

The MPC Era Arrives

Multimedia titles are changing the way we play games, and Sierra is setting the standards for multimedia titles.

By Kurt Busch

"*King's Quest VI* is the proof that the era of CD game playing is upon us... Kill your hard drives!"

Peter Spear
- *QuestBusters* - November, 1992

No doubt about it, the multimedia platform is changing the way we play games. When *King's Quest VI* ships on CD, lucky Multimedia PC (MPC) owners will be treated to an unparalleled game experience that those who played the MS-DOS versions caught only a glimpse of.

But, despite the great advances made in the CD marketplace, it's important to realize that not just any CD game is truly multimedia and fewer still meet the MPC standard.

The Age of MPC

The MPC standard was created in 1991 by 12 major companies, including Microsoft, Tandy, and Philips (the creators of the audio CD). It established minimum standards for hardware configurations and - more importantly for the consumers - software development. A typical MPC title holds as much information as 400 or 500 disks. The compact discs run under *Windows* for multimedia. A typical multimedia upgrade for a 386 (which includes a sound card, CD-ROM drive, and software) costs about \$800. MPC software is usually no more expensive than the MS-DOS disk equivalent.

A CD-ROM game that sports the MPC label is more than "shovelware" (the industry term for MS-DOS games ported to CD without enhancement). MPC titles combine voice, music, superior art and animation to create an experience that is truly like an interactive film or cartoon.

When you play an MPC game, every character actually speaks to you. Ships creak, dungeons drip, rockets blast, monsters screech, and whole worlds of fantasy come alive before your eyes.

Sierra Sets the Standard

This year, the readers of *MPC World* magazine voted for the best true

multimedia titles on the market. Not surprisingly, Sierra led the way.

Roberta Williams' *King's Quest V* was selected as "Best Multimedia Fantasy/Adventure Game". The people who played this ground-breaking game thrilled to the screech of a harpy, the incantations of a wizard, and the battle cry of a king. Over 50 voice actors contributed to this monumental multimedia experience.

Roberta was also honored for *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*, selected as "Best Multimedia Title - Learning for Children" by the readers of *MPC World*. This enchanting adventure for pre-readers features dozens of delightful characters



who talk and sing to children during a quest to un-scramble Mother Goose's nursery rhymes.

Sierra has also attracted legions of multimedia fans with titles like *Jones in the Fast Lane*, a board-game style "adventure in real life" and *Stellar 7*, a fast-paced battle across seven high-tech battlefields of the future. (The CD-ROM version of *Stellar 7* features exceptional action, sound, and music, but is not an MPC product).

But anyone who thought Sierra had already taken MPC to the limit with these titles is in for an action-packed, eye-opening surprise as Sierra rolls out even hotter titles for MPC.

Rockin' with Roger Wilco

Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers will hit the shelves soon, probably by the time you read this article. Join Roger Wilco in this hilarious and puzzling romp across space and time. The sequel police are hot on Roger's trail as he stumbles through the past, present, and future of this outrageous series.

The new MPC version of this award-winning comedy/adventure is narrated by Gary Owens (of *Laugh-In* fame) and features a hard-rocking soundtrack by Supertramp's Bob Siebenberg.

Get Wild with Willy

When the MS-DOS version of *The Adventures of Willy Beamish* was released last year, *QuestBusters* magazine called it "the closest thing yet to capturing the look and feel of animated cartoons". Now this great game captures the sound and fury of the genre as well, with dozens of whacky voices, outrageous sound effects, and enough high-octane, day-glo animation to keep you playing for a long, long time.

Willy Beamish will not only roll out on MPC, but also on the new Sega CD format, making this cartoon adventure a must-have for any collection.

An Amazing Multimedia Mystery

Fans of Laura Bow can help her unravel a master-level mystery in the MPC version of *The Dagger of Amon Ra*. This intricately designed, perpetually perplexing adventure features spectacular art deco illustrations and a sparkling 20s-style jazz soundtrack.

Help cub reporter Laura Bow investigate a murder in an imposing New York museum in the dead of night. Surrounded by socialites, miscreants, and thieves, Laura must unravel the mystery of an ancient Egyptian artifact.

Part of Laura's job is to interview and interrogate everyone she meets. Now you can actually hear these characters as they pass on rumors, recount events, and offer

alibis. Can you tell when these characters are telling the truth?

Having a cast of characters that actually talks also allows you to eavesdrop at parties and in public places. You may pick up a few clues if you listen closely.

Dan Carver, Sierra's project manager for multimedia titles, hinted that *Laura Bow in the Dagger of Amon Ra* may contain some design changes as well.

This is Sierra's most ambitious MPC project to date, and will only be surpassed when *King's Quest VI* rolls out (see below).

A CD Search for Cetus

EcoQuest: The Search for Cetus is an amazing animated adventure on MPC. It not only presents you with a fun, master-level game, it also introduces kids ages 10 and up to important ecological issues.

Cruise beneath the waves and discover a colorful cast of enchanting sea creatures, each with a distinct personality, and - thanks to MPC - a distinct voice.

As an interesting side note, Sierra auditioned dozens of young actors for the role of Adam and wound up selecting Dylan Skirvin, son of *King's Quest VI* project manager Bil Skirvin. (Bil was also the director on the MS-DOS version of *EcoQuest*).

In early 1993, the long-awaited MPC version of *Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards* should be released, bringing the off-beat world of Lost Wages to life. Al Lowe is personally supervising the casting right now, as well as working on design changes for the game.


And the BIG one...

When *King's Quest VI* for MPC rolls out in early 1993, everybody who got an MPC upgrade for Christmas is going truly believe in Santa Claus.

The opening cartoon, developed by Kronos, the company that did special effect work for *Batman Returns* and *Launmower Man* - is an amazing display of 3-D rendering, featuring sweeping camera pans that travel around people and objects that come to life. Those who've played the MS-DOS version of the game caught just a glimpse of this impressive example of animation.

The game will feature the most sophisticated design of any MPC game, along with a sensational soundtrack and a cast of characters that will talk, scream, sing, and howl. In fact, the audio highlight of the game is "Girl in the Tower," a love ballad sung as a duet.

Get in on the Revolution

For everyone who's upgraded to MPC, this holiday season is going to usher in a new era of multimedia games. For those of you who haven't jumped on the MPC bandwagon, this may be the time to write those letters to Santa Claus. 

Top MPC Titles from Sierra

King's Quest V: Absence Makes the Heart Go Yonder



King's Quest V was voted "Best Multimedia Fantasy/Adventure Game" by the readers of MPC World magazine.

Mixed-Up Mother Goose



Roberta Williams' beloved *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* was selected "Best Multimedia Title - Learning for Children" by MPC World.

Space Quest IV



Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers will send CD-ROM games into the space age.

The Adventures of Willy Beamish



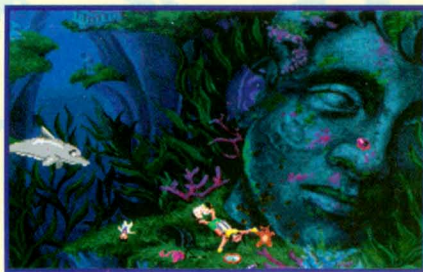
QuestBusters magazine calls *The Adventures of Willy Beamish* "the closest thing yet to capturing the look and feel of animated cartoons."

Laura Bow in The Dagger of Amon Ra



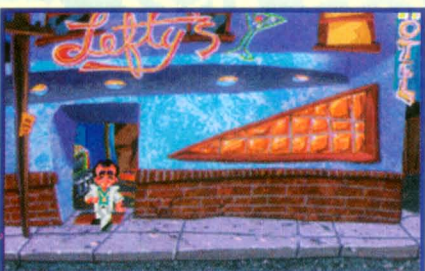
Laura Bow in The Dagger of Amon Ra is a mysterious masterpiece on MPC.

EcoQuest: The Search for Cetus



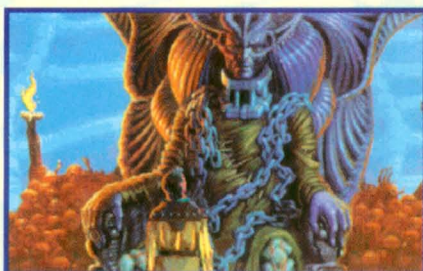
EcoQuest: The Search for Cetus is a multimedia quest to save the planet.

Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards



Check out the streets of Lost Wages when you step out in this hilarious MPC title.

King's Quest VI: Heir Today, Gone Tomorrow



QuestBuster called this game "the proof that the era of CD game playing is upon us."