Fantastic games. Fearless opinion. Britain's Favourite independent Xbox 360 mag

XBOX 360™



BIOSHOCK

Exclusive Preview

Irrational offers up some underwater love for the Xbox 360

SCORES! EVERY 360 GAME RATED INSIDE!

INSIDE!

SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2007
HALF-LIFE 2
COLIN MCRAE: DIRT
KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN
JUST CAUSE
DEAD RISING
INDIANA JONES
ENCHANTED ARMS
TIMESHIFT
VIVA PINATA

ISSUE ELEVEN £4.99
IMAGINE PUBLISHING
9 771747 683016 11
www.360magazine.co.uk


CAPCOM
dead-rising.com
XBOX 360.
XBOX LIVE
120 SHOPS, 250 WEAPONS, 100,000 ZOMBIES

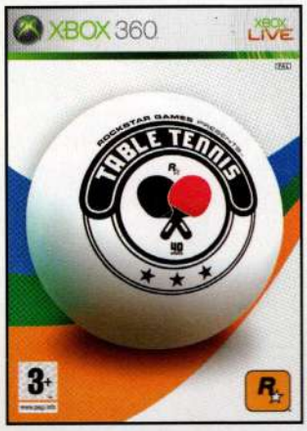

18
CHOP TILL YOU DROP
DEAD RISING
©CAPCOM CO., LTD. 2006 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, and the Xbox, Xbox 360, and Xbox Live logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S.and/or other countries.

BUY ONE XBOX 360 GAME AND GET ONE FREE*

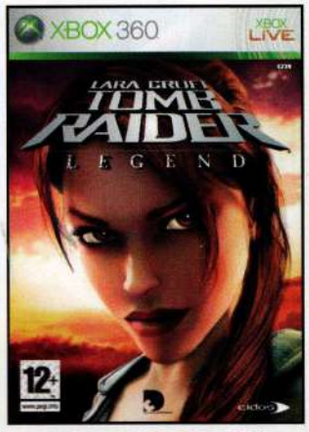
OR AS INDIVIDUALLY PRICED



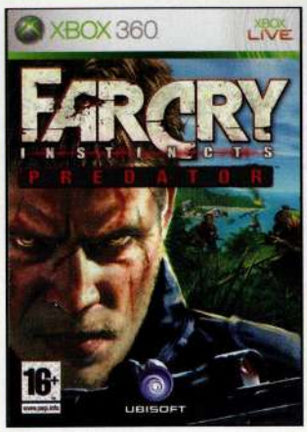
GHOST RECON: ADVANCED WARFIGHTER **£49.99**



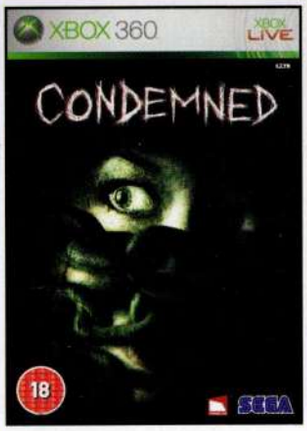
ROCKSTAR GAMES PRESENTS TABLE TENNIS **£29.99**



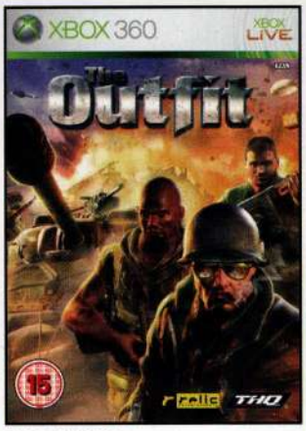
LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND **£49.99**



FAR CRY INSTINCTS PREDATOR **£49.99**



CONDEMNED **£49.99**



THE OUTFIT **£49.99**

GREAT VALUE AT

Virgin megastores

virginmegastores.co.uk

Lowest priced item free. While stocks last. Offers and prices may vary online and in Eire. All details correct at time of going to press. GHOST RECON: ADVANCED WARFIGHTER © 2005 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Ghost Recon, the Soldier Icon, Ubisoft and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the US and/or other countries. ROCKSTAR GAMES PRESENTS TABLE TENNIS © 2006 Rockstar Games, Inc. Rockstar Games, Rockstar San Diego, the R logo, Rockstar Games presents Table Tennis, the Rockstar Games presents Table Tennis logo and A Take-Two Company logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software. All other marks and trademarks are properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND © 2006 Core Design Ltd. Developed by Crystal Dynamics. Published in North America by Eidos, Inc. and published in the rest of the world by Eidos Interactive Ltd. Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend, Lara Croft, Tomb Raider, the Tomb Raider logo, Eidos and the Eidos logo. Crystal Dynamics and the Crystal Dynamics logo are trademarks of the SCi Entertainment Group. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved. FAR CRY INSTINCTS PREDATOR™ © 2006 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Far Cry, Far Cry Instincts, Far Cry Instincts Predator, Ubisoft and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the US and/or other countries. Based on Crytek's original Far Cry directed by Cevat Yerli. Powered by Crytek's technology "CryEngine". CONDEMNED – SEGA and the Sega logo are registered trademarks of Sega Corporation. "Condemned: Criminal Origins" is a trademark of Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. 2005. Developed by Monolith Productions, Inc. MONOLITH and the Monolith logo are trademarks of and © Monolith Productions, Inc

Welcome to X360...



How the hell did we go from struggling to find something to play every evening (*Battlefield 2* and *Oblivion* still reign supreme, it would appear) to being absolutely inundated with quality 360 games that are simply begging to be played? It's ridiculous. Don't get me wrong though, I'm not complaining that the 360 has suddenly received a massive shot in the arm as far as quality titles go – believe me, I've been waiting for the collected joys of *Dead Rising*, *Saints Row* and *Just Cause* for literally months now – but even so, the age old argument of 'Why do publishers release all their games at the same time?' can't help but raise its incredibly ugly head at a time like this. Put it this way – I don't save money. I'm not the kind of person to put cash away for a rainy day and, as such, I only have a very limited amount available for luxuries such as food, clothing and games. So, when five games ranging from 'pretty good' to 'freakin' awesome' all come out within three weeks of each other, who makes the cut? I want them all, but I don't have £250 (£250!) to ensure I get everything. Never mind that those friendly PRs might consider sending me a copy for free... that's not the point here. You guys suffer, so we must feel your pain too. Henceforth, we're going to start a campaign to get publishers to sort their proverbial [censored] out and work out a more sensible schedule. Think about it; if *Dead Rising* had come out last month, it would have stormed the charts. Instead, only the awful *Over G* came out... and that ended up in the All Formats Top Ten because THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE OUT on the 360. Where's the logic in that, eh?

> **"Finding the time to play everything is now an impossibility – I need to take a month off soon..."**

Martin Mathers
Editor (yes, still...)

PS **Juggling two magazines at once isn't fun – just ask Ryan (who loves being on his own) or Mart (who now sits on the other side of the office from his trustworthy sidekick). Ain't life unfair sometimes?**

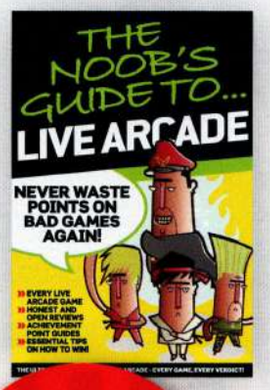
The only Xbox 360 magazine you need



X360 MAGAZINE
Bigger, badder and generally better than the competition – and that's a fact, jack



DVD - 360 VISION
Who needs boring trailers when you've got great exclusive content like this?



THE NOOB'S GUIDE TO LIVE ARCADE
Every Xbox Live Arcade game! With Achievements! It's really good. Really.

THE LATEST XBOX 360 NEWS!
Head over to page 14 and grab your fill of hot 360 facts!

Live and still kicking...

Live Arcade to see more exciting content arriving on Wednesdays

Never mind Orange Wednesdays – when it comes to Xbox 360 goodness, there's nothing like Live Arcade Wednesdays to keep the blood pumping. With Microsoft having already boasted that it has enough content to keep people going until well after Christmas, it seems the fruits of those labours have already started to emerge with *Time Pilot* and *Scramble* already being available by the time you read this. Of course, we know some of the other goodies that are coming; games like *Contra*, *Paperboy* and, of course, *Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3* are over the horizon, but as for when they're actually going to arrive... well, probably on a Wednesday, we reckon.

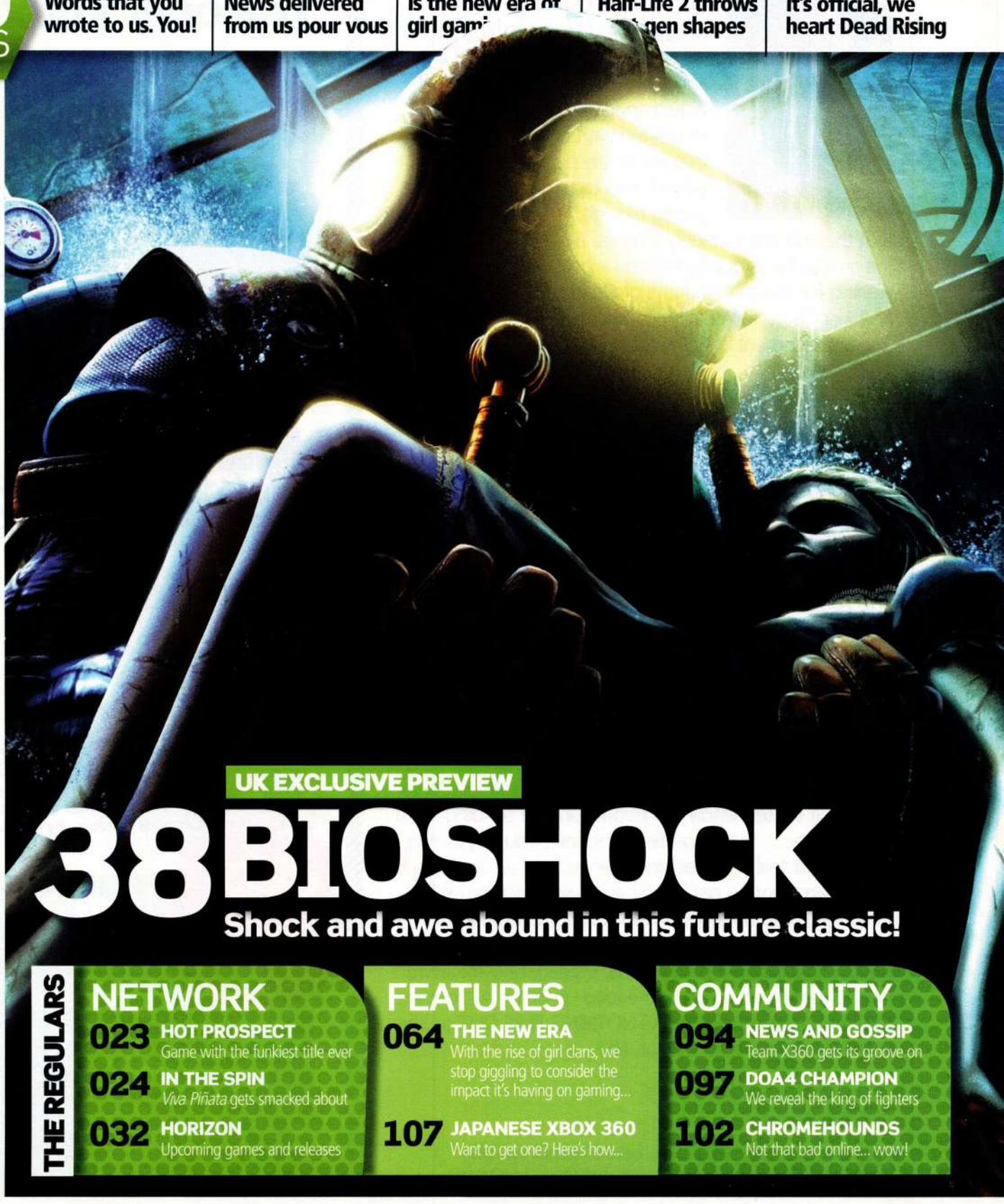
CONTENTS

X360 REGULARS

12 POSTAL	14 NETWORK	64 FEATURES	37 PREVIEWS	71 REVIEWS
Words that you wrote to us. You!	News delivered from us pour vous	Is the new era of girl gam[illegible]	Half-Life 2 throws [illegible]gen shapes	It's official, we heart Dead Rising

ESSENTIAL GAMES

Battlefield: Bad Company 61
Battlefield 2 99
Bioshock 38
Bullet Witch 33
Castle Crashers 107
Chromehounds 102
Colin McRae: Dirt 58
Dead Or Alive 4 97
Dead Or Alive Xtreme 2 32
Dead Rising 72
Enchanted Arms 84
Final Fantasy XI 96
Gears Of War 14
GTR 33
Half-Life 2: Episode 2 52
Import Tuner Challenge 61
Indiana Jones 54
Just Cause 80
Kameo: Elements Of Power 95
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men 56
Mobile Ops: The One Year War 60
MotoGP '06 15
NBA Live 2007 61
Ninety-Nine Nights 88
Outpost Kaloki 96
Quake 4 96
Saints Row 76
Senko No Ronde Rev. X 23
Splinter Cell: Double Agent 70
Stranglehold 15
Street Fighter II' Hyper Fighting 107
Texas Hold 'Em 107
Tenchu 360 60
TimeShift 18
Unreal Tournament 2007 15
Viva Piñata 24
WWE SmackDown Vs RAW 2007 46



UK EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

38 BIOSHOCK

Shock and awe abound in this future classic!

THE REGULARS

NETWORK

023 HOT PROSPECT
Game with the funkiest title ever

024 IN THE SPIN
Viva Piñata gets smacked about

032 HORIZON
Upcoming games and releases

FEATURES

064 THE NEW ERA
With the rise of girl clans, we stop giggling to consider the impact it's having on gaming...

107 JAPANESE XBOX 360
Want to get one? Here's how...

COMMUNITY

094 NEWS AND GOSSIP
Team X360 gets its groove on

097 DOA4 CHAMPION
We reveal the king of fighters

102 CHROMEHOUNDS
Not that bad online... wow!

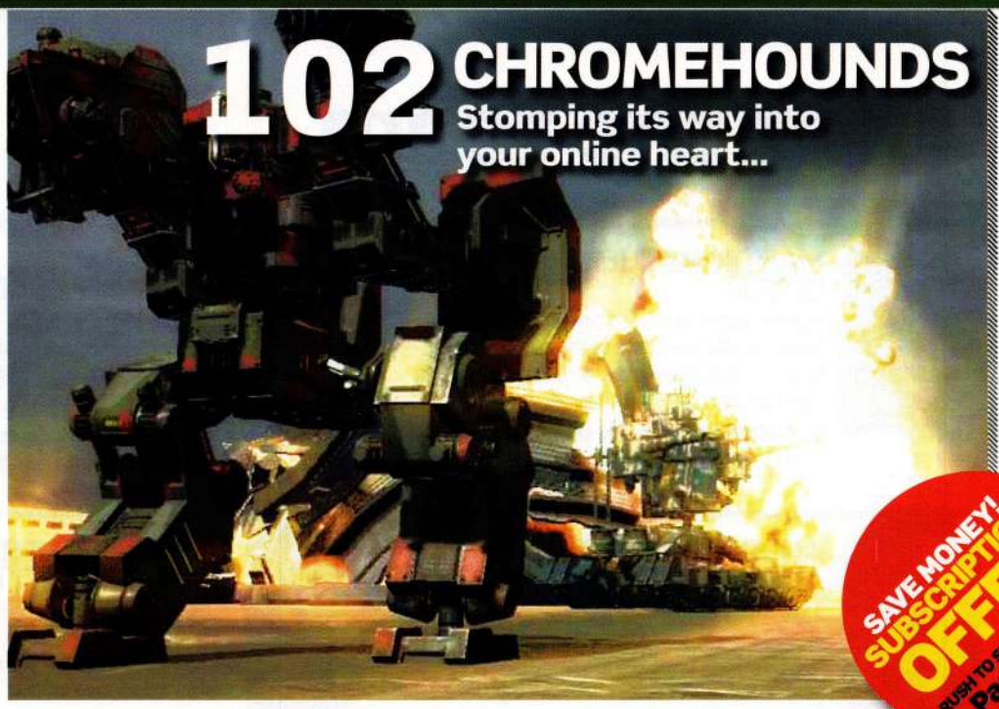


010 ON THE DVD
The best footage of the best games – plus loads more besides...

93 COMMUNITY
Team X360 debut match results!

114 NEXT MONTH
We're so very, very excited about it!





102 CHROMEHOUNDS
Stomping its way into your online heart...

SAVE MONEY! SUBSCRIPTION OFFER
RUSH TO SIGN UP NOW!
Page 113

PREVIEWS

038 BIOSHOCK
Having wasted the obvious 'shock and awe' pun, instead we'll say this is supposedly the 'deepest FPS' ever made. See! It's a play on words! Think about it.

046 SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2007
Who's that jumping out the sky? It's X360, delivering a Five Star Frog Splash on opinion, getting the Chair Of Truth and smacking it round the head of THQ's latest.

052 HALF-LIFE 2
Gordon Freeman cuddles up to the Xbox 360 as he brings his *Episode 1*, *Episode 2*, *Team Fortress 2* and *Portal* chums to Microsoft's little box of love. Hmm... tasty.

054 INDIANA JONES
Have fun with cowboy hats and bullwhips without being arrested! (Note: policemen don't burst in your bedroom and arrest you for doing this. We're being dramatic.)

056 KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN
It's not just Kane and it's not just Lynch. It's Kane & Lynch! And with such a name, it's miraculous this is neither a platformer with animals or a bad comedy duo.

058 COLIN MCRAE: DIRT
The first preview new boy Mark Podd wrote for us. Judge him based on this preview! If you don't like it, email him and tell him why! That way, he'll improve. See?

PREVIEW ROUND-UP

060 TENCHU 360
MOBILE OPS: ONE YEAR WAR
NBA LIVE 2007
BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY
IMPORT TUNER CHALLENGE









REVIEWS

72 DEAD RISING
It's finally here, having teased us by showing glimpses of its undead-yet-strangely-sexy legs for the past few months. Did it live up to the hype? We fire up a chainsaw and cut through the crap to get to the juicy stuff...

76 SAINTS ROW
Yo! Rhyming and criming! Stealing and feeling! Word! Or something. We considered reviewing the game in mildly offensive urban dialect but changed our minds after our bosses shouted at us for it. It was a stupid idea, admittedly. Never again.

80 JUST CAUSE
Like James Bond but with more Mexican beans. Mexican beans are good (especially with chili cheese and sauce) so it figures this game should be good. And it doesn't even come with free chili cheese! Amazing!

84 ENCHANTED ARMS
"So what did you think of it?" Never ask this after watching someone play *Enchanted Arms*. You'll find out why by reading our review. Or by playing it yourself. Reading the review is quicker though.

88 NINETY-NINE NIGHTS
It's like *Dynasty Warriors 5* but slightly better, though still not nearly good enough to warrant a full-price purchase. There's almost no need to read the review now but you're probably bored, so best read it anyway. Go on. Shoo!

Meet the team



MARTIN MATHERS
EDITOR

Just like Gazza's mate was nicknamed Five Bellies, so Mart now goes by the name Two Mags – not that he notices, because he's too damn busy to listen to anyone talk to him.

IS ALWAYS / liking his blonde hair

martin.mathers@imagine-publishing.co.uk



RYAN KING
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Cherish this issue of **X360** – it might not look like it, but large quantities of Ryan's blood, sweat, tears and other bodily fluids have all gone into making it. Thanks, Ryan!

IS ALWAYS / staying loyal

ryan.king@imagine-publishing.co.uk



ANDREW DOWNES
ART EDITOR

If you say: "Put whatever you want" when asked what we should write about you on the Meet The Team page, you're just asking for trouble. This month, Andy's been a complete w

IS ALWAYS / not answering us

andy.downes@imagine-publishing.co.uk



KAREN RUTHERFORD
SENIOR SUB EDITOR

Is it fair to call Karen lazy? Probably not, although the fact that she's taken TWO bouts of holiday in the space of a month is rather telling. It's like Keith all over again…

IS ALWAYS / topping up her tan

karen.rutherford@imagine-publishing.co.uk



SIMON PHILLIPS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This month, Simon's favourite word has been 'tough' – something that comes as a real irony, considering that it's the last thing that he could ever be described as by… well, anyone.

IS ALWAYS / avoiding meetings

simon.phillips@imagine-publishing.co.uk



MARK PODD
STAFF WRITER

Let the hazing begin! Mark's only been with us a few weeks but already he's had to endure taunting, ridicule and utter humiliation. And that's before he even gets into the office…

IS ALWAYS / taking his time

mark.podd@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Contributors



Tom Leclerc

A good line in waistcoats, blonde hair that can only be described as 'natural' and an unhealthy obsession with the circus – that's our friend Tompey. Plus, he invented the Go>Play guns, which is a definite plus.



Dave Shaw

Say goodbye to Mr Shaw's chiselled and manly features here in the Contributors section; as of next month, he'll be a fully fledged member of Team X360. He's even got his own 360, which means he's already better than Keith ever was.



Ashley Day

Bearing in mind that Ryan is built like several tanks stacked on top of one another, you can imagine the reaction in the office when we discovered that *gasp* Ashley's even bigger than him. 'Abject horror' doesn't cover it…

John Szczepaniak

Crazy name, even crazier man. And South African! Even though he used to live in France! He's not wacky though – far from it. In fact, there's nothing retro genius John likes more than a snifter of port, a good cigar and an Atari 2600. Bagsy him all those 'classic' Live Arcade reviews…



X360

Imagine Publishing Ltd
Richmond House
33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth
Dorset BH2 6EZ
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200
Website: www.360magazine.co.uk

Thank you for supporting Imagine Publishing – an independent specialist magazine publisher where quality, innovation and excellence are paramount. We hope you enjoy the magazine.

Editor
Martin Mathers
☎ 01202 586234
martin.mathers@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Editor-In-Chief
Simon Phillips

Art Editor
Andy Downes

Community Editor
Ryan King

Senior Sub Editor
Karen Rutherford

Staff Writer
Mark Podd

Contributors
Ashley Day, Jon Denton, Rab Florence, Simon Griffin, William Haley, Matt Handrahan, Keith Hennessey, Kirsten Kearney, Thomas Leclerc, Mike Richardson, Dave Shaw, John Szczepaniak, David Whittle

Pictures
Cover images: Supplied and approved by Take 2 © 2006 and THQ © 2006

Advertising
Digital/printed media packs available on request.

Advertising Director
Scott Caisley
☎ 01202 586444
scott.caisley@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Advertising Manager
Felicity Mead
☎ 01202 586421
felicity.mead@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Snr Advertising Sales Executives
Mark Maclean
☎ 01202 586420
mark.maclean@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Sally Meaden
☎ 01202 586434
mark.maclean@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Kaylie Green
☎ 01202 586431
kaylie.green@imagine-publishing.co.uk

International
X360 is available for licensing. Please contact the International department to discuss partnership opportunities.

International Manager
Cathy Blackman
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586401
Email: licensing@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Subscriptions
☎ +44 (0) 870 428 3051
Email: x360mag@cisubs.co.uk
6 issue subscription (UK) – £15
13 issue subscription (Overseas) – £80

Circulation
Circulation & Export Manager
Darren Pearce
☎ **Tel:** 01202 586200

Production
Production Director
Jane Hawkins
☎ 01202 586200

Founders
Managing Director Damian Butt
Finance Director Steven Boyd
Creative Director Mark Kendrick

Printed by
Wyndeham Heron, The Bentall Complex, Colchester Road, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4NW
X360 is distributed by Seymour Distribution, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT.
☎ 0207 429 4000

Disclaimer
The publisher cannot accept responsibility for any unsolicited material lost or damaged in the post. All text and layout is the copyright of Imagine Publishing Ltd. Nothing in this magazine may be reproduced in whole or part without the written permission of the publisher. All copyrights are recognised and used specifically for the purpose of criticism and review. Although the magazine has endeavoured to ensure all information is correct at time of print, prices and availability may change. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein. Xbox and Xbox 360 is a trademark of Microsoft corporation in the United States and other countries and is used by Imagine Publishing under license from the owner.

© 2006 Imagine Publishing Ltd

ABC 21,876 Jan-June 2006
IMAGINE PUBLISHING
PPA

ISSN 1471-1192

P-3

FREE GAMES

Free games forever

P3- The only mobile phone company with packages designed exclusively for gamers - is offering something new & exciting.
Free computer games forever.

What's the catch? There is none.

Simply get your pay monthly mobile phone from P3. Choose one of the selected packages and enjoy free games for life.

1 FREE GAME EVERY MONTH - ANY GAME - ANY PLATFORM - Xbox 360, Xbox, PS2, Game Cube, PSP, DS, PC + Loads More



E.g.-



+ Loads more on line...

Apply Today & Enjoy Reduced Line Rental Offers ....

Visit - www.p3mobiles.com

Call - 0800 002 5016

Prices correct at time of going to press. 12 or 18 mths new mobile phone contract applies. Terms & conditions @ www.p3mobiles.com

P-3

Free broadband

For the ultimate gamers package why not combine with the P3 Broadband package and you can also enjoy FREE BROADBAND from P3

No catch - It's simple !

Just take your pay monthly mobile phone from P3 with one of the selected packages, and you can enjoy free broadband.
No waiting - You can start enjoying your free broadband shortly after your new pay monthly mobile phone is connected.

Even if you have a few months remaining with an existing ISP contract - Don't Wait !
Take your pay monthly mobile phone now and as soon as your current ISP contract expires we will connect you to your free broadband straight away.



It's easy .....

Visit - www.p3mobiles.com

Call - 0800 002 5016

P-3
Every One Else Is !

12 & 18 mths new mobile phone contract apply. BT landline required. Broadband subject to availability, compatibility & line survey, and there is a 2Gb usage allowance. See www.p3mobiles.com.

+++ THE BEST MOVIES +++ IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS +++ BONUS FEATURES +++ EXCLUSIVE TRAILERS

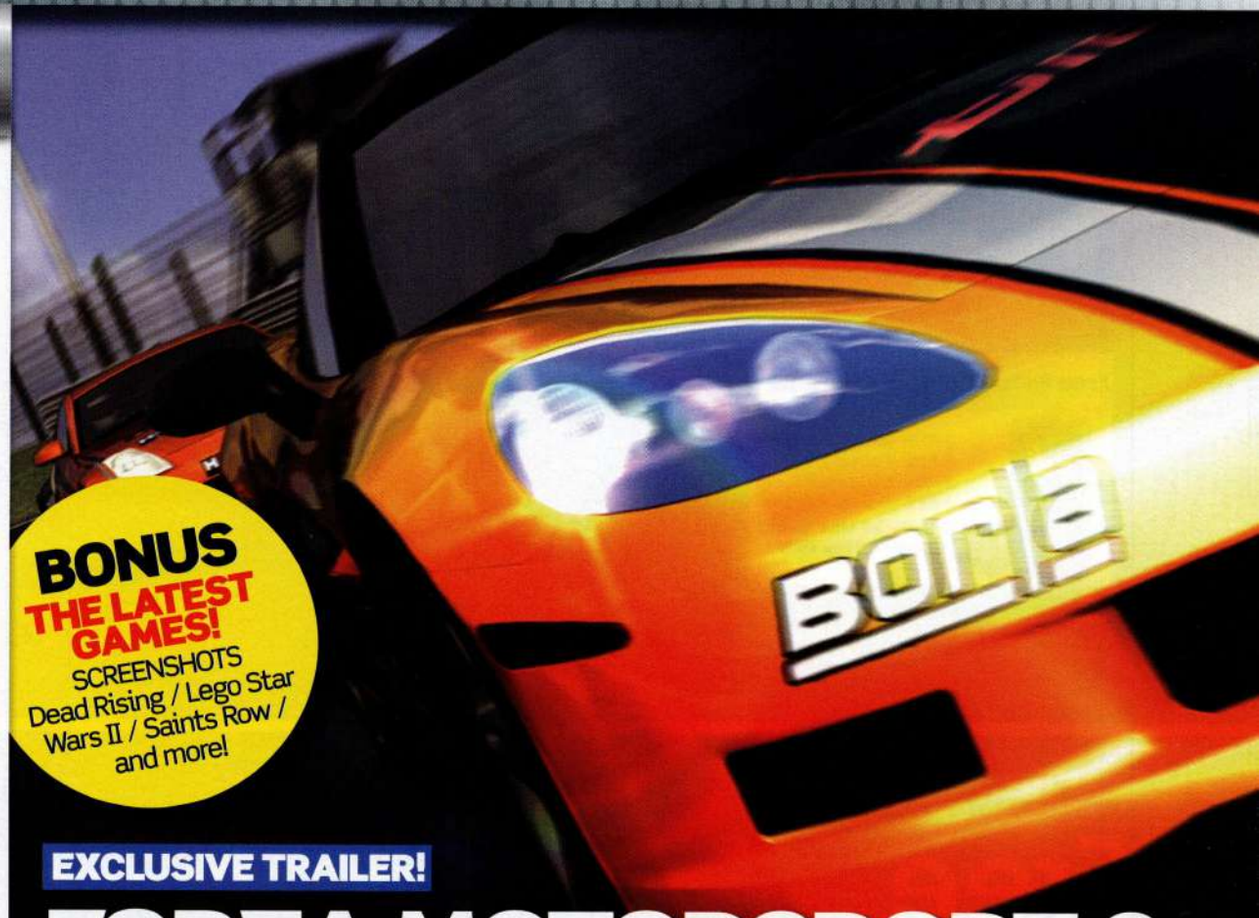
ON THE DVD

360 VISION CONTENTS

SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT
GTR
CRACKDOWN
DEAD RISING
BULLET WITCH
MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE
TENCHU SENRAN
SAMURAI WARRIORS 2
NHL 2K7
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES



FINAL FANTASY XI
ELVEON
CHROMEHOUNDS
ENCHANTED ARMS
NHL 07
AND MUCH MORE!



BONUS
THE LATEST GAMES!
SCREENSHOTS
Dead Rising / Lego Star Wars II / Saints Row / and more!

EXCLUSIVE TRAILER!

FORZA MOTORSPORT 2

X360 takes you on the ride of your life!

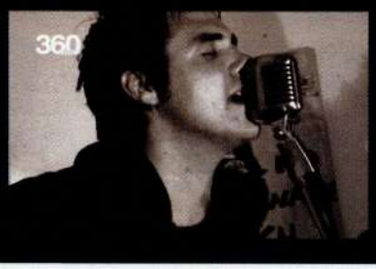
GAMEPLAY TRAILER / COMMENTARY

FEATURES

SAINTS ROW
A complete day and night cycle. It's more exciting than it sounds! No really, it is. Watch it.



PREY MUSIC VIDEO
Full music video taken from the Prey ending, exclusive to X360!



FINAL FANTASY
We found a top Final Fantasy XI player for this battle against the legendary Proto Omega!



TMNT: THE GAME
The first ever look at the game in action and what to expect in the movie!



*DVD only available with magazines sold in the United Kingdom



360 vision™

BONUS 360 VISION CONTENT
14 Movie Trailers + 8 Screenshot Galleries + Online Gaming Footage + 8 Features + 10 X360 Wallpapers + 3 Exclusive E-Books... all on one packed DVD!



HALF-LIFE 2

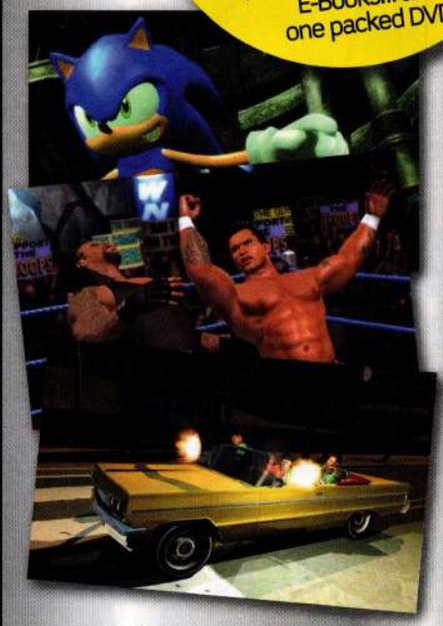
GAMEPLAY TRAILER / COMMENTARY "Take cover as Valve's classic FPS blasts its way into your life..."



BLUE DRAGON

GAMEPLAY TRAILERS / COMMENTARY "Can Mistwalker's RPG really change Microsoft's luck in Japan?"

PLUS!



360 SCREENSHOT GALLERIES

We have the latest screenshots of the hottest Xbox 360 games for you to browse! Simply click on the relevant gallery and browse away to your heart's content...

E-BOOKS AND GUIDE COLLECTION!

Learn about EVERY Xbox game that works on Xbox 360! Discover how to become an Achievement master! Learn how to be the best online gamer ever! It's all packed into the DVD...

TO ACCESS THE E-BOOKS AND GUIDE COLLECTION
Insert your 360 Vision disc into a PC or Mac and double-click on the icons. You must have Adobe Acrobat installed though.





Step-by-step guide on how to use your DVD-ROM

1 Insert the DVD and, using your Xbox remote or controller, press the directional buttons to navigate the menus once the cursor appears.

2 Press Select to choose the menu you want, then again to select the video. Press Menu at any time to return to the previous screen.

3 To listen to the alternative commentaries on selected trailers, simply highlight the Speaker icon and press the Select button. Easy, eh?

YOUR CONCERNS AND DILEMMAS LAID BARE FOR A NATION TO READ OVER A MUG OF TEA

POSTAL



2K GAMES JOYTECH

Each month our Star Letter wins an awesome Joytech Neo Se Controller and a 2K game! 2K games are always a sign of quality, and what better way to play than with the very best third-party pad available for the 360? In fact, Joytech's pads are so good we insist you go out and buy one now...

The summer lull is over. The Euro-trance music has died down, shops have stopped putting chocolate in the fridge and people have stopped looking down at you for staying indoors. Time to write a letter! Well, there's not much else to do now girls have started covering up again...

CONTACT US

LETTERS
We prefer letters – it makes us feel popular in the office. Send your letters, sweets and freebies to:
X360 Magazine,
Richmond House,
33 Richmond Hill,
Bournemouth,
BH2 6EZ

EMAIL
Email your letters to:
x360@imagine-publishing.co.uk

PHONE
Call the **X360** team and chat about games and your social problems on **01202 586241** between the hours of 4pm and 6pm ONLY

FORUMS
Speak your brains on our brand new interweb place:
www.360magazine.co.uk/x360/forum

FAX
If you're posh or an angry lawyer complaining about review scores, then fax on:
01202 789966



SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL WRITES!

❑ Just thought I would let you know that as a mega PlayStation fanatic, I decided that I had enough of them and their next-gen console, which, by the way, the PS2 cost me £200 and now they expect us PlayStation fanatics to pay a whopping £500 for a console and a controller with no games (WHICH WILL BE £50 OR £60) and then they tell us that, "A deposit of £150 will need to be paid" for what, a lousy Blu-ray player that will not be in use for a couple of years. Nice one jackass. Then about a month ago I decided enough is enough and I bought myself a 360. I was shown the light when *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter*, *Halo*, *Halo 2* and the multiplayer multipack and *Call Of Duty 2* came into my hands. I have no fear of the PS3, I feel that 360 will give it a good all bitch slap and we will WIN the next-gen trophy.

So I thought I would let you know that Xbox has converted me, a PlayStation fanatic, into the funky looking Xbox 360. Can I ask would it be possible to get a signed picture of the Master Chief now that I have been brought over to the Xbox 360 army?

Please please.

Thank you.

Jamie Pearson, Motherwell

This email came from the deep, dark confines of South Lanarkshire Council's offices, which also means South Lanarkshire Council now holds the record for the longest introductory sentence to an **X360** letter. Beating it will take some doing. Enjoy the picture.

STOP SHOUTING MAJOR

❑ Five weeks. Quite a long time actually. Definitely if your precious Xbox 360 is missing all that time. Picture the scene: You're playing your 360, sitting in your pants, grinning like an idiot when suddenly disaster strikes. Your shiny new copy of *Battlefield 2* stutters to a halt and instead of the familiar, comforting green glow, three menacing red lights of doom appear. I'm sure quite a few of you have been there. The heart-rending pain that slowly courses through your body as you realise that you're not going to be playing your 360 for quite a while.

star letter

❑ Once again, Xbox 360 leaves the competition quaking in their boots. Personally, the original Xbox was the best console as the PlayStation2's graphics were very rough around the edges and had many poor games. Take the best PlayStation2 game (*God Of War*) and compare it to the likes of Xbox's epic *Ninja Gaiden* and the best fighting series ever *Dead Or Alive*, whose graphics and gameplay are unbelievable.

Anyway, enough about the past because the 360 has been on the market for nearly a year and has already sold ten million units. The 360 boasts a bundle of quality games already including *Dead Or Alive 4*, *PGR3*, *Perfect Dark Zero*, the list goes on!!!

Although the 360's games are kicking arse, as a beat-'em-up fanatic, I would love to see more sexy female ninjas scrapping with muscle band wrestlers on top of huge skyscrapers. So where have all the beat-'em-ups gone? You can count the 360 fighting games on one hand, even if you only have two fingers. *Dead Or Alive 4* and the incredibly pervy *Rumble Roses XX*. The good news for fellow beat-'em-up fans is that *Dead Or Alive Code Cronus* is in the making.

So Xbox, stop making countless racing and first-person shooters for a minute and give beat-'em-up fans something to really sink their teeth into.

Ryan Brown, Sandhurst

If we're going to go down the weapons beat-'em-up route, it would be nice to see someone remake *Last Bronx* instead (Google search it). Also, Microsoft needs to make its Xbox beat-'em-up catalogue backwards compatible. Then you have *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike*, *Marvel Vs Capcom 2*, *Capcom Vs SNK 2*, *King Of Fighters* and so on available. Still, Xbox Live Arcade?



MENTALIST

THE SPOT

Don't anger him...

True but you don't have to worry Bobgroovy. Single-player isn't ever going to go away and online is really just pandering to the hardcore end of the market – the guys and gals who live and breathe the likes of *Battlefield 2*, *GRAW* and *Final Fantasy XI*. And trust me, you definitely aren't missing anything by not playing *Final Fantasy XI*... even just thinking about all those bees makes me want to scream...

❑ 28 July 2006. It's the day I stopped caring and gave up. After a few tries at getting my 360 on Live, I decided to dedicate a part of my day really giving it a go. I tried through the night (the clock said five hours but my soul had given so much more) but at 12:10am, my online dream died. Now I'll never know the beauty of *Gears Of War* or *Halo* online. This sounds like a sob story and that's not the intent. Instead, it's a plea to Peter Moore and the industry in general – don't forget us. Just because we're not online, it doesn't mean we're not important.

Paul (Bobgroovy), Paisley

In my case it was more than 'quite a while'. Several phone calls to Microsoft later and I had been ordered to wait for an email response. Fair enough. I'm a patient guy. Four days later I dialled them up again. What was going on? Was no one going to save my beloved Xbox? Oh, hello French lady. Yes, yes I sort of understand your wonky English. Now what about my Xbox, huh?

Suffice to say it took a while before Microsoft got their act together and picked up my 360. Just over five weeks after my Xbox 360 drew its final breath the machine was returned to me. Oh the happiness! During the following month everything started to go back to normal: My friends stopped calling me, my family abandoned me and the girls stopped talking to me. I was happy once more. Up until yesterday. When they returned. The lights. The blinding red lights.

I was devastated. All my GamerScore whoring had been for naught. It would begin anew. The five weeks' wait. Yet fortunately I was spared this time round. My Xbox 360 purred back into life already the following day. But what if this travesty had occurred in September, when all the great games are getting released? Or worse, on *Halo 3*'s release day?

How come Microsoft's service was so terribly slow for me? Granted I live in Norway (For all you Americans out there, no, it's not a mountain in Sweden) so the service might be slower, but I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH HAVING WAITED FIVE BLOOMIN' WEEKS FOR MICROSOFT TO SIMPLY SEND MY MACHINE BACK IN ALMOST THE SAME CONDITION AS WHEN IT LEFT ME!

Very best regards,

Iain 'Mad Major' Forbes, Norway

Weird fact: despite the fact Iain is from Norway, all the grammar in this letter showed up in Microsoft Word as Japanese. Must be their crazy keyboards.

BURNING ISSUE

This month's hot topic from the **360magazine.co.uk** forum: Xbox Live

What game would you like to see on Xbox Live? I'd like to see *Vib Ribbon* but Microsoft would never get the rights for it

sovietchimp

Dead Rising, you can kill the 50 zombies with the lawnmower and chainsaw in the fastest time

Goz

TimeSplitters, I loved that on PS2

AC ThaDon

Condemned cause you can't beat your friends with pipes in real life

YOYOdaMOOSE

Can't wait for the new *Dance Dance Revolution* so that I can shake my booty like Beyonce

Rad Rik

Wha... why... scary...

Mad Major

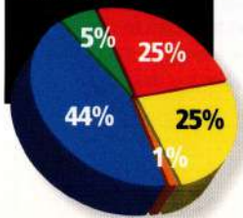
Only joking Mad Major!

Rad Rik

MAILBAG BREAKDOWN

People's hopes, dreams and fears...

- Why aren't there more beat-'em-ups?
- Why are there so many FPS games?
- Why hasn't a sequel to *Dynasty Warriors 5* been announced?
- Help, I can't get online
- Online sucks!



SHOOTING STUFF IS NOT DULL

❑ Okay, shooters. Why does the 360 have so many shooters? The 360 has so much potential but all of the games developers just constantly make FPS games. Don't get me wrong, the 360 is great at shooters and I love *Prey* but *Lord Of The Rings: Battle For Middle-Earth II* is so much better primarily because it was a breath of fresh air! Another thing, FPS games are, most of the time, mind-numbingly boring and simple!

James 'Professor Pinkle', Edinburgh

Looking forward to *Halo 3* then?

DOH LETTER

WHOOPS

❑ I would like to buy the *Virtua Fighter 5* game when it becomes available for the Microsoft Xbox 360 console. I hope that it does become available. All the characters are brilliant because I'm very interested in their unique style of fighting, very speedy, very sharp and it is very powerful, like *Street Fighter II*. It is a true fantasy game! My mind is full of martial arts and emotion, because of the fact that all the characters are the best of the best! I miss a lot of Sega games. Please bring the *Virtua Fighter 5* games to Microsoft's Xbox 360. That would be fantastic for the world. Sega is like God to me but my mother's nightmare.

Gabriel Kos, Dublin

Just as with last-gen, it looks like the *Virtua Fighter* series will be exclusive to Sony consoles. Which is a shame for us but what can you do, eh? If you think you're upset about it spare a thought for poor Ryan, who spent hours indoors learning "closed stance combos" (?) with Pai when he could have been outside talking to Real People. Still, that Sega sentence is a brilliant way to end a letter.

TEXTS

WHO IS THE BEST CHARACTER IN STREET FIGHTER II? DEADLYDRVE

Ryu has the best number of decent match-ups, his hurricane kick is probably the best special move in the game. And it goes through sonic booms, dontcha know...

WHAT ELSE IS COMING OUT ON XBOX LIVE ARCADE?

Er... lots of stuff

BF2 IZ KEWL BUT DA SERVERS R LAGGY N DAT GETS ON MA TITS. LATPY

How is writing 'kewl' easier than writing 'cool'?

WHERE'S KEITH GONE

Straight to hell, the traitor

WHAT'S THE BEST GAME FOR GETTING GAMERPOINTS? STU

NBA Live '06, *Madden '06*, *FIFA: Road To The World Cup* and *King Kong* make up an easy 4,000 points

NETWORK

X360
We look at news in many different ways. Here's how...

FEATURE
Is this the end of E3?

HOT SEAT
It's Saber's Ben Serviss!

MULTIFORMAT
PSP and Wii pricing updates

IN THE SPIN
Up close with Viva Piñata

OPINION
Rab Florence and Kirsten Kearney



E4?

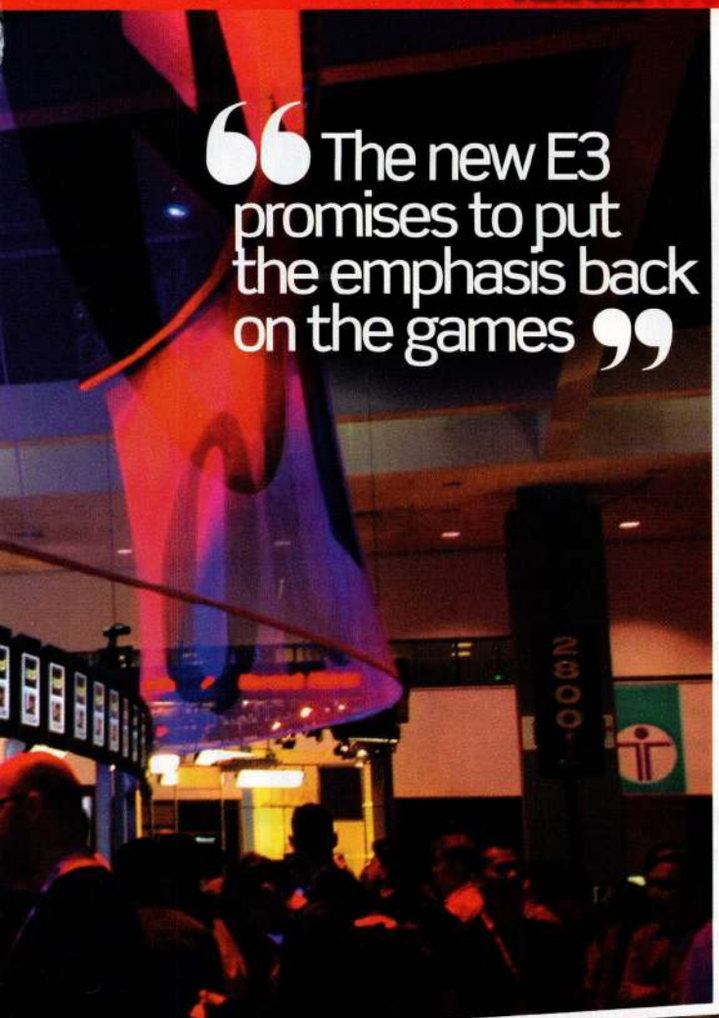
E3 replacements come flooding in

E3 is dead! Oh no! Since the 'cancellation' of E3 as THE major gaming event of the year, gamers have been up in arms searching for a spiritual successor to the event. The search led most to the door of Penny Arcade Expo. The annual event, hosted by dreadfully unfunny comic Penny Arcade was held between 25 August and 27 August and proved a success yet again this year. As well as attracting big name exhibitors such as Rockstar, the event in Bellevue, Washington showed a diversity and gaming appeal that E3 was missing. The highlight of the event was Omegathon III – a gaming tournament over the three days where the winner walked away with a Scion xB jeep. It also featured a rapper called Optimus Rhyme, which is clearly the best thing ever. However, despite the success of Gabe and Tycho's event, they insist they're not stepping into the shoes of E3. "PAX is not the new E3," explains Gabe. "E3 failed. If someone else wants to be the new E3, they are welcome to it. They can even set up shop in the carcass of the giant and claim his power but E3 is dead and it died for a reason."

> "A blow for gamers who look up to the show as the annual mecca of gaming"

Next on the list is the organisation behind the Consumer Electronics Show, the rather logically named Consumer Electronics Association. The CEA says it has been completely swamped with enquiries since the collapse of E3 and they've since had meetings to decide on ways that they can 'help the gaming community'. The CEA also says that developers have given them advice on how to stage a game show. Karen Chupka, senior vice president of events and conferences at Consumer Electronics Association, stopped moaning about her long-winded job title to explain what was happening: "A major goal of this advisory committee is to generate gaming community feedback on how best to meet the needs of the industry," she explains. "As long as there is desire and commitment, we are ready to service this community and will begin looking at venues in Las Vegas and Los Angeles and for appropriate partners. Should the committee recommend we move forward, we would design an event that is consistent with CES quality."

"What will happen to E3?" you cry, confused and slightly scared at all the changes. E3 will dramatically scale down in size after Microsoft, Sony and EA pulled out of the show citing financial reasons. The first publisher to jump ship is said to have been EA, who believes that the event has become far too expensive and no longer represents the correct venue to unveil its latest products. Once they went, others followed them off the great ship E3 too, with the annual uber-show left desperately reshuffling its deck to reposition itself as an intimate, focused games event.



> "The new E3 promises to put the emphasis back on the games"



CALM DOWN!/ Look how excited all these people are! Especially him in the striped polo shirt. Get him some water!

Instead of taking place in its traditional Los Angeles Conference Center, the new E3 Media Festival will take place in a series of Los Angeles hotels for a more 'intimate' feel. Entertainment Software Association president, Doug Lowenstein, says that next year's E3 will shoot for an attendance figure of 5,000 compared to the 60,000 people at this year's E3. The date will also shift from May to June, so publishers and developers have more time to prepare a build of their game to show off at the event, another complaint about E3 in its past form.

Predictably, the Internet is outraged, labelling these changes as the death of E3. While the loss of E3 as we know it now is no doubt a blow for gamers who look up to the three-day show as the annual mecca of gaming, there's also no denying the event was riddled with an increasing number of problems – the rising costs, the PR disaster that was the continuing booth babes fiasco and the fact that the show was getting clogged up with fans disguised as the press who snuck in through the back door because they were the Assistant Editor for BobLovesGames.Com. The new E3 promises to put the emphasis back on the games and the games media while the break-up puts more emphasis on EA and Microsoft's own events. ■





WILL THE REAL E3 PLEASE STAND UP?



E3 MEDIA FESTIVAL (E3INSIDER.COM)

Picking what's left from the corpse of the old E3, the new E3 Media Festival will be a smaller event with slashed attendance, plumping for the drab functionality of hotels over the glitz and glamour of Los Angeles Conference Center.



PAX (PENNYARCADE EXPO.COM)

The first 'big' gaming show to hit following the E3 bombshell, the slow and steady growth of PAX marks it out as a natural successor. Penny Arcade insists this isn't the case but it could be the gamers and developers who have the final say.



CEA (CE.ORG)

Where Entertainment Software Association failed, the equally exciting Consumers Electronics Association is stepping in with its own alternative to E3, tentatively scheduled for next year. Will it manage to succeed?

DEVELOPER EVENTS

EA's Summer Showcase and Microsoft's X06 have become more important in the wake of E3's cancellation, especially until a successor is found. It could be that they stick to their own showcases rather than plumping for a general show.

PROUD PARENTS

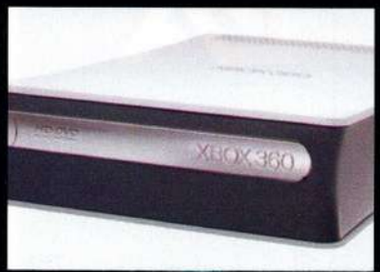
MICROSOFT SHOWING OFF HD-DVD

First glimpse at hardware to rival Blu-ray

MICROSOFT HAS proudly shown off its external HD-DVD drive to the world for the first time to members of the DVD Forum. Microsoft senior program manager, Kevin Collins, was the man at the controls as he showed off *The Phantom Of The Opera* in high-definition. The dashboard will have new options tied in to the open tray button to allow for the external drive while the HD-DVD player itself will be one of the cheapest to be available on the market. "All the audio and video processing is done inside the Xbox," explained Collins. "This gives consumers choice and keeps their cost down."

The demonstration itself was important as the DVD Forum isn't an Internet website where people sign up, call themselves JDoggIII, then post threads like 'who thinks keanu reeves is gay lol'. Rather, it's an international organisation made up of DVD industry members, with representatives from DVD hardware, software, media and content companies. They presumably sit around feeling rather smug, discussing whether Keanu Reeves is gay before laughing out loud and then passing verdict on new hardware such as this external HD-DVD player. Their verdict on Microsoft's dinky piece of kit? They were impressed. Now it's up to the DVD industry itself to follow suit.





INTERESTING!/ Not really. But it does look like the side of a particularly boring book. Again, not very interesting.

STOP THE PRESS!



EMERGENCE DAY REVEALED!

Gears Of War's 'big announcement' is release date

Everyone was expecting something bigger than Jesus. We were promised a 'BIG announcement' from Epic's Mark Rein who did a *Gears Of War* song and dance to get us excited while Xbox Live viral messages hinted at something spectacular. The big announcement came and it was... actually no, sit down and brace yourself first and find a household pet to kick in excitement. Okay? The announcement was *Gears Of War* has a release date of 12 November!

Hear that laughing in the background? That's Flava Flav, who finds it hilarious that people still believe the hype. If you're going "huh" right about now, we feel your pain. This announcement was built up to be so much more and incredibly, reading between the lines also shows that the game will ship in the US with a chunky $59.99 price tag draped around its neck, with the special edition setting Americans back a further ten dollars. Going on pricing history for American games making the long trek to rainy British shores, this suggests that *Gears Of War* could cost £60 over here with the special edition costing – time to sit down and brace yourself again – a meaty £70! Not quite the awesome announcement to send a shiver down Jesus' spine then.

If anything, this anticlimactic announcement combined with the loopy price has actually done a great job of weeing all over the slow-burn excitement the game was building up. To be honest, nothing short of Mark Rein kicking down **X360**'s door while making wild animal noises and punching the air is likely to make us excited about *Gears Of War*, apart from the actual game itself of course. Let's keep this old-school from now on and just let the games do the talking. Yes? ■

> "Not quite the awesome announcement to send a shiver down Jesus' spine"

WE REVEAL THE EXACT SIZE OF THE MOUNTAIN MICROSOFT HAS TO CLIMB

2,246 is the magic number

Microsoft's floundering to conquer Japan is always referred to in vague ways. Microsoft is failing. Xbox 360 isn't selling. PlayStation2 is massively outselling it. Statistics! We need statistics! Not ambiguous statements.

So statistics are what we found. As expected, the findings aren't good.

While the original Xbox is dying a lonely death, failing to shift ANY consoles on certain weeks, Xbox 360 is only just surviving, as you can see: DS Lite (176, 853), PSP (42,604), PS2 (26,451), Xbox 360 (2,246), GBA SP (2,229), Game Boy Micro (1,766), DS (1,530), GameCube (1,039), Xbox (11) and GBA (9).



EXCUSES, EXCUSES...

CLIMAX SAYS SORRY

MotoGP '06 frame rate issues explained

Climax has apologised! Not for England going out of the World Cup or for the existence of *Dynasty Warriors 5 Empires*, neither of which was anything to do with them, but we'd like to hear an apology for them anyway. Instead, the issue tugging at Climax's heartstrings was *MotoGP '06*'s stuttering. Frame. Rate.

The plan was for *MotoGP '06* to run at 60 frames per second like all Climax's previous *MotoGP* games, as development was started on early Xbox 360 SDKs (software development kits). However, Climax was left in the lurch when proposed changes to the SDKs that the developers were banking on didn't come through. "In November 2005, our game was running at 12fps with the render loop taking nearly two frames," explains Climax. "That month news came through from Microsoft that the changes to the Xbox 360 SDK that would allow us to circumvent these draw commands wouldn't be ready in time for our launch. We were in very serious trouble indeed."

Climax then goes into crazy developer moon language speak about how they moved a render loop onto its own processor core, wrote an offline automatic occlusion system and how the system reverts to frustum culling at certain points in the game. All of which translated means: the frame rate was stable but would nose-dive as soon as you veered off track. Climax also addressed the issue of loading times, as you could grow a beard in the time it took to load Laguna Seca. "The new generation of consoles have up to eight times the memory of the previous generation and yet the DVD read speeds have increased by only three times. Even assuming a perfect data read rate, it would take 32 seconds to fill 512MB of memory." And with that, Climax promised that loading times will be addressed in the next *MotoGP*. Still no apology for the existence of *Dynasty Warriors 5* though. Gits. ■

> "Climax addressed the issue of loading times, as you could grow a beard in the time it took to load Laguna Seca"





BBFC LOWERING VIOLENCE RATINGS FOR DEAD RISING?

Blood drop

Following the furore as *Dead Rising* took a bite out of Germany's morals and standards when it was denied an age rating, Capcom's zombie-fest sailed onto British shelves uncut and untroubled. The big surprise here wasn't the decision itself, as pleased as we are to see the game make it through the censors unharmed. Rather, it was the justification used by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) for letting the game pass through without getting their grubby hands on it that raised eyebrows.

An official statement from the BBFC said: "There is no clear evidence that playing games leads to copycat behaviour," hence the reason that *Dead Rising* was allowed to be released with an 18 rating. "We would only intervene if a game was going further than any other game in terms of interactivity and the thrills it offers a gamer," the BBFC added. This suggests a softening of standards at the BBFC, who tend to throw a hissy fit over games before allowing them to actually clamber onto British shelves. It's hard to tell whether this statement represents a change of heart, particularly until another violent game tests the BBFC waters.

The worry was that *Dead Rising* would have been refused classification as it was in Germany, which effectively made *Dead Rising* an impossible sell in German stores. The only game that has skirted close to being refused classification was *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* following the Hot Coffee outrage, as games featuring graphic sexual content are almost certainly dead in the water.



Even though "sadistic violence or terrorisation" is also seen as fair grounds for refusing classification, *Dead Rising* passed through completely unharmed. This means we're all free to cave Otis' head in with a spade when he calls us yet a-bloody-gain just as we're being attacked by a horde of zombies.

SMALL Print

O UNRLY?

» *Unreal Tournament 2007* won't be released in 2006! That's the *Quantum Leap*-esque news coming from Midway HQ, as it confirmed that the eagerly anticipated FPS will crop up in "the first half of 2007". Which isn't much of a date, given it covers every day from 1 January to 30 June. As for an Xbox 360 release, Midway says: "Nothing is yet confirmed... I would say that your assumption is relatively plausible." Oh, do stop teasing us.



STRANGLEHOLD STRANGLED

» With *Unreal Tournament 2007* delayed, you're going to have to spend your hard-earned cash on something else instead, like *Stranglehold*. Hang on! That's been delayed too! Due to the fact that *Stranglehold* wasn't quite shaping up how developer Midway wanted it to, it's being held back for a release in "early 2007". This should make sure everything is perfect, the slow-mo dives are slow enough and Chow Yun Fat is never seen with anything other than a gun in each hand.



EA GOES OFFLINE

» For all three readers out there still rockin' those EA original Xbox 'classics' such as *Madden NFL 2005* and *NFL Street 2* – bad news. EA will be closing down the servers for those games, so you can't play them online anymore. This follows server closures for EA games such as *UEFA Champions League*, *NFS Underground 2* and *NBA Street V3*. These games won't affect too many people, but it does show what happens when a company ignores Microsoft and ploughs its own path with servers...

"WE'VE MADE SURE THAT PLAYERS AREN'T OVERPOWERED, AND ARE REWARDED FOR USING THE POWERS SMARTLY..."

THE HOT SEAT / BEN SERVISS

With the time-twiddling tomfoolery of TimeShift nearly upon us, we caught up with Associate Producer Ben Serviss for a chinwag...

Time travel in games isn't exactly a new idea by any means, but you'll be hard pushed to see it as well integrated in a game as you will in Saber Interactive's *TimeShift*. But while comparisons can be drawn with other time controlling games like *Blinx* or *Prince Of Persia*, Saber Interactive went about things their own way, as Associate Producer Ben Serviss reveals: "From the ground up, *TimeShift* was designed as a first-person shooter with integrated time powers. If anything, we looked at existing time-play titles for things not to do."

However, implementing such things as time control in a videogame certainly presents challenges of its very own, as Serviss explains: "All too often, people come up and say 'Oh, you can stop time in this game, it'll be so easy,' or 'They must throw waves and waves of enemies at you to make up for the time control, it'll be so hard.' Both are valid concerns, and both are issues we've dealt with way at the beginning of development. [When playing the game] players quickly learn that you can't use Time Slow to steamroll through a typical enemy encounter in one shot, especially since the AI puts up quite a fight. On the other hand, we've made sure that players aren't overpowered, and are rewarded for using the powers smartly."

But while this is a fundamental element of the game, having a solid foundation to build it on is absolutely vital to success. However, Serviss is confident that above all else, gamers will find a solid shooter before them when the game is released: "We made it a critical priority to lay down a solid shooter foundation at the start of development. All of the innovative ideas we've implemented would've been for naught if there wasn't a rock-solid shooting game underneath, and we think gamers will respond to that extra attention."

TimeShift will be available soon. Ben Serviss isn't available soon.





BIOG

NAME/ Ben Serviss
COMPANY/ Saber Interactive
JOB TITLE/ Associate Producer
WORKING ON/ *TimeShift*
DID YOU KNOW? *TimeShift*'s "Linear Sandbox" gameplay lets you use your powers to battle tyranny or experiment with time on hapless enemy soldiers.



Turf Wars Bizarre clamps down on clones

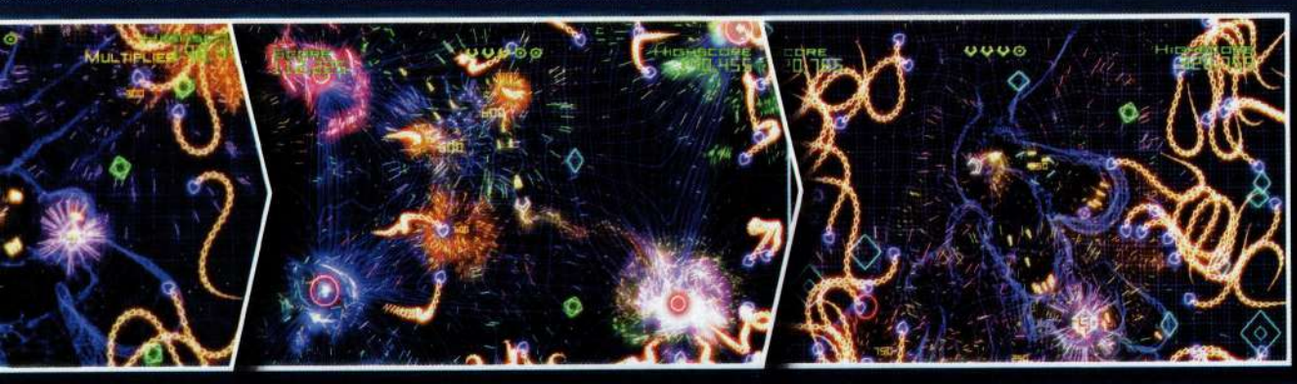
Geometry Wars: Retro Evolved is brilliant. Sure, it might not be the most visually inspiring game on the 360, but through its combination of frantic gameplay, near-perfect learning curve and Xbox Live scoreboards, we're still plugging away at the game when many would-be better games have long since been relegated to dust-collecting duties.

Of course, you need a 360 to play it, and it seems that this hasn't sat too well with certain non-360 owners, some of whom have been busy developing their own clones of the game.

The problem has now reached such proportions that Bizarre Creations has had to step in to stem the flow. The developer has started contacting the distributors of illegal ports of the game requesting they remove their versions immediately, and has also issued a statement through its official forum (http://bizarreonline.net/forum/index.php), citing that: "only hardcore gamers will be aware of any differences between a clone and the original game" and that this "potentially takes sales away from our product and weakens our brand – especially if and when we decide to launch a version of *GW:RE* on a platform where a clone is already available" as the reason for the clampdown.







SMALL Print

JAPAN GETS CHEAP 360S

» With the 360 continuing to struggle in Japan, Japanese retail giant Tsutaya has slashed the price of the 360 in its stores to 29,800 Yen – that's a smidgen under £135. £135! Even considering the continuing lack of decent Japanese games on the format, there's no doubting it's an attractive offer – we just hope Japanese gamers agree and start actually buying the thing. At present, there's no indication of how long this promotion will continue for – only time will tell.



INDIA SET FOR 360

» Microsoft's plans to launch the Xbox 360 in India took another big step forwards this month, with the company revealing that it intends to get the console on shop shelves ahead of the Hindu festival of Diwali (on 21 October this year). So, come launch day then, Indian gamers will have the choice of the Hard Drive equipped premium system (expected to retail for 23,990 Rupee – about £270) or the core package (which will go for 19,900 Rupees, or about £225), and will come bundled with a game to boot..



360 PAD RETHINK

» Speaking at the recent Gamefest 2006 event in Seattle, Rob Walker – Microsoft's Product Unit Manager for Hardware – confirmed that the company is looking at possible changes to the current 360 joypad. The revisions under consideration focus on the right analogue stick, with the aim being to make it more responsive for use in such games as first-person shooters. Walker confirmed that at present this is a long-term project and that Microsoft has no concrete plans to introduce such a pad.



SMALL Print

HADOUKEN?

» *Street Fighter II': Hyper Fighting* has become the fastest selling downloadable title on Xbox Live Arcade, beating the record held by *UNO*. "We are elated by the tremendous response..." blah blah blah, said some guy at Capcom. The reason we're mentioning this news? Well, the chances of Xbox's 2D fighting games library becoming backwards compatible has essentially plummeted to zero. Capcom and SNK will now want to keep their titles under lock and key for future Xbox Live Arcade release. Sigh.



HALO DIRECTOR

» Bungie's movie adaptation of *Halo* will be handled by the biggest name on the circuit, Neil Blomkamp! Yes! Blomkamp has directed adverts and was nominated for an Emmy for his work on the *Dark Angel* TV series. Big whoop. "With Neil on board, I'm even more excited by the potential of this project," said executive producer Peter Jackson. Production will begin in New Zealand soon, with a release due for summer 2008.



RISING DOT COM

» Not a major news story, granted, but check out what we found: if you go to **www.xbox.com:80/ja-JP** rather than the usual **xbox.com**, you get sent to the Japanese version of the same site. Things we found out: their Xbox Live Gold package includes 200 Microsoft Points and *Tetris Grandmaster Ace*. Worth a look, if only for the colourful insanity of it all.

DEAD RISES AGAIN?

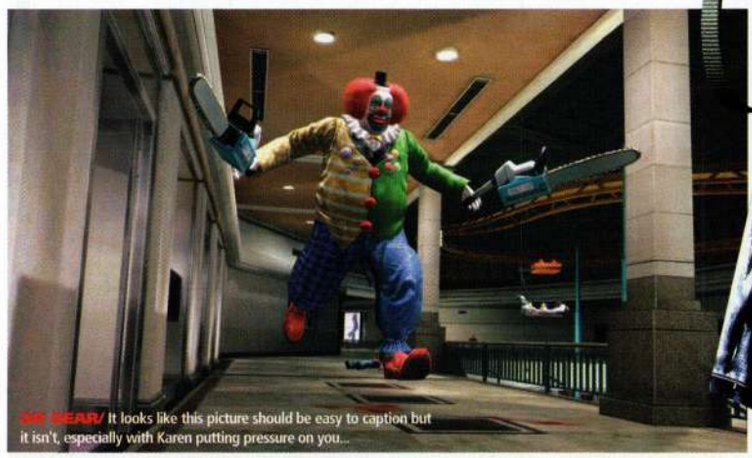
Capcom asks fans about Dead Rising sequel

The zombie-bashing has only just begun in earnest with Capcom's release of *Dead Rising*, but the Japanese uber-developers hate the undead so much, enquiries about a sequel have already started. A survey that appeared on Capcom's website asked the usual bunch of ragtag questions, such as what consoles do you own, what genres of game do you like, what did you have for breakfast, tell me about your mother, blah blah blah. Nothing spectacular, but question eight poses this little multiple-choice thinker:

If a sequel to this game were to be released, would you buy it?

I would even buy a new console to play a sequel on if I had to.
I would buy it if it came out on a console I own.
I would wait and see how it is received first.
I would want to play it but wouldn't want to buy it.
I wouldn't buy it.

A sequel hasn't been officially announced and won't be for some time given *Dead Rising* has only just clambered onto shelves, but clearly this line of questioning shows it's not too far from Capcom's thoughts. Worryingly, it also hints that *Dead Rising 2* could be single-format. So do your bit and vote for the second answer! Not that we have anything against PlayStation3 in particular, it's more that we can't be bothered to buy a new console just for one game. The survey is up at **ww2.capcom.com/deadrisingsurvey**. ■



OH DEAR/ It looks like this picture should be easy to caption but it isn't, especially with Karen putting pressure on you...



(DR) NO BOND

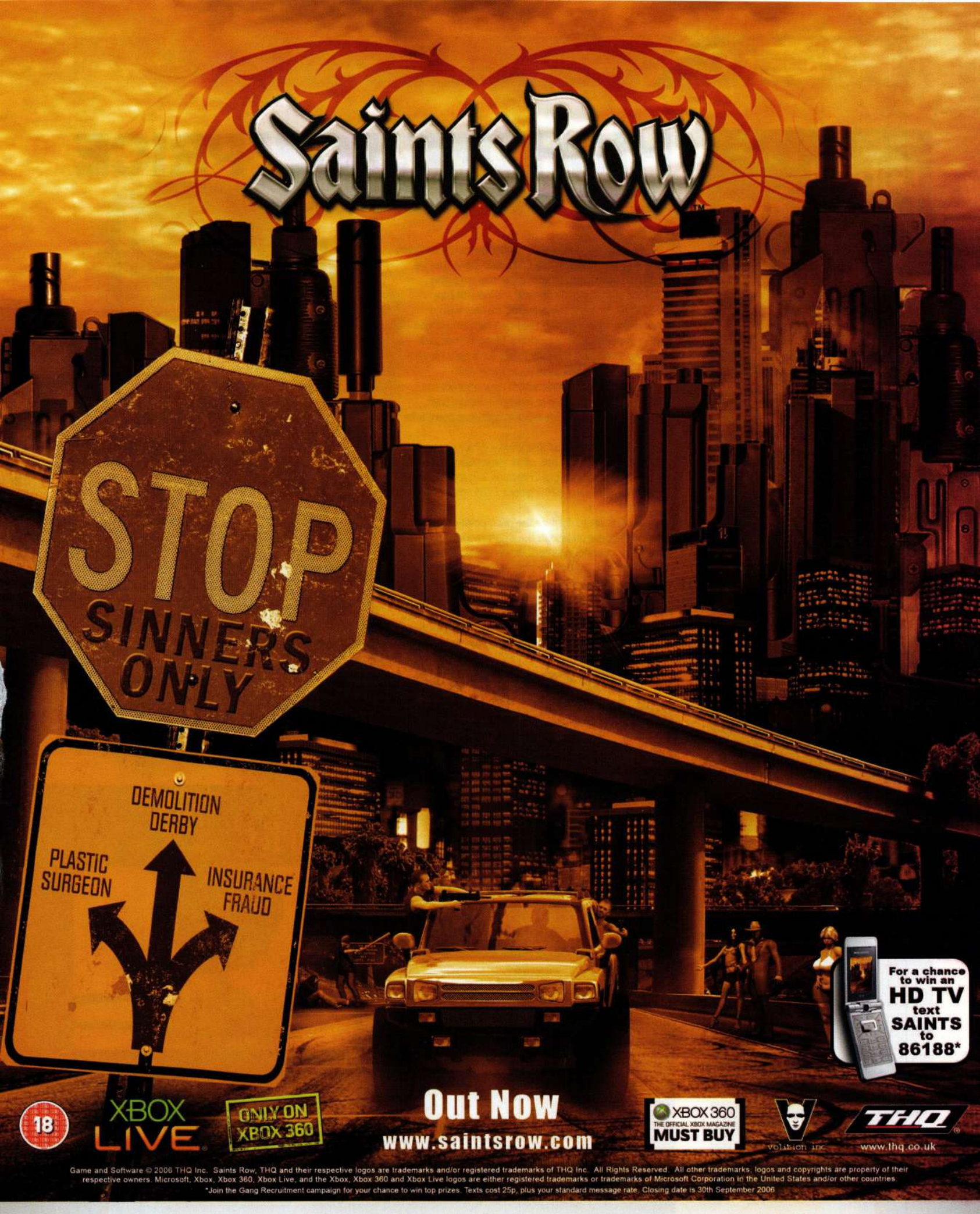
Activision ignores Casino Royale



WHILE IT'S common knowledge that Activision has pinched the James Bond licence from under the nose of EA, it's only just been revealed that there won't actually be a game based on the forthcoming *Casino Royale* movie.

Rather than rush a game out to meet the movie's theatrical release, Activision is already looking ahead to the next movie, which is pencilled in for release on 2 May 2008. No reason has been given for the *Casino Royale* shun but we'd like to think it's because Activision wants to make sure the next Bond release is a good one rather than continue the tradition of rushed, sub-par film tie-ins. Then again, it could be because Activision hates Daniel Craig and hopes a box office disaster means someone else assumes the role of James Bond for the next movie. Who knows?

What we do know though, is that Daniel Craig is signed up for the next film in the series, developer Treyarch will be manning the helm for the game and already the developers are advertising for programmers and artists to work on the franchise, presumably artists capable of replicating Craig's charisma-free, lumpy potato face.



Game and Software © 2006 THQ Inc. Saints Row, THQ and their respective logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of THQ Inc. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks, logos and copyrights are property of their respective owners. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, and the Xbox, Xbox 360 and Xbox Live logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

*Join the Gang Recruitment campaign for your chance to win top prizes. Texts cost 25p, plus your standard message rate. Closing date is 30th September 2006

Jump in.

XBOX 360™

MULTIFORMAT

Behind Enemy Lines

We look at what the competition has to offer...

You know what they say: "Keep your friends close but your enemies closer", so with that in mind we take a sneaky peek at what the competition is up to...

PSP PRICE CUT?



THE LAST few months haven't been kind to the PSP. With the leaner, meaner DS Lite fast becoming a speck on the global sales horizon, analysts (ie people who get paid lots of money to look at stats, only to wind up drawing the same conclusion as everyone else) are now predicting that Sony will need to slash the price of the PSP in order to stay competitive. Citing "lost momentum" as the reason for his prediction, industry analyst PJ McNealy predicted that Sony would have to knock $50 off the price of the PSP, when speaking to CNN Money recently. Sony denied the company has a price cut planned for the PSP at the moment – but, they would say that, wouldn't they?

Wii-LY CHEAP?



ANYONE CONCERNED that the Wii was going to be anything less than cheap can breathe easier this month, following reports that the console could cost as little as £90 when it hits shelves in Japan. Back in May, Nintendo revealed that the console would launch at a price under 25,000 Yen (115 notes), but according to the website arm of the *Nikkei Business Daily*, the manufacturing costs of the CPU used in the console are now so cheap that the Wii could hit the shelves for as little as 19,800 Yen – a couple of pennies over £90.

LOG ON TO **www.360magazine.co.uk/X360/forum** to vote on next month's burning issue question: Are you happy with your 360?

HIGH DEF, LOW PRICE

HD-DVD set to go for a song

With the world and its dog seemingly hellbent on shunning the DVD collections they've spent the last half a decade amassing in favour of starting afresh with the new Blu-ray or HD-DVD formats, it leaves 360 owners with a conundrum – how to play next-gen movies without paying the extortionate amounts being demanded by money-grabbing manufacturers for a new player?

Fortunately, help will soon be at hand with Microsoft's HD-DVD player, which now appears to have moved a step closer to reality if a report from Taiwan's Digitimes website (**www.digitimes.com**) is to be believed.

According to the report, the drive – which connects to the console through one of its three USB ports – will not only go on sale before Christmas, but it will also sell for a rather appealing $200 (about £105, give or take a few pence).

Microsoft is yet to confirm the price point or launch date for the drive (although the smart money is on some form of announcement at the Leipzig Games Convention or X06) but the cost of the add-on itself should be relatively low compared to the price of standalone HD-DVD players. While it'll spin the discs and send information to the console, the 360 itself will be responsible for the decoding and displaying of the images though, which should help reduce the costs. ■



> "The cost of the add-on itself should be relatively low"

MORE WEBCAM DETAILS

Eye(Toy) on the world

After months of silence, Microsoft used its Gamefest event to reveal a few more details about its Xbox Live Vision webcam. While such details as an official launch date and price were not given, Microsoft did confirm that when it does arrive in the shops you'll not only get the camera but *TotemBall* as well.

Developed by Britsoft developers Strange Flavour and Freeverse – the latter being the developer of ToySight for Apple's iSight camera – the idea of the game is to guide a wheeled totem pole around various levels collecting items and reaching the exit within the time frame.

Likewise, Microsoft's Jeff Stone confirmed at the show that more gesture-based games were also in development, but stopped short of actually confirming specific games.

While comparisons with Sony's EyeToy are inevitable, it should be noted that Microsoft's plans for its peripheral extend beyond the groundwork already laid down by Sony's webcam; not only will it be used as a control method and as a dedicated video chat client, but such things as video chat and face mapping will also find their way into games as well (such as *UNO* or *World Series Poker* respectively).



While Microsoft opted against confirming a launch date and price, US game retailer GameStop has listed the game and camera package as shipping on 19 September for $39.99 (which, if true, will probably translate to £30-35 here on British shores). ■

X360 Hot PROSPECT

SENKO NO RONDE

Is this the greatest 360 game you'll never play?



ORDINARILY WE wouldn't get excited about a game like *Senko No Ronde*. It's not much to look at, it's as bare bones as arcade ports get and it's yet to be confirmed for Western release.

But this is no ordinary game. In fact, it's possibly the most amazing game to hail from the Land of the Rising Sun this side of *Ridge Racer 6*.

What makes 'Senky' so amazing is its gameplay. Imagine the best elements of a shoot-'em-up, sticking them in a one-on-one mech fighting game and you will be halfway to understanding what Senky's all about.

From the shmup end of the gaming spectrum, you've got the top-down camera angle, complex bullet patterns and screen-filling B.O.S.S. mode (which sees your character morph into the sort of colossal boss you would expect to find in a shmup). From the mech side of things, you have got the boost function and limited array of attacks found in the likes of *Virtual On*.

However, while these two genres might sound like unlikely bedfellows, the manner in which GRev has managed to balance them out ensures this is one of the most playable games to hit the 360 in ages, offering an impressive degree of tactical depth usually reserved for the likes of *Virtual On*, with the frantic bullet dodging gameplay of a shmup.

Rounded off with a decent spread of characters, it's scant wonder that we're rather smitten with the game. Indeed, the only downside is that Western publishers haven't signed the game up for release over here. However, with the likes of Ubisoft and Atari happy to peddle half-arsed Japanese efforts like *Import Tuner Challenge* and *Bullet Witch* here – and Sega publishing the game in Japan – there is still some hope. ■



IN THE SPIN

WE CUT THROUGH THE CRAP OF THE PR MACHINE

VIVA PIÑATA

Viva means live, piñata is a small cardboard animal that small children batter with sticks until they break apart at the side and spill their guts out in the form of cheap sweets. Viva and piñata don't seem like a perfect fit but no matter. Piñata Island where the "animbassadors" of fun can blast off giant piñata cannons to reach any party on the island. It's a completely bonkers storyline but the important things to remember are first, it's a game rooted in fun and second, it has a glowing sheep.

"THE "VIVA PIÑATA" GAMEPLAY EXPERIENCE PRESENTS A CUSTOMISABLE, SOCIAL AND SPONTANEOUS WORLD IN WHICH GAMERS PLAY AN ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL ROLE"

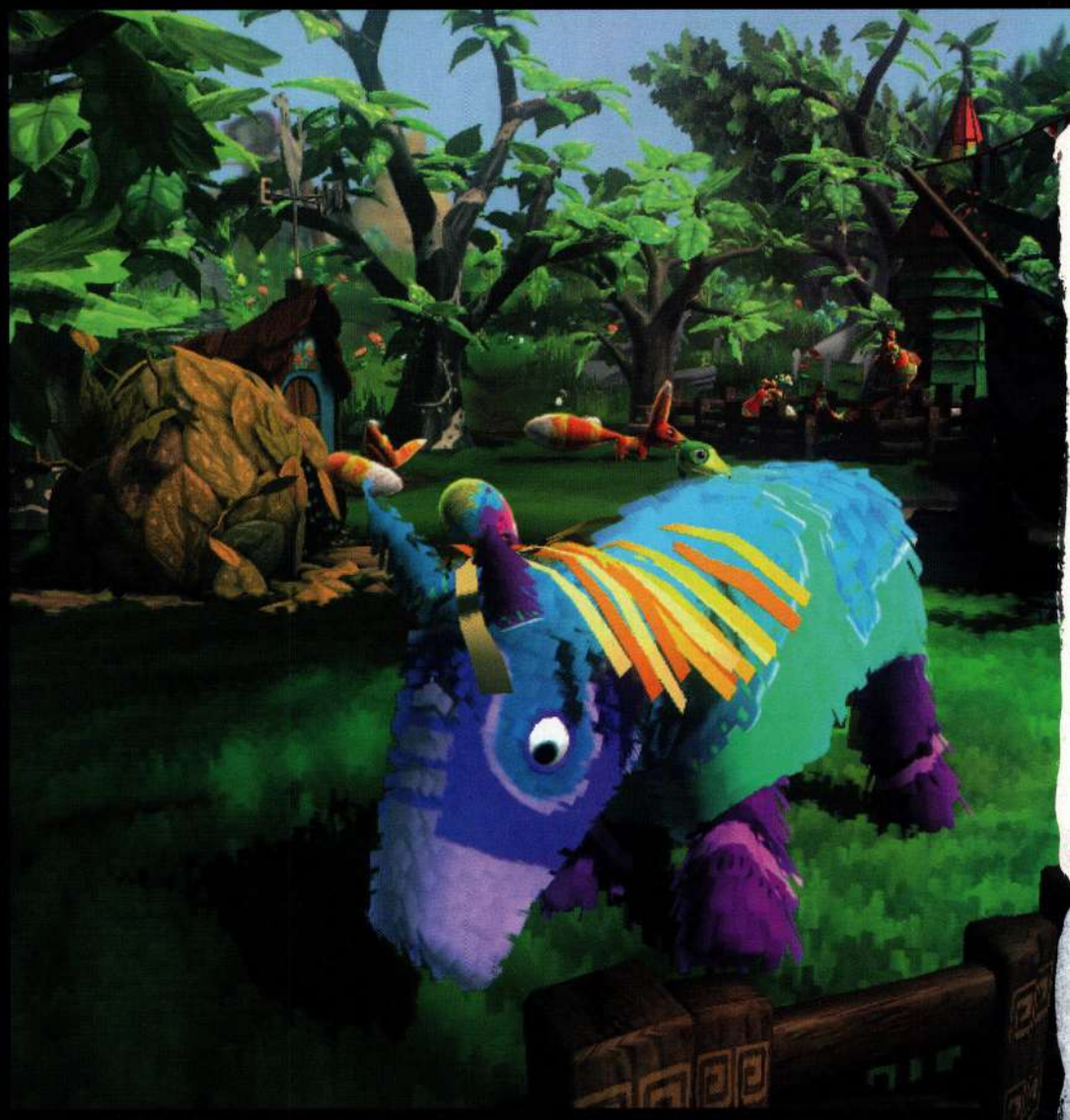
How many games can you think of where gamers don't play a crucial role, let alone an absolutely crucial one? Exactly. Without anyone to press start, all you can do is look at the title screen, as the logo shimmers and twirls about slightly and the background slowly pans through the green valley behind it, showing Piñata running around, as a tantalising glimpse of what might lie ahead.

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔✔✔✔

"VIVA PIÑATA ALLOWS PLAYERS' IMAGINATIONS TO RUN WILD BY PROVIDING THEM WITH EXPANSIVE FREEDOM AND CHOICE"

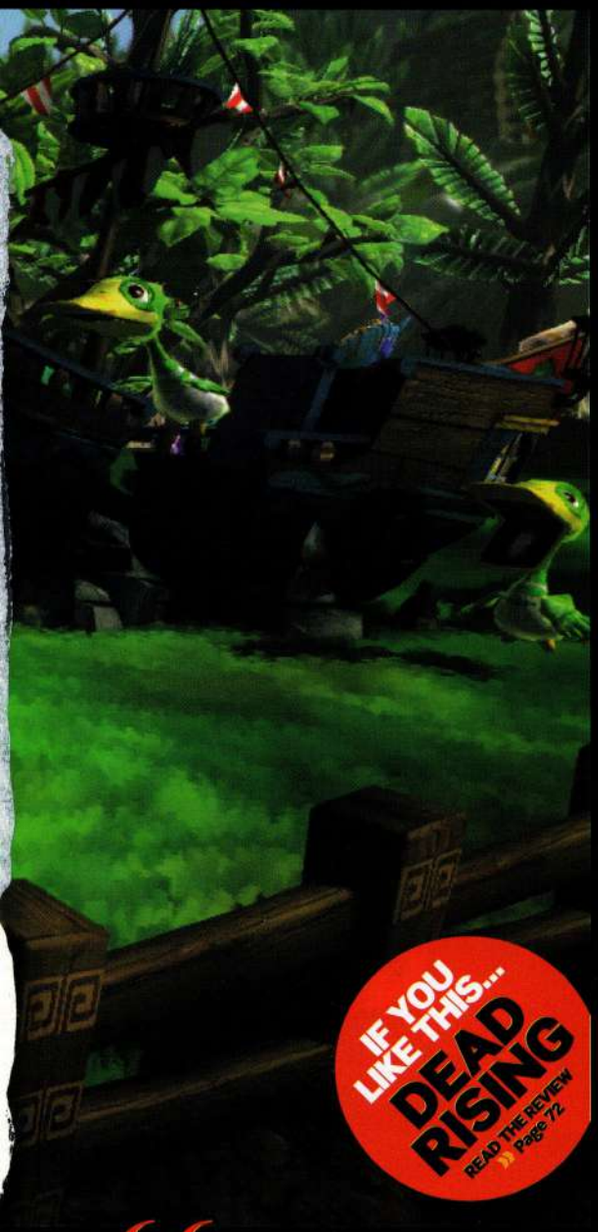
Perhaps not. Our imagination has conjured up a shiny 70-foot tall android that breathes fire at peasants, tramples children underfoot, shouts "DESTROY" and craps metal bricks as its main weapon of attack yet it's doubtful *that's* going to make it in the game. Still, the Piñata themselves are colourful and you can deck them out with all sorts of accessories to make them unique. It's just enough to convince us and the peasants and children get to live in peace, hooray!

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔✔●●





FLUFFY BEAR/ But we don't care about the bear. Look at the sheep! They're brilliant! They also glow. That's why we want to play this game NOW!



"WHETHER YOU REMAIN WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF YOUR OWN WORLD OR VENTURE OUT INTO THE REAL WORLD OR YOUR FRIEND'S PIÑATA WORLD VIA XBOX LIVE, THE FIRST AND ONLY GLOBAL, UNIFIED ONLINE CONSOLE GAMES SERVICE"

Very sneaky! Rare paying lip service to Microsoft and Xbox Live! To be fair, we'd do exactly the same if we were bought out for the equivalent of a small country's GDP, spent a few years scratching our arse, then released *Perfect Dark Zero* complete with the most embarrassing roll move seen in a game. Rare is trying to make up and the grovelling begins on the press release.

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔✔

"GETTING TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE PERSONALITIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF YOUR PIÑATAS IS ESSENTIAL IF YOU WANT THEM TO STAY HAPPY AND THRIVE. MAKE YOUR WORLD THEIR IDEAL PARADISE AND THEY'LL WANT TO RAISE A FAMILY"

Raise a family?! That means sex! Don't worry parents, it's all very, very sweet and saccharine. All together now, including you Jack Thompson – awwww.

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔✔✔

"SOUR PIÑATAS WITH BAD ATTITUDES AND TROUBLEMAKING RUFFIANS DO THEIR WORST TO SPOIL YOUR CREATION AND MUST BE DEALT WITH"

We can't remember the last time any press release used the word 'ruffians', let alone one to do with videogames. Maybe in Ye Olde London Towne there was a tattered notice stuck up by the local bobby, demanding information on ruffians who stole turnips from the local vegetable stall. But on a press release? In 2006? We can confidently predict *Viva Piñata* will be ruffians-free.

CHANCES OF HAPPENING: ✔✔

IF YOU LIKE THIS... DEAD RISING READ THE REVIEW » Page 72

"IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER: ROOTED IN FUN AND GLOWING SHEEP"





TRENDS: Mouthy developers

They're being silly again!

1. KEN LEVINE



The boss of *BioShock* developer Irrational delivered a huge pimp slap to EA: "One of the reasons I wasn't interested [in *System Shock 3*] is EA just didn't give a [censored] about the game. I think if EA were to do it, it would've been a regular first-person shooter with a boss monster at the end." That sounds awesome!

2. DEREK DANIELS



The developer of *God Of War* recently said: "In the game design world you have Miyamoto, Kojima, Will Wright, David Jaffe and handful of others that have risen to the top that have a little more control of their future. Then you have other faceless designers that no one knows working on games doing things that I'm sure their mothers do not want to hear."

3. GREG CANESSA



Xbox Live Arcade chief Greg Canessa recently defended Konami's *Frogger*. When asked how Microsoft decides when a game is of a high enough quality for XBLA, because *Frogger* looks a bit pish, he answered "Well, quality is a pretty subjective bar." What? LOOK AT IT GREG! Look at it!



THE JOCK
Rab Florence

ZOMBIES, EH?

When will they stop teasing us?

Since I downloaded the *Dead Rising* demo, I've been having fantasies about the Zombie Apocalypse. We all want one, don't we? Secretly, down in the dark place in our soul, we want the Zombie Apocalypse to begin and spare us from exciting things like paying the gas bill and having to cut our toenails.

That guy out of *Dead Rising* is one lucky bastard. Seriously. He's right in there, arse-deep in the undead. Now, I know he's not a real human being. I do realise he's a computer man. But still, he must be absolutely loving it. He has no responsibilities, other than wearing silly clothes while he throws compact discs at reanimated corpses. He's the guy we all wanted to be when we left school, but no careers advice guy ever told us where to study the kind of photography that got you a sweet gig taking comedy snaps of dead women piled up in a water feature.

Games can depress you sometimes. When you play *Dead Rising*, you realise that you'll never be the guy with the shotgun clearing a room full of shambling horrors from beyond the grave. You'll always be the guy watching *Countdown* with a hard-on. You'll always be the guy who burns the toast, and sits in his pants reading the back of a crisp packet. You'll never slice a dead girl's nut off with a Katana. And even though we put a brave face on it, we all know it's terribly unfair.

Non-gamers don't know what it's like. They're happy with their humdrum existence. Gamers are like Rutger Hauer at the end of *Blade Runner*. "I've seen things you people wouldn't believe." How can some poor bastard be the Master Chief then go and work in a call centre? You'd hang yourself, wouldn't you?

They should be banned, these games. Not because they might turn us all knock-nutted and violent, but because they let us see what life could be like if we were invaded by aliens or infected with a zombie-virus from a meteor. We're constantly teased by a million little "What If?" scenarios that allow us to be heroes and psychopaths. Our most base desires are indulged, and we sit there drenched in sweat, making our virtual avatar chop people up and freefall from spaceships and have sex with prostitutes. And then we need to turn it off and go and do the dishes. Maybe we'll treat ourselves to a Pot Noodle afterwards.

The sad thing is that years of "GAMES SEND YOU MENTAL" headlines have forced gamers onto the back foot. We all need to go around with our little soapbox, telling anyone who'll listen that we don't like the violence, and that no game has ever made us want to stab a nun. But, you know, if I'm being honest...

Me, covered head to toe in blood, doing all sorts of angriness all over people. Nobody to stop me. Nobody to question me. Lawless, crazy, mad, bad and off my bleedin' nut. Aye. I can go with that.

Zombie Apocalypse. Now. ■

Rab can no longer go shopping without throwing things.

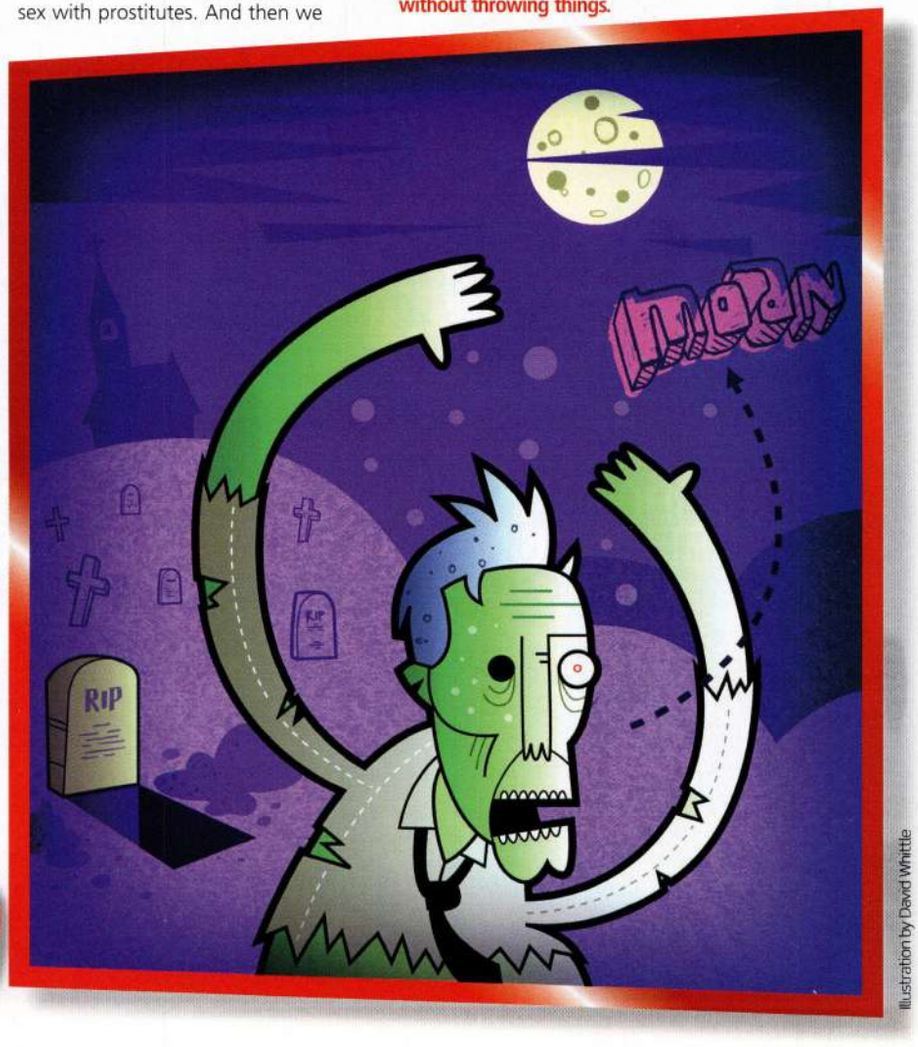


Illustration by David Whittle

> "YOU'LL NEVER SLICE A GIRL'S NUT OFF WITH A KATANA... IT'S TERRIBLY UNFAIR"

TIME IS THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

CONTROL TIME
Slow, stop, and reverse functions.

MULTIPLAYER
Experience mind-bending online multiplayer.

CINEMATIC QUALITY ENVIRONMENTS
Tracked and recorded for seamless time control.

9 DEVASTATING WEAPONS
With standard and alternate fire.

18

PC DVD ROM

XBOX 360. XBOX LIVE

POWERED BY gamespy

SABER

SIERRA SIERRA.COM

To find your nearest Approved Stockist go to
vugames.co.uk/approvedstockists

© 2006 Sierra Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Designed and developed by Saber Interactive. Timeshift, Sierra and the Sierra logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc., in the U.S. and/or other countries. GameSpy and the "Powered by GameSpy" design are trademarks of GameSpy Industries, Inc. All rights reserved. The NVIDIA logo and "The Way It's Meant to be Played" logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logos, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.



THE CHICK
Kirsten Kearney

BACK IN THE DAY

Was it always this hard?

The rose-tinted glasses are off. They are off and smashed on the floor with some wee on them and also, they're in a puddle of vomit I made when I realised that I cannot play *Street Fighter*. I am utterly pish at *Street Fighter*. I cannot do a Spinning Bird Kick to save my life and if my Chung–Li gets punched right up the front bottom by Ryu one more time I'm going to kill myself. I was so sure I was good at this 15 years ago. Ah, back in my youth when me and a lovely young handsome chap I used to know would kick the crap out of each other on the old SNES and then do some smoochin'. He was my Ryu and I was his Chung-Li and we were brilliant! We were *Street Fighter* masters and could beat anybody and now it's all ruined!

I want to believe – like so many who have convinced themselves that the Live Arcade has done something to *Street Fighter II'* – that the controller is no use for it; that it's even harder than the coin-op; that it's a lag issue. However, the fact is that it was always this hard, we're just shite at it and always were. You know how I know this? Because *Street Fighter II'* isn't the only coin-op we've been supposedly 'lucky' enough to have thrust back into our lives like a prodigal long forgotten fat stupid son.

Let's not forget *Galaga*. I'd have sworn I could have stormed through good old *Galaga* with my eyes shut and all my fingers broken, but what's this? A bunch of kamakazi alien fighter ships who will not only go straight for me but will go off the screen and smash into me from underneath? How did I forget about that? I'll tell you how because it was 25 bloody years ago. As for *Frogger*... sweet baby Moses in a basket, how hard can it really be to get a stupid frog across a road? Not only is it insanely hard, but after about the third level I don't CARE whether the frog makes it because it's a FROG on a ROAD. Where's my motivation? As for *Pac-Man*, let's just say *Pac-Man* does not make me want to say "waka waka waka". It makes me want to say many things none of which are big, clever or allowed to be printed.

So, sadly, it seems that bringing back the old classic arcade titles hasn't in fact rekindled old memories or brought the warm tickly feeling to my tummy of nostalgia for those halcyon days. It turns out all those memories are a sham. Those games were weapons grade balonium. I actually saw my Ryu in a café in Glasgow recently and you know what? He was a fat ugly twat. I could hear him talking to his mate and he was as boring as hell. I can see my memories being torn down as a negative thing but I choose to see it as invigorating. I'm going to download every 'classic' release on the Live Arcade and be pish at them all. C'mon Microsoft, bring it on. ■

Kirsten wishes she actually owned a pair of rose-tinted glasses.



Illustration by David Whittle

> "AS FOR FROGGER, SWEET BABY MOSES IN A BASKET, HOW HARD CAN IT BE TO GET A FROG ACROSS THE ROAD?"



london games festival 2006

in association with CREATIVE LONDON

02 - 07 OCTOBER 2006

A CELEBRATION OF INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

www.londongamesfestival.com

The first ever London Games Festival, a celebration of everything that video games have to offer, featuring a series of diverse, high-profile events in venues across London. From hi-def cinema tournaments to seminars on how to get into the industry, from celebrity face-offs to a Dragon's Den style pitching event for new game ideas. And of course an opportunity to see, play and win some of the biggest games and platforms for Christmas...

EVENTS

Face-off Tournament
2nd October
www.londongamesfestival.com

Launch Pad
2nd - 7th October
www.londongamesfestival.com

London Game Career Fair
3rd - 4th October
www.gamecareerfair.com

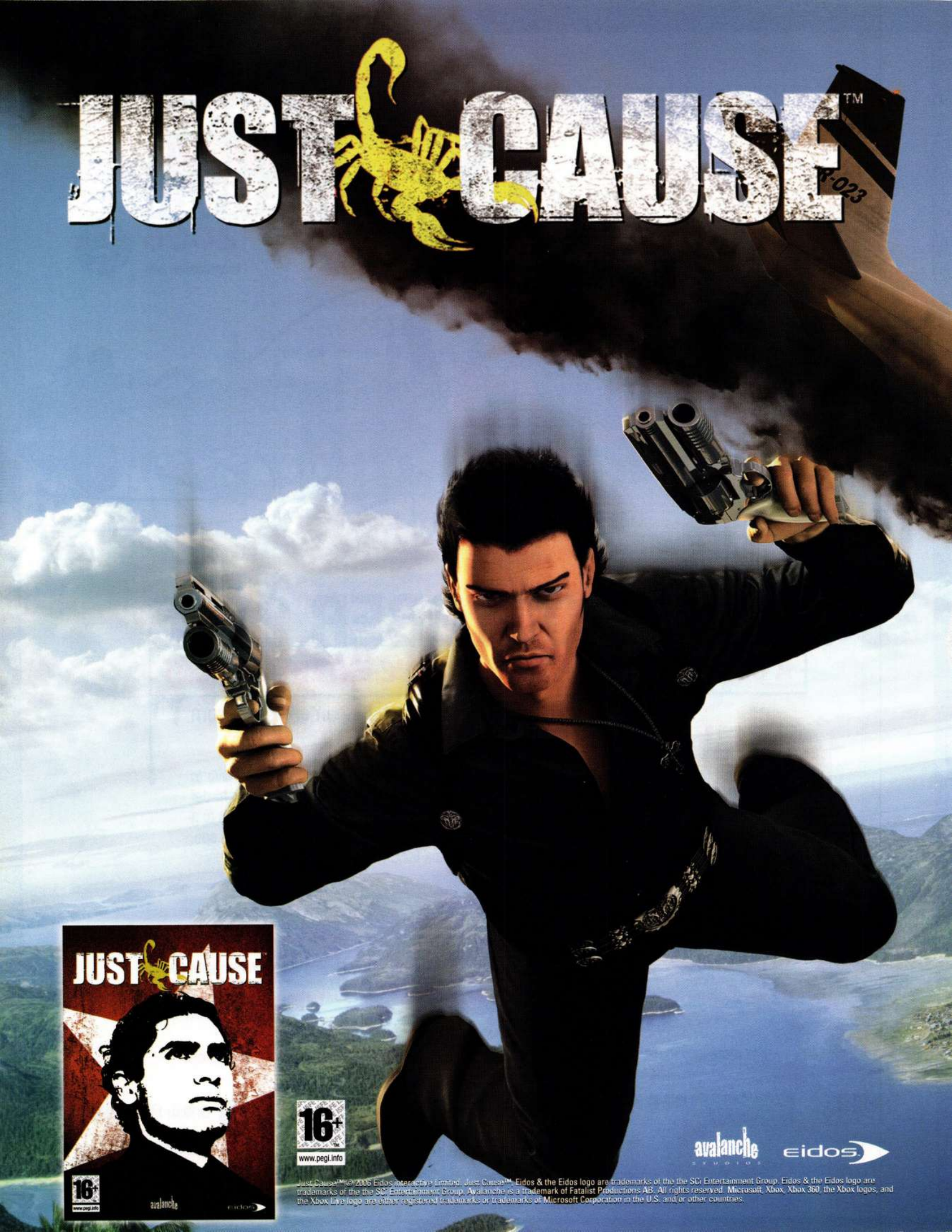
Dragon's Den
3rd October
www.londongamesfestival.com

Cinema Showdown
4th - 7th October
www.londongamesfestival.com

Playing Films, Watching Games
7th October
www.bfi.org.uk

For more information, more events and to register go to **www.londongamesfestival.com**

LONDON DEVELOPMENT AGENCY · BRITISH ACADEMY games awards · elspa Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association · EA GAMES · HMV top dog for music·dvd·games · vue · XBOX 360 · bfi British Film Institute · 2K · ip IMAGINE PUBLISHING


JUST CAUSE™
1-023
JUST CAUSE
16+
www.pegi.info
avalanche
eidos
Just Cause™ © 2006 Eidos Interactive Limited. Just Cause™, Eidos & the Eidos logo are trademarks of the the SCi Entertainment Group. Eidos & the Eidos logo are trademarks of the the SCi Entertainment Group. Avalanche is a trademark of Fatalist Productions AB. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, the Xbox logos, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries.

DPR-023
XBOX
XBOX 360

HORIZON

ICONS CUTE, AND USEFUL

SHOOTER · FIGHTER · PUZZLE · ADVENTURE · RACING · UK · JAPAN · USA · BEARDY · SLEEPER
CUTE · GIRLY · SCARY · BORING · MANLY · AMBITIOUS · CASH-IN · CONFUSING · DEAD CERT · ADULT



BIG GAME

DEAD OR ALIVE XTREME 2

Team Ninja adds substance to softcore style

SMALL DETAILS
RELEASE/ 2007
PUBLISHER/ Tecmo
DEVELOPER/ Team Ninja
GENRE/ Sports
LIVE/ Yes

At the time of writing, the great British summer seems to be reverting to its more familiar wet and windy self, so cranking up the central heating and hitting the virtual beach with the *Dead Or Alive* girls seems like a rather appealing prospect.

As with the original, the Vacation mode forms the crux of the single-player game. Spanning a two-week period, players are free to enter the jet-ski events and the beach volleyball from the off, but for the additional events you will need to buy tickets to enter.

While the jet-ski events will include stunt elements, the girls won't have their own sets of moves; rather, each of the five jet skis will handle slightly differently. In addition to this, there will be four classes of jet ski available.

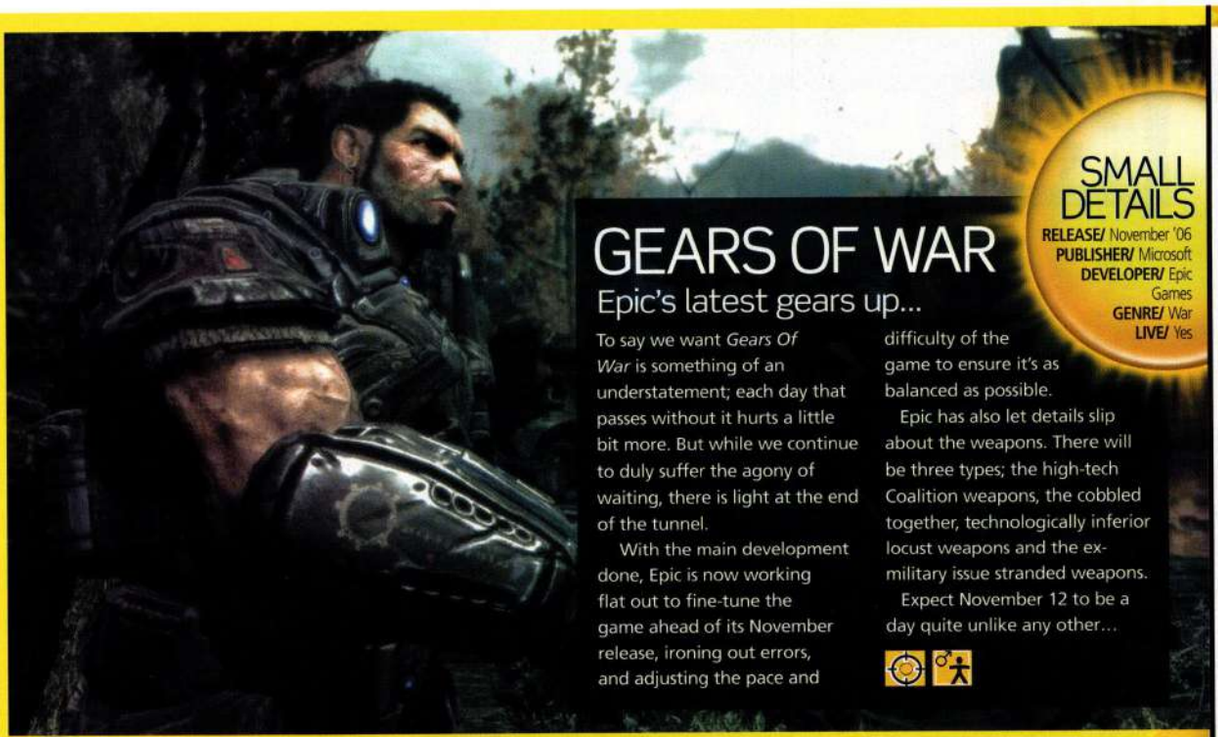
The ticket events will be somewhat more simplistic, being a combination of simple skill games and *Shenmue*-esque quick timer events. The arse-butting contests will play like paper-rock-scissors, while the running events will involve the players bashing buttons to get their girl running. In the float-hopping game, the floats themselves will be colour coded, with players needing to press the face button of the corresponding colour on the joypad.

DOAX2 will also feature the perv-tastic camera mode. Players start off with a clapped-out old camera with manual focus (although an auto focus upgrade can be purchased), with which they must photograph the girls at rest and play. At present, the volleyball mode is still to be implemented properly, but Team Ninja is confident that this aspect of the game will be much more enjoyable than its predecessor.

The biggest change will be the camera; rather than attempting to follow the ball around all the time, the camera will focus on the player's court, which Team Ninja hopes will see the gameplay slowed to a more manageable speed when it hits the shelves next year.



MAKE A SPLASH!/ Forget the volleyballs and try jet-skiing instead



GEARS OF WAR

Epic's latest gears up...

SMALL DETAILS
RELEASE/ November '06
PUBLISHER/ Microsoft
DEVELOPER/ Epic Games
GENRE/ War
LIVE/ Yes

To say we want *Gears Of War* is something of an understatement; each day that passes without it hurts a little bit more. But while we continue to duly suffer the agony of waiting, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

With the main development done, Epic is now working flat out to fine-tune the game ahead of its November release, ironing out errors, and adjusting the pace and difficulty of the game to ensure it's as balanced as possible.

Epic has also let details slip about the weapons. There will be three types; the high-tech Coalition weapons, the cobbled together, technologically inferior locust weapons and the ex-military issue stranded weapons.

Expect November 12 to be a day quite unlike any other...

GTR

PGR too easy for you? Try this one for size

SMALL DETAILS
RELEASE/ Q1 '07
PUBLISHER/ THQ
DEVELOPER/ Sim Bin
GENRE/ Driving
LIVE/ Yes

If you've ever wondered just how hardcore racing games can get, banish all thoughts of *PGR* and *Test Drive* and look this way. Developed by racing game specialists Sim Bin, *GTR* has already set the standard for driving sim realism in the PC market.

The 360 version will come with the full FIA GT licence, meaning you'll be able to bang wheels with the likes of the Aston DBR9, Maserati MC12 or Ferrari 550 Maranello around historic race courses such as Spa. Throw in a decent Live mode and this should prove to be a winner early next year.



BULLET WITCH

Because Japan hates the 360

SMALL DETAILS
RELEASE/ Q4 '06
PUBLISHER/ Atari
DEVELOPER/ Cavia
GENRE/ Action
LIVE/ No

On paper, borrowing gameplay elements from such games as *Devil May Cry* and *BloodRayne* and setting the game in a post-apocalyptic world with a gun-touting witch-chick as a lead character should be a winner. Sadly though, a flawed control system and some rather bland visuals left us unimpressed when we played the Japanese version recently.

Nevertheless, it's not stopping Atari from unleashing the game in the West – we just hope they can improve it ahead of its release.



TIMESHIFT

Make history, then freeze it. And unfreeze it

SMALL DETAILS
RELEASE/ September '06
PUBLISHER/ Vivendi
DEVELOPER/ Saber Games
GENRE/ FPS
LIVE/ Yes

The FPS has been undergoing a bit of a renaissance of late, with *Prey*'s mind-defying gravity tomfoolery set to be joined by *TimeShift*'s time-bending antics in September.

And now Saber Interactive and Vivendi have announced who will be providing the game's voice-overs. Dennis Quaid (*Enemy Mine, Frequency, Innerspace*) will be voicing lead character Michael Swift, Michael Ironside ('Jester' in *Top Gun* and the voice of Sam Fisher) will take on Professor Krone, while Nick Chinlund (*Con Air, Training Day*) will be vocalising General Mitchell's character.



PROFILE

Koei

Founded in 1978 in Japan (the name being derived from the names of two fictitious individuals to avoid giving credit to individuals within the organisation) Koei initially made its name with Japanese dating sims, although Western gamers will probably know them best for their *Samurai* and *Dynasty Warriors* games.

Having recently released *Dynasty Warriors 5 Empires* on the 360, Koei is now preparing *Samurai Warriors 2* for the console.



WORKING ON

Samurai Warriors 2

KEY TITLES

- Dynasty Warriors 5
- G1 Jockey 4
- Romance Of 3 Kingdoms

PLAN AHEAD, THE ESSENTIAL...

RACERS



1 FORZA MOTOR-SPORT 2: Expect nothing less than perfection

2 COLIN MCRAE: DIRT: Mud aplenty when this arrives

3 SEGA RALLY REVO: Next-gen overhaul for arcade classic

4 GTR: PC sim set to land on 360 next year

5 NEED FOR SPEED CARBON: The first truly decent *NFS* game? We certainly hope so

HORIZON

CHANCES OF...

Taking days off work to play Dead Rising

65%

Wishing it was summer again

5%

Already getting annoyed about Christmas

70%

Beating AC Clan on Battlefield 2

0%

ONE MINUTE ROAST

Feedback

People leaving bad feedback for losing on *Street Fighter II'*. MAN UP. Stop being a child. And what the hell is Overly Aggressive for anyway? Am I overly aggressive if I don't let up and land a double perfect on your ass? Am I overly aggressive if I constantly attack you? Am I overly aggressive if I don't let you win?

LET'S FACE IT

If you're calling someone out for being Overly Aggressive, take your niceties to the softer arenas of Unranked matches. Fight like men!

The great and the good coming your way in the next year

RELEASELIST

THE SURE THING



PHANTASY STAR UNIVERSE

There are two things this has to do to become our MMORPG of choice: don't be called *Final Fantasy XI* and don't make us kill a million bees. It's fulfilled one of the criteria... can it do the other?

review p80

first-look preview p58

OCTOBER

Bomberman Act: Zero	Konami
The Godfather	EA
Just Cause	Eidos
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	Activision
NBA Live 07	EA
Open Season	Ubisoft
Pro Evolution Soccer 6	Konami
Rayman Raving Rabbids	Ubisoft
Splinter Cell: Double Agent	Ubisoft
Stranglehold	Midway
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	EA

NOVEMBER

Call Of Duty 3	Activision
Crackdown	Microsoft
F.E.A.R.	Vivendi Universal
FIFA 07	EA
Forza Motorsport 2	Microsoft
Gears Of War	Microsoft
Need For Speed Carbon	EA
Phantasy Star Universe	SEGA
Siege of Khe Sanh	G2 Games
SmackDown Vs Raw 2007	THQ
Sonic The Hedgehog	Sega
Superman Returns	EA
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Activision
Too Human	Microsoft

DECEMBER

Bioshock	2K Games



F.E.A.R. Vivendi Universal

preview p38

Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	Ubisoft
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	Capcom
Mass Effect	Microsoft
Stranglehold	Midway
The Darkness	2K Games
Too Human	Microsoft
Viva Pinata	Microsoft

JANUARY

Shadowrun	Microsoft

FEBRUARY

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Ubisoft
Unreal Tournament 2007	Midway
Assassin's Creed	Ubisoft
Medal of Honor: Airborne	EA

TBC

100 Bullets	D3Publisher
Age Of Pirates - Captain Blood	Playlogic
Alan Wake	Microsoft
Armored Core 4	From Software
Army Of Two	EA
Avalon	TBC
Battlefield 2142	EA
Blitz: The League	Midway
Blue Dragon	Microsoft
Castle Wolfenstein	Activision
Colin McRae: DIRT	Codemasters
Condor Trilogy Online	TBC
Dance Revolution Universe	Konami
Dark Sector	TBC
Dirty Harry	Warner Bros. Interactive
Dead Or Alive Xtreme 2	Microsoft
Dead Or Alive: Code Chronos	Microsoft
Duke Nukem Forever	2K Games
Elveon	10tacle Studios
Eragon	Vivendi
Fable 2	Microsoft
Far East Of Eden: Ziria	Hudson

preview p46

Forza Motorsport 2	Microsoft
Frontlines: Fuel Of War	THQ
Golden Axe	Sega
Grand Theft Auto IV	Rockstar Games
Half-Life 2	EA
Halo 3	Microsoft
Hellboy	Konami
Huxley	Webzen
Import Tuner Challenge	Ubisoft
Indiana Jones	Activision
Infernal	Playlogic
Justice League Heroes	Eidos



Dead Or Alive Xtreme 2 Microsoft

Killer Instinct III	Microsoft
Killing Day	Ubisoft
LMA Manager 2006	Codemasters
Lost Odyssey	Microsoft
Love Football	Namco
Medal Of Honor: Airborne	EA
Metronome	TBC
Monster Madness	Artificial Studios
Ninja Gaiden 2	Microsoft
Overlord	Codemasters
Possession	TBC
Resident Evil 5	Capcom
Sega Rally	Sega
Spore	EA
Star Trek: Legacy	Buena Vista
Tenchu 360	TBC
Terra: Formations	Star Cave Studios
The Club	Sega
The Outsider	Frontier
The Sopranos	THQ
Turok	Buena Vista
Two Worlds	Zuxxez
Virtua Tennis 3	Sega
Voodoo Nights	Mindware
Zoids	Atari

only on Xbox 360

CIRCLE OF TRUST

What's getting the X360 team excited this month?

COSPLAY

No matter how much work is being dumped on X360's fragile shoulders or how tired our eyes grow... there's always the joy of finding cosplay pictures for Forward Planner.

FORWARD PLANNER 10/06

OCTOBER

Whether it's games, film or music, don't miss a thing this month – just use the **X360** diary

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
01	02 **DVD RELEASE** *United 93* – So controversial, we're not even going to bother making a joke about it. Nope		04		06 **XBOX 360 RELEASE** *Just Cause* – This features an island half the size of Jamaica. Let's call it Jam!	07
	09 **DVD RELEASE** *Blade Runner: Director's Cut* – Another version is out in early 2007, apparently. Wait for that instead?	10	11	12	13 **XBOX 360 RELEASE** *NBA Live 07* – This is the only game released today. We won't be buying it...	
15	16				20	21
22	23 **DVD RELEASE** *Ice Age 2: The Meltdown* – It's okay. It's alright. As definitive an opinion as we can muster!			26	27	
	30 **DVD RELEASE** *Ultraviolet* – Buy it for Milla Jovovich, realise it's rubbish, watch it again for more Milla. Mmm. Milla	31				

WE'RE ON SALE

On 12 October medieval pipe music will play, children will sing, tramps will link arms and dance a merry jig in the street to herald a brand new issue of X360





SALON DEL MANGA DE BARCELONA

Continuing the Obligatory Cosplay Picture In Forward Planner™ trend, some funky manga festival in Spain. No one will go of course, but look at the picture! Hotness!



"You need to practise your circular motions" – John S

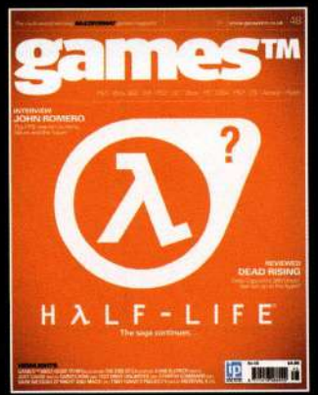


Knowledge is power...

- The UK's biggest videogame magazine
- Written by gamers for gamers
- Unbiased opinions
- Over 70 pages of the latest previews and reviews
- Massive section dedicated to Retro games every month

ISSUE 48 ON SALE 7 SEPTEMBER

The multi award-winning MULTIFORMAT magazine – available from all good newsagents or call for a copy direct on 0870 442 1097



+++ WWE HITS THE 360 +++ BIOSHOCK STORMS IN +++ NEXT-GEN INDY! +++ LOONS AND ROBBERS

PREVIEWS

X360
We cover games in five unique ways. Here's how...

SCREENSHOT	INTERVIEWED	FIRST TEST	FULL ACCESS	ROUND-UP
Let the game do the talking...	The developers openly talk to	Hands-on with st games	Exclusive screens and studio visits	Smaller games examined



HALF-LIFE: EPISODE 2

"A TITLE THAT'S BEEN ACCLAIMED BY MANY IN THE INDUSTRY AS THE BEST GAME EVER MADE"
Tom Leclerc

X360 PREVIEW GAMES
CONTENTS

38 **BIOSHOCK**
It's big, it's deep, it questions your judgement and tests your morals – in short, it's not "just another FPS"...

46 **WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2007**
With scant weeks to go, will the WWE's long overdue debut on the 360 be worth the wait?

52 **HALF-LIFE: EPISODE 2**
Gordon, that crowbar and the 360; it makes so much sense, we don't know why they didn't do it sooner...

54 **INDIANA JONES**
The man with the hat and the whip is back and swinging his way onto Xbox 360.

56 **KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN**
The creators of *Hitman* return with a professional criminal and a nutcase – sounds like the perfect combination to us.

58 **COLIN MCRAE: DIRT**
After a bit of a break, Colin's back with a vengeance as well as a whole lot of new toys to play with.

60 **PREVIEWS ROUND-UP**
A whole lot of Japanese stuff with a shot of American sports – if that tickles your fancy, the round-up will be right up your alley.

Release date/ Q2 '07

Excited?

- **Shoot second/** Less guns and more cerebral action – wonderful stuff
- **First amendment/** Will we really be as free to act as Irrational claims?

BIOSHOCK

Don't do anything that we wouldn't do...

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Take 2 Interactive
Developer/ Irrational Games
Genre/ FPS
Players/ 1
Xbox Live/ No

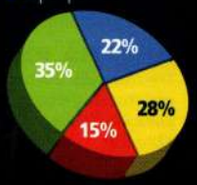
Briefly

Supposedly the 'deepest FPS game ever made', *Bioshock* looks to put the power of choice in the hands of the player

IN THE PIE

Out to shock you...

- Watery graves
- Big Daddies
- Little Sisters
- Super powers



Ken Levine is a fanboy. He's the kind of developer we love to meet – the kind that bounds into the room with the energy of an overenthusiastic six-year-old loaded with sugar. The kind that shakes every hand in the room, then sits down and immediately starts talking passionately about all manner of geeky topics (comics, movies, gaming... you name it) to people he's only just met, as though he's known them for years. The kind that shows off his game with absolute confidence and excitement, again like the same six-year-old showing off his latest toy to his best mates. And he's the kind that's almost too eager to get on with talking one-to-one about his creation, before going off on tangents you never even thought of. He's a gamer, a writer, a geek and a fanboy... and we love him for it.

Why? Probably because when the creators of a game are as fervent about it as the gamers waiting to play it, you know that only good things can happen. Well, most of the time. Thankfully, Irrational Games is one of those rare places where it's not about the money, the prestige or the need to push products out the door; instead, publisher Take 2 (who bought up Irrational back in January) has given the developer a huge amount of creative freedom to make the games it wants to make. The result? Right now, it's *Bioshock* – Ken's prodigal son of which he's oh-so-proud, and the reason why he made our recent visit to see the game at Irrational's offices in Boston such a joy.

Of course, it's very easy to dismiss *Bioshock* just from glancing at the various screenshots scattered around these pages. After all, the Xbox 360 isn't exactly short of first-person shoot-'em-ups (either already released like *Quake 4*, *Prey* and *Call Of Duty 2* or up-and-coming such as *TimeShift*, *F.E.A.R.* and *Half-Life 2*), so adding yet another one to the increasingly growing pile isn't exactly the most stimulating news ever. But wait! Don't get bored and run off. The thing that makes *Bioshock* stand out isn't so much its functionality as an FPS, but rather everything else going on around the shooting – in fact, the actual blasting almost takes a backseat to all the other facets of the game, just because there are so damn many of them.

Take control

Put simply, *Bioshock* is less of an FPS and more a sandbox-style game (much as we loathe the term ourselves) where progress and decisions are made entirely by the player. It's got elements of an RPG to it, much in the same way that *Deus Ex* managed to have oh-so-long ago, that allow you to develop your character in all manner of different ways. It uses the concept of crafting – something once restricted to only the most hardcore of MMO adventure games – to give players the opportunity to construct their own weapons, items and armour. And most importantly of all, it really tries to make you think about your actions rather than just putting you against a horde of faceless enemies and letting you pull the trigger. It's a game that tries to think 'outside the box' (again, another term we loathe) as much as possible, without taking things so far that you haven't got a clue what you're doing. As Levine so aptly puts it, *Bioshock* is 'the same, but different'. And that's a good thing. »

> "Bioshock is all about choices... choices that ask the biggest question of them all: 'Would you?'"



As is the case with most great games then, it all starts with an idea – in *Bioshock*'s case, that idea being one of capitalist freedom and the desire to do what you want (which is somewhat ironic, as that's both the focus of the plot and the emphasis of how you can create your own playing style as you go). In terms of plot, things kick off with a bang… literally. One minute you're on a plane, the next you're flailing about the water after a horrendous crash with no idea of where you are or what's going on. Luckily, there's a lighthouse in the distance and a short swim later, you're standing inside the entrance to Rapture, the underwater city that plays host to *Bioshock*'s rather tragic narrative. And by tragic, we don't mean the usual FPS fare like invading aliens, gates to hell being opened or generic 'It's war!' storytelling; instead, *Bioshock* tells a tale of mankind's aspirations, one man's attempts to manifest them and how greed and avarice can lead to their destruction.

Survival of the fittest

Sounds pretty grim, doesn't it? Well, not surprisingly, it is. As settings for a videogame go, the world of Rapture couldn't be more atmospheric; a failed utopia set in 1940's America, built for the world's best and brightest to live with no restrictions on technology or morality. The fact that you come in some 20 years later when the place is on the verge of being reclaimed by the sea makes things worse, because you're entering a world where wealth and prosperity have given way to a desperate struggle to survive for those who remain. Which, thanks to your rather inopportune arrival, now includes you. Bugger.

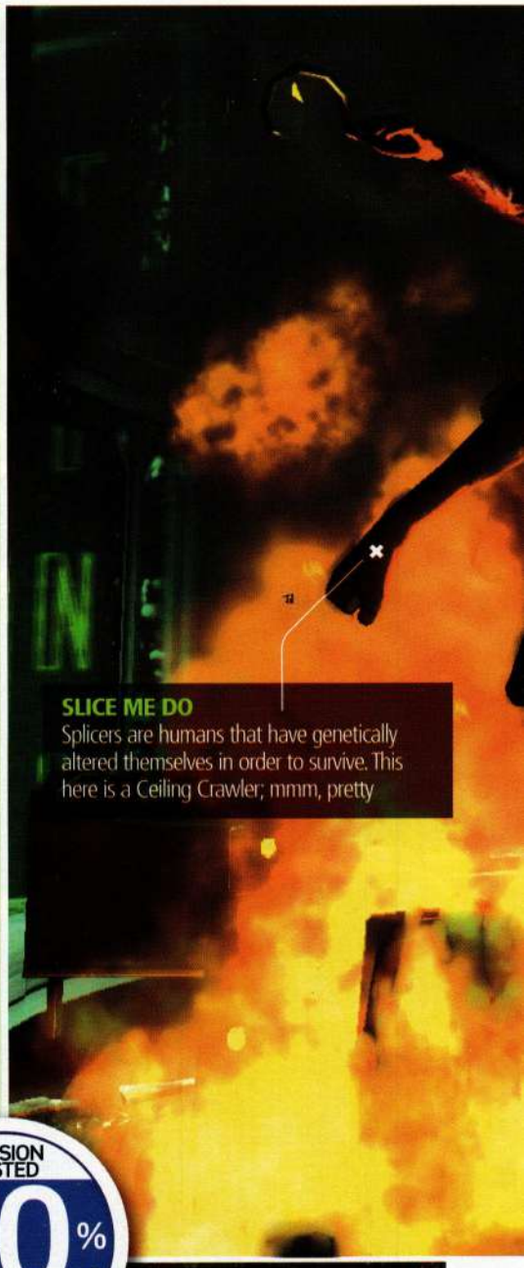
Thankfully, you're not totally screwed – in fact, you're somewhat better off than the miserable excuses for humans left wandering the decks of Rapture. How you go about surviving and finding out exactly what it was that brought about the downfall of the city, however (besides the bitter struggle for the mutation-capable commodity known as Adam, that is) is what makes up the crux of the game. Ultimately, *Bioshock* is all about choices. Not just ones that revolve around mundane decisions such as which way to go next (which is normally as far as most FPS games go) or how you approach a problem and eventually solve it, but also choices that ask the biggest question of them all: 'Would you?'

Take the most important issue that you'll have to address while working your way around Rapture: the collection of Adam which you'll need in order to 'upgrade' your abilities. Whereas before Adam was commonplace before Rapture's downfall, now the only source of it lies within the corpses of the dead. Even worse, the only creatures capable of recycling it from this raw form into something more useable are Little Sisters, small girl-like beings who, despite looking, sounding and acting like children, can inject dead matter into themselves and then excrete it as pure Adam. Yuck. And it's here that your dilemma lies: to get your hands on the Adam within, you need to interact in some way with the Little Sisters… but how? Although there are numerous other solutions that involve plenty of clever thinking and planning, the obvious answer would be to kill them – but that has consequences of its own aside from the destruction of a vital resource and the potential wrath of the relevant Big Daddy (the protectors of the Little Sisters). The question is, can you bring yourself to kill something so obviously innocent? Those of you nodding yes are either psychopaths or clearly don't get what *Bioshock* is trying to do; rather than just being a game, Irrational is attempting to absorb you into its world and make you think, dammit, about your actions.

NO CONTEST

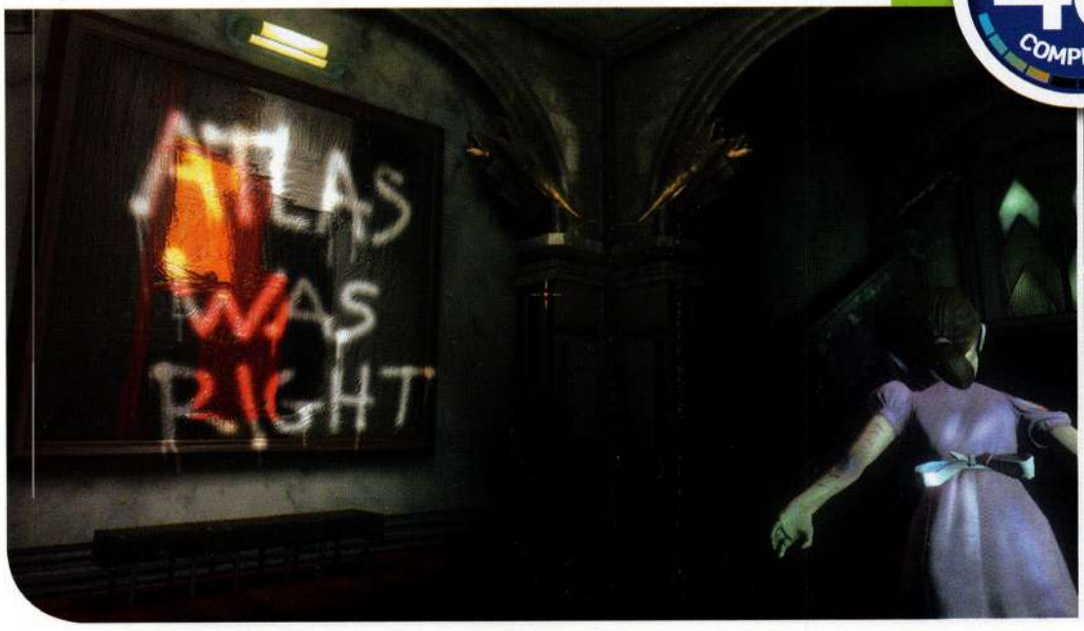
Would you Adam and Eve it?

As with all good utopian societies, it's the discovery of a rare and valuable resource that has caused the downfall of Rapture. Originally manifest as a type of sea-slug (really) that had the ability to digest human tissue and turn it into pure stem-cells (yes, really), the material known only as Adam can be absorbed into the human body to heal illness and enhance yourself both physically and mentally. Unfortunately, a battle between two factions for control of Adam eventually tore Rapture apart and it's this conflict that you have to investigate… among other things. Oh, and did we mention that you can use Adam yourself? Don't get yourself addicted now…



SLICE ME DO Splicers are humans that have genetically altered themselves in order to survive. This here is a Ceiling Crawler; mmm, pretty

VERSION TESTED 40% COMPLETE







CALM DOWN, GIRL/ Not surprisingly, constant genetic mutation has made the Splicers somewhat angry. Best steer clear of them, eh?

UNDERWATER LOVE
Rapture is located in the depths of the ocean so you'll see a lot of murky horizons through those windows. Just don't ask what happens if you shoot them...

EASY! EASY!
This is a Big Daddy; they act as the protectors of the Little Sisters, who are the main source of Adam in Rapture. Attacking one deliberately isn't clever

TALKING POLITICS

Viva la capitalism

Behind every great story, there's great inspiration...

Ever heard of Ayn Rand? Unless you're into obscure political and philosophical debate, probably not, but Rand's writings have proven to be a constant source of inspiration for Levine during the creation of *Bioshock*. As a supporter of capitalism and free will, Rand loathed countries like the United States and argued that the only way for mankind to survive was to throw off the shackles of government oppression. The only difference is how far Rand's concepts are being taken in the game; whereas she expressed her opinions through literature, Andrew Ryan (the creator of Rapture) founded a society on them instead. We all know how that turned out...

Ayn Rand's book, *Atlas Shrugged*, is available from all good bookshops... and is incredibly hard going.





LOOK, MR BUBBLES... ADAM!

Little girls – should you kill one or not?

Gatherers – or Little Sisters as they're more commonly known – are the only creatures capable of recycling Adam, Rapture's most precious resource. If you want some, then you've got a moral dilemma on your hands – can you kill a little girl in order to get it?

Of course, you might not have much of an option there, because for every Little Sister in *Bioshock* there's a Big Daddy; essentially the armoured car keeping you from the Little Sister's cash prize. They're ferociously protective beasts and if you mess with one…

… then this will happen. The Big Daddy will warn you off at first but keep on annoying it and the chances of the Big Daddy tearing you to pieces are pretty high. Hmm, we think we'll put all our cash on the guy in the suit of armour, if it's all the same to you.





» Naturally, this absorption spills out into other areas of the game too. *Bioshock*'s insistence on a complete lack of menus and other more conventional game systems, for instance, means that everything is handled by 'real-world' accessibility – weapon and ability upgrades are dealt with through function-specific machines that have to be accessed before you can perform the relevant action, while the Dynamic Training System lets players prove their skills and advising accordingly, rather than forcing you through a series of tutorials just for the sake of it. It's a system that works really well too; players who show a natural instinct for picking up the game's various mechanics such as avoiding security cameras and fighting enemies will be left to get on with it, while those lacking in the necessary skills will gently be coerced with hints until eventually, a full tutorial becomes available to those who really need it. Again, it's the same… but different.

Freedom of choice

To add to your absorption into the world, there's the freedom that the game grants you over how you advance around Rapture. Deciding which areas of expertise to specialise in when enhancing yourself with Adam ultimately changes that approach you need to use when solving other problems – for





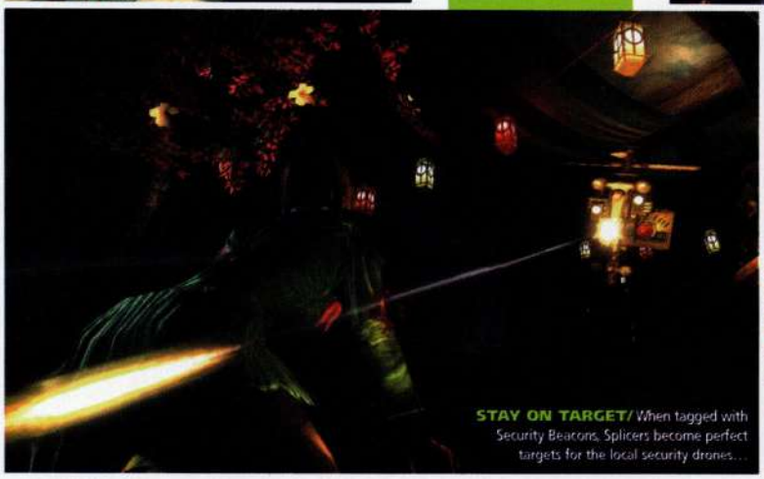
OH, THE RAPTURE/ The city of Rapture is beautiful... at least on the outside. Inside though, that's a totally different story

THINK!

Use your noodle...

You don't have to rush into every situation guns a-blazin' – there's a logical solution to everything too. Say there's a Big Daddy wandering around and a couple of Splicers scavenging the area; by spraying the Big Daddy with Splicer Irritant, the Splicers would attack it and leave the way clear for you to nip past unharmed while the battle ensues.





STAY ON TARGET/ When tagged with Security Beacons, Splicers become perfect targets for the local security drones...



example, an enhancement of your weapon skills obviously improves your firepower and ability to adapt your guns, while bolstering hacking skills gives you more of a chance when trying to overcome the various security systems you'll encounter. That these various categories stretch off into lengthy skill trees makes for some tough decisions, as you won't have enough Adam to take advantage of them all. Elsewhere, weapon upgrades and item creation encapsulates a huge element of crafting into the game, which will no doubt please the hoarder in all of us as we scour the depths of Rapture in order to find those rarities that can be used to give that little bit of extra oomph to our firepower, or allow us to finally make that item that we just can't do without. There are also the Plasmids; special physical skills that the player can take advantage of in order to solve certain problems. Again though, which ones you use and how you use them allows you to completely customise your game experience. Some, like Pyrokinesis and Telekinesis, speak for themselves while others like Splicer Irritant (anything covered in it immediately becomes a target for nearby Splicer enemies), Security Beacon (similar to Splicer Irritant, except making use of Rapture's security systems) or Springboard Trap (launch anything touching it into the air) have their own uses depending on the situation. There are even Plasmids that give you power over Little Sisters or even Big Daddies but because you can only equip a limited number of Plasmids at any one time (and changing them out requires a visit to a Plasmid Load-Out machine AND costs Adam), there's yet another difficult set of choices to be made.

It certainly all sounds rather complex, but then it's to Irrational's credit just how smoothly the game manages to integrate all these concepts into what otherwise appears to be a straightforward FPS game. And it is straightforward – indeed, there's nothing stopping you from ignoring all the additional depth that *Bioshock* has and approaching it like any other regular FPS. But then, why would you want to do that when there are so many 'vanilla' shooters out there? We honestly don't know. Personally, we'd take *Bioshock*'s hugely absorbing world and almost endless promise of freedom any day of the week; the *Oblivion* of the FPS world, if you will (well, nearly). Providing that Levine and his team can make good on their promises and deliver a game that's a true breath of fresh air to a genre that's becoming increasingly flaccid on the 360, we might just have to go back to Boston and plant a big wet kiss right on him. Not that we're into men with beards, you understand... really, we're not.

Martin Mathers

BLOODY SUNDAY/ Not everyone in Rapture is a Splicer – some have just been slain and left in a bloody puddle. How lovely



FACT: The team at Irrational are huge fans of Harmonix's PS2 game, *Guitar Hero*. During our visit, however, *Bioshock*'s Associate Producer Joe Faulstick got thrashed at it by a girl. Ha!

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Rather gorgeous and a refreshing change from Cookie-Cutter FPS #42. It's like Irrational took our thoughts and then made them real... thanks, Irrational!

Thriller?

INTERVIEW/ KEN LEVINE



BIOG

NAME/ Ken Levine
COMPANY/ Irrational Games
JOB TITLE/ Creative Director
WORKING ON/ Bioshock

So, you've got half an hour with one of the most passionate developers around – where do you begin? At the beginning, of course...

X360: Why Bioshock? Why did you decide to create this world?
KEN LEVINE: We'd just done *SWAT 4* and that was a pretty straightforward game to make for us – we looked at *SWAT 3* and realised that it wasn't that broken as a model, plus the publisher wanted a straightforward game... but that's not why people come to Irrational. They don't come to make somebody else's games or solve problems that have already been solved, and I think for the industry that's a big thing; we want to be solving new problems, breaking down new barriers. We've had a lot of freedom to do what we've wanted to do and pursue our own interests. But the benefit for us is that we get to hire great people; especially after E3, the range of people that want to come here is amazing and the better people you have, the better games you can make.

> "The shooter genre has really stagnated – it hasn't advanced since Half-Life, so we're looking to push beyond that"

X360: But aren't you worried that many developers are having to take an idea and adapt it, rather than saying 'I've got a great idea!' and hoping someone bites?
KL: There's a saying in Hollywood, coined by a writer named William Goldman, which is "In Hollywood, people want the same but different", and that's really true for our industry too. You want something where you can hold onto it and say 'I understand the core of this', but then also be excited about the new stuff as well. When you have the same but same, you have people thinking that they've played this before. What we're doing with *Bioshock* is that it's the same, it's a shooter, but the depth of the shooter is unlike anything anyone's ever seen before. It follows in the tradition of things like *Half-Life* where people got the interface right away, but they'd never seen that kind of in-game cinematics or the AI. You've got a lot of games, for instance like *Sacrifice*, which I loved, but it had the problem of being different but different; the game was unique and the aesthetic was also unique, so the audience was wondering what on earth they were looking at. The original *System Shock* had the same problem – I remember picking it up back in the day and even though I loved it, I picked up the box and wondered 'What is this thing?'. So *Bioshock*'s first job is to make people understand that it's a shooter; it's a deeper shooter than you've ever seen before, yes, but it's still a shooter.

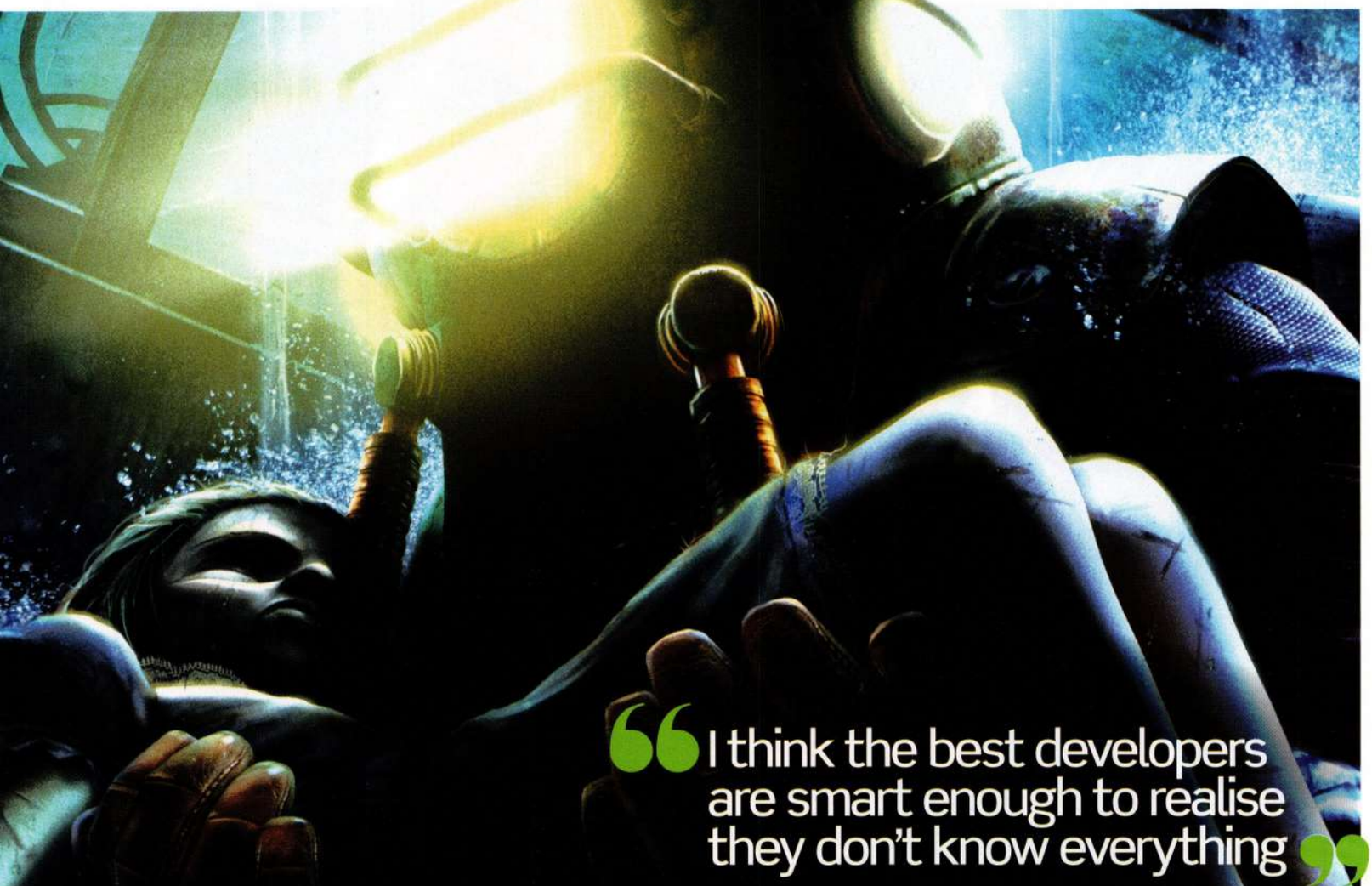


X360: What is it about Bioshock that makes it deep though?
KL: Just from a very practical standpoint, there's the stuff you can do in the game: the weapon modification, the Plasmid system, the crafting, the hacking into security systems, the ways you can interact with the AI by manipulating them to fight your battles for you or make them act in ways you'd never seen before. There's so much you can do, and these things aren't like one-off things like mini-games – these are things that combine together in incredibly powerful ways. We've shown you three of the Plasmids today, just three, and how those interact with each other in so many ways, so you can imagine how much further you can go with all the others. The challenge for us though, and I think we're succeeding, is to make it all work through a very straightforward interface, with a game that feels and plays like a shooter but is so much more. If you want to play this game just as a first-person shooter then you can, but then there's all the depth it gives you too. I think that's the key to the future, giving a point of entry for the gamer where they can get straight into it but then get deeper and deeper.

X360: How do you know when to say 'We have to stop coming up with ideas and just finish this'?
KL: How do you know when to make that first move on that girl that you really like? I mean, you just have to listen to your gut, use your brain. In our case, you have to look around you, play a lot of games, think a lot, talk to your colleagues and people you trust, show it to people as you're playing along. If you think about it, it's very rare that a truly great game comes out. I remember back when we were doing *System Shock 2*, someone asked me 'So, Ken, is this game going to be scary?', which kind of threw me; I was doing all the things in my gut that told me how to make it scary, but was it actually going to scare people? I had no idea! The only person who'd been scared by it was me because I was writing all the stuff! But that's what games developers do. I think the best developers are smart enough to realise they don't know everything and rely on their colleague, testing and journalists to say 'Are you crazy?', because there has to be some times where you say 'Yes, I am crazy but I'm going to do it anyway'. Like the Big Daddy/Little Sister thing – a lot of people said it should have been something else, but I stood by it as an emotional and ethical part of the game. I knew it had to be in there and I had to say no to a lot of people, and I think the final result vindicates my decision.

X360: But where does an idea like that come from?
KL: It evolves. For a long time, we had very traditional monsters and I wasn't happy with that; it's always scary to have something you can identify with like zombies and vampires, because deep down you can see that they're people. In terms of the Little Sisters, we wanted to do the next thing with AI and the notion of relationships; not just between you and the AI, but between AI and AI, and the idea of a protector and the protected came about. At first, we had the protected as little insect creatures and when I wondered why I hated them, I realised it was because you don't empathise with them – when you hurt them, you just don't care. Then one of our artists drew something resembling a little girl and I knew that's what we needed, because then the player can see the exploitation of the relationship in this world that says it's okay to make these little kids do this... but then we ask the player 'Do you think it's okay? Are you going to exploit them too? And are you willing to hurt them to get what you want?'. It's one thing to judge the people in the world doing bad things but when your back is against the wall, what do you do? The only positive relationship in this world is the twisted father/daughter bond... it's like the flower on the battlefield, it shows the contrast.

X360: Is it harder developing for the 360 than for the PC, from an interface point of view? The PC has an entire keyboard, so you can be more technical...
KL: I don't think you want to use that as a crutch though. When we were at Looking Glass [Levine's previous studio],



> "I think the best developers are smart enough to realise they don't know everything"

if we'd have done *Grand Theft Auto*... a lot of the stuff we did at Looking Glass was forward thinking, but if we'd have done a carjacking sequence for *GTA* you would have had one key to run up to the car, another key to open the door, Alt-5 to pull the driver out of the car and so on. The brilliance of *GTA* was that it had all that expression, but with just one button press. *Bioshock* is all about offering depth without compromising itself, but not weigh the player down with things, so we've got ideas like the Dynamic Training System. It's going to be a hell of a lot more work for us, but it'll be worthwhile in the end because the shooter genre has really stagnated as of late – it hasn't really advanced since *Half-Life*, so we're looking to push beyond that.

X360: Do you move from deck to deck and progress, or will you be able to return to past areas once you have progressed?

KL: There are going to be things that are too hard for you to do the first time but will be possible the second or third time you come by, but it's open. There's obviously a repopulation system, so new monsters and other things will be present when you return – you won't just be able to clear a deck out and then come back to an empty place. Plus, there will be things like security stations where you can either do a hard hack the first time or find a code later on, so there'll be value in going back to places.

X360: Is crafting essential to the game's structure?

KL: It's critical in one place, which obviously introduces the player to the art of crafting, but then it's up to the player what he does with it beyond that. There are people who'll specialise and spend a lot of time and resources on it, and there are people who won't care about it at all, so it's another way for the player to make the game he wants to make. That's really what we want to do by supporting a number of different play styles; people like you and me will go out and search for obscure items to build that skill up, and others will just want to shoot stuff.

X360: Can you explain how Ayn Rand influenced the story?

KL: She was writing in the middle of the last century, and Rand had a lot of interesting ideas about how things that slowed progress down, that made people feel bad about their accomplishments were bad. In one of her books, *Atlas Shrugged*, she theorises about a character who leads a group of people, the best and the brightest who are being dragged down by the hangers-on, to leave society, to basically take their ball and go home, saying 'If you're going to drag us down, we're going to set up our own society' and then the world falls apart without them. It's that idea we liked and what led us to create Rapture; I've always loved utopian and distopian stories, but Rand's was an extreme philosophy but there's a heart to it and I thought from both a story and visual standpoint, it'd be great to show the grandness of a group's vision and then the failure of that vision. The visual style really helps tell that and once we found that motif of the game, it became easy to show what the experience feels like...

X360: Why did you set it in that period of the Forties and Fifties?

KL: I love the idea of taking a period of technology that everybody knows and then branching off from that point; the people in our game started from the same point we did, but then went off on a different path. I think it's just a great period that's sorely underused in videogames. Again, it's the same but different – people are familiar with that look, but they've never really seen it in a videogame before and once our artists got that look, they just ran with it.

X360: How are you handling the Achievements?

KL: I honestly think that Achievements based on you finishing levels are pointless – there's nothing unique about it, so why bother? I reckon our Achievements will be more focused on play style more than completion. I liked *Battlefield 2* where you'd get medals for doing particular things, and I'm a big fan of little micro-rewards – I'll play *Diablo* just to get the tiny little gems and so forth, so the more you recognise that, the better. It encourages replayability, which is what we're aiming for. This is a new thing for the industry so you've got some people who haven't really thought it through and are shipping a game with that element left to the last minute... where's the fun in that?

Release date/ 10 November '06





Excited?

Total control/ A new grapple system puts you in greater control of the action

Extreme absence/ No sign of the WWE's new third brand ECW

Exclusive SCREENS

X360 gets hot and sweaty...

WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2007

Xbox 360 is declared console's new King of Kings

Hulk Hogan headlining main events, D-Generation X chopping crouches left, right and centre, Tatanka doing his war dance in the centre of the ring and Vince McMahon's puffy red face all over every hour of WWE programming. When you think about it, some things in the world of professional wrestling may change but the sad truth is that many, many things simply stay the same. Much, you might say like the world of videogames; franchises are born, new gimmicks tried and tested, but more often than not, what you're actually getting is exactly the same game only in a shiny new package. So what hope is there for wrestling videogames? Seemingly double cursed to a life of meaningless monotony resigned to roster updates, revamped match modes and new ways to batter the buttons, if the form book was anything to go by there might seem little point even attempting to develop one. But, as every console-owning wrestling fan will testify, there's always exceptions to the rule and that exception is THQ's *SmackDown* series. Refusing to be just another piece of worthless merchandise used to garnish whatever ludicrous storyline the WWE creative team has dreamed up that year, Yuke's has thought up new ways to draw fans into the action and put the entertainment back into WWE.

The past few years have seen the arrival of many new and compelling features such as Season and GM mode, but this is a very big year for the series. Not only is *SmackDown Vs RAW 2007* going multiplatform for the first time in its history, but it's also going next-gen – only on Xbox 360. From what we've seen of this monumental game thus far, it appears the teaming of THQ and Yuke's is doing what Vince and his team rarely dare to do – trying something a little different. The first big change is to switch the lead development platform from Sony to Microsoft, so the PS2 version is actually a port of the 360 game and not the other way around. So while 360 owners will be able to experience the game in the way the developers intended, PlayStation fanboys have to deal with the double blow of no PS3 version and a PS2 game that's lacking both visually and technically. Where the 360 version will benefit from the advance sweat system and an unprecedented level of crowd interaction, the »

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ THQ
Developer/ Yuke's
Genre/ Sports
Players/ 1-4
Xbox Live? / Yes

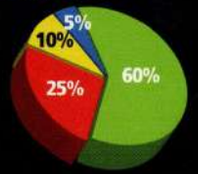
Briefly

The best wrestling franchise in videogame history makes its next-gen debut on Xbox 360

IN THE PIE

What you'll find in the squared-circle...

- Brain beatings
- High-flying
- Pyrotechnics
- White trash



LEGENDS IN THE MAKING

Superstars in your eyes

What fans really want to know is the line-up of wrestlers that will be in the game. This is one of THQ's most guarded secrets; so far, only a few of the company's big money draws have been confirmed. Kurt Angle, John Cena, Rey Mysterio, Booker T, Chris Benoit, Triple H, Johnny Nitro, The Undertaker and Shelton Benjamin have been given the green light. Then again, with all the disciplinary suspensions, contract lapses and hissy fits, it's probably a good idea to wait until the last moment to confirm the line-up. What has got us beating our chests in wild anticipation though, is the prospect of the new unlockable Legends. Our money has got to be on Eddie Guerrero, Earthquake and oh – we don't know – let's say Doink the Clown.



» PS2 will be limited to certain match types and situations. So we think what THQ is trying to say is 'Sony, you just got served'.

Ch, Ch, Ch, Changes

As fans of the series will no doubt have noticed from Internet game trailers and the screenshots of peacocks strutting their way across these pages, the new character models have reached a level of detail and realism that's never been seen before in a wrestling game. Boasting twice the polygon count of last year's game – tights, tattoos and a huge range of realistic facial expressions should help take the franchise to a whole new level. It's not just the polygon-plumped wrestlers that impress either, as the Xbox 360's next-gen jiggery-pokery allows for more complicated routines

STINK FACE
As the fight rages on, each wrestler builds up a healthy layer of perspiration and all that sweat has got to go somewhere – why not treat the crowd to a stinky shower?

RAINING PAIN
Perhaps not the most conventional of weapons, but the old-lady umbrella works just as well as any chair shot

and reactions. Each of the game's featured superstars are fully motion captured to ensure their in-game moves appear just as they do on screen, right down to the amount of sweat (and blood) they build up throughout a bout. Of course, in order to make the experience as convincing as possible it isn't just the talent that needs attention, it's every single element that goes into making a show and that includes the ticket-buying public.

Though *SmackDown Vs Raw 2007*'s unique crowd interactions have already been well documented, it's an aspect capable of adding a huge amount of credibility to the game. Too long have we had to look at identical cardboard cutout figures bobbing up and down like targets in some cheap fairground attraction and now we're to be graced with over 1,000 individually modelled crowd members each with an almost infinite number of animation cycles. Why are we so concerned with the crowd and not the characters? Well, in *SVR 2007*, the crowd IS a character, as you can throw opponents over the guard rail and take the fight to the great unwashed. Crowd members are so involved that they will hand you weapons to batter your adversary with. Weapons include items like umbrellas, bottles and even fire extinguishers. Whilst you're out there mingling with the crowd they'll make their feelings known, cheering the baby faces and jeering the heels, but you don't have to sit back and take the abuse. See a sign suggesting your mother quite likes the company of farmyard animals? Well, just snatch it off the pencil-necked geek holding it and tear it up or find a sign championing your cause and hold it aloft and shake it around like a man possessed. However, those with dreams about fighting their way to the back of the arena or escaping through the crowd will be disappointed as the fights are limited to specific sections – perhaps Yuke's is keeping something for next year.

So the crowd can play their part in each and every match-up, but what might prove more advantageous are the various environmental hotspots that exist both inside and outside of the ring. Removing the paddling from a turnbuckle and then whipping your opponent into the corner might prove a good taster, but why stop there? The world outside is far more twisted than anything you're likely to find in the squared-circle. For instance, as well as your standard-issue guard rails, steel steps and ring posts, you now have things like the new interactive announce table to play with. Why waste your time on chops and submission holds when you can smash a TV monitor over your opponent's head before sending him crashing headfirst into a speaker stack, electrocuting him in the process. If the laggard is still standing after that, simply give JBL or Jim Ross their marching orders and lay the defenceless fool on the table while you climb the scaffolding and take a death-defying leap off. We say death-defying, but if your enemy is savvy enough to move before you can quash him, you'll end up taking the brunt of the fall and may require the services of the Undertaker.

EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTING

ECW given the FU

The trouble with making a WWE game is trying to keep up with the latest storylines, wrestling talent and even brands. Since development began on *SVR 2007*, the WWE has relaunched ECW as a separate brand. So are we to see *SmackDown Vs RAW Vs ECW 2007*? It doesn't look likely, as a game featuring ECW wrestlers as a separate division isn't part of the developer's plan. Natch!





FACE OFF

Both franchises are represented, but if you want to make things more realistic you can create yourself in the game from over 250 create-a-character elements. Let's hope we can use the Live Vision Camera to map our faces on

VERSION TESTED 67% COMPLETE



Show us your moves

All of these new features are being included in an attempt to capture the essence of an actual WWE match-up, but while these peripheral elements are important, they'll amount to nothing if the fundamentals are neglected. So in order to keep the in-ring action as innovative and intuitive as the visuals, crowd and environmental interaction, a brand new analogue control system has been implemented endowing players with a whole new degree of control. Though *SmackDown*'s old-guard might be clucking their tongues in disapproval, the new system seems very user-friendly and will change the way the game is enjoyed. Maybe not as technical as analogue systems seem in titles like *Fight Night*, this new system does aim to give players 'total control'. Now instead of memorising different combinations of face buttons and directions on the D-pad, you simply have to flick a direction on the analogue stick to perform a move. While at first this might sound like a simplified and stripped-down version, Yuke's is keen to stress that the analogue system does not come at the cost of depth; in fact, despite being more accessible, each superstar can now pull off even more moves than ever before.

The remapped controls mean that grapples now come in two varieties: Quick and Strong. Quick grapples are fast and low impact, such as arm drags or hip tosses and can be used to soften up your opponent before hitting them with the real slobber-knockers.

MIX AND MATCH

Squaring off in the squared-circle

MATCH TYPE

MONEY IN THE BANK

A new match type that's drawn some serious heat over the past few years and is now set to be immortalised in the game. Six men enter the ring and battle it out to reach a briefcase suspended high above the ring. Inside the briefcase is a contract that guarantees the winner a shot at their brand's championship title. The one who can beat down his opponents and buy himself enough time to grab the case is declared the winner. If we're going by the form book, this is a very important match to win, as the two previous winners have gone on to cash in their Money In The Bank opportunity and win the strap.

LADDER

Besides just using the ladders to reach the belt you can also whip opponents into them or use the struts to sandwich their limbs. If you don't fancy that and simply choose to climb the ladder as originally intended, once you reach the top you'll discover a brand new way to grab the belt. Rather than grabbing hold of the strap, bashing the buttons and staring in desperation like some saucer-eyed gibbon, you now use the left and right analogue sticks to control the wrestler's corresponding arms. You must then find the belt's 'sweet spot'; the closer you get the more the pad will rumble – fill up the on-screen meter and the belt's yours. Easy, right?

TABLE

If you want to put an opponent through the wood you must achieve two things: first you have to have at least one stored finisher and then build up a full momentum meter. Only when you have totally dominated can you even think about setting up the table, but once you've achieved it you'll certainly reap the rewards. Instead of simply erecting the table in the middle of the ring you can choose to lean it against the turnbuckle and whip your opponent into it or even double-stack tables one on top of the other for much more extreme results. Even the wood-breaking animation itself has had work, so the moment of triumph should look very different. Wood you believe it?

PERFECT PARTNER

EDGE

The rated-R superstar was the first competitor to win the Money In The Bank match, choosing to take out Cena after he had just endured a gruelling Elimination Chamber match (one to watch out for). He lost the title soon after and teamed up with hardcore legend Mick Foley before beating Cena and another hardcore hero, RVD to regain the WWE championship.

RVD

After seeing a few of his tasty tricks with a ladder, Shelton Benjamin almost got the nod, but how could we live with ourselves if we'd failed to acknowledge Mr. Monday Night? RVD's skills in hardcore matches and simian-like abilities around ladders have all but guaranteed his inclusion in the game and in the pages of the wrestling history books too.

TRIPLE H

Triple H has been at the top of the WWE card for many years, holding the WWE Championship over ten times. Respected for his wrestling ability and lambasted for his use of backstage politics to get on-screen time, The Game is one of the few confirmed wrestlers to be in, er, the game. We can't wait to perform the Pedigree through two stacked tables.







INITIAL ROSTER ANNOUNCEMENT

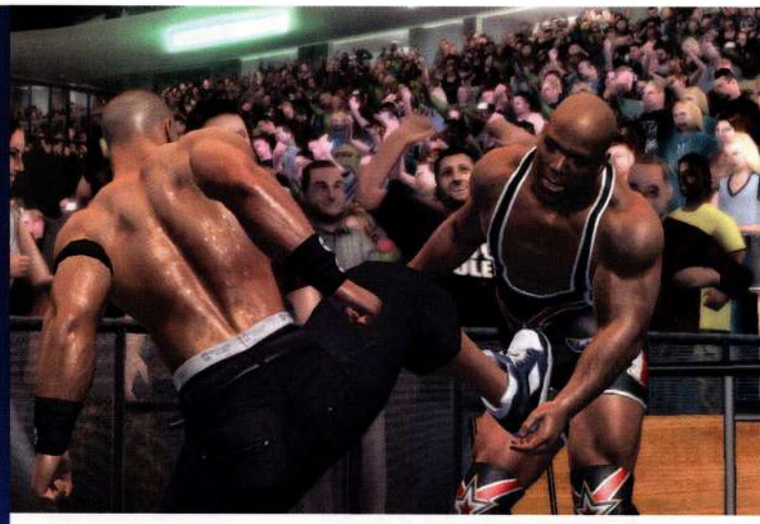
RAW TALENT
- Triple H
- Rob Van Dam
- Kane
- Chris Masters
- Snitsky
- Eugene
- John Cena
- Edge
- Shawn Michaels
- Ric Flair
- Lance Cade
- Johnny Nitro
- Big Show
- Carlito
- Shelton Benjamin
- Viscera
- Trevor Murdoch

RAW DIVAS
- Trish Stratus
- Mickie James
- Lita
- Candice Michelle
- Torrie Wilson
- Melina

SMACKDOWN TALENT
- Undertaker
- Batista
- Booker T
- Matt Hardy
- William Regal
- Hardcore Holly
- Super Crazy
- Paul Burchill
- Daivari
- Kurt Angle
- JBL
- Ken Kennedy
- Gregory Helms
- Mark Henry
- Boogeyman
- Psicosis
- The Great Khali
- Randy Orton
- Chris Benoit
- Rey Mysterio
- Joey Mercury
- Bob Lashley
- Kid Kash
- Vito
- Chavo Guerrero

SMACKDOWN DIVAS
- Jillian Hall

NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS
- Theodore Long
- Michael Cole
- Vince McMahon
- Tony Chimmel
- Nick Patrick
- Jim Ross
- Tazz
- Stephanie McMahon
- Lillian Garcia
- Jerry Lawler
- Jonathan Coachman
- Shane McMahon
- Mike Chioda

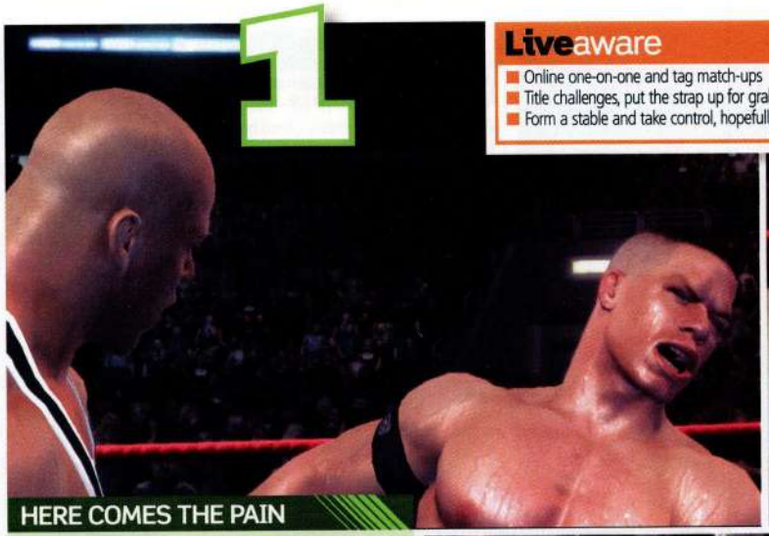


SLAP DOWN/ We remember when Kurt Angle had hair and Hogan, nah, hang on a minute, nobody remembers that far back

To perform one of these moves you first flick the analogue stick while in close proximity to your opponent and a new HUD should appear that will display the different moves available to you and the corresponding move of the stick. Once you've brought the pain with a flurry of quick grapples and strikes, you can think about the high-impact grapples, which include moves like DDTs, suplexes and submissions. These work in a very similar way to the quick grapples, but to initiate one you hold the Right Bumper down and then flick the stick – again a choice of moves will appear but unlike previous iterations of the game you don't just sit back and watch a predetermined animation play out. In *SVR 2007* Yuke's has promised total control and that's what you get because once you have selected a move, another list of options appears that lets you decide just how you would like the move to end. This is where it gets a little more complex. For instance, say you have selected a submission move – you're then given a new subset of four different submission moves. The best example of how the strong grapple system works is from a standard vertical suplex – you've selected the suplex option, you have your opponent held high in the air and you're then given a choice of what to do with him; either fall backwards old-school style, fall forwards driving his face into the canvas, dump him over the top-rope or execute an airplane spin and send his head swimming. These options are context-sensitive so you might be given a different set of options if you're situated in the centre of the ring than if you're standing by the ropes or in a cage.



PUNCH IT/ Randy Orton's at it again but what happens when the legend killer becomes the legend?



HERE COMES THE PAIN

Liveaware

- Online one-on-one and tag match-ups
- Title challenges, put the strap up for grabs
- Form a stable and take control, hopefully

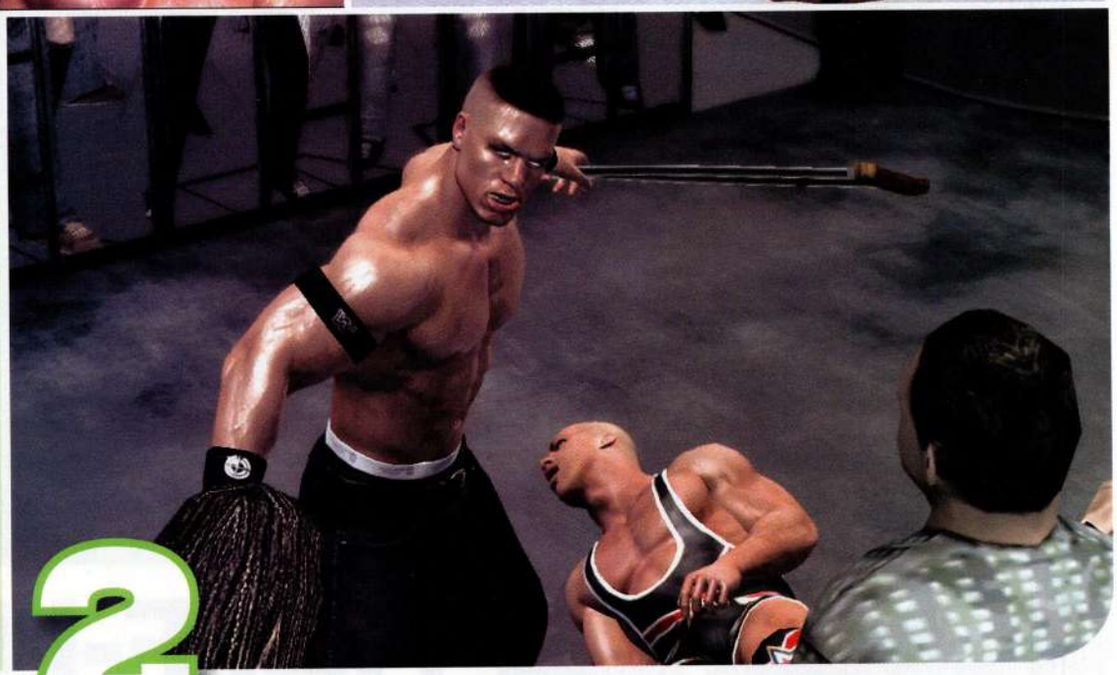


Yuke's shows us some ruthless aggression

In order to sell the experience even further, wrestlers now display a wide range of realistic facial expressions 1 that reflect the hurting you're dishing out and making every competitor's face appear as rubbery as Ric Flair's.

Even though there's no sign of ECW, the interactive hotspots mean you can take violence to the extreme, 2 so expect to see more claret than you'll find in Jilly Goolden's cellar.

The game is set to feature voice chat so you can smack talk your opponents while 3 smacking them down – isn't the future just magical?



There are over 40 of these new moves, but how and when you execute them are dependent on different factors including momentum, Clean/Dirty status and the wrestler's personalised move-set, which is assigned from the start. Every wrestler has their own attributes and moves that are pre-assigned by the developer and depend on their style. Wrestler categories include the likes of luchadore, brawler, technical, diva and so on, but you can play around with these settings as much as you like with both existing superstars and self-created characters. This again helps to add an extra layer of authenticity to proceedings, as you won't see the likes of mini Mysterio power slamming Mark Henry or the behemoth Big Show diving off the top rope.

Of course, whichever move you choose to assign to your wrestler, there will always be certain opponents who can counter them. Yuke's is making quite a lot of noise about the new chain reversal system that should help to recreate the lightning-fast move exchanges seen in the WWE – and seen better still in TNA – but we won't go there. In the early code that we tested, it wasn't entirely clear at exactly what point in the move these reversals could be executed, but we were assured the finished game will have various visual prompts to indicate the best time to turn the tables.

With the emergence of a new generation of consoles, it seems as if we are primed to experience a new breed of *SmackDown Vs RAW*. By refocusing on new elements, the developers have tried to further enrich the formula for a new generation of gamers.

However, with such an overload of new ideas it would be dangerous to forget where it came from and the classic features that have made *SmackDown* such a successful franchise. Though the 2007 edition might be more easily accessible to newbies, it hasn't abandoned its age-old ethos of action and authenticity. Far from trying to usurp the classic elements, all the new additions should ensure the survival of the series well into D-generation next.

Keith Hennessey

DEAD TIRED/ How many more years can Taker keep going? Perhaps this will be his last *SmackDown* game



FACT: Despite being both enormous and terrifying to behold, The Great Khali couldn't even wrestle his way out of a paper bag. Strange but true.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

We're keeping positive and predicting that the improved visuals, new modes and Live play will give this more than a fighting chance of success. Definitely one to watch.

Thriller?



Excited?

Half empty/ The collection doesn't contain the original *Half-Life* – boo!

Half full/ *Team Fortress 2* could be a real sleeper hit for console gamers

Release date/ November '06





I'M A LION/ Your two enemies – the Combine fighting the Antlions. We reckon we know who's going to be coming out on top here though

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ EA
Developer/ Valve
Genre/ Compilation
Players/ 1-32
Xbox Live/ Yes

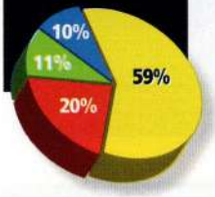
Briefly

An amazingly generous collection of titles from Valve, of which the main component might not be the best

IN THE PIE

The next-gen episode of:

- *Half-Life*
- Online death
- Portal travel
- Class war



Liveaware

- Full online multiplayer with Counter-Strike and Team Fortress
- Downloadable maps

HALF-LIFE: EPISODE 2

What happened when Valve met next-gen console gaming...

It's no secret that *Half-Life 2* on the Xbox didn't give us console gamers much reason to turn an ear to those constantly ranting PC gamers. As playable as it was, the fact is that any port is never going to capture the magic of the lead format. Coming to Xbox not only late, but loaded down with frame-rate and aiming issues, it was unlikely to endear itself to Xbox owners at the time, up against any number of quality console FPSs. At the risk of jinxing the whole thing, first-person development giant Valve seems to be dispelling that previously well-founded myth. With the announcement that the next episode of the successful *Half-Life* series is to come packaged with a whole bunch of extras guaranteed to get you lot hot under the collar, FPS nut or no.

The titular *Episode 2* is kind of useless to us 360 gamers, as without the previous two instalments, such a story-driven title becomes distinctly less story driven than it ought to. Thankfully, the inclusion of both *Half-Life 2* and *Half-Life 2: Episode 1* means that anyone unfamiliar with the series can get the whole story (apart from the original *Half-Life*) all in one go. Whilst many of us may have let the phenomenon of *Half-Life* slip by us, it is in fact a title that's been acclaimed by many in the industry as the best game ever made and is certainly worth your time, regardless of how long it's been out on the PC. So you're getting the *Half-Life* story as up-to-date as any PC gamer, but that's not nearly the most exciting thing about this package.

MOVE ANY MOUNTAIN

Welcome to your all-important portal training

Oh dear, you need to get to the other side of the room, but there's a massive chasm in the way. Oh, yes, and the ceiling's coming down on you too. Looks like you're shitted mate.

Not so any more, as with the new portal gun at the ready you can go pretty much anywhere you can point your shiny new weapon at. The ceiling's still coming down though, so get a move on.

Here we go. Finally, shoot where you want to go, then blast an entry point somewhere you can reach and you'll easily be able to jog over there without the hassle of actually having to do it. Result!



VERSION TESTED 90% COMPLETE



NARBARCULAR DROP

Building a portal

The team responsible for *Portal* in this new title originally used the concept on a title called *Narbarcular Drop*. Quite different to Valve's futuristic take on it, *Drop* was all about a princess that managed to get herself stuck inside a sentient prison, or something equally as rubbish.



Counter-Strike: Source is also included in the package, a game that's got the mouse-and-keyboard fraternity by the balls and refuses to let go. With its classic FPS style and effortless terrorist-versus-counter-terrorist logic, *Counter-Strike* is right up there amongst the most played games in the world. If you've had the joys of sampling it, even on the frankly incapable Xbox, you'll be well aware of just how addictive simplicity can be. You choose your weapons, you run about and you attempt to eliminate your opponent, or blow up their base. It's that basic, but we can guarantee that it'll be a massive hit on the 360.

BLUE STREAK/ This looks pretty nasty whatever it is. Alyx doesn't look scared though, so it must be okay



Similarly *Team Fortress 2* is another such title that, having been revamped in a wholly different fashion to that which you might expect from Valve, is certain to set the Live community alight. Choose a class of trooper from types like Medic, Pyro, Demoman, Heavy, Spy and Sniper, enter the battlefield as a team, and blast seven shades of sugar-coated shit out of your enemy. You'll love it – even more so with the Pixar-esque cartoon style. We've saved the best for last here, as *Portal* certainly looks to be something of an epiphany in terms of first-person shooters. Using a weapon every bit as revolutionary as the gravity gun was in its time, *Portal* turns the genre right on its head by allowing you to create portals anywhere you like and challenging you to solve puzzles using the new gun. A great compilation on its way to the 360 then? Certainly – and one that could signal the demise of the PC as the dominant online format for the future. **Tom Leclerc**

FACT: ***Team Fortress 2*** **has been in development for more than eight years and was originally conceived to be a free add-on to *Quake*.**

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

You can't argue with a collection like this. Not only do you get a number of titles proven to be brilliant, but you get a handful of potentially amazing ones as well.

Thriller?



VERSION TESTED 65% COMPLETE

Release date/ 2007

INDIANA JONES 2007

Dr Jones, Dr Jones, calling Dr Jones

We'd like you to imagine you're actually watching an aeroplane travelling over a map. As the plane continues on, a red line is left behind to show both the trip's origin and progress. As the destination is reached, the scene cuts to a busy market place, bustling with I've-got-a-monkey-on-my-shoulder-type guards. This year's E3 was our very own market place. Our guards were developers saying the word 'euphoria' a lot. Sadly for us though, there were no monkeys.

It's amazing how new technology can send this industry into a mad frenzy. The form this particular progress took was Euphoria – a physics engine that *Indiana Jones 2007* will be making use of.

But why such an ado? Why is everyone so excited? We all know that the Xbox 360 is in its infancy. As superb as the visuals may be, the race for 'best visuals' is being pushed aside in favour of a similar competition – 'best physics' – and this is why the latest *Indy* title is causing such a stir – it seems to be winning.

Watching *Indiana Jones* you notice what has been achieved using this technology: bodies fall realistically, arms flail, heads bounce… er, yes, that's ragdoll physics. It looks smoother but it's still ragdoll physics. However, look that little bit closer and the true step that's been taken is apparent – Euphoria is applying physics to show every bump and every knock, so much so that these characters simply look alive. The more you watch, the more impressive it becomes. We're so excited we've got the shakes. Why did it have to be shakes? **Rick Porter**

FACT: You know the *Indiana Jones* movies, right? Did you know Dark Horse comics – creator of *Hellboy* – did an *Indy* comic as well?





BREAK ON THROUGH/ There are destructible environments like you've never seen before. Honestly. Well, probably…

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ LucasArts
Developer/ In-house
Genre/ Action
Players/ TBC
Xbox Live/ No

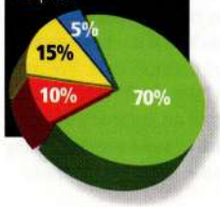
Briefly

It's about time we had another decent *Indy* game – this one's looking to do the job nicely

IN THE PIE

An adventure all about:

- Snakes
- Crocs
- Boulders
- Spikes



Excited?

- **Whips/** Euphoria physics should be something special
- **Jips/** Could be a case of 'seen it all before', though

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

The team seem to be aiming to deliver what the gaming public wants.

Thriller?

 COMING SOON: A new *Indiana Jones* movie! Awesome!

FROM THE ACCLAIMED STUDIO, PRODUCTION I.G CREATORS OF *KILL BILL & BLOOD*

攻殻機動隊 S.A.C. 2nd GIG

GHOST IN THE SHELL

VOLUME 5

"STAND ALONE COMPLEX"

©2004-2005 Shirow Masamune/Production I.G/KODANSHA All rights reserved. Illustrated by Makoto Shimomura



"GHOST IN THE SHELL SCORES VERY HIGHLY INDEED IN THE ANIME STAKES."
- DVD MONTHLY

"EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH STANDARD OF STAND ALONE COMPLEX IS MAINTAINED IN THIS COLLECTION OF EPISODES FROM THE SECOND SEASON."
- HOMECINEMA CHOICE ★★★★

"AWESOME" - ★★★★ BURN MAGAZINE

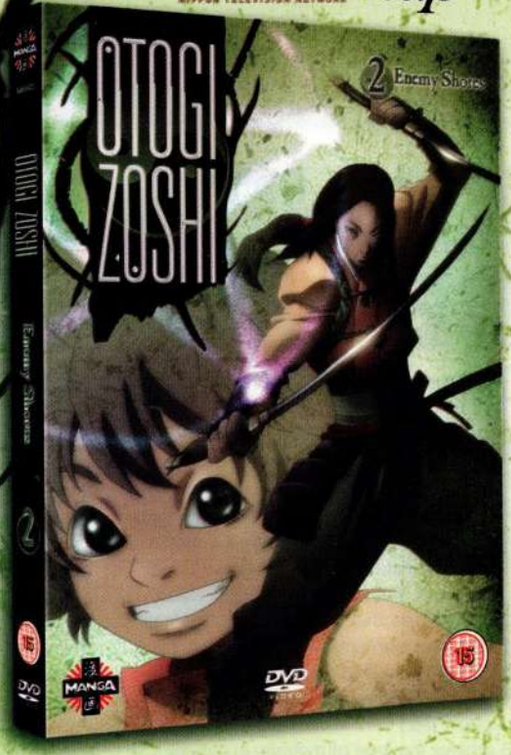


OTOGI ZOSHI

©IG/VAP/NTV

Volume 2
Enemy Shores
Episodes 6-9

NTV NIPPON TELEVISION NETWORK vap



"Otogi Zoshi is the kind of anime to get excited about." - AintItCoolNews.com

"Otogi Zoshi will; draw you in, purely on the strength of its well-constructed plot and genuinely intriguing characters. Well worth checking out." - SFX ★★★★

"Definitely one to collect and unreservedly recommended." - Impact



MANGA 漫画
www.manga.co.uk

OUT ON DVD 4TH SEPT 2006

Virgin megastores
virginmegastores.co.uk



Excited?

Sir, yes sir!/ Control a squad of hardened crims on crime capers

Sir, no sir!/ Squad-based stuff is sometimes a little tricky to pull off right

Release date/ TBA '07





LOOKING SHARP/ Up close the detaill on the characters is looking pretty impressive

NEED TO KNOW

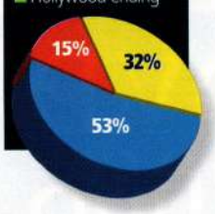
Publisher/ Eidos
Developer/ IO Interactive
Genre/ Action/Adventure
Players/ TBA
Xbox Live/ Yes

Briefly
Two unstable characters shoot the hell out of everything for ill-gotten gains and perhaps redemption

IN THE PIE

Kane & Lynch are all about:

- Swearing
- Gun fights
- Mental illness
- Hollywood ending



Liveaware

IO is keeping tight-lipped in regards to online play but the developer has confirmed it will be included in one form or another

KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN

Dead in a metaphorical sense of course

After the *Hitman* series and *Freedom Fighters*, IO Interactive reckons it's out to give us gamers something a whole lot more mature. Eh? More mature than playing a shady hit man who kills his targets silently with whatever happens to be at hand? Apparently so. You see, *Kane & Lynch: Dead Men* isn't just another third-person shoot-'em-up with squad elements, oh no. IO wants to give us something that looks like the best bits of *Heat* and plays like you wished every gun-filled game did.

To achieve this level of maturity in a game, IO is clearly going for substance over style (although it looks like it's got that covered too) with strong characterisation, a solid plot and a distinct lack of gaming clichés. The first cliché to bite the big one is the assumption that your leading character must be blessed with the dazzling good looks of a movie star. Refereshingly, IO blasts a Hollow Point Slug through that convention by presenting us with Kane – a man whose traumatised past has left him mentally and, most notably, physically scarred. Completing the pair is, of course, Lynch – a grizzled and unkempt psychopath – who just about manages to keep his rather insane tendencies at bay with the use of some truly heavy medication.

What brings these two together is not your regular game plot and *Dead Men* does away with the regular ex-military, ex-cop, ex-whatever crap and focuses on two seemingly ordinary guys. After Kane's family life disintegrated, he immersed himself in his job as an overseas consultant. He falls in with a criminal gang called 'Seven' and assists them in their dastardly deeds. When a job in Venezuela goes wrong, Kane is the only one to make it out alive. Upon his return to America he is







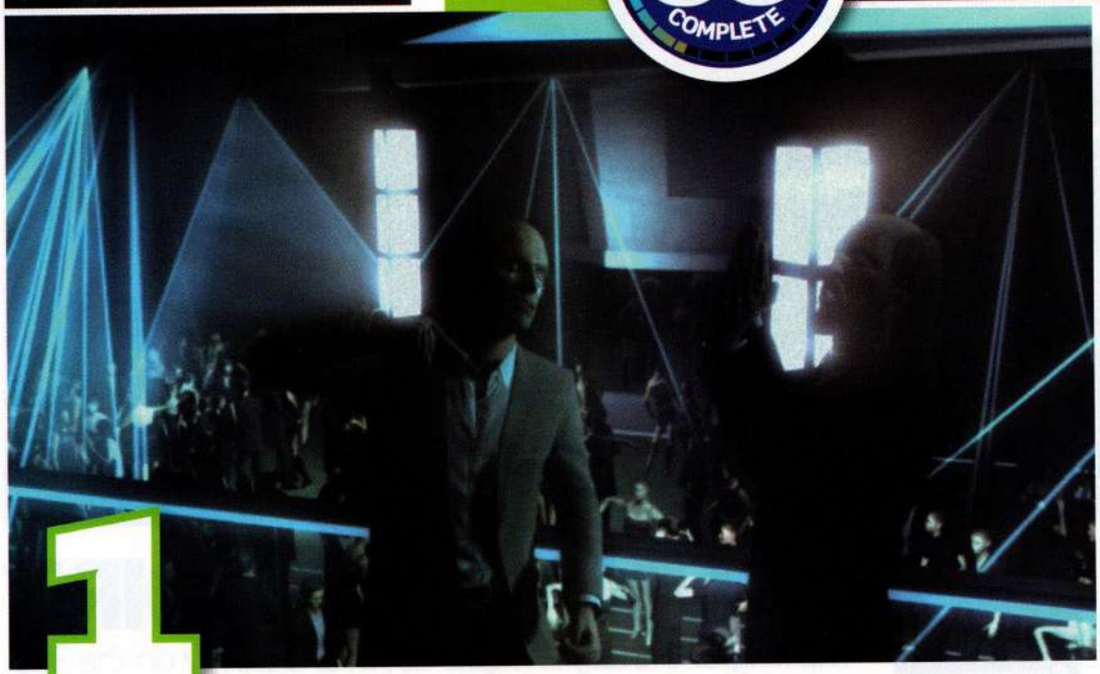
LIVE MEN

Kane and Lynch assault the Internet

IO is keeping quiet when it comes to the online modes in the game, but it has confirmed that there will be some. Co-op seems the most obvious choice to us and perhaps it will be the only one, as at first glance this game doesn't immediately lend itself to deathmatch-style gameplay.



VERSION TESTED 35% COMPLETE



I SEE DEAD PEOPLE

The cannon fodder crowds of Hitman return

Kane and Lynch go to a nightclub to unwind and as you can see, it's filled with loads of people – much like the Mardi Gras level in *Hitman: Blood Money*. Look at them dancing unaware of the carnage that's about to happen.

The pair obviously attract bad luck and a shoot-out ensues in the nightclub. Terrified dancers run in every direction as they try to avoid the hot lead that's whizzing past their heads.

Some civilian casualties are inevitable, but whether you'll be penalised for it as in *Hitman* is unknown. It probably won't matter who you kill – you are convicted criminals after all.

promptly arrested and sentenced to death for his crimes. Lynch, on the other hand, was not embroiled in a life of crime but instead spent his days working in a freezer factory. Everything in his mundane life was normal until schizophrenia began to take over his life accompanied by mood swings and blackouts. When he comes home to find his wife brutally murdered, the police pin the crime on him. It's at this point that we catch up with the pair as they are riding in a prison transport. Luckily the Seven gang manage to bust them out, but unluckily they force Kane to retrieve the cash that was lost on the botched job. Should Kane refuse then his family will be murdered. Lynch is simply in the right place at the wrong time and finds himself being assured freedom only if he can ensure that Kane will come up with the cash.

As you might have worked out then, these men don't start off as friends – and they're not particularly interested in forming a bond either – which is no better illustrated than by the acerbic chatter that flies between them as the plot unfolds. As seems to be the norm with many next-gen games, much of the plot is unveiled in-game rather than through the use of cut-scenes, which allows the game to flow a whole lot better.

The different missions that make up the story see the titular anti-heroes joined by various members of the Seven gang, who can be controlled in a similar way to the squads in *Freedom Fighters*. However, these goons won't put their own lives in danger, as everyone wants a cut of the loot.

With *Kane & Lynch: Dead Men* not out until next year, most gameplay details are still rather sketchy at the moment, but rest assured we'll bring you more juicy info on this intriguing game as soon as we get it. **Simon Griffin**



VERTIGO/ Is this a cut-scene or do you get to abseil down a building? We don't know, but it looks cool

FACT: The average age for the onset of schizophrenia is 18 in men and 25 in women. The onset of the disease is rare in those under 10 or over 40.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

Kane & Lynch looks like a game by adults for adults. With all the best elements from the IO back catalogue it could very well be the developer's best product yet.

Thriller?



Excited?

It's big/ There's a whole world of off-road racing in here

Too much/ All the extra stuff could water things down too much

VERSION TESTED 25% COMPLETE

Release date/ TBA '07

COLIN MCRAE: DIRT

The king of the rally sim gets down and DIRT-y on the 360

He might be a fading memory in the World Rally Championship these days, but that hasn't stopped Colin McRae lending his name to some pretty awesome games down the years. Indeed, with the 1995 champ no longer a regular fixture in the WRC, it's freed up Codemasters to inject some much-needed variation into 360 gaming.

While you'll still be able to hop in an Impreza and charge around small country roads, this will be a mere part of the rallying action offered by *DIRT*. Players bored with the normal selection of 300 bhp WRC cars can try their hand at racing across vast desert landscapes in Dakar-style rally raid trucks, charge up and down hills in 850 BHP hill climb machines, race against others in rally cross machinery or try their hand at buggy racing.

The attention to detail is second to none. Not only is the game to benefit from entirely new physics and damage engines to ensure it makes the most of the 360's power, the development team has been busy researching real locations for the game as well, including the 12.4 mile Pikes Peak International stage – the Nurbürgring of the rally world – which will be featured in its 150+ corner entirety.

The traditional rallying aspects will benefit from the addition of European, International and Global rally championships to boost longevity, while the game will also see wheel-to-wheel racing alongside traditional race-against-the-clock action that fans are used to.

With Codemasters billing *DIRT* as "the most diverse and exhilarating off-road racing experience ever" and a wealth of features still to come, rally fans should have few complaints when it arrives next year. **Mark Podd**

FACT: Colin McRae's one of the most successful WRC drivers of all time, winning the 1995 title and 25 rallies between 1993 and 2005.

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ Codemasters
Developer/ In-house
Genre/ Driving
Players/ TBA
Xbox Live/ Yes

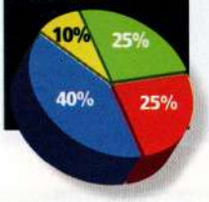
Briefly

Race around in anything that has wheels, an engine and doesn't mind driving around in the mud

IN THE PIE

Next-gen rally driving:

- Cars
- Mud
- Crashes
- Star driver



HOW'S IT LOOKING?

DIRT seems on course to give 360 owners the rally sim they've been waiting for.

Thriller?

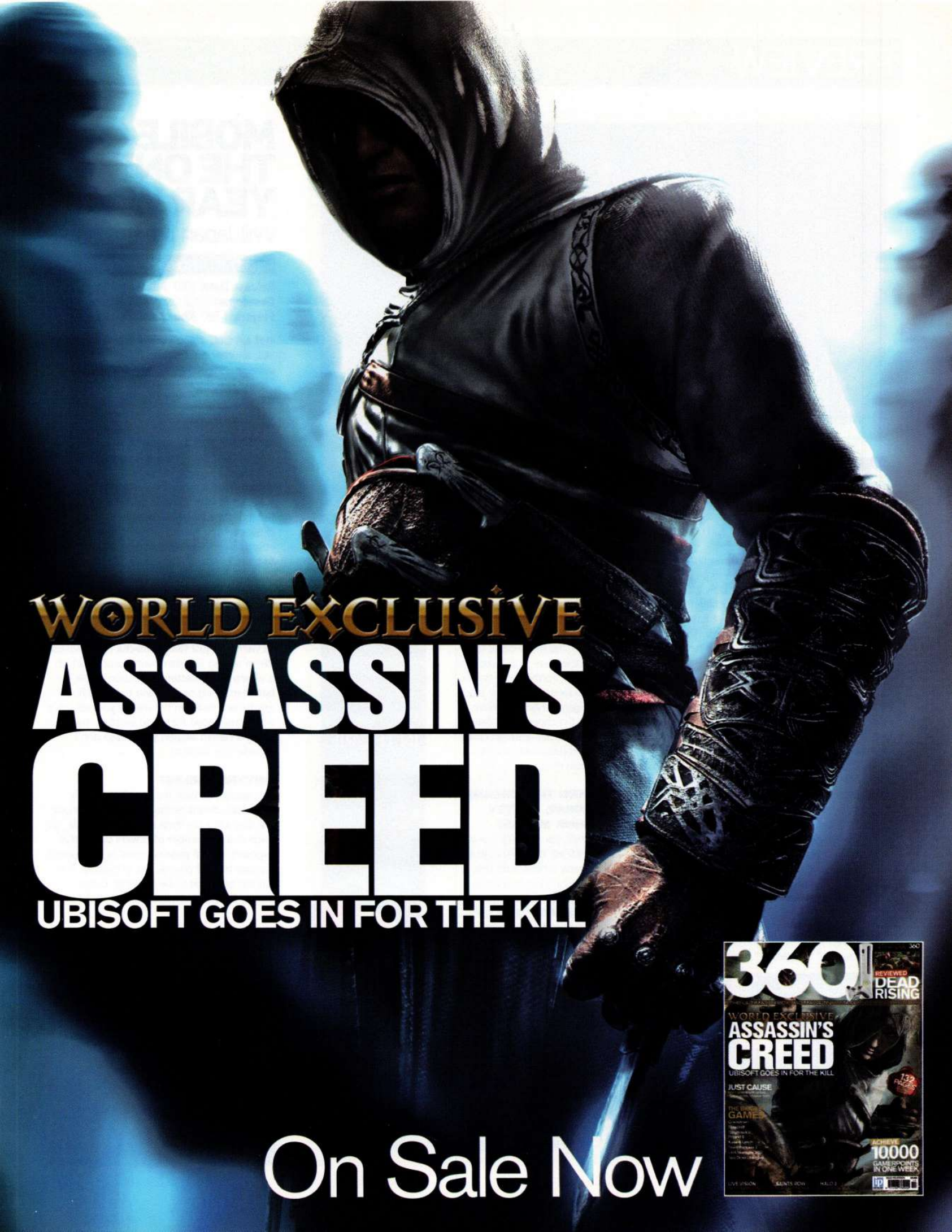




BUGGY OFF/ With diversity the key, *DIRT*'s selection of off road sports includes more extreme motorsports such as buggy racing

Liveaware

■ We don't know what the online mode will feature yet ■ But you can bet it'll involve online racing ■ And online time attack rankings too


WORLD EXCLUSIVE
ASSASSIN'S
CREED
UBISOFT GOES IN FOR THE KILL
360
REVIEWED
DEAD RISING
WORLD EXCLUSIVE
ASSASSIN'S CREED
UBISOFT GOES IN FOR THE KILL
JUST CAUSE
ACHIEVE 10000 GAMERSCORE POINTS IN ONE WEEK
On Sale Now



Release date/ 2007

TENCHU 360

Or Tenchu Senran, if you want to be leet about it

ISN'T TENCHU RUBBISH?

If you were to draw *Tenchu*'s awesomeness on a graph, not only would it be an incredibly dull thing to do, but it would also be a line slowly dipping from the understated genius of the first game to a mess clumsier than its eventual *Tenchu: Fatal Sprawl Of Heaven Assassins Shadow* subtitle. The series has massively lost its way but From Software, in an attempt to right previous wrongs, is throwing everything but the kitchen sink at *Tenchu*'s debut outing on Xbox 360. Just as well really because a kitchen sink would look rubbish in feudal Japan.

SO WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

The essence of the game is much the same. You're given an objective that's usually a dressed up way of going from point A to point B while avoiding guards. The hook of the games has always been how you perform the stealth kills to get rid of the guards in your way – sneak up behind the unsuspecting plonkers, then press the attack button for MASSIVE DAMAGE. Watch as the body staggers around in awkward animation, blood spewing everywhere, then move onto the next guard who sometimes shouts "Where are you?" and walks everywhere in straight lines.

SOUNDS LIKE SAME OLD, SAME OLD...

You horrible, cynical person. This features more stealth kills than before, with your assassins plunging their swords through paper walls, killing from ceilings and generally murdering in a manner that has made ninjas far cooler than pirates over the years. Furthermore, you're no longer tied to the black pyjama stylings of Rikimaru or the chopsticks-in-hair of Ayame – you can create and customise your very own ninja.

AND THAT MEANS WHAT, PRETTY PINK NINJAS?

Well, yes, if you're that way inclined. It also hints to a heavy emphasis on Live. *Tenchu*'s previous outing on Microsoft hardware was the only game in the series to feature online play, so it's not long-odds to suggest From Software will be nudging *Tenchu 360* in that direction – especially given attempts to nudge it any other way have backfired. Pink ninjas are the future? You better believe it buddy.



HOW'S IT LOOKING?

This looks rough and ready, as all of them have. *Tenchu 360* might not have had time to find its make-up but let's hope it found the gameplay.

NEED TO KNOW

Publisher/ From Software
Developer/ From Software
Genre/ Stealth
Players/ 1-TBC
Xbox Live/ Yes

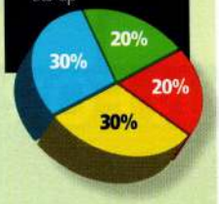
Briefly

The *Tenchu* series takes another shot at redemption with lots of customisation options

IN THE PIE

Tenchu 360 is all about:

- Sticking to the shadows
- Cacking yourself
- Running along walls
- Running for cover when it all goes tits up



MOBILE OPS: THE ONE YEAR WAR

Will Japan like this one?

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ 2007 **Publisher/** Namco Bandai
Developer/ Dimps Corporation **Genre/** Strategy
Players/ 1-TBC **Xbox Live/** TBC

OH LOOK, ANOTHER MECH GAME!

Yes, another mech game. It seems that developers feel the way to get Xbox 360 up and running in Japan is to throw mech games at it until it falls over and this is no different. OR IS IT?

BLOODY HELL, DON'T SHOUT...

WHAT? Oh. Okay. So this is Namco's attempt to do a mech game as it's never been done before. That doesn't mean with a romance sub-plot or with a 'fetch the right parts to build this mech!' mini-game but rather, close-combat. Mecha armed with axes, energy swords, plasma swords, big swords, two little swords, sharp swords, ninja swords, shiny swords...

OKAY, OKAY, I GET IT, MECHA WITH SWORDS. IS THAT IT?

This is a spin-off from the *Gundam* licence, so we're not just talking mecha with swords. We're talking Gundams with swords, which is clearly much better. The action is split up between being on foot and trying to find mecha and being in the mecha yourself once you've recovered them. No word on there being a stealth section yet (please don't include one, Namco).

ANYTHING ELSE?

This game was built for Live. Ridiculously long draw distances that allow you to shoot the dots off a die from another postcode, an unconfirmed number of players online that suggests 'lots of players online' is the current number and, of course, lots of swords. This has the potential to be a sleeper classic online, *Chromehounds* style. We shall see.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

A mecha game with a new mecha twist and lots of Gundams to unlock and ride around. With swords. It doesn't look bad.





NBA LIVE 2007

Living it up, 2007!

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ October '06 **Publisher/** EA Sports **Developer/** EA Sports **Genre/** Sports **Players/** 1-4 **Xbox Live/** TBC

HEY! LOOK! IT'S AN AMERICAN SPORTS GAME!
Yes, we know. It's hardly the stuff to stir English blood as Americans jump around whooping and hollering because an eight-foot tall monster put a rubber ball through a small ring of metal, but this has a very interesting feature that could feasibly change online sports games forever.

ERM... WHAT? REALLY?
Yes, really. EA hasn't put its ESPN licence to much use until now. The idea is that as you're hooked up to Live 24/7, you can receive updates, news and reports on what's happening in the world of NBA. You can also download highlight reels, basketball talk shows and full news stories. It's still all about that eight-foot tall monster, of course, but if this feature takes off then it could well crossover as other sports games try similar experiments.

WHAT ABOUT THE GAME ITSELF?
Well it's... you know. It's basketball. After getting spanked in every department by *NBA 2K6* last year, *NBA Live 07* seems to be pushing in an arcade gameplay direction, with a bar that fills up when you pass the ball to your designed X Factor player. When the bar fills up, that player will have 'mad skills' for a while. We know, it sounds like the exact opposite of everything Good Sports Gameplay stands for, but we'll just have to wait and see.

AND THE REST OF IT?
You pass, you dribble, you shoot, you score. That's the way a night out in Essex works and it's also the way basketball works. EA has some cute online functionality in place but if it also makes sure that the game itself works online, then it's halfway towards bettering last year's version. And a night out in Essex. Obviously.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

The online bells and whistles make this an interesting project, regardless of your stance on EA's sports games or basketball.

BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY

At long last, Battlefield does 'dark humour'

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ Q2 2007 **Publisher/** EA **Developer/** Digital Illusions **Genre/** Shoot-'em-up **Players/** 1-TBC **Xbox Live/** Yes

WOOOO! NEW BATTLEFIELD!
Yes, new *Battlefield*! But it's not the expected *Battlefield 2142* sequel, which will be heading to PC soon.

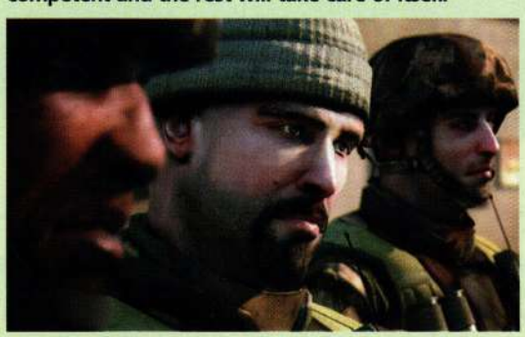
IT'S NOT? OH.
No, it's not. This is *Battlefield: Bad Company*, designed from the ground up for Xbox 360. Some hardcore fans criticised the fact that *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat* wasn't a port of the PC version, leading to a slightly dumbed-down version of the strategic war shooter (because console owners clearly aren't able to handle tactics to the same degree as PC owners). It looks as if EA will be putting its fingers in its ears to ignore those complaints and is heading down the same 'new game' road again.

SO WHAT IS NEW?
At the moment, not much has been announced, so we're not sure. The only clue coming out of Digital Illusions' HQ is there's been a lot of noise about the single-player mode this time around. *Modern Combat*'s single-player mode was pretty rubbish and suffered heavily in comparison to *G.R.A.W.*'s single-player. With both games released around the same time, it wasn't a pretty fight. Nevertheless, it's debatable whether anyone even cares about single-player.

ANYTHING ELSE?
Just the usual PR tittle-tattle that sounds big and means almost nothing. For example, it is "built from the ground up for next-generation consoles using Digital Illusions' bleeding-edge Frostbite game engine," news that would make us cartwheel with joy if we actually knew what any of it meant. Likewise, "dark humour" (bad jokes), "adventure" (you shoot stuff) and "trademark sandbox gameplay" (it'll be like the last one) doesn't mean much to anyone. Just fix the servers, EA. Forget the single-player. Just fix the damn servers...

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

It's far too early to tell but all EA needs to do is ensure the servers and clan features are vaguely competent and the rest will take care of itself.





IMPORT TUNER CHALLENGE

This ain't no red herring...

NEED TO KNOW

Release Date/ December '06 **Publisher/** Ubisoft **Developer/** Genki **Genre/** Racing **Players/** 1-2 **Xbox Live/** TBC

IMPORT TUNER WHAT, NOW?
Import Tuner Challenge. Originally known by the barmy *Shutokou Battle X* moniker in Japan, Ubisoft has picked the title and decided to publish it here, as well as refitting it with a title that makes a vague scrap of sense and allows for hilarious 'tuna challenge' jokes should we decide to get lazy.

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?
It is – and we mean this in the nicest possible way – the videogames equivalent of *Fast And The Furious: Tokyo Drift*. You race in Tokyo's 'underground', which we'll presume is a street racing reference rather than implying you race on the Tube, and you can customise your vehicle. There are said to be five million combinations possible, but then again, we're not sure who sat there and counted.

HMM... SOUNDS A BIT LIKE NEED FOR SPEED.
We know. It's essentially the equivalent of *Need For Speed* for Japanese chavs. For all the real Tokyo highways included, this will be all about the customisation and you can fine-tune the interior, exterior and engine with authentic parts by companies we've never heard of. "Tune your car like a mechanic!" shouts the press release, though it refuses to say if this involves splashing some oil at the engine, grumbling a ludicrously expensive price at the owner, then smiling a toothless grin.

SOUNDS GREAT. ISH. WHAT ABOUT ONLINE STUFF?
There's a Versus mode for online battles, where you can try and blind the other player with your pink and orange mess on four wheels that looks like it crawled out of Chernobyl. And the Frag Dolls will be playing it, of course, given that there's a whopping great Ubisoft logo on the box. Oh, how very cynical of us! Pah.

HOW'S IT LOOKING?

As Ubisoft's answer to EA's dominant *Need For Speed* series, this will need a boost off the starting line to compete.

GAMES ON THE VERGE OF THE BIG TIME – COULD THEY CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER?

X360 PREDICTS

TOP TEN RECOMMENDED 360 GAMES...

01 Dead Rising
02 The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion
03 Just Cause
04 Battlefield 2: Modern Combat
05 Hitman: Blood Money
06 Streer Fighter II': Hyper Fighting
07 Rockstar Table Tennis
08 Saints Row
09 Burnout Revenge
10 Prey

UNSIGNED

It's out there, but is yet to be confirmed for our beloved Xbox 360...

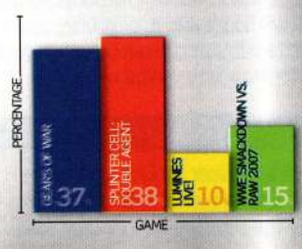
ASSASSIN'S CREED

LOWDOWN: This will happen, mark our words. Oh sure, Ubisoft protests there isn't a 360 version planned, but it's coming. And with all the best bits of *Splinter Cell*, *Prince Of Persia* and *Hitman* going into the mix, it'll be bloody brilliant when it does arrive too.



FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

September's already here (where exactly did the summer go by the way?) so now the the good games will start appearing on the scene. Hoorah! Here's what we're looking forward to:



SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT

MOST WANTED

Yes, we know what you're about to say, and hands on hearts, we're not entirely convinced by the sound of the single-player stuff either.

But nevertheless, we're still counting the days until the game's release – and it's all because of the multi-player stuff, you see. While *Chaos Theory*'s multi-player mode undoubtedly struck a chord with hardcore *Splinter Cell* fans, it wasn't the most newbie-friendly experience. Thanks to some rebalancing for *Double Agent*, however, things are going to be much, much better. With things simplified a bit to make things easier on *SC* virgins and the mercs versus spies element of the game rebalanced and refined (with three on each team now) we're cautiously optimistic this will kick some serious proverbial on Live.

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER '06



UNDER THE RADAR

Five sleeper hits


1


2


3


4


5

LUMINES LIVE!

1 The best game on the PSP is now heading over to Live Arcade. Hooray! *Geometry Wars*, your days are numbered.

SEGA RALLY REVO

2 We love *Sega Rally*. We loved it in the arcades, we loved it on the Saturn; we hope we love the 360 version too.

PROJECT SYLPHEED

3 With shmups specialist Treasure on the case, expect this to kick some serious arse – if it's ever released here, that is.

BLUE DRAGON

4 With *Enchanted Arms* a bit on the wrong side of crap, our longing for Sakaguchi-San's RPG has instantly shot up.

SHADOWRUN

5 Yes, we know it's an FPS and not an RPG, but with it being one of the first games to use Live Anywhere, we want it.



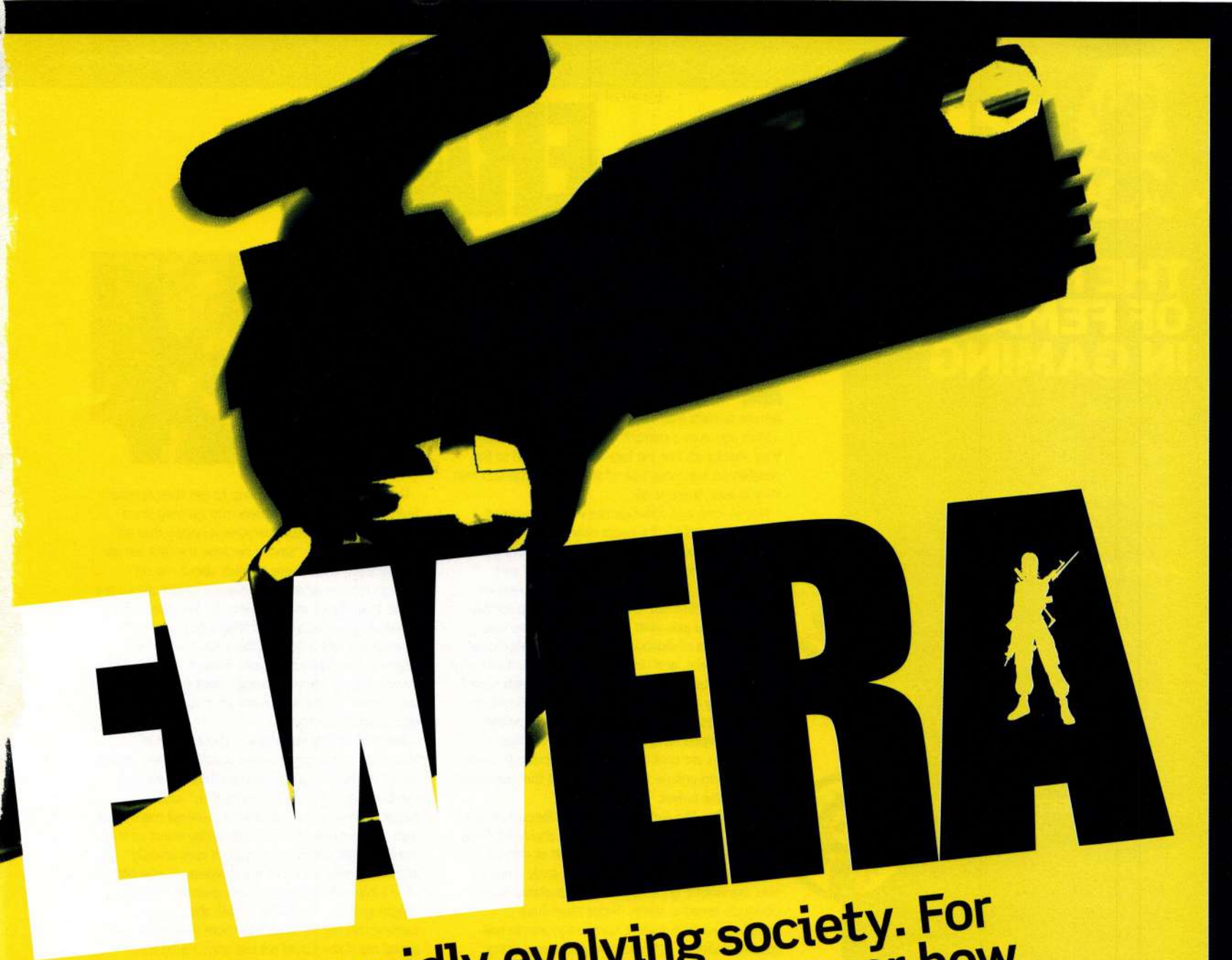
HIGH SCORE!

G@MERS - The best gaming action every week on British TV is Tuesdays at 7.30pm, Sky channel 193. But if that's not enough, why not watch Control Freaks and Cybernet as well! Rapture - the top score for gaming on TV.

RGAMING

Now watch all your favourite programmes for free, online at www.rapturetv.com/live
To advertise on Rapture please email advertising@rapturetv.com or call 020 7734 2323


THEN



EW ERA

We live in a rapidly evolving society. For better or for worse, things are never how they were just a few years ago. Technology, fashion, what constitutes a PG certificate and so on, all change on a virtually day-to-day basis. The videogame industry is no different, and while the games have certainly been getting prettier, so have many of the players... »

BY **WILLIAM HALEY**
AKA FALL3N ANGELZ
WHO HAS A STUPENDOUS GAMERSCORE OF 33,333



THE NEW ERA

THE HISTORY OF FEMALES IN GAMING

FEMALE GAME characters originate most notably as the cliché princess-in-peril that is now synonymous with Nintendo. Every game from *Donkey Kong* to *Zelda* to *Mario* had a helpless maiden that needed rescuing. Here's a look at a few digital ladies that decided to go against the trend and do a little butt-kicking of their own...



SAMUS (METROID)

Of course, one of the biggest shockers in gaming history was the fact that the little cluster of pixels that just spent the last few days blasting metroids and rolling up into a ball was actually *gasp*...a girl. While the concept of an ultra-tough, ultra-cool female main character was definitely original, the fact that you could play as Samus in her underwear didn't do much to help the cause of taking women in videogames more seriously...



CHUN-LI (STREET FIGHTER)

Chun-Li is the kick-@$$-now-take-names-later Chinese brawler that started it all. In a male-dominated game, Chun-Li stood out not just because she was still beautiful even after she had been busted up a little, but because she could hold her own against massive sumo wrestlers and Russian combatants nearly four times her size. Her outfit may be purposely revealing, which might normally be considered exploitative, but since nearly every other male character in *Street Fighter II* might as well have not even been wearing clothes, she fit right in.



LARA CROFT (TOMB RAIDER)

Lara Croft was a girl for one simple reason: the developer thought if you're going to have to stare at a character for hours on end, it might as well be a beautiful woman (something the team behind *Oblivion* might want to think about for the next *Elder Scrolls*). Turns out that was the best decision Core could have made because almost overnight a star was born. It's safe to say that had the first *Tomb Raider* not featured the great gameplay experience and visuals that it did, it still would have sold tons of copies.

Lara was the stripper version of Indiana Jones, only with a cocky attitude and sexy accent that had prepubescent boys all over the world going nuts, and apparently quite a few ladies as well: Ms. Croft is hands-down the winner for the most 'I wish I could be her' votes from all the interviewees...



RAIDEN (MGS2)

Oops... how did he get in here?

As any number of Xbox Live subscribers will attest, female gamers are invading the digital playing fields that were once only filled by you, a few embarrassingly stereotypical magazine editors, and Comic Book Guy from *The Simpsons*. While some of said female gamers may have more in common with the 'Don't you own a mirror?' staff at Gamespot than they should, it's not the face that's attached to the headset on the other side of the line, it's the fact that they're even there at all.

Not so long ago, videogames were considered an exclusive hobby 'for nerds only'. While we were shedding a tear for Aerith, and blasting Nazis in *Wolfenstein*, girls were painting their nails and buying shoes. Stereotypes to be sure, but neither is unfounded in truth. Boys are brought up to play with balls and girls with dolls, and the same was generally true of videogames. It wasn't until movie stars, musicians, and Hollywood embraced the hobby that it truly became mainstream. Mainstream meant it was finally acceptable to play games and not get called names, no matter who you were. Society certainly helped nudge girls and say, "Its okay, videogames are cool now," but even more so it was the new and unique titles coming out that appealed to our better halves.

Games like *The Sims*, *Dance Dance Revolution*, the countless iterations of puzzle games, and MMORPGs like *EverQuest* and *World Of Warcraft* all offer up an experience that many girls can more easily embrace over the violent, gun-happy or sports-related titles obviously aimed at males. Those series have a broad appeal that doesn't necessarily cater to one specific audience. "I think companies are starting to understand that women don't want games like *Barbie* and *My Little Pony* targeted at them," says PMS Batgirl (25-year-old ER secretary Kristin Reilly). "Females don't *always* want pink systems; but some do. Not shoving the 'girl' thing down women's throats helps broaden their appeal to female gamers."



While men have been trying to get their female friends and significant others into gaming since the days of *Pong*, not everyone is happy that it's finally happening. "Since I became the first female progammer, there were threads about me on Korean forums where they started to talk about me more than about male gamers. It's like they think I took another male progammer's position," says 21-year-old Seo Ji Soo, better known as Korea's reigning *StarCraft* champion, Tossgirl. "Just by what I wear, people say bad things about me. When I see people cussing about me on forums, I feel very disappointed and bad."

She is definitely not alone. "There's a lot of trash-talking slung our way. I usually just say 'good game' and exit the post-game lobby as fast as I can because I don't want to hear it," says PMS Batgirl. While all girl gamers interviewed mentioned that they receive several insults a day (most of them unrepeatable without a censor) it was actually another female who cut the deepest. "I was sitting on a table with my laptop and gear next to me," Batgirl explains, "wearing a PMS shirt, playing *Lumines* on my PSP, and this mom walked up and asked me if she could set her son's rig by me. I told her yeah, I didn't care where she set his stuff – I wasn't running the tournament. She looked at me and said, 'Oh, you're functional not just decorative?' I couldn't speak, pause my game, or even move. Her son got her out of there before I could recover."



FRAG DOLLS/ The original line-up that kick-started this whole controversy. Damn them! Tut

"Hiding behind a mic gives people the feeling that they can act however they want"

Besides the fact that hiding behind a mic gives many people the feeling that they can act however they want, there's also a bit of a grudge for some old-school male gamers. "It's like we've been saying videogames are not just for dorks for all these years," argues one Xbox.com poster, "yet everyone else was making fun of us and generalising the kind of people we were. Now girls are trying to slide in under the radar and unscathed, and want to cry foul for all the flak they're taking. But that's just the way the world works, we paid our dues, now it's their turn." That is definitely one way to approach the situation, but wouldn't it be better all round if you used your past experiences as motivation for welcoming others into the gaming world rather than punishing them?

TRUE GAMERS OR ATTENTION SEEKERS?

A lot of men and even women look upon girl clans with a suspicious eye. The most common point being brought to light is whether or not these girls deserve the special attention they receive simply for being girls. PMS Clan and the Frag Dolls may be better than many gamers – female and male alike – but as far as tournaments go their performance continues to underwhelm, often placing somewhere towards the back end of the top ten or beyond. And while even qualifying for many pro tournaments is a feat in itself, it's somewhat questionable when all the spotlights are on the Frag Dolls and no one even remembers the name of whoever took first place.

Morgon of MyGamerCard.net says: "On one side, I'm sure most female gamers don't want to be patronised or singled out exclusively just because they're female. On the flip side of that, I do think there needs to be a certain degree of visibility for them so that they can show not only men, but other women that they can enjoy games, make the games fun, and even provide a different degree or 'level' of play from what you might be used to." So whether it's your friend's mum, PMS Clan, the Frag Dolls, or even the not-so-subtle girls of WatchUsGame.com, regardless of why they get all the attention and whether it is deserved or not, the bottom line is that anyone with a controller in their hand is a gamer.

Last, and probably least, are the infamous booth babes. "I think booth babes are a slap in the face," says PMS Batgirl. "I know several models who do booth babe work because it pays well, but I really wish that companies would go for less skin and more skill. Yes, sex sells, but if anything you're degrading women which gives me a sour taste in my mouth toward your company, and alienates myself and a lot of my fellow gamers, male and female. I've also heard media complain about how they wish the booth babes knew what product they were pushing." In an industry that is so heavy on eye candy in the first place, if companies need to rely on scantily clad models to »

SEXIST GAMES

DEAD OR ALIVE

Over the ages, the made-for-males-by-males industry has produced a few blatantly sexist and exploitative games. The *Dead Or Alive* series introduced the now-universal 'jiggle' physics, as well as creating the *DOAX* spin-off series where the female characters go to an island for some soft-core exercises and what appears to be 'volleyball'. After the latest iteration in the series, it's clear Team Ninja now expects the sex appeal to sell the same game year after year.



LEISURE SUIT LARRY

Like James Bond films, *The Wedding Crashers* and *Revenge Of The Nerds*, *Leisure Suit Larry* is ridiculous for one reason: this guy would never be able to get with the beautiful women that throw themselves at his feet, without some sort of illegal substance. It's obvious that Larry is and always has been just a sexually frustrated designer living out his anger toward women, and unrealistic fantasies through a videogame. Seeing the popularity of the series, it's safe to say that he is not alone... The same could be said for *Rumble Roses* or *DOA*, as one look at Tomonobu Itagaki – the game's creator – and it's safe to say the man has GOT to be paying for it (imagine a face being mistaken for a piece of cheese and getting grated accordingly). However, it's only a matter of time until the women in the industry strike back, so don't be surprised when *Thunder Down Under: The Game* is announced in the next year or so.





THE NEW ERA



CRAZY FUN/ OMG bunkbeds!!! We're on t... um, nevermind

SO WHAT'S A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PMS MEMBER LIKE?

PMS Fedaykin sheds some light: "Crazy, fun, and full of giggles. It's an indescribable feeling to be surrounded by other girls who share one passion – gaming. In practice, we're encouraging each other to get better, giving out tips and strats, all the while laughing about random jokes and funny stories." No matter how hard we tried, Fedaykin wasn't willing to offer any pillow fight stories, but we are quite sure they happen...

POWERHOUSES



TAKE PART/ To see what 360 Actions Per Minute looks like, head on over to **www.meetyourmakers.com/vod/53.html** and try not to blink!

TOSSGIRL, UNDEFEATED CHAMP

Meet Tossgirl, the biggest thing to hit Asia since bird flu. At first you might think she's another K-pop singer or cosplay model, but this is the undefeated *StarCraft* women's champion. "My parents wanted me to be successful by studying. I especially regret that I disappointed my mother by becoming a progammer. But after seeing me on TV and seeing other people watch me on TV, I think they finally understood why I wanted to be a progammer. Sometimes when there is an article in the newspaper about me, they will call me and discuss the article with me. Now they are proud of me."

Although her physical beauty undoubtedly gets her quite a bit of attention – not all of it good (Korea still has 'traditional gender roles', meaning they treat their women like dirt) – seeing her in action will silence any naysayers and possibly bring a tear to the eye. Her APM (actions per minute) is up to 360. Coincidence? We're gonna go with 'yes'...



SAY CREED/ To see Jade and her pearly whites in action, check out the *Assassin's Creed* interviews at **Gametrailers.com**

JADE RAYMOND, PRODUCER FOR UBISOFT'S ASSASSIN'S CREED

Appearing at this year's E3 to hype future Game Of The Year candidate *Assassin's Creed*, Jade Raymond surprised a few people as the 'booth babe who actually knew what she was talking about'. In reality, Jade is the producer on *Assassin's Creed* and besides having an extremely cool name and ridiculously infectious smile, she represents what is sure to be a growing trend in the industry: female game makers. Jade has been in the industry for many years, graduating college with a degree in computer science and going on to program and produce a number of titles for Sony and EA, most notably *The Sims Online*. In 2003, she nabbed a co-hosting spot on G4's Electric Playground (boosting the show's initial fan base of zero considerably), then returned to her native Canada to produce games for Ubisoft. When asked what it's like being the 'girl' in the group, she said that she's never been a man so a comparison is tough, but the staff at Ubisoft are very nice.



FANCY A CHERIE?/ Cherie can be seen at **IGN.com**, **SuicideGirls.com**, and of course, **Myspace.com/cherieroberts**

CHERIE ROBERTS, IGN

Cherie is a queen of all trades: model, journalist, photographer. She freelances for both IGN.com and SuicideGirls and dreams of making her own game someday. "I'm a huge pervert, so it'd probably be some weird sex-simulator. If I had it my way, it'd be the dirtiest, raunchiest sim-game you could find. Yes, even nastier than the Japanese ones. That is my dream, one huge videogaming orgy-fest. Don't tell me that it doesn't make any sense, it's my dream, not yours." Actually, we're pretty sure that's the same game we've been wanting since we were kids. But we're not so sure about Cherie's other fantasy. "I don't like talking about it, but Tommy Vercetti from *GTA: Vice City* might've been my biggest crush. I mean, the way he steals cars, and beats hookers... My kind of man." When not drinking sailors under the table, Cherie finds that videogames find their way into every aspect of her life: "One model I shot wanted to do a shoot and have tip-offs to *World Of Warcraft*, so we did it. It's pretty awesome. I love that I get to talk to hot chicks about nothing in particular and get paid to do it!"



IF ANYONE CAN/ To get your read on, make your way to **PulpArcade.com** for all the latest on game-related comics

STEPHANIE CHAN, PULPARCADE.COM

Colourist for Marvel Comics and webmistress of the videogame-inspired website Pulp Arcade, Stephanie hopes to spread a little knowledge. "Pulp Arcade is dedicated to news and information about videogame-related comics. There are a lot of great (and not so great) comics getting published based on videogame properties that not a lot of people seem to know about. I found there are a lot more comics published than I thought. I made the site to keep track of all the videogame-related comic news that comes out. I haven't found another site like it yet, so hopefully I can stay unique."

As far as videogames themselves go, Stephanie would like to see a little originality. "I never had kids, but I thought this was the best idea for a game ever. I want to make a pregnancy simulator. What you do to your body through mini-games will impact on the baby's health. The final level would be a first-person POV of you lying on the hospital bed with your legs split wide and up in the air. And this is why nobody will ever hire me to design games." We sense a pattern here.



"GamerchiX has an emphasis on companionship, it's not just about being female"

draw attention to their product, it's very likely they are doing something wrong.

DRAMA QUEENS

One of the many emerging gamer girl groups is Xbox.com's 'GamerchiX'. Started by Xbox.com Community Developer Christa Phillips aka Trixie, this group has an emphasis on 'companionship, not competition'. Trixie explains: "GamerchiX is not just about being female; it's also about the commitment to being a good member of the community, and a good role model for young gamer girls. GamerchiX is not about competing with the boys or with anyone. There are tons of clans and other groups where girls can 'prove themselves'."

The genesis of GamerchiX came in the form of an Xbox.com thread that met with mixed reactions. In response to the idea of a 'GamerdudeZ', a gamer by the name of HSK Avant Garde replied that it would never happen because 'guys don't attract publicity like girls do'. He then said that female clans are famous due solely to their gender. Trixie responded by lowering his Community User Level by two whole levels (anyone who has been on the Xbox forums knows it takes quite a while to improve your CUL), deleting his post, and then saying: "Golly, what happened to your Community User Level? Tsk. That's a shame." And followed that up with "This is MY thread. If you want to spout venom about female gamers and your pet theories about why we do or do not get attention, go start your own thread. But don't bring that crap in my thread. And yeah... look out or you are next. Consider yourself warned."

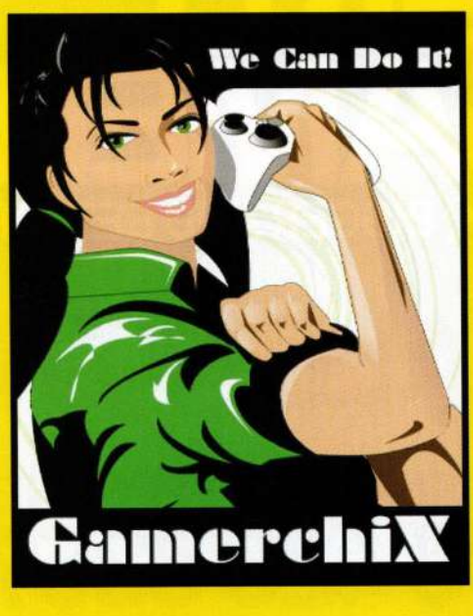
With that, the floodgates opened and it was like blood in the water. Many male posters struck back, but it was a gamer by the name of Luckiee who put it best, "Since when is stating your opinion (or the truth) 'spouting venom'? There is no way that any sane person could honestly say that the PMS Clan is never given attention just because they are girls. All girl clans and the attention that is given to them almost makes me ashamed to be a female gamer."

When asked about his opinion on the matter, HSK had this to say: "It was a 'This is my thread, and unless you post something that I agree with, I'm gonna delete your post and make you pay' kind of thing. I view the forums as a place to openly debate and discuss things. Apparently Trixie doesn't." But he insists he doesn't have anything against female gamers: "A gamer is a gamer in my book. Special attention should be given to people who have accomplished something... I don't think being born a male or female is a major accomplishment." HSK doesn't see the need for gender-specific groups: "It's not just females that the jerks on Live make fun of, it's everyone. So why not segregate even further then? Let's do it by race, gender, religion and so on. That way nobody can make fun of anyone. The truth is that someone will always find something wrong with someone else, even if they're exactly the same. Jerks are jerks, period."

Aside from the drama regarding its beginnings, and the questionable action taken by an Xbox representative in response to someone simply stating their opinion in a public forum, the idea of a group of women all getting together and helping each other becomes more comfortable with the Live experience and gaming in general is definitely a step in the right direction. As long as the man-hating is kept to a minimum, groups like GamerchiX and a few more supportive, respectful male gamers will go a long way to strengthening the gaming community as a whole.

Inspired by the Xbox.com group, one of the latest features of the newly revised MyGamerCard.net is a 'GamerchiX Leaderboard' which produced nearly 250 GamerCards in the first day. The number one gal goes by the handle of TGC Sirius389 (formerly XSiriusGamr389X) with just over 25,000 GamerPoints, and proves that girl gamers are similar to male gamers in many different ways, not only the skill and the ability to sit on their arse for long periods of time, but also the willingness to use gamesaves. The second-place card belongs to 'tripodcat' with only 13,000 GamerPoints, and the majority of the girls on the board have a GamerScore of 9,000 or less. In fact, almost 200 of the cards don't even break the 4,000 mark.

Out of the 200+ cards that belong to girl gamers, the total GamerScore rests at approximately 550,000, whereas the main leaderboard's Top 20 alone makes up more than twice that. That does not necessarily point towards a lack of skill on the girls' parts, but rather a lack of competitiveness. That, and the fact that most of the girls on your Friends List are either still playing *Zuma* or *Final Fantasy XI*... "I think I could make the [leaderboards] if they had 'most time wasted on one game without benefit'," says Trixie who spends the majority of her online time spitting rainbow-coloured balls out of a frog.





THE FUTURE

The gaming industry is going to continue to grow in many ways, and an increasing number of female gamers will inevitably be a natural part of that. Girls are the last horse to cross the finish line, and most of them have a sort of innocent 'Hey, I'm new here' attitude, but when guys start slamming them with sexist remarks or hateful messages, they understandably begin to get jaded or turned off all together. It goes without saying that a little common courtesy and respect for your fellow gamer, male and female alike, will go a long way towards making Live a much friendlier and diverse place.

PMS Batgirl says: "My ex used to LAN with me occasionally. But he wasn't as good as I was and whined about how much I gamed and that I spent more time with my XBL friends than him." To many readers, that may sound all too familiar, albeit with the roles usually reversed. How very far we have come in just a few years. Nowadays it is not completely unlikely that the mother picking out baby food in the grocery store or the attractive girl serving you your morning coffee is also the same person that handed you your arse in *GRAW* last night..."I'm a gamer. I just happen to be female," says PMS Fedaykin. "Last time I checked, gaming had no gender." ■



VERSUS/ Voodoo has left the Frag Dolls to start her own gamer group: 'Versus'

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE NEW retro GAMER

"Just beautiful. It's the only magazine I've bought in years that I actually want to keep!"

"The look and feel is much classier"

"10 out of 10 for the magazine"

"Picked up a copy of Retro Gamer... WOW!"

"Reading through the new issue – absolutely amazing!"

I'll definitely be buying it every month. I can't remember the last time I actually sat down and properly read a gaming magazine."



THE NEW LOOK

retro GAMER

BACK, BIGGER AND BETTER

ON SALE NOW

TO SUBSCRIBE TELEPHONE:

0870 428 8359

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CLASSIC GAMES

+++ THE DEAD TAKE OVER THE 360! +++ TROUBLE IN THE 'HOOD! +++ CAMP ADVENTURES!

REVIEWS

X360
Every month, the only reviews you can trust...

VERDICT	GIMMICK	LIVE TIME	CUSTOM GAMING	PLAY THE GAME
We rate games out of ten	The game's main unique feature	The multiplayer mode is tested	Custom mode options explored	The experience of playing



CLASSIC AWARD
Any game scoring a nine is awarded the Silver Classic

LEGEND AWARD
A game scoring the perfect ten gets the Gold Legend

DEAD RISING

"DEAD RISING IS THE JAPANESE KILLER APP WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR SINCE NOVEMBER"
Ashley Day

X360 REVIEW GAMES CONTENTS



72 DEAD RISING
Throw teddies at zombies, then run them over with a lawn mower. *Dead Rising*'s here, and it's every bit as cool as it sounds.

76 SAINTS ROW
Many have tried, but none have managed to topple *GTA* yet. Can *Saints Row* be the one to finally "pop a cap" in Rockstar's ass?

80 JUST CAUSE
Go to a Third World country and overthrow a corrupt and ruthless regime in the name of Uncle Sam. Nothing like the real world, then.

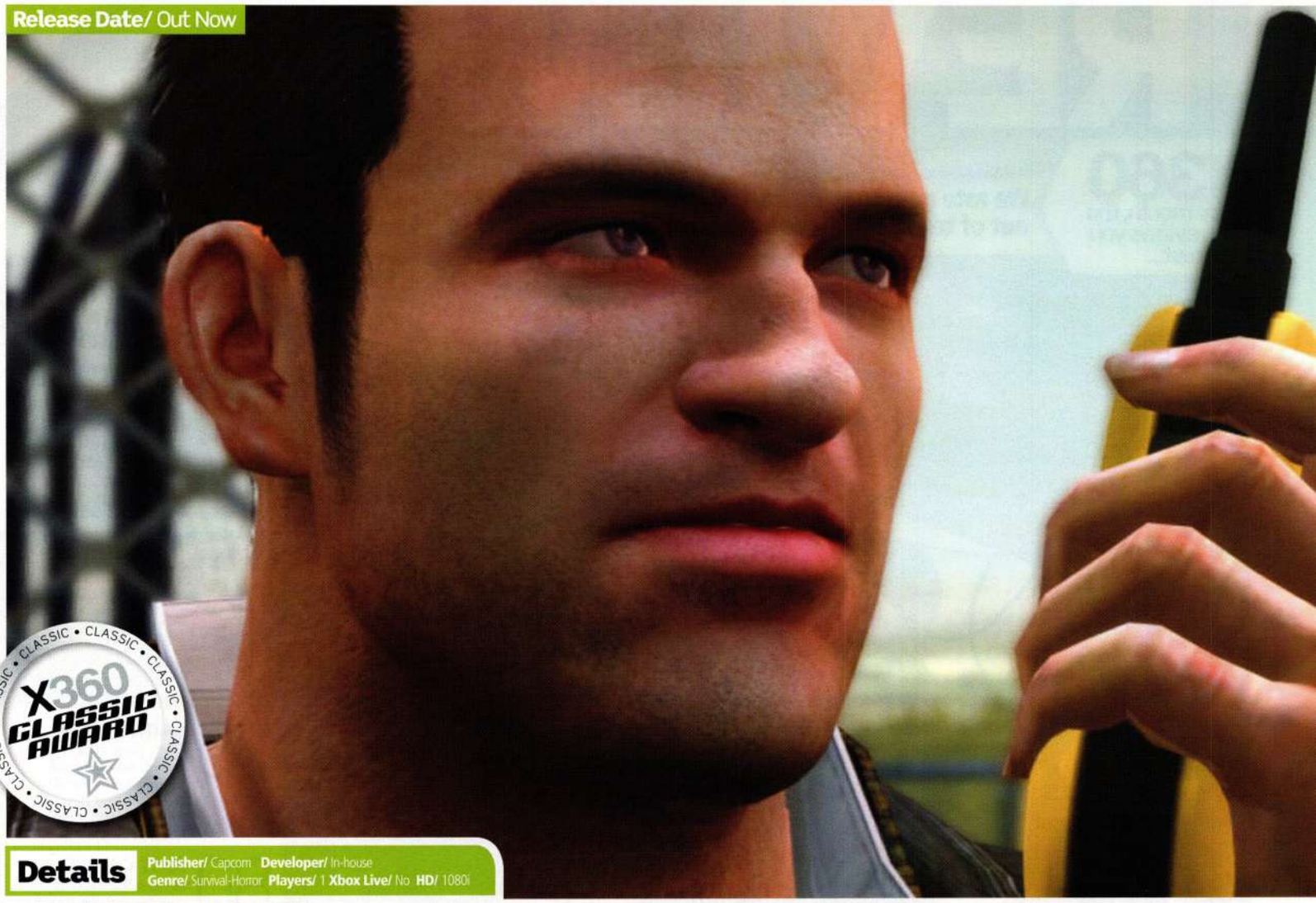
84 ENCHANTED ARMS
For those hoping that this camp and cheerful Japanese RPG would be the role player the 360's been crying out for, you're in for a disappointment.

88 N3: NINETY-NINE NIGHTS
An age after it arrived in Japan, Tetsuya Mizuguchi's hack 'n' slash arrives here. But while it involves plenty of swordplay, it can't quite cut the mustard.

THE SCORES EXPLAINED

1 Barely worth the disc it's been printed on
2 Why would you buy this? Why? WHY?
3 There's no excuse for games this rubbish
4 Er... pretty poor. Not terrible, just bad
5 As average as the girl next door
6 Good, but not great – a missed opportunity
7 Pretty decent, although it's lacking in places
8 A quality game but lacks... something
9 So close to greatness, it can almost smell it
10 Do such games exist? If so, they are gods...

Release Date/ Out Now



X360 CLASSIC AWARD

Details

Publisher/ Capcom **Developer/** In-house
Genre/ Survival-Horror **Players/** 1 **Xbox Live/** No **HD/** 1080i





HORSING AROUND/ Pop a mask on a zombie and take a picture for 'Outtake' points

DEAD RISING

Forget Resident Evil, there's a new King of the Zombies in town

Come on, admit it – we've all done it at some point. Every single person reading this magazine will, at least once in their life, have wondered 'What exactly would I do if my town was overrun with zombies?' It may seem a rather childish idea, but it's one of those things we all feel the need to consider, just in case. Now, thanks to Keiji Inafune and his imaginative band of magic makers at Capcom, we no longer have to waste valuable dream time imagining such things. *Dead Rising* does the job instead, by dropping the player directly into a shopping mall full of the brain-hungry shamblers with only everyday consumer appliances to help send the undead back to where they belong.

Sure, there have been other zombie games before: Sega's *House Of The Dead* and Capcom's very own *Resident Evil* series both did a terrific job of simulating the horror of a zombie infestation. However, those games put the player in control of special operatives: highly skilled in shooting the hell out of anything until it's stopped dead in its tracks. They never offered us the chance to experience the situation through the eyes of the average man, which is where *Dead Rising* comes in. Our hero, Frank West, isn't actually a 'hero' in the true sense of the word; he's a self-absorbed freelance photographer whose aim of the game is to get the next big scoop and to – ultimately – stay alive.

Dead Rising is much more of a survival-horror game than any of the *Resident Evils*, as Frank really has no combat skills and must rely on his wits and his ability to adapt to the situation in order to get out of the mall in one piece. This is the central premise of the title's gameplay, the one element that gives the player the most control of the action. What would you do if your mall was overrun with zombies? Do you sneak through the shadows, hoping that none of the mindless deadites spot you while you search for survivors and escort them to safety? Alternatively, do you adopt the cavalier approach, use whatever weaponry you can find to tackle the decaying masses head on and get to the bottom of the problem as fast as possible?

The choice is put firmly in the player's hands. Although the game's strict 72-hour time limit does not allow for everything to be experienced in one play through, there is enough time to wallow in the mall's many possibilities and doing so is really in the player's best interests. Dash between set pieces

Xtunes

What we listened to when playing *Dead Rising*:

- Weezer – Photograph
- Goblin – Zombi
- Bad Religion – Better Off Dead

SAVE ME

We've never needed the toilet so badly

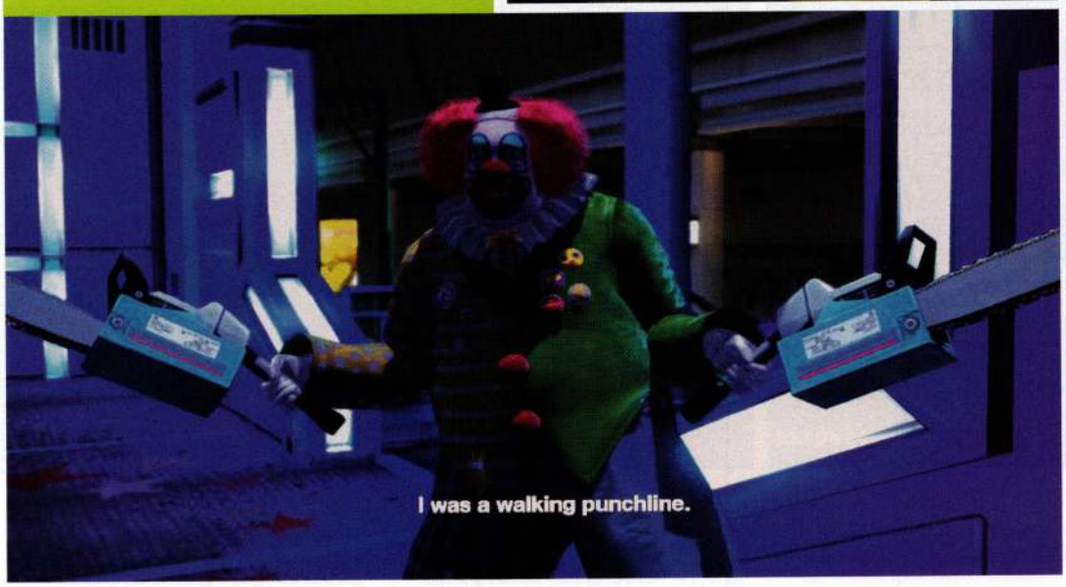
If there's one minor problem that stops *Dead Rising* scoring a perfect ten, it's the difficulty spikes that occasionally force the player into a loop of restarting and then dying again. Certain boss battles or areas with many zombies can make short work of Frank, and the fact that Save Points are so scarce means that you'll find yourself retreading a lot of old ground each time you inevitably die. The best workaround is to carry as much health-replenishing food as possible, but with only limited slots for food, weapons and other items, the difficulty can still get the better of you.



INSTANT OPINION

The 360's next killer app. Gory and exhilarating, *Dead Rising* is a labour of love for Keiji Inafune whose efforts have paid off

BLOOD 'N' GUTS/ We did warn you it was going to be a bit gory, didn't we? Pass the bucket...







> "Capture a 'brutality' or some 'erotica' in the shot and the game can award you thousands of points"

without taking in the building's many shops and not only will the player miss out on hundreds of great moments and hidden items, but they will also find the going much tougher as they won't have built up Frank's abilities by completing sub-quests.

Room to grow

Yes, what wasn't immediately apparent in *Dead Rising*'s early screenshots and demos is that Frank can grow and learn new abilities through the course of the game. In fact, doing so is near essential in order to keep the difficulty level manageable. In a similar way to the *Devil May Cry* games, Frank's abilities can increase in levels; he can improve his health, strength and other attributes as well as learn new fighting skills as the game progresses. Levels are increased by obtaining Prestige Points in a number of ways. Points can be earned simply by killing lots of zombies or causing a lot of damage in a single hit, while certain parts of the mall also hide secret points like the treadmills in the gym that award 200 points if you run on them for long enough. The easiest (and most fun) way to earn points, however, is with Frank's camera. Hold the L trigger at any time to aim the camera in the first-person perspective and take a snap of anything you see. Each photograph is then judged by the CPU for the number of bodies (alive, dead or undead) in the frame, the quality of the action and any other interesting features. Capture a 'brutality' or even some 'erotica' in the shot and the game can potentially award you thousands of points for one snap – as long as the pictures are dynamic enough.

As hoped, the photography elements are an integral part of *Dead Rising*'s gameplay: as they evolve, so too does the character. They also provide variety and a welcome diversion from the zombie bashing. That's not to say that the combat isn't tremendous fun though. In fact, if you find the right item to suit your play style then taking on the »



CAPCOM CAPERS/ It may look out of place, but we appreciate *Dead Rising*'s sense of humour

SHOP TILL THEY DROP

There's only one way to make mowing the lawn more interesting...

Anyone who saw Peter Jackson's gruesome B-movie *Braindead* will know that everyday appliances like lawnmowers and blenders can be very handy for dealing with a pesky swarm of undead folk. Thank God then that *Dead Rising* takes place in a mall, where hundreds of potentially lethal items can be easily acquired as long as you know where to look. The best part is that because most of the employees are dead, you won't have to pay for a thing. There are some traditional weapons like handguns, a katana and even an Uzi, but some of the best weapons are those that were never intended to be used in a harmful manner. Perhaps the idea that ordinary items could be used to shred a zombie to pieces appeals to our sick fantasies, but that's mostly irrelevant: they make for a great videogame after all.







brainless hordes can be a very rewarding experience. Almost everything in the mall can be picked up and used as a weapon. Tap the X button and all manner of objects can be used as bludgeoning or stabbing weapons. Hold the R-trigger while pressing X and objects can be hurled through the air, causing chaos if you throw a particularly heavy item, such as a cashier's till. The best weapons, however, are the secret and one-off items. Our favourites are the petrol lawnmower – which minces a crowd of zombies in seconds – and the katana, a relatively hidden weapon that can slice through a zombie in just one simple hit and cause considerable damage to the boss characters.

Oh the bosses, in all the excitement, we almost forgot to tell you about *Dead Rising*'s excellent boss battles. In a change to the typical zombie genre of videogames, *Dead Rising* doesn't feature mutated monstrosities as its bosses. In fact, the hardest creatures to beat are often the human characters. In a knowing nod to George Romero's classic zombie films (*Night Of The Living Dead*, *Dawn Of The Dead* and so on) it is the humans' own selfish interests and lack of moral fibre that causes the most trouble for our hero, and presents the biggest danger to the player. Whether they be escaped convicts, a deranged clown or even a freakish religious cult, it is the intelligent humans and their ability to wield weapons that can make progress particularly tricky throughout this game. Motivated by greed, survival instinct or just plain lunacy: the human characters' threat to the player is much greater than a zombie's desire to feast on a bit of flesh and ultimately, it's a lot more frightening. Once you've seen a clown menacingly juggling two chainsaws, you'll never be able to visit the circus again.

Laying down the gore

Aside from such genuinely chilling moments, *Dead Rising*'s horror comes more from its abundant use of gore more than anything else. Although it

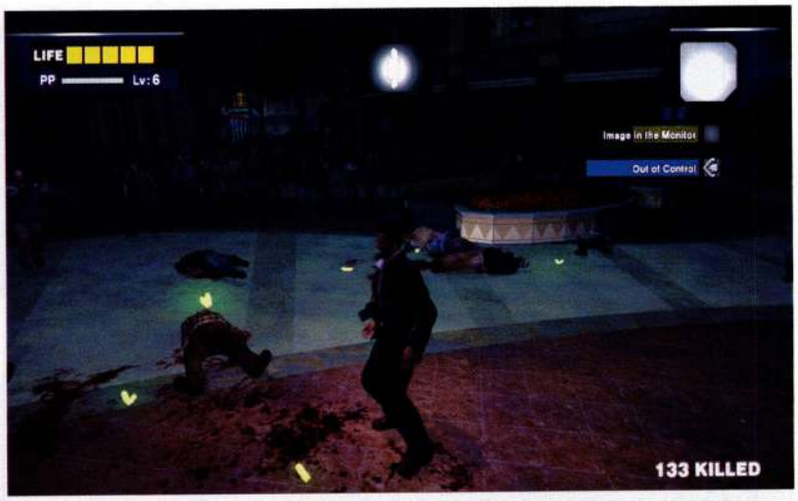


FASHION VICTIM/ Act like a pretentious celeb and wear glasses even when you don't need to



SMASH IT UP!/ Frank stands back to take a good look at his handy work – hasn't he done a fine job?





FAN SERVICE CALLING

When Capcom attacks...

Explore *Dead Rising*'s mall in detail and you're sure to find quite a few references to Inafune-San's past games. The cinema, for instance, features a poster for a *Mega Man* movie, complete with dreadful art that's reminiscent of the awful cover for *Mega Man 2*. Best of all though, you can wear a mask of the Lego-like creatures from *The Misadventures Of Tron Bonne*. He'll even wear it in the cut-scenes!

GIMMICK

Photography/ Take a picture of anything and rake in the points for dramatic, violent and even erotic pics



graphically pales in comparison to certain other Xbox 360 games (we suspect that the raw power of Microsoft's super console had to be reserved to get hundreds of zombies on screen at once) the actual art direction of *Dead Rising* is exemplary. Capcom has made every possible effort to ensure that the volume of blood on screen rises exponentially with every kill. After mashing a few undead bodies up with a baseball bat or spade, it's not uncommon to see Frank covered in blood and standing in a pool of the crimson goo that stretches off in every direction. Every zombie features some kind of stomach-churning disability, some are missing an arm (you'll probably be able to pick it up somewhere nearby though) while others have face wounds that allow you to see the inner workings of their mouths in truly nauseating detail. *Dead Rising* certainly isn't a game you'll be showing to your dear old gran – every few minutes you're sure to see a head explode or someone's guts fall out – so she definitely wouldn't approve.

But this game wasn't made for your gran. It was made for an entire generation of filmgoers who grew up on sickeningly violent yet politically astute zombie films. And while we're not going to bang on about the socio-political metaphors of *Dead Rising* too much (we're not *Sight & Sound* you know) we will say that *Dead Rising* borrows from its inspirations in all the right ways. The political subtext is certainly there – the photography elements easily turn the player into a voyeuristic paparazzi vulture, for example – but what we're most concerned with is the way Capcom has captured the look and feel of Romero's zombie movies through excessive gore, deranged human dangers and a shopping mall that is almost a character in its own right.

What Capcom adds to the genre is 23 years of game design expertise; combat is simple yet undeniably good fun, and level design is expertly tweaked to allow maximum freedom to experiment while also keeping some areas locked so that the game unfolds *Zelda* style to keep things fresh. The entire experience has been paced so that the simple gameplay never becomes monotonous. As soon as it looks like you might become bored of fighting zombies, a new weapon or a boss battle or a new cut-scene will emerge.

Dead Rising represents yet another high watermark of console gaming from the horror masters. Classy, stylistic and polished to perfection, *Dead Rising* is the Japanese killer app the Xbox 360 has been waiting for since last November. It's utterly essential, and if you don't love it as much as we do then you're dead to us. **Ashley Day**

HIGHLIGHT: The lawnmower! One of the most satisfyingly destructive items in *Dead Rising* that might also be the best videogame weapon ever.

TIMELINE Day Of The Dead



2 MINS	2 HOURS	4 HOURS
Take some happy snaps	The tears of a clown	Things start to get weird

DEAD RISING

Dead Rising features arcade-quality gameplay wrapped around a classic movie theme and sprinkled with tons of extras. Worth buying an Xbox 360 for – everyone should play this game.

VERDICT

- ⊕ Zombies!
- ⊕ Loads of weapons
- ⊕ Compelling sub games
- ⊖ It's not free
- ⊖ Very difficult in places
- ⊖ Not the best visuals

9 OUT OF TEN

HIT OR HYPE? "It's looking absolutely stunning" Ryan King, Issue 10. Well said. This is a classic

Release Date/ 01 September '06



Xtunes

What we listened to when playing *Saints Row*:

- Megadeth – Symphony Of Destruction
- Eminem – Criminal
- The Clash – I Fought The Law

Details **Publisher/** THQ **Developer/** Volition **Genre/** Action **Players/** 1-12 **Xbox Live/** Yes **HD/** 720p/1080i

SAINTS ROW

Don't be a menace to GTA while refining genres in the hood

Go on. You might as well say it. We're all friends here at **X360**. Just one glance at any of the screenshots adorning this page has no doubt set off questioning thoughts in your mind as to the striking similarity between *Saints Row* and a certain best-selling series of games from a certain British publisher. You see, this title makes no attempt to conceal its influences – from the in-car radio through the wanted levels to the Forgive And Forget drive-through police pay-off, this is very much an attempt to take the *GTA* mould and go on a screaming rampage with it. That's fine by us, after all, you would have to be a very naive person indeed to anticipate the decline of third-person free-roaming action games on current technology, following a handful of abortive attempts on Xbox and PS2. With this in mind, it becomes rather lazy criticism to dismiss an offering like this out of hand – the focus instead should be on seeing where it fits into an emerging genre, and letting the whole world know whether we have another *Getaway* or, God help us, another *True Crime* on our hands.



The good news is we most certainly haven't, as there are plenty of positives – some of them quite innovative – to go around. Strangely enough, the frontrunner among these is the game's map. Brought up via the Pause menu, it allows you to theoretically pinpoint any area of the city of Stilwater setting before embarking towards it using a suggested main-road-based route highlighted in your HUD. A modest sounding element perhaps, but one that completely wipes out the sense of disorientation that would usually go hand-in-hand with an environment of this size. Better yet, it does so without giving away the positions of the wealth of jumps and hidden short cuts, leaving you room to explore the terrain in search of ever more efficient ways to escape. The background story, too, leaks quite nicely into aspects of the game aside from the basic cut-scenes. Without giving too much away: one second you'll have assisted another gang member to fake their own death using the combination of a stretched limo and a rather large bomb, the next you'll be hopping into another stolen car, flicking the radio on and listening to the news being transmitted to all and sundry. Other times, you'll hear tongue-in-cheek

YOUR BROTHEL NEEDS YOU!

Moving from good to evil faster than a speeding bullet

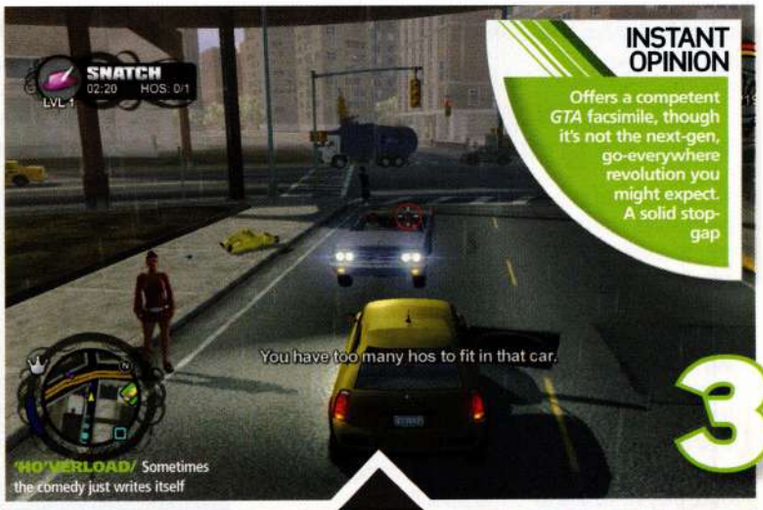
You'll occasionally have to delve so deep into the criminal mud pit it'll defy belief. One activity in particular seems to harness the power of Lord Kitchener spinning in his grave – Snatch. This involves heading out on to the street in search of a group of ladies of the night, before isolating their pimp (distinguishable, as all pimps are, by a fur-lined coat and feathered hat) then gunning him down in cold blood. Instead of letting the women go on their merry way however, it's your job to recruit them to some other gold cup-encrusted employer; a fact that raises some important questions. What happens if a four-door car can't be found and a two-door is too small for all the hos? Indeed, is a prostitute actually 'recruited'? And lastly, is there a more unintentionally funny videogame-help mechanism?



PIMP DADDY/ If he wore a T-shirt, he'd be practically invisible



EAT LEAD/ Alas, his conspicuousness is his downfall



'HO'VERLOAD/ Sometimes the comedy just writes itself

INSTANT OPINION

Offers a competent *GTA* facsimile, though it's not the next-gen, go-everywhere revolution you might expect. A solid stop-gap

adverts for in-game stores and mission providers, reminding you of the services they can render. Also tying in with the whole gangland story, the chance to call in back-up 'homies' is pretty quickly dealt out – a function you'll only start to use more than ten hours into play, but anything that helps to create the illusion of a permanent world shouldn't be sniffed at.

Atmospheric, not stunted

Before we drown in criticism, it might be useful to relate a little of the game's structure. Once you power up your 360, you'll be requested to create an avatar for your underworld self. The whole process bears a reasonable degree of similarity to EA's GameFace system in terms of potential variety of outcome and ease of use. Suffice to say you could create many hundreds of thousands of credible appearances before you'd have to delve into the whole 'David Dickinson with an Afro' thang. Now, the amount of character model detail available takes a hit due to the existence of this system, but the flip side of that particular coin is the fact that no two people you will then go on to meet will look the same.



FRESH PRINCE/ Full customisation has the by-product of making every Stilwater citizen unique

Pretty much the second your feet finally touch Stilwater turf, you gain access to a set of 'activities', numbering around a dozen, spread liberally across the city landscape (which, incidentally, is fully unlocked from the game's outset). These show the same extreme lack of imagination that they do in variety, covering such diverse subjects as stealing cars to order, doing as much damage as possible to the environment and protecting a drug dealer as both a pillion passenger in his car and as a lone gunman on foot. All prove immensely enjoyable, even strangely relaxing, due to an automotive control system that shows the true difference between each of the available vehicles and the lack of an automatic targeting mechanic, replaced instead by an icon just large enough to make you believe each fallen opponent is all your own work.

Every time an activity is completed, you'll receive the standard cash bonus, plus a number of respect points, based on difficulty. Said respect points build up, RPG-style, until eventually you'll have earned enough to take part in one of the game's full-on missions. Once you've got that out of the way your respect points will drop once more, leaving you to try out increasingly difficult activities to gain another story segment (happily, if you failed you can opt to simply restart the mission). Victory, however, gains you a neighbourhood from the triumvirate of other gangs fighting to control the turf, earning you the proceeds of any criminal goings-on from the district, easily collectable from your safe house at any point. Once you've gained control of all 36, of course, the city is yours.

Now, if you're sitting there thinking: 'Haven't I heard all of this somewhere before...?' allow us to take you back »



CRASH BANG/ Destruction derbies usually prove to be an easy way to raise your respect level. Getting out isn't always recommended, though

STICK 'EM UP!

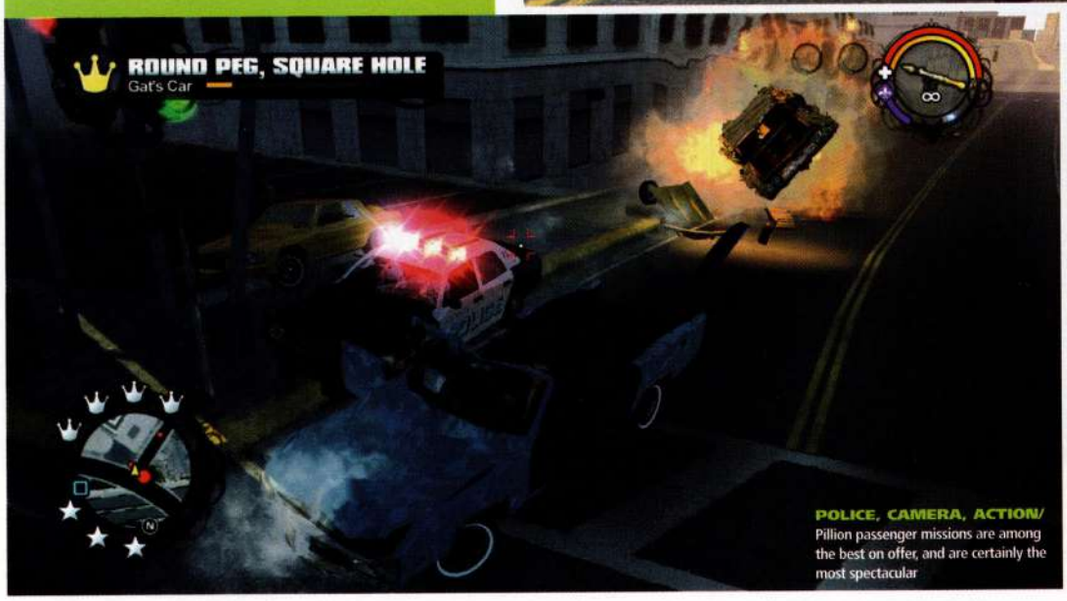
Shops – useful for the exchange of money for goods and services

The scattering of in-game shops can play host to a variety of entertaining sideshows. Entering during the day, you can choose to either buy their wares as usual or keep your weapon pointed right between their eyes to perform a little armed robbery. Once they've led you to the safe, it's a mad dash across town as you try to evade a police force suddenly quite interested in the brown package you've got stashed away in your trunk. During the night it's possible to subtly boot the door in, performing an ever-so-fiddly mini-game instead to crack the safe.

GIMMICK

Born free / A lot of the fun comes from just seeing where an innocent target and a rocket launcher can take you





POLICE, CAMERA, ACTION/ Pillion passenger missions are among the best on offer, and are certainly the most spectacular





again to Rockstar's classic series, specifically *San Andreas*. As obscenely unnecessary as the blocking off of story elements may look, it's a very different animal to CJ's personal quest to keep himself fit, loved and full of badly cooked chicken. While it may artificially elongate the game somewhat, the variety of the activities on offer, combined with more incidental stuff such as holding up stores, robbing people in the street and hostage missions (timed exercises in losing a tail, activated by a quick tap of the Y button as you make off with a car occupied by more than one person) give the game a 'more than the sum of its parts' feel. Often, you'll become sidetracked as becoming the world's greatest cat burglar becomes momentarily more interesting than the story itself. Modifying cars at in-game garages, remoulding your face at the plastic surgeon's and kitting yourself out in a feathered pimp hat also prove worthy of a mention when it comes to expressing the variety on offer, even though these can be of concrete use when you need to lose the cops or increase your respect levels, respectively.

Gang war benefits no one

And so we come to the point in every review wherein resides the 'but' – and *Saints Row* is no exception to the rule. Top of the great list of irritations this time

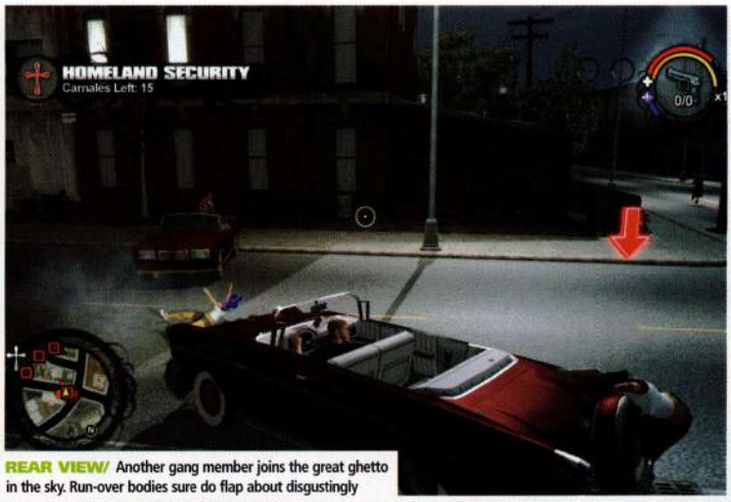


CLICK, CLICK/ Safe robbing is frustrating stuff. The instant the alarm sounds, the police are on their way



ORDNANCE SURVEY/ Select a destination on the in-game map and watch a detailed route appear on your HUD











REAR VIEW/ Another gang member joins the great ghetto in the sky. Run-over bodies sure do flap about disgustingly

SELF ABUSE

No win, no fee

Another of the more unusual activities on offer is 'insurance fraud'. After paying a visit to one of the, shall we say 'less reputable' law firms around town, you proceed out into the street hurling yourself, *Jackass*-style, into the path of every oncoming vehicle you see to earn juicy compensation dollars. While it's a little difficult to make contact with swerving cars on packed streets, on the highways it's quite literally car-crash viewing.



> "Makes no attempt to conceal its influences"

around is the relative futility of trying to keep yourself alive. The many fast-food outlets provide health packages in the shape of various cheeseburgers and soft drinks which, in theory, are accessible during the heat of battle by holding down a button and using the D-pad. In reality though, the second your health bar begins to drop in a gunfight you're in serious trouble, so much so that running away often does little good – such a fiddly control mechanism just frustrates. Eventually, you'll take to running down opponents, simply switching from car to car. While playing golf with pedestrians does have a certain tactile charm, desires to go in *Matrix* style remain well and truly unsatisfied. Some sort of automatic, *Metal Gear Solid*-inspired system would have gone down a treat, and actually allowed you to enjoy prolonged armed combat rather than spend the entire time anxiously tiptoeing around.

At number two on the hate list is the fact that gangs will attempt to reclaim territory you've already earned, through an all-out battle in which you must destroy a handful of enemy lieutenants. Engaging in large-scale combat like this is quite atmospheric, particularly as you skirt between isolated smaller stand-offs, but the delicious fancy of having access to RPG launchers becomes about half as amusing as each of the scores of times you're hit by one while in a car, dying instantly. In addition, these feel so much more like an artificial attempt to water down the game than the activities ever could. A lesser complaint might revolve around the fact that *Saints Row* feels a little like it's cheating you out of a proper, next-gen title. Sure, it looks nice, but if you're after the next revolution in this newly established genre, you won't find it here. Your surroundings are still loaded on the fly, the majority of buildings are still off limits and there's no dialogue from your lead character (though the script rather pointedly and humourously highlights that fact on several occasions).

Nevertheless, the mostly successful recreation of perhaps the greatest videogame of all time will suffice to make you return to spend many a happy hour cruising the streets, looking for trouble. Sure, Rockstar's next effort will probably be the next big shift in urban action, but until that happens, what's wrong with having another virtual playground inside your TV? Nothing, that's what.

Dave Shaw

HIGHLIGHT: The comedy perfection of annihilating a car with your RPG before following its tyres as they teeter down the road.

TIMELINE Not so Saintly behaviour...



5 MINS Get shot at

1 HOUR Explore familiar terrain

2 HOURS Indulge in some light arson

SAINTS ROW

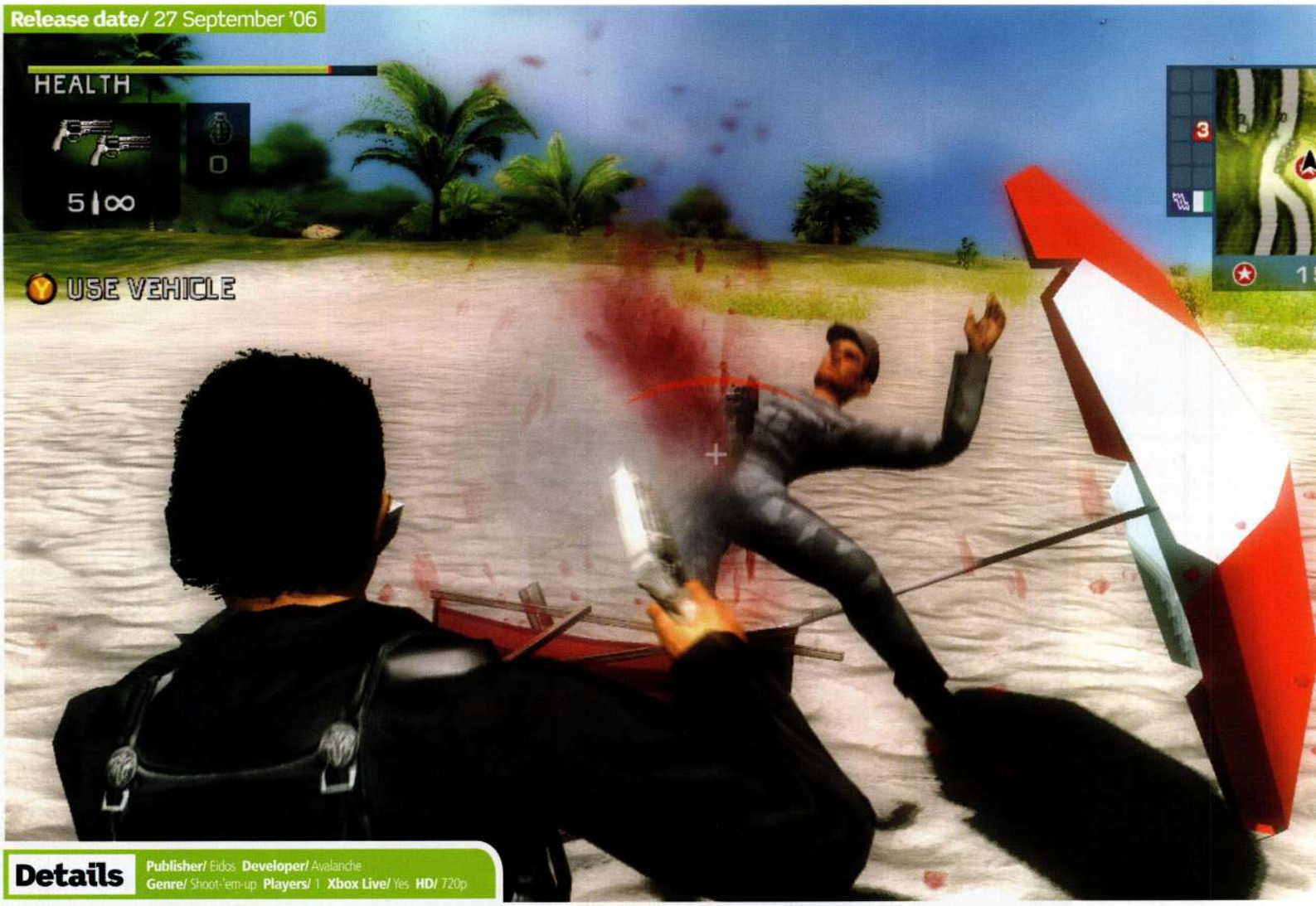
So little experimentation yet so few mistakes in a genre that's littered with notorious misfires. More freedom would have wowed us, but this is one for impatient *GTA* fans to investigate.

VERDICT

- ⊕ Instant restart missions
- ⊕ Superior pathfinding
- ⊕ RPG-based mayhem
- ⊖ Healing yourself stinks
- ⊖ Few new ideas
- ⊖ Slight graphical issues

8 OUT OF TEN

Release date/ 27 September '06



Details **Publisher/** Eidos **Developer/** Avalanche
Genre/ Shoot-'em-up **Players/** 1 **Xbox Live/** Yes **HD/** 720p



JUMP AROUND/ All you need to worry about in Stunt mode is getting off in time



JUST CAUSE

The revolution will be televised... and man does it look good in HD

When Eidos confirmed that *Just Cause* was coming to Xbox 360, we kind of just shrugged. It looked like a fun enough Xbox game, but before the announcement had even been released to the world at large we'd already assumed this was going to be a bog-standard port. A few months later the developer shows us this next-gen version running and our hat is lying on the floor, chewed to a soggy pulp. In what seems like a short space of time, Avalanche has worked wonders. This looks absolutely stunning.

From the moment you parachute in it's impossible not to be impressed by the scope of the landscape in front of you. Rolling mountains show off the large draw distance, miles of jungle decorate the ground, rivers sparkle, towns appear in patches, oppressive military buildings rise... all bustling with activity below you as the wind rushes past your hair. San Esperito is huge and, after the obligatory opening sequence involving a car chase, you're free to go anywhere you like in this world that looks as lush as anything that the frankly embarrassingly linear *Far Cry* has to offer. And, amazingly, there's not a single loading screen in sight. In the space of a few minutes you get that same sensation that you felt watching the sun set in *Oblivion*.

At one point, for sheer curiosity alone, we spent an hour speeding around the map just to see what would happen. The only sign of strain came from the occasional frame drop, usually when we were around cloud height. The scenery also got a touch too familiar after a while (once you've seen one tree you've seen them all) but during that 60 minutes we were grinning like a South American businessman hearing the word 'immunity' for the first time.

Have wheels, will travel

Travelling around the island might not sound like a barrel of laughs, but this feature is one of the most enjoyable – thanks purely to the stunt side of the gameplay. When you're driving any vehicle you can tap the A button to enter Stunt mode. In most cases this means surfing the roof of whatever vehicle you happen to be. From this Stunt mode you can fire guns, jump from vehicle to vehicle or open the parachute which, depending on the speed you're travelling, will launch you into the air.

Xtunes

What we listened to when playing *Just Cause*.

■ JJ Abrams – Lost Theme ■ Kool & The Gang – Jungle Boogie ■ Deus – Pocket Revolution

HOT WHEELS

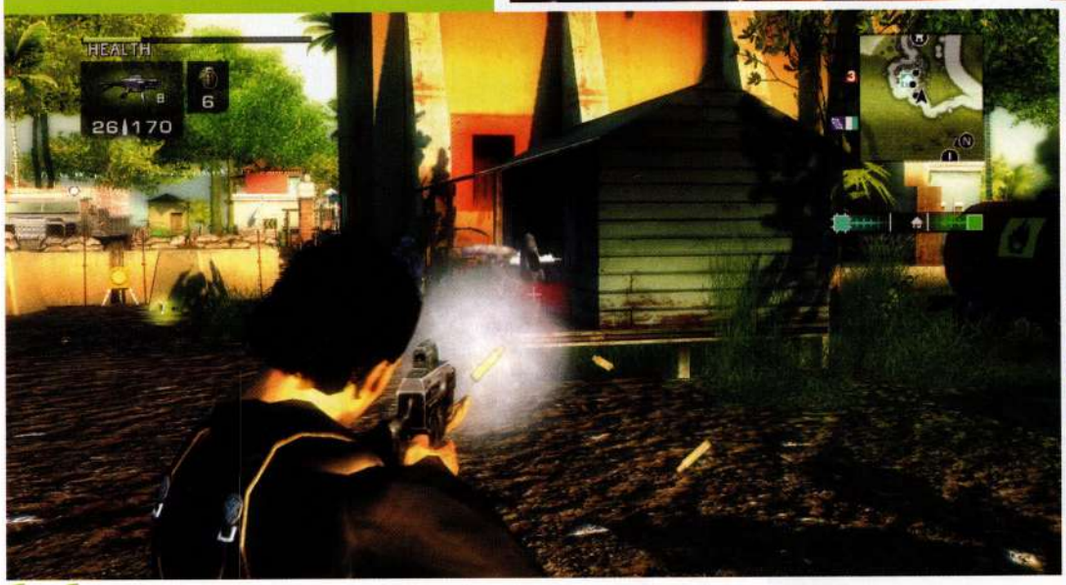
This is the way you roll

There are many, many vehicles in *Just Cause:* lorries, jeeps, cars, pickups, powerboats, fishing vessels, planes, helicopters… and numerous variations of each. There's always some kind of transport to hand, but unlike other games, you never get tired of what's on the road. You do of course get duplicates, but it never feels that way. One great feature is that you can ask for an agency drop, should there not be anything nearby that suits your needs. You can also switch to your PDA and request a jeep, bike, mini chopper or speedboat to help you out.



INSTANT OPINION

A tropical version of *Mercenaries* with a rogue Bond-like lead character and a play area far bigger than you could even imagine







"You are the star in a James Bond film directed by John Woo and produced by Jerry Bruckheimer"

While you're suspended from the parachute you can carry on using your guns or jump back onto any car below you, landing with a thump on the roof with your magnetic boots. Once you get used to the controls (and find the grappling hook, that allows you to parasail on any moving vehicle) you end up 'stunting' across the entire island looking like the freaky lovechild of Spider-Man and James Bond. Understandably, the grin doesn't wear off for a while.

It's almost impossible to travel normally – the temptation is far too great. You could be sitting on top of a mountain planning a stealthy attack on a cartel base, but there'd still be a voice inside your head telling you to request a motorbike drop so you can launch off the cliff with your hand thrust firmly above your head forming devil horns with your fingers. Mix this effortless stunt ability with the lock-on system and the combat becomes equally entertaining. You can throw grenades through the air as you leap from a moving vehicle, target them and shoot them before either you or the grenade hit the ground. You are the starring role in a James Bond film directed by John Woo and produced by Jerry Bruckheimer.

However, this level of cinematic cool also brings its own problems. The whole point of this game is that you're a government agent sent to incite a local revolution and essentially gain control of the entire area (also known as democratic freedom if you live in America). What this basically boils down to is helping the locals to take over the towns, assassinating political figures, siding with drug cartels to fund mini-wars and so on. Problem is, regardless of what you're doing, you attract attention.

Of course, this is fair enough if you're storming a base, but you can be driving normally down the road in an unmarked car with no gun on show and the passing police/militia will begin pursuit completely unprovoked. We're not sure what the point of the meters in the top corner of the screen that mark police and military awareness are though. There really is little reason to pay any »



THE HITCHER/ Travelling around the island like this tends to attract attention from militia choppers



NIGHT MOVES/ There's a full day-and-night cycle running on the island

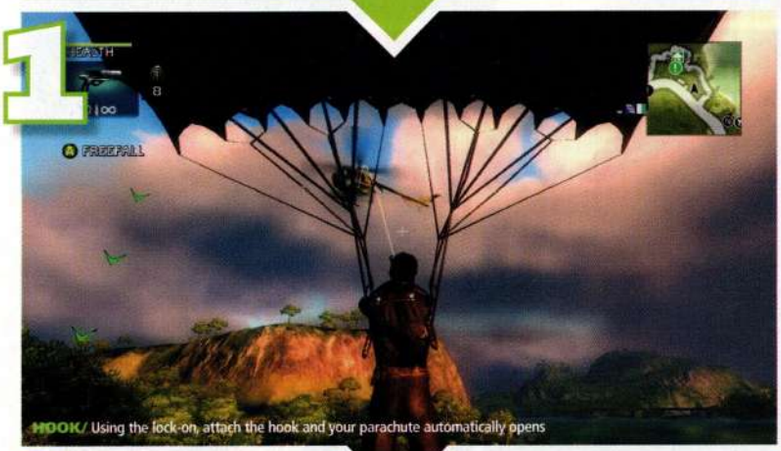


SWIMMING WITH THE FISHES/ The developer has done a fantastic job of the water in *Just Cause*

STUNTMAN

The art of grappling... the hook and rope version, not the manly kind

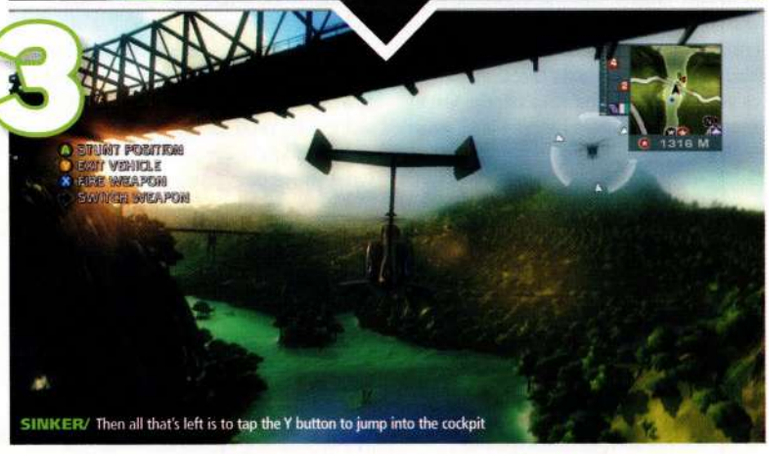
Your most valuable weapon in *Just Cause* isn't your rocket launcher, your assault rifle or even your dual pistols with infinite ammo. No, it's the grappling hook. This simple gadget allows you to attach to any moving vehicle within range. Just point and shoot to create an instant free parasail ride. Should the connection break for any reason, all you need to do is float around for a bit on your parachute until you spot something else to latch on to. Stay over busy roads and your feet need never touch the ground. It's incredibly handy for cutting down your time across the map. Especially if there's a helicopter travelling nearby; with a bit of practice you can easily hijack any helicopter, be it basic transport or fully fledged gunship.



HOOK/ Using the lock-on, attach the hook and your parachute automatically opens



LINE/ Once you're attached, reel in the line until you're close enough to grab on



SINKER/ Then all that's left is to tap the Y button to jump into the cockpit



MARKED FOR DEATH/ Your current objective always stays marked on the map in the top corner

attention to these as you're consistently forced into stunt escapes and acrobatic combat. It's a good job the auto-locking makes all of this incredibly easy. Unless you're a complete moron, not a single bullet is going to go to waste in this game. You can stride into the middle of a nasty looking group and keep rattling the triggers with guaranteed success.

Don't get us wrong – this is still a lot of fun to play – but could have been so much better had there been a feeling of being within a politically unstable environment. As it is, you're never given time to think or care about the various factions. The basic gameplay structure could have taken a lot of pointers from *Mercenaries*... a game that forces you to think about what you're doing and which faction you should side with. The story here might suggest otherwise, but this is very much a shoot first/think later game with no consequences for your actions. In a way – particularly with the stunt options and the auto-lock – this plays like a massive-scale arcade shooter.

> "You know how duvets protect you from monsters in the closet? Here, flags save locals from bullets"

Wash, rinse, repeat

Ironically, one feature that is directly comparable to the Pandemic Xbox game is the high level of repetition. This isn't the kind of game you want to spend more than an hour or so at a time with. If you do you'll find yourself starting to tire very quickly. It's all very well having free-roaming sandbox gameplay, but when it comes down to the missions you have to carry out, there is very little on offer in the way of variety. In fact, after a while you'll find yourself warping between the different headquarters on the island just to get some of the missions out of the way.

It's the side missions that are most notably cloned – the most glaring example being the minor revolution, which rears its ugly head far too often for our liking. Every single village on the island starts off under the control of the local government – the evil dictatorship you're trying to topple. Explore the immediate area around any village and you'll find a freedom fighter just away from the centre surrounded by crates and ammunition. It doesn't matter what town it is, they'll look the same and have the same crates stacked up next to them. Go up and talk to him and you'll begin the revolution in that town, because revolutions are that simple.

In every single town in *Just Cause* the revolution goes something like this: talk to freedom fighter and follow his comrades into the town. Kill anyone your target reticule locks onto until you



THE HADO JUMP

High Altitude... Don't Open

It took all of a few seconds before we tried the HADO jump, but we were surprised at the results. We cut our parachute free during the opening sequence and plummeted to the ocean... only to survive the fall. As you might expect, the same doesn't happen over land. We can highly recommend trying to hit a car or pedestrian with this technique. You get nothing for it, but it's fun.

GIMMICK

Totally tropical/ You've 250,000 acres of tropical terrain to explore. Sure, it all looks the same, but it's still awesome







reach a roadblock (that wasn't there before the revolution). Throw a couple of grenades at the roadblock to blow it up, move on and kill more cursor magnets until you reach a second roadblock. Blow that up as well and continue on until you find more militia and a flagpole, touch the flagpole to bring American freedom to the people and save the town. You know how duvets protect you from the monsters in the closet? Flags in this game save the locals from bullets.

This is all great the first couple of times, but after the fourth or fifth town this templated mission starts to get very tiresome. It's almost as if the developer has spent ages creating this wondrous environment to explore, but has absolutely no idea what to fill it with. The main missions do offer the occasional variety and there is fun to be had there, but even then you start to wonder what the point is to having such a large area.

What *Just Cause* ends up becoming after a while is a giant playground – somewhere to mess around for a couple of hours performing ridiculously far-fetched stunts and causing as many explosions as possible. Almost like *GTA* without any of the character. For these short bursts of satisfaction alone this is more than worth getting – however, don't be surprised when you end up switching off halfway through a mission and start praying that *Mercenaries 2* will fill the hole. **Mike Richardson**



SUPERMAN/ It goes without saying that you have to suspend a little disbelief every so often

HIGHLIGHT: Jumping off a bridge in a sports car, deploying the parachute, dropping onto a passing chopper and hijacking the ride.

TIMELINE Action man for a day...



1 min	4 mins	20 mins
See the island for first time	First taste of the action	Perform first extreme stunt

JUST CAUSE

This is beautiful to look at and genuinely entertaining to play, unfortunately it's not something you're going to spend any great length of time with.

VERDICT

- ⊕ Water effects
- ⊕ Huge area
- ⊕ Extreme stunts
- ⊖ Repetitive missions
- ⊖ Dumb AI
- ⊖ Feels empty

8 OUT OF TEN

Release date/ 08 September '06



Details **Publisher/** Ubisoft **Developer/** From Software
Genre/ RPG **Players/** 1 **Xbox Live/** Yes **HD/** 1080i





SWINGING AROUND/ In addition to walking about, it's possible to use a grappling hook to swing between certain points

Xtunes

What we listened to when playing *Enchanted Arms*:
■ Various - The NeverEnding Story OST ■ Soren Birch - Lokkende Toner ■ Various - White Elephants And Golden Ducks

ENCHANTED ARMS

Sadly, the name's the only enchanting part of the game

With most Japanese gamers more than content to pretend that neither Xbox console exists, it shouldn't really be that surprising that Japanese developers have been a bit cagey when it comes to developing for the 360 or its predecessor. But while most Western developers have managed to cover the majority of gaming bases out there, there are certain genres that even the most talented have struggled to cover with any degree of conviction.

Take the traditional Japanese RPG, for instance. While there's no denying that both Xbox consoles have played host to some truly epic RPGs down the years, the undeniable charms of taking control of a flamboyantly dressed set of characters and embarking on a magical quest, taking it in turns to exchange HP-depleting attacks with an array of demons, elves, dragons and wizards, remains something of a rarity on both of Microsoft's machines.

We should be singing the praises of From Software at the moment, because *Enchanted Arms* is about as Japanese as RPGs get. Turn-based gameplay: Check. Health points: Check. Magic: Check. Levelling of hometown and/or slaying of friends and family: Check. Clichéd Japanese characters and locations: Check. Token hero character struggling with his destiny: Check.

Your turn now

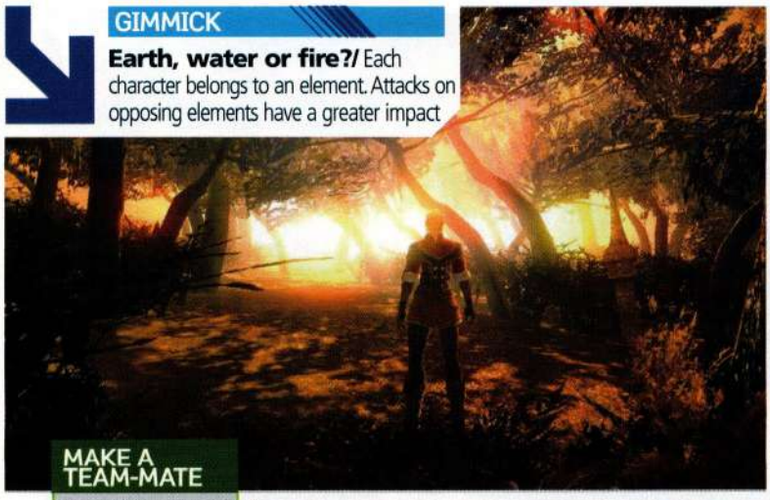
While the premise sounds like just the sort of thing the 360's been crying out for, the catalogue of errors that blight *Enchanted Arms* are enough to ensure it is little more than mediocre.

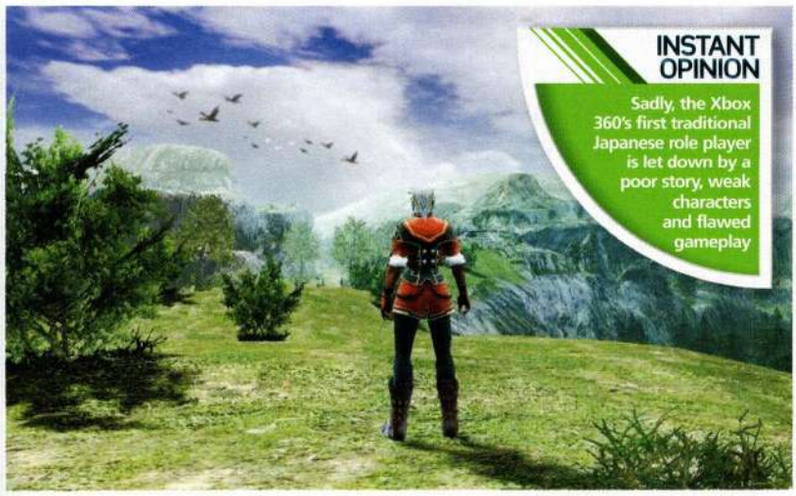
For starters, there's the gameplay. For most seasoned JRPG fans, the combat elements will be pretty standard fare. Players can have up to four characters selected at a time, who are then used whenever a battle commences. The battlefield itself is divided up into two grids (one for each opposing force), with the player being able to move their characters around the grid, selecting an action and then performing it, upon which the opposing force does likewise.

Each character comes equipped with a handful of moves to start with, although additional moves can be purchased later on. In addition to this, each character belongs to a certain element, distinguishable by the colour of clothing or, in the case of non-human characters, their skin (eg red for fire, blue for water, green for earth, and so on). These not only determine what kind of basic actions they can

GIMMICK

Earth, water or fire?/ Each character belongs to an element. Attacks on opposing elements have a greater impact





INSTANT OPINION

Sadly, the Xbox 360's first traditional Japanese role player is let down by a poor story, weak characters and flawed gameplay

MAKE A TEAM-MATE

Feeling lonely? Try making a friend

In the shop feature you can have your own golem made. Golems are made from special material, which you can collect by smashing crates up or beating certain enemies. These can be used at the shops to be turned into golems to bolster your team. The golems have their own characteristics, and while the number of individuals you can have in your party is limited, golems can handily be stored inside the shops.



perform (fire characters would specialise in close-range attacks, water in long-range attacks, green in protecting) but also how effective these actions are, with attacks on opposing elements carrying more weight.

While it's nothing spectacular, the battle system works well enough; the initial battles are nothing overly taxing, but as you progress, enemies will become stronger and you'll find the game soon turns into a rather strategic affair with the player having to think tactically according to their particular choice of character.

However, this is pretty much the sole redeeming feature of the gameplay, as the rest of it proves to be an exercise in frustration and tedium. By far the biggest problem is the random battles. While we don't mind the odd random battle here and there to spice up large stages and let us level up quicker, *Enchanted Arms* takes things to the extremes. Run 20 paces in any given direction and you'll promptly find yourself pitched into a random battle.

To say these are annoying is something of an understatement. In the initial stages, the relative weakness of the enemies you face means these are little more than an irritating – but ultimately harmless – annoyance. However, as the enemies grow stronger, these battles will start to take their toll on the members of your squad.

With health restore points and shops (to buy the usual array of potions, for example) increasingly few and far between – such is the frequency of the battles – that by the time the end-of-level bosses roll around you're often left to face them with a rather sickly bunch of wounded walking. This can be problematic to say the least. With bosses often having the ability to wipe »

> "We don't mind the odd random battle here and there, but Enchanted Arms takes things to the extremes"



SPECTACULAR EFFECTS/ The artwork that accompanies special moves is both rich in detail and style

ALWAYS ON ALERT

They're not called random battles for nothing you know...

Whether you love them or loathe them, there's no getting around the fact that random battles exist in *Enchanted Arms*. Although things start off easily enough, things can get quite tricky later on with some of the battles, as certain golems have the ability to knock you for six very quickly. That said however, each enemy golem has a limited range of attacks, and while the number and type of golems will always vary from battle to battle, once you've figured out your tactics (of which you'll have no lack of opportunity) for each type, it's simply a question of mixing and matching techniques. Should it all go tits up, you can bail out, but be warned; doing so on a regular basis will take its toll on your experience points, making it harder to level up and will only make things trickier further down the line.



TRANQUIL/ You're walking along...



DOWN BOY/ ... when you're ambushed



FIGHT!/ So you have to fight

out weakened characters with one move, should you not get the first move, a series of very quick defeats could follow.

On the plus side, there are ways around it. Not only can you save your game at any given point outside of a battle, when you do inevitably taste defeat, you can opt to replay the battle enough times until you win. In addition to this, you also have the option to escape from battles. However, escaping will knock experience points off, slow down your levelling up and in turn, add to your frustration later on – and it never once manages to stop the battles from feeling like a chore.

While the exploration/combat elements hog the lion's share of the gameplay, there are also puzzle elements thrown in for a small amount of variation. These are pretty standard affairs – fetch an item here, push a button there – and don't require a huge amount of mental agility to figure out.

Indeed, From Software does make it annoyingly easy for you at times. With the majority of the actions involving just a press of the A button – with the corresponding visual prompt when you're within range – the game still goes to the bother of explaining, step-by-step, exactly what you need to do in the most protracted manner possible. This not only becomes rather patronising extremely quickly, but also serves to slow things down even further still – its sole redeeming point being that it does ultimately provide a welcome change from the random battles that pop up as you play.

Just shut up already

If the storyline was suitably intriguing or there were engaging characters to spur you on, then you could at least forgive the title's shortcomings; but as it stands, the fact that it lacks both, robs it of a sense of purpose.



NICE PAD/ While the gameplay's pretty hit and miss, there's no doubting some of the dungeons can be stunning



YOU'RE SPECIAL/ One of the characters prepares to unleash a special attack– aah, isn't she pretty?

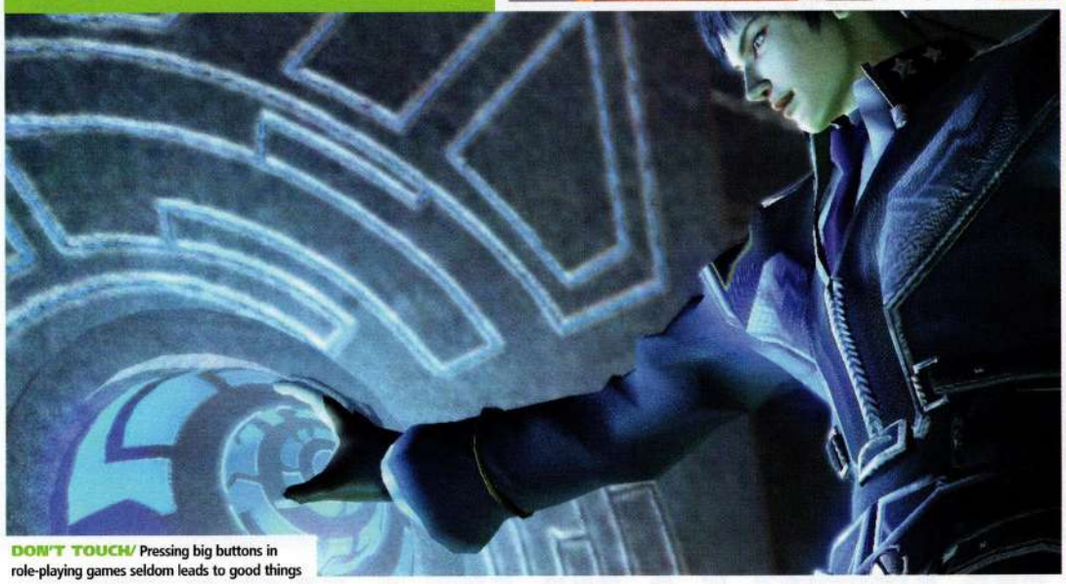
OFF ON A BENDER

Welcome to the first gay game on the 360!

One of the first things you'll undoubtedly notice about *Enchanted Arms* is how, well, gay it is. And we're not talking a-bit-on-the-camp-side here; the homosexual undertones of the game (especially early on) are hardly very subtle. Of the initial selection of characters, one is rather open about his affections for another member of your clique, who in turn seems to be more interested in the main character than the scores of women who follow him around.



BATTLE PEOPLE/ Some people are harder to win over, so be prepared to slap them around a bit



DON'T TOUCH/ Pressing big buttons in role-playing games seldom leads to good things





That said, we have to admit that *Enchanted Arms* does have its moments. Stylistically as well as technically, its visuals can be particularly impressive; unleash a special move and the screen will light up with intricate artwork patterns. However, it's the locations that look particularly amazing. While the 360 has undoubtedly played host to technically better games, From Software has clearly taken the time to ensure its game's locations each boast their very own unique atmosphere.

Sadly though, the game lacks the substance to bring all this together. From the characters to the story, virtually every RPG cliché you care to mention is almost certainly featured. The story is standard stuff – a huge war erupts, evil forces are released from captivity, cities are destroyed and the burden of saving the world falls to one young man struggling to come to terms with his destiny – while the characters are bland and lack imagination and fall into the same predictable relationships you'd expect to find in any RPG.

The directing and lack of a real feeling of progression doesn't help matters either. While some of the cut-scenes can feel genuinely emotional, for the most part, plot progression is restricted to text box conversations between the characters, which lack either a real sense of involvement or, due to the lack of anything engaging being said, are seldom interesting. Likewise, the endless onslaught of random battles can also put paid to the most burning desire to reach the next checkpoint.

There are a few other minor annoyances. The gameplay is very much on-rails and refuses to allow you to deviate from the main quest. While this does have the benefit of keeping you focused on the quest in hand, it does mean the game is lacking in variation, so we would welcome a couple of side quests or even something as basic as relationship manipulation (which is included to an extent, but has no actual impact on the action on screen).

Likewise, there is the occasional glitch present, such as the dubbing occasionally switching from English to Japanese on certain cut-scenes, which certainly takes away some of the polish.

The net result of all this is a game that is not only tedious to play, but more crucially still, fails to give you an incentive to put yourself through the torment of playing it in the first place. With both the story and the characters being straight out of the Big Book Of RPG Clichés, it's almost impossible to develop a sense of empathy with the protagonists or take an interest in the rather clichéd story; with the lack of balance in the gameplay a constant problem, it won't take long before you're wondering just why you're putting yourself through it all as you get pitched into yet another random battle or are replaying that same end of dungeon boss for the tenth time. As such, our advice would be to simply *Enchanted Arms* and save yourself the hassle in the first place. **Mark Podd**

HIGHLIGHT: The cut-scene battle with the Queen of Ice is a hilariously camp moment we won't forget in a hurry.

TIMELINE Battling away the hours...



20 MINS	1 HOUR	6 HOURS
Gotta get out of classes!	Boss battles	Random battles en masse

ENCHANTED ARMS

A fundamentally flawed and boring RPG, *Enchanted Arms* might be steeped in Japanese charm but without any sense of fun or involvement, there's no reason to buy this.

VERDICT

- ⊕ Looks nice
- ⊕ It's big
- ⊕ It's very Japanese
- ⊖ Boring story
- ⊖ Boring characters
- ⊖ Random battles

4 OUT OF TEN

HIT OR HYPE? "The fighting seems to be the substance of the game" Kelly MacDonald, Issue 9. Yep, it's all about the battles. And that's it...

Release date/ Out Now



Details **Publisher/** Microsoft **Developer/** Q Entertainment Ltd. and Phantagram. Co. **Genre/** Hack-'n'-slash-'em-up **Players/** 1 **Xbox Live/** Yes **HD/** 720p





FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT!/ A massive epic battle with thousands of characters fighting each other simultaneously

NINETY-NINE NIGHTS

We play Tetsuya Mizuguchi and SangYoun Lee's joint project for 99 nights

We've been waiting for *Ninety-Nine Nights* – or *N3* as it's also known – for what seems like forever, right back from when impressive videos were being previewed to the press. Hopes were riding high for it to be the kind of spectacular title that would shift 360 systems and certainly in the beginning it comes across as a thrilling *Dynasty Warriors*-style game that really pushes the hardware. Unfortunately, this initial excitement isn't maintained for long.

Things start well, with a fun training mission that gives access to higher level special moves. But as soon as you become accustomed and start enjoying the ability to perform combo kills, the game strips your character of all power and reduces them to having a few measly and very weak attacks. This is a monumentally stupid design decision forcing you to laboriously level them up just to acquire the better, fun attacks. This punishes the player for wanting to enjoy the game, since a low-level character is not fun to play with at all.

It pretends to have depth by displaying loading screens detailing the needed button combinations to perform combos. At first you'll start off memorising and using these combos, but you'll soon resort to mere button bashing, because frankly, it doesn't make a damned bit of difference what combos are attempted and random button bashing works just as well. Why even bother putting effort into it? A horse suffering from Parkinson's Disease could do well at this game. As a result, even after topping a 2,000-hit combo there is no sense of satisfaction. With further progression, it becomes less a test of skill and more an endurance contest – how long can you sit playing before resorting to malt liquor to induce feelings of pleasure?

Despite the idea of having a massive army to command being brilliant in theory, the execution is dire and your allies are little more than a hindrance. Their AI is as pathetic as their zeal for carnage – watch and laugh as a dozen of them stand around limp-wristedly pretending to attack a single enemy and then missing, leaving you to single-handedly unleash hell unto the encroaching hordes. When your army is actually amidst the enemy it becomes difficult to comprehend what's going

Xtunes

Recommended listening when playing *N3*:
■ Carl Orff - Carmina Burana ■ Richard Wagner - The Ride of the Valkyries ■ Enya - Orinoco Flow





YOU GOT SOUL, BROTHER

Be like God and kill thousands in an instant

Normally, when you attack enemies their souls are released, represented by floating red orbs, which are then absorbed by you. This charges up a red power bar. When full, this bar can be activated and allows for more powerful attacks while it drains to zero. Killing enemies in this phase causes blue orb souls to be released, which then fill a blue bar. When this is full and activated, every single weaker enemy in the vicinity dies in a beautiful display of green balls of light. Unfortunately the bars charge so slowly you'll be lucky to use the blue even once per level.

GIMMICK

Enemies/ Lots and lots of enemies, in epic battles. We haven't counted them all, but there's lots. Probably thousands



on; abject confusion reigns supreme in *N3*. While there's a radar and glowing arrows pointing out enemies, they're not easy to follow and prove utterly useless. Battles lose focus and direction, and combined with the random nature of the button basing combos, it soon begins to feel as if there's no control over what's happening. The lack of checkpoints is also infuriating, as dying happens regularly.

The biggest draw is its enormous screen-filling battles against thousands, pity then that the mechanic is so fundamentally flawed and broken. The fact that other games, some even on older generations of hardware, have executed the same one-against-thousands concept so much more efficiently and with greater variety, makes the problems here unforgivable.

Shockingly, the environments are non-interactive, at times even lacking collision detection. Both Otogi titles on Microsoft's previous hardware managed interactive and fully destroyable levels, resulting in fantastic titles of epic destruction, and yet this, which is intended to showcase the next generation, has your character running straight through fallen logs and directly into massive spiked barricades without even flinching. Plus everything is linear, with blocked off areas and endless invisible barriers. This style of design is sloppy, cheap, outdated and lazy.

Despite such problems, the overall production values are actually extremely high. The graphics, especially the sight of thousands marching over a hill, are stunning. Unfortunately, despite Q Entertainment and Phantagram's clearly evident technical skill with the 360, their art direction is generic, uninspired, and dull. Everything has a loathsomely staid medieval style to it, reeking of too much *Lord Of The Rings* fanboyishness and not enough individual creativity.

Trudging through this quagmire of problems there are many stages, stat-boosting items and six extra characters to unlock; plus a variety of other bonuses, such as art galleries. But honestly, this is so uninspired and mind-numbingly repetitive that it's unlikely many will have the gusto to go that far. The game disrespects players by assuming they have nothing better to do and nothing better to play on their 360 – it doesn't even try to be compelling.

If you're looking for a casual game to play with inebriated friends when you don't feel like actually thinking, there's a couple of hours' worth of fun here. Otherwise, avoid it and wait until developers create a similar game with gameplay that doesn't rely solely on a single gimmick. **John Szczepaniak**

HIGHLIGHT: Seeing the countless adversaries pouring over yonder hills is a wonderfully humbling feeling.

TIMELINE Nighty-night nights...



2 mins	45 mins	99 mins
Your eyes burn, look at the visuals!	Die at the Troll and start again	Trying not to fall asleep

N3

Fantastic production values and a great concept let down by a lack of checkpoints, dull art direction and horribly repetitive, shallow gameplay. What a shamefully wasted opportunity.

THE SCORE

- ⊕ Massively epic battles
- ⊕ Nice title screen
- ⊕ Won't blow up your 360
- ⊖ Very, very, very repetitive
- ⊖ Often confusing
- ⊖ No checkpoints

5 OUT OF TEN

HIT OR HYPE? *"Ninety-Nine Nights* is perfect for a bit of a laugh now and again" Mike Richardson, Issue 8. Yep, now and again is spot on

UK CHARTS

MULTIFORMAT CHART

01 (01) Cars
02 (02) New Super Mario Bros.
03 (03) POTC: Dead Man's Chest
04 (05) Over the Hedge
05 (04) POTC: Legend Of Jack Sparrow



THE X360 ALTERNATE CHART

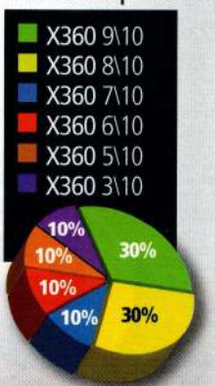
01 Beat-'em-up: Street Fighter II': HF
02 Shoot-'em-up: Prey
03 Racing: Test Drive Unlimited
04 Adventure: Dead Rising
05 Sports: Rockstar Table Tennis



Both *Test Drive* and *Dead Rising* have been getting a lot of play time at X360 towers this month, although *SFII'*, *Prey* (for multi-player) and *RTT* are hanging on in there.

SCORE PIE

X360 scores in the UK top 10





X360 OPINION

IT'S OH SO QUIET...

It's summer, which normally means all the game publisher types disappear on their hols and don't release any games. Unsurprisingly, there have been no new entries in the top ten, which not only means *Prey* and *Battle For Middle-Earth II* continue to rule supreme, it also means crap like *Over G* and *Chromehounds* are still hanging around. Oh well...

UK CHARTS ELSPA SEPTEMBER



1 (1)

PREY

TAKE 2

Another month at the top for *Prey*, Enough time to complete the single-player mode 148.8 times.

X360 SCORE: 6/10



2 (2)

LOTR: BATTLE FOR M-E II

ELECTRONIC ARTS

With *Prey* hogging the top spot again, the slightly cumbersome RTS is still stuck at number 2.

X360 SCORE: 7/10



3 (4)

THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

TAKE 2

A non-mover for one of the most playable 360 games around today.

X360 SCORE: 9/10



4 (3)

ROCKSTAR TABLE TENNIS

ROCKSTAR

It's one of the most enjoyable games on 360, but it's not enough to keep it on the podium.

X360 SCORE: 8/10



5 (10)

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

MICROSOFT

Bizarre Creations' classic puts in a quick lap en route to spot number 5.

X360 SCORE: 9/10



6 (6)

MOTOGP '06

THQ

Climax's two-wheeled wonder holds station in a nice-and-solid solid sixth position in the charts.

X360 SCORE: 8/10



7 (8)

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

EIDOS

Everyone's favourite bald hit man sneaks up a position from last month.

X360 SCORE: 8/10



8 (8)

GHOST RECON: AW

UBISOFT

Hanging on in there, but might be in need of reinforcements soon.

X360 SCORE: 9/10



9 (8)

OVER G FIGHTERS

UBISOFT

Hang your head if you're responsible for keeping this in the top ten.

X360 SCORE: 3/10



10 (5)

CHROME-HOUNDS

SEGA

Well, the multiplayer's alright... but that's about it, sadly.

X360 SCORE: 5/10

Subscribe

SAVE 50%



EXCLUSIVE SUBSCRIBER BENEFITS

Start a Direct Debit today from just £15 every 6 months and save over £32 a year

- Save 50% on the cover price
- Free UK delivery and moneyback guarantee on any unmailed issues
- Be the first to receive the UK's favourite Xbox 360 magazine



THREE EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

1. Telephone
Order via credit or debit card on the phone, just call:
0870 428 3051
Overseas: +44 (0) 870 428 3051

2. Online
Order via credit or debit card, just visit:
www.360magazine.co.uk

3. Post or email
Please complete and post the form to:
X360 Subscriptions
800 Guillat Avenue
Kent Science Park
Sittingbourne
Kent ME9 8GU

Or alternatively, you can scan and email the form to:
x360mag@cisubs.co.uk

XBOX 360 | Subscription Voucher

☑ **YES! I would like to subscribe to X360**

YOUR DETAILS

Title_____ First name_____

Surname_____

Address_____

Postcode_____ Country_____

Telephone number_____

Mobile number_____

Email address_____

DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT

☐ **UK Direct Debit Payment – only £15 every 6 issues (Save 50%)**

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

DIRECT Debit

ip IMAGINE PUBLISHING

Please fill in the form and send it to: Imagine Publishing Limited, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 8GU

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager — Bank/Building Society

Address

Postcode

Originator's Identification Number: 5 0 1 8 8 4

Reference Number

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society
Please pay Imagine Publishing Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Imagine Publishing Limited and, if so, details will be passed on electronically to my Bank/Building Society

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Branch sort code

Bank/Building Society account number

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

A6 instruction form

PAYMENT DETAILS

YOUR EXCLUSIVE READER PRICE, 1 YEAR (13 ISSUES)

☐ **UK £39 (Save 50%)** ☐ **Europe – £70.00** ☐ **World – £80.00**

Cheque

☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____
(made payable to Imagine Publishing Ltd)

Credit/Debit Card

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex ☐ Maestro

Card number

Expiry date

Security number ☐☐☐ (last three digits on the strip at the back of the card)

Issue number ☐☐ (if Maestro)

Signed _____

Date _____

Code: PAD001 XB3011

☐ Tick this box if you do not wish to receive any promotional material from Imagine Publishing Ltd

☐ Tick this box if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies. Terms & Conditions apply. We publish 13 issues a year, your subscription will start from the next available issue unless otherwise indicated. Direct Debit guarantee details available on request. This offer expires without notice.

I would like my subscription to start from issue: ☐☐☐

Return this order form to:
X360 Subscriptions, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8GU or email it to x360mag@cisubs.co.uk.

TXT UK MOBILE GAMER

WWW.TXTUK.CO.UK

TO ORDER TEXT: MICRO+CODE to 88066

OR CALL: 0906 664 0819

MOBILE GAMES

PLAY THESE WICKED GAMES ON THE MOVE!

TO ORDER text: MICRO+CODE to 88066 or call: 0906 664 0819



20224 29330 34379 33597

JODIE MARSH

Pan, zoom, shoot and position Jodie Marsh...

ANY WAY YOU WANT!



To Order JODIE Text: MICRO +35054 to 88066



13194 25318 32273 24959 31010 33459 29870 34378



22690 33731 32819 25959 15888 31824

GAME OFFER



Order Leisure Suit Larry and receive Crash: Twin Sanity...

TEXT: MICRO+20224 TO 88066

FREE KEELEY

Order KEELEY and get 3 pics Free!!!



To Order KEELEY Text: MICRO +30952 to 88066

RINGTONES

GET A REALTONE TO HAVE A REAL VOICE & BACKING TRACK AS YOUR RINGTONE!

REAL	POLY		
31352	31002	SHAKIRA FT WYCLEF	Hips Don't Lie
35326	33572	CASCADA	Everytime We Touch
33604	33573	CHRISTINA AGUILERA	Aint No Other...
29559	29545	RIHANNA	Sos
33606	33575	JAMES MORRISON	You Give Me...
32787	32766	PARIS HILTON	Stars Are Blind
33808	33091	LILY ALLEN	Smile
32786	32579	ROGUE TRADERS	Voodoo Child
34069	32537	PAOLO NUTINI	Last Request
34954	33086	SNOW PATROL	Chasing Cars
31698	31688	THE KOOKS	She Moves In Her Own...
35972	33596	MICHAEL GRAY	Borderline
31661	30571	SANDI THOM	I Wish I Was A Punk...
33605	33574	GNARLS BARKLEY	Smiley Faces
35973	35971	VIEW	Wasted Little Dj s
34953	34701	KASABIAN	Empire
34401	34390	MOUSSE T VS DANDY	Horny As A...

TO ORDER text: MICRO+CODE to 88066 or call: 0906 664 0819

WALLPAPERS

GET A NEW LOOK FOR YOUR PHONE WITH A GREAT WALLPAPER!

TO ORDER text: MICRO+CODE to 88066 or call: 0906 664 0819



28186



25153 28444 27065 30220 35350 34254



33709 16638 31654 33787 16034 14199



34670 11718 32884 33726 35352 32994



35348 35059 30827 33675 33697 32170

20083

SOUND FX

GET A CRAZY SOUND EFFECT OR FUNNY TV CELEB OR CHARACTER AS YOUR RINGTONE!



28641 23227 14082



24553 29024 11088



16006 29298 27426

TO ORDER text: MICRO+CODE to 88066 or call: 0906 664 0819

ANIMATIONS

WATCH SEXY BABES & FUNNY CARTOONS MOVE ON YOUR PHONE!

TO ORDER text: MICRO+CODE to 88066 or call: 0906 664 0819



34990 33474 33471 33080 34988 33472 33468 11418 17771 32575 35752 34425

MOVIES

CHOOSE ONE OF THESE GREAT VIDEOS TO WATCH ON YOUR MOBILE!

TO ORDER text: MICRO+CODE to 88066 or call: 0906 664 0819



24128 32546 32541 30878 30147 25347 29129 29123 23174 32161

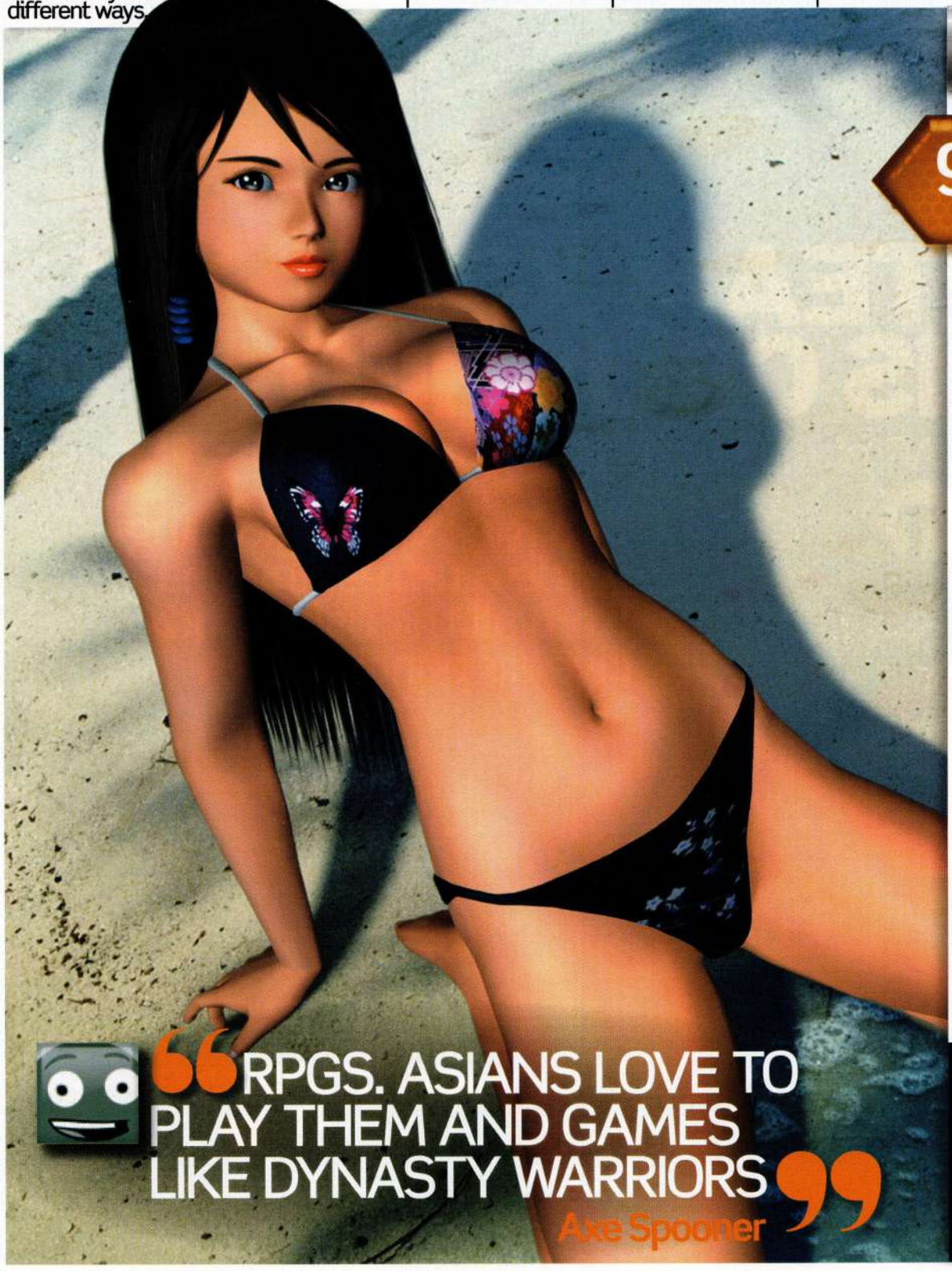
Calls cost £1.50 per minute from landline phones. Calls made from Mobiles may cost more. Callers must be 16 or over. Polyphonic Tones, Movies & Wallpapers and Animations cost £4.50 charged as 3 x £1.50 reverse billed messages. Java GAMES charged as £6. Realtones, Sound FX & TVTones charged as £6. You will incur standard SMS, WAP and GPRS chrges where applicable. Please check billpayers permission before you call. Please check the website to ensure your phone is compatible.You must have a WAP enabled phone to download content. Please allow 24 hours for delivery in extreme cases due to network traffic. You may be contacted by TXTUK with Offers and Info. To unsubscribe call our Customer Care Line. Customer Care Numbers UK: Email : help@3Optones.com. Address PO Box 51727, London NW1 8ZF. Thank You. Copyright © 2005 Wonderphone.© 2005 Universal Interactive, Inc. Crash Bandicoot and related characters are ® and © of Universal Interactive, Inc. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2005 Wonderphone © 2005 Sierra Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Leisure Suit Larry, Sierra and the Sierra logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries.

+++ TEAM X360'S FIRST CLAN GAME! +++ FRANKIE BOOSTS YOUR GAMERSCORE! +++ DOA4 CHAMP! +++

COMMUNITY

X360
We break down Xbox lifestyle in different ways.

NEWS	FEATURE	TOURNAMENTS	LIFESTYLE	THE MARKET
Online news and gossip	**How to get a Japanese 360!**	**Play with X360 and make us cry**	**Latest DVDs and peripherals!**	**Stuff that didn't fit elsewhere!**



"RPGS. ASIANS LOVE TO PLAY THEM AND GAMES LIKE DYNASTY WARRIORS"
Axe Spooner

X360 COMMUNITY CONTENTS

94 NEWS
Team X360 gets an almighty kicking so to cheer us up, we reveal the world *DOA4* champion!

98 RESULTS
Nerves, sweat and fear as you find out recent tournament results. Just like a pregnancy test!

99 TOURNAMENTS
Future tournaments, which we would reveal here, but then there would be no point reading on.

100 GAMERPOINTS
Doing maths each month is hard so we'll just say these two pages give you lots of points.

102 REVIEW
Chromehounds! It killed your soul offline with its crushing boredom. Can multi-player save the day? (Answer: yes).

104 XBOX LIVE ARCADE
We re-review *SFII:HF* and normal-review *Texas Hold 'Em*. Go see!

108 LIFESTYLE
A Uwe Boll DVD on import goes under review, just so we can give it a kicking.

110 MARKETPLACE
Moaning about lag, more moaning about Frag Dolls, even more moaning about Gamer Pics. Doesn't incite you to read on but it's true!

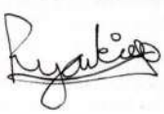
LIVE
RECOMMENDED DOWNLOAD
BOMBERMAN PICS
Avoid the first picture pack (based on the rancid new edition) and the final pack (weird Japanese writing) and go for the retro second picture pack. Win!



COMMUNITY EDITORIAL

In your face, *Frogger*. In your warty, cancerous, unblinking evil little face. Xbox Live Arcade was on the ropes a few months ago, with Xbox 360 gamers ready to leave it to die on its own. "Wait!" Microsoft roared at the sky, tilting its head back and raising its God-like white-and-green hands aloft. "There is hope!" Then it brought us bloody *Frogger*. Thanks for that. "What? You... you disapprove?!" said Microsoft, genuinely shocked, its arms lowering in hurt. Yes, I do. Microsoft stood there in silence, stroking its chin, then flew away on a cloud.

When it returned, it gave us good things. It gave us *Galaga*. It gave us *Street Fighter II': Hyper Fighting*. It gave us *Pac-Man*. It then promised *Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3*, *Paperboy* and *Lumines Live!* "I have done well," Microsoft stated. Yes. Yes, you have. Still, if you're not going to get rid of *Frogger*, can you make it fun? "I might be an all-powerful conquering God but there are some things even I cannot do," said Microsoft. "Keep the faith!" it shouted as it flew away on a cloud once more, heading off to deal with those people bitching about Windows Vista. Happy gaming kiddos.



Ryan
Community Editor
EMAIL ME:
X360@imagine-publishing.co.uk



TEAM X360 IS CRUSHED

AC clan tear us a new one. We cry a bit...

Team X360 is here! Team X360's bum is sore! Team X360 now suffers from horrible flashbacks. Made up of **X360** members, friends of the mag, forum members and score whores, Team X360 decided it had a squad strong enough to conquer the world.

THE SAD TRUTH ABOUT XBOX LIVE
Losing to children on Xbox Live makes you far, far angrier than it should

Sadly, it turned out to be the equivalent of Barnet making a few dodgy signings, then deciding Chelsea are fair game.

The finely tuned killing machine called Allied Coalition were Team X360's first opponents and they took no time at all to tear their opponents to shreds. Playing Capture The Flag on Bridge Too Far, AC clan set up their team at lightning speed, clicked into gear and that was it. Game over. Death after death on Team X360's side as a stream of fire from AC pinned the debutants back. They then sent men forward to kick ass and take names. The result was a crushing 4-0 defeat. Sides were switched and although this saw an improved performance – Team X360 even touched their flag at one point – AC clan strolled to another 4-0 win and were probably struggling to stay awake at this point. Stupidly, we then hung about for another match on the Backstab map, this one being 'for fun'. You can guess how that went.

> "The lack of gloating made a refreshing change from all the usual Xbox Live air punching"

On the day, the brave men of Team X360 were Ive Been Jipped, Tripped Out 360, Icarus 2015, Stretchy Raver, Changingtheorys, RareMartin, Red Mist 360, Smilinmonki666, Frankie B1, StripClubDj, Mad Major and The Buzzin One. The Allied Coalition members who ran rampant were clan leader SnideWolf, co-leaders Messiah, SK Brann and Triplekill, with the rest of the crew being Android, Azrael, Blade Be, ThaDon, The Major, Venom, Marv and Millsy.

Still, there are no grudges. They're all nice lads and the lack of gloating afterward made a refreshing change from all the usual Xbox Live air punching. AC ThaDon and AC The Major even joined our forums. They probably feel sorry for us. Allied Coalition are looking for a sponsor for their clan and if there's any justice in this world, someone will have dropped in at **freewebs.com/allied-coalition** and done just that. We'd appreciate it, too, as Team X360 needs something to distract Allied Coalition from the big rematch in three month's time... gulp. ■







FIVE DOWNLOADS AND COUNTING?

KAMEO LEVELS UP

The horse armour fiasco all over again

RARE JUST doesn't know when to let go of its dying children and let them pass away peacefully. *Kameo: Elements Of Zelda*, sorry, *Power* will be receiving its fifth update, as Rare continues to give its disappointing Xbox 360 debut the kind of life support only a huge buyout by Microsoft can afford.

Update number five, known as the Kameo Power Pack, contains three new co-op modes and yes, this includes horse armour. Sort of. By releasing a horse armour add-on for its game, Bethesda accidentally lit a fire under the arse of the Xbox Live community who complained about how trite the addition was. Now *Kameo* is walking a dangerously similar path with new 'armour skins' for the Elemental Warriors. However, Rare has dodged a bullet because there are bulkier additions fleshing out the horse armour handouts.

Expert mode will re-jig six levels so their difficulty is bumped up for both solo and co-op play over Live. A Time Attack mode has been thrown into the mix to see who can get through levels and avoid the slow creep of boredom fastest. Rounding off the package is Rune Battle mode, adding a competitive element as you fight off trolls to grab runes before your opponent. Sounds both thrilling and brilliant. Or, if we were being really sarcastic, it sounds 'thrilliant'.

As is a recurring theme in the Community section, it's pleasing to see games aren't being left to fend for themselves after a messy birth. Yet as with the recent *Outfit* update, this Power Pack is what *Kameo* needed to usher in a Live community at launch, not at a time when everyone has run to the loving arms of *Battlefield 2* and *G.R.A.W.* No price or date has been set for the Kameo Power Pack. ■



THORN!/ That's his name. This boss fight was actually rather easy and a disappointing end to the game. Perhaps Kameo should have done a choreographed song and dance with her elemental warriors about how much *PDZ* sucked

IRONIC GAMING

Live moments you love to hate

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

Normal and Expert, done. Professional? Ouch. It took seven attempts to perfect the vineyard level because of one sodding guard in the wine cellar. We didn't even try to complete the level the sixth time. We just ran in and head-butted him in the face. The git.



OUTPOST KALOKI X

Finally, returning to this three months after Mission 7 had us stumped, it fell without too much resistance. Why the bother before? We honestly don't know. But the music, the jazzy music! It's music that fat ladies in polka dot dresses could try and dance to.



BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

After AC clan gave Team X360 a swift kick between the legs, we wiped away our tears and decided to polish our skills. In one brilliant moment, we managed to sneak into the enemy's base and put landmines in front of all the vehicles there. Then, a few minutes later... BOOM.



NAME AND SHAME #5

Get your own back on those dirty cheaters

GIVEN XBOX Live is home to all manner of pondlife, it takes something special to stand out as an idiot. TA XCON has done just that, with a stupid GamerTag, the worst Xbox Live motto we've ever seen and some embarrassingly bad put-downs. "Who's this Jessie guy?" he drawled, slobbering all over his Xbox 360 pad. "I'm gonna [censored] your ass up!" Bam! Take that! Such daring wit! Such dazzling wordplay! AC JeSSiE? He's a friend of **X360**. TA XCON? Just another Beavis & Butt-Head moron doing the Great American Xbox Live Stereotype no favours whatsoever.

Again, no out and out cheaters this month; just a smattering of idiots. Rather than being rude, we're going to give some advice. STEELGEAR: your opponents are the red ones in *Battlefield 2*, not blue. A UgLy CaSaNoVa: when the *UNO* lobby fills up that's your cue to start the game, buddy. And finally, LIVINGxLEGEND: stop congratulating people when you win and getting your thong in a twist when you lose. It's very unladylike, don't cha know.



TERRORVISION

IF YOU wanted Americans to make fun of your face as well as your GamerTag/voice/mum's sexuality, then *UNO* was the only choice as it was the only game compatible with Microsoft's Vision Camera. Until now! Yes, that exclamation mark symbolises the growth of the Vision Camera's importance as more Xbox Live games will be made compatible with the camera.

Undergoing the white-and-green surgeon's knife are *Hardwood Hearts, Hardwood Spades, Hardwood Backgammon* and *Bankshot Billiards 2*. Great news for camera whores and even better news for those who threw 1,200 Microsoft Points at *Bankshot Billiards 2* (£10 for those who can't do maths) because this is the second major update it will receive. The updates are planned for Vision Camera's release on 19 September.

FINAL FANTASY XI ACHIEVEMENTS

Annoying and rubbish game gets annoying and rubbish Achievements. Touché!

Notorious for having no Achievements, Square-Enix has stepped in and decided to lavish its dull MMORPG with GamerPoints. Unfortunately, *Final Fantasy XI* is still about as fun as standing in your back garden and swatting bees for 40 hours without interruption and if these Achievements are meant to serve as incentive for new players to join the bee-murdering spree, then we're sorry to say Square-Enix has got it disastrously wrong. For the second time running.

The Achievements are for reaching level 75 for EVERY class, achieving rank 10 in ALL three towns, completing ALL the expansion missions and reaching 100 in a synthesis skill along with other equally ridiculous Achievements. It will take approximately 5,000 years to get all these Achievements and we can quite confidently predict not a single person will nab them all. You can bet your life ST TheKing is frantically trying to figure out a way of boosting for them though.



OUTPOST KALOKI UNDER REPAIRS

When *Outpost Kaloki X* was released, it suffered from stupidly hard gold times on some levels, rendering the 'Adventure Story Gold' and 'Eight-Port Master' Achievements impossible to get (no, we didn't suck, they were actually IMPOSSIBLE to get). Ninja Bee has confirmed an automatic update is on the way, fixing these times. The publisher has even put up suggestions for the gold medal times to see what the fans think. As for when it will arrive, Ninja Bee has avoided making any promises, learning from the furore on Major Nelson's blog regarding the broken date for the *Prey* demo and the flood of tedious "where is *Prey*" comments. "Don't get too excited," Ninja Bee said. "It will definitely be a while and we can't promise a date."



BOOST TIME...



FRANKIE SAYS RELAX SOME MORE

X360 readers help improve your GamerScore

Another month, another GamerScore whoring session courtesy of X360's Official Jipmaster™, Frankie B1. Having barged his way into the top 20 UK players by absolutely dominating the hell out of the likes of *Battlefield 2*, *MotoGP '06* and, erm, *Frogger*, now he's going to take time out to help you bump up your GamerScore. All you need to do is send a Friend Request to Frankie B1 and turn up on the following dates for more GamerScore jipping:

MONDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

QUAKE 4

The secret Achievements for reaching Number 1 and Top Ten in the world are impossible, right? Not so. The method for doing so is long-winded but if eight of you get in touch with Frankie, he'll set up the jippy method of boosting you to the top of the pile. As *Quake* king, you can enjoy fame, thanks to annoying kids sending you "how did joo get 2 numba one?" messages. You can enjoy fortune, thanks to the £18 trade-in value for your copy of *Quake 4*. You can even enjoy groupie love from spotty girls (or are they guys?) with tattered iD T-shirts, even though you being number one is a blatant lie. See how it works? Genius.

MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER

Frankie will help you get the Achievements for Coop 1-1, Coop 1-2, Coop 1-3 and Coop 1-4. If you ask nicely, he'll help you nab the Achievement for Perfect Chapter 1 too. By 'ask nicely', we mean don't use caps and try to spell. No alternate capital letters either.

So there you have it you lucky people. Frankie will give you a leg up to a better life full of respect, happiness and a fat GamerScore that will make your mother question what you're doing with your life. Tune in to the same page next month for more GamerScore jippage! Though it might actually be a few pages further back than usual, we're not entirely sure yet. You're not supposed to take these things literally anyway. Bye! ■

THE SAD TRUTH ABOUT XBOX LIVE...
You're glad summer is over, so your pad won't be as sweaty anymore



GHOST RECON!/ The Frag Doll approved Ubi-shooter. We didn't like this as much as *Battlefield 2* because one hit = death makes for a boring, slow camp fest. Which is what *GRAW* was. Wait... wait... zzzz

COMPETITION HOTS UP

DEAD OR ALIVE 4 WORLD CHAMPION!

Perfect Legend takes the crown in Las Vegas

THE DEAD *Or Alive 4* world champion was declared in Las Vegas when Perfect Legend saw off almost 50 contenders to earn the title. The Hayabusa player stomped his way through the winner's bracket on 18 August and turned up again two days later to blitz his way through the finals. Despite this, however, its status as a tournament game is under threat. EVO is the most prestigious fighting games championship and any fighting game that makes it there receives a massive boost to its community. However, thanks to *Dead Or Alive 4*'s poor performance at the seeding tournaments before the finals and the impending release of *Virtua Fighter 5*, this could be *Dead Or Alive 4*'s one chance to turn the series into a credible name wasted.

The EVO World Finals were preceded by two tournaments to decide the seeded players. EVO West was the first qualifier, with the eventual winner being Spartan 712, with second place



going to General KP and Jason A nabbing third. However, the embarrassingly low turnout of nine players meant that only one person who qualified didn't make it. This means more players in the tournament hall were playing *Mario Kart DS* than *Dead Or Alive 4*. EVO East saw an improvement as 36 players entered to try their luck but even so, the turnout was still far lower than some of the other games in attendance, such as *3rd Strike* and *Marvel Vs Capcom 2*, which leaves *Dead Or Alive 4*'s status as a tournament game hanging in the balance for next year. EVO East's eventual winners were Perfect Legend, TheHighGuy and Oop Rabies. Most of them play on Xbox Live under those names too, so it might be worth hunting them down if you think you're good enough (or if you want to scrub out a win in lag by bashing buttons, then brag about it, even though a laggy win means absolutely nothing. Hey, it's your call!) ■

JOYSTICK JUNKIES WINNERS!

They're "models-come-gamers", not a "booth babe bonanza"

THE GIRL gamer furore continues, this time thanks to Joystick Junkies. Over 300 girls entered the Joystick Junkies competition for what is bizarrely labelled as their search for six "models-come-gamers". Don't take our word for it though. Take theirs! "Joystick Junkies did not set out to create a girl gaming clan or booth babe bonanza, the aim was to establish a group of credible models-come-gamers who could help take videogames and the Joystick Junkies fashion brand into new and unusual places."



Joystick Junkies is setting up **X360** for an incredibly rude and offensive joke about taking the girls to "new and unusual places" but we digress. The winners will run gaming events, go to fashion shoots, host TV shows, go to celebrity parties and tour fashion stores. Playing games? Apparently not.

In any case, the winners from left to right are: Charlotte (24), Samantha (20), Emma (23), Aaliyah (22), Elise (21) and Carmell (24). They may be good-looking but THEY ARE NOT A BOOTH BABE BONANZA! We know how much groups of girls hate discussions about which one of them is the favourite, so we're going to say Samantha gets our vote. Call us sometime!

VIVA LA SPAM

Despite an almost flawless record thus far, Xbox Live users have finally received their first wave of spam messages. Not just any spam either but the special, Microsoft-approved, *Gears Of War* kind of spam.

Xbox Live user MFenix, named after *Gears Of War* character Marcus Fenix, has been messaging users telling them: "We need your help. Can't talk now. Don't know who to trust". This is followed by a longer, even more tedious message trying (and failing) to whip up *Gears Of War* excitement. It's a cute idea but one we don't approve of, lest our Xbox Live inbox soon spills over with "Enlarge your penis!" and "Hott_And_Sexxy69 is waiting for you!" style spam.



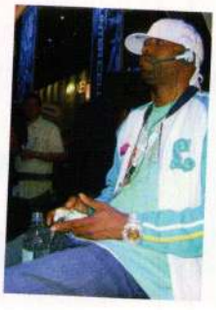
NO ASIANS ALLOWED?

Weird Xbox Live oddity of the month. The best 2D fighting players in the world are, by and large, Japanese. *Street Fighter II'* was a gaming series that was brought to life in Japanese arcades before the rest of the world caught on. And yet, despite this, *Street Fighter II': Hyper Fighting* isn't available in Japan, or neighbouring Asian territories such as Hong Kong, Korea or Taiwan. Does Microsoft really want to win Asian hearts and minds? Because denying them a *Street Fighter* release of any kind really isn't the way to go about it... just a thought.



AND FINALLY...

Method Man, from Wu-Tang Clan, playing on an Xbox 360. What's he playing? No one actually knows. Probably *Frogger* because, you know, dat [censored] be muddafuddin' gangsta, yo.



DYING SHAME

These original Xbox Live communities are dying. Don't give them updates, developers! Let them die!

WORMS FORTS: UNDER SIEGE!

A horribly convoluted and awkward take on the classic *Worms* series, this Xbox title was supposed to thrive on its Live play, exploiting its rich multiplayer tradition. Right? Right. So it would be the perfect title to see if the original Xbox Live waters were still rocking to the sounds of badly aimed grenades and rockets.

Apparently not! For 15 minutes we waited with a created match to see if anyone would show. We toggled the settings to amateur, changed the maps, changed the rules, nothing could entice the dead *Worms* community to take a bite. Anyone? Someone? Anyone. Please. Oh god, anyone. Please? On Monday 14 August at 10:11pm, **X360**'s Community Editor was the only person in the world trying to play *Worms: Forts Under Siege* online. The only sign of life we got was upon returning to our Xbox 360. "Why were you playing *Worms*? Is that on 360?" Sigh.



XIII

This was meant to be backwards compatible but after downloading a dashboard update, *XIII* inflicted an attack on us, flashing a stuttering Ubisoft logo at our weak eyes. *XIII* then showed us a quick glimpse of a Firestorm logo (who had nothing to do with the game) before getting to the main menu. A main menu with sound but no graphics. Just a black screen. There could still be a Live community for *XIII*. If there was, we couldn't see it. Still, *XIII* only cost us £2.99 in Gamestation second-hand and we also bought a weird PlayStation title called *Gubble* for the same price, so we played that instead. That was rubbish too. Sometimes we really do wonder why we bother.



Lag, no entries and confusion! It must be time for **X360**'s...

TOURNAMENT RESULTS!

"OH WOW, your job must be so cool!" is a fairly standard message we get from randoms on Xbox Live. Yes, it is. But every now and then you have to drag yourself out of bed to play a game like *The Outfit*, when no one else is interested. You never get to see that part. You people. Honestly.

1 PREY

WINNER: BAWHAWHAW
RUNNER-UP: XBOX LIVE

Eagle-eyed readers will no doubt remember that last issue we declared *Prey* wasn't laggy and it was actually the frame rate that caused the jerkiness. We take this declaration back. Whole-heartedly. Determined to prove our theory wrong, this match was so unbelievably laggy that it actually caused time in the real world to slow down. With rubber-banding preventing us to run further than three feet in any direction (a bit like real life thanks to all the junk food we eat), Bawhawhaw managed to clean house easily. Wasn't much of a contest. Still didn't stop him bragging, of course.



2 THE OUTFIT

WINNER: NO ONE
RUNNER-UP: EVERYONE

No one entered this tournament. No one. At all. This makes us sad. We've tried to love *The Outfit*, tried to give it a sloppy kiss of life, but no one cares. What makes this even worse was **X360**'s back-up plan of playing it online against random Americans also dismally failed because there weren't even enough people playing it online IN THE WORLD to make it worthwhile. After 15 minutes of an agonising wait for five other players to enter the lobby, with some dropping out because of the wait, we gave up. Sorry *The Outfit*. We're going to leave you alone now, so you can die in peace. God bless.



3 BATTLEFIELD 2

WINNER: ELITE SILENT ASSASSINS
RUNNER-UP: TEAM X360

Elite Silent Assassins stomped through a scaled down version of Team X360 – Ive Been Jipped, TheGrayWolf, Tripped Out 360, Mad Major, Nirvana GB and bob a lot uk. Team communication isn't Team X360's strong point but comedy is. Witness Tripped Out's mortar strike that never was and Mad Major helicopter heroics, that ended 30 seconds after he was declared to be 'saving the day'. Sniper King™ bob a lot sacrificed his place due to a team mix-up and so enemy sniper Ghost Swiss ran riot, leading to ESA victory. Damn them!



X360 Tournaments

It never ends! So much competition, so much testosterone! So many people determined to prove they're the Alpha males in the Xbox Live community so that maybe the Frag Dolls might give them a second glance one day. Oh, the shame of it all...

THE SAD TRUTH ABOUT XBOX LIVE...
No one plays the games you're good at online

1 Street Fighter II': Hyper Fighting



GAME MODE: SINGLE
DATE: 16 SEPTEMBER

Born out of an odd challenge against forum member Ipsofacto comes the latest in a long line of ways to humiliate X360 – the E.Honda challenge! We'll use E.Honda and only E.Honda as we attempt to beat you in a best of five face-off. You can use whatever characters you want. No one can contain the awesome of E.Honda, his sumo head-butt and that strange noise he makes when he wins. Oop oy! Practise up kids. And by skilful, we don't mean spamming a hundred hand slaps. Okay?

2 Call Of Duty 2



GAME MODE: DEATHMATCH
DATE: 18 SEPTEMBER

We played *Call Of Duty 2* once online when it was released, realised it had more bugs than the Tropics, then lent it to someone and sort of forgot it ever existed. That's it. That's the extent of our *Call Of Duty 2* experience. So we're not entirely sure why we're throwing our hat into the ring for this one, besides the fact that there's nothing else left to play online anymore. We don't know the maps, the weapons, the game modes, we don't know anything. We're complete and utter noobs and will struggle to beat a child who doesn't know the game beyond 'aim gun' and 'shoot'.

3 Rockstar Table Tennis



GAME MODE: TIMED TOURNAMENT
DATE: 20 SEPTEMBER

The previous one was fairly popular in that more than four people entered, so it's time to ride our luck and try it again. Timed Tournaments mean you have seven minutes to bap each opponent who has entered and the winner is whoever emerges with the most wins. This is the only non-*Street Fighter II'* tournament we're likely to win with our cheap as chips Juergen, so if you want to take X360 down a peg or two, please enter. Otherwise we'll brag. Again. We'll be even more unbearable this time than we were last. STOP THIS FROM HAPPENING, for the sake of your fellow readers and countrymen.

The dates for these tournaments could change at any time. This is one of the reasons why you have to send your GamerTag and the name of the tournament you want to enter over to ryan.king@imagine-publishing.co.uk. We might respond with a copied and pasted email, so it looks automated and professional, then send you a reminder before the tournament. DON'T just add us to your Friends List. There are some people on Xbox Live we desperately want to avoid (naked old men pretending to be girls and the like), so we just delete everyone we don't recognise. It's safer that way. Email us your GamerTag first!

LIVE STALKING

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

Like a dog with a bone, ST TheKing doesn't know how to let go. The question is: Will he ever get first place back?



» 11:32 GMT
Last seen four hours ago, last game played is *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat*. He's probably chasing the 500 games played Achievement. That takes approximately 120 hours of gaming time. Still, if the guy is insane/crazy/stupid enough to put 300 hours into *Rumble Roses XX*, then nothing is off-limits.

» 11:34 GMT
Just noticed his motto, 'cheaters are among us'. Oh Jesus, get over yourself ST! The man who practically invented boosting now crying about other people cheating? The man who has used gamesaves in the past bitching about others bending the rules? Whatever.

» 11:35 GMT
Damn, what a complete hypocrite! He's boosted for almost every Achievement he has. Oh, so you happened to get all the online medals in *Battlefield 2* AND finish top in 20 games before you even played 50 games? Yeah, sure you did ST, have a god damn cookie, you moron.

» 11:36 GMT
So everyone near the top of the leaderboards cheats to a certain degree but who the hell does he think he is, having practically invented boosting and then daring to sit there and say 'cheaters are among us'. LOOK IN THE MIRROR.

» 11:37 GMT
What an absolute [censored], he can [censored] right off, if he's going to be so [censored] full of himself and [censored] about cheating, then he can take his [censored] and [censored] [censored] [censored] right up his arse.

» TOTAL GAMERPOINTS ACQUIRED FOR THE DAY: 0
He probably got some GamerPoints but we're past caring. ST TheKing got his arse handed to him by RANCE6, Urgamanix and now StripClubDj and he's bitter. Ha. What goes around, comes around. CRYBABIES ARE AMONG US, ST. Don't get tears on your Xbox 360.

SCORE WHORE

We talk to Hong Kong's very own Axe Spooner. What a cool name!



Name/ Jason Kelts **Age/** 22
Location/ Repulse Bay, Hong Kong
GamerPoints/ 39,273
World Ranking/ 60 (1st in Hong Kong)
Hours on Xbox 360/ 20 on weekdays, 10 on weekends

What can Microsoft do to improve the Xbox 360 situation in Hong Kong?
It could start by promoting the console some more and going out there and trying to reach the people. A lot of younger kids over there do play games but usually stay at home; if Microsoft advertise more in magazines then I think a lot more people will notice it. Also, maybe host some events once in a while to show off the system to the public. I'd love to see a Hong Kong faceplate, that would be so awesome!

What kind of games do you think it will take to make Xbox 360 popular in Asia?
Role-playing games really, Asians love to play them and more games like *Dynasty Warriors 5 Empires*. *N3: Ninety-Nine Nights* is a pretty good title and I enjoyed playing it. Maybe some more fighters and platformers, that would fill the market up nicely.

How does it feel to hold the second highest Xbox 360 GamerScore in Hong Kong?
It feels pretty good I have to admit, but it's really not all that important to me personally. I love to play for fun and it's nice to be on up there, but I know someone will beat me one day.

Do you think we'll ever see a Hong Kong player on top of the global GamerScore leaderboards?
I think maybe quite close to the top but never actually on top. Getting points isn't that easy and does take a while, plus there's a pretty large gap between the top people in Hong Kong and the top people in the rest of the world... but I can dream, can't I?

BEST WAYS TO JIP

GAMERPOINTS



DYNASTY WARRIORS 5

We get asked this a lot. Here we go (deep breath): Pick Yellow Turban Rebellion, Yuan Shao's province, skip battle. Pick Dong Zhou in Luo Yang, Sun Jan's province, skip battle. Pick Battle of Guan Du, Juan Shao's province, skip battle. Pick Flames Over Chi Bi, Sun Quan's province, skip battle (exhale). Now you can stop asking! No seriously guys, STOP.

Play Yellow Turban Rebellion:	20
Play the Battle of Hu Lao Gate:	20
Play the Battle of Guan Du:	20
Play the Battle of Chi Bi:	20

EASY GAMERSCORE POINTS: **80**

STREET FIGHTER II': HYPER FIGHTING



You need some knowledge of the game and match-ups to complete *Street Fighter* on seven stars without losing a match (best done with Ryu, in case you're wondering), but for these Achievements, just Psycho Crusher back and forth with M. Bison. Easy!

World Champion:	15
Perfection:	5
Bonus Bonanza:	10
12 World Warriors:	5

EASY GAMERSCORE POINTS: **35**

CRYSTAL QUEST

No longer the worst XBLA game now that *Frogger* has been released. If you somehow got lumbered with it, one way to get these Achievements is to get to Wave 34 and stay in the middle, shooting the robots as they spawn and nabbing the treasure crystals as they appear. Bing!

Life-saver:	30
Marathon Man:	15
Treasure Hunt:	10

EASY GAMERSCORE POINTS: **55**



HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

It's only 20 GamerPoints, granted, but most people don't know how to get this secret Achievement. With the difficulty set to Rookie, start A New Life, push over the woman and take her hedgeclippers, then kill everyone with them. Including civilians. Ta-da! Instant Florist rating Achievement unlocked.

Special Rating: 20

EASY GAMERSCORE POINTS: **20**



UNO



The *UNO* Achievements are easy to nab anyway, but to speed the process up, change the settings so you're playing with in-house rules on zero points. This means you only have to win once to win the entire match, as opposed to forcing your opponents to hit a pre-determined points cap.

Devotee: 25
UNO Shark: 30

EASY GAMERSCORE POINTS: **55**

FULL AUTO

For some easy points, get a friend on private chat and have him join a ranked game as soon as it starts. Have that person drive slowly around the track and kill him over and over again for a ridiculous amount of points. Rank ten shouldn't take more than half an hour.

Xbox Live Ranks Level 1-10: 120

EASY GAMERSCORE POINTS: **120**





BLAZING ANGELS: SQUADRONS OF WWII

Pause the game, hold left trigger, press X, Y, Y and X. Then release and hold right trigger and press Y, X, X and Y. This activates God mode, which lets you breeze through the game. Any other cheat will lock out Achievements, so don't even bother.

Aces Of Aces: 175
Survivor: 150
Ace Killer: 150
Veteran: 150
Hero: 150
Colonel: 100
Collector: 150

EASY GAMERSCORE POINTS: **1,025**

This Month...

FRIENDS LIST MANAGEMENT

The problem with working on a magazine is everyone wants a piece of the action. Ive Been Jipped isn't just a GamerTag any more; it's a target, a sitting duck, a goddamned prize trophy. Everyone wants to be on the **X360** Friends List. We understand this of course, but when you only have 100 friend slots to play around with, some serious juggling is certainly needed. Add real-life friends, work colleagues, industry types, GamerScore whores as well as clan members to the equation and you'll see where our problem lies.

It's no good to us if you make it on the Friends List then never talk to us, arrange games or anything like that. People who haven't even done anything wrong have had to make way to give other guys a chance – players like dasuperbouncer and iMax 360 (sorry guys). Which only makes it all the more amusing when players get deeply offended at being removed. "Your magazine is rubbish!" cried superdragon1 in his girly, child-like voice after finding out we deleted him from our Friends List (it only took him a month to notice). "It's absolute crap!" he cried, before his voice became so high-pitched in girl-like rage that dogs five streets away started howling. Friends List management has become a skill but, thankfully, when you have idiots like superdragon1 around, figuring out who to delete becomes a hell of a lot easier.





Details Publisher/ Sega Developer/ From Software Genre/ Strategy Players/ 2-16 Future Content/ Yes Downloadable demo/ Yes

THE SAD TRUTH ABOUT XBOX LIVE...
You feel jealous watching people play games you don't have. Even bad ones

CHROMEHOUNDS

Release the hounds. Today. Maybe tomorrow. There's no rush

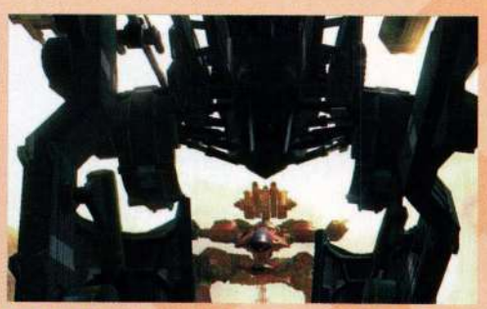
Chromehounds. Off. Line. Is. Kind. Of. Slow. It's a cumbersome, boring mech-sprawl where you can actually feel yourself getting older as you play. The kind of game where you think you need a shave afterwards, because it feels like you've been playing it for three weeks without a break. The kind of game where you can feel yourself slowly dying and wasting away, as the Grim Reaper swings his scythe and mocks you for not playing *Dead Rising*. In summary, the kind of game that's far too slow, far too dull and far too boring.

Online, thankfully, this doesn't happen. You have to join one of three countries who are all striving for power: Tarakia, Morskoj and Sal Kar. This is known as The Neroimus War. Obviously. Each country has different mech parts tailored towards different playing styles, which at least adds incentive to try out different countries. The point? You have to tailor your mech to be built within a certain weight limit. The more weapons you carry, the more powerful you are. However, the more weapons you carry, the slower and easier target you are. It's all about striking the right balance within your squad. So choosing your country is a pretty big decision, as is finding the right class to specialise in (snipers want to be fast, soldiers want to bulk out with armour and so on).

More important than that is finding your role within the squad because where *Chromehounds*



PEEOW!/ Ha! At first we thought peeow was supposed to be a missile noise but it sounds more like someone's smelt something really, really bad



FACE OFF!/ We don't think you can get camera angles quite this dramatic during the online game. We haven't really tried though. Perhaps we should!



PIMP MY RIDE/ You build your own mech using parts unlocked during offline play or bought in the online shop. A very educational caption, we feel

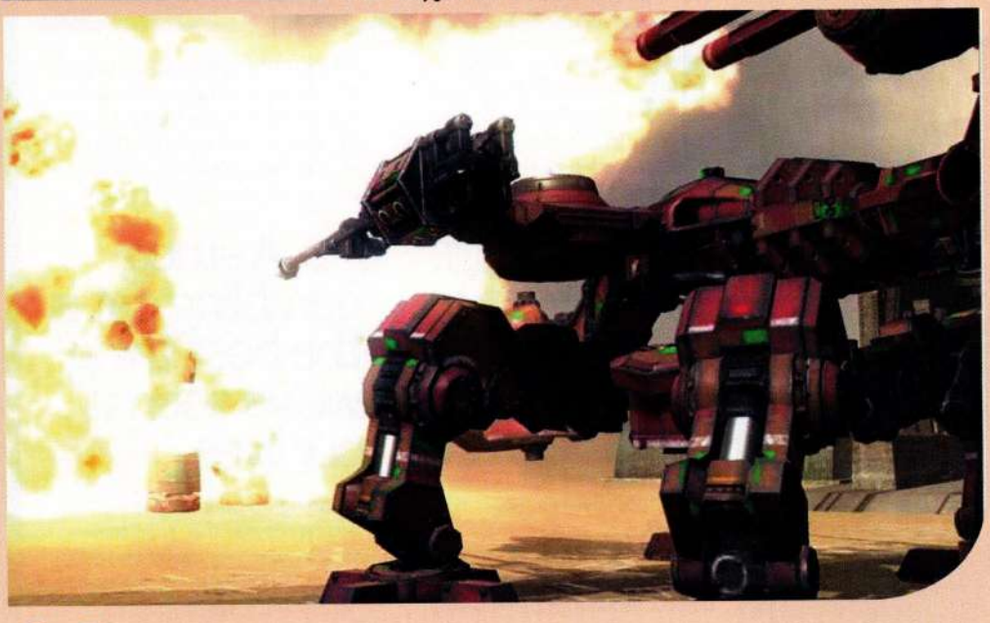








SPLASH/ Two mechs. One ravine. No way to pass. A dramatic stand-off... then it ended in a water fight! We don't really get it either but at least we can say "the water effects are next-gen!" with a straight face



"Developers love to shout about 'Squad-based teamplay!' and that's what Chromehounds brings to the party"

really shines is in its teamwork. Developers love to shout about "Squad-based teamplay!" and sure enough, that's exactly what *Chromehounds* brings to the mech party. Squads can house up to 20 people and you then battle against other squads to take control of territories on behalf of your chosen country. As you gain territories, you earn money that can be spent buying new parts for your mech. The battles are either the usual one-on-one fare (okay) or six versus six (awesome). The different classes, such as Commander and Defender come into play far more online than they do offline and you can also enter Free Battles – not for money, just for fun and to wash the rancid offline taste out of your mouths.

With constant updates and calls for help via the main menu, it does feel like you're fighting in a real, genuine war rather than a series of disconnected battles for random countries (*Battlefield 2: Modern Combat*). The disastrous launch when the servers weren't working means the community is smaller than it should be, as most copies were returned to the shops in disgust after players were forced to spend time with the single-player mode. However, everything is in perfect working order with no lag or voice communication issues, and there's a community slowly rebuilding itself under the *Chromehounds* banner as word gets around about how good it is online compared to the snooze-fest of the offline campaign. One of the most unappreciated and overlooked titles on Live, this should be the first port of call for those who want to play online but are tiring of the usual FPS fare. ■



DOGS D'AMOUR

OPINION



Bad news. You've got to complete the single-player first to get the most out of *Chromehounds* on Live. This unlocks all the parts you need, teaches you how the game works and shows how much better the game is on Live. Really, it's one of the more unique, enjoyable experiences online on Xbox 360 and one that absorbs you and sucks you into its world. The squad system is probably the best clan-style set-up we've seen and it works brilliantly.

As always, there are problems. The mech customisation has allowed players to come up with clever new mechs and circumvent game design (some 'jumping' mechs are already doing the rounds) but most plump for a double-double combination: four heavy cannons, cockpit armour, reverse or bipedal legs. This is the equivalent of everyone picking Ryu in *Street Fighter II'* or Assault in *Battlefield 2* – really, really boring. Whether this is a current trend or a sign of imbalance remains to be seen, but it's not looking too promising.

There are also some glitches and weird design choices that slipped through the testing net. There are frequent reports of players randomly going into massive debt online and while Sega squads used to fix the problem, they're now telling everyone to wait for a patch. It's also maddening to see that players can still disconnect rather than accept a loss. Why is this still happening? It's not exactly a new trend and until someone takes steps to punish droppers, it will remain.

SKILLS

- **KNOWLEDGE:** Knowing what weapons to use is extremely important on the battlefield.
- **TEAMWORK:** The lone ranger won't be too successful, you have to team up.
- **NETWORKING:** You need to get some good players in your squad to compete. Get recruiting.

THE SCORE

Unique, interesting and different, *Chromehounds* online is everything *Chromehounds* offline isn't. You know, FUN.

8 OUT OF TEN

ARCADE ROUND-UP

The best games on Xbox Live Arcade reviewed in an easy-to-digest format...

Price/ 800 points **Developer/** Capcom **Achievement difficulty/** Medium

STREET FIGHTER II': HYPER FIGHTING

Yes, well spotted. We've already reviewed this but there are new problems accompanying its release. Hurray! New problems such as Quick Matches not working. Four times out of five, Quick Matches will time out, booting you back to the main menu. This gives us something to moan about, which makes us happy, then we play a Quick Match to celebrate, which times out and makes us sad again. It's a never-ending rollercoaster of emotion! Put that quote on the Marketplace description, Capcom. We dare you.

When you do get a Quick Match, the competitive nature means players disconnect to avoid defeat so their online records stay intact. Imagine if Lennox Lewis took a punch to the face then said: "sod this!" and ran away with his belt slung over his shoulder. Or if Lennox Lewis beat everyone by doing a hundred hand slaps over and over and over again.

> "So why are there still no repercussions whatsoever for bottlers?"

That's *Street Fighter II'* online. This disconnecting trend happened with previous Capcom 2D fighters, so why are there still no repercussions whatsoever for bottlers?

Quarter Matches have problems letting certain people join and change from Private to default Public settings when the host loses and a new host is allocated. Then, of course, there's the issue of lag. It's *Street Fighter II'*, it's still good but it could – and in fact should – have been much, much better than this. ■





7 OUT OF TEN

TEXAS HOLD 'EM

Price/ 800 points **Developer/** TikGames **Achievement difficulty/** Medium

Bad news for all the Scrooge McDucks out there, *Texas Hold 'Em* is not free. To cut a long story short, the sponsorship deal to subsidise this game fell through, Microsoft sulked and sat on *Texas Hold 'Em* before deciding to throw an 800 points price tag around its neck and kick it out the front door. The good news is there are a few GamerPics thrown in for free, including one of a smug gambling cat, which is the best thing we've ever seen in our lives. Seriously. We'd pay for that alone. Free poker game with gambling cat picture! Bargain. Poker is free after all.

As for the game itself, it's poker. No frills, no spills, just poker. The biggest problem is determining the risk/reward aspect, as you can't gamble with anything of value (such as Microsoft Points). Instead, there's a fictional bankroll tied to your GamerTag, which determines whether you can join the big boys rocking the gambling cat GamerPics in the high-stakes tournaments or the losers with the Master Chief GamerPics in the freebie tournaments. It's no substitute for gambling with real money but seeing how Microsoft doesn't want to be blamed for ushering in a new generation of homeless gambling addicts who sit around drinking White Lightning on park benches cursing the day they tried their hand at gambling away Microsoft Points, it's probably for the best.

> "A smug gambling cat is the best thing we've seen in our lives"

There are some other cool touches to help spice up the game, such as win percentages when both players go all in, similar to poker tournaments as seen on TV. Otherwise this is poker. Nothing more, nothing less. It's just poker, with this particular edition happening to be a free game with the coolest, most expensive GamerPic in the world. Like we say, bargain. ■



8 OUT OF TEN

Glamour Girls

Want to watch countless hours of the highest quality hardcore videos featuring your favourite Pornstars? We feature the most astonishing hardcore movies with the Hottest Women in the World!



Join the Glamour Club for only £1.50/day. You receive two feature length videos or two high resolution images direct to your phone. That's only 75p each!

TEXT the pornstars name followed by **xpic** for pictures or **xvid** for videos
ie. for Briana Banks videos text brianaxvid to 89370

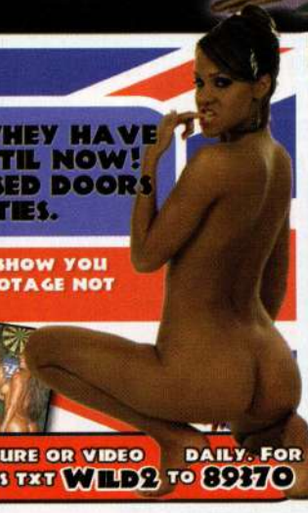
UK Girls Gone Wild



THEY'RE SWEET, THEY'RE YOUNG AND THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN ON CAMERA BEFORE - UNTIL NOW! FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS AT OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

JOIN TODAY AND RECEIVE OUR DAILY VIDEO UPDATES. WE SHOW YOU THE CLIPS THAT ARE TOO HOT FOR TV & DVD. EXCLUSIVE FOOTAGE NOT AVAILABLE ANYWHERE ELSE!





JOIN FOR £1.50/DAY. YOU RECEIVE ONE PICTURE OR VIDEO DAILY. FOR VIDEOS TXT **WILD1** TO **89370** FOR PICTURES TXT **WILD2** TO **89370**

Mobile Games



TEXT THE GAME CODE TO 82022
EG. FOR SEXY POKER MANGA TXT PLAY62 TO 82022 **£4.50 each**

UK Indian Girls

Wow we can bet you have never seen anything like this before. Real UK Indian Babes want to show you what you've never seen before.

Join the Indian Babe club for only £1.50/day and receive totally original indian content from real uk asian babes.

RED HOT!

For pictures txt INDIAN2 to 89370
For videos txt INDIAN3 to 89370

Mobile Strippers

High class striptease For Gentlemen

Join the Gentlemen's Club for only £1.50/day and receive high quality dance animations and videos.



For videos txt Strip22 to 82022
animations Strip23 to 82022

Hentai Babes

WE OFFER THE MOST COMPLETE AND HIGHEST QUALITY HENTAI CONTENT IN THE UK!

JOIN THE HENTAI CLUB FOR ONLY £1.50 A DAY AND RECEIVE DAILY VIDEOS OR ANIMATIONS SENT DIRECTLY TO YOUR PHONE.

£1.50 EACH

FOR VIDEOS TXT HENTAI22 TO 89370
FOR ANIMATIONS TXT HENTAI23 TO 89370

Sexy Babe Home Videos

Huge collection of home mobile videos Download them NOW to see what the girls get up to...



Join the Home Video Club for only £1.50/day and receive daily videos direct to your phone.
Text homevid to 89370 NOW

Age Verification info - Some phones may not be able to receive adult content. This is because your network provider has blocked your phone receiving hardcore adult content. To remove the content lock just follow the simple instructions that we send you. You will need to call your network and go through an automated process of getting age verified. You do NOT have to speak with anyone in person!

You must be 18 years old or over to use these services. By selecting any item you are agreeing to download and view that item. You will be billed the amount shown via reverse SMS. All phones must be colour and WAP enabled. Standard GPRS or GMS data transfer costs apply. No liability is accepted for any delay omissions or damage or loss of data incurred by any party. Glamour Girls is a subscription service costing £1.50/day until you send stop to 89370. You receive 2 videos or pics daily. The UK Girls gone Wild is a subscription costing £1.50/day until you send stop to 89370. You receive 1 video or pic daily. The Indian Girls service is a subscription service costing £1.50/day until you send stop to 89370. You receive 1 video or pic daily. The Mobile Striptease service is a subscription service costing £1.50/day until you send stop to 82022. You receive 1 video or animation daily. The Hentai Babes service is a subscription service costing £1.50/day until you send stop to 89370. You receive 1 video or animation daily. The Home Videos service is a subscription service costing £1.50/day until you send stop to 89370. You receive 1 video daily. Games provider Gameloft Ltd. All rights reserved. We may send you marketing messages on some occasions. If you do not wish to receive these messages please send us an email. For customer support please email customerservices@urmob.com or call our helpline on 08708554194

3 orange T-Mobile Virgin O2 Vodafone

NO SUBSCRIPTIONS. NO CONS. OUR GUARANTEE

DB Adult Mobile Entertainment

18+ ADULT ORDERING
TXT THE 5 DIGIT ITEM CODE TO 69011
EG: 55223 TO 69011

FREE SERVICE - CHECK IF YOUR PHONE IS ADULT VERIFIED?
TEXT YOUR SERVICE PROVIDERS NAME TO 69011 EG. T MOBILE TO 69011
IF THIS MESSAGE FAILS TO SEND CONTACT YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER REGARDS UNBARRING YOUR MOBILE. OTHERWISE PLEASE WAIT FOR CONFIRMATION.

18+ ADULT GIRL VIDEOS

55222 Cream Pie | 55229 Deep Throat | 55094 Amateur Gang Bang | 55218 Hot Rear Entry | 55223 4 Way Orgy | 55097 Double Whammy

54898 1 Girl 4 Guys | 55091 2 Studs 1 Novice | 54832 Cream Facial | 54839 Dirty Girl On Girl | 54844 Bukkake | 55219 Bouncy Backdoor | 55227 Sucks 3 Off | 55226 Poolside Gang Bang | 59618 Lesbian Strap On Fun | 56121 Dirty Little Screamer | 55092 One At Each End

official adult one night in paris vids

55132 Paris Gives BJ | 55134 Paris Gets The Cream | 55131 From Behind | 55135 Paris No Panties

BUMPER VIDS
5 MINUTES OF PURE ACTION

55043 Totally Hot Brunette | 55045 Blonde Reveals 'Em | 55046 See My Assets | 55047 Super Sexy Blonde

DB Mob Mobile Entertainment

NON ADULT ORDERING
TXT THE 5 DIGIT ITEM CODE TO 80155
EG: 55143 TO 80155
FROM IRELAND: TXT IRE (SPACE) CODE TO 57856 EG: IRE 55143 TO 57856

for games compatibility txt WAP to 80155
from Ireland txt WAP to 57856

RINGTONES

CHART	TRUE	FULL MP3	POLY
Hips Don't Lie	57856	57968	51678
Everytime We Touch	53208	53214	51750
Ain't No Other Man	53185	53191	51738
Unfaithful	53171	53177	51730
You Give Me Something	53182	53188	51735
Stars Are Blind	53174	53180	51733
Smile	53062	53070	51714
Voodoo Child	53160	53167	51723
Last Request	53158	53165	51721
Chasing Cars	53196	53201	51742
She Moves In Her Own Way	57951	57966	51709
Borderline	53217	53223	51757
I Wish I Was A Punk Rocker	57603	57608	51661
Smiley Faces	53183	53189	51736
Wasted Little DJ's	53218	53224	51758
Empire	53194	53199	51740
Horny As A Dandy	53219	53225	51759
In The Morning	53063	53071	51715

REAL SOUNDS	REAL
The Ateam intro	57169
London Underground	57174
Catchphrase Buzzer	57175
Southpark - Suck On My Balls	57176
Pulp Fiction - Whats Fonzi Like	57879
Happy Gilmore - Go Home Ball	57923
Scarface - Say Hello To My Little Friend	57924
The Shining - Heres Johnny!	57925
Pulp Fiction - The Path Of The Righteous Man	58051
Houston We Have A Problem'	58109
M16 Rifle	58114
Full Metal Jacket - Drill Sargeant "Do You Suck...?"	58138

TV & FILM	TRUE	POLY
Airwolf	57130	52001
Knight Rider	57143	52005
Stuck In the Middle With You	57147	--------
The Godfather	57154	--------
Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life	57155	52031
Highway To The Dangerzone - Top Gun	57156	52204
War of the Worlds	57157	--------
Rocky - Eye Of The Tiger	57280	52028
The Good the Bad the Ugly	57281	52136
The Italian Job theme	57282	52239
Mission Impossible	57286	51019
Magnum PI	57145	52035
Dr Who	57417	52050
Superman	57151	52085
The A team	57153	52020

CELEBRITY HOME VIDS

54412 Abi Girl Romp | 54413 Abi Action | 54416 Pammy On The Beach | 54418 Paris By Night | 54417 Paris Frolics | 54415 Pammy Swims | 54414 Jordan Romp

GAMES

get worms on your mobile
TXT 55473 TO 80155

56804 Public Sex Kamasutra | 54643 Kamasutra Sexplosion | 55427 Spearmint Rhino | 54469 Lego Star Wars
55451 Tokyo Drift | 54586 Zoo Tycoon 2 | 54475 True Crime | 55430 Boobs N' Bombs
55476 WWE Cage | 55253 Goodfellas | 54472 Kick Shot Pool | 55354 Juiced

PLATINUM GAMES £3

55117 Battle Ships | 55120 Done In 50 Seconds | 55121 Dougie Lampkin | 55123 Kung Fu Fighting | 55124 Pot Shots | 55125 Space Balls | 55119 Castle Nasty

NAUGHTY 40 VIDS

55143 Filthy 40's Photo Shoot | 55147 At Home Licks & Teases | 55233 40DD Mama | 55237 Sexy In Pink Lingerie
55241 Hot MILF | 55239 Plays While You Watch | 55243 Filthy Fantasy | 55149 Massive Boobs
55235 Dirty Talker | 55144 MILF Gets Em Out | 55148 Filthy 40 Fun At Home | 55234 Hot Busty Milf

BRAND NEW ACTION!

ULTMATE BRAWLIN VDS

55265 Mighty Midget | 55275 Smash Then Fight | 55261 Beach Face Off | 55271 Bizarre KO | 55266 Girl Fight | 59473 Bear Scrapping | 55270 Party Fighting

RED HOT GIRL VIDS

55247 Foxy Feather Fun | 55249 Mega Boobed Blonde | 55250 Rolling Naked In The Sand | 54900 Saucy Duo | 56105 Foxy Brunette
55251 Ice Lolly Seduction | 55456 Dannii In The Bath | 59477 Oriental Teaser | 55245 Rude Red Head | 56031 Sexy Chick | 56053 Dark N' Dirty
56106 Stunning Brunette | 54403 Busty Blonde | 54825 Good A** | 54533 Super Sexy Babe | 54906 Mega Mammaries | 54430 Check Out My Rack
54903 Check My A** | 54904 Bedroom Tease | 54915 Massive Melons | 55457 Saucy Dannii | 56055 Mega Melons | 54464 On The Beach

ALL NEW FREE MOBILE WAPSITE

1000'S OF TOP TUNES
50+ GAMES FROM £1.50
ACCESS TO XXX WAPSITE
DANNII HARWOOD FEATURE GIRL
SEE HER IN THE BATH!
WIN A STELLA FRIDGE
HUGE FREE MAGAZINE
TRY IT - ITS FREE
TXT WAP TO 80155
FOR IRELAND TXT WAP TO 57856

NO SUBSCRIPTIONS : NO CONS : OUR GUARANTEE

80155 & 57856 is for customers aged 16+, 69011 is for customers aged 18+. Single videos and ringtones cost £4.50 (€6). Bumper vids and normal games cost £6 (€8). Platinum games cost £3 (€4). Charge messages sent in denominations of £1.50 (€2). You will be sent a WAP link to collect your item and a small additional network charge may be incurred. Pre-pay users without enough credit will not receive items. Responsibility cannot be accepted for content ordered that is not supported by the handset or for delayed or distorted content delivery. TRUETONES & FULL TRACK MP3's: are not original recordings and are not sung by original artists and are not connected with the artist or associated companies in any way. MP3s and bumper vids will take longer to download due to increased file size. GAME COMPATIBILITY: See Wap Site, for full details. Due to phone screen sizes/resolutions images downloaded may differ slightly from shown. Prices correct at time of going to print. We reserve the right to alter pricing at any time. WAPSITE: A network charge maybe incurred from your provider during connection. K2 Media may contact you by SMS with the latest promotions and other products offered by K2 Media or its associated companies. DBMob is a product of K2 Media Ltd, PO Box 162, Kendal, LA8 8WW. Support line available between 9am to 5pm, Mon to Fri - +44 (0)871 200 3193.

GET LOADS MORE AT : WWW.DBMOB.COM



RENA TANAKA/ There are two great things about the story below. First, it is both informative and interesting, allowing the reader to absorb potentially useful facts about Xbox 360. Second, it's an excuse for a Rena Tanaka picture

EAST MEETS WEST

TURNING JIP-ANESE

Getting a Japanese Xbox 360 and going jip crazy

GAMERSCORE whores will already know that for maximum jippage, you need a Japanese Xbox 360. This grants access to those 'wonderful' games that Microsoft tries to woo a disinterested Japan with, such as *Tetris Grandmaster Ace* and *Zegapain* robots thing. And somehow, Japan continues to resist the lure of Xbox 360! Nevertheless, we've been asked what the best way to get a Japanese Xbox 360 is and now we're bored of our hilarious "By going to Japan!" joke, so here's the real answer.

First, head to eBay. This is where most GamerScore whores nabbed their Japanese Xbox 360s but now that sellers have cottoned onto the GamerScore trick, the prices have gone up to reflect the demand. Capitalism at its finest, people. They don't teach you that in school. While this is no longer the cheap option it once was, it's probably still the easiest. Do you trust iPiMpXbOxEs69 to send you a Japanese Xbox 360 in pristine condition though? Exactly.

Which leads us onto a slightly more reputable seller, **Amazon.co.jp**. Thanks to the cute 'In English' button, navigating the site is no longer a problem. Hooray! Except that 'In English' only actually translates the first page before shrugging its shoulders and leaving you to wade through Japanese moon language on your own. Thanks! You'll want the third tab from the right for the videogames section. While postage and packaging is expensive, the prices are ridiculous – a Premium Pack will set you back just under £200!

Still, if you're defeated by the moon language and don't want to try and second guess the Japanese for 'pay by credit card', then Google search 'personal shoppers Japan'. These guys are expensive but if you want a Japanese Xbox 360 at any cost, this is your most reliable option. Is it really worth it though? Probably not, but with your Japanese 360, you get to impress hot Asian ladies with killer chat-up lines in Japanese such as "Do you want to overwrite your save?" ■



EBAY!/ We trust eBay about as far as we can throw it, which isn't very far. Because, you know, it's a website

TAG TEAM

Who we've played with this month

AC JESSIE

He missed out when AC clan kicked **Team X360** from pillar to post but he was around waaay before that, popping up in *Battlefield 2* to shoot **X360** members in the face, reminding us why we hate snipers. The boy's got skills. Mad skillz, in fact! With a Z!



KNEELB4ME 360

We used to play *Capcom Vs SNK 2* against him, back in 'the day', before slowly growing apart. It was a sad break-up as we drifted towards GamerScore whoring and Kneel staying with his beloved *Capcom Vs SNK 2*. Now, thanks to *Street Fighter II'*, we're back together again! Hooray!



PURPLE CAREBEAR

He joined our team on *Battlefield 2* and the name seemed familiar… then it clicked! Enter 'Care Bear ownage' into Google Video to see him getting bipped at *Halo 2* for his lame trashtalk. As soon as we remembered, we stabbed him in the face for being American and annoying!



LIVE ARCADE INCOMING

CASTLE CRASHERS

No *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. No *Streets Of Rage*. No four-player side-scrolling beat-'em-up to quench the thirst for violence over Xbox Live Arcade. Until now! That exclamation of triumph symbolises the Xbox Live community collectively punching the air and doing a little dance of joy on *Frogger*'s smelly corpse because developer Behemoth is hard at work on *Castle Crashers*.

Using the same funky cartoon style as *Alien Hominid*, this looks awesome. Each of the four characters has their own fighting style and the game looks like a fun, lightweight take on Sega's classic *Golden Axe*. Behemoth and Ninja Bee are **X360**'s favourite Xbox Live developers by far but *Castle Crashers* looks to nudge Behemoth into the lead yet again. Sorry Ninja Bee. Fix Outpost!





CALIFORNIA GAMES

A perfect fit for XBLA thanks to its multiplayer nature and high-score ethos, but it's a name that rarely gets thrown around. Why? Because we're not entirely sure who actually owns the licence. Sega was the last one to publish a full *California Games*, erm, game and that was way back in 1991. Still, it's Microsoft's mess to sort out, not ours – the point is that *California Games* HAS to make its way to Live Arcade. Otherwise everyone will cry.



OH DEAR/ It used to look better than this, didn't it? It didn't look this bad. Did it? Any retro buffoons care to write in and explain?



X360 DVD OF THE MONTH

BLOODRAYNE



REPLAY

FREE GAME!

» *BloodRayne 2* might be old but it still has more story, more sense and more point than the DVD it's bundled with.

IT'S OLD

» Going back reminds us why reviews from five years ago almost always moaned about the rubbish camera.

NOT RETRO THOUGH!

» Out of five, we'd probably have given it three at the time but two now. Both of which is higher than the film. Tragic.

INFORMATION

Uwe Boll Productions • $27 (import) • Widescreen • Dolby Digital 5.1
DIRECTOR/ Uwe Boll
STARRING/ Kristanna Loken, Michael Madsen, Ben Kingsley

RATING/ ●○○○○

EXTRAS RATING/ ●●○○○

Due to the fact that Uwe Boll's films are getting better, they're getting worse. "Huh? That makes no sense." "Yes it does," we say, continuing to play out a mock conversation in our head. *House Of The Dead* was so bad that it swung right around the Pole of Logic™ and almost ended up being good again. *Alone In The Dark* was entertaining as you got to see the fire in Christian Slater and Tara Reid's eyes slowly fade away as they realise Boll's train wreck has killed their careers and whatever time they do have left in Hollywood will be spent answering "So, why did you do *Alone In The Dark*?"

But *BloodRayne*? It's abysmal. Not so bad it's good, not even unintentionally funny bar one brilliant line from Billy Zane – *BloodRayne* is just bad. Boll might have just about scrambled out of the car-crash filmmaking that made *House Of The Dead* such an accidental joy, but that means there's no redeeming factor to *BloodRayne* – the fights are appalling, the story doesn't make any sense, it doesn't even have much in common with the actual game besides a skimpily clad lady with a fondness for chomping on necks. How Uwe Boll managed to get the likes of Michael Madsen and Ben Kingsley to sign up is probably better left unknown because judging by the solemn looks on their faces and complete lack of effort as they cruise through the script numb to the tragedy unfolding around them, they know this isn't the film they'll be highlighting in bold at the top of their CV. Also, look out for the most embarrassing sex scene in any film ever.

Actually no, don't look out for it. Please. There's no reason to watch this. The only good things we can say about *BloodRayne* are Meat Loaf's cameo is vaguely amusing, and it hasn't been released over here on DVD yet. No doubt this travesty will eventually find its way to our shores so consider this an early warning – just don't buy it.

Ryan King

DVD EXTRAS: Incredibly, there's a full version of *BloodRayne 2* for PC included with the disc. And yes, it's better than the film.

DVDS

BLADE RUNNER: DIRECTOR'S CUT

Warner Home Video • £15.99 • 2.35:1 • Dolby Digital 5.1
DIRECTOR/ Ridley Scott
STARRING/ Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Darryl Hannah

RATING/ ●●●●●

EXTRAS RATING/ ●●●●○

WHAT MORE can be said about Ridley Scott's seminal 1982 neo-noir *Blade Runner*? Universally revered, endlessly influential and masterfully directed, Scott's vision of a dystopic urban future was so ahead of its time that it manages to still feel entirely relevant. As Deckard, the hard-boiled detective with a penchant for culling malfunctioning replicants, Harrison Ford shines – the antithesis of Indiana Jones; a performance drenched in ill feeling and woe. This is a man who hates his job and hates his life, living in a city where it never stops raining. This is no action hero.

Ford's mesmeric turn is only matched by that of Rutger Hauer, whose Roy Batty is a mistral of internal chaos and stoic evil. His speech at the film's climax is one of the defining moments in modern cinema, and simply HAS to be seen. If you don't own *Blade Runner*, then you don't love cinema. It really is that simple.

Jon Denton



BROKEN SAINTS

20th Century Fox Entertainment • £34.99 • Widescreen 16:9 • DD5.1
DIRECTOR/ Brooke Burgess
STARRING/ Greg Anderson, Ryan Crocker, Michael Dobson

RATING/ ●●●●●

EXTRAS RATING/ ●●●●●

THIS IS the weirdest, trippiest, strangest series you'll ever see. Presented in comic book form, plumping for still images and panels over animation, this means the focus is on the storytelling and that's where *Broken Saints* excels. With a slow,

slow build-up that introduces the characters through ambiguous dialogue, the pay-off is a truly gripping storyline. Once *Broken Saints* sinks its hook into you, there's no letting go as it throws you through conspiracies, mysteries and mind-twisting U-turns. Some will consider *Broken Saints* a shade too pretentious and long-winded in its early chapters to see the entire series through, but let them be the ones who miss out. With extras that pack out every disc and helping to fill in the cult and phenomena around this hidden gem, this really does have to be seen to be believed.

Ryan King

AREA 88

Arvato Services Ltd • £19.99 • 1.85:1 Anamorphic • Dolby Digital 5.1
DIRECTOR/ Hisayuki Toriumi
STARRING/ Dan Olk, BH O'Neill, Jim Ward

RATING/ ●●●●●

EXTRAS RATING/ ●●●●●

FIGHTER JETS piloted by those with dodgy nicknames while rock music squeals away in the background. That's *Area 88*'s main appeal summed up in one clumsy sentence and it's a damn good draw, featuring plenty of action, swooshing noises and explosions, three of **X360**'s favourite things. Being the first DVD in a four-part series, this serves as exposition, and setting up the later episodes by introducing the characters and establishing the storyline, it doesn't always have time to enthral as a standalone DVD. Fortunately, *Area 88* just about covers its arse by asking questions early on, most notably whether it's better to die in battle than it is to survive. In a weird way, it's because of this that the slower, talky scenes stand out as the strongest. The dialogue isn't particularly great but it's still interesting. And it features a character called Angel of Death, which is clearly brilliant.

Ryan King





HIGHWAY TO THE DANGER ZONE/ Sounds a lot like *Top Gun* for the anime generation. And it is!

RUBBISH DVD OF THE MONTH

BORN INVINCIBLE

PAY NO MORE THAN/ £5
DIRECTOR/ Taylor Wong
STARRING/ Carter Wong

THE PREMISE of *Born Invincible* is White Haired Bad Guy (not his actual name, we can't remember it right now) has channelled the power of Tai Chi and become invincible. You might know Tai Chi as that weird stuff old men do in Chinese parks on travel programmes while Craig Doyle goes "Isn't it great? Isn't it?" but apparently it makes you bastard tough too. In one scene, White Haired Bad Guy lies on his back and lets someone jump from a building onto his stomach, just to prove how much of a man he is. He also gets kicked in the groin and doesn't even flinch. Martial arts fans can marvel at the ultra-long one-take choreography for the fight scenes, which, even for a cheap Seventies kung-fu flick, wees all over anything Hollywood has done. Everyone else can marvel at a man who lets people jump from buildings onto his stomach, just to prove a point.

Ryan King



NEWS IN QUOTES

"THE LINES HAVE BEEN DRAWN AND NOW EVERYONE MUST CHOOSE A SIDE AS MUTANTS CLASH AND THE FINAL EPIC BATTLE BEGINS IN X-MEN: THE LAST STAND, ERUPTING ONTO TWO-DISC SPECIAL EDITION DVD ON 2 OCTOBER 2006"

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT

JOYTECH 9200 DIGITAL LCD MONITOR

X360 GEAR OF THE MONTH

INFORMATION

Joytech • £149.99
CONTACT / www.joytech.net

RATING / ●●●●●

The latest bit of technology to bounce out of Joytech's labs is a small monitor that clips to the front of the Xbox 360, with a 9.2-inch TFT digital screen. That sounds like crazy moon language, but it means that the monitor looks nice and supports PAL 50, PAL 60 and NTSC. It's the kind of technology that HDTVs will probably laugh at. Then again, this monitor isn't supposed to compete with the HDTVs of this world, preferring instead to flick V-signs at the behemoth HDTVs and do cartwheels to show how portable and nimble it is.

The 360 is about as portable as a corpse, so what's this clip-on monitor useful for? If you're pushed for space (don't laugh, some people are), then it won't take up valuable room. If you're setting up a LAN party for *Burnout*, *G.R.A.W.*, *Quake 4* or whatever (we're not going to list every possible 360 LAN game), it will save logistical headaches with transporting monitors and finding room to set them up. If your other half cries that they want to watch *EastEnders* rather than watching you unlock Achievements in *Perfect Dark Zero*, then you can set this up and carry on gaming. Anti-social? Sure. Will the relationship end? Possibly. But at least you'll have those GamerPoints. You win. It's niche appeal, yes, but damn good for those who need it anyway.

Ryan King



BREAK IT DOWN

- 9.2-inch LCD colour screen
- 160-degree viewing angle
- SRS 3D Surround Sound
- Integrated twin modular Stereo Speakers
- 2 Headphone Outputs

THE MARKET

TOP FIVE HATED GAMERPICTURES

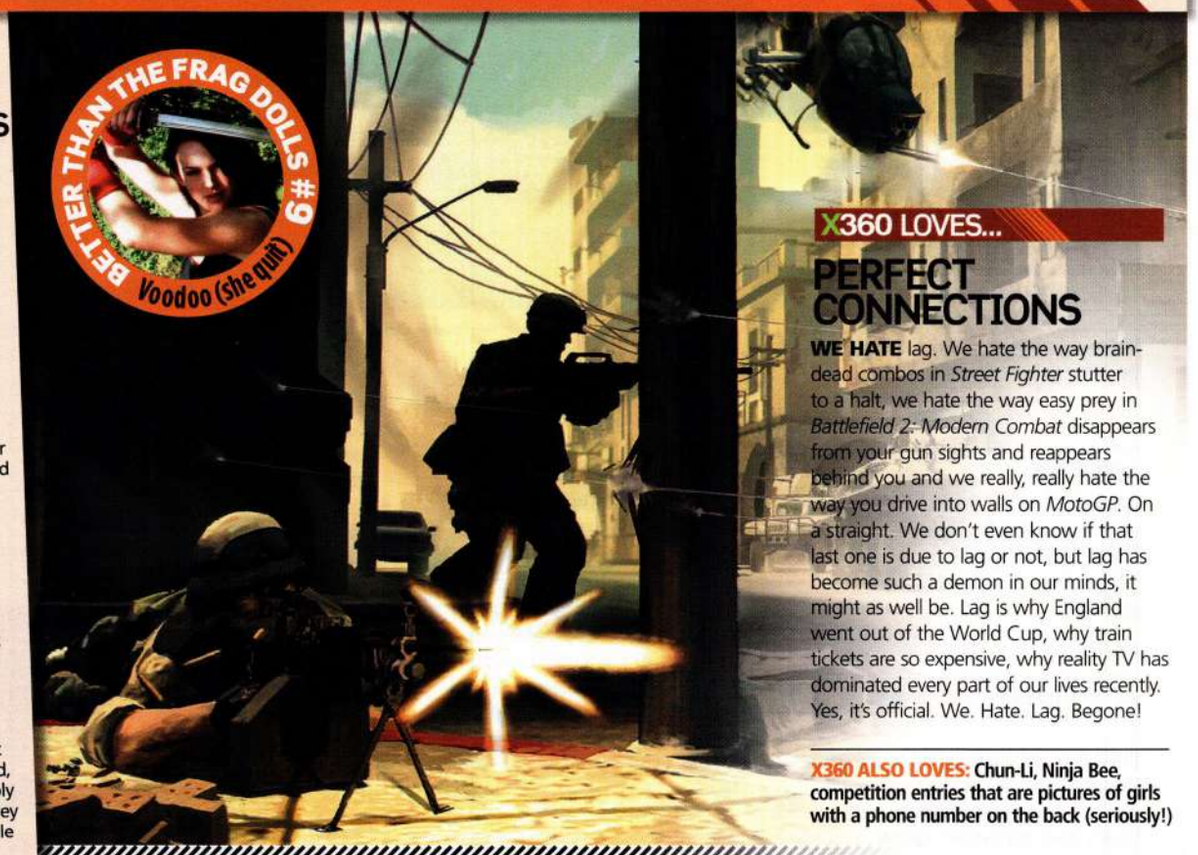
1 PENNY ARCADE
The pics are fine, it's Penny Arcade we hate. Typical Penny Arcade comic goes like this. Man 1: "I will make a videogame reference." Man 2: "Yes." Man 1: "Then I will make another videogame reference that isn't funny but people will laugh at because it's about games." Stop it. Please.

2 LORD OF THE RINGS
The first picture in the first picture pack, worth buying just to see how bad it is. Remember how hot Liv Tyler was in the movie? This GamerPic is what Liv Tyler would have looked like if Steven Tyler had drunkenly gone to bed with Quasimodo rather than a Playboy model.

3 ANYTHING HALO 3
Okay, WE GET IT NOW, there's no need to stick your *Halo 3* GamerPics everywhere, WE KNOW YOU WANT HALO 3. There's only one place we want you to stick your Master Chief portrait, and it's not next to your GamerTag.

4 ST THEKING'S
We don't know what it's from but he's been using it forever. That furrowed, confused expression on his pic is probably what most Canadians look like when they play *Cloning Clyde* at 5am for a miniscule lead in a virtual willy waving contest.

5 TOP SPIN 2 PICTURES
Similar to the *Lord Of The Rings* Liv-Tyler-fell-into-a-fire-face-first travesty, this looks like 2K Sports hired Mr Jones The Sex Doll Maker to create tennis player likenesses. Even Sharapova's face looks like someone's punched Maria-shaped dents into a ball of dough. Terrifying.



X360 LOVES...

PERFECT CONNECTIONS

WE HATE lag. We hate the way brain-dead combos in *Street Fighter* stutter to a halt, we hate the way easy prey in *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat* disappears from your gun sights and reappears behind you and we really, really hate the way you drive into walls on *MotoGP*. On a straight. We don't even know if that last one is due to lag or not, but lag has become such a demon in our minds, it might as well be. Lag is why England went out of the World Cup, why train tickets are so expensive, why reality TV has dominated every part of our lives recently. Yes, it's official. We. Hate. Lag. Begone!

X360 ALSO LOVES: Chun-Li, Ninja Bee, competition entries that are pictures of girls with a phone number on the back (seriously!)

LIVE CALENDAR OCTOBER













6TH The usual great start to the weekend: Frag Doll Friday! What will they be playing? Clue: It'll probably have a big Ubisoft logo somewhere on the box!

7TH The scrubs will have abandoned *Street Fighter II' : Hyper Fighting* by this point, leaving our cheap Chun-Li and Balrog to clean up the XBLA streets.

10TH *Marble Blast* is winner of X360's Best Multiplayer Game On Xbox Live Arcade Award That We Just Made Up. Congratulations to *Marble Blast*!

12TH This is the day we'll embark on a sorry quest to try and find another *Rumble Roses XX* player, anywhere, in the world... don't ask us why.

25TH Yes! It's Xbox Live Wednesday – providing Microsoft hasn't bottled it. But what game will it be? We'll hazard a guess at *Paperboy*...

27TH Originally due for release on 15 May 1928, *Splinter Cell: Double Agent* should finally be out on this very day. Find us online!

NEED TO KNOW...

LIVE CHECKLIST: STREET FIGHTER II' ONLINE

- I could complete the SNES version on highest difficulty with one hand, my eyes closed, upside down, while eating a burger ✓
- Oh man, this is going to be so easy! ✓
- Get absolutely spanked online ✓
- Man up and admit that maybe you aren't quite as hot at the game you only thought you were good at just because you could beat your younger brother ✗
- Bitch about lag instead ✓

Join FREE

UK's Hottest Text Date
GENUINE Local Girls
View FREE Photos - Hot photos on every girls



BORED	FUN	OFFICE	CITY	SEXY
& over 30	singles 25+	girls 22+	girls 25+	girls 22+
Txt BORED 30 to 07624 803 689	Txt FLIRT 25 to 07624 803 677	Txt GIRL 22 to 07797 807 055	Txt CITY 25 to 07797 807 054	Txt LUSH 22 to 07797 807 011

To stop reply "stop" For support, My date, BCM Box 6713 WC1N 3XX. 18+ only. First three msgs are free, then 50p.

Join 4p Text Date & Photo SWAP - Local Girls Join 4p



KEEN
DIVORCEES 32+
TEXT
TEASE 32
to
07624 802 861



WILD
SINGLES 22+
TEXT
LATE 22
to
07797 807 054



CHEEKY
LATINA 20+
TEXT
SALSA 20
to
07797 807 013



HOME
GIRLS 26+
TEXT
HOME 23
to
07624 803 675

To stop reply "stop" For support, My date, BCM Box 6713 WC1N 3XX. 18+ only. First two msgs are free, then 50p.



Maureen's
MATURE
CONTACTS
EXPERIENCED OLDER WOMEN CHAT LIVE
0909 661 3881
BCM Box 2621, London, WC1N 3XX. Calls cost £1/min at all times. All calls are recorded.

LIVE 1-2-1
AT IT'S BEST!
STRAIGHT TO THE ACTION-
No time wasting-No callbacks
Up to 80 girls on line now!
We'll put you through to the girl of your choice. Call Now!
FRIENDLY GIRLS HOT LIVE TALK
0909 661 3533
BCM Box 2621 London WC1N 3XX.
Calls cost £1/min at all times. All calls are recorded



SEXY GIRLS
TALK DIRTY
LIVE 1 ON 1
ACTION
0909 661 3707
BCM Box 2621 London WC1N 3XX. Calls cost £1/min at all times. All calls are recorded



OVER 40
CALL ME FOR A LIVE CHAT
0909 661 3887
BCM Box 2621 London WC1N 3XX. Calls cost £1/min at all times. All calls are recorded



DISCIPLINE!
STRICT MISTRESS DEMANDS OBEDIENCE NOW!
0909 661 3623
BCM Box 2621 London WC1N 3XX.
Calls cost £1/min at all times. All calls are recorded



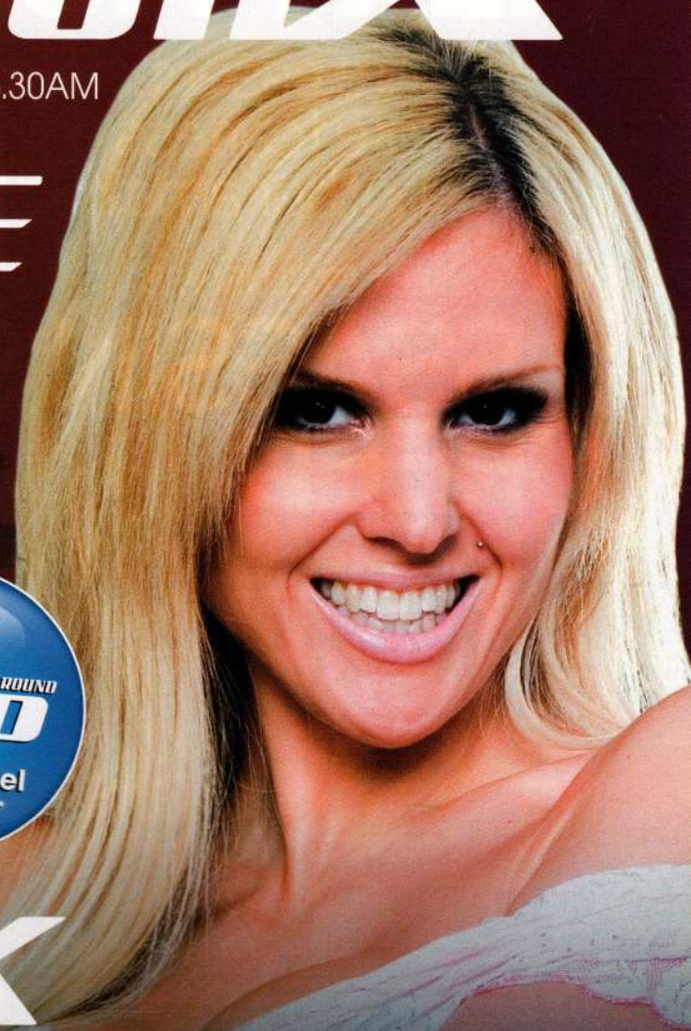
To advertise in
XBOX 360
contact James on
01202 586493
james.haley@imagine-publishing.co.uk

ROXX
Photos, Videos, Wallpapers and Tones
ROXX is your weekly mobile magazine delivered FREE to your handset with no subscription!
The Best Content Available!
Topless Celebrities, Fit models, Comedy, Top Stories and Much More!
text: BABES to: 83696
INSTANT FUN
text: BABES to: 83696
THOUSANDS OF PICTURES and HUNDREDS VIDEOS
FREE TO BROWSE!
SECRET GIRLS, HOT BABES, NAUGHTY CELEBS & MORE!
NO SUBSCRIPTION NO HIDDEN CHARGES
For more on ROXX visit www.roxxmag.co.uk
Please obtain mobile bill payer permission first. This is NOT a subscription service. To stop service text STOP to 83696, please refer to the terms and condition's within the ROXX wapsite. See your handset instructions for info regarding saving, storing and viewing your content. Some content or services may be incompatible with certain handsets. Service provider: NVI Ltd, PO BOX 52758, LCAP 2XD. Customer support number: 0870 851 8273.

televisionX

SIZZLING NEW SHOWS EVERY NIGHT! FROM 8PM UNTIL 5.30AM

BEST VALUE ADULT PACKAGE!



YOU CAN NOW WATCH 12 HOT CHANNELS FOR 1 GREAT PRICE

AROUND 4p per channel per night*

televisionX

CHANNELS 903, 904, 905 & 917

AND

RedHot

CHANNELS 924 TO 931

SKY **0871 271 6869**
NTL **0800 052 2000**
TELEWEST **0845 142 000**
DIGITAL TV **0871 271 2714**

THE ULTIMATE ADULT PACKAGE

SEE THE FREEVIEWS ON THE CHANNELS ABOVE **TONIGHT!**

OR PHONE:	OR VIA INTERNET:	OR REMOTE CONTROL:
0871 271 6869 24 HOURS A DAY	www.televisionx.co.uk www.redhottv.co.uk	SELECT CHANNEL 903 AND **PRESS THE RED BUTTON** ON YOUR REMOTE CONTROL – DURING FREEVIEWS

CALL ONLY ONCE. LINES OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY - 7 DAYS A WEEK

USE YOUR EUROCARD MasterCard VISA SWITCH CARD OR BY DIRECT Debit

YOU CHOOSE WHAT TO WATCH FROM 12 CHANNELS. UP TO 91/2 HOURS OF NO-HOLDS-BARRED ACTION ON EACH CHANNEL, EVERY NIGHT! £14.99 PER MONTH, EQUIVALENT TO JUST 4P PER CHANNEL PER NIGHT. EXISTING CUSTOMERS MAY UPGRADE CURRENT PACKAGE. 12 MONTHS MINIMUM SUNBSCRIPTION, PLUS A ONE-OFF STARTER PACK FEE. STARTER PACK ENTITLES YOU TO £30 WORTH OF ADULT MAGAZINES AND VIDEOS. ABSOLUTEL DISCRETION ASSURED! THERE WILL BE NO MENTION OF TELEVISION X OR RED HOT ON YOUR BANK STATEMENT. *per channel per night.

NEXT MONTH

- More essential games
- More fearless opinion
- Another amazing DVD

THE BIGGEST EXCLUSIVES...

ASSASSIN'S CREED

Full lowdown with everything you simply NEED to know about this mysterious next-gen game!

THE BEST GAMES...

RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

Ubisoft gambles with its intense squad shooter!

GEARS OF WAR

Don't believe the hype? Find out the truth next issue!

CALL OF DUTY 3

The latest report from the Activision frontlines!

THE BOLDEST FEATURES...

HEALTH AND EFFICIENCY

Couch potatoes, playing games all day, stuffing your face with chips... is gaming really bad for you? Our in-depth feature reveals all!

GO ON... SUBSCRIBE NOW!
TURN TO PAGE 113

ON SALE 12 OCT '06



X360

Never miss a copy of your favourite magazine!

Ask your newsagent to order you a copy *TODAY!*

Dear Newsagent: Please reserve me a copy of **X360** each month until further notice. Many thanks

ip IMAGINE PUBLISHING

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Date: _____ Signed: _____

To the newsagent: Additional copies can be ordered from the wholesaler that supplies your Radio Times. Thanks for your support.

THE BRAVEST REVIEWS...

TIMESHIFT

Find out how many bad 'time' puns we use in the definitive review!

LEGO STAR WARS II

Delivering a pure injection of fun straight to your gaming glands!

PLUS MORE ON ALL THESE GAMES...

FIFA 07 / TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07 / SAMURAI WARRIORS 2 / BOMBERMAN ACT: ZERO / SAINTS ROW ONLINE / LMA MANAGER 2007 / THE GODFATHER / SUPERMAN RETURNS / NBA 2K7 / ALONE IN THE DARK

Please note. Content may change due to 'unforeseen circumstances'. Ah, those wacky circumstances...

Game Zone
MOBILE FUN

its easy to order:

TXT THE ITEMCODE TO 88011

e.g. **XM85635** (found at the top of each game). Join Game Zone for just £4.50 per week (all items require a WAP enabled handset). Don't want to subscribe? Simply reply **STOP** after your order to unsubscribe, free of charge.

Best Games Best Value

Mobile Gaming is Ready!

Freebie

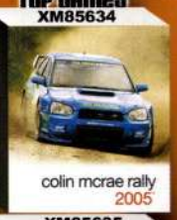
FREE WITH ALL ORDERS!



Lara Croft Strip Vid

TOP GAMES

XM85634



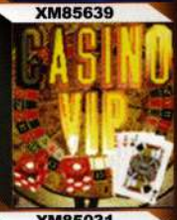
XM85635



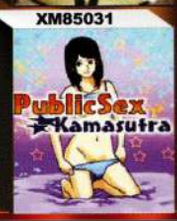
XM85743



XM85639



XM85031



GameZone is a subscription service charged at 3 x £1.50 per week until you reply **STOP** to **88011**. All games require a WAP enabled handset, for compatibilities please refer to www.blingmob.com. Customers will incur normal operator WAP browsing charges. For customer support email help@blingmob.com or call 0873 083 1180 (weekdays 9am to 5pm) or post BLING! BSM PO Box 2952 London WC1N 3XX.

NEW GAMES

XM85796



XM85819



XM85790



XM85795



XM85805



XM85777



XM85775



XM85814



XM85776

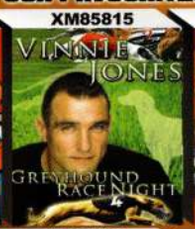


OUR FAVOURITES

XM85770



XM85815



XM85768



XM85744



XM85636



XM85751



XM85640



XM85781



XM85782



XM85698



XM85691



XM85769



XM85756



XM85752



XM85749



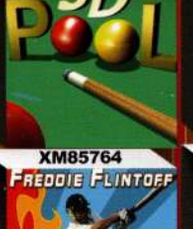
XM85029



XM85019



XM85764



XM85755



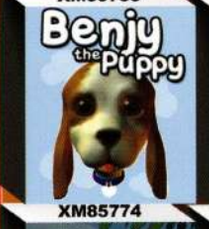
XM85748



XM85735



XM85774



XM85793



XM85721



SEXY GAMES

XM85631



XM85818

XM85788

XM85810

XM85792

XM85627

XM85617

XM85119

XM85747

XM85821

XM85626

XM85679

XM85739

XM85778

XM85718

XM85651

Fantastic games. Fearless opinion. Britain's favourite independent Xbox 360 mag

X360

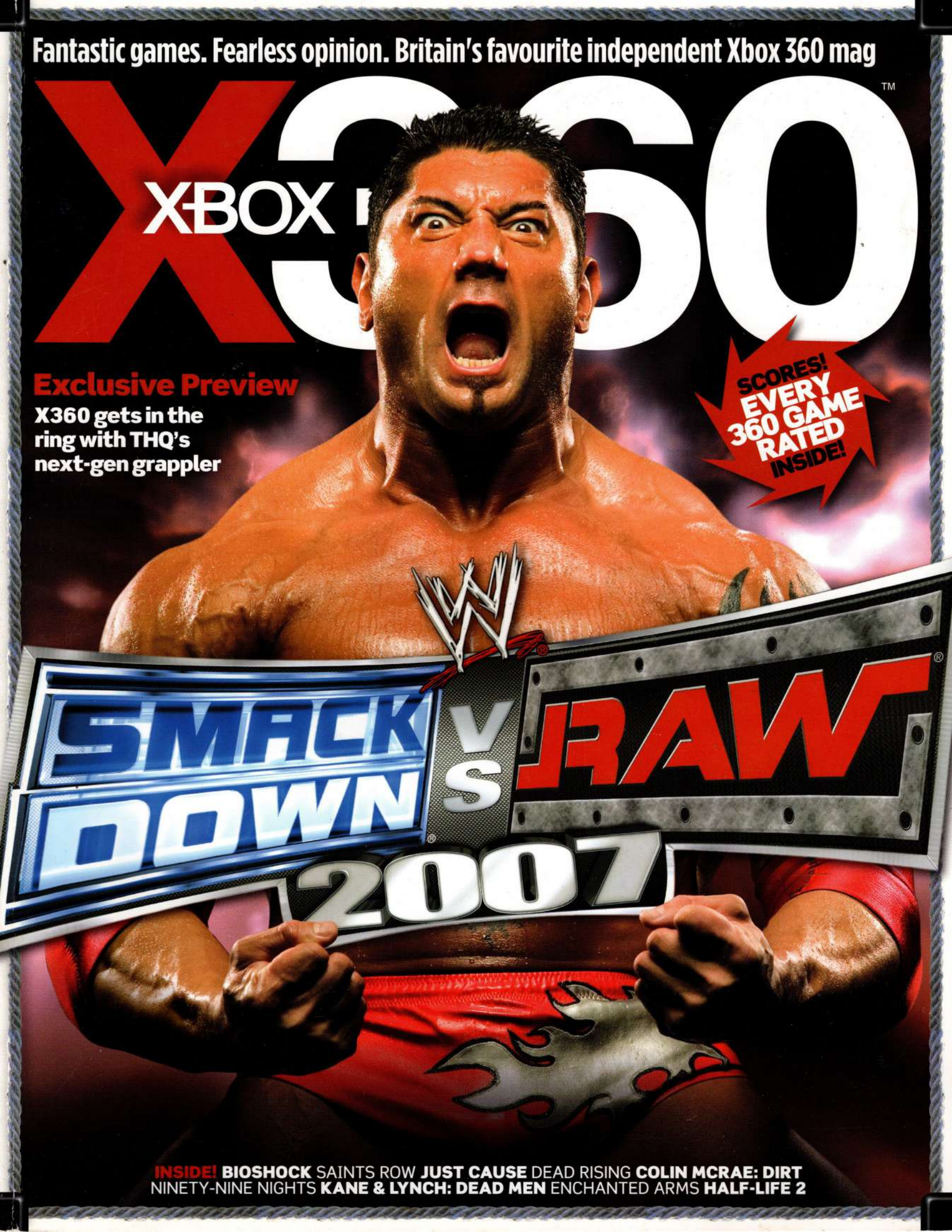
XBOX

TM

Exclusive Preview

X360 gets in the ring with THQ's next-gen grappler

SCORES! EVERY 360 GAME RATED INSIDE!



INSIDE! **BIOSHOCK** SAINTS ROW **JUST CAUSE** DEAD RISING **COLIN MCRAE: DIRT** NINETY-NINE NIGHTS **KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN** ENCHANTED ARMS **HALF-LIFE 2**