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The Inventory

A magazine for adventure games only



INTERVIEW WITH THE ADVENTURE QUEEN

JANE JENSEN - THE RETURN

The Inventory

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE 1

PREVIEWS 2

The Moment of Silence p. 2

Cypher: Traitor's Gate 2 p. 4



ADVENTURE GOSSIP 6

JOIN THE TEAM 8

THE LOUNGE 9

Jane Jensen p. 9

DTP p. 20



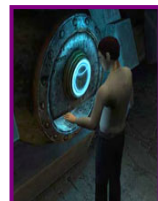
REVIEWS 24

Review of the Month:

URU (part 1): p. 24

Tony Tough p. 27

In Memoriam p. 29



LEISURE 30

The Al Lowe Show p. 30

Puzzle Page p. 31

Invento-Mail p. 32



THE HYDRA 36

EPILOGUE 37

Special Thanks:

Jane Jensen, DTP

Prologue

Happy birthday to us! One cycle around the earth ago we were publishing the first issue of the very same magazine you are reading right now. And what would be the best way to celebrate our 1-year-anniversary? How about an extensive interview with the best developer of the adventure genre? That's right, Jane Jensen, the master storyteller behind the award winning Gabriel Knight series is in the Inventory's lounge this month, and she is about to reveal a lot of information regarding her new game (i.e. the interface and the graphics style the game is going to use), currently known as Project Jane Jensen.

Well I'm almost certain that all of you have already jumped to the Lounge area, so I don't know if anyone is still reading this, but I might as well go on. We wanted to feature a review tribute to Gabriel Knight 1 as well to combine it with the Jane Jensen interview but unfortunately we did not manage to run it on a modern computer, although we tried every single way there is out there (VDM sound, Virtual PC etc). It is a pity really because this game is one of the best adventures ever, just like no 2 and 3 were. You can read review-tributes to Gabriel Knight 2 and 3 in previous issues of our magazine. To make up for not featuring a review tribute of GK1, Justin created a Gabriel Knight 1 puzzle page, which you can solve in our Leisure section. Oh and if someone knows of a way to run Gabriel Knight 1 on a Windows 2000 machine, please let us know.

The Inventory moves on to adventure development! That's right, we thought it was time to widen our horizons and start from scratch in a new area. Want to join? Check out our call-out to all developers and artists just after this month's gossip.

The review of the month for November is URU, probably the best looking 3D adventure ever made, but will its gameplay rate equally high? This you will learn next month when we will get the chance to try out the online version. If 3D is not your thing then check out what Justin has to say about the 2D point and click comedy adventure of Tony Tough. Another review for this issue is also In Memoriam, which is a perfect example how can one destroy a perfect idea with poor QA.

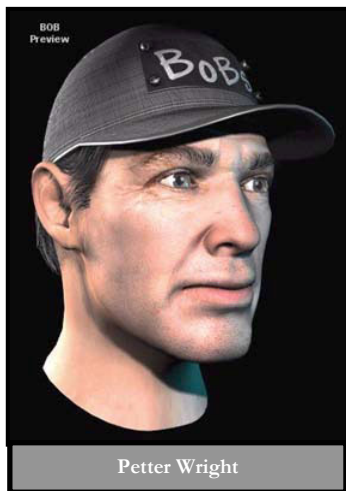
The German publisher DTP is one of the few publishers out there that are dedicated in providing smart entertainment to the public so we decided to invite them for an interview in our Lounge. Along with the interview DTP sent us some material and info on their upcoming project The Moment of Silence, therefore you can read a preview of the game in our previews section. Along with The Moment of Silence we take a look also in the sequel to Traitor's Gate, Cypher. How much of a sequel is a game that has nothing to do with the first one? Well...that's another story.

Before we go on with the magazine I want to thank all those of you who sent cards and presents for saying happy birthday. It takes a lot of effort to make this magazine and it is gestures like those that keep us going. Enjoy the rest of the issue and do not forget to e-mail us if you have comments or questions about the magazine!

Dimitris Manos
Editor



The Moment of Silence is a 3rd person point and click adventure developed by House of Tales, a company based in Germany that has also given us *Mystery of the Druids* some years ago. *The Moment of Silence* is a futuristic adventure, taking place in New York in the year 2044. The countries of the earth are united under the regime of a world government. In the metropolises everything is the same as before. Weird gurus preach doom prophecies, yuppies in glass skyscrapers develop marketing strategies, gangs and prostitutes hang around in the ghettos, terrorists blow bombs and old men are getting nuts on conspiracy theories.



The main character of the game is Petter Wright. Petter is not really inclined to care about everything else happening in the world right now, because his wife has just died in an aeroplane crash. His wife's loss has left him devastated. He has turned into a hopeless loner, being isolated from the rest of the society. He is having a difficult time looking for a purpose to

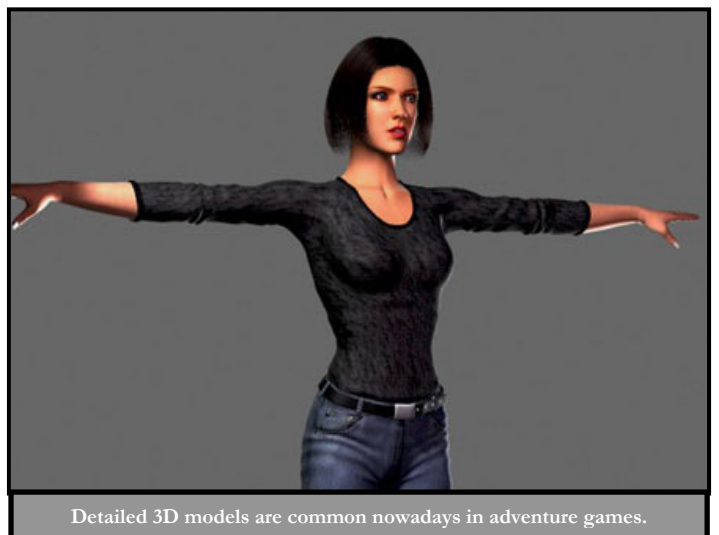
live... All this however changes when one day police special forces storm into his building and arrest his neighbor, an online journalist without giving any clear explanation for the incident.

This is the first thing in a long time now that has managed to awake Petter's curiosity. He starts investigating the event, an investigation that will bring frightening facts up to surface. Petter is not the only

character you will get to control in the game. Players will get control also of Deborah Oswald, the female character of the game, as well as her little son Tommy. The game will include in total 35 different characters and over 70 locations and it will offer two different endings according to actions taken during the progress of the story.

The first showings of the game's graphics are very positive. The 3D models are very detailed and the developers are making mention of a strong focus on facial animation and different camera angles to give a more dramatic feeling to the story. The characters will show a lot of emotions through real-time facial animations, which in combination with often camera changes and close-ups will make dialogues all more interesting to experience.

Some of the backgrounds that have been released to the public are very reminiscent of *Blade Runner's* theme, something that we have witnessed before in another





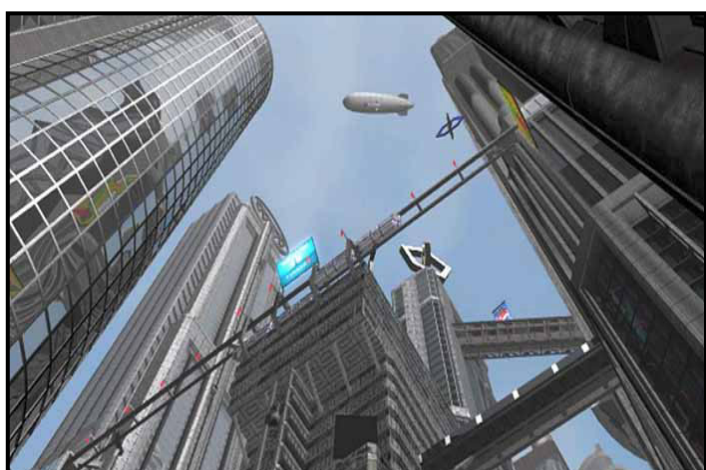
The Moment of Silence will also feature mechanical puzzles.

popular adventure, *The Longest Journey*. *The Moment of Silence* will also feature some impressive weather effects, so you will get for example the chance to see rain pouring in the futuristic streets of New York.

No details were given at the time being regarding the music of the game, however it was stated that the speech used for the purposes of MOS will be over 8 hours long.

The game will use a point and click interface similar to the one that was used in the *Mystery of the Druids*, however the dialogue system (which was admittedly very poor in *Mystery of the Druids*) will be revamped. The dialogue system will give the players multiple choices and it will let the player navigate easier through the different choices than the way *Mystery of the Druids* used to handle dialogues. The character will also be able to run in order to decrease time between moving around places.

As far as puzzles are concerned, *House of Tales* says that we should expect both inventory based and mechanical puzzles. The developers do not intend to make an easy game, but claim however that the challenge will be directly connected to the story and the puzzles will not feel out of place. In general terms the



New York in 2044.



The game will take place outside of the city as well.

player will not have to solve puzzles in a particular order and the gameplay will give the player a lot of freedom to manage tasks on their own pace.

The game will be released in Germany in quarter 3 of 2004. There is no set release date yet for an English version. No playable demo or trailer is currently available. The game's official website is <http://www.themomentofsilence.de/start.html> but for the time being it is under construction.

The publisher for the German version is DTP, a company that has shown great respect to the adventure genre, therefore we decided to invite them in the Lounge this month. This is the first early showing of *Moment of Silence*.

We will attempt to feature an interview with the developers of the game in the beginning of 2004 when the game will be nearing completion in order to give you a more up-to-date view of *Moment of Silence*. Until then feel free to check out another interview they gave to [adventure-archiv.de](http://www.adventure-archiv.de) and you can find the interview in English here:

<http://www.adventure-archiv.de/t/mosinterviewe.htm>

- Dimitris Manos



Blade-Runnerish, don't you think?

traitors gate 2

A New Terrorist Threat Lies Buried
Deep Beneath the Sands Of The Middle East...

Cypher is the sequel to a game by Dreamcatcher called Traitor's Gate. However, this sequel has nothing to do with its predecessor other than a name resemblance. Dreamcatcher released a playable demo only some days ago and the demo included the first minutes of gameplay from Cypher. Traitor's Gate 2 follows a similar approach to the one that URU follows as well, an approach that I like to call the 'Prince of Persia approach'. This specific approach is new for the adventure genre and it borrows a lot of elements from action games for better or for worse, and it makes the games that follow it to walk on the fine line that distinguishes adventures from action/adventures.

But let's see now what does the demo showcase and we will come back to this approach later on. The plot's main theme starts with the threat of cyber terrorism. A terrorist group has developed a digital virus that is capable of shutting down all electronic infrastructures and network systems bringing the western world into complete havoc. You take control of a Pentagon agent with the code name Raven.

Your mission is to travel to the middle east, enter the secret laboratory where the virus is developed, make a copy of it and then destroy the lab and get out of there. To achieve that you have to enter a 4000-year-old Babylonian temple that is filled with traps and obstacles that Raven will have to overcome if he wants to reach the lab.

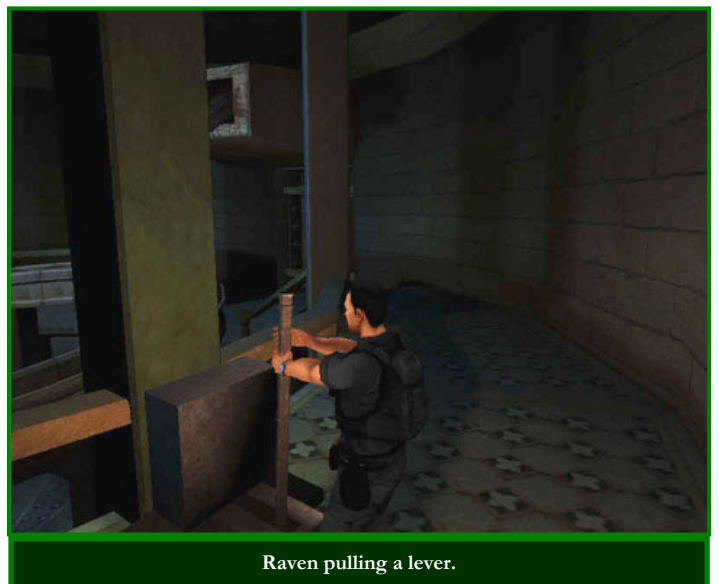
The game starts with an introductory video where we see Raven jumping off a stealth aeroplane in a ... rocket(!) and then jumping out of the rocket to land with his parachute in the middle of the desert nearby the temple. After that point you take control of Raven and work your way through the temple.

One thing that is radically different compared to the titles Dreamcatcher has produced so far is the graphics

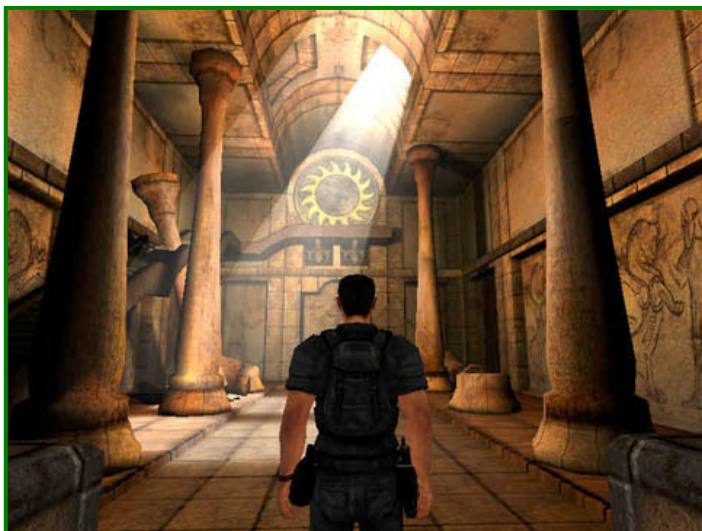
engine. It is a full-blown 3D engine. The camera follows Cypher from behind similar to the way the camera works in games like Prince of Persia 3D, Tomb Raider and Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine. Only during short cutscenes does the camera change angle. You can also click the right mouse button and look slightly up, down, left or right but the camera's point of origin is always behind Raven's back.

The engine is not the best found in the gaming world nowadays (it is nowhere near as good as URU's for example) but it does the job so to speak. It will feel familiar if you have played action/adventures before but it will surely get some used to especially by Dreamcatcher's fan base, since it is radically different to the 1st person teleporting from spot to spot engine that was often used before. The character design seems like a Splinter Cell rip-off (as well as the rest of the game as well to be honest).

It is difficult to judge the sound solely by this little demo, because you only get to hear one music track and the voices of the narrator and Raven. The music track



Raven pulling a lever.



You can look slightly up and down.

was quite pleasant with an oriental feeling to it. The voice of the narrator was the typical cheesy dark voice you get to hear in Hollywood trailers and Raven does not speak more than once throughout the demo so it is impossible to comment on it. If the demo is anything to go by, then you should not expect lots of dialogue in Cypher.

Cypher is controlled entirely by the keyboard. You move Raven with the arrow keys. When you just press the arrow keys, Raven will run to the direction you point him at, while if you press and hold down the Shift button Raven will walk instead. To activate an object you need to stand close to it and press the Enter key. During the demo, the player did not get to pick up any items but if we judge by the fact that there is an inventory we assume that there will be items to pick up in the full version of the game.

Raven carries with him some items that you usually witness in high-tech spy movies, like a tiny camera that



Near the end of the demo.



The first thing you see entering the temple.

you can insert through small niches so that you can see what happens in the next room without being noticed, or a tool that will help you get through retina scanners. During the first stages that we got to experience though, you do not have the chance to use any of these tools. Most of the puzzles encountered in the demo required that you pulled some kind of lever or that you pushed a tile so that you would open a door/entry in order to continue with your quest.

There are moments where Raven can be killed, and unfortunately those moments do not really add any suspense in the story. On the contrary they are rather tediously placed and they only result in frustration, as the game does not take you back to the spot before you died but it requires from you to load the latest spot where you saved the game. Some of these tedious ways to die included Raven falling off from a high spot, or passing on top of a snake. However there is no real action in the game, at least if the demo is representative enough of the final version. You do not get to shoot anyone and you cannot even jump.

As stated earlier the demo is too short to make any concrete conclusions about the game, but the first impressions show a weak storyline with no focus on dialogues, easy puzzles of the push/pull levers/tiles sort, a different graphics engine that is less disorienting than the one used quite often before by Dreamcatcher adventures and a what seems to be good musical score.

If this is what the final version will be like, only time can tell. Although the expectations for a magnificent adventure are not really high, it might make for a few pleasant hours in a Babylonian temple. As for the 'Prince of Persia' approach read this month's Hydra.

- Dimitris Manos

ADVENTURE GOSSIP

Legacy Delayed

Razbor Studios, the developers of the point and click adventure Legacy: Dark Shadows, have recently announced that due to some necessary improvements in graphics, the game's release date is pushed back to 2004. Razbor has also added a lot of new screenshots on the game's official website. On a sidenote, one of the screenshots (the one with the priest) will bring back TLJ memories to all who played the game! You can see the new screenshots here:

<http://www.legacythegame.com>

Bad Timing

Bad Timing is a new point and click adventure, reminiscent of games like Day of The Tentacle. In this new adventure you take the role of Brett Brennenman, a young guy who has been left home alone, since his parents are on a trip. The graphics are very similar to TV shows like Futurama and they will reach resolutions up to 640x480. The game will feature a classic point and click interface. This game has received hosting from Just Adventure, who has recently opened an Independent Developers section. If you are a to-be developer and you are also looking for a website to



host your adventure then contact randy@justadventure.com

King's Quest IX site is up and running again

The team behind the unofficial King's Quest IX has managed to fix the problems that were bothering them with their server and their website is now back up and running. The team has showed us some more 'secret' material from their work and they keep impressing us even more as development progresses. We will have exciting news for you from that front soon. Until then, pay their site a visit and check out the material they have uploaded there: www.kq9.org

Fountain of Youth new website

The team behind Indiana Jones and the Fountain of Youth has launched a new website for the game. The website features an impressive design that has nothing to be jealous of websites for commercial games.

On the new website you will find interesting information about the upcoming point and click adventure, which bears a lot of similarities to the well-known classic Fate of Atlantis. You might be even surprised to know that Fountain of Youth made it to television in Germany, as according to the website, it was featured in the TV-show GigaTV. The website can be found here:

<http://screen7.adventuredevelopers.com/foy/>

Uru demo

If you want to try out Ubisoft's latest 3D adventure you should give their website a visit and download the playable demo. The demo showcases the beginning of the game and it will get you accustomed with the control system and the first puzzles that you will encounter in Uru. However I have to say here that the graphics during the beginning of the game is nowhere near as impressive as they are when you get to travel to different ages. To download the demo go here: <http://uru.ubi.com/us/downloads.php>



Tierra goes 3D

The magnificent Tierra team that has brought us the masterpiece King's Quest 2 VGA is looking for a 3D modeller to join their efforts. Apparently the modeller should have good animation skills and be able to create 3D pre-rendered character models. Tierra also released a Halloween-wallpaper for their next remake, Quest for Glory 2. Find more information about the open position on Tierra's site: www.tierraentertainment.com and find the wallpaper here:

<http://www.tierraentertainment.com/downloads/treat.jpg>

The trinity...again

Last month we said that the famous developer that is working on a new point and click adventure would release information during December. We are sorry to say that we were wrong. After a little chat we had with the developer him/herself (hehe... we are not going to make it easier for you guys to know who he/she is) we found out that December is indeed an important month since some material would be handed to the publisher that has showed interest so far, but none of this would become available to the public for the time being. We apologise for the false information we gave last month and we will try our best to not repeat such a fault. We also promise that as soon as the game goes public we will have an in-depth interview with the developer. So just wait a tiny little bit longer. Hang on there....it's definitely worth it.

Larry who?

One guy you are certainly not going to control soon is Larry Laffer. Apparently Sierra On-Line has decided that the famous adventure-casanova is too old for the new generation of games so they decided to retire him and use his...nephew, Larry Loveage, instead.

Sierra was also thinking of leaving Al Lowe out of this new Larry game, but fortunately the fans' reactions made them reconsider. As Al writes from his personal site: *"Currently, I am in the process of negotiations with Vivendi Universal*

Games and my involvement with the next installment of the Leisure Suit Larry. Once we have reached an agreement I will be able to comment more on my involvement"

Since Al Lowe might work on this new adventure, we will give it the benefit of the doubt for the time being. *In Al We Trust.*

Inspector Parker

Just Adventure has opened up a new section where visitors can play casual games. One of the upcoming games is a puzzle game called Inspector Parker that has been developed by Oberon Media, a company which was founded among others by Jane Jensen! And to top it all, Robert Holmes, Jane's husband

who has created the absolutely memorable score for the Gabriel Knight series, has made the music for Inspector Parker. Make sure to check out Inspector Parker next week in Just Adventure's game portal.

Mourir En Mer

A new fan made adventure is available for download. Mourir en Mer is a short point and click adventure with intuitive puzzles and a charismatic (although a bit short) story about a boy who wanted to go to the sea, inspired by his favourite author Moby Dick. Download it here for free:

<http://www.agsforums.com/games.php?action=detail&id=140>

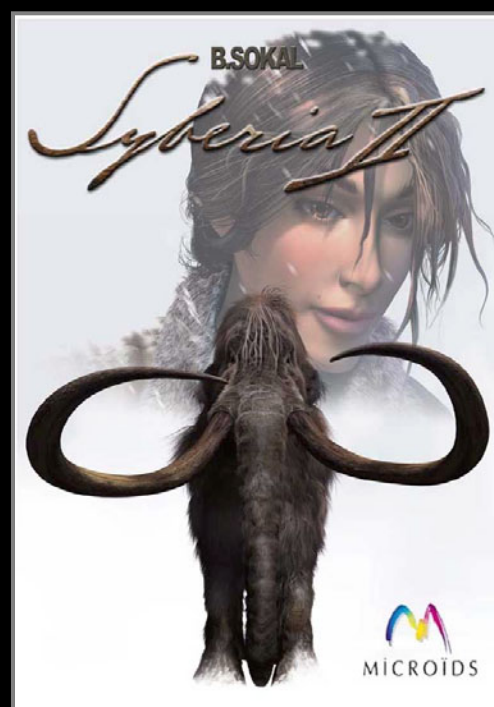
- Dimitris Manos

Syberia 2 box cover

Microids have provided us with the box cover art of the long awaited sequel to Syberia. So here it is for the Inventory's readers eyes only! And while we are on Microids related news, we should also let you know that Benoit Sokal, the creative mind behind Kate Walker's adventures, has founded his own developing company called White Bird Productions. You can find the website here: <http://whitebirdsproductions.com/>

Interesting to note on the press release: *"The company holds three original scenarios from Benoît Sokal, each of them being adaptable to video games as well as other media. In the video games area, formidable contacts are in progress with « majors » in order to sign a contract for the first of these scenarios."*

Does that mean 3 new adventures? Did you notice also the 'other media' words in there? And are these 3 stories connected to the 2 adventures Microids is working on right now, or are we talking about 3 completely new adventures? We will have to wait and see...



Developers and artists - Join the Inventory's adventure game!

Yes you read right. The team behind The Inventory is starting its own adventure game development team. Everything is in extremely early stages and we need people for all positions. We have already started writing the story for our first adventure game. Here is a short description of the game:

*Let's start by saying what the game is **not** going to be. It is not going to be about the Templars, it is not going to be about Atlantis. It is not going to have pixel hunting. It is not going to have keyboard controls. It is not going to be a 1st person adventure with no characters and no story. It is not going to be a 3rd person adventure with a female career driven lead with short dark hair and an athletic body. It is not going to have action elements. It is not going to have bugs. It is not going to be a fantasy game. It is not going to be a science fiction game. It is not going to be a comedy.*

Now let's go to what the game will be. It will be a 3rd person story-driven adventure. Its interface will be point and click v 2.0. The type of graphics is still under discussion but it is either going to be 2 1/2 D (TLJ, Syberia) or full 3D. Story is confidential for the time being, but it revolves around an event that has caused turmoil in the society and the media of the town where the game takes place and that the players won't get to know until late in the game. The gameplay will be something between TLJ, Syberia and the Gabriel Knight games.

We will try to get in contact with publishers and see if they are willing to support us in some way. If these talks prove fruitless we will use the Crystal Space open source engine, an engine used also by the fan project for the unofficial King's Quest IX (www.kq9.org) For more information on Crystal Space check out this webpage: http://crystal.sourceforge.net/tikiwiki/tiki-view_articles.php

We need all kinds of developers and artists but what we specifically want for starters is:

- **Programmers**
- **3D Artists/Modellers**
- **Background artists**
- **Character artists**
- **Music Composers**
- **Assistant Writers**

Requirements: You must be punctual and you must be able to deliver in time. If you want to apply, you should be certain that you can commit yourselves for the next 1-2 years and that you are not going to suddenly leave the project. Previous experience is always a plus but we welcome new developers as well. You must also be able to work in a team and respect your fellow team members.

Our goal is to publish the adventure in game stores so a salary will eventually be given (after the game starts selling), but during development you are expected to cover your own expenses.

Those of you who are interested, do not hesitate to e-mail your application letter and your CV to us at theinventory@yahoo.com and feel free to send us some of your work in case you are applying for an artist's position (max 300K if it's an e-mail attachment, otherwise provide a link). You will hear back from us sometime in December when we will have studied all the applications. We are looking forward to reading your application letters.

Interview with Jane Jensen

I am fifteen years old and I am going back to my home holding in my hands a copy of The Beast Within, which I just bought from the local computer hardware and software store. Just looking at the mystifying cover of the box makes me eager to run back instead of walking so that I can play the game sooner. More than one month later I have finished this amazing interactive experience and the world will never be the same anymore. I liked adventures till that point, but after my experience with The Beast Within adventures became a way of life. All the rest of the genres seemed pale in comparison.

*Jane has of course produced more titles than The Beast Within, and one thing they all have in common is that they are all top class products! She has also proven that no matter how the game is graphically presented (2D, 3D or FMV) a grand storyline and an exciting gameplay are enough to uplift any game in the 'first-rate' category. She has recently started her own company, called **Oberon Media** and she is currently working on a new adventure that is going to be published by The Adventure Company, a co-operation that was made possible through the help of our host site, Just Adventure.*

I think it was prudent to celebrate the 1-year anniversary of our magazine by featuring an interview with the main reason of its existence! So the master storyteller of computer games makes The Inventory's Lounge shine more than it has ever done before, with an interview covering Jane Jensen's glorious past, her bright looking future and her opinions on adventure games in general.

Yourself:

- I am sure that most of our readers know who you are already, but for those who do not could you tell us a little bit about yourself?



I started in the gaming industry with Sierra Online in 1989. I worked on a number of adventure games at Sierra including King's Quest VI, working with Roberta Williams, and later creating my own series, Gabriel Knight. I've also been a programmer (in the 'old days') and, more recently, have had several novels published. I live in Seattle with my husband and step-daughter.

- You started your career as a computer programmer. It is known that if someone is not an experienced writer most game developing companies will not even consider him/her for writing the story of one of their games. How did the transition from Jane Jensen the computer programmer to Jane Jensen the storyteller occur? How did you convince Ken Williams (Sierra founder) that apart from a programmer you are a great storyteller as well?

I was actually hired on at Sierra for their writer's block, a group of writers hired to help the established designers write dialogue, do game manuals, and so on. When I applied there, I sent in a short story and it was the short story that got me hired. So I guess you could say Sierra never saw me as a programmer, even though my previous job was as an engineer at Hewlett-Packard.

- It is obvious that you are a person who is very much interested in history, religion and the paranormal. What part of history is your favourite to study? Are you religious yourself? And do you believe in supernatural phenomena?

In history, I find all eras interesting, though I'm particularly compelled by the Victorian age in every way. I am not religious. I have a fascination with the trappings of belief and in comparative religions, but I'm not religious myself. Do I believe in supernatural phenomenon? Somedays I do and someday I don't. I've never experienced anything truly bizarre but I've heard some very compelling first-hand stories. Yes, I believe there's more to the world than we currently understand.

- The Gabriel Knight games have a large number of fans around the world. Do people ever recognise you on the street and stop you to congratulate you on your work?

No. ☺ My face is not well known. If I'm at a gaming function, such as a conference, people will recognize the name.

The Past

- Although you had worked for Eco Quest before, the first adventure you were widely credited for was King's Quest VI, which you co-designed with Roberta Williams. Many King's Quest fans believe that King's Quest VI is the best one of the whole series. How did you split work with Roberta? Which parts of the game did you do yourself?

We sat down at her house with a huge pad of paper – that was her method of design. She already knew the game would be about King Graham's son, Alexander, and his quest to the Green Isles to meet and save Cassima. Most of the rest was brainstormed between us. I would say I can claim responsibility for the Cliffs of Logic, though. That's definitely my kind of puzzle.

- Was the co-operation between you and Roberta easy?

It wasn't always easy at the time. She knew exactly what she wanted and I needed to bow to her sensibility of what King's Quest was and wasn't. She really understood her audience. My natural inclinations were to go a bit edgier and more adult, but she kept me in line. I learned a tremendous amount from her. It was one of the most important and beneficial training grounds I ever could have had and I respect her enormously.

- Do you believe that the success of King's Quest VI played an important role for your career? Did you start working on Gabriel Knight after you finished developing King's Quest VI or was the game already planned before that?

It wasn't the commercial success of King's Quest VI that meant anything to me. What happened was that I showed, to Sierra, that I could carry and complete an adventure game, and that was what gave me the opportunity. Basically I did a good job so they gave me a shot at my own title.

- Having played all Gabriel Knight games a numerous of times each, the first thing that comes to mind is how much research you must have carried out for the purposes of the games. Did you

travel yourself to New Orleans, Munich and Rennes Le Chateau? How much time did you spend 'on location' and how much time did you spend solely on research for each one of the games?

I've never been to New Orleans – still! But I did take research trips to Munich and Rennes-le-Chateau. In fact, I recently got back from one for the new game. I don't spent a lot of time on location, just a week or so. I tend to do a great deal of research on a location before I ever go there and the trip is to get the fine details (and photos) you won't find in books. Most of my research is actually in other areas, such as into the Rennes-le-Chateau mystery with GK3. I spend about 5 months on a design bible and about 2 of that is research.

- I know all three of the GK games must feel like your own children to you, but if the world would come to an end tomorrow and you could play only one of them, which one would it be? Which Gabriel Knight was the best one in your opinion?

They have different strengths and weaknesses. I think GK3 was probably the most sophisticated *game design*, especially in the area of puzzles. But GK2 is no doubt the best story and most people's favourite – I guess mine too. The actors brought another dimension to it.



- Let's talk about each game separately now and let's start with Gabriel Knight 1, which was published in 1993. In an age when adventures targeted to adults were uncommon and sparse, you decided to start an adventure series focused on a mature audience, featuring a main hero who is not your typical society idol, a voodoo cult and a good dose of crime, eroticism and foul language. Were you ever uncertain about how would the adventure community react to Gabriel Knight's mature contents or were you always confident that this was



something that the gaming world needed at the time?

I wasn't always confident. I had days when I worried it would be a flop. But you have to go with your instinct. At the time I was basing the mature edge of the title on some of my favourite graphic novels like Sandman and Hellblazer and I figured if comics could be cool with more mature stories, why not adventure games? Probably more to the point, it was just the kind of writing I do, and I was lucky that people were receptive to it.

- How long did it take to develop Gabriel Knight 1?

One year from proposal to ship. Those were the days!

- On the advertisement of Gabriel Knight 1 in Sierra's Interaction magazine (<http://www.sierragamers.com/default.asp?bhcp=1>) it was written 'The Darkest Knight Is Still Ahead'. Does the name Gabriel Knight symbolize something? It does not sound as it was picked randomly. How did you come up with it?

Of course, both "Gabriel" and "Knight" have a meaning. Gabriel is the archangel that fought against Lucifer's rebellion – and my Gabriel is a Schattenjager, a fighter of darkness. Knight is just the classic sense of a noble warrior. I won't claim any subtlety there. ☺

- Many issues of Gabriel Knight 1 make sense only after playing all three games. One has to wonder if you had planned the whole series from the very beginning. So did you already have in mind what would happen in the sequels when you were making Gabriel Knight 1?

Hmmm. Which issues are those? No, I had some idea what GK2 would be about when I wrote GK1, but only on a general level. Just as in TV series, there are ways to interwrap things. For example, when I did research on Ludwig in Germany for GK2, I found that he was at

one time the supreme honcho of the Knights of St. George. That wasn't something I knew when I made St. George patron saint of the Schattenjagers in GK1. But once I found it, I put it in GK2 and it just looked as if I'd planned it all ahead of time. The truth is, these weird connections happen all the time and you just need to be prepared to exploit the hell out of 'em.

- The cast of the CD version included some famous actors, i.e. Tim Curry as Gabriel and Mark Hamill as Mosely. Did the actors get to play the game, and if so what did they think of it?

I never heard of any of the actors who played the games. They will say that their kids play or, when we worked with Tim Curry again on GK3, that he'd had many people tell him they enjoyed GK1. But, in my experience, most actors are not big on computer game playing.

- The year is 1995 and the second instalment of Gabriel Knight, called The Beast Within is out in the stores. This time however the game has undergone radical changes. It features full motion video and live actors! It is quite evident that the development of the second game has little to do with the development of the first one. Was it more difficult to develop The Beast Within? Was it more expensive as well? How long did it take to develop it?

It was probably twice the time and twice the money of GK1. But at the time, FMV was the hot new thing, and you always have to try to follow, or be ahead of, the technology. It was hard – because, honestly, we really didn't know what we were doing. None of us on the development team knew anything about filmmaking. But we eventually got into gear and hired the right people and it was ultimately a fun, fun project to work on. The actors were a blast and it was so fulfilling to see the scenes being played out by real people.

- Was it you who took the decision to make an



FMV game or was it something Sierra decided?

Sierra. But I was all for it.

- What did you think of the final outcome? Did you think that the decision to use FMV was finally a wise one?

It was a great product. In fact, I wish FMV had not completely evaporated. There's something about live actors, particularly for a more dramatic piece like Gabriel Knight, that's just difficult to pull off with animated characters.



- How did you get to know about Ludwig II's story and legends? Had you read about him anywhere by luck? Or were you specifically looking for legends and myths in Germany with the intention of sending Gabriel there in the second part?

I lived in Germany for about 9 months prior to joining Sierra and I had been to Ludwig's castles and, yeah, found his story fascinating. I wanted to set GK2 in Germany, though, just because I really missed Germany at the time and had a deep sentiment for it. Ludwig was just a part of the area's history that I knew from my tourist days and could easily pull in. As it happened, the more I researched him while writing the design, the more his story brought to Gabe's story and to the game. It was a perfect fit.

“There's something about live actors, particularly for a more dramatic piece like Gabriel Knight, that's just difficult to pull off with animated characters.”

- The resemblance of Dean Erickson with Gabriel's face in Gabriel Knight 1 is just amazing! I was practically wondering if you cloned the guy!!! How did you find Dean anyway? Did his physical resemblance to the hero play a decisive role in your choice to hire him as the lead? Was there any tough

competition for Dean, I mean were there any other actors who were close to winning the leading role?

No. In fact, we'd looked for a Gabriel for some time and I was thinking we'd never find one. No one was right. To be honest, I didn't even like Dean when I saw his audition on videotape. But our director, Will Binder, had seen him in person and felt he could do it. He convinced me to meet with Dean and I knew as soon as I saw him that he *was* Gabriel.

- One of the famous characters of the Gabriel Knight saga was missing from Gabriel Knight 2. Detective Mosely. If you could choose any actor you would like to, without thinking about money, which actor would you have chosen for Mosely's role?

Hmmm, physically? Maybe Randy Quaid.

- You wrote and designed The Beast Within, but the film direction was done by Will Binder. Were you present during the shootings and did you oversee the work done there? Did you change something you were not satisfied with?

I was on the set for the really big scenes, such as the Hunt Club scenes. But a lot of the day-to-day filming work is pretty boring actually – Gabriel opening doors, Grace mailing a letter. And Will was great at what he did in managing it all. I had other responsibilities working with the team to get the logic and structure of the game itself in place. When I went on the set it was mostly for my own enjoyment. The thing is, the game script was massive and Will had to crank through 30 or so pages a day, so mostly everyone just worked their butts off on the set.

- Were there any funny or peculiar behind-the-scenes stories that you still remember today?

I remember what a pleasure it was sitting around and gabbing with the crew and actors during lunch breaks and how we all felt a real sense of excitement and ambition about what we were doing. But, mostly, it was a lot of work! Probably one of the more enjoyable things to film was the opera sequence, which was filmed here in Seattle. It was incredible to work with

real opera singers and to take over an entire theatre like that – one of those amazing experiences that game designers sometimes get. In truth, there were many moments like that on all three games.

- In the second part of Gabriel Knight we got to play as Grace also for the first time. What led you to that choice? What are the advantages of controlling two different characters in a game?

She was such a strong character in GK1 that I wanted to use her more. Also, the Ludwig plotline was becoming so large in the GK2 story. I needed Grace to takeover that plotline because Gabriel was too involved with the hunt club to be worrying about Ludwig! Using her enabled me to tell two stories at once.

- Did you form a concrete opinion about Ludwig II after your research on him? Do you think he was really mad? Or do you think that this is just what his adversaries made him look like in the eyes of the public?

I think he was mad in a Michael Jackson kind of way. He was pretty bizarre, very much in his own fantasy world. There's no arguing with that when you realize some of the things he did – most of which I made symptoms of werewolfy in the game. Maybe he *was* a werewolf!

- You even wrote an opera libretto for the purposes of the game!!! Did you have any experience in that before or was it something you tried for the first time? What are main differences between writing a libretto for an opera and writing a normal story?

“Libretto” is a fancy word. What I did was write a short description of what the story of the opera was about, then I wrote lyrics for the short few songs we showed on the film. It was by no means a complete libretto. I enjoy writing lyrics, though I don't do it often. They're basically poetry, which I try to use in the games whenever possible. My poetry more often shows



up as riddles. There's a bit of that in the new game, too.

- Sometime after Gabriel Knight 2 was released, rumours had it that you were working on a new adventure called Millennium. You even talked about it in an older interview of yours with Games Domain

(<http://www.gamesdomain.com/gdreview/depart/iviev005.html>) Finally this adventure never made it to development, but you did write a book called Millennium Rising. Why did you not develop the adventure Millennium after all?

What typically happens for me is that I end up picking up some book or seeing a program that gets me interested in a particular topic – in this case it was apocalyptic prophecy. I knew I wanted to do a project about it and I took it to Sierra, but we really wanted to do it as FMV and it would have been a large budget. We couldn't work it out so it ended up as a novel instead.

- Gabriel Knight 3 came in 1999, in an age when the infamous ‘adventures are dead’ statement did not really help the genre’s popularity. This time Gabriel is in 3D and your (once more) excellent work became proof that an adventure can be a great game regardless of the representation style (2D, 3D, FMV). Was it your decision to use 3D graphics or was it something that Sierra decided for you?

Sierra would only do it in real-time 3D. That's just the way the industry works. No publisher will invest a lot of money into a game that isn't competitive in its technology because it is unlikely to sell.

- Seeing Gabriel Knight 3 in retrospect, do you think it was a wise choice to go 3D with the game? Do you think it put off some of the older Gabriel Knight fans? Were you satisfied with the game’s graphics yourself?

I'm very proud of GK3 and I think the real-time 3D adds a lot to it. It would have been a totally different game in another format. A lot of the puzzles and story revolve around the fact that it is real-time 3D. So it is hard to imagine it any other way. Yes, I think it was the right decision at the time. Sure, some fans of GK2 wanted FMV and so they didn't play the new game. But that tends to occur with every game. There are fans of GK1 that wouldn't touch GK2 with a ten-foot pole because it's FMV. Each game ends up winning new converts to the series as well, as long as it's a good title in its own right.

- If someone visits Rennes Le Chateau or sees pictures of the place on the net, he/she will realise that the game recreated even the smallest details of this mysterious French village. What process did you follow to achieve such a high-level of recreation and why was it so important to you that almost everything looked like they do in real life?

We took a lot of photos. Seriously. It was important to be exact because the story and the puzzles in the game were based on the real Rennes-le-Chateau mystery, and the real-life mystery is based entirely on the landscape, geography and details of that place. For example, many clues to the real-life mystery are supposed to be hidden in the art and architecture of the church. For this reason – not only because the real-life place is so cool and had such great, mysterious 'vibes', but also because I almost wanted people to be able to solve the real-life mystery while playing the game – we did try to reproduce things exactly. With another story, such as the new game I'm working on, it's much less critical that things be exact and there's more creative flexibility.

“It was important to be exact because the story and the puzzles in the game were based on the real Rennes-le-Chateau mystery, and the real-life mystery is based entirely on the landscape, geography and details of that place.”

- Do you think there is really any treasure buried under the grounds of Rennes Le Chateau?

I don't know if whatever it was is still there. It may have been moved or lost in Sauniere's time. But there's definitely something real behind all the myths and legends.

- The game featured one of the best (if not the best) puzzles ever seen in adventure games, Le



Serpent Rouge. I was fascinated and surprised at the same time when I learned that the document of the Le Serpent Rouge enigma really exists! Did you get hold of a copy of the document? Did you come up with the solution featured in the game all by yourself or did you base it on possible solutions given by people who have tried to solve it before?

I'm glad someone besides me liked that puzzle. ☺ I spent probably 3-4 weeks just on that puzzle alone. It is the backbone of GK3. Le Serpent Rouge is a real poem and I got a copy of it in one of my research books. I tried to follow the logic of several other researcher's attempts at deciphering it, and I used what I could, but in the end it had to be a workable puzzle that people could actually solve, so I ended up rewriting big chunks of the poem and making up a solution. I did try to base everything on features in the RLC landscape and mystery and make it feel as close to a

“real” solution as possible. The goal of that whole sequence was to put the player in the position of being an RLC researcher and of actually solving the mystery and finding the treasure. Wouldn't that be exciting?

- Another puzzle of GK3 was not equally appreciated however. I am talking about the puzzle where Gabriel has to disguise himself as Mosely and in order to do that he has to take some fur from a cat and use it as a moustache. What is your opinion on that puzzle?



Yeah, yeah. It made sense at the time.

- Another new feature in Gabriel Knight 3 was the computer Sidney, a valuable tool for any schattenjagger! To tell you the truth when I first heard about it before the game's release, I was quite sceptical, because I thought it would take away the immersion factor for some minutes. How wrong I was! It turned out to be an excellent tool for building up certain parts of the game's story. What inspired you to incorporate Sidney in Gabriel Knight 3?

I really needed it for some of the puzzles I wanted to do, like Le Serpent Rouge and analyzing fingerprints. Once we had it, we had to let you do various things with it so it kind of grew from there.

- How long did it take to develop Gabriel Knight 3?

The design and script took about the same as the other 2 GK games. But GK3 was in production for 3+ years.

The future

- Before we start talking about your new game, let's talk a little bit first about a future that could have been, but never came to be. I am talking about Gabriel Knight 4. Did you ever talk to Vivendi about a Gabriel Knight 4?

I did talk to them seriously about it in '02. At that time, the company had no interest in adventure games at all. We discussed the possibility of me licensing the property and doing a sequel with another publisher, but in the end that discussion failed because there were

already rumours of a Vivendi sale and all their assets were more or less frozen. The problem is this is a huge corporation now, with hundreds if not thousands of properties, and getting anyone to talk seriously about a property like Gabriel Knight, which will never bring them millions, is pretty much impossible. They have bigger fish to fry. Which is really a shame.

- If Vivendi had given the green light then how had you planned to continue the Gabriel Knight saga? If somebody entered GK4 in Sidney the result was about ghosts... Would Gabriel Knight 4's story be about ghosts?

Yes, it was a story of a haunting – and a scary one too! But that plotline may eventually be incorporated into something else I do.

- Where would Gabriel travel to this time? Did you plan for Grace to be again a part of the game, or did she leave Gabriel for good in Gabriel Knight 3?

It was to be set in England. I'm not giving anything away on the Grace thing.

- If you made Gabriel Knight 4 would this be the ending chapter of the Gabriel Knight saga?

It wasn't planned to be – not unless it was clear there would never be another.

- Does Sierra have the rights for the Gabriel Knight novels as well, or is this a different case? If it is a different case, will we ever see Gabriel Knight 4 in a novel?

Yes, they have the novel rights as well so that books are in the same boat. Movie ditto.

- Could you describe to us the plot of Project Jane



Jensen?

Right now I can't say anything more about it than what was said at E3. It has a male and female protagonist. The male, David, is a neurobiologist and the female, Sam (short for Samantha), is a magician/street performer. The series has to do with the investigation of strange powers of the mind and uses neurobiology the way CSI uses forensics. It's very gothic and it's set in Oxford, England. The first storyline has some "Frankenstein" echoes about it.

- The characters are again a male and a female like in the Gabriel Knight games. Do you think this is a good balance so that both male and female players are able to relate with at least one of the main characters?

“One obvious difference is that the new series is less comic book like, less fantasy. In GK2 there were real werewolves. In the new series the supernatural is much more subtle and realistic than that, more like Matrix than Buffy.”

I don't know if that's so much my concern. Basically, buddy relationships work well in storytelling – look at practically any film or novel. I prefer male/female because then I can play with some sexual tension, which is always fun for me and my audience. Not that I necessarily *will*, but at least I have that option at some future date.

- What interface are you planning to use in the game? Point and click or direct control?

Point and click. But we're planning some special



interfaces in the game that will make things more interesting.

- Will the game feature anything similar to Sidney from Gabriel Knight 3?

Not exactly like that, but there is a computer.

- Have you decided yet what kind of graphics engine you are going to use in the game? Will the game have 3D characters on 2D backgrounds, will you use full 3D graphics or will you use Full Motion Video?

Currently the plan is for 2 ½ D similar to Syberia. We will not use FMV.

- In what ways will the game be similar to the Gabriel Knight games and in what ways will it be different?

That's a big question. Obviously there are similarities – it's basically an investigative mystery series, there's a male and female, some supernatural stuff is involved. However, it's really very different as well, as different as GK and Millennium Rising. One obvious difference is that the new series is less comic book like, less fantasy. In GK2 there were real werewolves. In the new series the supernatural is much more subtle and realistic than that, more like *Matrix* than *Buffy*.

- When do you think we will get to see the first screenshots of the game?

E3 '04 probably.

- Is your husband, Robert Holmes, going to do the music for this game as well?

I hope so! We're planning on it.

- The first and the last Gabriel Knight games were harder than Gabriel Knight 2. Will the difficulty of your new game be closer to the one of GK 1 and 3 or to the one of GK2?

Hmmm. Probably somewhere between GK2 and GK3.

- Will the new game mix reality with fiction and include real historical events like the Gabriel Knight games did?

The first storyline in the new series is not particularly historical. It just didn't turn out that way – I had too much else going on in the storyline. That doesn't mean that I will never use that kind of thing in the new series or that I would have always done that with GK. It does mix fiction and reality, yes. I think people will feel it is very "Jane Jensen" more than necessarily very "Gabriel Knight."

- Let's talk a little bit about the new company of yours, Oberon Media. Will Oberon produce only adventures made by you, or do you plan to acquire more developers to produce more games?

I founded Oberon with three partners and they're doing quite a few things, not just adventure games. What the company is really about is growing a general audience for games (i.e. a more mass-market audience than just young males). The focus of that for my partners is currently in the online casual gaming space. For me the long-term goal would be to grow the audience for adventure games and to have a development studio



doing strong titles, hopefully in a continuing partnership with The Adventure Company.

- Are there any people in Oberon that have worked with you in one of your past games?

Yes, the core team for the new game is built from people that I've worked with in the past, or that were long-time Sierra employees.

- Are there any strategies that Sierra had regarding their products development, which you plan to incorporate in your company as well?

When I joined Sierra Ken Williams was passionate about the fact that Sierra was a family game company. That's something I would like to recreate. By family I don't mean children's titles, but titles that everyone in the family, from mom and dad to the teens, can get into.

Adventure Games / General

- There is a huge increase of fan-made adventures out there. Many of the fans have decided to continue their favourite adventure series that commercial companies have decided to shut down (i.e. King' Quest, Space Quest, Indiana Jones etc...). What is your opinion on this? Would you be bothered if some fans made a Gabriel Knight adventure themselves? Would you feel honored by something like that or would you feel cheated, as if someone stole your property?

As a writer, I have wriely opinions about this. I would never rip off someone else's story and characters, and I think it's foolish to do so from a personal liability perspective. Why not create something similar but different? But I understand the frustration behind this kind of thing. I hope no one would do this with Gabriel Knight.

- Have you played any of these fan-made adventures? In a 'making-of' video from Gabriel Knight 1 you say that your first adventure was King's Quest 4 and that you loved the King's Quest series. Have you seen the unofficial King's Quest 9 (www.kq9.org) or have you played the King's Quest 2 remake by Tierra Entertainment (www.tierraentertainment.com)?

No, I haven't played it.



- 3 years ago you wrote an article that was first published by Adrenaline Vault and was later republished by Just Adventure, called 'A Love Letter To Sierra'. The article can be found in the following link:

http://www.justadventure.com/articles/Love_Letter/Jane_Jensen's_Love_Letter_to_Sierra.shtml and in this article you describe how the gaming industry has to shift its focus from traditional gamers to a demographic that was not paid any attention. On an interview with Randy Sluganski from Just Adventure (http://www.justadventure.com/Interviews/Jane_Jensen/Jane_Jensen_Interview_3.shtml) you also said:

"I think that the audience for these kinds of games is a non traditional computer game audience. How do we reach them? I have no idea. It may just be a matter of time, waiting for the technology to get pervasive enough that everyone has access to it as a matter of course."

On an interview we had with Cedric Orvoine, PR manager of Microids (Syberia) in The Inventory 4, we asked him to answer the question you posed 'How do we reach them?' This is what he said:

"I would tend to partially agree with Jane. I also think the audience for adventure games is a non-traditional computer game audience and that we have to find other channels to reach them. But still, adventure games must be placed into gaming stores. The publishers must work on developing new distribution channel like libraries, CD/DVD stores among others. The best way to reach them is to go as wide as possible in terms of marketing and publicity. Forget buying ads in PC Gamer, CGW or others. We must reach the mass. Movie previews, subway or buses

advertising, major dailies, good PR... I think developing business partnership with non-gaming related companies also benefits the game."

Do you think that the adventure community has improved in terms of reaching a wider audience compared to 3,4 years ago? What do you think about Cedric's answer to your question? Have you come up with any answer to the question you posed yourself 3 years ago, 'How do we reach them'?

Having raised the issue of taking out ads in mystery magazines, going into DVD stores, etc., with Sierra's PR every single game, I'm not as confident as Cedric that a traditional game publisher will ever pull this off. Their expertise is in the retail gaming space and they have a nearly impossible time reaching beyond that. Oberon is also trying to solve this issue and our approach is to try to reach a general audience online. But these things take time to develop. The new series will be a traditional retail product first and foremost, like Gabriel Knight. How well we can improve the reach for it is a battle we've yet to fight.

- Do you find time nowadays to play new adventure games? If so then what do you think where the best three adventures you have played since Gabriel Knight 3 was released?

I really enjoyed Syberia. That was the last good adventure game experience I've had -- and the first in many years.

- You have mentioned Syberia a couple of times in previous interviews you gave. Syberia has been both a critical and financial success and its new style of gameplay has given birth to lots of discussions among the adventure community. What is your opinion of the game and what do you think of its way to let the story flow without hindering the player too much?

I didn't pick up on that particular aspect of it. In fact, I found it extremely linear. (But I never thought "linear" was a naughty word.) What I admired about Syberia was the amazing art values, how well the artist's vision was integrated with the story, and the complete ease and simplicity of the interface. I thought it was a game anyone could play, yet satisfying to an experienced gamer. That's a lot to accomplish. Overall, it just had an amazingly smooth and polished production aesthetic.

- Story, Graphics, Music, Gameplay. Would you be able to put these four aspects of a game in order from 1 to 4 in terms of importance?

Geez. That really varies from game to game. If a game has exceptionally original and outstanding graphics, it can be a bit weak in other categories and vice versa. But if you held a gun to my head I would have to say story, graphics, gameplay, music.

- FMV has not been used so much lately in adventures and developers usually prefer 3D graphics. Some claim that this is because it is cheaper to make professional 3D graphics than to hire a whole cast of professional actors. Others claim that this is because 3D environments allow for bigger levels of interaction. Playing a game like Gabriel Knight 2 however, one can't help but wonder why didn't other companies follow that paradigm. Do you think that FMV will become big again sometime in the future?

I think the real issue is interactivity and, to a lesser degree, a simple matter of fashion. I can't predict if FMV will ever come back. Maybe someday in VR world.

- Many people claim that many of the adventures produced nowadays lack a certain magic the old adventures of Sierra and Lucasarts had. Do you agree with that, and if so what do you think it is that new adventures are lacking?

Yes, I think there is a charm lacking. I think the older Sierra titles had that because they were aiming at a family audience. I don't think GK was ever particularly 'charming' because it's too mature for that. But King's Quest and Monkey Island and some of those games were. Again, it's a matter of who the audience is expected to be. King's Quest was never aimed at young males. It was cute, it was sweet. You don't see much of that nowadays except in games for little kids. That's not the same thing at all.

- Who were your best buddies in Sierra? Who do you miss the most from the old Sierra Online? Do you still have contact with any of them?

Everyone! Seriously, people I have talked to from the "old days" at Sierra all feel the same way. Maybe we didn't appreciate it enough at the time, and it certainly had its share of headaches, but it really was a great atmosphere to work in. I miss everything about it and the people, yup – most of them!



- Old Sierra vs old Lucasarts. Which company do you think created the best adventures? Was there any rivalry between the two?

What a question. I dunno. I love Sierra, but I was there. Lucasarts was always a bit more remote to me. I guess, being female, I loved the King's Quest and Laura Bow series more than I ever completely related to any of the Lucasarts stuff. There were a lot more female designers at Sierra so, naturally, we were better. ☺

- Was there ever an interest by anyone to turn the Gabriel Knight games into a movie?

Yes, lots of times. But nothing that was incredibly serious, like "I'm ready to give you a two-million-dollar option." Unfortunately.

- What is the best and what is the worst part of your job?

I love game design and I love seeing the game come together. Working with actors – whether voice-over or FMV is a true highlight. Worst parts – long hours, contracts and politics, just like anywhere.

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thanks very much for the interview and for continuing to support the adventure community. It has continued to thrive, in large part due to the efforts of places like Just Adventure and this magazine.

Thank you very much Jane for taking the time to answer our questions. It is an honour for us that you accepted our invitation and shared your knowledge with our readers. Your presence in the adventure community was terribly missed all these years since Gabriel Knight 3 was released, and we all wish you the best of luck with your new game. We hope that we will hear from you again soon and we can't wait to play Project Jane Jensen.

Interview with DTP

Don't you just hate it when you go to a game store and all you see are action titles? Don't you feel neglected as an adventure fan? Well, fortunately, there have been some publishing companies around the world lately that are trying to make a change and give us, adventurers, the possibility to go in a game store and find something of our liking. One of these publishing companies is also DTP from Germany, which has done a remarkable job the last years of publishing and promoting adventure games. If there were more companies like DTP around the world, things might have been much different than they are now. Christopher Kellner, PR Manager of DTP, came to our Lounge this month to tell us all about their future plans. So let's move to our guests...

Yourselves:

- Could you tell us a little bit about yourselves?

I'm 27 years old. I studied History and Political Sciences, then I did a traineeship with the German Press Agency dpa, working as a journalist. Since November 2003 I'm PR Manager at dtp.

- Do you play adventures in your free time? If so which are your favourite adventures?

Of course. My favourites are The Longest Journey, the Broken Sword titles, Runaway and Grim Fandango. I'm also a great fan of RPGs, my favourites are Morrowind, Planescape: Torment, the Fallout series, Arcanum, Baldur's Gate I+II, Gothic I+II and Vampire: The Masquerade. I'm looking forward to our new RPG-project with legendary David W. Bradley: Dungeon Lords!

DTP

- When was DTP founded? In which countries do you publish games?

Dtp exists since 1995. In 1999 we decided to specialize in adventures.

- Why did you decide to support the adventure genre?

Because it's cool! And you have to find a clear profile to battle the market.

- Could you tell us which adventure titles you have published already?

We published The Longest Journey, Sanitarium, Hollow Earth and Runaway

- How many copies did each one of these adventures sell?

Between 10.000-50.000. Runaway did even better.

- Were you satisfied by these sales?

I think we're on a good way.

- Runaway was featured in the top 10 charts in Germany the first weeks that it was published. Did you expect that when you first signed the deal with Pendulo?

Yes, but we also did a lot for the success: Localization, marketing, a huge pr-campaign, and a growing community on www.runaway-game.de.

- What do you think it was about Runaway that attracted so much the German public?

I think it was exactly what we focussed in our campaign: the return of the classic adventure.





- According to the press and the feedback by the fans, what was the best and what was the worst parts of Runaway?

The fans liked the story, the characters and the music best. They didn't like some of the riddles. They said some are not very logical, for example the handbag and the wig or the coffee-bag.

- Do you usually expect developers to contact you first, or do you keep an eye on the adventure community for games that you find interesting, and then contact them yourselves?

We certainly keep an eye on the market and the community to get to the newest hot stuff. We cooperate with several teams and sometimes even propose topics or settings to them. We are open for any idea. To all developers and publishers: Contact us – if you want to put your project into the best and most understanding hands for adventures in German-speaking Europe!

- What are the qualities you are looking for in an adventure game? What are the requirements that an adventure has to fill in order for you to take the decision to publish it?

Atmosphere is most crucial in an adventure. And this comes through a brilliant localization, so we're keeping a strict eye on high-qualified actors. On the whole, an adventure must have a high quality in all matters.

- In what ways do you support the developers when you sign a deal with them?

We're doing the whole distribution and marketing stuff, so the developers can concentrate on...well on developing! My job for example is to keep in contact with the media and write really cool news on the games and our projects in order to arouse interest in the media.

- In German speaking countries, you usually dub games to your own language. Do you find the actors for your games or is this something the developers must do for themselves? What kind of process do you follow in order to find the appropriate actors for each character?

We're cooperating with our studio Toneworx. They have great ideas and do a great job. For Tony Tough we got the best German comedians to do the localization. It's like someone in the USA would sign Kevin James or someone like that for an adventure;-)

- Has your choice to publish adventure games been a satisfactory one so far? Have you made a profit by selling games of our genre?

It's been very satisfactory so far, because it's the best genre. We're on a good way.

- Where do you usually promote your adventures? What kind of media do you usually choose to place advertisements of your games?

Our main partners are naturally game-mags. But we're also in contact with all newspapers and lifestyle-mags in Germany, Austria and Switzerland and devote a lot of time, power and work into trying to get our products into them. We're also in contact with TV-stations and news agencies. We have very good contacts to the major German adventure-sites like www.adventure-archiv.de, www.adventure-treff.de and www.adventurecorner.de.

The future

- Which adventures titles are you going to publish in the near future and what are their expected release dates?



Tony Tough and the Night of the Roasted Moths (Q4/2003)

- The Westerner (Q1/2004)
- Adventure tba (Q2/2004)
- The Moment of Silence (Q3/2004)
- Runaway 2 (Q4/2004)

- Could you tell us a few words about each one of these adventures?

Tony Tough is a classic Point & Click-Adventure with cartoon-graphics, full of irony and black humor, featuring the world's most cunning (and smallest) private investigator, Mister Tony Tough. The Westerner is the sequel to "3 Skulls of the Toltecs" and it's the first Point & Click-Adventure in 3D. It's a funny adventure in a wild wild west setting. The Moment of Silence is a dark future adventure with fantastic graphics, developed by the German team House of Tales, who did "The Mystery of the Druids" very successfully in the past. Runaway 2 will be...errrh...the sequel to Runaway.

- If developers out there want to contact you in order to show their games to you, where can they do that and what should they have ready to show you?

A simple email is enough: pr@ntp-ag.com. What we need are a storyline and some good artworks or first screenshots. We'll call back very fast.

- Do you plan to expand your market outside German speaking countries? Are there any plans for publishing games in other countries of the EU?

We have some strategic partners we're cooperating with, pitching projects together.

- Have you thought of any new promotional techniques for your games that you plan to incorporate in the future?



First, we created a new branding label with some of the leading adventure-sites of Germany. They will test our adventures and give a kind of seal, like "approved and tested by adventure-gamers". This will be printed onto the boxes so any adventure-fan will see in the shop that this is a real high-quality product. Second: The fact of my



employment shows that dtp is determined to promote our games in the media even stronger than before. We want to work better and faster with the media than others.

- Are there any other future plans you would like to share with us right now?

Stay in contact with us. There's always something new to report.

Adventure Games / General

- There is an opinion voiced by many adventurers worldwide, that adventure publishers should change their focus from the mainstream gamers to a non-gaming public, by advertising adventures in non-gaming media and by publishing adventures in non-gaming stores. Do you agree with that?

We are already working on strategies of placing our products in newspapers that don't naturally report on pc-games. There's a rising interest in stories from the world of pc-games, with a dark and a light side. The dark side is, many newspapers and magazines are only interested in games because of the cliché that games somehow corrupt juveniles, leading them to kill others in extreme cases. You maybe heard of the shooting in a school in Erfurt with 17 dead persons in 2002. The light side is that even the old-fashioned departments in the newspapers see that pc-games are something they cannot ignore for much longer.

- Some time ago, there was talk about point and click adventures dying, but on the contrary, lately we have seen point and click adventures going much stronger they used to do four or five years ago with many point and click titles under development. What is your opinion on point and click adventures?



It's the old conflict between a new technology and something old but very very good. With the 3D-Hype being over now many people in the business tend to reconsider if some of the old technologies weren't that bad. Games like Grim Fandango are great, but many gamers were simply annoyed by the interface and missed point & click. We think that for an adventure, there is no better way than point & click. And we want to contribute to point & click surviving and we think the community is on our side.

- We can also see that unlike other publishing companies, you do not disregard adventure titles that use 2D graphics. Do you think that 2D adventures have a bright future ahead of them?

That's difficult. The possibilities of making 2D better and better are all exploited. For me 2D still is great, but the question is, what the community wants. I see great opportunities of combining point & click with 3D – like in “The Westerner” ;-). Nonetheless titles like Tony Tough are wanted by the community.

- Recently we have seen a couple of FMV games appearing again after a long time. Do you see any future for FMV games and would you ever publish an FMV game?

Why not? The Ripper was a good title for example. But to make a FMV-game really successful, you need really good actors. International successful actors. And that makes the whole thing very expensive.

- Do you think the gameplay of adventure games should change in some way in order for adventures to become more popular?

No. It's great as it is. I know that most adventure-gamers are deeply annoyed by action parts or even jump and run parts.

- Judging by your line-up of adventures, we can see that you favour 3rd person adventures to 1st person ones. What do you think is the best viewpoint to represent an adventure story and why?

I think both viewpoints have their pros and cons. We'll publish games with both views.

- It is not easy for us who live outside Germany to know exactly how the adventure genre is doing over there, but the truth is, that Germany has a lot of excellent adventure sites (like www.adventure-treff.de and www.adventure-archiv.de), many adventures are being published there (compared to other EU countries), there is a developing company from Germany (House of Tales) and you are a major distributor of adventures. So is the adventure genre doing so good in Germany as it sounds it does? And if so then why do you think it is doing better than in other EU countries?

The German-speaking countries are the biggest games-market in Europe. That makes it possible to make high-quality and expensive localizations.

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

We're always interested in developers over in the USA who are searching for a competent German publisher. And we're interested in what the US-community has to say about our adventures...

Thank you for passing by our Lounge and all the best with your company. We hope that you will continue to support our genre, and we hope that we will get to see your company publishing adventures outside German speaking countries as well, because the gaming world needs more publishers like you.

Thank you very much.



URU

AGES BEYOND MYST.

'Wow'. A three-letter word that (according to dictionary.com) is used to express wonder, amazement, or great pleasure. Well, be prepared to use a lot this three-letter word while playing URU, because we are talking about a unique piece of digital art. The main source for the wonder, amazement and great pleasure that you will need to express while playing URU, is its graphics. Cyan managed once more to raise the bar of the graphics standards in the computer games industry and this time they went even further, by introducing an online version of URU as well.

Due to the vast extent of URU's concept we thought that we should split its review in 2 parts. The first part you will read on this issue. This part will cover mostly the story, the graphics and the sound of the game. Next month when we will have the chance to play the online version as well, we will feature the second part that will talk about the gameplay of the game. The reason for leaving the gameplay for the second part is that it becomes evident when playing the single player version of URU that many parts of URU's gameworld are made with the online version in mind.

We will still feature a separate grading for the single player version and the online version respectively because the online version comes for an extra fee, but for reasons of space and coherence we thought it would



be better to split the review in two. But let us move on to one of the most controversial parts of the Myst series...its story.

Story: The Myst games' story has always been a big discussion in the adventure community. For some people Myst was never famous for its plot. The reason for that is that players usually roamed empty environments void of other characters, solving puzzles that gave birth to more puzzles. The story was always there in the background but it never played a major role in the overall gaming experience.

The fans of Myst however claim that Myst did indeed have a storyline and a very complex at that. It is not as obviously fed to the player as stories of other adventure games but it is a vague plotline that spans a whole new universe. Well, expect URU to raise the exact same kind of discussions around forums. Rand Miller himself, the creator of URU, claimed that the story is the core concept of the Myst series, and that they build the gameplay of the game around that core concept.

Again there is a plot lying in the background but it is evidently not what you are going to be spending most of your time upon. You are equally prone to finish the game even if you do not understand a thing of what is going on. On the other hand if you understand the story you are more likely to appreciate the whole experience. Whether that feature of URU is a good or a bad thing depends on whether story or puzzle solving rates higher in your gaming agenda.

The story that revolves around URU, is concerned with the ancient civilisation of D'ni. The D'ni people prospered and thrived in their underground empire, and their 34 rulers strived to develop the art of linking to other ages through books. But like all civilisations the D'ni one had its fall as well.

Nowadays, many years after the existence of the D'ni people an organisation which calls itself the DRC (the D'ni Restoration Council) is determined to restore the world of D'ni to the way it was hundreds of years ago. Yeesha, the daughter of Atrus and Catherine (from the



Flowers fall from the sky while you continue to wander.

previous Myst games), lived 200 years ago and she also desired the restoration of the D'ni civilisation. However the way Yeesha is picturing this restoration is quite different to the way that the DRC has in mind. Therefore she puts tests to the people that visit the ages. You try to follow Yeesha's steps and pass her tests by travelling through the different ages.

Graphics: Well, kiss Morrowind goodbye because URU is light years ahead of that. You have to see it to believe it! Trust me when I say that the screenshots do not come even close to the real thing. URU is a must buy just because of its graphics. Especially when you proceed in the later ages, you will feel like you have just been abducted by aliens and taken to another world.

URU's graphics are first of all radically different than all the previous Myst games. It is the first time you see the gaming world from the 3rd person perspective. In most cases the camera follows the player from behind, but in



Jumping is a new feature in URU

certain places the camera moves around the player to give a more cinematic feeling and also let you admire the magnificent backgrounds, which are full of 'life'. Nature and moving objects are going to make you forget that you are playing a game.

There is just so much movement around the player that you think something is going to jump right out of your screen in your bedroom. You have never seen such dynamic environments in adventure games before. Prepare to stand on a top of a spinning platform, which is hovering between mountains and waterfalls. Enter the gardens and watch the sky turn dark and feel the rain pouring on you while you are searching for journals and books. Walk between yellow flakes that are falling from the sky, while two suns are orbiting around the world you are roaming. Wander around, see flowers falling past you and get to know what it felt like for Roman emperors when they entered Rome! There are so many special effects in this game that one doesn't know where to start and where to end while describing them. Sometimes you will feel like you are walking in a National Geographic page that suddenly came to life.



That's totally a dating place for the live version!

As for the main character of the game...well he/she looks as you want him/her to look like. Right in the beginning of the game, you create your own avatar and the choices are plentiful. You can decide if your character will be male or female what kind of trousers, shirt, shoes and eye-wear he/she will be wearing, what the hair and eye colour is going to be, what kind of nose, cheeks and chin your character will have etc. So if you want to control a fashion model or a fast food fan, just go ahead and create one! The way your character looks of course has no impact on the gameplay (unless you are planning to cyber date in D'ni in Uru live).



A 'National Geographic moment'.

The only glitch I could find regarding Uru's graphics sector is the absence of cutscenes. A lot of the stories found in books could have been presented with cutscenes instead, which of course makes game production more expensive but it is a fine detail that increases the overall entertainment.

Sound: URU excels in that area as well. First of all the game makes use of Creative Labs EAX system, which provides advanced environmental effects in your audio experience. Apart from the amazing ambient tracks playing in the background that are arousing a sense of loneliness (appropriate for this kind of game) the sound effects are totally phenomenal.

Wherever the player turns, the sound turns with him/her. Walk over water in a cave and listen how the water sounds echoes on the cave walls. Walk under a waterfall and listen how the water splashes down. And don't play the garden age during the mornings if you have a roommate because he/she might go out of the



A majestic view from a balcony.

house bearing an umbrella thinking that it was raining outside. Peter Gabriel also composed a song for the game, but it did not really increase the experience or anything. I hope Cyan did not pay loads of money for that.

General info: The copy that is reviewed is the collector's edition. The game comes in a card box, with a picture of Realto on the front cover. The box includes the game's CD, a mini hint book for the first part of URU, a manual plus an extra CD featuring an impressive making-of video and the soundtrack of URU. There were no bugs encountered while playing the game. A quite annoying thing about URU is the loading times. It takes ages (pun intended) until each new age is loaded, and you have to jump from age to age quite often.

Although URU's story is connected to the Myst series, it is not considered as Myst 4. Myst 4 is a game under development right now. By purchasing URU you have the chance to play the online version of the game, called URU Live. The first month or so of the online version will be available for free and then if you want to continue you will have to pay a monthly fee. We will have more information on URU Live in the second part of the review that you can read next month.

To be continued... Now we come to the end of this first part of the URU review. Next month we will tell you all about URU's gameplay and how it feels like to play an adventure with friends online! However we must state here that the gameplay is probably the only part where URU could be seriously improved, at least as far as the single player version goes.

- Dimitris Manos



Rotating sun...for a perfect tan all around the body.



You know something? There just aren't enough good cartoon adventure games out there. Don't get me wrong, I like a good serious story as much as the next guy, but sometimes you just need to sit down and immerse yourself in rampant silliness. But where, I hear you ask, where can I go for some good old-fashioned point-and-clicking cartoony goodness? Well fret no longer, dear reader, for there is Tony Tough and the Night of Roasted Moths.

Recently, Got Game Entertainment has appeared on the adventure gaming scene seeming almost hell-bent on publishing quality adventure games, and who are we to stop them? Tony Tough is their second adventure game, and the level of quality is clear. You can tell the production team is a fan of the classics, Lucasarts in particular. The whole game seems at times to be an homage to Lucasarts classics (in-jokes about three-headed monkeys and purple tentacles abound), and it does borrow heavily from many of the elements that have made their games so successful, such as interface, screw-ball humor, bizarre characters, and pirates.

Story: The City. Halloween night. For ten years,



private investigator Tony Tough has been pursuing the nefarious Jack O'L, a swollen-headed maniac who steals candy from the hands of children while they trick and treat the night away. Through numerous eyewitness accounts and exhaustive research, Tony has concluded that the culprit is an alien from another planet, who is collecting the candy for some nefarious cause, and surely he must be close to the truth, or else they would not have kidnapped Pantagruel, his purple pet tapir. Tony now knows that he must explore the horrifying Halloween Park in order to get to the bottom of this, and to rescue his companion, but is he up to it?

At times the story does seem a little forcedly silly, as though they're trying too hard to be zany, but overall it is serviceable and amusing. The dialogue too seems to be trying too hard to make every line funny. For every laugh-out-loud joke, there's another that just falls flat. But hey, maybe that's just my sense of humor. At any rate, it's constant fun, even if it's inconsistently funny.

Gameplay: Interaction with the environment occurs through a verb coin, similar to Curse of Monkey Island, with the four key actions being Examine, Use, Take and Talk. Later in the game a fifth verb appears on the coin, but it isn't really for solving any puzzles. A small problem I had with the coin is that most of the verbs are grouped very closely together. Use, Take and Talk are crammed together in about two square inches of space, which frequently caused me to click the wrong verb. A minor problem to be sure, as there are no really "wrong" moves in the game, but a frustrating one nonetheless, made all the more confounding by the amount of empty space remaining on the verb coin.

The puzzles are, for the most part, familiar adventure game fare. Most are fairly logical and reasonable in a cartoony sort of way, at least on the "beginner" level they are. The "advanced" difficulty level is nearly impossible to solve without a walkthrough or two. I



Rats...



Venus de Tough

don't want to spoil the discovery of any of these gems for you, or ruin the fun of solving them yourself, but I leave you with two words which I am sure will serve you well in your journey through the game: Frozen Worn. There. That's all I'm going to say about it.

Graphics: The backgrounds and characters are hand-drawn in a very nicely done, high-resolution cartoony style, which fits the game's atmosphere. The cinematic cut-scenes are in the same style, but seem to be of a slightly lower quality. This is not really an issue however, as there are very few of them.

The only notable issue graphically is that often the characters in the game are, for some reason, colored differently than the background. Different brightness levels, different degrees of shading, it's as though the backgrounds and the characters were drawn in completely different styles. Not a glaring defect exactly, though it can make some of the characters, Tony in particular, appear slightly out of place.

Sound: I had some problem with the game's music. The tracks were constantly skipping and sounded garbled all the time. I contacted technical support and they were unable to help as, evidently, this is a very

uncommon problem. I ended up having to turn it off as it started to get irritating. From the little I heard, however, the music sounds fine, and sets the appropriate mood for the scenes.

The voice acting is very well done throughout, though a few of the voices do seem a bit overly stereotypical. Tony's for example, is extremely nasal and high-pitched. Sure, this fits the character, but it can still get a bit irritating after a while. A small black child who sounds like an extra from Amos and Andy, a pirate who can't stop saying "Arr", and an obnoxious chain-smoking children's clown all seem a bit overdone, and over the top. I'm seriously surprised that the Swami didn't end up sounding like Apu from The Simpsons.

In a few words... Though it falls just short of being a classic, Tony Tough is still a marvelous game that "old school" adventure players are sure to enjoy, and new players will appreciate too. By paying their respect to the classic format for adventure games and excelling in the presentation, Got Game has given us a terrific game sure to entertain. Incidentally, if someone could please explain to me what Roasted Moths have to do with anything, I would greatly appreciate it.

- Justin Peeples

TONY TOUGH and the night of the roasted moths

Game Info

Developer: ProGraph Research

Category: Point and Click

Perspective: 3rd Person

Difficulty: Medium/Impossible (choice)

Site: www.gotgameentertainment.com

System Req.: Win 95/98/me/2k /xp,
Pentium 200, 32MB ram, 150Mb free disk
space,8x CD-ROM and DirectX6

Category	Score
Story	90
Graphics	85
Sound	80
Gameplay	95
Overall	89



How to destroy a great concept you ask? It is very simple. Turn it into a game that does not work. Being a big fan of FMV games and also of thrillers, I was absolutely excited about In Memoriam. Especially the ambition to create something similar to what Blair Witch Project accomplished, sounded very innovative.

But unfortunately the technical aspects of the game managed to ruin the experience. Since the game does not work as it should work, and therefore being half-made product, we will give it a half-written review. This is also going to be our policy with all games that have not been polished and taken care of enough so that the customers who pay for them are sure to receive their money's worth.

The story is definitely original. You take the role of...yourself. A couple has been missing for a long time now and some time ago, a serious killer sent a CD to the agency where one of the people missing was working at. The CD includes lots of puzzles and clues that will give you hints to find out what happened to the missing couple.

The game also uses the Internet as well to send you e-mails with clues. During these puzzles, the game will

often send you to the Internet to find clues that are necessary to solve the games.

And this is exactly when problems start. When you change window to go to your Internet browser, the game crashes. And of course this is not the first time that we find a bug in a game, so I headed over to the official website and there was a patch waiting over there. Great I thought...I try to download the patch and then there is a 'File not found' message appearing. And apparently many people who bought In Memoriam are having the same problems. It does not seem to affect users of XP, but since on the box of the game, under requirements, all versions of Windows back to 95 are listed, this is no excuse!

I cannot express enough what a pity this is. I enjoyed the puzzles until the time when the crashes started and the acting was top notch up to that point. Unfortunately some companies still fail to understand how important QA is, so we will try to make it clear to them by grading this and every other game that is not going to work with a grade of 10 out of 100.

- Dimitris Manos

In Memoriam

Game Info

Developer: Lexis Numerique

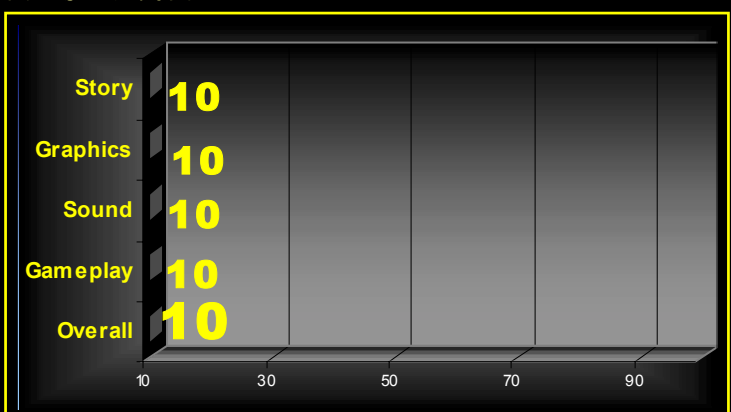
Category: FMV/Internet

Perspective: 1st Person

Difficulty: Medium

Site: <http://www.inmemoriam-thegame.com>

System Req.: Win XP, Pentium 333, 64MB RAM, 700Mb HD, 8x CD-ROM, 32 bit Video Card, 16 bit Sound Card



The Inventory is proud to introduce to you the creator of the legendary Larry games, and one of the funniest game developers in the history of the adventure genre, Al Lowe. Unfortunately for us, he has retired from game development and is now spending most of his time updating his humour site, www.allowe.com Al sends two jokes everyday to people who subscribe to his Cyberjoke 3000 project, and he is making a compilation with the best jokes of the month, for the readers of The Inventory. So welcome to... The Al Lowe Show!



What happens when you give Viagra to a lawyer? He stands straighter!

A man visited his 85-year-old grandfather in the nursing home. "How've you been, grandpa?" he asked. "Just couldn't be better. These young nurses take such good care of me. Why, every night they bring me a cup of hot chocolate and a Viagra pill and I sleep like a log." The man went to see the head nurse. "What's going on here?" he asked. "Grandpa says you're giving him Viagra on a daily basis now. Surely that's not true!" "Oh, yes," replied the nurse. "Every night at 10 o'clock he gets a cup of hot chocolate and a Viagra pill." "But why? A man of his age?" "Well, the hot chocolate makes him sleepy and the Viagra keeps him from rolling out of bed!"

An elderly gentleman came home one night to discover a beautiful young woman robbing his house. He quietly grabbed his gun, aimed it at her, and shouted, "Freeze!" She did, and he held her at gunpoint while he started telephoning the police. The girl quickly dropped to her knees and begged him, "Oh, please don't call the police, mister! If you don't turn me in, I'll make love to you all night. I'll do whatever you want! Just don't call the police." The man paused a moment, then hung up the phone. They got undressed and climbed into bed. The old man tried and tried to no avail. Finally, he rolled over, disgusted and embarrassed. "I'm sorry, young lady, it's just no use," he gasped. "Looks like I'm gonna have to call the police!"

Two Italian men get on the bus and sit in front of an well-dressed

woman. At first she is able to ignore their conversation, but she is offended when she overhears one man say, "Emma come first. Den I come. Two asses, they come together. I come again. Two more asses, they come together again. Then I come again and pee twice. Then I come-a once-a-more." "You foul-mouthed swine," huffs the woman indignantly, "In this country we don't describe our sex lives in public!" "Hey, coola down, lady," said the man. "I'm-a just tellin' ma friend how-a to spell-a Mississippi!"

A young Seattle woman was so depressed that she decided to end her life by throwing herself into Elliott Bay. Standing on the docks, staring at the frigid water, crying, she was teetering on the edge when a handsome young sailor passing by saw her, realized her plight and grabbed her arm just in the nick of time. "Miss, don't do it. You've got so much to live for. Look, I'm off to Japan in the morning, and if you like, you can stow away on my ship. I promise to take good care of you and bring you food every day." He slipped his arm around her shoulder and added, "I'll keep you happy...and you can keep me happy. Okay?" She considered this a moment, then nodded yes. After all, what did she have to lose? That night, the sailor sneaked her aboard and hid her in a lifeboat. From then on, every night he faithfully brought her food and drink. She repaid his kindness the only way she knew how: they made passionate love all night. Two wonderful weeks passed until the Captain discovered her during a routine inspection. "What are you doing in here?" the Captain demanded. "Uh, I have an

arrangement with one of your sailors," she explained bashfully. "He's taking me to Japan and giving me free food and drink...and he's screwing me." "He sure is, miss," said the Captain. "This is the ferry to Bremerton!"

A man and a woman were bantering about who enjoyed sex more. "Obviously, men enjoy sex more than women," said the man. "Why do you think we're so obsessed with it?" "That doesn't prove anything," said the woman. "Think about this: when your ear itches and you put your little finger in it and wiggle it around and then pull it out, which feels better, your ear or your finger?"

A proctology student went to the morgue one day after class to get in a little practice before his exams. He found a table with a body lying face down, removed the sheet and, to his surprise, found a cork stuck in the corpse's rectum. When he removed the cork, to his great surprise, he heard music. "On the road again...just can't wait to get on the road again..." When he replaced the cork, the music stopped. Baffled, he called over the Medical Examiner. "Have you ever seen anything like this?" he asked, removing the cork. "On the road again...just can't wait to get on the road again..." "Yeah," said the Medical Examiner, obviously unimpressed. "So?" "But that's the most amazing thing I've ever seen!" said the student. "Are you kidding?" replied the Medical Examiner. "Any asshole can sing country music!"

- Al Lowe

Gabriel Knight Voice Actors Word Jumble

Unscramble the surnames of these Famous actors who lent their voices to Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers. Use the letters in circles to complete and unscramble the puzzle phrase at the bottom of the page.



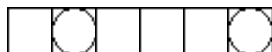
ROND



HRAKMAM



MLIHAL



ISMALTZIB

Gabriel Knight Trivia

After answering the following questions, use the corresponding letters to replace the numbers in the puzzle phrase at the bottom of the page.

1: Except for one, all characters below share a Voice Actor with a character from The Curse of Monkey Island by Lucasarts. Which is the incorrect connection?:

T-Malia Gedde(GK1)-Voodoo Lady(CMI)

N-Verner Huber(GK2)-Griswold Goodsoup(CMI)

G-Det. Mosely(GK1)-Dinghy Dog(CMI)

F-Gerde(GK1)-Minnie Stronie Goodsoup(CMI)

2: Which of the books was *not* written by Gabriel Knight creator Jane Jensen?:

T-Millennium Rising

N-The Voodoo Murders

G-The Beast Within

F-Dante's Equation

3: Which of the following Sierra characters is briefly mentioned in Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers?:

T-Graham, King of Daventry

N-Rakeesh, Mythical Man-Beast

G-Laura Bow, News Reporter

F-Larry Laffer, Bar Owner

Puzzle Phrase

If you intend to play all the GK games in one sitting,
be prepared for **1** " **2** **3** "

- Justin Peeples

For the answers go to the last page.

Time to see what our readers had to share with us. We have not answered all the e-mails that we have received since September, but you should be certain that we will do so eventually. If someone of you has sent us an e-mail before September that we have not answered in the Invento-mail, please send it again and complain about it, because there is a slight chance that we might have missed one or two. Let's move on to the letters!

Hi Dimitris,

Firstly, I want to say that The Inventory has become one of the most interesting sites/ezines in the community. For what it's worth, I found your nuanced answer to the 2D vs. 3D issue and your "letter to the Adventure Company" very agreeable. I also like how The Inventory gives much attention to lesser-known games, like Broken Saints.

What I want to comment about is the October edition of Invento-mail, where you make some good points for not covering action-adventures. You state that The Inventory "will stay a magazine only for pure adventures". That makes me a bit curious about how you define adventure games, and what games are included in that definition. The October issue carried an interesting feature on Quest for Glory (an RPG adventure). However, the magazine has not covered games such as Broken Sword 3 and The Longest Journey 2, which are (for all we know) major upcoming pure adventures.

The editorial policies of The Inventory, and those of Adventure Gamers, have regularly been debated on adventure forums. I think we both have chosen to disclude hybrid adventures because other sites already do a good job of covering those. I'm very interested in what others consider to be a hybrid adventure, but I'm still not entirely sure if I understand where The Inventory draws the line. Perhaps you could comment on that. Anyway, keep up the good work. It seems the genre is on a comeback tour -- hopefully through our collective efforts the gaming community will actually notice.

*Regards,
Marek Bronstring*

The Inventory: Hello Marek, and thank you for the kind comments. Before I explain the editorial policy of The Inventory I want to clear something out. We never said we are not covering The Longest Journey 2. We have covered TLJ2 as far as we are able to cover it. We had actually prepared and sent an interview to Ragnar Tornquist asking questions about TLJ2 a long time ago, and we were promised that it would be answered but eventually never was. Nevertheless, we still continued to cover TLJ2, and at one point Funcom said that TLJ2 would be an action/adventure. Tornquist said in his journal that he was misquoted. So I personally wrote at that point, that **if** TLJ2 turned out to be an action/adventure we would stop covering it, quite simply because we do not cover action/adventures. This does not mean that we do not cover TLJ2 at the time being, it just means that we will continue covering it, unless at some point in the future it turns out that TLJ2 is an action/adventure.

There has been nothing to say about it all this time, since as you well know Funcom refuses to release any information about it for the time being. As far as BS3 goes, the reason for not covering it is not so much its gameplay style, as it is Cecil's statement about point and click adventures. It goes down to ethics and matters of fair play, and you can think of it as a support to all the developers working on point and click adventures that are having a hard time to find publishers. If he apologised for the statement and admitted that there is actually place for both interfaces in the adventure community we would have no problems covering BS3. But I am sure Revolution could not care less whether their game is featured in our magazine or not so I wouldn't count on it.

As for what constitutes an adventure for the editorial policy of The Inventory...well instead of using a bunch of fancy words together to form a sophisticated definition that could be easily misunderstood or manipulated, I think I would better answer with examples instead. There are **a)**pure adventure games with no action elements at all, **b)**adventure games with some action elements tagged on, **c)**action games with some adventure elements tagged on, **d)**pure action games with no adventure elements at all. Under b I would include games like Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis, Blade Runner, Full Throttle 1, URU, Quest for Glory etc. **continued->**

Under c I would include games like King's Quest 8, Silent Hill, Outcast, In Cold Blood etc. It all goes down to whether the games have the focus on story development, character interaction and puzzle solving or shooting, stealth, jumping/standing/walking in/on a right direction/position. And the products that the Inventory is going to cover are products of the a and b category. For products of the c and d category our readers should better look elsewhere. And that is our editorial policy. Thanks again for taking the time to e-mail us.

Hey there,

First off, great online magazine, downloaded all of them already, and the fact that you have links to some previews and movies on upcoming games is awesome, keep it up. As for the pixel hunting, I don't know if you know this or not, but an old game called Simon The Sorcerer 2 had that system, by pressing F8 (or F-something else... I think, it's in the manual somewhere), all interactable (is that a word?) objects were highlighted for a split second so you could see what you may need to interact with. I don't know of any other game using that idea though, a shame I think, because I don't enjoy pixel hunting as well.

*All the best
Yoav*

The Inventory: Hello Yoav. Thanks for the commentary on the 'Ban pixel-hunting campaign' article. I am afraid to say I have not played Simon the Sorcerer 2, but this feature as well as the good reputation this game has in the adventure community has made me more than eager to play it. It is certainly beyond me why adventure developers have not used this system more often. It would definitely make for the ultimate interface system.

Hi, my name is Seong Park(male) and I'm from South Korea. I would first like to congratulate you for the job well done and say happy birthday. A year of reading The Inventory was definitely a spice in my life. Thank you so very much. I played many genres of games and I haven't played many adventure game. But adventure games truly bring out story, character, emotion and heart. My best gaming experiences were from adventures. The reason why I haven't played many adventures is that not many adventures were published in Korea. The fact that Syberia and TLJ didn't get published generally explains the problem. But that can't stop an avid adventure. ;)

I want to express my opinion concerning 1st person and 3rd person view, or rather 3rd person point and click and 1st person view that is widely used in the adventure genre. Certain adventures, recently Law and Order & CSI, chose the 1st person view while the majority of the adventures, especially successful ones, are 3rd person point and click. 3rd person point and click (3PPAP) is great for adventures and the articles in The Inventory explains why. Yet in my opinion, it has ups and downs. And I also think 1st person view (1PV) has great potential for adventures. This is my description of playing a 3PPAP. 3PPAP needs a strong main character. The more detailed the character, the better the story. Having a good story is a must for an adventure; Development of a detailed main character is vital. Or is it? The new adventure being developed by Cyan Entertainment (Uru but game names change quite often) will have a avatar-like character (maybe like The Sims). This wasn't the first time this method was used in adventures. In Mixed Up Fairy Tales, the main character can also be created. Strong characters are likable but having 'me' in the game is also a story itself.

When I play a conventional 3PPAP, I feel like a director making a film. When I get stuck, it feels as if the actors are making NGs because they only memorized their lines and didn't grasp the plot. I would be the director (maybe a fed up one) telling the actors what to and how to do it(with the feel). I would have to constantly remind them the details because of the personalities of the character and the atmosphere of the story. Often in a 3PPAP, great ideas and effort is invested on making solid characters. Such investment is rewarding, giving sure images and thoughts that illuminate the story and gaming experience.

continued->

This seemingly virtuous art yet has a flaw, a trap, a spec in an almost fine jewel. Let me explain. To play Quake well, you have to have to think like a mindless berserker. To play a standard 3PPAP well, you have to think like the main character(s). This is a great experience but it wasn't to me all the time. Before playing Indy4 FoA, I saw all the Indiana Jones movies. I had my interpretation of Indy and I wanted to play like what I thought Indy would do. Yet this constantly stumped me only until I say to myself, "Well, even though the option of fist/brain, brash/polite is given MANY times, I can't do it MY WAY all the time." Again, back to being the director. I have to admit, this is a ego thing. But don't we imagine ourselves cracking the whip when WE BE INDY?

I say 1PV should have a go, but extra work and thinking needs to be done. In a 3PPAP, special care is needed for making a solid main character. When you want players to have the "I'm in the game" feeling in the 1PV, special care is also needed. Although insufficient, I have a few ideas. I think 1PVs should have the main character speaking the dialogues. A pre-recorded male, female voice (a variety like macho/ gentleman, soft/sassy would be better) and a option to change the pitch and brightness of the voice would greatly give the, "I'm talking to that guy" rather than "I'm trying to find the right script to go along" feeling. Having special skills(Law and Order got something there) or items where I have the freedom to use or not also adds personal personality. For example, in Azrael's Tear, a laser weapon is given but I can finish the game without using it. I add the choices and personality in the gaming experience. The dialogue system needs variety in the adventure genre! I really liked the Sam and Max dialogue system (not choosing a sentence but clicking what and how to say or ask). It can really go well on 1PVs.

The future is bright for the adventure genre and two of its powers (out of many) is its creativeness and diversity. Yet I worry that when more 3PPAPs come out, a gaming magazine would have the nerve to say, "Been here, done that. Adventures never change. I guess you can't teach an old dog new tricks." I certainly don't think so but such comments are utterly litterd in the 'adventure is/was dead' type readings or editorials. Even some seemingly 'concerned for adventures' type writings underline such shallowness. This could be misunderstanding because many consider Tomb Raider an adventure. (I hate it when store owners hand me Lord of the Rings Something when I ask for an adventure) :]

This was quite a long email and you don't have to feel the burden of writing a long reply. ;) I'll be sending a card and a small gift for my gratitude to the crew of The Inventory. Best of luck and I hope you guys all have pleasant days that leave a smile before sleeping.

P.S. Sorry for the long letter.

P.P.S. I think Cyan should positively consider the change view option. Many games like flight simulations do it often(great for viewing landscapes). Ooh, binoculars!

The Inventory: Hello Seong. First of all thank you for the card and the gift. Seong sent us Azrael's Tear, a game that I had not played before actually and that I am looking forward to installing after I finish this issue of The Inventory. This was a great gesture from you. Now when it comes to your mail, unfortunately due to its large size I cannot comment on each one of your points. I can say though that they are most interesting to read.

One thing I want to comment though is the point where you say that 3rd person is great for adventures and The Inventory explains why. We are definitely not against 1st person adventures and we certainly do not think that a 3rd person adventure is better just because it is 3rd person. However I personally, am more than critical when it comes to the outdated engine most 1st person adventures use nowadays. I am talking about the 1st person adventures that have you 'teleport' from one node of the gameworld to another without even a transition sequence in between, which even disorients the players at certain times. Do not worry about adventure games. We are about to enter one of the best years for adventure games (check an article in the next issue of The Inventory about it) and the future looks bright. As for Cyan, it looks like they have already heard your wish, since in URU you can change between views with the press of a single button. Thanks so much for the present and the e-mail and we hope that you will continue enjoying our magazine!

Hey there,

Hello to everyone in the Inventory and specially to Dimitris (we have the same name). I am a new friend (issue 8 was my first) from Greece and a fan of adventuring. I could not decide whether I should write in greek or in english. Anyway which of the two I chose is obvious. I don't have anything very important to say but I wanted to write just to thank you for your great work.

Now some comments. The most important thing about Inventory is that it "brings adventures back on paper". When I first read issue 8 I wanted to suggest you to create a web site where we could find your reviews and anything else, but now I think it would destroy the feeling of Inventory. A friend asked you to put walkthrus. I think it is not necessary as it's easy to find lots of walkthrus for every game in the web. Something you could add in Inventory is a column about old games where anyone could write about one of his favourite games. Personally I would like to.

Now let's talk about some games. My favourite adventure game is The Last Express. It has problems (bad save system, small length, absence of subtitles when english is spoken, three very very easy action parts) but its plot is simply perfect and the puzzles are good enough. I know that it did not sell well (in fact much worse than that) so I propose it to everyone who wants a very good adventure game. If you do not post my letter please make a review of the game. Some games I also loved are Grim Fandango (Viva la Revolution!), Syberia, Black Dahlia and Discworld Noir. I have played lots of adventures but these 5 are my best. What's your opinion about them?

I have not found any comment in Inventory (though I must confess I have not read issues 1-7 thoroughly). On the other hand I have read a lot about Gabriel Knight and I want to tell my opinion. I have played only The Beast Within. In my opinion it has a very good plot but bad puzzles (please do not send me a virus for writing this). What's more I did not like none of the two main characters (especially this typical-american-guy Gabriel). Now about The Longest Journey, the game really impressed me and until chapter 11 I thought it would become easily my best game after Zelda (despite the slow and tiring dialogues and few bad puzzles) but the end (after leaving Earth) was much worse than I expected.

My final opinion is that it's a broken gem. Everyone should have played it but personally I cannot consider it as one of my favourites. That's all. I don't have anything else to add. Please excuse my errors. I rarely express in english and I found it a bit difficult. Dimitris please visit my website about Discworld Noir (dias.aueb.gr/~p3020118/) and tell me your opinion.

Yours,
Dimitris Tsonis

The Inventory: Hello Dimitris, you've got a beautiful name :-p I have already sent you the three latest viruses I could find on the net, plus a couple of worms and Trojans to punish you for what you said about The Beast Within ☺. Well to be honest I loved every single part of The Beast Within but of course we are different people and different people are supposed to have different opinions. The same goes for The Longest Journey. If you asked me it is one of the best games ever.

As for The Last Express, I am sorry to say that I have not played it. But like Simon the Sorcerer 2, which I mentioned in an earlier reply to another letter, it also has a very good fame in the adventure community and everybody talks about how innovative it was. Unfortunately I have never seen it in a computer games store so I was never able to purchase it. I'll check with the rest of the Inventory crew and see if they have it so that maybe they could write a review-tribute to it. And last but not least... as you have already understood yourself, the reason for not putting The Inventory online as a website is that we want it to feel more like a magazine. There are already enough adventure sites out there, I don't think one more would make any particular difference. Thanks for joining our readership and we hope you enjoy the future of this magazine.

THE HYDRA

The Hydra was a fearsome monster in ancient Greek mythology with many heads. If somebody cut one of its heads two more would grow out of its place. The Hydra represents the adventure genre that simply will not die no matter how much it is being fought.



The Hydra will be a column where you will be able to read thoughts and opinions on the current proceedings in our genre. Last month The Hydra was writing a message to the Adventure Company. This month we discuss the latest trend in adventure games.

THE PRINCE OF PERSIA SYNDROME

Lately we have seen some adventures (like URU and Cypher) that introduce a new style of gameplay. This new style of gameplay has players running around large 3D environments, trying to be careful not to fall from ledges, looking for levers to pull or tiles/crates to push in order to open some door so that they can move on and explore more 3D environments and pull more levers and push more tiles/crates.

This style of gameplay has been a trademark of action/adventures for years now. If you take out the action parts of them, you will notice that Prince of Persia 3D, Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine, Silent Hill and Tomb Raider feature the exact same gameplay. This of course does not mean that URU or Cypher are action/adventures themselves, since quite clearly they do not incorporate any action. But their style of gameplay has drawbacks when these games are put on a balance of an adventure gamer.

The first major drawback that this kind of gameplay entails is the tedious death scenes. Playing URU and Cypher I felt a lot of times like adventures turned 20 years back in the early Sierra games, when you would die every 10 minutes because you walked by mistake off a cliff, or because you touched a poisonous bush. And there is nothing exciting about that. The only feeling you will get is frustration.

Another major drawback, at least judging by the way this gameplay has been implemented so far, is that story-telling becomes hidden in the background. Running for 2 minutes to find a lever so that you can run 4,5 more minutes to find another lever is not really helping the construction of a strong story line. And the amazing graphics of URU might keep the players roaming the environments just for the artistic beauty of it, but the graphics' 'wow' factor can only last for a limited amount of time.

It is really disappointing that adventure developers borrow and copy gameplay styles and interfaces of other genres, instead of being original and coming up with something new of their own. Adventures were the leading genre in the 80s and beginning of 90s and they were the leading genre because the companies of the time, strived for originality and perfection.

The technology for great things is out there. Every tool however has to be used in a right way. A hammer can be a great tool, but it's not of much use when you try to cut a tree with it. Yes use the latest 3D graphics and use all the possibilities that a 3D world has to offer but make a classic masterpiece out of it, and not a Prince of Persia meets Sokoban 2003. And if you want to take some hints how can one make a great adventure in a 3D environment, take a look at Jane Jensen's Gabriel Knight 3.

The grand storyline is there, the memorable characters are there, the challenging puzzles that feel rewarding in the end are there and the exciting turn of events that make you say 'this is un-freakin-believable' more and more as you progress in the game is there also. Why borrow a style of gameplay that is the least to say monotonous and boring, when our own genre has so much to offer and so many gameplay options to be exploited? And after all of the above have been achieved, add by all means the graphics 'wow' factor and the latest surround sound capabilities that Creative Labs has to offer.

-Dimitris Manos

Epilogue

Well this is the end of an issue that you would probably like to print out in colour and keep it in your bookshelf (I think any issue with a Jane Jensen interview deserves that). 1 year completed. We hope you have enjoyed this past year, and get ready for more because there is lots to come. The Hydra has been nagging a lot lately so next month the article will be a bit more optimistic, and it will talk about the coming of what seems to be the best year for adventure games in a long time now.

Next month we will be featuring the point and click horror adventure Black Mirror as the review of the month section and we will be telling you if it manages to fill the void that has been left open since the Gabriel Knight series has stopped.

Apart from that you should expect a review of Law and Order II, the sequel to the first person adventure based on the TV-series, the second part of the URU review, and most likely a review-tribute to Grim Fandango, since many of our readers have requested it (Carla are you reading this?). As usual 2 interviews will be featured in our Lounge section. And how about some special treats for the holidays...well yep, you can say that we have some things in store for you.

Developers and artists out there, join our efforts to create an adventure that will measure to the classics by joining our team. This adventure will be a top class product, mark my words fellow adventurers! So get those applications written, and send us an e-mail.

Apart from that, we are thinking of adding a fan-fiction column in our Leisure section. So if you have written a fan-fiction story about an adventure game and you want it to be published in our magazine, send it to us. If the writing level is professional we will make sure it becomes an integral part of our magazine.

Year 2, here we come. *'Vanity... is definitely my favourite sin'*.

Dimitris Manos
Editor

Puzzle Page Answer Key:

Jumble: Dorn, Markham, Hamill, Zimbalist
Trivia: 1-G 2-N 3-G Puzzle Phrase: A Long "Knight"

The Inventory

A magazine for adventure games only

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