y Robert C. Lewis

rivia games have always been the rage. Whether it is a game of Trivial Pursuit or watching Jeopardy!, people love to have that blob of gray matter in their skulls challenged. If it was not the case, then shows like Jeopardy! would have faded from our screens many moons ago. Now imagine if we took Trivia Pursuit, Jeopardy!, The $64,000 Question and tossed them into a blender. To add flavor we would then add an album or two of Fireside Theater, a few cells from Robin Williams and Jim Carrey's brains, and a few buds of that stuff that Bill said he never inhaled. Then we would set the blender to puree and pour that goo into a CD ROM mold and let it go stiff. If all goes well, we should wind up with a game that will be in complete control and take you from the innermost and wildest questions to a point so beyond reality that all you can say is "You Don't Know Jack!"

Know-it-Alls Beware

You Don't Know Jack is the latest creation from Berkeley Systems. They have always been known for their wild screen savers but now they have taken this insanity and translated it into a computerized trivia game that is sure to be the hit of any get-together. This is one game that will place a cap on anyone who considers himself a trivia genius and bring him down to earth with categories that are sure to perplex one and all.

Categories like "Sexually Repressed Commonwealth Cultures," "Life After B.J. and the Bear," or how about "Indiana Jones and the Temple B'nai B'rith" are sure to raise an eyebrow or at

least get a dazed look from even the coolest person in the room. I played it at my game sig and the whole group was blown away by the irrelevant style of the game. I have shown many games off since 1986 and I have never gotten a reaction like I did with this package. You Don't Know Jack is one heck of a party animal.

Right from the point of booting the game, you are plunged into the atmosphere of a game show. From waiting in the green room to the rambling chatter of the director trying to get things in order (like on NBC's Dateline) before air time, you find yourself and competing friends ready to duke it out as the show begins. Right before the show begins you will be asked how many players there are (1, 2, or 3), your names, and whether you want to play a seven- or 21-question game. Each player is then assigned a key on the keyboard to press when they want to respond to a question. This is the first game to have up to three players competing head to head in real time. To ease the congestion at the keyboard, the ChoiceStick would be perfect because you could attach two separate gamepads and program them for players 1 & 2 while player 3 uses the keyboard.

hether you play the seven- or 21-question game, each game can be broken down into three parts. The first part is the standard (Did I say standard? Believe me there is nothing standard about this game.) multiple-choice questions with the "Screw Your Neighbor Option." If at any time you know that one of your competitor(s) do not know an answer, you can press the "s" key and force him/her to answer the question. The next section of the game is called "Gibberish" questions and are worth some major bucks (points). In this section, players are presented with phonetically jumbled quotes, saying, lyrics, or phrases. It is up to the players to buzz in first and decipher these whacked out statements. Just bear in mind that the longer

you take to buzz in, the lower the dollar value will be. I think this could be a good example of Reaganomics.

Lightening Round
The last round of You Don't Know Jack is called "Jack Attack" and it is here where it can either make or break the score for any player. In this section players are thrown association questions where they must match two phrases or words that are directly connected to a selected category. Lets say the category is Ships and Captains. You will then be presented with a screen with the key word or phrase (ex: The Voyager) in the center while other words are moving in and out of the screen. As soon as you see the mate to the key word (ex: Captain Janeway), buzz in and get those precious bucks.

Surprises
Besides the standard fare of the game are unique twists that can occur at any time. Try to get too cocky by buzzing in too soon and you may get "burned by the host." During the course of the show you may wind up taking a trip by joining a class on a "Fiber Optic Field Trip." Players will be taken to strange locales to meet special guest stars who will then read the next question. Then there is the "Don't be a Wimp" scenario where the audience punishes the leading scorer when he/she tries to avoid or wimp out on answering a question.

As with any question-oriented game you may be wondering how long it will take before the questions become repetitious and stale. You Don't Know Jack comes with a database of over 800 different questions that are randomly generated. Since the average game consist of either a seven or 21 questions, it will take a long time before you see any question or category repeated. I also need to add here how Berkeley gave our host unique and smart aleck responses for every style of question. I have played several games and no two games repeated themselves at all.

Last Words
If you cannot tell by now, I am positively mesmerized by the unique approach of this game. The graphics and sounds give you exactly what you need to hold and keep your attention throughout the game. Make sure you have a good pair of speakers since 75 percent of the gaming is audio centered. Even though the majority of the graphics are more or less text, it is how Berkeley breathed life into them and gave them a style that truly reflects the strangeness of the game. So grab a few friends and nestle up to the keyboard and see if you really don't know Jack!

Pros
• Hilarious
• Fast-paced
• Over 800 questions
• Never know what will happen next
• Allows up to three player to go head to head in real time
• Great party animal
• Well thought-out

Cons
• Requires an 040 or PPC to run
• Contains mature material including sexual language and references that
 may not be proper for the young at heart although they will not get it
 anyway!