

# leisure lines

**H**ands up, all those who are sick and tired of seeing Lara Croft's sickening Tomb Raider physique plastered over countless magazine and newspaper pages? Well, I am, for one, but as many of you out there don't share the same view, we're reviewing her new adventure, **TOMBRAIDER III**, in *Screenplay*. Along with Lara, there are reviews of **CARMAGEDDON II**, World League Soccer endorsed by Michael Owen, the **TIGER WOODS 99** golf game, starring



▲ THE SEARCH FOR GRANDMA'S REMEDY IS FEATURED IN OUR KIDS SECTION

the man himself, war on the Eastern Front in *Close Combat III*, and *Buggy*, a racing game. Our CD-ROM section features reviews to suit many tastes. All you Trekkies can enjoy **STAR TREK SHIP CREATOR**, there's lots to learn from **ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA 99**, you can dance the night away with *FrEQuency 99* and watch Kenny come a cropper in the **SOUTH PARK** desktop themes and screensavers. Reviewed in the *Kids* section are Dorling Kindersley's **MY AMAZING HUMAN BODY** and an adventure called *The Search for Grandma's Remedy*. In our *Books* pages you'll find reviews of *Overdrive* — Bill Gates and the Race to Control Cyberspace, *The Complete Idiot's Guide*

to Windows 98, and **DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY**. Our *Competition* gives you the chance to win a copy of a relational database called 4th D or a BT Internet kit. Complete our *Prize Crossword* and a copy of the new Chambers dictionary could be winging its way to you, or pit your wits against our *Brainteasers*. And in our trip down memory lane, in the *Retro* column Simon Collin looks back at the **GRiD 1101**, a pioneering laptop and a design classic.

ETELKA CLARK, LEISURE LINES EDITOR

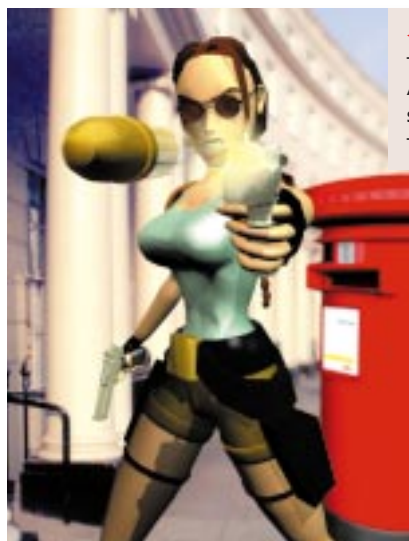
[ETELKAC@VNU.CO.UK](mailto:ETELKAC@VNU.CO.UK)

▼ YOUR CHANCE TO BOLDLY GO ETC... BUT FIRST, YOU CAN BUILD YOUR OWN STARSHIP [CDs]



# Tomb Raider III

**Third time around** for the feisty, sexy, action heroine.



◀ WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT POSTING A LETTER WOULD BE SO DANGEROUS THESE DAYS?

most famous of all pixellated female forms so it's hardly surprising that she's back for her third adventure, in the not-so-originally-

named Tomb Raider III.

Those who didn't like the first two versions should now go and make a cup of tea, as Tomb Raider III is pretty similar in most ways. Lara does, however, have new moves. She can sprint for short bursts, crawl, duck, and monkey-swing. The delightfully brutal young lady has also got new weapons, such as grenade launchers, as well as a variety of new vehicles in which to scream around, such as a mine cart, a kayak and a quad bike.

**Marketing folk realised** long ago that by including a sexy, scantily-clad lead character in their action games, they would sell lots of copies. Lara Croft is the

**The five new landscapes** range from Antarctica to London. You can run amok in Aldwych tube station if you feel so inclined. Graphics have been improved,

with new effects like rippling water, rain and smoking gun barrels, and the overall feel of the game is that it has been tinkered with rather than overhauled. A negative point is that you can now only save your game when you have collected a 'save game' crystal — and these are often hidden. So, for an amateur Tomb-Raider-ite, you might spend too much time returning to square one and become frustrated.

Tomb Raider III is a great game and highly addictive, as were its predecessors, and it will sell bucketloads. Just don't expect much of a difference.

JIM HARYOTT

## PCW DETAILS



**Price** £39.99

**Contact** Eidos 0181 636 3000

[www.eidosinteractive.com](http://www.eidosinteractive.com)

**System Specification** Windows 95/98, Pentium 166MHz processor (Pentium 200MHz recommended), 16Mb of RAM (32Mb recommended), 4X CD-ROM drive, DirectX 6.0 (supplied).



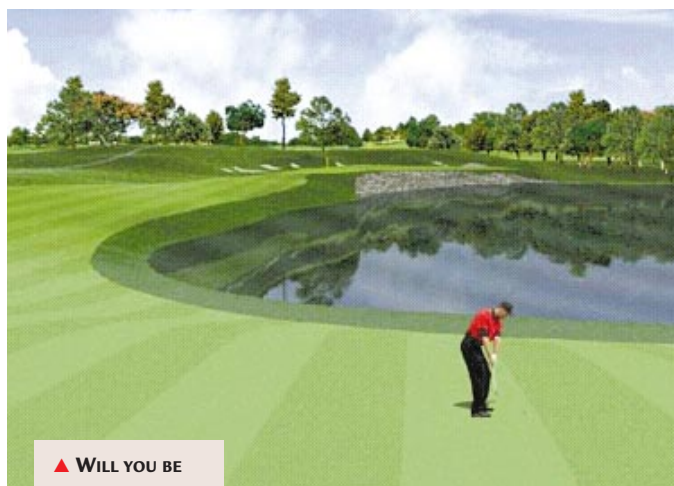
# Tiger Woods 99

**This pacy golf simulator** leaves the competition stuck in the bunker.

**Quite simply**, this is one of the finest golf simulators ever created. It looks stunning, the controls are easy to master, and most unusually for a golf game, it plays quickly. You play Tiger, who looks perfectly digitised and, importantly, blends in well with the scenery.

The machine on which I played the game had a 3Dfx card, so it was not really surprising that it looked good, but what really caught us out was the speed of the gameplay. Only a few seconds after a shot has been taken, the next shot is lined up, thus cutting out the tedious waiting time you usually have to suffer,

even with relatively new games such as Microsoft's Golf 98. The views provided when the ball is struck are very impressive. Sometimes the point of view follows the ball through the air, other times you see it from the green. Then, you can replay it from any of the six 'ball-cams'.



▲ WILL YOU BE ABLE TO CLEAR THE WATER? NOT EVEN TIGER WOODS IS INFALLIBLE...

**Tiger Woods 99** not only looks great and plays well, but there are up to eight different types of gameplay. Dozens of options make the virtual game almost

as difficult to master as an actual round of golf. The best bit, though, is that if you manage to get your timing on the swing just right, you can enjoy a 'Tiger Shot!' which results in young Master Woods crackling with electricity and belting the ball down the fairway, literally smoking!

PAUL TRUEMAN

## PCW DETAILS



**Price** £39.99

**Contact** Electronic Arts  
01753 672066

[www.ea.com](http://www.ea.com)

**System Specification** Pentium 133MHz, Windows 95/98, 32Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 110Mb free hard-disk space.



# World League Soccer 99

**Not a good match** for Michael Owen, who lends his name to this football game.



**Footballing wunderkind** he may be, but a totem of PC gaming quality he is not. Poor young Michael Owen has been approached by dozens of business types following his World Cup debut and offered countless commercial deals. Sadly, he said yes to this game, a shoddy affair that does little justice to his talent

ARSENAL PREPARE TO TAKE A FREE KICK: IS ANOTHER GOAL ON THE CARDS?

established football-sim franchise that will obviously shift a lot more products due to Owen's face being plastered all over it.

The first thing you notice about the game is that the main menu seems as responsive as an old Trabant

car. The game was reviewed on a PII 450 armed with 128Mb and a spankingly good graphics card, so the equipment cannot be to blame for the game's sluggishness. The culprit appeared to be the chunky polygonal form of Michael playing keep-me-ups to the left of the menu. When he was missing from the

with a football. World League Soccer is a well-

menu, the icons became far more responsive. The actual matchplay isn't bad, but forget about playing this game with a keyboard — there are too many keys to remember.

Where the game really fails is that there is no sense of it having anything to do with Michael Owen. His image appears on the opening video and that's it: none of his virtuoso skills are on display here.

PAUL TRUEMAN

## PCW DETAILS



**Price** £34.99

**Contact** Eidos 0181 636 3000

[www.eidos.co.uk](http://www.eidos.co.uk)

**System Specification** P133 (P166 recommended), 16Mb RAM (32Mb RAM recommended), 5Mb free hard-disk space, 4X CD-ROM.

# Carmageddon II

**More cars, more mayhem and more realism in this extremely violent driving game.**

**If you find gaming violence** offensive, then don't read on. Carmageddon II is another outing for the most violent, gratuitous — and successful — driving game of last year. It is so gratuitous, in fact, that the British Board of Film Classification has stepped in and ordered that it be toned down by replacing the 'real' pedestrians in the game with zombies.

One of the main objectives of Carmageddon II is to run over as many zombies as possible, in return for money. Another objective is to destroy your competitors' cars. If you fancy it, you can even race, but that's not really the point.

The game's graphics have not improved a great deal beyond the original, apart from the fact that it now has Direct3D acceleration as standard. The improvements lie in the physics engine, which allows more realistic crumpling of cars, and offers a 'smashable' environment so you can drive through walls, knock down lampposts and all sorts. Zombies are now fully polygon-based so you can probably guess the effect that this has... yes, they splatter far more realistically when you hit them.

There are 33 brand-new vehicles, including a combine harvester, and about a zillion silly power-ups. To progress to a new environment you have to complete



YOU'LL COME OUT OF THIS ENCOUNTER WITH MORE THAN JUST SCRATCHED PAINTWORK

mission levels, such as destroying a set number of objects in the time allotted. The missions are pretty hard and it can get boring having to repeat them over and over.

Although I found this game fun for a while, I would have preferred an hour with Colin McRae Rally instead.

DAVID FEARON

## PCW DETAILS



**Price** £39.99

**Contact** Bionic Digital 01753 653456

[www.sci.co.uk](http://www.sci.co.uk)

**System Specification** Pentium 166, 16Mb RAM, Direct3D graphics accelerator, 200Mb hard-disk space, 4X CD-ROM drive, 16-bit sound card.



# Buggy

Bump your opponents off the track in this **racy little number**.



## Simple name, simple game,

Buggy does exactly what it says on the box. You race like a mad thing around a variety of courses, trying to pummel your fellow opponents into the side of the track.

This is one of those games that you can be happily playing a few minutes after first taking the CD out of its box. Installation is easy and there are only a

▲ THERE'S NO TIME TO ADMIRE THE SCENERY WHEN YOU'VE A RACE TO WIN

few controls to master. If anything, Buggy is almost too easy to pick up. Although finishing last in his debut race, this reviewer then won every subsequent event. There are no difficulty settings, although you can greatly affect your chances by the type of buggy you pick, with numerous models offering various combinations of speed and handling: a speedy little number will most likely not handle well, and vice versa.

Once you've mastered the art of winning races, you can progress to collecting the various power-ups that litter the course and turn your buggy into a fearsome fighting machine. This isn't

exactly Carmageddon II, though. Instead of decapitating your rivals, there is the far gentler option to stun them, or lock their wheels while you race ahead. To be honest, this type of automotive sabotage will require a lot of practice as, initially, simply picking out the route requires all your concentration. Simple but effective, Buggy is awash with colour and carnage but its particular brand of mayhem won't be to everyone's taste.

PAUL TRUEMAN

## PCW DETAILS

★★★★

Price £29.99

Contact Gremlin 0114 279 9020

[www.gremlin.co.uk](http://www.gremlin.co.uk)

**System Specification** Windows 95, P166MHz (minimum) P200MHz (recommended), 16Mb RAM (minimum) 32Mb RAM (recommended), DirectX5-compatible graphics card, 4X CD-ROM.

# Close Combat III

A hard time and heavy fighting on the **Eastern Front**.

It's 1941, and all is not quiet on the Eastern Front. Hitler has ordered the invasion of the Soviet Union and German troops are marching towards Moscow. The Soviet populous is mobilised and prepared for a nationwide siege. The world's most brutal land war has begun.



◀ ON AN ICY RUSSIAN PLAIN, TANKS LOOK SET TO OVERCOME A BELEAGUERED INFANTRY DIVISION

It seems like an age before your troops get into the right position to engage the enemy. Having a less than intuitive interface doesn't

help matters and the game sprites are disappointing. Then again, not all strategy games need follow in the footsteps of, say, Starcraft with all its pace and pizzazz, to achieve their goals. There's much to be gained from playing Close Combat III but you must be prepared to put in a lot of initial effort.

CLIFF HOPE

In this game you are a low-ranking commander of either side, directing your troops into historically accurate battles which span four long years of the campaign. Microsoft, to its credit, has done well to make the gameplay as accurate as possible. There are over 200 categories of troops, vehicles and weapons, battlefields generated from

actual wartime aerial photography, and a game engine that faithfully incorporates elements of WWII warfare — chains of command, morale, limited ammunition and extreme weather conditions among them.

Given the level of detail here, it's perhaps only to be expected that actual gameplay is a little on the slow side.

## PCW DETAILS

★★★★

Price £34.99

Contact Microsoft 0345 002000

[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

**System Specification** Windows 95/98, P133 processor, 32Mb RAM, 60Mb hard-disk space, 4X CD-ROM drive, SVGA video card, Windows-compatible sound card.

# South Park Desktop Themes

Transform your desktop into a little corner of **cartoon Colorado**.

## 'Howdy Ho!

My, you smell of flowers!' — the wise words of Mr Hanky the Christmas Poo captured the heart of every South Park fan. And, with an opening like that, they will be the only ones still reading this review.

If, like me, you can't get enough of Kyle, Stan, Kenny and Cartman, then you'll love the Official South Park PC Desktop Themes and Screensaver. Joining



There are two parts to this product: the screen-saver and



the desktop themes. The latter consist of a number of backdrops and icons which you can set up to randomly shuffle as you restart your PC. There are 13 screensavers from which to choose, which have the featured characters stroll



your favourite Colorado chums are the regulars from Cartoon Central's controversial cartoon show: Chef, Mr Garrison, Mr Hat, Big Gay Al, Wendy, not to mention the Cows and the Aliens — they all make an appearance.



onto your screen and quote unforgettable lines — the graphics and sounds are indistinguishable from the show. The Cows are worried by the Aliens, Cartman gets an anal probe, Kyle learns something new, Chef sings about love gravy, Stan pukes when Wendy chats with him, and of course,

◀ **THIS IS KENNY, AND NO, HE'S NOT HAVING A QUICK 40 WINKS**

oh my God, they killed Kenny. So, nothing spectacular, but a welcome fix for

South Park fans while we wait for the forthcoming 3D game from Acclaim, which promises to have a multi-player option you won't forget. And remember, children — a pig and an elephant's DNA just don't match.

GORDON 'CARTMAN' LAING

## PCW DETAILS



**Price** £19.99

**Contact** Telstar Electronic Studios  
01932 222 232

[www.telstar.co.uk/tes](http://www.telstar.co.uk/tes)

**System Specification** Windows 95/98, P90, 16Mb RAM, 16Mb hard-disk space.

# FrEQuency '99

Sound and vision team up on this classy **dance music** creator.

The proliferation of music-mixing software has given closet DJs a lot to get stuck into over the past few months. If you didn't fancy Hip Hop eJay, there was Dance eJay or even Rave eJay. Turn your speakers up loud enough and your darkened bedroom could practically be mistaken for the Ministry of Sound. Well, maybe not; but when your only audience is your kid sister, you probably won't be expecting much in the way of crowd appreciation anyway.

Now there's yet another dance-mixing toy to play with — FrEQuency '99.

▶ **A SHADOWY MIXING DECK AND ATMOSPHERIC VIDEO CLIPS MAKE FOR SOME MOODY MUSIC CREATION**

FrEQuency shuns the user interface employed by the eJay products, where you have to drag tracks onto an eight-track synthesiser and then play them back until you're happy with the result. Instead, it has teamed up with Macromedia to produce a nice Shockwave-style interface where you click on various parts of the screen to change the sound and bring in new backbeats, cut the drums and so on.

**FrEQuency has included** samples from different musical genres, including techno, ambient, hip hop, house, jazz



and drum 'n' bass, which means you won't have to buy separate products for each. Another nice feature is the video loop, which you can play around with by adding your own clips. If your mixing skills leave something to be desired, you can just switch on the automatic track generator.

FrEQuency '99 is a bargain and would make the perfect party toy.

SUSAN PEDERSON

## PCW DETAILS



**Price** £19.99

**Contact** United Interactive  
0171 395 0800

[www.modified.com](http://www.modified.com)

**System Specification** PC: Windows 98, 95 and NT, Pentium processor or better, 16Mb of RAM, 4X CD-ROM, sound card.  
Mac: Power Mac or clone, 24Mb of RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, System 7.0.1 or later.

# Star Trek Starship Creator

The dream of every sci-fi fan is fulfilled: build your own **Federation starship**.

It is a **Trekkie's dream** to build his or her own space vehicle, to boldly go where none have gone before, and Starship Creator is a CD made by fans, for fans. So, if you're not a Trekkie, steer well clear. The program begins by offering you a variety of components which go into the making of a great Federation starship. You can select your favourite engine, tweak the all-important force field, or increase the power of your phasers and proton torpedoes. But be careful about what you choose. Powerful phasers can draw a lot of energy away from the shields, weakening the overall integrity of the ship. This may also affect your ship's manoeuvring ability. You can even select the type of crew quarters; cramped quarters with poor recreational facilities



can hit morale during long voyages. Having built your own version of the Defiant or the Enterprise, you can go on to select the crew, but choose wisely. Some crew members, like Worf, will always look for guidance. Others, like James T. Kirk, have an independent streak.

**Your dream ship** will now be ready to fly off into the unknown. Except it is here

◀ **WITH A BIT OF EFFORT, YOU CAN CREATE A STARSHIP OF WHICH JAMES T. KIRK WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD**

that the CD-ROM suffers. The missions on which you are sent are poorly planned and the 2D graphics are only slightly better than those of a Sinclair Spectrum. However,

if you collect Star Trek memorabilia, this CD is worth having.

AJITH RAM

## PCW DETAILS

★★★★

**Price** £34.99

**Contact** Zablac Entertainment

01626 332233

[www.ablac.co.uk](http://www.ablac.co.uk)

**System Specification** Windows 95, 15Mb hard-disk space, Pentium 90, SVGA graphics card, SoundBlaster-compatible sound card.

# Encyclopaedia Britannica 99

Updated to include even more **facts and figures** — a little too many, in fact.



◀ **DID YOU KNOW THAT ROMANS ONCE LIVED IN THE SLEEPY ESSEX TOWN OF CHELMSFORD?**

test. Neither the dictionary nor the encyclopaedia was able to define the term 'SCSI', although a list was offered of similar-sounding alternatives from which to choose.

This was a nice touch, as it meant that if we had spelt our query incorrectly, we would have been saved from having to retype it.

**Searching the encyclopaedia** can be performed in two ways. First, the more conventional method of entering a keyword will produce a list of all related articles. The second method is far more intuitive, allowing the user to enter a

question such as 'tell me about cars' and be presented with a list of likely matches. Entering this particular question, though, did not take us straight to articles relating to the motor car. Of the hits returned, the first five were in reference to railway cars, George Pullman, the history of the circus, air brakes and cable cars. So, with results like this, I could not help but feel that the people at Britannica had taken the idea of an 'International Edition' just a little too far.

NIK RAWLINSON

## PCW DETAILS

★★★★

**Price** £125

**Contact** Encyclopaedia Britannica

0800 282433

[www.britannica.co.uk](http://www.britannica.co.uk)

**System Specification** 75MHz Pentium processor, 16Mb RAM (32Mb recommended), 80Mb free hard-disk space, 4X CD-ROM, 800x600 SVGA monitor, sound card and speakers, mouse.

**Following the success** of previous years, the 1999 edition of Britannica incorporates over 73,000 articles, 8500 photos and illustrations and 30,000 freely downloadable related internet links. This tidy little lot is supplemented by a 1998 yearbook to keep users right up to date.

I had high hopes for this package, but was disappointed after putting it to the



# My Amazing Human Body

An interactive insight **into your insides** with your skeletal guide, Seemore Skinless.

**Children ask awkward questions** and this CD will help provide the answers. It is a basic illustration of the human body and how it works, for six- to ten-year-olds. An interactive approach is used to introduce the body from the inside out. Skeletal host, Seemore Skinless, guides us around the CD's four main sections. There's a personal file, too, where the child inputs information about itself and creates a picture of what it looks like: a point of reference which helps the child understand the principles being covered.

**Various sections** look at what we're made of, how we're put together and the importance of nutritional and daily requirements. Using Seemore's body as



▲ **WHO NEEDS A TOOTH FAIRY WHEN YOU CAN PRACTICE VIRTUAL DENTISTRY?**

the model, the child can analyse different body parts and the location of organs and bones, enlarging them, X-raying them, measuring them and counting them.

Seemore is colourfully animated to captivate a child's short attention span. In the Take Me Apart section, they can

literally 'blow him up' and reassemble him, working against the clock for an extra challenge. Interactive games and activities form a substantial part of the exploration. One activity requires the child to feed, water, exercise and rest Seemore Skinless throughout the day. This is a fun and educational CD-ROM that children will thoroughly enjoy.

HELEN FORTGANG

## PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

**Price** £24.99

**Contact** DK Multimedia 0171 753 3488  
[www.dk.com](http://www.dk.com)

**System Specification PC:** Windows 95/98, 486 DX2/66MHz, 12Mb RAM, 8- or 16-bit sound card, 256 colours at 640 x 480 pixels, 2X CD-ROM drive.  
**Mac:** 68040/33MHz, 8Mb RAM, System 7.0, 8-bit (256) colour display at 14in, 640 x 480 pixels, 2X CD-ROM drive.

# The Search for Grandma's Remedy

You're a **mouse on a mission** as puzzles must be solved to restore your grandma's health.



**Mia, the skateboarding mouse** in The Search for Grandma's Remedy, has to find something to cure her grandma's sickness. The adventure begins after Mia's 'sparklies', needed to buy the ingredients for the medicine, are stolen by the rascally Romaine Rat. Exploring the house where she lives, Mia and her friends have many encounters which lead her closer to the ingredients. Mia must collect the various tools lying around the house and keep them in her

▲ **GO FOR YOUR GRANNY: MIA GETS HELPFUL ADVICE FROM THIS TALKING INK DROPPER**

rucksack. Aimed at children aged four to nine years old, this little adventure combines learning and play in one engaging production. The puzzles and games are educationally designed to help develop a variety of basic strengths. Skills including word recognition, phonics, spelling, early reading and rhyming are taught.

**With four levels** at which to set the program, the difficulty of the games and puzzles can be increased or decreased accordingly. Alternatively, the player can enter their age, which, I presume, automatically defaults the program to a particular level. The animated, film-like 3D graphics greatly add to the adventure, making an enchanting visual ride which is beautifully introduced with a song from Boo, the swinging spider.

Even though it should be possible, it was not clear how to save the game, which meant that I was thrown back to the beginning when what I had really wanted was to resume play. It also became rather frustrating manoeuvring Mia where I wanted her to go.

Presented on two CD-ROMs, this is a unique and charming educational program despite its imperfections.

HELEN FORTGANG

## PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

**Price** £19.99

**Contact** Ransom Publishing  
01491 613711  
[www.ransom.co.uk](http://www.ransom.co.uk)

**System Specification PC:** Windows 95/98, P100, 32Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 16-bit sound card and speakers, 640 x 480 pixels, 256 colours, 30Mb free hard-disk space. **Mac:** Power PC 100MHz, System 7.6 or later, 32Mb RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 640 x 480 pixels, 256 colours, 30Mb free hard-disk space.

## Win a V.90 Internet kit!



The kit consists of a 56K external modem supporting V.90 from Hayes and BT Internet software. A free CD-ROM tutorial is included to help you get online.



service; Wireplay multi-player gaming software; a one-month trial of BT HomeCampus, the internet-based home learning service; and three months' free access to BT Internet.

➔ **For the chance to win one of these superb kits,** just answer the following question:

*How many email addresses does the V.90 Internet kit allow you to have?*

- A. Three
- B. Four
- C. Five

**M**odem maker **Hayes** has teamed up with BT to offer PCW readers the chance to win one of its new **V.90 Internet kits**. We have four kits to give away, each worth £139.

**BT Internet** offers fast and reliable access to the internet and comprises five email addresses and 10Mb of web space.

This complete internet solution also includes: one month's trial of LineOne, the UK's leading online consumer

## Win a 4th Dimension database!

**F**ive copies of the graphical, multi-threaded relational database, **ACi's 4th Dimension (4D)** worth £242.50 each, are up for grabs this month.

➔ **4D is designed for end-users** and expert developers. From the time of its release in the mid-eighties, 4D has been winning awards from the computer press and winning praise from users for its power, elegance and simplicity. Its intuitive interface and powerful 4GL programming language make 4D the ideal tool for designing solutions in a single-user, client/server or internet/intranet environment.

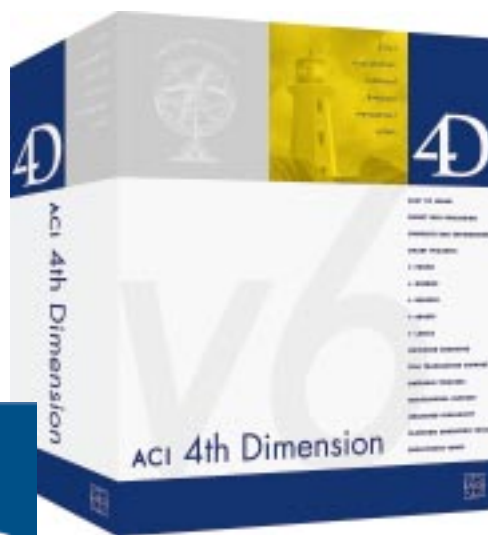
With 4D you can create virtually any type of database application, from simple contact management systems and product catalogues to sophisticated multimedia applications and full-scale accounting packages. 4D's ease of use, reduced development time and

straightforward installation and maintenance make it an unbeatable, cost-effective database solution for organisations of all sizes.

➔ **For the chance to win a copy of 4D,** just answer the following question:

*What is 4D?*

- A. A word processor
- B. An award-winning relational database management system
- C. A spreadsheet



### RULES OF ENTRY

**T**his competition is open to readers of *Personal Computer World*, except for employees (and their families) of VNU Business Publications, Hayes, BT Internet and ACi. 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.

### HOW TO ENTER THE COMPETITIONS

1. Via our web site at [www.pcw.co.uk](http://www.pcw.co.uk), or
2. Write your answer, name, address and daytime telephone number on a postcard or on the back of a sealed envelope. Mark your card "PCW/Hayes BT Competition" or "PCW/4D Competition" as applicable and post to: P.O. Box 191, Woking, Surrey GU21 1FT, by Friday 27th February, 1999.

• Please state clearly on your competition entry if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies.



# First off the GRiD

Simon Collin takes a **strong liking** to the GRiD 1101, the metal-cased laptop pioneer.

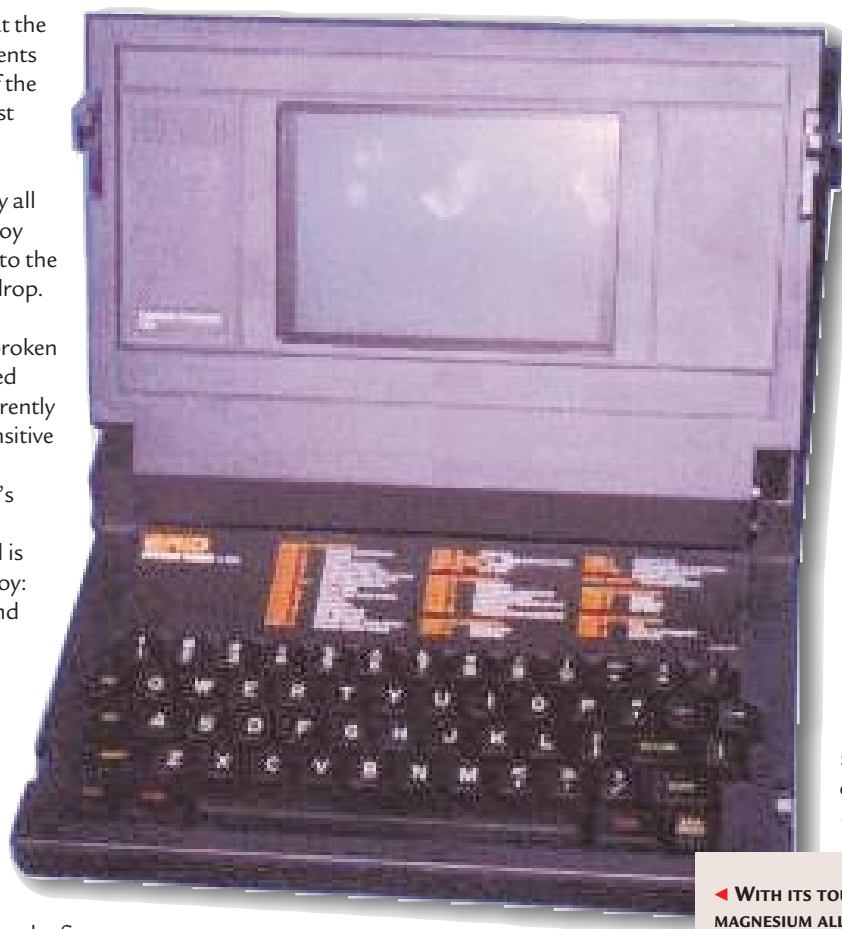
If you look at the advertisements for some of the thinnest, newest laptops on the market, you'll notice that they all sport metal-alloy cases, resilient to the odd knock or drop. Since I've just dropped and broken my plastic-cased laptop, I'm currently particularly sensitive to this issue. The metal that's in fashion as a casing material is magnesium alloy: it's very light and super-tough. However, even though the latest laptop models rate this feature top of the list, it's not new. In fact, one of the first real laptops was also the first to use a strong magnesium-alloy casing. The model was built by GRiD, the forgotten pioneer of the portable-computer industry.

**GRiD was started** in 1979 by engineer Glenn T Edens, who provided pivotal ideas and concepts which have ensured current laptops and PDAs work and

***The GRiD 1101 took the knocks of life on the road better than any other model***

look the way they do. He invented the idea of the laptop as we know it, with clamshell design, integrated flat display and so on — he even holds the patent for the laptop idea.

Edens went on to develop pen-based computing ideas that looked great at the time, then died off, but have now taken off again with products such as the Pilot and Windows CE.



◀ **WITH ITS TOUGH MAGNESIUM ALLOY CASE, THE GRiD 1101 WAS BUILT TO LAST**

The first GRiD model, the 1101, was not only a revolution in computing terms but was also a design classic. The styling and case design for the 1101 was produced in the UK by William Moggridge. He produced a neat, elegant, classic design — and if you want to see the original, it's on display in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The machine's magnesium alloy casing ensured that the laptop was fantastically strong. Unlike today's fashion for bare metal styling, GRiD computers were painted a trademark black. Critics complained about the weight, but it took the knocks of life on the road better than any other model (come to think of it, there were very few other models around at the time with which to compare it). To add an impressive feather to its cap, the space agency NASA took the GRiD laptop to its heart and there has been a GRiD on board almost every space shuttle flight since.

The original 1101 was powered by the then-standard 8086 processor (used in plenty of PC-compatible desktops of the time) together with the companion 8087 maths co-processor. Its main memory was 128Kb of RAM as standard, although this could be expanded to 512Kb. The small electro-luminescent screen was easy to read and provided a standard 80x25 character display. Unusually, the GRiD also featured bubble memory, which was very trendy at the time, and used an odd electro-chemical process to store data. GRiD provided mass storage through both a cassette tape and floppy-disk drive, and there was an optional hard-disk unit available which could store your MS-DOS 2 compatible software.

Displaying its engineering-based pedigree, the GRiD 1101 featured a GPIB interface port together with the usual serial and parallel printer ports. GPIB (also called IEEE-488) ports are still used to link test and lab equipment to a computer and no doubt prove useful when linking the laptop to standard shuttle patch panels.

**It's hard to find** an original GRiD computer, but if you're determined you could try the antiques market: Bonhams, the London-based auctioneering firm, offered one as an icon of 20th century design and it fetched a respectable \$800. The GRiD company was acquired in 1988 by the Tandy Corporation (itself featured here recently) but it is thanks to Edens' revolutionary ideas and designs at the start of the eighties that we can now choose from dozens of sleek laptops wrapped in a magnesium alloy casing. □

# books

## The Complete Idiot's Guide to Windows 98

Sometimes it's quite handy being a complete idiot, as people like to write books to help you. The *Complete Idiot's Guide to Windows 98* is one such self-help publication which cuts to the quick of Windows 98 ignorance. Although it's not very colourful in its presentation, it does contain a whole load of sound advice and tips, going into sufficient depth to prove a valid reference for you to return to.

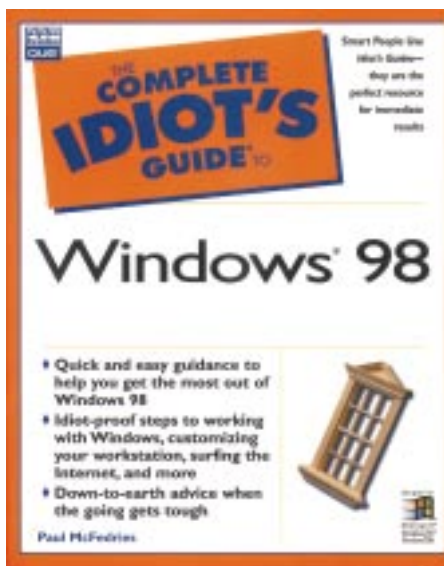
Written in a friendly manner with dashes of humour — yes, Windows can be fun — it manages not to patronise the idiot and avoids the use of heavy jargon in its explanations. But it does include the obligatory, albeit brief, glossary to help you 'Speak Like a Geek' and covers the core terms. Screenshots are placed throughout the book and some

of them require a magnifying glass, but there are also helpful tip-boxes and cross-references which point you towards related subjects and help you navigate through the book.

### It is not the best guide

I have seen, certainly in terms of presentation, but as Windows 98 bibles go, this one is a user-friendly tool which would do well in permanent residence beside your PC.

Although concise, the book's lighthearted conversational style can



make it seem quite waffly in places. This can be forgiven though, as it does get the information across. The book covers all the important aspects of Windows 98 and pays sufficient attention to your system and relevant subjects. If you do

decide to buy this book, and you wouldn't be an idiot to do so, look carefully for it on the bookseller's shelves as it is easy to miss its uninspiring cover.

HELEN FORTGANG

### PCW DETAILS



#### THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO WINDOWS 98

Author Paul McFedries

Publisher Alpha Books

ISBN 0-7897-1493-0

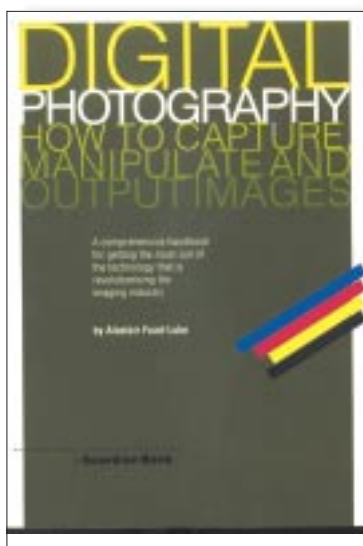
Price £13.99

## Digital Photography — How to Capture, Manipulate and Output Images

Most of us have fancied ourselves as a bit of a David Bailey in our time — until, that is, the less than impressive snaps come back from the chemists. This is where digital photography comes into its own, letting you get rid of your mistakes before you print them out. As its title suggests, this book tells you everything you need to know about processing prints of which you can be proud. Unfortunately, the book's title also hints at a tone of dull undergraduate thesis.

This book is packed with information.

Everything is covered, including scanners, digital cameras, printers, image-editing software and a few basic editing techniques.



There are even 28 pages of glossary. However, there are too many items covered in this book, which leaves no room to discuss anything in detail. Worse, some of the information is

already out of date. When it covers image-editing software, for instance, it mentions several old versions. Without wanting to blow our own trumpet, you are probably better off reading this magazine. The January and February '99 issues of PCW, for instance, covered all the latest image-editing packages in far more detail.

**This worst thing** about this book, though, is that it is a very dull read. It is rather like going through your bank statement; utterly tedious, but you feel as if it might possibly turn up something you need to know.

*Digital Photography* takes what should be a fun subject and turns it into something you would only do if you were paid to. You cannot even look at pretty pictures in the book because, although most of the shots are informative, they are unimaginatively presented in dull-old black and white.

ADELE DYER

### PCW DETAILS



#### DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY — HOW TO CAPTURE, MANIPULATE AND OUTPUT IMAGES

Author Alastair Fuad-Luke

Publisher Fourth Estate

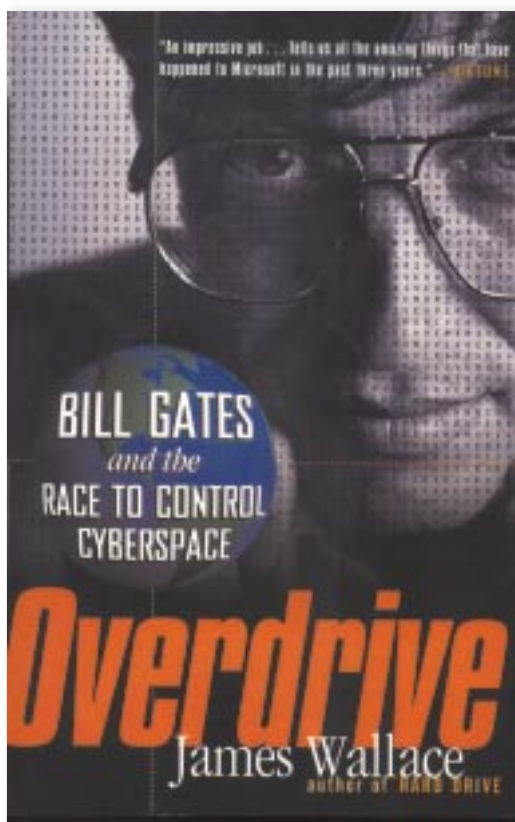
ISBN 1-8411-5 051-7

Price £15.99

# Overdrive — Bill Gates and the Race to Control Cyberspace

So where do you sit in the great 'Microsoft vs The World' debate? Is Bill a saint or a sinner? In his first book of six years ago, *Hard Drive*, journalist James Wallace of the *Seattle Post* was one of the first to point an accusing finger at the business practices of the largest software company in the world and its allegedly control-freak boss. Six years in the IT industry might as well be 60, given all that has happened since 1992. Wallace unsurprisingly chooses to focus on 'the internet', the biggest IT story of the past ten years. In a recent book, *The Microsoft File*, by Wendy Goldman Rohm (reviewed, PCW Jan '99) there was a good deal of confusing guff written — much as if Rohm had personally been given an out-of-body tour around Bill Gates' mind. But Wallace remains firmly corporeal and his book is all the better for it.

So what picture does Wallace paint? Well, Gates is not really establishing Microsoft's satanic dominions over the Earth, despite the claims seen on some web sites, although the bare facts show a dominating,



*If there is one main theme of the book, it is how close Gates came to blowing it*

paranoid boss ruling his empire of thousands as though it were his fiefdom.

**All the good stuff is here** and Wallace is quite happy to concentrate on

other major players in the internet boom. Indeed, if there is one main theme of the book, it is how close Gates came to blowing it by dismissing the world

wide web. From the online birth of NSCA's Mosaic browser, to Marc Andreessen's near-eclipse of Gates, the major history of the past three years in the industry is here.

What also emerges is how much of a gambler Gates is: for instance, he had not decided to give away the Explorer browser for free until an hour before it was announced at a public meeting. The decision was so last minute that even Spyglass, the company from which Microsoft had licensed the browser, didn't know about it. It is eccentrics like Gates that make the IT industry such an interesting place and Wallace captures it, warts and all.

PAUL TRUEMAN

## PCW DETAILS



**OVERDRIVE — BILL GATES AND THE RACE TO CONTROL CYBERSPACE**

**Author** James Wallace

**Publisher** Wallace

**ISBN** 0-4712-9106-4

**Price** £9.95

TOP

10

books

1

**Unified Modelling Language User Guide**

Addison-Wesley  
£35.99

2

**The Internet: The Rough Guide 1999**

Rough Guides  
£5.00

3

**VB & VBA in a Nutshell**

O'Reilly  
£14.95

4

**MCSE: The Electives in a Nutshell**

O'Reilly  
£14.95

5

**Perl Cookbook**

O'Reilly  
£29.50

6

**MCSE: The Core Exams in a Nutshell**

O'Reilly  
£14.95

7

**DNS on Windows NT**

O'Reilly  
£25.95

8

**Flash 3 Creative Web Administration**

Macromedia Press  
£22.99

9

**UML in a Nutshell**

O'Reilly  
£14.95

10

**Advanced Visual Basic 6.0, 2nd Edition**

Microsoft Press  
£55.49

Prices include VAT on disks and CD-ROMs. List supplied by The PC Bookshop, 21 Sicilian Avenue, London WC1A 2QH. Telephone: 0171 831 0022 Fax: 0171 831 0443



## h1&gt;brainteasers

## Quickie

If 5 times 7 is forty-three, what will a fourth of thirty be?

## This Month's Prize Puzzle

An oil snail (*Limnaea Oleatum*) crawls through a cylindrical fractional distillation column that is exactly ten metres in circumference. The worm enters an inlet pipe at the top of the column, crawls around the inside of the column, and exits via an outlet pipe diametrically opposite the inlet pipe and 12ft vertically below.

If the column had been empty, the snail would have made the journey by the shortest possible route and taken 26 hours. However, the column contains four different types of oil:

1. The top 10% of the column contains thin oil through which the snail crawls at 20% slower than its usual dry-land speed.

- The next 25% consists of a medium oil which reduces the snail's dry speed by 40%.
- The bottom 5% contains sludge which slows the snail's speed down to a mere 10% of his dry speed.
- The remaining third layer consists of thick oil through which the snail's speed is reduced by 50%.

What is the least time that the snail can take to get through the column?

Send your answers on a postcard or on the back of an empty sealed envelope, to:

PCW Prize Puzzle — March 1999  
P.O. Box 99  
Harrogate  
N. Yorks HG2 0XJ  
to arrive no later than 24th February, 1999.

We will also accept solutions by email. Send the solution only (no

explanatory notes or program listings etc.) to [jj.clessa@btinternet.com](mailto:jj.clessa@btinternet.com).

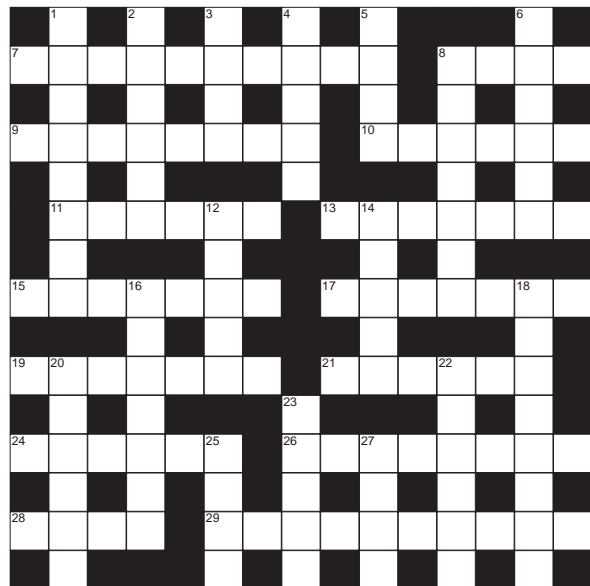
## Winner of the December 1998 Prize Puzzle

A good postbag for our surveying problem — 120 entrants in all. A few people mentioned that I hadn't stated the terrain was flat, which could have made a difference to the answer. True, but since I didn't specify any differences in altitude, it was reasonable to assume that there weren't any and that the race was run on the flat. The majority of you did just that and gave the required answer of 4,589 metres.

The winning entry, drawn at random, came from John Pollard of Baldock, Hertfordshire. Congratulations, John, your prize will be with you shortly. Meanwhile, to the 119 also-rans, keep trying, it could be your turn next.

JJ CLESSA

## h1&gt;prize crossword

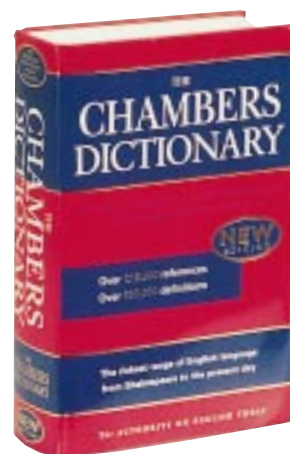


It's only words — and there are millions of them in the new **Chambers Dictionary**. Each month, one lucky PCW crossword entrant wins a copy.

This time, it could be you.

Send your completed crossword to 'PCW March Prize Crossword', VNU House, 32-34 Broadwick Street, London W1A 2HG, to arrive not later than 24th February, 1999.

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



Please note: no Prize Crossword was published in the Feb '99 issue.

## ACROSS

- Place for plugging in (6, 4)
- Saved parcel of data (4)
- Brought in from elsewhere (8)
- Defined part of a disk (6)
- Join on the end of an email? (6)
- Fixed amounts of storage on a disk (7)
- Work out the code (7)
- Quick jump from one site to another (3, 4)
- Partial internal stores for data (7)

- List of activities performed (6)

- Software box requiring an answer (6)
- The second T of HTTP (8)
- Microsoft's WP package (4)
- Failure messages (5, 5)

## DOWN

- Soak through (8)
- Excavate (3, 3)
- Scheme (4)
- Temperamental (5)

- Redding, sixties pop-star (4)
- Nook (6)
- Based on real life (7)
- Frolic (5)
- Atmospheric layer (5)
- Gave away in a draw (7)
- Chatted (8)
- Agreement (6)
- Exhibited (2, 4)
- Tempest (5)
- Delight (4)
- Broadcasts (4)