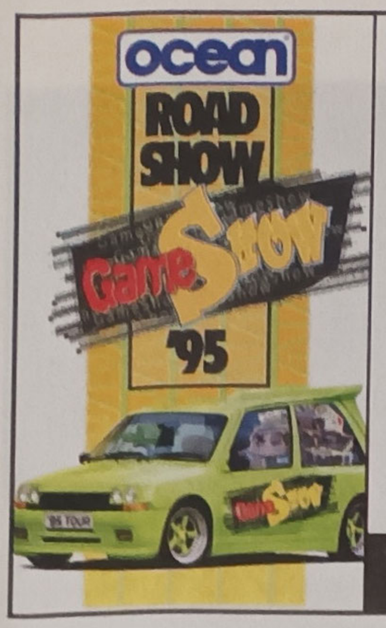


CTW

THE ENTERTAINMENT COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY

Monday February 27th 1995



Sega metamorphosis continues

The 'new era' at Sega continues to unfold, with its lavish Euro HQ being put up for sale and deputy chairman Frank Herman leaving.

CTW can exclusively reveal that Sega House, on the Warwick Road, Earls Court, has been put on the property market. Valued at £7 million, it was bought freehold several years ago — at the height of the video games boom.

A striking building, originally owned by fallen merchant bank BCCI, Sega's arrival there was perfectly in keeping with its onetime swagger and mega-budget marketing.

Now, however, after losing many millions in Europe due to market decline and the strength of the yen, the firm has clearly entered a rather more conservative period.

Managing director Malcolm Miller promised a company more concerned with the bottom line when he arrived at Sega Europe in October. Marketing budgets have since been slashed, and the move out of Sega House is clearly a cost-cutting exercise.

Once a buyer has been found, *CTW* understands that European and UK management will move in with Sega's software development division in Chiswick, set up last year.

Meanwhile, Frank Herman, who first brought Sega into Europe with a distribution deal through his company Mastertronic in late 1986, will retire as deputy chairman on April 30th.

Having been interim managing director between the departure of Nick Alexander last spring and the arrival of Miller, Herman had always stated that he would look to retire this year.

He is not, however, leaving the business. UK developer Probe and ambitious US firm GT Interactive Software have both signed him up as non-executive chairman. After a brief sabbatical, Herman will also return to Sega Europe in the summer as a non-executive director.

Speaking from his holiday retreat in South Africa, Herman told *CTW*: "I've got into the lovely position of being able to poke my nose into someone's else's business, without having to sort everything out if I cause trouble."

GT, meanwhile, will use him to add weight to its sizeable European aspirations. The firm is already the biggest rack-jobber in the US, with exclusive distribution deals into stores such as Walmart and Target.

The firm is taking offices in the Marylebone Road, London and will look to make an immediate impact from spring onwards. Software catalogue already signed up includes all future output from *Doom* creator id and the new consumer software division of coin-op giant Williams.



Sega's £7m HQ is to be sold off, as deputy chairman Frank Herman moves to Probe and GT

"I will be leaving Sega with a certain amount of regret, but time and tide waits for no man. Sega have put some very good people in to run the business in Europe. As CTW said a few months back, things have changed; 'after Sonic comes Knuckles' is the perfect way to sum it all up."

City cash to save Zone?

The precarious position of Future Zone has left its parent firm Rhino looking to the City for extra cash.

A 'rescue rights issue' was announced last week, seeking to raise £3.7 million. Conditional to this, the chain's banks have granted a £6.7 million overdraft.

The move, plus an expected posting of a £2.7 million interim loss, saw Rhino's share price fall a third to just 8p.

CENTRESOFT / U.S. GOLD

"It's deadly out there, and some companies are hurting a lot more than us. They just don't have to go public with it all," CentreGold chairman Geoff Brown told *CTW* last week, as he considered City reaction to the firm's £3.6 million loss in the six months to January 31st. Cart stock and project write-offs were largely the cause. At time of press, shares had dipped from 97p to 48p as a result.

Sensible tied up

Sensible Software has signed an exclusive three year publishing deal with Warner Music's new games division.

Warner Interactive Entertainment, which bought UK publisher Renegade last September and a third of Accolade in January, will have first option on all Sensible products.

The deal comes as a blow to Virgin, which has scored significant success with Sensible's *Cannon Fodder* games in recent years, and still has the rights to spring hopeful *Sensible Golf*.

The multi-million pound contract provides security to Sensible, which has had its products published through a variety of firms over the years.

The WIE team, formerly Renegade, have strong links with the Saffron Walden based developer, through the *Sensible Soccer* series. Three new projects are already under way, including one intriguing title called *Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll*.

BMG advances

Record giant BMG has raided Virgin for its next step into the games business.

Ian Mathias, a cornerstone of Virgin's back-room staff for 10 years, has quit to become product development director at the ambitious new games division.

He joins as BMG continues to find its feet in the industry. Various tie-ups with the likes of Crystal Dynamics, Rocket Science, Ion, GTE, Montparnasse and Telemedia are promised to be just the start of a major distribution onslaught in Europe.

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Discounts take centre stage again

Two key releases this weekend should give the cart market a much-needed boost but, as ever, all eyes are on discounting.

Acclaim's *NBA Jam T.E.* shipped on Thursday (February 23rd), with SNES title *Superstar Soccer* by Konami a day later. The first big video games of the year, both sports titles have been eagerly awaited by public and trade alike.

Indeed, Konami has already taken orders for some 60,000 units. It shipped 30,000 carts last week and expects a further 15,000 to arrive shortly.

Yet, despite this supply shortage and high demand from the consumer, some retailers discounted the £49.99 title from day one. Toys R Us, Dixons and Future Zone began the weekend selling at full price. Our Price, HMV and Game, however, rolled out the game at £37.99, with Virgin selling it at £39.99, causing many others in the trade to react angrily.

"It is the policy at Future Zone not to discount new releases, except when market forces dictate that we have to," Future Zone boss Tony Pickup told *CTW*.

"*Superstar Soccer* is in short supply so there really is no reason for anyone to sell it at less than the full price. There is one irresponsible retailer in the marketplace, but we will not react to the discounting unless everyone else does. After all, we sold more copies of *FIFA '95* than anyone else and we were selling it at a higher price."

Although Acclaim has a policy of not setting RRPs for its products, the 'official' price of the SNES version of *NBA Jam T.E.* was expected to be around £65. But like Konami's release, High Street prices were slashed from the start, with both Our Price and HMV selling the title at £49.99.

Our Price said its moves were "in line with pricing policy". No one at HMV was available for comment.



SUPERSTAR SOCCER: Street price ranging from £37.99 to £49.99

ROADSHOW GAMESHOW ROADSHOW OXFORD ROADSHOW MAIDSTONE ROADSHOW LIVERPOOL ROADSHOW GAMESHOW ROADSHOW GAMESHOW LEEDS GAMESHOW BRISTOL ROADSHOW GLASGOW ROADSHOW GAMESHOW ROADSHOW BIRMINGHAM ROADSHOW


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CTW

The Entertainment Computer Trade Weekly

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NEWS

3DO gains ground with Future Zone

Future Zone has given the green light to 3DO software, and is on the verge of a deal with Goldstar.

All 112 Future Zone stores will carry a minimum of 20 titles from mid-March. *CTW* understands that Goldstar expects to get the hardware nod ahead of rival 3DO manufacturer Panasonic. Its £399 multiplayer is launched at ECTS Spring next month, with stock due to arrive by May at the latest.

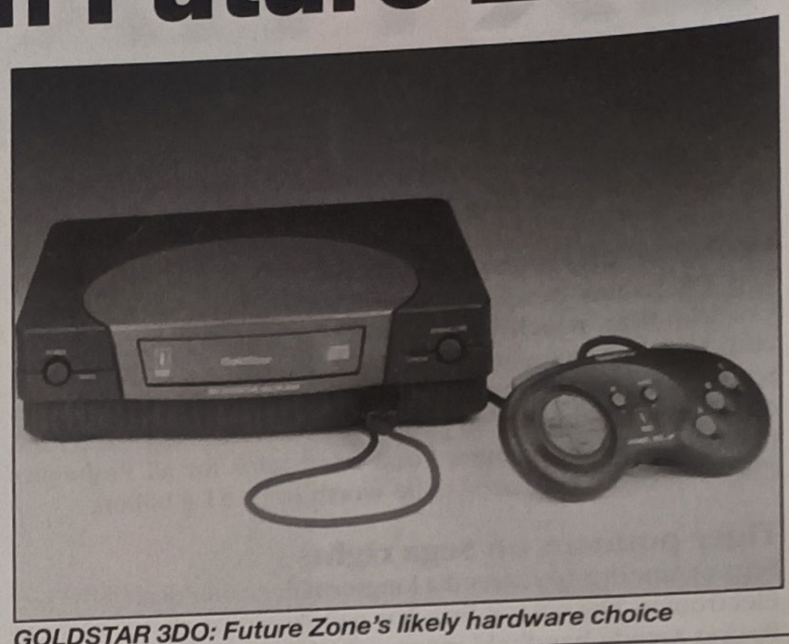
Future Zone will join Game, HMV and Virgin as the chains supporting 3DO in the UK. Although the installed base is only around 20,000 units, sales through these outlets, plus numerous independents, have outstripped initial forecasts.

"We feel the time's right to introduce 3DO. We've been tracking its performance for some time and it's now reached a level where it's feasible for us to enter the market," Future Zone managing director Tony Pickup told *CTW*.

3DO Europe was quick to welcome the chain's move. "We're delighted. Future Zone's decision marks a new stage of growth at an exciting time for 3DO," director John Edelson told *CTW*.

"The Goldstar machine arrives soon, we're about to see our 50th software release in Europe and Paragon's *3DO Magazine* goes from strength to strength. 3DO is clearly a growth market and one that other platforms will have to chase from behind."

● Former US Gold marketing supremo Andrew Chorzelski has joined Goldstar to help it through the 3DO machine's launch period.



GOLDSTAR 3DO: Future Zone's likely hardware choice

Home win for computer market

At least one in seven households now owns a computer, with some 3,000 a day making a purchase during 1994.

According to market research firm GfK Marketing Services, 3.3 million households in the UK owned a computer by the end of September last year, with a total of 1,191,000 purchasing a machine in the previous 12 months.

GfK's quarterly *Computers In The Home* survey also shows that an increasing proportion of the new machines bought for home use are multimedia models. These accounted for 32 per cent of sales in the six months to September.

The report shows that home computer purchases are split three ways — a third are bought from High Street multiples and department stores and a third are brought from specialist computer retailers or direct from the manufacturer. However a large proportion, some 32 per cent, are second-hand machines.

Nearly half of the machines (43 per cent) were not the first computers to be bought by the household — 26 per cent of purchases were described as replacements, and 17 per cent as additional machines.

"We're witnessing the birth of a potentially vast market," said Martin New, GfK's IT specialist.

"Mainstream computer manufacturers have realised the potential of the home market for PCs and are actively targeting it through substantial press, TV and radio advertising, and by creating home computer 'packages', including multimedia options, that create a different kind of product from the normal office PC."

Emap completes its dismal set of ABCs

Life didn't get much easier for Emap last week, as it announced two more poor ABCs.

Following last week's news of drops of at least a fifth across *NMS, Sega Mean Machines, The One Amiga, C&VG* and *CU Amiga*, the official *Sega Magazine* has dropped by a similar factor — down 23 per cent to 42,037.

Although not published yet, Future is making noises that it expects its *Sega Power* to now over-take *Sega Magazine* and become the second largest Sega title, behind *Mean Machines*.

On the PC side, meanwhile, the news is even worse. In a sector that has seen many titles posting useful rises lately, *PC Review* has seen July to December sales fall by 12 per cent to a new monthly average of 40,219.

Emap attributes this to the title's late move into the CD-ROM market. *PC Review* didn't start start publishing a standalone cover-mounted CD edition until the turn of the year.

Dixons on Jaguar hit list

Atari is looking to widen its Jaguar network, and is in talks with five major High Street chains.

Until now Rumbelows has been the only chain to stock the console hardware, but its closure, as well as the full availability of European stocks, has led Atari to negotiations with Dixons, Toys R Us, Comet, Argos and Currys.

"Ideally we would like to sign up all five," Darryl Still, Atari's marketing manager told *CTW*. "The wider the distribution, the better it is for the product. We are still looking for a major push through the independent retail sector. They will have an advantage with the Jaguar this Christmas as it will be the only super console on the market at a mass market price."

Although Rumbelows has been selling the Jaguar console for as little as £90, Still believes that it will have a positive effect on the market. "Suddenly, there are a whole lot of new Jaguar users who can't buy the software at Rumbelows," he claimed. "Independents can pick up on these additional sales."

Network targets 50

Network Computing Buying Group begins a major recruitment drive next month, with plans to have up to 50 members by the end of the year.

Established just four months ago, the buying group is affiliated to trade body NASCR and now has 20 members representing over 30 outlets. The group was set up to give independents an equal footing with the multiples on the High Street and currently has two 'preferred suppliers' in Frontline and Gem.

Will Copeland of One Step Beyond in Norwich has been working hard with fellow Network directors to make sure that the group is now ready to grow. Next month's ECTS will be the springboard for the recruitment drive.

ECTS Awards gather momentum

Votes are streaming in for the ECTS Awards, set to take place in a month's time.

The biggest and most prestigious game awards event in Europe, it takes place at the Kensington Roof Gardens on the evening of Sunday March 26th.

Nine categories are being voted on directly by the industry, through forms published in *CTW* over the past few weeks, or by faxing organiser Blenheim Online directly.

As well as these nine categories, which include the *CTW*-sponsored Marketing Award, there are Game of the Year presentations being made by consumer magazines in Germany (*Power Play*), Italy (*Game Power*), France (*Joystick*), Spain (*Micro Mania*), Scandinavia (*High Score*) and Holland (*Power Unlimited*).

There will also be special awards from Japanese title *Log In* and US publishing icon *Wired*.

An impressive link-up with leading BBC children's show *Live & Kicking* means there will also be an award voted by TV viewers. The 'best game' nominations here are *FIFA '95, DKC, MKII, Tie Fighter, Magic Carpet, Sensible World Of Soccer, Cannon Fodder, Lion King, Sonic & Knuckles* and *Micro Machines*.

"After six years, the ECTS Awards are now respected as the most prestigious prizes in the industry," commented ECTS marketing manager Minnie McBride.

"This is not only for the quality of the voting, but also for the quality of consumer audience they deliver for the industry."

DIRECT VOTING CATEGORIES

The following nine ECTS awards will be voted on by the readers of CTW. Anyone who wants to place their votes simply has to fax them to the Awards Hotline on +181 747 3856:

Developer of the Year
***CTW* Marketing Award**
Software Publisher of the Year
Innovation Award
Edutainment/Reference Product of the Year
Video Game of the Year
Hardware Award
Most Original New Title

For further information about the ECTS Awards, or to order tickets for the Kensington Roof Gardens presentation night, call Blenheim Online on +181 742 2828.



NEWS

EXTRA

Key Virgin man joins Williams

Justin Heber, Virgin Interactive Entertainment's US senior vice president for the past four years, has joined Williams Entertainment — the home publishing division of coin-op giant WMS Industries. He has taken the role of vice president of business development.

Probe re-christens itself

Top UK games developer Probe has changed its name. The Croydon firm, which works for the likes of Acclaim, EA, Sega, 20th Century Fox and Warner Bros, has switched from Probe Software to Probe Entertainment. For the record, the 10 year-old firm now employs 86 people (at an average age of 27) and has produced 400 games. Total retail sales for all Probe-produced titles are estimated to be worth some $1.4 billion.

Tiger pounces on Sega rights

Sega of America has agreed a longterm licensing deal with Tiger Electronics. The US toy firm has gained global rights to Sega's Pocket Arcade handheld range, which will be expanded, plus sundry software licences for its own low-cost LCD games. The firm will also independently create toys under the Sega brand.

Marketing men too slow on multimedia

European marketers had better wise up to multimedia technology very quickly, claims a new report, or they're likely to get left behind by the rest of the world. Management consultant Coopers & Lybrand commissioned MORI to survey European business leaders. The findings show that while 80 per cent expect multimedia applications and superhighway communications to benefit their businesses, 70 per cent fear Europe has no co-ordinated approach.

Sony profits up, despite movie troubles

Despite the continuing problems with its motion picture business, Sony managed to post a moderate increase of 4.8 per cent in its third quarter pre-tax profits to Y59.2bn ($600m) for the three months to December 31st. Sales of TVs, lithium batteries and the PlayStation console were reported as contributing to the firm's overall performance.

Lottery blamed for slack retail growth

More gloomy reports on the High Street...According to the latest figures from the Central Statistical Office spending is growing at its slowest rate since the economic 'recovery' got underway in early 1992. Sales volume in the three months to January was only 0.1 per cent higher than in the preceding three months, which led to the Treasury admitting that growth has 'clearly slackened'. The National Lottery has been blamed for taking 2.26 per cent of sales in each week of January, while the Kobe earthquake and the floods in Holland, Germany and France reduced the number of overseas visitors to London for the January sales.

PorchLight glows with first acquisition

Recently formed US entertainment firm PorchLight Entertainment (*CTW February 20th*) has snapped up the rights to William J. Bennett's *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories*, which has been on the *New York Times* best seller list for over 60 weeks. It is now in its 34th printing and has sold over two million hardback copies since its publication in November 1993. PorchLight will initially produce an animated TV series, but plans other products, including video and interactive titles.

New sticks Add-up for Zye

Zye Technology has extended its Add-up range of accessories with three new joysticks. Turbo Power is a game pad featuring a direction control, A and B buttons, plus turbo buttons for rapid firing. Designed for use with games such as *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter*, it retails at £19.99. The Quick Action joypad features a pressure sensitive trigger button, additional weapons control button, turbo fire switch and trim controls at a retail price of £19.99. Top of the range if the True Fire, with a retail price of £29.99.

Product Info: Call Zye Technology on 01293 538666.

CD overtakes floppy at Gem

Further proof of the growing CD market comes as distributor Gem announced that in November, for the first time ever, CD-based software accounted for more than half of its PC business — 53 per cent in total. "It's been on the cards for some time, but I still see it as a significant moment when CD finally overtakes floppy in a trend that can only continue apace in 1995," said managing director Paul Donnelly.

Ocean bites into Burger King

Ocean has tied up Burger King in a month-long cross promotion for six of its console titles.

All 325 Burger King outlets will participate in the special offer, which runs from mid-March to mid-April — giving the firm access to an estimated 15 million people.

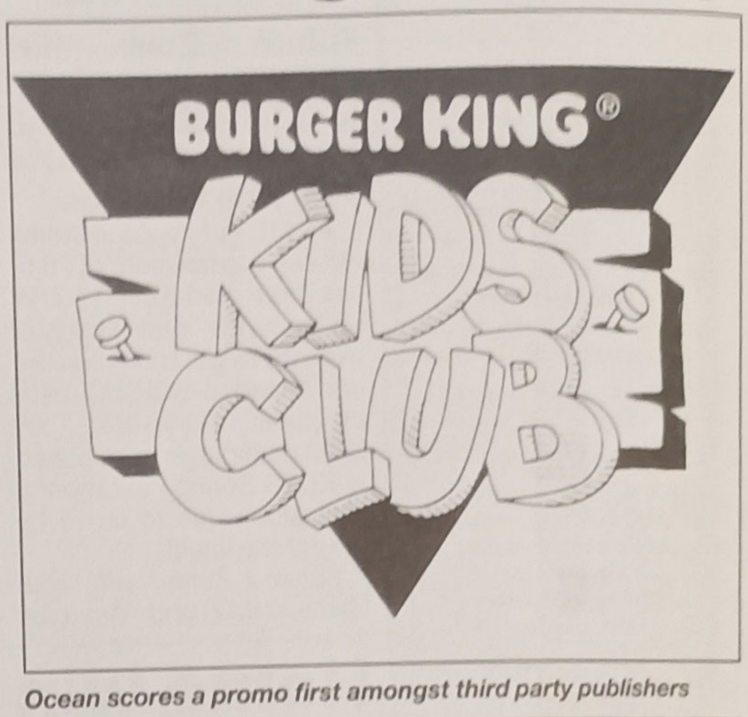
Consumers buying a Burger King Kids Meal will receive one of four slider cards featuring either *The Flintstones, Addams Family Values, Manchester United Super Soccer or Jelly Boy. Pocky 'N' Rocky II* and *Putty Squad* are also featured in the promotion.

Also available in store will be free copies of the firm's in-house consumer games mag *Ocean Power.*

Burger King will support the venture with window displays and POS material.

Ocean is also weighing in with PR targeted at youth media titles *Smash Hits* and *Shoot*, plus specialist press ads.

"This promotion achieves a powerful presence for us in-store at Burger King. Reaching an estimated 12-15 million customers will give Ocean's consumer brand recognition a huge boost in the run up to Easter," offered Simon Alty, marketing manager at Ocean.



Ocean scores a promo first amongst third party publishers

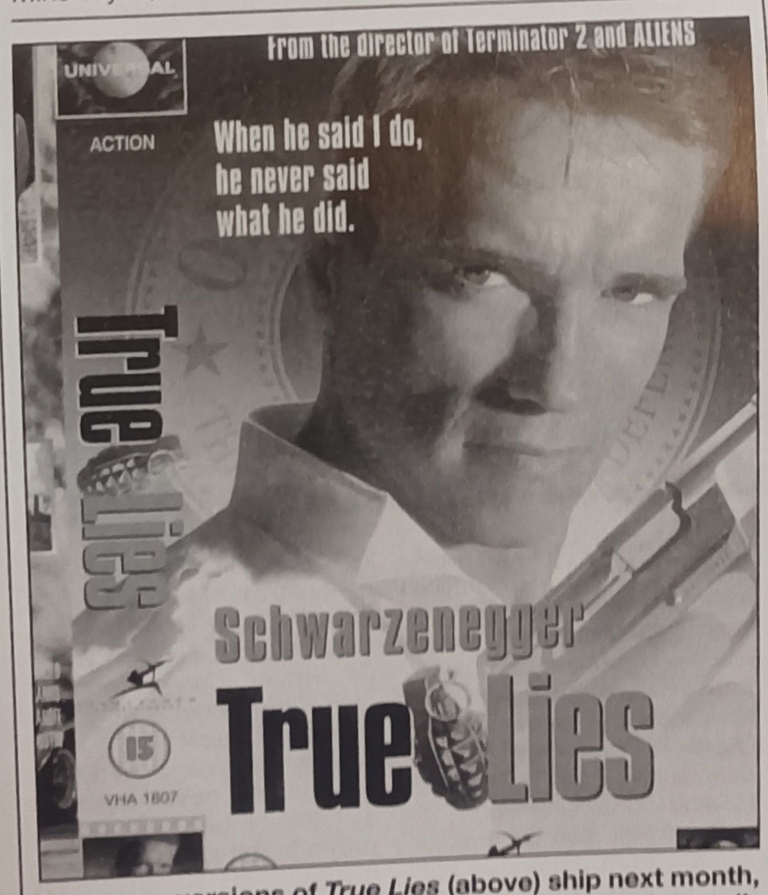
TRU warns suppliers

Toy giant Toys R Us is strongly encouraging its suppliers to shift to on-line trading — or face an additional admin charge.

Toys R Us set up its EDI (electronic data interchange) system over two years ago and so far some 240 suppliers have logged-on, taking orders from the toy giant electronically. At the beginning of '94 the firm told its vendors that by February 28th this year, it wanted as many as possible to have the EDI system up and running.

"EDI provides a more effective means of passing information, both for ourselves and our suppliers," Mike Taylor, director of distribution, told *CTW*. "As well as making orders, in the future we expect to do invoicing, make electronic fund transfer payments for those invoices, etc. It has a big future."

Taylor claimed that over 50 per cent of its suppliers had already introduced the EDI system, but was adamant that those who hadn't wouldn't be blacklisted by the chain. "There are huge benefits for ourselves and our vendors by using the system," he said. "But there will be those who won't or can't invest in it. I can't see us stopping trading with those people, although I can foresee that in a number of years we will possibly have to make a charge for extra administration costs."



The game versions of *True Lies* (above) ship next month, just a few weeks after the blockbuster movie's sell-through video release. The SNES version is set for March 10th, with Mega Drive and Gameboy SKUs following on March 24th. According to Acclaim, gamers can expect 'bigger than life action, coupled with ground-breaking special effects and edge of your seat excitement'. Phew.

More budget from VCI

VCI has stepped up its attack on the PC budget sector with a new CD-ROM brand.

The firm has already made an impact with Premier Collection, a 34-strong range of £9.99 PC titles launched last June. It achieved a 15.4 per cent share of the budget sector pre-Christmas.

Badged as VCI Software, rather than Premier Collection, the new CD-ROM range will carry games priced at £14.99.

A collection of clip art, fonts, backgrounds and kids educational titles, the first seven releases arrive next month.

VCI already has distribution through the likes of WH Smith, Virgin, Future Zone, Game, Debenhams, Office One, Boots, Nurdin and Peacock and PC World.

Multimedia PCs go Aiwa

Another brown goods firm has moved into the multimedia market, with plans for a complete range, including PCs, by the beginning of next year.

Primarily an audio and video manufacturer in Europe, Aiwa has just launched the ACD300 twin speed CD-ROM drive with a retail price of £249, as well as the SCC55 multimedia speakers at £49. And more is to come later in the year.

The firm will be establishing a dedicated multimedia and communications division to handle these products and will be gearing up to the key selling period in the autumn when a full range of peripherals, CD-ROM drives and possibly PCs and multimedia PCs will be available.

"Aiwa is best known in Europe as being an audio and video firm," said Patrick Chambers, group product manager. "But in Japan we have a communications division which has the number one brand for faxes and modems. This move into multimedia is a natural route for expansion for us."

JVC COMPETITION

Another Mega giveaway

JVC's new Mega CD releases, *Dungeon Master II* and *Keio Flying Squadron*, have just shipped and to celebrate the firm has helped *CTW* put together yet another excellent retailer competition.

First prize is five copies of each game plus a sweatshirt and dealer POS pack. Five runners up will each receive a copy of both games, a sweatshirt and a dealer pack.

To win simply fax the answer to the question below to us on 01462 442489.

What football club does JVC sponsor?
A. Arsenal
B. Vaguely Athletic
C. Northern Town



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NEWS

EXTRA

Perry declares his independence

Dave Perry, Paragon star man and games TV stalwart, is certainly unstoppable when it comes to self-publicity — as the recent six-page feature on 'the software superhero' in *The Independent*'s colour supplement proves. He claims he's always wanted to be famous and is keen to throw off the nerdy game-player image. "I don't want to be Brains from *Thunderbirds*," he says. "I have tattoos on my arms. I'm fit. I work out. I play sports. I might be an extrovert, I might be a bit of a character — but I am not a geek." The relentlessness of this chap knows no bounds, and *CTW*'s very own 'We love Dave Perry' campaign starts here. For a factsheet and free bandana phone 01462 442472.

Half price games at Dixons

The software sales continue at Dixons, with games being advertised at up to 50 per cent slashed from RRPs. Highlights of the latest 'Dixons Deal' are *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* for the Mega Drive at £29.99, while the CD-ROM title *Hell* is being promoted at £19.99 and *Vortex* on SNES at £29.99.

Amstrad cuts PC prices...

Amstrad Direct has announced price cuts on three of its PCs. The Powerpack PC9486, which includes an Intel 486SX2 50 MHz processor, 4Mb RAM and 270Mb hard disk drive now retails at £649 plus VAT and includes *Windows 3.11* and *PFS: Windows Works*. The PC9486 Multimedia Pack features the same specification as the Powerpack, as well as a double-speed CD-ROM drive, 16-bit stereo sound card, twin amplifier speakers and a range of entertainment and educational software. Retail price is now £799 plus VAT. Finally, the PC9486 Business Pack, which also retails at £799 plus VAT, includes *Microsoft Windows, Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows* and *Lotus AmiPro for Windows*.

...and so does Elonex

Elonex has also dropped the prices of some of PC bundles. Its entry level Pentium PC, the PC-560M/1 now sells for £975 plus VAT, while a new Pentium computer, the PC-575M/I has been launched at £1,195 plus VAT. Meanwhile models using 486SX-25, 486SX-33 and 486DX-33 processors have been superseded by a new entry level computer, the PC-450XM/I. Priced at £795 plus VAT.

Product Info: Call Elonex on 0181 452 4444.

All change at Millennium?

Millennium's days as an independent games publisher may be coming to an end.

Like many other UK games outfits, the seven year-old Cambridge firm is currently considering how to safeguard its future in an increasingly globalised, capital-intensive business.

The firm refused to comment on what those options were, although some kind of cash-for-equity deal or long-term licensing arrangement with a third party looks likely.

For the moment, Millennium insists that it is 'business as usual', with a trio of titles — *Pinky* (CD32), *Extractors* (CD-ROM) and *Master Axe* (Amiga) — all due out at the end of this week.

The firm did concede, however, that its hotly tipped CD-ROM and super console title *Incoming* — due later in the year — is unlikely to be published without a partner of some sort.

Millennium moved into publishing two years ago, following successful co-publishing deals with the likes of EA, Mirrorsoft and US Gold. Since then the firm has doubled its development staff from 23 to just under 50.

THQ takes more EA

THQ has signed up more Electronic Arts licences, including *FIFA '96* on Gameboy.

This is THQ's third rights deal with EA, and features the likes of *Madden '96* and *NHL Hockey '96* as well as the soccer blockbuster.

THQ already has Gameboy rights to the original *FIFA Soccer*, which is set for release on March 24th.

Other EA titles in the can include *Urban Strike, PGA European Tour* and *PGA Tour III* on SNES.

Fraud journo caught

A conman posing as a journalist has been imprisoned for 'obtaining property by deception', thanks to MicroProse.

Mr J. Skullard managed to collect PC equipment as well as business and leisure software from a number of firms, until he came a cropper after contacting MicroProse.

The firm were able to provide the police with details of exactly what software had been sent to Mr Skullard. He was convicted on six counts of obtaining property by deception and on two counts of forgery. He pleaded guilty to all counts and was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.

SDL backs Amiga

Distributor SDL is continuing to back the Amiga, adding two new peripherals to its Amitek range.

Launched this week are an internal replacement floppy disk, called Loader 500, and an external modulator, the Mamba.

The Loader 500 is a 3.5 inch drive with a 1-Meg unformatted capacity (80K formatted). RRP is £39 inc VAT and it's backed by a two year warranty.

The Mamba is designed to produce a high quality display on any domestic TV and monitor. It also apparently allows end users to connect an Amiga to a VCR with a direct video input. This lets users record Amiga sounds and graphics to video tape. Price is £34 including VAT and it carries a two year warranty.

Stokes back on Target

After 12 years in the industry, Colin Stokes has set up his own sales firm.

Stokes left Gremlin last month after working his notice to move on to Rage as sales and marketing director. However, with Rage changing its mind over a move into publishing, Stokes was left with no job to take up.

His new firm, Target, has already secured a 12 month sales and marketing contract with Newcastle publisher Microvalue Flair. The deal has, in effect, made Stokes sales and marketing director of the firm.

"We are delighted to have retained the services of Stokes, for whom we have the highest regard and who has been at the top of our company recruitment hit list for some time," said MF's joint managing director James Neffendorf.

Third parties plug Jag gap

Jaguar software from third party publishers finally arrives this week.

Scheduled to hit the UK today (Monday February 27th) is VIE's *Cannon Fodder*, with *Syndicate* and *Theme Park* from Ocean plus *Sensible Soccer, Troy Aikman's Football* and *Double Dragon V* from Telegames following next month.

Hailed by Atari as another important step in the expansion of the Jaguar software library, the titles should go some way to appeasing retailers critical of the lack of titles currently available.

Atari has so far provided all software itself, publishing 18 games to date, with three more carts plus six CDs scheduled to arrive over the next two months.

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MEDIA

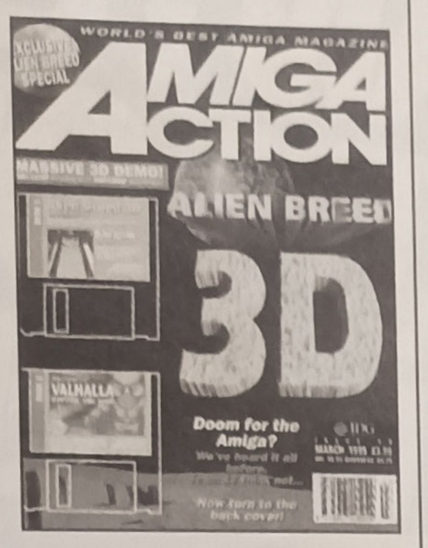
MAGAZINE FILE

by Lisa Foster

As ever, *CTW* throws open the pages of this week's specialist mags, giving you the low-down on the latest news, reviews, gossip and features...

Amiga Action
IDG Media
Sector: Amiga
ABC: 40,129
100 pages, £3.99

Apart from the very dodgy intro to the review of *Kingpin*, *AA* this month looks at the golden opportunities from the silver screen that the games firms have missed, such as *Rain Man* and *Zulu*. Alan Bunker, Team 17's PR man writes about his company's forthcoming title *Alien Breed 3D* and the 'Get A Life' feature encourages readers to broaden their horizons. Competition to win a CD32, player's guides to *Dreamweb* and *Theme Park* and plenty of previews.



Highest Score:
Guardian (A1200)/ Theme Park (CD32) 92%
Lowest Score:
Rocketz (A1200) 63%

NMS
Emap Images
Sector: Nintendo
ABC: 55,569
100 pages, £2.45

This month the mag includes an Acclaim-sponsored pull-out on *NBA Jam T.E.* and *NFL Quarterback Club*. Elsewhere, the mag provides an in-depth analysis of *Virtual Boy*, a feature on *Starwing II* and a look at *Super Street Fighter II — The Animated Movie*. Previews include *Addams Family Values*, *Air Cavalry* and *X-Men*, while In Progress reports cover *The Firemen*, *Jungle Strike*, *Whizz*, and *Warlock*. Player's guides to *Animaniacs*, *Syndicate* and *Killer Instinct*.



Highest Score:
Goeman 3 (SNES)/ Wonder Project (SNES) 91%
Lowest Score:
BC Kid 2 (Gameboy) 56%

GamesMaster
Future Publishing
Sector: All formats
ABC: 65,527
100 pages, £2.25

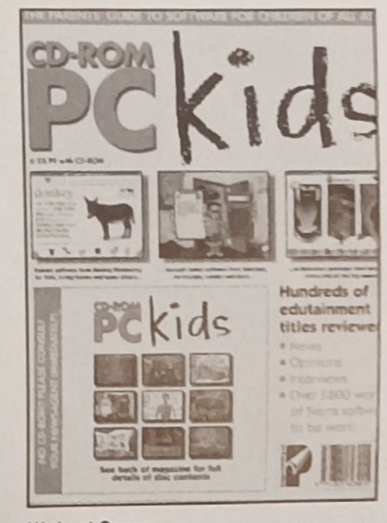
There's a Judge Dredd frenzy this month, with cover image, plus a major feature on the phenomenon. *GM* has introduced a new regular column this issue — Shiny Entertainment's Dave Perry will write each month about *Earthworm Jim*, as well as giving snippets on *EJ2* (how much is there to say?). As well as a bluffer's guide to the Internet, there are previews of *Air Cavalry*, *Dirt Racer SFX*, *Descent* and more, plus various player's guides.



Highest Score:
Return Fire (3DO) 94%
Lowest Score:
Skeleton Krew (Amiga) 71%

PC Kids
Paragon Publishing
Sector: PC, CD-ROM
ABC: N/A
68 pages, £4.99

Paragon's newest launch looks set to serve the growing edutainment market, providing an easy-to-read mag for both parents and children. This first issue looks at what products are currently available for kids and tots, plus info on the latest reference and entertainment software. There's a feature explaining the basics of the multimedia PC, as well as a look at how computers are used in schools and there's also useful advice on buying educational software.



Highest Score:
Various ★★★★★
Lowest Score:
Second Steps (PC) ★

SCAN...

PC Magazine sees sales rise
Ziff-Davis has just posted a respectable 1994 ABC figure for *PC Magazine*. During the period from January to December 1994, the circulation increased 10.8 per cent on the previous year to 105,293. The firm also claims that subscriptions rose 71 per cent to 59,691 after an intensive marketing push. However, news trade sales and overseas sales fell slightly.

Future claims best leisure mag with PC Format
Future's *PC Format* is claiming the best ABC figure in the PC leisure market. Its latest circulation figure for the July-December '94 period saw sales rise by 23 per cent to 92,387.

Rage on the Internet
A new music and lifestyle magazine will be launched next month on the Internet, featuring video footage and interactive editorial and advertising features. Readers will be able to download sections of *Rage*, and there are also plans for electronic shopping and a 24-hour real-time letters page. *Rage* will be a monthly publication, although some sections will be updated daily or weekly. It will be distributed on CompuServe, the Cerberus on-line music jukebox service and the Internet Underground Music Archive.

ON AIR...

Week ending February 18th 1995

Most TV & radio review mentions:

Hardware: SNES	9
Software: *Wario Blast*	7

Total TV & radio review mentions (All games products):

This week: 131 Last week: 110

Comment
The launch of Nintendo's *Wario Blast* has received a fair amount of coverage, featuring in both reviews and competitions.

Missed It?
Visions of Heaven and Hell (Channel 4, February 14th) was the last of a short series of programmes about the effects of technology on society. The question is put as to how developments such as Virtual Reality and the Internet will shape our future society.

Supplied by Media Research. All broadcast games coverage is available for purchase.
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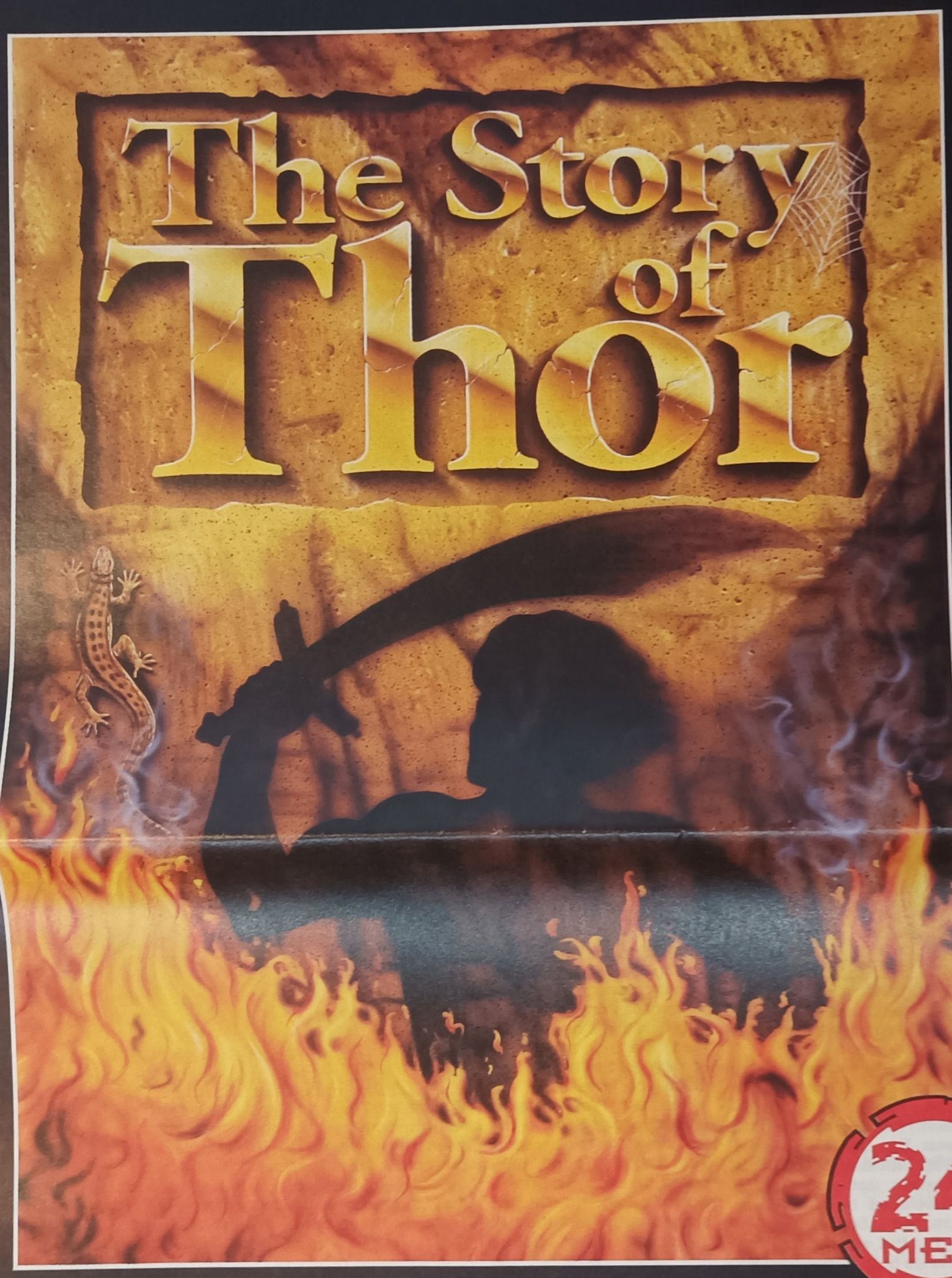
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Future PUBLISHING

"This is One Hell of a Game"

Mean Machines (March)



93% Sega Power (April)

93% Mean Machines (March)

90% Sega Mag (March)

90% Sega Pro (April)

SEGA

MEGA DRIVE

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MARKET RESEARCH: GALLUP GAMES REPORT

THE MOST IMPORTANT MONTH OF ALL

So what really happened during Christmas '94, and what can it tell us about trends in the market. For the full picture, call ELSPA on 01386 830642 and order a copy of Gallup's December report. Otherwise, you'll have to make do with *CTW*'s exclusive highlights and analysis...

SOFTWARE SALES BY FORMAT

Total Market (Value)

Market Sector	Dec '94	Nov '94	Oct '94	Sep '94	Dec '93
Cartridge	75.1	76.1	73.2	67.6	78.8
Home Computer	15.3	14.7	17.5	23.6	17.7
Compact Disc	9.6	9.2	9.2	8.8	2.6

Source: Gallup/ELSPA

In the end it was, of course, another cart Christmas. It wasn't the best, but neither will it be the last.

The figure of 75.1 does back up many people's view that the 16-bit cartridge market has been written off too completely, too quickly.

But even the staunchest optimist would concede that the dip of only a few per cent from Christmas '93 does rather mask some very real problems in the sector.

For a start the sales were concentrated more than ever into not just the top ten or even five but into two outstanding titles, *FIFA Soccer '95* on the Mega Drive from Electronic Arts and *Donkey Kong Country* on the SNES from Nintendo.

FIFA was the overall best seller in the Cartridge Chartalk Top 100. *Donkey Kong Country* was only 5,000 sales behind, but the third place game, Virgin's *Lion King* (on Mega Drive, SNES, Master System and Game Gear) sold less than half of *DKC*'s total.

Between them *FIFA* and *DKC* accounted for 36 per cent of sales achieved by the Chartalk Top 20, and anything below the Top 20 failed to sell more than 10,000 units in the month.

That old tosh about a fine line between success and failure would appear to be extremely wide of the mark. There is, in fact, a country mile between the two imposters in this market.

It's also worth noting that the rise of the cart figure back to something like past glories came right at the end of the year, fuelled by once-a-year purchasers and non-console owning gift buyers opting for the most obvious choice, *FIFA* or *DKC*.

Tracing the cartridge share back to September '94 sees a dip of nearly 10 per cent, giving an idea of how tough the market is away from Christmas time.

The compact disc share has grown by more than 350 per cent since December '93. This is almost entirely due to the relentless rise of CD-ROM but a reasonable performance from CD-i is also worth a mention. Just about.

MARKET SHARE BY PUBLISHER GROUP

Total Market (Value)

Company	Dec '94	Dec '93
Virgin	16.9	6.3
Nintendo	14.6	12.6
Sega	14.1	18.3
Electronic Arts	13.0	12.3
Acclaim	6.0	7.5
US Gold	3.4	4.2
Codemasters	3.4	1.4
Ocean	3.4	6.1
Sony Electronic Publishing	2.2	2.9
Mindscape	1.7	1.5
Gametek	1.3	1.3
Time Warner Interactive	1.2	—
Domark	1.2	2.1
Konami	1.1	2.1

Source: Gallup/ELSPA

Part of this table was, quite rightly, catapulted straight onto *CTW*'s front page recently as it highlights a quite remarkable performance from Virgin Interactive Entertainment.

It has more than doubled its share of the value of the total games market, taking 16.9 per cent of all money spent on games in December and leaping ahead of Sega and Nintendo.

In 1993 it was well adrift of both companies and Electronic Arts. It was only just keeping in touch with Acclaim and only slightly ahead of Ocean.

Now it can proudly claim that it left all third party publishers (apart from EA) well behind in the Christmas sales scramble.

There are a number of key factors behind this meteoric rise. Firstly, it's probably worth pointing out that this year *The Lion King*'s sales were attributed to Virgin whereas last year, *Aladdin* (developed by Virgin) was credited to Sega.

But this was not a performance built on one product. Virgin had six products in the Cartridge Top 20 (*The Lion King, Earthworm Jim, Jungle Book, Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker, Cool Spot* and *Robocop Vs Terminator*), six in the Home Computer Top 20 (*Sensible World of Soccer, Cannon Fodder 2, Mortal Kombat, Doom 2, Cannon Fodder* and *TIE Fighter*) and four in the CD Top 20 (*Doom 2, NASCAR, Creature Shock* and *X-Wing*).

This is down to Virgin's own in-house development, to its relationships with key third parties such as Shiny and Sensible, to its management for establishing those relationships and for maintaining close ties with Disney and to a marketing team that had to keep all those plates spinning rather than pile lorry loads of cash into one title.

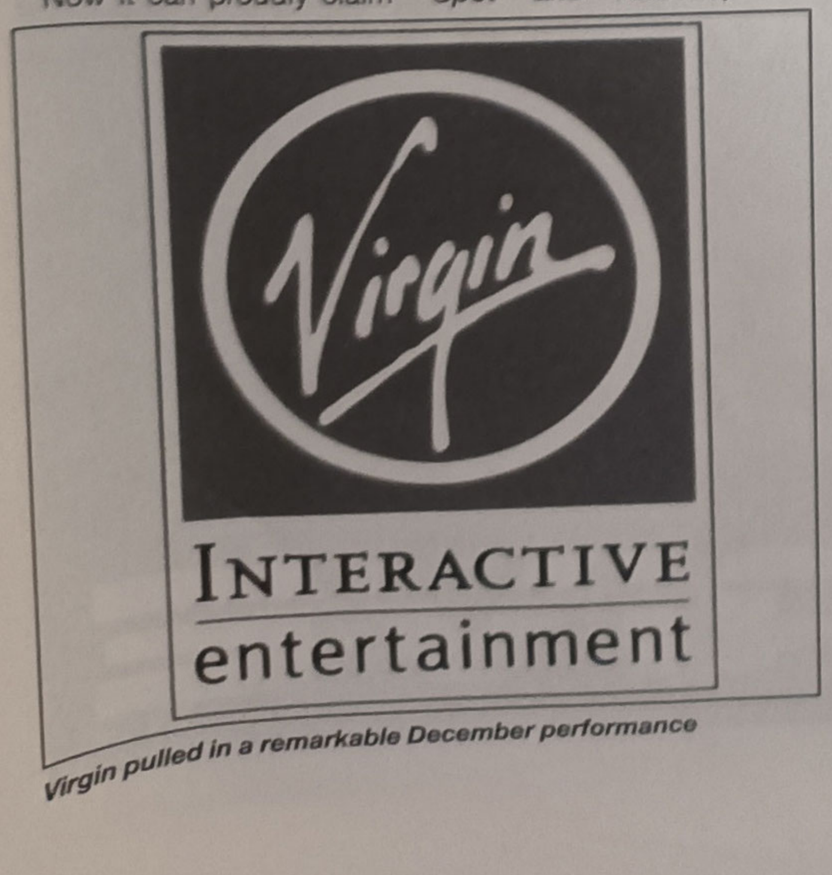
OK, so this is beginning to read like an acceptance speech, but what the hell. Good work fellas.

The rest: Well, Nintendo crept ahead of Sega for the first time, for two reasons. The first is a huge, hairy gorilla, the second is *Donkey Kong Country*. No, OK, the second is the fact that, as mentioned earlier, Sega's '93 share included the Virgin-developed *Aladdin*, '94's total does not include *The Lion King*.

Electronic Arts confirms its position as the most consistent publisher of quality interactive entertainment across all market sectors while Acclaim slips a bit, although its overall final quarter share will probably be higher as *MKII* was a star throughout October, November and December rather than just the final month.

Codemasters grabs an honourable mention for *Micro Machines 2*, lifting its share from 1.4 to 3.4 and putting the name of this steadfastly independent and privately owned UK company in amongst the big boys.

Ocean's share just about halved from 1993's *Jurassic Park*-inspired 6.1 while Sony Electronic Publishing remains stuck on 2.2 and still hasn't made any significant impact on software publishing in Europe.



Virgin pulled in a remarkable December performance

MARKET SHARE BY PUBLISHER GROUP

Compact Disc Market (Value)

Company	Dec '94	Dec '93
Electronic Arts	19.1	1.6
Philips	10.5	0.9
Virgin	9.4	1.2
Sega	8.9	36.4
US Gold	6.7	10.9
Microsoft	5.0	—
Mindscape	4.7	8.5
Time Warner Interactive	3.4	—
Ocean	3.3	-
MicroProse	2.4	0.6
Psygnosis	2.2	-
Sony Electronic Publishing	2.0	4.1
Gametek	1.9	0.6
Interplay	1.9	0.7
Sierra On Line	1.6	0.6
Marubeni	1.4	—
Dorling Kindersley	1.3	—
Core Design	1.2	11.1
Grandslam	1.2	—

Source: Gallup/ELSPA



EA biggest CD brand, Magic Carpet biggest CD hit

About 18 months ago, EA announced that it was abandoning floppy and turning its attention to CD publishing.

This is the result: a 19.1 per cent market share (up from just 1.6 in Dec '93) and a market-leading position.

Its success was built on the performances of *FIFA, Magic Carpet, Theme Park* and *Wing Commander 3*, mainly on CD-ROM but with a sprinkling of Mega CD and even 3DO. Every little helps.

Philips' 10.5 per cent is explained by the fact that it published every single CD-i hit of 1994 itself.

Virgin's growth from 1.2 is just another part of its annus superbus, while Sega's slump from 36.4 to 8.9 is a reflection of the fortunes of Mega CD.

The demise of that format is also illustrated by the fact that Core (the most prolific and successful independent Mega CD publisher) saw its share fall from 11.1 to just 1.2.

Time Warner Interactive's 3.4 comes from *Rise of the Robots* (CD-ROM and CD32) being the best-selling CD game in December — a bright spot for a game which has otherwise had a pretty torrid time in the hands of reviewers.

SOFTWARE SALES BY FORMAT

Cartridge Market (Value)

Format	Dec '94	Nov '94	Oct '94	Sep '94	Dec '93
Mega Drive	47.9	51.7	45.7	45.3	41.9
SNES	30.5	28.7	27.9	31.4	25.7
Gameboy	8.6	7.7	8.6	9.5	13.4
Master System	5.8	5.5	7.8	5.3	6.4
Game Gear	4.6	4.1	5.7	5.1	5.9
NES	1.5	2.3	4.2	3.3	6.5

Source: Gallup/ELSPA

Sales of SNES and Mega Drive software may have been down year-on-year, but both formats increased their share of the market as the other four contenders seemed to drop out of the race.

In the case of the NES, Master System and possibly even Game Gear this was, to a certain extent, in the script, but the Gameboy's share slumping from 13.4 in December '93 to just 8.6 last year is surely a case of Nintendo fluffing its lines.

Indeed, the firm admitted to *CTW* just last week that its high hopes for Gameboy in 1994 had been scuppered by a lacklustre marketing campaign throughout the summer.

In the ever popular SNES Vs Mega Drive battle both sell less and both take higher shares. The only thing that remains the same is the gap between the two.

Nintendo has probably already conceded that it will never actually close that gap, but with Saturn due in the autumn and Ultra 64 delayed until spring '94, it may be hoping that an eye/ball/unaligned type scenario might afflict its rival on 16-bit this year.

Surely the Saturn will drain some marketing resources away from Mega Drive and the older format will inevitably take up a smaller percentage of the company's overall resources than in previous years.

Nintendo UK, meanwhile, has the SNES still stuck at the top of its agenda (whether it likes it or not) and its main concerns and main campaigns will all be centred around SNES software.

So, perhaps finally the SNES share may creep up to within 10 or even five points of the Mega Drive's. That means Nintendo would have gained a slightly larger share of a decreasing sector of a market in which the rival system is still the leader. Sega (and/or Sony), meanwhile, busies itself creating another lead in the next generation market. Hmmmmm....

Still, Nintendo has to do something whilst it waits for Ultra and selling as many SNES games as it possibly can is a far more worthwhile pursuit than sulking in the corner.

Besides, the company would argue, if that plan does come together it will be making strides in what will remain the largest market sector (although with a figure some way short of 75 per cent) with the Ultra 64 ready and able to arrive early in '95 and immediately wipe out any small lead that its rivals may build up (Nintendo doesn't believe the two systems will sell more than 300,000 units between them before the end of the year).

ELSPA

GALLUP

All Gallup data used in CTW is the strict copyright of ELSPA. It is the only recognised weekly research on the UK games market, boasting a retail panel which covers some 70 per cent of all stores. Monthly and quarterly reports are published on a subscription only basis and include actual sales figures. For more details, contact Roger Bennett on 01386 830642.

MARKET RESEARCH: GALLUP GAMES REPORT

SOFTWARE SALES BY FORMAT

CD-ROM Market (Value)

Format	Dec '94	Nov '94	Oct '94	Sep '94	Dec '93
CD-ROM	60.2	53.8	49.8	50.6	18.7
Mega CD	17.6	18.0	19.6	18.7	59.8
CD-i	10.5	15.2	16.2	16.0	0.9
CD32	7.5	9.4	12.0	12.4	20.4

Source: Gallup/ELSPA

The growth of CD-ROM is staggering. The rise of CD-i is impressive. The future of the Mega CD and CD32 is very, very bleak.

Actually, in percentage terms, the growth of CD-i is more spectacular than that of CD-ROM, but in the real world there's no doubt at all about which format is the star of this chart.

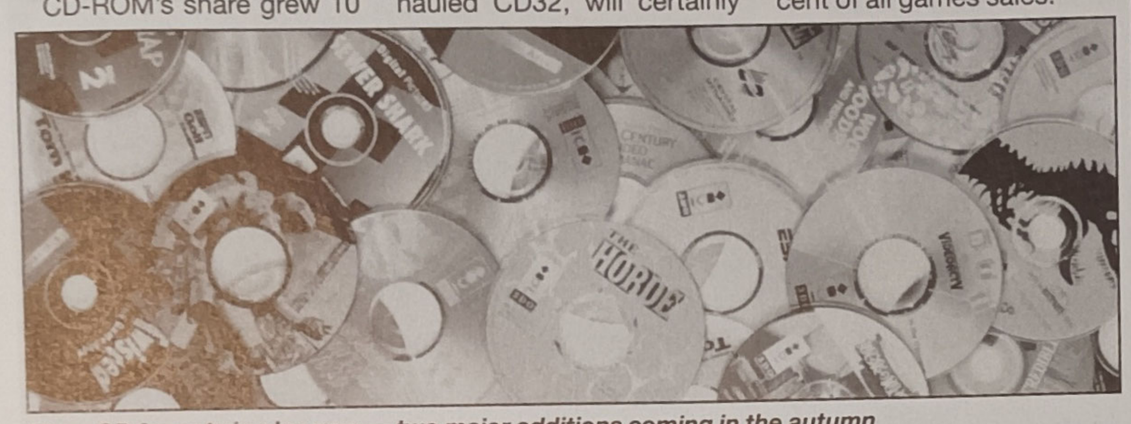
CD-ROM's share grew 10 per cent in the last three months alone, this from a format that is not considered to be overly seasonal in its sales patterns.

The Mega CD's brief reign as leading CD format is well and truly over and it will now do very well to keep its share in double figures during 1995.

CD-i, having already overhauled CD32, will certainly have Sega's format in its sights.

CD-i's dip towards Christmas (from 16.0 in September to 10.5 in December) was a result of a seasonal surge (of sorts) from Mega CD, but on the more even playing field of spring and summer Philips will undoubtedly triumph, as CD-i owners do seem particularly committed to buying software regularly all year round.

But whilst Philips can quite rightly celebrate a year of growth, it is still only taking 10 per cent of a market sector (CD) that accounts for just 9.6 per cent of all games sales.



Many CD formats in play now — two major additions coming in the autumn

SOFTWARE SALES BY FORMAT

Full-price Home Computer Market (Value)

Format	Dec '94	Nov '94	Oct '94	Sep '94	Dec '93
PC	46.2	55.1	63.0	63.9	34.4
Amiga 500/600	45.6	34.3	29.0	29.6	57.2
Amiga 1200	6.8	8.4	4.8	3.7	3.0

Source: Gallup/ELSPA

Only really included for purposes of historical record, this chart shows PC games sales ahead of Amiga 500/600 sales for the first time ever in December.

OK, so if you add on A1200 sales the Amiga family of products can still be said to be shading the Christmas period, but if you look at the previous three months the Amiga total falls well short of the PC's share and you also have to remember that the PC figure excludes CD-ROM sales.

So, stop quibbling, the times they have a-changed.

MARKET SHARE BY PUBLISHER GROUP

Cartridge Market (Value)

Company	Dec '94	Dec '93
Nintendo	19.4	16.0
Sega	17.6	22.0
Virgin	16.4	4.8
Electronic Arts	13.7	14.8
Acclaim	7.3	9.6
Code Masters	4.3	1.3
Ocean	2.9	5.1
Sony Electronic Publishing	2.7	3.5
US Gold	1.7	2.0
Konami	1.4	2.4
Domark	1.3	2.2
Capcom	1.3	3.9
UBI Soft	1.2	—
Telstar	1.2	1.1
Gametek	1.2	—

Source: Gallup/ELSPA

Virgin is again hugely impressive, but in a cart-only chart not even six of the top 20 carts can break Sega and Nintendo's stranglehold on the top spots.

In the end, Virgin pulled up just 1.2 points short of Sega, having raised its share from 4.8 to 16.4.

Nintendo took December's top spot through *DKC* and the fact that the must-have Mega Drive game was from EA not Sega.

Much further down the list, Konami's share of just 1.4 (down from 1993's 2.4) suggests that its decision to move away from 16-bit publishing might be as much to do with its own performance as market conditions.

Capcom's share plummeted from 3.9 to 1.3. In 1993 it had the SNES version of *Aladdin*, in 1994 it didn't get a look in on *Lion King*. There was also the amazing absence of any version of *Street Fighter* on any format in the Cartridge Chartalk Top 50 (and most of those that appeared outside the 50 were published by either Sega or Nintendo themselves).

Finally, congrats to Ubi Soft and Vivid Image, the publishing and development partnership behind *Street Racer*, which propelled the French firm into the reckoning with a 1.2 per cent share. ❑

ELSPA — European Leisure Software Publishers Association Ltd

GALLUP

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*British Board of Film Classification applied for.

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MAT TOOR

IT'S STILL ONLY ROCK 'N' ROLL

The pioneering for interactive goes on and, as MAT TOOR discovers, the interest remains just as high whether you are Peter Gabriel or a dodgy pub rock band from Sunderland...

The Smalltown Heroes are an up and coming band from Sunderland. They play good old fashioned rock and roll, if you like that sort of thing. No samplers, no drum machines and you get the feeling their electric keyboard's on probation. With their leather jackets, torn jeans and Midlands accents, they are about as far from the menopausal multimedia ramblings of Peter Gabriel, David Bowie and Mike Oldfield as it is possible to imagine.

But this month The Smalltown Heroes will carve their own little niche in the record books by releasing the 'world's first' CD-ROM single. *Moral Judgement*, the band's first release, comes complete with Apple Mac and IBM-compatible data tracks, as well as three digital audio tracks. So if you put the disc in an ordinary CD player you can still hear the songs, put it in a PC and you can watch a selection of videos, see the lyrics on screen and learn all about the 'history' of The Smalltown Heroes.

Now the sceptics out there might be wondering just who is going to be that interested in the background of a band that last year were, in their own words, 'second billing to the bingo' in their local working men's club.

"You can say what you like about Gabriel's *Xplora-1* or David Bowie's *Jump*, but at least they are established artists with an identifiable fan base," says Steve Helmsley, special projects editor of the music biz bible *Music Week*. "The tricky question is just who is going to buy a CD-ROM from The Smalltown Heroes."

That's a question that neither the band nor their manager Harvey Lee can answer. But then again they can't be sure who would buy an ordinary CD single from the band, so in one sense they have nothing to lose.

Top of the sales props

But what Lee is trying to do with The Smalltown Heroes is create a new template for interactive music discs that will not intimidate the mass market. "We're not making this as a novelty or a game. It's music videos and entertainment. There's no climbing up ladders or exploring the lads' bedrooms, we want to appeal to kids who are into music rather than computer fanatics," he maintains.

Many in the music and 'multimedia' industries are following the single's progress intently. Already Microsoft, Philips, Sony and a host of record companies have agreed on a new standard — provisionally labelled CD Plus — that makes it even easier to play CD-ROMs on your hi-fi and your PC. The hope is that more and more albums and singles will be tarted up with additional audio visual goodies to help keep prices buoyant and punters happy.

To take off though, many in the industry reckon that the whole approach of mixing interactivity and music needs a total rethink. Out goes the esoteric, deliberately cryptic presentation of Messrs Gabriel, Bowie et al. In comes a more 'what you see is what you get' approach that doesn't hide the assets under a beautifully-rendered bushel.

"Our job has to be to keep the consumer happy," says Alan McCaskill, director of the CD-ROM specialist OmniMedia. "So we've got to make sure that they're not spending four hours finding where the door is or how to pack the artist's bloody suitcase like some music CD-ROMs I could mention. You want to be entertained, not mentally challenged."

Without being harsh, the music and multimedia efforts of The Smalltown Heroes are unlikely to mentally challenge anyone, Kerrang readers included. Lead guitarist 'Baz' Warne says that their cautious approach was based partly on Luddism and partly on sheer ignorance.

"We were very worried that the CD-ROM would overshadow the music," says Baz. "We were a bit naive, we didn't have a great idea what it was all about. We certainly didn't want it to become the main focal point of the release."

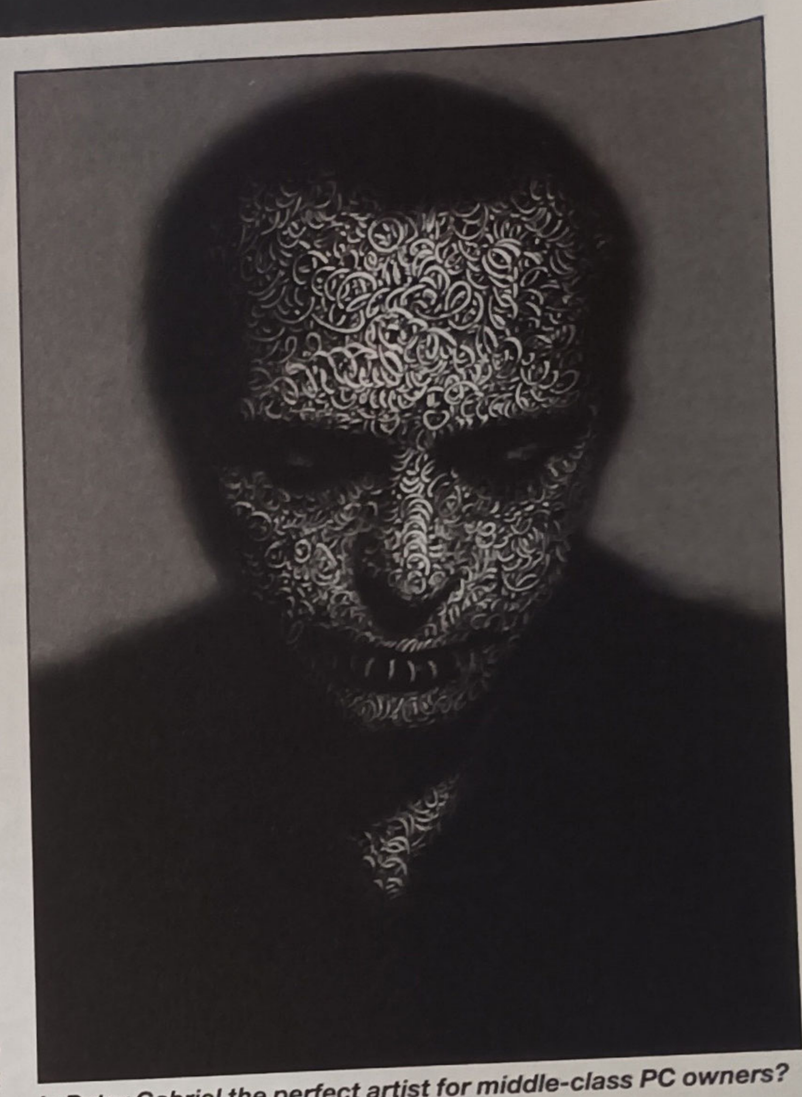
His record company, though, has other ideas. Being 'the world's first CD-ROM single' is too good a promotional angle to ignore, and the band needs as much exposure as it can get to pick up radio plays and attract distributors.

So like it or not, Baz and the boys from Sunderland have found themselves at the cutting edge of the new Rock and Roll. This is because the global record industry is mobilising to see whether music CDs bolstered by a small dose of interactivity can help win back a generation lured by the delights of Sonic and Mario.

"We can see that this is the way things are starting to move now. The computer age, the 1990s, and all that," says Smalltown Heroes lead singer Chris (brother of Baz) Warne.

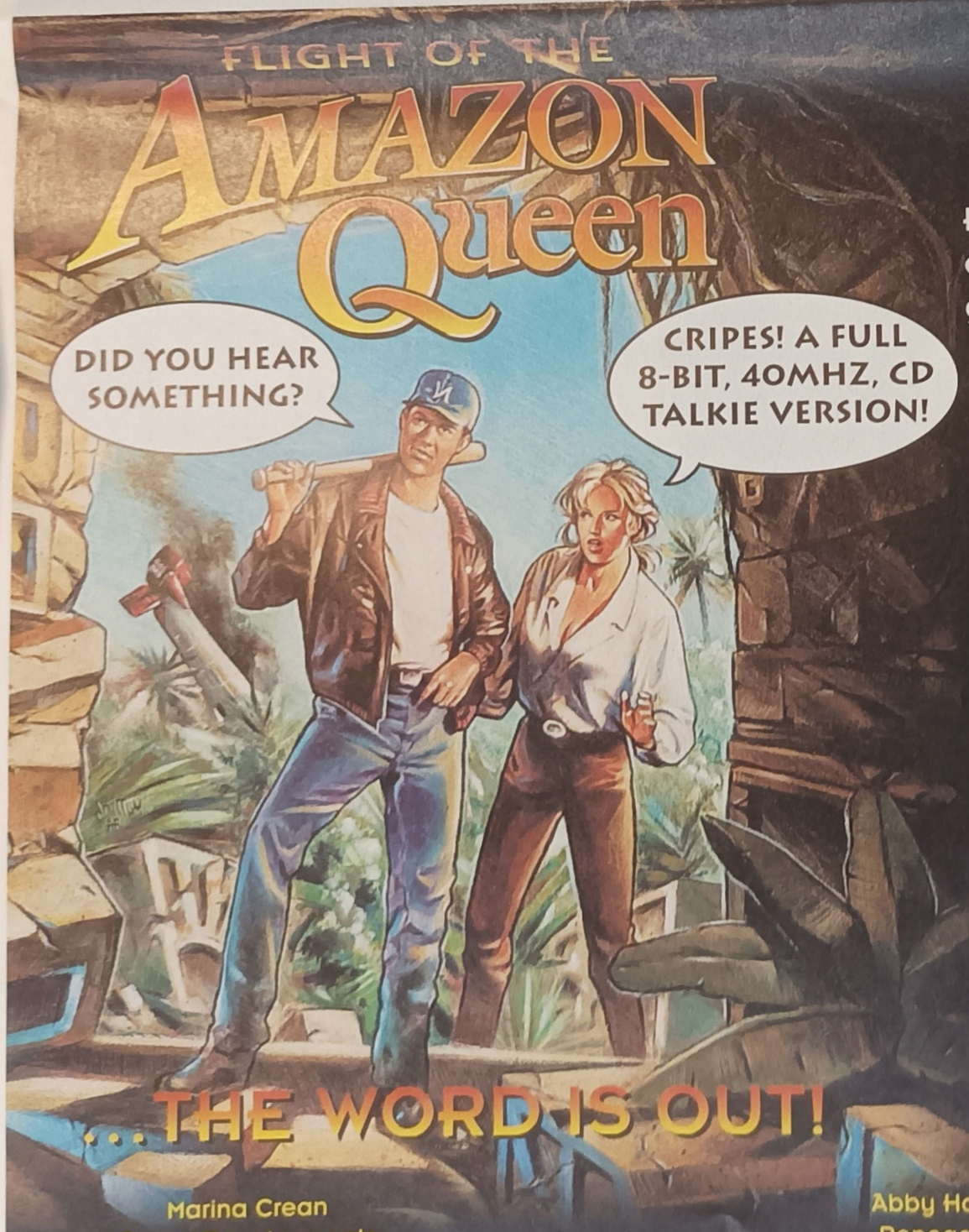
"Alright, we may be the first people to bring out a single like this, but we're certainly not going to be the last..."

You have been warned. ❑



Is Peter Gabriel the perfect artist for middle-class PC owners?

Mat Toor believes Tory MPs and children should be seen and not heard, while music CDs should be heard and not seen. So far..



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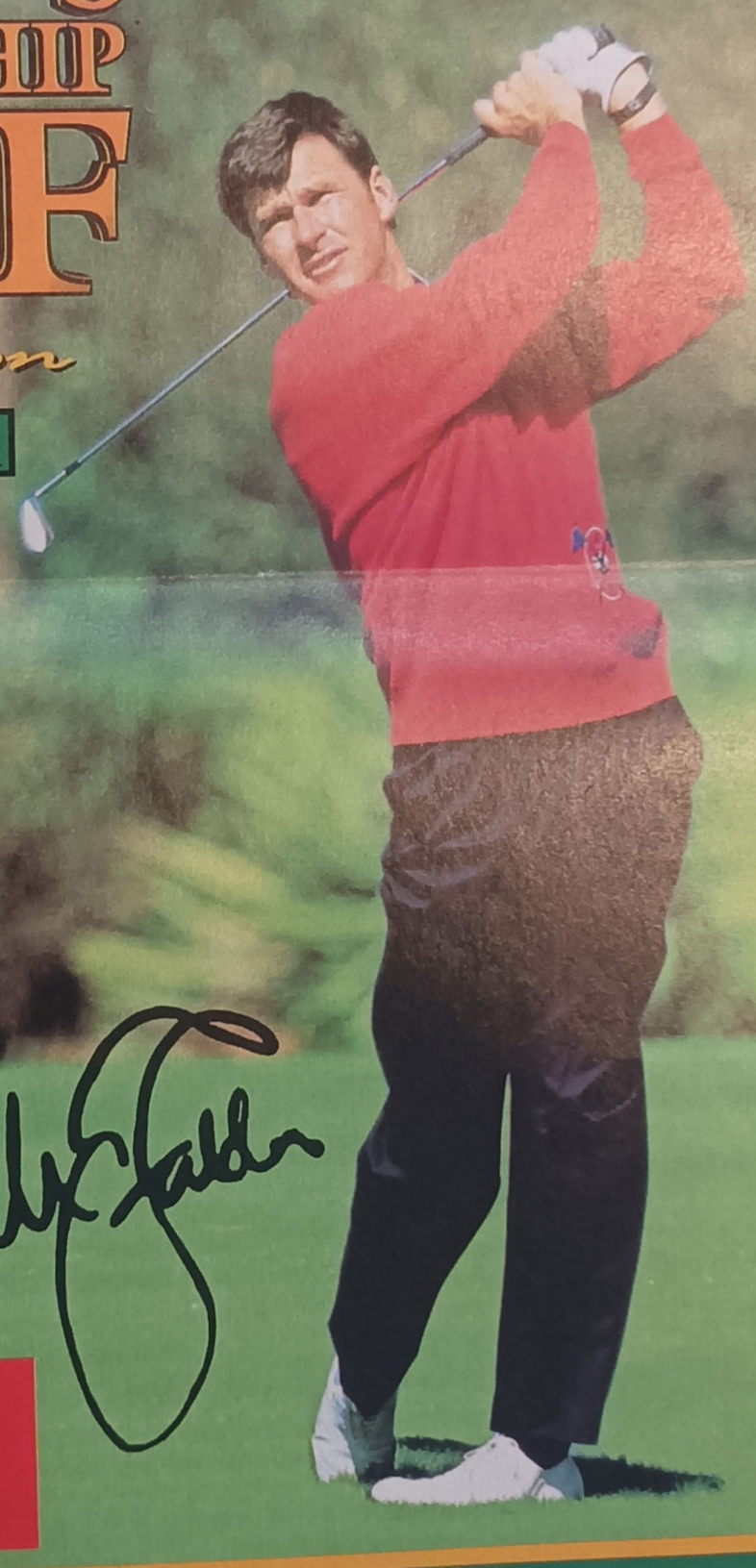
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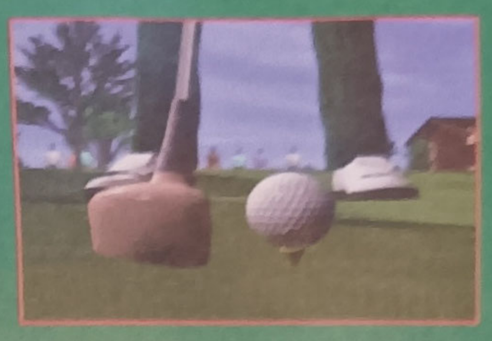
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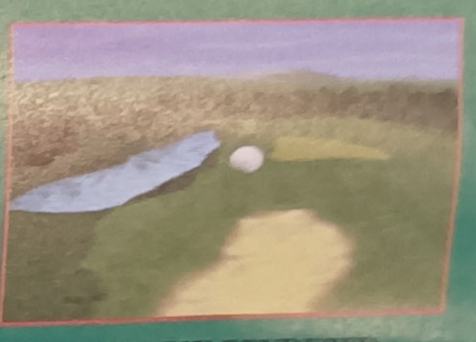
Deluxe Edition

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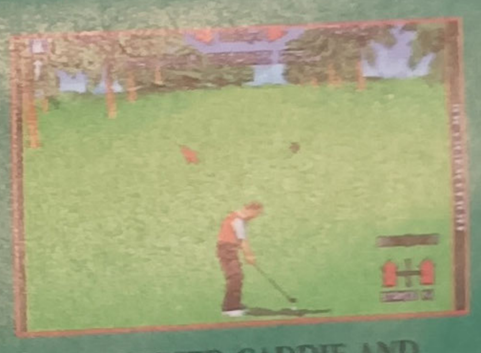




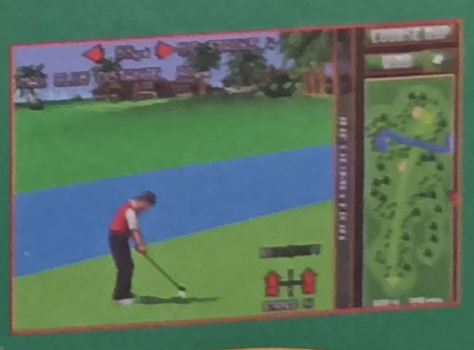
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GRANDSLAM INTERACTIVE

SPOTLIGHT: 3DO'S PROGRESS SO FAR

THE IMPERFECT IMPRESSER?

The indies love it, but chains are thin on the ground. UK sales have gone well, but the base is still only 20,000. Breakthrough software is emerging, but so is the competition. With 3DO so far, acclaim and admonition go hand in hand. But should they? DAVE ROBERTS reports...

In the minds of many, 3DO is filed next to Jaguar and CD-i as outsiders in the race towards the next generation of gaming.

Saturn and PlayStation are often bracketed together as joint favourites, with Nintendo's Ultra 64 as the wild card. 3DO certainly won't like this perceived pecking order, they probably don't agree with it, but if you were to name the two games machines that you think will be the best-selling units of Christmas '96, would the name 3DO spring to mind?

OK, make it the three best-sellers. Any sign of 3DO yet?

Those, of course, are questions of perception and conjecture. 3DO is happier discussing matters of fact and record.

European president Bob Faber declares: "Who's got the biggest installed base of advanced CD machines in the UK? 3DO. It's simple, we're now the system in the lead. Everything else is just speculation."

3DO does not, unfortunately, back up these claims with any actual sales figures but it's thought that there is now an installed base of around 20,000 units, achieved mainly through sales in HMV, Game, Virgin and a great many independents.

"It's not huge yet," points out Faber before anyone else gets the chance to, "but it is the market leader, it is something to build on and one thing I can guarantee is that every single consumer that has bought one is happy."

It's a bold claim that can never really be proved, but even if there is this happy band of 3DevOtees, they do not necessarily represent the beginnings of a mass market.

The rest of the general public remains in a mixture of ignorance and ambivalence whilst the trade, a couple of years after 3DO president Trip Hawkins first outlined his grand vision, has yet to be fully convinced.

Software publishers are generally still willing to give the format a chance. HMV, Game and Virgin must be reasonably pleased with Christmas sales and chains such as Future Zone are becoming interested. But no one's totally convinced.

Faber concedes: "I think 3DO is in a typical position for a format in the first half of the year after launch. People have said 'yeah, that was great, now let's look for the next new thing'. What people have to remember is that a launch doesn't happen in a month, it takes a year.

"I think some people will forget about 3DO for a while now until the autumn and then they'll wake up to see something becoming a very big business."

Maybe, but most people in the press, software publishing and retail have set their September alarm calls by Sony or Sega time and will wake up to the sound of PlayStation and Saturn crashing into Europe. If Faber thinks 3DO is in danger of losing centre stage in the summer, he should surely be concerned that it might get pushed right into the wings this winter.

"I'm actually not too worried about the competition. I don't think this autumn is going to be a crucial sales battle. I think this autumn the question is whether the consumer will buy or sit on the sidelines and wait to see how things develop.

"Consumers aren't in the trade, they don't know what PSX is. We did a small survey asking what people thought was the best of the next generation machines and the most common response was 'what, you mean like Super Nintendo?'.

First, and foremost?

In such a scenario, Faber feels that 3DO having been out first will be a key advantage, that it will seem established, that it will have full distribution amongst retailers that are already comfortable with the product and that it will have a full and rich software catalogue that will leave any Sony-come-lately in the shade.

Alternatively, Sony (or Sega) could arrive with the biggest launch marketing campaign this market has ever seen. It could make PlayStation the hottest, hippest hardware of the year. It could have as strong a line-up of games as any start-up system could possibly need and it could do all this with the backing of magazines that seem desperately keen to feature PlayStation as often as possible.

Faber thinks not. He quite rightly points out that the UK mags' attitude to Sony is just about as raving and rabid as it was towards 3DO 18 months ago and that the wave of PlayStation hype must eventually reach some sort of crest and then start to subside. He's equally confident that 3DO won't be drowned out in the process.

Nevertheless, the increasing outbreaks of PlayStation fever do seem to rankle: "The thing is, I could do what Sony did and say we're going to sell a million units in the first 12 months. Would you believe me? Did you believe them when they said it?"

By the way, he's talking to you, not me.

"I don't believe them, I think it's sales talk and I think that this year is not the year to start getting bogged down in predictions and obsessed by volume. This is the year to get shelf-space because the reality is that the war is not going to be won or lost this year by anyone. It's all about positioning."

So, to Faber increasing distribution and increasing awareness are two of the major tasks for '95. Increased sales should follow naturally.

The awareness will be lifted by the arrival of not only a new brand, Goldstar, in the spring, but the unveiling of a new Panasonic model, the FZ-10 at ECTS and the launch of an MPEG cart in June.

On top of all that the format will be rolled out to more and more European countries throughout the year, creating regular spurts of interest.

Next, next please

At the very end of '95 the hype-o-meter will be given another nudge by the introduction of the M2 accelerator, the backward compatible add-on that 3DO is already claiming to be a PlayStation-beater.

Curiously, Faber insists that the arrival of the Next, Next Generation piece of kit is "not a commercial event for '95". It is instead "a showcase" and it is important because "3DO said they'd be first to market and they were and then they said they'd maintain their technology lead and just as everyone else arrives at stage one, Boom! here it is, far better than anything else on the market".

It's obvious then that 3DO (if not every partner) has a very clear idea of where it is taking its technology over the next 10 months. It's also pretty safe to assume that the firm has worked out a sales target. Unfortunately, it's damn well certain that it is not going to share its thoughts on the subject.

"Have we predicted how many we'll sell this year? Sure, down to the last unit and even the last piece of software. But we will not release those figures, not least because they involve our partners' businesses and so it's not completely up to us to talk about sales predictions.

"But also, the fact is that there are two companies in this business that are not allowed to lie to you; 3DO and Atari because they are governed by US regulations.

"Sony have said that they sold 300,000 PlayStations in Japan. Not true. Completely false, but they say it anyway and hope that it sticks. 3DO is never going to do that to you, not because we don't want to but because if we did we'd go to jail.

"I know that no matter what I say, our competitors are going to say a bigger number because they can say what they like, so why do I need to play that game?

Faber's 3DO Europe management partner, John Edelson, chips in: "It's simple, we're the system to beat. We're out in front. No one's telling you how they're going to beat Jaguar or CD-i or Neo Geo, are they?

"No matter who's talking, they're saying 'we're going to catch 3DO'. So, let's see it. First they've got to get to market, then they've got to match our sales month by month before they can even think about getting near our installed base, then they've got to be selling on a worldwide basis."

That, 3DO argues, is why it simply must figure in any rundown of the Next Generation's leading contenders. In any race, at any stage, you must never discount the leader.

Philips and Atari might be tempted to take a similar line, fiercely disputing any price, performance or installed base claims that 3DO cares to put up.

3DO can probably cope with that. Its software support does seem to be getting stronger, retailers (particularly independents, who voted the firm 'Hero of 1994' in *CTW*'s Christmas Poll) do seem to be moving units and there is still enough credibility attached to the people and partners backing the system to prevent it booking a permanent place in the also-ran department.

But, even if it is the number one Next Generation format of the moment, with a UK installed base of over 20,000 and a range of software that most reviewers agree is getting stronger every month, there's still this undeniable temptation to put the words so and what far too close together for comfort.

There's still a tendency to think that 3DO isn't really in the lead because the race hasn't actually started yet.

When it does, 3DO's promises of pan-European presence and multi-brand launches must materialise. The *FIFA*s and *Super Streetfighters* must become the norm rather than the exception, and chains must become just as enthusiastic about the format as the specialists are.

Otherwise, in a year or two's time, Faber might well be able to claim once more that 3DO has seen off CD-i and Jaguar, only then the result would not be market leadership, merely the largest slice of the scraps left over from the real sales feast being carved up by Sony, Sega and Nintendo. ❑

KICKING BACK AT SONY

Some parts of the trade — such as ZCL, HMV, Game, Virgin, Panasonic and a couple of hundred indies — would agree with 3DO's insistence that the format has got off to a useful start in the UK.

But thinking about things from a truly global perspective, with an eye on that promised next boom for the industry, Sony's joint Euro games boss Ian Hetherington sees things rather differently.

Indeed, at the recent PlayStation developers' conference (*CTW January 30th*), he was totally dismissive of 3DO, concluding that "it's all over for them" and dropping in a handful of barbs aimed at president Trip Hawkins and his legendary desire to create a worldwide interactive entertainment standard.

3DO Europe boss Bob Faber responds, but insists he isn't over concerned by such criticism: "It's interesting isn't it, they've all said that 3DO is insignificant but then gone on to describe how they're going to destroy 3DO.

"That's fine by me. If they want to spend their time trying to figure out ways of killing off 3DO, we'll spend our time selling units, building an installed base, getting software out there and working on new technology.

"All that's important is that we're the market leader and they're going to have to come and get us. Last time we talked I said that at the time 3DO was the best system with the most software, the lowest price and the biggest installed base. That's still true and, apart from the lowest price, which I can't really predict, it will all be true on January 1st, 1996."



FABER (left) & EDELSON: "We're the CD console leaders, others will have to come and get us"

PRODUCT FILE

NBA Jam T.E.
SNES, Mega Drive, Game Gear
Acclaim
Tel: 0171 344 5000

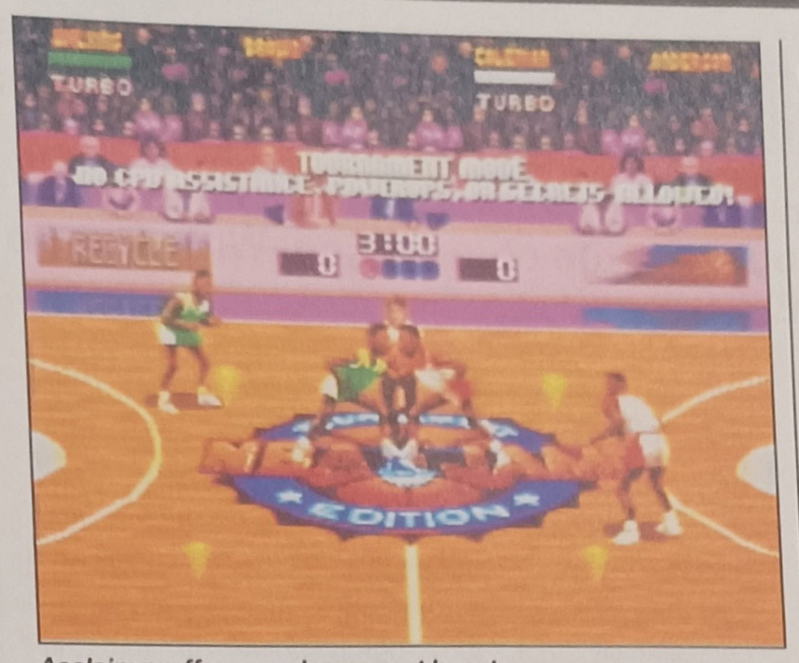
RECOMMENDED

It's shipped some quality titles already, but this is where the year really starts for Acclaim.

NBA Jam sold four million units worldwide and Acclaim is after a repeat success with this sequel. It's the firm's first blockbuster of the year and with Acclaim that means a big marketing spend.

Some £750,000 in all for Europe covers billboards, cinema ads, consumer and trade press ads, plus POS and a PR campaign that includes *CTW*'s biggest ever competition (see last week's front page).

Sequels need to offer something extra, rather than the re-hash of a hit game's formula. Thankfully, Acclaim has come through here, tweaking the graphics and sound and adding enough new gameplay features to ensure enthusiastic reviews. So far, it's had 91 per cent (*GamesMaster, C&VG*) and 92 per cent (*Total*).



Acclaim proffers a welcome cart boost

True Lies
SNES
Acclaim
Tel: 0171 344 5000

A huge movie hit, much has been expected of *True Lies* the game, although it has been overshadowed by the *NBA Jam* razzmatazz.

Film licences don't always result in quality games but Acclaim has stuck to a simple shoot 'em up formula with this effort and it seems to have worked.

Released just a month after the video sell-through version, it's already had enthusiastic preview coverage and a first review score of 85 per cent from Future TV tie-in *GamesMaster* augers well.

Tactical Man. Italia
PC, PC CD-ROM
Black Legend
Tel: 01438 840004

Black Legend's *Tactical Manager* topped the Amiga charts last year, and now its Italian sibling gains a PC release.

It's supported by specialist press ads and there'll also be a range of *Tactical Manager Italia* POS and merchandising. This includes posters, T-shirts, mugs, demos, caps and flyers.

One of those titles that should produce a steady flow of sales without necessarily causing a mad rush. Watch out next month for full-blown sequel *Tactical Manager 2*.

Way of the Warrior
3DO
Interplay
Tel: 01235 821666

3DO's third big beat 'em up, and the first to be specific to the format, here's Interplay's BBFC 15-rated *Way of the Warrior.*

It aspires to be a *Mortal Kombat* for 3DO but specialist press reviews suggest it doesn't quite cut it. A UK best of 83 per cent in *C&VG,* heads a 3/5 from *3DO Magazine,* 59 per cent from *Ultimate Future Games* and only 43 per cent from *GamesMaster.*

No ads and no POS material, but Interplay is relying on strong PR campaign.

Bureau 13
PC, PC CD-ROM
Gametek
Tel: 01753 553445

Gametek's latest is another 'interactive adventure' from *Hell* author Take 2. It looks similar to *Hell* and adopts much the same approach, but with a backdrop of UFOs and sci-fi mysteries.

Ads are planned for the specialist press and it will also receive the benefit of Gametek's usual trade support. PR activity includes competitions run with independent radio. It's also been featured on BBC kids' show *Live and Kicking.*

No reviews had been published at time of press.

by Ian Lynch

To be featured in Product File, please send review copies to CTW, Troopers Yard, 23 Bancroft, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1JW. We also need details of marketing support and any review scores already received.

CTW GAMES GUIDE

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FEBRUARY

Title	Publisher	Formats	Release
NBA Jam T.E.	Acclaim	SN MD GG	Feb 23
Keio Flying Squad	JVC	MC	Feb 23
Battle Bugs	Sierra	PR	Feb 27
Fleet Defender/Subwar	MicroProse	PC PR	Feb 28
Hokum KA 50	Virgin	PC	Feb 28
Mavis Teaches Typing	Mindscape	PC PR	Feb 28
Urban Renewal Kit	Maxis/Mindscape	PC	Feb 28
Alex Dampier Ice Hockey	Merit Studios	PC PR	End
Alien Logic	Mindscape	PR	End
Commanche Blood	Mindscape	PR	End
Flight o' Amazon Queen	Renegade	PC PR CD AG	End
It's Int. Cricket	Grandslam	AG AA	End
Man Utd — The Double	Krisalis	PC PR AG CD	End
Nick Faldo's Deluxe	Grandslam	PR	End
Oldtimer	Max Design	PR	End
Scottish Open Golf	Core	PC PR	End
Stardust Super Ed.	Daze	PC	End
Syndicate	Ocean/Bullfrog	JA	End
Tactical Manager Italia	Black Legend	PCPR	End
The Clue	NEO	CD PR	End
Theme Park	Ocean/Bullfrog	JA	End
Tower Assault	Team 17	PR	End
Wonderland	Mindscape	AC PR	End

MARCH

BC Kid 2	Virgin	GA	Mar 1
Story of Thor	Sega	MD	Mar 1
Super BC Kid	Virgin	SN	Mar 1
Descent	Interplay	PC PR	Mar 3
Extractors	Millennium	PR	Mar 3
Master Axe	Millennium	AG AA	Mar 3
Star Trek — Fl. Acad.	Interplay	SN	Mar 3
Trans Tycoon data disk	MicroProse	PC	Mar 3
Way of the Warrior	Interplay	DO	Mar 3
Speedball 2	VIE/Renegade	CD	Mar 4

For formats key see Charts Section

VOLUNTARY AGE RATINGS

11+: *Fleet Defender/Subwar, Master Axe*
Way of the Warrior has been given a legal classification by the BBFC of 15+.
All other games listed above have been rated as suitable for all ages

CHARTS

WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 18TH

COMPILED BY GALLUP

Budget appeal

Although the market's up five per cent by volume this week, it's down two per cent by value. Proof, if anyone needed any, that it's budget software that's keeping the market afloat at the moment.

Indeed, the budget home computer sector is up a whopping 37 per cent, largely due to the glut of Pysgnosis titles that are currently shifting in volume through Future Zone outlets. The only other market area that has shown an increase is the CD sector, which is also dominated by back-catalogue, low price titles.

Infogrames' *Alone in the Dark 3* at 14 is the only full price new entry in the CD top 20. The other six — *Reunion, Flink, Lemmings, Ground Zero Texas, X-Wing* and *Wing Commander 1 & 2* — are all budget or discounted titles.

FIFA '95 is back at the top of the cartridge chart, although with *International Superstar Soccer* and *NBA Jam T.E.* just out, this could be it's last week of glory. *Donkey Kong Country* already looks to be shifting down the chart, and *Earthworm Jim* has dropped right down to number 17. There's a new entry at number 12 — *Battletoads in Battlemaniacs* from NBA Jam T.E.

TOP 20 — CARTRIDGE

TW	LW	TITLE	LABEL	FORMATS
1	2	*FIFA Soccer '95*	Electronic Arts	MD
2	1	*The Lion King*	Virgin	MD, GG, SG, SN
3	7	*Cannon Fodder*	Virgin	MD, SN
4	3	*Donkey Kong Country*	Nintendo	SN
5	5	*Micro Machines 2*	Codemasters	MD
6	11	*Jungle Book*	Virgin	GG, SG, GA, MD, SN
7	4	*Mortal Kombat 2*	Acclaim	GA, GG, MD, SN, SG
8	19	*Starwing*	Nintendo	SN
9	6	*Micro Machines*	Codemasters/Ocean	MD, NI, GA, SN
10	15	*Mortal Kombat*	Acclaim	GA, GG, MD, SG, SN
11	16	*Sonic the Hedgehog 2*	Sega	GG, MD, SG
12	—	*Battletoads in Battlemaniacs*	Nintendo	SN
13	8	*Sonic and Knuckles*	Sega	MD
14	13	*Cool Spot*	Virgin	GG, MD, SG, SN GA
15	30	*Eternal Champions*	Sega	MD
16	14	*Sonic Chaos*	Sega	GG, SG
17	9	*Earthworm Jim*	Virgin	MD, SN
18	18	*PGA Tour Golf 3*	Electronic Arts	MD
19	20	*Rugby World Cup 1995*	Electronic Arts	MD
20	23	*Donkey Kong*	Nintendo	GA

TOP 20 — HOME COMPUTER (FULL PRICE)

TW	LW	TITLE	LABEL	FORMATS
1	1	*Sensible World of Soccer*	Renegade	AG
2	2	*Premier Manager 3*	Gremlin Interactive	AA, AG, PC
3	3	*Sim City 2000*	Maxis/Mindscape	AP, PC, AA
4	4	*FIFA International Soccer*	Electronic Arts	PC, AG
5	6	*Theme Park*	Bullfrog	PC, AA, AP, AG
6	12	*Cannon Fodder*	Virgin	AG, PC, ST
7	9	*Cannon Fodder 2*	Virgin	AG, PC
8	—	*Indy Car Racing*	Virgin	PC
9	8	*Tie Fighter: D.E.*	Virgin	PC
10	36	*Football Glory*	Black Legend	AA, AG
11	10	*The Lion King*	Virgin	PC, AA
12	13	*Doom 2*	Virgin	PC
13	11	*Transport Tycoon*	MicroProse	PC
14	17	*Overlord*	Virgin	PC, AG
15	—	*Championship Man. Italia 95*	Domark	AG, PC
16	16	*Micro Machines*	Codemasters	AG, PC
17	30	*Frontier: Elite 2*	Gametek	AG, PC, ST
18	23	*All New World of Lemmings*	Psygnosis	PC, AA
19	27	*Kick Off 3*	Anco	AA, AG, PC
20	38	*LucasArts Classic Collection*	Kixx	AG, PC

KEY: MD (Mega Drive), SG (Master System), GG (Game Gear), MC (Mega CD), PR (PC CD-ROM), CD (Amiga), Sn (SNES), NI (NES), GA (Gameboy), CI (CD-i), AC (Mac CD), AG (Amiga 500/600), AA (Amiga 1200), PC (IBM PC compatible), AP (Mac), DO (3DO), JA (Jaguar), LX (Lynx).

Format Monitor *By units*

Cartridge

Total market share	-1%
Total sales this week	52.0%

Compact Disc

Total market share	+11%
Total sales this week	16.3%

Home Computer (Full Price)

Total market share	-2%
Total sales this week	17.8%

Home Computer (Budget)

Total market share	+37%
Total sales this week	13.9%

Total leisure software sales this week +5%

All chart and market share information is compiled from data collected from Gallup's sampled retail panel over a seven day period.

TOP 20 — COMPACT DISC

TW	LW	TITLE	PUBLISHER	FORMATS
1	2	*Microcosm*	Sony	MC, CD, PR
2	1	*Theme Park*	Bullfrog	PR, AC, DO,CD
3	—	*Reunion*	Grandslam	PR
4	5	*Wing Commander 3*	EA	PR
5	3	*Innocent Until Caught*	Psygnosis	PR,MC,AC,DO
6	4	*Rebel Assault*	Various	CD
7	—	*Flink*	Psygnosis	PR
8	8	*Creature Shock*	Virgin	PR
9	6	*Doom 2*	Virgin	MC, PR, DO
10	9	*FIFA Int. Soccer*	EA	CD, CI
11	—	*Lemmings*	Various	PR
12	10	*Magic Carpet*	Bullfrog	MC
13	—	*Ground Zero Texas*	Sony	PR
14	—	*Alone in The Dark 3*	Infogrames	PR
15	7	*Premier Manager 3*	Gremlin	CD
16	19	*Benefactor*	Psygnosis	PR
17	—	*X-Wing*	LucasArts	PR
18	13	*Privateer/Strike Cmdr*	EA	PR
19	—	*Wing Comm. 1&2*	EA	CD, PR
20	16	*Rise of the Robots*	Mirage/TWI	

Software piracy information?
Call the ELSPA Crime Unit now on 01386 833810

The above charts have been compiled from the Gallup Weekly Report, which is the strict copyright of ELSPA. It is available on subscription, and features Total Market Statistics and Software Charts & Analysis for all leisure formats. For more information, write to the general secretary at ELSPA, Station Road, Offenham, Near Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 5LW.Tel: 01386 830642.

SPEAKEASY

Unity is strength, simple as that

I would not wish for the readers of Simon Harvey's letter (*'Brit Awards teach us all a lesson' — CTW February 20th*) to assume that ELSPA, which now has a total of 84 members, is fighting for survival. That is certainly not the case, and I hope that we have been able to demonstrate that from comparatively very small resources, we have and continue, to very effectively serve members' interests and provide extremely good value for money.

Nonetheless, I support his views in respect of the need to show a much greater level of co-operation in fully supporting initiatives and activities created for the benefit of the industry as a whole.

Simon's comments in comparing ourselves with the music industry association, the BPI, are perhaps a little optimistic. We are still a young industry by comparison, and the BPI, with whom ELSPA are in the midst of building a close relationship, tell us that it has taken over 20 years to achieve the levels of co-operation that they enjoy today.

Additionally, they have huge resources made available by their committed and enthusiastic members to ensure that their main objectives — piracy, standards, research, PR, conferences, etc. — are funded sufficiently to achieve maximum results.

Our industry, nonetheless, has yet to understand the real value of greater co-operation in collective positive exposure.

Creating a cost effective industry-wide strategy in targeting a greater share of consumer spend on leisure software would be a good starting point. The levels of co-operation within the music industry, which so clearly produce such a strong focus on them by the media and thus the consumer are, or should be, an inspiration and an ideal to which we should all aspire.

The speed of advance in the technology we serve or the mass market we aim for, is not yet reflected in the attitudes taken by some of the influence involved in the interactive leisure software industry. Suspicion, individual vested interest and pure apathy can undermine the opportunity of sharing common goals. This inevitably has a dampening effect on the equal (and, I believe, growing number), who are genuinely enthusiastic in attempting to drive the industry, as one, forward.

A prime example of Simon Harvey's description of this industry's lack of co-operative awareness is that there are still some software publishers who will just not even support their industry association, yet enjoy all the spin-off benefits. Even those who do, have still not really appeared to understand that CD piracy, both domestic and international in its manifestation, is the biggest threat to their own interests, ever.

PC CD writers are soon to be available for the home user at under £500. Some 50 pirated cartridge games are available on a single CD. Europe is set to become the Far East's dumping ground for pirated, identically packaged, CD software. Yet only one ELSPA member can find the time to attend a very recent inter-industry CD Piracy Conference.

The inevitable conclusions one draws from such evidence varies from: not interested, don't care, don't know and let someone else worry about it. Alternatively, it's not a real problem. Little wonder that our Crime Unit is run on a shoestring!

Fully supporting genuine industry initiatives through ELSPA, ECTS or elsewhere is surely not much to ask and is not a naive expectation. If the music industry can do it, so can we.

Let us all get involved in driving our industry forward and away from the 'feather one's own nest' attitude that is all too prevalent among those who collectively have the ability to drive the industry as a whole forward from strength to strength.

Let us help each other in protecting our collective future. Let us tell 'the world at large' that we employ a lot of people, add significantly to the country's exchequer, produce some astounding software, that it's tremendous entertainment value and that everyone in consumer land can greatly enjoy it.

Roger Bennett
Director & General Secretary
ELSPA
Offenham

— Here's another thought; the applause for different Brit winners and performers was as warm at the back of the Alexander Palace, where the 'suits' were located, as at the front, where the kids were.

Now, how many of us have been to an InDin, ECTS or Golden Joystick awards presentation where you can honestly say that the success of others gained the respect it deserved?

The industry has actually changed a lot in the past 12 months. Let's hope that is apparent when the ECTS Awards are dished out in London on Sunday March 26th.

The art of perfect Prose

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Landberg of Computer Connection, Sweden for his comments regarding the distribution of MicroProse products to the export territories and the overall effect of our tie-up with Pinnacle (*'Pinnacle & Prose: The export effect' — CTW February 20th*).

The move to exclusivity within the UK market has further enforced our aim for controlled sales and marketing within the computer games market worldwide. One of the many reasons for moving in this direction is the reduction of grey exports to our overseas managed territories.

By working with one distributor in the UK we are completely knowledgeable of our customers and can ensure that we are supplying solely legitimate retailers, rather than potential export wholesalers. I felt from Mr Landberg's letter that he may be unclear that MicroProse has run very successfully on an 'exclusivity' basis within 28 territories for the past 18 months.

Indeed the Swedish market, originally supported by some seven distributors, is now seeing not only further commitment in increased sales from a single distributor, but a greater involvement in the marketing of our products.

As MicroProse continues to further invest in games design, the underlying factor is that they need to see a faster return for their investment.

Exclusivity is as big an investment for the distributor as well as MicroProse, and our distributor in Sweden continues to commit to high quantities of both new release and catalogue titles.

A single distribution agreement is not only more manageable but also creates an accurate indication of the specific consumer market resulting in a valid reason to invest in further advertising, PR and customer support.

I'm sorry to hear that Mr Landberg feels it necessary to boycott MicroProse when a straightforward telephone call to Wendros would provide a satisfactory solution to the problem.

David Glover
Export Sales Manager
MicroProse
Chipping Sodbury

— David Glover's explanation mirrors CTW's own comments in response to the Computer Connection letter last week. He also noted to us that he is happy to discuss his firm's export strategy privately with any of our many international readers if they call him on England +1454 326532.

Please send your letters to: The Editor, CTW, at Troopers Yard, 23 Bancroft, Hitchin, Herts. SG5 1JW or fax him on 01462 442489.

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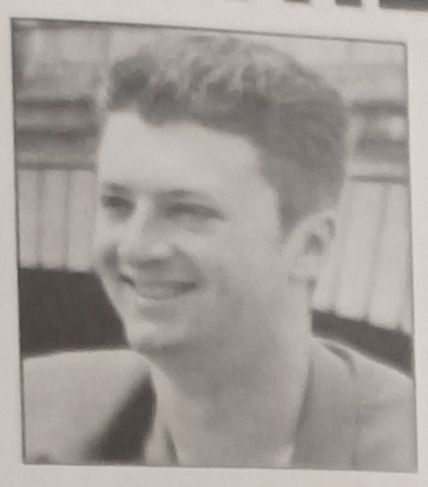
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INSIDE LEFT

IN THE HOTSEAT WITH...



David Pullan

He used to scare people with his hair-style, now it's his company's bank balance...

What is your job title?
Head of BMG Interactive Entertainment UK.
Which means what, exactly?
Lording it over Andrew Wright, being industry rent-a-quote (especially in interactive music) and pissing off Tim Chaney!
Why did you get moved across from music to games within BMG?
I was in the right place when the new division was set up — having just finished a year working directly for BMG's chairman — and knew something about the games industry.
A good move?
Yes. It's a great business to be in: lots of challenges and uncertainty, but also major opportunities to make things happen.
How do you believe BMG is perceived by the games industry?
Massive company, yet to prove itself as a serious player.
And how would you like it to be?
Massive company, with the best product in the marketplace.
Just how big *is* that cheque book?
Size is not important. It's what you do with it that counts (allegedly).
Is CD-ROM really worth all the effort (and cash)?
Was cartridge?
Which established games firm do you most admire, and why?
Bullfrog, because of the originality and consistent quality of their products. And Virgin, because of the speed at which they have become a power house. This is why we keep hiring their best people.
What's the games industry's biggest fault/problem?
Next-big-thing-itis. Formats get talked and hyped out of existence before they've had a chance. Eye-candy — just because it can be done now. Too many 'me-too' products, showing a shortage of innovation.
Have you ever seen Take That in the BMG offices? If so, who was the friendliest?
Of course. I am the unofficial sixth member of Take That (not pretty enough to be a full member). Robbie was the most friendly. Incidentally, he can often be found in London arcades wasting (joke) all those millions.
Name a BMG artist that no one's heard of who will be big by Christmas:
Ryan Molloy: a young English guy with a phenomenal voice and a great songwriting talent. He also looks good enough to be a heart throb. Makes me sick, really.
Is it true you were once in a band yourself, complete with Mohican haircut?
Bang to rights there. The band was called The Chicken Ranch and our great claim to fame was the fact that John Peel played our single (twice!).

David Pullan was talking to Stuart Dinsey

RETRO

2 Years Ago

The media backlash against games reaches its peak. *The Sun*'s infamous 'Nintendo killed my son' story is followed up by *World In Action*'s 'Entering the danger zone' and a *Daily Star* piece ('Breeding a nation of monsters') which spuriously linked games with the Jamie Bulger murder. Exciting times.

Meanwhile, specialist retailers started falling like British ice skaters, northern chain The Games Store hitting trouble just a few weeks after Future World.

Fujitsu launches its Marty CD games machine in Japan. Goldstar pulls out of the UK PC market.

CTW February 22nd 1993

7 Years Ago

The writing is on the wall for Montbuild's *PCW* Show as the mighty Domark and Cascade pull out. More seriously, there was growing vocal discontent about an event that always seemed more interested in its business market clients than public-catching games firms.

Spectrum magazines hit a peak, as the combined ABCs for *Crash*, *Your Sinclair* and *Sinclair User* top 250,000.

Distributor Mastertronic has to re-jig its Sega Master System prices after new aggressive moves by Dixons, which had reduced the 8-bit console from £99 to £79.

CTW February 29th 1988

CTW

Herman's no hermit

Only Frank Herman would announce his retirement and then immediately take three new jobs. That's the type of man he is, a workaholic.

He's also one of the father figures of the European games industry. He actually prefers 'Uncle Frank', but whatever he's been called over the years, he has always commanded respect.

The industry has changed a lot since Mastertronic came up with the idea of selling original computer games on cassettes at £1.99. But Frank hasn't.

His idea of a 'rest', after coming back from a health scare last year to steer Sega through the most difficult period in its European history, is to take a seat on the board at both Probe — one of the biggest and best developers in the world — and GT's new operation, which could emerge as a major software force this side of the Atlantic over the next year or two.

On top of all that, after leaving Sega in his current capacity of deputy chairman on April 30th, Herman will return as a non-executive director of the video games giant later in the summer.

Sega has sorted out its management during Herman's extended notice period, but is still trying to ensure that it doesn't run the risk of missing him too much — a wise move given the pressures that remain for that company. Probe and GT, meanwhile, have both achieved a major coup in gaining his input and association.

One of the old-style 'characters' of this industry (and always good for a quote), *CTW* sincerely wishes Frank Herman well in his new, hopefully more relaxed, position on the back-benches.

Stuart Dinsey

EVENT CHECK

FEBRUARY
Mac Shopper Show: February 25th-26th, Alexandra Palace, London. 0171 831 9252.

MARCH
National Computer Shopper Show: March 16th-19th, NEC Birmingham. 0121 767 434.
ECTS Spring: March 26th-28th, Olympia, 0181 742 2828.

APRIL
MIDI Electronic Music & Recording Show (MEMS '95): April 21st-23rdd, Olympia 2, London, 01225 442244.

CTW Event Check welcomes details of any shows or conferences being planned for the leisure/low end business marketplace. Please address all correspondence to CTW EVENT CHECK, Troopers Yard, 23 Bancroft, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1JW. Or fax us on 0462 442489.

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Please send your CV or letter of application to:
Rob Groves, Director of Human Resources,
MicroProse Ltd., The Ridge,
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