

he MDR mailbag contains letters received by MDR, as well as some of the more useful and interesting posts from the Mac-related newsgroups on Usenet.

Letters:

From: Steve Duff <STEVED45@aol.com>
To: MDR
Subject: More Marathon vs. Doom

I suppose this fracas could go on forever, but I won't resort to name-calling.

I've played several demo versions of Marathon 2, both downloaded and off CD-ROMs, on both of my Macs (a Performa 6200 and a PowerWave 132) and one theme is consistent -- Marathon 2 is dog-slow. Maybe the full CD-ROM version has something that resembles a boogie-down mode, but the 'rapid-run' mode on the demos is like molasses compared to Turbo on Doom. Moreover, I haven't seen anything that can leave you in that mode permanently. As a result, it's real boring to someone who's used to rocketing through rooms and doing mach-speed dodges around a Cyberdemon.

Also, the colors of Marathon often make me ill -- I mean physically nauseous. For some reason I have a bad reaction to them. I also second Jason Carter's comments about the look of the aliens (very spindly) and the sounds they make (really dorky). To me, Marathon is more irritating and annoying than fun. It has neat features like the ability to elevate your grenade launcher for long-range bombardment, but no matter how many times I get killed, the critters don't scare me. In Doom II, when I drop down a shaft and hear the elephant roar of a Hell Knight somewhere down below, I just about jump out of my chair, because Doom has better playability and a nastier attitude. And because you don't spend half your time fumbling around the keyboard, Doom II allows you to project yourself into Our Hero and just enjoy the experience. That's what playability is all about, and that's why ten million people around the world play Doom.

And one last thing about the graphics -- I happen to love the graphics in many Doom II levels (The Spirit World is a big favorite) and some of the WADs are mind-blowing. When I first encountered the Mayan temple in Epic 2A, my jaw dropped. Talk about totally way rad! I was so stunned I wrote the author a congratulatory letter. I can't wait until we have our level editors up to snuff, so I can send back a Babylon WAD to the PC side.

Remember, it's not the platform a game comes from that counts, it's the game itself. And so far as I can see, Doom has no competition -- it's simply the best game of its type anywhere.

Steve Duff

Steve, thanks for the thoughtful argument. Obviously, I tend to agree with you on every point. I never did get the hang of banging the keyboard while trying to maneuver in Marathon, and I think this is one of the reasons I love Doom so much. But to each his own. Hopefully, we can end this debate on a peaceful note -- at least until Quake and Marathon Infinity battle it out later on this year!-Ed.

From: Steve Huling <hampton@netins.net>
To: MDR
Subject: Voice communication and modem play

I recently found out that our PC friends (at least those with the Pentium chip) can talk live during Doom play over a modem with a piece of software called Echo Speech Gamephones <<http://www.echospeech.com/>>. The info from Echo Speech said that the driver for Doom was replaced with their driver and it did not affect gameplay. I contacted them about a Macintosh version and they said I was out of luck, there were no plans for it. Isn't that par for the course! Does anyone know of a similar product for a Mac? If not, maybe if enough of us contact the people at Echo Speech letting them know there is a market for a Mac version, they would develop it.

Steve Huling

Steve, I believe this is a basic feature of Marathon, at least for network play. Besides, many Macs have built-in microphones and great sound capabilities, so I can't imagine it would be too hard to do. Maybe someone will come up with a shareware solution on the Mac. One note: I suspect that adding voice data traffic to modem play would make it too slow to be very playable, but I bet it would work great with Ethernet networks!-Ed.

ave a correction or comment for MacDoom Review? Send us a letter at reeltime@voicenet.com.