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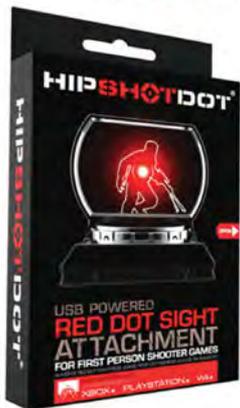
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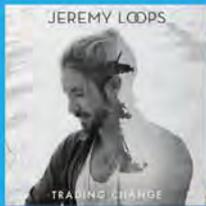
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FEATURES

28 DISNEY INFINITY: MARVEL SUPER HEROES (2.0 EDITION)

Just in case you didn't already think *Disney Infinity* is lovely, the house of mouse has gone and made it 100% more worthy of your attention by adding a liberal dose of Marvel to the proceedings. If this doesn't make you wish you were a kid again, nothing will.

32 THE OTHER GUYS

We continue our journey in video game variety by returning to the sun-kissed, zombie-ridden shores of *Dead Island*. In between all the bikinis and electrified machetes, someone remembers that throwing Molotov cocktails at friends is totally acceptable, so long as everyone involved laughs.

42 DESTINY

We've touched *Destiny*, and it's touched us. How's Bungie's post-*Halo* shooter shaping up? It's looking mighty sexy, to put it plainly. It's also got a giant floating space orb (which is kind of like a giant floating space ring) in it! Let us tell you more about the game's delicious multiplayer mayhem.

ON THE DVD

▶ DEMOS

Beware Planet Earth! / Eterium / Running with Rifles
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Get civilised



Usually end up writing the Ed's Note on the day the magazine goes to print. It helps to summarise the sentiment in the office at that crucial moment, just with less cursing and coffee-induced anxiety. This time things are different: I'm currently at home, trying desperately to catch up on work before I leave for the airport in a few hours to attend a press event in LA. My bags aren't even sorted out yet, but I've done these things so many times that I can go from panicked to packed in 30 minutes. Travelling to interesting places is one of the so-called perks of this job, but the longer I've been in this industry, the more difficult it gets to find someone willing to sit in an aeroplane for 24 hours twice in one week. Planes are gross, anyway. Apparently they don't always wash those flimsy little blankets you so dearly cling to in the miserable attempt to find comfort at 35,000 feet.

For all the hassles that they bring, press trips and conventions are still my favourite part of this job. Sure, I moan to people about the mental and physical stress that accompanies these events, but as someone whose life revolves almost solely around video games and their many facets, visiting game development studios and meeting high-profile developers is one of the best things I get to do. I geeked out so hard when I went to Firaxis in 2012 to see the (then) new *XCOM* game. There I was, in the lush Maryland countryside, sitting in a board room at Firaxis while eating tacos and chatting with Sid Meier. I even brought along my *Civilization II* manual for him

to sign. It's one of my favourite possessions.

I guess the point to all this rambling is that the games industry is a very, very strange creature. It's filled with so much love yet at the same time this seemingly endless stream of anger. To the outside viewer, gamers and game developers could seem to be at war with each other while publishers rake in piles of money and the media gets flown around the world to eat Mexican food with celebrities. It's difficult to not become completely absorbed by the insanity that is this business. And here I am trying to make my own games as well. This rabbit hole has no end.

IT IS YOUR DESTINY

Speaking about globe-trotting, this month we sent Pippa to Seattle to smear her face all over Bungie Studios and their upcoming role-playing FPS *Destiny*. It was very-much a "concept game" for some time but now it's finally starting to take the form of something recognisable. It also seems like it has some *Diablo*-like stuff going on and that makes us pretty happy. Yes, we're still playing *Diablo*.

Stay classy, you wonderful people!

-GeometriX

FINDING NAG

If you currently buy your favourite gaming magazine (that's us, by the way) at a local shop, petrol garage store or anywhere that's not one of the big chain stores then please pay attention: if you can't find *NAG* at your usual place, head over to your nearest Pick n Pay, Spar, Woolworths, Checkers, or CNA and ask for it there. If that's a problem for you, give us a call (011 704 2679) and we'll tell you exactly which stores in your area have the magazine in stock. Alternatively, you can subscribe (subs@nag.co.za) to ensure you always get the latest issue of *NAG* delivered straight to your post box (and save some money while you're at it).

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Inbox

*DISCLAIMER / Most of the letters sent to this fine publication are printed more or less verbatim (that means we don't edit or fix them for you slow kids at the back), so ignore any spelling or grammatical errors. It's not us... it's you.

letters@nag.co.za

Letter of the month June 2014

From: Yudistra Thakurdin

Subject: Game Critique

Pippa's column on game critique as opposed to review was interesting. I certainly think that games are deserving of critique in addition to a more general overview. The problem with critique is that it is by nature an in-depth analysis of something and will obviously require all parties to be well acquainted with the subject.

Simply put, critique will contain spoilers which is not desirable for someone who just want to know whether he should spend his money on a particular game.

That said, I would welcome a critique section in the magazine, perhaps a few months after a game has been released.

The NAG staff could each contribute their opinions on a game and even collate reader input to create a diverse analysis of a title which goes beyond technical details and a simple overview. This kind of discussion is well suited to online forums (as evidenced by The Last of Us thread on the NAG website) but having this in

your magazine would set it (further) apart from the rest.

That's an interesting point. Many people who play games do so for the stories, but when it comes to reviews of games, story is almost never mentioned (other than a cursory "the story is well delivered / contrite / barely functional / etc."). You're right though – this would need to be a discussion rather than a monologue; people who have already experienced the game in question would be happy to go into detail about the story.

Trying to make this work in as magazine is a challenge, though. Sure, we have sections like this very one which are direct communications with readers, but dedicating pages to specific games could be seen a wasteful to those people who aren't part of the discussion. I'd think that most people would read a Last of Us review even if they don't own a PlayStation, but I doubt they'd be interested in reading a spoiler-filled

THIS MONTH'S PRIZE

The "Letter of the month" prize is sponsored by the good folks at Megarom. The winner receives two games for coming up with the most inspired bit of wisdom or cleverness. **NOTE /** You can't change the games or the platform they come on.



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interactive

discussion of the narrative. Or, heck, maybe they would because they'll never play the game.

Either way, it's a cool idea, and certainly one worth considering.

Thanks, have a couple of games for your trouble! Ed.

From: Grant Pickering

Subject: Is gaming really unsociable?

I'm a 24-year-old guy who has played games everyday from when I was given my first Sega console when I was around 6 years old! I've been told countless times by family and other noobs that gaming is "anti-social". But is it really? I play on Xbox with three of my best friends, one of whom lives in the UK. We chat everyday after work and have a good time usually playing GTAV. A couple months back two of the guys had a huge fight; it got so serious that they deleted each other off of Xbox Live. It was easier for them to avoid each other in the real world, at bars and other social gatherings, than

it was to avoid each other in GTAV. They would spawn in the same game and not know that the other was in the same lobby. It started getting really awkward for everyone involved. Eventually they decided to speak to each other again. Why? They both wanted the awkward gaming to stop. A bromance is salvaged and it's all because of gaming!

Gaming, like most hobbies, can be a social or an antisocial experience. It really just depends on the person. Think about stamp collecting, tapestry weaving, carpentry or whatever it is normal people do with their spare time

– those can all be done in an isolated environment, but they can also be done with other people and depending on those people, made more enjoyable because of it.

Also, thanks for the bromance story. That's adorable. Let us know when the wedding is and we promise we'll briefly consider not making excuses to give it a miss. Ed.

From: Joshua Elish

Subject: Hidden advantages...

Dear Ed and all the people at Nag. You have probably heard of this bit of wisdom of cleverness before but just bear with

me. More and more gamers these days are being called names such as, "Nerd" or "Basement child" (mostly Jocks) because they think we aren't good at sports. This made me think that gaming was a huge waste of time and caused me to stop for a while. A year later my school started a gaming society and showed us an interesting video that explained the hidden advantages of gaming. I found that gaming actually improves hand-eye coordination, helps with Attention Deficit Disorder, improves language and math skills, develops creativity, increases social skills, creates quick thinking and has many other advantages. Gaming is actually sneakily building the next generation of all-star athletes and improving people on an academic level too. So all you fellow gamers out there just know that all your gaming does actually pay off. So here I am still gaming and loving it! I now have a balanced relationship between my gaming and sporting activities too. Who says you can't have the best of both worlds?

I don't know about gaming building the next generation of athletes – I rather think their rigorous training regime might have something to do with that – but you're on the right track: gaming is definitely not as bad or as useless as most people think it is.

Why, just the other day we were talking about surviving a zombie apocalypse, and we all think we've played enough CoD Zombies, Left 4 Dead and Dead Island to figure it out. These games might've oversimplified a few aspects like not dying of cholera and picking which "friend" to leave behind when the going gets tough, but we feel that, overall, we'll be okay.

Fun fact: the game Stronghold first encouraged me to learn how to bake bread. That's now a skill I have, which is also pretty handy in the zombie apocalypse. Ed.

From: Brent Cox

Subject: I support you all the way

This letter is regarding the increase of price and the decrease of paper quality of the NAG. Now I know what you're thinking, yet another letter of complaint about the price increase and the paper quality decrease, however, I am not complaining. I don't understand why so many people are complaining. Obviously you have to increase the price every 2 years or so. Do people honestly think

ON THE FORUMS

Like a crazy old person attracts many cats, the NAG forums attract only the funniest, wittiest, and most lovely people on the Internet. We're one big happy family. Join us! www.nag.co.za/forums

QUESTION / If you could hand over control of any game development studio to any particular person in the industry, which person and which studio would you choose, and why?

Bobby Kotick to Valve. Then we'll see Half-Life 3. And 4. And 5. And 6. And 7...

- Azraphael

Brett Sperry and Louis Castle to Westwood studios. Then we may have WESTWOOD STUDIOS! And great Command and Conquer again.

- Gammaray

Not anybody particularly, but I would love to see the Call of Duty franchise be handed over to Valve. We would get less sequels, but the quality of the game should improve in terms of multiplayer balancing and each iteration will have a good life-span before it gets superseded.

- Nferno

that everything costs the same as it did a few years ago. If you had to keep NAG's price the same, you would end up having less and less money and soon you would have to stop NAG completely. I'm not saying that I like a price increase, I'm just saying that I'm only 13 years old and I understand why. The paper quality doesn't even matter to me. I know that printing is expensive. Besides, so what if the paper is thinner, at the end of the day, NAG is NAG despite of the paper quality or the price. It won't stop me from buying NAG and if it stops other people from buying your mag, then I feel sorry for them, because they're missing out on a great mag.

Thanks! I'm publishing your letter because last month we published one that was a complaint, so this should serve as a reminder to everyone else that there's some balance in the world.

And that's the key, really – balance. We all strive for it and sometimes other things come along that like to rock the boat, tip the scales and poke the angry lion, or

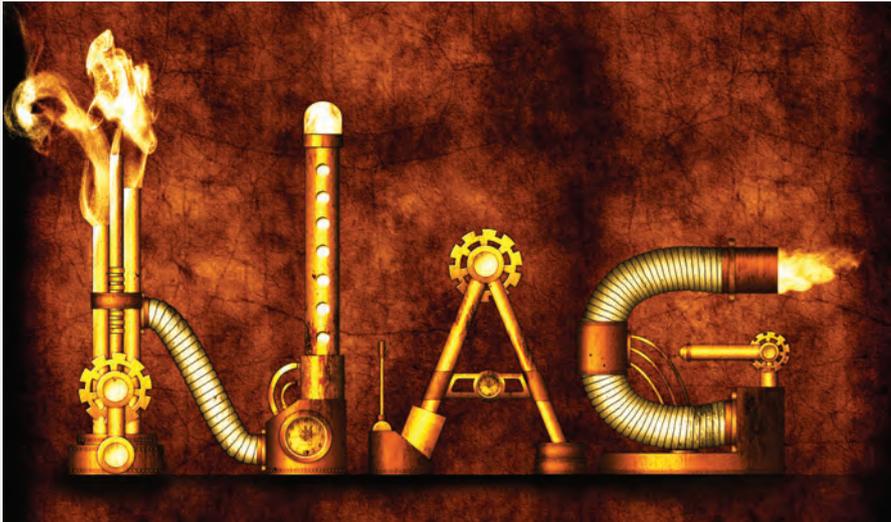
something. When that happens it's up to us to put things back together or find another seafaring vehicle, weight-measuring device or large feline. There's a hippy message in there somewhere but I won't force it on you any further. Ed.

From: Henrico du Plessis

Subject: Overboard!

Hi there all you beautiful wonderful people at the best magazine that I have ever seen (now with more pages) I just wanna say thanks for the great magazine this month. Ok, on to the reason I am writing this. One thing that I have noticed is that certain games have gone WAY overboard in my opinion (this is my opinion and no one else's if you want to write to me and complain well tough luck I am not giving my credentials away) like for example the sims games. I really think that there are way too much of those games. I really don't understand why they make so many sims games and the like. Is

there such a big market that they keep making it or what?



Jamie Atkins, "Here is a steam powered version of NAG. Hope you all enjoy."

🔔 This is the best bit of fan created artwork we received at NAG this month. 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. Just don't go and stick the NAG logo on a picture and send it in because that is dumb and dumb people don't win things.



This month's prize courtesy of Prima Interactive is a purple chrome Xbox 360 controller valued at R699.



Whoa there Mister Defensive Pants, nobody's going to write you a formal complaint for having an opinion. With that said, let's look at your opinion: Sims games (or do you mean "simulation games"? Anyway, same rules apply) have gone WAY overboard. Now, in my brief history of naval travel, I've yet to see a single video game go overboard. That's not to say it hasn't ever happened, but if it has, I highly doubt that a Sims game would be more prone to doing so than, say, a sports game or popular FPS series. Let's just say that regardless of any game's propensity for taking a long walk off a short plank, it all comes down to supply and demand: are people demanding that a game gets thrown overboard? Yes? Well then it will. Ship captains love to listen to the baying cries of their passengers and crew – especially those with handfuls of cash. Ed.

From: Manqoba Shongwe
Subject: Originally vr, but now lotso'things

Sup, guys. Busy reading the May issue and I just had a thought. Please could you guys have the Oculus owes come through with a couple of headsets next rAge. Not only does Miklós make it sound so cool, but we both know you guys need a showstopper to top the ps4 and the One from last year. Watchasay?

I had to cut the "lotso'things" from your mail for space reasons, but to answer your main question: we'd love to have the Oculus Rift at rAge. It's kind of not up to us, though. We can pitch the idea to them, but unless a

local distributor swoops in to pay for their flights, accommodation, time, and stand building for the show, it's unlikely to happen. I did actually chat to some of the team members about rAge while at Gamescom last year, and they seemed keen. But you know how people are.

If you want to help, you can email all the local hardware distributors and tell them you want to see the Rift for sale in stores when it's ready for consumers. Ed.

From: Jodien Munnik
Subject: My Star Wars gaming experience

The very first star wars I have ever played, and actually noticing it, was Star Wars the Force Unleashed! It was like a pure pleasure crawling up my spine as I killed my first ever Rancor! I fell in love with the graphics too! And since then, I played everything Star Wars I could get my hands on!!! And two years ago, for my 13th B-Day, there it was in all it's might, SW The Force Unleashed 2, thanks to sis, Jana Liebenberg!!!! (As you can see, that was a shout out!) My current quest is to get a Xbox 360 with all the Star Wars games! I must fight my way over these financial problems as a young padawan, and reach full Jedi-hood! Never the less, I'm still on a Galactic quest to greatness! And my dear NAG friends, May the 4th be with you!

Hello! I too enjoy the use of exclamation marks! They are nice but they lose their impact if they're overused! Don't you think so! That should've been a question mark but it doesn't even matter at this stage!

THE SHORTS

[extracts of LOL from the NAG audience]

"I used to like 3D then I looked at myself"
– aden naidoo

"the content is still great, I know this even though I haven't even paged through yet. That's the reputation you guys have"
– Gert Jansen

"The German comment for the Wolfenstein issue was a nice touch. Just letting you guys know someone noticed :)"
– Dylan Marais

Anyway, I wish you the best of luck with your quest to load up on Star Wars games. As far as licensed games go, they tend to be fairly good. Not all of them, but on the whole they do a good job of honouring the films while keeping the gameplay solid. Also, they earn bonus points for combining two of the geekiest things in the world, so you really can't go wrong. Ed.

ON TWITTER

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LazerDuck

@nagcoza They were giving out free NAG issues at school today :D Just wanna say thanks ... though I missed it :(

killerwombat15

just reading the @nagcoza mag Branston leant me today ... we share each edition, he buys it, I find a reason for him to let me read it.

Lauren K Kruger

Playing Ni No Kuni at the moment and I'm loving every second of it. Thanks to @nagcoza for recommending it. Grabbed the last copy in the WC!

Hazelnutz

I'm a girl. When I walk into a store, I look at the magazines they have – however, I'm only interested if they have NAG. @nagcoza

Josh Nalder

I can't wait for the next @nagcoza magazine!! Want to add to my pile of like 100!! Such an AWESOME mag keep it up!!

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"The SteelSeries H Wireless headset ticks all the right boxes" 9/10



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THE GAME STALKER

by Pippa Tshabalala



Sorry, I'm just not that into you

Pippa used to live in your TV. Now she lives in your brain. And also in this magazine, obviously. Some say Pippa once ate an entire jelly bean in under one minute. If that's not a superpower, we don't know what is.

There are certain games that no matter how hard you try, no matter how many good reviews they get, no matter how awesome they look, you just can't quite get in to them.

I have a couple of these, and in most of the cases I've been asked to review them I end up giving that honour to someone else in order to provide a less biased opinion. That makes sense right? You don't want to give a game a negative review just because you know it didn't appeal to you. You've made the decision in your head before you've even played it. For example I really don't like JRPGs, so I tend to give those to other people who do like them to review, otherwise my response will always be the same – “longwinded cut scenes, story that makes absolutely no sense, stilted combat that I spend hours sitting around waiting for everyone else's turns to complete”. Unfair? Perhaps, but this is why I don't play them. I think the only one I've ever played that I really loved was *Ni No Kuni*, and that was because I'm a huge Studio Ghibli fan.

I don't know if you've ever heard of that awful self-help dating book, *He's Just Not That Into You* – yeah, think of it something like that. Playing a game that you're biased about right from the start seriously damages that title's chances in the “dating” arena.

One of these games for me is less a specific title and more a genre, or perhaps game mechanic is more accurate I suppose. Either way the most preeminent example of this is *Skylanders*. And although I have tried that specific franchise, another game that didn't even get a chance simply because of its similarity was *Disney Infinity*. Shame. I have absolutely no interest whatsoever in even trying it out. Sure it looks cute, but whereas I was prepared to give *Skylanders* a chance because I knew quite a few people who loved it, *Infinity* didn't get that privilege.

And what's not to love, when you think about it rationally? It brings into play all the new and classic Disney movies that many of us grew up on (as well as ones that those of us who have kids have been forced to watch over and over again ad nauseum). It's a control system that's incredibly similar to the *Skylanders* franchise so in theory anyone who loved that would probably give it a try. Of course, perhaps that's why I've avoided *Infinity*. I played *Skylanders*, but it didn't appeal to me much beyond, “oh that's kind of cute”, so why would I play something else that in essence looks like much the same experience?

This of course is completely unfair, every game deserves a chance, but it's also realistic. How many times have you looked at the art on the box, read the back, and put it back on the shelf thinking, “yeah I don't think that's for me”, only to

miss out on an amazing game (or so your more adventurous friends tell you), because you didn't like the genre or look of it? Most gamers have diverse tastes, but this doesn't mean we like and play every single genre of game out there.

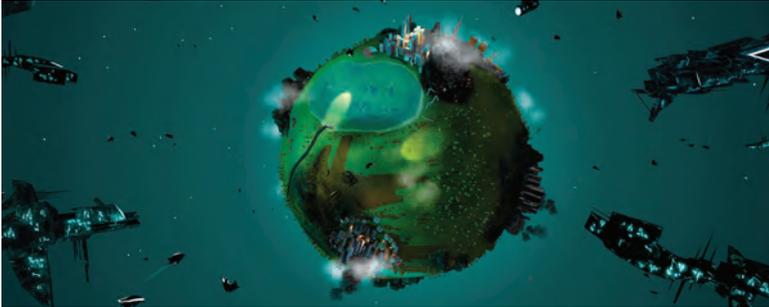
As game reviewers we're often privileged to be able to make those choices without heavy financial consequences, but if you're dubious about spending your hard earned money on a game that you're fairly confident you won't enjoy, then why would you do so? I would much rather spend my days playing a variety of RPGs and action adventure games over pretty much anything else. Does this mean I don't enjoy other genres of games? Of course not, but it means they have to be something pretty special to make me sit up and take notice. The upcoming *Destiny* for example, is something that I wouldn't ordinarily have considered as my cup of tea, and yet I'm extraordinarily excited for its release. It brings together everything I love about RPGs and combines it with a fast paced action experience that completely surprised me.

Perhaps given the chance, *Infinity* could change my mind. Or perhaps someone else who has played it and loved it has an alternate opinion and can tell me why it's an amazing, underrated game that I need to go out and buy right now. Please, I'm all ears! But until then... well, I don't think that's really the happy ending they were looking for. **NAG**



Just a kid with a magnifying glass

The Universim is SimEverything



Sad fact: the AAA industry has all but abandoned the god-game/management genre. With the exception of last year's *SimCity*, obviously. But we all know how that went. Indie developers have started picking up the slack with varying degrees of success, eagerly seeking to remind us why we fell in love with god games in the first place – and now indie studio Crytivo is trying their hand at keeping the genre alive. And they're being very, very ambitious about it.

As its name suggests, *The Universim* aims to simulate an entire universe, with you at its helm. Unlike most games of this nature, however, you can't directly control the inhabitants of your in-game civilization. Instead you can subtly influence their progression, deciding which path they should follow as your society gradually evolves from club-wielding stone-agers to AT-AT-riding laser-people. We're making up the bit about the AT-ATs, but you get the point. If your civilization pursues

a path that displeases you, you'll slowly generate a wrath resource – and once you've built up enough wrath, you can unleash it on your citizens in a number of creative ways.

Eventually you'll be able to take to the stars, exploring the rest of the universe to discover its secrets. Every planet you encounter in the game will be unique, each one posing distinct challenges if you hope to colonise them. Changing seasons will affect your civilisation's ability to gather resources and prosper, and you'll have to carefully manage your technology research to ensure that your civilization is ready for any sudden difficulties they may face.

At time of this writing, *The Universim* is seeking a hefty Kickstarter goal of \$320,000, and it's unclear if the developers will actually manage to reach it. This is one of those projects that sounds so brilliantly intriguing that we're hoping it reaches fruition with or without Kickstarter support.

Pokémon Omega Ruby and Alpha Sapphire announced for 3DS

In a move sure to get Pokéfans squealing with joy, Nintendo has recently announced 3DS remakes of *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*. First released in 2003 on the Game Boy Advance, the two games formed the third generation of Pokémon and introduced some

unique features, but never became as popular as others. No further information is known except for box art depicting Mega-Evolved legendaries Groudon and Kyogre, but with a release date of November 2014, it's a fair bet more will be seen soon.



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Nobody really knows what Miklós is, or where he comes from. We found him in a floaty sci-fi box-thing that had rudely crash-landed in a field of mielies outside Peetyramitzburger. He was wrapped in a blanket made of unknown materials.

COLUMN

by Miklós Szecsei

Gaming platform exclusivity and other stupidities

Perhaps it's due to the new generation of gaming consoles, but I've noticed that the PC gaming fraternity has become more vocal in their indignation towards the "lesser platforms". I'm beginning to get the feeling that there's this growing difference between being a "gamer" and being a "PC gamer". Being a PC gamer apparently comes with an obligatory air of superiority – hence the ever-accurate moniker of "the glorious PC gaming master race", as coined by gaming journalist Ben "Yahtzee" Croshaw. (If you need a history lesson, head onto www.escapistmagazine.com and look for the "Zero Punctuation" review of *The Witcher*.) What started out as a facetious quip in response to the PC gamer superiority complex, has become a badge of pride worn by the group that the quip originally intended to mock. How very Tyrion Lannister of you, PC gamers.

It was actually a comment on NAG Online that got me thinking about this again. I say "again" because this topic is kind of what got me a job as a writer for NAG nearly six years ago. The comment on NAG Online was something to the effect of PCs being better than consoles because PCs can do everything better than a console anyway. That's not exactly an Earth-shattering statement and you don't need to look far on the Internet for comments that echo those sentiments. It's what came afterwards that got me thinking: "consoles have, well... that *Last of Us* game lol".

Disregarding the fact that "that *Last of Us* game lol" is likely one of the most influential and significant titles of this last generation, and one that holds over 200 "Game of the Year" awards, the comment perhaps showed a glimpse of a PC gamer admitting defeat, albeit in a very particular area and with a "lol" spattered qualifier. Once I'd noticed it, I kept on noticing other examples of PC gamers lamenting their lack of *The Last of Us*. Perhaps Naughty Dog's masterpiece is significant for other reasons then?

A massive part of contemporary gaming is made up of console exclusives. I personally cannot imagine myself having never been able to play games like *Red Dead Redemption*, the *Uncharted* series, *Shadow of the Colossus*, *Super Mario Galaxy*, *Bayonetta*, and *The Last of Us*. Those are a handful of console exclusives that PC gamers will never get to play, and I can't help but feel that they'll never get to play them because of their superiority complex; it's a nose-to-spite-face scenario.

Less than ten years ago, I didn't own any consoles and did all of my gaming on PC. This was largely thanks to my upbringing and my dad's insistence that PCs were better and more powerful, so why would you want a Golden China anyway? No amount of explaining that *Super Mario Bros. 3* wasn't on the PC was going to convince him, and sadly this was the age before emulation. One of the great things about growing up, however, is that you get to free yourselves from the parental convictions that are (perhaps unintentionally) forced on you while you're young. Eventually I got to an age and financial position to realise that, actually, locking myself into PC gaming exclusivity meant that I was missing out on a ton of great games.

Just as I'm sure there are innumerable people who "get over" their instilled homophobia or racism, I got over my instilled PC gaming superiority, and I've never looked back.

Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare is a thing

And it looks like a Future Warfighter Crysis



In a move that surprises no one, the next annual *Call of Duty* game has been announced. It's called *Advanced Warfare*, which implies some connection to the *Modern Warfare* games. If the three-minute announcement trailer is anything to go by, we can expect the series staples of explosions, helicopter crashes, rabid boycotts, and a slump in productivity shortly after its release.

Remember when the *CoD* franchise was all about realistic warfare and modern military? That's all gone, and replaced with hoverbikes, mech-suits, bigger mech-suits, deployable bulletproof cover, and robo-dogs. The robo-dogs are unconfirmed, but you read it here first.

It's unclear what the story is, but the game will be set in 2054 and seen from the eyes of a private military contractor in the events following what developer Sledgehammer Games calls a "global 9/11". The game stars Troy Baker voicing the protagonist, and also the voice and likeness of Academy Award-winning actor Kevin Spacey, so hopefully the story won't fall apart like a house of cards.

Speaking of *House of Cards*, Sledgehammer's co-founders and Spacey have hinted that Spacey's character in the award-winning Netflix series may play or mention *Advanced Warfare* on the show. Another thing the game promises is a new, yet unnamed engine. This mystery engine must allow for tons of scalability, because *Advanced Warfare* will be available on PC and all major home consoles, current and last generation. The game is scheduled to launch on November 4th 2014.

There are far worse things in the dark than death



Uncanny Valley is a side-scrolling survival horror that aims to “preserve the old survival horror kind of gameplay instead of following the modern trend of creating a third person shooter with horror elements”. Has that got your attention? Good, because it’s definitely grabbed ours. In aid of their noble goal of recreating the horror experiences of yesteryear, the developers say the game includes a mix of exploration, puzzle solving and a small dollop of action as you work to unravel the story.

You’re cast as Tom, the night-shift security guard at a remote android research facility. One night, when

you’re bored of sitting around, you decide to do a bit of exploring. And it obviously does not end well. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the game is its death mechanic – or, to be more specific, the almost complete lack thereof. While there will be a few sequences in the game where death is inevitable, more often than not making a mess of things won’t get you killed outright. But you will have to live with severe consequences. If at a certain point you fail to dodge an enemy attack, for example, then for the rest of the game Tom will move slower, making your experience significantly tougher.

Nintendo eyes Skylanders pie, announced Nintendo Figurine Platform

It’s odd for Nintendo to be following suit, but they seem to be doing just that with the announcement of a new project tentatively dubbed the *Nintendo Figurine Platform*. Similar to *Skylanders* and *Disney Infinity*, Nintendo plans to release a line of physical toys that can be “teleported” into video games via the NFC capabilities built into devices like the Wii U Game Pad. Obviously, the toys and games will leverage familiar Nintendo IP, so you might purchase a Link or a Mario figurine. That toy will then be able to be used in a variety of new games being developed specifically for the *Nintendo Figurine Platform*.

As you play these various games, so your figurine will level-up and gain stats and skills. Those stats and skills will be saved on the figurine for use in different gaming titles. It’s similar to what *Skylanders* does already, with character stats being saved on the toy for use across various games or at a friend’s house.

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Miktar made it into US news headlines this one time when he threw a PlayStation Vita directly at an Amish man's nose-hairs and inadvertently sparked a miniature civil war.

MIKTAR'S MEANDERINGS

by Miktar Dracon

A moment in time

My day started with a two hour drive to the airport. Then a two hour flight from Pittsburgh to Atlanta aboard a very small plane. Now it's a five hour flight to Los Angeles. The seatback in front of me has a little touchscreen on it for watching movies or playing games. For free, which is rare. Domestic air travel in the United States isn't making money, with the exception of a single airline. Only government funding keeps the entire industry going.

I decide to watch *Ender's Game*. Hadn't seen the movie yet. I'm a fan of the books. I don't agree with the opinions of the author, Orson Scott Card, but I won't hold that against the books. The books can't help who wrote them. The movie is enjoyable. The plot's super-rushed and compressed, so it might be confusing to people who've not read the book. The actor playing Ender really suits the role. But it's the person one row ahead of me to my right, that keeps my attention. After the plane took off and I started the movie, they poked at their own screen for a bit and loaded *Bejewelled 2*.

They poke the help button and choose "How to Play". They back out and pick Classic mode. The screen fills with a grid of coloured gems. *Bejewelled* is a simple concept: you're given a play field of gems. You can swap two gems if they're next to each other, vertically or horizontally. If you make a grouping of same-coloured gems, three or more, they disappear and more drop in from the top of the screen. You might have seen variants of the idea in more recent mobile games.

The player flips random gems for a while. Just, randomly. Not making a match, the gems bounce back into their original position. After more random swaps, an accidental match is made. Three diamonds vanish, the gems above them slide down to fill the gap. The player makes another match, another, and another. By Jove, I think they've got it! They keep matching gems for a while, then stop. They start doing random flips again for a bit, then tap the hint button. A set of gems highlights, suggesting a move. They flip them. Hint button again. Flip. Hint. Flip. Hint. Flip. They quit the game.

Ten minutes later, they load up the game again. To my surprise, the entire sequence repeats itself. They look at the help page, start a Classic game, flip random gems until an accidental match is made, make some intentional matches, hit the hint button several times, then quit. This scene played out no less than ten times before I finished the movie. And another movie after that. *Frozen*, if you must know.

It is now a day later. I'm on a bus on the way back to the Los Angeles airport. I am alone, except for an elderly man a few rows ahead of me. He is holding a stack of lottery cards. Big ones that cost \$5 each. They appear to be crossword themed. I don't know how they work exactly. He scratches at one a little then shuffles it to the back of the pile. He scratches the next one, shuffles it back. Scratch, shuffle. Scratch, shuffle. After each scratch, he makes a sad little noise. He seems unhappy. The bus reaches the airport and I disembark.

Sony Online's zombie MMO unveiled

Insert Rust / DayZ / Don't Starve pun here



It's called *H1Z1*, a cheeky play on the H1N1 swine flu, and it will be a free-to-play MMO from Sony Online Entertainment. Announced recently by SOE president John Smedley, the game is touted as a hardcore survival experience where "death is the only sure thing".

According to the announcement, the game will take place in America (no need to learn to read русский) 15 years after the titular H1Z1 virus ended the world, and it will be up to players to work together to survive. Or just kill noobs and grief everyone, depends on you.

Other sure things will be a robust crafting system, perma-death, vehicles, and realistic bullet physics. The game also sounds like it will be well supported by the developers, as an in-game economy will be present, as well as servers with individual rules that can support thousands of players.

In a Twitch live-stream, game designer Jimmy Whisenhunt announced a few more features, such as firearm scarcity and the day-night cycle. The game also features at least one large city, the ability to grow survivor towns with other players, and future content in the form of additional locations. He also went on to emphasise how much of a threat the undead are in this game, claiming "the zombies will ef you up!"

It seems *H1Z1* is trying to introduce a great deal of refinements to the survival FPS genre, and teamwork is really being pushed by the developers. By the time you read this, the PC version should be available on Steam Early Access, with the final product available on PC and PS4 later this year.

Star Wars: Battlefront will be at E3

When questioned about work-in-progress *Star Wars* games, EA CEO Andrew Wilson responded that work on *Battlefront* is going very well, and will be seen at E3.

At the moment, no one knows in what form it will be present. So whether or not it will be playable is still a matter of speculation. Hopefully all questions will be answered at EA's E3 conference on 9 June.

Regardless, news of the darling series will undeniably cause millions of fanboys to cry out in joy, and be suddenly silenced with anticipation.

Not everything's better with friends

Planning to make a multiplayer indie game? Don't.

At least, that's the advice indie developer Dan Marshall would like to impart upon your malleable indie game-making meat-computer. Why's he say this? Well, because Dan's studio – Size Five Games – has had a really unpleasant experience with its most recent title, *Gun Monkeys*, which is a fast-paced online multiplayer shooter featuring procedurally generated arenas. And despite the fact that people really seem to enjoy the game, not enough people actively play it to make its existence worthwhile.

"The TL;DR is really: if you're an indie developer, don't make multiplayer games," says Marshall. "There are exceptions, naturally, but by-and-large the number of customers you're ever likely to get simply isn't there to support it."

Dan explains that people expect a very smooth experience with a multiplayer title. They want to be able to quickly find matches to enjoy all the time, and one of the first issues players had with *Gun Monkeys* was that matchmaking took forever due to lack of player activity. Size Five's solution was

ingenious – if a player spent too long waiting for a match, the game would automatically generate a Steam key for that player to give to a friend so they'd have someone with whom to play. But even that didn't work.

"I don't want to be completely negative, I just think as indies we need to be aware that the numbers *Titanfall* sells in order to be a constantly-playable online game eclipses anything we could possibly hope to achieve. It's a case of being very, very boringly realistic."



Don't Starve expands, plans a future with multiplayer

Don't Starve is lovely. Its particular brand of sandbox survival isn't for everyone, but it's got undeniable charm. If you're itching for more of it, you'll be happy to know that it's recently received its first DLC expansion. Called *Reign of Giants*, it adds two new playable characters, seasonal survival challenges, new biomes (and new stuff to fill them) and, as you've likely guessed from the title, giants. It'll set

you back just \$4.99.

Then, while developer Klei was initially adamant that *Don't Starve* would forever be a single-player experience, *Don't Starve Together* is an upcoming expansion for the game that'll add multiplayer for up to four players (this number could grow). It'll be free to anyone who already owns the game, but once multiplayer is added the base price for the game will rise to \$19.99.



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Shake that money-stick

Destiny cost Activision very many monies, might come to PC in future

Life after *Halo* is expensive for Bungie! Then again, we imagine that life before *Halo* and during *Halo* was also pretty expensive. We're basing this on the fact that Activision has revealed that Bungie's new shooter/MMO/thing *Destiny* will end up costing the publisher around 500 million dollars in development and marketing fees, in addition to other expenses. Considering that Activision expects *Destiny* to become their "next billion dollar franchise" and "the best-selling new video game IP in history", however, it's obvious they hope to quickly recoup all those costs.

In related news, Bungie has told Eurogamer that there's still hope for a PC version of *Destiny* in the future. Design lead Lars Bakken explained that part of the reason why it's not on the cards right now is that Bungie's got its many hands full with the four console versions of the game, and they're not willing to outsource development of a PC version.

"The console SKUs are really important for us and that's what we're focusing on," says Bakken. "We're doing it all internally ourselves. That's a huge endeavour. That's not something we've ever done before. So when I'm playtesting and I'm trying to play PS4, Xbox One, Xbox 360 and PS3, that's a lot of work. Adding another thing on there is just crazy. It's crazy to think of right now."



Legendary Atari landfill exhumed, copies of E.T. uncovered



The legendary burial site of Atari's terrible *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* game for the Atari 2600 home console has been dug up. A group creating a documentary

about the well-known story recently excavated the New Mexico landfill and found hundreds of copies of *E.T.* as well as other games for the Atari 2600.

The mass burial site was a result of a bad business decision on behalf of Atari. In 1982, the company paid millions of dollars to secure the rights to develop a game of Stephen Spielberg's hit film released in the same year. The game was rushed to market to cash-in on the film and festive season hype, and the result was a terrible product that ultimately caused Atari to go under.

The company tasked James Heller to dispose of the excess stock "as quickly and inexpensively as possible", which led him to burying the games in the desert. More than 30 years later, a group of documentary film makers have unearthed what Atari sought to forget about. The documentary film is being produced by Xbox Entertainment Studios, and will be hitting an Xbox console near you sometime soon.

Eternal sleep: World of Darkness MMO cancelled

After eight years of clearly troubled development, *EVE Online* developer CCP has finally pulled the plug on its MMORPG set in the hugely popular World of Darkness role-playing universe. CCP's CEO Hilmar Veigar Pétursson says cancelling the game was one of the hardest decisions he's ever had to make, and the cancellation has resulted in 56 developers being laid off at CCP's Atlanta studio.

"To our current and former employees and fans of World of Darkness, I am truly sorry that we could not deliver the experience that we aspired to make," said

Pétursson. "We dreamed of a game that would transport you completely into the sweeping fantasy of World of Darkness, but had to admit that our efforts were falling regrettably short. One day I hope we will make it up to you."

In other World of Darkness-related news, underappreciated gem *Vampire: The Masquerade: Bloodlines* (which was originally released in 2004) just hit version 9.0, all thanks to its extremely dedicated community, who've continued to support the game long after original developer Troika was shut down back in 2005.



Eve Online gets a real-world monument, monument gets vandalised by douchey players

Eve Online, possibly the most confusing but admittedly incredible online game, recently had a monument erected in Iceland's Reykjavik harbour to commemorate the game's community. The monument had been up for a total of eight days before it got vandalised by visitors attending the annual Eve FanFest.

There were two acts of vandalism on the monument. The first was a sticker bearing the logo of one of the game's most notorious alliances, Goonswarm. Goonswarm pretty much exists in Eve to try and cause as much chaos as possible, so many players weren't surprised to see members being just as douchey in real life. Fortunately the sticker was removed with no damage to the monument.

The second act, however, is more permanent: the monument features more than 500,000 player names along the base, and the name of an apparent trouble maker in the game, Xenuria, was scratched out. The vandalism caused a massive uproar

among the Eve community. Developer CCP called the vandalism "an insult to the entire community, not just to the individual who's [sic] name was directly targeted."

Luckily the four people responsible for the vandalism were tracked down by CCP and have been banned from the game for life. They've also been blacklisted from future FanFests.



Want an arctic snow fox? Play Never Alone

You know what's great? Video games. You know what else is great? Using video games to explore cultures and mythologies we never normally would have. That's what Upper One Games looks to be trying to do with *Never Alone*.

The recently announced puzzle-platformer puts players in the moccasins of a Native Alaskan girl and her adorable snow fox companion. It

all looks a bit like *Limbo*, only with a frozen backdrop and an apparently rich backstory.

Authenticity seems to be the big goal here, and Upper One Games has teamed up with expert Alaskan storytellers to deliver a tale worthy of the folklore. *Never Alone* is scheduled for release later this year on the PC, PS4 and Xbox One.

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Pack your parachute: 20,000 Leagues Above the Clouds unveiled

You like pirates, right? What about airships? And steampunk? Well then, That Brain's

20,000 Leagues Above the Clouds has your name all over it. In the vein of *Sid Meier's Pirates!* and *Skies of Arcadia*, *20,000 Leagues* sees you piloting your own airship among floating islands in a sky emblazoned with an aurora borealis.

The three-man team making up That Brain admit that they've been heavily influenced by Japanese animation house Studio Ghibli, which means you'll probably find glimpses of *Spirited Away*, *Howl's Moving Castle* and *My Neighbour Totoro* in there somewhere.



The game is primarily about piloting your airship, which will be fully upgradable. You'll be able to trade, explore and commit acts of piracy with your crew. When you're not on your airship, the game makes use of simple menu navigation, one-click movements, and semi-static scenes to portray docks and cities. There you'll find new quests, new characters and new crew members. These port scenes are all hand-painted, as are the animated character portraits – the result is lovely.

The game has a beta that you can sign up for if you're craving airborne swashbuckling. Head on over to www.20000above.com

In Soviet Russia, mother bleeds you!

Or something...

Anyway, here's a new game called *Mother Russia Bleeds*. It's basically a classic, side-scrolling beat-em-up similar to any of those arcade titles that consumed more 20c pieces than your Chappies addiction used to. Did we just show our age? We think we did.

Mother Russia Bleeds is set in an alternate history, 1980s USSR. You play an antihero "with a crippling drug addiction" who embarks on an opiate-addled revenge killing spree because reasons. The game uses pixel art and hyper violence to evoke that old school arcade feel and perhaps bring in a little shock value.



ZeniMax accuses John Carmack of stealing VR code for Oculus

"...they don't own VR."

Bethesda and id Software parent company, ZeniMax Media, is pursuing legal action against former employee and head of id Software, John Carmack. The company is alleging that Carmack stole "technology and intellectual property" when he left id Software to become Oculus VR's fulltime chief technology officer. According to an official company statement: "ZeniMax's intellectual property rights arise by reason of extensive VR research and development works done over a number of years by John Carmack while a ZeniMax employee."

The company is also citing research and VR technology support provided to Oculus in 2012 as further grounds for litigation. Apparently Carmack provided assistance to Oculus VR founder Palmer Luckey in order to make the Oculus Rift a viable commercial product.

Naturally, Oculus VR is vehemently denying the charges, as is Carmack who said: "No work I have ever done has been patented. Zenimax owns the code that I wrote, but they don't own VR."

Oculus VR is maintaining that the Oculus SDK source code doesn't contain a single line of code owned by ZeniMax. Furthermore, the company stated that that code is available online for anyone to access, and to date ZeniMax has been unable to highlight any specific lines of code that they own.

The crux of the issue *appears* to be the recent Facebook acquisition. Shortly after ZeniMax allowed Carmack to assist Luckey in the early stages, the company began negotiating compensation for allowing Carmack's VR research to be used to develop the Oculus Rift. ZeniMax wanted a "non-dilutable equity stake in Oculus", which never happened. Then Facebook came along and purchased the company, effectively slamming the door in ZeniMax's face.

Still, Oculus VR's stance remains unfaltering: "Zenimax has never contributed any IP or technology to Oculus, and only after the Facebook deal was announced has Zenimax now made these claims through its lawyers."

Epic Games announces a brand new Unreal Tournament

And it's going to be FREE

On the 8th of May, Epic Games held a Twitch.tv stream during which they announced they were starting work on a brand new *Unreal Tournament*. They also revealed that they wanted to leverage the ever-enthusiastic and active *Unreal Tournament* community to help in the development of the new game. Epic put out a call to all modders, developers, artists, lighters, meshers and fans to get involved during the creative process so that this new *Unreal Tournament* is a game that truly represents the wants of the fans and community.

While the news that they want fan involvement is great, the news that the game will be entirely free is even better. The game's project lead, Steve Polge, clarified that when they said "free" they really meant it – you'll be able to download and play the game for free. This is not a free-to-play game and there won't be any microtransactions.

How then will Epic Games make any money off this? The answer is a community marketplace. *Unreal Tournament* is being built on Unreal Engine 4, and the game will be entirely open for modding. This means that players and armchair developers will

be able to create mods, player skins and entirely new game modes that can then be sold in the marketplace. Epic Games will take a percentage cut of every item sold. What's more, in order to develop content for *Unreal Tournament*, Unreal Engine 4 Tools is a must, and that costs a monthly fee to utilise. Basically, the only time you're going to pay for this new *Unreal Tournament* is if you want to develop content for it, and even then there's a chance you'll make money back selling your content on the market place. If you just want to play the game, well, then, you score!



The Old City is like Dear Esther with whales



In much the same vein as celebrated story-centric indie game *Dear Esther*, *The Old City* is a first-person adventure game that's fully focused on telling a story. "This game is not about fighting bad guys, commanding armies, boosting stats, or even solving puzzles," say its developers. "*The Old City* is about discovery. You learn more about the world by exploring it, and you understand more about what you find by making the conscious effort to connect the dots."

Epistemology (the nature of knowledge) is said to be a major theme throughout the experience. You're cast as a "sewer-dwelling isolationist" who must journey to the surface and to the titular Old City. Along the way, you'll discover the "shattered remnants of a civilization long past". It sure looks interesting, with a *Dishonored*-like visual style, and footage shown so far sure looks attractively atmospheric. As of this writing, the game is currently seeking funding on Kickstarter.

Project Legion's sandbox-y shooting teased

It feels like the news section is jam-packed full of info surrounding *EVE Online* developer CCP Games, doesn't it? That'd be because the annual EVE Fanfest just took place in Iceland. Another bit of juicy news to erupt from the event is the reveal of *Project Legion* – a PC-exclusive FPS that has far more in common with *EVE* than CCP's PS3-based free-to-play shooter *Dust 514*.

It's still very much a prototype, but the idea is to make the experience more of a sandbox for players, with both PvP and PvE elements. Players will be able to team up with friends to tackle challenges. As with *EVE*, there'll be high-security areas where the world is safer, and you're protected from friendly fire and the like. Move into low-security zones, however, and you'll have to keep your wits about you to ensure your "friends" don't betray you to reap all your hard-earned rewards.



The Last of Us coming to PS4



File this one under “N” for “Nailed it”. It’s been hinted at previously, but it’s now been officially announced that PS3 hit *The Last of Us* is coming to the PlayStation 4. It’s dubbed *The Last of Us: Remastered* and will feature the original game in all its award-winning glory, the single-player DLC “*Left Behind*”, new multiplayer content, new commentaries and full 1080p visuals throughout.

Naughty Dog creative director Neil Druckmann went on to emphasise that the in-game character models will be the same

as the higher-definition cutscene models from the PS3 version. He further stated that the *Remastered* edition will support better lighting, and in general will be the best way to play the game.

Considering the game is shipping with a bundle of DLC, it looks like this remastered port will be a great way to experience an amazing game. There isn’t a release date yet, but a summer release (North American summer, obviously – which is our winter) has been hinted at.

“ummm.. so... yeah.. Thomas Was Alone has now sold over one million copies :O”

– *Thomas Was Alone* developer **Mike Bithell**, via Twitter. Bithell quickly clarified that the bulk of the sales were made during bundles/discounts. Nevertheless, that’s a tidy number.

Caption of the month

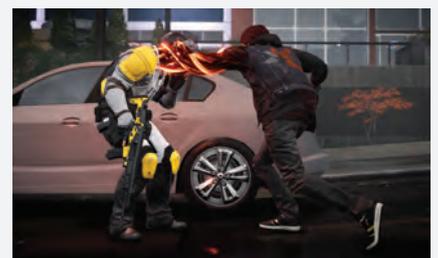


Every month we’ll choose a screenshot from a random game and write a bad caption for it. Your job is to come up with a better one. The winner will get a copy of *Sniper Elite V3 on PS3* from Apex Interactive. Send your captions to letters@nag.co.za with the subject line “*June caption*”.



NAG’S LAME ATTEMPT AT HUMOUR

“Bro, your hair smells incredible... Is that elderflower?”



LAST MONTH’S WINNER

“This is what happens when you don’t pay your e-toll fine.”
– *Ryden Pillay*

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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.

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PUBLISHERS / Microsoft Xbox
Telephone / 0800 991 550

PUBLISHERS / Electronic Arts
e-mail / zasupport@ea.com
Telephone / 0860 EAHELP/324357

Roxy hunt

Send your sighting to letters@nag.co.za with the subject line "June Roxy", and of course your contact details, and you could win a prize. Feeling lucky punk?



May winner

Jean-pierre Emtch, page 93

This month's prize

Marvel Dice Masters valued at R250. Sponsored by Skycastle.



BL GAMES RELEASE LIST

Dates subject to change without notice

JUNE WEEK 1

WildStar	PC
WildStar 30-day game time card	PC
Murdered: Soul Suspect	360 / PC / PS3 / PS4
GRID Autosport	360 / PC / PS3
Tropico 5	360 / PC
PlayStation Vita Pets	PSV

JUNE WEEK 2

Enemy Front	360 / PC / PS3
Nintendo Selects: New Super Mario Bros. Wii	Wii
Nintendo Selects: Super Mario Galaxy 2	Wii
Nintendo Selects: Mario Party 9	Wii
Nintendo Selects: Wii Party	Wii

JUNE WEEK 3

EA Sports UFC	PS4
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JUNE WEEK 4

Sniper Elite 3	360 / PS3 / PS4
Transformers: Rise of the Dark Spark	360 / PS3 / PS4
Plants vs. Zombies: Garden Warfare	PC

Darksiders "is not dead", says creative director

Cast your minds back to just over a year ago and you'll remember that publisher THQ exploded in a dazzling ball of flames and debris! A lot of that debris was gaming IPs, like *Darksiders*; that got picked up by Swedish company Nordic Games. Now, the series' creative director, Joe Madureira, has stated that more *Darksiders* games are still on the cards.

"The new owner, Nordic seems very committed to continuing the series," Madureira said on his official Facebook page. "As far as my involvement, I can't say at this point. Hopefully we will all have exciting news about the franchise soon."

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home_coded

EXPOSURE FOR SOUTH AFRICAN INDIE DEVELOPERS

by Rodain Joubert

If you've ever played a video game, chances are Rodain was watching you the entire time, scribbling furiously into a mangled notebook to record your precise eyebrow positioning at every second.

ARCTIC ANTICS

MGSA (Make Games SA) member Miltage has created a tight and charming package filled with cute visuals and vengeful orcas. Players need to skate around an icy arena picking up the scattered pages of their killer whale research while dodging a small army of the aforementioned animals who, for reasons of their own, are hell-bent on breaking through the ice and ending your life.

Arctic Antics is included here because it's the perfect example of conservative game scope and good polish in a time-sensitive environment. Interactions are limited, frills are minimal and everything is placed together well enough to make sense. Movement is challenging without being frustrating (you're slipping around on ice, after all) and the constant ice-breaking orca army decays the arena as you collect more papers. Game sessions can last as little as a few seconds and there aren't any power-ups or special moves – just a basic yet satisfying set of interactions. The art is consistent, informative and telegraphs important behaviours.

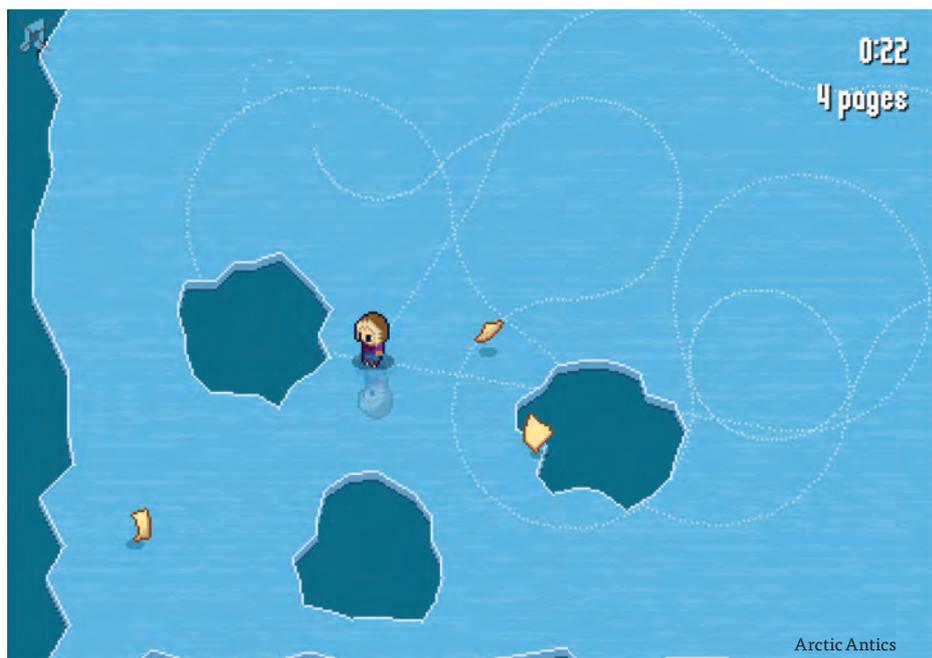
Those who dare

Ludum Dare is arguably the world's most prominent (and regular) game development competition, taking place several times a year and offering people a way to flex their design muscles in a mere 48 hours. The event itself has gained massive popularity: the most recent iteration (Ludum Dare 29) has enjoyed nearly 2,500 submissions with the theme of "Beneath the Surface". To play that many games within the competition's judging period, you'd have to rate one of them every 12 minutes over the three week window offered.

Its size is not the only factor which makes this competition noteworthy (though it has grown truly impressive over the 12-odd years of its existence). Ludum Dare has also evolved a sophisticated support system to streamline entries, incentivise game rating and even

promote the various projects that come out of it. Although there aren't any "real" prizes for doing well, the implicit rewards are clear to savvy users: journalists, Youtube casters and development groups keep a keen eye on the LD competitions. The potential marketing boost for games made during this window cannot be underestimated.

Despite the short time frame of the competition itself, Ludum Dare is exceptionally well-organised, democratic and flexible. The theme is chosen via rounds of votes well before the event starts, and teams of people who want a more accessible experience can work together in the concurrent 72 hour comps with several restrictions lifted. Exposure of individual entries is determined by participation and voting on other projects, ensuring that the competition provides healthy



Arctic Antics

YOJIMBRAWL!

Yojimbrawl! is beautiful in more ways than one. Aside from being possibly the most visually gorgeous South African entry for LD29 (a subjective statement with some gravity – the art talent behind several other games was also superb), it was built around a carefully-selected design goal to help it shine mechanically

as well as literally.

Built by a handful of crewmen from local studio Free Lives, *Yojimbrawl!* is a two-player fighting game with a special emphasis on intuitive controls. As far as possible, the game attempts to strike a balance between skill and simplicity – a single attack button and directional input is all

that you need to perform most of your attacks, and they feel logically tied to your commands: aggressive forward dashes, conservative back step swings and leap attacks are easily mastered in a few seconds.

The rest of the gameplay emerges from positioning, timing and non-control mechanics in a manner

reminiscent of *Nidhogg*. Weapon clashing, momentum and facing emerge as complexity factors. Swinging in close quarters deals extra damage, while stunlockers are a dangerous but navigable reality. When rounded up with juicy visuals, this game is immediately gripping and entertaining.



LAIR M.D.

This entry was made by the talented crew at RetroEpic, who as usual do a good job of providing something fun and quirky that thinks ever-so-slightly out of the box. The goal of this game is simple enough: players act as a goblin doctor who has to diagnose patients within a time limit using various medical tools to find symptoms that match up with those of known diseases.

The *design* goal for this project, however, is far more ambitious than that. The game was built to make the player think in as many ways as possible, meaning that almost nothing is explicitly pointed out: diagnoses are built on common sense, intuition and oblique references to problems. If a goblin shouts at you after being poked in the stomach, he may have the nasty temper brought about by Bog Rot. But what if it's just pain from Gut Worms? It's difficult to say, though the patient history may tell you that this particular greenskin fought in a recent campaign to secure the Grobesh Swamplands. Is that enough to suggest the rot, or should other symptoms be investigated?

With the enforcement of a deliberately short time limit, the game often forces you to make "by feel" decisions in sub-optimal, somewhat analogue situations, in an approach similar to that taken by *Papers, Please*.

"Despite the short time frame of the competition itself, Ludum Dare is exceptionally well-organised, democratic and flexible"

exposure and feedback for as many entrants as possible. Then, of course, there's the built-in site support for various bits and pieces of media such as blogging and Twitch videos.

More details about the Ludum Dare competitions can be found on the site (www.ludumdare.com/compo), but locals may want to turn to Make Games SA for more focused support, feedback and info. At the time of writing, MGSA recorded ten official South African entries for LD29 and organised dedicated venues in both Cape Town and Johannesburg to help participants to meet up and form teams. The forum has a thread dedicated to summarising the competition output (www.makegamesa.com/discussion/1960/ludum-dare-29-entries) and you can also sign up with the community to keep track of future competitions.

Want a few examples of local games right now? Check the boxouts! **NAG**

TO INFINI



INFINITY AND BEYOND



Disney Infinity: Marvel Super Heroes (2.0 Edition)

PLATFORMS / 360 / iOS / PC / PS3 / PS4 / Wii U / XBO
RELEASE / September 2014

On April 30th, we attended a special unveiling of the upcoming *Marvel Super Heroes* expansion for *Disney Infinity*, which was held in the Pacific Theatre's Cinema Dome in Hollywood. The expansion brings some of the most iconic Marvel superheroes to *Infinity*'s toy box, along with many great improvements to the creation toolkit, the *Toy Box*.

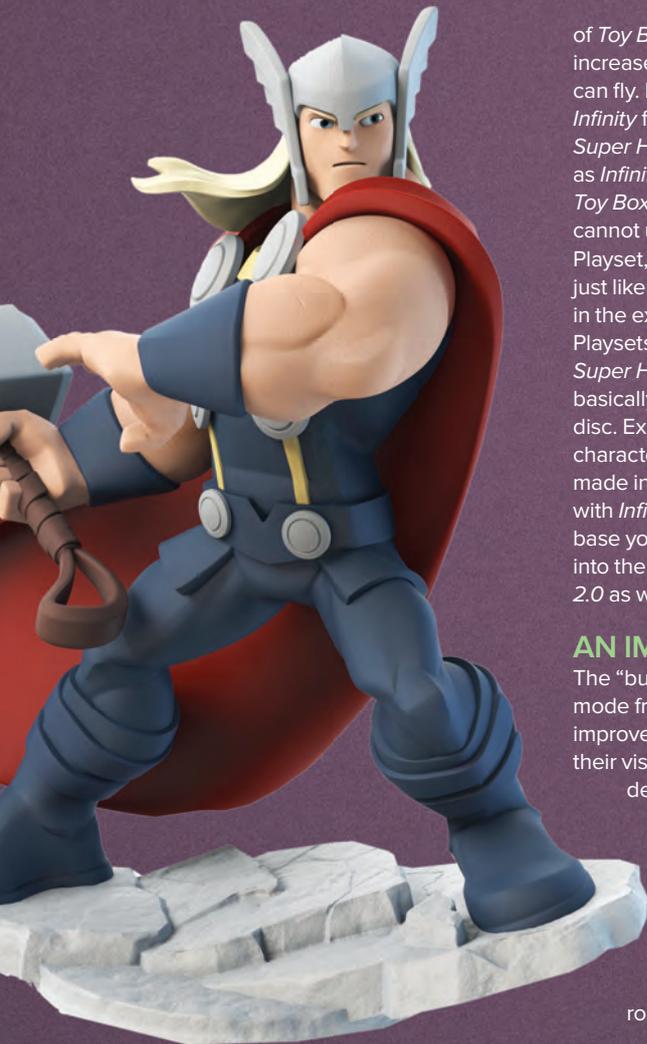
The press junket kicked off with a short introductory video by none other than Samuel L. Jackson reprising his role as Nick Fury, much to the delight of the crowd. Fury introduced the master of ceremonies Clark Gregg (Agent Coulson from the Marvel movies and TV show *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*) Coulson, staying completely in-character, bantered a little with Jimmy Pitaro, president of Disney Interactive, then the presentation kicked off.

SUPER PLAYTIME

"With the introduction of *Disney Infinity: Marvel Super Heroes*, we're ushering in a new chapter of adventures, featuring a cast of the world's most popular superheroes," said Pitaro. *Marvel Super Heroes* will add 20 new interactive figures to the roster, starting with Iron Man, Black Widow and Thor in the Starter Pack, with Captain America, Hulk and Hawkeye sold together in a separate pack.

When you purchase the *Marvel Super Heroes Starter Pack* you get access to the Avengers Playset written by veteran comic book writer Brian Michael Bendis. The Avengers Playset takes place in "Marvel Manhattan", which is four times larger than the Incredibles Playset from *Infinity*. The story revolves around Loki and MODOK, who plan to rebuild the "Casket of Ancient Winters" with the aid of the Frost Giants. Players will fight Ice Giants using entirely new movesets and powers. Additional Marvel characters like Spider-Man, Rocket Raccoon and Nick Fury were teased.

Marvel Super Heroes introduces a host of new features previously not found in *Infinity*. All the Marvel characters now have a skill tree with upgrades to unlock that improve their powers and combat moves. The size



of *Toy Box* worlds and Playsets have been increased, since many of the new characters can fly. It's worth noting that all existing *Infinity* figures are compatible with *Marvel Super Heroes* (which is also being billed as *Infinity 2.0* due to improvements to the *Toy Box* and gameplay systems). But you cannot use Disney characters in the *Marvel Playset*, only in *Toy Box* created content, just like you can't use the *Marvel* characters in the existing *Disney Playsets*. All previous Playsets will work when used with the *Marvel Super Heroes* game disc, so the expansion is basically a replacement for your *Disney Infinity* disc. Existing Power Discs (that summon assist characters or buff your heroes) and *Toy Boxes* made in *Disney Infinity* are also compatible with *Infinity 2.0*, along with all save files. The base you place figures on to summon them into the game remains compatible with *Infinity 2.0* as well.

AN IMPROVED TOY BOX

The "build whatever you want" *Toy Box* mode from *Infinity* returns, but with many improvements to help creators realise their visions. A new Brush system lets you designate an area to be auto-filled with a theme like city, racetrack, or tree house. The game will build a fully-working structure inside the area instantly. But for people who prefer a more organic approach, you can drop some Builders in your world. These little AI-driven autonomous robots run around and build things

automatically, like adding more rooms to your castle, expanding your city, or just building random things.

You can now also build Interior sections. These inside zones that can be linked to from the outside overworld are composed of rooms connected together, and the rooms can be fully customised. If you're not in the mood to design a game type yourself, there are new templates you can drop into your world that are complete games, like a tower defence mission or a dungeon crawling experience. These types of mini-games also come in Power Disc form, which if you drop on to your base, will create a new randomly-generated experience each time.

If you've already built yourself a sweet city, forest, or floating island maze, there are new tools to populate the environment with a gameplay-oriented goal. One example given was Collector: players place the Collector goal in your world and it spawns a bunch of baubles players need to find. The player then drags around these baubles in their environment, and all the "game logic" needed is pre-built for them. There are many pre-built game logic templates in *Infinity 2.0* for players to try.

The press event ended with a quick "stinger" video, much like the ones you find post-credits in the *Marvel* movies. Nick Fury returned to the screen, saying he had something very important to tell us – but the feed cut out intentionally, replaced with "see you at E3 2014".

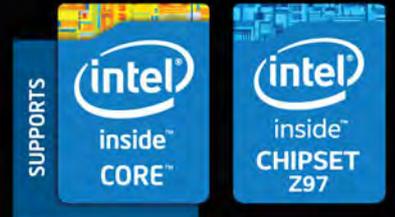
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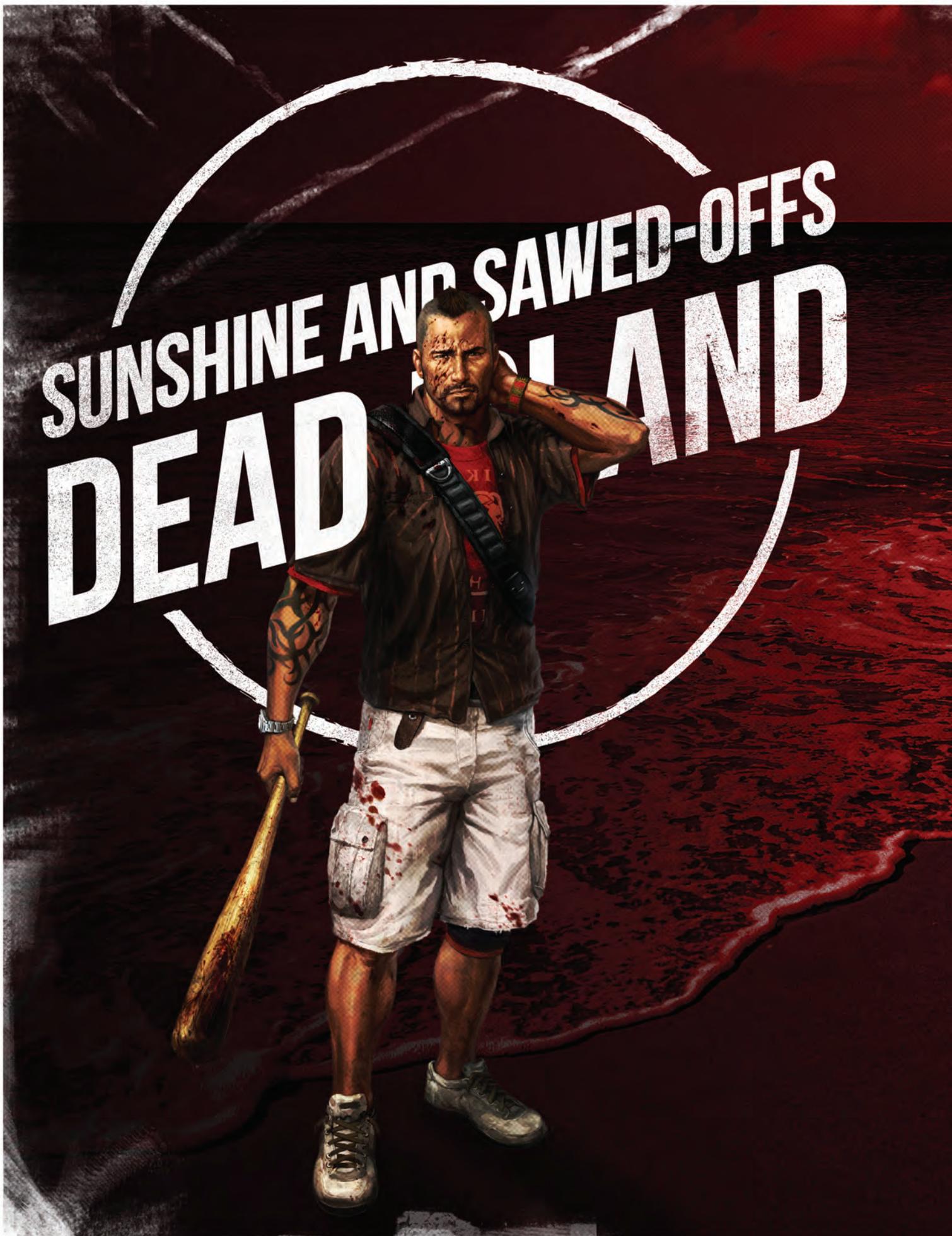
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THE BEST GAMING WEAPONS AT HAND



YES, WE KNOW:

we've reviewed *Dead Island* in the past, so why are we covering it in this new series of features in which we're supposed to try our collective hand at games we've never played before? Well, that's because we like to make up the rules as we go along. And also because this feature is brilliantly freeform, and we can pretty much do whatever we'd like with it. And also also because we didn't play *that* much *Dead Island* when it first launched, despite how much it intrigued us. So it totally qualifies. Anyway, this is how it went.

BARKSKIN:

It started off every bit as badly as we've come to expect from this new adventure in gaming diversity. *Dead Island's* user interface is obtuse (to put it kindly), and so it took the four of us something like 25 minutes to figure out how to get a cooperative game up and running so we could get on with our frantic zombie-bothering. And when I say the four of us, I actually mean just GeometriX and me. Because SAVAGE's and RedTide's contributions consisted mainly of their usual moaning about how crap life is and how they wished they were playing *Call of Duty* [*Battlefield 4* actually, the new *COD* is rubbish – RedTide] and they've both developed this weird rash or something.

Nevertheless, we eventually bludgeoned the game into submission, formed our little band of merry misfits, and set out across a beach that would've been mighty attractive were it not littered with mangled bodies. In between searching for any paddles or sticks or zombie earlobes that we could use as weapons, we learnt that certain members of the office have never learnt how to use stairs.

GEOMETRIX:

I chose the dude who specialises in throwing weapons, not because I secretly wanted to be a ninja while growing up (although I did), but because I find the idea of using shovels, oars, knives and anything not bolted down as projectiles in the zombie apocalypse to be hilarious. While everyone is beating down on a pack of the undead, I'm the guy at the back tossing kitchen appliances at anyone with a suspicious limp.

Needless to say, with this lot, getting things going was a challenge. And I don't

even mean the technical stuff, I mean the game itself. I must've spent a good hour trying to convince everyone to follow a mission waypoint instead of randomly running around and looting beach huts. Mostly because I wanted to loot them. Just kidding, I already did. I'm also *that* guy.

REDTIDE:

It was more like 10 minutes really to figure out the multiplayer connectivity trick with this game [*Whatever. It felt like a lifetime. – Barkskin*]. I was kind of handed the girl with gun ability [*This is Michaelspeak for "I played the female character who's proficient in the use of firearms". – Barkskin*], by GeometriX I think. His reasoning was if I can shoot in it I'll like the game and therefore will make this text more interesting. The problem I discovered later was that you don't get guns during the first act of the game. The overall truth here, to be honest, was I didn't really care who I was going to be playing because I didn't care about the game. I had only played 61 minutes solo and got bored with the fetch tasks (and lack of guns) I was initially handed when playing the game alone. I didn't think the cooperative multiplayer was going to be good because of this predisposition. Boy was I wrong, but I'll talk about that later because we've been given a stupid word limit to stick to here that I think I'm going to hit any second. Well almost about to hit. Am I there yet? How about now? Okay, Barkskin what is the actual...

BARKSKIN:

I chose the character who specialises in sharp weapons, because I assumed that

at some point there would be a badass katana to collect, which is the sort of weapon you always expect to be great to have in the zombie apocalypse. Alas, I didn't get to use a katana even once. Sharp weapons are weirdly difficult to come by in *Dead Island*. I got the impression that *someone* kept stealing all the best sharp weapon drops. *Bastard*.

As in most action RPGs, weapon drops in this game are colour-coded according to rarity and power. Melee weapons in *Dead Island* are incredibly fickle though, as if they're made out of cardboard. A few swings at a zombie's head is all it takes to leave your weapon of choice battered and hugely ineffective. This meant that with every new area we entered, we were like a pack of loot locusts, unapologetically swarming through rooms and vacuuming up anything that looked like it might be even vaguely useful. Batteries, bits of wire, fruit – none of it was safe.

GEOMETRIX:

Dane told me that he's set me up for writing about crafting in this space but I have to come clean first: I took the sharp weapons. All of them. I was literally throwing them away because I had so many. Hey, what can I say, I'm the throwing things dude – I throw things. Sometimes they don't come back. I actually almost lost an awesome electrocuting machete that I crafted (hey, there you go) but then everyone helped me look for it because they're so kind. Also because I was holding up the quest progression. Michael eventually found it much further away than I expected it to be and I got a snide remark about not playing golf.

Hey *Dead Island*: why can I only carry ten knives but a hundred laptop batteries? Also, why can't I use the laptop batteries as projectile weapons? I once saw a video online where a guy hit a mobile phone battery with a hammer and it exploded.

RETTIDE:

We all do it: sneak ahead to clean out all cupboards, dustbins and drawers before the other guys get into the room, but it's done in a sneaky way so that it doesn't look like that's what you're doing. The game needs a better system for this. You know, like *Diablo III*. That said, "innocent" dicking with each other became a huge part of the experience. For example, if I leave a room with Dane inside I close the door to try to confuse him [*For a long time I actually thought I was going mad. Or that I'd broken the game.* – Barkskin [*Definitely madness.* – GeometriX]]. In another case, I got the attention of a room full of zombies and then



"Sharp weapons are weirdly difficult to come by in *Dead Island*. I got the impression that someone kept stealing all the best sharp weapon drops. *Bastard*."



left so the other guys were forced to deal with the mayhem (while I looted the next room). It was all harmless and good natured until we discovered we could all drive our own cars. This turned into an episode of *Top Gear* with everyone subtly (in some cases blatantly) trying to cause accidents, by ramming people near cliffs or just braking hard in the middle of nowhere for fun. Getting to the objective was secondary,

screwing each other around ended up being the only game we played on the roads.

BARKSKIN:

Of the three new games we've tried so far with this series, *Dead Island* ended up being the first that every one of us has immediately clicked with. Maybe it's the zombies. Maybe it's the fact that bashing things over the head with wrenches



is primitively satisfying enough to be universally enjoyable. Maybe it's because it's a huge laugh to flying-kick your way out of each and every deadly situation.

It's got that cunning mix of ARPG addictiveness, where you're constantly salivating over the thought of new goodies and finishing just one more quest to see what reward you'll get. The skill tree is automatically alluring, despite the fact that you never really learn anything as impressive as, say, how to launch fireballs from your nipples, or how to one-hit kill a waterslide. At times, it's a soggy mess of opaque mechanics and terrible UI. But it's such brilliant entertainment in spite of all its oddities.

GEOMETRIX:

We've got our staples in the office. Or staple, really: *StarCraft II: Diablo's Reaper* expansion has brought new life to the game so most of us are also playing that, but *Dead Island* has a surprising amount of pull for our attention even in the face of Blizzard's much more finely crafted offering. Coming back to an old game (or oldish, in this case) has been a fun experience. We've all made the claim that we're going to finish *Dead Island* as a co-op experience; we'll see how long that lasts, but the chances are looking decent.

REDTIDE:

Overall this was a great experience; it took us about an hour to get everyone moving in the same direction and "cooperating" to achieve goals. The thing that surprised me the most was that the zombies were even chasing the other guys; I mean I've got the biggest brain out of the lot... I guess these zombies are happy settling for scraps before the main course. I wanted to have the last entry here just for that dig. So I win. Anyway, here's what an outsider (Jacqui) had to say about the game: "It was horrible to watch. I don't know if it was just where Dane was or something, but you see a guy getting hit and blood and that, but when he cut off that guy's head and the blood didn't stop coming, it made me feel uncomfortable. I don't know if it was because he was fighting a girl or if he was a girl. My hair is getting all itchy just talking about it. But I couldn't look away."

Dead Island is the perfect success story of what is supposed to come out of this series of articles. Unlike *League of Legends*, this is a game that will stay on my hard drive indefinitely and everyone in the team has agreed to play it until we finish it and you can't get a better endorsement than that. **NAG**

Evolve



Hide-and-go-peek with big guns

Turtle Rock's *Evolve* is finally gaining ground now that all that business with THQ's closure is behind it. 2K swooped in to pick up the project last year and it's nearly ready for public consumption. We had a chance to play a couple of rounds of the game, once as a hunter and once as a monster, so we thought it'd be fun to give you a quick hands-on impression of the game as it currently stands. Next month we'll bring you more coverage once we've dug even deeper into this very interesting title.

HUNTER

I chose the Support class – a chap named Hank who sports a big old beard and some neat equipment. His main weapon is a laser cutter, good for doing moderate damage at medium range. He also has a shield gun which functions very-much like the Medi Gun from *Team Fortress 2*, a time-delayed orbital barrage, and a cloaking device for himself and nearby allies.

The game starts; we're in some sort of aerial transport, looking out onto the jungle beneath us. We've been told that the monster has already started – it gets a 30 second head-start. We drop in and immediately spot some glowing footprints: the monster's tracks. It moves fast, but we have jet packs to allow us to dash, double jump, glide and scale vertical heights in short bursts. The jetpacks feel inadequate as a means of catching up to the monster; we need to outsmart it, think where it's going to be instead of simply following it.

Too late: we get a notification that it's evolved to level 2. It's now stronger, faster, and more capable. In short, we're on a level playing field now.

We spot the monster leaving the evolution nest it made for itself behind a waterfall. It bolts; we fire everything we've got. Our medic fires a tranquiliser dart into its back, causing it to slow down. We deplete its shields but with all our focus on the enemy



“I'm not paying attention to my jetpack metre; it's run out and my mobility falters. Need to wait for it to recharge, but every second the monster is out there, it's feeding; it could reach level 3 at any time.”

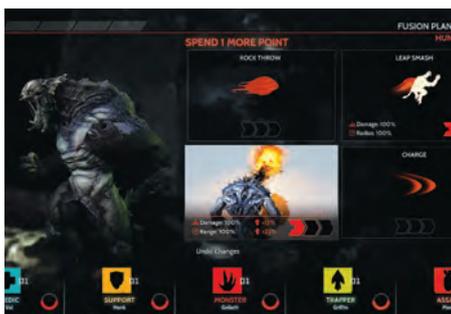
I'm not paying attention to my jetpack metre; it's run out and my mobility falters. Need to wait for it to recharge, but every second the monster is out there, it's feeding; it could reach level 3 at any time.

Eventually we find it, and it's evolved. Our trapper throws out an Arena, which deploys a dome shield around the area, trapping the monster. I pop the cloaking device to give us a few precious seconds of advantage. Our Assault goes in to do maximum damage while the Medic and I buff him with our ranged support guns. I get to the high ground; the range of the shield gun is impressive. Assault and Trapper have been bringing down the monster's health substantially, but it's turned its attention to the medic now. It knocks her out in a few swipes. Desperate to finish the job, the monster goes in and starts massaging her unconscious body in the attempt to kill her off for a few minutes. I take the opportunity to drop an orbital bombardment on its head, causing it to desperately slink away with just a few hit points remaining. Less than a minute later and we get a notification that we've won the round: the monster ran into one of the most deadly neutral creatures on the map, which promptly killed it.

• We've been told there are more monster types set for the game's launch. The one we played as is considered an all-rounder, "Godzilla"-type creature.



RELEASE DATE / Q4 2014
 PLATFORM / PC / PS4 / XBO
 GENRE / First-person shooter
 DEVELOPER / Turtle Rock Studios
 PUBLISHER / 2K Games
 WEBSITE / www.evolvegame.com



HUNTED

I spawn in the middle of the jungle. The 2K PR person on my headset tells me to run. I run! There's an old factory-like building in the middle of the map that I make a bee-line for. I don't leave footprints on surfaces like metal or water – the factory has an underground waterway inside that gives me the perfect opportunity to shake my tailing hunters, which have now touched down. I kill and consume some of the lower-level animals wandering the map to gain enough points to evolve. Now to find a decent place to do so.

I run for the same waterfall that the monster in the previous round used as a place to evolve, but the hunters are right there! I panic; they're nearby but they haven't spotted me yet, so I duck behind a rock tower and wait for what feels like an eternity. I can see them flying around, looking for me, but my tracks must've confused them and eventually they take their search elsewhere. I take the very brief opportunity to evolve to level 2, which gives me the ability to upgrade some of my attacks (like fire-breathing, leaping and hurling giant boulders) to do more damage.

My increased size gives me the confidence to take on higher-level wildlife, with varying degrees of success. Eventually the hunters

catch up to me and we tussle. I manage to take out their Medic and Support by flinging boulders to scatter their group. With just two of them left, they decide to gather at the starting location and wait for the other two to respawn. I use my bought time to devour some more wildlife and evolve to level 3. I'm now very powerful; it'll take a concerted effort to bring me down.

At level 3, I can now attempt to destroy a generator inside the factory to win the round. I head there, but the hunters are waiting for me. Multiple floors on the factory interior gives the hunters a tactical advantage, but my boulder throw is maxed out and insta-kills on a direct hit. They don't stand a chance: I leap, swipe, spew flames and hurl rocks in a flurry of key presses. Two of them down again; I start hammering at the generator. They fire at me which stops my destruction progress, so I turn around and swat the source of irritation with a boulder. The next couple of minutes is spent alternating between taking quick swipes at the generator and fending off the hunters, but it's too much for them and, in the end, I destroy the machine and am declared winner of the round. **NAG**

-GeometriX



• Both the hunters and the monster can gain unique abilities during each round by killing and feeding upon specific neutral creatures in the area. These creatures are particularly tough to bring down, though, so it's important to choose the right time to make your move.

Carmageddon Reincarnation

The classic carapocalypse returns

There was a specific mission objective in *Carmageddon II* that always stuck with me. Even though the main goal in *Carmageddon* has always been to win the race (by any means), later games in the series added fun side-missions you could attempt. In this case, the objective was to dispatch a single pedestrian, perched high atop a thin pole. No matter what I did, I couldn't get my car up there to drive over them, even when using the more exotic power-ups like wall

“Carmageddon basically invented the whole concept of video game physics and real-time damaging of cars and the scenery.”

- **Stainless Games**



climber. And yet the solution was there all along, something I didn't think to use in a game that rewards you for driving over people. Once I figured it out, I couldn't stop laughing. Using speed, and some tricky steering, you had to drive your car up the pole as far as you can. Right before you reach the pedestrian and start sliding back down: honk your horn. They get scared and jump to their death.

The last *Carmageddon* was *Carmageddon TDR 2000* released in, appropriately enough, the year 2000. There were plans to release a *Carmageddon 4* in 2005 but the project was scrapped. In 2011, Stainless Games got back the rights to *Carmageddon* from Square Enix. In 2012 they held a successful Kickstarter to raise \$400,000 to develop a sequel. It's now two years



Stainless Games developed both the original *Carmageddon* (1997) and its sequel *Carmageddon II: Carpalypse Now* (1998).



RELEASE DATE / TBA 2014
 PLATFORM / PC / PS4 / XBO
 GENRE / Vehicular combat / racing
 DEVELOPER / Stainless Games
 PUBLISHER / Stainless Games
 WEBSITE / www.carmageddon.com/reincarnation



Carmageddon was inspired by the 1975 cult action film *Death Race 2,000*, which is in turn based on the short story *The Racer*.

later and *Carmageddon: Reincarnation* is available as an Early Access title on Steam. It's very much a pre-alpha, is unoptimised, lacking content, and has plenty of bugs. Currently there are four levels (three with one race route and one with two routes), 11 cars, and plenty of pedestrian types to run over, like nuns, grannies, cows and “the calorifically challenged”. A handful of wacky power-ups are in, many of them classics like the Electro Bastard Ray, Afterburner, Ped Detonator and Solid Granite Car.

Even this early in, *Reincarnation* is staying true to the original series' warped humour and unique free-form racing. The jokes are crass (the highest difficulty level is called “harder than rimming a rhino”), running over people dismembers them, leaving smears of blood from your tyre. You get the idea. Vehicle physics and deformation is looking solid (if a bit floaty). You can still shear a car in half if you hit it right, which is incredibly satisfying.

The final game will have a single-player career mode (which brings back the crazy opponent characters from previous games), full online and offline multiplayer, leaderboards, challenges, Easter eggs, and allow for full modification of the game like adding new maps, cars and game modes. If Stainless can get the game running at a decent framerate and deliver on their promises, *Carmageddon* might just crash back into the spotlight. **NAG**

- **Miktar**

Fortnite

Funky free-to-play fort-building survival sandbox

Founded in 1991, Potomac Computer Systems (now known as Epic Games) has a really colourful history when it comes to the types of games they've made. Cartoonish platformers like *Jill of the Jungle* and *Jazz Jackrabbit*, pinball games, the fighting game *One Must Fall: 2097*, and of course *Unreal* and *Unreal Tournament*. In 2006 Epic released *Gears of War*. Ever since, the studio has been very focused on "gritty" games with a rather narrow colour palette. And it seems even they're tired of it.

"We had just come off *Gears* and wanted to do something new," says producer Roger Collum. "The original conception for *Fortnite* was a very serious, dark game, and some of

"We had just come off *Gears* and wanted to do something new."

- Roger Collum, producer on *Fortnite*

our original concept art was very evil. Then we started thinking we could do so much more, we could have so many different kinds of enemies if we kind of stylised this game. That was a pretty big departure for Epic. It required changing some hearts and minds at first, because not necessarily everyone was on board, but the whole company is a believer now."

The core premise of *Fortnite* is that of a cooperative sandbox with survival elements. During the day you harvest materials and build structures. At night, waves of monsters arrive to take you (and your structures) down. There's no real story to the game, other than mysterious storms that spawn the monsters via lightning strikes. Up to four players explore the procedurally generated environment using an over-the-shoulder perspective. You can find schematics that let you build better tools or weapons, provided



It's unlikely that *Fortnite* will have an offline or LAN mode, but Epic hasn't confirmed this yet.

RELEASE DATE / 2014

PLATFORM / PC

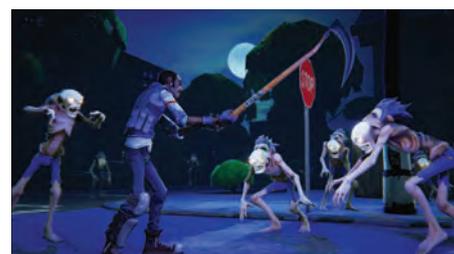
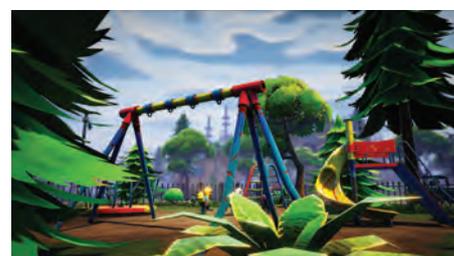
GENRE / Survival sandbox

DEVELOPER / Epic Games / Epic Games Poland

PUBLISHER / Epic Games

WEBSITE / www.fortnite.com

No details yet as to how *Fortnite* will support itself, being free to play. Probably vanity items.



you have the resources. When you start the campaign, you set the length (10, 20 or 50 hours), and a world map is randomly created, each stage represented by a hexagonal tile that shows the biome style, like city, forest, mountains or suburb.

Building a structure is simple: you slap down a 3x3 "wall" or floor and then punch holes in it to define what it is. Knock a hole in the middle of the grid and it becomes a window. Cut it down to leave only the bottom row, and it's a waist-high wall. This lets you create structures very quickly and efficiently. You can add things to the structure, like traps, landmines, spikes or turrets. The AI director will spawn enemies that can crash through your walls, climb them, or will try to attack you from a distance.

There will be four classes at launch: Constructor, Ninja, Commando and Scavenger. Each has their own special abilities, and you can customise your gender, look, and which skills you unlock as you level. There will be some mission variety, like escort maps, and players can take part in more than one campaign at a time. **NAG**

- Miktar

Stronghold Crusader 2

Be the king of your castle

It's been 12 years since *Stronghold: Crusader* (2002), a successor and spin-off from the original castle-building and real-time strategy blend *Stronghold* (2001). Where the original *Stronghold* was set in a sort-of medieval-period Europe, the *Crusader* series took it to the Middle East during the time of the Crusades. The franchise has had quite a few spinoffs and sequels. There was a fantasy-themed spin-off called *Stronghold Legends* (2006), and a free-to-play massively multiplayer interpretation called *Stronghold Kingdoms* (2012).

According to Firefly Studios, the *Crusader* series always remained their favourite. So for the last two years they've been working on a self-funded, and soon to be self-published, sequel that brings back the old-school real-time strategy the series became known for.

Being a blend of two genres – strategy and management – there's a lot going on when playing a match in *Stronghold Crusader 2*. Be it against an AI opponent, a human opponent, or in one of the campaign missions, the player has to manage both a castle economy and military force. If the castle population is mismanaged, the output needed to construct and maintain an army falters and you fall prey to a better managed economy.

There are 25 unique unit types in *Crusader 2*, including slave drivers that function as both unit "motivation" and melee attackers, as well as assassins that can scale walls and cause havoc with the farming population. The game uses an entirely new 3D engine with real-time physics: when siege weaponry attacks the walls of a castle, individual bricks shatter all over the place. A new battle interface



There was a *Stronghold* game for the Atari 2600 published in 1983. It is unrelated to this series.



RELEASE DATE / TBA 2014

PLATFORM / PC

GENRE / Real-time strategy

DEVELOPER // Firefly Studios

PUBLISHER / Firefly Studios

WEBSITE / www.strongholdcrusader2.com



Composer Robert Euvino, who worked on the previous games, will compose the soundtrack once more.



aims to help you manage your troops more easily compared to previous entries. The single-player campaign lets you play as either Richard the Lionheart on the Crusader side, or as the Sultan of Syria on the Arabic side. Both campaigns are loosely based on historical events, but also include dynamic events like tornadoes and locust swarms.

There will be a skirmish mode for fighting against an AI opponent, up to 8-player multiplayer (LAN play not confirmed) with any combination of human or AI players, as well as a cooperative mode where you share building, troop and resource control with another player. Custom-designed AI Lords provide a "challenge mode" of sorts, where you fight opponents that have distinct personalities, certain ways they like to build their castles, and unique styles of play that will test your abilities. And of course, a fully-featured map editor will allow players to design their own missions and maps for multiplayer. Unlike what happened with *Stronghold 3* however, Firefly Studios indicates they won't release *Crusader 2* until it's as bug-free as can be. **NAG**

-Miktar



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Alex Roth, PC Gamer, September 2013

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DESTINY

BUNGIE TAKES US ON A JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE

RELEASE DATE / 9 September 2014

PLATFORM / 360 / PS3 / PS4 / XBO

GENRE / Massively multiplayer online role-playing first-person shooter

DEVELOPER / Bungie

PUBLISHER / Activision

WEBSITE / www.destinythegame.com





“Legends say the Traveller sacrificed itself to save us. The mysterious sphere still hangs where it made its last stand, low above the Earth, keeping silent watch.”

Yet another post-apocalyptic game is set to hit the store shelves this year, joining the plethora of other titles that feature a similar theme. But what is it that sets *Destiny* apart from an over-abundance of video games dealing with the world gone to hell? Bungie calls it “mythic science fiction”, a transplant of fantasy into a post-apocalyptic, futuristic setting.

The story goes, after a prosperous “Golden Age”, brought about by the visitation of a moon-sized sphere called the Traveller, in which mankind is at peace and advanced to a technological level undreamed of in our time, we suffer through the Collapse, our colonies on other planets mysteriously wiped out. Humankind is on the edge of extinction, besieged by the Traveller’s ancient enemy – a darkness that sought it out and found Earth. Just as everything appeared to be lost, the Traveller sacrificed itself for us, and humanity was saved. Now the Traveller hovers over the last human city on Earth, and the Guardians, defenders of mankind, are granted special powers in order to fulfil their duties, turn back the darkness and ensure the survival of the human race.

The world of *Destiny* is larger than anything ever created by Bungie. Although Bungie are best known for the *Halo* series (and you will certainly see elements of the first person shooter genre here), *Destiny* is a genre-bending game of epic proportions. Although at its heart an action game, *Destiny* combines elements of the first-person shooter with role-playing-style skill trees and customisation, as well as massively multiplayer online elements. It’s hardly the first game to attempt this combination, but the real question is whether or not it will do so successfully.

Of course I had seen the gameplay videos, we all have. I’d read the press releases, I knew pretty much everything there was to know about the development of the game, but this was very different to exploring the world with a team of people. I’m always sceptical of games that try to fuse too many genres into each other, and this seemed like an ambitious project, albeit a visually gorgeous one, even from the calibre of a studio such as Bungie.

First off, this game looks incredible. The draw distance is astounding – you can see far off vistas with no effort as the engine effortlessly holds together the real-time atmospheric and lighting effects. There is a definite sense that the entire world has been carefully crafted to offer the player the best visual experience possible, a world filled with complexity – danger,

hope, sadness, excitement – all rolled into one.

In the final game you will of course be able to play solo – there is an entire single-player campaign that explores a complex narrative and carefully crafted story. This is not your average first person shooter. For our hands-on experience, however, we were thrown into a three-player Strike mode – a short mission-based mode where a team of three players must complete a specific objective.

Although it makes sense considering that each character class plays to a different set of strengths, you're not required to have one of every class in your party, that's completely up to you, but the real emphasis is on cooperation. Not "every man for himself even though we're all playing in the same team", but real cooperation. The way you'll get through these levels is by supporting your fellow players, fusing into a team, working together, helping each other.

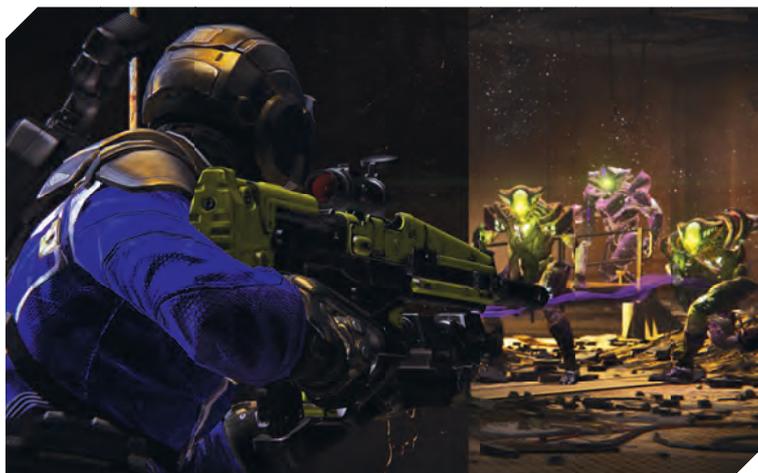
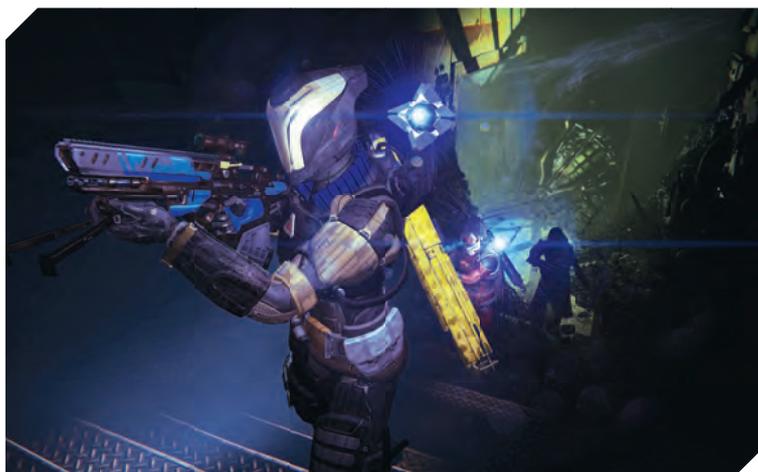
You play as one of three different races – Human, Awoken or Exo. You can then choose from three character classes – Titan, Hunter or Warlock. The good news is that if you're so inclined, your character is persistent, and can be used in every mode of play, so you aren't restricted to a specific type or level of character when playing in co-op versus solo mode for example.

Each character class of course has its own set of strengths. The Titans are the heavy hitters, specialising in weaponry and armour. They are the most heavily armoured of all the classes, and are reminiscent of the classic "future soldier" that many of us associate with futuristic shooters.

Hunters are the RPG Rogues of this world. They are primarily distinguished by light armour, cloaks and a stealthy use of weapons such as a knife in addition to a variety of guns.

The Warlock is the magic user of the bunch, but don't think that they can't make good use of their weapons as well. They combine the use of different magic spells (defined by the selection of a focus in the skill tree), with weapons, the fusion of which make a deadly combination.

After our third play-through, each time playing as a different class, it became abundantly clear that we were becoming better at working together, feeling out the other players' strengths, supporting against enemies where needed. What made it even more exciting was that the level changed somewhat every time we played. Things spawned in different places, enemies behaved differently, and each play-through was a different enough experience to feel unique and exciting.





The world of *Destiny* is larger than anything ever created by Bungie.

DESIGN/CONCEPT ART

The visual theme of *Destiny* is described by Bungie as “mythic science fiction” or even “space opera”. There are both obvious and subtle elements evident in each environment that reinforce the theme, for example a colony ship in the background that speaks to the Traveller based story elements. The artists had to work to evolve these elements throughout the design of the game, as things that worked well in the concept art stage, didn’t always translate well in certain scenarios.

The visual style is not constrained by real world scenarios and ultimately came down to what was going to look the coolest and feel the best, and realism could be both a hindrance and an aid. The result is a mixture of both. Visually the game is inspired by ‘70s sci-fi art, and it has a vintage feel to it, with faded colours dominating although there are also vibrant colours used. There is a definite colour palette, and the artists had to know when to stick to it, and when to deviate from it when necessary.

SKILL TREES

You can explore multiple skill trees at once – Bungie didn’t want you to feel as if you had made a “wrong” choice and were now stuck with it. Conversely when it comes to character customisation you don’t have to continually change if you feel you’re committed to a specific path. There is a point where you can lock off your character and only explore a specific path, but you will always have the option to roll back to an unlocked character in case you change your mind.



Your teammates must revive you when you've fallen, and the match won't end if there is still a single player left alive. This means that if you're the last person standing, in order to revive your fallen comrades you must sometimes brave a barrage of enemies firing on you as you attempt to make your way to their location. Although no indication has been given as yet as to how revival works in solo mode, in cooperative modes a ghost sphere will mark the location of your fallen teammate.

The combat is fast and dynamic, the kind that dries out your eyeballs as you focus intently on the screen during a particularly hectic battle. The weapons are responsive, and each has its own distinct set of strengths, much like the characters themselves. Super moves charge up while you play, enabling you to inflict devastating damage on enemies at crucial points in time. Combine this with a good team, and you have the makings of a dynamic, exciting and addictive game that bears all the hallmarks of the Bungie signature.

Another great feature is the personalised loot system. Even if there are characters of different levels playing, loot will always be personalised to your character. If your teammates are level 8 and you're level 12, no matter who opened the chest, you should *always* investigate, as there might be something specific to your level and character class awaiting you that they simply will not be able to see.

Even at this early pre-alpha stage, there is no doubt that *Destiny* is set to be an impressive game, both visually and technically. Although we were warned in advance about both visual and technical glitches, the levels we were showed and played through had few enough of these to be worthy of mention, and the level of polish on the finished product is likely to be of an extremely high standard.

WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

You can carry three different types of weapons – primary, heavy and special, all of which obviously fulfil different functions. If you're not happy with the weapons you chose in your original loadout, you can change them dynamically within the round, but beware, because you will suffer a penalty, such as loss of ammo. Each weapon is also completely customisable, upgrading according to accuracy, handling or special upgrades such as incendiary rounds for example. Armour is also completely customisable, and in fact is distinguished by the ways in which the player levels up. Even high level players will probably not end up looking the same in terms of armour, because diversity is key to the design and consequently this is dependent on the way the player levels up.





The Titans are the heavy hitters, specialising in weaponry and armour. They are the most heavily armoured of all the classes, and are reminiscent of the classic “future soldier” that many of us associate with futuristic shooters.



CHARACTERS

There are three character classes in *Destiny*: Titan, Hunter and Warlock, which if you're an RPG player, equate roughly to Warrior, Rogue and Magician. The Titan is the heavy hitter, the Hunter is quick and stealthy, and the Warlock can combine the use of magic and weapons. You can choose how you want to level up your character, no matter which class you choose. In terms of visually distinguishing between each class, the team were confident about the different archetypes they wanted to represent, and the essence of each character class is captured by a symbol or silhouette that represents them. The design of each character class always came back to that silhouette.

INTERVIEW

with Brandi House, workflow engineer



NAG: So what is a “workflow engineer”?

Brandi House: It’s a call that we made at Bungie as the team began to grow, and we really needed some people who were able to understand the artists and creative people, and what their needs were. We would translate that back to engineering requirements and work with the team to figure out what we could build and when we needed to build it by, what was feasible and make sure they had a good understanding of what was actually required. We’ve now got over five hundred people.

NAG: That’s a big team to manage! What are the different aspects of the workflow that you’re in charge of?

Brandi: It is. It’s primarily the content creation workflow so I work with our world artists, our designers, our effects artists, our audio teams, our UI teams and just generally try to understand what does it take to accomplish their job, and what are the pieces that make their job really miserable, something that’s really slow, really frustrating, some piece that they have to work around because there’s always something, I’m never worried we’ll run out (laughs)! And then just try to find the biggest ones of those and go try to tackle them and see what we can do to solve it.

NAG: What has the experience been like working on *Destiny*? It’s a much more ambitious project than something like *Halo*.

Brandi: It can be overwhelming! Just the amount of stuff that we have to keep track of. It’s really exciting to see everything that we do. I’m continually impressed, getting to walk around the open floor studio and see all the gorgeous things people are doing and to play all the cool new activities that come online,

but at the same time understanding that there’s this new system that just came out and these four other teams need to know about it, and this team doesn’t have the technology to do what they need to do with it.

NAG: Did you work on *Halo* as well?

Brandi: No. I’ve been here three years, so pretty much as the entire team that worked on *Halo* moved over to work on *Destiny*. I got here before there was anything to play [on *Destiny*], the engine was still being built, people were throwing stuff out on paper, coming up with ideas, before the game even remotely existed, so it’s been really cool to watch it grow from nothing to the gorgeous experience that it is now.

NAG: Do you feel that there are certain workflow procedures that have been carried over from *Halo* to *Destiny*? Is this something that needed to be started from scratch?

Brandi: I think a lot of it stems from the fact that we wanted a new toolset that was more powerful to match the new engine that we were building, so we really didn’t save a whole lot of what we did from *Halo*. There are a few people who are still using tools and pipelines that are similar to those used on *Halo*, but almost every team has had a significant upgrade. We wanted to make our tools more powerful and able to account for the new complexity of the engine and the new flexibility that the engine opens up.

NAG: Do you think people will recognise this as a quintessentially Bungie game?

Brandi: *Halo* has been ten years of our past so it’s what many people know and recognise. A lot of times when we talk to people they do say it feels like Bungie but it also feels new,

it’s not *Halo*, but it feels right, and I like that. I like that it has some of the pieces people have come to love about Bungie, the really tight gameplay, the awesome first-person shooter action, and that there are elements that they still recognise and came to love in the past and they can still expect some of that here, but in a different world with new elements and new things to try.

NAG: How would you describe *Destiny* to the uninitiated, someone who has no concept of the game?

Brandi: It’s definitely at its core a great first-person shooter but beyond that it’s incorporating aspects of other genres that we find really exciting. The character that you get to create and build over time, the more social and cooperative aspects that other games have had, and doing something cooperative that’s actually fun and is part of the experience too.

NAG: So what do you think will set *Destiny* apart from other games that have attempted to do the same thing in the past in terms of crossover genres?

Brandi: I think we really wanted to stick close to that visceral reaction to the genre of the first person shooter, but then just make it more exciting and have these other pieces that are there to enhance but not necessarily be so much of a distraction that it feels as if it’s a completely different genre.

NAG: What do you think the public reaction is going to be? What do you think ultimately will make people come back and carry on playing?

Brandi: My feeling is that there have been so many shooters for so long that have started to become very formulaic... *Destiny* looks different to other shooters. It’s the variety of experiences you can have, in addition to the really awesome type of gameplay that people have come to love here... but the gameplay is not what you’ve come to expect, so the fact that you can have that as well as being able to go on patrols and explore a great space or go on a strike with a few people and have this great little thirty minute action-packed adventure or get your character all beefed up and go do a raid... or go compete, go do your competitive multiplayer... whatever you want to do that day, you can do it, and you can go to a different world to do it, because there’s Mars or Venus, there’s so much that you can change it up any time you want to. I think that’s the piece that really sets it apart, is that you finally have just whatever you feel like at your fingertips. **NAG**

- **UnexpectedPippa**

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Reviews *Intro*

If life is like a box of chocolates, the NAG review team is like the leftover Quality Streets at the end of a long Sunday lunch. But, just like those weird nutty toffee things, we love 'em anyway. Meet your reviewers...

Question /

If you could hand over control of any game development studio to any particular person in the games industry, which person and which studio would you choose, and why?



BEN "BENSONANCE" MYRES
Jenova Chen running Sledgehammer games just to see whether he could make the *Saving Private Ryan*/*Apocalypse Now* of video games.

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Risk of Rain, Ludum Dare 29 games, *Don't Starve*, *Nuclear Throne*



DANE "BARKSKIN" REMENDES
Assign Peter Molyneux as head of one or all of the seven hundred *Call of Duty* dev studios. Because wild, unbridled, utterly impossible semi-ambition at the helm of one of the most stale franchises in gaming.

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Rayman Origins, *Antichamber*, *Dark Souls: The First*



DELANO "DELANO" CUZZUCOLI
I'd have Gabe Newell running Nintendo. 'cuz y'know: Mario, *Pokémon* and *Zelda* on Steam. And Steam handhelds. And then Gabe's world domination plans will be complete (cue evil laughter).

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Starbound, *Defense Grid: The Awakening* and *Alien Rage – Unlimited*



GEOFF "GEOMETRIX" BURROWS
Phil Fish to run Rovio or Zynga, just to see how long it'll take before he goes postal.

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Jet Lag Recovery Simulator 2014



MATT "SAND_STORM" FICK
No particular person, but I would give everything ever made by Quantic Dream to Telltale Games. Quantic has great ideas, but Telltale could do those ideas better justice.

CURRENTLY PLAYING
University Student Simulator: June Exam DLC

mini review

Daylight

daylight is, in essence, an attempt to grab the attention of the *Slender*-loving crowd. Its hook lies in the fact that its levels are randomly generated at the start of each new game, which in theory means that you could repeatedly play it and have a uniquely horrifying experience each time. Sadly, holes in the design of the actual game buried beneath this novelty inevitably peer through, quickly revealing the experience to be nothing more than a hollow item-hunt with scare tactics that eventually become disappointingly predictable.

In each area, you're searching for a set number of "remnants" – story fragments that slowly unravel the game's uninspired narrative. Each remnant you collect increases your threat level. The higher your threat level, the more likely it is that ghostly



enemies will appear to frighten the bodily fluids out of you. Once you've collected all the remnants from within each area, you're forced to make a hasty dash for the exit while being hounded by nasty spirits – but the catch is that, while you can normally dispatch of foes using flares, during these mad scrambles you're unable to use flares at all. These are some of the



most successfully terrifying moments in the game, but even they gradually wear thin.

It doesn't help that the game performs absolutely terribly, even on a fairly powerful PC, and numerous bugs breed frustration. Ultimately, *Daylight* is an intriguing idea that's fallen dreadfully flat. **NAG**

- Barkskin

54

Daylight is great in theory, but not much good at execution. Its randomly generated atmosphere is undoubtedly effective at keeping you on edge, and it managed to make me jump enough times to make it embarrassing.

HEARD IN THE NAG OFFICE...

“God, these peons...” - Michael



MICHAEL “RETTIDE” JAMES
Myself to run Electronic Arts, so I could liberate all the old Bullfrog licenses and do me some proper sequels – looking at you *Dungeon Keeper*.

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Diablo III, Battlefield 4



MIKLOS “MIKITO707” SZECSEI
Tim Schafer and Ron Gilbert to take over Disney, so that we can get more *Monkey Island* point-and-clicker adventures. While they're at it they can make a new Indiana Jones P-n-C too.

CURRENTLY PLAYING
The Elder Scrolls Online, Hearthstone, Diablo III



MIKTAR “MIKTAR” DRACON
I'd make Hideki Kamiya an industry consultant so that every game developer can benefit from someone who knows how to actually design games.

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Mario Golf: World Tour, Luftrausers, Guild Wars 2, Shadowrun Returns



NEO “SHOCKG” SIBEKO
Gabe Newell to run EA or Ubisoft or both. So we can be rid of EA's Origin. Uplay should also vanish into thin air.

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Not much, apparently



TARRYN “AZIMUTH” VAN DER BYL
I'd choose me to take over Epic Games and make sure all the character models in the new *Unreal Tournament* have “HUG ME” stickers on them. And ponies.

CURRENTLY PLAYING
UT2004

▶ *mini review*

Octodad: Deadliest Catch

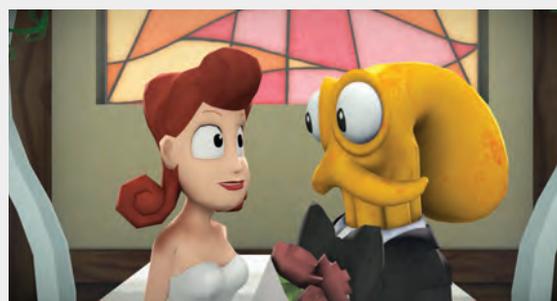
you're an octopus, but you're also married to a human and have two human children; the developers slept during high school biology. Now you do all sorts of mundane tasks while trying to protect your identity – nobody (not even your family) knows you're an octopus.

Imagine the most infuriating moment from any game; multiply that by, I don't know, a billion, and you'll arrive at an estimation of just how riling *Octodad: Deadliest Catch* can be. I say “can be” because there are moments when it's rather charming. Octodad himself is inexplicably endearing even if controlling him feels like trying to wrestle a greased-up contortionist who is hyped on a cocktail of uppers and Red Bull. Octodad is wrigglier than a bag of pissed off wet cats, and controlling

him seesaws between satisfying when you get it right, and heart-palpitation-inducing the rest of the time.

The developers have gone out of their way to ensure the control scheme is ridiculous and the gameplay scenarios even more so in an attempt to create humour. If slap-stick humour is your kind of thing then you'll likely giggle for the first five minutes before the controls and fixed cameras break your spirit and you're left scowling at your TV, hating yourself for even attempting to continue playing. **NAG**

- Mikito707



55

If this game was free, then I'd recommend giving it a go just for the laughs, but it isn't free, so avoid unless you're a sucker for punishment.

PLATFORMS / 360 / PS3	REVIEWED ON / 360	GENRE / Sports	DEVELOPER / EA Canada
AGE RATING / 3	MULTIPLAYER / Local > 4 players Online > 2 players	PUBLISHER / Electronic Arts	
WEBSITE / www.easports.com/2014-fifa-world-cup			DISTRIBUTOR / Apex Interactive

2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil

A faster, more fun kick about

The idea of a FIFA World Cup tie-in game *sounds* like a cheap way for EA to cash in, but surprisingly this game is worth your time.

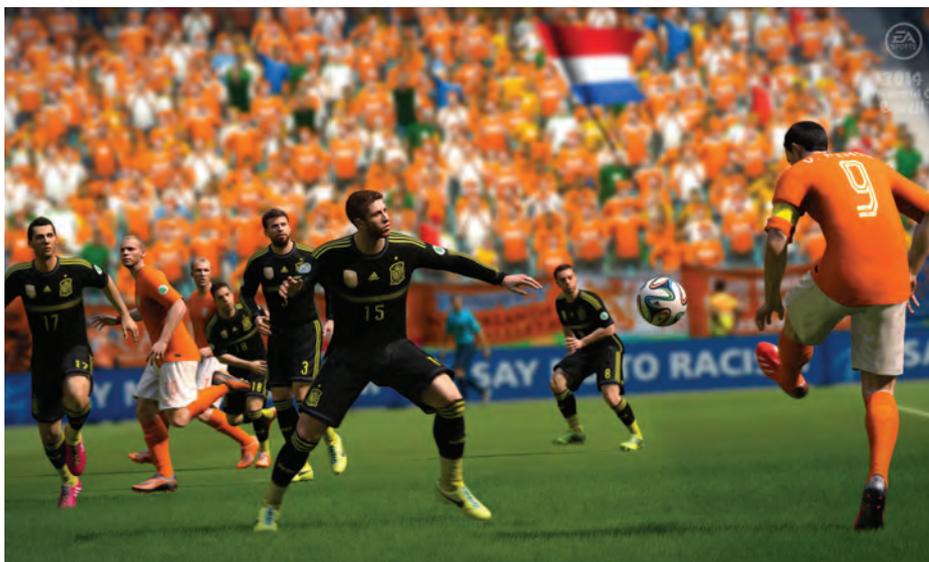
The most obvious change from *FIFA 14* is how fast and responsive the game now feels. The physics system has been tweaked to an even higher standard and – in combination with a multitude of new animations – you'll be hard pressed to find a blend of movement and action that don't transition perfectly into each other.

2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil also feels more fun. The game moves a lot faster and much of the gameplay has been tweaked to be less about simulating a real soccer game, and more about emphasising player enjoyment. Initially, this is at the compromise of the through ball

and cross being more difficult to pull off, but you will find yourself adapting.

Despite the highly entertaining core, it is the management modes that are the stars of this game. This year's edition newly brings forth the opportunity to nurture your team right from qualifications. Depending how players perform, they'll either decrease or increase in form, thus boosting or detracting from their overall player score. Between each match, you'll have training sessions where those training drill loading screens are finally put to good use.

Depending how well you perform the drill, your players will receive a boost in that skill and thus an overall form increase. This sounds banal, but the drills are excellently designed and quite entertaining. You'll even



find yourself getting better at the game itself having done some of the drills.

To add to these modes, the excellent Captain your Country, Online FIFA World Cup, Story of Qualifying, and Story of the Finals modes all make their return from previous world cup soccer editions.

In addition to the manager modes, there is also a collection of match scenarios you can play through. Currently, this involves only scenarios that happened during the qualifiers, but this mode will eventually include scenarios from the upcoming world cup matches. EA also claim that during the world cup, the performances of the real life players will affect the virtual form of your players. This means you can play a world cup campaign affected by how your real-life favourites are playing.

There is also the worthwhile introduction of EA Talk Radio, which is a pair of recorded radio shows where a duo discuss, banter and argue about all things football. You will really appreciate their cheeky arguments during the time you inevitably have to spend in menus during a drawn out career campaign, and luckily the length of these shows goes into the tens of hours. **NAG**

- *Bensonance*

RIGHT / Captain your Country mode is particularly fun when you're competing locally with three friends.



79 *2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil is a fast paced, arcade version of its bigger brother with a great campaign mode and plenty of neat touches to help build your excitement for the world cup.*

PLUS / More fun and responsive / Great campaign mode / EA Talk Radio is a great listen

MINUS / Slightly overpriced / Crossing and through balls too sensitive

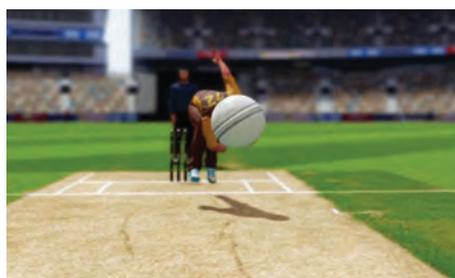
PLATFORMS / 360 / PS3 / PC	REVIEWED ON / 360	GENRE / Sports / simulation	DEVELOPER / Big Ant Studios
AGE RATING / 3	MULTIPLAYER / Local > 2 players Online > 2 players	PUBLISHER / Tru Blu Games	
WEBSITE / www.bigant.com			DISTRIBUTOR / Megarom

Don Bradman Cricket 14

One ball and two stumps short of a good time

The illustrious history of cricket games is about as long as a fast bowler's batting time. *Don Bradman Cricket 14* does an adequate job of halting this trend, but often slips up in such dramatic fashion that it is difficult to stay engaged. It is really a game for the die hardest of cricket fans and it is pretty honest about that. While it is good fun at times, the learning curve is exceedingly steep and the controls grossly complex. The game really shines in its bowling though, which is both simple and engaging – a combination that is rare in this game. Trying to mix up your bowling deliveries in pitch, angle, and speed to outwit the computer or a fellow player is a real challenge.

Being on the facing end of deliveries isn't quite so enjoyable, though. For a game that boasts "intuitive controls", its batting mechanics are quite the opposite. You use the right analogue to direct which



Objects on the pitch are closer than they appear. Either that or you're doing this batting thing wrong.



side of the wicket you would like the ball to move toward, while the left analogue stick shuffles your feet to help line up that perfect shot. It sounds simple, but you'll need the reflexes of a professional cricketer to react in time to the oncoming red blur. The intense reaction times required are compounded in difficulty by the several other controls that affect the aggression of your shots. That there is also no tutorial to teach you the nuances of this system is no help either. Most balls you face will have you gripping all over the controller just in an attempt to hit the ball, and it'll take you a while to do just that without giving a fielder an easy catch or being bowled out.

Unfortunately, it is just as you get to grips with the bowling and batting that the cracks in *Don Bradman Cricket's* armour really start to show. Once you are hitting runs and taking wickets, the fielding becomes increasingly frustrating. It is rare to see a fielder not get a direct hit, even from a throw off the boundary. Batsmen do weird, glitchy tap dances on their creases that often result in them being stumped. The camera reorientation after a ball is

hit is also clumsy enough to make running before the ball hits the boundary a real risk. I've been run out after diving to safety, only to have my batsman stand up outside the crease and be given out.

Looking past the quirks, T5, T10, T20, test match, three-day, five-day, tours, competitions, and a reasonably interesting career mode will give you plenty of options to keep your inner cricketer sated for a long while. **NAG**

- **Bensonance**

66 *Don Bradman Cricket 14* requires as much time to understand as it does to become a reasonable cricket player in real life. If you slog through the learning phase and can handle frustratingly timed glitches, then it is a joy to play.

PLUS / Deep complex system / Enjoyable multiplayer

MINUS / Steep learning curve / Glitchy fielding

PLATFORMS / PC / iOS	REVIEWED ON / PC & iPad	GENRE / Digital collectible card game	DEVELOPER / Blizzard Entertainment
AGE RATING / 7	MULTIPLAYER / Local > None Online > Two	PUBLISHER / Blizzard Entertainment	
WEBSITE / www.battle.net/hearthstone			DISTRIBUTOR / Battle.net / App Store



Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft

When did Walter White start designing for Blizzard?

When I first started playing the *Hearthstone* beta in October 2013, I called the game “crystal meth” on NAG Online. It’s still crystal meth, and I’ve been using for over six months now. If I want to keep the drug-addled analogy going, then by meth-head standards I should be face down in a gutter, drowning in my own vomit and devoid of any intention to kick the habit.

Hearthstone, if you don’t know by now, is a collectible card game of the most frighteningly addictive variety. It also really is free-to-play; as in you could play this game forever without spending a cent. Of course, that didn’t stop me from spending nearly R800 in six months, but that’s beside the point. I didn’t *have to*, I wanted to, OK? Stop judging me; I can quit whenever I like.

The gist of the game is this: you choose

one of nine heroes and construct a deck of 30 cards. Each hero has a unique ability, such as the Mage being able to cast a fireball to cause one damage. Once your deck is built, you duel an online opponent; the first to whittle the other’s hit points down to zero from 30, wins.

A big part of the game is collecting cards. When you start you will have access to a base set of neutral cards and 20 basic class-specific cards per hero that unlock as you level-up that hero. You can easily accumulate in-game gold that will allow you to purchase Expert Packs of cards. These blind packs contain five cards with at least one rare or better. Much like loot levels in RPG games, cards come in different flavours: common, rare, epic, and legendary. You can only ever use two of the same card in a deck, so if you have three of a kind you can “disenchant” one to gain “arcane dust”. That



TOP / Certain cards result in some very neat special effects. The boards are also interactive, so in typical Blizzard style you poke and prod the objects in the corners until they react.

RIGHT / Card art is incredible, and Blizzard’s artists continue to produce incredible drawings. Each card also has a humorous description, adding to the already light-hearted tone that pervades the entire game.



commodity can then be used to craft specific cards you want for your collection; so you can “collect” for a specific class build if you like.

Finally, the Arena mode requires a pay-in of about R20, or 150 gold pieces. The Arena gives you a choice of three randomly selected heroes; you then have to construct a deck on the spot using a selection of cards. You *then* take that deck online to see how many victories you can accumulate. The more you win, the bigger your prize pool, but lose three times and you’re out. Prizes include individual cards, arcane dust, gold and card packs.

Hearthstone is one of the most streamlined and, dare I say it, *perfect* gaming experiences I’ve played. Aside from its complete reliance on servers being up and accessible, there’s really very little to complain about. **NAG**

- Mikit0707

95 I’m now going to bash my head against the keyboard for the remainder of this review in order to bulk up the word count so that I can get back to *Hearthstone* as quickly as possible *pnawE MWEgWPHSH JSDVL:SD”Z <vldkrj hae rd;lbm ;z njkt qyip...*

PLUS / Fiercely addictive / Really IS free-to-play / Very well balanced / Plenty of strategy

MINUS / Fiercely addictive / What’s a “social life” / I don’t need friends anyway / I can stop if I want

PLATFORMS / PC / PS4 / XBO	REVIEWED ON / PC	GENRE / First-person shooter	DEVELOPER / Flying Wild Hog
AGE RATING / 18	MULTIPLAYER / Local > None	Online > None	PUBLISHER / Devolver Digital
WEBSITE / www.shadowwarrior.com			DISTRIBUTOR / Digital (Steam)

Shadow Warrior

Ain't no party like a Lo Wang party

The original *Shadow Warrior* (1997) was a crass and quick cash-in on the popularity of *Duke Nukem 3D* released a year earlier. What *Duke 3D*'s Duke was to casual sexism, *Shadow Warrior*'s Lo Wang was to casual racism. This reboot isn't as heavy on the corny clichés and stereotyping, but it's still able to offend the more sensitive types.

Thankfully, beneath the oriental trimmings and plot centered around themes of Eastern mysticism is a first-person shooter that excels at being what it is. Flying Wild Hog know their stuff, as was proven by their excellent yet overlooked cyberpunk shooter *Hard Reset* (2011). Unlike the recent *Rise of the Triad* and *Duke Nukem* reboots, this one nails it. It's the run-and-gun hard-boiled action '90s first-person shooter fans crave, but with modern trimmings to keep it fresh.

Using money, karma and ki crystals you find throughout levels, you can upgrade Lo Wang's guns, buy attachments, and



purchase powerful spells. The gunplay works well in conjunction with the spell system, letting you do both at once for some nice combo moves. After each fight, you get scored based on how creative you were with your bullets, katana and mystical powers. The corny plot even manages to hold it together all the way to the end. **NAG**

- Miktar



79 There's going to be no denying it: this *Shadow Warrior* reboot has a lot of juvenile humour, casual racism, and quite a lot of dumb jokes. But look past all that, and you've got a great shooter with solid gameplay.

PLUS / Great visuals / Decent plot / Lots of Easter eggs

MINUS / Dodgy checkpoint system / No multiplayer / System intensive



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The 21:9 UltraWide Professional display is designed with multitasking in mind. Connect and view two different sources at the same time with advanced Multiview technology. Images look sharper than ever in ultra-high 2560 x 1080 resolution and the IPS panel delivers distortion-free viewing from any angle. Whether you are demanding professional requiring extremely detailed information for CAD-CAM solutions, using 3D graphic applications or a financial wizard working on huge spreadsheets, Philips 298P4 displays will give you crystal clear images.

PHILIPS



PLATFORMS / 360 / PC / PS3 / PS4 / Wii U / XBO

REVIEWED ON / PS4

GENRE / Role-playing game

DEVELOPER / Ubisoft Montreal

AGE RATING / 7

MULTIPLAYER / Local > 2 Players Online > None

PUBLISHER / Ubisoft

WEBSITE / www.childoflight.ubi.com

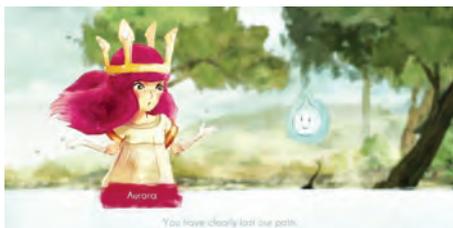
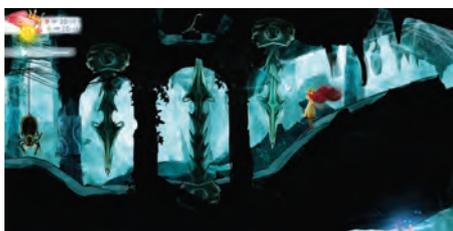
DISTRIBUTOR / Megarom

Child of Light

The UbiArt engine gets another chance to shine

Child of Light is very much a role-playing game. In fact, it's very much a Japanese role-playing game despite it being made in Canada. I generally loathe JRPGs, but *Child of Light* (much like *Ni No Kuni: Wrath of the White Witch*) is an exception.

The game focuses on a little girl called Aurora and her adventures in the fantasy land of Lemuria. Together with an eclectic array of party members, Aurora has to rescue Lemuria's sun, moon and stars in order to thwart an evil queen who has subjugated the land. It's a typical plot that allows for coming-of-age tropes and sundry positive feelings, but with all the blood, guts and war-torn themes that make up most contemporary games, *Child of Light* is refreshing and full of fairy tale whimsy.



ABOVE / Igniculus is a blue firefly companion that accompanies Aurora on her quest. He's useful for collecting health and mana globes as well as shining his light on enemies to slow their movement along the combat progress bar. A second player can control Igniculus if you like.

RIGHT / In combat, each character moves along the bottom progress bar at different paces; once they hit the "Cast" section they'll execute whichever attack or action you pick.

Aside from being *literally* the most beautiful game I've ever played, *Child of Light* features an interesting combat mechanic that might be familiar to JRPG stalwarts. Enemy encounters take place in an arena (of sorts) that's separate from the game world you're exploring. Two of your party members face off with up to three enemies; each character has a set of unique attack options that range from physical weapons, to magical spells that include buffs, debuffs, and direct damage effects.

Combat features a progress bar that continually runs during all encounters. Each character and enemy is represented on the progress bar by an icon that loops along it. The right-hand quarter of the bar is the action section, which means once a character's icon hits that area they can trigger one of their chosen special attacks, or actions like drinking potions. Different characters progress along the bar at different speeds, and there are methods to knock enemies back or push party members forward. You can also interrupt or be interrupted if you're attacked during your action. Different attacks and actions take time to execute, so you need to judge your timing if you want to, for example, trigger a very long but powerful spell.

It sounds complex, but it's actually very accessible, which belies the fact that RPG fans will be able to spend ages perfecting ideal party member combos and attack orders. Consequently the combat system is exceptionally robust for a game as seemingly simplistic as *Child of Light*.

Unfortunately, there's not much else



outside of the main quest, which you'll be able to complete in about 12 hours. There are a handful of side quests, but they're all iterations of the dull "fetch quest" variety. There is also nothing in the way of equipment and weapons to loot and swap out, but you do find one-shot stat buffers, potions, and gems (called Oculi) that can be combined a la *Diablo* for use in three equipment slots per character. Luckily the story, characters, artistry and combat mechanic are enough to buoy up the experience. **NAG**

- Mikit0707



80 *Child of Light won't be for everyone, but if you're looking for 12 hours of something charming and different, then give it a go. Hardcore JRPG players might be put off the game's simplistic approach to the genre, but there's a robust combat mechanic that warrants experimentation.*

PLUS / Fun, multi-layered combat / Gorgeous visuals and music / Charming characters / New Game +

MINUS / A little repetitive / Some cheesy dialogue / Very linear / Inhibiting skill tree progression

PLATFORMS / PS4 / PSV	REVIEWED ON / PS4	GENRE / Action	DEVELOPER / Omega Force
AGE RATING / 16	MULTIPLAYER / Local > 2 players	Online > 2 players	PUBLISHER / Koei
WEBSITE / www.koei.com/dw&xl/			DISTRIBUTOR / TBA

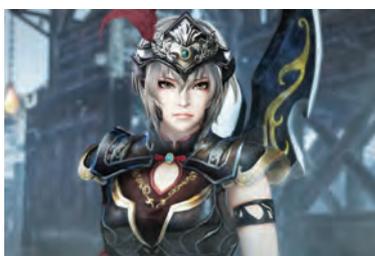
Dynasty Warriors 8: Xtreme Legends Complete Edition

To take on Dong, you're going to need Lü Bu

If you've never heard of the *Dynasty Warriors* franchise, or don't know what it's about, here's the super-short of it: you fight hundreds of enemies and it feels awesome. The slightly longer answer would be: *Dynasty Warriors* is a tactical action game based on the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The novel in turn is based loosely on the historical events during the Three Kingdoms era of Chinese history (169AD – 280AD). Historical figures such as Lu Bu, Dong Zhu, Ding Yuan, Jia Xu and Ding Feng are made into playable characters with ridiculous abilities. *Dynasty Warriors* elevates the myths and legends surrounding these people and turns them into a super-powered man-drama unlike anything seen outside the franchise. It's goofy, but there's a kind of method to the madness.

The *Dynasty Warriors 8* campaign, like those of previous games, lets you pick a

character from one of the many warring factions then play through their personal part in the much larger Three Kingdoms story. Each has their own take on events, though characters from the same faction tend to share a lot of missions. There are 82 playable characters with over 200 scenarios, and *Xtreme Legends* adds in five more, along with 40 new stages. Combat in *Dynasty Warriors* is straightforward: you alternate between light and heavy attacks to create combination moves, certain moves being good for high damage to single targets while others are great for clearing large amounts of enemies. Missions are a combination of resource management, knowing who is expendable, and figuring out your primary targets. Your resources are enemy soldiers, fodder only good for filling your Musou and Rage bars, both of which allow for insane screen-clearing super-moves.



There are no real frame-rate issues, even during the largest of fights. A first for the series. Visuals are somewhat improved over the PS3 version, but not by much. Weapons now have a trinity system (Heaven, Earth, Man), each strong against one and weak against the other. You need to swap between two weapons when dealing with officers of the opposing type, which triggers a Storm Rush move (another super move). Enemy AI has been tweaked to punish players who fail to rescue their allies or forget to block.

There's a new Ambition Mode which involves going on skirmish missions to gather resources and allies with the goal of building up your castle. You recruit leaders, earn bodyguards that go on missions with you, and upgrade vendors so you can have access to better weapons. Skirmishes have a time limit, making them great for quick play sessions. Experience and weapon upgrades gained in Ambition Mode carry over to the other game modes. **NAG**

- Miktar

70 If you've never played a *Dynasty Warriors* but have been curious, this is a good place to start. There's an insane amount of content, the combat system has never been better, and the action is ridiculously over the top. Series stalwarts will want to upgrade for the improved frame-rate.

PLUS / Cross-save with Vita version / Improved frame-rate / Much content

MINUS / Online play is buggy / Overly chatty officers / Recorded footage is silent



HARDWIRED

by Neo Sibeko

Some time ago, it was general knowledge or consensus that x86 was inherently unfavourable for mobile or low power parts. This was true to some extent and remained so in comparison to other architectures until recently.

What many of us failed to consider was that the chief producer of x86 products also happens to have one of the most advanced if not the most advanced fabs on the planet. All designed specifically for this purpose. This is at the very least true today where later this year or early next year we will witness the first wide spread rollout of high density 14nm products.

To simply look at the pitch of a node is more than oversimplification of what goes into IC manufacturing but consider that there is nothing else we have that is manufactured at this node with this kind of complexity. One may look to GPUs and the numerous TSMC 28nm processes they have. However our favoured HP 28nm process is a traditional lithography and not Fin-Fet or 3D transistors as we have with the current 22nm products from Intel.

Throwing away the x86 instruction set isn't an option for anyone with a licence really, but improving on it progressively has kept it relevant for decades. It's currently at a point where consumer level desktop CPUs resemble RISC processors more than they do their predecessors which were very much ASICs. Special functions, SIMD and many other changes in how CPUs are designed have made them very applicable to not only portable devices but smart phones as well. It's a matter of dialing in the right power target against the desired performance and this is where scalable designs play a major role.

Prior to the mobile boom, the primary concern for Intel, AMD or any other company invested in the x86 landscape was performance above all. Power consumption, heat and the like were secondary. The world we lived in was also less concerned about such things. Progressively things changed and low power portable platforms forced a change in trajectory, not to abandon the need to computing power per say, but to define a new target compute power per mm or per watt. The challenge changed and it is the current driver for ever more powerful and smarter design decisions at many labs across the globe.

If you compare the IPC from Lynnfield to what we have today with Haswell, it has improved for sure, but it's not as dramatic as you may think. It is less than what we had going from the original Pentium to the Pentium II (keep in mind between these two we went through the MMX and

the Pentium Pro revisions each with IPC improvements across several process nodes), the Pentium III and certainly up to the ill-fated Pentium 4. The real changes have been in power consumption, power gating, per mm efficiency and heat.

The Core i7 875K of 2010 as compared to the Core i7 4770K of mid last year seems to compare favourably as the former has a TDP of 95W while the latter has one of 84W. With a reduction to around half the process pitch you'd think there should be more of a saving, but you have to look a little deeper than that. The Lynnfield based 875K had a nominal operating frequency of 2.93GHz and a Turbo speed of 3.6GHz. The 4770K though, has a nominal frequency of 3.5GHz and 3.9GHz under "Turbo" conditions. The 875K had roughly 771 million transistors, the 4770K has 1.4 billion. More impressive though is that Haswell has a fully functional, DirectX 11.1 compliant integrated GPU on the same die as well (which obviously takes up a lot of the silicon space). Moreover, Haswell has a fully integrated voltage regulator, which prior to this generation was external and on the motherboard. Despite all of this, the TDP has decreased by 11 watts at maximum load with the GPU and CPU parts active. This is all in three and a half years or so.

This progress means it's possible to half the power consumption but offer the same performance per mm or per watt as the Lynnfield CPU. Once again this is an overly simplified way of looking at it but it's logically valid. Instantly that takes you to the low 40 watt range (assuming linear scaling for all parts relevant). Half that again and you've got yourself a 20 watt part, which with some further tuning and scaling, you can cut to half. The Pentium (Bay-Trail-M) N3530 Atom consumes 7.5 watts at full tilt, compared to the Q6600 which consumed 105W on the desktop. Looking at the best x86 had to offer in 2007 may have led you to believe that there was no future in x86, however right now 7.5 watts gives you almost the same computing power and they are both x86. There's a future still in this instruction set and it's possible it'll be around for decades more in a form that's virtually unrecognizable to us right now. **NAG**

Neo didn't appreciate the temperature of the planet Earth, and so he chose to ascend to the stars. He now roams the universe in search of the first liquid nitrogen-cooled planet. He thought he'd found it once, but it turned out to just be a planet inhabited by a race of Christian Bales.

PSU
Cooler Master V1200 Platinum PSU
R4,899 / www.cooler-master.com

NEW



GRAPHICS
GIGABYTE GV-N78TGHZ-3GD
R11,499 / www.gigabyte.com



OS DRIVE
OCZ Vector Vector 150
R2,808 / www.ocz.com



STORAGE DRIVE
WD Black 4TB FZEX
R3,299 / www.wdc.com



CHASSIS
Corsair Obsidian 900D
R4,499 / www.corsair.com



DISPLAY
ASUS VG248QE
R6,099 / www.asus.com



KEYBOARD
Razer BlackWidow Ultimate
R1,700 / www.razerzone.com



COOLER
Cooler Master Nepton 280L
R1,529 / www.cooler-master.com



MOUSE
Razer Ouroboros
R1,899 / www.razerzone.com



MOUSE MAT
Razer Ironclad
R599 / www.razerzone.com



SOUND
Creative Sound Blaster ZxR
R3,499 / www.soundblaster.com



HEADPHONES
Plantronics GameCom Commander
R4,569 / www.plantronics.com



INTEL

INTEL CORE I7 4960X
R14,103 / www.intel.com

ASUS RAMPAGE IV EXTREME BLACK EDITION
R7,999 / www.asus.com

AVEXIR BLITZ 1.1 DDR3 2,666MHZ
R4,799 / www.avexir.com

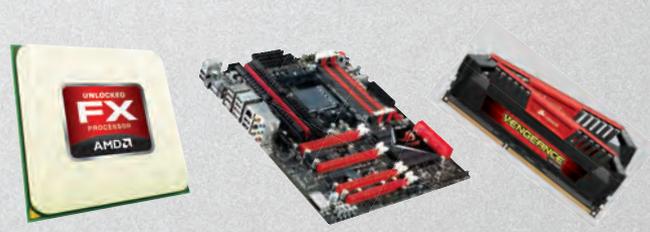


AMD

AMD FX 8350
R3,099 / www.amd.com

ASUS CROSSHAIR V FORMULA-Z
R3,999 / www.asus.com

CORSAIR VENGEANCE PRO 2,666MHZ C11 16GB KIT
R4,999 / www.corsair.com



INTEL DREAM MACHINE
R73,799



AMD DREAM MACHINE
R58,995

Intel X79

VERSUS

Intel X99

After nearly four years, Intel is ready to announce its next enthusiast chipset. With each generation that the rest of Intel's lineup received, this enthusiast market only gained CPU upgrades. This time Intel has overhauled the entire lineup, from CPUs to storage solutions and everything in between. As usual, this is the highest level of performance you can buy on the desktop, thus prices are always going to be very high for almost every component involved. Still, if you have the money or want to invest in a high powered system that will last you for years on end, between these two chipsets is where you'll find what you need. This is less of a versus as there's a clear succession path here, however what follows will serve to highlight the differences between the two chipsets and what you may possibly expect with each. Full coverage of the X99 platform will follow in the coming months.

INTEL X79



CONNECTIVITY

Strictly speaking the X79 chipset only supported PCI Express 2.0. It has 40 lanes still, but getting PCIe 3.0 working can be tricky and it isn't supported by all graphics cards. However, PCI Express 2.0 compatibility is excellent. 14 USB ports in total much like X99, the only difference here is that the X79 chipset only supports USB 2.0, thus every motherboard with USB 3.0 support does so through a third party chip. Gigabit LAN and a secondary South Bridge PCI Express 2.0 with eight lanes is standard. SATA 6Gbps is only on 2 out of the total 6 supported, the rest are SATA 3Gbps. Once again for more high speed ports a third party chip is needed.

CPU'S

The good thing about X79, unlike X99, is that it supports two generations of CPUs at present. Not only that, but you can buy a 4-core or 6-core CPU which will no longer be possible with X99. The entry price for X79 CPUs is comparatively low at \$325 USD which is roughly the same price as the Intel Core i7 4770K. The benefit here being the ability to gain access to 40 PCIe lanes and quad channel memory for those memory intensive applications. The architecture on these CPUs however is outdated compared to what is on offer on Z87 and Z97. PCI Express 3.0 support is still shaky and there are several changes presented with Haswell CPUs that are not available on Ivy Bridge-E. These CPUs are a good one or two years behind what the performance chipsets and platforms offer in technology support. In performance however, they are still the best money can buy especially with the 4960X which we currently have as our Dream Machine CPU. These CPUs are backed by what is without exception the best motherboard that the industry has seen to date in the ASUS Rampage IV Extreme Black Edition.

MEMORY

X79 uses standard DDR3, from 1.5V to 1.65V. The memory frequency support on Ivy Bridge-E is much better than it was on Sandy-Bridge-E and for the most part could be considered an equivalent to the frequency scaling that one may find on Z77. From DDR3 1,333, to 2,800MHz and beyond, these are all possible speeds with Ivy Bridge-E CPUs and the right motherboard. All speeds above 1,866 however are not officially supported, even though most of these modules are capable of working at their rated frequency provided the CPU has an equally capable IMC. Memory capacities range from 4GB to 64GB of total system memory when using 8GB DIMMS.

INTEL X99



CONNECTIVITY

Unlike with X79, X99 fully supports PCIe 3.0 with an internal 40 lanes. Features such as 4-way SLI and CrossFire are natively supported (provided the motherboard vendor pays the required SLI license) electronically. Performance should increase here to varying degrees depending on the PCI-Express traffic. USB 3.0 native support has been added as well and the PCH supports a total of 14 USB ports, eight of which are USB 2.0. The PCH (South Bridge), much like on the outgoing X79 has a single PCIe 2.0 8X link, including an integrated Gigabyte LAN controller. Intel has however removed PCI (5V) support altogether, so if you're still using older 5V PCI devices, they will not work on the new platform. Finally, all SATA ports from the PCH are SATA 6Gbps. Why there was no provision made for SATA Express is puzzling, but it's an upgrade over X79.

CPUS

All CPUs for X99 are of the 2011 kind. That doesn't mean that one may use existing Sandy Bridge-E and Ivy Bridge-E CPUs on the new motherboards. The pin count is the same but the layout is different. As such you'll require any one of the new CPUs to make use of the system. In that regard, Intel is for the first time offering 6- and 8-core CPUs, each with Hyper-threading and as much as 20MB of L3 Cache. From 12 to 16 threads, which CPU is suitable for you will depend on your pocket and your desired application. What we have learned thus far is that the 8 core high-end CPUs will cost as much as \$1,500 USD which means here in South Africa that is likely to translate into anything as much as R20,000. A steep price, but unrivalled parallel processing power for sure. Sadly there will be no 4-core versions of these CPUs, for that you will have to look to the Z97 chipset. All CPUs on this chipset are 22nm and should migrate to 14nm as and when those CPUs are available going into 2016. The initial Haswell-E CPUs are based on the current Haswell architecture, but have some significant differences which make them suitable for this platform. In terms of IPC they should be identical or faster than what the current Haswell CPUs offer. In comparison to Ivy Bridge-E the performance differences will be more pronounced.

MEMORY

The largest and most important change here is the introduction of DDR4 memory. X99 will initially use 1.2V VDDQ memory, a dramatically lower operating voltage than the desktop DDR3 at 1.65 to 1.5V. More importantly DDR4 is at an even lower voltage than DDR3L which operates at 1.35V and 1.25V for DDR3ULV. The memory is the same size physically as DDR3, but houses 288 pins with a 0.85mm pin pitch. It is notched differently to prevent insertion into the incorrect DIMM sockets. This DDR4 standard will be the future for this platform and others going forward. Most interesting is that this chipset also supports NVDIMMs as well, which is non-volatile DRAM. The extent of the support for this technology is unknown at present, but it is mechanically supported (284 and 288 pin). Memory bandwidth is set to increase, not only because of the frequency scaling but because of the different signaling method used. With a direct to IMC connection per module, the latencies will decrease, but sadly it also means that every system will in essence have a maximum of four DIMMS instead of the eight we have with X79 boards.

ASUS ROG GTX 760 Mars

Website / www.asus.com/za

ERP / TBA Supplier / ASUS

SPECS	GPU	2x GTX 760
	CUDA CORES	2,304 total
	MEMORY	2x 2GB GDDR5 @6GHz
	MEMORY INTERFACE	2x 256-bit

Video card manufacturers have been smooching together GPUs onto a single PCB for years, and the ASUS Mars range has always stood out as one of the best of these examples. In this latest iteration, ASUS has opted to combine two upper-mid-range cards in the form of the GTX 760 – an excellent starting point for this exercise.

This card is essentially the same as two GTX 760s in SLI, but ASUS has gone the extra mile with high-end internal components like a 12-phase VRM, as well as the best quality MOSFETs, power chokes and capacitors they could get. The result is a unique card that delivers solid results, but for all of this flair you know you're going to pay a premium.

The benchmarks are clear: 9,398 3D Mark, 14,1423 in Catzilla, and an average frame rate of 80 in *Hitman: Absolution*. Good results to be sure, but these numbers don't come quite close enough to GTX 780 level. Instead this Mars card performs more like a high-end GTX 770, which is a bit of a pity considering it costs twice as much. And squeezing in two GPUs to a fairly standard cooling system means you can expect either a lot of heat, or a lot of noise. In our tests we saw GPU core temps reach as high as 88°, and even under that relatively high temperature, the fans were very noisy. This usually means that there isn't much overclocking headroom, but we were chuffed to find that this card still has some headroom: we took the GPU speed up by 168MHz and memory up by 742MHz, all with a moderate 12mV bump in voltage. **NAG**

- Geoff Burrows



8 This ASUS card is certainly solid, but at this price we simply don't see a market for it for anyone but the techiest of tech-heads. Still, it's a great showcase for what's possible.

PLUS / Good performance / Some room for overclocking

MINUS / Very loud / Impractical / SLI performance not guaranteed in all games

Sades SA-902 7.1 gaming headset

Website / www.facebook.com/gamersgadgetssa

ERP / R520 Supplier / Gamers Gadgets

SPECS	FREQUENCY RESPONSE	20Hz – 20kHz
	IMPEDANCE	32 ohms
	DRIVER UNITS	40mm
	CABLE LENGTH	3m

Well this is surprising. Despite the poorly-translated marketing speak emblazoned all over the Sades SA-902's packaging (which creates a pretty awful first impression), this headset from a largely unknown brand delivers excellent sonic performance at an attractively low price.

It's powered by a single USB connection (with in-line volume/mic control), and while the bundled software suite is nothing more than functional, getting these headphones up and running is painless. The quality of the materials used in their construction certainly isn't on par with the best in the business, but you can't really expect much more from a set that costs just R520. That doesn't mean the SA-902 isn't sturdy enough to withstand a bit of punishment – just that it doesn't boast the high levels of polish seen on more expensive brands.

What they lack in build quality they make up for in comfort. The padded cups (the outer shells of which are accented by red LED lighting) and headband (coupled with the SA-902's light weight) ensure that even after long periods of use the headset remains pleasantly comfortable.

Audio production is where this headset is really astounding. There's very little to fault here. Bass is punchy without being all-consuming. The mid and low ranges never overpower each other. They boast an insanely high volume ceiling, with very little distortion at even the highest possible volume settings. The clarity of the sound produced is fantastic. They're not much good at keeping noise locked in, but they do a commendable job of keeping noise locked out.

You could use this set for gaming, music, movies, whatever, and they'd make you happy. Their audio quality is right up there with some of the more costly offerings available, but at a fraction of the price. **NAG**

- Dane Remendes



9 The SA-902 is an awesome headset with an unexpectedly low price tag.

PLUS / Really comfortable / Really cheap / Really good sound quality

MINUS / Build quality isn't the greatest

MSI Z97 MPower Max AC

Website / www.msi.com ERP / TBA Supplier / Corex

SPECS

CHIPSET	Intel Z97
MEMORY	4x 240-Pin DDR3
CPU SUPPORT	LGA 1150
EXPANSION	3x PCIe 16X, 4x PCIe 1x
SIZE	ATX

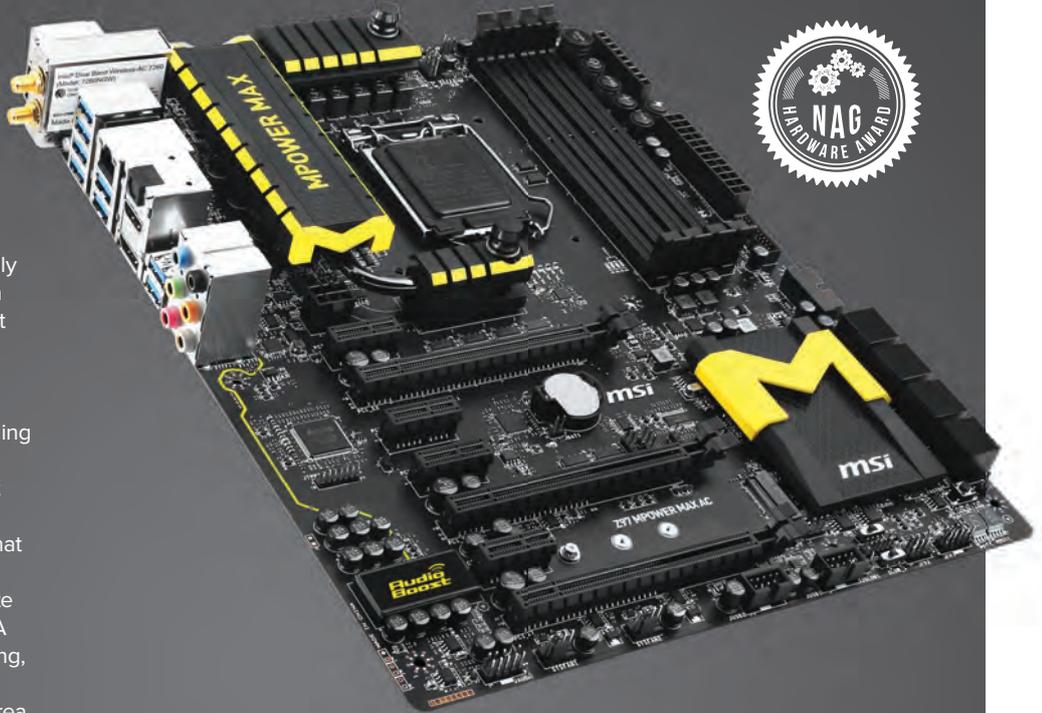
Here is MSI's follow up to the Z87 MPower Max motherboard we covered in August last year. Visually it is near identical to that board, save for a few changes here and there. For the most part though, it's the black and yellow we have grown to like and admire. Where aesthetics go, MSI definitely makes the most distinct and possibly visually appealing motherboards in the industry.

Mechanically, the Z97 Max AC doesn't support SATA Express which is a shame, but instead opts for M.2 support. Given that mSATA didn't go anywhere with the last generation, we suspect the very same fate will befall M.2. The decision to forgo SATA Express support in favour of M.2 is puzzling, especially given that for an overclocking motherboard, you may want to seal the area where the M.2 card would be located for SLI/CrossFire overclocking.

That aside, it's immaculate and we like the fact that you can connect up to 18 USB devices on this motherboard. That's right, there are ten USB ports on the rear IO, eight of which are USB 3.0, you'll find a further two headers on the board and another two for the traditional USB 2.0 specification. Connectivity is not ever going to be a problem here. Since this is the AC version you'll also find a dual band 802.11 WiFi adapter and Bluetooth 4.0 module. It supports the latest connectivity protocols such as a/b/g/n and AC along with Intel's Wi-Fi technology. For an overclocking board, this is mighty impressive.

Add the MSI Audio Boost technology and audio routing and it nets you a packed motherboard that not only works great on an overclocking station but is good enough to have in your gaming machine as well.

Overclocking and tuning is an area however where there have been the most significant changes. We get the usual V-Check points for monitoring various voltages, but this time you get three ground points so you can monitor three values simultaneously, a small change but one that all competitive overclockers would appreciate. The usual Bclk adjustment



buttons return, along with a new Discharge button for discharging power from caps when you want to clear the CMOS quickly. There's the Go2BIOS dip switch which does exactly that, an overclocking Slow Mode, Fast Boot and the familiar OC Genie button.

Click4BIOS makes a return with some extra performance tuning features. Memory overclocking options are exhaustive and surpass those of many other established motherboards on the market. They are for the most part better explained than ever before, but the effect on overclocking stability is not as well documented. Still, it's a huge step in the right direction and it is the standard by which we will hold future MSI overclocking boards to.

There is a lot to this motherboard that we can't cover here, the changes in the BIOS alone are numerous and all of them have been added to make for a better overclocking experience. We did have an issue with the efficiency and memory performance on the board however. This was probably down to a BIOS version issue, but the efficiency with single sided MFR memory was particularly low at least in comparison to other Z97 motherboards. A few hundred megabytes here and there are of no concern but for instance the Mpower

Max was coming in at 8GB/s slower in some memory benchmarks which is obviously going to lead to lower performance in 3D and 2D applications. Fortunately this is something that is likely to get addressed in future BIOS revisions, but for now it is worth noting that even with hand tuning we were not able to match some of the performance we had on other boards other than when the DRAM frequency was at 2,400MHz. Even then however, the memory latency was higher.

That aside, this is the best overclocking motherboard MSI has produced and it is truly impressive and definitely worth your spend. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko

8 MSI has built a solid overclocking board with the Z97 MPower Max. Probably the best they have produced to date.

PLUS / Very detailed overclocking BIOS / Looks great / Focused overclocking features

MINUS / Wasted space with PCIe 1x slots / Inefficient memory performance with BIOS 1.22

Cooler Master V1200 Platinum PSU

- Website / www.coolermaster.com
- ERP / R3,200
- Supplier / Cooler Master

SPECS	RATING	1,200W
	CERTIFICATION	80 Plus Platinum
	COMBINED 12V OUTPUT	200W (100A)
	SIZE	150mm x 190mm x 86mm

The V1200 Platinum is Cooler Master's newest PSU and one that is actually their highest end offering. Sure we have the Silent Pro M2 1500W, which is currently our Dream Machine PSU, but this unit has surpassed it where it matters.

With PSUs it is very easy to be swayed by the total wattage, but that tells us nothing about how good or efficient a PSU is. As much as we liked the M2, the V1200 Platinum is a different level of power delivery altogether. It uses a single, powerful 12V rail which can deliver a total of 1,200W of power at 100A. This can be achieved even on a 115V wall socket. Moreover the V1200 Platinum is one of the few PSUs that actually comply with the ATX hold up time requirement of 16ms. This is very important, especially on our shores where power sometimes can be very unpredictable. Add a relatively low in-rush current measurement and rock solid rails (12V and 3.3V) and you have a PSU that can deliver under all kinds of conditions.

It supports 4-way SLI (with the power to feed as many graphics cards obviously), a completely silent mode for low loads and a hybrid fan controller as well. Connectivity is great as you can power up to 12 SATA devices and nine 4-pin peripherals (MOLEX).

If you're looking for a PSU to power the most demanding systems out there, look no further than the Cooler Master V1200 Platinum. There aren't many 1,200 Watt units that are better. It is so prolific at delivering good clean power that we have little choice but to make this our new Dream Machine PSU. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko



9 Cooler Master has produced their best PSU to date. It may not be their most powerful, but it is their best one.

PLUS / Fantastic efficiency / seven year warranty / Platinum certification Single 12V rail

MINUS / Potentially pricey

Corsair Graphite 230T

- Website / www.corsair.com
- ERP / R989
- Supplier / Rectron

SPECS	MATERIAL	Steel
	COLOUR	Rebel Orange / Gunship Grey and Black
	SUPPORTED MOTHERBOARD TYPE	Mini-ITX, Micro-ATX, ATX
	FRONT PANEL	2x USB3.0

This is probably the flashiest case in Corsair's arsenal aside from the 760T. The Graphite 230T is a budget chassis with an all-steel construction and some acceptable machining, and you'd be hard pressed to believe that this retails for under R1,000.

As a mid-tower case, motherboard support is limited to ATX and smaller, but with that it supports up to seven expansion slots and up to eight internal drive bays. Of particular interest are the four 2.5" drive bays which are obviously for SSD drives. This is great because it means, unlike with other cases, you don't have to resort to drive cages and adapters.

Cooling is taken care of by three fans which you will find included with your purchase. You may add more of course, but it's nice to see that Corsair has taken care of the basic exhaust and induction fans. With those alone you could get by without needing to invest in more cooling, further making this a great economic purchase. The only down side here is that while Corsair states that the 230T will support 240 and even 280mm radiators, none of their Hydro series coolers with the above dimensions would fit in the 230T. Anything the size of the H100 or larger would not have enough clearance for the fans and radiator. The front fan mountings are offset and the top of the case is too shallow to allow a comfortable fit. However, you can get by with the H80i and other single radiator solutions.

Other than this slight annoyance, the 230T makes for a good entry level case. It looks better in the flesh than on paper and the two year warranty doesn't hurt either. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko



7 The 230T is a simple, yet good looking case. It offers a lot for an entry level case.

PLUS / Cooling capabilities / Generous internal space for its dimensions Looks great

MINUS / Not really built for water cooling

MSI GS60 Ghost Gaming Notebook

Website / www.msi.com

ERP / R19,999

Supplier / MSI

SPECS

CPU	Intel Core i7 4700HQ
GPU	NVIDIA GTX 860M 4GB
MEMORY	8GB DDR3
STORAGE	128GB SSD (RAID 0) + 1TB Storage drive
OPTICAL DRIVE	None



Last month we looked at MSI's most powerful gaming notebook, the GT70 Dominator Pro. However, there are those who not only need something powerful, but something significantly smaller. It is in such situations where you'll find that the MSI GS60 Ghost can serve not only as a competent gaming notebook but one that is almost Ultrabook light. It is visually striking with its brushed aluminium materials and its shallow profile makes it an instant hit.

Devoid of an optical drive, this is how most modern day gaming notebooks should be. If a vendor does feel that such a drive is necessary, we'd prefer it be an external slim type reader where you have the option of just leaving it behind. As such we are not deducting points on the GS60 for not having an optical drive, but rather look upon it favourably as a way to not only shave on weight but produce a slim notebook that is as appropriate in a boardroom as it is at a LAN party.

As with other MSI notebooks, the GS60 Ghost makes use of Dynaudio speaker technology in tandem with Sound Blaster Cinema 2 software. The combination is great over a set of headphones but sadly isn't convincing when played through the notebook's speakers. They are not the worst but because of the small profile of the housing, they lack bass and warmth. The mid-range however is clear and highs are lively, even though they do get a little harsh sometimes.

The SteelSeries keyboard offers the comfort and precision we've grown to expect and it's a pleasure to type and game on. It is also backlit much like the GT70 and can be customized through the SteelSeries Engine software.

Graphics wise, the GS60 Ghost is powered by the new NVIDIA 800 series GPUs. These are not really new as they are made up of the Kepler architecture. In the case of the GS60 we were hoping for the GM106 based 860 GPU but instead it is one that is still based on the Kepler core. It may have 1152 CUDA cores, but they are less efficient than the newer 640 Maxwell



BENCHMARK RESULTS

PC Mark8 Creative Suite
(OpenCL accelerated): **4,329**
Battery time: **1H: 52m: 44s**
3DMark Fire Strike: **2,842**
Catzilla 1080p: **4,469**

processing cores. NVIDIA however doesn't make a distinction between these two GPUs and you could either receive an 860M with the Kepler design or one with the Maxwell logic. Regardless, the performance is better than what we had with both the GTX 760M and 765M. Games that were not really playable at 1080p are manageable with the new GPU. Don't look to play many games at full detail, but it certainly does the job and warrants the GS60 Ghost being called a gaming notebook.

The GPU powers one of the most beautiful 15" screens we've seen on a notebook. The colours are sharp and vivid even if the viewing angle is sometimes limited. When you're working on the screen, it is comfortable and you can look at it for hours on end with no eye strain. This is certainly one of the most impressive aspects of the GS60 Ghost.

Overall, we are once again impressed by MSI's offering. The GS60 is more than just outright performance, but makes an almost

optimal compromise between performance and portability. The unit exudes quality and it feels solid. At only 1.9kg it is a breeze to carry around and is fairly competent where battery life is concerned. MSI has produced yet another thoroughly impressive notebook with the GS60 Ghost. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko



The GS60 gaming notebook is the most powerful lightweight gaming notebook we've ever tested. It's a wonderful notebook for gaming on the go.

PLUS / GTX 860M is much better than the 760M. / Only weighs 1.9kg / Impressive screen and keyboard

MINUS / GTX 860M is Kepler based and not Maxwell version, 17" version may potentially be better

GIGABYTE Z97X-GAMING G1 WIFI

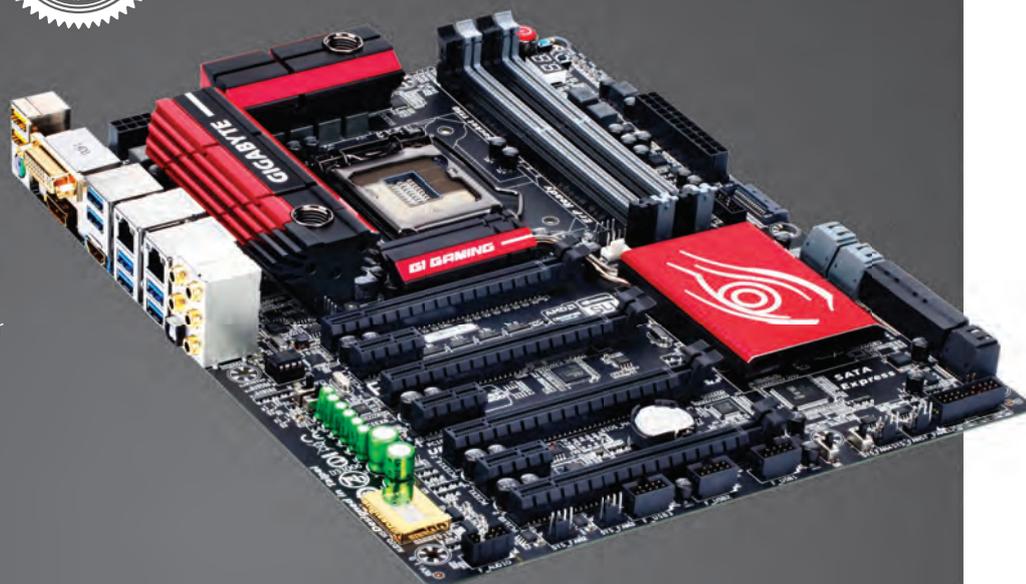
Website / www.gigabyte.com

ERP / TBA

Supplier / Rectron

SPECS

CHIPSET	Intel Z97
MEMORY	4x 240-Pin DDR3
CPU SUPPORT	LGA 1150
EXPANSION	3x PCIe 16X, 3 x PCIe 1x
SIZE	ATX



GIGABYTE was the first vendor to send out a Z97 motherboard to us and as such, this particular board set the bar by which all other Z97 boards would be measured, regardless of whether they were from another vendor or GIGABYTE's other SKUs. A risky thing to do but fortunately the Z97 G1 sets a very high standard for gaming boards. As a successor to the incredible G1.Sniper V board, the Z97 iteration had plenty to live up to.

Two things immediately stood out about this board and the first is the lamentable serial number inspired name. There's absolutely no reason why any vendor should still have product names like this. The industry has moved past this but GIGABYTE's naming scheme for their Z97 boards is a throwback to the turn of the century. G1.Sniper V worked, simple to remember while this one is anything but memorable. In addition to that and as important is that GIGABYTE has forgone the brilliant green and black design ethos and gone with a more generic ruby red theme. Aesthetically, it's disappointing and it also makes it very generic because every motherboard vendor on the planet has red gaming motherboards, making them virtually indistinguishable from each other. These are two very obvious steps backwards for GIGABYTE.

Fortunately however, as a product the Z97 G1 is a solid offering. Perhaps even a more refined version of the Sniper V. You'll get ten SATA ports, eight if you use SATA Express, a total of 16 USB devices to control (including motherboard headers), of which eight will be USB 3.0. Dual gigabit Ethernet (no teaming however), including one controller powered by the Killer E2200 NIC and most importantly this board offers the best on-board audio solution money can buy. The impressive Sound Core 3D powered audio processor and circuitry is back along with swappable op-amps for customised audio characteristics. In addition to this, the Z97 G1 has the ability to set output gain via a pair of DIP switches

and one may select from 2.5X to 6X. These settings are ideal for powering high-end headphones or high impedance speakers directly from the board. Once again this audio solution is peerless (at least thus far) and it will be up to the other vendors to see if they can match or exceed what GIGABYTE has delivered here.

Most impressive on this motherboard however is the new UEFI which is a vast improvement on the previous generation boards. In terms of user interfaces, GIGABYTE has gone from one of the less desirable ones (hence you spent all your time in the legacy BIOS interface) to arguably the most refined in the industry. We could write an entire 10 page article on just the features here alone and how well they are presented (including support for full 1080p displays within the interface). GIGABYTE gets a perfect score here.

Performance then should not be of concern given that the Z97 chipset is identical to the Z87 chipset aside from SATA express support. Strangely enough though, the Z97 G1 is very efficient, very fast and manages to not only keep up with the incredible Z87-OC in efficiency, but sometimes exceed it. Memory overclocking

is phenomenal and no matter the settings it seems the motherboard just keeps POSTing and tuning for maximum performance, while tedious like on any other board, is much fun. The Z97 G1 keeps delivering phenomenal performance time and time again.

Overall, this is a fantastic motherboard that was fully deserving of a perfect 10 but just fell short of that. Despite this, for gaming boards, you'll not likely find a better board for the Z97 platform than this one. The GIGABYTE Z97X-Gaming G1 WIFI comes highly recommended. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko

9 GIGABYTE has refined an already refined G1.Sniper V motherboard. It's in every way better technically and is still probably the best gaming motherboard money can buy.

PLUS / Phenomenal audio / Very fast and efficient / Remarkable BIOS

MINUS / Uninspired colour scheme / Terribly confusing naming

ASRock Fatal1ty FM2A88X+ KILLER

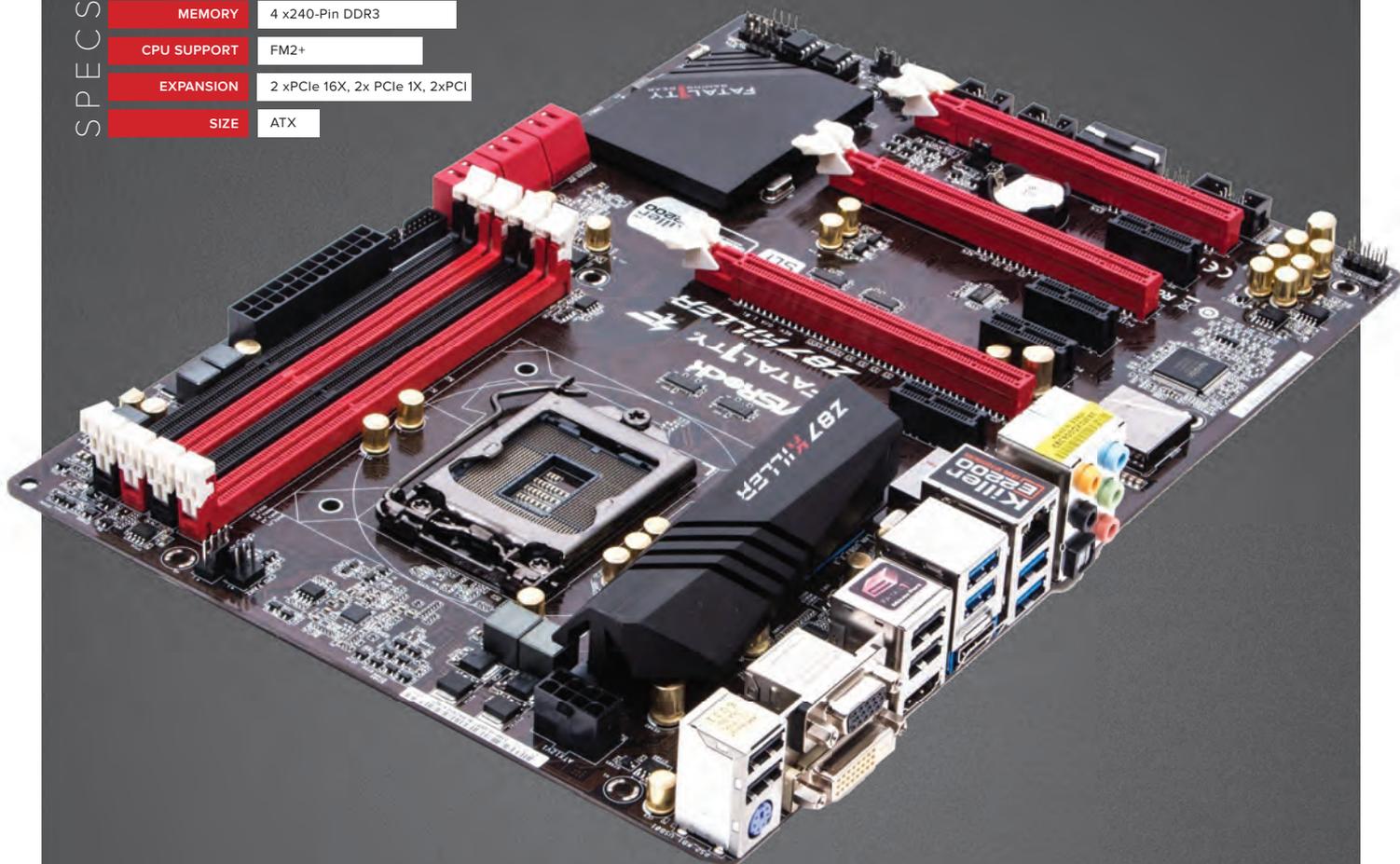
Website / www.tvr.co.za

ERP / R1,799

Supplier / TVR

SPECS

CHIPSET	A88X
MEMORY	4 x240-Pin DDR3
CPU SUPPORT	FM2+
EXPANSION	2 xPCIe 16X, 2x PCIe 1X, 2xPCI
SIZE	ATX



Here with us is another FM2+ motherboard, for AMD's latest APUs. Much like all such motherboards, this one packs in as much as it can to complement the chipset, without breaking the bank.

This is one of one of the cheaper and definitely better FM2+ motherboards on the market. It is a no nonsense gaming focused budget board that carries the familiar Fatal1ty name.

ASRock has not made a fancy motherboard here, just stuck to the basics in what any gamer on a budget would need. A great sound processor courtesy of the ALC1150 codec and signal quality enhancements through Purity Audio. A Killer E2200 Gigabit NIC and a special very low latency USB mouse port for high-end gaming mice. To complement that, the board supports CrossFire and even PCIe 3.0 on one slot along with the

older 2.0 spec on the secondary slot. Not a useful feature before because of the CPU bottleneck, but with the Mantle API, CrossFire has become a viable configuration especially with mid- to high-end graphics cards.

Performance is as you would expect from the FM2+ platform, the ASRock board does one better by allowing very easy DDR3 2,600MHz configuration, which was something that took some tuning on other FM2+ boards we tried. This will prove very valuable especially if you'll be using the iGPU on the 7850K for example.

The only disappointing part about this motherboard is the lack of a power reset button along with a POST LED. We have come to expect these things on modern boards and to not have these robs the FM2A88X+ of what it could have become. Still, we were able

to gather some good performance numbers from it and, should you be looking for an FM2+ board that won't break the bank, you'll not be disappointed. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko

8 This is a basic gaming board, which has more than enough to make it stand out from the standard A88X offering.

PLUS / Should be relatively cheap / Above average audio via Purity Sound / 2,600MHz memory support

MINUS / Should ideally be Mini-ITX / No POST LED or on-board buttons

CM Storm Alcor Gaming Mouse

- Website / www.cmstorm.com
- ERP / R499
- Supplier / Cooler Master

SPECS	BUTTONS	7
	SENSITIVITY	4,000dpi / 1,000Hz polling
	SENSOR	Avago 3090 Optical sensor

Regardless of how you feel about optical mice, the Alcor is one fine example of what modern gaming optical mice can achieve when built purely with FPS games in mind. The Alcor is similar to the Mizar (reviewed last issue) but even simpler yet as it fits the hand in largely the same way but has a stronger bias to the contour of your right palm. It doesn't feel as comfortable to use, especially where the side buttons are concerned. The sensor however is where all the magic happens. Tracking with this mouse is sublime and your accuracy as a result is improved proving once again that a higher DPI isn't necessarily better. Even at 4,000 DPI it was silky smooth offering superior precision without any acceleration issues. Updating to the latest V3.0 firmware resulted in finer control throughout the different DPI settings. It is unfortunate that you can't set custom sensitivity, but within the multiple settings you're bound to find a match for you and your desired gaming. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko



8 This is one mighty impressive FPS optical mouse and well worth your consideration.

PLUS / Very good tracking / Sensitivity

MINUS / Boring looks

Mad Catz S.T.R.I.K.E. 3

- Website / my-gadgets.co.za
- ERP / R2,019
- Supplier / Comet Computing

SPECS	MACRO KEYS	12
	BACKLIGHTING	Yes, adjustable
	WINDOWS KEY LOCK	Yes

Supporting the premium level of quality you'd expect from a Mad Catz peripheral, the S.T.R.I.K.E. 3 is a highly worthwhile option if you're in the market for a shiny new gaming keyboard. And shiny it definitely is: the only real gripe I have with it is the non-matte surface that envelops the keys. While it looks great and affords it a somewhat unique aesthetic within the saturated gaming keyboard segment, it means that fingerprints and dirt are more easily noticeable.

Aside from that, the S.T.R.I.K.E. 3 is brilliant. The typing and gaming experience is nicely comfortable – provided you use the bundled wrist rest, because the keyboard does have a fairly significant vertical profile that means your wrist is always bent at an upward angle if you don't use the rest, which could lead to eventual discomfort.

There's configurable backlighting, a host of macro keys (and I especially like that some of them are conveniently located above the arrow keys – useful for the sort of games that rely purely on keyboard input), media controls and all the other creature comforts you'd want. **NAG**

- Dane Remedes



8 This is an excellent gaming keyboard, packing all the bells and whistles you'd expect.

PLUS / Comfortable / Impressive feature list

MINUS / Non-matte surface a haven for fingerprints and dirt

Sades A30 Xpower

- Website / www.facebook.com/gamersgadgets
- ERP / R495
- Supplier / Gamers Gadgets

SPECS	SPEAKER DIAMETER	50mm
	CABLE LENGTH	2.2m
	INTERFACE	USB 2.0

The Sades A30 headphones don't make much of an impression when you first pick them up with their cheap-feeling plastic ear cups and a thin, flimsy headband, but specks of quality manage to peek through in the form of the braided cable and soft-touch ear pads.

In action these headphones perform surprisingly well. The plastic has the neat side-effect of making for a very lightweight product overall, and that headband, well... it actually works very well. This headset is incredibly comfortable to wear for even prolonged periods of time, and it does a good job of blocking out ambient noises with its snug-fitting ear pads.

As for the 50mm speakers inside the headset, they perform admirably by delivering more volume than you'd ever need at acceptable levels of clarity throughout the frequency range. The microphone cannot be detached, but it tucks up neatly and can be bent into place thanks to its adjustable stalk. **NAG**

- Geoff Burrows



7 A good all-round headset with plenty of volume that's only let down by its cheap-feeling plastic.

PLUS / Very loud speakers / Comfortable and lightweight / Decent performance all-round

MINUS / Feels cheap

AVEXIR Blitz 1.1 DDR3 2,666MHz 16GB

Website / www.avexir.com ERP / R4,799 Supplier / Avexir

SPECS

FREQUENCY 2,666MHz

TIMINGS 11-13-13-35-2T



After what seems to be an eternity, DDR4's release is imminent. In less than six months we will see our first DDR4 platform and all kinds of memory that will come from the new standard.

That however is for a very high end platform and most people will not be able to gain access to this memory for some time. Moreover, Intel's next Broadwell platform will still utilize DDR3 well into 2015. Thus there is great sense in investing in a good DDR3 based kit even right now in the middle of 2014.

It is unfortunate that most high performance kits these days are based on SKHynix's MFR chips which are fantastic for overclocking but lack the tight timing ability of older PSC and BBSE chips. Despite that virtually all memory on the market is manufactured with these chips, there are some sets that still stand out from the rest. One such kit is the AVEXIR Blitz 1.1 DDR3 2,666 set. This 16GB kit is comprised of four 4GB sticks so it is perfect for those who want to use it on the X79 platform or those who want to populate all their available memory banks on other platforms.

In our particular testing, we tested this memory on standard dual channel Z97 and Z87 motherboards. Even though this is essentially a quad channel kit (if only because it has four sticks), there is sense in power users of these chipsets buying this memory. Other than price, it's the fact that this memory with the right tuning can perform very well. In a gaming context, you can simply plug all the sticks in, select the X.M.P setting and be done with it, but you would not be getting the best out of this memory. Do not however be fooled into thinking an MFR based 1,600MHz kit for instance will deliver the same performance or overclocking headroom.

Through a stringent binning process, AVEXIR has managed to release a CL11 2,666 set which, under the right conditions, will reach frequencies as high as 3,000MHz. In our own testing this was achievable and in fact it was relatively simple. The only issue is that with such a high frequency you would lose a lot of efficiency in the memory sub timings, which would result in lower performance than you would get at

2,666MHz. There is a way around this but this is where one would really need to be familiar with tweaking memory sub timings.

For those who are not as adept at options within the BIOS, but are more than willing to try out a few basic settings, you'll be happy to know that this memory was capable of CL11-12-12-35-1T. This is easily achievable at the nominal 1.65V and it does offer much better performance than the standard 11-13-13-36-2T timing that the X.M.P setting would configure for you. It's basically "free" performance that would in another kit cost you much more. As if that was not impressive enough, relaxing the timings to the standard CL11-13-13-35 but keeping a command rate of 1, we were able to operate the memory at 2,800MHz. Needless to say between the reference frequency and our highest Hyper Pi stable speed of 3,000MHz the 2,800MHz setting offered the best performance and it was very simple and easy to configure.

Not all memory kits will perform identically but we have no reason to think that any other kit would fare worse

than this sample. As such, AVEXIR is essentially selling you a 2,800MHz kit which would set you back significant amounts of money for DDR3 2,666MHz prices. Given that the current Corsair Dominator Platinum 2,666MHz CL10 kit is no longer in production nor is any other similarly configured set from any vendor, the AVEXIR Blitz 1.1 2,666MHz 16GB set becomes our new Intel Dream Machine memory. This set is better than most kits you'll find on the market.

NAG
- Neo Sibeko

8

The AVEXIR Blitz kit not only looks phenomenal but it performs well if you take the time to tune it.

PLUS / Large overclocking headroom / Looks phenomenal

MINUS / Single sided MFR / May be hard to source locally





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AORUS X7

Website / www.aorus.com

ERP / R29,999

Supplier / Rectron

SPECS

CPU	Intel Core i7 4700HQ
GPU	NVIDIA GTX 765M SLI 2 x2GB
MEMORY	16GB DDR3
STORAGE	384GB SSD (RAID 0) + 1TB Storage drive
OPTICAL DRIVE	None

BENCHMARK RESULTS

PC Mark8 Creative Suite
(OpenCL Accelerated): **3,881**
Battery time: **1H: 49m: 28s**
3DMark FireStrike: **4,201**
Catzilla 1080p: **6,442**



Let's be honest. NVIDIA's GTX 760M and 765M GPUs aren't as quick as their model numbers may suggest. In fact, a desktop GTX 750 is faster than both, significantly so in fact. However, what happens when you use two of them in SLI?

Well, that is something that we found out when reviewing the X7 notebook from AORUS. We'll delve right into the meat of things because at the heart of this notebook is the SLI configuration. Everything else is secondary and thus the performance of this setup will either be compelling enough or deter you from spending this kind of cash.

The verdict from the numbers is a little bit of both. The good thing is that AORUS is correct in saying that you can achieve 780M-like performance from this

configuration. When we did our testing this turned out to be true for the most part. In some instances it was not so but those were far and few in between and certainly not in any of the tests we use in our benchmark suites. With a total of 1,536 CUDA cores and 128GB/s of memory bandwidth, you'll be able to play most games at the native 1080p resolution with no problems. Keep the AA off however as that is a bandwidth hog, which you have little of with the GTX 765M.

With that said, the unit is powered by the familiar Intel Core i7 4700HQ CPU. A capable CPU and one that will certainly not bottleneck any game for years on end, moreover it is very power friendly with a TDP of 47W. Where gaming notebooks are concerned there's really no need for a faster

CPU and AUROS with their first attempt has chosen the ideal CPU for the X7.

Memory is taken care of by two 8GB DDR3 1,600MHz DIMMS. There's not much to say here as this is not where your performance will come from, but rather the SSD configuration. What you have with the X7 is a standard RAID 0 setup, which may be less than what other vendors offer in their three drive arrays, but it delivers performance that's equally impressive. We recorded sequential read numbers over the 900MB/s mark and write numbers above 500GB/s. This kind of storage performance along with Windows 8.1 result in one of the fastest notebooks that we've tested.

Performance wise, the AORUS X7 is covered, so what of the usability and

general impressions? Well this is where it can become unstuck because under heavy loads the X7 can get fairly loud; this was very evident in the most strenuous parts of PCMark 8's Creative Suite benchmark. It is expected though as there are two GPUs in there along with a CPU.

Audio is supposed to be one of the X7's strong points, and indeed it is louder than a great many notebooks but it doesn't deliver the bass we thought we would hear for such an elaborate sound scheme (with two woofers supposedly). The mid-range is clear and the highs are smooth. The sound stage is comfortably wide and music sounds lively for the most part. However we still lament the lack of bass even though it is to be expected as with most notebooks. This is especially true for these slimmer notebooks where the profile makes it very hard to move lots of air, a basic requirement for bass and lower frequencies. Overall we are satisfied with the audio, but not bowled over.

The two most annoying aspects of this notebook are the super glossy track pad which is a pain to use and the lack of Optimus support, but more about that later. With the track pad, your finger will get stuck as you glide it along because the surface doesn't allow your finger to breathe. This causes a build-up of friction where your finger will get stuck, requiring you to lift more often than on any other track pad. This is particularly annoying because there's no included mouse with the unit.

The other unfortunate aspect of this notebook is that NVIDIA doesn't support SLI on the GTX 765M even though it works. However, because it is not supported officially, you will lose the ability to use NVIDIA Optimus, as such when SLI is enabled in the control panel, you'll always

be using the discrete graphics cards which will rob you of the battery life you'd have if you were otherwise using the iGPU. You may disable SLI and only engage one discrete GPU which would remedy this situation, but then you are without SLI which is the whole point.

Save for these two issues, the rest of the notebook is great. It looks wonderful and is solidly designed. As mentioned earlier the performance is there should you need it and you'll play most if not all games at medium to high detail levels. At 2.9kg it's lighter than most high-end gaming notebooks but it is still a fair amount of weight to lug around with you. Later on in the year, AORUS is set to introduce an updated GTX 860M based version, which will not only result in even better performance and improved battery life, but will officially support SLI and thus Optimus technology. With just that small change we can be sure to have a notebook that very few in the market can match with all things considered.

Until then, this is a fairly impressive effort from AORUS but we'd like to see them include one of their great gaming mice as shown on their website. That may not remedy the immediate situation with their track pad but it would go a long way into making it a non-critical issue. For the most part though, we can't help but be impressed with the notebook. It is visually striking without looking juvenile. It is built for gaming, from the scissor switch keyboard buttons to the macro keys and is built in a compelling way that is sure to turn heads everywhere you take it.

As far as high-end gaming notebooks go, the AUROS X7 is a good alternative to the plethora of offerings out there. **NAG**

- Neo Sibeko

" A capable CPU and one that will certainly not bottleneck any game for years on end, moreover it is very power friendly with a TDP of 47W."

8

AORUS has dared to be a little different in their approach to notebooks and the X7 is a great showing of what modern gaming notebooks should look like.

PLUS / Looks fantastic / Very good disk performance

MINUS / GTX 765 SLI is not officially supported / Can be a little loud

MOSH *pit*

This month's hot list of cool stuff and everything else you simply must have. Well, almost everything.

► **ASTRUM MAGIC STICK**

- **Supplier** / Astrum South Africa
- **Website** / www.astrum.co.za
- **RRP** / R1,099

Astrum's USB-powered Magic Stick converts any TV with an HDMI (or Mini HDMI) port into an Android-powered smart TV. In essence it ensures that you never really have to leave the comfort of your couch to do anything but use the toilet – and even that's negotiable. It runs on Jelly Bean 4.2 and allows you to access Google's Play Store, so you can use your favourite apps and play your favourite games on your television. It's got built-in Bluetooth for interfacing with other devices and is Wi-Fi capable. It's also packing 1GB of memory and a Cortex A9 1.6GHz dual-core processor – which means it's powerful enough to allow you to do stuff like stream full HD video from a USB drive or NAS device.



► **PARROT MINIKIT NEO**

- **Supplier** / SMAC
- **Website** / www.smac.co.za
- **RRP** / R1,199

As far as hands-free kits go, the MINIKIT Neo is impressively advanced. It clips onto your sun visor and allows you to control up to two phones (sync'd via Bluetooth) using nothing but voice commands. Sound quality is maintained even in the noisiest of circumstances thanks to noise and echo cancellation, so that your conversations are mostly free of distractions

There's a companion app with some added features like the ability to help you locate your car if you've somehow lost it in a parking lot or giant ditch or something, and can be used to set up auto-reply SMSes for when you're driving. A vibration sensor automatically activates the Neo when you enter your vehicle, and from there you can use it to stream music from your phone or answer or reject calls (and navigate menus and your phonebook – which automatically syncs with the Neo) simply by speaking to this tiny machine. TECHNOLOGY.



➤ SAMSUNG GALAXY S5

- Supplier / Samsung
- Website / www.samsung.co.za
- RRP / R9,999

If you're in the market for an upgrade then the GALAXY S5 simply must be on your shortlist. It ticks all the boxes and adds some compelling new features that will undoubtedly appeal to your sense of 'cool'. Looking for a phone that is dust and water resistant? Check. Need a quick way of securing your phone? Finger print scanner check. Looking for a convenient way to stay fit and healthy? Personal fitness tracker with pedometer and heart-rate monitor check. Need extra battery time and you're nowhere close to a charger? Ultra Power Saving mode check. Combine all that with a 2.5GHz quad core processor and a 16MP camera and you have a phone that will easily satisfy all of your mobile needs.

➤ PARROT FLOWER POWER

- Supplier / SMAC
- Website / www.smac.co.za
- RRP / R899

Are you one of *those* people who always manage to murder their plants, no matter how strictly you adhere to the care instructions on the little label attached to them? Well then Parrot's got a tech-powered solution for you with the Flower Power. Embedding it in your plant's soil will allow the Flower Power to monitor factors like sunlight, water, temperature and even the amount of fertiliser you need to let you know what your plants require to thrive.

It pairs with your iOS device via Bluetooth, communicating with a companion app that has a database of over 6,000 plant varieties so that you're always informed of your plant's status via real-time alerts. A single AAA battery will get you six months of Flower Power life, and it can be used both indoors and outdoors.



➤ EVERKI BEACON GAMING BACKPACK

- ➊ Supplier / Rectron
- ➋ Website / www.rectron.co.za
- ➌ RRP / R1,199

If you're a regular attender of LANs or just tend to lug around your 18" gaming notebook or gaming console, then the Beacon is the bag for you. Not only is it loaded up with more pockets than you'll know what to do with, but it's capable of storing a gaming notebook and an entire console. The bag includes a removable padded console pouch that's big enough for anything, and has a dedicated padded laptop compartment in the rear.

All of this combines with an extremely high level of quality in stitching, choice of material and ergonomics, which means carrying even some seriously bulky stuff will be comfortable thanks to its five-point balance strap system.

Other nifty features include integrated cable management in the straps for your portable music player or phone, a water-resistant and ultra-tough bottom, and a pouch right at the bottom which contains a separate water-resistant coat for the bag and doubles as a stash for your valuables thanks to its discreet zipper.



➤ ANCIENT TERRIBLE THINGS

- ➊ Supplier / Cosmic Comics
- ➋ Website / www.cosmiccomics.co.za
- ➌ RRP / R650

The local game development scene has been steadily building up steam for years, and we're glad to see that the humble art of board game design is still alive and well on our own shores. Ancient Terrible Things is from the Cape Town-based Pleasant Company Studios, with Simon McGregor leading the game design and Rob van Zyl handling most of the artwork. This is a result of a successful Kickstarter campaign that completed in July 2013 by nearly tripling their goal of \$10,000.

Now the game is out, it's in our hands and it looks gorgeous. Sadly we do have to confess that the artwork appears a little more dark than we'd expect (not artistically speaking, we mean some detail is lost to the dark printing), but the overall

appearance is still one of high quality.

In terms of gameplay, Ancient Terrible Things doesn't shy at the chance to be complex. Games take an hour or more to complete (obviously a little longer on your first go), and feature some interesting dice manipulation to help offset that random element that dice-based games bring to the, erm... table. Altogether it's a fun game that's great for opportunists and those who aren't put off by the idea of someone simply being luckier than them.

The "as-is" early development version of the game is available for free download from their website www.ancientterriblethings.com, so be sure to grab it and get that printer whirring if you're not yet ready to commit to a purchase.



▶ THE RESISTANCE

- ▶ Supplier / AWX
- ▶ Website / www.awx.co.za
- ▶ RRP / R265

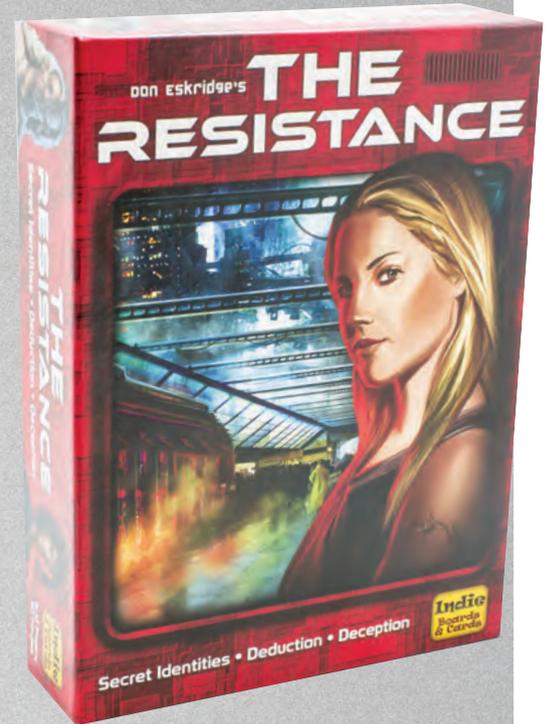
This is technically the second edition of *The Resistance* and features improved graphics (the artwork is functional but not great) and includes the expansion. It's unlikely that you'll ever be presented with the first edition out in the wild but here at NAG we pride ourselves in leaving no stone unturned in the pursuit of superfluous information.

To save time reading the eight page A5 rule booklet, you can always watch the soul destroying 9:51 minute "official" rules video on YouTube followed by the expansion rules, *The Plot Thickens*, at 10:14 minutes. There is an alternative independent video called *Skip the Rules* that features actual people and not just a dull voice, so watch that one instead.

The game itself is a hidden role card game featuring the resistance, the spies and missions to undertake. The kit in the

box includes playing cards, tokens and score cards and requires 5-10 players. It's really for players older than 13 and an average game should take around 30 minutes. We're not going to go into the rules of the game but will tell you that it's best suited for odd numbered groups of players looking for a quick bit of social mistrust and friendship testing entertainment that will involve bluffing and tricking your mates.

Part of our stone-turning process revealed that if you're a soulless mega cheapskate you can play a version of *The Resistance* using standard playing cards – it's a lot less interesting but just shows what you can actually get up to on a desert island using only a pack of cards. Something to think about when you're stuck on a desert island – what single thing will you take with you?



▶ FIREFLY: THE GAME

- ▶ Supplier / Cosmic Comics
- ▶ Website / www.cosmiccomics.co.za
- ▶ RRP / R825

It's odd to think that it's taken this long for a board game based on *Firefly* to surface, yet here we are, over a decade since Joss Whedon's *magnum opus* met its untimely demise, with this incredibly detailed game.

Firefly: The Board Game is a game based on strategy and managing your luck (good or bad). Players take on the role of a captain of one of four *Firefly*-class spaceships and attempt to outdo one another by taking on crew, cargo (legal or otherwise), passengers (again, legal or otherwise) and flying around the 'Verse in the attempt to make a name for themselves. It does an excellent job of playing on the ideas set out in the TV series, and constantly has a foot in the door of the show's narrative without ever feeling bogged down by it: this is a strategy game, after all, and that requires the freedom to have depth and complexity. *Firefly* delivers both bountifully.

For those who enjoy a higher level of strategy, there are a number of suggested additional rules as well as a second addon pack on the way, and we can imagine this'll become the sort of game that will see regular players adopt their own house rules.

► **MARVEL AVENGERS NOW!** **KOTOBUKIYA HULK ARTFX+ STATUE**

- **Supplier** / Cosmic Comics
- **Website** / www.cosmiccomics.co.za
- **RRP** / R1,299

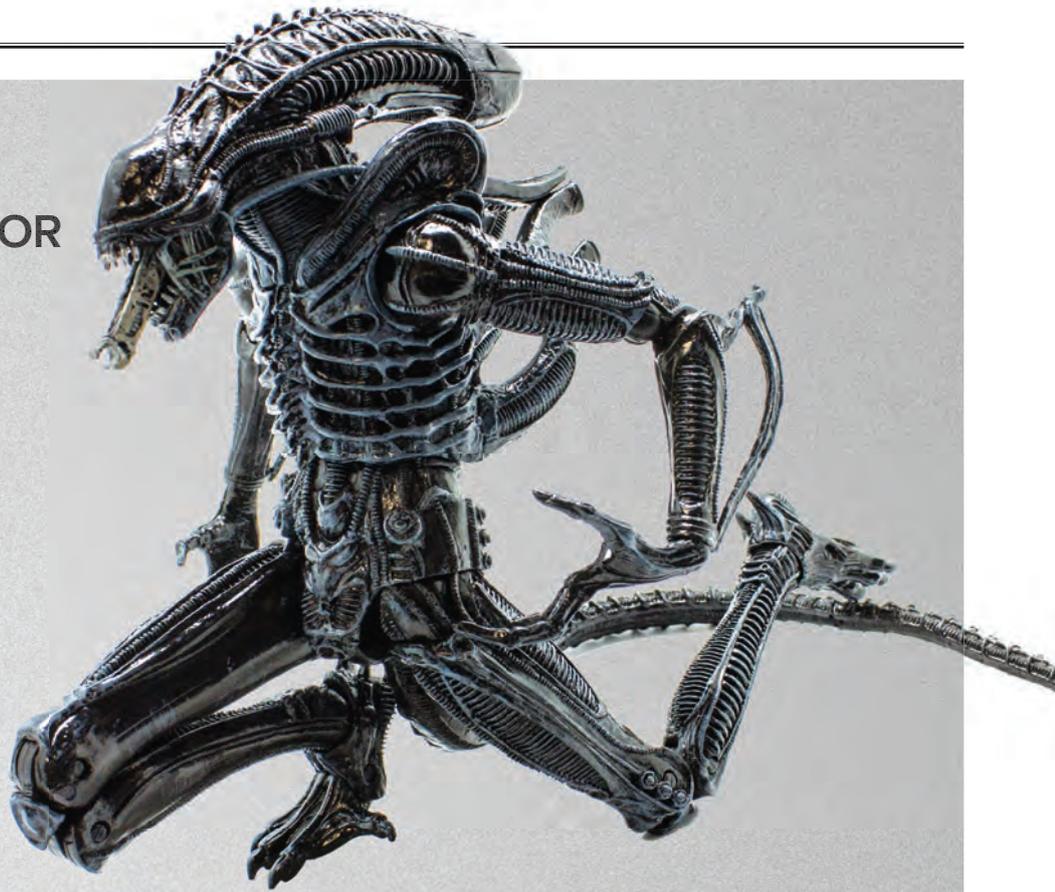
The big green smashing machine strikes a classic comic book pose as this collectible figurine. The statue stands 24cm tall and has a weighty feel to it which is somewhat limply supported by two separate magnetic bases. We tested it in the office earthquake simulator (Michael shaking Jacqui's desk) and it was determined that the Hulk would stay standing in anything less than a 6.7 on the Richter scale. That said, he would probably not survive a cat pawing or a careless feather dusting. The Hulk comes in three separate bits: top, bottom and surprisingly his head – they all slot together nicely in a way that won't look out of place except for a seam along the neck when closely examined. The colouring and detail (especially the muscles and veins) is a master class in how you should present a statue and anyone wanting an angry addition to their figurine collection won't go wrong with this effort. We did have a look for any clips, catches, hinges or similar as we kind of hoped that inside the Hulk we'd find a smaller Bruce Banner but after an extensive search nothing was uncovered. We also did a quick Barbie doll check and The Hulk can easily carry a Barbie in each arm – as you'd expect.



▶ ALIENS XENOMORPH WARRIOR

- ▶ Supplier / AWX
- ▶ Website / www.awx.co.za
- ▶ RRP / R340

If you ever want a proper butt-kicking, alien-creeping sci-fi movie look no further than James Cameron's *Aliens*. It's been aped for years and even turned out better than the original franchise-launching movie, *Alien*. *Alien*-based figurines and toys seem to be the in thing these days. Last month we had that Facehugger egg sack thing and now we've got the very sexy Xenomorph Warrior. You know, the one with the overly forceful kissing action. Naturally the H.R. Giger design, look and feel is strongly represented and the model feels all spiny and sharp and uncomfortable to handle. The only thing missing here is the acid blood which we couldn't find a drop of, even after drilling a small hole in the warrior's chest. The figure stands 22cm tall and apparently took a team of nine people to make happen; if this seems excessive remember that it is Hollywood after all. The figurine has 30 points of articulation and it's possible to stand it upright without any assistance. As a bonus surprise you can open the jaw and slide out the inner mouth. The paint job is also excellent and under the right kind of moody lighting conditions and striking the right kind of pose your little sister's Barbie collection is in for one hell of a nightmare ride.



▶ THOR: THE DARK WORLD SCALE FIGURE

- ▶ Supplier / AWX
- ▶ Website / www.awx.co.za
- ▶ RRP / R1,560

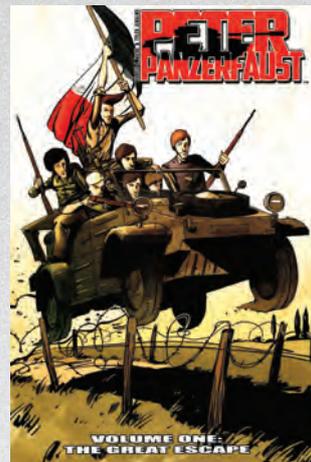
This Thor is a big boy, standing at 47cm he's also rather heavy so don't let your hamsters play around him – Mr. Nibbles could get really hurt. For the record this figure also features the hardest to remove packaging we've seen in around thirty years on the planet (this includes bicycles and remote controlled helicopters). Even Mjölfnir, which is separate in the box, is fastened with its own two cables and plastic supports. The build quality is great, the colour and details are epic and the whole figurine fits the part of a god perfectly. The cape is removable so if you live in a desert and keep your statues outside this makes washing it easy. The cape, while huge and flowing, was also described by Dane as using porno bed sheet material – because it's silky and red we presume. Just because we play games for a living doesn't mean we're like him. The other cool bit is Thor's hair; it's flowing and natural looking but was also described in the office as Rastafarian, so a bit of a hit and miss on that one too. It's a great figurine that is only let down a little by the way the face is modelled. It's a little bit of uncanny valley mixed with hillbilly inbreeding, not perfect but you can't place your finger on why exactly.

► FOREVER EVIL #1

- Supplier / Cosmic Comics
- Website / www.cosmiccomics.co.za
- RRP / R59

Forever Evil #1 marks the beginning of the largest crossover series in DC's *New 52* range: it spans the entire revised DC universe without messing too much with the already established canon. As a result, this is a must-read for anyone who enjoys a little bit of side-story with their back-story.

Forever Evil tells the more-or-less self-contained story of The Trinity War – an epic seven issue war that sees alter-egos of DC's traditional heroes take on the form of evil villains from another dimension. So instead of Batman you get Owlman, Superman takes on the form of Ultraman, and so on. It's maximum cheese but manages to take itself just seriously enough to be intriguing. We guess having the penmanship of the legendary Geoff Johns at the helm goes a long way to achieve this, and with art from David Finch you know you can expect a high level of quality.



► PETER PANZERFAUST

- Supplier / Cosmic Comics
- Website / www.cosmiccomics.co.za
- RRP / R189

They say war is hell, but in the case of the pack of lost boys that make up the cast of *Peter Panzerfaust*, it seems like a jolly good time, too. This book manages to tastefully walk the line between sombre, serious business and light-hearted fun with its bizarre take on the story of Peter Pan (there's a Wendy in here too, and the references are almost endless). The eclectic artwork helps, too: Tyler Jenkins' style is suitably bold and moody while retaining a sense of almost comedic fantasy.

One for thinkers and casual readers alike: this is a comic out of which people will get at least something positive.

► PROOF BOOK 1: GOATSUCKER

- Supplier / Cosmic Comics
- Website / www.cosmiccomics.co.za
- RRP / R139

Most comics like to include elements of occult, supernatural, magical or science-fiction, but as is claimed by writer Alexander Grecian's intro to this trade paperback, which collects the first five issues of *Proof*, everything contained within could already exist. It's just lacking proof.

Following the intriguing introduction is a mix of core story and interlude pieces, each sometimes just a few pages in length. It takes some getting used to at first, but before long you'll be on board with the pace and you'll hopefully have an idea of what the almost insanely inconsistent art style is trying to achieve. We get the impression that artist Riley Rossmo likes to play around: this is clearly evident in the rough-and-ready line work in the core story and use of mixed media from coloured pencils to digital halftone effects for the interludes. It makes for a fun backing to Grecian's attention-demanding narrative, the two contrasting each other but making for an odd harmony that ultimately works very well.



► DIRECTORY

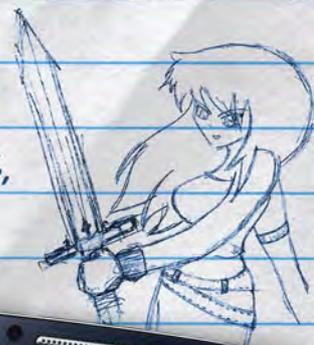
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Astrum Peripherals	011 314 0400
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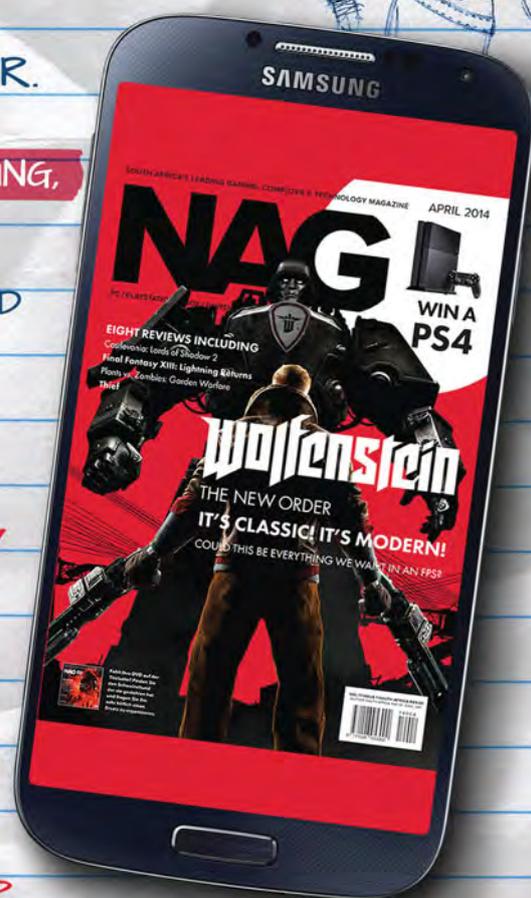


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GG

Not your best game, huh, Jeronkey?

by Tarryn van der Byl

When Tarryn first discovered that the Mushroom Kingdom isn't an actual place, she bombed a small island off the coast of World 3-1 to placate her anger. When the ash and smoke had cleared, she began laying the foundations of her own personal Mushroom Kingdom, to ensure that never again would a child have to be told that eating flowers actually doesn't do much at all.



I'll tell you a secret about my job – the hardest part of it is coming up with a clever title for my column every month. It's an almost interminable process of iteration, permutation, and maddened abnegation – co-starring multiple existential crises and therapist-mandated cat image breaks – that starts approximately immediately after submitting one month's column, and ends approximately immediately after submitting the next. This month, however, I've saved myself a lot of time, effort, and collateral liver damage because I made a promise¹. Okay, maybe not the collateral liver damage, but I'll get back to that later.

In the meantime, though, let's rewind ten years to the start of this story – when Epic Games launched *Unreal Tournament 2004*². Now, as any proper gamer knows, *Unreal Tournament 2004* is the most bestest multiplayer FPS ever made,

ever (TRUE LIFE FACT), even a decade and about a zillion Call of Battlefield games later because FLAK CANNONS. And, you know, pretty much everything else about it but especially the Flak Cannons. So when somebody on the NAG forum recently proposed a game night of Unreal Tournament 2004 and a server was organised, I totally got myself in on that, and Super Retro Gib Friday was officially the next big thing. I expected awesomeness.

What I didn't expect was how bad I am at this game now. I mean, I wasn't always bad at this game, but five years or so of playing almost exclusively on console have added a substantial penalty to my mouse and keyboard skill stats. That, and NAG forum user Zoop on a Manta. And the allegedly reckless quantity of booze I may or may not have consumed over the course of the evening, but I'll deny that. If I don't remember what happened, nobody

1 And I've kept it, but you kind of had to be there, huh, Jeronkey?

2 And, more or less coincidentally, when I only just barely managed to finish my undergraduate degree. Mostly less. I don't even use my formal qualification for anything now, so it doesn't matter anyway.

else does either. That's how it works, and that compilation video you might've seen on the Internet is probably definitely fake.

My embarrassing lack of coordination (... and credibility) notwithstanding, however, a megablast was had by all – and I don't mean just the Redeemer massacres on Deck 17, although those count too – and NAG's Super Retro Gib Friday is now also officially a regular thing. If you want to get up close and old school with us, hit up the Press Start ZA Steam group for more info, free Shield Gun hugs, and an opportunity to learn all sorts of interesting things about Chippit's mom. You know you want to.

Exploding high fives to Robert Stevens at Iteology for hosting the UT2004 server, as well as NAG community gunstar heroes Cynikill and Jeronkey for handling all the admin stuff. <3 **NAG**

EXTRA LIFE

By Scott Johnson / ©2014 All rights reserved / myextralife.com



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CHRISTOPHER 'GET_RIGHT' ALESUND
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