Fans of Bruce Willis will have fun with Die Hard Trilogy, or you could try blasting aliens from a helicopter. For a quieter life, try a golf game or some photography and art packages

Home & Entertainment

The latest stories and products

This year's E3 entertainment show in Atlanta played host to a huge number of titles scheduled to make their debut later this year. Activision made a splash with the news that it will be revamping two of its most

DIE HARD TRILOGY ⑮

Who, after having seen Bruce Willis cavort topless as NYPD officer John McClane, hasn't felt like crawling through the office air conditioning system, riding on an airport baggage carousel or driving through playing fields in a minicab?

Well now you can. Die Hard Trilogy puts you in McClane's tattered vest as he battles his way through a key scene from each film.

Part one has you trapped in the upper reaches of the Nakatomi Plaza as terrorists run amok with their dubious Eastern European accents. Such games usually work best in a 3D, first-person perspective and this is almost how it's been done here. The difference is that, rather than just a 'gun-in-hand' view-point, the action is viewed from behind McClane, so you get to see his every move.
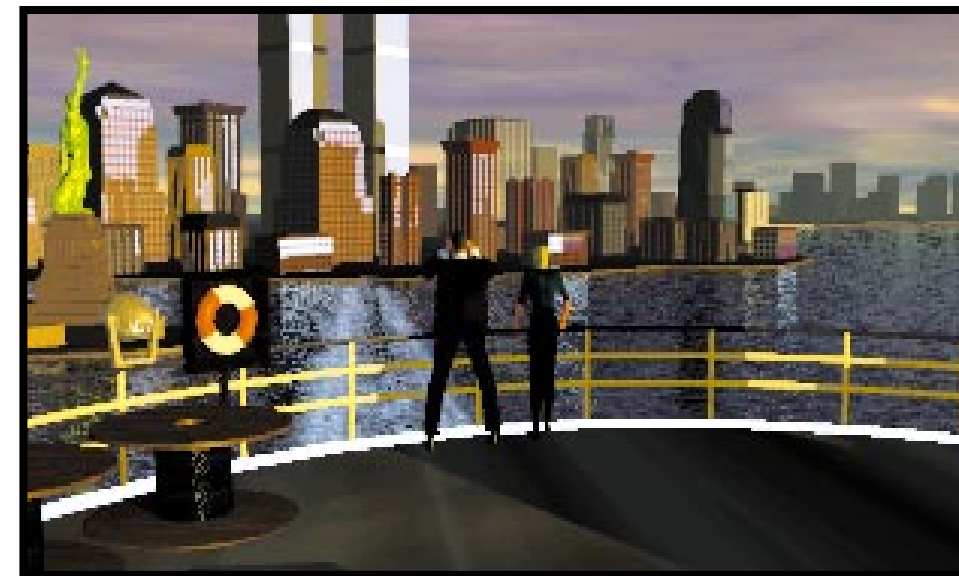
The peculiar angle means that walls of buildings vanish as they come 'out' of the screen; this is disconcerting at first, but you soon become familiar with it as play progresses.

Less convincing are the terrorists, who stagger like marionettes, as designed by Reeves and Mortimer. The object is to reach the top floor, free-ing hostages (by walking into them) and dis-patching terror-ists along the way.

Part two relocates you to Washing-ton's Dulles airport, as another batch of terrorists add to the misery of economy class travel. Shoot the terrorists, not the hostages, this time using a Virtua Cop-style technique. Your path through the mayhem is more or less fixed, but the trail through the airport concourse and surrounding countryside, on foot and in assorted vehicles, adds to the variety.

In part three, you play Simon Says on the streets of Manhattan to defuse a potentially explosive situation. Compass directions point you to bomb locations and the aim is to get there as fast as possible without harming other drivers or pedestrians.

Make it through several stages where cars shouldn't be driving and the climax has you racing against mad Simon himself in a bid to save the city.

Given the emphasis on guns and murder, it is no surprise that Die Hard Trilogy is gory and the films themselves look like Open University programmes in comparison. As far as ultraviolent action games go, however, it's up there with the best. *Julian Prokaza*

Gory, yes; mindlessly violent, absolutely; but great fun if you don't take it too seriously and certainly an entertaining translation of Brucie's best movie moments.

● £39.99 (inc VAT)
● Electronic Arts: 01753 549442

Die Hard Trilogy					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 120, 16Mb of RAM, DirectX 3a supported sound and video cards, 10Mb of hard drive space, CD-ROM drive, mouse.

EXTREME ASSAULT

ON THE CD

After a hard day slaving over a hot PC, it's a pleasure to relax by starting up your Sioux attack helicopter – 'so advanced it was science fiction two years ago' – and blowing away enemy vehicles or planes as you fly through tunnels or across tundra.

Helicopter simulators are notoriously hard to play. You need to balance obscure controls like the collective against your height and speed, which means you're prone to

successful titles for the DVD-ROM format. **Spycraft: The Great Game** and **Muppet Treasure Island** will feature MPEG 2 compression technology to enhance video and audio elements. The company also plans to support Pentium MMX PCs with all new titles, including **Heavy Gear**, a 3D combat simulation, and **Zork Grand Inquisitor**, the next instalment in the nearly 20-year-old Zork adventure series. **Activision: 01895 456700**

Virgin Interactive is set to deliver a horde of top titles. Adventure fans will be keen to see the long-awaited **Lands of Lore 2**, and LucasArts' **The Curse of Monkey Island**. Both titles look set to hit the top of the charts as soon as they appear. Others on the way include the multi-player *Star Wars* slugfest **Jedi Knights**, and conversions of the console hits **Shadows of the Empire** and **Mega Man x 3**. **Virgin Interactive: 0171 368 2255**

Interplay's latest is **Atomic Bomberman**, where the idea is simply to run round a maze drop-ping bombs in an attempt to blow up your opponents. The game can be played as a single player or over a network with up to 10 people, and features over 25 'power-ups' such as jelly bombs, land mines and super soakers.

Devilishly simple and packed with humorous animations and sound, this looks set to be one of the most addictive games of the year. **Interplay: 01628 423666**

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crashing while shooting at the enemy. Extreme Assault doesn't pretend to be a simulator, and simply dealing with height, speed and course leaves plenty of time for the serious business of killing aliens.

Some concessions are made to plot; after you've chosen your pilot, you move on to a mission briefing and must carry out your task successfully to progress to the next level. Not all missions involve wiping out aliens. There are prisoners to be freed and sophisticated weapons to be found – generally after having blown away all the pesky aliens. Even better, halfway through you can swap your helicopter for a heavily-armed tank.

The most difficult choice you'll face is which weapon to use: razor gun, laser cannon or the alien systems available as power-ups on the higher levels.

It all takes place in impeccable 3D. The vehicles and scenery aren't as flash as some we've seen, but they do show progressive damage, puffing out clouds of smoke as you pound them, and buildings stay 3D as you fly round them.

Up to four people can play across the Internet or a network, choosing either the Sioux helicoptor or an A1 tank, and although you will need a CD each for a full game, there is a demo mode which allows you to indulge in a little light extermination. *John Sabine*
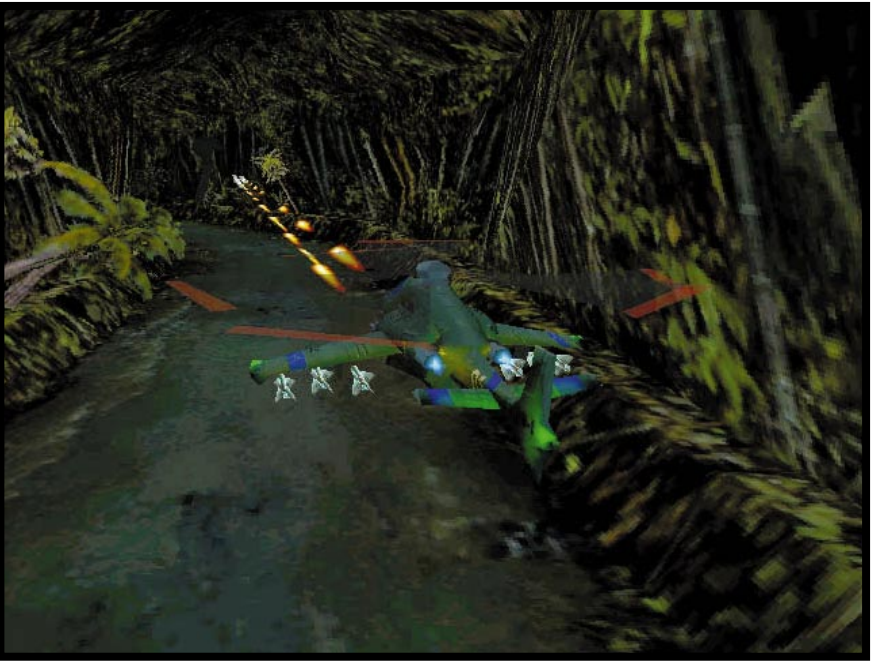**If you find blasting aliens with high-tech weapons relaxing, get Extreme Assault. If you're tired of aliens, blast your friends – they may be aliens themselves...**
● **£29.99 (inc VAT)**
● **Blue Byte: 01604 23200**

Extreme Assault					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: 486DX4/100, DOS 5.0 or Windows 95, local bus graphics card, 16Mb of RAM, 50Mb of hard disk space, 2x CD-ROM drive.

JACK NICKLAUS 4

Oh, the smack of leather against willow; oh, the glare of starched white shirts; oh, the bonhomie of the deckchair-supported crowd supping their warm beer; and – oh dear – the spectacle of watching the fielders attempting to stop the runs. But that's enough about cricket because this is a golf game, endorsed by that old swinger Jack Nicklaus.

A golf simulation such as this has a lot of advantages over the real thing. For a start, play is not subject to weather conditions, and you don't waste time trudging from hole to hole. More than that, it gives couch potatoes the chance to breathe some virtual fresh air.
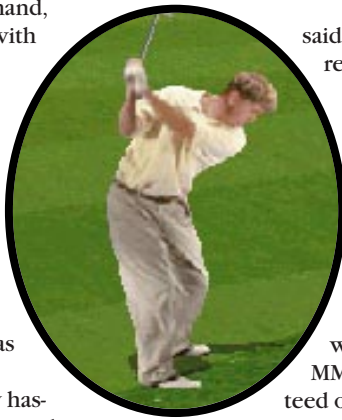
Now, we're not accomplished golfers in the *What PC?* office, and for the first few minutes we were thrusting our balls in all directions – most of the time towards the rough. We even managed to make one fly over the cuckoo's nest – Jack Nicholson would have been proud. Mr Nicklaus, on the other hand, simply chose to berate us with some suitably cutting commentary.

After an hour or so, however, we'd got to grips with the 'swingometer' ball-hitting system and our game began to improve. A particularly easy hole saw us pulling our first birdie, but for the most part our scorecard was covered in bogeys.

Electronic Arts certainly hasn't scrimped when it comes to the courses. A standard installation sees five of the undulating delights placed on your hard drive, and a 'bonus' CD-ROM containing a further four is also included – that's a total of 162 holes! Unfortunately, the downside to this is that even a basic installation will cost you a whopping 180Mb of hard disk space.

Should you happen to become bored with the courses provided, you can create your own with the course designer. This is very flexible, although it does take some getting used to.

You can change everything from the curvature of the green to the warbles made by on-looking birds, but it takes ages to perfect a single hole, so bank on days to design an entire course. That said, we doubt it's a doddle in real life either.

Graphically, the game is almost flawless, but there are some unacceptable pauses between 'taking' the shot and actually seeing a ball fly through the air. Our patience extends some way but, given that we were using a 200MHz MMX PC, we did feel rather teed off. *Scott Colvey*

If you're a golf fan and you own a PC of suitable magnitude, Jack Nicklaus 4 is unlikely to disappoint.
● **£39.99 (inc VAT)**
● **Electronic Arts: 01753 549442**

Jack Nicklaus 4					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 90 (100 recommended), 16Mb of RAM (20Mb recommended), 2x CD-ROM drive, 180Mb of hard disk space (215Mb recommended), DirectX 3.0-compliant graphics card and Windows 95.

HMV GAMES CHART

	Title	Manufacturer	Price
1	**Carmageddon**	SCI	£34.99
2	**EA Cricket '97**	Electronic Arts	£39.99
3	**FIFA Soccer Manager**	Electronic Arts	£39.99
4	**Championship Manager 2: Double Pack**	Eidos	£19.99
5	**Command & Conquer: Red Alert**	Virgin	£44.99
6	**Theme Park: Classics**	Electronic Arts	£11.99
7	**Red Alert: Counterstrike**	Virgin	£14.99
8	**Ultima 8: Classic**	Electronic Arts	£11.99
9	**Theme Hospital**	Electronic Arts	£39.99
10	**Space Hulk: Classic**	Electronic Arts	£11.99

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

Canon Interactive Guide to Photography & John Hedgecoe's Guide to Photography

Disney's Magic Artist is set to be released at the end of September. Featuring classic Disney characters, this disc aims to help teach drawing techniques. Disney's own artists give sketching tutorials, and there is a tracing feature which allows you to copy their secrets. Authentic backgrounds and props are included, and a range of special effects can be added to help create a musical slideshow. Magic Artist will cost £39.99.
Disney Interactive: 0181 222 1571

Type To Learn is the latest title in Iona Software's Sunburst range of educational products. Aimed at children from eight years upwards, Type To Learn has an outer space theme and builds typing skills through games and activities which also teach astronomy and geography. The disc includes a word processor and is available now priced at £19.95.
Iona Software: 0181 296 9454

Latest in Dorling Kindersley's Eyewitness series is a multimedia **Children's Encyclopedia**. Featuring an interactive Navigator, the Encyclopedia disk includes maps, animations and video clips which can be explored through 19 virtual worlds. On-line links to the DK Active Learning Club complete the package.

Due for release at the end of August, the Children's Encyclopedia will sell for £39.99; parents who buy it can also get a free copy for their child's school.
Dorling Kindersley: 0171 836 5411

Back in July we looked at digital cameras, possibly the easiest way to get a picture onto your PC. This month we've scrutinised two titles which let you use a PC to improve your snaps, even if you're using film.

Both discs cover much the same ground as any basic photography textbook: a look at the technical aspects of taking a picture, together with more artistic advice on how to compose an image.

The Anglia disc is presented by John Hedgecoe, professor of photography and author of several of the aforementioned books. The other comes from Canon, although it's distributed by Ocean Software. The technical section on cameras makes frequent references to the features of Canon's own products. Although these are impressive, we were glad to see that the basics of focusing and exposure were explained as well as more esoteric functions, such as eye-controlled auto-focus.

In terms of content, there's not much to choose between the titles. Both contain a wealth of good advice and, if you can manage to take it in, your pictures will show a definite improvement. The Canon disc, though, makes better use of animations and has fuller explanations – John Hedgecoe's glossary was too brief. Furthermore, although Canon's only audio content is a camera shutter sound effect, this is far better than Hedgecoe's talking head slots. These are monotonous and only detract from the information that they contain.   John Sabine

Both of these discs achieve pretty much what they're meant to do. On balance, the Canon disc has the edge. It has animations to illustrate the technical stuff and better explanations of photographic theory and style: these outweigh the concentration on Canon's own cameras.
Canon Guide:
● £19.99 (inc VAT)
● Ocean Software: 0161 832 6633
John Hedgecoe's Guide:
● £29.99 (inc VAT)
● Anglia Multimedia:
   01603 615151

Canon Interactive Guide to Photography					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: **PC** – 486, Windows 3.1 or higher, 4Mb of RAM, 2Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive.
Mac – 68020, System 7.0 or higher, 4Mb of RAM, 2Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive.

John Hedgecoe's Guide to Photography					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: **PC** – 486SX/25, Windows 3.1 or higher, 4Mb of RAM (8Mb recommended), 2x CD-ROM drive, Sound Blaster-compatible sound card.
Mac – Mac or Power Mac, System 7.0 or later, 4Mb of RAM (8Mb rec), 2x CD-ROM drive, 256-colour display.
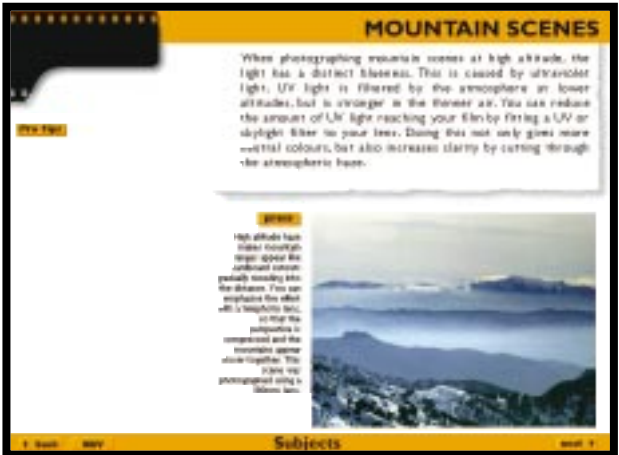
Picasso, the Man, his Works, the Legend

The very name Picasso is enough to conjure up images of weird paintings, distorted views and disconcerting ideas. Quite how those ideas were born, what made the artist the man he was and which techniques he used, remain a mystery to most people. But now, *Picasso, the Man, his Works, the Legend*, from Grolier Interactive, sets out to demystify the man and his work.

When you start the program, you can go into the Notebook or explore some Themes. In the Notebook, Picasso's life is divided into various periods – Beginnings, Blue and Rose Periods, Guernica, and so on – and you can either follow through the story of Picasso's life or dip in and out as you wish.

Each period begins with a major work representative of that period and you can click on this to get some in-depth information. Carry on through successive illustrations to find notes and voice-overs which explain the relevant influences and the major events of that time.

A helpful feature is a timeline for each period, so you can easily put Picasso's works in the context of their time.

Inside the Themes section, you will find the works of Picasso organised under eight different headings, such as Sculpture, Portraits and Engraving – choose a theme and, to the accompaniment of some atmospheric music, you will be off on a tour of some of the most representative works. The Self-Portraits theme is especially interesting, as you can track Picasso's development from a tradi-

tional painting through to a complex, distorted view of himself.

Along with this resource bank of pictures, commentary and background information, there are all sorts of useful features and tools. Close-up tools, search facilities and video footage, together with good use of hypertext links, mean this is a package you won't put down in a hurry.   Sheila Hill

The wealth of information on this CD-ROM makes it an absolute must for any Picasso fan or student, but its ease of use, its atmospheric presentation and its utter browsability make it thoroughly enjoyable for anyone with a general interest in art.
● £39.99 (inc VAT)
● Grolier Interactive: 01865 264800

Picasso, the Man, his Works, the Legend					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: 486DX4, 8Mb of RAM, 16-bit sound card, mouse, Windows 3.1x or Windows 95, 256-colour display.

Discovery Channel Multimedia has just launched two titles aimed at children of nine years and up. **Pirates: Captain's Quest** is a nautical treasure chest, while **Invention Studio** encourages children to follow in the footsteps of the great inventors. With the help of an animated guide, Doc Howard, it's possible to research and create your own inventions, based on genuine scientific principles. Both cost £29.99. Look out for a full review next month.
BMG Interactive: 0171 384 7500

Attica Interactive has got together with the St John Ambulance organisation to produce **First Aid**, an interactive reference and training CD-ROM. With four sections to teach you how to assess casualties at an accident and give the most appropriate treatment, the disc can be used to give a basic grounding in first aid or to help prepare for a course leading to a formal qualification. It will be available at the beginning of September for £39.99.
Attica: 01865 791346

Following the success of its Tamagotchi pocket pets, Bandai has launched a range of keyring games. You too can return to the eighties with **Tetris Jr**, **Breakout** and **Space Invaders** – all are available now for £7.99.
Bandai, 01489 790944

Continuing the First Aid theme, this time for children, **Owie Wowies - The First Aid Family** has 14 interactive lessons on themes such as broken limbs, sprains and heart attacks. It is available now for both PC and Mac at £19.95.
Owie Wowies: 0541 50 50 05

MOUNTAIN SCENES