

{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device AVIVideo][autostart][looping][noframe]!title.avi}

[Click here to continue...](#)

{ewc MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][autostart]!music4.wav}



Disc Mag

Click on the Software, Reviews or Features buttons on the right to go to a particular section of Disc Mag. When in a section, click on the Next and Previous buttons in the top right hand corner of the screen to go to the next or previous pages.

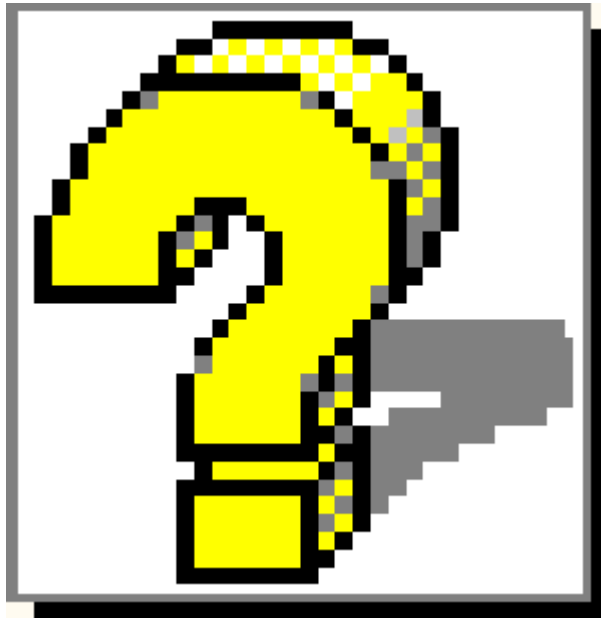
Click on the Contents button at the top of the screen to return here

Exit Disc Mag

The logo features the text "CD-Rom" in a large, bold, red sans-serif font. Below it, the word "now" is written in a smaller, grey, italicized sans-serif font. A horizontal red line runs through the middle of the "now" text.

Copyright notices...

The Pianist © PG Music (Arbiter Pro Music 081-202 1199)
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Director 4.0 © Macromedia
World War II © ILP (091-261 1255)
WinCIM © CompuServe
Little Big Adventure © Adeline Software International



Select an item from the Contents list on the left to jump straight to that topic.

Or click the Next button at the foot of the page to read through the Help pages in sequence.

The Disc technical support line is open
Mon - Fri 2pm - 5pm
on 0625 858084.

Help Contents

[Moving around](#)
[Screen shots](#)
[Video clips](#)
[Sound/music](#)
[Copying text](#)
[Dos programs](#)
[Hardware](#)
[Poor video](#)
[No video](#)
[Poor graphics](#)
[Audio CDs 1](#)
[Audio CDs 2](#)
[No music](#)
[Performance](#)
[Disc Mag Crash](#)
[Screen Resolution](#)

Click on an item...

Help

Moving around Disc Mag is easy and there are several methods which you can use. The button bar at the top of the screen provides some navigation controls and probably the most important one is the Contents button. This will always take you back to the first page of Disc Mag. The History buttons displays a list of topics you have visited. Point and click on an item to go straight to it.

The buttons with **Previous** and **Next** on go to the previous or next page within a group of articles - such as Features. This is a Help topic within the General articles group, so clicking **Next** will take you to the next Help page.

Any text highlighted in green indicates an action point, such as a jump to a new topic, or a picture which can be displayed on the screen. All action points (icons and pictures can also be action points) cause the mouse pointer to change shape.

When you are reading a review or feature some screen shots will be included within the text - usually the small ones. Large ones that won't fit on the page may be stored in a reduced form, but you can expand them to their full size by pointing and clicking the mouse button.




Look out for the symbol on the right. It's an icon we occasionally use to represent a screen shot. When you see one of these, click on it to display the picture. Tap the Escape key to remove it from the screen or click the mouse somewhere off the picture.

Note that the screen shots are nearly always 256-colour and won't look as good with the standard Windows 16-colour VGA screen driver. The pictures might even originally be 24-bit, reduced to 8-bit, so they may look even better in real life than they do here.

Some reviews and features contain video clips and these show someone actually using the software to provide you with a better idea of what the program does. The quality of the video image isn't as high as the static screen shots because they have been digitised and compressed, but they give a better impression of the action onscreen. Note that the animation will be faster and smoother in real life than in the video clip.



You'll find small  video clips within the text and these are approximately 1/16 full screen size (about 160 x 120 pixels). You'll also find a larger icon (shown on the right here) and clicking on this will display a much bigger (1/4 screen) video clip.

However, you'll need a 486DX-66 with local bus video and double speed CD-Rom drive to play them back properly. Lower specification PCs won't be able to play the video fast enough and will drop frames and skip bits of the audio track.

Video won't play? Make sure Video for Windows is installed!

```
{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][stdcontrol][autostart]!music1.wav}
```


```
{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device Sequencer][stdcontrol][autostart]music1.mid}
```



```
{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device AVIVideo][stdcontrol][caption 'The Disc Editor'][autostart]!exmplvid.avi}
```

Help

Some reviews and features may contain music stored either as .WAV samples or .MID MIDI

files. The icon on the  right may be used to indicate that there is some music you can listen to. When you see the music symbol in an article you can click on it to play the music.

Clicking on the icon will display a sound controller with Play/Pause and Stop buttons. Sometimes this controller is embedded directly within the text.



This is a MIDI file. Click on the icon to play it...

Note that MIDI files may not play back correctly through a sound card unless it is set up properly, and you can only play back one sound at a time. You must click the Stop button before clicking the Play button on the next controller.

Did you know that you can copy any of the text displayed in Disc Mag to the Windows clipboard? Once it is on the clipboard it can then be pasted into any Windows application, such as a wordprocessor.

All you need to do is click on the Copy button in the button bar above. Highlight the text and then click on the Copy button in the dialog box. Now go to your other application and select the Paste option. Note that all the text is copyright, but provided you don't sell it or distribute it in any way, feel free to do with it whatever you like.

Click on the scroll bar on the right to browse through the text if there is too much on the screen. Any text displayed in green is a link to another topic and clicking on it will jump straight to it. If you need further help you can use the Help menu above.

Some Dos programs will run quite happily when you shell out to Dos from Windows, but many games and demos are often awkward and don't like this. Sometimes it's the lack of memory which causes problems, and sometimes it is Windows' memory management.

Whatever the reason, as a precaution, most Dos programs can be run only from the Dos prompt. If we find a particularly well behaved Dos program, we might put it on the Windows menu.

There isn't a Dos-based menu on this disc, but you can run the Dos programs by following the instructions in the Software section of Disc Mag against each item.

What do you need to run the programs on this CD? That all depends on the program, and there is also a tremendous difference between the minimum specification PC which can run the software, and one that can run it well.

You could just about manage with a 16MHz 386SX, single speed CD-Rom drive, 2Mb of ram, standard VGA video card, 40Mb hard disk and 8-bit mono sound card, but you would find it very frustrating to use as it would be very slow indeed, and even then, some programs wouldn't run. You need a new PC!

A much better specification is a 66MHz 486DX with 8Mb of ram, 200Mb+ hard disk, Super VGA local bus video card, double speed CD-Rom drive and 16-bit stereo SoundBlaster compatible sound card. Remember that the latest software demands the latest hardware to run it well.

Several factors affect the quality of the video playback. The best results are obtained with a very fast processor 486DX-66 or Pentium, local bus video card with 256 or more colours onscreen, double speed or better CD-Rom drive.

Video will, however, run on a simple 386SX with plain vanilla VGA running in 16 colours and a single speed CD-Rom drive, but the quality will be quite poor.

Make sure you have installed the latest versions of the video playback software - Microsoft Video for Windows v1.1 contained on this disc. Without it, you won't be able to play some clips and error messages may be displayed on the screen.

We can digitise the videos to produce better playback, but that would mean people with older hardware wouldn't be able to enjoy them. Few people have the capability to play back full screen full motion video, so we lower the quality of the video slightly so that everyone can watch.

In order to play back the video clips on this disc in Windows you need to install the right software drivers. And that means the right version too.

On the CD every month is Microsoft's Video for Windows Runtime v1.1. Go to the \VFW11 directory and run SETUP in Windows. (This is available on the menu, too, so all you need to do is point and click on the Video for Windows item.)

The Intel Smart Video Recorder was used to digitise the clips and you'll find the latest Indeo drivers contained in Video for Windows. Change to \VFW11 and run SETUP.EXE in Windows to install them.

Go to the **Software** section of Disc Mag to install Video for Windows 1.1.

Some applications are designed for screen modes with a minimum of 256 colours and they either won't work in standard 16 colour VGA mode, or the graphics will look very poor if they display at all.

You need to install the Super VGA graphics drivers that were supplied with your video card in order to see the graphics in this program at their best. Almost all video cards can run Windows at 640 x 480 in 256 colours.

To do this, quit to Dos, change to your Windows directory and type SETUP. Cursor up to the Display setting and press Return. Scroll down to the bottom of the list and select Other display... You'll be prompted to insert your video driver disk and then some Windows disks. Finally you can reboot and Window will load with the new settings.

If there are audio tracks on this CD (and there usually are) you can play tracks 2 onwards in a standard hi-fi CD player. Don't play track 1 as this is where we store all the computer programs. There are two other ways to listen to the audio tracks on a CD - through the CD-Rom drive direct or through your sound card. Most CD-Rom drives have a headphone socket through which the audio output is piped.

To listen to the music on this CD, simply plug in your headphones, run the CD Player from the Main Menu and select any track but 1. All the computer programs and data are stored on track 1 and the music is on tracks 2, 3, 4 and so on. Don't play track 1 - go to track 2 and start from there.

Many CD-Rom drives have audio output facilities and you can plug the Line Out from the drive into the Line In of your sound card (This may be done inside your PC's case, or externally if you have an external CD-Rom drive.) You can then listen to the audio through the sound card - use headphones or speakers as normal.

For this facility to work you need to add the [MCI] CD Audio driver to Windows. When you install a sound card there is a good chance that the installation program will do this for you, but sometimes it doesn't and you have to add it manually.

Run the Windows Control Panel and select the Drivers icon. In the list displayed on the screen look for [MCI] CD Audio and if it isn't there, click on the Add button. Now go down the list and click on [MCI] CD Audio. Click on OK and you'll be asked to insert one of your original Windows disks. Just follow the instructions.

You'll need to reboot Windows for the changes to take effect, then try running the CD Player utility program.

You should hear music playing in parts of Disc Mag and in some demos, but this will only happen if your PC and sound system are set up correctly. The program checks for both WAV and MIDI capabilities and MIDI may be selected for some sound output. Is your MIDI equipment plugged in and switched on? Volume turned up? Speakers connected?

Even if you have no MIDI equipment, you may still be able to hear the music as many sound cards will simulate a MIDI setup. However, with the default settings you may hear nothing. Run the Control Panel from the Windows desktop and then select the MIDI Mapper icon.

A dialog box will appear and next to Name: is a drop down list of MIDI settings. Try a different setting, such as SBP2 Ext FM for Sound Blaster Pro, Adlib General with Sound Blaster 1.5 using Windows' own drivers and Extended FM with the Media Vision Pro Audio 16. These settings work fine on our PCs, but with a different setup and different sound cards we can't really advise on the settings. Experiment - you can't do any harm. Re-run the menu with the new setting and see what happens.

You may see the animated sequences and video clips in this and other software stutter and jerk. That's because the data can't be read from the CD fast enough. The solution is to optimising your PC and drive for maximum speed. There are two lines in your AUTOEXEC.BAT which need checking: The one with SMARTDRV in and the one with MSCDEX.

```
C:\DOS\MSCDEX /M:20 /D:MSCD000  
C:\DOS\SMARTDRV.EXE 2048 1024
```

The latest version of SmartDrive is 5.0, which is supplied with MS-DOS 6.2. This will cache CD-Rom drives, but only if it comes after the MSCDEX line. The line above sets the cache size to 2Mb (2048k) when in Dos and 1Mb (1024k) when running Windows.

The important bit in the MSCDEX line is the `/M:20` as this is the cache buffer size that MSCDEX uses. Higher numbers set bigger caches which improve the performance of the CD-Rom drive. However, each buffer requires 2k of memory, so the `/M:20` above sets up 20 buffers, which is 40k of memory.

Disc Mag Crash

Disc Mag crashes Page 15

Some readers are experiencing problems with Disc Mag in that it crashes in certain places - usually when they try to scroll the screen. It's possible to jump to another section so it seems to be a bitmap or video clip that won't display. And Video for Windows sometimes hung on installation. This was traced to the video driver, quite often with the Cirrus Logic card's driver. Loading a different driver - either a newer one or perhaps, an older one - almost always cured the problem.

And an odd thing happened with a recent PC Home CD which might occur with CD-Rom Now. The CD worked fine with MSCDEX 2.23, but not with earlier versions. MSCDEX 2.23 has been shipping free with MS-DOS 6.0 and 6.2 and Windows 3.11 for about a year now, but some readers still had old drivers which prevented a file from being accessed. Contact Microsoft and upgrade your old drivers please!

The above video and CD driver problems highlight the need to keep your software up to date. Check the versions of video drivers and MSCDEX and get new ones if necessary, and avoid using other CD-Rom drivers unless they are 100% compatible.

Screen Resolution

Screen resolution Page 16

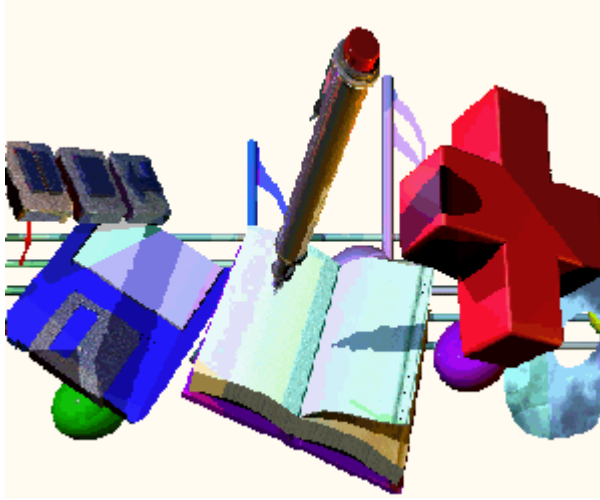
The menu and this Disc Mag are designed to be run in 640 x 480 pixels x 256 colours. You can try different resolutions, but it's not recommended. For instance, when running at 1,024 x 768 pixels the video clips will be the size of postage stamps!

Fortunately, Disc Mag runs entirely from CD and only installs a few small runtime files on your hard disk. The drivers haven't changed from issue 1 so nothing is actually copied to your hard disk if you have installed an earlier version of Disc Mag.

Keep a check on your free disk space as it gets consumed at an alarming rate. Regularly run CHKDSK /F (the /F will Fix any Faults). If you have MS-DOS 6.2 you should run SCANDISK. Both programs should be run each time you switch on your PC.

Features

{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][autostart]!music3.wav}



The Disc Editor reveals what's new and brings you up-to-date with the latest changes to this CD.

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[Ricoh RS-CD9200CD](#)

[More...](#)

Features
Contents

More...

Editorial

By the Disc Editor

I know it's hard to believe when you've got 650Mb of disc space on a CD, but once more I have run out of room and I have had to leave off some great demos. Last year we were struggling to fill a high density floppy cover disk, now a 650Mb CD just isn't enough!

Help is at hand though, well almost. Pioneer have developed a new type of CD-Rom drive which uses a blue laser, rather than the red one in current CD-Rom drives. The light from blue lasers has a shorter wavelength and so can read and write much finer detail. Blue laser CD-Rom drives will pack over 10Gb onto a disc.

Stacker is a well known utility which compresses the data on your hard disk drive on the fly, doubling the disk space available. Wouldn't it be nice if you could do that with CDs? Well, CD-Rom USA has a driver which does exactly that. The CRI-X2 driver creates a Stacker volume on the CD. EWB has a similar utility called CapaCD, which also doubles the CD-Rom drive space.

Write with your comments - praise and criticism - to: *The Disc Editor, CD-Rom Now, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.*

Readers' Submissions

Your input is vital to the success of this CD and each month we devote a section of it to readers' submissions. Everything is placed in the \READERS directory and there may be Dos or Windows items. If you have already sent something in, thanks! Almost anything goes, so why not have a crack at something and send it in on a floppy? On the next few screens I'll be providing info and screen shots.

{ewr MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device AVIVideo][autostart]!exmplvid.avi}**Send all your submissions to:**

The Disc Editor

CD-Rom Now

Europa House

Adlington Park

Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Please note: You must include written permission for all programs, sound samples and video clips to be included on the CD-Rom Now disc and confirm that it doesn't include any copyright material and is all your own work. Without this, we can't use the material.

Click on the Next button above to go to the next page...

Sound & music

{ewc MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][autostart]!bark2.wav}

In the \READERS\SOUNDS directory is a collection of sound samples which you'll be able to use for your own multimedia programs. There are old files from previous issues and many more **new files** this month.

This section is building up month by month into an exciting and comprehensive resource library - with your help.

Here are four samples from the library...

{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI,
[device WaveAudio][stdcontrol]!
macstart.wav}

{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI,
[device WaveAudio][stdcontrol]!
plunk.wav}

{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI,
[device WaveAudio][stdcontrol]!
rotary.wav}

{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI,
[device WaveAudio][stdcontrol]!
whizz.wav}

Use **The Music Machine** to browse and play the sounds

New files this month

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| bassbeep.wav | dong3.wav | plip.wav |
| beeboo.wav | droplet.wav | plunk.wav |
| beeeep.wav | eep.wav | plup.wav |
| beeip.wav | eerp.wav | pop.wav |
| beeip2.wav | gabing.wav | pop2.wav |
| beep.wav | gloopee.wav | pop3.wav |
| beoing.wav | guitbeep.wav | rotary.wav |
| bernk.wav | jets.wav | steel.wav |
| blurp.wav | macstart.wav | thinbeep.wav |
| bonk.wav | metal.wav | thtew.wav |
| brrr.wav | metalbom.wav | tinybeep.wav |
| bu-eep.wav | metallic.wav | tring.wav |
| chord.wav | metbeep.wav | whizz.wav |
| ding2.wav | micro.wav | zap.wav |
| dong.wav | oop.wav | files.txt |
| dong2.wav | oop.wav | |

Send them in...

{ewc MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][autostart]!meow3.wav}

Send in your sound samples either on a standard cassette tape and we'll sample it for you, or on floppy disk as a standard Windows .WAV file.

Next time you start up the lawn mower get out your tape recorder. Do you live near an airport? How about recording a jet taking off? Having a party? Recorder the laughter!

Record your dog or a cat barking or meowing, or your budgie singing. Sample a motorcycle revving up, a day at the races, a telephone ringing, a thunder storm, and so on.

Obviously we can't use samples taken off records or television and similar media because it is copyright. You must compose the original music or we can't use it. Believe it or not, even Happy Birthday is copyright!

Animation & Graphics



Edward Hicks from Hillesley in Gloucs. has supplied a grand total of 18 files, all of which are stored in the \READERS\HICKS directory on this CD. VGAMan is a graphics file viewer written in Visual Basic (source code included), COIN.LAT, CORD.LAT, MIC.LAT, PIN.LAT and TUMBLER.LAT are MicroLathe pictures (See disc #1 and disc #2 for MicroLathe), MISSION.FLI is an animation, DISK.WAV is the sound of a CD ejecting, ME.TIF and ME2.TIFF (shown on the right) are TIFF images of himself and his brother on holiday. Edward, presumably, is the one on the left. Load the animation player (in the software section of Disc Mag) to view the FLI file, Sound Recorder to play the sound, File Manager to point and click on VGAMAN.EXE to load and run it.

Graphics 1

Paul Bailey or Heron Ridge, Nottingham has drawn two excellent GIF graphic images of a snowman. They are stored in the \READERS\BAILEY directory on this disc.



Click on the pictures above to view them full screen.

Graphics 2

{ewc MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][autostart]!tollis.wav}



Craig Tollis of Leyton, London - who regular readers will rememeber from last month - has supplied more of his pictures and music. All his files are in the \READERS\TOLLIS directory.



The pictures are TRAFALGA.TIF and TULIP.TIF, and the music you can hear playing is REPEATER.WAV. Other files include ROCKS.TIF, PADDINGTON.GIF, STGLASS.GIF and STARTUP.WAV.

Dear Sir: I have been an avid reader of Multimedia Now (now CD-Rom Now) since the first issue. All the articles are informative, but I am particularly interested in the write-ups on graphics applications. I design electronic equipment for a living and the opportunity to get involved with graphics and animation is a welcome change.

I have spent many hours experimenting with various graphics applications and although I am very much an amateur, I hope you might feel that the two GIF files which I have enclosed could be included in a future issue of your excellent magazine.

Since this is the first time I have ever attempted anything like this, I will try not to be too disappointed if the images are not suitable for publication. Should you choose to publish any of the material on the enclosed disk I give my full permission and can assure you that the disk is all my own work and has no copyright. **Paul Bailey**.

Disk Ed: Thanks for the GIFs, they are excellent and I'm pleased to include them on the CD. You're wrong about the copyright - the copyright is yours! You own the copyright to any original work that you produce.





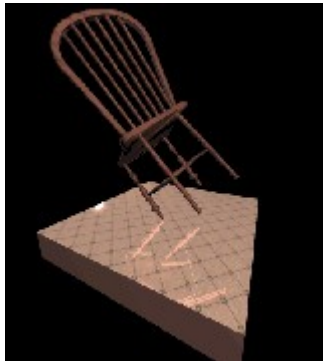


19 94 Danny White
2:254/33

Graphics 2

Danny White of Radstock, Bath has supplied artwork for earlier issues of this disc. He has sent in his latest work. The picture on the left below shows one of his rendered 3D Studio creations and the picture on the right loads one of his animations (make the animation window full screen to see all of it).

Click on the pictures below to view them.

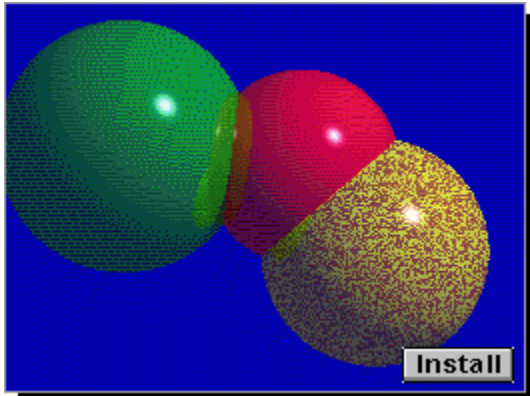


There are more files in the \READERS\WHITE directory on this CD.

Programs

Do you write your own programs, perhaps dabbling with Visual Basic or Multimedia Toolbook, Multimedia Viewer, Authorware or other software? Send in your programs and we'll include them on this CD.

No matter what you produce, share it with other CD-Rom Now readers - we want to see it!



Reader M vd Hurk from Holland has sent in a Breakout clone that he has written. It runs under Dos and needs to be copied to your hard disk drive first because it needs to save the high score table when you play it.

Click on the picture to install it.

Subscriptions

{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][autostart]!subscrib.wav}

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and receive one of these top
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Cinemanía
Musical Instruments
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No CD pack for World subscription

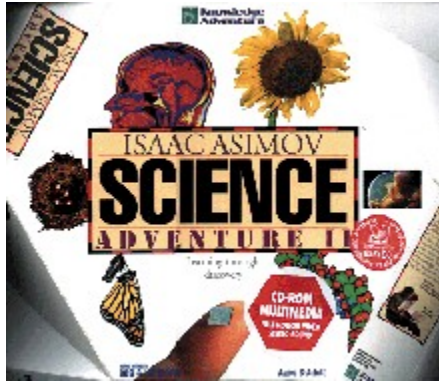
Microsoft Golf



A realistic and fully controllable golf simulation for up to nine players. Control your game by choosing your stance, ball, position, club face and swing plane.

Polish up your technique by practising on the driving range or the putting green.

Science Adventure II



Bring science to life with this stimulating and comprehensive science adventure. Play Dr. Zoom's game of Bogus Science, enter the realm of virtual reality and explore over 100 video clips as you are guided through the exciting world of science.

Cinemanía



Microsoft's much acclaimed Cinemanía '94 invites you to explore the magic of the movies on your PC. Packed with detailed reviews, biography, faces, voices, music and film clips from top Hollywood films.

Musical Instruments



Microsoft's Musical Instruments brings to life over 200 instruments from around the world. Explore the history of each instrument, learn how it works and listen to its tone and range with this impressive software package. Contains over 1,500 sound samples.

Beneath a Steel Sky



This is a gripping science fiction thriller set in a bleak vision of the future. Featuring Revolution's innovative Virtual Theatre system and stunning artwork from the award winning comic book artist Dave Gibbons.

Sound Samples

These files are all new this month:

file 1

file2

file3

Disc Base

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Disc Base | |
| Product: | Business in Motion |
| Type: | Business |
| Price: £ | 69.32 |
| Company: | LTS |
| Tel: | 0386 792617 |
| Fax: | 0386 793147 |



Disc Base is a comprehensive CD-Rom directory - an indispensable reference guide to **over 600 CD products** currently available for the PC and Mac.

It's an invaluable tool if you are looking to buy a piece of software and are wondering whether it is available on CD, or if you are thinking of buying a product and want to see at a glance how similar packages compare.

The directory has recently been updated to ensure that it is bang up to date with the current state of the rapidly expanding CD market.

Dorling Kindersley

Last month we had a demo of the latest CD-Rom products from Dorling Kindersley. Now we have an interview with the man at the top...

```
{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device  
AVIVideo][stdcontrol]!dorling1.avi}
```

```
{ewr MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device  
AVIVideo][stdcontrol]!dorling2.avi}
```

Multimedia comms

By Steve Gold

On-line services and networks are moving away from hideous text only user interfaces and retrievable files into the field of multimedia. Graphics, animations, video and sound are all now available on the networks. Let this new regular column be your monthly guide to the world of on-line multimedia.

(Get on CompuServe with WinCIM)

Radio show on the Internet

One of the most exciting developments in multimedia online facilities lies in Talk Internet Radio - TIR - a *radio* program distributed as a compressed audio file across the Internet. Upon receipt, suitably-equipped PC users first decompress then execute the file.

TIR is the brainchild of Carl Malamud, a Californian book author, who started the half-hour weekly programme in the spring of this year. The program format is very similar to the old BBC TV Micro Live, with interviews, news items and features all chained together with jingles. The result is quite interesting.

Guests on the program so far have included Microsoft's Bill Gates, NASA's Dr. Marshall Rose and Interop founder Dan Lynch. According to Malamud, he originally conceived TIR as an audio program that could be syndicated around US radio stations.

Then he realised the uphill battle he faced with such syndication and decided to offer the program free of charge across the Internet, getting sponsors to pick up the tab for the project.

So far, Sun Microsystems is the major sponsor for the show, which comes as a 15Mb - compressed to around 5Mb on-line - self-executing file and is available to most Internet addresses around the world.

"I started a radio station. I'm producing voice programs, and instead of using airwaves to distribute them I'm using Internet, which reaches 14 million people in 106 countries", explained Malamud, who added that not all Internet users can receive the program, as they need a decent Internet host - and a big hard disk as well.

"What I'm doing is producing a file which can be copied from network to network. Eventually it gets to a local network and needs to be played. It can be converted to formats for the PC, Macintosh, Next machine, you name it".

Malamud said that he started with a technical show *"because it's a brand new medium. We're starting with the radio metaphor, but we'll change it to suit."*

Malamud claims that he will add programming for physicists, Unix, entertainment, and programmers, and will eventually depart from the radio metaphor to add data types from video to text to graphics *"and other methods of interacting, so people can talk to the radio station as they're listening, as with a game show"*.

Each TIR program originates from UUNET in Virginia and is spooled across to IJJ in Japan and EUnet here in the UK. The EUnet site acts as the primary distribution point for TIR in Europe.

In the UK, if you're an Internet user, you can FTP to EUnet or, alternatively simply mail to carlmalamud@carlradio.com for more details of the program. TIR can also be contacted by voice on 001-703- 548-1126.

CompuServe reach two million

Closer to home, CompuServe UK, the British outpost of the world-wide online network, tell me that they have hit the two million subscriber mark worldwide and are ramping up their services to celebrate. Two new services are of interest to readers of this magazine - the on-line multimedia movie clips and the CompuServe CD.

The video files are held on a new area of CompuServe known as the Entertainment Drive. The files, which range in size from 1.5 to 4Mb, include clips from current and future releases from Universal Pictures, Walt Disney and Warner Brothers.

According to Neil Laver, product services manager with the company, the major files are located in special areas of the CompuServe Information Services, so as not to overload the system.

"We're moving to a more devolved system structure for CompuServe that allows us to cope with rushes of downloads of a particular group of files much more effectively. The structure of CIS is changing", said Laver.

A slice of Hollywood

On CompuServe's Entertainment Drive forum - go EDRIVE - it is now possible to download and view highlights from recently released and forthcoming movies from the main studios, including Universal, Warner Bros and Disney, such as The Mask, Natural Born Killers, The Shadow, Black Beauty, North and Angels in the Outfield.

Clips from Disney's blockbusting Lion King were also available for a limited period, during which there were several thousand downloads of the files in the UK alone. The movie files are based on actual clips from the films with full motion video and stereo audio, and can be viewed on PC's running Windows and equipped with Apple QuickTime for Windows.

Extracts from another film-related product, Microsoft's Cinemania CD-Rom, are also available on the Entertainment Drive forum. Video highlights from the Cinemania demo are also published on the second issue of CompuServeCD, the multimedia extension of CompuServe on CD-Rom issued in early August.

CompuServe on CD

CompuServeCD is a bi-monthly CD-Rom magazine that costs £5-95 per issue, although subscribers do get a £5 credit applied to their accounts on CompuServe. The plan is to issue the CD monthly from July of next year.

According to David Eastburn, CompuServe's vice president, almost a third of the on-line service's two million subscribers have a CD-Rom drive, making the disc a dead cert in the distribution stakes.

To run the disc, you'll need an MPC Standard PC (MPC 2 is recommended), Windows 3.1, 4Mb of memory - 8Mb is recommended, VGA graphics plus an 8-bit SoundBlaster or better. To order the disc, subscribers should GO FEEDBACK while on-line.

Internet comes - slowly

Regular users of CompuServe will have noticed that the service is now allowing test access to the Internet Usenet newsgroup service. This latest move marks the completion of a five-year rolling plan by CompuServe to allow their subscribers full access to the Internet.

This kicked off back in 1989 when inter-system electronic mail across the Internet was offered, since when the service has been enhanced to include full X.400 message switching to major hosts such as AT&T, MCI and other e-mail services.

CompuServe have commissioned a special graphical interface for PC Dos and Windows users that is being used to allow access to the Internet's Usegroup facilities. Similar in operation to the CompuServe Information Manager (CIM) graphical user interface comms package for Dos and Windows users, the Usenet interface is claimed to have a similar command interface.

According to Andrew Gray, CompuServe UK's general manager, plans are in hand to offer a full range of Internet services later this year. *"At that stage, the Usenet facility will be for message exchanges. We plan to implement FTP (file transfer protocol) across the Internet link by the end of September and, by the end of the year, full telnet facilities should be online"*, he explained.

Telnet is a system whereby the Internet is used as a packet data network (PDN) for data calls between Internet hosts. So, for example, anyone logging on to CompuServe in the US could telnet link across the Internet to on-line services in Europe, such as the Compulink Information eXchange (CIX) in London.

The advantage of using telnet across the Internet is that call costs are significantly below those of a traditional PDN. In CompuServe's case, the surcharge is ú4.80 an hour for the Internet services, excluding e-mail, which is charged at CompuServe's standard mailing rates.

For more information on CompuServe, call 0800-289378 or e-mail to 70006.101@compuserve.com on the Internet.

America On-line seize the day

The incorporation and spread of multimedia across the networks is very apparent. One US multimedia service, America Online - also available in an embryonic form in the UK - have taken the route of only being accessible through GUI software for Windows and Dos users. The software is free for the asking and is available on several of the major on-line services such as CompuServe and Genie, as well as via several BBS.

America Online (AOL) costs just ú9.95 to sign up for, which gets you a starter kit ID including five hours of free off-peak, on-line access. Extra hours are ú3.50 an hour. To access the service on the PC, you'll need a Windows machine with at least 4Mb of memory. In the UK, the service is available at all speeds to 9,600 bps - higher speeds are locked out - on Sprintnet, the packet data network (PDN) with ports in London (0171-973-1030), Basingstoke (01256-600061), Manchester (0161-747-5000) and Edinburgh (0131-454-

1290).

AOL is very easy to use, and is arguably the most multimedia-ish way of accessing the Internet. The GUI software handles Usenet newsgroups on the Internet with amazing ease. When used with the Windows 1.1 software, AOL interfaces with your PC's multimedia system, offering spoken menus and auto-downloading high-res graphics.

AOL's strong point is its newsgroup reader. The newsgroup reader makes it extremely easy to follow or drop discussion threads, and list threads by subject. While other GUI software for online systems offer similar facilities (including the next version of CompuServe Information Manager for Windows, due later this year), AOL's overall interface is more user-friendly.

Don't worry about subscribing to AOL from the UK - the service plans to launch in Europe real soon now, but is already taking subscriptions by plastic from the UK. For more information, call AOL on 001-703-448-8700 or fax on 001-703-883-1509.

Send E-mail to Steve Gold!

You can contact Steve c/o the usual editorial address, or via the following electronic media:

CompuServe: 76004,3451

Internet: sgold@cix.compulink.co.uk

Fax: 0114-268-6900

Ricoh RS-9200CD

{ewr MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device AVIVideo][autostart][looping][noframe]!ricoh.avi}The Ricoh RS-9200CD is a budget priced single speed CD-Rom writer about the size and shape of a shoebox. It is a SCSI device and was supplied with an old, but still OK, Adaptec 1510 interface. I already had a SCSI interface so setting up was a simple matter of plugging in a connecting cable and setting the SCSI ID number (behind a plate screwed on the back).

The software runs under Windows and like most Windows programs, is easy to use. You can easily define the directories and files to be placed on the CD and save layout files. When you come to write a CD an image of the disc is created on your hard disk, which means you need around 700Mb free, plus your source files - another 600Mb. You will also need to defragment your hard disk prior to writing. Overall, if you need to write your own CDs and have a limited budget, the Ricoh is a good buy at just under ú2,000.

Contact CD Revolution on 0932 562000.

(Thanks to Richard Pearson for the loan of the kit.)

The ECTS Show

Take a trip around the recent ECTS show in London with Will Sargent and his roving camera! Due to the length of time it takes to develop PC CD-Rom products there wasn't a lot that hadn't been seen before and the highlight of the show was probably Wing Commander III.

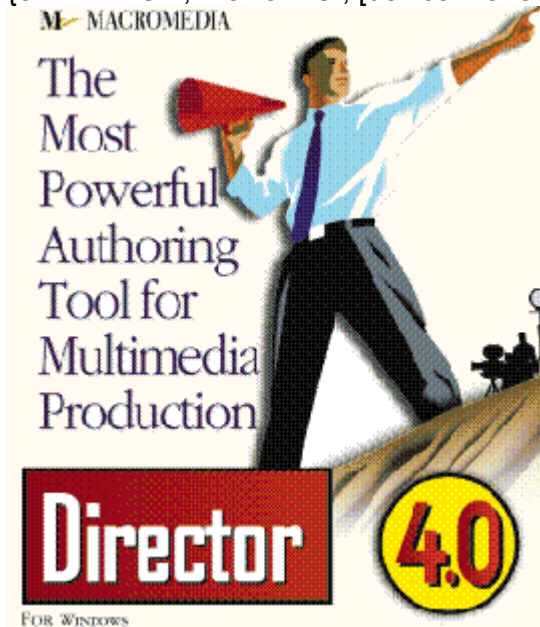
```
{ewr MVMCI2, ViewerMCI,  
[device AVIVideo][stdcontrol]!  
ects1.avi}
```

```
{ewr MVMCI2, ViewerMCI,  
[device AVIVideo][stdcontrol]!  
ects2.avi}
```

It was very noisy, so prepare your ears for a battering!

Software

{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][autostart]!software.wav}



On the following pages you'll find descriptions of the software on this disc.

Many of the programs can be run directly from Disc Mag by simply pointing and clicking with the mouse.

[Click here to upgrade to the full version of Director...](#)

SAVE ú150
on
Director 4.0 for Windows
with our special readers' offer price

Normally ú999, you can buy Director 4.0 for just ú849

Order it now!

Call Europress Multimedia on 0625 878888 or send a cheque for ú849 (inc VAT & P&P)
made payable to Europress Multimedia to:
Director 4.0 Offer, Europress Multimedia, Europa House, Adlington Park,
Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Software Contents



Video for Windows



D-Day



Dark Forces



Roomer3



Software Contents



Music Machine



Parallel Universe



Best Service



Animation Player



Software Contents



CD Player



Westwind Media



WinCIM



World War II



Software Contents



Little Big Adventure



Tuneland



Jazz Guitarist



The Pianist



Software Contents



Syracuse Language System



Director 4.0



Harry and the Haunted House

More...

Shareware

Shareware software is not free or public domain. You are allowed to try it for a short period of time, usually about a month, and if you decide to keep and continue using it you must register. This often entitles you to a better version of the program with more features, printed documentation, support and so on. Details are usually in the program.

WavePlay



The Music Machine is a small, but useful Windows utility which will find all the .WAV sound samples and .MID MIDI music files stored on this CD-Rom disc or your hard disk drive.

It tracks them down, lists them, then lets you play any one by pointing and clicking with the mouse.

The Music Machine runs entirely from CD and doesn't need installing or copying to your hard disk drive (unless you want to!). It is stored in the \MMN directory and was written by the Disk Editor.

Click on the picture to run it from CD now...

Video for Windows 1.1



To display the video clips on this CD you need to have the latest version of Microsoft Video for Windows installed. Note that although the current version is still 1.1 Intel have upgraded their Indeo compression routine to R3.2 and you can upgrade now.

If you see an error message when you select a page in Disc Mag or if you see a message instead of a video clip, you probably need to install the new Video for Windows in \VFW11.

You can install Video for Windows Runtime by running SETUP.EXE in the \VFW11 directory on this CD or by clicking on the picture now.

Note that on some machines this version might prevent Viewer - this program - from displaying old video clips properly. If this happens, install an old version of Video for Windows to cure the problem. Indeo R3.2 will still be there, but it cures the Viewer problem.

D-Day



This game from Impressions is a war simulation demo with some excellent graphics and interesting gameplay for those who like this sort of game.

It runs from Dos and needs installing on your hard disk drive first. It doesn't take up very much disk space.

Click the picture on the right to install it.

The README.TXT file provides some basic information about the terrain and weapons.

Dark Forces



Get up close and personal with the deadliest stormtroopers and most vile aliens ever in LucasArts Entertainment Company's upcoming PC CD-Rom action adventure, Dark Forces. Scheduled for release this autumn, it introduces a compelling new Star Wars story fraught with danger and intrigue, and uses richly-detailed, full-3D environments.

Successfully completing the game requires navigating through more than a dozen complex, multi-level worlds and harnessing the fire power of an arsenal of weapons including blasters, ion guns and plasma assault rifles in order to defend the Rebel cause.

Click on the picture to run a slide show of screen shots.

Roomer3



Roomer3 will help you to quickly produce floor plans, design and furnish offices, homes, kitchens, computer rooms, theatre sets, factories, exhibition stands and so on. It will:

Create floor plans and 3D models of floor plans * Furnish the plans or rooms in the plans with furniture within the program or furniture you create yourself! * Create perspective views of plans and rooms

- Produce lists and price reports * Export drawings and 3D models to other CAD and paint programs! * Output to a wide range of printers, laser printers and plotters!

Click on the picture to install it on to your hard disk drive. Needs 2.5Mb disk space.

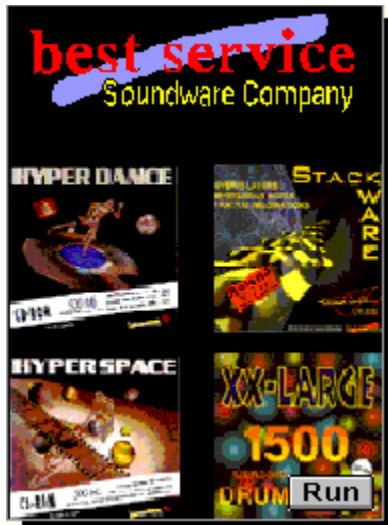
Parallel Universe



Simon Browne, of Parallel Universe, may not be a name familiar to you, but his animations certainly will be. Simon produced the animations introducing early issues of CD-Rom Now (when it was called Multimedia and CD-Rom Now), and animations for some issues of PC Home.

On this disk are some of his latest creations. They are best run from Dos (just **type SIMON at the Dos prompt**), but they can also be **run under Windows by clicking on the picture** on the right to load the animation player. Use this to go to the \DOSPROGS\BROWNE DIRECTORY and then load the FLI files.

Best Service



Best Service - a German company - produce a wide range of sampling CDs. That is, true hi-fi quality audio CDs with hundreds of samples on each one.

The idea is that you take the samples and mix your own music. You can produce anything from Dance music to sound effects to accompany a film. All tracks are 16-bit 44KHz stereo.

The demo (in the \WINPROGS\BEST1 directory), contains 16-bit 22KHz mono samples, but still sounds good. Also in the \WINPROGS\BEST2 directory is a collection of samples taken from the Sound Collection, Film Collection, Bizarre Planet and Looping CDs. These are 16-bit 22KHz stereo.

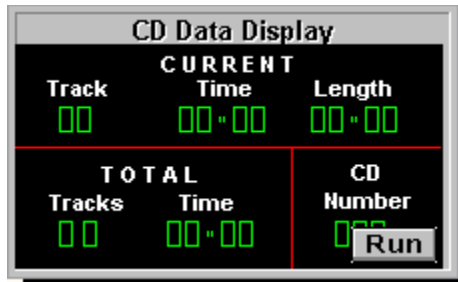
Click on the picture to run the demo from CD...

Best Service

**Siegesstrabe 23
80802 Munchen**

**Tel: 010 49 89 34 50 26
Fax: 010 49 89 39 73 96**

Audio CD Player



This utility is small, yet very useful if you don't already have a similar program. It enables you to play standard audio CDs on your PC and any audio tracks which may be on computer discs.

If the CD is a computer disc, any audio tracks will be numbered starting at 2, and track 1 is reserved for computer data - don't try to play this!

It is stored in the \MMN directory and runs directly from the CD without needing to be installed or copied to your hard disk drive (unless you want to!).

Click on the picture to run it now...

Animation Players



There are two animation players on this disk from Autodesk, both stored in the \MMN directory. One program runs under Dos and the other runs in Windows.

You can run the Windows program by clicking on the picture on the right. When it has loaded you can go to the file menu and load one of the animations on this CD or your hard disk. Any file with an extension of .DIB, .FLI or .FLC can be loaded.

The Dos version is called AAPLAY.EXE and must be run from the Dos prompt. It is stored in the \MMN directory.

Westwind Media Demo



This is a superb demo of several CD-Rom based titles from Westwind Media. Apart from menu selection it is non-interactive, but still well worth watching.

DinoSource is an onscreen dinosaur encyclopedia with excellent graphics, Theseus: Caught in the Maze of Minos introduces Greek mythology, Tales of the Wild Zeep features a weird troll-like creature drawn using superb rendered graphics, The Fall of the House of Ushar is a gripping story and Constitution Hall explores the American Constitution.

Click on the picture to run the demo...

WinCIM

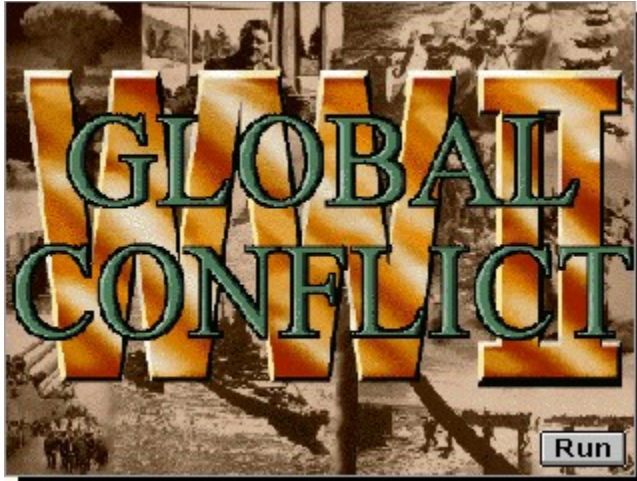


Since its introduction in 1979, the CompuServe Information Service has become a leading worldwide provider of online information for personal computer users. More than 1.7 million members access the service by a local telephone call or gateway network from 120 countries.

CompuServe members can choose from more than 2,000 databases, information resources, communications and transactional services. Send and receive mail 24 hours a day, join one of the 600 special interest forums from rock music to photography to science fiction, join conferences, play multi-player games, download utilities and games and much more...

Click on the picture to install it to your hard disk drive (modem plus 3Mb disk space needed).

World War II



From ILP - Interactive Learning Productions - comes World War II: Global Conflict.

It's a complete history of the second World War and this demo version provides an overview of the material contained on this disc.

The demo runs entirely from CD, doesn't install anything to your hard disk drive and can be run by clicking on the screen shot on the right.

Interactive Learning Productions, North Street Court, North Street East, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 8HD. Tel: 091-261 1255.

Little Big Adventure



This Dos game by Adeline Software International (and available through Electronic Arts) is a visually stunning adventure game with lots of puzzles and fast paced action.

The graphics and animation are among the best we've seen!

In this special preview version you get to play a part of the game - it's fully interactive. It needs to run from your hard disk drive and approximately 10Mb of disk space is required.

Click on the picture to install the game...

Tuneland



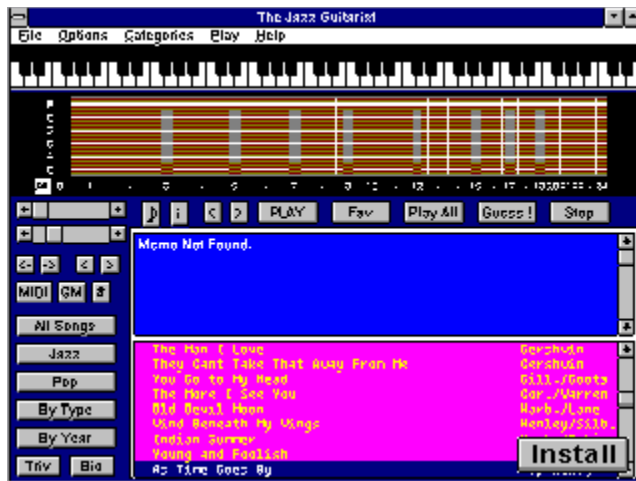
This is one scene from 7th Level's Tuneland, the World's first interactive cartoon (at least that's what it says in the publicity blurb!). Seriously though, this is lots of fun for young children and they'll love it.

Tuneland is designed to teach your child basic computer skills while journeying through a musical wonderland.

To experience all eight scenes, call 7th Level on 0223 425558.

Click on the picture to install this Windows program. It puts just 30k of files on your hard disk drive.

The Jazz Guitarist



Welcome to the Jazz Guitarist Demo version.

This has only five tunes in it, but the regular version has 60+ jazz standard tunes. They were all played in real time by a top Studio Guitarist using a MIDI Guitar controller. They were never quantized or step recorded. You can see the guitar on screen, step through the pieces chord by chord. Press the Notation Window, and you'll see the music in notation. You also see the chords and guitar TAB. And this may all be printed out! Note: The quality of sound depends on your MIDI setup or sound card. **Click on the picture to install it...**

Full program available from Arbiter Pro MIDI (081-202 1199)

The Pianist

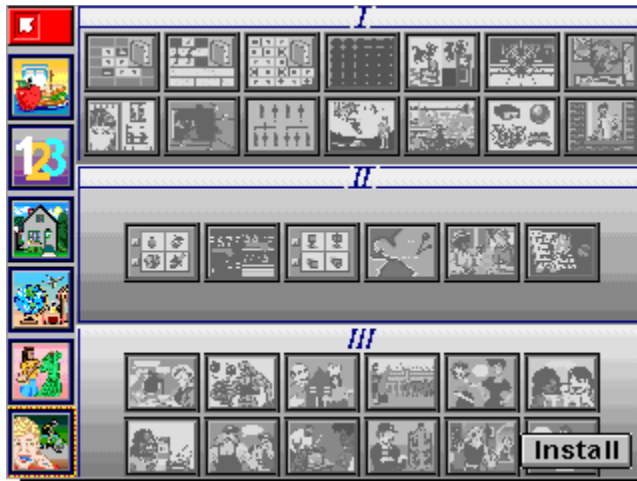


The Pianist is a Music Program containing a huge collection of over 200 of the world's most popular classical piano pieces, performed by world-class concert pianists! Plus... Music Trivia Game, Guess the Song, Program Notes, Biographies, Music Dictionary (all on disk).... and much more.

With this demo version you'll be able to play a selection of classic pieces. **Click on the picture to install it.**

Full program available from Arbitr Pro MIDI (081-202 1199)

Syracuse Language System



This is a fully interactive demonstration of Infogrames' Syracuse Language System for learning to speak Spanish.

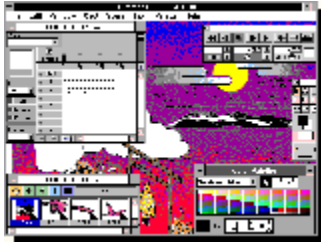
Most of the sections are disabled, but there are still several sections which you can use, including a comic strip cartoon in which the characters speak Spanish, and a calendar guessing game in which you have to identify the day from a sentence spoken in Spanish.

Click on the picture to run the setup program.

Contact: Infogrames, 14 Smedley Street, Clapham, London SW4 6PF.

Director 4.0 for Windows

Save Disabled



This is one of the most popular multimedia authoring tools for the PC and Mac. Previously only available for the Mac (though a special Windows runtime utility was available), it has now been converted for the PC. This is an evaluation version of Director for Windows. Consequently, the Save, Save As and Export options cannot be used. Apart from that, all other functions work and for a full installation you'll need 38Mb of hard disk space! Minimum installation is around 15Mb - this is a serious multimedia developer's tool!

Click on an option below: (they take a while to load so be patient!)

Install Director - to your hard disk drive

Run HouseJam - demo created in Director

Run Revolution - demo created in Director

Lesson 1

Lesson 2

Lesson 3

Lesson 4

Lesson 5

Lesson 6

Lesson 7

Lesson 8

Lesson 9

Note: Click on the Exit button after each tutorial if necessary.

Contact: Computers Unlimited (081-200 8282).

Harry and the Haunted House

{ewr MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device AVIVideo][autostart][noframe]!livebook.avi} This is the latest children's educational title from Broderbund and it is a highly entertaining interactive, animated story.

The demo, which runs under Windows, features just one page from the book, but there is still plenty to do as almost every object on the screen is animated.

The program will run straight from CD without being installed on to your hard disk drive. It is best run in 640 x 480 x 256 colours, but will run in other modes.

[Click here to run Harry and the Haunted House](#)

Reviews

{ewl MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][autostart]!dontplay.wav}



Welcome to the reviews section of Disc Mag. Here you'll find specially selected products from the pages of CD-Rom Now. You can see real screen shots on your monitor, and sometimes watch video clips of someone actually playing the games!

[Music from Don't Play Track One - Read the review in this issue!](#)

Reviews

Contents



Gif Gallery



Tuneland



Don't Play...



The Discoverers

Reviews
Contents

More...

Gif Gallery 1

By Martin Gittins

Acquiring high quality images for use in publications can be an expensive business. Going to any of the commercial picture libraries for a particular image can cost hundreds of pounds, not to mention a wait until the transparency turns up. Then of course you've got to scan the image before you can use it in your DTP program. What a palaver.

Alternatively, buy a CD such as Gif Gallery 1 which contains about 1,000 GIFs on 10 themes, called galleries. Then, you can buy the CD containing PhotoCD images of the particular gallery, such as architecture. These are of high enough quality to be used within DTP applications ready for printing. The images are royalty free, so once you have bought the CD you don't have to worry about paying for using the images.



Price: ú17.63

Supplier: Unica

Tel: 061-429 0241

Summary: This is surely the way image resources are going. Buy the sample CD, then buy the specific PhotoCD and get royalty free images at 30 pence each.

Tuneland

By Claire Mawdsley Page 1



Claiming to be the world's first interactive musical cartoon, Tuneland is somewhat of a disappointment. This is due mainly to the program's limitations, not only in the quality of child-computer interaction available, but also in the standard of music and cartoons that are used.

Tuneland consists of a variety of screens, including the farmhouse, barn, pond, barnyard, grandma's house, the mountain and the pasture. Each contains numerous songs, many of which are well known nursery rhymes, but some, due to the general American feel of the program are unfamiliar.

This is a great opportunity to teach children, especially British children, new songs. Unfortunately, the program only allows children to listen to the songs and makes no attempt to try and get them to join in, by following on-screen lyrics, for example.

[Tuneland Demo...](#)

[Go to the](#)

Tuneland

Page 2



This is a major flaw in the program, as children are not truly able to interact or learn from using this title. Interaction is limited to clicking on characters and watching for their response.

The response of some characters and objects does vary a little, but not enough to keep children occupied for hours on end, as the program claims. But each screen is very busy, with a lot going on: Pigs dancing, little furry mammals hiding in barrels, phone calls from Howie Mandel, and hiding somewhere is Lil Howie.

The characters are quite interesting and amusing, and very well animated, but are extremely small, which reduces their impact on the screen.

Tuneland

Page 3



Each scene in Tuneland also includes a small cartoon. These are short and not particularly interesting. However, there is more action when a song is played and the characters dance and sing along.

One of the more annoying aspects of Tuneland is the screen saver which appears frequently. This alternates between an animated steam-train and the 7th Level Logo, which travels labouriously across the screen accompanied by the voice of Howie Mandel - a comedian little known in this country.

There seems to be little point in the continued appearance of this screen saver, apart from informing us of Howie Mandel's contribution to the program.

Tuneland

Page 4



The program also includes Tuneland Tunes Player, where children can play through the songs on the CD. However, as with the main program, the children cannot fully interact and join in with the songs as no lyrics accompany the tunes. The Tunes Player does not include any animation to accompany the songs, which makes listening to them somewhat boring, especially for children.

Tuneland relies rather heavily on the musical content to keep children occupied and so fails to realise other opportunities to entertain, as well as educate. By not including lyrics or other means to provide a more interactive experience for children, Tuneland falls short of producing a truly entertaining, and potentially educational, title.

Tuneland

Page 5

Price: útb
Supplier: Longman
Logotron
Tel: 0223 425558



Don't forget the Tuneland demo...



Summary: With its over-emphasis on music, the program fails to realise its full potential in educational and entertainment fields

Don't Play Track One

By Paul Gaunt

Page 1

```
{ewc MVMCI2, ViewerMCI, [device WaveAudio][autostart]!dontplay.wav}
```



Interactive computing is what it's all about these days. If it's not interactive, it's not hip and if it's not hip, we don't dig it: Right? Okay then, man, how's this for pumpin'? Don't Play Track One is the latest in interactive music videos. "What's an interactive music video?" was one of my first questions, along with "What the hell?" and "Whatever next?"

The reason behind the bizarre title of this product is simple. Track one contains all the computer data relating to the disc while the remaining 10 hold songs from 10 new artists. Some of them will probably do well because their lyrics are trash beyond comprehension and some will probably flop because they've got talent but can't dance.

Don't Play Track One

Page 2



Load the disc into your CD-Rom drive, install the Windows front-end and you're in for a treat with the vids. Some allow you to fiddle and click on various bits so that you can get different graphics, others are of the non-interactive, sit-back-and-watch variety and all vary in quality in both video and song.

Eat Within Two Days Of Opening is a classic example. The video is strange and pretty naff although there is some interaction which opens it up a bit. The song's main lyric goes something like "*find within it, absolute peace, absolute quiet*" and the rest of it sounds as though this guy's learned how to use the sequencer on his synth and immediately become a *musician*.

Don't Play Track One

Page 3



Naturally though, this is but one person's opinion and if you're the type to go out to a night club and bounce around to a beat with a jumble of notes and no real melody, you might well like this one, especially if you're a fan of 2Unlimited.

Puffy is a group that sounds like a combination of The Beautiful South, Deacon Blue and REM. Wish is a melodic track with definite lyrics and a sound you can really appreciate \equiv unless you like 2Unlimited, I suspect.

The reggae beat of Wu Wei is quite soothing which is in complete contrast to the utter rubbish of Alien with their repetitive and dull Superman. It has to be said, though, that this had one of the best videos out of the lot.


Don't Play Track One

Page 4



On a Mountain Top, is a compelling string orchestral piece accompanied by an interesting and quite fitting video. If this is indicative of the work of the young Richard Jay, I suggest you look out for his debut album.



 Not to be confused with the upwardly mobile portable phone network, In Orange is a track with real feeling. With the folk-like sound of Marina Florance and her guitar, you could be listening to a female version of REM or another Tracy Chapman.

Don't Play Track One

Page 5



The user interface offers a pictorial menu of the 10 tracks which needs to be referenced with the inlay card to establish the names of the tracks by matching the images. This is a touch strange, as are some of the other icons on this menu.

Don't Play Track One is just another new gimmick for distributing music. The difference is that the songs are new and are from new artists trying to get the break they need.

In truth, I like the idea. It presents new musicians in an interesting fashion and much of the music was, if not fully to my taste, at least listenable. If you like music and hanker after something new, this disc has what you're looking for.

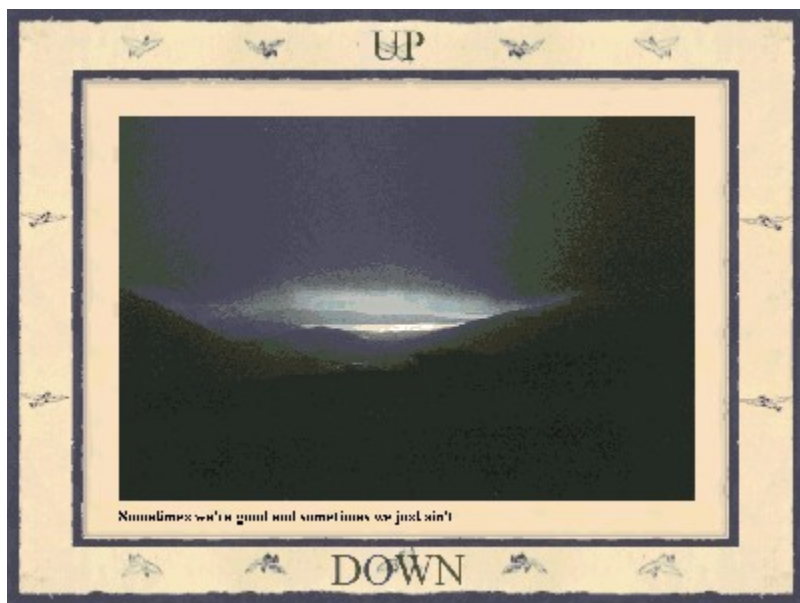
Supplier: Day at the Beach Productions

Tel: 071-233 9924

Summary: An entertaining new way of trying to give new musicians a break and explore new ideas



More...



UP



Sometimes we're good and sometimes we just ain't

DOWN

Music by David Toplift
Lyrics by Don Thompson
Produced by Wu Wei
Vocals & banjo David Toplift
Backing vocals & mandolin John Mitchell
Guitar Adam Maskew
Bass Chris Bingham
Drums Graham Hunt

DOWN

Loading Humanity
Swing by Wu-Wei...

Please Wu-Wei.







The Discoverers

By Paul Gaunt Page 1



From modest beginnings the Knowledge Adventure range has progressed and expanded to the point where its products now come on CD.

The first batch - Science, Knowledge and Dinosaur - all claimed they were multimedia packages without the need for a CD. Silver disc versions duly followed when the medium started to take off, but these were mere enhancements. Then came Speed and now The Discoverers - an unwieldy title for a product that could equally be called The Explorers. These two products have advanced the Knowledge Adventure cause by incorporating short science films from MacGillivray Freeman.

The Discoverers

Page 2



It starts off with the film rolling, and if you don't feel the need to interrupt you can sit and watch the whole 20-minute production on your PC. These films tend to be high on gloss and low on fact, but the facts are so attractively presented it shouldn't be too hard to get children to sit around the PC.

There are fast forward and rewind icons and, handier still, a key-frame selector. Picking this puts the key frames in the film under control of the mouse. Roll it left to go back and right to scroll forwards through the film. The video screen size for the film is quite large and all the family can watch without too much discomfort.

The Discoverers

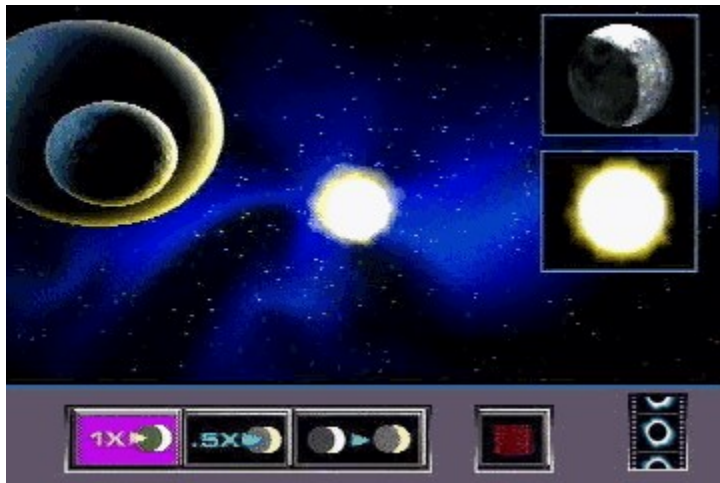
Page 3



You can dive in at any point by clicking the mouse button. If the mouse is now moved over the screen it encounters topic hot spots. For example, clicking here reveals more about Arab astronomers while there reveals more about the classic view of the solar system at that point in time. Two hot spots are available whenever the film is stopped. From the film menu you can either switch over to the traditional KA learning interface or, instead, go to the games menus or the discovery menu. These are the three main elements which make the package a treat when simply exploring what it has to offer, but a pain when trying to remember where a certain feature was.

The Discoverers

Page 4



The games section will disappoint as the first two offerings are weak and flabby matching games - really a waste of space. However, all is not lost since number three is where Knowledge Adventure have stuck their Wolfenstein 3-D sub-program which has appeared in their other recent releases. Wandering around here you get three quotes from a classic discoverer, and at the end of the passageway are asked which was the misconception. Some of these are quite tricky, so for that reason it encourages learning in the older age groups because this is a knowledge contest. The use of the 3-D corridors is something of a gimmick, though - even with a time limit.

The Discoverers

Page 5



Moving on to the discovery menu four basic simulations are on offer, plus the extended learning module. The simulations cover eclipses, mapping Mars and Jupiter, four stories of primitive art as a means of historic story telling, and prisms and the colours of light. The first two are unimpressive and weak interactively as well as educationally. The art stories are more interesting and will hold a child's attention longer, but aren't interactive enough to warrant looking at again. That feeling is somewhat swept aside by the extended learning section - which any Blue Peter fan would be proud of. Here are seven practical experiments concerning ideas and topics covered in the package generally.

The Discoverers

Page 6



This is a really nice touch, extending the package's usefulness and lifespan - especially when you can construct the projects with children then come back to look at the main KA learning engine to find out more about the subject they've been practically studying. The main engine is located beneath the film. As soon as the film is stopped and a hot spot clicked on, the familiar engine comes into play. Here a timeline runs from 10 billion years BC right up to the modern day and stories about smog in LA. Each story has a picture and the text is narrated. Each picture is linked to another in the timeline by a hot spot so a similar theme can be followed through time.

The Discoverers

Page 7



Alternatively you can start off with the hilariously hammy Birth of Orion spiel at the start and follow the story of the discoverers all the way through time. The globe in the left of this screen shows where the story is taking place in the world.

The problem with this package is the topic itself. The main items in the timeline are astronomy and continent based, all in the same gosh wow approach. So reading about smog in LA or listening to a bit of narrative on dolphins is somewhat bizarre. It's almost as if the programmers got so far, ran out of discoverers and then decided they'd fill up the package with other things they were interested in.

The Discoverers

Page 8



Einstein and Newton receive most attention, followed by Edison and Bell. Stephen Hawking, Marie Curie, Dr Livingstone and a host of other, notably non-American, personalities and their discoveries are completely ignored and this really does detract from the package. What you actually get at the end of the day is a combination of Science Adventure and Space Adventure, where there is a huge cross-over of material.

The Discoverers shows that Knowledge Adventure are one of the leading proponents of classy edutainment software, and in this incarnation the programming is as slickly impressive as ever.

The Discoverers

Page 9



Unfortunately, the educational content is very uneven and the entertainment side peculiarly uninteractive. It has a number of things going for it, but with such a slap-dash approach to its subject matter this is one for collectors of the Knowledge Adventure series only.

Price: £49.99

Supplier: Guildsoft

Tel: 0752 895100

Summary: A nice piece of software with a glossy movie, plenty to look at and some projects to undertake but too many gaping holes

