



# THE WAY

It's meant to be played

GeForce

All the best holiday games with the power of NVIDIA

# Crysis

Far Cry's creators outclass its already jaw-dropping technology with an epic new sci-fi battle



Battlefield 2142



World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade



Company of Heroes



Warhammer: Mark of Chaos

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Alcohol Reference

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# Notebooks are set to transform PC gaming

**T**he latest must-have gaming system is... a notebook PC. Until recently considered mainly a means for working on the move or for portable presentations, laptops complete with dedicated graphic processing units (GPUs) such as the NVIDIA® GeForce® Go 7 series are making a real impact in the gaming world. The advantages are obvious – gamers need no longer be tied to their desktop set-up.

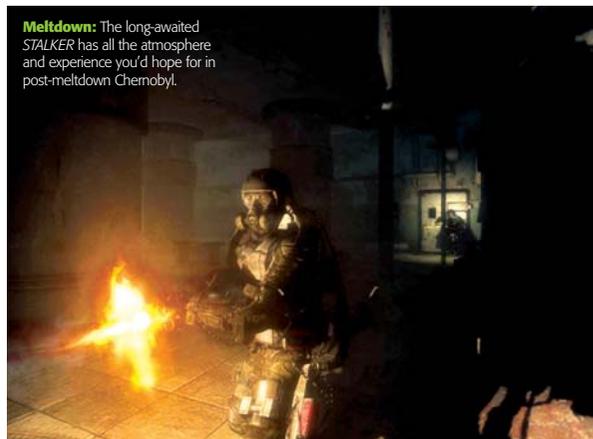
The new NVIDIA® GeForce® Go 7900 notebook GPUs are designed for extreme HD gaming, and gaming hardware specialists such as Alienware and Asus have seen the potential of the portable platform. Alienware's newly available 17" Aurora M9700 even incorporates two NVIDIA® GeForce® Go 7900 GS GPUs and features the NVIDIA® nForce® 4 SLI. Leading manufacturer Dell is also upgrading its XPS M1710 system to incorporate the NVIDIA® GeForce® Go 7950 GTX GPU.



**Latest thing:** Laptops complete with dedicated graphic processing units are making an impact in the gaming world.

For more on these systems see <http://www.alienware.com> and [www.dell.com](http://www.dell.com).

For details on the offerings by Asus, turn first to page 28 of this issue, where we reveal details of Asus' plans to transform notebook gaming.



**Meltdown:** The long-awaited *STALKER* has all the atmosphere and experience you'd hope for in post-meltdown Chernobyl.



## STALKER on the prowl again

**T**he long-awaited *STALKER*, the action game set in post-meltdown Chernobyl, is now confirmed to be released in the first three months of 2007. New screens and game levels from the Kiev-based programming team at

GSC were demonstrated to great acclaim at the Games Convention in Leipzig in August. Helen Jones, UK PR manager at publisher THQ, said: "Approximately a year ago, after we'd finished all the individual game components and brought

them together, we realized that we had to redress the balancing in order to achieve the atmosphere and experience that was the essence of *STALKER*. *STALKER* is very much on track and all the hard work that GSC has put into it is paying off."

## Welcome...

**Welcome to the 10th issue of *The Way It's Meant To Be Played***, the magazine dedicated to the very best in PC gaming. In this issue, we showcase 30 games, all participants in NVIDIA's The Way It's Meant To Be Played program. In this program, NVIDIA's developer technology engineers work with development teams to get the very best graphics and effects into their new titles. The games are then rigorously tested by three different labs at NVIDIA for compatibility, stability, and performance to ensure that any game carrying the TWIMTBP logo will deliver the ultimate install-and-play experience with an NVIDIA GeForce-based graphics card, especially in nForce-chipset based PCs, whether with Intel or AMD CPUs. This is one of the most exciting holiday seasons the PC has ever seen. The latest graphics and PC platform hardware from NVIDIA provides the most state-of-the-art platform for interactive entertainment. This season's titles are all amazing, regardless of the genre of game that you play, and all prove that an NVIDIA PC continues to set the high bar for interactive entertainment. I hope you enjoy the magazine – let us know if there's anything you think should be included in these pages.

### Bill Rehbock

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THE WAY

# Broken Sword: The Angel Of Death

Publisher: THQ Developer: Revolution Release: Out now



**S**ince his debut in *Broken Sword: The Shadow Of The Templars*, reluctant hero George Stobbart has defeated Mayan gods, foiled evil masterminds and even battled dragons. Now the multi-million selling star is back... and looking forward to the peace of a nine-to-five office job. Needless to say it's not long before he's on a brand new adventure, searching for a missing woman and an artifact of great and terrible power.

Built using a brand new game engine, this latest epic delivers a richer game world, more believable characters and a truly cinematic flavor. Thanks to the new proprietary Virtual Actor System, players can read characters' emotions, build up relationships and truly get involved in the story. The plot brilliantly mixes fact, fiction, conspiracy theories, cerebral puzzles and race-against-time action. It adds up to the most dynamic, detailed, action-packed *Broken Sword* adventure yet. ■



**Impressive comeback:** The brilliant *Broken Sword* series makes a triumphant return, with the action powered by a muscular new graphics engine.



## Case study: Dungeon Siege II: Broken World

Publisher: 2K Games Developer: Gas Powered Games Release: Out now

**P**icking up right where the bestselling sequel left off, *Dungeon Siege II: Broken World* serves up an all-new campaign packed with wondrous environments, formidable enemies, monstrous beasts and a whole load of new features. The ultimate aim is to hunt down the Dark Wizard and undo the evil brought to the world of Aranna, but this will require fighting through 10 hours of intense action, while an additional five hours of optional quests and levels further fleshes out the tale.

More than 40 new monsters feature this time around, plus new weapons, armor and magical items. Pets have also been added to enhance the gameplay, along with new races, new powers and skills, and new character classes. Finally, a newly-refined tactical battle system deepens the fighting fantasy experience. Note that *Dungeon Siege II: Broken World* requires the full version of *Dungeon Siege II* to play. ■

"... formidable enemies, monstrous beasts and a whole load of new features..."



**Epic action:** New lands, more outrageous creatures and a whole range of innovative extras make *Dungeon Siege II: Broken World* so much more than a simple add-on pack.



# LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy

Mix and match heroes, roam the universe... *LEGO Star Wars* is back

Publisher: LucasArts Developer: TT Games Release: Fall 2006



**A**rm yourself with your best Han Solo quips and start practising that Darth Vader breathing – the inspired digital collision between the world’s favorite toy line and the ultimate movie series is back. Combining the endlessly entertaining customization of LEGO with the plot, characters and action from George Lucas’ first three *Star Wars* films, *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy* puts players in the thick of the battle between the Galactic Empire and Rebel Alliance. The results are stunning, action-packed, and even funny.

Because this is the *Star Wars* saga retold with a LEGO twist, gamers now have the opportunity to build, as well as battle, their way through the trilogy’s most memorable

moments, from Darth Vader’s pursuit of Princess Leia’s craft at the beginning of Episode IV to the final showdown on the second Death Star (as seen in Episode VI).

### Cast of millions

Expanding on the winning formula that made the first *LEGO Star Wars* such a hit, this all-new adventure now makes it possible to mix and match body parts from more than 50 different playable characters, including Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, and Darth Vader, alongside cult favourites such as Greedo and the Jawas. The result is a potential cast of millions of customized *Star Wars* heroes! There are now more character-specific attacks too, ranging from Darth Vader’s choke force to Chewbacca’s talent

for pulling enemies’ LEGO arms right out of their sockets!

Best of all, characters are now able to ride creatures such as Banthas and Tauntauns, and even get in and out of vehicles including landspeeders, AT-STs and speeder bikes. The vehicle-based levels are free-roaming too, further opening up the lavish, LEGO-constructed environments. Then there’s the Free Play feature, which gives gamers the opportunity to explore the *Star Wars* universe with greater freedom, even changing the whole storyline!

Of course, every bit of action is depicted using an inimitable blend of cutting-edge TWIMTBP 3D with those familiar LEGO building blocks. That galaxy far, far away has never looked so cute! ■



**Building blocks:** All the classic scenes from the first three *Star Wars* films are brought to life, courtesy of a 3D engine blending classic LEGO design work with cool sci-fi visual effects.



### David Dootson, Travellers Tales:

“Working with NVIDIA on *LEGO Star Wars II* made a big difference. The detailed reports and great advice really helped us to improve our PC render pipeline. They gave us exactly the kind of support a developer really needs.”

**Feel the force:** Teamwork and the unique rebuildable possibilities of LEGO ensure puzzle-solving is an inspired affair in the world of *LEGO Star Wars*.



**The cute side:** Familiar sights, sounds and scenes from the first three *Star Wars* movies come to life, and this time the galaxy far, far away is built with LEGO!

**Space hopping:** Freeplay makes it possible to switch between characters at will in land-based levels and jump from vehicle to vehicle out in the space levels.

**Make it up:** Gamers get to play as more than 50 *Star Wars* characters, and can then even further mix and match body parts to create millions of new variations.



THE WAY



**Meet the troops:** Soldier animation is extraordinarily lifelike, while the incredible model detail gives each soldier a face and rank insignia visible on his uniform.

**Fire power:** Powered by the next-generation Essence Engine, *Company Of Heroes* introduces truly destructible battlefields.

**Artistic annihilation:** Advanced lighting, shadow, dust and smoke effects turn both day and nighttime battles into beautifully cinematic experiences.

**AI:** *Company Of Heroes'* 'Living Soldiers' feature ensures that every unit member acts realistically, adapting to the ever-changing battlefield terrain and executing authentic squad behavior.

# Company Of Heroes

Join the men of Able Company in this sensational, detailed and bloody World War II epic

Publisher: THQ Developer: Relic Entertainment Release: Out now

**Of the essence:** Relic's next-generation Essence Engine provides graphics quality and a physics-driven world previously unseen in the real-time strategy genre.

**T**rust Relic, the games development studio responsible for the groundbreaking *Homeworld*, *Impossible Creatures* and *Warhammer 40,000: Dawn Of War*, to push the real-time strategy genre to new heights. Months before its release, *Company Of Heroes* was already kicking up a storm, and notched up several Best Of Show awards at the 2006 E3 industry exhibition. Now you can find out for yourself what all the fuss is about.

The game follows the journey of the men assigned to Able Company as they fight in World War II. The war will take these men right across Europe, fighting in battles more cinematic, realistic and detailed than anything military fans have seen before.

Underpinning the *Company Of Heroes* experience is the Essence Engine, a cutting-edge system delivering ultra-high-

“... battles more cinematic, realistic and detailed than anything military fans have ever seen..”

quality visuals packed with high-resolution textures, real-world grime, detailed scenery, spectacular weapon and explosion effects and advanced lighting and shadows. It also makes full use of the highly-acclaimed Havok physics engine. In addition to turning the battlefield into a mass of flying shrapnel and tumbling bodies, this enables *Company Of Heroes* to break new ground with completely destructible battle environments. Soldiers can destroy anything, reshaping the entire battlefield, blasting terrain to block the enemy, and flattening sections to open up new possibilities. The result is that no two battles will ever be the same!

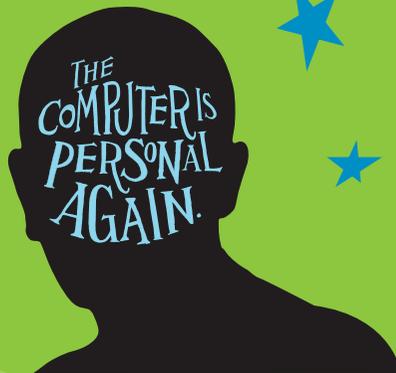
The game features period military hardware from BMW motorcycles, M3

Greyhounds and Howitzer artillery through to Panther tanks, Shermans and more. *Company Of Heroes* also introduces the concept of 'living soldiers'. Advanced squad AI enables soldiers to realistically adapt to and interact with changing environments; taking cover, attacking and executing advanced squad tactics. Soldier-types enrich both the solo and multiplayer experience, with engineers, rangers, stormtroopers, pioneers and other specialists displaying unique combat skills.

PC Gamer magazine recently wrote that *Company Of Heroes* “delivers a visceral punch made possible by a giant leap forward in ground-level RTS graphics technology”. That may well be an understatement. ■



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## HP Pavilion Media Center TV m7680n Desktop PC

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- Genuine Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition
- 2048MB PC2-4200 DDR2 system memory<sup>2</sup>
- 500GB (2 x 250GB) 7200rpm Serial ATA hard drives<sup>3</sup>
- SuperMulti DVD burner with LightScribe technology<sup>4</sup>
- NVIDIA GeForce® 7300 LE graphics card with TurboCache supporting up to 256MB shared video memory and TV-out capabilities<sup>2</sup>
- Wireless LAN 802.11b/g<sup>5</sup>
- HP wireless optical mouse and HP wireless keyboard with extended range (up to 16 feet)



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1. GHz refers to internal clock speed of the processor. Other factors besides clock speed may impact system and application performance. Dual Core is a new technology designed to improve performance of certain software products and hardware-aware multitasking operating systems and may require appropriate operating system software for full benefit. Check with software provider to determine suitability. Not all customers or software applications will necessarily benefit from use of this technology. 2. Up to 256MB of main system memory may be allocated to support video graphics. 3. When referring to hard drive capacity, 1GB = 1 billion bytes. Actual formatted capacity is less. 4. Actual speeds may vary. Does not permit copying of commercially available DVD movies or other copyright-protected materials. Intended only for creation and storage of original material and other lawful uses. Double Layer is a new technology. Double Layer media compatibility will widely vary with some home DVD players and DVD-ROM drives. LightScribe creates a grayscale image similar to a black-and-white photograph. LightScribe media required and sold separately. 5. Wireless access point required and is not included. Availability of public wireless access points limited. Wireless Internet use requires separately purchased Internet service contract.

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THE WAY

# Crysis

The makers of *Far Cry* return with an astonishing new sci-fi action romp

Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **Crytek** Release: **Winter 2006**



**Start praying:** The aliens in *Crysis* are as inventively designed as they are lethal. Using superior technology and working as a coherent attack force, they'll stop at nothing in their mission to bring Earth to its knees.



**T**he sound of gamers collectively gasping and countless jaws hitting the floor welcomed games developer Crytek to the scene just a few years ago. Touting a new game engine dubbed CryENGINE, this fledgling Frankfurt-based company appeared to have found a way to squeeze an entire tropical world inside a standard PC. Even cynics had to admit that the steady trickle of screenshots and videos showing off this new technology set a new standard for the real-time rendering of outdoor environments. But few expected that Crytek would be able to marry that game engine with solid gameplay. Then came *Far Cry*...

Here was a game that pushed the first person shooter genre to a new level, not

only thanks to those super-immersive visuals, but also through the clever use of AI, physics, and an open-ended mission system that enabled gamers to explore a whole island, tackling confrontations with the enemy in any way they saw fit. Players could pile in with all guns blazing; they could pick off targets from



**Left a bit:** The battle takes place on land, sea and air, showing off stunningly detailed environments.

half a mile away using a sniper rifle, or sneak around armed with little more than their wits and a knife. Needless to say, *Far Cry* was a massive success.

Now comes the company's sophomore effort, and it's clear the technical and creative minds at Crytek have been far from idle. Past glories have paved the way for a game that uses an even more advanced version of the studio's custom technology to thrust gamers right into an epic battle against an invading alien force. And this time around those beautiful environments are only the starting point. Add an enemy army, gigantic creatures, innovative weaponry, and more fresh ideas than the shoot-'em-up genre has seen in years... it's little wonder so many are eagerly awaiting the arrival of *Crysis*.



## THE GAMES



**The real world:**  
These environments aren't just pretty. They're also fully interactive. A real-time physics engine means that every piece of vegetation is affected by the wind; trees can be felled, landslides can change the geography, and weather systems can affect the course of battle.

**The game world:**  
The game world is awash with cool visual effects that take full advantage of NVIDIA GPU technology, including complex pixel shading, self-shadowing, and translucency.

**The experience:**  
Powered by CryENGINE 2, *Crysis* immerses players in the most realistic tropical environments ever seen on the PC. This is first-person action *The Way It's Meant To Be Played!*



“the real alchemy lies in the way *Crysis* combines gorgeous artwork and bleeding-edge technology to deliver a fuller interactive experience”

### Your mission

The story driving the action in *Crysis* is movie-like in scope. It kicks off in the year 2019, when a massive asteroid crashes into an island chain in North East Asia. The North Korean government quickly seals off the island, but the United States wastes no time sending its own Delta Force team in to assess the situation.

Inevitably, these long-opposing forces come face to face, but old rivalries quickly become irrelevant when the asteroid bursts open to reveal a gigantic alien craft. Having generated a huge force sphere, it quickly freezes a whole portion of the island and triggers a seismic shift in the global weather system. The invasion of Earth has begun, and so begins a battle through jungles, frozen landscapes and into the heart of the alien ship itself. And, needless to say, there's just one heroic soldier who can ultimately tip the scales, fighting relentlessly to save the planet and all of mankind.

The plot is impressive and involving, but of course it's the way that Crytek brings this futuristic war to life that really matters.

Powered by CryENGINE 2, the latest version of Crytek's leading-edge 3D game technology, this is a game boasting more detailed environments than PC gamers have ever seen before. It's not just that the engine is as brilliantly adept at depicting steamy jungles as frozen wastes; as good with foliage as flowing water, and as scenic when viewed at ground level as it is from the air. Or that the dynamic world is subject to earthquakes, landslides, tornadoes and even breaking ice. No, the real alchemy lies in the way *Crysis* combines gorgeous artwork and bleeding-edge technology to deliver a fuller interactive experience.



**Planet under pressure:** Only you can save the planet from ice-wielding aliens, arrived Trojan-style in an asteroid.

Some dynamic game elements only reveal themselves over time. Decisions made and actions taken can have a real effect on the game world, impacting on future events, and making the experience unique for each player. Others, however, are very clearly and wonderfully visible. Leaves are pushed aside as the player passes by, trees collapse to the ground as their trunks are blasted by gunfire, and whole environments are brought to a standstill when struck by freeze weapons.

### Scary monsters

Crytek has also taken lessons learned with *Far Cry* and used them to build a more involving and challenging kind of combat this time around. There are a wide variety of vehicles to play with, naturally, including trucks, boats, tanks and even helicopters. More importantly though, both the enemy and allied units are actually powered by an AI system that utilizes real-world military tactics. Aware that few games ever serve up truly memorable enemies, the company has also ▶



## THE WAY

### Scenery:

The island landscapes in *Crysis* stretch as far as the eye can see. If the view looks off to the horizon then that's exactly what's shown.

### Chill factor:

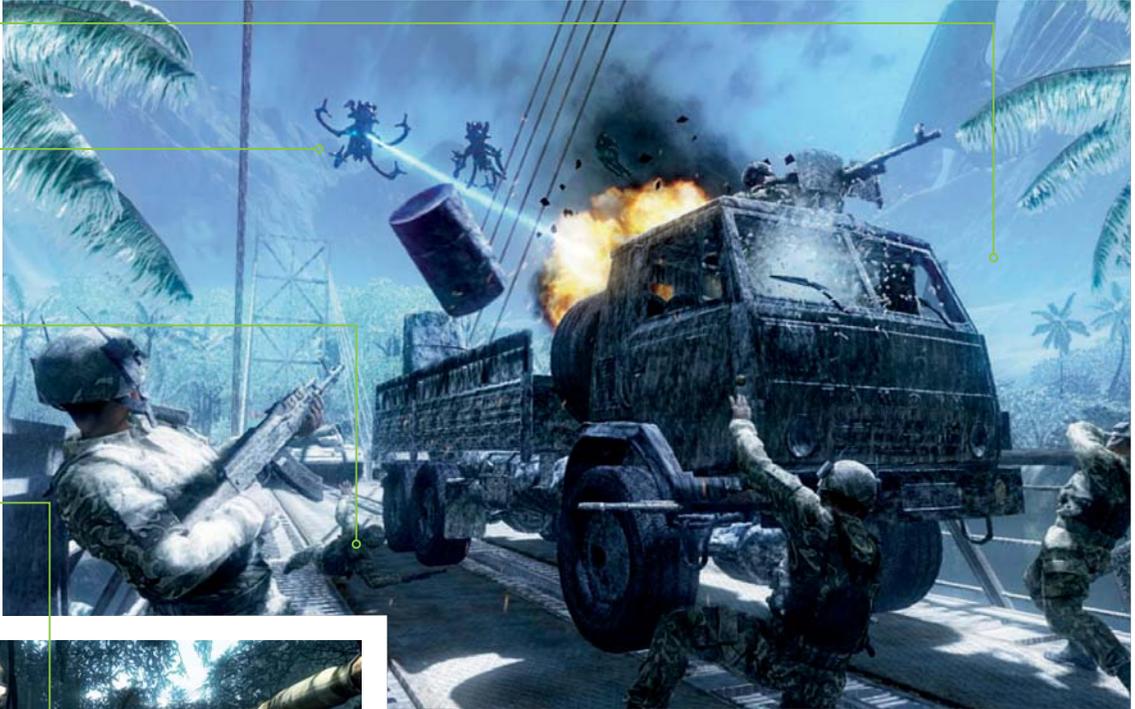
It's not only frozen wastelands that pose a threat. The aliens have access to devastating freeze guns that stop the enemy in their tracks. Frozen bodies will even fall to the ground and smash into tiny pieces.

### Modeling:

Every object in the game world casts a shadow and is blessed with incredible detail, thanks to multiple pixel shading effects, including bump maps, normal maps, specular highlights and dirty maps.

### Nice suit:

Even the player's attributes can be customized, thanks to a muscle suit with configurable abilities.



“Up to 32 gamers can head online and battle it out in death matches, with each player using body armor modifications and weapons customization”



worked hard to create an alien race that's original, frightening and highly logical. The aliens even use their senses intelligently, and will work in tandem with their fellow soldiers to eliminate any human threat.

*Crysis* is equally innovative when it comes to multiplayer gaming. Up to 32 gamers can head online and battle it out in tactical death matches, with each player using body armor modifications and weapons customization to tailor their in-game character to their exact tastes. And, of course, all the awesome engine features open up new strategic possibilities when in multiplayer mode. What's more, a robust mod toolset means that players can further expand both the single and multiplayer experience, creating their own levels, setting challenges, and taking the gameplay in exciting new directions.



This is a game built to last, with technology designed to take full advantage of Microsoft's upcoming Vista Operating System as well as the new Direct X10 graphics standard. Crytek is on the advisory board for Direct X10 so there's little doubt that CryENGINE 2 is really a genuinely groundbreaking affair.

The development team has also worked to ensure that the game runs beautifully on

PCs running Windows XP and Direct X9, of course, while fully scaleable visuals ensure smooth play on more modestly specced machines as well.

Already the recipient of 10 awards and 13 games industry nominations, *Crysis* is a truly astonishing achievement for Crytek, a relative newcomer to the scene. Who would have thought that *Far Cry* was only the warm-up act? ■

# Q&A



Cevat Yerli, joint managing director of Crytek, discusses everything beginning with Cry...

## How many people work at Crytek?

There are 128 development staff and growing, with almost everybody currently working on *Crysis*. We are always looking for passionate developers!

## Where did the original ideas for some of the most distinguishing features in *Crysis* come from?

The main desire was for maximum contrast with *Far Cry*, hence the development of the 'frozen paradise' theme. Then we developed motifs and reasons for that setting, picking the most dominant gaming enemy (the aliens) and setting new goals in development to achieve the desired benchmark qualities. At the same time we wanted to develop what we call Realistic Sci-Fi, hence we set up the political conflict as a vehicle to tell the story of the invasion.

## The gameplay in *Crysis* is popularly described as 'intense' – how do you fine-tune the balance between all-out action and more strategic interludes?

Its intensity comes from atmospheric gameplay, and supporting features such as amplified effects and player feedback. Ultimately, though, it's up to the player to 'create' intensity based on their own personal play style.

## How much is made within the game of the fact that you have two sworn enemies – US and N Korea – acting as allies together?

They have different weaponry and vehicles, ergo offering different gameplay. At a story level we present the alliance as a necessity for mankind to survive and where egos have to step aside to make this happen.

## What does real-time ambient lighting bring to the game?

The areas with real-time ambient maps have indirect lighting information that makes the scene look more smooth and realistic. It creates the closest possible thing to real-time radiosity lighting.

## How has Crytek's Polybump normal mapping technology been utilized and extended for use in *Crysis*?

The amount of detail and shading is drastically improved, everything behaves in a more video-realistic way. The high dynamic range lighting greatly improves the perceived realism, and the quality of imagery is just as crisp and vibrant but at the same time it's realistic.



## What post-processing effects does the game feature?

We use depth of field for things like the Ironsight, as well as object and camera-based motion blur to add intensity, speed and drama. We also stylize using color-filtering and lighting, while other special effects – such as refraction, glass, and water – also use a post-processing layer.

## How has the physics system been developed with regard to the way the player can now change the environment?

We can destroy structures, vegetation and trees in real-time, which increases the realism to a large degree. Characters use an advanced animation system including kinematics and dynamics solutions, a form of biometric simulation to offer smooth and video-real character acting.

## We've heard that *Crysis* is going to be made into a movie – is that a possibility?

Yes.

## And finally, which third party games are making use of CryENGINE?

The various ports of *Far Cry* use CryENGINE, of course. Beyond that it will be used in NCSoft's new massively multiplayer online game, *AION*. Newer projects should be announced shortly.

**1. The real thing:**  
The political conflict makes 'Realistic Sci-Fi' out of the alien invasion.

**2. All-out action:**  
Crytek's Polybump normal mapping technology has made *Crysis* truly video-realistic.

**3. Strategic pauses:**  
Choose the intensity level of your game by balancing planning and strategy with all-out alien attacking action.



## Cevat Yerli, joint managing director of Crytek:

"NVIDIA is a partnership provider deluxe. Anything we ask for gets done and supported – it couldn't be better. *Crysis* will very clearly showcase the results of our tight and intense partnership and collaboration."



**Useful landscape:** Environments form an integral part of the battle, with armies using the unique geography and properties of forests, swamps, plains and tundra to their advantage.

**Depth and detail:** The 3D visuals are capable of portraying massive battle scenes, while also showing each character in intricate detail.

**Characters a-plenty:** Mercenaries, trained soldiers and giant demons go head-to-head in the large scale battles of *Mark Of Chaos*.

**Multi-player:** The game's epic single-player story is complemented by a variety of multiplayer modes, enabling gamers to send thousands of troops into battle against human opponents, or even team up to fight through the campaign mode together.

# Warhammer: Mark Of Chaos

Hollywood producer Andrew Vajna delivers fantasy combat on the grand scale

Publisher: **Deep Silver** Developer: **Black Hole Entertainment** Release: **October**

**Y**ou may not have heard of **Black Hole Entertainment**, the studio behind *Warhammer: Mark Of Chaos*, but chances are you'll be familiar with the output of its owner, a certain Mr Andrew Vajna. A veteran Hollywood producer, he has been responsible for bringing classics such as *Rambo: First Blood*, *Total Recall*, *Jacob's Ladder* and *Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines* to the big screen.

That unique movie-making background has clearly given *Black Hole* an edge, helping the studio to give Games Workshop's legendary *Warhammer* franchise a uniquely cinematic videogame treatment. From the highly acclaimed opening animated sequence (created by the same team that worked on visual effects for that *Terminator 3* movie) through to the in-game depiction of blood-spattered battlefields, *Warhammer: Mark Of Chaos* draws gamers into the heart of

the battle, while simultaneously delivering scenes of combat on a massive scale.

### Battle-tastic

Bringing the races, factions, and creatures of the *Warhammer* fantasy world vividly to life, *Warhammer: Mark Of Chaos* does away with all the tedious aspects of base and resource management that usually feature in large-scale war titles. Instead the emphasis is firmly on the battles, with thousands of characters clashing on screen. It also gives gamers the opportunity to take command of heroes and champions. These unique characters possess the ability to learn new tactics, unlock new abilities, command ever larger units and even engage in spectacular duels to the death.

The game also ushers in a new era of customization to the real-time war genre, giving gamers the ability to swap body parts, make weapon and armor enhancements, and even paint units

and banners. They can also change the way their armies do battle, by bringing in mercenaries and 'dogs of war', to create a fully customized war machine.

But perhaps most important of all is the fact that the game's powerful 3D visuals, streamlined real-time strategy gameplay, and uniquely customizable design bring to life one of the most powerful and popular role-playing universes ever devised. *Mark Of Chaos* is destined to be as prized by die-hard *Warhammer* fans as by lovers of large-scale virtual war. ■



### Chris Wren, senior producer

"NVIDIA has been great with getting *Mark of Chaos* running at a fantastic frame rate. At E3 we demoed at an astonishing resolution of 2560 x 1600 on NVIDIA hardware and it ran great. Plus, its support with Shader model 3 has really made our lighting and textures come to life."



# Warhammer Online: Age Of Reckoning

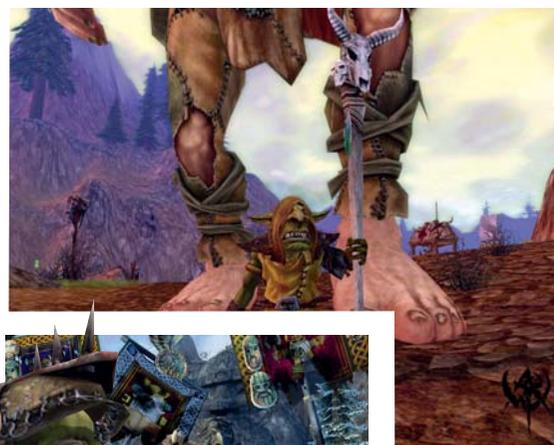
Publisher: **GOA** Developer: **Mythic Entertainment** Release: **October**

**W**ith *Age Of Reckoning*, the world-famous *Warhammer* universe heads online, bringing bloodshed, slaughter and fantasy combat to the internet on a grand scale!

Created by Mythic Entertainment, the developer responsible for the highly successful *Dark Age Of Camelot*, *Warhammer Online: Age Of Reckoning* gives gamers the chance to play as dwarfs, high elves or humans under the banner of Order, or follow the path of evil by leading Orcs, Goblins, Dark Elves and evil human worshippers of Chaos.

With hundreds of thousands of players able to dive into the *Warhammer* fantasy experience, this is war on an epic scale. There are four levels of combat in all, ranging from skirmishes to all-out invasion campaigns, with additional quests, skills

and customizable armor making it possible for gamers to tailor the game to suit their own tastes. In addition to its gameplay innovations, *Age Of Reckoning* also does an amazing job of bringing the environments and inhabitants of the *Warhammer* universe to life. Landscapes are packed with detail and character models are incredibly varied, with every aspect of the design faithful to the original fantasy game. Note that *Warhammer Online: Age Of Reckoning* requires a subscription to play. ■



**Get the look:** Gamers can fully customize their characters in the online world. Their physical appearance will even change as they grow in experience and power.

## Case study: Warhammer 40,000 Dawn Of War: Dark Crusade



Publisher: **THQ** Developer: **Relic Entertainment** Release: **Out now**

**T**his brand new expansion pack for the award-winning *Warhammer 40,000 Dawn Of War* takes gamers to the mysterious planet of Kronus. Here, under the central desert, lies a honeycomb of skull-lined tunnels and funeral chambers. Now, a million years since it was filled with plague-ridden bodies, the tunnels are exposed once more, and the deathless are starting to rise. Playing as one of seven races, gamers must engage in a battle for control over this mysterious planet,

taking stronghold after stronghold, while also unlocking the planet's dark secrets. Along the way they have the opportunity to customize their commander as he grows in power and influence, while also managing a fighting force whose numbers and attributes are carried over from one conflict to the next. Combining the highly acclaimed gameplay and 3D visuals of the original *Dawn Of War* with a compelling non-linear storyline, this is a must-have for *Warhammer* videogame fans. ■



**Evil force:** Seven races battle for supremacy of the planet, and all the while an ancient, evil force is ready to rise from beneath the ground.

**"Under the desert lies a honeycomb of skull-lined tunnels and funeral chambers"**





THE WAY

# Paraworld

Publisher: Deep Silver Developer: Sunflowers Release: Out now

**F**rom Sunflowers, the creators of the highly-acclaimed *Anno* strategy series, comes an incredible journey into an alternative reality.

Taking command of any one of three unique tribes – Norsemen, Dustriders or the Dragon Clan – players build their own armies and battle their way through five radically different climactic zones. Using a unique ‘Army Controller’ system to control their tribe, gamers must forge through 16 distinct levels. It’s a journey that gives warmongers the unique opportunity to control dinosaurs as well as human units and devastating weaponry. Combat units have their own special abilities and ‘finishing moves’, while hero characters facilitate the construction of buildings and can even develop new abilities. With its unique combination of prehistoric wonders and 19th-century technology, *Paraworld* pushes the real-time strategy genre into a new space and time! ■

**A revolution:** *Paraworld* revitalizes real-time strategy with brilliantly evocative visuals, a unique prehistoric-meets-Victorian-era world, and a revolutionary unit-management system.



## Case study: Dark Messiah Of Might & Magic

Publisher: Ubisoft Developer: Arkane Studios Release: Out now



**Ugly mug:** An enhanced version of Valve's *Half-Life 2 Source* game engine, provides astonishing attention to detail.

**C**ombine the impressive skills of Arx Fatalis developer Arkane Studios with the unsurpassed power of the *Half-Life 2 Source* game engine and the result is a groundbreaking new journey into the legendary *Might & Magic* universe.

*Dark Messiah* combines first-person action with truly epic adventuring, its story offering gamers the opportunity to enter the hitherto unexplored lands of Ashan where

12 levels await, all of which are littered with evil creatures and untold treasures.

*Dark Messiah* may be packed with the depth of a genuine role-playing game, but it's one that makes full use of that powerful game engine to create a more accessible and contemporary experience. Combat is a wholly interactive affair, pumped up with cool visual effects, detailed creature models, and carried out using more than 30 different weapon types and a variety of devastating spells. The game also comes with a robust multiplayer element, specially created for the game by veteran developers Kuji. Here a whole variety of play modes enable warriors and magicians to wage epic online battles, the *Crusade* game mode even introduces the concept of character evolution. ■

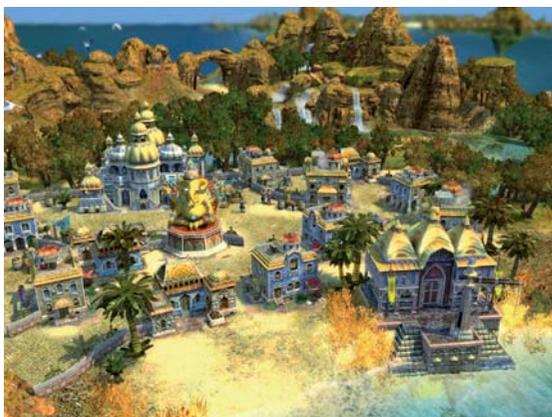
*“Dark Messiah combines first-person action with truly epic adventuring in the unexplored lands of Ashan.”*





# Anno 1701

Publisher: Deep Silver Developer: Sunflowers Release: TBC



**W**ith a budget of €8 million, this is the most expensive computer game ever developed in Germany, and one of the biggest-budget real-time strategy games, full stop.

The fruits of this investment are plain to see, with a game that builds on the

**Magical kingdom:** Explore new continents and foreign cultures, and build your own civilization, in the lavishly appointed *Anno 1701*.

winning concept of its multi-million-selling predecessor to deliver a unique blend of spectacle, discovery and empire-building. Bringing to life a 16th- and 17th-century world in beautiful detail, *Anno 1701* blends gorgeous artwork with cutting-edge 3D.

Flora and fauna, village life and even natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are all rendered with a level of detail hitherto unseen in this genre. It's not just the visuals that are inviting – an intuitive interface

and unique information mode provide beginners with a smooth learning curve, while the multi-layered gameplay – featuring more than 100 subquests and offering the opportunity for every strategy from diplomacy to sabotage – adds depth to both the single player, co-operative, and competitive multiplayer modes. Created with the input of thousands of owners of the previous *Anno* titles, this is both an answer to the fans' dreams and an ideal entry point for newcomers to this highly acclaimed series. ■

## Case study: El Matador

Publisher: Ceneg Publishing Developer: Plastic Reality Release: Out now

**T**he war against Central and South American drugs barons hits the PC screen with a bang, in this wildly inventive, adrenaline-fuelled 3D action title from Plastic Reality Technologies.

Players take the role of the one and only El Matador, a DEA special agent sent on a mission into Colombia to bust the drugs syndicates and bring down the bad guys by any means necessary. Powered by the proprietary Typhoon 2 game engine, *El Matador's* beautiful visuals are awash with the latest graphical effects.

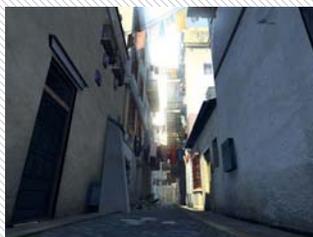
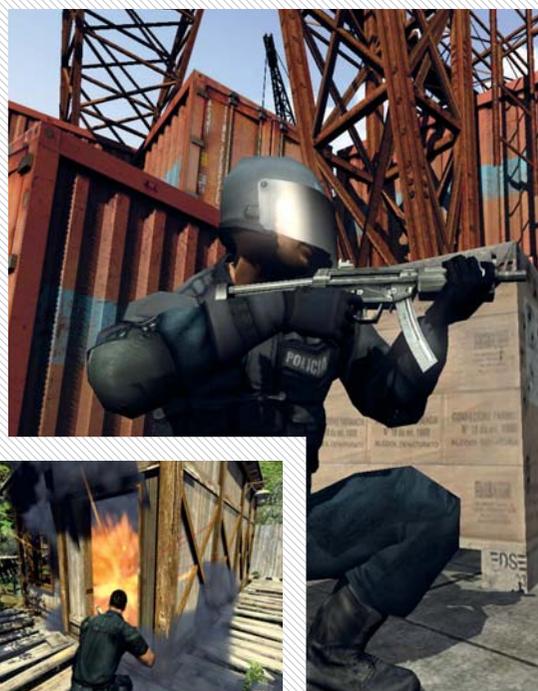
If you can think of an innovative technique used for the creation of the finest possible 3D graphics, chances are you'll find it included in Typhoon 2. Features include per-pixel atmospheric scattering, realistic water rendering, fully dynamic per-pixel shadows based on cascading shadow map technology, a lightmap system with global illumination, plus both specular and bumpmaps applied to every single object in the game. Per-pixel atmospheric scattering is also supported, with advanced terrain

texture blending enabling *El Matador* to render environments containing a huge amount of trees, bushes, grass and other dynamic foliage.

Typhoon 2 also pushes the envelope through a range of cool post-processing effects, such as motion and radial blur, depth of field and colour grading.

A huge range of particle systems is also on hand to add further sheen, with fire, smoke, explosion and muzzle flash effects bringing battles alive with a genuinely movie-like appearance. ■

**Watch your back:** Real-time physics and advanced enemy AI help bring the South American locations of *El Matador* alive, and make it all the easier for our hero to wind up dead.





THE WAY

# The Lord Of The Rings, The Battle For Middle-earth II, The Rise Of The Witch-king

Brace yourselves for a new trip to Middle-earth with this epic expansion pack

Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **Electronic Arts** Release: **November 2006**

**E**verything about **JRR Tolkien's** amazing saga is epic in scope, whether in its three-book original form, silver screen incarnation, or in the award-winning videogames from Electronic Arts. Needless to say, this new expansion pack for *The Lord Of The Rings, The Battle For Middle-earth II* is no exception. Prepare for a new trip to Middle-earth that expands upon the original title's acclaimed gameplay, adding new strategic depth and a host of innovative new features.

Drawing directly on the original stories, this new pack portrays events prior to the award-winning movies, with a new campaign

chronicling the Witch-king's rise to power, domination of Angmar, and the invasion of Amor – home of Aragorn's ancestors.

### New challenges

*The Lord Of The Rings, The Battle For Middle-earth II, The Rise Of The Witch-king* puts a whole new spin on the original's acclaimed real-time gameplay. Players can march into war in control of an entirely new faction, while the addition of new units for each of the existing six races (including Elves, Dwarves and Goblins) results in completely new combat challenges. Even the most hardened *Battle For Middle-earth II* gamer will need to adapt to these radically

different unit types and formulate brand new strategies to succeed out on the battlefield.

This expansion also lets gamers fully experience the evil side of Middle-earth, with the ability to play as the Angmar in skirmish, multiplayer and War Of The Ring modes. Furthermore, the game's Create-A-Hero component now includes an entirely new Troll class, with all new weapons and armor, allowing even greater customization. The War Of The Ring mode has also been upgraded, with improved army persistence, a new siege dynamic on the epic 'Risk-style' Living World Map, plus unified territories that now serve as major control points. This is a must-have for fans of *The Battle For Middle-earth II*. ■

**Bigger and better:** A whole new campaign plus new features and enhancements including an improved War Of The Ring and Create-A-Hero feature in *The Battle For Middle-earth II, The Rise Of The Witch-king*.



**1. More mayhem:** Gamers can finally flex their muscles as an agent of evil, wreaking havoc on the lands of Middle-earth!

**2. New army:** A new faction and new unit types give the combat in *The Rise Of The Witch-king* a completely new flavor.

**3. Enhancements:** This expansion offers enhancements for the original's existing features, including upgraded Create-A-Hero and War Of The Ring modes.





## THE GAMES

# Sid Meier's Railroads

Publisher: 2K Games Developer: Firaxis Release: Out now



**Working on the railroad:** Sid Meier is back, with his most graphically ambitious and involving tycoon strategy.



**O**ne of the world's finest games designers, Sid Meier has been responsible for some of the best strategy titles of the last two decades. Now at last he has returned to the rail series that helped launch the whole 'tycoon' genre, and in doing so he has constructed a game far more ambitious in scope and execution than anything that's gone before.

The world of *Railroads* is played out in real-time. Lay the tracks and route the trains and the 3D world springs to life; with cities and industries growing, and rail lines visibly carrying cargo to and fro. It's easy to start laying tracks, but it's quite another matter to create a successful rail line that will form the basis of a locomotive empire, and fuel progression from primitive steam engines through to ultra-modern bullet trains. The game features more than 30 train types, along with a 'LocoBuilder' option, while the scenario and map editors offer further customization. It's even possible to empire-build, battling rival players for supremacy. If you thought the railroads were something for transpotters, it's time to think again. ■

## Case study: Pirates Of The Caribbean Online

Publisher: Disney Online Developer: Disney Interactive Release: 2007

**P**repare to set sail on the high seas of the Caribbean, embarking on a quest for adventure, fame and fortune in the time of the infamous Captain Jack Sparrow. This is massively multiplayer gaming with more swashbuckling, more adventuring, and more buried treasure than has ever been seen online before! Gamers will experience the adventures depicted in the movies and also explore beyond their boundaries to discover further exotic locales, unravel new myths and stories. They will play alongside thousands of other hardy adventurers as they battle the undead and other evil forces in a bid to become one of the most legendary pirates on the high seas. Creating a unique pirate character (complete with optional eye patch, tattoos, scars, or even peg leg!), gamers can purchase and customize their very own ship, setting sail with a crew and using advanced weaponry, working their

voodoo magic and building up both riches and reputation along the way. With total freedom to tackle quests in any way, players can choose to forge alliances, build a crew or even join a guild. Just remember that traps, double crosses and ambushes are always around the corner! ■



### Shiver me timbers!:

You've seen the movies – now live the legend, in the beautifully cartoon-like, massively multiplayer online incarnation of *Pirates Of The Caribbean*.



"...more swashbuckling, more adventuring than ever seen online!"



THE WAY

# The Way It's Meant To Be Played With Eidos

The legendary games publisher unveils its next four visionary PC titles

**S**ixteen years since its formation and Eidos continues to go from strength to strength. Technology has changed beyond all recognition since those early days, but the legendary British developer and publisher's commitment to innovation has remained constant.

The *Tomb Raider* series remains its best known achievement, but beyond Lara Croft's adventures, games like *Thief*, *Legacy Of Kain*, *Commandos*, *Deux Ex* and *Hitman* have pushed the boundaries and

garnered legions of fans. Now part of SCI Entertainment, Eidos is about to unleash its most exciting titles yet. From a brand new, child-friendly LEGO adventure to the videogame adaptation of a Tarantino movie masterpiece, this quartet represents the publisher's finest line-up to date. ■

**"The legendary developer's commitment to innovation has remained constant"**



## Reservoir Dogs

Publisher: Eidos Developer: Volatile Release: Out now



chance to step into the formidable shoes of every key character. And it's not just the 3D visuals, suitably beefed up when paired with NVIDIA hardware, that help the game pack a punch. With the original *Super Sounds Of The Seventies* soundtrack and Michael Madsen reprising his role as Mr Blonde, this is as faithful a rendition of the cult movie as any Tarantino fan could ever hope for. ■

**Stick 'em up:** Take hostages, battle the police, engage in high speed chases, and manipulate your colleagues – it's all in a day's work when you're playing *Reservoir Dogs*.

**A** game so controversial it's already been refused classification by censors in Australia, *Reservoir Dogs* more than lives up to the classic movie's reputation as a brutal and stylish depiction of life in a criminal gang.

Closely following the events of Quentin Tarantino's original script, the game re-lives events leading up to an armed robbery on a diamond store and deals with the bloody aftermath. But experiencing familiar

scenes laced with that trademark blend of coolness, violence and electric dialogue is only half the fun. The videogame fleshes out the story, letting fans get involved in the diamond store robbery and answering all those tantalizing questions, such as just how Mr Blonde made it back to the warehouse and whether Mr Pink ultimately survived. In signature Tarantino non-chronological order, the game switches between events and characters, with the





# Just Cause

Publisher: Eidos Developer: Avalanche Studios Release: Fall

**I** magine a virtual game world encompassing over 1,000 square kilometers of mountains, jungles, beaches, and cities. Now imagine being able to explore this beautifully varied and immersing environment through access to a wide range of vehicles, the ability to pull off daring stunts – leaping from one moving car to another, skydiving, base-jumping and parachuting. If that all sounds too good to be true, it's because the corrupt government of San Esperito have other ideas.

They'll stop at nothing to thwart your mission as a CIA operative to bring about a rebellion in this corrupt country, so it's just as well missions can be tackled in a totally freeform manner, alliances with local guerrillas can be used to change the balance of power in the various provinces, and that a CIA support team is on hand to provide additional support and land, sea and air-based vehicles. Totally cinematic yet truly open-ended, gloriously complex yet packed with action and drama, *Just Cause* is next-gen gaming at its most imaginative and ambitious. ■



**Larger than life:** Thanks to its custom-built Avalanche Engine, *Just Cause* delivers a seamless, procedurally-generated landscape larger and more detailed than any other game environment around.

# Bionicle Heroes

Publisher: Eidos Developer: TT Games Release: TBC

**F** rom the makers of the best-selling *LEGO Star Wars: The Videogame* comes an adventure starring the most powerful LEGO characters around.

With this all-new action adventure, gamers play out a brand new *BIONICLE* adventure, taking control of a young hero as he steps out of the real world and into the beautiful but deadly alternative universe. *BIONICLE Heroes* uses a powerful 3D engine with a cool over-the-shoulder viewpoint that brings the new 2006 toy range, including the mighty Inika and the villainous Piraka, and lavish environments to life in spectacular style. Players get to explore jungles and volcanoes, learn to walk through fire, and climb sheer cliff faces as they solve puzzles and master the unique powers and weapons of the *BIONICLE* universe. This may be LEGO, but it's by no means kids' stuff! ■



**Laser blast:** The best-selling *LEGO BIONICLE* range comes to life, courtesy of the same team behind the awesome *LEGO Star Wars* games.



**Water world:** With 60 different airborne and water-based craft played out using a cutting-edge graphics engine, this is one war you'll be glad to sign up for.

# Battlestations: Midway

Publisher: Eidos Developer: Mithis Entertainment Release: Fall

**A** t last, a game that takes combat on to the high seas! You may have answered the call of duty and earned several medals of honor, but nothing will have prepared you for the water-borne experience of *Battlestations: Midway*. Utilizing a unique blend of third-person action and large-scale naval combat recreation, this is a World War II shooter unlike any other.

Blasting across the Pacific – from the brutal attack on Pearl Harbour through the Philippines and on to the epic Battle Of

Midway – the game presents a myriad of WWII fighting machines – battleships, aircraft carriers, fighter aircraft, dive bombers and even submarines. It's a brilliant approach that makes for a non-stop action experience that uses a cutting edge graphics engine, stunning real-world effects, and gorgeous artwork whether you're training with the naval academy or commanding the fleet. With online play for up to eight combatants, taking full advantage of the 60 different airborne and water-based craft, this is one war you'll be glad to sign up for. ■



THE WAY

# World Of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade



World's biggest multiplayer role-playing game just got bigger

Publisher: **Blizzard Entertainment** Developer: **Blizzard Entertainment** Release: **TBC**

**A** **must-have add-on for World Of Warcraft**, the world's most popular massively multiplayer online role-playing game (4.5 million players and counting!), *The Burning Crusade*, introduces a new story that takes place some years after the Burning Legion's defeat at Mount Hyjal, when the heroes of the Horde and the Alliance have begun to explore new lands and have broken through the Dark Portal to realms beyond the known world.

Embarking on this new adventure, *Warcraft* gamers will find two new playable

racess – the Blood Elves and the Draenei. No longer trusted by the Alliance, the Blood Elves have joined the Horde to hunt down the demons that destroyed their homeland of Quel'Thalas. The Draenei are descended from the Eredar, the same ancient race as Archimonde, leader of the Burning Legion's invasion of Azeroth. Having resisted the demonic forces that corrupted their brethren, the Draenei have devoted themselves to ending the Legion's apocalyptic crusade.

The game also opens up Outland, a foreboding continent last seen in the *Warcraft III* videogame. Players will also gain access to Quel'Thalas, the region to the northeast of the Plaguelands, the Azuremyst Isles, the Caverns Of Time, and a whole host of new battlefields and dungeons.

**Pick me:** Players can finally choose character classes that were previously unavailable to their faction.

Character development also benefits from a range of additions, including a new jewelcrafting profession, a new experience level cap of 70, and two new player classes – Shaman and Paladin. And of course new lands and quests bring a new bestiary, with even more nightmarish and powerful creatures to face. There's also a whole new range of armor sets, weapons, and other items. Socketable items are now available, and players can even use flying mounts for the first time!

With so many new features and extras in *The Burning Crusade* it's almost an injustice to call it a mere expansion pack. ■

**"With so many new features it's almost an injustice to call it a mere expansion pack."**

**1. Creature comfort:** New lands, new playable races, a new bestiary of creatures and the addition of flying mounts all help to add a new dimension to exploration and combat in *The World Of Warcraft*.



**2. Come with me:** New battlegrounds, dungeons and exotic lands await in the *World Of Warcraft* expansion set.

**3. Monster war:** The spectacular massively multiplayer sensation that is *World Of Warcraft* gets bigger, better, and even more challenging, with the brand new add-on.



# F.E.A.R. Extraction Point

Publisher: Vivendi Developer: Timegate Studios Release: Fall 2006

**T**he shoot-'em-up took a groundbreaking detour into cinematic horror territory with the arrival of the award-winning *F.E.A.R.* Now comes the very first expansion pack. Developed by TimeGate Studios in conjunction with original developer Monolith Productions, *F.E.A.R. Extraction Point* picks up right where the original left off. And that means it begins with a bang!

The First Encounter Assault Recon team are back, and this time they're battling the newly freed Alma and her minions right across the length and breadth of a ruined city. With another superbly plotted set of missions to play through, that innovative combination of intense combat, slow motion gunplay, and genuinely unnerving chills and scares remains as powerful and addictive as ever. And with unfamiliar city locations, new weapons, plus a range of new enemies to deal with, this add-on pack also unleashes a whole bunch of brand new challenges and thrills for those who think they can handle the pace of life as a *F.E.A.R.* team member. ■



**Thrills and spills:** Get ready for new horrors, even more close quarters combat, and countless fresh adrenaline jolts, in *F.E.A.R. Extraction Point*.



## Case study: F.E.A.R. Combat

Publisher: Vivendi Developer: Monolith Productions Release: Out now



**Y**ou are an elite soldier trained to deal with unusual situations others can't even imagine. Called in to confront a murderous force with paranormal abilities, you must contain a crisis spiralling quickly out of control. Discover the true meaning of *F.E.A.R.* in this unique fusion of stylized FPS combat and supernatural suspense.

*F.E.A.R. Combat* is the free downloadable multiplayer component to *The Way It's Meant To Be Played Gamers' Choice Awards 2006 "Game of the Year"* and "Best Action Shooter" *F.E.A.R.* (First Encounter Assault Recon). This multiplayer component includes 10 multiplayer modes, 19 multiplayer maps, and the ability to play against the owners of the retail version of *F.E.A.R.* as well as

the other *F.E.A.R. Combat* users.

The intense multiplayer combat experience is brought to life by cinematic effects that see you showered with debris, blinded by smoke and totally immersed in the battle. The latest in DirectX 9.0

rendering technology uses real-time per-pixel lighting, shadow volumes, normal mapping and advanced shaders to create an environment so immediate that the terror and adrenaline grips like never before.

Visit [www.nzone.com/joinfear](http://www.nzone.com/joinfear) now to download your copy of the game and receive a registration key that will enable you to play for free. ■



**Free download:** *F.E.A.R. Combat* includes 10 multiplayer modes and 19 multiplayer maps, and it's free!



**Big baddie:**  
In the fast and furious war zones of *Battlefield 2142* gamers can take control of menacing Battle Walkers, high speed recon vehicles, and ground and air-based personnel carriers.

**Great gadgets:**  
As befitting a game set more than 100 years in the future, *Battlefield 2142* comes fully armed with high powered assault rifles, EMP grenades, smart mines, sentry guns and even cloaking devices – weapons and gadgets that change the face of online combat.

**Planet Earth?:**  
It's Earth, but not as we know it. The war unfolds in the dawn of a new Ice Age, and the game goes all out to depict the radically altered landscapes of Europe, Asia and North Africa with a wealth of detail.

**Play with me:**  
With up to 64 gamers fighting it out at any one time, teamwork is everything in the online world of *Battlefield 2142*.



# Battlefield 2142

The next generation of sci-fi combat reaches the battlefield

Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **Digital Illusions** Release: **Out now**



**T**he *Battlefield* series may well be the most popular online military series ever created. Now it's time for a new kind of conflict as *Battlefield 2142* thrusts gamers into a new kind of sci-fi-flavored war. Here two superpowers – the European Union and the Pan Asian Coalition – fight for supremacy on an Earth ravaged by a new Ice Age, utilizing an astonishing range of advanced technology to gain control of the remaining habitable areas of the planet.

Where previous *Battlefield* games did an amazing job of recreating the hardware used in wars past and present, *Battlefield 2142* sees that expertise teamed with real imagination and vision, bringing to life a dazzling array of powerful vehicles, weapons and armor that feels at once authentic yet

out of this world. From cloaking devices, smart mines and EMP grenades to futuristic aircraft and massive land walkers, the field of combat comes alive with a devastating and brilliantly nuanced range of military toys!

### Strategic assaults

Supporting up to 64 players online, *Battlefield 2142* promotes teamplay like never before, with gamers choosing to stake their lives as part of a squad out on the front lines, or to head behind the scenes to direct the strategic assaults of their team-mates in Commander Mode. And, for the first time in the *Battlefield* franchise, gamers can play the brand new Titan mode. Here team members must work together to defeat the enemy's Titan – a massively heavily armored warship – while simultaneously defending their own.

Bringing down one of these behemoths is no easy task. Even once its shield defences have been brought down, soldiers must then battle to its inner core before detonating a charge right at its heart.

This is also a game with a persistent battlefield, rewarding gamers by increasing their rank and unlocking new awards – about five times more than featured in *Battlefield 2*. Equipment, medals and other rewards are also awarded in-game, while unlocks are made available immediately upon respawn, making for a multiplayer experience that's as fast-moving and dynamic as it is explosive. Players also get to expand their range of abilities, even blending multiple player classes such as assault, recon, or engineer.

*Battlefield 2142* is next generation multiplayer combat in every sense. ■



# FlatOut 2

Publisher: Empire Interactive Developer: Bugbear Games Release: Out now



**Smash 'em up:** With twice as many vehicles and tracks as its predecessor, a more involving career mode, better AI and even greater emphasis on smashing everything to pieces, *FlatOut 2* presents the ultimate combination of destruction and speed.

**I**f there's one thing more satisfying than driving a supercharged vehicle at high speed, it's doing so on dirty, deadly tracks where the next crash is just a heartbeat away. Little wonder more than 800,000 gamers bought into the accelerated destruction of the original *FlatOut*. Featuring an enhanced physics engine, even faster tracks, and a truckload of improvements and additions, this sequel now takes the battle to be first past the finish line to another level.

Every track now boasts more than 5,000 fully destructible objects, each vehicle is built from 40 deformable parts, and the interaction between everything is modelled more accurately than ever before. And this time round, smashing things up brings greater rewards, triggering all kinds of mayhem as drivers spend as much time bashing into each other as putting their foot to the floor. And of course the *FlatOut* experience wouldn't be complete without a selection of Demolition Arenas or those rag doll stunt models. If you thought the original game was packed with senseless destruction, just wait until you see what *FlatOut 2* can do. ■

## Case study: Caesar IV

Publisher: Sierra Entertainment Developer: Tilted Mill Entertainment Release: Out now



**Play for power:** *Caesar IV* offers a giant leap forward over its predecessors, with an alluring new 3D viewpoint, more complex social interactions, and even more finely-tuned economic, political, and commerce-based gameplay.

**T**he latest in this acclaimed strategy series casts gamers as a provincial governor with big ambitions. Taking control of a small portion of ancient Rome, it's the governor's task to lay out the roads, begin construction of the buildings, and design a new home where citizens can live happily and free from barbarian threats. Manage this delicate balance and grow the area into a successful metropolis and promotions await. Rise far enough through the political ranks and there's even the coveted title of Caesar! Putting a whole new perspective on the series, *Caesar IV* provides a full 3D depiction of

every aspect of life in ancient Rome. A selection of building types are available, with the opportunity to further customize their designs through unique decorations. A successful city requires more than bricks and mortar, of course. New realistic citizen behaviors and the inclusion of 75 unique characters truly help bring this civilization alive, while the ability to open trade routes with both neighboring and distant provinces further strengthens the game's economic elements. Not that it's all plain sailing, with the ever-present threat of fire, plague, riots, food shortages, and raids – but then Rome wasn't built in a day... ■





THE WAY

# FPS Creator

Love first-person action games? Now you can create your own!

Publisher: **The Game Creators** Developer: **The Game Creators** Release: **Out now**

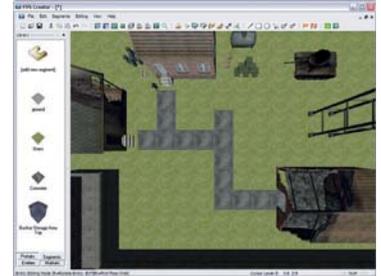
**F**rom **The Game Creators** comes a stunning new tool for the creation of first-person shooter games. From the dark horror of games like *Doom 3* through to the epic sci-fi of the *Half Life* series, the endless range of possibilities offered by this genre has made it the most enduring on the PC. Now *FPS Creator* gives power to the people.

Using an intuitive editor it's possible to build a brand new game without all the days, weeks and months of sweat that regular game development teams have to endure, not to mention without any of the costs, or indeed the need for a whole team! Instead, the user can simply drag and drop walls, environmental elements such as doors and lifts, place weapons and ammo, and set up

enemy positions and behaviors – all with pixel-perfect precision. A single click of the mouse is all that's required to change these easily-created level designs into a brand new, ready-to-play, first-person action game.

### Easy to use

With the 3D editor removing the need for any 3D modeling or programming skills by making it possible to virtually 'paint' elements into the game world in real-time, *FPS Creator* also does away for the need for any artistic skills at all! The program comes with 800 ready-made game objects and segments, including 62 different types of enemy and 18 weapons including a shotgun and a sniper rifle, with hundreds more objects available online. This wealth of content frees



gamers to concentrate on building the kind of game they want. Alternatively, the more artistically inclined can design their own walls, doors, rooms and windows to import.

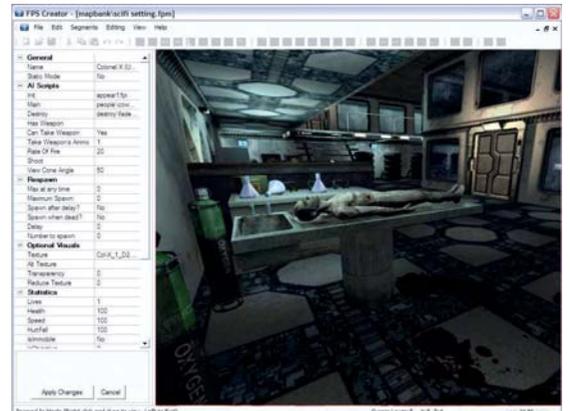
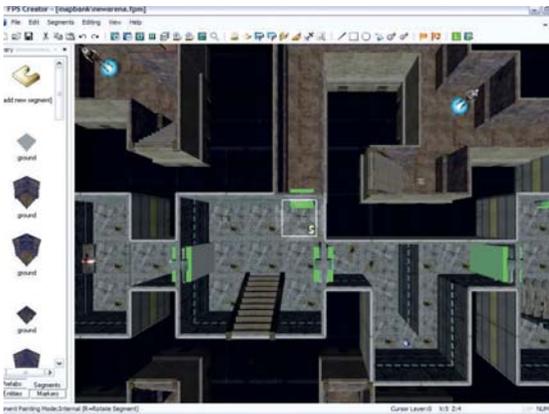
Of course there's more to a great first-person shooter than well designed environments. *FPS Creator's* powerful AI and physics systems mean gamers can even add their own game logic to add further drama. And once a game is complete, it can be burned to CD or DVD and passed on to friends, ready for multiplayer battles across LAN or over the Internet. *FPS Creator's* content is free of licensing restrictions, so it's even possible to sell any games created with it. Who knows where it might lead? ■

### Get creative:

Entire first-person action games can be created in a matter of minutes, and all without any prior programming or art skills.

### Total control:

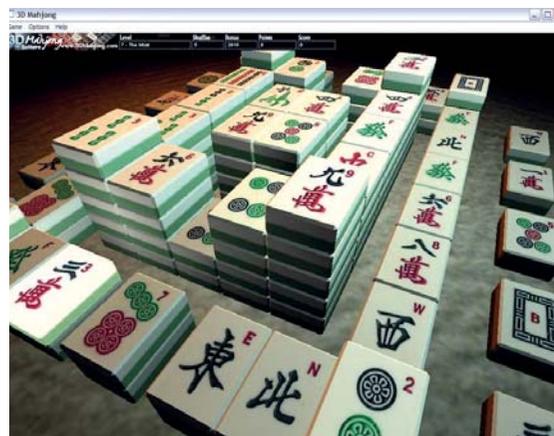
*FPS Creator's* intuitive map editor lets gamers drag and drop objects and elements right into their game level. Scripting tools then offer total control of enemy AI, physics and other variables.





**Fine tuning:**  
Dark BASIC Professional's powerful 2D and 3D engine controls enable coders to create their own unique 3D games and they even make use of the latest NVIDIA-support pixel and vertex shader effects.

**Epic creation:**  
From 2D arcade games, to beautiful 3D epics, to slick interpretations of classic card and board games, Dark BASIC Professional users are only limited by their imagination.



# Dark BASIC Professional

Ever wished you could code your own games? Now you can...

**D**ark BASIC has already kick-started a new gaming revolution by putting cutting-edge game development within the grasp of regular PC users. Now with *Dark BASIC Professional*, game fans have access to the most advanced 3D development system ever built on the

massively popular BASIC programming language. With *Dark BASIC Professional* it's now possible to build games in record time, while incorporating the latest effects and features with ease.

This may be the professional version of *Dark BASIC*, but that doesn't mean it's harder to use. All the easy-to-learn aspects of the standard version are offered here, but now, as users gain experience and become more confident with their programming skills, they can take charge with lower level controls, using 3D maths commands and accessing the more advanced 3D engine. And for truly advanced users who want to go beyond the amazingly comprehensive set of around 1,000 commands, it's even possible to write new custom commands so that the program grows to suit each individual's needs.

From control of pixel and vertex shaders, and deployment of lights, shadows, particle systems, and reflections, through to the use of bone-based character animations,

advanced terrain systems, bump, light, and environment maps, multitexturing and even toon shading, *Dark BASIC Professional* offers an astonishing range of 3D engine features. And to get budding game programmers started, the package also includes DarkMATTER, a collection of fully animated, royalty-free 3D models. From cars and jet fighters to weapons and zombies, the content is ready to drop right in to any new game design. And just to show what's possible, two full games created using *Dark BASIC Professional* are also included – the award-winning *Riftspace* and the epic *Starwraith*. Further enhancements packs are also available, including *Dark A.I.*, *Dark Voices*, and *Dark Physics*, with *Dark Shader* also due out later this year. And of course there's a massive community of enthusiastic fellow game coders online, all ready to network and help new users create their dream projects. Next generation game development has never been easier. ■

## Design a game and win!

**The Game Creators have teamed up with NVIDIA** for two great new game creation competitions. The first is open to anybody who creates a cool new game using *FPS Creator*, and the second is for *Dark Basic Professional* users who can show the best possible use of pixel and vertex shaders in a game or demo.

Providing the ideal way to flex those creative muscles and win some amazing prizes in the process, the competition also offers budding game designers a chance for real fame, as the winning entries will be hosted online at NVIDIA's hugely popular nZone website. For full details visit: <http://nvidia.thegamecreators.com>



THE WAY

# GameShadow

The innovative new service that ensures gamers stay abreast of the latest updates



**1. It's free!**  
Registration to GameShadow is now completely free. Just sign up for access to all the patches and updates you need, plus 1GB of demo and movie downloads each month.

**2. Hardware too:**  
GameShadow provides updates for hardware as well as games. Sign up and you can keep fully up-to-date with the latest drivers from NVIDIA, as well as DirectX updates from Microsoft.

**G**one are the days when the story ends with the release of the boxed version of a game. The spread of the Internet now means that every game developer and publisher is able to keep the legions of fans abreast of patches, updates and new content simply by offering the opportunity to download extra code. This degree of support is great, but it does cause a problem. As gamers expand their library it becomes ever more difficult to keep tabs on which updates are available for each particular title. It can take hours or even days to wade through one website after another to find out what's available. This is where the revolutionary new GameShadow service comes in.

all the hard work out of software updating, GameShadow already supports more than 1,700 games with more than 7,000 updates, including patches, demos, movies, mods, graphic card driver updates, and more.

### Now it's free!

With 425,000 subscribers already making the most of GameShadow, the service is now available free of charge! Simply sign up and you can get all the latest content. Users can obtain as many patches and drivers as they need, while up to 1GB of the best demos, movies, trailers and other content is also available each month. It's even possible to personalize the service

to provide automatic alerts when favourite games updates are issued or other additional content becomes available. And for those who want a little more, there's also a premium service, offering 30GB download capacity per month, along with a free boxed game chosen from a range including *King Kong*, the *Prince Of Persia* trilogy and the *Splinter Cell* trilogy. "We've been waiting to hit critical mass before offering the service for free," says Nicholas Lovell, CEO, GameShadow. "We know the technology is 100% sound, we know that publishers are impressed about what it can do to improve customer service, and gamers find it hugely useful." [www.gameshadow.com](http://www.gameshadow.com)

### 3. Get the knowledge:

In GameShadow's extensive Gamepedia section you'll find essential patch and update information, along with game details, movies, and even links to some essential purchases.

An innovative automatic update and patch technology, GameShadow is already a massive success, boasting support from NVIDIA as well as leading publishers such as Eidos, Ubisoft, Konami and Atari. Taking



### Tony Treadwell, founder and COO, GameShadow:

"As gamers ourselves, we just want it to be easy to keep your games and drivers up-to-date. We do all the hard work so gamers can just use GameShadow to get the latest updates

quickly and with no hassle. We also pride ourselves on telling our customers about the latest demos, trailers, mods and other downloads that are relevant to their games."





**1. Benchmarking tools:** In-built D3D benchmarking tools enable *3D Media Center* users to test and tweak their PC performance, while automatic updates provide access to the latest tools and enhancements.

**2. Clever effects:** From color correction and blue screen effects, to titles, keyframing and audio, *3D Edit V4* is packed with pro-level effects.

**3. Easy editing:** *3D Media Center's* powerful scene detection system sifts through video footage to prepare it for easy editing, thus saving an enormous amount of time and effort.

# 3D Media Center

Transform the way you watch, listen, edit and file your media files with this new suite of tools

Publisher: Tenomichi Developer: Tenomichi Release: Out now

**D**eveloped with the assistance of NVIDIA, this new *3D Media Center* system combines unparalleled media technology expertise with a brilliantly intuitive new interface design to provide instant access to all the entertainment and personal content on your PC.

When it comes to video playback, *3D Media Center* offers one of the world's finest DVD players, complete with high quality de-interlacing and accurate colour reproduction. It also provides superb high definition playback, with support for HD DVD and Blu-Ray 1080p. With the NVIDIA PureVideo decoder included, it features support for all popular video formats, including WMV, HDV, Divx, Xvid and H.264. A range of powerful capture tools also enables video transfer from VHS and DV camcorders as well as from all Windows-enabled devices.

Audio receives equally comprehensive support. Working with the PC's own audio card or a home cinema system, *3D Media Center* makes it possible to experience full surround sound with the PC and DVD when playing games and DVDs, while support for CDs, WAV and MP3 formats makes music

"The new *3D Media Center* system combines unparalleled media technology expertise with a brilliantly intuitive new interface design."

playback a breeze. Then there's Tenomichi's award-winning *3D Edit V4*. Making the most of NVIDIA GPU power, this offers real-time SD and HD video editing, complete with wizards to enable both novices and experts to get the best possible results. It's also the only video editor for consumers that features 3D transitions and 'Shaderman', enabling the addition of real-time effects such as fire, water and other animations.

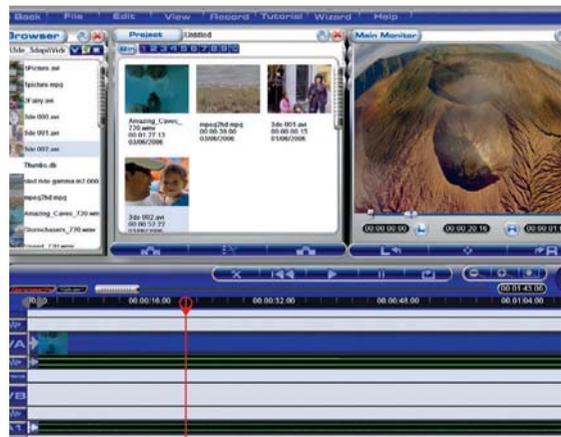
Even portable devices get full support from *3D Media Center*, with the ability to automatically convert video, audio and photos for playback on USB, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi peripherals or backup to the PC. Analogue and digital television playback is also provided, via any suitable PC card, USB receiver or broadband feed, complete with live pause, picture-in-picture and multi-channel viewing. Best of all, the entire suite of tools is a breeze to use, thanks to a unique 3D carousel interface

and control via either mouse, keyboard, remote control or mobile phone. With such a potent combination of power, flexibility, and approachability, *3D Media Center* may just change the way you live your digital life.

[www.tenomichi.com](http://www.tenomichi.com)



**Advanced tools:** A next-generation TV viewer provides a range of advanced tools, including live pause, picture-in-picture as well as multiple channel viewing options.





THE WAY

# Gaming On The Go With Asus

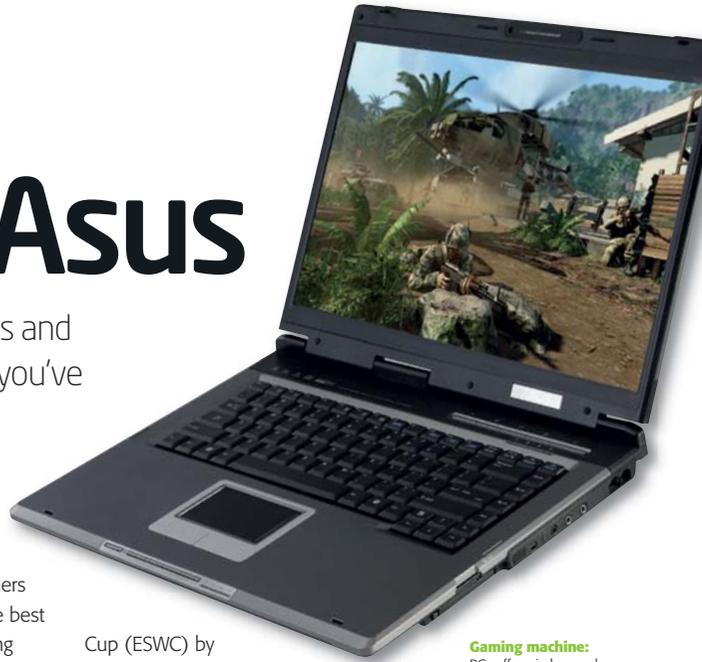
Combine NVIDIA's world-leading graphics processors and leading-edge notebook technology from Asus and you've got go-anywhere gaming.

**G**one are the days when notebook PCs were used only by businessmen. Now mobile PC solutions no longer sacrifice performance in the name of portability, and nowhere is that more evident than in the latest range of gaming notebooks from Asus.

A world leader in the field of laptop and desktop-based PC technologies, Asus won 1,706 awards in 2005 alone! Harnessing the power of the NVIDIA® GeForce® Go 7 series graphics processing units, its range of gaming notebooks ushers in a new era of digital entertainment – one offering non-stop playing, any time and anywhere. What's more, they enable gamers to play on the move for longer periods than ever before – with battery life extended by the GeForce® Go 7 generation's breakthrough combination of high performance and

advanced power management technology.

Its notebooks are even being used by some of the most avid gamers around – PC users who demand the best when making the most of the exciting new opportunities offered by wireless and desk-free gaming. Asus has even made an appearance at several of the world's largest electronic sports tournaments, with its notebooks appearing at the gaming playoffs in the world series of the World GameMaster Tournament. More recently Asus also took the Electronic Sport World



Cup (ESWC) by storm, even supplying the Official ESWC Notebook for Gamers at the event.

Whether you're a gaming professional or just serious about gaming, head on to the virtual battlefield armed with an Asus gaming notebook and you can't lose.

[www.asus.com](http://www.asus.com) ■

**Gaming machine:** PCs offer wireless and desk-free gaming, and Asus is a world leader in the field winning 1,706 awards in 2005 alone.

**"Its range of gaming notebooks ushers in a new era of digital entertainment - one offering non-stop playing, any time and anywhere."**

## A6JM

The official gaming notebook of the Electronic Sport World Cup, the Asus A6JM is based around the latest Intel Centrino Duo Mobile technology, for increasing computing performance with multi-tasking, longer battery supply, and better power management. Powering the display is an NVIDIA® GeForce® Go 7600 graphics processing unit, containing a very sizeable 512MB of onboard memory. The result is a notebook that delivers stunning 3D gaming performance, while additional multimedia features, such as the built-in high-resolution webcam and generous 15.4" display, deliver maximum performance on the move, without any compromises.



**Top notch:** The A6JM has all the latest technology to make it a first rate gaming machine.





## A8Js

Brand new from Asus, the A8Js features a 14" widescreen display with a resolution of 1440 x 900 pixels, ideal for movie playback as well as next-generation gaming. It's also blessed with a 2GHz Intel Core 2 Dual CPU, a built-in webcam, 2GB of RAM, support for both Bluetooth 2.0 and 802.11a/b/g wireless, and of course the latest generation NVIDIA® mobile GPU technology – in this case the powerful GeForce® Go 7700, which comes equipped with 512MB of DDR2 RAM. The next weapon in the Asus gamer's arsenal, the A8Js provides extreme mobility with top-drawer 3D performance.



**The Go Team:**  
The A8Js gives you extreme mobility with exhilarating 3D performance.



**On the move:** The next-gen gamer uses a notebook for gaming on the go.



## G1P

New out this month, the G1P sees Asus take its commitment to gaming to the extreme. Squeezed into that sleek new chassis design is the latest Intel Merom Core 2 Duo Processor, a 15.4" high-response-time display, and an NVIDIA® GeForce® Go 7700 (featuring 512MB of DDR2 VRAM) for high-speed, high resolution gaming. The G1P also boasts a 1.3 megapixel onboard camera, a 4-in-1 card reader, Bluetooth 2, and Intel a/b/g networking. Despite packing in enough performance and multimedia extras to satisfy even the most demanding next-gen gamer, this beautifully-styled notebook weighs a mere 2.8kg, making it one of the most portable high-end gaming notebooks around.

## A7T

Pairing AMD's Turion 64 platform with the NVIDIA® GeForce® Go 6100, the A7T is another Asus notebook series that's heavyweight in terms of performance, yet lightweight when it comes to portability. An ideal model for gamers who understand that size sometimes matters, the A7T features a muscular 17.1" LCD screen, along with a remote controller for true multimedia control. Other goodies include 5 USB ports, S-Video, Audio DSP for video conference support, Wireless 802.11 technology, Gigabit LAN and a 56K V.92 modem, and even a USB mouse.

**Hey good lookin':**  
A slim body and a big screen, along with a bundle of attractive features, makes this notebook a real catch.

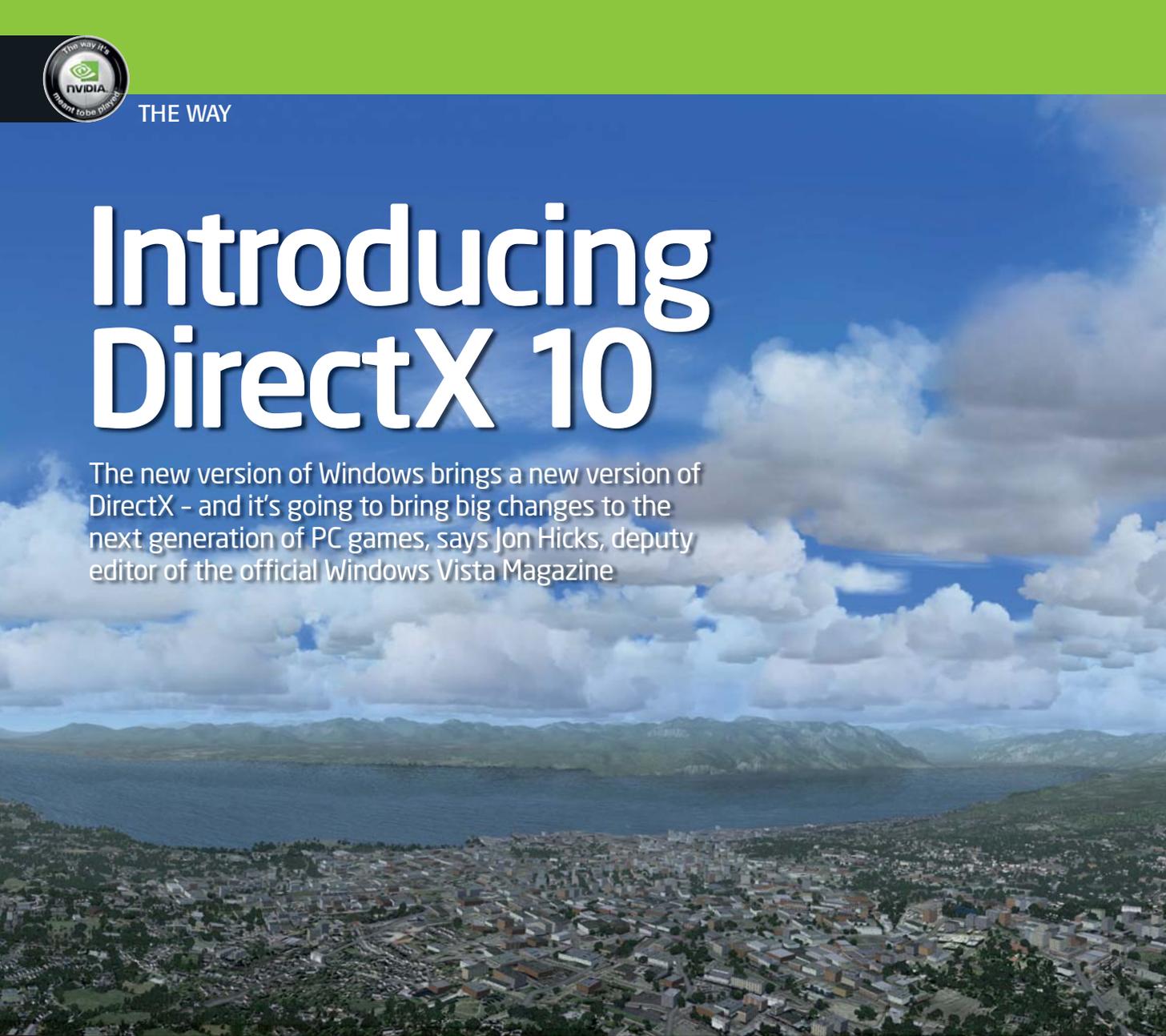




THE WAY

# Introducing DirectX 10

The new version of Windows brings a new version of DirectX - and it's going to bring big changes to the next generation of PC games, says Jon Hicks, deputy editor of the official Windows Vista Magazine



**True to life:** DX10's realistic particle effects mean clouds will look more real and fluffy than ever.

**I**n the last issue of *The Way It's Meant To Be Played* we saw how the next version of Windows has been built for the benefit of PC gamers – but that's only half the story. There's also been a lot of changes under the bonnet to make life easier for game and hardware developers, and they're all tied up in the new Microsoft® DirectX® 10, arriving exclusively with Windows Vista.

The current standard, Direct X9, brought plenty of flexibility in the form of programmable pixel and vertex shaders, but there are limits to how much data can

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**"Trees will be able to have individually modeled leaves, fields individually modeled blades of grass"**

---

be processed efficiently, and there's a big reliance on getting the CPU to organise everything, which means that great visuals require massive PC horsepower. Vista's graphics engineering has been extensively revamped in order to make it much easier for games to deliver eye-popping effects without running into vein-popping slowdown.

First and most importantly, it fixes the 'small batch problem', enabling more unique objects to be on-screen at once. Trees will be able to have individually modeled leaves, fields individually modeled blades of grass

– not exactly genre-breaking, but it's one of many ways in which DX10 makes it possible to create much more realistic worlds.

Another big help is the geometry shader. It's a completely new addition that sits in between vertex and pixel shaders in the graphics pipeline, and it's capable of making all sorts of changes to the data as it passes through, and passing the results direct to system memory and back again. This means that it's possible to do all sorts of hugely advanced detailing on the card itself, without having to rely on a clear path to the CPU.





- Explosion:** DX10's flexibility means future graphics cards will be able to handle physics as well, making for vastly more exciting explosions.
- Smoke:** DX10 brings realistic particle effects: smoke that drifts realistically, or bullets that leave a proper vapor trail.
- People:** The CPU is freed up for things like getting extra units on the screen, or beefing up their AI.
- Trees:** Huge numbers of individual objects can now fit on screen without a big performance hit.
- Detail:** Even the first DX10 game releases will be far more detailed than we're used to. Everything from the ground to characters' skin will be minutely detailed.

The result is a graphics system that's massively flexible, and which can be pressed to do all sorts of jobs without relying on the CPU to do the work. In the short term, DX10 will enable games to look much more impressive; in future your graphics will be able to take on things like physics processing and more. Plus, of course, taking that load off the CPU frees up the clock cycles to deliver more convincing effects elsewhere.

The last big change is that – unified shaders aside – developers can now be much more certain about what the graphics

card can actually do. Previously, they've had to consider the rich variety of DX9 cards out there, optimizing or even removing features so that games can run on lesser-equipped cards. DX10 hardware will fit a much tighter specification – there are still some points of differentiation, but one DX10 card can do much the same as any other. That means developers can focus on one code path and be sure that every card will be able to support it.

Cheapskates will be disappointed to hear that low-end cards will still have worse

performance, but it'll be a matter of speed rather than missing features.

Ultimately, the plan is to make a dent in the ever-growing time and cost of games development: future versions of DirectX will turn the graphics card into a multi-purpose processor that can generate advanced effects, rather than forcing developers to hand-code every twiddly bit themselves. It'll take a while, until Windows Vista and DirectX 10 graphics cards become ubiquitous, but ultimately games will be much more realistic yet, hopefully, easier to make. ■

## What about Windows XP?

DX10 is Vista-only. What about those left behind?

**The interesting news about DX10** is that it's going to be Windows Vista only: the new features it adds won't be available in Windows XP. (Microsoft claims that this is the way Vista works with device drivers, isolating them from the heart of the system so lame drivers won't make your PC crash.) This opens up the possibility of games that will only run on Windows Vista – Microsoft has announced that the PC port of *Halo 2* will do just that. However, it'll be a while before other developers follow suit. It'll be at least a year until Windows Vista becomes a significant chunk of the PC install base, and even then cross-platform games will be tied to DX9 because that's all the consoles can cope with – yes,

even the mighty PS3. Instead, developers are looking at building in DX10-specific extras, or, in the case of *Company of Heroes*, adding them as patches later in 2007 – the games will still run in Windows XP, they'll just look much more impressive in Vista. ■

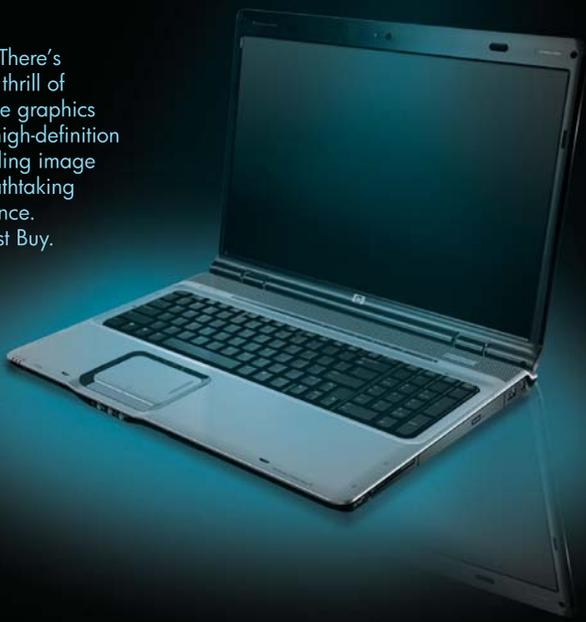
**Exclusive:** DX10's superior detail will only be available for those with Vista – Windows XP users are out of luck.



**Explanation:** Vista works with device drivers isolating them from the heart of the system, so lame drivers won't crash your PC.

HP recommends Windows® XP Media Center Edition.

**Born to rule.** There's nothing like the thrill of NVIDIA GeForce graphics and a 17-inch high-definition display for startling image clarity and breathtaking visual performance. Available at Best Buy.



### HP Pavilion dv9008nr Entertainment Notebook PC

- AMD Turion™ 64 X2 Dual-Core Mobile Technology TL-50 (1.6GHz, 256KB + 256KB L2 cache, up to 1600MHz system bus)<sup>1</sup>
- Genuine Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition
- 1024MB DDR2 system memory<sup>2</sup>
- 100GB 5400rpm Serial ATA hard drive<sup>3</sup>
- LightScribe SuperMulti 8X DVD±R/RW drive with Double Layer support<sup>4</sup>
- NVIDIA® GeForce® Go 6150 UMA graphics card with up to 128MB shared video memory<sup>2</sup>
- 17.0" WXGA+ high-definition widescreen display<sup>5</sup>



1. Speeds listed for AMD Turion™ 64 Processors are maximum performance levels on AC power. The processor speed is reduced up to approximately 80% on battery power to optimize battery life. Please go to [www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com) for more details on battery life conservation. This system requires a separately purchased 64-bit operating system and 64-bit software products to take advantage of the 64-bit processing capabilities of the AMD Turion 64 processor. Given the wide range of software applications available, performance of a system including a 64-bit operating system will vary. AMD's numbering is not a measurement of higher performance. GHz refers to internal clock speed of the processor. Other factors besides clock speed may affect system and application performance. Actual bus speed is less. Listed bus speed represents the equivalent effective throughput for data. Dual Core is a new technology designed to improve performance of certain software products. Check with the software provider to determine suitability. Not all customers or software applications will necessarily benefit from use of this technology. 2. Shared video memory (UMA) uses part of the total system memory for video performance. System memory dedicated to video performance is not available for other use by other programs. 3. When referring to hard drive capacity, 1GB = 1 billion bytes. Actual formatted capacity is less. 4. Actual speeds may vary. Does not permit copying of commercially available DVD movies or other copyright-protected materials. Intended only for creation and storage of original material and other lawful uses. Double Layer discs can store more data than single-layer discs. However, Double Layer discs burned with this drive may not be compatible with many existing single-layer DVD drives and players. LightScribe creates a grayscale image similar to a black-and-white photograph. LightScribe media required and sold separately. 5. Requires high-definition content (e.g., WMV HD files). Most current DVDs do not provide high-definition images.

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