

INSIDE GAMES & ENTERTAINMENT UPDATE

Volume 2, Issue 34

Uploaded on January 29, 1996

Published by:
The Word Warriors
23115 Broadmoor Court
Auburn, CA 95602

email
gamesup1@ix.netcom.com
igufolk1@aol.com

Publishers/Editors: Hartley & Pattie Lesser
Associate Publisher: Tuncer Deniz
Senior Editors: Gary Le, Lance Forrest
Associate Editors: Sal Iva, Aleksandra Stuart
Field Editor: blud
Editorial Ne'er-Do-Well: Mudgeon

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Publishers:

Distillations: news and new products
--Computer Entertainment News
--Video Game News
--Industry Stuff: Digital Delights
--Online Stuff

Inside Games and Entertainment Update (TM) is published by The Word Warriors(TM), Auburn, CA. Federal law prohibits the unauthorized replication or distribution of the contents of this newsletter without the express, written permission of the publication's owners. This publication is distributed via on-line services, the Internet, and through regional and international bulletin board services who have requested permission from this newsletter's owners to distribute this product.

FROM THE PUBLISHERS . . .

Geez, one week away from the hustle and bustle of the digital entertainment industry-what a wonderful experience. And just in time, too, as snow and snow and even more snow blanketed the Sierras, enabling us to enjoy several days of powder skiing. Now we're back, and we're ready to pummel everyone with more and more goodies. In order to accomplish the continued expansion of our newsletter, we are now looking for a reviewer who owns a Sega Saturn system. This individual will become one of our permanent reviewers and will be responsible for several Sega Saturn product reviews. If you're interested, let us know! We look forward to hearing from you.--s/Hartley & Pattie Lesser

[DISTILLATIONS: news and new products](#)

* COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT NEWS *

IN THE MOOD FOR MAYHEM?

Total Mayhem is a new product enroute for Windows 95 gamers from Domark (415-513-8929). Seems as though there's this planet that's run entirely by machines. And guess who the slaves are--yep, mankind! But there are freedom fighters on this planet and they call themselves the Mayhem Soldiers. They are fighting a war to liberate mankind from the machines, machines that hold society in a grip of terror and death. Using high tech weapons and strategic tactics, you can game not only against the computer, but also over a network against several opponents. This title is totally Windows 95 native and supports play for as many as 8 players. You can zoom in to the action and control as many as 6 Mayhem Soldiers against 13 different enemies utilizing one of five different levels of skill. There are 20 missions that involve both interior and exterior environments. This could be a really hot title for Domark in that the game also runs under Windows 3.1, but the network play demands Windows 95 operation. You'll also need a 2x CD-ROM and a monitor capable of displaying SVGA graphics.

SPACE SURFIN'

King Dorf and his rotten mechanical Hopper Attack Force are threatening your planet. The only hope to prevent these destructive forces from winning the day is, well, Space Dude. As Space Dude, you must rescue the princess and prove that right is might. This CD-ROM game, coming from FormGen on April 1st, will keep you laughing and shooting for hours at a time. The game is very much like an interactive animated motion picture with you controlling the action. The title is also highly suitable as a family entertainment, suitable for all ages. Plus, the game self-adjusts and anticipates your strategy!

COLLEGIATE ROUND BALL AND DEEP MYSTERIES

GTE Entertainment (619-431-8801) has acquired the rights to the logos, uniforms, mascots and courts of 64 of the NCAA's finest college basketball teams for use in its upcoming NCAA Championship Basketball CD-ROM game. This is the first time any CD-ROM game has secured both the NCAA license and the rights to use 64 Division I schools. This title will allow you to recruit and build teams from scratch, drawing from an extensive "pool" that includes freshmen through senior players with varying strengths. More than 100 player moves are created through 4,500 frames of animation, all using GTE Entertainment's sophisticated motion capture technology. Plus, this game's characters actually grow in experience and abilities as they play through four years, unlike other sports games in which players have fixed, unchanging stats. Watch for this title to roll-out next month. You'll need a 486/66 with 8MB RAM, SVGA graphics and MS-DOS 5.x or higher.

Also upcoming is Timelapse Ancient Civilizations(TM), where you are lured to discover the secrets behind earth's most amazing civilizations--Egypt, Mayan, Anasazi and the mythical Atlantis, all using computer-generated 3D worlds. This game is scheduled for release this August on CD-ROM for Macintosh and PCs. The title will feature movie-quality special effects such as animation and morphing, as well as full-motion video. The CD-ROM's high-res, photo-realistic 3D worlds will utilize ray-traced images to create true shadows and reflectivity, accurately re-creating outdoor images. Building on the game's visuals, special features will include panoramic 360-degree turns, the use of a camera to take instant photos, and abundant animated life in the form of animals, statues and spirits. The title draws on well-researched historical facts to support the game's fictional storyline. [We've seen pre-alpha material and were totally absorbed by this title's artwork and animation. This is gonna be one hot title!--Editors]

YOU'RE NOT REALLY ALONE

More and more titles are being announced and released for the Windows 95 operating environment. Now Interplay Productions (714-553-6655) has released Solitaire Deluxe for Windows 95 with 24 games of chance. You'll enjoy such games as Klondike, Golf, La Nivernaise, Pyramid, Monte Carlo and other classic favorites. You can enable the Tournament mode and you can go up against your highest score in any six of your favorite games. The title was developed in 256-colors and you may select from 29 card decks and 25 background graphics. You can also create a customized background using a new import feature that can incorporate your favorite pictures that are in "bmp" format. To play this title, you'll need a 386/33, minimum VGA video card and monitor, 4MB RAM, MS mouse and a 100-percent compatible Sound Blaster sound card. Check out the company's WWW site at <http://www.interplay.com>.

PINHEAD AND DOLPHINS ENROUTE

Coming from Magnet Interactive for Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment are two highly-anticipated software entertainments. The first is Hellraiser: Virtual Hell, where you assume the persona of a hotshot network Cybehunter. You are a high-tech troubleshooter and you must find your way out of hell while evading Pinhead and his evil cenobite apostles. Perhaps you'll even find the right path to salvation! The game uses a real-time, 3D engine with hellish puzzles presented for your edification. All the terror of the movie is brought to you in full 360 degree real-time interactivity. Plus, the latest in 3D sound technology will immerse you in a multi-sensory game experience, including a sinister soundtrack that includes music for the original movie. There's even Pinhead's voice and image on your monitor. This title is for PC CD-ROM machines.

In the 21st Century, man, nature and technology converge. This is a game of discovery, adventure and intrigue where you must discover the mystery and unlock the clues. The action takes place at the Bluestar Space Station, which is suspended in low Earth orbit. You take the role of Abacus, a former circus dolphin who was raised in captivity until rescued by human scientists. You've been trained in sonic programming and sent into space. You're soon caught in a mysterious web of technological wonder, psychological intrigue, adventure and drama. You'll engage in dynamic, interactive conversations with dolphins and humans to share the secrets learned and prevent the destruction of everything Bluestar hopes to achieve. There's a full cast of acting talent, including Levar Burton from the hit TV series Star Trek: The Next Generation. You'll get seamless integration of computer generated and full motion video characters. This title will have broad appeal for male and female gamers of all ages. Bluestar will release later this year for Windows 95 CD-ROM computers. Don't forget to visit the company's WWW site at <http://www.magnet.com>.

** VIDEO GAME NEWS **

BOMBS IN TETRIS?

Yep, there WILL be bombs in Tetris as Nintendo releases their new 4-megabit puzzle game, Tetris Blast, for Game Boy and Super Game Boy. The new strategy is to complete a line with a bomb in it. Once completed, the bomb explodes and all of the blocks in its area are destroyed. The more lines completed with the new piece, the larger the radius of the explosion. A "Mega Bomb" is created if four bombs are placed next to each other to form a square. A "Mega Bomb" clears a larger radius than a regular bomb blast. The best overall strategy then has you trying to create as many "Mega Bombs" as is possible. There are three different modes of play: Training, Contest and Fight. Plus, this game includes four new game

play puzzle pieces. As with the harder levels of the original Tetris, Contest mode begins with a pattern of blocks already on the play field as you try to clear the field before 100 blocks fall. Fight mode is an expert challenge against eight enemy characters, each with its own special ability. The new puzzle pieces include a five-block "T" and a five-block plus sign, which appear only after reaching Stage 50 of the Contest mode. By using the Game Boy Link connector, two players can play Tetris Blast simultaneously. Added to the other strategies is the two-player tactic of being able to send blocks over to the opponent's play field--one block is sent over for each 10 blocks cleared. For more info on this and other Nintendo titles, check out the company's WWW site at <http://www.nintendo.com>.

STORE SHELVES SUPPORT SUPER SHOOTER

Named the best shooter of the year by Electronic Gaming Monthly, Philosoma(TM) is now available for the Sony Playstation. From Sony Computer Entertainment, this title propels you into an adventure that includes 18 alien-infested levels, all waiting to be conquered. 3D graphics and ever-changing perspectives (horizontal side-scrolling, vertical arcade-style, top-down isometric, 3rd person 3D front and back views) will provide you with hours of gameplay. You'll have an entire arsenal of weapons for your use, including the red Vulcan cannon that fires multiple shots per second. Buster grenades can quickly annihilate all of the enemies on-screen. Your blue laser provides pin-point accuracy and the ray-B shoots enemies who might be attacking you from the rear. You also have an atomic-powered weapon that becomes more powerful the longer the button on the controller is depressed. There are tons of power-ups, including bombs, guided missiles, shields and extra lives. The title also includes movie-like cinematics and 3D views with music and sound effects. This title is for the Sony Playstation.

** DIGITAL DELIGHTS **

TRADE SHOW SELLS OUT

This should be of no surprise to anyone who attended the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) last year in Los Angeles. Four months out from its opening date, E3 has already sold out all available exhibition space. This means there are over 279 exhibitors who have reserved more than 445,000 square feet of space. The exhibition takes place May 16 through 18th at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The show features interactive entertainment, edutainment and educational software for all forms of distribution to the consumer. An added highlight this year is a new WWW site at <http://www.mha.com/e3/>. This site carries info on the exhibitors, an on-line brochure request form, details on conference sessions, travel and hotel information, E3 and exhibitors press announcements, special events, celebrity appearances and hot links to exhibitor's Web sites. E3 is co-produced with Infotainment World and MHA Event Management.

I/O FREEDOM, FREEDOM AT LAST

You enjoy playing 3D games. We enjoy playing 3D games. Yet, too many I/O (Input/Output) devices just try to accommodate their 2D workings to the 3D world. Not so with Spaceball(R) Avenger from Spacetec IMC. Check this puppy out if you really want 3D game control. Not only is it Windows 95 compatible, but you get full, simultaneous six-degrees-of freedom 3D control. Many games already support Spaceball Avenger.

The unit is quite simple to control. All you do is put your thumb on the "Y" pole of the ball and then place your index finger on the "Z" pole of the ball. Now, hold your unit so it is pointing at your monitor, holding it parallel to the floor or desk. All you do to navigate is

gently twist, pull or push the PowerSensor ball in the direction you want to realize on your screen. You can even cartwheel using this device. We think that this is a rather unique device and requires very little time to get used to its operation.

** DEVELOPER DUMPS **

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD

3DLabs, Inc., has been awarded the 1995 Editor's Choice Award by Computer Graphics World for their GLINT(R) and PERMEDIA(TM) 3D accelerator chips. Both chips are members of 3D processor families. GLINT enables VRAM-based workstation-class graphics with support for hi-res displays with 32-bit color and Z buffers and is used in PC board aimed at the graphics pro. The GLINT 300SX processor can process 300,000 fully OpenGL-compliant polygons per second with advanced rendering modes including anti-aliasing, multi-bit stencils and alpha-buffer translucency. It can drive as much as 80MB of graphics memory for advanced display functionality. The PERMEDIA is designed for the consumer market and brings 2D, VGA and video acceleration with GLINT-class 3D performance to low-cost graphics boards. The chip can generate 25 million texture-mapped pixels-per-second with high quality, true per-pixel perspective correction and full bi-linear filtering.

ANIMATION FOR MAC WEB'ERS

A new multimedia authoring tool is going to be released soon by DeltaPoint, Inc., for the Macintosh. Called WebAnimtor, this tool is expected to speed the creation of multimedia graphics and decrease the file size for use on the World Wide Web (WWW). WebAnimator is designed to animate Web pages through two components: the authoring tool and a viewing player (including both Netscape Navigator plug-in and stand-alone full-screen players--distributed free-of-charge). This product makes it easy to create animations, synchronize sound, import photos, add interactive buttons and customize and enliven WWW sites. As WebAnimator use vector architecture, smaller file sizes result, requiring shorter download and playback times. Objects in WebAnimator are drawn as lines, circles, rectangles, and so on, which are compressed to very small file sizes. One second of WebAnimator animation can be compressed to as small as 500 bytes. Animations are created by pointing, clicking and dragging your mouse with extensive creative control, including transitions, time control, sound, colors, drawing and animation. The StoryBoard feature enables you to author your productions from pre-designed animated templates or to create your own, customized, full-featured presentations. The SRP is \$295, with an expected introductory street price expected to be \$99.

CONFERENCE FOR NETSCAPE BUILDING

The Netscape Internet Developers Conference has been announced by Netscape Communications Corp. This will be the industry's first Java and JavaScript conference for developers creating live on-line applications and content. The dates are March 5th through 7th and the conference will be held at the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco. There will be in-depth technical info for the develop community building on Netscape's open standards-based software platform. Three keynote speakers will address attendees: Mark Andreessen, vice president of technology and co-founder of Netscape; Eric Schmidt, chief technology officer at Sun Microsystems (the creators of Java); and Will Hearst, CEO of @Home, a joint venture between TCI Technology Ventures and Kleiner Perkins Caulfield & Byers working to bring high-speed Internet access to homes via cable. The show is produced by Netscape and Integrated Media (a division of IDG). Individuals can register by calling 800-225-4698 in the US or 617-551-9800 for international applicants. Otherwise, send email to netscape@mha.com.

QUARTERDECK GRAPHICS MOVEMENT

Quarterdeck is now shipping Hijaak Graphics Suite 95, a complete graphics toolkit for Windows 95 users. The suite comes with 15 tools for editing, drawing, converting and capturing graphic files, scanning, slideshow utilities, plus a database to store images, as well as an editor to create and edit vector graphic images, as well as a library of 10,000 images. The suite is fully compatible with OLE 2.0 (Object Linking and Embedding) and allows you to drag graphic files into a variety of apps. The core program is Hijaak 95 Plus which converts, captures, enhances, embeds, scans, traces, and searches for image files by their graphical attributes. Hijaak 95 extends the Windows 95 interface by presenting thumbnail representations of images as icons for files in the Explorer and common dialogs as well as added shortcut menu options. The Plus version includes extensions for raster-to-vector tracing, generating a slideshow or screen saver, and an OLE applet for creating 3D headlines. For creating line art, there's Hijaak Sketch; for images, Hijaak Paint; plus there are on-line tutorials.

* ONLINE STUFF *

ATTITUDE NETWORK CREATED

The Attitude Network, Ltd., has been created through investments by ESPN founder Bill Rasmussen and Internet Americas president David Rae. The Attitude Network will focus on customized content for niche lifestyle audiences with delivery via cable, radio, print and on-line media and has signed on as a Netscape development partner and will use its Commerce Server technology for on-line transactions. The site also incorporates RealAudio and will bring Java technology, Net Genesis' NetThread chat software, and a proprietary search engine into its Web programs.

The first program, Happy Puppy, is an award-winning WWW site that was acquired by the Attitude Network. Happy Puppy is the number one games site on the Internet, with more than 12 million hits per month as measured by I/PRO, the Nielsen-affiliated tracking software from Internet Profiles. According to the most recent I/PRO audit, this site receives an average of 33,000 original users per day and over 2.5 million hits per week. The average time spent in this site is eight minutes, with users accessing and average of five pages per visit.

Fog Studios is also a partner in the Attitude Network and brings some of the electronic entertainment industry's top games journalists, editors, authors and analysts to develop content for Happy Puppy media properties. Fog is headed by Ed Dille and his partner, Bill Kunkel. A complete overhaul of the already popular Happy Puppy Web site is underway, with a new Puppy mascot and new content areas in development. Top games agent Barry Friedman is also participating in the formation of the Attitude Network.

This area is super-radical and super-cool. You should visit the site at <http://www.happypuppy.com> and check out the goodies for yourself!

QUARTERDECK ON-LINE MOVEMENTS

Quarterdeck Corporation has announced their award-winning WebSTAR Web server products are now available for the Macintosh. Products include WebSTAR Commerce Toolkit, a customizable engine for conducting commerce over the Web, Global State Chat Server software, an IRC chat server for Macintosh, and a new version of Quarterdeck Mail. Also, the company is going to bundle Adobe PageMill with WebSTAR as well as ports of Quarterdeck

Mosaic and Global Chat IRC client software for Macintosh. Another Mac product is ListSTAR, an Internet Mailing list manager.

The company has also started shipping their WebSTAR for Windows 95/NT. Formerly called WebServer 32, this product offers directory-level security and supports the establishment of multiple virtual servers on a single, non-dedicated PC. The program comes with an intuitive, graphical interface that makes setup, configuration and administration of WebSTAR easy for the user. You'll need a 486/66 with 8MB of RAM to run under Windows 95, and a Pentium-based PC with 16MB of RAM to run under Windows NT. This product is designed to operate directly out of the box with no UNIX experience required. The Control Center handles all administration, logging, document management and user management. WebSTAR for Windows 95/NT works with all popular Web browsers and authoring tools and is compatible with HTTP v.1.0/HTTP v.0.9.

Quarterdeck has also released InternetSuite 2.0, a complete solution for users to get on-line and gain the maximum use of the Internet. The product now comes with the Global Chat utility which gives you access to the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) real-time chat system on the Internet. Also, there's CyberSitter to allow parents to lock children out of Web and Usenet material they consider unsuitable for the viewing. Quarterdeck has also licensed the RealAudio Player from Progressive Networks, the QuickTime for Windows from Apple Computer to play motion video, and an Adobe Acrobat PDF file viewer for Quarterdeck Mosaic v. 2.0 (which also supports additional Netscape and HTML 3.0 formatting extensions). Additional new features include modem detection during setup, MIME messaging, a spell checker, and a global search system in the Quarterdeck Message Center, a news and mail reader.

**** Perspectives: rational investigations of new products ****

The Hive from Trimark Interactive
for Windows 95 CD-ROM-based computers

The Hive boils down to three things: your trigger finger, the precision of your joystick calibration, and your patience. This is a shooter, plain and simple. And a hard shooter, at that. There will be lots of unhappy folk who buy The Hive. They'll see the stack of them next to the Windows 95 upgrade display and say to themselves, "hmmm, an action/arcade game exclusively for Windows 95. Wow! This must be cool!"

Yes, installation is a snap, the graphics are wonderful in places (this is the first game that uses the DirectX APIs under Windows 95), and the soundtrack heightens the suspense. Other than that, The Hive is a major disappointment as anything but a stubborn every-millimeter-counts shoot-'em-up game. You shoot on foot, on your back, from a space ship, from a fighter pod, while you're flying with a jet backpack--and the list goes on.

There's a punchless science-fiction backstory: an ancient culture once dabbled in the propagation of Hivasects for the deadly biotoxin they produced. The biotoxin, however, eventually killed off the ancient culture in total. Bummer, huh? Now, millions of years later, the underhanded Noir Dyne Corporation has discovered this extinct homeworld, and have revived the Hivasects from DNA remnants. You play Max, a Federation agent sent to infiltrate the illicit operations, but when your cover is blown (in the first scene), you must use brute force to find and destroy The Hive, once and for all.

Sure, there's a story, but unlike a game like Dark Forces where you really cared, here the

story does nothing to propel the action. Oh, I guess the cutscenes do let you rest your numb trigger finger and are pretty cool to watch.

The 20 levels boil down to 20 arcade sequences. The first couple of levels are just plain lame. For level 2, the autopilot controls are dead, so you must keep the game cursor between two horizontal lines on the screen. It's the stupidest thing I've ever seen in a game.

The levels do get better, though, or should I say harder. Basically, you must hit the bad guys before they hit you, and there's no margin for error, even in the "normal" mode. Even the most nimble gamers will end up playing the same scene over dozens of times. Hell, I had to repeat some levels almost 100 times, and I'm a competent Rebel Assault-type shooter. Another caveat is that there's no opportunity to dodge incoming fire; you must just stand there and take it. Imagine playing Descent with no ability to move up-and-down, or side-to-side. Thus, each level boils down to more luck than skill--that makes for a most frustrating gaming experience.

My recommendation: run from The Hive before it stings you. For HARD-core shooter fans (with 10 year-old reflexes and an iron trigger finger) who liked Cyberia, Rebel Assault and Novastorm, you might want to give The Hive a try. For me, though, I hope the Hivasects remain extinct.--Lance Forrest

Game requirements

A 486/66 or better, Windows 95, SVGA graphics, 2x CD-ROM drive, 8MB RAM, joystick

Mudgeon: On Games

I certainly shall not require much of your valuable time this issue. Additional newsletter design and the initiation of 1995 tax preparation have resulted in a Spindler-sized headache. I simply wish to offer a couple of thoughts.

First of all, thumbs down to MicroProse! Although I personally have the highest respect for the company, although they are now actually a studio, and their latest moves to focus on good, solid programs is a superb decision, I cannot help but wonder WHY on earth they release a bloody title that requires user-intervention with system files in order to make a game run correctly? Why? Why?

I speak of This Means War which runs under Windows, a strategic game I was truly looking forward to playing. However, this title's sound card support is so antiquated and so forlorn in features, the included "read.me" file explains WHY the user must edit their Win INI file just to get their sound card to work correctly--if it hangs up. Ask most users of Windows 95 how their operating system works, what files do what, and what they need to do other than RUN their games, and you get a blank stare. How are these fine consumers going to cope with the fact that they must go into their editor and recode Windows files simply to get a game to work correctly? Uh-uh, not a good thing to do!

So many games, including several from MicroProse themselves, automatically "detect" sound and MIDI cards. So many games simply run from their .EXE file without additional user intervention. MicroProse is asking for trouble when they release a title that can cause a user to go bonkers. And, why should ANYONE have to engage in recoding INIs? Doesn't make sense to me at all. Bothersome, most bothersome.

On the other side of the coin, you get programs like DOGZ from PF.MAGIC. This is a super

screen-saver because it is MORE than a screen-saver and presents man's (or woman's) best friend in interactive play on your monitor. For Windows (Mac version coming soon!) computers, you not only get to select the right dog to be your friend, but you get to train your pooch. There are several activities that you'll find yourself engaging in with a grin. And, when you're not using your computer, you can establish your canine friend to become the guard dog of your computer. This is a job your dog accepts with great seriousness. You can rest assured he (or she) is on patrol to ensure no screen burn-in. Whether barking or baying at the moon, snuffling when at rest, your best friend ensures that your time at your PC is quality-time. DOGZ is certainly a product you should seriously consider owning!--Mudgeon