

# Doom: Evil Unleashed

**Format:** PC

**Publisher:** Id Software

**Developer:** In-house

**Price:** Shareware:  
£35 for next  
two episodes

**Size:** 4 disks

**Release:** Out now

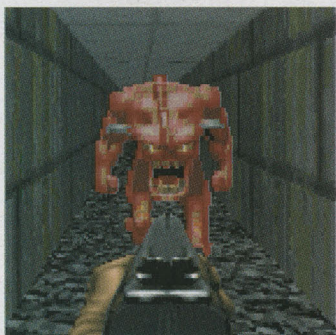
It doesn't seem rational, does it? Along comes a fairly simple 3D-perspective maze adventure/shoot 'em up, and suddenly hundreds of grown men start acting like they've never seen a videogame before – and even the normally sober PC press are turned into gun-mad fanatics. Huge ratings, rave reviews across the board... No-one could deny that Id Software's *Doom* has caused quite a stir – on both sides of the Atlantic. And that's before the full version is even out in the shops.

It's got to go down as a marketing coup: by releasing the first episode of their new game as shareware, Id have managed to whip up and control a vast torrent of nigh-frantic bulletin-board trading. Well, you write a game as immediately playable as *Doom* and ship it with the message, 'please distribute like crazy' and you're guaranteed a big audience.

And *Doom* looks like following its forerunner, *Wolfenstein 3D*, in becoming *de rigeur* games software in offices and homes throughout the Western world.

Basically, the way it works is that the first episode of *Doom: Evil Unleashed* is free. Anyone can get hold of it, and they can play it until they're sick of it – or can just discard it straight away if they don't like it. The next two episodes you have to pay for. So get hooked on *Doom* and you'll probably want to buy the rest of it. Interestingly, though, Id Software are also planning to release a more conventional all-in-one, buy-it-in-the-shops version of *Doom* later this year.

One thing that this distribution policy ensures is a vast, vast audience. Almost every PC in the world seems certain at one time or other to have the code to *Doom* ticking away on it. That obviously means that the game



From the earliest scenes of the first episode, you can tell you're in for a treat with *Doom* – like the way the mountains scroll totally convincingly behind the windows (above). And the action's all yet to come – like the charging pink shotgun fodder (inset) you meet later in the episode





The range of scenery in *Doom* is certainly the game's best feature – like the flame-filled caverns (middle), the stunning Alpine splendour of the first level (bottom right), and the fiery views of the second episode – complete with grotesquely massacred corpses (below right). Yep, there's something for everyone here

needs to be kept simple. You don't want anyone losing interest, or being unable to play, because they don't have the manual, or a joystick, or a sound card, etc, etc. And the real beauty of *Doom* – and yes, even a game as undeniably violent as this can have an element of beauty – is the way it works so well within this limitation.

*Doom* will run okay on almost any hard-disked PC, but play it on a high-end system and it is immediately recognisable as a very, very impressive piece of software, with graphics technology way up there with the *Strike Commanders* and *Comanches* of this

world. And the speed at which it all works is nothing short of breathtaking.

The differences between *Doom* and the now primitive *Wolfenstein* are obvious at first glance. Firstly, Id have got a lot better at clipping sprites in three axes – which means simply that the action in *Doom* happens on more than one level. There are stairs for you to climb, lifts to find, and aliens firing at you from windows and balconies high above the ground. This adds major new depth to the action – go back and play *Wolfenstein* and you'll laugh at the horrible 2Dness of the 3D perspective. It also makes games like 3DO's

## Power ups

*Doom* has a healthy selection of power-ups dotted throughout its many levels. Don't expect to survive for any length of time without using them – but be warned, some are very tough to find. Often you'll have to risk a great deal of your health to find the much-needed bonuses listed below.

**Health bonus.** The most common power-up. Each of the flasks of blue, soothing liquid increases your health rating by 1%.

**Medipaks.** Take the form of a small white chest with a red cross. Each one gives you a 10% health increase.

**Stimpaks.** Identical in appearance and effect to the ubiquitous Medipaks. Stimpaks provide a boost of raw adrenaline (or maybe testosterone) to help you along in your mission.

**Berserk.** This green medical pack is very hard to find and only available on later levels. It gives you the ability to literally tear people apart with your bare hands. It also greatly increases your weapons' rate of fire. The effect of this pack is highly satisfying, but it's shortlived – you can expect to get only 30 seconds' boost.

**Invincible.** A green orb with a human face in it. As its name suggests, it renders you invincible, for 30 seconds.

**Invisible.** A red and blue orb that makes it hard for your enemies to see you, particularly in the dark corridors – but although they're firing blind, they still usually manage to hit you.

**Radiation suit.** This lets you walk through the green/red/blue poisonous gunk without your health going down.

**Light amplifier.** Another shortlived effect. It allows you to see clearly in the near pitch-black tunnels.

**Armour.** Wearing armour greatly reduces the impact of enemy fire on you. There are three types: the first is a helmet which bestows a 1% increase; the second is a green chestplate which gives you 100% armour; the last is a blue chestplate which can double your armour.

## Go berserk

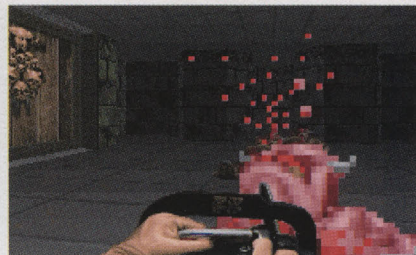


The Berserk mode is only available if you find the power-up – it looks like a small black medipak, and lurks on later levels of the game. The power-up lets you give your guns a rest – you now have the power to tear the bad guys apart with just your fists. Oh yeah, and your spiked knuckleduster



## testscreen

The chainsaw



Ah yes, the chainsaw. A beautiful weapon – even the biggest bad guys don't seem quite so keen on a full-frontal attack after you've just carved up one of their friends like this. The sound effects are about as close as you can get to the sound of a chainsaw massacre as well. What fun

## Weapons

There are seven weapons in all. Each one is brilliantly animated, and the step-up between each weapon is suitably awesome.

**Pistol.** You start the game armed with just a pistol, but even that can fire up to 200 shots before you need to reload it. If you die during any level you return to the start of that level, again armed with the pistol.

**Shotgun.** The first weapon power-up gives you a pump-action shotgun. The bad guys no longer fall down – now they're blown clean off their feet.

**Chainsaw.** The next weapon you can expect is a powerful chainsaw. It's best to only use this for closeup work (although chainsawing through a whole crowd can get slightly messy). With this meaty implement in your hands, your enemies don't seem quite so keen to take you on.

**Multibarrel machine gun.** Watching those grotesque lizard creatures dance around as the bullets rip into them is deeply, and rather worryingly, satisfying. Get your hands on this and suddenly you start getting into this game in a big way.

**Rocket launcher.** Not much to say about this. It fires rockets. They embed themselves inside your enemies' flesh. They (rocket plus enemy) explode; blood sprays everywhere. You'll face the bosses of the first episode armed with this gun.

**Plasma gun.** This weapon is apparently reserved for the second episode. It unleashes a bolt of blue electricity which flattens all but the hardiest of ghouls.

**BFG.** No prizes for guessing what this might stand for, but it sure is one big, er, gun. Anyone on the receiving end of the BFG's mega-powerful bolt is quickly turned into a small, smoking pile of ash.



The Exit. It's there on each level, but sometimes it's very tough to find. Sometimes it's even worth a blast or two with your shotgun when you find it. Doesn't really help much, but it makes you feel good

← new *Monster Manor* (Testscreen, page 79) look totally passé before they're even out in the shops.

That said, though, there are problems with the game (Edge has no intention of joining the rabble mindlessly praising *Doom* beyond its worth). Yes, it is good – in fact it's a very, very technically impressive piece of programming – but where's the genuine 3D (look up and down) of *Ultima Underworld*? Where's the variety in the gameplay (it's all just kill, kill,

kill)? And looking at it coldly, what is there really in *Doom* (apart from the graphics) to set it above even the most average, most highly repetitive and tedious 2D shoot 'em up?

Okay, there are some visual touches in this game that will literally blow your mind – like the scaling and parallax on the distant mountains – but then everyone said much the same about the hi-res images in *The 7th Guest*. They may look great, but what do you do with them? You don't ever get to explore

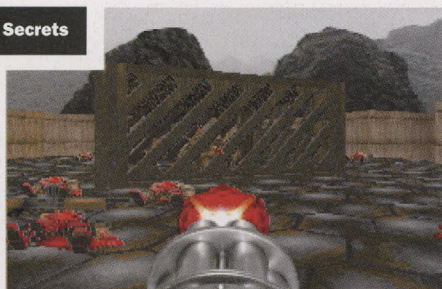
Secret exits



Some of the secret panels are almost impossible to spot. But spot them you must if you plan on surviving the horrors of the mazes in *Doom*. Power-ups, big guns, health points... they're all hidden here



## Secrets



A totally secret level in the first episode sees you in control of an oversized machine gun, facing a pen of caged lizard creatures in their barracks. It's a psychopath's wet dream... and they can't even fight back



## Secrets

As with their earlier creation, *Wolfenstein 3D*, Id Software have programmed hundreds of secret passages into the mazes in *Doom*. You have to explore every wall with great care, and some secret doors are even obscured by objects that you have to blast aside.

When you reach the end of each level, the game informs you of the percentage of secrets you discovered on that level – and you're doing well if you find 50% of them. The secrets in *Doom* really give the game that incredible 'Go back and see what you've missed' element.

Most of the secret doors can be spotted if you look carefully enough. A slight difference in light shading, suspicious metal pillars on the wall for no reason, an alcove just before a doorway – these are the kind of visual clues you should be on the look-out for. All the big power-ups are secret, and to get your first chance at most of the big weapons you'll need to crack the secret passages on each level. Okay, you can just whip through, but there's always that nagging doubt: 'Just what did I miss back there ...'

We don't want to give too much away here, but non-secret hunters will in fact miss at least one entire level – the first episode gives you a secret bonus chance to wipe out hundreds of the aliens in their army barracks. But no-one's forcing you to see that bit ...

those distant mountain ranges – they're really little more than impressive padding (as in *The 7th Guest*, you're just meant to watch them – in awe).

*Doom* is certainly a gorgeous-looking game – it has also, incidentally, made serious advances in what people will expect of 3D graphics in future. But the gameplay is as narrow as it gets: you run along beautifully parallaxed corridors and through stunning 3D rooms shooting at a near-endless supply of green lizards. That's it. Still, we're not going to deny that there is a worryingly addictive fascination in watching the frantic despatching of those little green guys.

On the plus side, some of the lighting effects in the game are truly scary. Everyone at one time or another has described some videogame as scary – and as we all know, they're never scary to anyone with an IQ above, say, 12. Well, that's one generalisation that *Doom* shatters: walking through the computer centre with the lights flashing slowly

and rhythmically, and turning to find one of those hideous pink beasts running behind you is a seriously intense videogame experience.

It's just a shame that the number of enemies is fairly limited. After a while, the multiple pump-action, blood-spraying demise of yet another pink monster is only marginally satisfying. If whenever you turned a corner you could be met by some new, more grotesquely deformed creature than the last, then at least *Doom* could boast that it had replaced gameplay with real horror.

As it is, once the power of *Doom*'s graphics has worn off (they're amazing, so give that at least a week or two), you'll be longing for something new in this game.

If only you could talk to these creatures, then perhaps you could try and make friends with them, form alliances... Now, that would be interesting.

E

Edge rating:

Seven out of ten



Bosses

There are three main bosses in the three episodes of *Doom*. The pink/brown things are in episode one (top left), a rocket-toting guy (above) lives in episode two, and the spiderdemon guards episode three (left)