rake's Corner
by R.L. Drake

We're all DOOMed

How's this for a statement? DOOM for the Macintosh will be the single most important game to be EVER released on the Macintosh platform. Pretty bold, huh? Well, stay with me, believe it or not, it's true.

For almost a year now DOOM has been on the PC platform and is easily the most talked about game of 1994. DOOM was released as shareware in late 1993 and since then over a 100,000 people have registered their copy of DOOM at 40 bucks a pop. That's about $4 million, not bad for a shareware company. Take into account all the licenses, royalties, etc. and you've got a $5 million-plus company, all from shareware. Hmm....

I think we would all agree that Mac games still get the end of the stick when it comes to great gaming software. Granted, there's been some spectacular games released on the Mac like MYST, Rebel Assault, F/A-18 Hornet, Links and a few others, but the amount of games released on the Mac still pails in comparison to the behemonth amount of games on the PC. Now I'm sure this isn't isn't new to you, you've been buying those ports years after they've been released on the PC. And as evidenced on major online services (oh no, not that again), Mac gamers are still crying to publishers to develop games on the Mac.

Well, it seems that now one of those companies, id Software, has heard the cry's of the many and will soon unleash DOOM upon us. Ah, but don't kid yourself, id didn't decide to develop DOOM for the Mac because "we deserved it" or because "the voice of the people has prevailed and our demands have been met." Yea, right. I'm afraid to tell you that the major reason id decided to develop DOOM for the Mac is because of their greedy desire to turn id in a $10 million company instead of that measly $5 mil.

But you can't blame them. As Ivan Boseky said, "Greed is good." The Mac to id Software is just another platform to make money on. In fact, they've publicly stated that DOOM will be developed for Windows, OS/2 PM, Jaguar, SEGA 32X (Mars), QNX, Irix, Linux, FreeBSD, Solaris, SGI and a few others. About the only platform they're not developing for is the Amiga (aw shucks). It seems id is on a mission to dominate the electronic games industry all by itself. Umm, come to think of it, make that a $20 million company.

Now, to get back to my statement at the top of this column and why I think DOOM will revolutionize games on the Mac. Well, that's easy, because it will open up PC game publishers' eyes and ears. I can just see it now, the faces of all those PC game company CEO's when they learn id is developing DOOM for the Mac. "id is doing what? DOOM for the Mac? What do they know that we don't?" Well, for one, id knows that the Mac is a great game machine. It's fast, relatively inexpensive now, and has some 15 million devote followers. Id has also realized that there is money to be made on the Mac and that developing exclusively for the PC is no way to achieve your goal of global shareware domination. However, all those reasons as to why id has decided to develop DOOM for the Mac are but mere pieces of the entire picture.

The MAIN reason (besides money) id Software is doing DOOM on the Mac is because of.......the PowerMac. The sheer rendering speed of the PowerMac is what really attracted id to the Mac. There's a belief in the game industry (especially on the Mac) that no matter how good a game is, if it doesn't run fast, the game will surely bomb. Take Red Baron, which did extremely well on the PC. But when it came to the Mac, users were turned off by its horrible frame rate.

I've played DOOM on a PC and the excellent graphics, the relentless carnage, and especially the sensation of running through the dark corridors and hallways at lightening fast frame rates is what makes DOOM the ultimate game of death. So the attraction to the PowerMac is easy to understand and that is why id has decided to develop DOOM and DOOM II only for the PowerMac (although we've recently learned that Apple is trying to convince id to do an 040 version). They not only want their game to sell well on the Mac, they want to make sure it looks damn good!

Now that speed is not an issue on Power Macs, game developers who in the past have balked at the Mac's slow speed will have no excuse. One of those developers, Larry Holland, creator of Lucas Arts' X-Wing, sighted the Mac's slow speed as the main reason he never developed X-Wing for the Mac. But rumor has it he's been in love with PowerMacs since they were released back in March. A sign of the things to come? You bet, DOOM's your proof...

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