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NOTE: Screen shots and information presented in this article are based on a pre-release version of The Dig and are subject to change before final release. This article is not a review.

The last several years have seen the line between Hollywood movies and computer gaming continually blur with a diffuse spread of past and present actors and actresses. From Robert Culp to Tia Carrerra and Dennis Hopper, a cavalcade of Hollywood stars and starlets have been popping up in all sorts of titles. Some game companies are, in fact, direct spin-offs of the movie biz. Take LucasArts for example, they have gone right after Lucas' successes with X-Wing and Rebel Assault. After all, what the heck did we think their games were gonna be about? Yep, everything in Lucas's arsenal has been fair game, save Howard the Duck, which more than a few of us would rather not see converted to ones and zeros.

[The "Duel" of Computer Games](#)

It kinda gets you thinking. Who would be the toppermost of the poppermost (to quote John Lennon) of the movie biz to get involved in a computer game? The "S" man? Naw, he'd never do it. Couldn't be. Yep, Steven Spielberg has finally reared his head in the computer game, The Dig, from LucasArts. Although Spielberg was not directly involved in the production and development of this game, the story itself is based on a Spielbergian concept. To add even more delicious icing to the cake, Orson Scott Card (a famous science fiction writer Hugo-award-winning author) contributed along with Sean Clark to develop the storyline. Add all these components together and you should have a blockbuster game, both for the masses and for the most sophisticated of the science-fiction hardcore elite as well. The Dig has been out on the DOS side for several months. The question is, will it meet the Mac user's discerning tastes?

[Dig 'em!](#)

To start things off you find yourself enjoying life on our troubled, but livable home world of Earth. That shining blue globe we've all come to love. Wouldn't you know there's this small matter of an asteroid that's began to beat a path to our collective door. As Boston Low, a NASA commander, you have been given the responsibility to take up a shuttle (with new O-rings) and intercept this nasty bit of space rock and change its trajectory to a somewhat more desolate location. Problem is, once you and two co-workers get down to the asteroid surface and blow the rock into a better orbit (if there is such a thing), you find the fun is just

beginning. After returning to the site of the blast you find that what you thought was a giant asteroid is really an alien space craft and before you can say "HAL, open the pod-bay doors" it has zipped you off to goodness knows where.

There you are. Boston Low, Ludger Brink (a leader-wannabe), and Maggie Robbins (a sassy journalist with a flair for settling disputes) in a lonely crater on what appears to be a rather desolate world. Worst of all, you could be a billion light years from Earth. Yep, this is definitely the winter of your discontent. From this point on you must use your gumption and brains to figure out what the heck is going on, and how you're going to get your party back to Earth. For starters, your role as leader is tenuous at best, with old Ludger challenging for the reigns right off the bat. If nothing else, The Dig should prove to have an extra layer (or two) of depth in its storyline.

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No doubt the biggest problem Mac users are going to have with The Dig is going to be with the rather low-resolution DOS style graphics. This is VGA in all its splendor. This can be OK in certain situations, but I retain some skepticism that Mac users are going to want to stand 40 yards away from their monitors in order to obtain a high resolution effect. However, many games with blocky graphics have proven to be fantastic, playable diversions. Therefore one must see the finished product before passing judgement on such a game. LucasArts' own Full Throttle is a prime example. The Mac version of The Dig will come on one CD-ROM disk, and will include no special 'Mac-specific' features or changes.

Interacting with the Dig's environment is nearly the same as the Full Throttle/Day of the Tentacle games. Point, click, pick things up, use objects with other objects, we all know the drill fairly well by now. Although rather drab in nature, this is familiar to nearly all gamers and should provide an easy indoctrination into The Dig's atmosphere. In fact, this is where The Dig will likely excel beyond its contemporaries. There is a seriously engrossing storyline here that will make you forget about the mediocre graphics and game engine. A story, which if given the chance, should keep you captivated for hours.

Dig it!

In the end the success of the Mac version of the Dig will lie in the users ability to look beyond the surface features and stick around to get to know the inner game a little better. If you can do this, you'll find yourself deeply involved in an interesting storyline that will keep you occupied for hours. Granted, you'll have to park your sense and sensibilities at the mouse pad before you begin, but all in all The Dig should be a success at least of the magnitude of Full Throttle.