

y Mudgeon

[Curse of Dragor for Macintosh](#)

You are absolutely correct--there are NOT enough games for Macintosh gamers. Although there are far more digital entertainments these days than in days of yore, the ratio of PC to Macintosh games is rather dismal. Some developers continue to doggedly produce games that they know will sell fewer than 40,000 units. Hardly enough sales to warrant the R&D expenditures, never mind the massive marketing budget and retail sales "influence" needed to find shelf space for these titles.

And so, it is with deep regret I must admonish folk regarding the purchase of the above title. Initially, I felt as though this fantasy role-playing game had merit. Now I must change my tune of joy to a dirge of disappointment. The title certainly has potential, although the oft tried and now stale tune of evil kith coming back to flaunt their powers in the face of good is becoming quite trite.

The game play is solid enough, save for an interface that absolutely requires you to operate both your mouse and your keyboard to get anywhere. This is, at times, quite frustrating. Allow me to explain. Let us say you are approaching a closed door. You are using your keyboard to direct your movement. You must also use your keyboard to activate the weapon being carried by your leader of your party of four adventurers. You approach the door and you must move your hand from the keyboard to your mouse to actually open the door, then move back to the keyboard to move through the doorway and be ready for a possible attack of some kind. Useless motion. Why not enable the mouse to do everything, or the keyboard to do everything? Why cause the user unnecessary motion sickness?

The graphics are quite cool, as the screen shots reveal. The sound effects are OK, save for the idiotic laughter that echoes through your Mac speakers when you quit the game. Whoever was responsible for THAT voice over should probably not consider radio as a career. The auto map is only viewable when you're not doing something else and before you can return to the game, you must put the map away. Nor can you use the map to actually move your characters about in the game, which is a set back. As compass directions are not revealed on your screen, the map is the only way you can determine exactly where you are in the scheme of things and can be the only revelation of which way you should actually turn.

The nasties that oppose you are nicely rendered. The static objects such as furniture and walls are also texture-mapped. All-in-all, a pleasant game. Ahhh, but that's the rub. A moment of happiness fills your soul when you realize you can save your game at any juncture. No need to rush to a special icon or a special location to save your adventure. Any time, any where, the saved game is yours to command.

Unfortunately, approximately 50 percent of the time I recalled a saved game (usually necessary when some of your characters have been lain to waste by some evil critter in the game) in order to master an ambush or a puzzle, all I received in return was the exact spot I wish to avoid again. In other words, my save game 3, which digitally encoded my hard drive with the last great location of my adventurers, would not load correctly. What I received was the culmination of the last great misadventure where my wizard and my cleric were both slain by a spell-wielding nastie. As I had purposely saved the game at a position that I knew I would need recalled, to be so rudely set upon by the game and given a position I have no desire to continue leaves a great deal to be desired. In fact, I desired so little, and received so little, I finally surrendered all semblance of rationality and simply gave up on the game.

There you have it, then. Dragor is a Macintosh FRPG with, seemingly, tons of potential to entertain adventurers. What it delivers is a miscoded save game feature that sometimes works and sometimes doesn't--nothing worse than spending time with a particular scenario only to have your best moves evaporate into the digital netherlands. Now, if Domark can fix this problem, hallelujah--Mac gamers will rejoice and rejoin this grand adventure.

[As Few Words As Possible about Descent II from Interplay](#)

March 13th is the date Interplay has scheduled for the release of Descent II (and soon after for the Macintosh), the [hopefully] awesome sequel to their smash-hit, Descent (which now appears on both the PC and the Mac!) Just to let you know, the company has released a PC CD-ROM demo of Descent II and this puppy will give everyone a true taste of the features that will enthrall one and all when the game releases.

If 360 degree action is not to your liking, tune out. If you thoroughly enjoy fast-paced movement and tactics and shooter-thrills, this is THE title for you--and I've only experienced the demo, for heaven's sake. The new game now has you diving and shooting on 4 different planets through 30 levels that are far deeper and far darker than anything you experienced with Descent. Plus, the enemies you'll encounter sure seem smarter. Plus, they're also far faster, which makes them even more dangerous.

And keep an eye on your energy, for one of the most unobtrusive of the nasties out to get you is a thiefbot who has a hunger for your energy and will steal it at the most inappropriate times. However you can fight back, with 13 new weapons that are among some of the most destructive I've had the joyful happenstance to use. Should you feel you need assistance, there's always the guidebot to steer you through the levels and the music from Ogre of Skinny Puppy is highly entertaining and a great addition to the entire environment of Descent II. From the demo experience, the full game must be totally awesome--I would state you should retrieve the Interplay game from your local retailer as soon as such is available--it should definitely destroy your weekend and evenings.

For those who would truly enjoy finding and playing an entertaining family game that'll appeal to all ages, I heartily recommend Arcade America. This title is funny, cool and (ha-ha) educational! Although I have not finished the game as of yet, I wanted to let gamers know that the PC version has already been released--but the good news is that, come this March, a Macintosh version will also be available. Certainly check out Arcade America at your local

store and see why it is quickly becoming one of the leading edutainment titles in the U.S. Plus, Arcade America address the drought condition of family entertainment by proving such an offering can provide hours of entertainment with knowledge and remain--entertaining! Way to go, 7th Level!

Buyer, Beware!

How many times have you heard that purchasing additional insurance for your computer, television, CD player, is not worth your investment? How many experts have you seen pop-up on your TV screen to explain why these insurance purchase plans are only a boon to the retailer and not to you? That these plans are simply a rip-off?

Although I cannot speak to every single equipment insurance purchase plan that abounds throughout this marvelous country of ours, I can relate to you one experience that proved the general consensus to be wrong! That's absolutely correct, my friends. And the reason the added insurance plan proved viable is because the retailer has an absolutely despicable policy regarding equipment purchased without insurance.

Not so long ago, Tandy Corporation developed an idea to help boost company profits through the development of a retail superstore for electronics products. The name of the store is The Incredible Universe--mammoth stores packed to the rafters with every electronic device imaginable, from washing machines to cell phones, video consoles to computers, big screen TVs to satellite systems. The employees of The Incredible Universe are "cast members," homage to the Disney-approach of customer service.

I purchased a new Acer-built, Pentium-based machine at The Incredible Universe last November. I needed the 100 MHz speed and the 16MB of RAM to run Windows 95. Unfortunately, I knew more about the equipment than the "alleged" expert in the computer section of the local Incredible Universe and managed to negate her up-sell to a more expensive system because I knew what Windows 95 required--nothing more, nothing less.

In my haste to leave the store with my purchase, I agreed to purchase an additional insurance package for the computer. I have never believed much of what I'm told in a superstore, as volume is a way of life, and with volume sales comes specialists who manage verbiage better than product knowledge. I decided that, should anything untoward occur to my new computer, the extra, hard-copied, affirmed, definite protection would be worth the \$45.00. Had I more trust in the retailer, I doubt I would have bought the coverage.

Approximately one month after the purchase, there began a series of strange happenings with the computer. Windows 95 would not load correctly--my MIDI board decided to cease operation--the internal speakers of the Acer SVGA monitor decided to imitate the screechings of a harpooned whale. Messages began to pop-up during startup that indicated the computer's main memory was failing, apparently in the high register range.

I did what I could--I completely reformatted the hard drive twice, hoping the memory messages were in error. I reinstalled Windows 95 four times and finally I did what all consumers end up doing--I unplugged all of the peripherals from the computer and took the entire unit back to The Incredible Universe for an exchange. I also managed to tuck away my original sales receipt that indicated not only the purchase of the computer itself, but the insurance policy as well.

While standing in the Customer Service area for 25 minutes awaiting my turn, I noted with some concern the lack of zeal and happiness upon the faces of those folk ahead of me

attempting to return items. Whether they were justifiable returns that were accompanied with appropriate sales receipts, or folk attempting to scam the store, I have no idea. Some of the cast members became rather animated when talking to the customers, but most held their composure well. Score one for Incredible Universe employees.

My turn arrived and I was told I would have to take my computer to the Upgrade Area for examination. The Upgrade Area rested behind a closed and locked door that required a secret knock to enter. A young man named Corey, polite and experienced, read the documentation I had made regarding the memory corruption. He stated that the RAM was definitely the problem and that RAM with problems usually starts to go between one and two months after the purchase of the computer. He stated I should get a new computer and he authorized the exchange. I beamed with joy. What a pleasant experience!

But NOOOOOOO! I returned to the Customer Service area and was politely told that there would be NO exchange. As I had purchased the additional warranty on the machine, they would repair the unit. I was somewhat amazed and asked what would have happened had I not bought the insurance policy. I was informed that such was just the consumer's bad luck--there would be no exchange--and I incredulously asked if that meant the consumer would be out the \$3,000 they had paid for their machine. The reply was that, after 30 days and NO insurance policy, that was indeed the case. They would lose their investment--The Incredible Universe would do nothing for them. I muttered under my breath that certainly legal action would be one result of such a policy.

There you have it, folks. Make certain you know EXACTLY what the standard warranty is on your computer before you purchase it. If you hear 30 days, I highly recommend you purchase the additional insurance. After all, any retailer that will only guarantee their systems for 30 days--any retailer that also knows RAM can go nutso within 30 to 60 days--is not a retailer I would care to revisit in the future. If you have to, buy from a store that gives you a decent warranty--at least 90 days in length. If you have no choice but to purchase from the 30-day warranty retailer, then buy that insurance policy. Otherwise, you're getting sold a bill of goods.--Mudgeon

PS - As an aside, The Incredible Universe add-on warranty indicates that if you have to leave your computer for more than two days, and you require your computer for business, they will "loan" a computer to you. The repair manager indicated that to replace the RAM would take 8 to 9 days. I, therefore, requested a loaner. Guess what? That is absolutely correct--they had NO loaners. And guess how long it took to repair my machine? Two hours, not 9 days! Incredible (as in Universe), is it not?