Ultima Ascension

FAQ

11/15/98

Gameplay Issues

Why does Origin feel that an RPG needs a 3D engine to sell well?

Does an RPG need to be 3D? Of course not.. He says that there are plenty of good what's called "RPG"'s in 2D and there's plenty of great "role-playing" games in 2D.. but this goes back to why he started Ultima in general.. which is for the immersive environment. There are three elements which he uses to design Ultimas... They must be compelling, be role-playing games, and must be immersive. In Ascension, the compelling part comes from the epic storytelling... the role-playing comes from the virtues... the immersive environment comes from the 3D world. For RG, it has nothing to do with selling more games, or following what anyone else has done. He thinks back to the old Ultimas and says, "The old Ultima's used to be 3D (remember the dungeons in U1?) but I wasn't up to the task of developing 3D eventually, which is why I abandoned that perspective." RG does agree that the compelling story and the role-playing and interaction with party members all also contribute to the immersiveness of the world, and that people who bring this up are making a very good argument. That this debate was had over and over here in the office, but that it boils down to RG's vision of a realistic, immersive environment... and that it doesn't end with a 3D engine, but will continue to evolve until it is entirely virtual reality.

Why the Tomb Raider perspective and pre-rendered cutscenes?

RG feels that party members who follow you around like a puppy and you dress them and feed them aren't really that interactive. And they were cut for this reason, among others. The cut scenes are used for subtle story advancement and superior "acting", and even if the world were 2D, they'd still be used. His preference would be to keep the party, and the female avatar, among other things.. but not at the expense of the 3D engine.

What is the size of the world in Ultima Ascension?

No "math" has been done on this subject, but an estimation of about 150x150 screens is probably pretty close. However, such an estimate is difficult to assess given that UA is a 3D environment.

Will horses or dragons be available to ride?

Probably not. While the engine could do it, it would require additional bandwidth to include and we are currently focused on finished the features that are necessary to the design of the game.

What type of inventory management will there be in Ultima Ascension?

The current strategy is most easily described by thinking of 'containers' that you might be previously familiar with, such as backpacks and chests. The primary change from the previous Ultima systems is inspired by the fact that we've been unhappy with the way you start to generate piles of junk which are difficult to sort while playing. As an aid to organization, we're going to have things fall into 'slots' within the container which represent the maximum number of

objects the container may hold. The containers determine the number of slots... big containers have more slots, little containers have fewer slots.

Containers in Ultimas 6-7 had volume and weight restrictions, and while this was nice for the 'realism' in the game, the players found it obtuse and couldn't easily determine when a container would be full. For instance, a backpack might only have one "heavy" object in it and it would be full. Players couldn't easily 'see' if something was full or not. With the slots, we hope to make that management much easier.

Will the musical tracks be dynamic?

Yes.

Will the Avatar be able to wear different types of armor and clothing?

Yes, you will be able to wear different types of armor and clothing. And not only will the armor and clothing be reflected on the Avatar, but every weapon will also be individually reflected within the game and the ÒpapaerdollÓ. The current plan is the "paperdoll" avatar system where he faces the camera and you drag items on and off him.

In comparison to past Ultimas, will the depth of the story and character be sacrificed?

You needn't fear any lack of depth in characters in UA. Compelling characters are incredibly important to the Ascension dev team, so much so that a screen writer will be hired to help make sure that not only is the dialogue concise, but that it also conveys the most effective storytelling possible given the medium. There is a great deal of effort being put into the story.

What kind of a magic system will be utilized in Ultima Ascension?

We have both spells and rituals. You should expect to see a spellbook and ritual spell casting. That doesn't mean that spell book spells with be ritual spells. They are separate types of spells. The plan for the system is that it will be extremely customizable, so that you can use your function keys any way you want. You could fill them up with 12 spells and cast them "on the fly" like in the demo. The spells will cost you something, however, like mana, and Òon the flyÓ spells will be restricted by something of that nature.

Will there be a party system?

No. For more, see below.

CST said to RG.. "well, the party system has come up again, and they're asking about different ways the party could be accomplished, and offering ideas, etc.."

RG says NO.

CST says Well.. yeah, I figured..

RG laughs and says with wide eyes NO!

CST says, timidly heehee.. but

RG says Marketing is pushing for it, the fans are pushing for it, everyone wants it, but I've decided no. I hear you! I get the picture! But it's No. That's the answer. No.

CST says Gotcha.

RG laughs and says Tell them I said so. No!

Will players be able to own and pilot a ship?

By the end of Ascension, you will be able to sail and explore anywhere.

Will Ultima Ascension keep track of good and evil deeds?

The game will be keeping track of the good and evil deeds and it will affect the way the game and NPCs treat you.

Will text subtitles be available in addition to full speech?

The plan is for you to be able to toggle text subtitles on or off, and speech on or off.

Will the Avatar be able to get drunk, weave, stumble, fall down as in Ultima VIII?

He will probably have the visible signs of drunkenness.

With the full-speech, will 'ye-olde-english' style dialogue be used as in previous Ultimas?

The language will be something of a hybrid. There will be enough old English so that it sounds Britannian, but it will not be Shakespearean. Vocalization of different ÒaccentsÓ has an implicit characterization. For example, a noble may have a high English manner of speech, whereas a chimney sweep may have a more low-brow manner of speaking.

Will there be stats and or just one or the other?

There will be several stats and skills total combined. They will be like Str, Dex, Int, etc in previous Ultimas, and like swordplay, archery, etc.

Will stats be ÒhiddenÓ?

Stats and skills have levels, not numerical values, and to the degree that they are not numbers, they are not hidden.

How will the stats/skills system work?

When you become more skillfull, you will gain a new abilities. You directly earn skills by events that you do to be granted an ability, or by buying training to grant you an ability. Every skill gain is an event. Skills and stats go up independently, but you can master them. You don't have to master one before you can start working another. So, you can have swordplay, and master it, but you can begin archery without mastering swordplay. Therefore there will be choice in how you develop those skills/stats, because they are independent.

Will we be able to play the game through as multiple times focusing on one particular character type or skill set at a time?

Not really. Early in the game you can play with different skills being stronger than others, however, by the end of the game, you will have basically mastered all of them.

Will you be able to attack anything?

Basically yes.. you should be able to attack anything but not everything can be damaged.

Will I be able to pull up a stats screen and see a numerical representation of my abilities?

The general answer here is you won't see any numbers... no stat screens. There's no such thing as Archery 87%. I don't have a specific example from the game, but just to make one up for illustrations, it would be like you begin training your Archery skill by buying training from a master archer and then you just GET the ability called "Double Range". You have no choice about it, you just get it. Now, all your bow usages gets double the range it used to. Again, I just made that ability up.. I don't promise that it is or is not in Ascension.

Will UltimaAscension have an open-ended game play?

Staying true to Ultima tradition, Ascension generally is an open-ended world which you can explore without time constraints. However, there are a few exceptions. To make it easier for new players to get their bearings, the first eighth of Ascension is fairly linear inasmuch as it presents a single plot at the beginning (which becomes more complicated and open-ended as the game progresses). Likewise, there are a couple of times where you feel some time pressure in your goal to solve the quest. But, like life, there are many options and choices to make in this very real Britannia!

How long, in terms of gameplay time, can we expect this Ultima?

About 40-100 hours. Somewhere between Ultima 8 and Ultima 7.

How many forms of transportation are there?

There will be a few forms of transportation. Ship travel, teleports. We don't know about exotics yet. And yes, moongates.

How will character advancement be handled?

There will be trainers, and events to advance your character. You will be able to emphasize how your character advances. There is a definitive list of skills, but we aren't going to tell you them.

Why has the concept of Ascension been changed so drastically from hardcore-rpg to action/adventure

The concept of Ascension is RPG.

Will there be an inventory and what will it look like?

The current strategy is most easily described by thinking of 'containers' that you might be previously familiar with, such as backpacks and chests. The primary change from the previous Ultima systems is inspired by the fact that we've been unhappy with the way you start to generate piles of junk which are difficult to sort while playing. As an aid to organization, we're going to have things fall into 'slots' within the container which represent the maximum number of objects the container may hold. The containers determine the number of slots... big containers have more slots, little containers have fewer slots.

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Will the runic alphabet be kept and incorporated into the story?

Yes.

Is the rumor true that you could kill Lord British in U7 by clicking on the sign above his head in the game because Richard Garriott was almost killed by being hit on the head with a sign in real life?

The answer is yes. RG was ruthlessly attacked by falling metal locking plates in the doors at the office. The first one fell on his head and knocked him out cold for a few minutes. He had stitches and the whole nine yards. Not long after that, he was at an apartment complex with similar security doors, and the moment before he crossed the door's threshold, a second plate fell, almost hitting him in the head. He was about to cross another door, sometime later, and decided to check the metal plate to see if it was secure. Apparently it was not, so he took the liberty of removing the faulty plate, so that it should not find occasion to fall on his head.

Will there be dense forests with lots of different plants, where you can hunt and chop down trees?

Yes, there will be dense forests with lots of different plants, but you can't chop down trees.

Will there be environmental effects like burning forests?

There will be environmental effects, but there's no chance for burning forests.

Will you be able to walk through swamps, seeing your knees under the water?

Yes.

How many talking NPC's will there be?

There will be over 150 talking NPC's.

Will there be sleep in Ascension?

Yes. The plan is to have sleep/rest in Ascension.

How much speaking/text will be in Ascension?

There will be over 150 talking NPC's. However, the intent is to have fewer words, with more meaning.

When speaking to NPC's, will the camera zoom in automatically?

Yes. The camera will zoom in automatically.

Can you name the Avatar?

Yes, you can name the Avatar. But likely the only place you will see it reflected is in the journal.

How much time is being spent on real-time plot progression?

RG says that in terms of conversations, there are as many characters and plot bits as there were in U7. The story size is very similar, and should thus feel very similar to U7.

How long is a Britannian Day versus an Earth day?

Currently, about 6 hours of real time = one Britannian 24 hour cycle.

Will there be animals roaming the streets?

Yes.

Will there be lighthouses and lost cities from U5, or the Isle of Fire?

There will be lighthouses. Bordermarch and Farthing won't be in the game. The Isle of Fire is still there.

Will the mood of NPC's accurately reflect the general atmosphere of the state of Britannia?

The answer to that is that characters who should react to the general atmosphere of Britannia probably will. Those who, by virtue of their character, shouldn't, probably won't.

Can you explain the difference in the AvatarÕs costume from game to game?

In every Ultima, you, the computery person, leave your corporeal manifestation behind and go into the world of Ultima. It is only your soul, your essence, your id, etc that makes the journey to Britannia. Consequently, you've never been able to take things back and forth between the places... not guns or amo or anything else. Likewise, when you go through the transformation, it's like a malfunctioning Star Trek teleporter, and you can be very different when you come out the other side. So, your costume is likely to change. Your body could change. But your soul is always the same.

Will there be varying themes and architecture styles for the dungeons?

Yes.

Will there be NPCs living in the dungeons?

Yes.

Will dungeons connect to each other underground?

Some of them will, yes.

Will Ascension be a level-based game?

No. All the above ground world is one continuos map.

Moving from downstairs to upstairs in a house, specifically? "Yes, there is gravity in the game, but there all kinds of ways to beat it." There will be some "portals" to other "maps" which might be dungeons or something to that effect... but if the dungeon is built out in a 3d space, then you could stand at the top of a hole and look down to see many "stories" of the dungeon... you could jump into the hole and fall down to the bottom and splat.

Are there are a set number of creatures or is the population random?

There are both. Many are a preset number, providing surprise encounters and things of that nature. But there are some "hordes" who spawn over and over to provide for that bloodthirsty nature in some of us.

When killed, do monsters become a permanent part of the landscape, or do they fade over time?

The will disappear over time. The exact method by which that happens is undecided.. at the very least, the corpses will just fade.

If creatures spawn, what is the approximate rate of regeneration for any given monster?

The creatures will probably respawn after you leave the arena of battle, as opposed to over time.

Will there be resurrection for the Avatar?

Yes.

Will there be a paperdoll?

Yes. The "paperdoll" in Ascension is directly the 3D character before you.. you try clothes and equipment directly onto the Avatar. This goes back to the Q about spinning the camera around to face the Avatar so that you can drag things on and off of him directly when managing your worn inventory. This is the plan, anyway.

The thing to remember is that unlike in UO, where you are represented by a tiny little Avatar, so small you can't see a lot of detail.. the Ascension Avatar is quite large, and you can directly see the detail of the clothing, etc that he has on his person.

Will eating mean anything in Ascension, like you need to eat to survive, or will it be a superficial way to magically increase health?

It will just be a way to increase health magically.

How is damage going to be represented?

There will be some valuation of hitpoints, but how that is shown remains to be seen. There will be some visual feedback about your health on the Avatar, but to what degree, we don't know yet. And yes, arrows and darts will stick to him.

Will there be a good reason to sleep?

Sleep will heal you... there might be plot elements... but an important thing to consider here is that even though it's night in Britannia doesn't mean the world stops.. there will be things to do at night. Food will also heal you. You will not have some food counter that clicks off with movement.. you will not starve to death. The Avatar never needs to go to the toilet because he's really a Marvel superhero, and his superpower is that instead of turning food into poop, it turns into health.

Will we be able to see blacksmiths make swords, and bakers make bread etc?

Yes, you will be able to see merchants doing their jobs.

Will there be storms and hurricanes at sea that can capsize or sink your ship?

The thing about ships is that they are designed to be a cool thing you get to let you go where you want and really fast. Although there *may* be terrible things at sea (large monsters/pirate ships/whirlpools/etc) the idea isn't about getting you out stranded on the water for hours. Part of this is because of the plot... Swimming is restricted out in the sea as a part of keeping the first third of the story linear in its progression.. at the end, when you can go anywhere and everywhere.. you'll want a quick way to do it. But in the beginning, if you can swim anywhere you want, then it destroys what we're trying to accomplish at the beginning of the game. The complex swimming physics probably won't be included.. however, we'll have a look at it and see if it helps game fun. Otherwise, it probably won't come into it.

Will magic be reagent based or if it will be the intricate placing of elements?

There will be a variety of different kinds of spells in the game, and the mechanisms for using them aren't to be revealed at this time. However, the problems that came with the intricate placement of items in Pagan won't be repeated in UA, even if placement of items is a factor in spellcasting. I realize that is vague, but it is purposefully so.)

Will clouds float across the sky?

The clouds do float across the sky. Sky bitmaps arenÕt static.

Will every item in the world be usable in a logical manner?

The idea is that a great many items in the world have logical uses, although there will be decorative items, too. But in terms of a ropeÉ if you see a rope, you should be able to use it logically.

Will spells leave visible effects on buildings/the ground?

Depending on the spell... some will, some wonÕt.

Will locational damage be modeled?

No, probably not. There is damage feedback visually, and the way we illustrate damage will be some combination of visual clues on the monsters and some sort of meter for yourself. And we have been toying with how to accomplish the idea of a ÕwoundedÓ look. But depending on time, more or less will be implemented in terms of modeled damageÉ and it currently isnÕt.

Will there be a children killing area like there has been in past Ultimas?

Yes. We agree. ItÕs a tradition.

Will UA support activities like making bread from grain youÕve turned into flour and mixed with water?

Yes, these types of activities will be supported.

How exactly will sailing be simulated?

The basic idea for sailing is a very simple system that will move you around the map in a greater speed than just walking,. the ocean can be a dangerously boring place and weÕre trying to avoid dangerously boring places. As to the exact look and feel of sailing... itÕll prolly be something quite unrealistic... in terms of honest to goodness sailing.

Will there be different animations for the Avatar?

At the very least we will have, walk, run, jump, climb, and swim. The rest will probably be determined by what there is time to implement.

Will UA use numerical values to represent the stats?

The basic design principle here is that numerical values can be arbitrary and can be rather vague in terms of the progression and advancement of your character. We want to use a system that gives

you meaningful advancement; for instance, in terms of the abilities you gain as you advance. The difference here is between using 25 strong, 27 strong, and 30 strong and using strong, stronger, and strongest.

Is there an estimate of replayability?

There will be a lot of things that people will miss on the first play-throughÉ

Will Ultima Ascension feature full speech?

We are having full speech. German and French.

Technical Issues

Which 3D APIs (Direct3D, Glide, OpenGL) will Ascension support?

3dfx glide, and D3D/DirectX6.

They should all "look" about the same from a graphical standpoint, but there might be performance issues (currently unnamed) by using one or the other...

No OpenGL at this time, even though we think itÕs cool.

Also, there will be a software rasterizer, although you must expect it to be less exciting looking than the 3d accelerated versions.

What type of music and sound will Ascension use?

UA supports DirectSound and DirectSound3D (22kHz, 16 bit, mono sounds) - Things that should have a 3D sound do (bees, creaking signs, birds in trees, etc.)

Things that can get away with a 2D sound (ocean waves, wind, etc.) do NOT use 3D for performance reasons.

Sound use is scalable, controllable by the user from the options. The players will essentially control how many total sounds they want to hear at a time... If you have a PII 400 and a soundcard that accelerates DirectSound and DirectSound3D, you can crank it all up and hear every possible sound the designers put in the game. If your machine is lower-end, lower the number of sounds down. We'll probably default to something like 5 3D sounds and 3 2D sounds for the minimum spec machine.

Music is currently streaming digital, 22kHz, 16 bit, stereo.

There are no plans to do Redbook, MIDI, or support DirectMusic.

How much hard disk space will Ascension's installation take up?

It shouldn't be more than 400-500mb for the install.

Fully installing the CDÕs onto your HD won't increase your performance.

Will Ultima Ascension support resolutions higher than 640x480?

The plan is that yes, there will be support.

Will Ultima Ascension support the EAX audio extensions being used by SoundBlaster Live?

The plan is that yes, there will be support.

How many CDs will the game be?

3 CDs

Will Ascension support MMX2?

To the degree that D3D and glide support it, we will.

Will there be a 44khz option if there is a DVD version?

The 22khz version sound just peachy. However, it's a one line code change and so if we choose to do it, it won't be hard to implement. There probably won't be a performance hit if you have one of the new generation PCI sound cards.

Will the game support True Color texture display in 3D?

WeÕre currently supporting up to 16 bit textures.

What is the control method of Ascension going to be?

WeÕre hoping to support all the major controllers, and exactly how you use them should be completely definable by the player. There will be the mouse and keyboard for sure, though, at the very least.

Will Ultima Ascension run on Windows NT?

Yes. NT 4 should be able to run. We currently run under NT 4 here, but it -might- require NT 5. This will be decided at a later date.

Plot

Will Sherry the Mouse appear in Ascension?

Currently, Sherry the Mouse is not in the game. However, that doesn't necessarily preclude her from appearing in the final product.

What types of weapons can we expect to see in Ascension?

There will be lots of weapons, and they basically break down into 5 categories...

Fisticuffs (okay, that's not a weapon class... but you get the idea.) 2. Single handed weapons (swords, scimitars, daggers, etc...) 3. Two handed weapons (two handed swords, battleaxes, war hammers, etc...) 4. Staves (used rather Japanese style... double ended.. pow pow, you know.) 5. Bows (archery)

Will we be able to find the reagents in the wildernessas well as buy them?

Yes, you will be able to find some reagents in the wilderness.

Will Ascension have some of the older Ultima tunes/music for nostalgia?

Yes, some old tunes will be in Ascension.

Will Zog be a part of the Ultima Ascension plot?

Zog -was- not in the Ascension script, but as you all have come to know, RG likes to press buttons in people... and so, if the fancy strikes him, the bones of Zog, which were in a museum in Ultima fiction way before some other uses of the word and which was named by him only because he thought it up himself and for no other reason, well then he might choose to include them in the game. Richard has no fear of doing something which people might choose to misinterpret. No fear.

Will there be readable books in UA?

There will be readable books in UA, of about the same length as those in U7. A picture of the book will come up like in U7... RG was hoping to get a 3d book with turning pages, but the programmers say no for now.

Will there be side-plots not related to the main storyline?

Yes. Side-plots are traditional to all Ultimas and provide more depth and a richer storyline.

Can we expect some of the consistent running themes of the past Ultimas to be present in UA?

Yes, tons.

Do we find out who the Guardian is and the story behind him?

Oh yes.

Which races will appear in Ultima Ascension?

The races in Ultima Ascension will be primarily humans and gargoyles.

Will there be pirates?

Yes, there will be pirates, they will be at sea, and very probably will have canons.

Are all (or most) of the "classic" townes of Britannia still present?

Many of the ÒclassicÓ towns are still present, some of those are Britain, Skara Brae, New Magincia, and Paws. Those are the only ones IÕm going to tell you about for now though. You can discover the rest through play. Heehee.

Will the weapons be different from one another in appearance?

Yes, weapons will have different appearances.

Will there be exotic or rare weapons that can be acquired by some quests?

Yes, there will be rare and exotic weapons that can be acquired by questing.

Will there be children NPCs?

Yes, of course.

Is the game set solely in Britannia?

No... but it is predominately so.

Will there be loads of little quests that can be pursued in any desired order?

Yes, there are loads of these little kinds of questsÉ but the initial parts of the story is fairly linear, so if you should find yourself starting out pretty focusedÉ

Will Iolo and Shamino be present in Ultima Ascension?

Yes. Both.

Who developed the design for the Guardian?

The idea of the Guardian, and who he is, has existed for a long time. Certain details are decided upon during the course of the individual games, but the overriding high concept is common. IÕve mentioned before that in Ascension you finally learn more about him.

Will there be teleporters?

The high concept here is that ÒyesÓ there are teleporters and they take you from one place to another. There are also moongates to do a similar thing.

Will there be a reference to Dupre in UA?

Dupre continues to be meaningful in UA.

How will the Avatar be dealt with if he commits a crime or other ÒevilÓ act?

Without giving too much away, the avatarÕs choices, good and bad, will have a noticeable impact. Killing a good person will be a bad thing.

Will water have fish in it?

If applicable, yes.

Will wildlife attack each other, e.g. a bear attacking a dear?

Probably not, but donÕt rule it out completely.

Marketing

How will Ultima Ascension be positioned?

Ultima Ascension is the next-generation fantasy role-playing masterpiece that delivers the glory of saving a legendary land of virtue from the ultimate force of evil.
Benefit - The only game where *you* become the greatest hero of all time, the Avatar.

What will the price point be for the retail version?

Wholesale price is $37.25 U.S.

Retail price is approximately $54.99 U.S. (depending on the retailer)

What is the ship date?

February 23rd, 1999.

Will there be a playable demo prior to ship?

Yes. Although, no date has been confirmed yet.

What platform is *Ultima Ascension* going to be delivered on?

Windows 95/98 PC-CD

What gaming category does *Ultima Ascension* fit into?

PC DataÕs Adventure/Role-playing.

Who will buy *Ultima Ascension*?

Primary
Role-playing gamers Male 12-35.
HeÕs a Gothic (black hair, black clothes) individual or ÔAÕ student who plays paper RPGs like Dungeons & Dragons and Computer RPGs like Ultima and Might & Magic. Single, interested in function over fashion, would rather read books than play sports, imaginative, introverted. They play RPGs or watch movies and TV on weekends instead of going out. They watched the *Merlin* TV miniseries and *Dragonheart* and have been to a Renaissance fair. They will like Ascension because it lets them escape to a fantasy world where they are the hero (unlike reality) and because it provides a broader role-playing experience than other computer RPGs (well-crafted balance of story, quests, combat, puzzle solving and character interaction). Rich story lines are very important to this group and Ascension will deliver story like no other game, including full speech conversations with 200 characters.
Secondary
Diablo and Action/Adventure Fans Male 18-35. These guys are gamers who donÕt consider themselves RPG fans, but like DiabloÕs instant gratification, combat focus, rapid character development and dark, sinister style. He also likes immersive 3D games like Tomb Raider and Unreal. This guy has long hair, wears rock concert T-shirts, and is more likely to ÔpartyÓ, have a girlfriend and go out than the hard-core RPGer. HeÕll like Ascension because itÕs really easy to play, has much more interesting combat and more depth than Diablo or Tomb Raider, heÕll love the excellent character controls and the 3D graphics take the experience to the next level. Ascension looks beautiful and has so much more fun things to do than other action/adventures (talk to characters, perform signature fighting moves, interact with objectsÉ)

What will be in the boxed retail version?

Box w/ flap -	$.75
Reg. Card -	$.01

EA catalog - $.10

3 CDs - $1.35 (3@.45)

Dual jewel case - $.45

CD backliner - $.03

Tarot cards - $.41 (set of 8 cards Ð 2 color/4color)

Install guide - $.105 (16 pages)

Fiction book 1 - $.37 (magic book - 44pages Ð 4 color)

Fiction book 2 - $.37 (journal book Ð 4 color)

Map - $1.39 (cloth map, as included in UO)

TOTAL $5.34

What are the marketing objectives and strategies?

Marketing Objectives

The best-selling Origin PC title to date

A top 5 Adventure/RPG title in CY98

A top 20 title in CY99

Marketing Strategy

Leverage the demo to prove our position and gameplay

Win the support of RPG enthusiasts early

Build a gaming event perception among consumers

Use the positioning change and the Ultima System of Virtues as an opportunity to re-define the franchise

Emphasize beautiful graphics to appeal to broader audience

Utilize the EPK to communicate with Japan and Europe to make this the most successful Ultima ever.

What is the style and tone of the campaign?

Masterpiece
At last! UA is here.
Innovation

Exciting
Beautiful/Colorful
Event
Heroic and Magnificent; Epic; Immersive
Controversial (like Titanic, the press is skeptical and holding a higher standard)
Cutting-edge Beauty; Strength/Heritage; The best Ultima of them All
Historic Figure The Avatar is a dragon-slaying, puzzle-solving, ass-kicking Jesus Christ
If Ascension were a car, it would be a horse-drawn carriage designed and built by Ferrari
If Ascension were a movie, it would be like Star Wars meets Excalibur
If it were a vacation, it would be like Total Recall, where the experience is so vivid itÕs like an actual memory.

Is there a web site?

Yes. *Ultima Ascension* web site will be integrated into OWO.com. With links from the OWO.com home page; EA.com home page and ORIGIN.ea.com home page, the web site will consist of features; new monster animations; descriptions; FAQ; How to Upgrade; and Pre-order walkthrough.

Who is our competition?

Diablo 2 -

KingÕs Quest Mask of Eternity - BaldurÕs Gate -

Fallout 2 -

Will there be any add-ons for Ascension with extra plot elements and characters?

There are no current plans.

Where can I get the latest Marketing Plan?

We are working on integrating the marketing plan into the Origin internal Intranet. Stay tuned for more details. You can also contact Brian Allen. (Ballen@origin.ea.com at x761 (1-512-434-6761).