leisure lines

Go 3D and conquer

No sooner had we all rushed out and bought the latest Command and Conquer game, than another one is announced. **Command & Conquer: Renegade** will break the mould by extending the franchise into the 3D action genre. Fighting for the Global Defence Initiative against the Brotherhood of Nod, the idea this time around is to get you right into the centre of the action, rather than commanding it all from a distance. Multi-player support will be there as always, with deathmatch options at the centre of it. Keep checking www.westwood.com for more as the game develops.

Half-Life was an extraordinary single-player experience, but the downloadable add-on Team Fortress made it a fun multiplayer game as well. Now Valve has announced that it is developing a sequel called, strangely enough, **Team Fortress 2: Brotherhood of Arms**. You can assume one of 12 different roles, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. If you want to charge in with all guns blazing, for example, you can be

a Marine or a Commando. If you prefer skulking around like a coward then you can be a

sniper or a spy. If you're a true team player, a backup role such as a medic or an engineer might suit you. The engine uses technology that claims to be able to render objects with fewer polygons, but with no loss of detail, allowing much more to be on the screen at once. We're certainly looking forward to it here. Keep an eye on www.sierrastudios.com for updates.

The run-up to Christmas can mean only one thing: it's time for the latest Lara Croft game. The buxom adventuress returns again in **Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation**. The fourth version of the popular series is designed to be one continuous experience rather than several adventures as in the last game. Set in Egypt, Lara inadvertently puts the whole of humanity in mortal danger and spends the entire game trying to save us all from destruction.

The Last Revelation features a new engine, with the good news being that the PC engine is different to the PSX version, which on our past experience should make the game look and play a lot better. The inventory system has been redesigned to allow items to be combined, collected and stored. Look out for a review of the game that will top the Christmas charts, and take a peek at www.eidos.com while you're waiting.

Fine-tuned FIFA

One of the best and most successful sports simulations ever was FIFA 99. Unsurprisingly, EA Sports has written a follow-up, **FIFA 2000**. The new version will feature all the best teams from today's footballing scene, together with the best teams of all time. You can play for any of the teams. The game has been redesigned slightly so that league and cup matches are delivered in one schedule.

We're not expecting large-scale changes, but there are promised motion-capture movies from Sol Campbell together with music from Robbie Williams. It all sounds as though it will be
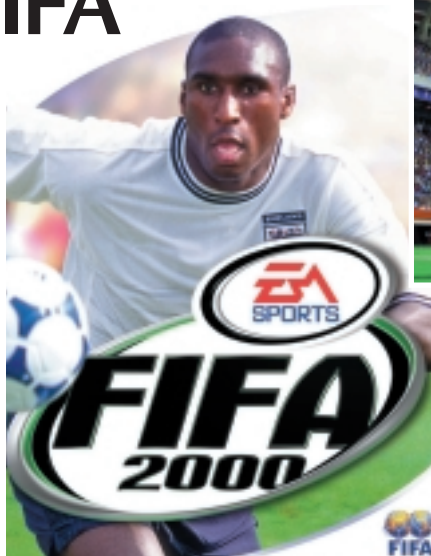
more of a polish-up of previous versions than anything truly groundbreaking, but sales are certain to hit the roof.

We'll have a review of FIFA 2000 when it's out but in the meantime point your browser at www.easports.com for more.

JASON JENKINS

Unreal Tournament

**A worthy successor to the crown of deathmatch king. You've never had it so good...**

The first-person perspective genre has been one of the most successful game formats on the PC, with Wolfenstein 3D giving birth to the infamously popular Doom. However, it wasn't until ID Software released the groundbreaking and visually stunning Quake that gaming environments started to appear real. Quake was a milestone in computer gaming history and its polygon-based 3D engine required a very powerful PC to run at an acceptable speed. In fact it was Quake that was mostly responsible for the advancements in the 3D accelerator market. Many games arrived based on the Quake engine, but Epic Games and Digital Extremes were beavering away on their own game engine, having decided that the Quake and Quake II engines just weren't impressive enough. The result of this work was Unreal, which was and probably still is the most beautifully-rendered 3D game available on the PC.

Shortly after the launch of Unreal, ID Software announced that Quake III would be multi-player only since most die-hard gamers played Quake and Quake II in a multi-player environment rather than as a single-player game. This is fair testimony to the popularity of multi-player games and anyone will tell you that it's more fun to frag one of your friends than an AI bad guy.

Not to be outdone, Epic has released a deathmatch-only game, based on the Unreal engine and it's almost as beautiful to play as it is to look at.

Like most deathmatch-based games, the aim is to kill as many people as you can without getting killed too many times yourself. You'll find various weapons and ammo scattered around the map and it's always a good idea to keep well stocked up with armaments.

Your starting weapon is a standard auto-mag sidearm, but you'll find much better tools of destruction than this. There's a mini-gun with a frighteningly high cyclic rate of fire, while the rocket
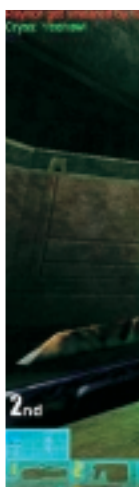

▲ **HIDE IN THE SHADOWS AND TAKE 'EM BY STEALTH**
▶ **LIFE IS... A FULL METAL JACKET AND A FRIEND TO FRAG**

launcher is great for taking out multiple enemies simultaneously, and using the secondary fire throws a bouncing grenade forward. The flak cannon is a fabulous invention. It fires a wad of jagged metal that rips your enemies to pieces, especially if they're close to you. Secondary fire shoots a ball of flack that explodes on impact.

But, without a doubt, the best weapon by far is the sniper rifle. This little beauty has a telescoping sight that lets you zoom in on your enemies from a great distance. The sniper rifle really lets you take advantage of the localised damage in the game, shoot them in the leg and they'll take some damage but keep coming, shoot them in the head and it's all over in one shot. There's nothing more satisfying than taking the head of a moving target at a 1,000 yards!
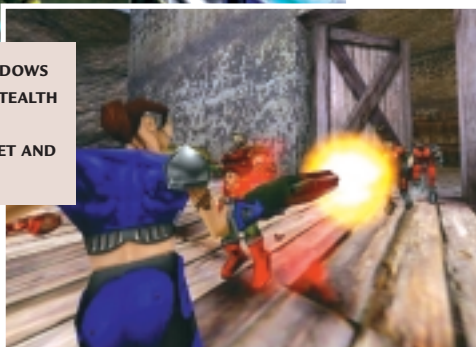
There's a multitude of maps to choose from, with something to suit everyone and any number of players. One of the best aspects of the game is the fact that you can hide in the shadows. Find yourself a well-shadowed corner and no-one will be able to see you; arm yourself with the sniper rifle and you're laughing. If you're smart you'll be able to rack up frags without your enemies even seeing you, although you have to be careful that they're not facing you when you fire or the muzzle flare will give your position away.

Of course, to get the best out of Unreal Tournament you'll need a few PCs, a LAN and some friends. But don't despair if you don't have any of those, because you can still play the game by yourself (although it's not as much fun). If you want to practise your skills when you don't have anyone to play against, you can throw a few bots into the mix. Bots are computer-controlled opponents that try to emulate human adversaries. You can decide how intelligent you want them to be and increase their skills as your own talent develops.

Ultimately, though, Unreal Tournament excels as a multi-player frag-fest and until Quake III Arena rears its head, it's the best there is.

RIYAD EMERAN

PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

Price £34.99 inc VAT
Contact GT Interactive 0181 222 9700
www.unrealtournament.net
System requirements *Pentium 200MHz, 32MB RAM, 100MB hard disk space, Win 95/98/NT, TCP/IP for Internet play*

RECOMMENDED
PERSONAL COMPUTER WORLD

Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear

Take out terrorists and rescue hostages in this unforgivingly realistic first-person shooter.

Just when it was looking as if there would never be anything new in the first-person shooter genre, Rainbow Six was released. You had to control a squad of commandos pitted against a terrorist army, but the difference was the high level of realism – you had to remember to reload, and if you got shot once, chances were you'd die. Now Red Storm Entertainment is back with the sequel, Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear, and everything just got better.

The action remains the same: pit your team against the terrorists in a variety of different missions: from rescuing hostages to preventing bombs from going off. However, there are some major game improvements that make this one of the must-play games of the year. First up, the controls have been radically improved. Your guys can do pretty much anything in the game environment. If you think that a window is the best way into a building, then shoot it out and climb through it. You can duck and run, keeping yourself out of harm's way and (more importantly) from being seen. The best control addition has to be the peek option. This lets you stand at the side of a door, peek round it and start taking out terrorists without exposing your entire body. It makes playing the game a whole lot easier, and so much more realistic.

Weapons have been changed to offer a wider spread of skills throughout a team. Now you've got sniper rifles, so you can take down enemy targets from the other side of a map. Of course, this means that the enemy can do the same to you. There's nothing more annoying than hearing a couple of shots ring out, and watching as your team starts

▲ INFILTRATE AND ANNIHILATE
◄ ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME?
▼ ZOOM IN WITH YOUR BINS

dropping to the floor. There are also more items to choose from, including binoculars, which really help out on those missions where recon's the important thing.

But how does it play? Fantastically. There's a little something for everybody here. At the start of each mission you are presented with a mission map, which you use to plan how your men will move. You're not going to find it very easy if you try and complete a map entirely by yourself, so a good plan's essential. If strategy isn't your thing, then you can go with a pre-defined plan, and just dive straight into the action.

Where the game really picks up is in multi-player, as this is one game where co-operative play is so much better than the deathmatch option. It takes a little while to get into, as at first players are likely to act like Rambo wanting to get the most kills, so they all dive loudly through the same doorway, only to be met by a rather angry-looking terrorist armed with a shotgun. Once this has happened a couple of times, people soon

start to sneak around, and begin to cover each other. The only annoying thing about the multi-player side of things is that gun descriptions are missing, so unless you're a gun freak and know the abilities of each weapon from reading its name, it can be a bit hit and miss as to whether or not you pick a good gun for the upcoming mission.

Graphically the game's superb, and when you see your team moving, they look so lifelike you'll think that you're there. You even get great effects such as rain, which adds to the mood.

Thankfully the bad guys have been given a little more intelligence than those in Rainbow Six, and if you shoot someone loudly, then backup will come running in to help. One realistic addition is that sometimes you can get near to the end of a mission, just to have

everybody killed by a really well-hidden terrorist that you can't see. You've always got to be on your guard.

This is a great game. Play it in single-player mode and you'll love it, play it in multi-player and you'll never want to put it down.

DAVID LUDLOW

PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

RECOMMENDED
COMPUTER WORLD

Price £34.99 inc VAT
Contact Take 2 Interactive 01753 854444 www.redstorm.com
System requirements Pentium 233MHz, 32MB RAM (64MB recommended), 3D graphics card recommended, 150MB hard disk space, Windows 95/98

Prince of Persia 3D

Enough adventure and perplexing puzzles to leave you beside yourself with frustration.

Every once in a while a game comes along that is so revolutionary and groundbreaking that it blows everything else clean out of the water, leaving gamers everywhere slack-jawed, dewy-eyed and gasping for more. Unfortunately, Prince of Persia 3D isn't that game. Perhaps it's a little unfair to criticise a game for not being superlative, however we feel justified in being so harsh on PoP3D as it has so much going for it on paper. Let's save the punishment for later and take a quick trip down gaming memory lane.

Way back in 1989, a young programming upstart called Jordan Mechner conjured up a mystical Middle-Eastern platform game called Prince of Persia, in which a mightily cheesed-off bloke ran, jumped and battled baddies in search of his beloved but imprisoned fiancée. In 1993, the same thing happened to him all over again in The Shadow and the Flame, the action still scrolling by in a side-on view.

Now, we're at it again, except the adventure is presented in three glorious dimensions this time round. PoP3D has a slightly updated story, in that the royal couple are finally hitched and you're charged with rescuing your wife, rather than fiancée. There's some other story-type guff in the manual, but we couldn't resist the eye candy filling the screen and dived straight in for a shot of sword-swishing action.

One of the first things you'll notice are the rather splendid cut scenes at the start of the game and between levels. Thankfully, these are more than mere decoration and do actually add value and atmosphere to the experience. The backdrop to your escapades looks fantastic – great lighting and realistic textures in just about every location – however, the characters that fill them do have a certain *South Park* quality to their animation at times. The Prince and anyone else in the scene slope around smoothly in a generally pleasing fashion – as befits characters that are based on motion-captured video. However, once in a while things go pear-shaped and the

cast start to lurch and lumber like men fuelled on chocolate bars and strong lager.

Another major problem we found was in the control system, which is a touch clumsy. Sometimes, trying to guide the Prince round a corner feels like it takes a lifetime – the Titanic probably had a tighter turning circle. Th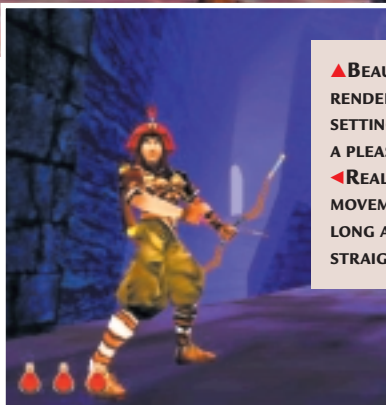e developers deserve praise for attempting to bring realism to the characters' movements, but why at the cost of something as fundamental as playability?

The greatest flaw in an otherwise intriguing game lies in the player's view of proceedings. The camera remains behind the Prince, moving occasionally to avoid obstructions – at least, that's the theory. The reality is completely different; far too often we found ourselves trying to negotiate a trap or puzzle that we couldn't see properly because of inadequate camera positioning. It is possible to exert some limited control over the perspective, but this often doesn't help a great deal – frustrating in the extreme. We're told that a patch has been released that should ameliorate the situation, so fingers crossed.

On the positive side of PoP3D's ledger, there is plenty to grab and maintain the interest of adventure nuts who can learn to live with the drawbacks. Combat is fun – if you like dicing grown men like carrots – and the conundrums (both mental and physical) laid in your path are often challenging enough to make you eager for more. Add in a fantastic soundtrack and there is enough to make PoP3D a pretty good bet for fans of the genre. It's just a shame that it has been crippled by a clutch of serious design faults.

J MARK LYTLE

▲BEAUTIFULLY-RENDERED AND EXOTIC SETTINGS MAKE **PoP3D** A PLEASURE TO BEHOLD
◄REALISTIC CHARACTER MOVEMENT IS GREAT, AS LONG AS YOU KEEP TO A STRAIGHT LINE

PCW DETAILS

★★★

Price *£34.99 inc VAT*
Contact *The Learning Company 01293 651 300* *www.pop3d.com*
System requirements *Pentium 233 (Pentium 300 recommended), 64MB RAM, 8MB Direct X compatible 3D graphics card, Direct X compatible sound card, 300MB hard disk space, Win 95/98*

Driver

Shift yourself into gear and head downtown for a bit of funk-driven, incognito cop action.

Driver is easily one of the best games to come to the PlayStation in years, it's great fun to play and looks gorgeous. Unfortunately, what makes a good PlayStation game does not necessarily make a good PC game, and this is certainly true of Driver.

It has a very 1970s feel – you drive around in a selection of old cars that are fun to control. They slide all over the place and generally lose a lot of parts as you hare round the course.

Driver is mission-based. You play an undercover cop tasked with infiltrating several American gangs by helping them out with their criminal deeds. Most of

the missions are fairly difficult, with a tight time limit and a lot of ground to cover. There are also a number of standalone extra missions involving excitements such as evading the police and smashing up other cars. A funky soundtrack provides an adrenaline-charged atmosphere

through the chase sequences.

We felt that you would need a pretty fast machine to play this properly. It was fairly jerky on one of our test machines, a Pentium II 350MHz with an ATi Rage 128 graphics card – we felt you'd need something a bit more up to date to play the game at a smooth frame rate.

It's all good, clean fun as far as it goes, but PC owners have been spoilt in the past few months. Microsoft's Midtown Madness works a bit better on the PC and you can have a lot more fun with it.

JASON JENKINS

PCW DETAILS

★★★

Price *£34.99 inc VAT*
Contact *GT Interactive 0181 222 9700*
http://driver.gtgames.com
**System requirements** *Pentium 166MHz, 32MB RAM, 3D graphics card, Windows 95/98*

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

You've got soul! But you're hungry for more and you're finding it difficult to control yourself.

The market is flooded with third-person perspective adventure games, so is there room for another? Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver is a sequel in name only to Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain, and fans of the former should not buy this game on that connection alone.

After loading up the game, the first thing that may begin to annoy you is the fact
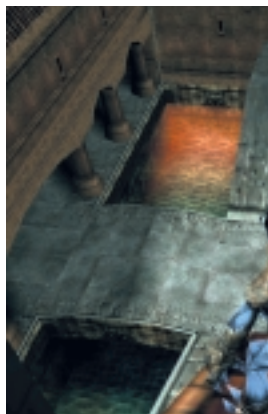
that you can't skip over the movies – they have a story to tell and you must listen. You are told of how Raziel was thrown into the Lake of the Dead for evolving wings, something his master Kain didn't have. From here he was given the opportunity to get back at Kain and this is where you start your journey, flitting between the spectral and the material world as needed.

Controlling Raziel is at best tricky, and at worst infuriating. After playing the game for only a short time it feels as though it was originally developed with the PlayStation in mind, and porting it to the PC platform was left as an afterthought. To play the game properly you are

advised to forget the keyboard option completely and invest in a joypad or you won't get far. Stunning graphics with great attention to detail make the experience enjoyable, but the playability is too linear to keep you enthralled.

On the whole Soul Reaver is graphically stunning, but control is difficult to master and too little attention has been paid to the PC port. This game promises a lot but fails to really deliver.

WILL HEAD

PCW DETAILS

★★★

Price *£39.99 inc VAT*
Contact *Eidos Interactive 0181 636 3000*
www.eidosinteractive.com
System requirements *Pentium 200 (Pentium 266 recommended), 16MB RAM (32MB recommended), 4x CD-ROM, 4MB DirectX6 compatible graphics card, DirectX compatible sound card, 320MB of hard disk space, Win 95/98*

Complete Idiot's Guide to Microsoft Office 2000

The *Idiot's Guides* (and their competitors the *Dummies Guides*) provide a very different approach to computer books. They're chatty to the point of over-familiarity and you have to like the style to enjoy them. We do, and the huge sales figures for these books imply that plenty of readers agree with us.

A typical example is the opening statement of the Excel section: 'How do you start Excel? First, you have to know where to find the Excelerator. Get it? Excel-erator! Okay, enough of that.' But don't be fooled into thinking it's all froth. There's plenty of content in this easy-to-read book.
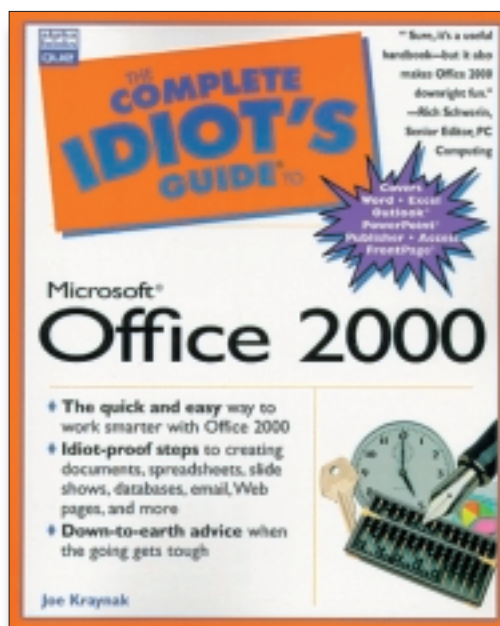
The *Complete Idiot's Guide* covers all the major applications, including Outlook, FrontPage and Publisher, as well as the big four. There's some cross-application stuff, though like most of the competition

we thought there was a real missed opportunity in suggesting when to use Word or Publisher, Excel or Access.

The *Idiot's Guide* format probably makes the best use of additional information boxes, including asides that are either tips or technical details. It assumes that you know the basics, which is fine. It then looks at each application, starting with the basics and working up.

Although you could simply use this book as a reference, it's best treated as a practical course, by working through each chapter and trying out the different approaches. You are pretty well bound to come out a more effective user, provided you don't feel patronised by the way the book wants to be your friend rather than just a textbook.

BRIAN CLEGG

PCW DETAILS

★★★★

THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO MICROSOFT OFFICE 2000
Author *Joe Kraynak*
Publisher *Que*
ISBN *0789718480*
Price *£15.99*

Linux in a Nutshell – 2nd Edition

Linux is by no means easy for the uninitiated or those without a background in Unix. Even after you've had a system up and running for a while, there are plenty of times you'll find yourself reaching out for help. Linux has been well documented, in the form of 'How-Tos' and other electronic references, but there are times when a printed reference is what you really need to get your hands on.

This book won't teach you Linux – it is only billed as a quick reference after all – but it will prove useful to both the beginner and the advanced user.

The second chapter, which runs to about 160 pages and equals about a third of the book, contains a detailed table that lists all the Linux user
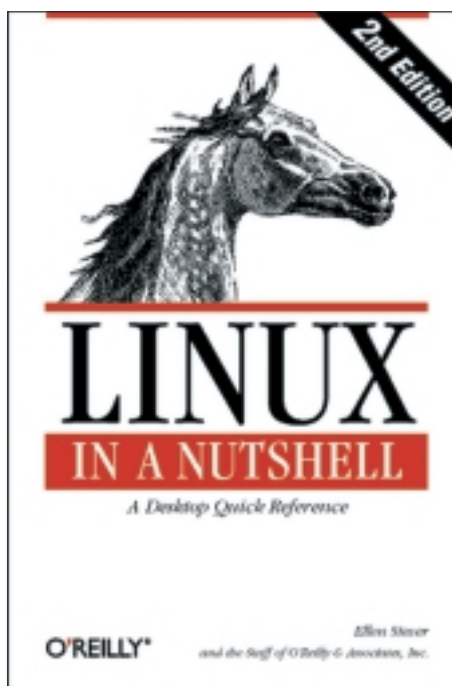
commands and their switches, with descriptions listed alphabetically. This includes the commands that aren't part of specific shells, programming

languages, applications, or the set of administrator commands.

This is followed by several chapters on the Unix shells – the programs that act as buffers between you and the operating system – covering the bash, csh, and tcsh shells in extensive detail.

Two major editors are used in Linux, vi and Emacs, both of which have whole chapters devoted to them. Also covered in detail are pattern matching, sed and gawk commands, as well as software development commands and system administration commands.

New material in this second edition includes a Perl quick-reference guide and popular LILO and Loadlin programs used for dual-booting. The Perl chapter is especially easy to follow, with each subject listed in the contents page.

All in all, this is a quick-reference book at an affordable price, which is well laid out and sufficiently detailed for most Linux users.

EMMA DEVINE

PCW DETAILS

★★★★

LINUX IN A NUTSHELL – SECOND EDITION
Author *Ellen Siever*
Publisher *O'Reilly*
ISBN *1565925858*
Price *£15.95*

Learn Visual Basic Scripting

Making web pages come alive has become one of the most important skills of the last few years. Microsoft Visual Basic Scripting Edition (VBScript) can be used not only to animate such pages, but also for less specific Windows programs.

This book is not for someone who is ignorant about the Internet, but it doesn't presume you're an expert either. It gives an insight into HTML, something that is vital if the reader is used to Microsoft tools such as FrontPage for creating web pages. You'll soon come to realise you need to know some HTML tags if you want to program in VBScript.

Like many books about Microsoft products, a companion CD is tucked into the back cover and the 312 pages are split into three parts.

The first part has three chapters explaining the basics of VBScript. The next part goes beyond the basics and is sectioned into four chapters, one of which gives an in-depth overview of testing, debugging and error trapping. The final part goes on to more advanced topics such as dynamic HTML and the Internet Explorer object model.

Cornell manages to get a lot of information over in a short space of time. Of special use are the three appendices at the back, including one that acts as an FAQ about VBScript.

PAUL MUNFORD

PCW DETAILS

★★★★

LEARN MICROSOFT VISUAL BASIC SCRIPTING EDITION NOW
Author *Gary Cornell*
Publisher *Microsoft Press*
ISBN *1572313471*
Price *£32.99*

Quick Course in Microsoft IE5

Divided into two parts, this book offers easy-to-follow lessons for both beginner and intermediate users on how to use Microsoft's Internet Explorer 5 browser. It begins with summaries of each chapter, so the reader can start from the point that is of relevance to them, or just dip in where they feel like.

Each page contains illustrations and pointers to important sections in the text. This makes it easy to read and apply, but for quite a small book a large amount of ground is covered.

The first few chapters, known collectively as the 'Learning the Basics' section, are concerned with what a URL is and how to browse the web. The second half of the book then goes on to explore other areas, such as using NetMeeting to hold video conferences, and fine-tuning your browser's security features. You'll also learn how to download files using FTP, and integrate the web and Windows desktop.

Using Outlook Express, the email application that comes with IE5, is covered in some detail, and by the end of the instruction the reader should easily be able to send, receive and organise mail, add attachments and understand the etiquette of emailing.

This is a very useful book for the Internet beginner and the intermediate user at a pleasantly affordable price.

EMMA DEVINE

PCW DETAILS

★★★★

QUICK COURSE IN MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER 5
Author *J Cox, T Cox & E Heydrick*
Publisher *Microsoft Press*
ISBN *1572319895*
Price *£13.99*

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