

## INSIDE GAMES & ENTERTAINMENT UPDATE

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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

From the Publishers

Folks, we have a NEW, PRIMARY email address. Please IGNORE gamesup1@ix.netcom.com. Our NEW, PRIMARY email address is gamesup@gv.net. The reason? We got extremely tired of paying through the nose for excessive line charges to reach a node for our previously selected carrier. We now have better service, and better rates, through a more local number--all the more reason for the change! We're delighted to have this new service through Grass Valley Net in Grass Valley, California. Please make a note of the new email address and use it to your heart's content.--s/Hartley & Pattie Lesser

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[DISTILLATIONS: news and new products](#)

\* COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT NEWS \*

#### RAD RACING ON-LINE

An agreement has been signed between Domark (415-513-8929) and Total Entertainment Network (TEN)--the latter will host the former's new multiplayer racing sim, Big Red Racing, on their network. The game features include two-player, split-screen racing plus the opportunity to race 12 different vehicles over 18 tracks. Vehicles include backhoes, hover craft, lunar buggies and jeeps. You'll race on different terrains from around the world to outer space. The 3D graphics engine allows you to view the action from any angle, including your opponent's front seat and numerous trackside cameras. TEN's software will be available for Windows 95 and Macintosh.

#### SEVEN GRAND FOR GAMER

The winner in MacPlay's Descent competition is Marc Chu from San Rafael, California. Developed by Parallax Software, the Descent competition started last November and coincided with the release of the Power Mac version of this award-winning game. At MacWorld in January, the four regional winners went at it, competing for the title "Best of the Best." Chu easily captured first place after racing to 50 kills in the competition and he won \$7,000 in cash and prizes. He also received a special trophy containing a Lucite engraved orb which has become a national icon for Descent; a check for \$2,500; a Descent jacket, and a new Power Computing 120(TM) computer provided by Power Computing. The three runners-ups were presented with certificates of accomplishments as well as a Descent jacket for their play.

#### HOT FIGHTER ENROUTE FOR PCS

Long the force behind the success of many video game units, fighters have held the attention of millions of gamers. Now, one of the hottest of all video game fighter titles, Battle Arena Toshinden, is coming to PC CD-ROM. Playmates Interactive Entertainment plans to release this super-smash-hit title for the new platform this March. The game is set in 3D fighting arenas. Invited to Toshinden to fight their most important battle ever are eight fighters (Duke, Eiji, Ellis, Fo, Gaia the boss, Kayin, Mondo, Rungo, and Sofia). Each fighter has a special weapon that will inflict the maximum damage possible upon opponents. Each fights for a different reason, be it love or fame or vengeance. You set the skill level, bout time, camera action and so on. The PC CD-ROM version will feature 360 degree movement, astounding graphics, plus network play for as many as two players. You can even download a demo of the game from the company's WWW via anonymous FTP at <ftp:playmatestoy.com/pub/tsd0122.zip>.

#### ACCELERATOR PACKS-IN PANZER DRAGOON

One of Sega's hot titles for the Saturn was Panzer Dragoon. Now that Sega has ported the game to PCs, the action-adventure game becomes grist for the bundling mill. Diamond Multimedia Systems certainly thinks so, as they are now bundling Panzer Dragoon with their new Diamond EDGE 3D line of multimedia accelerators for PCs running Windows 95. Virtua Fighter Remix also accompanies Panzer Dragoon, with more Sega Saturn titles expected in the coming months. Bundled with Diamond's Stealth64Video 2001Xle accelerator that'll be released at the end of this month is Sega PC's Comix Zone, Ecco the Dolphin and a sample version of Tomcat Alley.

#### GOING TO THE DOGS

A new CD-ROM based on a canine theme is going to be released by Virgin Records. Called P.A.W.S., this CD-ROM will be available this April in formats for Macintosh and IBM computers. This is Virgin's first entry into a non-musical field for its newly created Digital Garden company. The title was developed for children ages five to eight and offers a dog's eye view of the world. Containing hand-drawn animations of man's best friend, users can roam freely through a backyard and enjoy digging up fresh bones, growling at felines, and getting to slow-footed mailpersons. The title combines good-natured mischief with hilarious surprises. The title was developed in England by Domestic Funk Products and has already won three prestigious awards in Europe, including Best Children's Title at the 1995 Milia Multimedia Festival in Cannes, France. (By the way, P.A.W.S. is an acronym for Personal Automated Wagging System!)

\*\* VIDEO GAME NEWS \*\*

#### THINGS NOT "LOOKING UP"

Unfortunately for the 3DO Corporation, their fiscal third quarter is not looking all that healthy! The company has stated they'll be posting losses that are more than they had expected to post--bummer! However, no EXACT details were available as to the amount of the loss.

#### BANDAI PRICING TO HIT NEW LOW

In Japan, 4,000 yen is considerably less cost than what current video games charge for their titles. More than halfless, to be exact. This June, Bandai will offer a new system that'll cut the cost on video games plus enable developers to get their titles finished far faster, as well. Seems as though the price war has already started, even before Nintendo releases their April-destined 64-bit goodie!

#### FIRST EVER GAME TRADE SHOW IN CHINA

From April 5th to 9th, in Beijing, the very first trade fair that will feature electronic games will occur in China. Not only Chinese game makers will be in attendance, as invitations have been extended to nearly 50 foreign firms based in the U.S., Japan and Taiwan. The attendance is expected to be around 50,000 people. The show will be organized by Japanese trading firm Itochu Corporation.

#### \*\* DIGITAL DELIGHTS \*\*

#### ANOTHER DVD DEVOTEE

The list of company's anxious to become involved in the digital video disk field continues to grow. Heck, we've supplied a whole bunch of info on company's already announcing their DVD intentions. Now, add Hitachi, Ltd., to this growing group. The company will soon open a DVD application LSI design and development center with production on units to start this summer in both China and Japan. Watch for Hitachi to market their units this fall.

#### EGYPT HAS MORE THAN THE SPHINX

A contract has been signed by Matra Marconi Space and Arianespace that contracts for the launch of a Nilesat satellite for Egyptian Radio and Television Union. The location of the launch will be the Guiana Space Center in French Guiana and is scheduled for late 1997. Built by Matra Marconi Space in Toulouse, the satellite will weigh just over 3,700 pounds at launch. Nilesat will provide direct, digital transmission of as many as 56 TV channels to an area from Morocco to the Arab Gulf.

#### INDONESIAN SPACE QUEST

Cape Canaveral Air Station in Florida is going to be the site of the launch of a Lockheed Martin Atlas rocket for PT Satelit Palapa Indonesia (Satelindo) on January 31st. The spacecraft will reach an altitude of nearly 100 nautical miles when two engine burns will place the satellite in supersynchronous elliptical transfer orbit around the earth. Satelindo is a private Indonesian telecom company that provides services to individuals and businesses throughout the Asia Pacific region through its fleet of on-orbit satellites. The satellite was built by Hughes Space and Communications Company in El Segundo, California.

### GETTIN' INTO TV

They paid \$682.5 million to get into the TV biz. That's right, that's what MCI Communications Corporation paid at a government auction for a highly-prized satellite-TV slot that can cover the U.S. with around 170 channels of programming. MCI teamed with Rupert Murdoch in this 50/50 venture and they will form a company that'll provide all of the entertainment services plus medical imaging, teleconferencing and info download to computers. Another \$1 billion or so is expected to be spent by the new company to launch their new venture. Expect this entire operation to start-up within the next couple of years with them needing over 2.2 million subscribers to make a profit!

### SKY HIGH SCURRYING

Two new Digital Satellite System (DSS) receivers will be marketed this year by Matsushita Consumer Electronics Company. They'll enter the market under the Panasonic brand name and will offer as much as 175 channels of programming via an 18-inch satellite dish. Once again, the model naming creativity of hardware manufacturers is visibly demonstrated with the company's models TZ-DBS10 and TZ-DBS20. These units can be controlled using Panasonic's exclusive home theatre remote control unit called The Director (hmmm, that's better!). Already, DSS sales in the US are estimated to be more than two million units.

### \*\* DEVELOPER DUMPS \*\*

### MORE MPEG MARVELS

A single-chip MPEG-1 chip has been introduced by ESS Technology, Inc. Called (stunningly) the ES3204, this MPEG-1 decoder chip is targeted to multimedia PCs and consumer AV electronics and will be in volume production by April of this year. This is the first chip from this company for real-time video and multimedia systems. The ES3204 delivers full-screen, full-motion video at 30 fps with selectable 44.1 kHz or 48.0 kHz CD-quality audio and offers a complete MPEG-1 decoder on the chip. MPEG-1 bitstream rates range from 1.2 to 9.0 megabits per second, with video output in YUV or RGB format. The chip with bundled software drivers is compatible with DOS games, Microsoft Video for Windows, VideoCD, Karaoke and CD-i standards.

### SUN NEVER SETS

As powerful personal computers take their share away from Sun's low-end workstations, the folks at Sun have experienced an epiphany--develop software that is the common bond of computers on the Internet. Java, a scripting language that is designed to run on multiple computers and operating systems. Sun could lead the pack with Java becoming an operating system capable of running on top of conventional operating systems and on top of browsers. Java would add more networking and graphics abilities to browsers such as Netscape's Navigator.

Microsoft has signed a letter of intent to license Java, and if Sun is successful in their efforts to purchase Apple Computer, Sun would be sitting pretty in both camps. Sun could bundle Java networking language with Apple's computers, thereby providing instant access to the net for Apple's loyal followers-- especially artists, publishers and others who are heavily involved in new content for the Internet. Apple could pump new life into Sun, if of course, this marriage of Apple Computer and Sun Systems takes place.

### \* ONLINE STUFF \*

#### HOTEL HULLABALOO

Thanks to the 4th Network, you'll now be able to operate via a high bandwidth interactive distribution net nationwide after you've checked in. Boasting a contract base of some 50,000 hotel rooms, the company fully expects a 200,000 room presence by year's end. Now you'll never get away from your work. Plus, the next generation of interactive multimedia products will be provided, thanks to a new strategic partnership plan. Details of these alliances, which will include interactive game groups, record companies and movie studios, will be released over the next few weeks.

#### DIGITAL BILLBOARD

The Internet is the next site for the new Billboard On-line Web site. Offering articles and music charts direct from the current issue of the publication, there will also be many other editorial features, columns and cover stories--plus the capability to download Billboard Windows and Macintosh software. The password necessary to access the service at <http://www.billboard-online.com> can be obtained from Billboard On-line customer support at 800-449-1402. This new site is possible thanks to efforts by BPI Communications and Telescan, Inc., with the latter providing proprietary search tools that add great value to the web site.

#### MUSIC MEMORIES MADE EASY

There are several places where acronyms are definitely required. One such is the acronym NOMAD for Navigational Online Music Archival Directory. What this is, is, a searchable product index that'll allow Internet users the ability to find various music-related sites. No simple URL this--this is a full-feature search engine, fine-tuned to music needs. You enter a specific music title and NOMAD will respond with the links to the WWW site of the company or other party that issued that release. Other related locations, including discussion groups, will also be listed. Development is by Digital Music Network (DMN) and this directory will debut this spring.

#### BLACK HISTORY ON-LINE

From February 1st through April 30th, there will be a new WWW site called HBO CyberSoulCity. Located on Time Warner's Pathfinder site, this new content was developed by Tucker Hilliard Marketing and Communications in celebration of Black History Month. The site will offer info on HBO's full slate of Black History Month programming, offer you the opportunity to test your knowledge about African-American history and sports, plus enable users to enter a special on-line sweeps. You'll also be able to "chat" with some of the actors and comedians featured on HBO (via AOL's NetNoir). CyberSoulCity may be reached at <http://pathfinder.com/HBO/blackhistory>.

#### SPORTS NEWS SERVICE FROM IBM

There's a new agreement between IBM and SportsTicker that'll bring new content to the IBM infoMarket NewsTicker--yep, sports news--up to the minute news, stats, previews, recaps and features. As an Internet-based information source, sports headlines will scroll across computer screens. Should you happen to note a headline of interest, simply click on it for the full SportsTicker story. You can download the software using any browser from <http://www.infomkt.ibm.com>.

#### NET-ON WITH NBC

Check out <http://www.nbc.com> to tune into the on-line version of the NBC network. There you'll find all sorts of bios on every actor, actress, news reporter and other persons affiliated with the network. You'll also find major sports events and upcoming movie previews. Into trivia? You'll find interesting facts on all of NBC's shows, plus there are sports and news sections, as well as info on the soaps.

#### SEGA CHANNEL INCREASES SUBSCRIPTION BASE

Thanks to a hot and heavy Holiday Campaign, the Sega Channel has increased its subscriber base by nearly 50 percent. Running from November 18 through December 31st, a free month of Sega Channel and free activation caught the attention of many consumers. Sega Channel also offered monetary rewards to those who brought prospects to the channel and turned those leads into actual sales. More than 80 percent of Sega Channel affiliates participated in the program.

#### SURF'S UP

Surfin' now has it's own home page at <http://www.surfdirect.com>. With seamless on-line access via America Online and the net, Surf Direct has partnered with AOL's SURFLINK to offer a complete menu of surf media. This includes videos of surf and snowboard stuff, books, posters, software, and surf and punk music. There's WAV files for downloadable graphics for a complete on-line surf shoppin' experience. There's even a CD-ROM on surfing and travel guides.

#### WHERE'S WILDCAT?

Check out <http://www.mustang.com> if you're like many awaiting a look at the wide area beta release of the Wildcat! Navigator. The site is Mustang Online, a fully interactive, multimedia world. This navigator is said to enable users to realize powerful, on-line communities through two-way communication, a feature most WWW sites currently lack. The browser uses HTML graphics and also offers access to chat, email, file library, and messaging and runs under Windows 95 and Windows NT. The browser contains a feature that automatically downloads updated versions of the software when they become available.

#### \*\* OTHER ENTERTAINING NEWS \*\*

#### DIGITAL IS IN!

Before March leaves us, ABC Radio Networks will have totally completed the conversion of their 24-hour analog music channel formats to digital audio. The technology is via SpaceCom Systems' FM Squared(R) technology. The SpaceNet III satellite will carry the transmissions which afford band-width efficiency, enabling the network to use lower cost digital audio receivers. ABC Radio Networks I is the largest such network in the U.S. and reaches around 115 million listeners each week on nearly 2,900 radio stations.

#### BLOCKBUSTER MUSIC PALS WITH SEARS

A license has been signed between Sears, Roebuck and Co. and Blockbuster Music so that the next time you head to your regional Sears store, you'll find Blockbuster Music in the Brand Central home electronics area. These Blockbuster Music departments will feature 2,000 square feet of pre-recorded CDs, audio tapes, some video tapes and assorted accessories good for all of those products. Initially there will be three test sites in Clearwater,

Tampa Bay Center, and Tampa University Square in Florida. Currently, Blockbuster Music has over 500 stores in some 34 states.

#### SUIT FILED AGAINST KODAK & SGI & LUCASFILM

Phew, when CST Entertainment decides to take on some of the biggest folk in the high-tech entertainment industry, they do so in a big way. That company has filed a lawsuit against Eastman Kodak Company, LucasFilm Ltd. and Silicon Graphics, Inc. The suit alleges the named companies violated CST's Priority Masking Techniques for Video Special Effects patented technology (U.S. Patent No. 4,642,676, issued on 02/10/87). CST Entertainment is best known for color enhancement technology through four key apps. They include colorization, sfx applications for commercials and music videos, Featurizations creation, series and feature length productions from classic black and white technology, plus animation production. The claim is that the defendants have made, use, or sell devices that incorporate this propriety technology and/or also encourage others to do likewise. An injunction, is being requested, plus damages and the payment of legal fees.

#### MOVIE MOVES

Moll Flanders, a feature film from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, has now been moved to a June 7th introduction. The movie stars Robin Wright, Morgan Freeman, Stockard Channing, John Lynch and Brenda Fricker in an original story inspired by a passionate and fearless heroine. Critics and preview screening audiences have given the film rave reviews. The movie follows the life of a woman who overcomes her lower class origins in an unforgiving caste system.

#### THE TALK OF TOKYO

In 1995, Sony Corporation and Imax Corporation signed an agreement for the former to supply the latter with giant-screen, large-format motion picture systems. Now a new IMAX 3D theatre is going to be located in the new Takashimaya retail complex in the very heart of Tokyo and will open in October of this year. This theatre will anchor other location-based entertainments including a two-story entertainment center, a music outlet, bookstore, hobby store and restaurants.

#### GET "INTO" THE ACADEMY AWARDS

"The Envelope, Please," is currently being created by Virtualize in Santa Monica. This effort will result in a new WWW site that'll contain images and info regarding this year's Academy Awards ceremonies. Some super Kodak Digital Science technologies'll also be part of the site which is being co-sponsored by Microsoft, Revlon and, naturally, Kodak. All of the nomination day activities as well as the pre-Oscar Night goings-on will be presented with viewable images captured using Kodak's digital cameras. Additionally, visitors to the site can enter an interactive contest where those who predict the most Oscar winners will receive Kodak digital and 35mm cameras as prizes. Other awards will include portrait session, autographed posters and other photo-related goodies. The site may be reached at <http://www.oscars.guide.com>.

#### JAMMIN' WITH BENNETT

If you're a Tony Bennett fan, by all means mark your calendar for Wednesday, February 14th! The A&E Network is going to have an entire evening of romantic singing by Bennett that will feature an interactive format--you'll be able to call in to the show and request your favorite Tony Bennett song. Called "Tony Bennett Live By Request: A Valentine's Special,"



there will be a simulcast through the SW Network's nationwide radio stations in 80 markets. The show will be broadcast from the Sony Studios in New York City, plus there's a special contest in USA Today as well as on the Sony Music Web site that'll offer some great prizes. Also, Tony will be the host of an on-line chat over Prodigy at 8:00 p.m. on February 13th.

#### TV RATINGS

Here are the Top 10 network shows and their ratings for the past week:

Friends, NBC, 20.8  
Seinfeld, NBC, 20.1  
ER, 19.3  
Mad About You Special, NBC, 17.8  
The Single Guy, NBC, 16.6  
Home Improvement, ABC, 16.2  
60 Minutes, CBS, 15.8  
3rd Rock from the Sun, NBC, 15.2  
NYPD Blue, ABC, 15.1  
Frasier, NBC, 14.1

Overall, NBC received an 11.6 rating and an 18 share, while ABC held at an 11.0 rating an 18 share. CBS pumped into last place with a 10.0 rating and a 16 share. ABC's World News Tonight remains the leader among evening newscasts.

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

System Shock for Macintosh  
from Origin

Reviewed by Gary Le

A talented hacker is apprehended after being caught in the process of a break-in attempt on Trioptimum's security system. Diego, a corrupted Trioptimum suit, offers the helpless captive a compromise. The deal is a fairly simple one: break into the artificial intelligence known as SHODAN, and in return, the hacker receives a fully integrated cyberjack implant, an operation hackers all over could only dream of. The hacker succeeds and enters a healing coma to recover from his implant operation. It is six months later. The healing process is complete and the hacker is awake, but only to find that something is extremely disturbing. Apparently, SHODAN has been doing some dangerous hacking also, but of its own free will!

Clearly borrowing from William Gibson's cyberpunk theme, Origin brings System Shock to the Macintosh, porting it over from the original PC title. What System Shock offers is a truly fascinating opportunity to experience the Gibsonian vision of cyberspace. Assuming the role of the hacker, the player attempts to uncover SHODAN's intentions and foil the AI's plans. In the process, the player explores Citidel, a major research facility where the cyberjack implant took place. Lying about are various weapons to protect the player from the SHODAN-controlled denizens of Citidel. Besides hand-to-hand weapons, the player is able to utilize a range of firearms, energy weapons, and explosives. Variety is the keyword here, with enough pistols, rifles, blasters, concussion bombs, and grenades to make any trigger-happy fanatic smile. Along the way, various hardware attachments can be found to plug into the neural system, such as a Sensoround unit that effectively gives the player eyes behind the head, and an Energy/Projectile Shield unit that absorbs damage from enemy fire.

During the course of the game, various data modules can be found containing logs from previous Citidel personnel. These logs provide valuable information concerning the layout of Citidel and SHODAN itself. Using the Data Reader unit, the player is able to reconstruct events occurring during the coma. The logs are expertly presented using impressively convincing voice-overs, that bring much suspense and credibility to the game.

Thusly equipped, the player operates the game from a first-person perspective, with a snug set of on-screen controls simulating a cyber-neural interface for everything from auto-mapping to inventory control. While a bit daunting at the start with so many controls, this interface becomes surprisingly intuitive after a bit of exposure and adds a perfect cyberpunkish feeling to the mix. Furthermore, the player is treated to an opportunity to "jack" into a cyberspace terminal. This experience is where System Shock shines. Once linked to the network, the player seems to float into another world, traversing the bits and bytes on a surreal electronic level. Cyberpunk fans revel in the chance to simulate a true "decking" experience by obtaining "softs" and breaking through I.C.E. (Intrusion Countermeasures Electronics) to ultimately defeat SHODAN.

Graphics in the game, unfortunately, are not as impressive. While the graphics might have been eye-catching when the original PC version debuted, they are now standard fare. This wouldn't be so bad, were it not for the sluggish animation. Although adjusting the detail settings to the lowest levels improved performance, it's a bit disappointing to find System Shock's requirement of a 7100/80 Power Mac for such a mediocre graphics showcase. However, credit must be given to the scintillating introductory sequence, which gets the blood pumping and sets the stage for an engaging storyline. Also, animation while jacked into cyberspace is superb.

System Shock has much to offer. Besides delivering a professional rendition of a cyberpunk experience, the game features an engrossing plot and lots of action. The intro and voice-overs are top-notch, further throwing the player into the adventure. Origin has only just begun releasing titles again for the Macintosh after a long hiatus. Fortunately, System Shock is one title that will give many Mac gamers reason to welcome Origin back.

System Requirements: 7100 Power Mac or equivalent compatible; 8 MB RAM (at least 5.2 MB free, 6.2 MB with music); 2x CD-ROM drive, recommended 16 MB RAM, level 2 cache card.