

#### Softbank: YAHOO JUMPS FOR JOY

One of the premiere search tools on the Internet is Yahoo. In fact, demand for Yahoo info is at an all time high. Now Yahoo has a new, major shareholder--Softbank. You'll recall Softbank purchased Yahoo as part of their Ziff-Davis Publishing acquisition, which accounted for about a 4 percent piece of Yahoo. Now, because other companies are believed ready to invest more big bucks in Yahoo, Softbank is going to increase their percentage with an inpouring of nearly \$66 million.

#### SuperScape: MORE ON-LINE 3D FOR YOU

Another 3D app has debuted for World Wide Web'ers. This time, the product is Superscape 3-D Viewer from Superscape. A fully compatible plug-in for Netscape Navigator, the app is free for the download from the company's WWW site at <http://www.superscape.com>. Once you have the plug-in working with your Netscape browser, you can check out Superscape's SuperCity. This is a 3D, interactive world that features virtual offerings from the likes of Infoseek, Intel, Northern Telecom and Tandem. The virtual city was created using Superscape's VR authoring tool known as VRT 4.0. The full use of "intelligent" objects and behaviors are demonstrated and the effect this technology will have on business, communications, data analysis, entertainment and training on the Internet are also shown. The company is also planning to ship a consumer 3D Web page construction kit later this year, a kit that will contain templates for making home page creation an easy task. Plus, their Networks product will debut that enables 25 folk at a time to be in the same virtual world. Also shipping will be Visualiser for VR viewing from your desktop. All products run on i486 or Pentium processor-based platforms.

#### UK Online: BRIT SERVICE FOR MACS

Now sporting local call access for all of the United Kingdom, the Internet provider and on-line service known as UK Online has made their service available for Macintosh users. The service offers a service that has no additional charges once you're online, plus customers receive Microsoft's Internet Explorer as the browser for the service. As a new version of this browser has just been released by Microsoft, Mac cybersurfers can drop in with this app and also obtain email and a trial version of Newshopper off-line reader.

#### WEB SITE SUPPORTS NEW MOVIE

A new web site based upon the movie by Martin Lawrence's comedic-thriller, *A Thin Line Between Love and Hate*, has appeared on the Internet at <http://www.athinline.com>. In the film, directed by and starring Martin Lawrence, a seemingly harmless fling turns deadly as an ambitious nightclub promoter discovers the dangers of saying all the right things to the wrong woman. *A Thin Line Between Love and Hate* will debut April 3 at various theaters. [athinline.com](http://athinline.com) creates the on-line version of the film's fictional nightclub, *Chocolate City*. A VIP card allows the user to maneuver through the nightclub, here sex is separate to VIP areas where they can gossip about mating, dating and hating the opposite sex. The Ladies Only area offers horoscopes, fashion tips and a complete listing of nightclubs and bars hosting promotional events tied to the film and the top-selling Warner Bros. soundtrack. Men can pounce into *The Players Club* to find postings offering the female perspective about playboys and dating.

#### Yahoo: YAHOO! FOR KIDS

Yahoo! has a Web site for kids at <http://www.yahooligans.com>. This site is designed to offer

kids content appropriate for younger Web surfers in categories that include sports, entertainment, world culture and even homework. Yahoo! worked with Ingenius, a company that specializes in online entertainment and educational products for kids 8 to 14. Ingenius handled the selection of sites and developed a rating system to weed out potentially harmful content from the directory.

Random House will partner with Yahoo! to provide an interactive Internet thriller series for young adults entitled The Lurker Files, available at <http://www.randomhouse.com/lurkerfiles>. And Family PC, the computer magazine put out by the Disney Publishing Co. and the Ziff-Davis Publishing Co., will partner with Yahoo! to publish Megazone, featuring celebrity profiles, game tips and computer product reviews. The site is free and no registration is required.

#### Ziff-Davis: AVATOR CHATTING IN REAL-TIME

The ability to actually chat with an on-line, visible representation of the one you are talking to is truly a unique experience. Such is now possible at ZD Net's World Wide Web Edition, which may be reached at <http://www.zdnet.com>. Using VRML, Black Sun Interactive has now enabled this site to offer proactors to select their on-line persona, their avatar, and then meet others in the ZD3D Terminal Reality area for a chat. This same technology is used in chat events that are scheduled by ZD Net and its editors and industry personalities. In order to obtain this capability, you'll need Black Sun's new CyberGate browser. Black Sun's WWW site is at <http://www.blacksun.com>. The browser supports threaded group discussions, one-one-conversations, and CyberCard exchanges where you can exchange virtual personal or business cards with one another. Other new goodies at the ZD site include: an area where you can initiate or participate in a live 3D chat; a weekly overview of new WWW sites called Reality Check; and Terminal Reality airport that features the VRML Site of the Week. The latter area was developed with Intervista Software and their VRML browser is available for download in either the browser or download area of ZD3D.

#### OTHER FUN STUFF

##### Anderson: I'VE GOT YOU, BABE

How many of you folk saw the marvelous movie, Babe? The genius responsible for the visual effects supervisor on Babe is Scott Anderson. Anderson has been signed to a multi-year agreement with Sony Pictures Imageworks, extending his relationship with the company as a visual effects supervisor.

It's no wonder that Anderson is so competent. He has worked at Pacific Data Images, Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), where he was a senior technical director and computer graphics supervisor, and two prior associations with Sony Pictures Imageworks, on Caravan Picture's Tall Tale and Tristar's Look Who's Talking Now.

##### AP: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS GOES HOLLYWOOD

The Associated Press is losing the image of a tough reporter in the thick of wars, wearing a trench coat, in fact the AP is going Hollywood. A combined effort of the AP and BPI Communications, Inc. has resulted in AP-Hollywood Reporter/Entertainment ALERT, a joint news service that delivers information from BPI's leading entertainment publications and AP news to the entertainment industry.

Here's the skinny: the AP news will blend with stories and charts from eight BPI magazines,

including The Hollywood Reporter, Billboard and MEDIA WEEK, as well as BPI's Entertainment News Wire to form the foundation of AP-Hollywood Reporter/Entertainment ALERT. The service also includes relevant industry reports from PR Newswire, Kyodo News International and Canadian Press. The service will focus on breaking information about the businesses of music, film, theater, radio, video, television, media, live entertainment, amusement parks, gaming and casinos. For more information on AP Information Services' products, telephone 1-800-AP-CALL-1.

#### BBC: CHERRIO! BBC COMES TO EAST ASIA

The British Broadcasting Corp.'s, BBC World, television service will return two years after it disappeared from the East Asia satellite television channels. The BBC with a deal with Panamsat, the 24-hour news and information service will begin broadcasting April 1 to the markets of Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, Thailand and China. It has been available on some cable systems in these areas. The US and Latin America currently are not part of this plan. BBC has plans for hoping to incorporate China. The BBC emphatically announced that it doesn't plan on compromising the station's journalistic independence to gain access to the Chinese market. Chinese officials have been critical in the past of BBC news coverage.

#### Cahners: CAHNERS PUBLISHING ACQUIRES ELECTRONIC NEWS & WEB OFFER

Cahners Publishing Company reports that they have signed an agreement that will lead to the purchase of Electronic News of Mountain View, CA. Cahners of Newton, MA is a division of Reed Elsevier Inc., which publishes more than 85 specialized business and professional publications as well as CD-ROM and online services. Additionally, Cahners' services information needs of over 5.6 million business managers and professionals world-wide. Cahners is also responsible for industry-based research, economic forecasting, reprints, direct mail services, database marketing plus custom publishing projects.

Cahners will also offer a new electronic publishing venture via the Web focused on the manufacturing sector. Entitled The Cahners Manufacturing Marketplace, editorial and content comes from 12 Cahners' manufacturing titles and nine product directories. This specific information will be combined and augmented with additional content licensed-in from other sources to create a comprehensive manufacturing information resource on the Web. All of this information will be free to qualified users determined through the Cahners Circulation Qualification System and the site will be supported by advertisers. Manufacturing folk will have the following information/services available once they are qualified:

The new product/supplier directory.

Manufacturers' product data.

Editorial content from the 12 Cahners' manufacturing publications.

Other manufacturing literature from trade and scholarly journals.

Current news in manufacturing.

News product information and press releases.

Online forums and discussions led by Cahners' editors and industry leaders.

Access to other manufacturing-related Web sites selected and reviewed by

Cahners editors.

Books on manufacturing selected by Cahners editors from various publishers.

E-mail interaction with other Web site users. o Jobs available in manufacturing.

#### CARRY'S SCAREY TO THE CABLE INDUSTRY

You either love him or you hate him, Jim Carrey, the guy who now commands \$20 million for

his dramatic efforts (or not). Never the less, Columbia Pictures has joined forces with the 7-Eleven convenience store chain to promote Carry's latest comedy, The Cable Guy, also with Matthew Broderick which opens June 14.

This editor recalls an article that was on the front page of the Wall Street Journal a while ago that mentioned that cable providers were non-too-thrilled with the announcement of this movie. Seems as though the cable companies have worked hard on re-imaging the perception of the cable person who arrives 8-hours later than originally planned, who carries in muddy shoes, clumsily knocks over breakables and bends over to reveal--well, you get the idea. No sooner had cable companies worked on their image and then this movie comes out.

#### Knight-Ridder: KNIGHT-RIDDER SELLS TKR CABLE

Knight-Ridder is selling its half-interest in the cable company TKR to Tele-Communications for a mere \$420-million. TKR supplies the New York and New Jersey areas totaling 350,000 subscribers and 106,000 subscribers elsewhere.

#### MIT: COMPUTER BOOKS OF THE FUTURE

Those folks at Massachusetts Institute of Technology never rest. Imagine a computer book that would use special paper embedded with a tiny mesh of wires that uses electronic ink, turning black or white depending on the electrical current. These pages could be loaded into a CD-ROM-like device and displayed on an easy-to-read computer screen. The idea would be to load several hundred pages at a time, perhaps downloading them from the Internet or a link to a library. World Wide Web pages might be viewed the same way. Awesome!

#### Universal Pictures: FIRST LOOK FOR UNIVERSAL

Four acclaimed films have come from the partnership of Addis-Wechsler and Associates. Those titles included sex, lies & videotape, Drugstore Cowboy, The Rapture, and The Player. Other films included The New Age and the production of Little Odessa. Now Universal Pictures has signed a two-year agreement with the production company, entitling the film company to a "first look" at all of the projects being considered by Addis-Wechsler.

#### U.S. West: IT'S NEVER OVER 'TILL THE FAT LADY SINGS

Never assume a deal is done whether the ink is dry or not. Remember an article we reported about US West wanting to buy Time Warner? Well, now US West's CEO, Richard McCormick, said that he would have never entered into a relationship with Time Warner if he had known Time Warner was going to buy all of Turner Broadcasting.

#### BEST SELLING BOOKS

This week's fiction best sellers book list from Associated Press leaves very few surprises. Here are the title rankings:

1. Primary Colors by Anonymous from Random House
2. The Return by William Shatner from Pocket Books
3. Montana Sky by Nora Roberts from Putnam
4. In the Presence of the Enemy by Elizabeth George from Bantam
5. And This Too Shall Pass by E. Lynn Harris from Doubleday
6. The Celestine Prophecy by James Redfield from Warner
7. Absolute Power by David Baldacci from Warner
8. The Horse Whisperer by Nicholas Evans from Delacorte

9. McNally's Puzzle' by Lawrence Sanders from Putnam
10. Rogue Warrior: Task Force Blue' by Richard Marcinko & J. Weisman from Pocket
11. First King of Shannara' by Terry Brooks from Del Rey/Ballantine
12. That Camden Summer' by LaVyrle Spencer from Putnam
13. Guilty as Sin' by Tami Hoag from Bantam
14. The Enemy Within by Larry Bond from Warner
15. Five Days in Paris by Danielle Steel from Delacorte

On the non-fiction side, you have:

1. Blood Sport by James B. Stewart from Simon & Schuster
2. Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus by John Gray from HarperCollins
3. Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot and Other Observations" by Al Franken from Delacorte
4. The Way of the Wizard by Deepak Chopra from Harmony
5. Seven Spiritual Laws of Success by Deepak Chopra from Amber-Allen/New World
6. 100 Years, 100 Stories by George Burns from Putnam
7. How Could You Do That?! by Dr. Laura Schlessinger from HarperCollins
8. You'll Never Make Love in This Town Again by Robin, Liza, Linda & Tiffany from Dove Books
9. The Zone by Barry Sears from ReganBooks
10. It Takes a Village by Hillary Rodham Clinton from Simon & Schuster
11. Undaunted Courage by Stephen E. Ambrose from Simon & Schuster
12. Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman from Bantam
13. Enter Whining by Fran Drescher from ReganBooks
14. Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil by John Berendt from Random House
15. Mountain, Get Out of My Way by Montel Williams with D. Paisner from Warner

#### BOX OFFICE LISTINGS

With the Academy Awards now behind us, the interest in motion pictures remains at a high intensity. Here are the latest rankings for the film biz:

1. The Birdcage starring Robin Williams
2. Executive Decision starring Kurt Russell
3. Diabolique starring Sharon Stone
4. Up Close and Personal from Walt Disney
5. Homeward Bound II from Walt Disney
6. Girl 6, directed by Spike Lee, from 20th Century Fox
7. Fargo from Gramercy Pictures
8. Mr. Holland's Opus
9. Down Periscope
10. Broken Arrow

#### [PERSPECTIVES: Rational Investigations of New Products](#)

Comedians from Magnet Interactive and Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment for PCs running Windows

Reviewed by Senior Editor Lance Forrest

Comedians is a multimedia homage to the best stand-up comics of our times, based on

Arthur Grace's book of the same name. The book features black and white behind-the-scenes photos of 13 comics and short vignettes on the situations that take place behind each photoshoot. Included are Robin Williams, Billy Crystal, Whoopi Goldberg, Richard Lewis, Steve Martin, and Joan Rivers. Grace is a photojournalist who has worked for the big guys such as Time and Newsweek, as well as for Hollywood studios. During the shooting for his book, Grace also taped hours of interviews with each star, parts of these interviews were shared on this disc.

Comedians includes Grace's entire book—all of the photos and text—as well as many video and audio clips generously sprinkled throughout the program. You explore a virtual comedy club with five different rooms: the Bathroom (where you'll find jokes about sex and personal habits), the Dressing Room (many quotes about pre-show jitters), Back Stage (where you'll find an amateur comedian cut his teeth), the Bar (where you'll find lots of sports jokes), and the Manager's Office (here you'll see seven big-time agents provide video and audio clips about the business). It's easy to move around the virtual club, a gloved hand will indicate what your options are at any time. Plus, there's always a map icon present, that makes it easier so you can zip to any room you desire without having to wade through a dozen or so screens.

My favorite clips were found in the condom dispenser in the bathroom. Press the button, out shoots a condom and an adult video clip of one of the comics appears on the dispenser. Steve Martin talks about a pussy cat, Steven Wright about birth control, Robin Williams about condoms . . . you get the picture. But this program is more than a collection of jokes. On almost every wall in the club are black and white photos of the comics. Click on the picture, and often there's a related video and/or audio clip. Besides the jokes, the comedians are captured while sharing their thoughts and fears about performing, how they got into the business, and the nature of their art making them appear vulnerable.

A multimedia program should fuse different media, creating something stronger than the individual components. In this medium, Magnet and Fox succeed fairly well. The program is based on a solid work, that being the photograph book and accompanying audio interviews, and some classic stand-up clips provide comic relief, so to speak. Still, I don't find the program to be money well spent-- there're only a couple of hours for you to explore on the disc, and just enough laughs to whet your appetite. No, I'd rather buy Arthur Grace's fine book and rent a couple of comic Relief videos. It would be a much better value.--Lance Forrest

Program requirements: Comedians requires a 486/33mhz or better, Windows 3.1 or higher, a double-speed CD-ROM drive, 8MB RAM, and a SoundBlaster or compatible sound card.

Mudgeon: CyberChat  
DESCENT from Interplay for the Sony PlayStation

I am not particularly enamored with alternative music, especially when added as a soundtrack to a super, new Sony PlayStation game. The fact that folk who call themselves Type O Negative and Skinny Puppy were paid enormous funds in order to coax them into participating in a game's soundtrack leaves me somewhat flabbergasted! The game is the play, not the sound. However, as I am truly somewhat calcified with age, I expect this is a normal statement for one of my wondrous age. I would also imagine that this soundtrack is a true, value-added delight for younger gamers. As is the case with youth, enticements beyond game play are required for them to spend their hard-earned allowances on video games. I have to state that there are few of this title's calibre worthy of such expenditures. Descent from Interplay for the Sony PlayStation is absolutely, without doubt, one title that

should be commanded to appear in every video gamers' CD-ROM library. Perhaps we can talk Mr. Bill into signing a rider to a House or Senate bill that would make this a law!

I have now played the Macintosh, PC and Sony PlayStation versions of this game. I must state that I prefer the PlayStation version over those other two formats. And I must add a proviso here -- I totally noshed on the Macintosh version and thoroughly enjoyed my PC experience. However, simply put, neither of those computers were designed as an "action game" machine. If there was ever an "action game," it is definitely Descent. As the PlayStation was designed to handle action far differently than that system's computer counterparts, you'll find that the PSX controls allow for far more flexibility in completing your missions. The machine was designed to speedily process arcade-like conditions and, although the graphics capabilities are not up to par with SVGA on the PC or the Macintosh resolutions, the game speed seems far more exhilarating.

Plus the opening cut scene is more dramatic and contains far more information than the computer version of the game. I also have to add that after the first few levels with the computer version, I found the going extremely hostile. Death was my constant companion. With the PSX version and the three difficulty settings, you should be able to really work up your expertise to find all levels challenging and quite do-able (even if such will take weeks and weeks of hard work!).

Parallax Software must be congratulated for coding a superb action game. There are animated texture maps, 3D morphs, and light-source shading that absolutely adds that definitive touch of realism to your game play. With truly 360-degree maneuverability, you shall thank your gifted PSX for controls that allow you full rotation of your ship to realign your senses to what is appropriate for floors, ceilings and floors. The hidden doors are a true treat and the adversarial robots are a true nightmare. But you must face all as you attempt to rescue hostages and destroy aliens who control the subterranean mines of Pluto (should it be determined it REALLY is a planet). Er, however, you had best first locate the exit before you decide to initiate the destruct sequence by exploding the reactor for that mine. Should you fail to do so, you shall become part of the particle residue resultant of the massive explosion.

You have flares you may fire down those dark and narrow corridors. They do not last for long, though, so you should take advantage of them when you use them. In other words, simply do not sit on your thrusters -- charge ahead and be prepared for any and all opposition. The automap becomes quite useful. However, here is my only negative statement about this title. You must actually leave your game environment to move your menu selector to the auto map view. How much better would such have been incorporated into the heat of the action where a simply combo control press could have brought same to the forefront of your TV screen or monitor. A continual back-and-forth reference can become somewhat irritating when you become lost. And lost you shall become!

The game is a delight for one-player. Using a Sony PlayStation Link Cable you may play with a good friend as well when you tie-in with a second system. There are various game parameters available in two-player mode, ranging from a cooperative mode to complete robo-anarchy where the object of the game is kill your fellow player. Ahhh, the delight of head-to-head confrontation. Exhilarating, to say the least.

During game play, there are a number of power-ups to remain on the alert to find. There are laser cannons you can obtain that increase your power level by four--or, my favorite, the Quad Laser that gives you four firing bolts instead of two! Delight in the explosive Vulcan Cannon or the Plasma Cannon for supercharged plasma discharges. You might even find a power-up that makes your ship totally invulnerable to all manner of attack. Those sparkling

stars you shall run into every now and then offer you energy boosts of up to 200 units. One item to constantly be on the search for are the access keys. These color-coded puppies will enable you to go through locked doors of the same hue.

Exciting, exciting, exciting. Certainly an apt description of Descent from Interplay for the Sony PlayStation. This is one title that certainly does not require super music to help sell its position as a leading action game for this video game system. I suppose such cannot hurt, though, so go with Type O Negative and Skinny Puppy's Ogre and enjoy the heat of battle. Robotic opponents have rarely been this addictive!--Mudgeon