

# The Lawnmower Man & Cyberwar

ess with a gardener's brain and before you know it, there's a psychopath taking over cyberspace. Marcus Hawkins attempts to save the day.

The Lawnmower Man film had one of the cheapest endings ever slapped onto the conclusion of a big budget film; it was yet another example of how not to do a Stephen King story (even the author distanced himself from the project); and the game of the film received fairly mixed reviews when it hit the Mac. But now SCi have seen fit to release a boxed set of both The Lawnmower Man and its sequel Cyberwar for the Mac.

he limited edition pack incorporates The Lawnmower Man disc and the full three CDs' worth of Cyberwar, plus an audio disc of the Cyberwar tracks - all for the price of a single game. But, the interactive movie crowd (or 'widescreen interactive video gameplay', as it's joyously termed) is renowned for failing to offer enough actual gameplay for your dosh. Is this game any different?

The blurb on the packaging suggests that the games are stunners to look at, with airy terms like, 'Stunning interactive raytraced 3D graphic sequences' and '360-degree cinematic panning', but what about the games' playability or longevity?

### Film versus game

In the film, an enterprising doctor (played by Pierce Brosnan) experiments on one of his neighbours, a lawnmower man, using virtual reality and various drugs. The upshot is that the lawnmower man becomes a pulse of energy, and is sucked into cyberspace, where he takes control of all the computers in the world. Where the film leaves off, the game begins. You are the doctor, and you must defeat your adversary, Cyberjobe.

tmospherically metallic, the graphics recapture the film, effectively depicting cyberspace as you might well imagine it to be. The film's plot is explained in the manual, and while SCi have included QuickTime excerpts of the film in the game, the QuickTime is the usual poor quality, and the excerpts neither fit into the gameplay nor explain the plot.

### Sub-games

The Lawnmower Man and Cyberwar take very similar approaches when it comes to translating the film to gameplay. In each game you find yourself locked in the mutant hedge-trimmer's computer world, where it's your job to rescue your trapped friends and solve the villain Cyberjobe's challenges (which take the form of sub-games). Achieve all this, and you will put an end to Cyberjobe's virtual escapades.

Each CD represents a different section of the cyber world, and each game features ten different sub-games. These range from logic problems that you must solve quickly to get past certain doors, to reflex tests and shooting and flying stages. Unfortunately, once you've experienced both games, you'll realise that there are too many similarities between the two. Cyberwar is a huge improvement on the original in terms of looks, presentation and length, but some of the sub-games found in The Lawnmower Man have been more or less duplicated for inclusion in its sequel. To all intents and purposes, Cyberwar could have been turned into a data disc (or three data discs) for the original game, rather than a lavish sequel.

frustrating

Both games offer lots of different challenges in an attempt to incorporate various game styles, but while this is a great idea on paper, it's weak in practice. There's never enough to sink your teeth into - no sooner do you begin to get into one of the challenges in Cyberjobe's domain, than it's over. Either you've successfully completed it, or you're dead.

his is particularly frustrating when it comes to those scenes that rely on timing. They tend to be a bit too close to those ubiquitous 'classics' Dragon's Lair and Space Ace (which scored 44% and 36% respectively in Macformat 26). One wrong move, one key pressed too early or too late and it's a leap, a crash or a plummet to your death, without so much as an ounce of pleasure along the way. This does not make for an enjoyable gameplay experience.

his double pack looks like good value for money when you see it on the shop shelf, but start playing the games and you soon discover how unrewarding and unplayable they really are. Anorak-equipped Lawnmower Man fans will no doubt be turned on by the chance to get hold of this limited edition pack,

but fans of real gameplay will be forced to look elsewhere for their enjoyment.  
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here are various challenges in The Lawnmower Man and Cyberwar: win the sub-games and you win the game itself. Here are just a few representatives of the different genres of game.

n Circuit Citie is a timing-led challenge where you have to choose the right direction for a MonoBike as it speeds along a snaking monorail.

n Into The Void is reminiscent of the sadly defunct television gameshow The Adventure Game. You must cross the Vortex Bridge without stepping on the same tile as the invisible Dr Timms. Ring any bells?

n There is an unfortunate amount of duplication in the sub-games. An example of this is Breaking Through, as it's known in The Lawnmower Man. You, as the suave but stubbly Dr Lawrence Angelo, face Father McKeen (Jobe's evil landlord) from behind an invisible wall. You're both armed with cannons and fire consecutively, trying to find the hole in the wall that your shell can pass through, by controlling the elevation of the barrel. In Cyberwar there's a game entitled Projectile Ranges that offers almost exactly the same challenge: find the gap in the wall and destroy Father McKeen.

n Similarly, the first challenge you encounter in Lawnmower Man is Ledge of Darkness. You run along a corridor, jumping from pillar to pillar, leaping over obstacles and sliding past beefed-up enemies. There's an oh-so familiar sub-game on the third disc of Cyberwar, called Catwalk. You must get to the end of the catwalk, springing between pillars, jumping mines and gaps, and ducking Jobe's henchmen.

n As for the tunnel-based flying game Cyber Boogie (clearly influenced by the film), this appears on every game CD in the pack - although it has been refined somewhat in Cyberwar.

### Making Tracks

Steve Hillage provided the music for the films of *The Lawnmower Man* and *Cyberwar*. Hence his tunes are on the audio CD. Hillage and his synthesiser-playing partner Miquette Giraudy have previously been involved with techno group *The Orb* and have done the soundtracks for several feature films.

### Indigo Power

The *Cyberwar* development team used Silicon Graphics' IRIS Indigo2 computers to give *Cyberwar* its stylish look. Currently the most powerful desktop graphics processor on the market, the Indigo2 houses Silicon Graphics' Extreme Graphics subsystem, which enables 630,000 polygons per second to be manipulated.

rice: £49.99. Out: now.

Requires: Quadra or better, 4Mb of RAM, 13-inch colour monitor, CD-ROM drive.

Contact: Sales Curve Interactive on 0171 585 3308.

### Graphics 79%

Both games are presented slickly, and both recapture the atmosphere of the film reasonably faithfully.

### Sound 84%

A game music fan's dream come true - with audio CD to boot.

### Gameplay 30%

Some good sub-games, an incredible number of unnecessarily bad ones. The duplication doesn't help either.

**MACFORMAT rating 50%**

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