

offline net 6

Another bonus to the printed offline Internet. Made by drummyfish in May 2024.

Table of Contents

offline net 6.....	1
https://www.angelfire.com/in/eimaj/interviews/john.carmack.html.....	1
http://www.eurogamer.net/article.php?article_id=56256 (2004 Doom III review).....	2
http://www.eurogamer.net/content/r_warcraft3/2 (2002 Warcraft III review).....	3
http://pc.1up.com/do/reviewPage?cld=3137027&did=1 (WoW review).....	4
https://complexity.gg/fatal1ty-syndicate-interview-series/.....	5
http://www.gamesradar.com/pokemon-emerald.....	6

https://www.angelfire.com/in/eimaj/interviews/john.carmack.html

A few days past, we solicited questions from you folks to ask QuakeLaird John Carmack [?] . We sent the questions over to him, and he answered. A lot. It's definitely one of the best interviews we've had yet - click below to read more.

1. Inazuma asks: I know that you and id are doing simultaneous development of Q3 for Windows, Mac and Linux. Which of those is your favorite OS to use, and which to program for?

John Carmack Answers: I use WinNT, Win98, MacOS 8.x, and linux on a regular basis. I also spend some time with MacOS X and irix.

There are individual pros and cons to each system, but if I had to choose only a single platform in its currently shipping state to work on for the next year, I would choose WinNT.

I'm going to risk my neck here and actually defend microsoft a bit:

There are plenty of reasons to have issues with MS, but to just make a blanket statement like "everything that comes from microsoft is crap" is just not rational. There are a lot of smart people at microsoft, and they sometimes produce some nice things. There are some damn useful features of MSDEV that I have not seen on any other platform - all the intellisense pop up information and edit-and-continue, for instance.

I chose NT as our development environment because, after evaluating all available platforms, I decided it was the best tool for the job. NT had the added advantage of running the native executables of our largest target market, but the important point is that it would have won on its own merits even without it.

It offered quality 3D acceleration on intergraph hardware, a stable platform, a good user environment, apps for basics like mail and document editing as well as high end media creation tools, and a good development environment.

I made that decision over three years ago, and I think it has proven to be the correct one. NT is definitely going to be the primary development platform for our next project, but I will be evaluating alternatives for a possible transition after that. The contenders will be linux and MacOS X. None of the other unix workstations would be competitive for our purposes, and I don't think BeOS will offer anything compelling enough (they can always prove me wrong?).

I haven't really been using Win2K, but from a cursory glance, it looks like a reasonable evolution over NT 4.0. The only real downsides to NT 4.0 for me are the bad sound latency and poor input fidelity, and these should be fixed in Win2K.

The current MacOS X server is a bit of a disappointment. I really enjoyed NEXTSTEP on a lot of levels, and if it had workstation quality 3D acceleration, I probably would have stayed there. Unfortunately, much of the development effort spent on it during its transformation to MacOS X seems to be steps sideways instead of forward. Macifying the user interface, porting to PPC, deprecating ObjC for java and C++, etc. They probably all had to be done, but it just hasn't brought anything new to the table. As a user environment, it still feels sluggish, and it still doesn't have 3D graphics.

Linux has progressed a lot in usability in the time since I made the last platform decision. Sure, the guts have always been good, but the user environments were very weak compared to windows or the mac. Some people may think xterms and a few athena apps are all the UI that anyone should need, but I disagree. The Linux user environment still isn't as good as windows, but going from redhat 5.2 to redhat 6.0 was a whole lot more impressive than going from win95 to win98, or MacOS 7 to MacOS 8. If there is another jump like that, I wouldn't feel too bad inflicting another non-windows platform on everyone else in the company.

2. DanJose52 asks: How'd you start, personally (I mean on the inside, like emotionally and morally), and how has Id software changed you? for better or worse?

John Carmack Answers: I knew I wanted to work with computers from a very early age, but there were also a lot of other stereotypical geek aspects to my life growing up - phreaking, hacking (nobody called it "cracking" back then), rockets, bombs, and thermite (sometimes in not-so-smart combinations), sci-fi, comic books, D&D, arcades, etc.

I was sort of an amoral little jerk when I was young. I was arrogant about being smarter than other people, but unhappy that I wasn't able to spend all my time doing what I wanted. I spent a year in a juvenile home for a first offence after an evaluation by a psychologist went very badly.

I went to a couple semesters of classes at the University of Missouri (UMKC), taking nothing but CS classes, but it just didn't seem all that worthwhile. In hindsight, I could have gotten more out of it than I did, but I hadn't acquired a really good attitude towards learning from all possible sources yet.

I dropped-out of college to start programming full time, but trying to do contract programming for the Apple II/IIGS post 1990 was not a good way to make money, and I only wound up with between \$1k and \$2k a month. Not having enough money is stressful, and I did some things I didn't want to. I wrote a numerology program for a couple hundred bucks one time...

Softdisk publishing finally convinced me to come down to Shreveport for an interview. I had been doing contract work for Jay Wilbur and Tom Hall, so I knew there were some pretty cool people there, but meeting John Romero and Lane Roath was what convinced me to take the job. Finally meeting a couple sharp programmers that did impressive things and had more experience than I did was great.

After I took the job at Softdisk, I was happy. I was programming, or reading about programming, or talking about programming, almost every waking hour. It turned out that a \$27k salary was enough that I could buy all the books and pizza that I wanted, and I had nice enough computers at work that I didn't feel the need to own more myself (4mb 386-20!).

I learned a huge amount in a short period of time, and that was probably a turning point for my personality. I could still clearly remember my state of mind when I viewed other people as being ignorant about various things, but after basically doubling my programming skills in the space of six months, I realized how relative it all was. That has been reinforced several additional times over the seven years since then.

All the time from working at Softdisk, to founding Id and making the products we are know for has been pretty seamless for me. I have been learning as much as I can, working hard, and doing my best.

I know that most people won't believe it, but a 100x increase in income really didn't have that big of an impact on me as a person. It is certainly nice to be in a position where people can't exert any leverage on you, but it's definitely not the primary focus of my life. I get to drive a ferrari in to work, but my day to day life is almost exactly the same as it was eight years ago. I get up, go in to work, hopefully do some good stuff, then go home. I'm still happy.

3. by moonboy asks: I once read, in Wired, an article that said you have an incredible headstart on everyone else for making "virtual worlds" on the Internet using your engine from the Quake games. Do you have any intention of doing this? Has anyone approached you about it? It would seem like a fantastic use of the technology with online gaming being so popular. Entire worlds online could be created virtually and very life-like with many different purposes.

John Carmack Answers: Making Snow Crash into a reality feels like a sort of moral imperative to a lot of programmers, but the efforts that have been made so far leave a lot to be desired.

It is almost painful for me to watch some of the VRML initiatives. It just seems so obviously the wrong way to do something. All of this debating, committee forming, and spec writing, and in the end, there isn't anything to show for it. Make something really cool first, and worry about the spec after you are sure it's worth it!

I do think it is finally the right time for this to start happening for real. While a lot of people could envision the possibilities after seeing DOOM or Quake, it is really only now that we have general purpose hardware acceleration that things are actually flexible enough to be used as a creative medium without constantly being conscious of the technical limitations.

Two weeks ago, I pitched a proposal to develop some technology along these lines to the rest of the company. I may wind up working on some things like that in parallel with the next game project.

4. justin_saunders asks: Many people consider you to be one of the best programmers in the game/graphics scene, based on your ability to keep pushing the limits of current PC hardware.

I was wondering what measures you use to gauge the skill of a programmer, and who, if anyone, you look up to and consider to be a "great" programmer.

John Carmack Answers: Like most things, it is difficult to come up with a single weighted sum of the value of a programmer. I prefer to evaluate multiple axis independently.

Programming is really just the mundane aspect of expressing a solution to a problem. There are talents that are specifically related to actually coding, but the real issue is being able to grasp problems and devise solutions that are detailed enough to actually be coded. Being able to clearly keep a lot of aspects of a complex system visualized is valuable. Having a good feel for time and storage that is flexible enough to work over a range of ten orders of magnitude is valuable. Experience is valuable. Knowing the literature is valuable. Being able to integrate methods and knowledge from different fields is valuable. Being consistent is valuable. Being creative is valuable.

Focus is extremely important. Being able to maintain focus for the length of a project gets harder and harder as schedules grow longer, but it is critical to doing great work. (Side note - every time "focus" is mentioned now, I think of Vernor Vinge's "A Deepness in the Sky", currently my favorite SF novel)

I certainly respect the abilities of my primary competitors. Back in the DOOM days, Ken Silverman was extremely impressive, and today Tim Sweeney is producing much of value.

5. ajs asks: I read a sort-of-analysis that you wrote way back comparing DirectX 3D handling to Open GL (with Open GL being far preferable to you). Do you feel that the tools that you and others will need to create the next generation of games exist now under Linux or other Open Source operating systems, or is that still a long way off? What would you recommend that we developers and developer wannabes dedicate our time to?

John Carmack Answers: To develop a game, you need coding tools, pixel art tools, modeling and texturing tools, sound tools, and usually music tools. Coding tools are basically fine under linux, and there is already plenty of force behind their improvement. Gimp looks serviceable for pixel editing, but I don't know of any professional game developers using it. I assume there are some basic sound tools available, but I would be surprised if they are equal to the best windows or mac tools. That is probably the most approachable sector to work on improving.

Modeling and texturing tools are the biggest lack, but it is also the hardest to address. They really need to be built on top of solid 3D infrastructure, and that is still in its infancy right now. It would probably be possible to build a simple, focused modeling and texturing program that could get the job done, but full featured programs like MAX and maya have an immense amount of work invested in them. Maybe SGI will get maya ported to linux...

We are going to try to build our next level editor cross-platform, which will probably sort out a bunch of 3D content creation issues. I will be improving the matrox GLX driver as necessary to support the effort.

6. thebrit asks: Is it possible ID may join Ion Storm for a future project together , or are the 'artistic' differences between you too great ?

John Carmack Answers: Future technology licensing is certainly possible, but as for actually working together, there is very little chance of that for a project that we considered important. If I decided to spend a little discretionary time whipping up, say, a color gameboy port of Commander Keen (an idea I have sort of been toying with), then I might ask Tom and John if they wanted to make some levels for it.

7. Scott Francis[Mecham asks: Recently someone posted about their experience in determining the file structure of the Doom WADfile. How did you feel when people were discovering how to modify Doom, from building new levels, to changing the executable itself(dhacked) originally without any information from id? In your opinion, is the modding community a valuable place for creating future game developers?

John Carmack Answers: The hacking that went on in wolfenstein was unexpected, but based on that, DOOM was designed from the beginning to be modified by the user community. The hacking that went on with the leaked alpha version was obviously not approved of, but after the official release I did start getting some specs and code out. I had sent some things out early on to a couple of the people that had done tools for wolfenstein, but in the end it was pretty much a completely different set of people that did the major work with DOOM. The original source I released for the bsp tool was in objective-C, which wasn't the most helpful thing in the world, but it didn't take long for people to produce different tools. Dhacked was a bit of a surprise to me, and I always looked at it as something that maybe shouldn't have been done. I'm not very fond of binary editing an executable. It clearly showed that people were interested in more control, so it probably argued for the greater freedom given with quake. I still remember the first time I saw the original Star Wars DOOM mod. Seeing how someone had put the death star into our game felt so amazingly cool. I was so proud of what had been made possible, and I was completely sure that making games that could serve as a canvas for other people to work on was a valid direction. A doom/quake add-on has become almost an industry standard resume component, which I think is a Very Good Thing. The best way to sell yourself is to show what you have produced, rather than tell people what you know, what you want to do, or what degrees you have. In the modern gaming era, it is very difficult for a single person to produce a complete looking demonstration game from scratch. It does happen, but a much more reasonable scenario is to do an add-on that showcases your particular talents, whether they are in coding, design, or media. You want to be able to go to your prospective employer and say "There is a community of ten thousand people actively playing a mod that I wrote in my spare time. Give me a job and I will be able to devote all of my energy to gaming, and produce something vastly superior."

8. jflynn asks: Many people think that the extreme sucessfulness and longevity of DOOM and Quake was partly due to the internet communities that sprung up around them, to discuss playing them and write new levels for them. How important do you feel a viable gaming community is to the success of a new game today?

John Carmack Answers: I have always been a strong proponent of supporting the gaming community, but arguments can be made that it isn't that important for success. Most entertainment media is designed to be throw-away, where people buy something, have a good time with it, and move on. Myst, the most successful computer game of all time, has no community. A lot of companies would prefer to look at their games like movie releases. Every couple years, you go see the latest by a director you like, then don't think about it too much until the next one. The game-as-a-lifestyle type of community that has sprung up around a few games is an interesting phenomenon. The plus side is that there is a lot of wonderfully creative things going on, and it does attract more attention over the years than any single media blitz. The downside is that it breeds a lot of zealotry, which can be a bit ugly. I get some fairly hateful email from people that are too wrapped up in it and disagree with some direction I am taking. At this point, I think it is clear that the community has been a positive thing. I was very pleased when, earlier this year, Kevin Cloud came around and agreed that the community has indeed been good for us. For years, it felt like I was just being humored by the other owners at id when I pushed for all the code releases. 9. mpav asks: This is a break from the usual questions from this group, but I thought it would be interesting to know.. You have a couple of exotic sports cars, one being a 1000 horsepower/750 ft-lbs of torque (insane!) ferrari, and I was wondering which one you generally drive to work?

John Carmack Answers: I drive my twin-turbo F50 almost all of the time. It took a while to get all the bugs sorted out, but it is almost a perfect combination right now. It is light, nimble, and responsive, and 600 hp at the rear wheels is just about perfect for a street car of that configuration. I only drive my testarossa now when I am low on gas in the F50 or if I need to drive someplace where I think the extra inch or two of ground clearance is important. It is heavy and ponderous, but every time I do drive it, I am impressed again with the power. 1000 hp at the rear wheels is excessive. It takes a while to spin the turbos up to the full 24 psi of boost, but when it has a full head of steam going, it moves like nothing else on the road. It runs away from superbikes on the highway. However, when exercising it, you have a very clear sense that you are taking your life into your hands. I will probably be getting rid of my TR when my next project car is completed. It is a custom carbon fiber bodied ferrari GTO with a one-of-a-kind billet aluminum twin turbo V12. It is going to make a bit more power than the TR, but only weigh about 2400 lbs. I have a suspicion that we will wind up detuning the engine, because 1 hp / 2 lbs is probably quite a bit past excessive and into the just-plain-stupid realm. It was supposed to be done two years ago -- mechanics are worse than programmers. I also have a little MGB that I am theoretically working on myself, but I haven't had time to touch it in six months?

10. Hobbex asks: Though it unlikely that games will ever be free (ala beer), since so much effort goes into them from all angles (not just code, but also art, music, design etc), but that does not necessarily preclude open source game engines. Admittedly (and I don't mean this as a slam against you) game engines today do suffer from many of the same problems that Open Source activists attack in Operative systems and other software: bugs, instability and sometimes even bloat and vaporware. Do you think that Open Source will play a part in the future of game development?

John Carmack Answers: I have spent a lot of time thinking about that. I was trying hard to get an article together about game code licensing to go out with the interview questions, but I just didn't make it in time. I had written three pages of article and four pages of other stuff that I had ripped out because it was going off on various tangents. First, it is interesting to examine how coding is similar or dissimilar to art, music, design, etc. Most GPL works don't have to face the issue, because the work is clearly dominated by code. A few little icons aren't enough to make people really think about it. The argument is significant for games, because coding is only about a third or less of the work in most cases. The arguments that RMS puts forth for the ethical rightness of free software also seem to apply to all digital media. If you take them seriously, the spirit of the GPL seems to want to say that all digital media should be free. That isn't a pragmatic battle to try and fight. If you just focus on the code, I think there is indeed a viable business model for a line of titles based on open source code with proprietary data. It will take either a very small company, or a very gutsy big company to take the first step. The payoff won't be until the second product. I think open source is at its best with games (and probably most other things) in a post-alpha model. Fixing, improving, and building upon an existing core is obviously extremely fruitful in an open source model. Going open-source from development day one with a game probably doesn't make much sense. Design by committee doesn't work particularly well, and for something with as much popular appeal as games, the signal to noise ratio would probably be very low. I tagged along at the beginning of a from-scratch open source gaming project (OGRE), and it more or less went how I feared it would - lots of discussion, no code. While the mod communities may not be exactly OpenSource?, I think they work very well. There is some value in having focused areas to work in, rather than just having the entire thing dumped in your lap. I am going to be releasing the majority of the code for Q3 soon, but there will still be proprietary bits that we reserve all rights to. We make a fairly good chunk of income from technology licensing, so it would take some damn good arguments to convince everyone that giving it all away would be a good idea. Something that is often overlooked about id is that Kevin and Adrian together own 60% of the company. They are artists, and most definitely do not "get" free software.

http://www.eurogamer.net/article.php?article_id=56256 (2004 Doom III review)

It's hard to figure out what's more hellish. Being trapped indoors on a hot, sticky, humid London summer day at 32 degrees C, fighting off your body's desire to dissolve into a pool of salty ooze, or being trapped on a base on Mars in the future, fighting off an endless respawning succession of Satan's minions. The fact that we had to do both at the same time in order to get a review out on time simply made the experience all the more authentic. In our spare time, we sin for fun, so hell seems like our natural home; it's like playing tourist to your future.

2, http://www.eurogamer.net/article.php?article_id=56256 (2004 Doom III review)

Doom III kicks off with a knowing nod to Valve, with an opening sequence that bears more than passing resemblance to Half-Life but feels more like a fitting tribute to their excellent ideas than an all-out lift. Still, you can't help but smile as your grizzled, muscle bound marine arrives at work, faced with orders to go and see his superior, assorted grunting co-workers and jobsworths barking at you to get a move on or moaning about their lot at the UAC base.

Of course, exactly to type, your initially humdrum arrival heralds the start of hell literally breaking loose. All but a handful of your colleagues are instantly turned into shambling Dawn Of The Dead extras, fixated on killing anything in sight, and suddenly your brief is to send a distress call, before eventually taking on the culprit - who happens to be the power-crazed boss of the base Malcolm Betruger. Now, where would videogames be without some megalomaniac let loose with supernatural powers, we often wonder? No-one expected anything different, of course, but rather than being a worthless over-the-top exercise in science fiction, the narrative is actually one of the game's strong points - but more of that later.

Ultimately the narrative's a sideshow to the main event. The reason Doom III's taken so long (over four years) to emerge is evidently the sheer amount of grunt work to get the tech in the state they wanted it. The result is largely magnificent - a true next-gen engine, and the sort that most serious PC gamers have been waiting years for; a game to truly test the capabilities of recent and forthcoming graphics cards, and an engine that fellow developers will be making games with for the next five years or so. For what seems like an age, PC games have been stuck in something of an incremental rut, but what id has produced consistently surprises with the grace and subtlety on what boils down to a very straightforward shooter - once you pick your jaw up off the floor and stop drooling at what's being displayed in front of your eyes.

Everywhere you look Doom III has improved on something incidental. Just take the environments. As samey as the interiors of a 22nd Century base inevitably become, it gets away with it by making every area feel alive. Every corridor, every office, every crawl space regardless of how bland has something going on inside it. A flickering light, a burst pipe pumping out steam, a PC monitor that you can actually read (and in many cases interact with), a smashed up fixture, a knocked over chair and discarded soft drink can. It no longer feels like a generic, tiled gaming environment that anyone could put together.

Almost every single environment feels hand crafted, thought through, built. At times it feels almost too real. Look through a window for the first time and see the distortion effect behind it. That, along with 1500 other things will jump out at you and make you go "ooh - look at that!". Enter a connecting corridor and gaze out wide-eyed onto the rocky exteriors of the red planet with swirling dust and feel the sense of awe wash over you. You might as well be there. This could almost be the real thing. Doom III's biggest draw is the sense of heightened immersion. This isn't marketing bullshit anymore; at times you're no longer just playing a game. In your head, this could be Mars.

No amount of mental imagining via text-based narrative, or Hollywood movie blockbuster special effects, could replicate the sensation of being on that UAC base in Doom III just trudging around, alone, afraid. This is one of the greatest realisations of an interactive audio/visual experience. Ramp up the detail, buy a bigger screen, spec up the surround sound system, dim the lights. Doom III creates a special atmosphere of tension around every corner, and is exactly the sort of game you can see the audio/visual potential in - and as a result you won't mind spending money to make the most of it. To play it any other way would be like trying to play a guitar with one hand. Frankly, anyone interested owes it to themselves to make the most of what's on offer here. This, along with a bunch of other games coming soon, is a hardware company's wet dream.

Doom III starts out tight and enclosed. Enemies come at you in ones and twos. It feels claustrophobic, like Resident Evil crossed with Aliens. Every fight in Doom III has you reeling on your heels; there's rarely enough firepower to just send them packing - and when there's a bunch of them, close quarters combat will have you facing hammer blows, claws and fireballs raining down, blurring your vision, accompanied by shrieks of menace and pain. You learn to back the hell off - Doom III is never an easy ride. Nevertheless, the challenge is a sound one, because you're simply revelling in the unprecedented level of detail packed into every creature, every survivor, and it only ever looks better the closer you get to them. The stills can never do them justice, but seeing them in motion is something else; not only are they designed to a level that's reaching perfection, but they're animated with such convincing fluidity it's hard to take it all in.

And the spectacle is heightened all the more by simply watching them recoil in accordance with the force delivered. A mere pistol shot might nudge them slightly, a shotgun might even blow their brains out close up, but whack a rocket at them, and the chances are they'll go flying with hapless velocity. The damage modelling isn't quite as expansive - in that you can't target individual limbs - but the force of destruction is no less spectacular once you see their skeleton dissolving with the shattering force of your blast. Add to that the celebrated lighting capabilities of the engine, which plays a huge part in the game. For much of the game you're in partial darkness, and Doom III makes the most of scaring the bejesus out of you, placing enemies where you least expect them, or saving them until you trigger them by picking up an innocuous object first. It's a cheap trick, but one that serves the game well by keeping the player in an almost perpetual state of fear. Eventually you almost just learn to be scared, be ready, reloaded and primed for another architect of death to have designs on your soul.

One of the hasty conclusions drawn about Doom III is the tightness of the environments, which leads to an initially un-Doom-like experience, where manageable clusters have replaced the relentless assault of the many, and downed enemies merely vanish into the ether - obviously a CPU saving tactic, but disappointing for those that like to see the fruits of their labours (especially given that this was one of the trademarks of the original). The UAC base could never be described as the most expansive location for a game, but as things progress, the architecture changes subtly, along with the enemies that populate it. At first corridors are low and narrow, and this gives as false impression, as it turns out. Not only does the terrain start deforming (sometimes right in front of your eyes), but the terrain changes altogether (no spoilers from us!) - dramatically. Suddenly it's like playing an entirely different game, and one where the odds are stacked firmly against you. One where the only hope is that you'll actually get good enough to figure it out, and it's at that point Doom III really clicks. Once you raise your game in the face of brutally hard odds, it's like old times again, only with the most impressive graphics engine ever.

Even the audio stands out as being exceptional. Whether via the means of surround sound or, our preference, through headphones, you're constantly struck by the attention to detail. Just wandering around, it's like everything has a sound. The intermittent blips of a nearby terminal, the whooshing of air from a pipe, the faint footsteps of an oncoming enemy on a metal walkway above you. Possibly more than even the visuals themselves, the audio fills in the mental gaps of what's going on, and cannot be underestimated as to its role in making Doom III what it is. And more. Praise be for the addition of quality voice acting - if only every game developer realised how important this is to the overall atmosphere and suspension of disbelief. In what is a relatively solitary game, you don't come across too many survivors, but when you do it's worth the wait - each is blessed with excellent lip synching and facial animation that allows id to dispense with the idea of ever having to resort to rendering cut-scenes out of the engine.

Even when things are getting lonely, the game's use of PDAs allows id to subtly tell a story in roughly the same manner that Capcom, Konami and Tecmo have been doing for years with their survival horror game. In Doom III's case, instead of discarded notes and keys, the PDAs come with keycodes, security clearance, as well as their audio logs, emails and the odd videodisk lying around. Reading emails and listening to logs provides a unique insight into just how the base has ended up in this state in the first place, with many voicing concerns over security and a general dissatisfaction over many of the procedures leading up to the incident. Not only that, they often provide the combinations you need to access the many lockers around the base that provide crucial ammo, armour and health - often just when you need it most. All told, the narrative structure works well within the context of the incident, and although ultimately the concept of one man's megalomania causing havoc is hardly original, the execution makes it easy to forgive such an obvious route. And certainly, given that it's id's first attempt at injecting any kind of story element into one of its games, it's a big success, even if ultimately it hasn't quite got the imagination to come close to usurping some of its rivals in this respect.

Naturally, there have been complaints that Doom III doesn't do enough to take things forward, and in many respects those claims are hard to argue against. There are basic errors and omissions that seem unjustifiable. For example, why on earth couldn't there have been some sort of head mounted lamp? Forcing the player to ditch their weapon every time they need to illuminate the proceedings just seems daft - at least id could have compromised and made certain weapons one-handed (like the pistol or hand grenades). Other touches that seem standard in other games are also missing, such as being able to lean around corners, and adding other soldiers fighting on your side might have added personality and credibility. Small points, but things that would have made the game feel just a fraction better.

What many players will certainly end up arguing long and hard into the night over is whether Doom III's ostensibly old school, simple gameplay was the right direction to go in. Once the game opens up a little and becomes a little less like a survival horror FPS, the conclusion we came to by the end was that, yes, it definitely was the right decision. There's ultimately a place for all sorts of sub-genres to flourish within the broad bracket of first-person shooters, and to have strayed too far from the cherished Doom brand and all that it stands for would have been considered sacrilege. For the purposes of bringing the Doom gameplay up to date, after a questionable early portion of the game id absolutely hits the sweet spot between adding in the new features we know and love; the physics, the narrative, the benchmark audio/visual elements, while staying true to the relentless assault on the senses that the previous Doom games fostered.

Taking Doom III out of context and isolation is somewhat easier to do. It is not a varied game, and it's certainly about as far away from being original as you could get. In simple terms it's just one unending succession of locked door/find key tasks populated by the endless repetition of killing everything that gets in your way - but isn't that exactly what id games are supposed to do? Sometimes it does feel a little samey, although it would be harsh to interpret that as boring; there's simply too much going on in the environment for it to ever stoop to being that. It would have been nice to maybe have more than three or four extremely simple puzzles in the entire game, and to that end Doom III does little, if anything, to update the status quo. A bored, apathetic cynic might take a weary glance at Doom III and mutter sarcastically something along the lines of "ooh pretty graphics, shooting, zzzzzz, really exciting". Yes, if you want to completely miss the point about Doom III's appeal, then it is easy to sum it up into digestible, cynical chunks. More justifiably, you might also balk at the amount of money it might take you to spec your PC and audio/visual equipment up to the 'right' levels. For the sake of one game, yes, it could well be out of the question, but bear in mind there are other games around the corner that will demand the same...

It may not feel like it's taking gaming forward to any appreciable degree in terms of astounding new ideas, but when it's as all round immersive and entertaining, who cares? The thrill of Doom III is simply that id has not only created something genuinely stand-out impressive on a technical level, but has gone on to create a beautifully unpretentious game that feels at home with itself in that it's not trying to be something it isn't. At once retro in its simplicity, yet managing to create a compelling world that drags you in, Doom III dissolves your apathy by taking you on the kind of harrowing journey in the unknown that all the best shooters should. Doom III feels like glimpse into the future of videogaming but without forgetting its past, and for that, Doom fans will be thankful. It's best not to think of what Doom III isn't or what it should have been; far better to celebrate what it is - a terrifying back to basics blast with incredible atmosphere. Doom III is id's crowning achievement, and well worth the wait.

Given that we only took delivery of our hastily delivered import copy just days ago and have slept very little since, we plan to devote a standalone review to the multiplayer side of game early next week. The score issued here is based purely on the single-player experience, and was reviewed on a system comprised of a Radeon 9800 Pro using the Catalyst 4.9 beta drivers, 1GB RAM, and 3.4GHz Pentium 4.

Rating: 9 out of 10

http://www.eurogamer.net/content/r_warcraft3/2 (2002 Warcraft III review)

Rites of Passage

Real-time strategy franchises tend to attract fanatical followings, from the legions of Command & Conquer fanboys to the near religious fervency of Total Annihilation devotees. None more so, however, than Blizzard's Warcraft series - and its futuristic spin-off, StarCraft - a series of RTS games which have honed to perfection a formula which balances relatively simple gameplay with surprisingly complex mechanics, innovative graphics and a healthy dollop of bizarre humour. It's a long time since the last game in the series grabbed the attention of the strategy gamer, making Warcraft III one of the most anticipated PC titles ever; can it possibly live up to the legacy of its forebears?

Set years after the conclusion of Warcraft II, with orcs and humans living in an uneasy co-existence, much has changed in the lands of Warcraft. For a start, they're entirely rendered in 3D now; from the intricately animated menu screens to the often stunning battlegrounds, every element of the game has been given a polygonal, texture-mapped makeover. The

3, http://www.eurogamer.net/content/r_warcraft3/2 (2002 Warcraft III review)

interface, which will be immediately familiar to fans of StarCraft, even features animated 3D portraits of each character you select – right down to the bored-looking sheep who occasionally wander through the map.

Purists need not worry, however, as nothing has been lost in the conversion to 3D. The basic gameplay of the series remains intact and, perhaps more importantly, the character and humour of the art in the original WarCraft games has been moved seamlessly into the third dimension. Blizzard were perhaps wise to wait until 3D was quite mature before releasing this latest game in the series; uninspiring, badly textured models would have ruined the feel of the title, but the quirky and beautifully animated models and portraits seen here carry the classic feel of the title admirably.

Nothing offered, nothing gained

Those running low-spec systems will also be pleased to hear that, despite the graphical splendour of the game, it won't cripple even the most basic of systems. Playing four-player games on a network – usually the type of play most likely to bring an RTS title's framerate to its knees – saw smooth and perfectly acceptable framerates even on our lowest spec system, a Duron 800 with a GeForce 2. With a little tweaking, the game is undoubtedly playable on systems even less well endowed than that. Real time strategy titles have never been the most demanding games on the market in terms of system spec, and it's good to see Blizzard continuing this tradition and resisting the urge to add curves, bump mapping and all manner of other widgets which would rule out much of their audience unnecessarily.

But while little has been lost in the conversion to 3D, little has been gained either, although admittedly the move is nowhere near as disappointing as Command & Conquer's abortive foray into voxels. The switch to 3D has opened up significant scope for in-game cutscenes, but for the purposes of pure gameplay WarCraft may as well have remained in two dimensions. Camera rotation and movement is shockingly limited; you can't zoom out (and the default camera is very tight indeed, often making it impossible to see an entire skirmish on screen at once) and the 3D terrain is very obviously a polygonal sheet draped over a resolutely 2D map.

Aside from the updated technology underlying the game, the "big idea" behind WarCraft III is the inclusion of hero characters, with three distinct types for each race. These form the focus of the single player campaign and add a role-playing element to the gameplay by gaining experience through involvement in battle, with players earning a point to spend on upgrading their abilities every time they go up a level. Heroes are remarkably powerful and flexible characters, and their presence changes the mechanics of the game dramatically. Some have automatic status effects on all units within their range, others can cure units in their group, and most possess powerful physical or magical special attacks.

Leader of the Pack

Elsewhere, the gameplay of the series remains almost untouched, bar various tweaks. There are four races to play as now, with Dark Elves and the Undead being added to the traditional line-up of Orcs and Humans, and the influences of StarCraft are very obvious - the Undead are effectively a clone of the Zerg, complete with blighted land to build bases on. Each race is nicely balanced in terms of strengths and weaknesses, with the interesting addition of resource gathering abilities to the mix of differences. The Undead, for example, gather resources far more quickly and efficiently than other races, making it far easier for them to expand earlier in the game than the other races.

Frustratingly though, the unit control and production foibles of StarCraft have also made their way into WarCraft III. Many aspects of the control and grouping system are superb – the ability to select all units of a single type by double clicking on one of them should be enforced as law for every RTS game, and the "sub-grouping" system which allows you to press tab to move between unit types in your current group, enabling you to access all their various special abilities, is another excellent addition. However, the crippling inability to select more than a dozen units at any given time is every bit as annoying here as it was in StarCraft, and is seemingly arbitrary; the only explanation we can find for this unit limit is that that's the number of icons which would fit in the group panel at the bottom of the screen.

Much more frustrating, however, is the absolute food limit in the game. Each player is restricted to 90 food units total, and once you hit that limit you can build as many farms (or equivalent food-producing buildings) as you like, but the limit won't budge. Not only that, but many high-level creatures and units take up several food units apiece. Micromanagement near the food limit is astonishingly annoying – RTS should be about battles, not trying to get some low-level units killed so that you can afford to fit in another high-level unit! Food also quickly becomes the most important resource in the game, much more so than gold or wood, which is a ridiculous situation. The limit may be there for balance purposes, but if so it's a clumsy and cack-handed way to balance the game, and possibly the single most negative factor about the title as a whole.

Cinema Paradiso

These issues aside, there's a hell of a lot to enjoy in WarCraft III. As mentioned, the sense of humour of the previous games is retained, naturally including the ability to repeatedly click units for a variety of amusing speech clips, some of which are fantastically funny. There's a massive single player campaign which is entertaining and varied, even if the difficulty curve could have done with a little tweaking in some places, while multiplayer is perfectly balanced and a lot of fun, either on a LAN or through the superb Battle.net system. This performs excellently and makes playing on even a humble modem possible. Our only complaint about multiplayer is that many units pop up in the single player game which aren't available in multiplayer – a somewhat frustrating oversight.

One element of the game worth special mention is the cinematic clips that punctuate the single player game. These are, in a word, superb; possibly the most impressive examples of rendered video we've ever seen. While much of this splendour is purely technical progress – cloth, leather, fur and feathers all look excellent – quite a bit of it is down to first-class direction and animation, and the game's classical score contributes in no small measure as well. While these sumptuous cutscenes aren't quite up to the standard set by Final Fantasy X in terms of facial animation, in every other respect Blizzard has leapfrogged Square's video department – an impressive feat indeed.

So does WarCraft III live up to our high expectations? Yes. It's not perfect by any means – the food limit and unit selection limit will drive you nuts after a bit of play, and the "Upkeep" tax on your gold mines when you have more than a certain number of units is frankly daft, since it encourages you to build as few units as you possibly can. It is a worthy update to the series though, and makes the transition to 3D with flying colours while adding some interesting new gameplay elements to an already hugely enjoyable title. No fan of real-time strategy should be without WarCraft III, and many RPG fans will want to take a peek as well.

Rating - 9/10

<http://pc.1up.com/do/reviewPage?cld=3137027&did=1> (WoW review)

by Johnny Liu 12/03/2004

"Stop living in your real world and get back to fantasy."

To date, there hasn't been a single Massively Multiplayer Online RPG that could honestly live up to that reversal, but by far the closest yet to hit this mark is Blizzard's newly-released World of Warcraft. For discerning MMO-ers and MMO novices alike, World of Warcraft is one for the ages.

Keep in mind, it's hard to describe and compile every fact and facet of a massively multiplayer online RPG. To even begin to explore everything about this game could take months. By then, new elements will be implemented and the community will have changed; this is a world constantly changing, twisting, and growing.

World of Warcraft begins from a plate full of familiar RPG and MMO elements. If you've played the Warcraft series before, you should be familiar with the game's lore and visual style. Beginning with these games as a foundation, World of Warcraft transports you to the ground level of a fantasy world once only seen distantly from above.

The same visual style that struck a careful balance between fantasy art, cartoons, and realism in Warcraft III has been revived and greatly improved to create a strikingly warm and inviting atmosphere. The environments of Warcraft's Azeroth, from snowy mountaintops to grassy plains, feel natural and earthy. Everything from the lay of the land to the bustling towns and cities has a sense of actualization instead of copy and paste repetition. The use of colors in these environments is vibrant and bold; the night elves' home world is filled with organic purple and green hues and a glow that simply shines off the screen.

Instead of trying to make everything as realistic as possible, the emphasis on style creates beauty without the perception of backwards graphics that most online RPG's entail. Plus, there are very, very few loading screens; as a result, this world feels seamless and natural.

It also sounds natural with surround sound effects and music contributing equally to the immersion. There's plenty of personality among the sound effects and voice bites, and the fantasy-style music that comes in and out at distinct points is well-composed and punctuates the game.

From the beginning, World of Warcraft starts you off with character creation, selecting from 8 different species. These species are split down the middle between The Alliance and The Horde. The Alliance is comprised of humans, dwarves, night elves, and gnomes. The Horde is made up of orcs, trolls, undead, and tauren (bipedal, husky cow like creatures). Within these species, there are several different classes. The selection among all the species combined includes: warriors, rogues, hunters, mages, paladin, priest, warlocks, druids, and shaman. Each character class is unique and rewarding in itself; you won't feel a constant sense of envy for other classes, because there's something worthwhile about whatever you choose.

Character customization does have some visual limitations. You cannot alter a character's proportions. Every character is locked to their specific height and dimensions. Yet, since the characters already embody personality in their designs and there is a great number of possible details and accessories, it's excusable that I can't make an extra big Tauren or a super-midget Gnome.

The early game starts off like most massively multiplayer online role playing games. You are introduced to the world and given several basic fetch and kill quests. Leveling up within these first few levels is speedy. A few hours in, you begin to break the surface and dive into a wealth of compounding depth. To keep you from drowning in details, you will always receive Quests within your capabilities, and the constantly changing variety keeps the game involving and rewarding.

Once you've plowed through the break-in, you can choose a trade talent for your character. These trades work off a branching model and add spice by enabling your character to create and enhance items, and sell them. Unlike other MMO's, this ability works well with the other elements of the game. There is PVP in the game, but it's currently consensual; future updates will add free-kill areas.

Normally, dying in a massively multiplayer online game carries a strict penalty. In World of Warcraft, you are given a choice. One option is that you can return to life in exchange for penalties on your armor and equipment. This works better compared to money since if you keep dying, you might not necessarily have the money to spend on resurrection. The smart alternative option when you die is to wander as a ghost, find your corpse, and revive it. This system makes the normal system death a less painful and aggravating experience. Instead of losing progress and ability, you just lose that little bit of time it takes to find your body. This tweak goes a long way towards keeping the game consistently enjoyable.

Notably, the World of Warcraft launch hasn't been perfectly smooth, though it has been much smoother than many past MMO launches. Based on the internet buzz, it seems like the problems were more prevalent on East coast servers. This point is moot at this point since Blizzard has credited free days to all players who joined during that time. Personally, I have not run into any server problems. I ran into an isolated glitch where my corpse was seemingly irrecoverable, but I worked around it by just paying the reaper. Otherwise, my days and days of playing have been pristinely smooth and I find no fault in this area; no lag even when playing with people on the other side of the world.

Even in the midst of so many huge games being released this winter, the fact that World of Warcraft can pull off the incredible numbers that it has is downright impressive. In any other game, sales numbers don't really figure in, but each of these purchases means more characters and enthusiasm within the community. Blizzard and their many games have a certain appeal that extends beyond normal "gamer" dividing lines. I knew a guy from my high school who played StarCraft so obsessively, he failed out of college his Freshman term; he didn't do

anything but play StarCraft. I can rattle off a handful of high school and college friends who only play Blizzard games, shirking off everything else just to play the Defense of the Ancients mod for Warcraft III.

A beef that's always nagged at the back of my mind with any of the MMO's I've played is this: strangers. Growing up, we have all learned never to talk to strangers. Yes, MMO's are built completely around the idea of interacting with new and different people, but if you could play a MMO that everyone was playing, including your friends from real life, wouldn't you choose them over strangers?

These friends of mine who would never think of any other games -- let alone other MMO -- have been dying to jump into this game on the Warcraft factor alone. For me, and this is a subjective opinion, that makes the game more inviting -- chilling with old friends who I wouldn't normally get the chance to spend time with.

Yet if World of Warcraft only banked on Warcraft's fading glory, then that wouldn't be enough for these friends or myself to stay in the game. Thankfully, the game has the solidity to back itself up. Apart from my personal and subjective experiences, objectively, World of Warcraft is indeed one of the best Massively Multiplayer game out there.

That statement carries certain stigmas. While as a unique and refined MMO, World of Warcraft has the power to convert many non-MMO players, there are elements and problems that are simply inherent to the genre. There are just as many jerks in the virtual world as in the real world and finding a good bunch of players to play with isn't necessarily a given. Though, I must say, everyone I've run into has been notably friendlier than in past MMO's.

Like most other MMO's, World of Warcraft also carries monthly fees. While 15 dollars is fairly standard with this genre, I wish Blizzard could have taken a few more dollars off the price. Considering the price to value ratio for gaming hours to money, World of Warcraft is still cheaper than buying new games; arguably, that's not a completely fair argument. Even with new content, you will essentially be doing similar actions. That's just the nature of a MMO. All things considered, while monthly costs do strengthen servers and community management, I think Blizzard could have afforded to set a precedent and still come out strong, considering how many more players Worlds of Warcraft is expected to retain than the typical MMORPG.

All in all, affixing a numeric grade to this game carries a lot of difficulty. Like Warcraft III before it, World of Warcraft is less about cataclysmic evolution and more about refinement. If you are reading this review, you probably haven't bought World of Warcraft. If you need that final push or word of assurance, go for it. Now! See you in Azeroth.

<https://complexity.gg/fatal1ty-syndicate-interview-series/>

The focus of our next Syndicate Interview Series installment is none other than the famous American gamer Johnathan "Fatal1ty" Wendel. Fatal1ty has won over \$500,000 in prize money during his eSports career and has been one of the pioneers of branded gaming products and licensing deals. Most recently Wendel tested the broadcasting waters with the Championship Gaming Series.

Thanks for sitting down with us. Let's start at the beginning. When did you first start playing video games? What drew you to FPS games versus other genres?

I started when I was about 4 years old, playing Nintendo and some Atari/PC/Apple games. The fascinating thing about playing FPS games was mainly being able to compete in a high caliber game against other people on the internet. I really looked at it as a sport in another world, playing a game where you had to have some of the same skill sets you needed to compete at a high level playing sports.

You have been quoted as saying that your third place finish in the 1999 CPL Quake event prompted you to pursue a fulltime career as a professional gamer. In the beginning, did you expect your career to last as long as it did? How did your family and friends react to you being one of the first professional gamers in the world?

Yah, that event was really great for me. It was truly when I was just a college kid trying to play games for fun, but also win some money while doing a hobby. I expected after that tournament to just keep playing in the games I love and keep up my hobby as long as I could win some small money on the side. I was expecting to make \$10k/year after that as a hobby. It just so happened that it turned into \$110k my first year in 2000. My friends thought it was cool for sure! It's a kids dream to turn their hobby into a living, as it was for me. My parents weren't too fond of it until I started bringing checks home. My dad was supportive, though, with my competitive nature as he also is extremely competitive.

Looking back, what were some of the factors that resulted in your early success? If you could go back to 1999, what, if anything, would you change about your approach?

I wouldn't change a thing! I loved every minute of my beginning career. I approached it very relaxed and just running around in my socks at the very first tournament. Even in Sweden I was just so happy to be there and just wanted to play my best game. Hanging with the guys was definitely the most fun part! We were all very young, roaming around Stockholm and enjoying everything Sweden had to offer. I think being relaxed and having fun was definitely a huge part of my success, and even today, I always try to make things fun and have good times with friends.

Over the years you specialized in several games including Quake, Counter-Strike, Call of Duty, Unreal Tournament and Painkiller. What is your favorite all-time game and why?

Quake III Arena and PainkillerR!

Quake III started my career and offered great gameplay, and tons of talent to really shine in it, but I later fell in love with PainkillerR. It was sooo fast and sooo skilled in every category. If you sucked at just one category there was no way you could be in the top 3. If you were bad at two categories, back up to top 16... It was truly an amazing game that always had action. You never really ever saw a low scoring game. It was always exciting and great fights! I think the reason for great fighting in that game was because of the fast movement, but also no rail gun. It intrigued people to fight close fights which is what spectators want to see.

In 2005 you defeated Sander "Voo" Kaasjager to win the CPL World Tour Painkiller Championship. Some observers and FPS purists criticized your game play as evasive but at the end your tactics won the title. Talk about the event and how you were able to defeat the seemingly unstoppable Voo.

Some observers don't know what they're talking about. vo0 is extremely evasive, and I decided to use the same tactics I saw him use countless times, but I turned it up a notch. I told myself, after every kill I got, I would go agro aggressive. Watch game 1 and you'll see what I'm talking about. As for my map choice, Meatless, there was no evasiveness. I won by 20 frags or more in game 2. As for game 3, we both played super evasive, but if you see, when it went to overtime, I thought I would throw a wrench into the game flow. I was thinking I would catch him by surprise, and I did. I landed 7 shots in a row at gold armor while he hit me 0 times. That eventually played to me winning game 3 and then taking it back to game 4 on Meatless, which I clinched somewhere around the 7 to 9 min mark when I hit a clutch stakegun shot mid-air at gold armor. Meatless is one of my favorite maps, and I feel when I get control on that map and certain items timed up, I'm impossible to kill.

Speaking of the CPL, around this time period allegations arose from around the world that the organization was not honoring its prize payments. Rumors arose that you had not been paid the massive \$150,000 prize from the New York finals. Have you ever received full payment for the event? What are your thoughts on the controversy? How do you think gamers should react to groups that don't honor their financial obligations to gamers?

I got paid. But other companies that are still around today that associated with CPL and supposedly loyal to gamers never honored money owed to me and others. I'm sure you've heard of a company called Razer? When I won RazerCPL, I won \$40,000, but actually only got \$30,000 and was told from Razer that they would pay me the other \$10K soon... Never happened. Other issues came up with that association with other contracts that also fell through for me and many other pros that were playing Counter Strike at the time. This is why I quit being sponsored and started Fatal1ty Gaming Gear. I wanted to make sure when you sign a deal with me you get paid no matter what.

Over the years you have managed to license the Fatal1ty brand on several different kinds of products including mouse pads, headsets, sound cards, RAM chips and video cards. What lessons have you learned that you can share with other gamers and organizations looking to monetize the brands they have built? What worked well and what mistakes, if any, did you make?

I've always been very passionate about what products I make and take a lot of pride with it. If it's true in my heart then I can speak with a lot of emotion and feelings. When I got the chance to work with CREATIVE, and actually go to their Advance Technology Center and test out the new X-Fi, I was blown away! It was real, I felt like I was really immersed into a different world more than ever before. Even when the test started out, in the headphones while using the CMSS 3D, it said "hey"... I swore to God it was someone standing over the cubicle behind me to my right saying "hey" to me from about 5 feet away. And they told me, "No, we didn't say anything, that's part of the test." Instantly I was super hooked and realized where they were going to go with this... They just needed to get the gamers to understand it, and that's where I came in. I've been using Sound Blaster cards since I was 17; I even have a picture of me with it on X-mas. So when I work with a product like the X-Fi card, I get more attached than just hey I'm sponsoring this. I actually live and breathe it and actually need it in my game.

Similar to individuals of stature in other industries, you have had your critics. Some observers have accused you of exaggerating your success while others have suggested that you have dodged certain game titles and/or events. From a controversial interview where you were called a "douchebag" to the flap with the Penny Arcade Expo in 2008, you've arguably endured more scrutiny than any gamer in history. What are your thoughts on this? Is it part of the territory? How do you respond to your critics?

They have never met me. I'm actually a very modest guy, but don't mind joking around with friends of course. If you see me on 60 minutes, MTV or something, you see me as a real person. Even when Steve Kroft asked me if I was the best, I said, "you tell me". I didn't go ramping on that I'm the best, but inside I definitely believe I'm the best. I need that for confidence when I go to battle. If I don't think I'm the best, what am I doing playing in the tournament? As for Penny Arcade, I was involved with EforAll at the time, which was competing with their show. I thought it was a tongue-in-cheek, humorous promotion on their part. But I think there's a big disconnect on the internet and not knowing someone for who they really are. PR, publicists, ads, etc. write some crazy stuff about me. It's not me saying it, it's Business Week, Time Magazine, etc etc etc saying it. I'm just playing my game and winning. As for not playing the right events, are you kidding me? I played all the biggest prize tournaments and won.

On a final note though, I really do try to be a nice guy, and like I said, you have to meet me to really know who I am and what I'm about... I throw parties for gamers as much as possible. I've been throwing parties at QuakeCon every year for the gamers that come there, and even at CeBIT this year, I hosted a good 15-20 gamers/workers out in Hannover. I've sponsored over 20 gamers personally, so I'm really trying to help this thing grow. It's what I love to do, and giving back is just one of the things I enjoy doing in gaming.

Many of your fans are wondering if we're going to see you competing professionally again. Do you have any plans to return to gaming or have you officially retired from the highest levels of competition?

I've never retired. I went to Championship Gaming Series to help grow the sport, and was advised this was a good move to help grow the sport, which I was mostly interested in... So I did it for the two years. After that, I've been looking for competitions I want to play in. I don't want to invest 12-18 months, 8 hours a day to train to win small tournaments right now. As the economy gets better, I imagine the prize money will get better and will spark my attention to play for big tournaments with a lot on the line. So definitely look for me to play again, it's just a matter of what new game will come out and what's on the line.

What are your thoughts on the state of professional gaming today? Is the industry growing or has it already seen its peak?

It'll continue to grow. The economy is hurting some of the teams, etc. because they aren't getting sponsorships, but the player base is still growing, which is great. We will continue to get back the sponsors as the economy rebounds and, more than likely, be in a much more powerful position in the future for gaming and sponsors.

Currently you're associated with Full Tilt Poker and word has it that you're devoting a great deal of time to your game. What initially drew you to competitive poker? What similarities do you see to competitive gaming? What are your long term goals in poker? Are you planning to make a career of it?

I've been playing a good amount. I really like the competition and the mind games of poker at the higher level. There is definitely a pattern to different players like gaming, where some players are defensive, some are aggressive and some have no clue what they're doing sometimes but make it work, or not. J. My long term goal with poker is to have fun with it, travel the 5, <https://complexity.gg/fatal1ty-syndicate-interview-series/>

world playing it and win. As for making a career out of it, I'm not thinking so much. I still prefer gaming over poker as it's always evolving and always new and interesting! I love technology and everything about it. So, for now, I'll just keep doing poker as a competitive hobby I enjoy playing.

If you had a relative or good friend just starting out in eSports, what advice would you give him? What are the championship qualities you would share with him and what are the pitfalls you would warn him about?

Go to LAN parties and play in online tournaments and join the scene. As for championship qualities, I think being sports oriented before gaming is a huge plus. Also, I believe being good at math is important and if you're really good at trial and error, you can go really far. As for pitfalls, you can't do it half-way. You can't expect to be top pro gamer in the world unless it's your life. Make sure you play against other players who are better than you and try to scale yourself. You need to find out if you're getting better or not. Other than that, watch demos and videos of pros playing the game you want to be the best at, and try to take some tricks from them. Try them out for yourself and adapt to your own style.

In closing, what was your single favorite event or memory from professional gaming? What event or memory would you like to forget?

Definitely the 2005 World Tour Finals was my most exciting moment so far. Best memories from the guys like LeXeR, booms, ZeN, stermy and friends. LeXeR was telling everyone in Singapore about 2 months before the final tournament that I would show up to the finals and use no hands and win... He was hilarious to have on tour and everyone loved hanging with him. As a joke, he looked over to me before I went up on stage, and I did a little pose for him pretending I was playing with no hands. We both laughed and then it was time to be serious... Was great to laugh with friends and always know when to joke around a little bit, but also know when to turn it on and be focused.

As for a bad event or memory, I think Cyber X Games was a big downfall for all of us. Tons of gamers traveled the world to Las Vegas to play Counter-Strike in 2003, I believe. This is when I just formed my CS team "inevitable Fate". The tournament turned up to be a complete flop, and just didn't work out. So basically all us gamers ended up stranded in Las Vegas with no gaming tournament. So it actually turned out to be a killer time! We all went out and partied it up in Las Vegas. It was my first time being of age in Vegas as well, so it really was an epic few nights with all my euro friends like Potti, Aurora, and my team(destrukt, icesalmon, amic, & pointblank). I Can't wait for QuakeCon this year and other major tournaments!

Thanks again for your time. Any final comments or shoutouts?

I can't wait to see what iD software does with RAGE and future games that might push the envelope for more competition and bigger tournaments for all of us. Even DooM IV would be sick I'm sure. So just have to wait and see what is next! For now, it's Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 for me till the next big game releases.

http://www.gamesradar.com/pokemon-emerald

With the Pokemon series about to be reborn in glittering double-screen style on Nintendo DS, Pokemon Emerald sees the original form of the game take its final bow. After seven years of defiantly static, stubbornly ugly creature collection, stage one of the phenomenon ends here.

But this is an annoying way to crown seven years of catching (and clobbering) 'em all on Game Boy. Emerald is simply the celebrity marriage of 2003 chart-conquerors Ruby and Sapphire. A few extra bits and bobs have been bolted on to keep Nicky Campbell from shoulder-barging through Nintendo's door on behalf of a nation full of disappointed 10-year-olds, but that's it.

We like having almost all of the Ruby and Sapphire Pokemon imprisoned in one cart, we like the wireless capability and we like the new Battle Frontier, but couldn't we have had all this the first time around, rather than for another 30 notes two years later?

Emerald's plot merges Ruby and Sapphire's storylines together. So, rather than stumbling on the plans of Team Magma or Team Aqua, you get under the feet of both. As either Brendan or May (or "Hasselhoff", as we vainly tried to name our hero in the space allowed), it's your job to kick the asses and take the names of the twin troublemaking teams. Although it's not much of a story, truth be told. As Ruby/Sapphire veterans, we were almost in tears as we waded through the syrup of what is essentially an identical rehash of the excitement-free 2003 storyline all over again, although the neat new finale did stop us sulking for a bit.

The game though, is as lethally and blissfully compelling as ever.

You know you're hooked for the duration the moment you choose your starting Pokemon from Treecko, Mudkip and Torchic (again) and you're tripping over critters in the tall grass, colliding face-first with Whismurs down dark alleyways and taking on Trainers with a bad case of floating exclamation marks.

Pokemon's winning concept refuses to crumble with age, and Emerald is as much fun as our old friends Red and Blue were back in 1998. In fact, while we'd happily marry the recent Leaf Green and Fire Red if they'd only make it legal, the games that Emerald is based on really aren't that far behind them on our love-chart.

The beauty contests are a uniquely non-violent option for those who would rather not be picking bits of bloodied Pikachu off their pullover at the end of the day.

Trainers and Gym Leaders are plentiful and relatively forgiving. The ability to decorate your own secret cave with dolls and posters makes us as happy as a seven-year-old in a room full of McFly.

And while it still looks awful compared to, say, Golden Sun The Lost Age, the 200-odd hyperactive mini-monsters scrub up pretty well.

But pushing down the other side of the scales are faults and annoyances that should really have been put right by now. The kind of pace-slowng, hand-holding nonsense we can do without after seven years, thanks.

Annoyances like clicking through the same "The soil returns to its loamy state" message marathon every time we pick a berry, or having to travel to one particular house in one particular town just to change a Pokemon's name.

Shoving rocks around in caves and getting hammered by five Zubats every three paces in the process is second only to fingernails being run down a blackboard on our teeth-clench-o-meter.

Still, Emerald often glitters with new features that are hard not to like. Two-versus-two battles, which seemed a throwaway addition in Ruby and Sapphire, are now a regular occurrence - individual Trainers gang up on you, and you can even join forces with the odd GBA-controlled character for proper cooperative fights.

Speaking of which, the monsters still don't get stuck into each other during fights. They just stand there while a special effect flashes across the screen. Come on, Nintendo, it's time to bring your animal fights into the 21st century. If not blood, at least give us contact.

The phone call feature of the PokeNav - with which you can return to gyms to chalk another one up for the Littleroot Town crew - makes a welcome return from Gold and Silver, too.

It all adds variety to the trudging around between towns, and makes watching your team's green EXP meters crawl upward that much more bearable.

Rounding it all off is the colossal new Battle Frontier: the evolution of Ruby/Sapphires's Battle Tower.

It's a giant island with seven challenge areas to take on, each culminating in a battle with the Frontier Brain (not an actual brain, sadly). Even established Pokemaniacs will struggle here, with the assorted restrictions including a ban on Legendary Pokemon - so long, Kyogre - and Pokemon refusing to follow your orders.

Still, quite why unlocking Frontier requires you to smash your way through the entire game - a game that half the world has already played - is beyond us.

So, the bottom line: Emerald is for you if you missed Ruby and Sapphire, or if you're attempting to build the world's tallest tower of different Pokemon games, or you just like the name.

It's a superb title, splitting at the seams with great bits and, with wireless play borrowed from Fire Red and Leaf Green, it's a genuine multiplayer marvel.

But while there's no point trying to argue that Emerald isn't fun in a bun (hence the score), you can probably smell our cynicism from here. Combining Ruby and Sapphire as it does, you're left asking what the point of Ruby and Sapphire was in the first place.

And with so many niggling problems left over from 1998's debut carts, and so little that's actually new, there's an even bigger question that will be quite rightly forming in your mind: why don't I just wait for Pokemon on DS?