after hours

This month we take you on a good old-fashioned knight's outing in Monty Python's search for the Holy Grail; we zap you back to the heady days of arcade games when Pac-Man and Galaxian were all the rage, and witness some animal magic from Baku Baku and Catz. For the family, we've Winnie the Pooh, spooky puzzles in Dracula's Secret and news from *The Times*. Plus, more sites from the Net

PG

Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail

The Quest for the Holy Grail looks just like one of Terry Gilliam's animations, with the added novelty of being interactive.

As Arthur, King of the Britons, you must take your knights and seek out the Holy Grail, burning witches, spanking virgins and solving mysterious puzzles along the way. The whole thing is based on the film and manages to capture the same sense of surreality. Extensive use is made of actual footage and the Pythons' own voices are used throughout.

The Quest is presented as a series of scenes from the film and, in each one, Arthur must find a certain object before he can proceed. Using the mouse, and on occasion the keyboard, you must negotiate each scene, clicking on various objects in the vain hope that something useful will turn up. A number of games are also dotted along the Quest, and although these appear to have little to do with anything at all, they're nevertheless mildly amusing and probably offensive to some people. JP

There can be no denying that this is supremely silly and it certainly isn't going to give anyone sleepless nights worrying about completing it. If you're a Python fan it will have you rolling around in stitches but, if not, steer clear.

- £39
- 7th Level: 01932 355666

Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail ★★★★

Minimum requirements: 486DX/33 or higher, 8Mb of RAM, CD-ROM drive, sound card, Windows 3.1 or later.

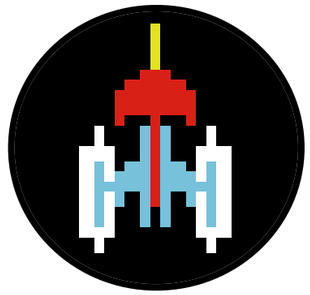
Return of Arcade

Who would want to buy a load of arcade games that are fifteen years old? Microsoft's Return of Arcade brings the most popular arcade games of the early 1980s to Windows 95. Those too young to remember them may laugh at the low-tech graphics, but if you're twenty or over this collection may bring the excitement flooding back.

Pac-Man, Pole Position, Galaxian and Dig Dug are included on this floppy disk package. All have been duplicated beautifully: the graphics, soundtracks, and levels are true to the original games. Microsoft has also used its new DirectDraw graphics technology to get the best performance.

Both Pole Position and Galaxian are fast-moving and harder than the original arcade games, especially when played with keyboard controls. To really evoke that early 'eighties arcade feel, you're going to need a steering wheel or joystick.

The other games are enjoyable, and addictive. As a kid with a lim- ▶



games news

Set to be one of the big games releases this autumn, **Z**, from Warner Interactive, is a variation on the action strategy formula. Featuring gung-ho robots that behave like cult film characters, Z will cost £44.99. *Warner Interactive: 0171 391 4330*

Universal Pictures has acquired the film rights for Activision's espionage game, **Spycraft: The Great Game**. Lawrence Gordon, producer of the Bruce Willis film *Die Hard*, is developing a script. *Activision: 0181 742 9400*

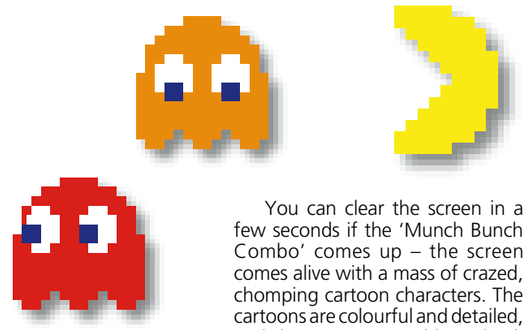
7th Level has developed **PythOnline** to coincide with the release of **Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail** CD-ROM (see our review above). This Internet site contains contributions from Terry Jones, Terry Gilliam, Michael Palin and Eric Idle. There are pages of gossip, home shopping, and games for Python fans. *www.alt.fan.monty-python; www.thedailyllama*

Microsoft has released add-on software for **Fury 3**, its fighter simulation action game. **F!Zone** features three new planets, nine exciting missions and the option to design your own levels. *Microsoft: 01734 270000*

Ocean is set to launch **Dawn of Darkness**, a new Sam Raimi-style shoot-em-up with 'the emphasis on horror and gore'. Dawn of Darkness includes a huge range of locations, as well as vile undead zombies, like the 'fat, middle-aged woman in the horrible dress who spits corrosive ectoplasm at you…'

Also under development is **HMS Carnage**, a flight action game in which biplanes and steam-driven tanks have invaded Mars in a surreal 3-D war. *Ocean Software Ltd: 0161 832 6633*

Finally, to coincide with the release of **Everything But The Girl's** single Wrong, Virgin has released an Interactive floppy disk with visual clips, information, and recordings of **Wrong** and **Walking Wounded**. *Virgin Records: 0181 964 6000*



ited supply of 10-pence pieces, you could only have so many games, but when it's on your PC and you just have to press F2 to restart it's tough to drag yourself away. All the games play better in a window – blow them up full-screen and they become a bit blocky. However, this will appeal to the hard-core traditionalists, who can't bear the thought of playing a classic game when it is surrounded by a Windows 95 menu. JC

For those who are old enough to remember the original games, this package is incredible value and top-quality entertainment.

- £19.99
- Microsoft: 01734 270001

Return of Arcade ★★★★

Minimum requirements: 486SX/66MHz PC; Windows 95; 8Mb of RAM, 6Mb of hard disk space, 256-colour display, sound card.

Baku Baku

Baku Baku is the latest Sega console game to be transferred on to CD-ROM for the PC. It's a variation on the frustratingly addictive Tetris, with an added dimension.

Baku Baku has an animal theme – the blocks that fall down are either food or animal icons. The animals are a monkey, dog, panda or rabbit, while the food comprises bananas, bones, bamboo shoots, and carrots. Match the right animal to the right food and the cute, Manga-style characters eat the food and both blocks disappear.

You can clear the screen in a few seconds if the 'Munch Bunch Combo' comes up – the screen comes alive with a mass of crazed, chomping cartoon characters. The cartoons are colourful and detailed, and they move smoothly. Indeed, the whole game is beautifully designed – right from the introduction through to the lion that munches on your screen when you lose. It is quick and easy to load, and you can program it for two-player games, when the stakes are raised and it's possible to sabotage your opponent's game.

The only problem with Baku Baku is that there's essentially only one screen, with subtle changes as you progress through the game. It would have been more entertaining had the screens changed completely as you progressed to more difficult levels. JC

Baku Baku adds some new elements to the Tetris formula and the result is an original, entertaining game at a very reasonable price.

- £29.99
- Sega Europe: 0181 995 3399

Baku Baku ★★★★

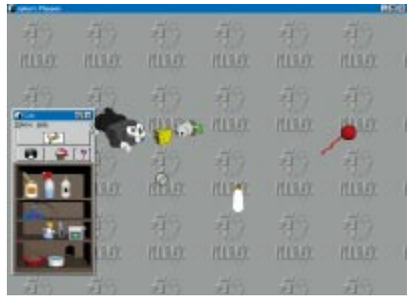
Minimum requirements: 486SX/75MHz Pentium processor, 8Mb of RAM, 5Mb of hard disk space, double-speed CD-ROM drive, 256-colour display, 16-bit audio.

Catz

'Get a kitty in your PC – without fitting a cat flap.' Get a life, we said. Or, more to the point, get a real pet… But that was before we were bitten by the bug, bowled over by the animal magnetism of the virtual pet.

Catz follows hot on the heels of Dogz, Mindscape's runaway success that has had grown men whimpering with delight as newly-adopted puppies everywhere bounded after balls obediently, 'ruffed' and rolled their eyes appealingly, and guarded their masters' desktops in a devoted if not entirely tireless fashion – all on a clean, doggie-do-free screen.

Catz has more of a sophisticated, feline feel, but the basic drill is the same. You're first faced with the adoption parade, where the five breeds – prowling catz, lazy catz, finicky, playful and scaredy catz – each in turn emerges from its basket and struts its furry stuff in an attempt to convince you that it is indeed the cat's whiskers. After much umming and genuine aahing we plumped for the prowler as it looked the most cat-like. We called our kitty Eartha, which proved appropriate as it soon developed a miaow more akin to a low, guttural growl.



Free to frolic in her very own playpen, Eartha really let her fur down – pawing at balls of wool, batting a rattling ball and rolling onto her back and swigging from a milk bottle through a straw in true Top Cat style. The kitty is constantly tormented by an over-sized mouse, which is tempted into the playpen by a hunk of cheese. Our little prowler stalked, pounced and finally got her claws into the prey in a realistically gruesome way. Though this is very much a bloodless sport, the squeamish among you can use the right button on your real mouse to pull the frenzied kitty off the squeaking mouse on screen.

Should you wish to pamper your pet you can, using your cursor, pick up a brush and stroke her till she purrs, feed her crunchy fish treats and, when she starts to scratch, give her a dousing with the flea spray. Also, if you fancy a pink or piebald pussy, there's a paintbrush and palette of colours that does the job – though this causes a certain amount of wretching and sneezing followed by a major wash-and-brush-up session.

When left to its own devices your Catz will switch to screensaver mode where it catnapz, whiskers twitching as it dreams of chasing dogs.

Characteristically, the Catz are a little less obliging than their canine counterparts, so be prepared for more of the independent, nose-in-the-air treatment. But they are no less endearing.

As with Dogz, your kitten will, in time, grow into an adult cat, which presumably means it will spend a good ninety percent of its time sleeping and the rest eating, preening and coughing up fur balls. WB

Catz is captivating. It also comes with a free shareware version of Dogz – an irresistible double-bill. We await hamsterz and rabbitz!

- £14.99
- Mindscape: 01444 246333

Catz ★★★★

Minimum requirements: 50MHz, 486DX, 15Mb hard disk space, 4Mb of Ram, Windows 3.1, CD-Rom drive, sound card.

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

TOP TEN CD-ROM GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
–	1	Formula 1 Grand Prix 2	Microprose
2	2	Theme Park	CD-Rom Classics
1	3	Duke Nukem 3D	US Gold
5	4	Civilization 2	Microprose
4	5	Championship Manager 2	Domark
9	6	Command and Conquer	Virgin
8	7	Worms	Ocean / Team 17
10	8	Little Big Adventure	CD-Rom Classics
3	9	Settlers 2: Veni, Vidi, Vici	Blue Byte
–	10	Magic Carpet Plus	CD-Rom Classics

TOP TEN DISK GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
1	1	Aladdin	Virgin
–	2	Return of Arcade	Microsoft
2	3	Jungle Book	Virgin
4	4	Sim Tower	Maxis
10	5	Best of Windows Entert.	Microsoft
7	6	Autoroute – UK & Ireland	Microsoft
6	7	World Rally Fever	Ocean / Team 17
5	8	Worms	Ocean / Team 17
8	9	Sim City 2000	Maxis
–	10	Scrabble	US Gold

Figures for both charts from Chart Track Ltd – week ending 03.08.96