

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. and AOL conferences.

Letters:

From: Dan Schimpf <dschimpf@voyager.net>
To: MDR
Subject: Bug-eyed Space Marine

This is reply to the mail in MDR #8. I've seen this happen. I can make it to happen (sometimes) by walking into a nukage area with God mode on, then turning it off. When I'm almost toast, I quickly turn God mode back on (without using Pause) and the little guy freaks out. I love it.

Dan Schimpf

Dan, that one letter from Kris Norberg in MDR#8 received the most response of anything in MDR since the great Marathon vs. Doom controversy last winter. Some folks indicated that blasting a wall with a rocket launcher could recreate the effect as well, and several others noted they had seen the bug-eyed incarnation but didn't know how to get it back. You gave the most concise explanation on how to make this Easter Egg occur, so I'm running your letter. Thanks to everyone who tried to shed additional light on this odd topic.-Ed.

From: Kris Norberg <knorberg@pipeline.com>
To: MDR
Subject: Doom = Krappy Kali

DAVE!! Don't say you can do "some serious Dooming" over Kali! I found out that Lion's port of Doom is so botched there is no way to play over the Internet at more than 1 fps! At first I figured that it was Kali's fault, but the guy who ported it told me that Lion left out a crucial element of the

networking engine that makes Internet play impossible. Mention that on the next newsreel post, 'cause Lion ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Kris Norberg

Kris, thanks for responding to my online MDR News Feed post about MacKali. I don't know how true this is... I have heard reports of MacDoom games over the Internet, but I don't know how good they were. I don't play them myself, but I thought your comments about MacKali might save some people time trying to make it work. But, on the other hand, if there are people out there who have had better success with 'Net games, please write in and share with the rest of the class!!!-Ed.

From: Wayne Tarello <wtarello@infodial.net>

To: MDR

Subject: Final Doom delays

That really blows! Why does id Software have to delay Final Doom for the Mac? What's the problem? MacDoom has been out for over a year. Why can't they just release both platforms at the same time?

I am really getting sick and tired of waiting six months for a game to come to the Mac. Maybe it is time to go back to the PC. I had just about had it. The PC people have all the fun!!!! But I still hate Bill Gates!

Thanks for your time. I am just sick of this same old BS!

Wayne Tarello

Wayne, all I can say in defense of id is that they seem to have very strong feelings about Quality Assurance. On the other hand, I think they sometimes take it too far, or don't put enough resources toward expediting Mac releases. These are strictly my opinions, based solely on my own twisted perspective of the situation.-Ed.

From: Beau Mullis <Mirage75@aol.com>

To: MDR

Subject: MacHexen!

Greetings,

I was browsing through the AOL Games forum when I came across the MacHexen Demo, and despite the hour-long wait, I downloaded it. I'd seen the amazing PICT files of Hexenplay in MDR#3, so I was interested in

checking this one out.

I must say that I'm very impressed! The graphics are great, and the environment is very un-Doom-like. At first I was a little concerned about the speed it ran at, but after awhile of gameplay, I'd forgotten all about that.

I think that including Hexen in MDR is a great move! Doom fans will definately enjoy Hexen... I know I am. I'm also looking forward to a Hexen WAD editor (possibly Hellmaker from what it says in MDR#8). I'll jump on that as soon as I get the chance. I can't wait! MacHexen WADs are gonna be great.

I only have one problem with Hexen, I haven't been able to establish a successful Deathmatch/Coop Modem game yet. It could be my Modem settings, although I did follow the instructions that came along with the demo (and experimented with my modem buddy for over an hour on alternate settings). Don't know! If you know of any tips for Hexen or Doom modemplay, please let me in on them. Thanks!

I've been working on some more Doom WADs. I haven't had much time lately, but I did manage to get Mirage Vol. 2 and a single level called Abandoned Outpost out there. I've been getting some feedback about Vol. 2, it runs slow on some systems due to its size, so I'm scaling down for the future. Outpost is smaller and, in my opinion, more hectic. Anyways, Hexen has not replaced Doom for me: I still love those Mancubi and Cacosh. I'm glad there are other Doomers out there (like yourself and the staff at MDR) that feel as strongly as I do about the game. It's a great one!

Beau Mullis

Beau, thanks for the pat on the back. You're now a part of the "staff at MDR" -- I'm running your DoomPlay article in this very issue -- so right back at ya! Also, you asked for help with Hexen networking. Be sure to read Ethan Butterfield's treatise on the subject, also in this very issue of MDR.-Ed.

From: Tom Whelan <twhelan3@bayou.com>
To: MDR
Subject: (I'm a) MacHexen fan

I got a copy of MacHexen two weeks ago, and now I need more... What is the status of the "Deathkings: sequel? Can I purchase that yet?? Or download it?? If so, where??

I think Hexen is pretty solid on my machine... PPC 7500. No bugs except on Gibbet.. there was no big monster. I worked around it though.

Tom Whelan

Tom, Deathkings of the Dark Citadel is coming soon to a Mac reseller near you (or, barring that, try Cyberian Outpost at <http://www.cybout.com/>). I've beta-tested it, and it's way harsher than the original Hexen. It does require Hexen to run -- it doesn't come with its own engine. Not sure what to say about the Gibbet bug, except that if you avoided a confrontation with the second coming of the Heresiarch, you were lucky!-Ed.

From: William Walker <MMPNBRW@ix.netcom.com>
To: MDR
Subject: MDR on a PC?

I am a very avid Doomer. The guy that wrote your Icarus review in MDR#8 (Aaron), is one of my friends, and I helped edit that review. But, anyway, I have looked through your Web pages and excellent work has been done. One thing though: Don't ask how stupid this sounds, but I would like to be able to read MacDoom Review even though I am on a PC? Let's just put that ugly Mac is better or PC is better argument aside.

I would just like to read it. Is there any way I can?

William Walker

William, it is feasible that you could read MDR on a PC using a Mac emulator, such as a program I tested once called Executor. But I don't know for sure if it will work, and I can't say I recommend it. A much better idea would be to go to Aaron's house to read MDR! I purposely designed this e-zine to be more or less a "Mac only" club. While there is certainly room for PCers to play our fraggin' games, we like to have our own space, if you know what I mean.-Ed.

From: Brett Wertz <bwertz@lps.esu18.k12.ne.us>
To: MDR
Subject: Zip files

I love your magazine ;)

I've been reading it for quite a while now and I have been looking at your WAD reviews. When I click on the image, it gives me a pathname but all of the files are .ZIP. How do I unzip these? Do you know where I can find a program that lets me?

Brett Wertz

Brett, that's a damn good question, and one I intend to answer in an MDR Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) file I'll be posting soon to the new MDR Web site. For now, let me say that ZIP is a PC compression format similar to Stuffit. You can unpack ZIPs using the full commercial version of Stuffit Deluxe, or using freeware and shareware utilities, such as Ziplt.-Ed.

From: Wayne Tarello <wtarello@infodial.net>
To: MDR
Subject: Quake!

Quake is EXCELLENT!!! I downloaded it on my friend's PC. The monsters look very cool and weapons are much better than the ones in DOOM! I played the whole first episode and was VERY impressed. We were running it on a Pentium 75, and it ran SMOOTH.

What is going to suck it waiting until next summer for the Mac version to come out. Is there any way to speed up the process???? They should be able to do this port and have it out by THIS Christmas!!!! NO excuses for waiting a year!!! It should run smooth on a Power Mac. Even though I HATE id for disliking Macs, I praise them for making such a great game.

Please keep us posted on the day the port will begin. Thanks for all the news. Keep up the good work!

Wayne Tarello

Wayne, didn't we just talk a few minutes ago? Well, I have good news -- MacQuake is due early next year. I must say that I don't think id hates Macs. I'm not sure they entirely understand our fervor, but hate? Naw... They keep giving us these assume games of destruction. That's love, buddy!-Ed.

From: Rich Pizor <pizor@lclark.edu>
To: MDR
Subject: MacHexen!

I haven't been a long-time follower of your zine, but 'twas recommended by a friend so I downloaded MDR#8 to check out. I take exception to your review of I, Anubis in the Doom II Reviews section.

It's obvious that the magazine is written by and for people who play Doom with little intent but to shoot things; this isn't apologized for and shouldn't have to be -- there's nothing wrong with it. What I do have a problem with is writing off I, Anubis as a less-than-completely-worthwhile download simply

because it didn't have you dripping in blood before you crossed the threshold of the second room.

Granted, I'm spoiled. I was playing Marathon 2 before I even saw Doom on the Mac, and I keep looking for the subtleties I find there -- monsters that form alliances, the ability to aim, etc. (God, there have been so many times when I've wanted to slam a rocket launcher round in to the ground at a group of Imp's feet... but that's another story.) Still, I find WADs where the whole point is to carve as many notches as possible into your blaster less than thrilling. I find it stressful rather than challenging or fun to fight off overwhelming odds that would make even Death Incarnate cringe. I'm not a fan of being dropped into a courtyard and being forced to fend off four of those skeleton things with only 50 bullets and my fists (i.e., CASTLE.WAD on the D!Zone CD) and no armor or medkits in sight. I miss level designs where you actually have to explore and think before triggering a button because of the potential consequences.

I, Anubis was, in my opinion, just the right balance of puzzle/strategy, innovative graphics, consistent story concept and wanton carnage and destruction. So you can make it all the way through on Level 3 without getting smoked once -- some of us found it a bit more challenging. But it's not the hopeless, what's-the-point challenge of facing three Cyberdemons with nowhere to run; it's the aggravating challenge of a well-designed level, combined with interesting new graphics, that makes you want to come back for more.

The reviewer, to his credit, did make a nod in that direction by admitting that the sounds and graphics were downright awesome (which they are, though you don't get to see the cool blue walls immediately, so don't hold your breath). But it seems to me that there's more to rate WADs on than the sheer carnage value. Would it perhaps be out of line to propose rating WADs on two or more scales (e.g., fragdom, thought level required, quality of graphics/sounds when appropriate, etc.). It seems a good compromise to me, because this way those of us who look for more than dead bodies have something to go on without the editorial content of the 'zine having to change to accomodate what seems to be a minority of your readership.

Rich Pizor
Contributing Writer, MacNet Journal

Rich, I pretty much leave it to the individual WAD reviewer to:

- a) Select the score
- b) Review the WAD as he/she sees fit

On rare occasions, I will tweak a review and on one occasion I've even

adjusted a score that I felt was artificially high (back in MDR#1 or #2 -- writers now have a pretty good sense of what' else is out there, and have shown, IMHO, good judgment in their scoring).

It's not a bad idea to include scoring scales, but not one that I -- as an unpaid volunteer to the cause -- really have time to implement. The idea is to have an overall score, based on the reviewer's best judgment, and then a write-up that explains it. The body of the review is the appropriate place to point out that a WAD might have elements that, while unappealing to the reviewer, might appeal to other types of players. Personally, I think that the I, Anubis review captured this well.

Frankly, as one who personally dislikes Marathon, I take issue with the idea that most Doomers are just into the game to frag, frag, frag. I like a certain degree of puzzle value, I just don't like long interruptions to the game flow. To me, the fluidity of gameplay and the constant threat of attack are part of Doom's charm. I dislike levels with "three Cyberdemons" or anything else that brings the game to a long halt.-Ed.

Online Posts:

From: Alex Rosenberg <alexr@bungie.com>
To: comp.sys.mac.games.action
Subject: 3D Games Trivia

In a previous article, dgrounds@lion-ent.com (Douglas Grounds) wrote:

>Optimized PPC renderer/blitter (You won't believe who helped >with this, so I'm not going to tell you.)

Since Doug won't say, I will.

The Lion folks came to the second Apple Games Kitchen, held in Austin, TX.

The person who helped them the most was Eric Traut. Eric wrote the dynamic recompiling 68K emulator that's in all the PCI-based Power Macintoshes.

The pixel-doubling blitter is based on code I wrote for a "fire" screen saver in C while I worked for Apple. I knew that the key optimization involved the use of the `rlwimi` instruction. I didn't bother with PPC assembly at the time because I was using IBM's `xIC` compiler for the RS/6000, which happily generated the `rlwimi` instruction and the loop overhead was well handled. Aaron Giles of LucasArts ported it to PowerPC assembly the first night of that kitchen because CodeWarrior didn't (and still doesn't) generate the `rlwimi`

instruction for the code sequence used. Aaron put that code on the kitchen's AppleShare server for everybody to use (the reason I had given him the C code in the first place).

While modifying it for another product (Bungie's Marathon 2), Dave Falkenburg and I changed the code to make more efficient use of registers and make it a true leaf routine and use the red zone for temporary storage (needed to build doubles). Eric Traut popped in and rescheduled the code to be optimal for all current and planned PowerPC processors at the time. This improved version was given back to Aaron, who refit it into Dark Forces.

Eric took that version back into the Lion suite and plugged it into the Doom code. He then went on to rework much of the vertical and horizontal texture mappers to render up to 4 pixels at a time and write custom versions of FixMul and FixDiv in PPC assembly for them. Quicksilver's Robert Barris helped them by figuring out that an offscreen GWorld 640 pixels wide results in the worst case cache performance for vertical rendering and came up with a solution for that.

The Apple Game Kitchens have involved some of the best talent in the industry working together, and that's why they have been so successful.

Alexander M. Rosenberg
Bungie Software

From: Racoona@aol.com
To: AOL's Mac Games forum
Subject: Null Modem Doom tips

The best way to connect a Mac and PC for serial game play is with a DIN8-to-DB25 null modem cable, but you have to order those special and they're not cheap. You can do it with your two cables if you add a standard PC modem cable between the null modem cable and the PC.

So, you'd have:

MacSerialCable<->NullModemCable<->PCSerialCable

It has nothing to do with having the right adapter on the end of the null-modem cable you plug into your PC. Because you're using a Mac modem cable on one end, you're screwing up what the null-modem cable is trying to do. You need another standard modem cable on the PC end to fix it. Trust me. It really does work the way I said. :)

Mac<->MacModemCable<->NullModemCable<->PCModemCable<->PC

Rac
The Mask-Ed Wonder

ave a correction or comment for MacDoom Review? Send your letter to reeltime@voicenet.com.