

after hours

This month you need to annihilate an alien or two in the unearthly Quake, shift gears to get ahead in the Need for Speed Special Edition, and show your leadership skills to a platoon of robots in Z. On the family front you can create a cartoon in the Stone of Wakan, know it all with Webster's Interactive Encyclopedia and spell well with Snoopy. Plus, more sites from around the World Wide Web

Quake
 Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the keyboard, ID Software comes up with another game.

Following much speculation, this month finally sees the launch of Quake, the next 3D blockbuster from the creators of Doom. As with Doom and the clones that followed it, Quake is a first-person adventure cum shoot-em-up. Its plot is best described as low-key, bordering on non-existent, and the aim is to blast your way to the end through a number of increasingly challenging levels. Where Quake differs from the rest is its depth of game-

play, coupled with an all-new state-of-the-art graphic engine. The game casts you as a lone soldier on a mission to seek out and destroy an invader from another



dimension, codenamed Quake. Just to make things interesting, the action takes place in the alien's homeworld, split over four episodes and a number of different stages. The first stop in your search is the aptly-named Dimension of the Doomed, a dark and forbidding military complex packed with numerous nasties. You start your mission armed only with a small axe and a shotgun, but bigger and better weapons and ammunition can be found en route. Chief among these are a double-barrelled shotgun and the powerful and far more satisfying nail gun. Other handy bits include a grenade launcher and the top-of-the-line thunder-

bolt, but you'll need to explore before these show themselves. Mystic runes and magical power-ups are also scattered around, which can temporarily improve your ability to face the opposition. The opposition ranges from foot soldiers and mad dogs through to bomb-toting trolls and skeleton warriors. Each has its own unique method of attack and needs to be tackled slightly differently. Skeletons destroyed with a shotgun have a habit of resurrecting themselves – a well-aimed grenade is more likely to have the desired effect. Similarly, a beast that fires projectiles can't do much with a nail gun up its nose!



As well as exploring military installations, Quake's worlds have you wandering through sewers, castles, low-gravity areas and lava pits. Traps await you at almost every turn, and hidden switches and panels must often be found before you can proceed to the next level. It pays not to take any of your surroundings at face value. Graphically, Quake looks amazing when played in high resolutions, with advanced texture-mapping and lighting effects that have to be seen to be believed. The 3D is convincing and, unlike other games of this type, both the characters and scenery

games news

Following the success of its War Craft series, Blizzard Entertainment has announced **Diablo** – a dark tale of Gothic fantasy for Windows 95. Armed with little more than your wits it sends you on a quest for vengeance into a sin-

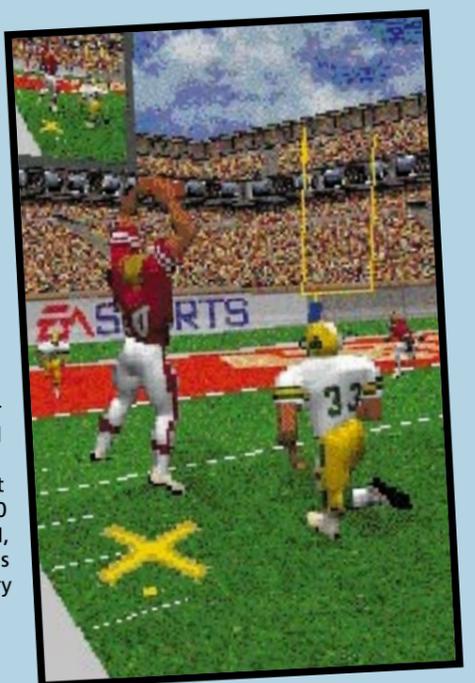


ister underworld teeming with evil creatures and supernatural forces. A price has yet to be confirmed, but brave readers up for the quest can contact distributor *Zablac* on 01626 332233. Definitely one for bargain hunters, the latest release from Gremlin brings you five classic titles on a single CD-ROM. **CD5** lets you play for England, start a war, race to victory and kill aliens – all for under £30. Games included in the compilation are **Actua Soccer – Championship Semi Final edition**, **Desert Strike**, **Jungle Strike**, **Retribution** and **Slipstream 5000**. A **Normality** screensaver is also bundled for good measure. *Gremlin:* 0114 275 3423. EA Sports is set to release all-new versions of its top-selling **NHL** and **NFL** sports simulations. The company claims both products have been totally redesigned for



viewed from any angle at any time. Adjustable penalties, an on-screen referee and motion-captured 3D graphics add to the authenticity. Improvements in **NHL'97** include special 'signature' moves, which put the skills of the superstars at your disposal, and the option to define your own hockey hotshots and put them through their paces. *Electronic Arts:* 01753 549442. Billed as a first of its kind, **Power Chess** is the next big game release for Windows 95 from Sierra On-Line. Powered by an award-winning artificial intelligence, it claims to be the ultimate chess simulation and more human than any other

the fastest and most competitive game-play ever. Top of the new features in **Madden NFL'97** is the Iso-Cam, which lets you play the game through the eyes of an offensive lineman. This, coupled with EA's Virtual Stadium technology, allows the action to be viewed from any angle at any time. Adjustable penalties, an on-screen referee and motion-captured 3D graphics add to the authenticity. Improvements in **NHL'97** include special 'signature' moves, which put the skills of the superstars at your disposal, and the option to define your own hockey hotshots and put them through their paces. *Electronic Arts:* 01753 549442. Billed as a first of its kind, **Power Chess** is the next big game release for Windows 95 from Sierra On-Line. Powered by an award-winning artificial intelligence, it claims to be the ultimate chess simulation and more human than any other



are redrawn to suit your system.

Audio takes a back seat compared to the graphics, but various grunts and groans are used to good effect. Music is provided by the rock band Nine Inch Nails, and streamed from the CD as you play.

All of this would be nothing without good gameplay, and Quake's levels are extremely well designed. The monsters show more than the usual amount of intelligence and the atmosphere could be cut with a knife. CC

If you jumped when you first ran into Doom's pig monsters, buy some spare underwear before playing Quake.

- £29.99 (the shareware version of Quake can be downloaded from www.idsoftware.com)
- GT Interactive: 0171 258 3791

Quake ★★★★★

Min requirements: 60MHz Pentium, 8Mb of RAM minimum, 16Mb recommended (16Mb required for running under Win95), CD-ROM drive. MS-DOS 5.0 or better or Windows 95 (does NOT run under Windows NT) 30Mb disk space for shareware, 80Mb for registered version.



is a network play option for up to eight PCs, new tracks and better car-handling. The graphics are also much more impressive, but you'll need a serious system to make the most of them. With all the options set to maximum, we still noticed frequent halts in the action on our Pentium 133 test machine.

There are several types of race – 'Tournament' pits you against a number of opponents in a multi-race championship and 'Head to head' puts you in a race against a single

car, dodging police speed traps as you go. There's even an option to race against the clock and compare your score to *Road and Track* magazine's performance statistics.

As far as driving games go, NFSSE is great fun and the graphics are extremely impressive. The game has lasting appeal, thanks largely to the wide variety of tracks, cars and race types available, and the difficulty level is pitched just right. The options of manual or automatic transmission, and even ABS braking and traction control, make the cars easy to drive, but difficult to master.

Like its predecessor, the action in NFSSE can be viewed from a number of perspectives. The most realistic of these is sitting behind the steering wheel, but it's also possible to move the viewpoint outside the car and watch the race from above.

Unfortunately, NFSSE doesn't come across too well using just a PC keyboard. Prodding keys to turn left and right has never been a good substitute for wrestling with a sturdy steering wheel. You can, however, use a variety of joysticks and analogue controls with NFSSE, and these make it a really thrilling experience. JP

The Need for Speed Special Edition

U There's no shortage of driving games available for the PC and there's one that caters for almost every conceivable vehicle. The Need for Speed Special Edition (NFSSE) is an update of a game released late last year and it gives you the opportunity to test-drive a bevy of fast cars, from a Porsche 911 Carrera to a Chevrolet Corvette ZR-1.

New in this edition of the game



If you like driving games, you'll love the Need for Speed Special Edition but, unless you have an extremely fast PC, you're not going to see it at its best.

- £44.99
- Electronic Arts: 01753 549442

The Need for Speed Special Edition ★★★★★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 75 or higher, 8Mb of RAM and 4Mb of hard disk space (DOS), 12Mb of RAM and 30Mb of hard disk space (Windows 95), VESA-compatible video card, double-speed CD-ROM drive, sound card.

Z Z is a new action-strategy game in which you lead a platoon of robots, pitting your wits against the computer or a network opponent.

The amusing opening scene is set in outer space, where two drunken robots are clowning around; they're taking supplies to their burly, gung-ho commander – aptly named Zod – who barks orders at them while they belch and swear. The animation is both entertaining and of a high quality, which is just as well as these characters reappear at the end of each stage in cartoon clips to celebrate with you if you win, or insult you if you lose.

After an introduction like this, the game has a lot to live up to. Set against a barren landscape, there are two armies of robots, each with their own forts and factories (where new robots are manufactured). The aim is to use the tanks, jeeps, grenades and robots at your disposal to destroy the opposition's troops and base.

Virtually all the controls are on the mouse – you can move troops and vehicles, target, and fire on victims. The detail on the screen is impressive: explosions and effects are quite spectacular. When your troops get killed – and they will



because this game is hard, and there are over twenty levels – you'd be advised to turn the volume down as the swearing and yelling builds to deafening levels. Be warned, your grunts and snipers go so obediently and enthusiastically off to battle for you that you could feel guilty when they bite the dust.

The soundtrack is particularly good, featuring atmospheric music that builds to a crescendo when you get your butt kicked. JC

The plot follows a familiar

formula, but Z is an amusing and absorbing variation on the strategy game theme. It's likely to appeal to all ages, though some of the content and dialogue may not be suitable for younger children.

- £44.99
- Warner Interactive: 0171 391 4300

Z ★★★★★

Minimum requirements: 486DX/66MHZ, double-speed CD-ROM drive, 8Mb of RAM, SVGA monitor, 20Mb of free hard disk space, Soundblaster or compatible sound card.

TOP TEN CD-ROM GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
–	–	Quake	GT/ID
1	2	Formula 1 Grand Prix 2	Microprose
–	3	Z	Renegade
5	4	Championship Manager 2	Domark
2	5	Theme Park	CD-Rom Classics
3	6	Duke Nukem 3D	US Gold
6	7	Command and Conquer	Virgin
7	8	Worms	Ocean/Team 17
4	9	Civilization 2	Microprose
–	10	Nascar	The White Label

TOP TEN DISK GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
1	1	Aladdin	Virgin
3	2	Jungle Book	Virgin
5	3	Best of Windows Entert.	Microsoft
4	4	Sim Tower	Maxis
2	5	Return of Arcade	Microsoft
6	6	Autoroute – UK & Ireland	Microsoft
–	7	Mavis Beacon 2 (UK Edit.)	Mindscape
7	8	Word Rally Fever	Ocean / Team 17
8	9	Worms	Ocean/Team 17
–	10	Doom 2	Virgin

Age ratings: We have assigned viewing suitability ratings for each game. U = Universal; PG = Parental Guidance; 15 = suitable for viewing by 15-year-olds and above; 18 = suitable for viewing by 18-year-olds and above.

