

Attack Stack

By Velocity

Recently it's become popular for companies to bundle software together on CD's and sell them under a theme. Velocity has done just that with their Attack Stack. The idea behind this marketing scheme is to sell the bundle at such a price that, as a whole, it's worth the money. Is the Attack Stack worth the price? Well... kinda.

Velocity has bundled Spectre VR (by Velocity), Arnie 2 and Blade Warrior (by Merit Studios), Novastorm (by Psygnosis), Street Fighter II (by Capcom), Crystal Caliburn (by StarPlay Productions, Inc.), The Lemmings Chronicles (by Psygnosis), The C.H.A.O.S. Continuum (by Creative Multimedia), and The Journeyman Project Turbo (by Sactuary Woods) in the Attack Stack. A bonus game (Doom by Id Software) was also included.

Bogus Bonus

First off, I'm not quite sure why Velocity decided to include the shareware version of DOOM as a "bonus" game. Unless you've just bought a computer or have been absent from the face of the earth for the last couple of years, you've probably already played DOOM--again and again. DOOM is still a great game, but almost everybody has it! Not much of a "bonus".

A quick synopsis ***or, "How do the games rank?"***

The Good

There were only 3 games that were really good. They were Crystal Caliburn, Novastorm, and The Journeyman Project Turbo. (I don't include DOOM, because it's only the shareware version--and it's the "bonus" game)

Crystal Caliburn is a really good pinball game for Windows. It's based upon the pinball tables of the 80's with tunnels, ramps, bumpers and kickbacks. The gameplay is fast and realistic. The graphics are good and the sound is appropriate.

Novastorm is a shooter for DOS. It's very similar to Rebel Assault in that you maneuver a spaceship through a 3D world (that's really a movie). There's a lot of pure arcade twitch-n-move action in this one. The only down sides are: you can't save your progress (and there's no password feature) and once you start the arcade section, you can't exit! (You have to lose all your ships to get back to the main menu).

The Journeyman Project Turbo is a decent Windows adventure. When it was released it was revolutionary; today it's okay. The premise of the game is to go back in time and stop someone else from changing history. Even though the game has the name "Turbo" in it, it still runs rather slow from the CD. (Even with a huge CD-cache, it runs slow). The few puzzles in the game aren't too difficult, and JPT can be finished within a few evenings. The graphics are good, the music is great, but the gameplay is sluggish.

The Okay

Spectre VR is alright, but this game is rather old. This is another, "It was revolutionary when it came out, but it's old news now." It's an arcade 3D action type game for Windows. The graphics are okay, as are the sounds.

The Lemmings Chronicals tries to capture the mystique and addiction of the original Lemmings. But it doesn't. The animation is smooth, the graphics are good, the music and sound are okay, but the gameplay is mediocre. The game has become too complex for fun. You now have to help 3 of the Lemmings tribes colonize 3 different islands.

Mommy, I'm scared!

I still can't figure out why these games were shipped with this pack. They are C.H.A.O.S. Continuum, Blade Warrior, Arnie 2, and Street Fighter 2.

Blade Warrior reminded me of an old Commodore 64 game--Forbidden Forest. It may have been a compliment back in 1986, but today it's pathetic. You see a silhouette of your character and of every monster you come across. Pure black. *yawn*.

Arnie 2. This game tried to be an overhead view Rambo type shooter. You're a one-man army going in to kill the bad guys. The graphics are simplistic, the sound and graphics are unremarkable, and the gameplay is sluggish.

I was really amazed at how bad the original Street Fighter 2 was in comparison to Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo. (SSF2T is very good. Check out issue 13 of VrE Online) All sound effects come from the Sound-blaster--no CD music here. The graphics are kinda true to the arcade. There are too many frames of animation left out from each character, and the game is clunky--not smooth and quick. I couldn't quit out of the game fast enough.

How Annoying!

One thing that annoys me about bundled software is the paper documentation that comes with the package. The Attack Stack comes with an 8.5" by 14" piece of paper folded in half. Documentation for each one of these games is listed on that paper. Okay, okay--they're saving the environment by not printing more pages. But I want to read all the documentation that came with the original game. Without it a lot of background information that helped explain the purpose of the game is lost.

Another is the obvious absence of CD jewel cases. The CD's are shipped without cases. This is uncalled for because the cost of cases is insignificant. The only options you have are: Leave them naked (and let them get scratched), buy some CD cases (too expensive), or throw away some of your old 5.25" disks and use the covers to store the CD's (recommended).

All in All

The Attack stack may be worth the money depending on how much you like these games. I mean, if you're really, really into the Lemmings, and just want the Lemmings Chronicals, then maybe the price could be justified. Or maybe you're interested in 3 of these CD's, it could be worth it to ya. Otherwise, keep walking down the software aisle and look for something more worthwhile of your money.

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Rating

Graphics:	52 (Blade Warrior) - 85 (Novastorm)
Sound:	49 (Arnie 2) - 83 (The Journeyman Project / Novastorm)
Interface:	45 (Blade Warrior) - 86 (Novastorm / The Journeyman Project)
Fun Factor:	0 (Blade Warrior/Arnie 2/C.H.A.O.S Continuum) 90 (The Journeyman Project/Novastorm)
Overall:	36 - 86