

-

MG: Mudgeon on Games
by Mudgeon

It's a Small (Mac)world

Do you know what's extremely frustrating, so much so that you end up standing on your head simply to obtain blood flow to your brain in an attempt to fathom if trade show management has any gray matter, whatsoever? For example, the recent Macworld in Boston bifurcated it's exhibitions between two remote conference sites. Throw in the mugginess and oppressive heat of Boston in August, the fact that the city is determined to inconvenience citizen and visitor alike with its abhorant and perpetual construction, plus traffic flow patterns reminiscent of what surely must be the tollways in Hell. Not only were attendees hesitant to leave the World Trade Center for the displays in the Bayside Expo Center for fear of not being able to return, but even the shuttle bus service was rarely on time. Forget taxis — forget driving yourself! Why can't Mitch Hall and his alleged associates provide for a comfortable, convenient trade exhibition in a city where August is enjoyable and where exhibitors may equally present their products at a single site. And then, let's not even get into the idiocy of the Electronic Entertainment Expo and Interactive CES shows scheduled for the same bloody dates in 1995! The culprit here is IDG, who established their trade show after the EIA had set-up their new Philadelphia Show. With E3 in Los Angeles and Interactive CES in Philadelphia, once again the loser is the publisher and the attendee who must now decide to be at one place, and not the other. Loyalties will be split 'tween west coasters and east coasters and those in the middle's air fare will be about the same to either city. Complete idiocy! My heavens, wouldn't it be something if trade show management decided they could all win if they made these expositions convenient for one and all? Ohhhhhh, perish the thought, eh?

To move onto more pleasant thoughts, there were some really outstanding new Mac products announced at Macworld. Of those viewed through our aisle traipses, the following certainly managed the most impact.

You've already read about one of the latest products that I feel has enormous sales potential — that's Rebel Assault from LucasArts Entertainment. I expect great comments about this foray into Mac gaming by this great publishing company.

I also expect terrific impact to be made upon the Mac game community by Bungie Software

and their Marathon product. Not only did their booth in the Bayside Expo Center show innovative design, but to witness four simultaneous players going against one another in this multifaceted, 3D adventure game was extremely enlightening. One might think of this title as just another shooter — you'd be incorrect! There is a great deal of strategy to employ as you battle for your life against various real-time foes. Plus, you've got to find better weapons and ammo all the time, else be annihilated rather quickly. One tip offered by Alex Seropian (president of the firm) and employed by Tuncer Deniz (publisher and editor of Inside Games) against various Bungie staffers was that of standing still and awaiting your enemy. Blimey, but doing this, you don't register on your competitor's movement scopes and they blunder directly into your path of fire. However, once you fire, rest assured everyone else now knows where you are! Marathon is definitely going to be a hit for Bungie, to the delight of Mac gamers.

Stuck in one corner of the Bayside Expo Center resided Thrustmaster and ParSoft. Their exhibit of not only ParSoft's A-10 flight sim but the complete Thrustmaster flight control line was most impressive. The crowds certainly agreed with my assessment that this was one flight sim that would definitely take the Mac gaming community by storm.

And then there was the inimical High Priest from MacPlay — Bill Dugan — and his crew revealing all of the goodies to be pumped out for the Mac this year. Not only did it include Wolfenstein 3D, but Flashback, whose development has taken a turn for the good and will be released earlier than expected. What I observed onscreen definitely leads me to believe that this title is going to be out of this world!

For sheer bulk comes the new flight stick I/O device from Advanced Gravis. Although really quite impactful when first observing it's broad-based identity, this joystick does provide all the features anyone could wish for in a joystick/flight control package. Yet, the more I looked at this device, the more I began to wonder — did its large size make it somewhat impractical for gamers who flight sim in the sparse real estate on their desktop? Was this puppy just, simply, too big? Only sales will tell!

Deep within the crowded confines of the Apple tent pavilion resided Domark, their staff gleefully handing out full working demos of their latest product for the Macintosh, Out of the Sun. This dynamic flight sim certainly seems to offer Mac gamers a complete and thorough flight sim environment, pitching you against the best WW II had to offer. There was no question that the crowds attracted to their displays were impressed by the imagery seen on the Mac monitors.

A new company named Frontal Assaultware was on hand to reveal the latest demo for a brand new war sim entitled Onslaught. With cool pop-up menus on various military units and an extremely easy-to-use interface, the race for the best war sim company will now heat up! This looks to be an exciting product!

Also on hand were Changeling Software with their latest offerings Avatar and Space Madness, PegLeg and version 2.0 of their popular Pax Imperia science-fiction conquest game. The company not only develops their own games but also has become a distributor. Macworld Boston — hot & frustrating, but at least the games were cool!