

leisure lines

Christmas draws close and in *Leisure Lines* this month we have a superb selection of software, any of which would make a great Christmas gift. In *Screenplay* we review a selection of games which were launched at the recent ECTS show in London. There are two expansion packs, *Age of Empires — The Rise of Rome*, and **QUAKE II — GROUND ZERO**.

We fly Microsoft's new Combat Flight Simulator, and puzzle over a strange game called Reah. We try to beat the Lie Detector and fight ennui with the perfect boredom reliever, *Lose Your Marbles*. Study the stars with the *Starry Nights Deluxe* astronomy package featured in our CD-ROM section, and there's a world of information at your fingertips in Microsoft's **ENCARTA DELUXE 1999 EDITION**. If those fingertips happen to be green, then take a look at



▲ ADI ENGLISH AND MATHS



▲ [ABOVE, TOP] GARDENER'S WORLD; [ABOVE] MAGIX MUSIC MAKER V2000

Gardener's World, and *Music Maker V2000* really does sound good. In *Kids* we have the fabulous **TELETUBBIES** CD, a big Christmas hit with kids of all ages, and we get back on the educational track with *Adi English and Maths*. Bill Gates dominates our *Books* section. There's a profile of him in *Bill Gates Speaks* and an insight into the way he works in **THE MICROSOFT FILE: THE SECRET CASE AGAINST BILL GATES**.

We also feature a hefty in-depth guide to upgrading and repairing PCs. In our *Competition*, **FILEMAKER** is giving away £3,000-worth of software. You also have a chance to win the new Chambers dictionary if you complete our *Prize Crossword*, and *Brainteasers* will give you something to think about. And last but not never least, *Retro* recalls the taste of the Apricot F1.

ETELKA CLARK, LEISURE LINES EDITOR
ETELKAC@VNU.CO.UK

Age of Empires: The Rise of Rome

Start a civilisation and build an empire. This popular game of **social engineering** gets even better.



Age of Empires came out towards the end of 1997 and impressed strategy fans with its neat blend of civilised social engineering and bloodthirsty battle planning. It has quickly become one of Microsoft's notable successes.



◀ **FIGHT A CAMPAIGN TO FURTHER YOUR CHANCES OF WORLD DOMINATION**

For those new to the game, Age of Empires is a beautifully detailed and animated chance to start a civilisation from the ground up, beginning in some cases with a single primitive male and ending, several days of conquest and pillage later, in your total domination of the known world. The price tag is rather misleading: Microsoft will actually reimburse you to the tune of £10 when you buy the expansion pack, making the net cost a mere £15. For your money you get another four civilisations to add to the existing list of 12, and a range of new units to research and create,

including my personal favourite, the armoured elephant.

There are new landscapes, too, in case you were getting sick of the old ones, and the game-playing map has been made even larger. Best of all, there are 19 new scenarios which you must build, farm and fight your way through, culminating in four large-scale campaigns.

The Rise of Rome is a good way of reinvigorating this one-year-old game, ironing out problems and making sure that we stay interested while Microsoft toils away on the big one that we're all really waiting for: Age of Empires II.

PAUL TRUEMAN

PCW DETAILS



Price £24.99

Contact Microsoft 0345 002000

www.microsoft.com

System Requirements Windows 95/98 or NT, P90 processor, 16Mb RAM, 24Mb for NT, double-speed CD-ROM.

Reah

A hostile **planet of puzzles** awaits in a foreign dimension.

If you thought your gran's house was the only place known to man where modern technology will not work, then you have not yet come across Reah. It is a distant, hostile planet harbouring a portal into another dimension where technical gadgets are rendered useless. As a journalist, you pass through this portal willing to risk your safety in exchange for being a pioneering explorer of this strange sister planet. You realise your mistake only when it is too late; the portal disappears and you are left stranded.

Control is wholly mouse-driven, making navigation easy and movement smooth but limited. Although you can turn through 360° it is not possible to walk to all points in a scene, only specific areas. Nevertheless, the quality of this game is stunning and features some of the most clearly-rendered scenes we have seen on the PC. Full-



◀ **JOURNALIST JOURNEYS INTO JEOPARDY TO SOLVE PERPLEXING PUZZLES**

motion video allows you to interact with characters as you rack your brains to solve the devilish puzzles this strange world presents. These are not your run-of-the-mill "find key, open door" tasks. Just working out where or what each puzzle is in this immense world can be a mammoth task which soon gets tedious. Those with a DVD drive will be glad to hear that they can put it to good use here because a DVD release follows the six-disc CD-ROM edition.

NIK RAWLINSON

PCW DETAILS



Price £39.99

Contact Anglia Multimedia 0500 600191

www.blackfriar.net

System Requirements Pentium 90MHz processor, 16Mb RAM, quad-speed CD-ROM, 1Mb SVGA graphics card, Windows 95 DirectX driver, Windows 95-compatible sound card (32Mb recommended).

Combat Flight Simulator

At last! Microsoft **adds armoury** so you can re-fight the battle for the skies in true WWII style.

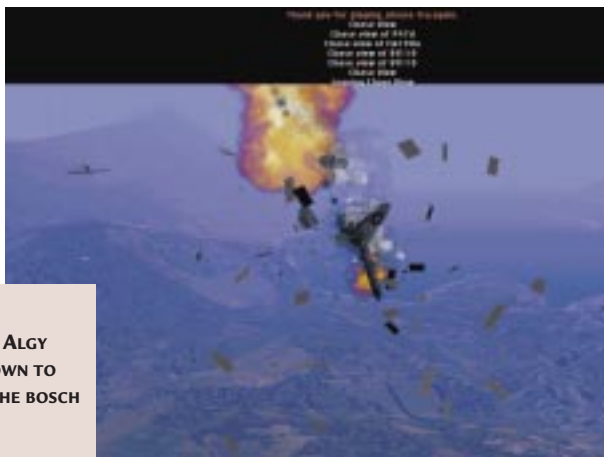
Combat Flight Simulator is probably Microsoft's biggest game release of the year. After years of unofficial weapon add-ons to spice-up existing peaceful versions of Flight Simulator, fans of the aerial genre everywhere will be getting excited about the chance to let rip in combat — this time with Bill Gates' official approval.

If you are running the game on a PC with a top-notch processor and graphics card, you can afford to switch on all the graphics refinements at your disposal. If there is a criticism to be made of the "look" of this

simulator, it is that, even with most of the effects switched on, when diving it is easy to lose one's sense of height *vis-à-vis* the landscape because the ground does not seem to come into focus as it would in real life. The aeroplanes respond well and it is up to you whether you fly throughout a whole campaign, spanning the war, or simply "duke it out" in quick-combat mode.

Our review copy of the game was a Beta version, and although our manual had been photocopied, the 200-page tome still weighed in on the hefty side. This is a sentence never previously written (at least, not by this reviewer) but... the manual accompanying the game is fascinating. Packed full of every conceivable fact about the games' WWII setting, you can learn about the basic physics of flying, the major battles and the flying aces on both sides of the war.

PAUL TRUEMAN



► OUCH! ALGY GETS BLOWN TO BITS BY THE BOSCH

PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

Price Price £49.99

Contact Microsoft 0345 002000

www.microsoft.com

System Requirements Pentium 133MHz processor, Windows 95/98 or NT4.0 operating system, 16Mb of RAM, 200Mb free hard-disk space, quad-speed CD-ROM drive.

Quake II — Ground Zero

You know the mission but now you are faced with **more levels**, and an anti-matter bomb to use.

Milking the Quake II cash cow once more before Christmas is Ground Zero, yet another add-on pack to the original game. Again it's your noble duty to rescue a group of fellow marines being held captive in space. Armageddon is near and soon you will see searing lasers, severed limbs and pounding action.

The mission pack has 14 new levels but there is little variety to the gameplay and most of the weapons and enemies are the same as in the original game, except for the odd new one like the vicious spidery creature and an anti-matter bomb. However, the enemies are more intelligent. They dodge quicker, chase

you around many more corners and fire while running. The graphics are also

equally popular game, Unreal. In fact, the whole mission pack has little variety. Most of it gives the impression of being set in a huge warehouse with stacks of crates piled everywhere. The pervasive, dirty-brown textures and lack of multi-coloured lighting also make the pack look flat at times. However, as add-on packs go, Quake II's Ground Zero is a passable addition.

AJITH RAM



◀ A DEATH WORSE THAN FATE AWAITS THE UNWARY. YOUR ENEMIES ARE MORE INTELLIGENT THAN THEY WERE IN THE ORIGINAL GAME

very similar to the original and require a 3D accelerator to run at their best. Unfortunately, this means they are not as stunning as those in the

PCW DETAILS

★★

Price Price £24.99

Contact Activision 01895 456748

www.activision.com

System Requirements Windows 95/98, Pentium 166MHz processor (200MHz or above recommended), 32Mb RAM, quad-speed CD-ROM, SVGA video card (3D accelerator recommended), mouse, Windows-compatible sound card.

Lie Detector

I don't believe it! Just let sleeping dogs and this CD lie.

I would be lying if I said this game was worth buying. But how will you know whether or not I'm telling the truth? Well, you won't, especially if you test me using the Lie Detector.

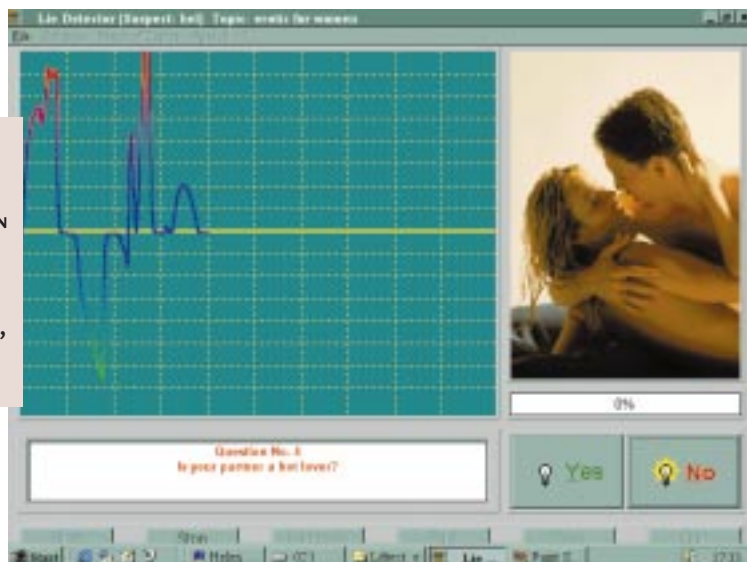
This CD is not meant to be taken seriously, but it could be quite a laugh if you're testing your friends or work colleagues on embarrassing topics. The choices include Job and Career, Sex for men or women, and Life and Conscience. Alternatively, you can compose your own questions. But it would help if the program actually worked. Generally, when I told it the truth, it would "detect" that I was lying; yet when I told it an outright lie, it would "detect" that I was telling the truth. Occasionally it got it right, but mostly I beat it. The sensor pad, which is worn on the finger, can be set to register different levels of sensitivity. I tried re-programming it — not that I'm

► IS SHE A BARE-FACED LIAR? AN 'UNTRUTH' IS SHOWN ABOVE THE YELLOW LINE WHILE A 'TRUTH' IS SHOWN BELOW. OH, HELEN, WHAT A WHOPPER!

thick-skinned — but still it didn't understand me. It just made the graph look prettier.

The novelty value of this production wore off after the first question. It's just hugely boring, waiting for your response to be registered. And, if you laugh or someone gives you a pat on the back, the sensor picks it up and you'll be likely to get a false reading. Still, at least you'll be safe knowing that the truth won't hurt — trust me!

HELEN FORTGANG



PCW DETAILS



Price £19.99

Contact Black Friar 0500 600191

www.blackfriar.net

System Requirements

486 PC or above, 4Mb RAM, 256-colour display, Windows 3.1 or Windows 95/98, double-speed CD-ROM, 40Mb free hard-disk space, sound card (optional), 9-pin serial port, mouse.

Lose Your Marbles

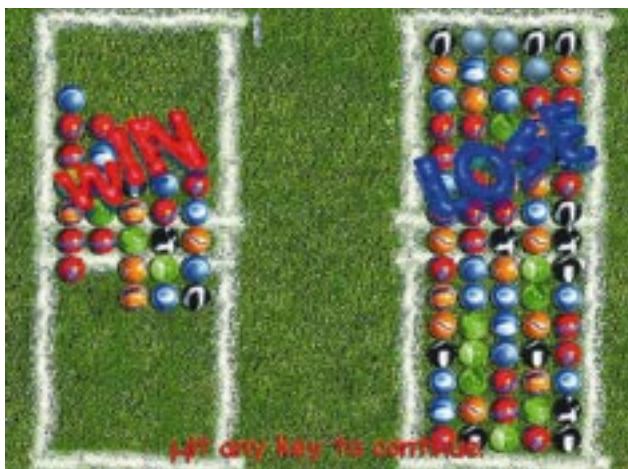
It's marbellous how easy it is to get hooked on this. Let 'em roll!

This game first made an appearance in the Plus! 98 pack for Windows 98 and I quickly became a fan. Hours flew by and bedtime passed unnoticed as I stared transfixed at marbles clicking and popping on the screen. I knew it was only a transference of my age-old Tetris

obsession, but I didn't care. I was hooked. Rocket science it's not — you simply line up three, four, or five marbles of the same colour on the pitch line and they disappear. Marbles can be moved up and down or along the pitch to help you get them into line. All the while,

however, marbles continue to fall onto the ends of the stacks, filling them up. If an entire stack becomes paralysed, the game finishes.

◄ DON'T LET THE STACK FILL UP OR YOU'LL LOSE YOUR MARBLES



And that's it. Apart from a few special marbles, the game stays much the same no matter what level you reach. Sure, you get some different backgrounds and bonus rounds, but it's not quite difficult enough to want to stick with it forever — unlike its forefather, Tetris. Also, there is no high-score facility and each time you quit, you have to start all over again at the beginning, which is extremely tedious.

A further caveat is that the system requirements state that Marbles will run on a P60. And so it might. But trust me, don't do it. I found it infuriatingly sluggish on anything lower than a 133MHz.

SUSAN PEDERSON

PCW DETAILS



Price £19.99

Contact Roderick Manhattan Group

0181 875 4441

www.segasoft.com

System Requirements P60 or better, Windows 95, 1Mb SVGA, 8Mb RAM.

Starry Night Deluxe

View the **night sky**, in all its celestial glory.

A program for those with stars in their eyes, *Starry Night Deluxe* threatens to consign Patrick Moore to the dole queue. This software makes it easy for a beginner to explore the night sky, while providing enough depth for the more serious gazer.

With a view of the sky from anywhere in the solar system, be it your house or

Oberon, you can observe the classic illustrations that mark constellations, follow the paths and orbits of planets and comets, and even map out your own star charts. You can time travel from 4713 BC through to 9999 AD, and although the sky doesn't look dramatically different, it's interesting to imagine that this is what you would have seen, or will see, at a particular moment

in time. You can open multiple windows to view one event from different places simultaneously, or set the stars so that you can see what is visible out

of your window, be it in the city or the country. You can make videos of



◀ THERE'S MORE TO THE SKY THAN MEETS THE EYE, AS **STARRY NIGHT DELUXE** SHOWS YOU

galactic events and edit your own sequences. The tools perform in the same way as your word processor or graphics package, making it nice and easy to work with, and there is a direct link to the LiveSky internet site which provides up-to-the-minute information.

Starry Night Deluxe is a realistic desktop planetarium that will provide the best star-gazing ambience there is, through a monitor screen.

HELEN FORTGANG

PCW DETAILS



Price \$89.95

Contact 001 41 6 410 0259

www.sienasoft.com

System Requirements PC: Pentium processor or higher, 256-colour capable, CD-ROM drive, Windows 95/98, NT 4.0 or later, 8Mb RAM, 15-60Mb free hard-disk space. **Mac:** 68040, PowerPC or better, 256-colour capable, CD-ROM drive, System 7.0 or later, 8Mb of RAM, 10-40Mb free hard-disk space.

Gardener's World

A **handy companion** for the green-fingered.

Gardener's World, hosted, as you might expect, by jovial Alan Titchmarsh, provides a plant encyclopaedia and advice on dealing with pests and problems. It also lets you create a garden diary.

When you first use the CD, you will be asked for your name. Up to ten users can use the program and each user has their own password — overkill perhaps on a gardening CD. Each time you log on, the disk will open at the diary section and give you a tip of the day or a plant of the day. There is also the chance to add your own notes on what you have been doing in the garden, creating a year-by-year diary. You can also compile an inventory of the plants and shrubs in your garden.

There are sections giving advice on what you should be doing in the garden at certain times of the year, and suggestions for special projects such as



▲ AVOID THOSE HORTICULTURAL HORRORS WITH **ALAN TITCHMARSH AND HIS TEAM**

pruning roses or building a pond, as well as general problem-solving. Most of the advice is fairly standard stuff — nothing most gardeners won't already know. Probably the most useful section is the Plant Finder which lets you search the huge plant database, selecting plants according to when they look their best, the kind of soil they thrive in and how

much sun they need. Navigating around Gardener's World is much quicker than using a gardening encyclopaedia, but otherwise this CD provides little you couldn't get from the Royal Horticultural Society encyclopaedias.

ADELE DYER



PCW DETAILS



Price £29.99

Contact BBC Multimedia
0181 576 2945

System Requirements Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95.

Encarta 99

A well produced and beautifully presented reference and learning package.

Encarta's elegant interface makes it one of the most inviting CD-ROM reference works, and the incorporation of Shockwave compact animation makes it feel more like you are directing a small television documentary. The information in the 11 million words that go to make up the package's 32,000 articles is comprehensive and well written, and searching on various keywords turned up very few occasions when a match was not available.

The only slight inaccuracy I could find after several hours of use was an aerial photo of London's Docklands incorrectly captioned as the city's financial district. We were surprised, as this is not an American production adapted for a UK audience — it is commissioned and edited in London. Over 13,000 illustrations, 140 videos and 2,300 audio clips provide the user with added value and make this much more than merely a book in binary

format. Subtitles allow the aurally impaired to enjoy the media clips and the suite incorporates the Concise Oxford Dictionary. An extensive index will aid searching, getting you where you want to be fast, while the bundled research organiser is a good learning aid for students. Fascinating 360° panoramas allow you to stand in locations as diverse as the Space Shuttle and Piccadilly Circus and perform a Wonder-Woman-esque spin to view your surroundings. In short, a highly recommended package.

NIK RAWLINSON

► A WORLD OF INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS INCLUDES LOCATIONS CLOSER TO HOME



PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

Price Encarta Standard £49.99, Deluxe £79.99, Reference Suite £99.99, World Atlas £49.99

Contact Microsoft 0345 002000
www.encyclopedia.com

System Requirements 486DX/50 or higher, Windows 95/98, NT4 or later, 8Mb RAM for Win95 (16Mb for Win98 and NT4), 30Mb free hard-disk space. Double-speed CD-ROM or faster, SuperVGA 256-colour display at 640 x 480 or higher, 5Mb additional hard-disk space to use Encarta Research Organiser.



Magix Music Maker V2000

It's only rock 'n' roll — and a lot more besides — and we like it.

Lately, there seems to have been a huge boom in music-making software — to the extent that it's no longer new or groundbreaking. That is, until you try Music Maker V2000 from Magix, which seems to be the only production that has truly got to grips with the concept of desktop sampling.

▼ BOOGIE ON DOWN TO THE SOUNDS YOU MAKE WITH MUSIC MAKER V2000



Rather than relying on gimmicks to boost sales, this program takes things a little more seriously. It manages to support up to 16 tracks (32 in the Deluxe version) and offers high performance, all without you needing a degree in sound engineering.

Because the tools perform in the same way as your word processor, it's very easy

to manipulate and edit your sounds and sequences. Everything you do is clear on-screen, whether you're using the mixer, viewing video sequences or simply dragging your samples to each track.

The real beauty of this CD is the sounds that it produces. There are no tailored and stereotypical samples that so many programs of this type tend

to employ. This production uses "real" sounds that are flexible: you can manipulate them to sound just the way you want them to.

For a little extra money you can obtain Magix Soundpool, which allows you to access quality sounds in the style of music that you wish to sample. It's all royalty-free and covers a wide range of musical styles, from R'n'B and HipHop to Techno and Industrial Rock.

HELEN FORTGANG

PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

Price £39.99 (Standard), £79.99 (Deluxe)

Contact Magix Entertainment
0171 917 2897 www.magix.net

System Requirements Windows NT/95/98, Pentium PC or higher, 30Mb free hard-disk space, 16 Mb RAM, VGA card, 16-bit sound card, CD-ROM drive, mouse or compatible keyboard.



Play with the Teletubbies

Fun with **Tinky Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa and Po**. What child — or grown-up — could resist?

We have all, at some point, encountered the Teletubbies. They are on the TV in the early mornings, they were in the music charts, and now they are on this delightful CD-ROM. There is no getting away from it — kids love these strange, colourful creatures, and they will certainly like this new CD. The interface is very similar to that of the television programme, with brightly coloured scenes including the Tubbytronic Superdome and those lush green hills that the Teletubbies are so famous for playing on.

The CD-ROM contains seven activities in which the child can either watch or take part in. You can chase Noo-noo around the Tubbytronic Superdome, so some Teletubbies make a mess with mubby custard, play hide-and-seek or make tubby toast. Each one repeats itself again and again until the child wants to move on. As this program is aimed at children between the age of

► **LIFE IN LAA-LAA LAND: HAVE FUN WITH THE TELETUBBIES AND THEIR FRIEND, NOO-NOO**

two and four years, a special cursor in the form of a pink sparkle helps to control the mouse. Instead of having to point and click, the child can simply wave the cursor over the animation. This CD is the result of extensive testing with children, varying levels of interaction cater to the range of abilities amongst young children, allowing them to progress at their own pace. With plenty of giggling and themes to repeat, this enchanting CD will delight children of all ages and is guaranteed to be a big hit.

ETELKA CLARK



PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

Price £24.99

Contact BBC Multimedia Section

0181 576 3592

www.bbc.co.uk/education/teletubbies/

System Requirements Windows 95 or later, Pentium P100 processor with 15Mb RAM, quad-speed CD-ROM drive

Adi – English & Maths

Learning that's **out of this world** — and that's just the teacher!

Many children may think their teacher is an alien. Now they can be sure.

Adi beams down as an intelligent alien friend, here to guide the pupil through this educational program, teaching, correcting, rewarding and advising. After choosing a face to represent themselves

and giving a few personal details, the child enters Adi's attic. The pupil explores the room, clicking on particular objects to reveal different topics. Click on the rocket ship to bring up information about space exploration. Click on the jukebox to listen to clips of

different music from around the world. The Adi series displays a high standard of 3D graphics and smooth animation,

which really brings the CD to life. The lessons are clearly introduced and the instructions can be listened to repeatedly if necessary. The program encompasses core school curriculum requirements and comprises eight titles in total (years three to ten). The series makes maximum use of today's technology by including optional internet access. It provides real-time "virtual classes" through a web site, where the pupil can attend and make friends with other children. As well as classes in the internet section, there are opportunities to make cartoons, send messages to friends and, crucially, allow parents to monitor their children's progress. It makes learning an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

HELEN FORTCAND



► **WHAT A COOL-LOOKING ATTIC! THERE'S PLENTY TO SEE AND DO UP HERE WITH ADI**

PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

Price £29.99

Contact Knowledge Adventure

01189 569100

System Requirements Pentium 75 or higher, Windows 95, 16Mb RAM, quad-speed CD-ROM drive, Windows-compatible sound card, 16-bit colour



WIN FileMaker Pro 4.0!

FileMaker Pro - [event schedule.FP3]

File Edit Mode Show Arrange Format Script Window Help

Info Close View As Form View As List Reports Your Own Button

Event MonthName

Start In Stop In Start Time Stop Time

Location: Location

Staffed By: Staffed By

▲ YOU COULD WIN THE EXCELLENT FILEMAKER PRO 4.0, THE LAST WORD IN DATABASE SOLUTIONS

Yes, you did read the headline correctly. FileMaker is giving away eight copies of FileMaker Pro — Developer Edition, worth in total a staggering £3,000.

FileMaker Pro 4.0 — Developer Edition, individually priced at £390, provides the total solution needed for creating, managing and distributing customised FileMaker Pro database solutions quickly. It also runs on **Windows 95, Windows NT and Mac** operating systems. Targeting over one million database developers worldwide, who develop in FileMaker Pro, Microsoft Access 97 and other database programs, the new developer edition features an API (Application Programme Interface) that allows developers to write external functions for FileMaker Pro 4.0 databases. With 100 percent Pure Java certification, Filemaker Pro Developer

FileMaker

Edition's Java classes enable developers to access FileMaker Pro databases over any Java-enabled operating system such as Windows 98 and MacOS, as well as most Unix and Solaris systems.

FileMaker Pro 4.0 — Developer Edition includes FileMaker Pro Binder software used to create royalty-free, run-time versions of standalone FileMaker Pro solutions. FileMaker Pro Binder also gives developers control over the look, feel and structure of their run-time database solutions.

It's so simple...

For a chance to win a copy, just send in your name and address. The first eight entries out the hat, win. Good luck!

HOW TO ENTER THE DRAW

1. Via our web site at www.pcw.co.uk, or
2. Write your name, address and daytime telephone number on a postcard, or on the back of a sealed envelope. Mark your card "PCW/Jan FileMaker Competition" and send it to: P.O. Box 191, Woking, Surrey GU21 1FT, by 4th January 1999.
Please state clearly on your competition entry if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies.

RULES OF ENTRY

This competition is open to readers of *Personal Computer World*, except for employees (and their families) of VNU Business Publications and FileMaker. The Editor of *Personal Computer World* is the sole judge of the competition and his decision is final. No cash alternative is available in lieu of competition prizes.

Apricot crumble

Simon Collin on why the **rather eccentric Apricot F1** was crushed by the opposition.

In the dark and distant days when manufacturers jostled for supremacy and standards in the PC market, one of the odder range of computers was the Apricot series from ACT. The first in the line was the stately Sirius (like the DEC Rainbow, covered a few issues ago, non-IBM PC compatible); this was followed by perhaps the most stylish of all PCs, the Apricot PC. Unimaginative name, great design.

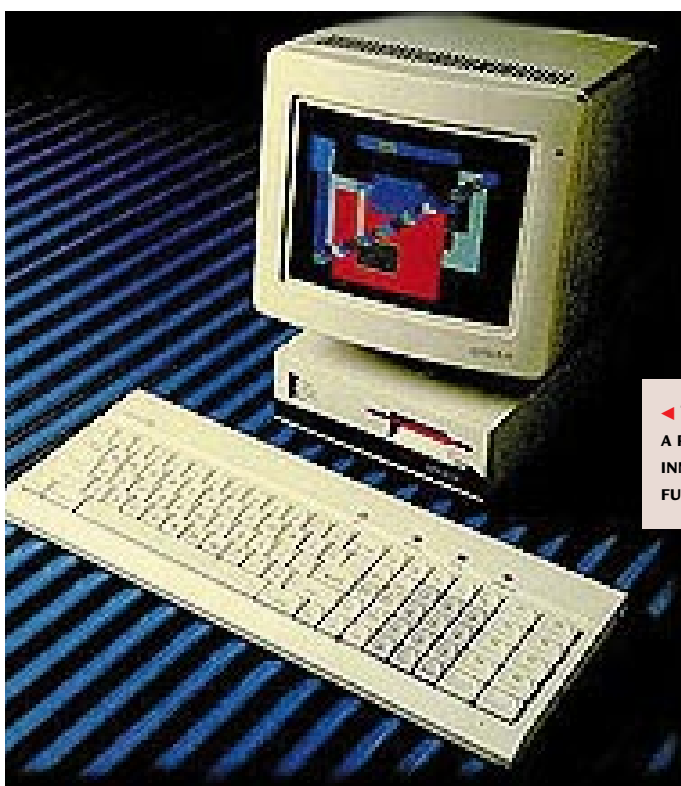
The Apricot PC was sleek, slim and had a fold-down lid in case the ugliness of the disk drives offended you too much. However, enthusiasts got most excited about the keyboard: this had a little set of six membrane function keys with a programmable LCD text panel above each one, so that software applications could create their own key labels on the LCD display. It was great, until the fragile ribbon cable inside the unit cracked — and they all did.

Moving swiftly on, we arrive at the Apricot F1, my favourite oddity. Compared to the elegant streamlined case design of the PC, someone at Apricot towers took the exact opposite approach for the F1. The idea was that the case was the same width as the monitor. Why? It stuck out twice as deep and looked like a great plastic brick.

The questionable styling aside, Apricot managed to sneak in another cute keyboard feature. Rather like Maserati's sports car's oval clock of the time (it appeared in every model) the Apricot crowd-pleaser was the latest gizmo built in to its keyboard. With the new F1, Apricot decided that cables were out

and ensured that the keyboard was linked to the base brick via an infra-red lightbeam. Nowadays, every PDA and printer has an IrDA link, but at the time it was still quite something. The problem was, you had to be in direct line of sight or it didn't work. If you wanted to move the keyboard, Apricot supplied a string of fibre-optic cable. This was fragile, not very bendy and took up more space than a simple cable. Quoting from the user

The idea was that the case was the same width as the monitor. Why?



◀ **THE APRICOT F1:**
A PRIME EXAMPLE OF
INNOVATION OVER
FUNCTIONALITY

manual wraps up the subject of keyboards with a rather silly warning, and firmly positions the F1 as a SoHo fun tool: "You can even work at home with the F1 on the coffee table and the keyboard on your lap...the link will usually work quite happily at distances of up to two meters from the computer, although of course you might find it difficult to see the information on the screen at that distance."

Your shiny new F1 was fitted as standard with 256Kb of RAM, but this could be easily expanded to 786Kb with just a few extra memory cards. A strange device called an MSD (mass storage device) was optional. Apricot was careful never to write "hard disk" in its manuals, preferring this wonderfully old-fashioned acronym instead. The F1 with a hard disk was actually badged the F10, but this was otherwise the same machine.

A disappointment was the visual display on the F1 — a real let-down after the fantastic high-resolution PC

monitor. F1 users had a choice of mono or colour CGA display, and my display always wiggled and hissed to itself in a distracting manner.

Lastly, a modem card could be fitted to access all the latest news from the Prestel online service. The F1 ran a custom version of DOS that was IBM PC compatible up to a point. Some standard software would run, much would not; this was mostly due to the non-standard screen display. Diskettes from an IBM machine could normally be read on an Apricot, although the same was not generally true in reverse. I remember spending hours rigging up a serial link between an F1 and an IBM PC to send files one way, and using the disk to send them back the other.

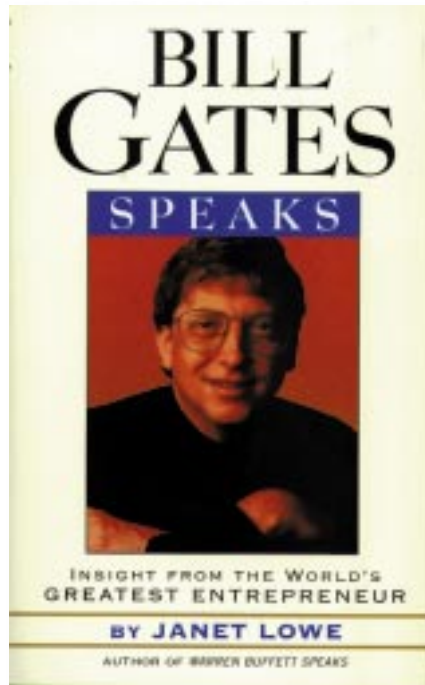
Finally, Apricot dropped the range, continued on as an independent UK manufacturer and then was bought by Mitsubishi. It has since developed normally sleek and stylish power servers and PCs. Look carefully, and you might still see either a flap to hide the disk drives or a gizmo on the keyboard — a reminder of past glories.

Bill Gates Speaks

Whatever you might think about Bill Gates, he's an interesting character. Hidden behind that geeky exterior is a sharp business mind which is now pitting its wits against none other than the US government. Why, then, does Janet Lowe's quasi-profile of the great man leave me stone cold?

Perhaps part of the reason is the format of the book. Lowe's internet research skills are undeniably superb. She has obviously culled information from umpteen web pages and printed material, for quotes both by and about Gates and his achievements. Nevertheless, she doesn't so much fuse them together as merely juxtapose them like so much junk at a car boot sale. Lowe is more collator than author and makes little attempt to add her own comments to the soundbites that she

so proudly displays. One example is her collation of "God versus Gates" jokes; a tired collection of web witticisms



about encounters between the Almighty and the geek that inherited the earth. But some of the most frightening commentary in the book comes from Gates himself — didn't this guy ever hire a PR representative? When once faced with

a baby, he reportedly pointed at it and stated, "That scares me". And, when asked what were his personal goals for the next ten years, he fumbled "I'm sure it's in [my PC] somewhere. I just have to download it... You know, in my personal life, I don't set big goals."

According to the dustjacket blurb, Lowe places "the public statements of a major world figure under her microscope to build a fascinating picture of what he has said and what has been said about him." I'd argue that a few days spent trawling the web would give you everything you needed to know, minus the inane patter that Lowe uses as an excuse to rake in her publisher's advance. Read Robert Cringely's *Accidental Empires* and you'll see what proper research looks like when mixed with a healthy dose of industry experience. Give this one a wide berth.

SUSAN PEDERSON

PCW DETAILS



BILL GATES SPEAKS

Author Janet Lowe

Publisher John Wiley & Sons

ISBN 0-47-129-3539

Price £10.95

Upgrading and Repairing PCs

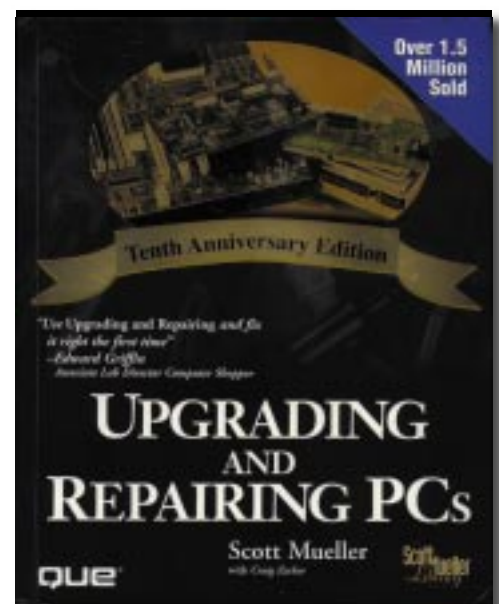
I remember, way back at school, there was a mystical cupboard at the end of the computer room holding "The Winchester". Nobody could quite explain what it was. All we knew was that it ran the network and had a "massive" 30Mb storage capacity. Finally, I have the answer: Winchester is, in fact, a nickname given to a series of 30Mb hard drives made by IBM. Why "Winchester"? Nothing to do with where it was made, but instead named after a .30mm rifle.

This, and countless other nuggets of useful and interesting information, can be found in the 1,584 hard-bound pages

that go to make up the tenth anniversary edition of Scott Mueller's classic text, *Upgrading and Repairing PCs*.

A refreshing breather from some of the more hardcore technical manuals available

The work was originally written as course notes for his \$1,300 seminars about the internal workings of a PC. With this edition, the second of two bundled CD-ROMs includes videos of his presentations and seminar documentation on no less than 3,600 drives and hundreds of other pieces of hardware. Mueller's writing style is a



PCW DETAILS



UPGRADING AND REPAIRING PCs

Author Simon Mueller

Publisher Que

ISBN 0-78-971-6364

Price £51.49

refreshing breather from some of the more hardcore technical manuals you are often likely to find, but it could also explain how he managed to write so many words; in certain places the "padding" is obvious. Experienced PC users may find it tiresome ploughing through this waffle, but should ultimately find the necessary reading a rewarding experience when

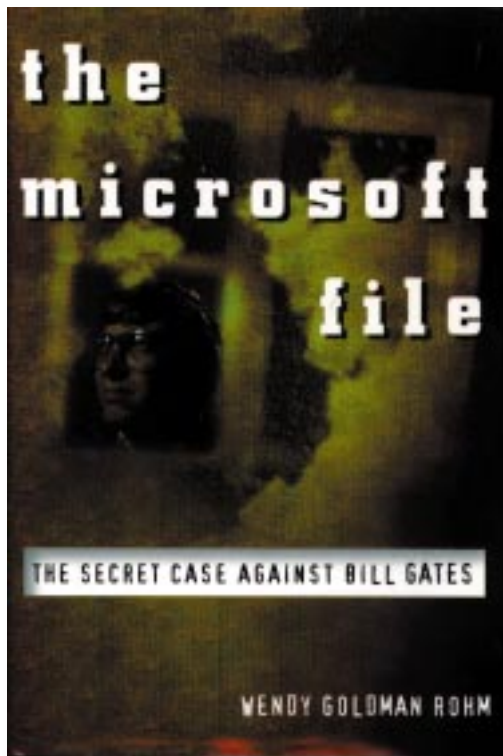
they come across the comprehensively-explained facts.

The appendices comprise invaluable technical reference tables, but also demonstrate the book's transatlantic slant with a US-centric list of hardware suppliers that will be close to useless for a UK audience.

NIK RAWLINSON

The Microsoft File — The secret case against Bill Gates

This book claims to be a fly-on-the-wall account of Microsoft's inevitable ascent. We are told that information has come from "Deep Throat" sources as well as leaked emails and interviews with key personnel. Unfortunately, for the curious reader, that is as far as sourcing the claims goes. One wonders why author Rohm doesn't quote from the more accurate email exchanges she had with Gates prior to publication of the book, mentioned in her foreword. The author is undoubtedly at her best when digging the dirt on Microsoft. For instance, she reveals that code was found within early versions of Windows which would sabotage applications if users were running rival DR-DOS rather than MS-DOS.



There are some great windows into the mad Palace of Bill, my personal favourite being the moment when Gates loses his rag during an interview with CBS interviewer Connie Chung. But these are never followed through.

Instead, the legal wranglings inside the Federal Trade Commission are covered in depth and too much space is given to sources such as Novell CEO Ray Noorda, presumably

...information has come from 'Deep Throat' sources

because they proffered far more information.

Rohm definitely makes some basic points along the way, observing Microsoft's habit of dividing and destroying the competition until it dominates and then hiking-up prices, unhindered. There is a really superb book to be written on Gates' empire, but this isn't it. We'll have to keep on waiting.

PAUL TRUEMAN

PCW DETAILS



**THE MICROSOFT FILE —
THE SECRET CASE
AGAINST BILL GATES**

Author Wendy Goldman
Rohm

Publisher Times Business

ISBN 0-81-292-7168

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brainteasers

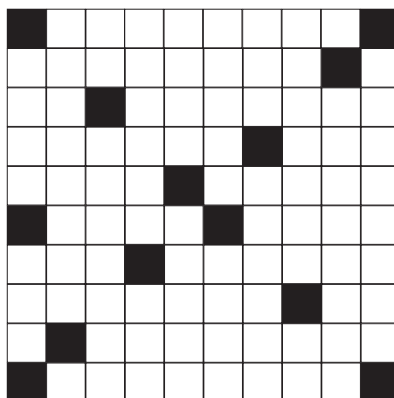
Quickie

Why will you always find a picture of Charles Dickens in a bank?

This Month's Prize Puzzle

This month you will be pitting your wits against the Xmas number crossword. Arrange the numbers [below] into the grid [right], some across and some down, in the manner of a crossword.

16	2155	2980972
17	5091	5186811
88	5443	5401815
91	9181	8392650
258	11093	18983188
480	19603	27864111
482	32896	32832118
511	297091	37740183
689	465715	38451557
1512	542739	65961665
1851	917136	75019985



Send your answer on a postcard or the back of an empty, sealed envelope, to:
PCW Prize Puzzle — January 1999
P.O. Box 99
Harrogate HG2 0XJ
Entries should arrive no later than 20th January, 1999. Please do not send solutions on floppy disks, emails, or in envelopes.

Winner of October Prize Puzzle

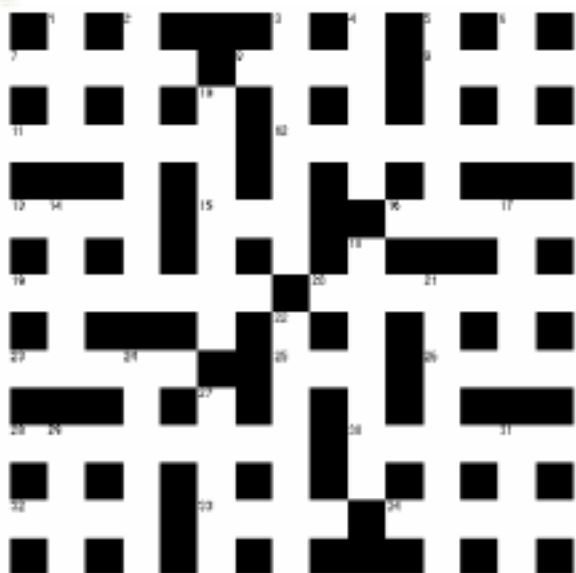
We thought that the October problem would prove rather difficult, and the fact that we had less than 50 entries confirmed this. It was a real number-cruncher. The solution required was that the six digits are 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and this gave 208 primes and 13 squares and cubes. The winning card came from a previous winner of the competition, Mr Gordon Brindle of Witney, Oxfordshire. Sorry, Mr Brindle, you're going to get the same type of prize as you got before.

Usual condolences to the also-rans, but keep trying — as they say, next time it could be you!

☛ I seem to have made a bit of a dog's dinner of November's problem. However, I'll try to have things sorted out by next month's issue.

JJ CLESSA

prize crossword



ACROSS

7 The V of DVD (5)
8 Box in a table (4)
9 See 30 across
11 Disk division (6)
12 Microsoft's internet adventurer (8)
13 Island's programming language? (4)
15 Software glitch (3)
16 Time to reboot (5)
19 Visuals input device (7)
20 Existing setting unless another has been stated (7)

23 Screen dot (5)
25 19 across's text capability (inits) (3)
26 Electronic input-output point (4)
28 Rival of 12 across's company (8)
30 ...and 9 across peripherals plug-in point (6, 4)
32 ...and 34 sound card's real sound capability (9)
33 Place for expansion (4)
34 See 32 across

It's only words — and there are millions of them in the new Chambers Dictionary. Each month, one lucky PCW crossword entrant wins a copy. This time, you could get lucky. Send your completed crossword to: PCW November Prize Crossword, VNU House, 32-34 Broadwick Street, London W1A 2HG, to arrive no later than 4th January, 1999.

Please state clearly if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies.



DOWN

1 Dumb show (4)
2 Hold back (8)
3 Retaliation (7)
4 Gradient (5)
5 Outcry (6)
6 Genuine (4)
10 Boy singers (7)
14 Character code (abbrev) (5)
17 Divide (5)
18 Sadden (7)
21 North African (8)
22 One way or another (7)
24 Spring festival (6)
27 Brief interval (5)
29 Verve (4)
31 Companion (4)

December solutions

ACROSS

7 Ethernet 9 Search 10 Help
11 Character 12 Turbo
14 Scanner 18 Start Up
19 Lithium 22 Refresh
24 Email 26 Intranets
28 Tray 29 Laptop
30 Provider

DOWN

1 Attenuate 2 Keep 3 Snack
4 Asia 5 Battle 6 Scar
8 Trance 13 Bar 15 Nail
16 Purr 17 Mutilated
20 Hem 21 Asleep
23 Estate 25 Ascot 26 Iran
27 Alps 28 Trip