after hours

X-Wing vs Tie Fighter

U A few years ago in a galaxy not unlike our own, LucasArts brought *Star Wars* to the PC with X-Wing. A compelling combat simulator, it cast you as a rebel pilot in the long-running battle for freedom against the evil Empire. The company then repeated its success with Tie Fighter, turning the tables and allowing you to join the Imperial forces.

LucasArts' latest game brings the two together in the originally titled X-Wing vs Tie Fighter. A multiplayer affair, it lets up to eight friends or, indeed, enemies, battle it out over a network or the Internet. For those of you without friends the game can also be played solo, and there are over 50 combat missions to test your skill.

The first stage in either mode is to choose your alliance and decide which type of ship you want to fly. Rebels can choose from a number of craft including X-Wings, Y-Wings, A-Wings, various star cruisers and even a Correlian Transport aka the Millennium Falcon. The Empire's fearsome line-up boasts Tie, Tie-Interceptor and Tie-Advanced fighters, Tie Bombers, Gunboats and huge Imperial Star Destroyers. Once you've got your wings, all that's left to do is select
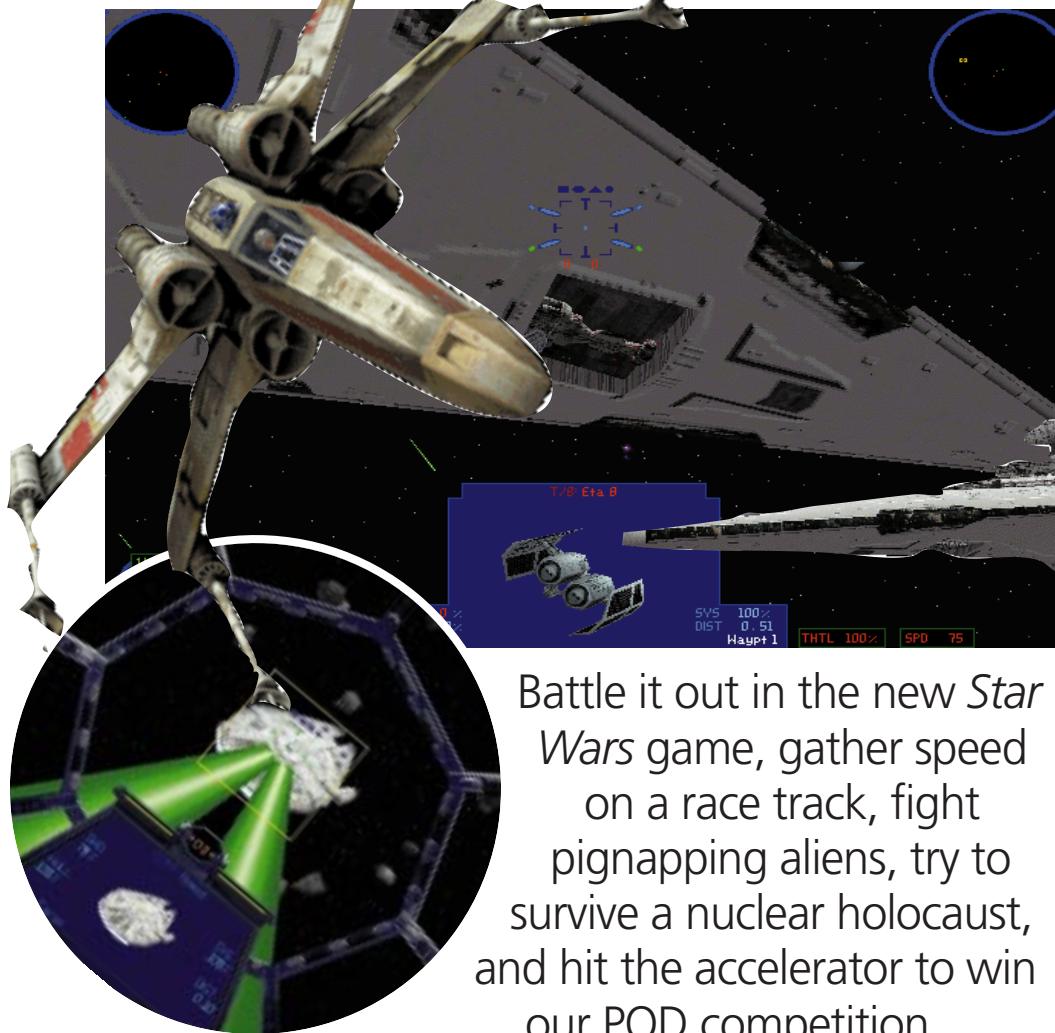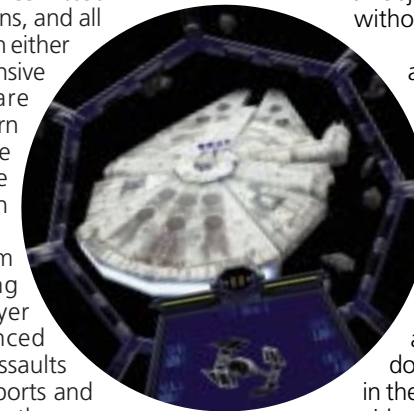
Battle it out in the new *Star Wars* game, gather speed on a race track, fight pignapping aliens, try to survive a nuclear holocaust, and hit the accelerator to win our POD competition

your mission and it's off to the stars.

The flight controls are fairly standard (climb, dive, left and right), and most ships come with both lasers and missiles fitted. Some carry extra cannons, and all vessels can be fitted with either flares or chaff for defensive manoeuvres. There are quite a few keys to learn to get the most out of the game, but you'll have the basics mastered in less then 10 minutes.

Missions range from simple target shooting and player-versus-player competition to advanced scenarios with team assaults on enemy bases, transports and supply lines. Obviously, the more complex the mission the more difficult it is to complete, but the more enjoyable the game.

Graphically, X-Wing vs Tie Fighter is by far the best in the Star Wars sim series. LucasArts has updated its 3D engine and everything is beautifully rendered at 640x480 pixels. The detail on the craft is excellent, and all objects move around the screen without a hint of flickering.

The audio department has also been restocked, with plenty of original *Star Wars* themes and sound effects. LucasArts' ingenious interactive music engine action also makes sure that the score fits the action as you play.

Unfortunately, there are a couple of areas that let an otherwise superb game down. Unlike the previous titles in the series, this game will not run without a joystick connected. It also requires you to have the program disc in the CD-ROM drive at all times. A second disc is supplied for

multiplayer games, but that's only one person taken care of.

Other than these two drawbacks, X-Wing vs Tie Fighter is the latest and greatest way to immerse yourself in the *Star Wars* legend. **CC**

The force is strong with this one – just watch that phone bill when you start those late night multiplayer sessions.

○ £44.99 (inc VAT)
○ Virgin Interactive: 0171 368 2255

X-Wing vs Tie Fighter
Overall	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Minimum requirements: Pentium 90 or faster (100 recommended for multiplayer games), 16Mb of RAM, Windows 95, 2x CD-ROM, PCI graphics card, 16-bit sound card, joystick, DirectX support (drivers supplied).

games news

Microsoft has unveiled a horde of new games designed for Windows 95. First to be released is the **Microsoft Entertainment Pack: Puzzle Collection**, which features 10 original brainteasers, some created by the designer of the original Tetris.

By autumn, titles will include **The Condemned, Age of Empires** and **Close Combat 2: A Bridge Too Far**. The Condemned is a vehicle combat game set in a futuristic prison colony, while Age of Empires is a tribe-based god sim, created with input from one of the designers of Civilisation. A Bridge Too Far is the sequel to the award-winning military strategy game Close Combat, which was released last year.

Christmas should see another series of releases, including **MetalTek**, a battle mech combat game, **Critical Depth**, a submarine action game and an as yet unnamed strategy game codenamed **Devil's Own**. Meanwhile, **Reach for the Stars**, a space conquest game and **CART Precision Racing**, an Indy Car sim, are under development for later release.
Microsoft: 0345 002000

If you want to race for your life in Ubi Soft's **POD** contest, point your Web browser to www.ubisoft.co.uk. The fastest drivers can win prizes including a special edition MMX PC. Check our cover CD for a demo of POD and our own competition.
Ubi Soft: 0181 944 9000

Autumn this year should see the release of two new titles from 3DO. **Army Men** is a strategy game with a difference – it stars the plastic soldiers and tanks that were a feature of every small boy's childhood. In **Uprising**, you command a Wraith, a high-powered assault tank, and control an army in what is claimed to be the first first-person military strategy game.

Planned for next spring is **Requiem: Wrath**

of the Fallen. Pitting the player as one of the Chosen against the Fallen, rebellious angels in a dark world, it will be an adventure game but with all the elements of a 3D first-person shooter.
www.3do.com

September should see the launch of the latest simulation from Acclaim. In **Constructor**, you are a property developer, trying to get rich quick and dominate the world with your building plans. With a four-player network option, this isn't easy and you'll have to destroy other people's buildings using characters such as the Psycho Clown or the Hippy Squatter.
Acclaim Entertainment: 0171 344 5000
www.acclaimnation.com

Recently launched by French company GOTO, just in time for Wimbledon, is Tennis Elbow. Featuring network play so you can take on your friends, computer opponents and the chance to play the world's top players in 95 major tournaments, this tennis simulator is available for £19.95.
GOTO Informatique:
00 33 3 20 66 55 00
www.tenniselbow.com

Ten mousemats showing *Star Wars* scenes, including Darth Vader and the Millennium Falcon, have been launched by boeder and are available on the high street. As a special competition this month, boeder has provided us with 10 mousemats to give away to the first names out of our Stormtrooper's hat. To have a chance of winning one of these, send your name and address to **Star Wars Mousemats,** *What PC?* Editorial, VNU Business Publications, VNU House, 32-34 Broadwick Street, London W1A 2HG.
boeder: 01734 272277

The Need For Speed 2

When Tom Cruise said he had a 'need for speed', he wasn't talking about an expensive showbiz habit but rather a burning desire to tear around at a few hundred miles an hour, scaring animals and small children. If you feel a similar compulsion, Need for Speed 2 might be just the thing for you.

Although NFS2 follows the same premise as its predecessor (reviewed in February 1996), it's not just a rehash of the same ideas. There are new cars, different tracks, and various race and multiplayer options that support up to eight players.

The aim is to be the first to get your car past the various finish lines and there are three types of race. 'Single race' is exactly that, 'tournament' is a slog through each of the six tracks with the winner being the one with the most points and in 'knockout', the slowest car from each race is dropped until only two are left.

NFS2's tracks range from a simple loop to precarious snow-covered mountain roads and all are superbly realised. The tracks are also dynamic – cars can plough through road signs, scattering debris onto the road and there's even a 'traffic' option for when you want the challenge of being stuck behind a lorry on a country lane.

Until virtual reality booths become commonplace, the realism of any PC driving game is always going to be limited. NFS2 manages to recreate the sensation of driving at high speed better than most, though and there are times when you really can feel sweat start to prickle on your temples.

The realism also extends to the cars' handling and all are supposed to be accurately modelled on the real thing. Mastering each certainly takes a lot of doing and although each of the eight supercars drive very differently, they can all be tossed over the tarmac like a Dinky toy very easily.

Sadly, the Dinky toy analogy also extends to crashing. Roll the Jaguar XJ220 at 200mph and, apart from a shower of sparks, the car isn't damaged and you're back on the track in no time. This seems like a bit of an omission for a driving 'simulation' and it certainly takes the fun out of driving around the track the wrong way, ramming hapless 2CV drivers. **JP**

If you're seeking the visceral thrill of driving too fast for your own good on unsuitable roads then NFS2 is probably about as close as you can get while sitting in front of a keyboard.
○ £39.99 (inc VAT)
○ Electronic Arts: 01322 549442

The Need For Speed 2
Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Minimum requirements: Windows 95, Intel Pentium 90, 16Mb of RAM, quad-speed CD-ROM, DirectX3 supported sound and video cards, 30Mb of hard disk space.

POD RACERS' COMPETITION

For a chance to win the latest 3D graphics accelerator card from **Ubi Soft**, and the full version of top racing game POD, play the POD demo on our cover CD. Follow the instructions on page 9 to send us your best time.

The fastest driver will receive the brand-new **MAXi Gamer 3Dfx** card which has 4Mb of video RAM and works alongside your existing graphics card.

And parcels containing POD, a POD T-shirt and a POD mousemat will be winging their way to 10 runners-up.

Redneck Rampage

Aliens have landed in America's Deep South and they're about as welcome there as a tee-total vegetarian. And in an apparent bid to further their unpopularity they've gone and kidnapped Bessie, the prize-winning pig belonging to local hicks Leonard and Bubba. Anyway, to cut an already short story to the bone, the guys want their hog back and they ain't gonna hold no punches.

The game is set in your home town of Hickston, a run-down place full of crumbling bars and drunken locals, and now positively teeming with indescribably repulsive aliens. You play the part of Leonard, the slimmer, more attractive of the two rednecks, and armed with nothing more than a crowbar, a pistol and a pair of dungarees, your job is to retrieve Bessie by giving the aliens a welcome they won't forget.

To turn this reception into a real party, you'll need fireworks of course. Fortunately, you'll be able to create plenty of these because scattered around the town are weapons of all descriptions, including a shotgun, a ranch rifle, a rip-saw, a rocket-launching crossbow, an alien arm gun, sticks of dynamite, a power keg, and a bowling ball. Yes, a bowling ball.

It's not all hard work though. From time to time you can indulge in some rest and recuperation by taking a couple of slugs from your liquor bottle and chomping on a few mouthfuls of pork rinds. And if you happen upon the pigpen you can partake in a game of instant-bacon-creation – simply lob a couple of sticks of dynamite and retreat to a safe distance. Leave the fuse burning for too long, however, and you'll join your porky pals on their trip to piggy heaven.

Although it looks much like any other 3D Doom clone, Redneck Rampage is actually more fun than many of its stablemates. While there is an undeniable amount of gratuitous violence and uncouth behaviour on display (urinating in the street after too much liquor, for example), the game does have a strategic side to it. Simply chasing down the high street shooting at anything that moves achieves little; better to skulk around quietly and strike suddenly. **SC**

Outrageously violent and littered with bad language, alcohol abuse and scantily-clad female aliens, Redneck Rampage is great fun. However, it is absolutely NOT a game for the younger family members.
○ £39.99 (inc VAT)
○ Interplay: 01628 423666

Redneck Rampage
Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Minimum requirements: Pentium P90 with 16Mb of RAM, SVGA video card, 30 Mb of free hard disk space, and a CD-ROM drive.

Age ratings: We have assigned viewing suitability ratings for each game. U = Universal; PG = Parental Guidance; 15 = suitable for viewing by 15-year-olds and above; 18 = suitable for viewing by 18-year-olds and above.

18 15 PG U

CHARTS
Figures for chart from Chart Track Ltd for month of May, 1997.

Krush Kill 'n' Destroy

In the bleak aftermath of a nuclear holocaust, anyone who was going to carry on existing had a stark choice. Either live underground, surviving as best they could with the technology that remained, or stay on the surface, mutating in the nuclear fallout.

As Survivors and Mutes grew further apart, conflict became inevitable: Krush Kill 'n' Destroy, the latest strategy game from Electronic Arts, is that conflict. You can play Survivors or Mutes, controlling their fighting and their research in the quest to develop fast enough to destroy the other.

Some 17 missions are available for each side; in some it is enough merely to wipe out the enemy, while in others a longer-term strategy is needed. Moving men and machines – or mutated beasts – with simple mouse clicks, you must drill for oil to fuel research and build up your forces. It's also worth searching for concealed Tech-bunkers which contain advanced weapons systems; these can give a vital edge in battle.

The game is very playable, with computer opponents who can seek out the weak spots in your defence. They'll attack your base from several sides, or draw your forces into an ambush to destroy them at leisure. Both the computer and your forces learn with experience – veteran units are more accurate, fire faster and can even heal themselves.

Of course, how a game looks is almost as important as how it plays. KK'n'D doesn't disappoint. The terrain looks 3D, with hills, bridges and valleys – unfortunately, this doesn't really affect lines of sight. Vehicles move convincingly, while the sprites used for infantry and the Mute beasts are excellent; guns even show muzzle flash when they are fired. **JS**

KK'n'D is a fine strategy game if you like your battles to be a bit more than just mindless. If you tire of the computer armies though, then you may end up falling back on the network or Internet multiplayer options.
○ £34.99 (inc VAT)
○ Electronic Arts: 01753 549442

Krush Kill 'n' Destroy
Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Minimum requirements: Pentium 75, 16Mb of RAM, 27Mb of hard disk space, DOS 5.0 or Windows 95, local bus video card, 3x CD-ROM drive, sound card.

TOP TEN CD-ROM GAMES/LEISURE TITLES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
–	1	X-Wing vs Tie Fighter	LucasArts
1	2	Theme Hospital	Bullfrog
–	3	Premier Manager 97	Gremlin Interactive
2	4	Championship Manager 2	Eidos Interactive
4	5	Red Alert	Virgin
5	6	Tomb Raider	Eidos Interactive
–	7	Encarta 97	Microsoft
3	8	MDK	Interplay
7	9	Duke Nukem Atomic	Eidos Interactive
9	10	Flight Simulator 6.0	Microsoft

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