

MMORPG: Military Acronym or Gaming Style?

PC GAMES 'R US

Not The Best PC Games Magazine, But Buy It Anyway!

Unreal Tournament A Full Review



special in this issue...

A Letter from the Editor!! WOW!

Features

Diablo II Preview

Online
Role-playing Games

FPS History Lesson

What?

Media that is very confused

\$5 US \$2 CAN (haha)



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Letter From the Editor

Dear Readers,

With the first issue of *PC Games 'R Us*, certain issues need to be addressed. Yes, that is slightly redundant but bear with me. Most importantly, what is it that you computer game players want to hear about? You already have plenty of magazines telling about the basics of gaming. Why is this new magazine with the cool cover and perfectly written articles, which are fit to be graded, any different? I'll tell you why: 'cause we have a cool cover and perfectly written articles that are better than my college thesis. (*Although that's not saying much about his thesis.* -Bob.) Of course, we also have the wonderful staff of the magazine.

Nevertheless, we here at *PC Games 'R Us* will be devoted to bringing you the best information we could scrounge up. This being our first issue, we've decided to feature a major genre of games that has recently come back into popularity. This is the First Person Shooter. On this topic is our feature story about Unreal Tournament, a game that is set to revolutionize the multiplayer arena. Following suit is an article about the history of these FPS games. We've done research dating back from the granddaddy Wolfenstein 3D up until the current games.

Then there is an article on the upcoming Diablo II, supplied from our inside sources. For the last helping, we're serving a review of the top MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Games). Get ready for an action packed issue of sweet gaming goodness. Grab a Mountain Dew to wash it down and start reading.

■ **Elliot Pinkus**



Editor-in-Chief

SIDEWINDER

Air to Air Missile

OR

The Gamepad



- Used to cause controlled but complete destruction.
- Best results while in the heat of the action.
- Provides pinpoint control with the use of the top motion-sensing available.
- Easily programmable switchboard functions.
- Makes great explosions when detonated.
- Drawback: It could be used against you. (By the highest bidder)



- Used to cause controlled but complete destruction.
- Best results while in the heat of the action.
- Provides pinpoint control with the use of the top motion-sensing available.
- Easily programmable button functions.
- Does not explode very well.
- Drawback: It could be used against you. (By other extreme players)



Unreal Tournament's for Real!

Quake III: Arena
doesn't stand a chance.

Who wouldn't love blasting other players apart with chunks of hot shrapnel shot from the flak cannon? Unreal Tournament provides the best multiplayer first-person combat to date. All the features included in the Tournament blew Quake III away. No FPS has nearly as many options and varieties of how to play and win.

The graphics are the first thing any gamer notices. They're mind-blowing. This heavily upgraded Unreal Engine is what powers such programs that professionals use to design buildings and tour them. The main competitor engine-wise is the Quake III. Even being a die-hard Unreal fan, I must concede that the QIII has slightly better graphic quality, but they are never used as strongly. The graphics of UT show the strongest in the fantastic level designs. The textures look as if they were taken directly from photographs. There is no fogging effect whatsoever. A perfect example of the distances in the game is the Capture-the-Flag level "Opposing Worlds." This sniper's heaven is based around two fortresses at opposite ends of a bridge in space. While standing atop one of the towers you can see the tiny specks of other players running around the base of the other tower.

Four modes^{of} gameplay are available at all times. Each mode has its own specially designed set of levels to insure the best gameplay. Of course there is the basic deathmatch where the person with the most kills wins. Then there is a Capture-the-Flag mode where each of the two teams has a flag in a section of the level. A player from the other team has to retrieve the flag and bring it back to their own side. This lends to team strategy where the best players work with their teammates to set up who is capturing the flag, who is defending their flag, etc.



Opposing Worlds,
with the red team's
tower in the
background.



Look at that oblivious
player. A hit with the
ASMD shock rifle
should make him notice
the player behind him.

The most innovative mode is the Domination. In these levels, three "domination points," essentially floating icons, are placed around the level. When a member of either team touches one of the domination points, the spot turns into that team's symbol, and it's indicated on the side of the screen who has control over what. Every five seconds, a team gets one point added to their score for each spot they control. The game is a race to get a certain score that can be set ahead of time.

The last mode is Assault, which is a mission-based style. One team starts as the attackers, and the other team starts as defenders. There is a set time limit in which the attackers must accomplish certain objectives. Then the teams switch sides and the new attackers must accomplish the same objectives in less time than the first team took. It is one of the more complicated modes, but luckily the objectives are fairly straightforward.

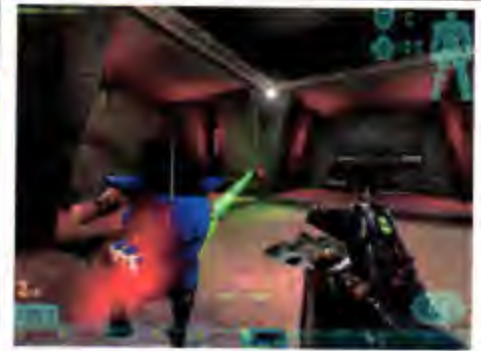


The blue team's got a domination point.



Come on, lets see if the red guy can dodge the pulse cannon. Don't think so.

The Ripper rips its instant kill
HEAD SHOT!



My personal favorite aspect of the game is the one that lends the most gameplay variety. The sheer variety of weapons makes Unreal Tournament stand out from any other game I've played. Quake III has about 9 weapons, most of which are common ones such as rocket launchers and shotguns. In Unreal Tournament there are 12 different weapons all with completely different functions. Each weapon not only has a primary fire, but with a right-click, a secondary fire that serves a separate purpose. For instance the pulse cannon fires rapid balls of energy while in primary mode. In secondary mode it sends out a constant stream of energy. Other weapons like the sniper rifle zoom in while in secondary mode, or other non-attack based features. Unlike many other games, no weapon is better than another. People have their preferences of course (Flak Cannon all the way, baby! -Bob), but they all even out if used correctly.

Of course there are other brilliant FPS games out there, maybe with more innovative features. Nevertheless, nothing can match the constant action and excitement in the best FPS deathmatch-style game to date.

-- Bob

Overall Rating:

95%

The History of First Person Shooters



Wolfenstein 3D



Doom



Quake



Unreal

Up until Wolfenstein 3D was produced by Id Software, the idea of a first person shooter was nonexistent. Most games of the time were either viewed in two dimensions from the side, or an overhead view of the characters. When Id Software created Wolfenstein 3D as a small, single "episode" shareware game, they had no idea of the consequences. The terrific graphics for the time and the involving action-packed gameplay went unrivaled. Soon, four other "episodes" were produced and commercially sold. Along with a few other games such as the side scrolling Commander Keen series, Id became a force in the computer-gaming industry. They soon produced a sequel using almost the same game engine as Wolfenstein, and featuring the same character, known as Spear of Destiny. Without any real improvements, this up and coming genre seemed to start to wither away already.

The biggest break for FPS games was when Id Software, along with Apogee, developed Doom. This quasi-futuristic/fantasy game not only revived the genre, but also boosted it into the mainstream of gamers and beyond. Doom took place in dark settings within dungeons or burnt out cities or dead space ships. The enemies ranged from tiny burning skulls that flew around, to monstrous half-goat half-robot Cyber Demons. You fought with average weapons such as the pistol and shotgun, but Doom introduced a standard for games to come: the BFG 9000. The Big "Freaking" Gun was slow to shoot and consumed immense ammo, but acted as a miniature Nuke, killing everything in its path.

A few years later, after other companies produced mediocre FPS games as well as hits such as Dark Forces, Id and Apogee returned once again to revolutionize the genre. With the release of Quake, another dark mix between the future and fantasy elements, the genre was reborn. Straying from the "blasting everything in your path" style, it took on many more strategic elements. The other element Quake introduced was the rise of the Deathmatch. Players online could duke it out in one of many specially designed levels. With Quake II, the deathmatch was improved and the BFG 10,000 was introduced. In the recently released Quake III: Arena, the entire single-player mode was abolished in favor of multiplayer gaming.

In 1999, after Quake II had already reached its peak, a newcomer to the genre joined the race. Epic MegaGames produced Unreal, a mostly single-player based game with the arguably best graphic engine even now, became an unexpected hit. This science-fiction style game gave unprecedented gameplay as well as the unbelievable graphics. Unreal Tournament was released in late 1999 and is set to be a blockbuster. Other games such as Wheel of Time have brought role-playing elements into the genre, proving that this is a style that is here to stay.

-- Frank

Can Diablo II Live Up to Its Name?

Diablo—A hybrid between role-playing games and action/adventure games. In 1995 when it was released, Blizzard had yet another masterpiece. After releasing Warcraft and Warcraft II, Blizzard had been established as being a terrific developer. All the high hopes were fulfilled and Diablo became Game of the Year and sold millions of copies. The random setup of the dungeons and items you find provided for endless replay. Even now, five years later, with Diablo II being released in less than a month, the amount of people playing the original Diablo hasn't decreased one bit. The problem is, what will happen if Diablo II isn't one of the best games of the year? With all the hype, it had better be, and everything known about it proves that it will be amazing.

Five different character classes are included in the game. The sorceress, the barbarian, the necromancer, the amazon, and the paladin each have different skills and tactics to use. The old format of randomly generated dungeons and items is staying the same, but the action isn't limited to one building with many floors. There are plenty of outdoor action sequences, which are new to the sequel, and many different sets of indoor levels. The spell book system of magic has been abandoned in favor of specific skill trees for each character class. The game is also about four times larger than Diablo. This sequel is divided into four acts, each of which are approximately the size of the original.

The story picks up after the first one ends. The hero of Diablo takes the Demonlord into his body to contain him. Diablo II focuses on the idea that Diablo corrupted your first hero from the inside, and is drawing all of the monsters back. This sequel is proving to be every bit as good as we all hoped.

-- Frank

Not Your Daddy's MMORPG

The Realm

This old Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Game was produced by Sierra and went through three incarnations. The third is the one that became known and stayed up for years. The Realm is a typical fantasy RPG featuring humans, elves, and giants as playable races. The game had simple sprite-based characters that moved about screen-sized "rooms". The Realm never attracted as many people due to its basic but still too challenging gameplay.

Ultima Online

UO is probably the largest online gaming community there is. The next largest games only have about half the players. UO featured many classes and styles of play ranging from warrior to miner to animal trainer. The constantly updated world with different servers, separate "worlds", to supply so many people without running out of room. It has a 3/4-overhead view, like many RPGs, and a simple point and click movement style. The only major problem is that it is not very "newbie-friendly" and the Player-Killers are a real problem.

Asheron's Call and Everquest

These two games are very close together in most standing. They have similar three-dimensional graphics and real-time battle systems. The two of them have recently come out so they haven't had enough time to work out all the bugs. Everquest just came out with an add-on pack that adds another "continent" and more characters. Microsoft's Asheron's Call has a system where the developers constantly update the game online.

Middle-Earth

If Sierra ever gets their acts together to release this game, (It's been delayed since '98), it could be the best there is. Very little is known about the game itself, but the fact that it takes place in J.R.R. Tolkien's fabled Middle-Earth is enough to warrant it enough fame.

-- Bob



Diablo II



What Deeper Terror Lies In Wait

