

DOOM

What's this? A poxy shareware game with a Gold award and a three-page review? Why isn't it on page 121 with the rest of the dross? Richard Longhurst explains.



Because it's the best game we've played this year, that's why. It's like this. You load it up, you start playing, and you don't stop playing. Simple as that. You're mesmerised by a non-stop barrage of violence, monsters and mayhem as you creep, crawl, walk and run round the death-filled corridors. Blood oozes out of each and every pixelated pore, lifts take you down into darkness to be met

by deadly demons, monsters hurl fireballs from gangways above your head, lights flicker on and off, death-head skulls decorate the walls...

From the moment the first gun-toting soldiers open fire to when the last monstrous baron of hell howls its last spine-chilling scream, *Doom* has atmosphere in abundance. In fact, it has so much atmosphere that you could create your own life-supporting solar system and still have



Congratulations, you've made it to the end of *Knee Deep* and now you've got these two mothers to deal with – your chain gun's no good now.

plenty spare. It stomps mercilessly all over *The Terminator Rampage* (reviewed on page 83), and laughs cruelly at the pathetic efforts of *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Even the much-loved *Underworld 2* and *Shadowcaster*

come in for a drubbing in the speed and excitement stakes.

Vivid and sadistic

Doom's smoothly scrolling 3D engine is the best of its kind, and not only



Comedy ketchup antics galore as you open the door and waste those suckers.



Shoot first and don't ever bother asking any questions. They wouldn't understand English anyway.

ammunition, but they could just as easily be hiding another batch of lethal blood-crazed enemies.

Creep along the corridors, fearful of what's lurking around the next corner.

Admire the mountainous

scenery as you peer past pillars. Watch flights of stairs rise from the ground as you flick switches. Wonder why you're losing health (you're standing in toxic green gunk). Keep away from the win-

dows because enemies have a nasty habit of firing from rooms across the other side. Gaze longingly at the exit and wonder how you're going to get across the chasm separating you from freedom. This is *Doom*, and it's going to drive you mad.

He could have just handed over the shotgun, but, oh no, he just had to argue. Bet he's regretting it now.



KNEE DEEP IN THE DEAD

The first and easiest set of eight levels prepares you for what's to come later on in the game, but will you ever be ready for the horrors that lie ahead?

TACKLE THE THREE CHAPTERS IN any order you like, although it is best to start at the beginning.

Take a couple of seconds to get to grips with



the control system, and then prepare yourself for a headlong rush into darkness, death and delirium. The opening level breaks you in gently, and the next one tries to break your puny spine

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over its knee. There's no respite from soldiers and monsters as you search frantically for the coloured keys that open the locked doors blocking your path to the exit. Keep an eye out for suspicious panels, they often hide secret rooms and passages containing health and armour bonuses and extra

GO ON, BLOW THEM ALL AWAY

A roomful of monsters is not a welcome sight.



Without the BFG, these monsters are going to take some killing. It takes three or four blasts from the shotgun to kill just one of them...



Take a step back, aim the chain gun and spray the canisters with a liberal dose of lead. Admire the explosions and laugh manically.

does the game have excellent technical pedigree, it's been designed by people with vivid and incredibly sadistic imaginations. A huge variety of texture maps – dull grey metals, green stone, brown skulls, banks of computers – are used to give the impression that you're hacking around real buildings, the intense atmosphere changing not only from one level to the next, but within each level.



The enemies are even clever enough to use the transporters to chase you.

awesome, and, yes, they're even in 3D on the Gravis UltraSound.



Here it is, the BFG-9000, about to waste two barons of hell. Tee hee.

medicine – as well as the cunningly designed and gloriously depicted levels, you get different (and decidedly tougher) monsters, and the chance to use some hugely powerful weapons, such as the plasma gun and the BFG 9000 (work it out for yourselves, abbreviation fans).

At the end of each individual level you're told how long it took to reach the exit, usually between 10 minutes and half-an-hour, and that doesn't



Oh my God, and now there are four of those things. Aaaaaaargh.

include the amount of time you spend reloading saved games when you're killed. You can easily expect to spend up to an hour on the later

Ear-splitting screams

While the visual delights attempt to make your eyes burst in a mass of colour, the sound effects do their level best to suck your brains out through your ears. A horrific wailing, screaming, growling and groaning greets your every move – and that's only the people who are watching you play. The effects are

Haemoglobin-stained

You're mesmerised by a non-stop barrage of violence, monsters and mayhem, as blood oozes out of every pixellated pore

The free shareware Doom game gives you the eight haemoglobin-stained levels of *Knee Deep in the Dead*, and for the £34.95 (plus postage) registration fee, you get eight more

levels in *The Shores of Hell* and nine in *Inferno*. These don't just give you another dose of the same murderous

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levels of *Knee Deep* and on each of the levels in the other chapters (with the exception of the first level of *Inferno*, which only takes 15 minutes). If you think you're ready to take a whirlwind

tour of the horrors of *Doom*, read on, but it's definitely not one for the faint-hearted among you. **PCF**

THE SHORES OF HELL

Yep, that's right, you're fighting through hell. Fire and damnation are down there too, so just make sure you give as good as you get.



AT THE START OF each chapter you can choose how tough you want the battle to be, from "I'm too

turning up on *The Shores of Hell* you're in for a shock – you've lost your armour and most of your weapons, it's just you, your knuckle-duster, your pistol and hundreds of enemies.

young to die," through "Hey, not too rough" and "Hurt me plenty," all the way up to "Ultra-violence." You might well reckon you're pretty tough after slogging through the corpses in the first chapter, and select some ultra-violence for your next spree. But on

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chain-gun, or even the annoying whine of a chainsaw. Never mind, you can find replacements for all your hard-

Suddenly you find yourself yearning for the simple delights of a rocket-launcher, the solid blast of a shotgun, the satisfying sound of a

IF THE SUIT FITS, WEAR IT

Doom makes Sellafield look about as dangerous as Sellotape.



Wading through toxic sludge is not a good way to improve your health, so grab the radiation suit and dive in.



It gives you a brief period of protection, but you're still open to attack from monsters, so don't get trapped in the canals.

ware, they're just hidden in ever more ingenious places, which means it's going to take you just that little bit longer to find them.

If you start playing *Doom* at six o'clock in the evening, by the time you make it to *The Shores of Hell* it's very likely to be the early hours of the morning, and there's no way you'll want to stop



These handsome red things move up and down. Very odd.



Oh that's just disgusting. Blood everywhere, and it's the cleaning woman's week off. What do you think this is, *American Psycho*?



Look, your mate's dead, and so is his mate. And do you know what else? You're going to die next.



The monsters and scenery may have changed, but the sentiment is still the same – prepare to die.



INFERNO

As soon as you start the last chapter, you know you've landed smack in the middle of Sicksville, Tennessee. We are talking serious insensitivity.

IN THE FINAL CHAPTER YOU'RE MET with a torrent of disturbing images, the likes of which have never been seen in a computer game. Anyone who's ever complained about violence in games will be ranting and raving all over

The walls are made with screaming skulls, bloody bodies are impaled on stakes, and butchered babies hang from the roof

again - if you haven't seen the gory conclusion of *Inferno*, you haven't seen anything. The walls are made with screaming skulls, bloody bodies are impaled on six-foot stakes, and butchered babies hang from the roof...



When you've run out of bullets, you can always turn to the chainsaw.



Look, how many captions can you write about things dying? You shoot, they die. Simple.

H R Giger's beautiful biomechanical mutations (such as *Alien*) have got nothing on these gory spectacles.

As if the lifts, switches and secret doors weren't enough, you now have to contend with moving walls decorated with twisted faces that seem to mock your feeble efforts at staying alive, floors that fall away when you

walk on them, and more radioactive gunk that Sellafield could ever produce. As far as the monsters go, the mean mothers that you met in the first few chapters are here in huge numbers, and they're all after your guts. If you struggled to defeat the two



And there are even more of those nasty red things here. Lucky you have managed to get the plasma gun isn't it?

INTRODUCING THE INVINCIBLE

When the monsters are too numerous to count, you need special help.



No, it's not a nuclear holocaust, you've grabbed the invincibility power-up. Quick, slaughter those monsters before it runs out.



When the invincibility wears off, you can see what the scenery really looks like. It's quite pretty in a spartan kind of way.

LARGER THAN LIFE (OR PERHAPS SMALLER)

Doom enables you to adjust the size of the viewing window to suit the speed of your PC.



Shrink the window to this minuscule size and you won't be able to see what's going on. At least you won't be scared.



You can pick up armour as you go along, but having 0% means that your health takes a real pounding if you get hit, so watch it.



A little larger and you get a much better idea of what's going on. The figures in the bottom right-hand corner tell you how much of each ammunition type you've got left. Start worrying if all of them get to 0.



If you've got a 486, crank up the window so it fills up the whole screen. Nice stomach wound you've got there, mate.

barons of hell at the end of *Knee Deep in the Dead*, you're in big trouble now - there are loads of them just wandering around.

Maybe everything is not lost, because by now you should have found the BFG and the plasma gun, weapons that you can only dream of earlier in the game. Then there are the berserk and invincibility power-ups to collect, and if you make the most of them, you should be able to wade through the worst excesses of *Doom's* relentlessly violent madness.



As far as speed and non-stop action are concerned, *Doom* is unbeatable. *Underworld 2* scores more because there's much more depth to its gameplay, offering puzzles, magic and a complicated plot as well as out-and-out monster bashing.

WATCH OUT FOR...

Underworld 2
£44.99 Origin/EA, PCF 18, 93%
Shadowcaster
£44.99 Origin/EA, PCF 27, 87%
The Terminator Rampage
Reviewed on page 83

DON'T BOTHER WITH
Bram Stoker's Dracula
£39.99 Psygnosis, PCF 27, 45%

DOOM

£34.95 ID Software
From all good public domain libraries
(see page 125)

Minimum system: 4Mb; VGA; 386; hard disk (12Mb).
Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; Gravis UltraSound; joystick; mouse.

FOR

- Fast and detailed 3D.
- 25 imaginative, exciting levels.
- Varied texture mapping.
- Frighteningly gruesome sounds.
- Never a dull moment.

AGAINST

- We want more.

PCF RATING 92%