on the OCZ Vertex 3 drives.

In addition this drive uses a much larger cache than previous Intel SSDs, four times the size to be exact. This cache is courtesy of a single Hynix DDR2 chip. The increase in cache size and obviously the newer controller is what leads to the impressive numbers we observed on this drive, at least for the sequential read and 4K results. We’ve yet to have a drive with this kind of 4K performance, at least as measured by Crystal Disk Mark. Where we were left less than moved was by the low sequential write results, they have hardly improved over the last generation SSDs and in fact seemed too close to high-speed magnetic drive figures.

Still, given that when one is looking at an SSD, 4K results and IOPS are more important than any of the sequential drive numbers; this remains a respectable and notable drive. Whatever tuning Intel may have done, has obviously given them an edge over other similarly configured drives as the performance is right up there with the best in the business.

It’s worth keeping in mind though that our average read and write scores may appear lower than one would expect and in some ways negate the need for a SATA 6Gbps controller, but this is only because of the way HDTUNE tests the drives. Using Crystal Disk Mark the read speeds were well above 300MB/

sec with the write speeds recorded at 277MB/sec. These results though are not accurate as this benchmark only uses 4GB data sizes and the algorithm used to fill the drive during each of these tests allows devices with massive caches such as this one to score higher than they actually should.

Overall this is a great drive. The garbage collection has improved immensely since the last time we tested an Intel SSD. The provided software does help administer the drive in a way that other manufacturers could stand to learn from as well. The stringent tests that Intel subjects its drives to are supposedly much higher than what other manufacturers can afford and it is because of this that Intel is able to offer such extended warranties despite using commonly available parts.

Overall we are once again impressed by Intel’s offering. It’s not perfect by any stretch of the imagination but it is an improvement over a drive we always liked. One should consider this drive if an SSD is what you’re after.

**NAG**  
Neo Sibeko

## [ specs ]

Size:  
**120GB (128MB Cache)**  
NAND Type:  
MLC  
Form Factor:  
**2.5"**  
Interface:  
**SATA6G**

**/ PLUS /** Improved write speeds / Superb 4K performance  
**/ MINUS /** Still can't match Sand Force based drives

FANTASTIC PERFORMANCE AT AN INCREDIBLE PRICE.

**8**  
OUT OF 10



# ZEROtherm ZT-10D

Supplier: TVR / Website: [www.zerotherm.net](http://www.zerotherm.net) / RRP: R780

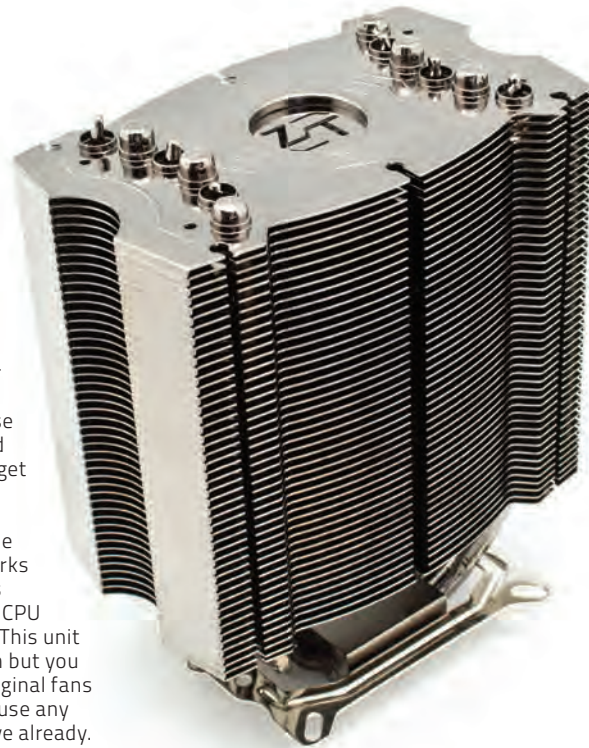
In the last two years or so we've seen some really great CPU coolers. Almost every manufacturer has some high end HSF (Heat Sink Fan) that is designed around several heat pipes feeding a tower of fans. This design has permeated through the market and at this point it's hard to figure out who its originators are. Regardless of who was first with the design, it's clear that it offers the best thermal dissipation for modern day CPUs.

The ZT-10D is one such HSF that features this tried and tested design and, as you would expect, performs identically to some other coolers we have tested in the past. The idle and load temperatures are what you can expect from the Xigmatek AEGIR CPU cooler. In short, this HSF performs very well. Even better though is the ease with which the mounting mechanism works, at least in theory. Short of the push-through clips used on Intel reference coolers, the bolt, hold-down and back plate model is still the best and easiest mechanism to deal with.

Made easier on the ZT-10D is that the hold down is attached

to the HSF base via screws which makes installation a breeze. Where it doesn't go according to plan is in the spring-loaded bolts. Sometimes these bolts will not screw on straight and it may take several tries before they are perfectly perpendicular to the board. Annoying to say the least as these bolts need to be affixed properly and evenly to get the best performance.

Other than that, this is a great design and the black pearl painting works wonders in making this one of the best looking CPU coolers on the market. This unit isn't bundled with a fan but you can buy ZEROtherm original fans to use with the HSF or use any 12cm fans you may have already. This is our first experience with ZEROtherm and so far we're impressed. The ZT-10D may not be perfect but it is an impressive product and one you should definitely consider.



## [ specs ]

Dimensions:  
127 x 74 x 160mm  
Heat pipes:  
6  
Weight:  
885g  
Fan speed:  
N/A  
Base:  
Copper (plated)

## [ Benchmarks ]

Intel Core i7 2600K  
@ 5GHz Idle: 37

Intel Core i7 2600K  
@ 5GHz Load: 70

/ PLUS / Looks good / Performs well

/ MINUS / Spring loaded bolts aren't designed well

HIGH END CPU HSF WITH A GREAT DESIGN AND GOOD PERFORMANCE.

# 8

OUT OF 10



Price: From R300



# W

# G @ M E S

Price: TBA



UNCHARTED 3  
DRAKE'S DECEPTION

Price:  
From R300



MAX PAYNE 3

Price:  
TBA



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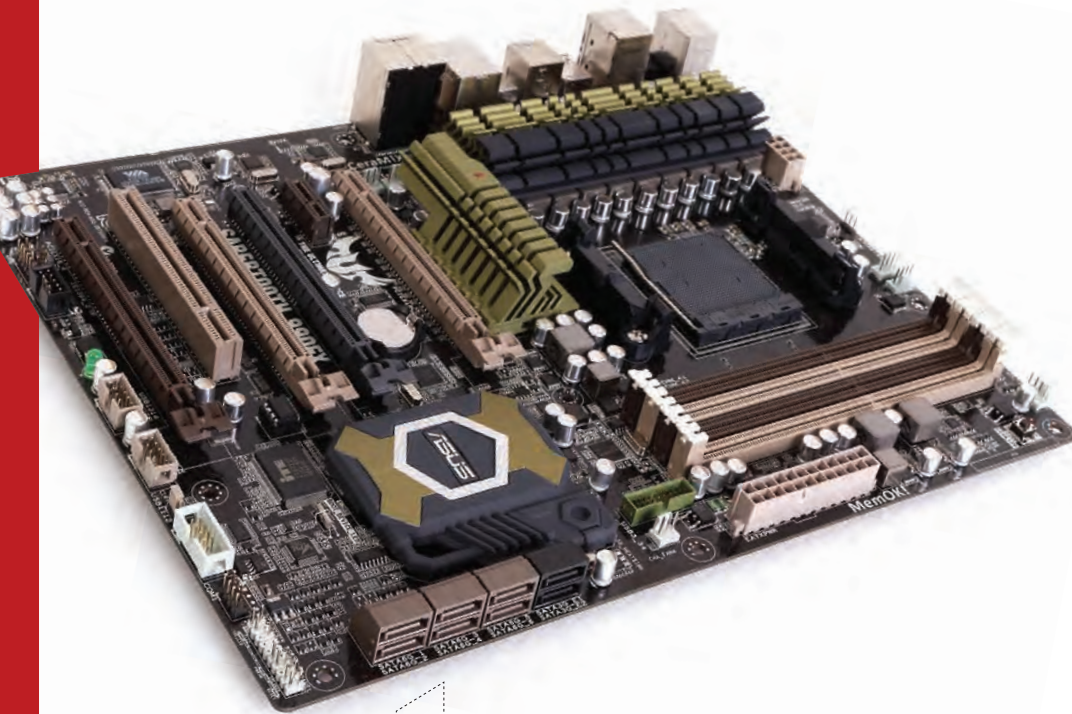
NINTENDO 3DS

Games  
for Windows



# ASUS SABERTOOTH 990FX

Supplier: ASUS / Website: [za.asus.com](http://za.asus.com) / RRP: TBA



Benchmarks	
Super Pi 8M	3min48.010 / 2min 5.175 /
CineBench 11.5	6.46 / 9.34 /
AIDA64 Read	11,136 / 33,737 /
AIDA64 Write	9,671 / 17,111 /
AIDA64 Copy	13,086 / 16,627 /
3DMark Vantage CPU	18,271 / 16,441 /
Latency	40ns / 49.1 /

Baseline: ASUS RAMPAGE III GENE

“The biggest problem with this board is that there’s really no reason why it should exist in the first place ”

The ASUS TUF series of motherboards has always made us wonder what exactly it is ASUS is trying to achieve with this SKU. We’ve seen some good products in the range, but none to make us overlook the other product lines let alone the ROG family. So you can imagine our very modest expectations when we received this motherboard.

If you’ve just looked at the score, well, much like all hardware scores it doesn’t tell you everything and in some cases doesn’t tell you much at all: this isn’t a terrible board. It’s just less than what we have grown to expect from the number one motherboard manufacturer. The ASUS SABERTOOTH 990FX is a board that’s neither here nor there. The biggest problem with this board is that there’s really no reason why it should exist in the first place. Sure enough it’s supposed to have superior “heavy-duty TUF” components that make it last longer, but like many we’re not entirely convinced why one would need a board to last 15 years. This motherboard, like others in the series, is manufactured or at least subjected to higher quality control tests than the regular boards. This is great, but doesn’t really mean anything to the end user.

As an overclocking board, well - it’s not. It has the features you’d expect in a modern day BIOS and in this regard the

ASUS EFI BIOS is amongst if not the best in the business right now. However as you can see from the results, it’s slow, in fact it’s slower than the Crosshair IV Extreme by a sizeable margin, which is based on the older 890FX chipset. In truth it’s actually slower than all the other 890FX boards we’ve ever tested. In a gaming context, well the truth is there’s no such thing as a gaming motherboard really because there’s yet to be a single board that can’t accept a graphics card and as a result not play any games. However, let’s entertain the idea of a gaming board as we have up until now and in that context this isn’t anything amazing or special either. It’s the standard 990FX board, with virtually nothing added to make it more attractive than other boards. Maybe we shouldn’t say this but from our previous experiences with the Crosshair line of boards, the Crosshair V Formula and the subsequent Extreme board will undoubtedly be the best 990FX boards money can buy. So why then should this motherboard be so average especially by ASUS standards with which all other motherboards are measured to?

That aside, this board is still functional and if you’re one who believes in the TUF components and the promise ASUS gives then you could consider the SABERTOOTH 990FX. For everyone else, we would urge you to look at the

## [ specs ]

Chipset:  
AMD 990FX+SB950  
Memory:  
4x240-pin DDR3  
CPU support:  
AMD Phenom II/ FX  
AM3+  
Slots:  
3x-PCI-E 16x, 1xPCI  
2.2, 1xPCI-E 1x

other ASUS offerings and if your budget can stretch that far, wait until the Crosshair V Formula is available. It would have been great if the board featured something to get excited about but it doesn’t at all. The presence of AMD’s new Chipset is great but then again it’s expected as we were bound to get a 990FX SABERTOOTH board. As to what compelled ASUS to release this product ahead of the usual PRO and Deluxe variants we can’t know.

We didn’t go into the 990FX and the new FX CPUs performance partly because at the time of writing we didn’t have said FX CPU, but more than that we refrained from making direct comparisons because this isn’t a great representation of the 990FX. It would be unfair to use this board as a benchmark.

The ASUS SABERTOOTH 990FX isn’t a bad motherboard, not at all. What it most certainly is though is less than average for ASUS and just about passable for any other manufacturer. This one is only for the “TUF” fans.

NAG

Neo Sibeko

/ PLUS / USB3.0 / SATA6Gbps / 5 year warranty  
/ MINUS / No clear CMOS Button

THE SABERTOOTH 990FX IS ONLY SAVED BY ASUS’S FANTASTIC EFI BIOS, IT’S A VERY AVERAGE MOTHERBOARD AT BEST.

6  
OUT OF 10



# Seagate Momentus XT 500GB

Supplier: Landmark Computers / Website: [www.seagate.com](http://www.seagate.com) / RRP: R999

Seagate, along with Western Digital are the only surviving companies in traditional mass market magnetic storage. Several years ago we had over ten players in the market, but the arrival of affordable solid state drives and other market pressures have caused that number to dwindle into the potential duopoly we have today.

As performance of magnetic drives is always behind their storage capacity, Seagate has an eloquent but simple solution that tries to strike some balance in this regard. The Momentus XT may not be the first hybrid drive we've seen but at this price, it is amongst the more affordable. The drive comes in a 2.5" format and features a single 500GB platter which should translate into improved performance over dual platter disks.

In addition to this, the Momentus XT packs 32MB of Cache, 7200rpm spindle rate, a SATA 3G interface and most importantly, 4GB of high speed SLC NAND memory. This memory, or storage rather, is used as a non-volatile caching

area that should speed up access to frequently used files by placing them in this part of the drive. Obviously that means your user habits will need to be learned as its only then that you can reap the benefits of this drive's hybrid nature. We'd like to say that this was the case but as you can see from the numbers, the Momentus XT isn't as quick as one would expect. Indeed it outperforms every other 5400rpm 2.5" drive on the market and manages to challenge some cheaper 7200 rpm 3.5" desktop drives. Given that this drive features what is essentially a 4GB SSD we would have expected much more.

We suspect that 4GB just isn't enough and double that amount of NAND memory would make a sizeable difference in performance (and price no doubt). Still, if you're looking for an upgrade for your notebook you should consider this drive above all else. For the desktop user interested in high density single platter, hybrid drives, you may want to give this one a miss. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko



Benchmarks	
HD Tune Average Read	/ 86.8 /
HD Tune Average Write	/ 84.9 /
CrystalDiskMark 4K Read	/ 0.540MB/S /
	/ 1.0MB/sec /

Baseline: VelociRaptor 600GB

## [ specs ]

Size:  
500GB (32MB cache  
+ 4GB SLC NAND)  
Platter density:  
500GB (x1)  
Form factor:  
2.5"  
Interface:  
SATA 3G

/ PLUS / Quiet and low power / 7200rpm 2.5" drive  
/ MINUS / 4GB SLC NAND / Not as fast as you may expect it to be  
THE MOMENTUS XT HOLDS A LOT OF PROMISE ON PAPER, BUT SADLY IT JUST DOESN'T LIVE UP TO THAT IN PRACTICE.

6  
OUT OF 10

# Next month in NAG!

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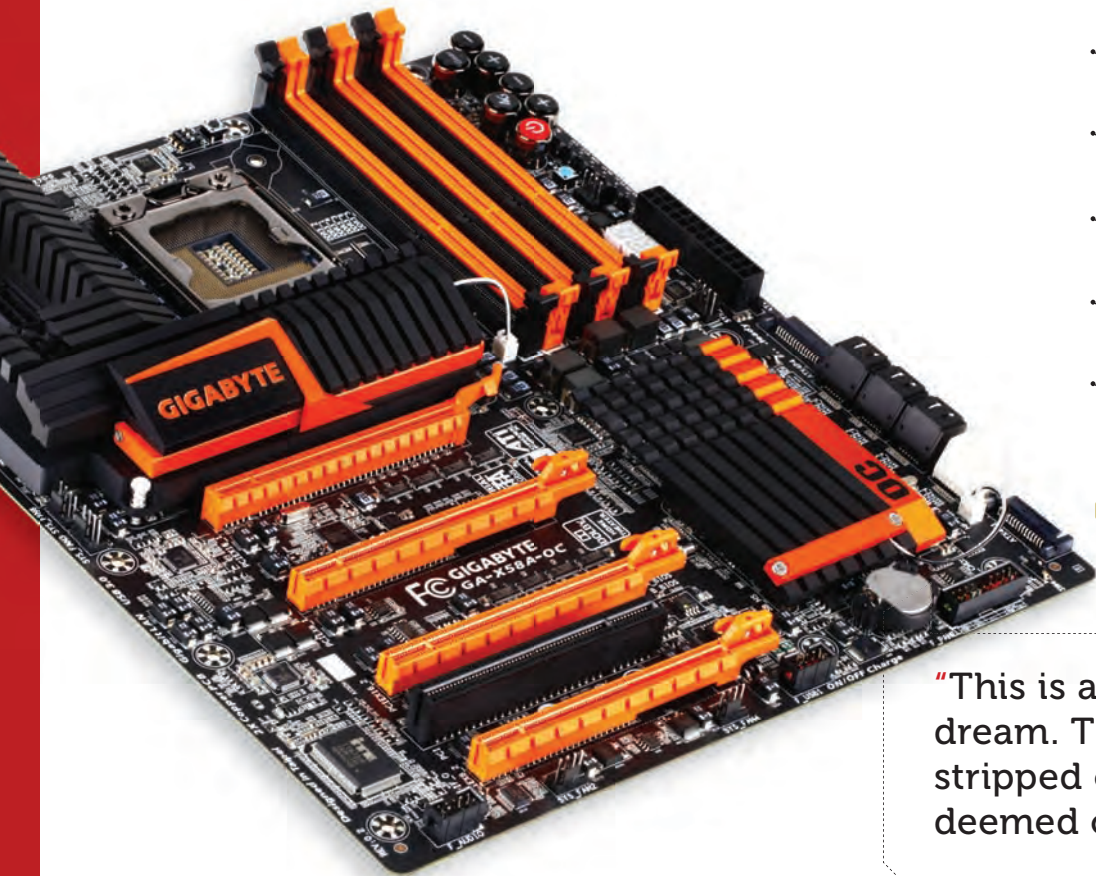
# E3

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# GIGABYTE X58A-OC

Supplier: Rectron / Website: [www.gigabyte.com](http://www.gigabyte.com) / RRP: \$380 (Import)



Benchmarks	
Super Pi 8M	/ 2min04.785 / / 2min 5.175 /
CineBench 11.5	/ 9.25 / / 9.34 /
AIDA64 Read	/ 17,148 / / 33,737 /
AIDA64 Write	/ 16,592 / / 17,111 /
AIDA64 Copy	/ 16,489 / / 16,627 /
3DMark Vantage CPU	/ 33,936 / / 16,441 /
Latency	/ 48.8ns / / 49.1 /

Baseline: ASUS RAMPAGE III GENE

"This is an overclocker's dream. The X58A-OC is stripped of everything deemed optional"

It seems like an unwritten rule that all game-changing products should be as late to market as possible. A bold suggestion indeed, but then again this motherboard should represent a lot to me and every other extreme or competitive overclocker out there than anything before. It's because of this that one has to look at the X58A-OC with awe and sadness at exactly the same time.

Much like the DFI LANParty nForce 2 board during the AthlonXP era, the Abit NF7-S rev2, the DFI NF4 Ultra SLI-DR or the original ASUS Rampage Extreme, this motherboard is so late to market its regrettable. Much like all these motherboards though, it will be immortalized as the best board for that particular platform. More than that, the X58A-OC will always be HiCookie's first born and in a way, the first time our voice was actually heard. If you're not familiar with HiCookie, he is one of the most revered overclockers of all time and was the world number one for a while, before relinquishing his throne to Antec employee "Nick Shih". In his hiatus it's obvious what he was doing and this motherboard is the result.

This is an overclocker's dream. The X58A-OC is stripped of everything deemed optional, packed with features that are only bankable to an overclocker and designed in a way that would only impress those with a single purpose for

their systems. There is no ambiguity with this motherboard. A risky product for GIGABYTE because this motherboard will not have mass appeal at all; in fact, as a gaming motherboard, it's lacking in several departments and, as such, will always be a very low volume SKU.

However, unlike others that have come before, this is a focused board that only carries the bare essentials. The power delivery system that at face value seems inferior to that of the X58A-UD9 (our current dream machine motherboard) but in reality is vastly superior. Here you will find two 12V ATX CPU power connectors. POSCAP input capacitors and a 12-phase drive MOSFET PWM, each one rated at an incredible 35A. All this is filtered through 9400 uF (micro Ferrites) Tantalum capacitors. Just in case that wasn't enough the Intersil ISL6336G 6-phase chip has a user selectable operation mode (via DIP switches) as well. Put that together with 50A capacitors and you have an impeccable CPU power delivery system. One only GulfTown users would be able to take advantage of and in a way the only system worthy of putting on such a specialist board.

You'll find no excessive 24-phase power system here, instead you'll get rock solid stability and a board that has proved time and time again that 7GHz on an Intel Core i7 990X is possible. You'll get 7 fan headers, Vcore, Vdimm, QPI



## [ specs ]

Chipset:  
Intel X58 + ICHR10  
Memory:  
6x240-pin DDR3  
CPU Support:  
Intel Core i7/  
LGA1366  
Slots:  
4x-PCI-E 16x

PLL and other measuring points labelled for you to use as well. Additional power for the PCI-Express slots is via SATA power connectors as well as a true dual BIOS system with an easy switch to choose between them. There's no NF200 multiplexing chip here to get in the way of single GPU performance figures and hence no 4-way SLI. You'll get 3-way SLI through the PCI-E lanes provided by the PCH and that's it. 4-Way Crossfire is possible and because of this all the buttons to control the system are located away from the PCI-Express slots, right in front of the DIMM sockets where no graphics card will impede them. Here you will find everything you need including the power, reset and POST LED.

It's not perfect and leaves a lot to be desired as a gaming or even regular motherboard, but then again it isn't trying to be any of those things. This is for competitors trying to reach the top spot. Not a meaningful product to most except for overclockers at the present time, but a spectacular product still and one that GIGABYTE should be proud of.

**NAG**  
Neo Sibeko

**/ PLUS /** Incredible engineering / Impressive performance  
**/ MINUS /** Far too late into the market to be considered a useful upgrade  
MOST LIKELY THE BEST MOTHERBOARD EVER. THIN ON GAMING FEATURES, THIS ONE IS STRICTLY FOR THE COMPETITIVE OVERCLOCKER.

**10**  
OUT OF 10



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## Modding 101

# Case modding **FAQ**



I've been case modding for quite a while now, and I've always been happy to post my work online. I haven't posted much online lately, but I still get a lot of e-mail from people asking me questions about modding. Questions regarding tools, techniques, guides, etc. This month, instead of running you through a guide on how to mod something specific, I want to address the questions that I get asked most often, and hopefully that will help you out in your modding ventures.

### **/ HOW DO I DRILL HOLES IN PERSPEX PROPERLY? /**

A big concern for a lot of people is the fact that they chip the perspex when they're drilling holes through it. There are a number of reasons that this happens. The most likely cause is that you're applying far too much pressure when you drill. Drilling at full speed with a lot of pressure will almost certainly cause your perspex to chip at some point. If it doesn't chip right in the beginning, it'll chip away at the back as soon as your drill bit gets through. I learned this one the hard way - when I was still working on my first project, I spent about 6 hours working on one piece of perspex and all I had left to do was drill the four mounting holes. I went way too fast, and broke out two of the edges. So, go slowly, and don't apply too much pressure. I found that the slower I do it, the better it turns out. Another factor could be your drill bits. There are actually drill bits made specifically for plastics which are really nice to use. Their cut angle is different to that of bits for metals. These are usually pretty pricey though. Personally, I don't bother with those, but it is a factor to consider.

If you're drilling a really big hole (13mm+), you might also want to start with something small, like 3mm, and then drill that same hole with a 6 or 8mm, and then end on the 13mm. This will ensure that you're accurate.

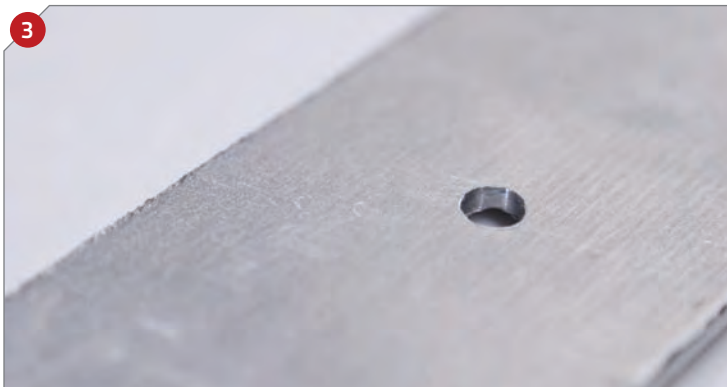
### **/ I'VE CUT A HOLE/LINE, BUT THE EDGES ARE VERY ROUGH. HOW DO I MAKE THEM LOOK PERFECT? /**

This is also a common one. The answer to this question is an unpleasant one: elbow grease. You need to sand your edges quite a bit to get them looking good. On acrylic, you'll want to start off with something like a 120 grit, that's usually enough to get started. You'll want to put the sandpaper onto some kind of sanding block that's completely flat. Do NOT do this with your bare hand, because your hand isn't flat, so your edge will never be flat. So start off with 120, and when the whole edge is sanded and has the same finish, move onto something like a 240 grit. Repeat this process again with 600, and then 1000. If you're a perfectionist like myself, do it again with 2000. Your edges will feel as if they were made like that in a factory. You can even go one step further and polish them at this point. That gives an amazing finish.

### **/ HOW DO I PREVENT THE DRILLING BURR ON ALUMINIUM? /**

This is a common one too. It's not the end of the world, because burr can just be sanded away, but that's an avoidable extra step, and if you can avoid fixing 20 holes, you've saved some time. I don't know if there's a "proper way" to do this, but this is what I've figured out myself, and it works really well. In my experience, the reason burr





occurs is because the aluminium actually has somewhere to go when you drill through it (see image 1). So if you drill against some kind of hard surface, it has nowhere to go, and you'll be left with a flat surface when you're done. I usually grab a piece of scrap perspex and place that underneath my aluminium before I drill, that works perfectly (see image 2). The end result is a perfect hole (see image 3).

**/ THE BIG ONE: HOW DO I GET SPONSORED? /**

This is certainly the one I get asked the most. How do you get companies to give you lots of free stuff for your projects? Well, you've got to look at this from a different angle. Stop thinking "what can I get from PC companies?", and start thinking "what can PC companies get from me?". How is a retailer going to benefit by giving you a bunch of free stuff? This is where you start going into the business side of case modding. A company needs to know that they'll get more out of sponsoring you than what they put into sponsoring you. So when they give you R10,000 worth of stuff, will they get that much back? If not, they won't even consider it. The way that companies can benefit by sponsoring you is by gaining advertising. So if you publish your work on the web, your sponsor gets advertising. The more you publish, and the more people see your work, the greater the benefit is for a potential sponsor.

Those are some of the most common questions I get asked. If you have another, drop me an e-mail and I'll help you out - [ett@nag.co.za](mailto:ett@nag.co.za). Happy modding!

**NAG**  
Ett Venter

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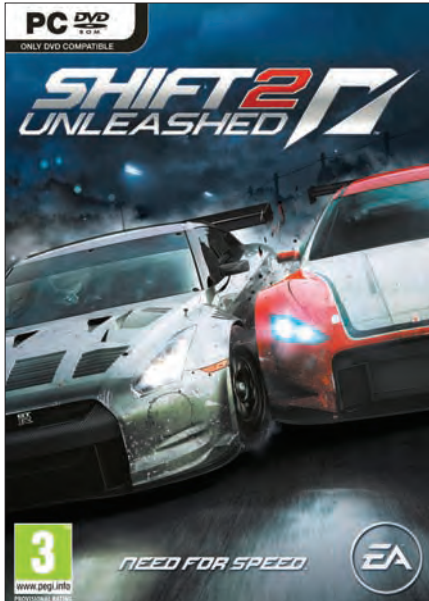
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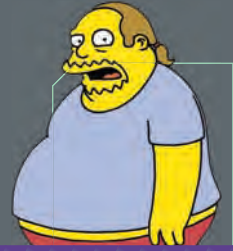
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# Think different



"Assumption", they say, "is the mother of all f\*\*\*-ups". I'm not sure I agree entirely – I'd say a biogenetically reengineered dinosaur with a gatling laser is probably the mother of all f\*\*\*-ups<sup>1</sup>, even if only hypothetically – but assumption is right up there somewhere in between ontological paradoxes and the third round of absinthe. Stuff has to be responsible for war and rap and American foreign policy and everything else that's wrong with the planet, and some of that might as well be assumptions.

Quite in spite of being such a self-evidently catastrophic failure of ingenuity, however, assumption grows fat in the public imagination, and everybody's a victim of it. Gamers are necessarily included in this sorry bunch of willfully deluded fools, and – like everybody else, I guess – not just as victims, but also frequently offenders. It's what scientists and other career coffee-drinkers would<sup>2</sup> call "autonomous stupid".

I mean, how many years now have we been working off that stereotype about gamers being a bunch of pathologically single male virgins living in mom's basement? But conveniently, it seems, it's readily endorsed whenever there's a significant difference of opinion about really important stuff that matters, like whether an unreleased game that nobody's played yet is better than another unreleased game that nobody's played yet. You know why we can't quite get rid of this one? It's because some of you keep bringing it up again, and you know, it's really only mostly true these days.

And the assumptions don't stop there. This, that, or the other thing is rubbish / dumbed down / an underworld crime-funded corporate plot because you read it on a forum somewhere so it must be true. Game reviewers are paid to write favourable reviews of games, because apparently integrity and opinions only count if they're yours. So-and-so is gay because they pretended to shoot you before you pretended to shoot them on the tellybox.

But perhaps the most heinous, the most *iniquitous* assumption about gamers, by gamers is that all gamers love Japanese RPGs.

"I mean, how many years now have we been working off that stereotype about gamers being a bunch of pathologically single male virgins living in mom's basement?"

JRPGs<sup>3</sup> seem to exist in some sort of magical elves-and-unicorns dimension where they are considered beyond the encumbrance of such petty mortal exigencies as critical analysis. And the fact is, the entire genre sucks. JRPGs are the pulpy thriller straight-to-paperbacks of the gaming industry – they're tremendously popular, not because they're actually any good, but because their fans wouldn't know a decent narrative if it bomb-dropped a *dénouement* on those guys' houses. And if you don't know what a *dénouement* is, then you know it's true.

Now people on Twitter can stop asking me to write about this. \:D/ **NAG**

Tarryn van der Byl

<sup>1</sup>Or a totally awesome Friday night out on the town.

<sup>2</sup>(Probably.)

<sup>3</sup>And PS3 exclusives.

## Extra Life

By Scott Johnson - ©2011 All rights reserved - Myextralife.com



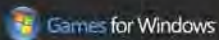


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