

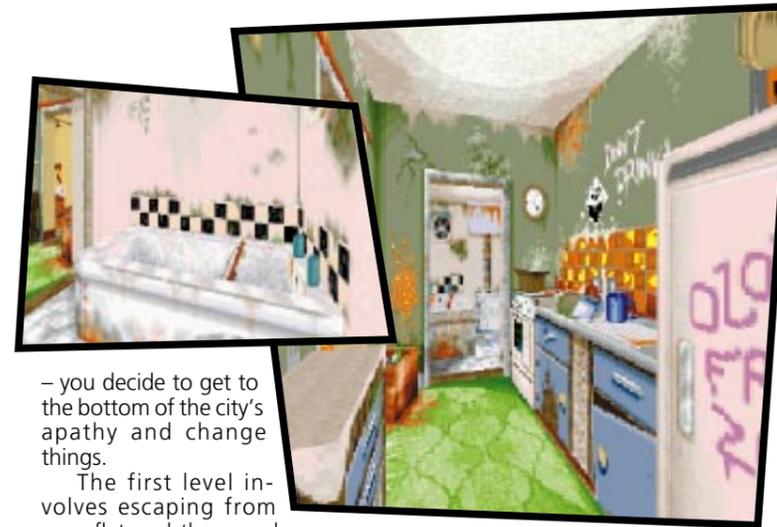
after hours

On offer in After Hours this month is an adventure game where you save a city from the boredom of 'normality', a new improved version of Civilisation and a ripping yarn starring Christopher Walken. Also, we test a steering wheel add-on for better gameplay, some new family products, teach you how to mix music to create your own tracks and show you the sites on the Internet

Normality

Normality is a 3D first-person point-and-click adventure. What makes it different from other adventure games is that it's set in a world you can recognise, rather than a weird, monster-ridden one.

If you think your life is dull, visit Neutropolis. This used to be a lively city until, 30 years ago, one of its leaders was killed. Now it is strictly guarded by Norm Troopers, whose orders are to stamp out fun of any kind. You are Kent, a lazy youth, who is being punished for whistling happily in public. After a week of imprisonment, you've had enough



– you decide to get to the bottom of the city's apathy and change things.

The first level involves escaping from your flat and the guard of the Norm Troopers. The best way to move around is to use a combination of keyboard and mouse and you should aim to collect as much as you can in the rucksack provided, talk to as many people as you can, go everywhere you can and examine absolutely everything. You can put anything you want in the rucksack, although if you try picking up the television, you're told to 'get real'.

You do have to be resourceful. As part of a deal, you have to get someone a cup of milky coffee. Don't give up when you find that there's no milk in the fridge. Add some white paint – after all, you don't actually have to drink it. Hints for those short of patience or imagination can be found on the CD insert – if you follow them, at least you'll discover how to get out of the flat.

Once outside, there are lots of places to go to. In fact, there are over 100 captured animation sequences in this game. It is very

responsive to keyboard strokes, and as you walk around, the movement is rather reminiscent of Doom though, unlike Doom, Normality is suitable for all ages and involves no killing or maiming. RS

This is great because it's a quality game which doesn't involve you having to sink to the depths of violence and murder. The most harmful thing you'll see is the dirt and grime in Kent's flat.

○ £39.99
○ Gremlin: 0114 275 3423

Normality **87%**

Minimum requirements: 66MHz 486, 8Mb of Ram, MS Dos 5.0, double-speed CD-Rom, Soundblaster-compatible sound card, 20Mb of available disk space.

Civilisation II

Civilisation II isn't exactly a sequel to Civilisation, but rather an update that improves and extends



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upon Sid Meier's best-selling strategy game. The concept of managing and developing an entire civilisation is the same but new additions make the game much more interesting and in some cases, much more difficult.

The game begins in 4,000BC with a small band of settlers over whom you rule. The first priority is to found a city because if they wander around for too long, marauding barbarians or a competing city may overrun them. Once founded, the city's population must then be set to work and decisions have to be made on how they farm the surrounding land. Cities must also be defended. At this stage, only simple warriors are possible but as technology improves, more sophisticated options become available.

Your people must also be set goals that steer the course of their civilisation. Although these start off small (writing, the alphabet), they soon increase in sophistication and while it may be ethically suspect, it's nevertheless immensely satisfying to drop a nuclear bomb (once you've discovered nuclear power) on a neighbouring city that's been irritating you.

Civilisation II is a big game. To give you some idea of its scope, the winner is the first civilisation to conquer the world or colonise a distant star system. Since your people start with pointed sticks and bare feet, this obviously requires a lot of time and effort on their part. Your role, as leader, is to guide them.

In a short review such as this it's impossible to do full justice to the depth of Civilisation II but, needless to say, it's not a game to play in a

games news

Robert de Niro owns a games company called Tribeca Interactive Studios. Its first game, called 9, is due for release this autumn, and will feature digitised voiceovers from Cher, James Belushi and Christopher Reeve. GT Interactive: 0171 258 3791

Sega is about to release many of its big arcade games on the PC platform. The fun starts in the summer with Virtua Fighter PC and by Christmas we'll see Sonic CD, Baku Baku, Panzer Dragoon, Bug, Daytona USA, Sonic 3 and Knuckles, Virtua Cop and Sega Rally Championship. Sega: 0181 995 3399



New releases from Ocean Software include Viper – a 3D helicopter blaster, World Rally Fever – a Manga-style racing game, Tunnel B1 – a shoot-em-up and, finally, Offensive – a strategic wargame. Ocean Software: 0161 832 6633

The release of Gametek's Battlecruiser 3000AD has been rescheduled for October 1996. It's a 3D space combat simulation

which will cost £39.99. Gametek: 01753 553445

Schiratti Commander is a new add-on for Microsoft Flight Simulator 5. Among other things, it enables you to draw your own scenery

with the help of Scenery Maker and take advantage of two extra cities – Budapest and Delhi. Alternatively, you could opt for Janes AH-64D Longbow, a flight simulator from Electronic Arts. Funsoft: 0181 748 7565; Electronic Arts: 01753 549442

CH Products is currently working on a force feedback joystick, which means it will offer jolt-button reflex, vibration, buffeting, axis force and vector force



features that make gaming a visual and physical experience. Dimensional Services: 01844 345406

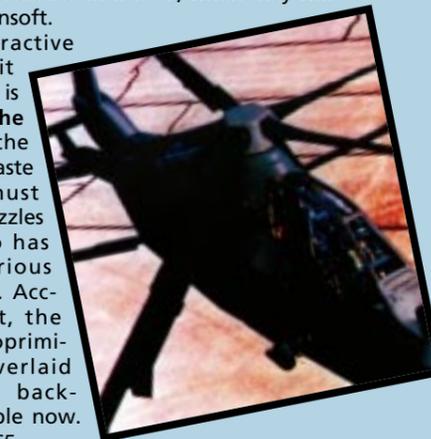
Nova Logic is soon to launch Comanche 3 and Armoured Fist 2. These are the latest versions of Nova's legendary helicopter and tank warfare arcade simulations. In both games, realistic landscapes are rendered in real-time using Nova Logic's spectacular Voxel Space technique. Voxel Space has been vastly improved since Comanche was first released over three years ago. Terrain unfolds more smoothly as you move across it, and fractal-style landscapes can now incorporate realistic ground and air targets made up from highly-detailed texture-mapped polygons. Expect

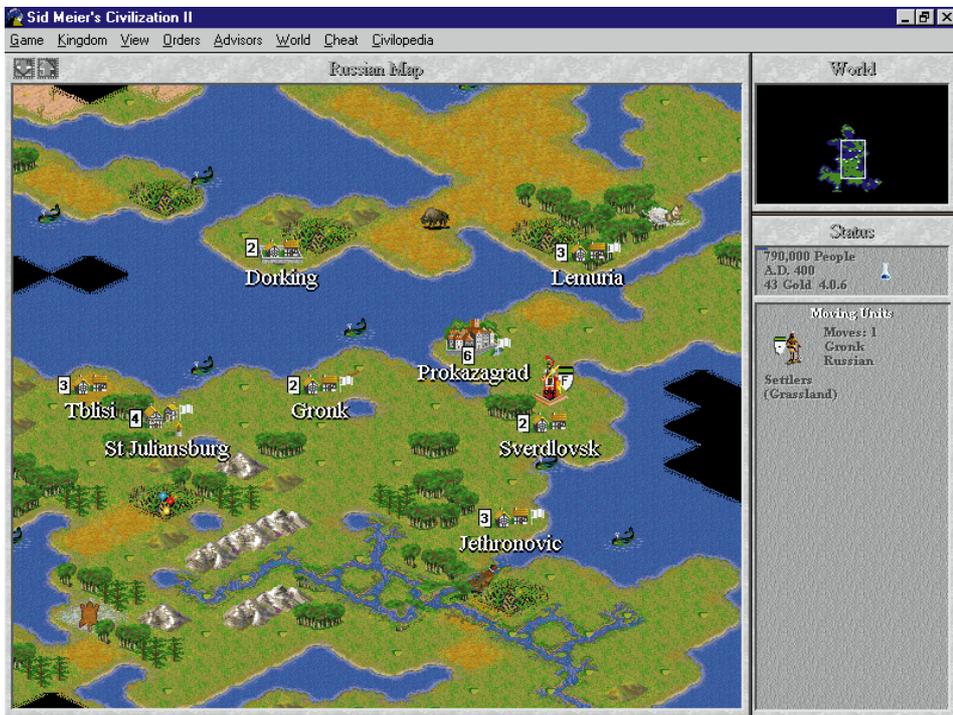


release in early autumn. Nova Logic: 0171 607 9707

Meanwhile, Virgin Sound and Vision has signed an agreement with Warner Brothers Interactive to create a range of children's software based on the Looney Tunes characters. All titles will feature TV-quality animation and original voices from the Looney Tunes gang, including Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, Sylvester & Tweety, Wile E Coyote, and others. The first titles aren't scheduled for release until 1997, when they will be distributed by Funsoft.

The latest interactive cartoon whodunnit released by Funsoft is called Elroy Hits the Pavement. Elroy, 'the spindly kid with a taste for adventure', must solve a series of puzzles and discover who has stolen the mysterious Canine Revitalizer. According to Funsoft, the game features neoprimitive animation overlaid on photographic backgrounds. It's available now. Funsoft: 0181 748 7565





four stories, but more of that later.

You play Jake Quinlan, ace reporter at *The Virtual Herald* in New York. The year is 2040. A serial killer is on the loose, emulating his (or is it her?) hero, Jack the Ripper, and it's your job to track down the murderer. Christopher Walken plays Vincent Magnotta, the detective leading the case, and in the prologue to the game he gives you your first clue to set you off on the trail of the Ripper.

You move through a magnificently rendered 3D environment (admittedly following predefined tracks) and the videos are overlaid on this so that you don't get the sense of the game pausing while you passively watch the next clip, a common feeling in many of these filmic games. As you exit any scene in the game you can call up an aerial view of New York and transport yourself immediately to any of the available locations.

You're equipped with a virtual palmtop computer called a WAC which you can use to make notes, so you don't need to write down clues and make maps on paper. The WAC also acts as a scanner so you can take pictures of objects you have found and refer to them later in the game.

spare five minutes. Give it a weekend, however, and you'll be hooked.

Eventually, of course, you are going to win, but the game's appeal doesn't end there. Apart from its multitude of options giving a variety of game permutations, it also has a world editor that allows you to construct your own scenarios. Anything goes here, so if you want to see just how ancient Rome might have coped if it had discovered the theory of gravity a little early, then it's possible. JP

The time and effort involved in getting to grips with Civilisation II (the manual is almost 200 pages long) is not going to appeal to everyone but, if you're a strategy fan, you'll be more than rewarded. An excellent game in every respect.

- £44.99
- Microprose: 01454 893900

Civilisation II **90%**

Minimum requirements: 33MHz 486DX, 8Mb of Ram, Windows 3.1 or higher, double-speed CD-Rom, SVGA graphics.

Ripper

Games like Ripper from Take 2 Interactive Software give the lie to hoary old chestnuts about 14-year-old geniuses knocking out games in their bedrooms and making a fortune.

This is a game which features three hours of full-screen video (shot with a cast led by mas-

ter-of-menace Christopher Walken), has a soundtrack by Blue Oyster Cult and comes on no fewer than six CDs. The cast and credits fill more than three pages in the manual, and the game actually has a story – well, to be precise,



New York in 2040 is a very high-tech place; so much so that it is possible to enter Cyberspace via your office computer, and much of the action takes place here – as well as in the 'real' city. There are clues to collect, enemies to defeat and puzzles to solve in both New York and Cyberspace. Some of the puzzles are manipulative (in the manner of *Seventh Guest*) while others are deductive and require you to work out what to do next by using the information gathered so far.

The weakest part of the game is the interaction with other characters. Remember, these are played ▶



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by actors who can speak sensibly to you, but you can only interrogate them by picking questions from lists. Until someone comes up with far better voice recognition systems than are currently available, it's a poor compromise – but much better than typing in questions from the keyboard.

If you follow the game to its conclusion, all the suspects are gathered in the same place and you have one chance to confront the Ripper, (we haven't got this far!), but that's not the end of the game. You can play it three more times, with different clues and a different Ripper each time. One nice touch, because it gives you a chance to become familiar with the controls and options, is that the prologue comes with a written step-by-step walkthrough that also acquaints you with the story so far and a couple of essential locations. PW

It's a strange mixture of Blade Runner, Agatha Christie and gothic horror, but it works. The gameplay is ingenious and the execution is superb. One day we might find time to finish it.

○ £49.99
○ Gametek: 01753 553445

Ripper **90%**

Minimum requirements: 50MHz 486/DX2, 8Mb of Ram, 10Mb of disk space, 512Kb Vesa-compatible video card, mouse, double-speed CD-Rom drive, sound card.

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



Figures for both charts from Chart Track Ltd - week ending 25.05.96

Per4mer

No matter how accurate car racing simulations get, they'll always have a failing. Sitting in front of a computer screen and keyboard is a poor substitute for a car windscreen and steering wheel. It's going to be some time before we can get rid of the computer screen but at least racing-game fanatics can get their hands on something more realistic than the 'k' and 'l' keys.

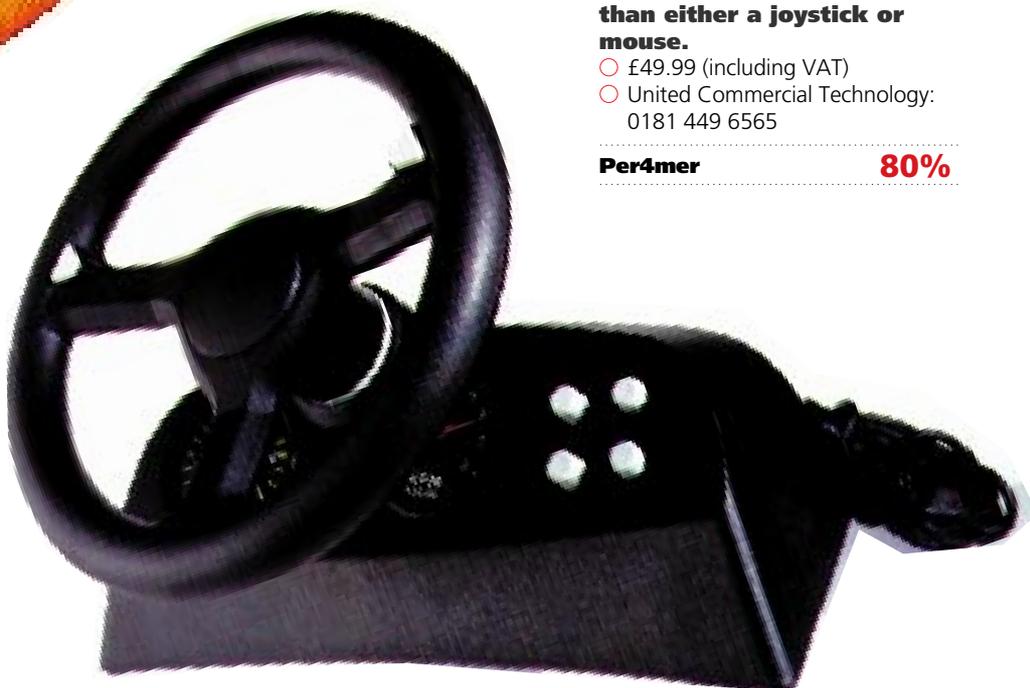
The Per4mer is a steering wheel controller that can be used with any game capable of being played with a joystick. Left and right rotation

corresponds to the joystick's left and right movement for steering, and two buttons on the wheel itself work as joystick up and down (usually for acceleration). The device itself is a little plasticky and stuck-on paper dials for a speedometer and rev counter certainly don't add to its allure. It does, however, work extremely well. JP

Games such as 'Big Red Racing' take on a whole new light as you frantically wrestle the wheel from left to right to regain control of your vehicle and it's a much more intuitive controller than either a joystick or mouse.

○ £49.99 (including VAT)
○ United Commercial Technology:
0181 449 6565

Per4mer **80%**



TOP TEN CD-ROM GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
–	1	Duke Nukem 3D	US Gold
4	2	Civilisation 2	Microprose
10	3	Command and Conquer	Virgin
1	4	Theme Park	Electronic Arts
5	5	Encarta 96	Microsoft
7	6	Worms	Ocean
–	7	Warcraft 2: Expansion Set	Ablac
–	8	Dogz	Mindscape
–	9	Championship Manager 2	Domark
8	10	Worms: Reinforcements	Ocean

TOP TEN DISK GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
–	1	The Lion King	Virgin
–	2	Aladdin	Virgin
4	3	Jungle Book	Virgin
1	4	Sim City 2000	Maxis
3	5	Autoroute – UK and Ireland	Microsoft
2	6	Sim Tower	Maxis
7	7	Best of Windows Ent.	Microsoft
6	8	Toy Story screensaver	Disney screensaver
–	9	Autoroute – Europe	Microsoft
–	10	Award Winners – Platinum	Empire