

develop for the Studio's production banners on a first-look basis. Keaton is no new-comer to Disney Studios as she starred in the 1991 Touchstone comedy *Father of the Bride* and *Father of the Bride II*. Keaton made her debut as a dramatic feature director with the Hollywood Pictures' comedy, *Unstrung Heroes*. Prior to that, she had directed the feature-length documentary, *Heaven*, as well as the award-winning film *Wildflower*, for Lifetime.

Warner Brothers: HASTA LA VISTA--ERASE USERS' IDENTITIES

The underworld of witness protection as seen in the upcoming Arnold Schwarzenegger action-thriller film, *Eraser*, can be experienced at <http://www.movies.warnerbros.com/eraser>. Folks can have their own identities fictitiously erased. Production information, storyboards, special-effects information, sound clips and photographs can also be accessed.

After entering their actual names, relevant personal information and identifying characteristics, as well as more imaginative data such as their reason for seeking protection and a new identity, users find their identities replaced with new data through an interactive section of the high-tech site that imitates the film. These folks learn what it takes to remain anonymous and can link to sites where they can potentially find traces of their real identities located on the Web. Users are also invited to go on a cyber-hunt where they decipher and follow clues to locate items related to their new identities. When users find icons such as passports, credit cards and cars within the Warner Bros. online site, they will be returned to the *Eraser* site to participate in prize-winning contests.

Warner Brothers: TWIST ON THE PLOT--ALLEGES TWISTER WAS STOLEN

It appears that Stephen Kessler from Missouri claims that the hit movie *Twister* has been stolen from a story Kessler wrote called *Catch the Wind*. *Catch the Wind*, written by Kessler, was part of a screenplay contest that was circulated in Hollywood and, the suit alleges that the story line is too similar to Kessler's to have been a coincidence. The suit was filed Tuesday in federal court in St. Louis. Kessler, who lives in Kirkwood, Missouri, produces documentaries and commercials.

Kessler seeks all of the movie's profits and names writer Michael Crichton and his wife, Anne-Marie Martin, Amblin' Entertainment Inc. and its president Steven Spielberg, as well as Warner Bros. Inc. and Universal Studios.

Yamaha: PLAY ON POSSIBILITIES WITH PLUG-IN

The ability to download and play music via the Internet has been relegated to those folk who can manage rather complex software and who understand the

complexities of recording for streaming technologies. Yamaha is coming to the aid of those who simply wish to "do" without having to learn a great deal of new "stuff." Yamaha Corporation is now offering a free trial version of their Midplug software, which will work until its date-code of August 31st deactivates the software. You install this with Netscape Navigator and you'll be able to experience high-quality music through your home page as well as incorporate such capabilities into your own online pages. The compression ration is 1:10 when using the new plug-in which will be distributed through magazine-bundled CD-ROMs and Yamaha's own WWW page. The fully developed version is expected to sell toward the end of 1996.

Ziff Davis: SHOP TILL YOU DROP WITH ZIFF

Coming this fall will be a one-stop shopping center for everyone's computer needs, courtesy of Ziff Davis. The Computer Shopper NetBuyer (working title) will be like Computer Shopper magazine and will bring the largest number of vendors to a massive audience of interested buyers and, with product evaluations, product reviews, and editorial opinions, advise the audience of the best buys. Watch for more info when such becomes available.

Mudgeon's Magical Ministry #1

To better everyone's life through the blessings of respite and relief in the knowledge I have spoken the truth about the ever-mystical world of digital entertainment.

To remain so invisible within my work post does leave me somewhat bereft of my senses as hours turn into days and days into weeks. With the constant attention to my computer systems, I see much and wish to impart to those who seek some of my words of wisdom. I grant you that much boils down to a single fact . . .there's a great deal of magic afoot these days!

In this particular sermon, I cover:

- SnailBait of the WebCralwer Kind . . .
- Self-Defeating Self-Service . . .
- PERSPECTIVE: Conquest of the New World from Interplay (review)
- PERSPECTIVE: VR Soccer '96 from VR Sports (review)
- PERSPECTIVE: Total Mayhem from Eidos Interactive (review)
- Render Unto Caesar: The I.R.S. Unplugged . . .

SNAILBAIT

WebCrawler . . .for three days (May 24th through May 27th), access to this search tool was IMPOSSIBLE! No matter what browser was utilized, WebCrawler certainly did crawl . . .the WAIT icon simply hovered atop Navigator and Explorer and, after three to four minutes of attempted entry, I simply surrendered my efforts! Attention, AOL-type folk, even if you happen to be super engaged with a variety of duties, I beg you to engage in kind works that will enable others to access this site! If there are that many

cyberians attempting to climb onto the WebCrawler bandwagon that you cannot handle the traffic, I might have to happenstance a guess that your operational forecasting is somewhat amiss! Thank heavens Yahoo! and Alta Vista seem to always be accessible. Hmmm, an inkling of thought here--perhaps I simply do not require WebCrawler anymore!

SELF-DEFEATING SELF-SERVICE

No matter the World Wide Web site visited these days, seems as though everyone now purports themselves to be experts in the field of WEB PAGE DESIGN. No matter if the WWW site happens to be one that expounds the value of the culinary arts. Upon some subsequent page, the individuals responsible for creating this food fest site are also hammering home the fact that they are supremely talented and quite naturally the best experts in the creation and management of YOUR site as well. For a fee, of course. This is not charity work.

Are all of us net'ers simply overselling our services to one another? Seems a scandalous waste of time to me. What is of supreme interest is the fact that many "promo sites" actually do a significantly poor job of demonstrating WWW page design expertise. You have probably already noted such sites where HTML code remains visible, where text has dropped off the planet, where animations simply are not refreshing their backgrounds after each GIF is displayed, and on and on and on. I say, should one wish to promote oneself as an expert in any discipline, that someone should be certain to ensure that his or her pages are absolutely perfect before advertising them as the cat's whiskers.

PERSPECTIVE

Conquest of the New World from Interplay for PC CD-ROM

The coming of SimCity and Civilization from Maxis and MicroProse, respectively, a few years ago resulted in sims that required gamers to manage resources and build their empires. They proved to be enormously popular. As that's right to occur, for these titles showcased the coding expertise of programmers, product managers and publishers who knew what the consumer wanted and filled that need.

Similar, numerous sims now populate your retailers' shelves. Some occur in space, others in the ocean, and others attempt to better what has already been done. For example, SimCity 2000 and Civilization II both built upon the success of their predecessors and enhanced those environments with better programs. Obviously, the betterment of computer technologies also played a role in the enhancement of these programs for the wonders of SVGA, digital sound, faster CPU processing and the like brought new life to what were already classic environments.

Many companies attempted to mimic the success of competing publishers. Interplay is certainly one such company and their Conquest of the New World seems to have been released in direct response to the success of MicroProse' Civilization and Civilization II programs. Did Interplay succeed? On most levels, yes. Their product is graphically far more pleasing, and the sound bytes that accompany your colonization of the new world truly are certainly game-enhancing in tone. In fact, as I happen to

own both Civilization, Civilization II and Conquest of the New World, I recommend folk who enjoy such games should probably purchase all three of these titles. There is a proviso, however.

Where Conquest of the New World loses points to the MicroProse product is in the area of speed. The game was obviously designed for gamers with 133MHz or better machines, for if your computer putts along at between 66 and 100MHz (as surveys indicate remains the clock-speed most machines run at these days), you're going to be rather disappointed in the game speed. I purposely run a 100MHz Pentium machine so that I may report accurately on the games I review for the majority of PC owners who enjoy playing digital entertainments. Conquest of the New World is extremely sluggish on my machine. The time between turns becomes blatantly boring as the processor has to compute a huge number of algorithms, due to the advanced graphics and multiple sprites and textured backgrounds of the game. This leisurely wait for the next turn to occur is also impeded by the number of opponents you have decided to compete against, whether computer- or friend-controlled.

At the end of a turn, the waiting becomes rather unbearable as each opponent's moves and stats are updated and calculated. To help pass the time, a "newsletter" appears that offers you historical facts that are relevant to the year in which your turn is progressing. Unfortunately, the news items are chopped off at about mid-screen and you cannot finish the article. Such is rather pointless, as one never really knows whether the facts being offered to you could impact the manner in which you play your next turn!

Alright, folk, Conquest of the New World is a great game--if you have a great machine! A minimum of 133MHz is required, in my humble opinion, for this puppy to stand a chance at your home. Otherwise, if your machine is of lesser capabilities, I would opt an opinion you shall be far happier with Civilization II from MicroProse. Granted, the graphics are not as rich, but the gameplay itself is just as gratifying and, speed is not an issue.--Mudgeon

Perspectives

VR Soccer '96 from VR Sports for Sony PlayStation

Until this CD-ROM came along, I truly was not a die-hard soccer fan. Now I understand, at least partially, why soccer is the most popular of all sports, globally-speaking. From a viewer's point-of-view, I have seen no other soccer games running on any other platform that are as credible in their display. I must admit, I have only played one other video console soccer game, and VR Soccer '96 blows that title away.

The realism of the game play is quite enriching, even to the accent of the game announcer. You definitely will enjoy representing whichever country you wish in practice, a "friendly" game, or league game. In the latter mode, when you are playing your match, you shall even obtain information on other matches "in progress" and you'll see the match results as they occur.

Initially, I found myself spending a great deal of time in the practice mode where I could actually improve my chip shot capabilities. As you can

set up the controller to match your own command set, you'll spend a great deal of time at first learning how to control your players. When is the best time to pass to the nearest player, how to accurately kick, and how to maneuver around the field. The only opposition on the field during practice is the other team's goalie, so you will not have to bother with a wide variety of offensive sets to avoid your ball being picked off. The goalie is aggressive, and you'll soon learn that your shots on goal must be well-calculated.

You can set the sounds, from the crowd noises to the commentary, as well as the background music. Plus, you have six cameras that can relay game play to you. This feature, while nice, really seemed to be less of a concern during play when the action is intense. The last thing in the world I needed to do was to zip from a plan camera overheard view of the action to a far camera that was photographing the action from the location of the spectator stands. You can, if such is your want, view the game from behind your goal line, but in my opinion, the classic isometric camera view was the best screen vantage. Perhaps that's because most sports sims offer such a view, and I am already accustomed to such a display for a game.

If you have a memory card for your PlayStation, you can save and load games easily. Also, as my skill set was far less than others who play soccer sims, I rather enjoyed having the computer control the players. I could still select the Next Player during an offensive drive, but the computer seemed to be able to handle the player most suited for a specific task. You can tell which player you are controlling because there is a colored highlight around his feet. If you are playing against a friend (or former friend), his or her controlling highlight color is white and yours is yellow.

With the In-Match functionality of the game, you can alter your team formation. Although not on-the-fly, a formation menu appears and, when you've selected what you feel is the most appropriate formation, you simply press the X button to activate it. You can also perform player substitutions and replay those amazing plays.

As I stated earlier, VR Soccer '96 for the Sony PlayStation is a great soccer sim. I wish I had more talent in this arena to really perform better on the field, but I enjoyed being beaten by fewer and fewer points as my experience expanded hour by hour. If you are a true soccer sim specialist, I believe you will enjoy engaging in this exciting sport with this title.--Mudgeon

Perspectives

TOTAL MAYHEM from Eidos Interactive for PC CD-ROM

Aye, the package itself reads that this product is from DOMARK, but please realize that Domark and U.S. Gold merged to form Eidos. And this is one heck-of-grand-title from this new company! The graphics are super, the gameplay exciting and the music riveting.

Most gamers are familiar with the Conqueror (from Origin) screen presentation. Such is the aspect ratio incorporated into Total Mayhem (TM), with a two-level ZOOM control that allows you to really pull into the

action, or back-out for a broader view of nearby happenstances. The plot revolves around the fact that machines run the planet. You are a member of the cyborg freedom fighters called Mayhem Soldiers. You are waging a war of liberation against these intelligent machines. Should you acquire the wherewithal to afford them, some of the most awesome weaponry ever assembled in such a game are at your disposal. This game will find you, eventually, controlling as many as six Mayhem Soldiers, each one individually, or as a group.

There are 20 missions. I have not managed to play them all. Each mission requires you to accomplish specific tasks, such as finding a technology or destroying a communications center. Many missions have multiple tasks, and I thoroughly believe it is best to complete them in the order they are given. Otherwise, you may overlook one element or another and spend a few minutes deciphering the puzzlement of failure when you were certain you had addressed each issue to be completed.

As you gain experience, you shall find yourself able to equip your soldiers with better power, armor and shields. Plus, new soldiers will be assigned to your command, and they, then, may be brought through the fields of fire to earn their rewards as well. Although these words seem somewhat glib, the missions are definitely enough to cause you to earn your keep. For not only do you have to exercise your brain to ensure mastery of puzzles and other query-filled conditions, but your reflexes must be swift, as well. The enemy robots delight in catching you with your guard down and their retribution is rather swift.

Your weapons are quite powerful. The experience of firing your AF-2 Liberator Mini-Gun with explosive shells that leaves the enemy at permanent peace is quite exhilarating. Or try your L-9 Anarchy Rocket Launcher against a heavy mech or a rather stubborn door. The results should be quite pleasing. I certainly am not adverse to warning one and all about the Walker heavy Bot. A rather unpleasant hunk of metal that possesses this energy weapon I'd rather not discuss at this point.

If you are of the ilk that enjoys a little help during play, I have managed to smuggle some hints that could be of assistance to you in your Total Mayhem operation. There is a cheat mode that is activated when you simultaneously hold down the SHIFT and CONTROL key and enter the word CHEAT. Once activated, you can regenerate all of your soldiers' health and shields by entering CTRL-R. If you would like each soldier to possess one of each item they can so garner, try holding down CTRL and SHIFT and enter the word STUFF. There are other cheats, but I feel my duty is to enable you to find much of these enhancements yourself. Otherwise, what is the use of game play if there is no challenge?

Total Mayhem is a grand title for those who enjoy shooters and those who enjoy strats. The combination of both genres in this offering makes for grand combat entertainment and I must now return and find the rotten red key!--Mudgeon

RENDER UNTO CAESAR THAT WHICH IS CAESAR'S . . .

For those with some semblance of Biblical knowledge, the command is that you should pay the government their just due, while acknowledging God rules all. In that regard, the payment of one's taxes is a duty that should not be forestalled, no matter how one personally feels about government waste.

Of which, we know, there are billions and billions of dollars going down the sewer. This does not mean that we should pay unjust amounts!

In that regard, I have received notice of a tax deficiency for a past year. Aye, 'twas an oversight on my part, and, unfortunately, the interest and penalties certainly have produced an amount one might consider monumental when compared to the initial value of the error. However, as one who believes our form of government remains the best in the entire world, I have hastened to see what I can do to eliminate this problem. I have called the 1-800 number three times, remained on hold for a total of nearly 7-1/2 hours trying to reach even an elemental being at the tax office, all with no luck.

Ahhh, I said to myself, everyone is on the World Wide Web today. And such is the case for the IRS as well. Hop onto the World Wide Web and, lo and behold, after much tubular interpositioning from the U.S. Treasury Department, I enter the IRS site! Success! And, by golly, these fine folk even WANT your emails to work upon. Two paragraphs down, one to go, and I felt somewhat refreshed and invigorated that perhaps my taxes were going to an establishment that did know how to respond to the taxpayer.

Uhh, that was until I glommed onto the last paragraph. And I suddenly realized that, no matter what the government explains to you, the proof is in the pudding. To say their response time to your email requests is beyond belief is an understatement. In order to properly explain to one and all the befuddlement I experienced within the IRS site, I captured the screen and hereby produce the same for you and hope you can shed some tears for those who are now enslaved within the email tax catacombs of Utah.

[screen unavailable in text version -- go to our WWW site at <http://gamesup.com/>, access Mudgeon's Ministries from the main menu, and scroll to the bottom of the page.]

Until next issue, my friends, heartily GAME ON!