GIVE BLO

The most eagerly awaited PC game of all time has finally arrived, bringing the Internet to a halt. Somehow, we managed to download it, stick it on CD Gamer, and play it to death. And now we tell you about it.

By STEVE OWEN and JAMES FLYNN



Let the blood flow by the gallon. *Quake* takes violence in games to a new and fantastically enjoyable level.



The traps are the other main obstacle to success...



...the jaws close on this one with you in the middle.

ALL WEAPONED UP

Quake features a surprisingly small collection of eight weapons. They are:

(1) An axe
(2) A shotgun
(3) A double-barrelled shotgun
(4) The nailgun
(5) The super nailgun
(6) A grenade launcher
(7) The rocket launcher
(8) The thunderbolt (see right)

All bar the last are fairly self explanatory. The thunderbolt is a rather weedy-looking electric flash that frazzles very efficiently what's in front of it. Try it underwater for best effect.



OD!



The monsters fight just like before, but at the moment they never attack in hordes as were seen in *Doom 2*.



The *Quake* shareware single-player mode is over all too quickly, but the multi-player game will keep you going for a lot longer. The early levels all have enclosed arenas that act as a meeting ground and slaughter point for all.

ON SATURDAY 22ND JUNE, 1996, id Software, arguably the most respected group of programmers on Earth, calmly uploaded the shareware version 0.91 of *Quake* to 40 Internet sites around the world. Within seconds, a normally quiet Internet day was alive with thousands of eager game players, scrabbling to connect to the FTP sites like old women at a Harrods sale. In traditional id style, they made no early warning of the release, but the prospect attracted so much attention that no secret could be safe for long. Rumours were rife the day before, and thousands expected it to appear on the Saturday. Like the appearance of *Doom* two years before it, so many people were waiting on the distribution sites that id had trouble connecting to some themselves in order to upload the program.

Weighing in at a hefty eight and half megabytes zipped and nearly twenty on your hard drive, downloading *Quake* using your modem would cost you a fortune, particularly when the rest of the world is causing the Internet to run so slowly. But, thankfully, Trevor, the CD Editor, spent most of Sunday 23rd getting it for you, and with the nod from Jay Wilbur at id, we present to you the very first shareware version of *Quake* on CD Gamer



The super nailgun is the best weapon in the game.

There's a plot?

Indeed there is, and you can't possibly expect to understand the complexities and strategies of *Quake* until you learn this tale by heart. You work for a top secret scientific department, one that is close to perfecting the technology of Slipgates and thus transporting people and cargo to anywhere else in the Universe instantly. An enemy department,

"With a further 20 missions and 9 Deathmatch levels available, it's not surprising the lines opened the moment *Quake* appeared on the Internet."

OBJECTS D'ART

Having just admired Steve's remains arcing beautifully across the room, who could possibly argue that killing is an art form? Deep-rooted anger and insecurities may be expressed without fear of ridicule by lobbing a grenade at someone's head. This being indisputable, here are some of the items scattered about to help express yourself.

ARMOUR

Green, yellow and red provide you with 100, 150 and 200 points of protection respectively.



It's vital at all times to have some, and particularly useful against the lesser weapons.



MEGAHEALTH

Adds 100 to your health. Much needed for longer firefights, and you can feel very smug when you have 200 life.

PENTAGRAM OF PROTECTION

Temporarily raises armour to 666 points (i.e. makes you invulnerable).





QUAD DAMAGE

Pick it up, the *Quake* logo appears, and even the shotgun blows people to smithereens with a couple of blasts.

RING OF SHADOWS

Makes you invisible. Real players don't pick this one up.





FOR THOSE TRICKIER MOMENTS

The shareware version isn't as hard as most of us expected, but when three fiends are trying to turn you into meat every self-respecting Quaker will feel the need for a little easy firepower. To ease your way through the carnage, *PC Gamer* presents the basic cheat codes. Just type 'em into the Console (easily accessed using the wobbly '~' key, beneath Escape on UK keyboards) as you go.

GOD – God Mode
IMPULSE 9 – All weapons and keys
MAP E#M# – Level Warp
NOCLIP – Turn Clipping On and Off
FLY – Fly mode (use D & C keys)
KILL – Suicide



Activate NOCLIP and FLY up to inspect the map.



An Ogre and Spider fight it out as you watch on. Wait 'til they're weak and take them both out with the shotgun.

"id know that Deathmatch is the be-all and end-all ingredient in a classic game, and *Quake* is designed from the very beginning to make multi-player sessions as simple as possible."

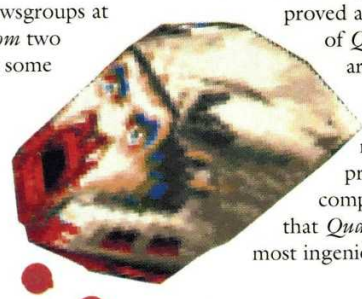
codenamed Quake, that may even be from another dimension, is using its own slipgates to deposit lethal creatures into your base. As part of a counter strike, you, being the department's best man naturally, must prepare a team to destroy the menace. Unfortunately for you, while enjoying a spot of reconnaissance, Quake attacks your base without warning, killing all your colleagues and then disappearing again. Without the army you were counting on, you sneak into Quake's slipgate before it closes, and decide to take the blighters on single-handed.



Good or what?

Good. Perhaps with this much hype, *Quake* could never be as special as everyone hoped. It is only a game after all. But take it from us: *Quake* is good. Perhaps the greatest criticism floating around the Internet newsgroups at the moment is that it's just *Doom* two years on. It looks nicer, it's got some new weapons and big gothic rooms, but essentially things haven't really moved on since *Doom*, or *Wolfenstein* 3D for that matter.

We don't remember id saying it would do, though. This is the follow-up to *Doom*, just as *Doom* was the follow-up to *Wolfenstein*. It's a first-person 3D game, where the rule is to move through a succession of levels, killing bad guys, collecting power-ups, finding keys and getting to the exit before you die. What has been proved already, and the latest release of *Quake* affirms this, is that id are still the masters of level and game design. Although their technical expertise may be overshadowed by the promise of future games from competitors, no one can deny that *Quake* includes some of the most ingenious and entertaining levels



A SECRET STASH

At first glance *Quake* appears to have far fewer secrets than *Doom* had. This revolution is linked to one of *Quake*'s main new features – there's no 'action key'. Whereas in *Doom* you always had to hit space to open a door, simply running into one now achieves the same effect. The result is that *Quake*'s secrets are generally activated by shooting at the right area, be it a switch, wall or ceiling. This distance activation gives the level designers more freedom to play around with the trigger locations.

First, look around for all buttons high up on walls, suspicious shadows, panels on the floors, flashing lights and cubby holes that appear to have no purpose. These contain most of the secret goodies. Either shoot them, hit them with the axe or throw grenades into them in the hope that the explosion will set a switch off nearby.

As a start, try accessing the Nightmare difficulty level which is unavailable from the menu or the opening selection hall. Enter any of the arches at the start, and climb the stairs leading to The Elder World (the fourth episode). Move very slowly into the pool ahead, keep your back to the wall and back up as you fall down. If you do it right, you'll land on a beam whereupon you can exit left and move into the Nightmare teleporter.

THE FULL VERSION

At about the same time as the shareware Quake was released, rumours of a beta version of the full game began circulating on the Internet. This unfinished version, it is reported, was distributed for purposes of final video, sound and networkbug testing. Those who've played it say that, apart from a few monsters with no AI, it was pretty much what we could expect from the finished game.

What's it like? Hard, apparently. But the number of monsters is substantially smaller than in *Doom* and the levels are vastly more convoluted. Some complain that the lack of a map means large periods are spent wandering around searching for new areas to explore and dying because there are so many beasts in your way. We shall say no more until the review next month.





The axe is a pathetic replacement for the chainsaw.

"If your plan was to run around your opponent, blasting him with a shotgun, you'll be disappointed that your shots miss as often as hit."

ever designed. The single-player game, at least as far as the shareware levels go, are a touch too simple. It's likely to take you only two to three hours to complete the seven shareware missions (and one hidden special), and the boss on the final level, although looking more incredible than any monster you'll ever have seen, is surprisingly easy to kill. Perhaps it's all a matter of cunning marketing. *Heretic,* for instance, provided so much in the shareware version that some other game probably came along before you got through it all. By providing only a few hours of entertainment, id obviously expect the world to order the full version today. With a further 20 missions and 9 Deathmatch levels available, it's not surprising the lines opened the moment *Quake* appeared on the Internet.

I've got some mates

If it isn't the polygon graphics, pseudo real-time lighting and proper 3D levels that distinguishes *Quake* above its predecessor, then the careful integration of multi-player options must stand out as a distinct improvement. *Doom* always gave the impression that the Deathmatch option was bolted on at the last minute. Players couldn't come and go as they pleased, and you fought it out on the basic single player levels. But it's the Deathmatch sessions that ensured *Doom* was still being played two years on.

Quake, if anything, has gone the other way. id know that Deathmatch is the be-all and end-all ingredient in a classic game, and *Quake* is designed from the very beginning to make multi-player sessions as simple as possible. Network games are integrated as naturally as changing the sound effects volume. You simply select the multi-player option from the main screen, and decide whether you want to set yourself up as the originator of a network game (server), join one that is going on elsewhere, dial a friend using your modem, connect using a straightforward serial cable, or, if you have an Internet account, you can even join in with a game going on anywhere around the world. It's possibly not worth trying to join a game

LIGHTING THE WAY

Much of the pre-release chat discussing *Quake* was focused on the use of lighting. While *Into The Shadows, Unreal* and *Prey* were all promising true lighting, id were preaching that by using clever texturing the demands on the processor could be significantly lessened. Now we can see the near-complete version, it's apparent that id have recanted to at least some degree. Weapons DO cause real-time effects and illuminate corridors. They aren't anything like as pretty as in *Dungeon Keeper* or *ITS* but are brilliantly functional and fast. The use of textures in *Quake* is still clever, and the two techniques complement each other extremely well.



Using rockets to illuminate darker areas is risky because of their blast radius...



...but fire them off into the distance and watch the real-time lighting kick into action.

LEVEL DESIGN

In the gap between the release of *Doom* and *Doom II*, id honed their level design to bring us larger and larger spaces packed with interesting features. This evolution has reached a new level of perfection in *Quake*. Vast chasms dominate the maps, their ceilings rising into the clouds and their interiors being criss-crossed by platforms, beams, walls and ledges. Looking down from high on the Ziggurat level and considering everything is perspectively-correct, textured, and lit real-time in places, it's amazing the screen moves at all.

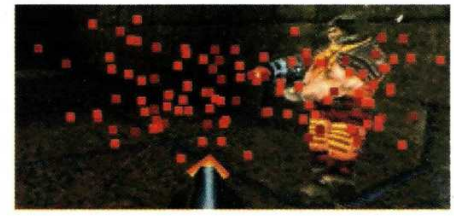


in Australia, though, as the delay will slow everyone's game down. If you want to find out the address of any games around the world, take a look at Stomped's Web site at http://www.stomped.com

Deathmatch is as fast and furious as it ever was in *Doom*, but much harder. In fact, if you're used to the *Quake* test that appeared a few months ago, you might be shocked by how badly your tactics work in this version. The aiming isn't as forgiving as it used to be. If your plan was to run around your opponent, blasting him with a shotgun, you'll be disappointed that your shots miss as often as hit. And if you've become proficient at toasting someone with a rocket, you'd better hope that your opponent hangs around long enough to eat it.

Supplies are hard to come by, particularly when there're 16 furious Deathmatchers gunning for whatever they can get their

"The greatest addition is water. Thank God, though, that the Poseidon Adventure never had the kind of traps that *Quake* has waiting for you."



Take to the dungeon in your finest Sunday outfit.

MONSTROUS FUN

Quake's engine technology is the best out there. It's the only game with quality hi-res textured polygon monsters (*Terminator: Future Shock* doesn't count because, er, they were all grey) that move fast. But is their characterisation and behaviour up to the impeccably high standard of id's previous games, *Doom* and *Wolfenstein?* We're going to leave the judgement until the review next month, but until then here's what they are and what they do.

ROTWEILER

Read Trainspotting? Then you'll like playing with these.





GRUNT

Simple humans. Blow them away and collect their ammo.

ENFORCER



[registered game only] Grunts with blasters. The orange blaster bolts these super-grunts fire are easy to deal with from a distance but large numbers cause problems when up close.



KNIGHT

Streak towards you and take a nasty swing at your head with their sword. You can gun them down from a distance without too much hassle, but don't let them get too close.

DEATH KNIGHT



[registered game only] Brutally tough and fast. Need three grenades to see them off and are resistant to the nail guns. Keeping them at a distance will allow them to unleash their fire spray and bringing then in close will only cause more trouble.



ROTFISH

[registered game only] We hope the Rotfish look better in the finished game. Don't do much at the moment apart from die.

ZOMBIES



These are highly irritating hunks of rotting flesh. They keep rising from the dead unless you obliterate them with grenades or rockets. They tend to cluster, which makes for a wider splat radius.



SCRAG

Rather out of place in the shareware game. Weak but aggressive ghost-like chaps that fire dubious streams of yellow from their eyes. Strafe a lot to avoid and pick them off with a shotgun.

OGRES



The first real enemies you meet. Very clever, fast and strong. At a distance they lob grenades; close up they'll chainsaw you to pieces. Fire, retreat, dodge, fire, laugh at the corpse seems to be the order of the day.



SPAWN

[registered game only] Like that thing from The Abyss. A tad dodgy looking and extremely vulnerable but cause damage to you when they explode nearby.

FIEND



Gits. Leap upon you from a distance and munch. Avoid contact at all costs, and try to group them together and give them a grenade as a present. They're big, so backing down narrow corridors will allow you to pick them off at leisure.



This chap is called Chthau. He's the most impressive beast in the game but isn't that strong for some reason.

bodied hands on. If you hear a right scrap going on further down a corridor, have a second thought about charging in, guns blazing, unless, of course, you want to be cut down in rapid crossfire.

You don't have to constantly slaughter your mates. As with *Doom*, there's a co-operative option, where you can all gang up on the monsters. We must warn you, though: Try not to team up with the unstable psycho, as a co-operative mission soon breaks down when a Deathmatcher-wanabee lets rip on his chums.

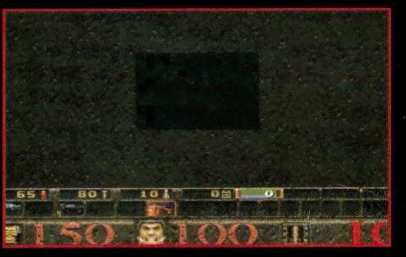
You could, of course, go halfway with a team game. Set an option on the main screen and anyone with trousers of the same colour automatically becomes a member of a team, where a combined total kills wins the day. You can even set it so that it's impossible to become a victim of friendly fire, an interesting addition from an American company.

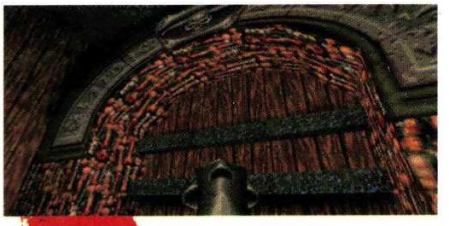


A shambler closing in for the kill. We don't know where his eyes are but he spurts blood when hit in the face by the lightning gun, so that's okay.

CAN I PLAY IT ON MY 486?

One of *Doom's* greatest assets in its global domination was the fact that it ran on a low-spec'ed PC. *Quake* doesn't. Play it on anything less than a P75 and you're in for a torrid time if you want to have fun in much more than a postage-stamp-sized window. This is highly regrettable considering that 33% of *PC Gamer* readers have a 486DX2/66 and a further 20% have a 486DX4/100 (according to our spies). To run it at more than the basic resolution of 320x200 requires a decent Pentium, and to whack it into 640x400 you'll need at least a P166 and a fast video card under DOS (but even then it's less than speedy). If you're feeling stupid, *Quake* supports a res of 1280x1024, although you'll be running at about 3fps and it's fairly pointless anyway because all the wall textures are drawn in standard VGA no matter which res you run in.





The background scenery easily outperforms *Doom*, but it's a shame that all the textures are in low res – they block up terribly when you move in close.



VORE

[registered game only] The most blatant Doom rip off in the entire game. A spider that's as crap as their name and look about as menacing as a jelly. But the Quake damage spreadsheet makes them as tough as a sheet metal.

SHAMBLER



Huge and deadly. Apart from the end-of-level bosses this is where *Quake* is at its toughest. Run when their lightning bolts are fully charged and get in close for some David and Goliath action. Shotgun them in the chin for that Wild At Heart effect.

And that's about yer lot. First impressions of the shareware monsters are encouraging. The only possible drawback is that they tend to attack in ones or twos as opposed to the hugely entertaining swarms that descended upon you in *Doom II*. We'll make a final decision when we see the boxed game, eh?

Some new bits

Quake's greatest addition is water. Most levels feature some form of lake or river, many of which hide weaponry, power-ups or monsters. If you keep 'running', you'll swim on the surface. Stop treading water for a second and you'll start to sink. Once your head goes under the surface, a whole new world is open for exploration. You can swim in any direction you choose, and then pop up for air every 30 seconds and explore a bit further. Thank God, though, that the Poseidon Adventure never had the kind of traps that *Quake* has waiting for you. If you want to impress your grandparents, stay under water for as long as possible and listen to your sickening choke as you gasp for oxygen.

Sensibly, *Doom*'s Use key has been replaced by a Jump, allowing a whole new range of platform-style puzzles. You can even avoid rockets and flechettes by carefully timing your jump. Look out for interesting levels in the registered version, as the Ziggurat Vertigo Deathmatch level in the shareware game changes the gravity, with leaps of over forty feet possible.

End of the day

Is this the greatest game ever written? Perhaps it's just too early to say. It's certainly a superb game and very enjoyable, but the ultimate accolade is not the amount of hype and pre-release excitement generated, but how long it takes to be deleted from your hard drive in order to make way for the latest blockbuster. Playing the single-player game, you might be disappointed within a few hours, and hankering after the full version. As a multi-player game, though, if you're anything like us, *Quake* 'll be occupying you long after you should have gone home. PCG

● The registered version of *Quake* is expected during August. We'll be sure to review it as soon as it arrives.