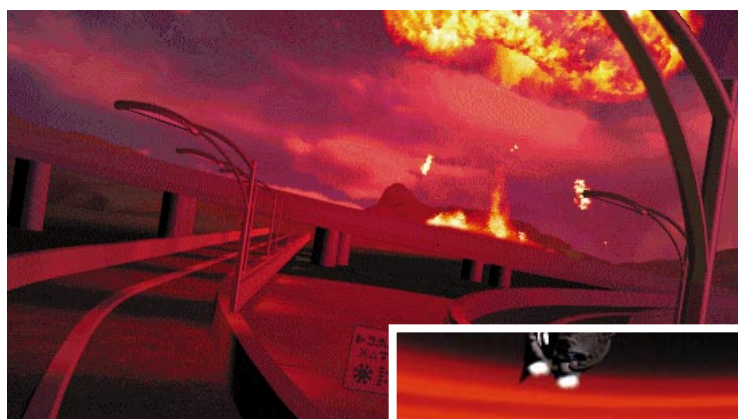


after hours

This month we try another Doom clone, put an Mpeg player through its paces and join the space race in Wing Commander IV and Chronomaster. For families, there are Mythical Creatures, Pocahontas, and Blender – a lifestyle magazine on CD-Rom. And Terry Pinnell provides a tour of the sites for Internet fans



Chronomaster

Much play is made of the fact that this game was developed from an idea by Roger Zelazny, the prolific author of minor classics of science fiction and fantasy. In fact, most of the work was done by his partner, Jane Lindskold, and credit for the splendid presentation must surely go to the developers – Dreamforge.



Hype aside, this is a graphical adventure and comes from a long line of similar games: you fly your spaceship, land, walk around, meet people, collect objects and try to follow the storyline to its conclusion without meeting too many dead ends or getting killed along the way. What makes the game stand out is not the story or the puzzles (too complicated to summarise, and they would sound ridiculous if we tried) but the graphics and the easy-to-use interface. The game can be entirely controlled with a mouse; the left button being used to move and the right button to select objects or options.

Your character, Korda, responds quickly to commands, and menus and options pop up almost instantaneously. Korda is equipped with a device to communicate to the mothership, an onboard computer, a direction finder and an all-purpose gizmo with functions that vary according to what you're doing and where you are.

Stunning cinematic clips are used to fill in the storyline between locations, but if you want to skip these you can click on the right mouse button and get straight on with the action. You can save the game at any point (it's oh so easy to get killed!) so you can resume after a coffee break or an untimely demise. The voices of the eighty or more characters are supplied by professional actors and add to the interest ►



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of the story, as do the atmospheric music and sound effects.

Our only real criticism is that it's not an easy game to get running, though it should be possible on most standard PCs. We had trouble installing it under Windows 95, though once installed, we could run it OK. Depending on the graphics card in your PC, it might be necessary to load a Vesa driver before running the game from Dos. The manual points this out, but doesn't say that the drivers for many popular graphics cards are in a sub-directory of the CD called \ChronoVesa. On the plus side, the game doesn't require you to boot from a separate floppy disk or to make changes to your system files.

Once you've got the game running, refer to the well-written manual to learn the keys and tools at your disposal, and then you're on your own. We haven't finished the game so we can't say how complex it becomes, but the early puzzles are quite logical, and there are plenty of clues along the way. **PW**

An excellent graphical adventure game – slick, colourful (256 colours on a 640x480 screen) and well-acted. Animations and sound are a cut above average.

£39.99

US Gold: 0121 625 3366

Chronomaster 85%

Requirements: 486/33MHz; 4Mb of Ram; 512Kb video card (Vesa compatible); Soundblaster-compatible card; at least 5Mb of hard disk space; double-speed CD-Rom drive.



Realmagic Maxima

The Realmagic Maxima is an Mpeg player that you can fit inside your computer, enabling it to play back video CDs and games that incorporate full-motion video. It won't improve the quality of Windows video clips (AVI files) or of existing games, unless they are already Mpeg-compatible.

The Maxima replaces the older Realmagic Lite card and not only outperforms it but is also much easier to fit. It goes into any 16-bit expansion slot and connects to the existing graphics card using an external cable, instead of tricky internal connectors. Plug your monitor into the Maxima and the Maxima into your sound card and

you're almost ready to roll. But first you've got to install the software, which is slightly tedious because it has to be done twice: once for Dos and once for Windows.

After a restart of the computer you're ready to test out the system with the supplied discs. The Maxima comes with three of these, but they're nothing to get excited about. One is a demo of mixed video clips and the other two are games: Flash Traffic is just a demo of an 'all-video interactive technothriller'; and Silent Steel is an interactive movie set aboard a nuclear submarine. The full game requires four CDs, but only the first is provided with the Maxima.

Mpeg buffs out there will be interested to know that the Maxima card uses 128,000 effective colours and will work with any SVGA graph-

ics resolution from the standard 640x480 up to 1,280x1,024. It sustains a video rate of 30 frames per second with no skipping and provides CD-quality sound.

Because it's not exactly cheap at £249 plus VAT, you need to consider very carefully whether the Maxima provides the features you want. Video CDs are quite expensive and usually play for less than an hour, meaning feature films have to be split over multiple discs. **PW**

Despite the quality of the Maxima card's output, which is compatible with the latest MPC3 multimedia standard, the quality of playback is nowhere near as clear as broadcast TV or even a good VHS tape. This is a feature of Mpeg digital video in general and not a criticism of this particular implementation.

£249 (excluding VAT)

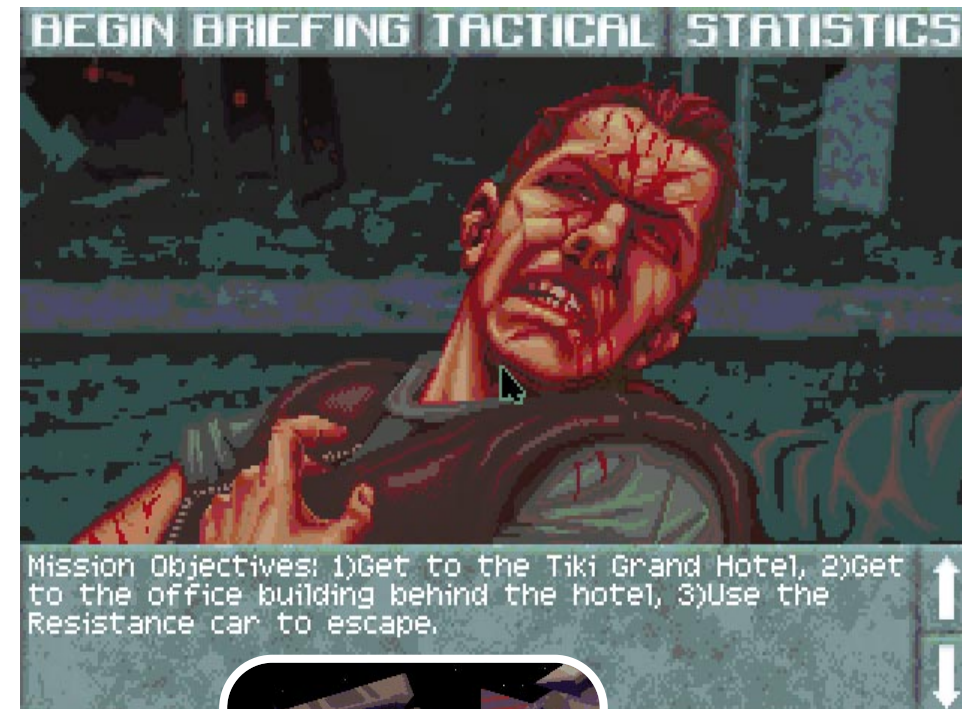
Imago Micro: 01635 861122

Realmagic Maxima 73%

Minimum requirements: 486SX-25 PC fitted with 4Mb of memory, SVGA graphics, Dos 5 and Windows 3.1 or Windows 95.

The Terminator: Future Shock

Set amongst the ruins of 2015 Los Angeles, *The Terminator: Future Shock* puts you in the role of a resistance fighter battling against Skynet – the robotic menace that is determined to exterminate mankind.



Starting with your escape from a death camp, you must use a variety of weapons and the occasional vehicle to complete several missions and defeat Skynet. The action takes place in a 3D environment and is viewed from a first-person perspective. In other words, if you liked Doom, then Future Shock is probably right up your street.

The idea may not be a new one, but the premise is good. The future

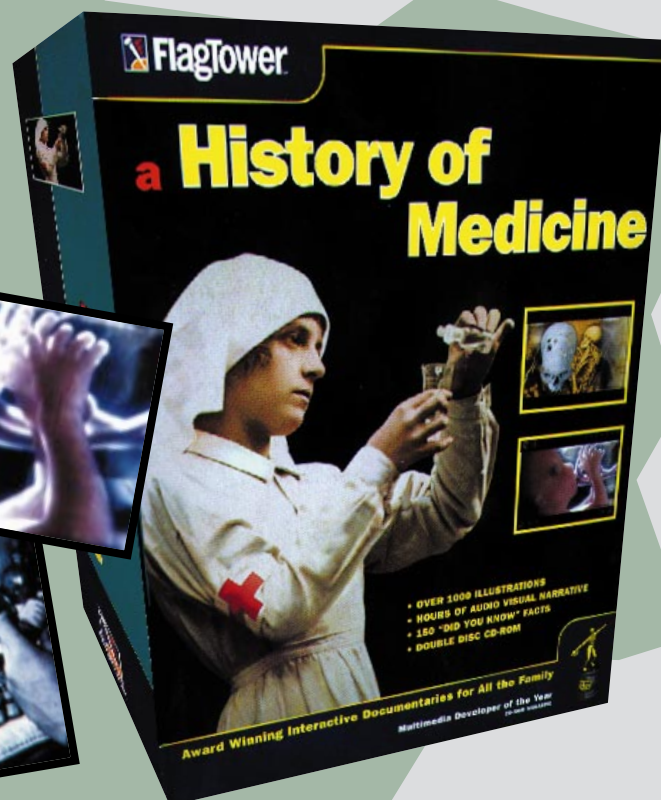


games news

This month we're giving away copies of FlagTower's *History of Medicine* to ten lucky winners. Keep an eye out for a full review in next month's issue of *What PC?*. In the meantime, to win a copy of this superb new edutainment product, all you have to do is decide if the following statements are true or false:

- (1) It's not possible to die from eating too many carrots.
- (2) Moses had a harelip and a cleft palate.
- (3) Over half of an adult male is made up of water.

Send your answers on a postcard to: June After Hours Competition, *What PC?*, VNU Business Publications, 32-34 Broadwick St, London W1A 2HG. Entries should arrive before 28th June 1996.



Now for the news... **Junglism**, a game with a difference, is published by CD Vision. It's a multimedia exploration of Jungle music. The aim of the game is to pick up flyers from nightclubs that you visit in order to progress to higher levels. In the process, you can try out mixing and scratching, and learn about the roots of Jungle music from its most prominent stars. You can download samples from the Web site to practise mixing. Junglism costs £24.99 from CD Vision: 0171 240 7764. <http://www.vidzone.com>.

Thirty years on and *Star Trek* is still going strong. **Deep Space 9: Harbinger** was released on 28th April. The game features voices, special effects and digitised sets taken from the show itself. For faithful Trekkers, there is also *Star Trek: Klingon* and, in October, *Star Trek: Voyager*. *CIC Video*: 0181 846 9433.

Video Xpression is a new 64-bit accelerator board which promises TV-quality PC graphics. It's a 2Mb D-Ram board which costs £175 (RRP). *ATI Technologies*: 01235 833666.

Congo: The Movie – Descent into Zinj has just been released as a game, following the book by Michael Crichton and the film. The adventure is set in a jungle and the makers boast intricate sound effects, photo-realistic scenery and a host of cinematic special effects. *CIC Interactive*: 0181 846 9433.



Hind is an exciting new flight simulation from Digital Integration. In producing *Hind*, DI wanted to create a helicopter simulator which could be played over a network with Apache Longbow, one of the company's previous titles. *Digital Integration*: 01276 684959.

Telstar is launching a new football game, **Onside**, at the European Champions League Finals in Rome, at the end of May. The makers claim it will successfully combine good looks, great commentary and playability. *Telstar*: 01932 22232.

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world depicted in the two Terminator feature films is a grim place – the prospect of slinking through ruined city streets, blasting killer robots is an excellent idea. Unfortunately, while all the ingredients for an excellent game are there, Future Shock fails to pull them together and the game is disappointing.

The main shortcoming is atmosphere – there just isn't any. Your weapon sticks out stiffly in front of you as if it was glued in place and, as you walk around, your footsteps sound more like Fred Astaire doing a soft-shoe shuffle than the determined crunch of Doc Marten on asphalt. The robots aren't much better. The use of texture-mapping on their surfaces gives them a fairly realistic appearance, but their squeaking and whirring noises are more Dusty Bin than Cyberdyne Systems. In a game of this type, unless you feel as though you're there, the game has not really succeeded. Doom managed it and so did Duke Nukem 3D, but Future Shock fails to engage in the same way. JP

If you're a fan of the films and like games of this type, then you'll probably enjoy playing Future Shock, despite its shortcomings.

£44.99

Virgin International Entertainment: 0181 368 2266

Future Shock

60%

Requirements: 486, 50MHz IBM PC or compatible; 8Mb of Ram; 20Mb of hard disk space; Mouse; CD-Rom drive; MS-Dos 5.0 or later; Windows 3.1 or later.

Wing Commander IV – The Price of Freedom

This is the fourth instalment of the dramatic space saga that is starting to resemble Star Wars in terms of sheer scope. Parts I to III, in case you missed them, focused on the Terran Confederation's war against a furry alien menace known as the Kilrathi.

In Part IV, that war has been over for a few years and the Confederation has been getting used to its new-found peace. It needn't have bothered, as it turns out, because mysterious pirates – known only as 'The Black Lance' – have just attacked a Confederation convoy. This means that, once again, you must dig out your trendy flying suit from the back of the wardrobe and go and give them a bit of a talking to.

Like Wing Commander III, this new version consists of a series of missions and these are linked together by video clips. Actually, to call them 'video clips' is doing them a disservice. Origin, the game's manufacturer, has pulled together a large cast, including the likes of Mark Hamill and Malcolm McDowell, in



order to add a dose of big-budget realism to the sequences. Real sets are used throughout, as opposed to computer-generated ones (at least for the indoor scenes), and limited user interaction allows the player to direct the action of certain scenes and talk to characters in order to glean information.

When it comes to flying the missions, an extra pair of hands would be a distinct advantage. Although the ships can be controlled by a joystick, they still rely on the keyboard to control most of the functions, and things can get a little hectic as you poke around the keys trying to select your missiles, lock them on target, send a message to your wingman – as well as avoiding enemy fire. It cer-

tainly gets the adrenaline flowing.

The graphics in the missions are extremely impressive and the excellent use of music and sound effects really sets the scene. JP

An extremely impressive game: if you liked the previous instalments, you'll be thrilled with Wing Commander IV. The plot may not be new, but the sheer spectacle makes it an essential, if somewhat expensive, buy for all fans of space combat simulations.

£59.99 (incl VAT)

Electronic Arts: 01753 549442

Wing Commander IV 85%

Minimum requirements: 486/75 processor; MS-Dos 5.0; 8Mb of Ram; 30Mb of hard disk space; double-speed CD-Rom drive; PCI video card that supports SVGA.

TOP TEN CD-ROM GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
–	1	Civilization 2	Microprose
1	2	C&C Covert Operations	Virgin
2	3	Command and Conquer	Virgin
3	4	Encarta 96	Microsoft
–	5	Duke Nukem shareware	US Gold
8	6	Championship Manager 2	Domark
4	7	Worms	Ocean
5	8	Actua Soccer	Gremlin Interactive
–	9	Fifa Soccer 96	Electronic Arts
7	10	Screamer	Virgin

TOP TEN DISK GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
1	1	The Lion King	Virgin
2	2	Aladdin	Virgin
10	3	Sim City 2000	Maxis
3	4	Autoroute (UK & Ireland)	Microsoft
5	5	Best of Windows Ent.	Microsoft
8	6	Jungle Book	Virgin
6	7	Worms	Ocean
–	8	Sim Tower	Maxis
7	9	Doom 2	Virgin
4	10	Mavis Beacon 2 (UK Edition)	Mindscape



Figures for both charts from Chart Track Ltd – week ending 30.03.96