he MDR mailbag contains letters received by MDR, as well as some of the more useful and interesting posts from the Mac-related newsgroups on Usenet.

Letters:

From: Remmy Tourment <remy.tourment@cemagref.fr>
To: MDR
Subject: About MacDoom and the user interface

I don't like very much the way Doom has been "MAC-ized." There are lot of flaws in the user interface, ways to do things that are not natural to Mac users.

One of your readers told about the use of the mouse in game configurations. I agree with his point of view. I would like to point at another such flaw, which is a lot more annoying. MacDoomII knows two (at least) kind of files : WADS and saved games. Opening directly a saved game (double click) from the Finder crashes (at least on my Performa 5200, with System 7.5.1 running without any extensions except QuickTime 2.1 and SoundManager 3.1), if this saved game was created with a WAD other than DoomII.WAD. The adapters could have made the WAD automatically loaded, after all, saved games are not common files with other platforms, so it is possible to store information about the WADs loaded to create the saved game.

At least they could have put an error message, as "This saved game is from another WAD file, please load it first," and not let the Mac crash.

The naming of saved games also follows not-too-natural rules, with the auto-naming disappearing once you've been killed, and going on once you've changed levels. I would have felt the other way more easy to understand.

Remmy Tourment

Remmy, thanks for your letter. You've expressed what many of us surely

have felt living with MacDoom. All I can say is, wait for MacHexen. It sounds like the interface will be much more Mac-like. Doom was the first major port of an id Software game (not counting Wolfenstein 3D, which is inferior to Doom in many ways), but it's a good start. Hopefully future ports will improve the interface and build around past mistakes.-Ed.

From: Mako Miyamoto <miyamoto@jeffnet.org>
To: MDR
Subject: Alien-X WAD crashes

Hello. I read MDR #3, and it talked about the Alien-X WAD. I tried it but an error message comes up a lot saying something about Numlump and some numbers and equal signs. I was wondering if you knew what was the problem. Thanks.

Unfortunately, Mako, the Alien-X WAD has a lot of problems. I've tried it too, and I can't say I recommend the experience. The WAD simply crashes a lot, and I can't say that it's worth the trouble. I've heard talk of some new Alien WADs emerging that should be more compatible with MacDoom. I'll try to get an update on the situation as soon as possible.-Ed.

From: Ed Sikorski <sikorski@princeton.edu>
To: MDR
Subject: Demon Gate CD

I came across the Demon Gate CD at a Software, Etc. store and picked it up for $14. After starting some WADs up, I realized, this product is awful! It is a complete repackaging of what is on the Internet and PC aisle, and then some.

(OK, SANTA.WAD from Ziff Davis is on there and it is... different! I wish the train would at least move, as then I could lure an Imp or two into its path!)

I found patch errors on several WADs. I also found that it was not thoroughly documented.

I would have appreciated a category of WAD files (deathmatch, single player, multiple levels, etc.). Now, for $14 I don't expect much. However, I have paid less for shareware products and received much more in quality.

Ed Sikorski

Ed, thanks for sounding off on this. Yes, upon close examination, there are some quality control issues with the DemonGate CD. It's shovelware, what did you expect? Still, it's

nice to have a ton of WADs for those days when you just can't get onto the Internet, or you don't want to wait to download something new -- not to mention for those folks stranded without a modem or access to an Internet connection!-Ed.

From: Dr. Ken Mahood <Ken1616@aol.com>
To: MDR
Subject: An interesting twist

Well, I've actually received a letter requesting some e-mail help regarding Doom from one of your readers -- now that's what I call an interesting turn of events. I'm always receiving mail from young musicians and other instructors asking for my help or opinion about some musical question--usually with regard's to music theory. But, thanks to the publication of my letter in MDR#3, I've actually been able to give some help to someone (at least I HOPE it was the correct answer).

Being able to do this kind of thing in some non-music field -- has been such a thrill -- I thought I might let you know that I'd be most pleased to entertain any and all questions. I mean I'm not any Doom expert -- far from it. But, for the hard cases, I am able to ask some others who have far greater programming experience (if it comes to that). Most of the questions I 've received about Doom (before my letter was published in your journal) were very easy -- and took no time to answer.

Lastly, I've been thinking about writing completely new music for use with the Doom II engine. The stuff id Software includes is rather barren and uninteresting. I usually play my WADs with the music off (and I'm a musician!). How would one go about recording it to make it a part of the music portion of the files. I'm using four keyboards and a master cassette recorder when I make a master for my albums (I've got 11 albums released so far). But I don't have a clue as to how to record the music to make it part of the gaming sound files.

Ken Mahood, Ph.D.

Well, Ken, if you want to take some of the questions off my hands, feel free!! Maybe you can field some, leaving me more time to work on the next issue of MDR. (Folks, every ten letters asking me when the issue will be released adds about a day to the project. Remember, I have a day job -- and quite a bit of freelance work. As much as I'd like to do this full-time, MDR just doesn't pay the bills. In fact, it doesn't pay anything, except in gratification!)

As for the music recording, well, I hope to have a full-fledged article on the subject in MDR#5. I've approached someone who has experience with this about exploring the little known area of QuickTime MIDI music files.-Ed.

From: Peter Tam <Petertam@aol.com>
To: MDR
Subject: Deathmatch cheat

SSSSSSHHHHHHHWWWWW BOOOOOM! That's the sound of your opponent's dreaded BFG powering up before it smears you against the wall, like butter on toast. We all recognize that shrill sounding alarm of an impending deathblow and have resorted to holding down the shift key to run for cover!

Those of you who are familiar with, and have been accustomed to that scenario are in for a little surprise.

Three words, Silent But Deadly. Nope, it's not the horrible smell emanating from your anus! It's the Silent BFG. Wind up to blast your opponent leaving him clueless about how you powered up -- without the death tune. All you need to do is to get near a wall and press up against it making the "umph" noise (imagine you're looking for a secret door). While grunting, power up the BFG and turn away toward your opponent just before it fires. Watch that green ball flare out without a peep (except for the grunt of course). Jumping off stairs and cliffs will yield the same results. It's takes a little dexterity to coordinate the two actions at once, but just like chewing gum and walking, most of us have been able to cope. It's a rather easy technique to employ, but, more importantly, you must know when to execute it. Appropriately used, the surprise will win you a few frags and a big smile!

Read MDR and get educated, or read the Doom obituaries.

Peter Tam

Peter, thanks for the, er, rather colorful gameplay tip.-Ed.

senet:

Note: Some Usenet posts are edited for space and clarity. Material quoted back from previous messages is in italics.

From: Chris Richards <crichard@blue.weeg.uiowa.edu>
To: comp.sys.mac.games.action
Subject: Quake

In a previous article, Michael Eilers <eilersm@aruba.ccit.arizona.edu> wrote:

>I've been reading up on id Software's next PC (and Mac,
>supposedly) game. It's another first-person affair, but set in
>what seems to be the Middle Ages. Features are reported to
>include:
>   * Newer, better wall options (better bridges, etc.)
>   * Look up/down
>   * "Leaning" to dodge
>   * Body-part specific damage
>   * Range-specific damage
>   * Swimming, jumping, and getting flung into the air
>   * Multi-player net games
>   * Net-game servers on the internet
>   * User-customizable texture maps on net players
>   * 640x480 and beyond
>   * Up to 24-bit color
>
> Sounds a lot like Marathon 2, but has some good ideas of its own.

The best idea to me is the customizability built into Quake. The entire game is written in
QuakeC, which exists as text files to be modified at will by the end users. New objects
can be easily created and inserted, and everything from monster AI to weapons to game
rules can be changed to taste.

The connectivity is also impressive.   There is no hard-wired limit to the number of
players like in Doom or Marathon. Rather, its whatever the server can handle, with
numbers like 60-100 players being thrown around. Also, id has mentioned that if a
player connects to a server that contains universe objects the player doesn't have on his
hard drive, the items will be sent and installed, simplifying things greatly in a web-like
fashion.

Others things that sound cool are 3-d texture mapped polygon monsters like in Descent,
but more complicated. Should be fun.

Keep in mind though, id has stated many times that everything they say could be a lie.
Take it with a grain of salt until March, when the game should be out.

Chris Richards

For more letters and Usenet posts, see this month's MacDoom ModemPlay:

ave a correction or comment for MacDoom Review? Send us a letter at

reeltime@voicenet.com.