

Search for lost treasure with Lara Croft, thwart the Dark Jedi, discover the wonders of National Geographic, decide the fate of Doctor Who and drink in the delights of virtual beer

Home & Entertainment



TOMB RAIDER II



Mindscape is set to batten down the hatches and shiver your timbers with **Buccaneer**, its latest adventure for Windows 95. Set around the early 1700s, the game allows players to scour the seas in search of ships to plunder and treasure to steal. **Buccaneer**'s missions take you through the Caribbean to 21 ports, mostly based on genuine seventeenth-century Caribbean towns. The game also features realistic sailing models, and 3D graphics. Priced at £39.99, it should be available by the time you read this.

Mindscape: 01444 246333



Continued opposite...

Lara Croft. Athletic archaeologist, international sex symbol and soon-to-be Hollywood superstar. Or, to use the words of a BBC Radio Derby researcher who called the *What PC?* office recently: 'She's a Derby girl done good.'

Of course,

Lara does not come from Derby, because she does not exist - at least as a carbon-based life-form. Her matter is entirely silicon - or should that be silicone?

Quips aside, Lara Croft is a phenomenally successful computer character. She burst onto the gaming scene a little over a year ago in the epic *Tomb Raider*, a dazzling action adventure that has since been mimicked but not bettered.

Now she's back, round-the-world ticket in the back pocket of her khaki shorts, on a quest to find the legendary dagger of Xian.

So, what has Lara been doing for the past 12 months? Well, not much it would seem. In fact, the only noticeable addition to Ms Croft's acrobatic repertoire is an ability to scale ladders and creeper-covered walls. She's also learned to drive.

Such talents, however, will not be





wasted as Lara is ejected from a helicopter and slides uncontrollably into a tiger-patrolled cavern somewhere beneath the Great Wall of China. Within moments she is able to avoid the tigers by nimbly leaping across chasms and negotiating ledges and platforms.

Unfortunately, because we were at the controls, her agility was initially restricted to exercising her trigger finger while we used her pistols to pick off the two prowling pussies. Still, that's only a 0.04 percent reduction of the Siberian feline population.

The fact is Lara takes some controlling. Not because she's a supposed advocate of Girl Power, but simply because the game has about 12 essential keyboard controls. Tot up your fingers and thumbs and you can see how this might prove awkward. A joystick or console-style joystick would be a wise investment.

That said, it doesn't take an unreasonable amount of time to master - tying your fingers in knots to make Lara grasp that distant overhang soon becomes second nature. This is good news because she has a lot of ground to cover, including cutting through the maze-like canals of Venice in a speedboat and traipsing the monk-littered mountains of Tibet. In all there are 16 themed levels to conquer, with plenty of nasties to tackle along the way, which should mean many, many weeks of gameplay.



As for presentation, Lara Croft's world has never looked better. As long as you have a good-specification PC (see the minimum requirements listed below), the game world appears beautifully detailed and thoroughly convincing. If you've got a 3D accelerator, it looks even greater.

Even the girl herself has had a graphical makeover, and though still ludicrously proportioned, she has seemingly dispensed with the cone-cupped basque of old, which we are sure will make a lot of young boys very happy.

An utterly brilliant game, Tomb Raider II blasts through the end of the five-star rating scale. Need we say more?

Scott Colvey

- £39.99 (inc VAT)
- Core Design: 01 332 297797
- www.eidos.com

Tomb Raider II
Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 90 (Pentium 130 recommended), Windows 95, 16Mb of RAM, 4x CD-ROM, DirectX 5.0 compatible (software included with game).

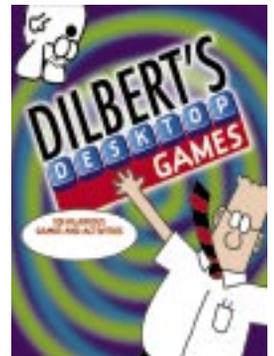


Continued...

Following its success with Sega Rally PC last year, Sega has announced an all-new version of the game especially for PCs fitted with Pentium MMX processors. Imaginatively titled **Sega Rally MMX**, the release is designed to take advantage of the chip's multimedia enhancements to provide higher quality graphics and enhanced sound. Owners of the existing version of the game, however, have not been forgotten - a free software patch that upgrades the original to the new version will be available on the Sega Web site.

Sega: 0181 995 3399
www.sega-europe.com

The latest release from DreamWorks Interactive, **Dilbert's Desktop Games**, puts you in control of Dilbert, the cartoon character created by Scott Adams.



Designed to relieve office stress and let you have fun at the same time, the games let you blast your boss, run around stealing everyone's donuts, and even set up your own virtual company so that you can hire and fire people at will. Dilbert's Desktop Games is priced at £19.99.

Dreamworks Interactive:
0345 002000
www.microsoft.com

AGE RATINGS

Age ratings: We have assigned viewing suitability ratings for each game.

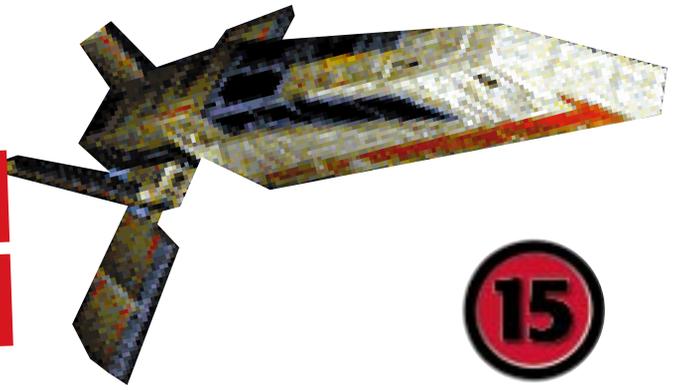
U = Universal;

PG = Parental Guidance;

15 = suitable for viewing by 15-year-olds and above;
18 = suitable for viewing by 18-year-olds and above.



JEDI KNIGHT - DARK FORCES II



15

The original *Dark Forces* brought the *Star Wars* universe to the PC in an excellent Doom-style 3D action adventure. Now, bearded hero and mercenary Kyle Katarn returns to fight the Empire in LucasArts' *Jedi Knight - Dark Forces II*.

He's got an arsenal of new weapons - including the light sabre - and a mission to find out about his past.

From the opening titles - a wide-screen video that mirrors the beginning of the *Star Wars* films - it's clear that a lot of care has been taken over the graphics. On a powerful system it looks good and runs smoothly, but you need a 3D graphics accelerator to see the game at its best. If your card is supported - support for many of the latest cards is still 'planned' - then it opens the way to some



great special effects.

Graphics like this wouldn't mean much if the gameplay wasn't up to scratch - but it is. The worlds you explore are huge, peppered

with secret passages, automatic lifts and deadly drops. Like so many games, you start off armed with just your fists and a puny pistol, but your victims drop higher-powered weapons after a little leaden persuasion.

Power-ups, first-aid packs and new weapons are all waiting to be discovered.

As its name suggests, *Jedi Knight* also allows you to get to grips with the Force. It's the source of your increasing powers as you progress, but you can never forget that it has a light side and a dark side. Choosing the dark side is easy - just start killing defenceless civilians - and grants you pretty awesome powers of destruction.



The light side, on the other hand, exposes you to the same powers but gives you the strength to resist them. You'll need to master this mysterious energy if you're to get anywhere and defeat the seven Dark Jedi.

A huge game. If you're not a *Star Wars* fan it's just a great shoot-'em-up: if you are, it's much, much more. John Sabine

● £44.99 (inc VAT)

● Virgin Interactive: 0171 368 2255

www.lucasarts.com

www.starwars.com

Jedi Knight - Dark Forces II

Overall



Minimum requirements, Pentium 90, Windows 95, 16Mb of RAM (32Mb recommended), 2x CD-ROM drive (4x recommended), 33Mb of hard disk space to install + 20Mb swap file. Requires DirectX 5. Multiplayer support: 8 players by LAN, 4 by Internet, 2 by modem or serial cable.

DARK EARTH



Three hundred years from now life on Earth will be nothing like it is now.

Early next century a bunch of asteroids will pummel the planet, churning up clouds of dust. Only a little sunlight is able to pierce the thick dark shroud that envelops the Earth. The effect on the environment is catastrophic - nearly all plant and animal life is wiped out.

In this bleak future, only a few species remain to eke out an existence on the now Dark Earth. Humans have clung onto a remnant of civilisation, building fortified cities beneath the few mystical shards of light that make it through the clouds. Outside these cities lie the darklands, where horribly mutated creatures live, and only the hardest and bravest of humans can survive.

Set in the city of Sparta, this game puts you in control of Arkhan, a young member of the elite Guardians of Fire. Arkhan learns of a treacherous plot to plunge the city into everlasting darkness. He also becomes contaminated with the dreaded Dark Rot, and has only a limited amount of time to save both Sparta and himself.

There are only a few keyboard controls to master, and best of all you can use your mouse in the inventory and control screens. There is a lot of action and having to learn lots of complicated keystroke combinations would ruin the fast rhythm of this game.

Arkhan moves realistically, which makes fighting and combat easier, and more fun. To hone your fighting skills, players can venture first to the practice room. Here a couple of opponents are ready for you to try out your weapons and technique, without losing any of your life points.

While the graphics are impressive, and the scenery is without a doubt visually stunning, it is the attention to little details that make this a great game. There are a lot of characters involved in the storyline whom Arkhan knows quite well, such as old friends, his girlfriend, father and so forth. Interaction is influenced by their shared past, and this strong level of characterisation adds to the game's playability.



A visually stunning adventure that is also a great game. Look out for Deliah's gravity-defying breasts! Lynley Oram

- £44.99 (inc VAT)
- Microprose 01454 893 900
- www.microprose.com

Dark Earth
Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 75 (Pentium 166 recommended), Windows 95, 8Mb of RAM (32Mb recommended), 4x CD-ROM, DirectX supported sound and video cards, 60Mb of hard disk space.

HMV GAMES CHART		LEVELUP
	Title	Manufacturer
1	Championship Manager 2 97/98	Eidos
2	Curse of Monkey Island	Virgin
3	Age of Empires	Microsoft
4	Carmageddon	SCI
5	Carmageddon: Splat Pack	SCI
6	Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II	Virgin
7	Network Q Rally	Europress
8	Riven: Myst 2	Brøderbund
9	Quake: Replay	GT Interactive
10	Flight Sim '98	Microsoft

This chart is based on the latest available figures at the time of going to press.





Just out from Dorling Kindersley is **The Jolly Postman's Party**. You're invited to a party at Goldilocks' house: play the Balloon Game or help the Jolly Postman bake a cake. Costing £19.99, it's the second disc to be based on the books by Janet and Allan Ahlberg and is ideal for children aged from four to eight.

Slightly older children will be able to learn about geography from **My First Amazing World Explorer 2.0**, while **The Way Science Works** is an exploration of scientific principles using a mammoth pinball game: it's aimed at nine to 14-year-olds. Like these discs, the **Eyewitness World Atlas** will be available around Easter this year. It will be available on DVD-ROM as well as CD-ROM, allowing a terrain database of the world to be included along with more than 30 full-screen videos. You'll need a high-specification PC – probably a Pentium II – to run it though. Dorling Kindersley: 0171 753 3488 www.dk.com

Adding to its record collection, Europress Software has released four new **Interactive Songbooks**. Along the same lines as the Oasis disc which appeared earlier this year, the new products feature popular songsters Blur, INXS, U2 and Sting. As well as singing along with your heroes, you can teach yourself the right guitar chords to accompany all the tracks from the featured albums or play a pub-style quiz to test your knowledge. The discs are £29.99 each.

Europress: 01625 859333 www.europress.co.uk

Continued opposite...

National Geographic on CD-ROM

It is becoming increasingly common for magazines to make their content, present or past, available on CD-ROM. Last month's issue of *What PC?* can be found on our cover CD and our sister magazine *Personal Computer World* sells 12-monthly collections. *National Geographic* has gone one better than this.

Its back issues are available in two collections. One covers the 1980s and 1990s while the other, *The Complete National Geographic*, covers the whole 108 years of the magazine's history. For this, you get every page of every issue printed up to 1996. This includes the advertisements – probably as valuable as the articles themselves if you're interested in social history.

It's possible to use the collection almost as you would the issues themselves, clicking first on the issue cover and then on the article title to find out about a subject, or even just flicking through from page to page. As such, it's a very natural interface and won't take long to learn. There is a search facility too: although this is supposed to allow you to find



any word in any article we found it a bit erratic in use and sometimes it wouldn't let us return to an article we had just read.

It's more awkward to read the pages. They're displayed as double-page spreads and on a small screen – we first tried the discs at 800x600 resolution – you'll need to scroll around an awful lot to follow the thread of an article. Moving down one column, then across, back to the top and down the next one is very disruptive.

It can also be difficult to see the pictures as a whole. *National Geographic* has a justifiably high reputation for the quality of its photography: it's a real shame if you have to make the choice between seeing part of the image at full size or the whole thing miniaturised to fit your screen. You can print the articles, but because the image files are designed to be used on screen, you'll see a great loss in quality.

You'll need a high-resolution screen to get the best from these discs. Having said that, they are tremendous value and are absolutely fascinating.

John Sabine

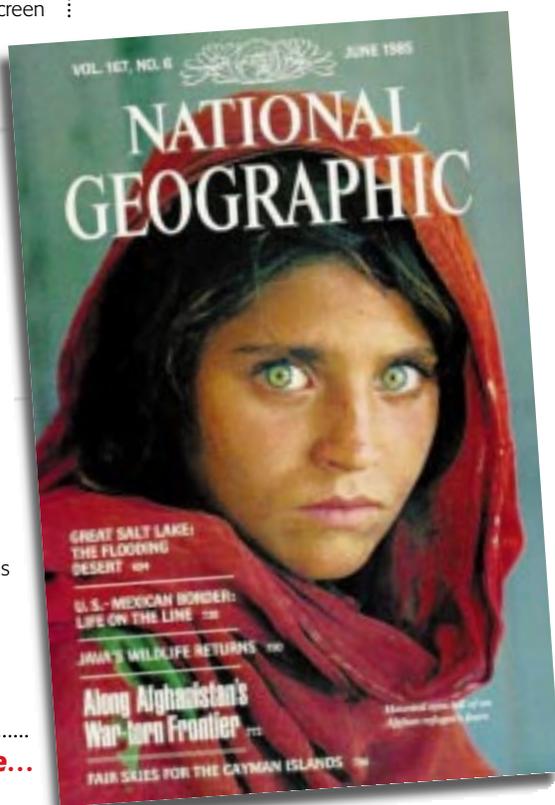
- National Geographic, the 80s and 90s £29.99 (includes £50 off voucher for the complete collection)
- The Complete National Geographic, £199.99 – scandalous, given that it's \$179.99 in the US
- Mindscape: 01444 246333 www.mindscapeuk.com www.nationalgeographic.com

National Geographic on CD-ROM

Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Minimum requirements: PC – 486DX33, Windows 3.1 or later, 8Mb of RAM, 10Mb of hard disk space, 2x CD-ROM drive, sound card.

Mac – 68030 33MHz, System 7.5 or higher, 8Mb of RAM, 10Mb of hard disk space, 2x CD-ROM drive.



Doctor Who – Destiny of the Doctors

As any *Doctor Who* fan will tell you, the Master is a dastardly fellow always looking for a way to conquer the universe. Our favourite Time Lord is usually on hand to save the day, but this time that might prove a bit difficult. Having seized Siralos, a planet made of psychic energy, the Master has captured and imprisoned the seven incarnations of the Doctor. And that's the way it looks like staying, unless ...



Challenging the megalomaniac Master is the Graak, an energy-dependent amorphous plasma matrix (no, we don't know what that means either) created by the Doctors before their imprisonment. You, of course, are the Graak, and must free each Doctor in turn. Fail, and it's curtains for them and you.



Following the rich vein of Doom-like games, *Destiny of the Doctors* takes place in a 3D environment, and sets numerous challenges. To free each Doctor you must outwit the Master, perhaps by collecting objects or chasing him across the skies trying to shoot him down. As well as freeing the Doctors you must do battle with other nasties, such as Daleks, that you encounter on the way, all before running out of energy.

Destiny incorporates real footage from the shows and new footage starring Anthony Ainley, who played the Master from 1980 to 1989. There is also a large database of *Doctor Who* facts and figures, which is a pointer for beginners and a dream for anoraks.

The graphics, however, even when playing at a low resolution are jerky and not a patch on other games of the same ilk. Though there are some nice touches and a lot has been crammed on to the CD, this is at the expense of gameplay.

Doctor Who fans will like this for its coverage of the show and collection of facts and figures. But *Destiny of the Doctors* is a peculiar mix. Part game, part something else, it seems to have bitten off a bit more than it can chew.

Jim Haryott

- £29.99 (inc VAT)
- BBC Multimedia: 0181 576 2112

Continued...



Along with the Complete National Geographic (reviewed on the previous page), it's possible to buy a disc of the greatest pictures from the magazine's photographers. The **National Geographic Photo**



Gallery includes 3,000 images split into categories such as National Parks and Ancient Civilisations, together with interviews with the snappers themselves. It is distributed by Mindscape and costs £29.99. **Mindscape: 01444 246333** www.nationalgeographic.com www.mindscapeuk.com

One of the world's best-known encyclopaedias has just launched an improved CD-ROM version. **Britannica CD 98** contains 44 million words on 72,000 topics, as well as multimedia tours and a timeline. It features a completely revamped interface and can be searched using natural language questions as well as through a more traditional index. The price has dropped as well, down to £125.

Encyclopaedia Britannica:
0181 770 7766
www.eb.com

Doctor Who – Destiny of the Doctors

Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 60, Windows 95, 16Mb of RAM, 50Mb of hard disk space, 2x CD-ROM drive, Sound Blaster 16-compatible sound card.

10 gift packs to be won



This month, GSP has teamed up with *What PC?* to offer 10 readers the chance to win one of two gift packs. The **Creative Wonder's Gift Pack** combines PressWorks 2.5, a capable budget DTP program that also includes a version for Windows 3.1, with the clip-art collection 5,000 Pictures. If you're feeling brainy then the **Total Swot's Gift Pack** contains Speak Fluent French and the British Multimedia Encyclopedia.

To enter, simply send your name and address on a postcard to the usual *What PC?* address before 28 February. Don't forget to state your choice of prize. The first 10 cards out of the hat will win a gift pack.



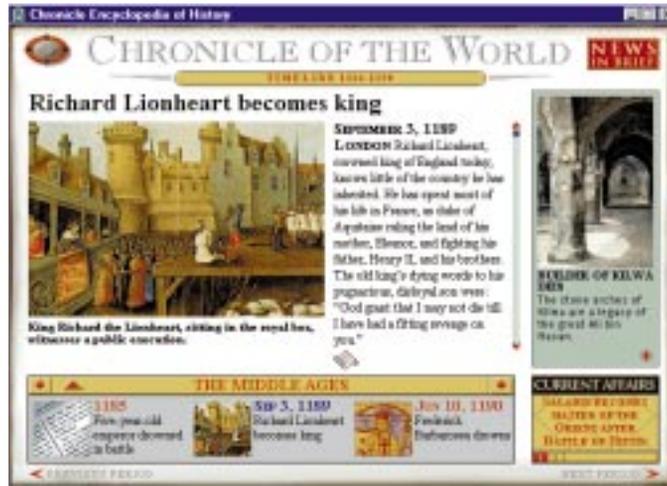
Chronicle Encyclopedia of History

Dorling Kindersley's Chronicle Encyclopedia of History follows on from the earlier Chronicle Encyclopedia of the 20th Century. Like the other disc, it's based on the Chronicle series of history books that have made such a success out of recounting the past in a modern style.

Choose a period from the Chronicle - it covers the Stone Age to the present day - and major events are dealt with as if you were reading a contemporary newspaper report. There is a fair amount of depth to many events, but some superficiality is inevitable with each screen covering the events of up to 30 years.

Once you've found details of a subject that interests you, say the thirteenth century Cathar heresy that led to thousands of Frenchmen being burnt at the stake, it's easy-to-follow links to related subjects and learn more about the excesses of the Spanish Inquisition.

Because the most colourful way to find information is by following the



chronological links, it can be a bit awkward to find your subject unless you have at least a rough idea of when a particular event took place.

There is a search function, but this isn't particularly sophisticated. Although it does index every significant word in the entries, even linked words will give completely different results, so you'll need several searches to be sure of finding everything.

This apart, navigating the disc isn't

too confusing and you can take advantage of the timeline or biography section to narrow down what you're looking for. There's even a screen of History in the Making, which provides links to some of the most significant periods of world history - great for school projects on, say, the French Revolution.

As ever, Dorling Kindersley's glossy presentation seduces you into liking the Encyclopedia of History. Fortunately, it has the content to match and although individual events may only be dealt with super-

ficially this is countered by the enormous breadth of the disc. John Sabine

- £29.99 (inc VAT)
- Dorling Kindersley: 0171 753 3488
- www.dk.com

Chronicle Encyclopedia of History

Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Minimum requirements: 486DX33, Windows 95, 12Mb of RAM, 41Mb of hard disk space, 2x CD-ROM, 8-bit sound card, SVGA display.

Michael Jackson's World Beer Hunter

BMG Interactive would have you believe that Michael Jackson's World Beer Hunter offers the ultimate pub crawl without the hangover. Well, there's no danger of the hangover - a couple of non-virtual pints would have been a nice addition to the product - but it's not really a pub crawl either.

It's more a repository of information about the beers and breweries of the world, a perfect post-Christmas gift for any real-ale buff. Simple but clear sketch maps take you round the globe, while icons mark all the breweries deemed significant enough to be included - just over 400 worldwide. We were pleased to see that all our favourites were listed, from the tiny Harviestoun brewery in Scotland (try its Ptarmigan if you ever have the chance) to the Czech Budvar.

There's a tremendous amount of detail on this disc, from briefings about



styles of beer to notes on individual brews, and even directions to certain carefully chosen pubs. Only a few are listed, but they're obviously a personal choice and, at least regards the couple we've been to, are well worth a visit.

Without being a beer snob, it was fascinating to pick up snippets of knowledge about certain ales - did you

know that Theakstons Old Peculier is named after an ancient ecclesiastical court?

However, we found the presentation slightly limiting. Beyond some beer labels and a couple of inviting pictures of a pint, there are few pictures - although the comments provided by Michael Jackson are interesting, a multimedia disc could really do with some visual treats.

The Beer Hunter is full of information to help you in your search for the perfect brew. Although it's fascinating on the subject of beer, its presentation could have been

more interesting. John Sabine

- £29.99 (inc VAT)
- BMG Interactive: 01373 455999

Michael Jackson's World Beer Hunter

Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Minimum requirements: 386, Windows 3.1, 4Mb of hard disk space.