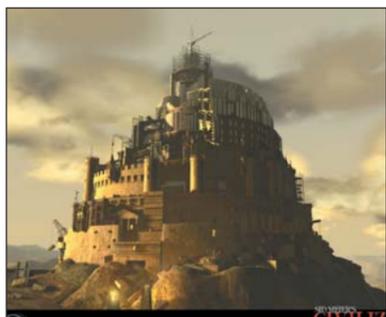


Forthcoming attractions



↑ Codswallop: building the Tower of Babel may be taking God games to an extreme

In the *PC Advisor* tradition of providing reviews by those in the know, this month we have reviews of new horse racing form guide Profile by a sports journalist and Steinberg's Cubasis music production software by a practising amateur musician – well, he claims to practise.

What have our other games hacks been playing this month? There's a preview of Rock Manager and comment on Project Eden, IL-2 Sturmovik and a couple of fun titles for the kiddies.

Some of us, though, can think of nothing more than the imminent arrival of *Civilisation 3*, the third instalment in what is arguably the finest computer game of all time. A brief look at www.civ3.com will show you how the Firaxis team (which developed the cracking Gettysburg) have beefed up Civ.

Civ lovers don't want anything radically different. They just want it radically improved: more diplomacy, more tinkering with cities, more complexity, easier use and better graphics. In short, more wonders.



The good news? It looks like these demands will be delivered – *Civilisation 3* has already gone gold in preorder sales. Not many games can boast that – in fact, Civ 3 is the only one. It's out in the US first (typical), but should be here in time for Christmas. We live in hope... ■



↑ All mod cons: a huge bronze statue is essential for your citizens' quality of life

← Broadening your horizons: some modest claims from the Civ 3 stable

Rock Manager



If you have ever played in a band, sat in a room strumming away wondering if you could write a hit tune, or listened to the radio and thought 'What cross! I could do better than that,' then *Rock Manager* is a must.

Admit it – sim games are tired and dull. We live-fast-die-young music heads are bored with them – apart from *Civilisation*, which isn't really a sim at all. But *Rock Manager*... well, read on. You play a manager on the look out for a hit band. You must choose

your band members from a bunch of misfits, then purchase a song from a music publisher. Once you've got your line-up, you take your band into a studio and pay for them to record the song. From there, you move along to the mixing desk where you play with each band member's sound and end up with something not dissimilar to standard indie pop chart fare.

You hawk this demo round some labels in Rock Town and, sooner or later, one accepts you. You set a release date, organise some gigs, do some schmoozing with the press and bingo, you're in the charts.

After that you get the dubious honour of looking after the Golander brothers, who are a bit like Oasis. And we all know how that turned out... ■

Rupert Collins-White

← Rock and roll Lifestyle: this lot should be banned



Rock Manager

System requirements: 233MHz MMX Pentium; Windows 95/98/2000/Me; 32MB RAM; 100MB hard disk space.

Pan Interactive: 01256 707 767

Website: www.rockmanager.net/eng

Price: £29.99



PREVIEW IL-2 Sturmovik

Flight simulation gaming is a bit of a curio. Never is polygonal rendering quite as tedious as when it involves real-time recreations of the London to Jakarta flight path – a full 21 hours straight play with the gaming action that brings you everything from blue sky and clouds to, erm, more clouds.

Even combat flight sims are weighed down with extraneous detail, and when you bring out an action-led game like *Crimson Skies* the true hobbyists snort at its accessibility. It's no wonder such enthusiasts are often derided as the anoraks' anorak. So where's the sort of game that will enthuse the realists and be accessible enough for the novice? It might just be *IL-2 Sturmovik*, a preview copy of which we've been enjoying this month.



Sturmovik is being developed by Russian company Maddox, and it looks likely to be a big hit on its release. It sets its aerial combat in the skies over Russia and Germany during WWII, where pilots can choose from a series of gameplay options from single-player missions to online multiplayer – with support for up to 32 players in any one game.

Different missions mean a great diversity of battles, so it's not just air-to-air fighting. You get the chance to fly sorties over sea and land, blasting your way through a huge amount of WWII military hardware with extensive damage after each assault.

There's a stunning array of planes to choose from and attention to detail on all the models is Da Vinciesque. Aficionados will appreciate the fact that you can't jump straight in without swotting up on the manual. Novices, on the other hand, will appreciate the option to turn off all the realistic settings. We can't wait for the full release. ■

Spencer Dalziel

← Dog flight sim: realism and action meet in IL-2

IL-2 Sturmovik

System requirements: 400MHz Pentium II or higher; Windows 95/98/2000/Me; 128MB RAM; 550MB hard disk space.

Ubi Soft: 01932 838 230

Website: www.il2sturmovik.com

Price: £29.99



Industry Giant

If guiding the development of an entire civilisation seems a bit grandiose, then you could try building a business empire with *Industry Giant*. Anyone who has played a sim before will be familiar with the format used here, but there is also an easy-to-follow tutorial that leads you through the main features. The aim is to build your career from entrepreneur with a bank loan to captain of industry bestriding a multimillion dollar business empire. But on the way you will face competitors.

The possibilities are endless – you can stick to one sector or revive the 80s industrial philosophy of diversification and expand into another by snapping up a snoozing business and revitalising it with your business genius. The more income and profit you make, the more possibilities are open to you.

You can also choose what type of country and economic climate your firm operates in, though you shouldn't expect geographical realism. *Industry*

retail outlets sited in the most attractive cities and trucks whizzing between them with raw materials and finished goods. But take care: if you put a road in the wrong place it's difficult to shift, and a badly placed building is prohibitively expensive to demolish.

And you'd better hope that if you go into computer manufacturing, you aren't competing with Michael Dell – you're stuck with the retail model and can't sell direct to the public. ■

Andrew Charlesworth



Giant's England has south London suburbs Eltham and Norbury neighbouring York and Gateshead, for example.

At the beginning of *Industry Giant*, speed is of the essence: get your factories working, your

← Personnel growth: your infrastructure takes shape in *Industry Giant*

Industry Giant

System requirements: Pentium 90; Windows 95/98/Me; 16MB RAM; 40MB hard disk space.

JoWood: 020 8901 7300

Website: www.industrygiant.com

Price: £19.99



Project Eden

Imagine Half Life, in a bar, with Lara Croft from Tomb Raider. Mix in some Rainbow Six, some SWAT 3, a liberal dollop of Deus Ex, a dash of vermouth and serve in a straight glass. What does it taste like? Well...

Project Eden looks great, and does its best to please everybody all of the time. It's a third-person game you can play in first-person view. It's also a team game that you play, sort of, as one person.

Developed by Core, the same team that did Tomb Raider, there was always going to be some crossover. It's almost as if the Core coders were mulling over how they could use the Lara ideas in a whole new way and just woke up with the alpha code of Project Eden.

But this is not your average shooter. In fact, the shooting plays second place to the puzzle-solving, just like with Lara. But don't worry, there are lots of dogs to shoot in the opening missions.

Smooth operation

Eden's graphics are gorgeous. They're silky smooth (although there was an irrecoverable graphics card problem) and some of the lighting and special effects are magical. But while your movement is great, you never jump, which is a strange and worryingly more common trend in today's games. It makes you wonder whether coders get so little exercise that they've forgotten humans can jump.

So what about that all-important scenario? Well, it's the 23rd century, or something. Population growth has forced town planners to cover the entire planet with tall buildings, or something, and your job is to take your team down to somewhere deep and uncover some strange goings on. Or something.

↓ Getting creative: the team works out the best solution



→ Let there be light: in the beginning there was the word, and the word was 'fire'



← Trouble in paradise: the baddies are assailed by dermatitis



Less prosaically, you command a squad of four future cops, all with different skills. Sometimes you have to split your squad into two or three sections and play in different parts of level maps to get things done. This is refreshing, and occasionally rather intricate.

Serious challenge

It's more fun to play Eden in the third person because of the beauty of the game, as it allows you to see more that way. Core has had some cracking ideas, from fully controllable rover devices to flying cameras that can activate switches. None of your four characters ever really dies – they just get reincarnated at regeneration points.

Core is very proud of Project Eden, and rightly so. It's interesting, challenging and works for many of the same reasons Tomb Raider and Deus Ex did – it's a long series of puzzles more than it is a combat game. One of the drawbacks of this is that it's undeniably linear. You know there's a set route for you, and when you can't work out where the magic switch is to turn off some raging flames, it's absolutely infuriating.

The game, or at least the master review code we played, still contains some bugs that make gameplay more difficult that it should be. However, all in all, if you enjoyed Tomb Raider and Deus Ex, you'll like this.

Drink it in slowly and savour the difference. ■

Rupert Collins-White

Project Eden

System requirements: 300MHz Pentium II; Windows 95/98/Me; 64MB RAM; 10MB hard disk space.

Eidos: 020 8636 3000

Website: www.eidosinteractive.co.uk

Price: £29.99



Cubasis VST 3.0



The professional version of Cubase, made by German company Steinberg, is the last word in software for audio and Midi music recording. Nearly all musical production is computerised these days and Cubase is the package of choice for the majority of users. At around £400 it's much cheaper than hiring out a recording studio for the day, so it keeps a record label's expenses down. However, for the enthusiastic amateur it's still too pricey.

Fortunately, Steinberg hasn't overlooked exploiting what must be a huge and financially rewarding demographic figure: budding musicians or producers with barely two coins to rub together. Just for them it has made a lite version of Cubase that includes pretty much all the same basic music-making tools as the professional version.

We had a look at the latest release of Cubasis VST 3.0 and, though it didn't automatically transform me into a part-time pop Svengali, it still comes highly recommended.

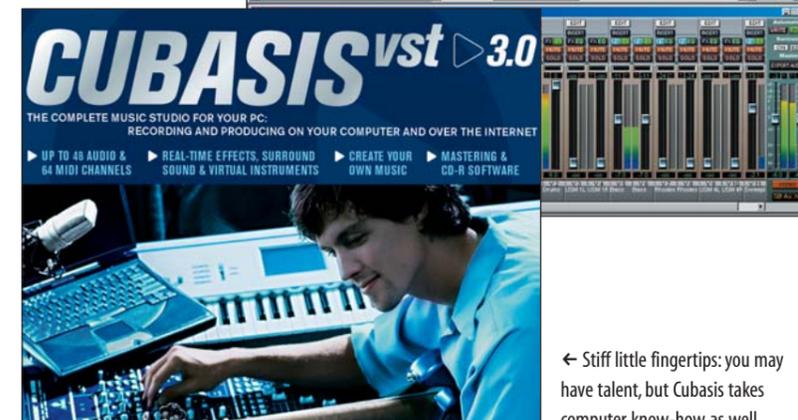
Sounds serious

First, a word of warning. Although Cubasis is much easier to use than Cubase, it still requires a healthy amount of computer literacy before you can get recording. If you're thinking of buying it for anyone who wants to record but isn't au fait with PCs, don't bother. Stick to the traditional four-track tape machine

↓ High fidelity: realising your musical dreams has never been easier



→ Graphic equaliser: bring new balance to your compositions



← Stiff little fingertips: you may have talent, but Cubasis takes computer know-how as well

because Cubasis is hard going for even the most ambitious newcomer.

There is a manual and online tutorial to help you through the setup process, so a bit of patience will pay dividends. You will find yourself referring back to these because this pared-down package still contains a generous amount of options and tools.

Light electric orchestra

The virtual recording studio can create 48 audio (WAV and MP3) and 64 Midi channels, but you will need a Midi keyboard and a microphone before you can start. Musicians with only one battered

guitar needn't worry – you can download Midi samples, use the drum machine and add virtual instruments for that big band effect.

We decided to create a track using the microphone and line-in on the sound card for an acoustic and electric guitar respectively. At this stage it's worth following the easy step-by-step guide and we

had no trouble getting to grips with the basics. We found a suitable drum sample from the 600MB disc of free samples. The cut and paste utility let us pinpoint exactly how much of the sample we wanted to use, and then loop it for the duration of the track. Unfortunately, we were unable to stretch the drums to different time signatures.

Once a track has been created it can be edited with sound effect tools, mixed down, and burned on to a CD. An interesting addition is a web utility that allows for live web collaboration, so music can be shared with others or you can download other people's work.

Cubasis is a total solution for anyone looking to get their musical ideas on to a CD. Since the alternative is to splash out over twice the price for the same result, it's also worth every penny. ■

Spencer Dalziel

Cubasis VST 3.0

System requirements: 200MHz Pentium II; Windows 95/98/Me; 64MB RAM; 500MB hard disk space.

Steinberg: 0800 169 1341

Website: www.steinberg-ag.net

Price: £49.50



The Secret World of Santa Claus: The Magical Night

With the season of goodwill just around the corner, one way to keep little minds busy and entertained is to purchase them a copy of The Secret World of Santa Claus. There, a snowman named Billyball will guide them through a wonderland of games, songs and other Christmas delights.

That's the story anyway, and the reality behind it is no less pleasing. The menu comprises five core options: games, karaoke, cartoon, decoration workshop and an advent calendar. The layout is clear with straightforward directions to get younger children moving through with ease, and Santa is aimed at four- to eight-year-olds, so they should still be under the spell.



Your child will, at any rate, love the opportunity to expand their lungs and sing along to *Jingle Bells* and other Christmas carols. However, they may be disappointed to find that the selection is very small – only four songs to choose from. The game section has a far more expansive collection, with picture puzzles, memory games and a colouring section. The box cover boasts over 200 games and it does not disappoint.

The featured cartoon is also of superb value. There's around 45 minutes of Christmas shenanigans for your kids to enjoy – it even attempts to answer that age-old question of how Santa manages to visit all the children in the world on a single night.

As Billyball points out, he's there to help you prepare for Christmas, so The Secret World of Santa Claus is not the best present for Christmas day. However, it is an excellent treat to keep the children amused while you do some last-minute festive shopping.

Chloe Harwood

← You'd better watch out: Christmas is coming – at light speed

The Secret World of Santa Claus: The Magical Night

System requirements: Pentium 133; Windows 95/98; 16MB RAM; 68MB hard disk space.

Montparnasse: 020 8805 1000
Website: www.montparnasse.net
Price: £19.99

0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10
OVERALL RATING 7

Trumpton Fun Pack

Nostalgia just isn't what it used to be – especially on the evidence of Trumpton Fun Pack. Like many of us, the growing realisation that I'm knocking on a bit leaves me susceptible to the charms of childhood. So when I heard that there was a new CD all about the classic puppet series, I demanded to review it.

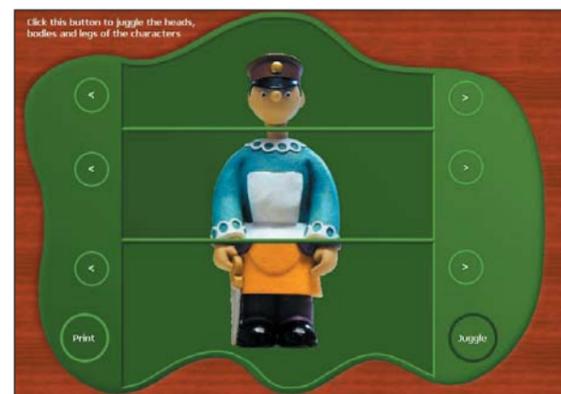
But, oh, the disappointment. Unless you're willing to take nostalgia to a ridiculous level and actually let your mental

age regress to three, you'll have had enough of the games here after about two seconds. They range from matching pairs of pictures of the main characters to a jigsaw consisting of 15 pieces.

These are mildly more stimulating than the trivia quiz, which includes 12 multiple-choice questions, to which you are simply told whether you answered correctly or incorrectly. Have another go and you get the same questions in a different order.

One or two of the screensavers are okay, and a couple of the video clips that last longer than the blink of an eye provide that warm nostalgic glow you were after all along. However, whether because of copyright

← Cross purposes: dress firemen in pinafores in this lacklustre fun pack



restrictions or for some other reason, there's very little content on this disc and the 30-somethings it's pitched at are bound to be disappointed.

If you are interested in Trumpton or other children's programmes of the late 1960s and early 1970s, head to an enthusiast's site such as Cusack Book's We Salute You (www.cusackbooks.com/we_salute_you_trumpton.html) or the Small People section of the BBC's site (www.bbc.co.uk/smallpeople/past_present_2.shtml).

Rosemary Haworth

Trumpton Fun Pack

System requirements: Pentium 166; Windows 95/98/Me/2000/NT4; 32MB RAM; runs straight from the CD.

Digital Workshop: 0870 120 2186
Website: www.digitalworkshop.com
Price: £19.95

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OVERALL RATING 3

Profile (Electronic-Book II)

The National Hunt racing season is about to start. With thousands of horses in training in Britain and hundreds of meetings every year, even the most ardent horse racing fan can feel swamped by the amount of data generated by the sport. So a program that processes this information in an easy-to-understand way has to be welcome news for racing fans. Profile (Electronic-Book II) fits the bill nicely.

Horses for courses

Produced by Nomadic Press, the Profile system provides a database which covers the last eight years of racing. A total of 31,000 racehorses are included, together with 2,400 sires for those interested in breeding information. Each horse's details are broken down into handy dossier-headed forms, profile, ratings and statistics.

The form of each horse is laid out in linear format with all the usual details such as finishing position, type of race, going, ratings, starting price and so on. There is plenty of information to digest, though the draw is not included. In sprints especially, a bad stall position can explain a poor run and this cannot be gleaned from the information available.

The profile section has some interesting features, including short comments and statistics on the time of year a horse performs best. 'Pace makes the race' is an old adage and a chart detailing running styles aims to help the punter evaluate how a race is likely to pan out.

Forming an opinion

But Profile is not just a database. By inputting the details of a race, the system can automatically generate a list of adjusted profile ratings based

↓ Field of knowledge: give yourself a fair to heavy advantage

The Profile Electronic Book II (v2.4b)

File Race Horse Settings Window Help (F1)

01-10-15 Folke 2.40 (5yo+ Intermediate Handicap 0-100) (R)

6 declared 1 PR

01-10-15 Folke 2.40 (5yo+ Intermediate Ha

A Chase at Folkestone 3m1 on Good

Date: Mon 15 Oct 01 Weights: Drop << >> Raise Field: 6

Horse	Wght	HGear	Jock	Days	pr	adj	PR	rk	clr	price
Touring-Turtle	10-01	-	TIZZA	42D+	66	+33	99	1	+1	3/1
Maybeseven	10-01	-	WILLI	42D+	60	+38	98	2	+5	7/2
Booming Business	10-00	-	FENTC	42D+	58	+35	93	3	+1	5/1
Tidal Reef	10-00	-	GREEN	11-25E	50	+42	92	4	+4	11/2

→ Why the long face: you could become a top tipster with Profile

See More Business Horse 4958 of 36044

General Form Profile Ratings Statistics

Ratings - 17 Races: Highest winning OR: 177 Highest OR EW placed: 177

Days after 19 Nov 1997

Statistics - 26 Races:

	Wins	Places	Runs	Win (±run)	E/Way (±run)
Total	15 (58%)	17 (65%)	26	+35.22 (+135%)	+20.01 (+77%)
60+ days	4 (50%)	5 (63%)	8	+2.20 (+27%)	+1.19 (+15%)

Race Type:

NHF	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3	+4.78 (+159%)	+2.98 (+99%)
Hurdles	12 (52%)	14 (61%)	23	+30.44 (+132%)	+17.03 (+74%)
Hunters	-	-	-	-	-

Race Class:

Hoags	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5	+0.16 (+3%)	+0.29 (+6%)
Stakes	13 (62%)	14 (67%)	21	+35.06 (+167%)	+19.72 (+94%)
Pattern	-	-	-	-	-
Platers	-	-	-	-	-

Surface: All 26 Turf 0 AWV

Race Type: All 0 Bumpers (NHF) 3 Hurdles 23 Chases & Hunters

Ignore: Unknown OR Show Handicaps only Unknown pr 9 Races ignored

← Thoroughbred: the information is nothing if not detailed

around various factors such as weight carried, suitability of trip, track preferences and so forth. For example, in the Juddmonte International Stakes at York in August, Medicean's rating based on form was a pound higher than Sakhee's. However, after adjustments, Sakhee came out the clear top-rated and duly dotted up at 7-4.

A particularly useful feature is the generation of a 'tissue', which provides an estimated starting price for each runner. This allows the punter to seek out value bets by comparing odds with those marked up by the bookies.

Latest tips

Of course, Profile is not a guaranteed path to riches. For one thing, adjusted ratings cannot be provided for horses that have run only once or twice as there is too little information for the system to evaluate. At the very least, though, the ratings can be used as a reference to bring the punter's attention to factors which they may not have considered. At £60, Profile (Electronic-Book II) is good value for the information it contains. Regular updates can be provided throughout the Flat and National Hunt seasons for as little as £2.50 each, and racecards can be downloaded and entered by email.

The system is easy to use and provides plenty of information for the experienced and novice punter in the battle against the bookies.

Shaun Watson

Profile (Electronic-Book II)

System requirements: Pentium processor; Windows 3x/95/98/Me/NT 4.0; 4MB RAM; 50MB hard disk space.

NomadicPress: 01275 475 275
Website: www.nomadicpress.co.uk
Price: £60 (£110 for Flat and National Hunt)

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OVERALL RATING 9