

review by Craig Cox

Stars - 1 Star Poor, 5 Stars Excellent

Title: Microshaft Winblows 98™

Version: Not given

Developer: Parrotty Interactive

Publisher: Parrotty Interactive

Price: \$19.95

Contact Info: <http://www.winblows.com/>

Genre: Game, Parody

Requirements: PowerPC or 33 MHz 68040, 16 MB RAM, 20 MB free hard disk space, SVGA monitor (640X480, 256 colors) double-speed CD-ROM (quad speed highly

recommended),

System 7.1 (7.5 or later recommended)

Note: This is a hybrid Mac/Windows disk.

verview

Parrotty Interactive bills this software as a parody of Microsoft, the operating system and "the man." It is that and more — a whole lot more. Winblows 98 is an entire ecosystem. Upon starting the game up, you're greeted with a spin on the Windows 95™ desktop. It is hilarious, yet frighteningly real. Here you are greeted by fictional Microsoft™ employees Meg and Graham, presented as "your subversive hosts."

From the desktop you can play a variety of games, gain insights into the fictional goings-on at Microsoft, or raise your BILLAGOTCHI virtual pet (more below).

Winblows is integrated via your web browser right into the Winblows web site. This means that content can always be added to the game via the web, so you'll get much more than a CD-based game.

he Games

From the Winblows 98 desktop you can access different games. Treat yourself to Winblows Exploder. This throwback to the Galaga arcade game from days of yore lets you blast descending bugs, viruses, and error messages. It's an entertaining diversion for adults, and children will have a blast with it.

Then try out "Win Bill's Money," a fun and sometimes challenging computer industry trivia game. Help Steve Jobs try to give away some of Bill Gates' money. You'll have a blast with this one.

lay against the computer or a human opponent in a game of "The Roll Ahead." Similar to a scaled-down version of Monopoly, you can chose to be Steve Jobs or Bill Gates. Roll the dice to get ahead of your opponent and build corporations. This simple game is made very entertaining by the ceaseless verbal jabs traded between Jobs and Gates.

Don't skip Pinbill. This is the only computer game I know of that rewards you for smashing balls up Bill's nose. My children loved it, and so did I.

he Billagotchi

Meet the world's most undesirable virtual pet. Give him money, try to be his friend and listen to his spoiled rotten responses. Give him medicine and clean him up when he's dirty. Discipline him. Strangely, Bill requires a lot of discipline. You'll enjoy doling it out.

he Levels

Advance through the different levels. You'll get plenty of help figuring out the passwords to each new level from Meg and Graham. It is, after all, supposed to be fun. At each level you'll have access to Bill's email and "Bill's Personal Outlook." Find out where he's going today and laugh out loud at the outrageous notes.

You'll find new additions to the "Reject Bin." See software that didn't make it to market, including "MS Word-Up," a novel application which converts any text document into ebonics.

Get new insights into Microshaft at each level via the "Campus Cam" videos. See new shows such as "Star Tech: The NeXT Generation," "Mr. Gates' Neighborhood," "Xena, Code Warrior," and other beautifully drawn "shows" via MSTV — Bill's vision of the television future.

nternet Integration

Many features are available to you at <http://www.winblows.com/> . Treasures like comic renditions of Bill Gates make splendid desktop pictures/wallpaper and they've got them for you right now. Email beautifully drawn "Shaft Cards" from the Winblows web site to your friends (or whomever) to show them how much you care. Get the Microshaft "Joke of the Day" or download a Microshaft Screen Saver.

Owners of Microshaft Winblows gain access to the restricted "Members Only" section. Here you can pick up goodies unavailable to commoners. Download Microshaft Desktop Themes, participate in the Vent Board, and do many more fun things.

4 Stars Because...

The above makes it seem as though Winblows is the greatest game on the face of this MS-riddled planet. Some games make your palms sweat, your teeth grind and you really get into them. This game just wasn't that way.

It's a fun diversion, a great bargain, but just nothing I'd think all day about waiting to get home and play.

In my mind, you save the top billing for those products that just clearly are the best. This wasn't one of them. It is highly amusing, but it suffers from lack of longterm playability.

onclusions

While attractively designed, this game does not rely on "intense" graphics. Game play will be adequate on any machine that meets the minimum requirements.

Park the F-18, hang up your hand grenades, discharge those directed energy weapons, take your shoes off, and get ready for tons of irreverent fun. I suppose this game will be most enjoyed by Mac lovers that are forced to use Windows machines, but there's certainly plenty in here for everyone.

Winblows 98 is simply a great value. For less than the price of 2 movie tickets, popcorn, and sodas you can have weeks of fun. Get a friend, get comfortable, and get Winblown. Once you put in the CD, you'll see why the humorless drones had the Parrot International people thrown out of the November, 1997 COMDEX.

I occasionally encountered
strange errors playing this
game. I was confused and
impressed by the game's
ability to coax grinding
noises of my Mac's drive. It
did make my Mac seem a
whole lot more like
my Windows machine.

Hey, you don't suppose...

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