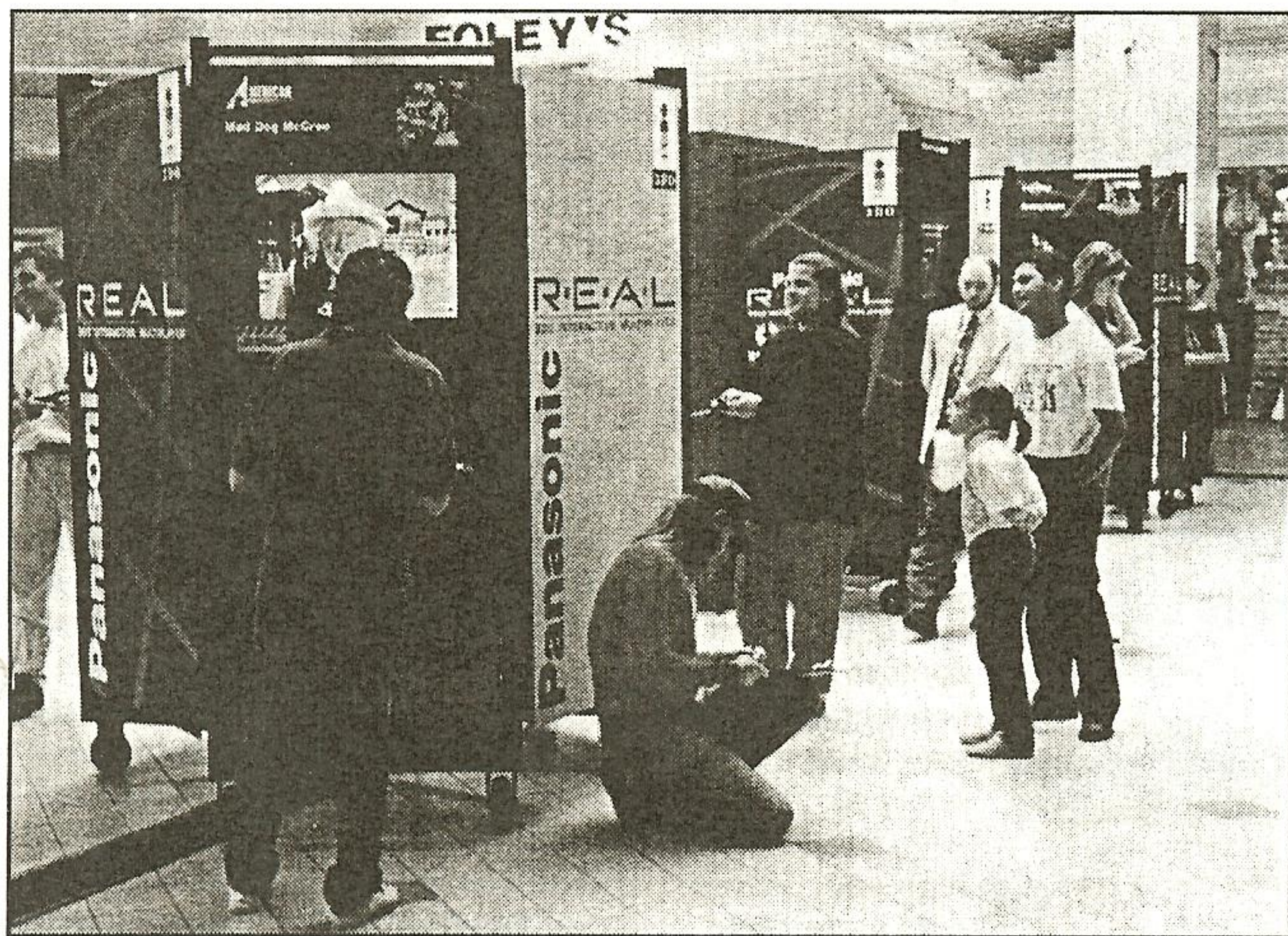


Point of ORIGIN

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Austin, TX



Getting malled...

Panasonic takes its 3DO dog-and-pony show to Dallas

3DO Does Dallas

It's a concept that record companies have always embraced: when you need to promote an unknown, take it on the road. And so began Panasonic's 3DO National Mall Tour, which did a weekend gig at Valley View Mall in Dallas. The Panasonic REAL Multiplayer is the first 3DO box to ship. It is so named because it not only plays 3DO CDs, but also audio CDs and photo CDs. A Sanyo 3DO machine is expected to ship sometime around April of 1994, with the AT&T unit to follow in June or July.

Panasonic's idea for the tour is to give the public a hands-on feel for the platform and some of the titles designed for it. In all, five free-standing kiosks showed 15 products (including Super Wing Commander) along with a flashy, looping videotape on a big-screen monitor. I, your Humble Editor (Galen Svanas), went *incognito*, as if I were somebody off the street wanting to learn about 3DO.

At each stop, Panasonic hires models to walk around and hand out brochures and surveys. That's about as far as their expertise goes. One particu-

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In Print

It's always great to start this article with a bang, so check out the Wing Academy review in PC Entertainment. "ORIGIN seems to have taken every rational suggestion from the series' legion of fans and wrapped them into one gorgeous package," Bill Trotter writes. And he ends with: "Thank you ORIGIN; you have answered many prayers." You can't top that.

But hold it—maybe we can. AOPA Pilot is the largest-read maga-

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3DO...

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larly friendly model told me she finally had to give up looking for the mixing bowl in Fatty Bear's Birthday Surprise. "When the guy was showing us how to play," she said, "I kept thinking, 'What's the point?'"

However, the tour also had Field Managers, members of a marketing company hired by Panasonic, who were very knowledgeable about each title and overwhelmingly helpful with everyone who wanted to try his or her hand at the controls. I asked one of them, Toby Schertzer, why the volume was turned down on the Super Wing demo. He didn't know I was from ORIGIN when he answered, "All of the sound isn't in yet; the software is still in development. But this is supposed to be one of the best titles when it's released." Later, after I introduced myself, I asked how the response had been to SWC3DO. "Everybody really loves it," he said. "I just wish it would go ahead and ship."

That seemed to be a prevalent feeling for almost all of the titles. Andrew Hoolan, a Babbage's salesman, said the 3DO players have been selling like wildfire. One store at North Park Mall put out seven units that first Friday morning and sold five of them within 45 minutes—on a school day. Field Manager Toby Schertzer said that 15,000 people attended the Mall Tour in Los Angeles, and 15 of them immediately went out and bought a player.

But Hoolan said he's seen some of the units coming back. "I think the hardware got a jump on the software. People really seem to like 3DO, but

they're sick of Crash 'N Burn (the title that ships with the player along with a sampler disk)." Since C&B is the only truly finished title, it was on three different screens. Almost all of the remaining titles had a disclaimer: "This software is in development. Please allow time for disk access and loading." "Some people lock up the machines just hitting random buttons," Schertzer said.

Still, the products looked

impressive. Even without sound, SWC3DO was one of the most popular games. "The graphics are great," one player said, "but I think I'm going to hold off on buying 3DO for a while." The other obvious leader and SWC3DO's major competitor was Crystal Dynamics' Total Eclipse, a space-flight and combat game with some grabby ground terrain and really nice artwork. EA's Road Rash, a high-end, texture-map motorcycle chase reported to

be an impressive title, was not being shown.

Full motion video is the hot trend right now, and 3DO is especially suited for it. An EA title called Twisted: The Game Show, was one of the best examples. It uses live actors in a surreal television game show setting, with a lot of bizarre contests and sound—definitely a show favorite. Mad Dog McCree, a wild west shootout game from American Laser Games, is completely video based. American Laser also does a line of arcade games with the same idea: you use your gun cursor to blast your way through the story. American Laser plans an entire line of 3DO products using this movie approach, complete with professional actors and full sets.

In my opinion, one of the *least* effective uses of digitized video was Software Toolworks' Oceans Below.

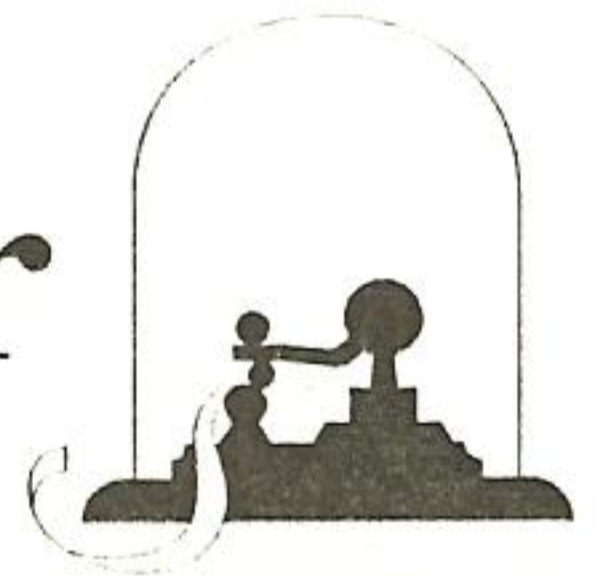
It's meant to take you to some of the great scuba locations around the world. In its current stage, the video was very choppy and unimpressive. 3DO is promising an optional video accessory next year that will make full motion playback much smoother and presumably pave the way for the 3DO player to be used for movie rentals.

Other notables: Intellimedia Sports looks to be in 3DO big time with a line of video-based products that serve as personal coaches. Intelliplay Football is broken into four subtitles: Quarterback, Receiver, Linemen and Defensive Backfield. Each covers the fundamentals. A companion baseball line takes you from the pitcher's mound through hitting, catching and defensive play. Other titles include Lower Your Score with Tom Kite (a golf tutor) and Cowboy Casino.

Humongous seems to have a lock on 3DO kids' edutainment right now, with its Fatty Bear and Putt-Putt franchises. Both titles looked identical to their PC counterparts. The only other edutainment title shown was Shelly Duvall's It's a Bird's Life (Sanctuary Woods), which is finished and available now in stores.

This tour plans to hit Boston, NYC, LA, Washington D.C., Mall of America (Minnesota) and wrap up in San Francisco, where, undoubtedly, it will be swamped with EA and 3DO employees. Another six-city tour may hit the road in February and could include Houston. Don't let your subscription to Point of ORIGIN expire. We'll keep you updated on all the latest developments in the 3DO marketplace.

Ticker



The latest from Wall Street at press time.

ERTS	35.750	unchanged
THDO	34.750	-2.500
BROD	53.750	+1.000
MPRS	14.500	unchanged
MSFT	78.250	-0.500
SIGI	41.625	+0.625
SIER	23.750	-0.750



A player checks out Super Wing Commander on a free-standing kiosk

Pulse Check

For you amateur phraseologists out there who enjoy keeping up with ORIGINisms, we have a new one for you. In the beginning, when producers were asked about a project's status, they would say, "It's tracking." Next came the "range" concept for release dates (thanks, Bart). Now, the popular phrase seems to be, "The team is very focused." Make sure you're hip during the next project status meeting or press interview.

On to the products themselves. The Strike CD is in the final throes of development and could go beta next week. The team gave the Marketing gang a huge helping hand by putting together a gauntlet mode that will be used during COMDEX. Toshiba is sponsoring a big Strike Fly-Off at its booth and the event will be the unofficial launch of the Strike CD. Three armchair pilots will take the controls and fly for three minutes. Those with the highest kill ratios will get a t-shirt and possibly even a free double-speed disc drive or copy of the game. Right now, the CD's looking at a December ship date. About the only thing left is to implement a flick player to run the totally overhauled (and great) intro sequence.

Despite the tireless toil of the U8 team, it's beginning to look a lot *not* like Christmas. That game will probably ship in the fourth quarter. On a positive note, though, Computer Game Review plans to put U8 on its January (CES) cover as a feature work-in-progress story. Hopefully, that will lead to a bump in sales and some good momentum when the ship date arrives. Besides, retailers would be disappointed if they didn't have an Ultima to bring customers back into stores for the new year.

The road's been a little bumpy for the Pacific Strike team, too. They're still cranking and trying to make Christmas, but it's going to be

tough.

As for released products, we may have two hits in a row. Overall, the response to Shadowcaster has been very positive; just about the only complaint is the short play time. From a Product Support standpoint, the thing looks clean. 46 calls came in during the week (10/27-11/2). Of those 20 were for boot disks, 9 for Flash Bios, 6 for hints, and 11 for miscellaneous.

Privateer logged a whopping 809 calls: boot disks (21%), hints (20%) and IRQ conflicts (14%) topped the list. Serpent Isle pulled in 354 calls, with an incredible 61% of them for hints. Boot disks (of course) ranked second at 16%. Strike Commander players checked in with 307 calls. Boot disks (48%) and install problems (16%) were the biggest snags. It only follows that Tac Ops would be next (62 calls): boot disks (15%...anyone else noticing a pattern here?) and the savegame patch (15%). A Product Support dream, Silver Seed had 55 calls, with 78% of them hint-related. Finally, Wing Academy had 16 calls, with 31% of them dealing with IRQ conflicts and 19% of them having to do with boot disks.



Hire and Hire

Get ready for another new version of the phone list; HR's been at it again. **Evan Brandt** is new in Product Support. He says his favorite color is black and his heroes are Wilson Phillips, Tiffany and Debbie Gibson. At least the guy has a sense of humor (we hope)...

Shawn Rogers is an Advanced Software Engineer (is that one of those new titles?). How did Shawn end up at ORIGIN? "Dog sled got a flat." Shawn would also like to start a Beer Appreciation club here. (Really...I don't make this stuff up. It's what they write.)

NEWS.TXT

MAYBE WE CAN STILL DO "MIKE TYSON BOXING": Garry Kasparov was well on his way to repeating as the World Chess Champion when he suddenly dropped out of the tourney. Kasparov had just advanced to the final round when a dispute over the venue and prize money led to his quitting. Right now, EA is promoting its chess game, Kasparov's Gambit, featuring audio and video clips from the master himself.

JUST WHAT WE NEEDED: Baseline Publishing has announced Axis The Gamecheater, a utility designed to give you the ability to bamboozle your favorite game. By pressing a hot key you can add points, lives, or whatever to the game you're currently playing. Over 50 games are supported, including Prince of Persia, Lemmings, Hellcats, PGA Tour Golf, Spectre & Spectre Supreme, Dogs of War, Simcity, A-Train, and more. Retail price of Axis The Gamecheater is \$69.95 on the PC and \$59.95 on the Macintosh. The company says the product is available through major software retailers via distributors such as Merisel and Baker & Taylor.

JUST WHAT WE NEEDED (EVEN LESS): A multimedia CD-ROM player for use in cars has been unveiled by Japan's Fujitsu Ltd. The player—called Car Marty—was developed jointly by Fujitsu and a car stereo manufacturing subsidiary. The device plays CD-ROMs for car navigation, karaoke, video games and other purposes, as well as ordinary music CDs.

Just a
reminder...



Turn in your HR questionnaire by tomorrow (Tuesday) to qualify for the free lunch.

Print...

Continued from page 1

zine of professional and private pilots. In a write-up of several flight sims, Vincent Czaplyski calls Strike "a 9-G flying extravaganza that lives up to its promise of being one of the very best personal computer flight simulations ever." His only complaint (and a minor one) is that the aircraft control is overly sensitive. Still, he counts Strike at the top of the sim list which includes Secret Weapons and Comanche. In addition to his writing career, Vinnie flies as a Boeing 727 captain for a major U.S. airline.

The premier issue of Personal Computer Simulations is out and Strike is on the cover. PCS is from the same gang that does Air Classics and Air Combat magazines. "Fly over this terrain in true 3-D," the article says, "and you'll feel like you're there." We couldn't have said it better ourselves, and we have proof. The entire "review" is a verbatim reprint of our FPO (For Press Only) that we sent with the game. So much for journalistic integrity.

We have higher hopes for an international group here last week. Guillaume Lepenneck from Tilt (France), Paul Lankin from PC Zone (England) and Mark Deltz from Strategy Plus (U.S.) made the rounds, checking out all the works in progress. Each plans to do an ORIGIN profile in a December or January issue. When asked what he thought about what he'd seen, the Brit journalist replied, "I could do *five* feature stories with everything going on at ORIGIN."

While we're talking about foreign press, Tilt's October issue is brimming with ORIGIN coverage. U8 is listed as "Event of the Month." The editors say it could be "one of the greatest role-playing games ever for the PC...Graphically rich with a luxury of detail." In a separate review, Privateer is called "superior to any other game in its category." They go on to say, "No doubt that Privateer will quickly become a classic and we'll be talking about it in 10 years. Go buy it." The reviewer's only objection to the game is that it not in SVGA. Still, it rates 91%.



Pacific specifics...

Eric Hyman gives the spiel to the international press corps: (l-r) Paul Lankin from PC Zone in England, Guillaume LePenneck from Tilt magazine in France, and Mark Deltz from Strategy Plus here in the United States.

Also in Tilt—Shadowcaster is called graphically superb with excellent animation. "Fascinating. Fabulous," they write. Since this was only a preview, there is no rating. The Tilt gang is a little more lukewarm to Wing Academy, giving it only 71%. "Great quality, but the lack of scenario makes it quickly boring." We've noticed that most European reviewers really miss the flicks and storyline.

Another French mag, Joystick, has a nice write-up on U8 from its European Computer Trade Show coverage: "So beautiful, it will probably bring even more people into the Ultima fan club." Privateer also gets three pages with a ton of screen shots and rates as a Joystick "Megastar" with a 92% rating.

Sadly, we end with a story about mis-Fortune. If you picked up the latest issue of Fortune magazine in which Austin ranked as one of the top ten cities to do business, you noticed that ORIGIN was not profiled as expected. But take heart. The reporter was very taken with this place and sent out a photographer to get plenty of pictures, so we may still be talking about a full-fledged ORIGIN feature story. We'll keep you posted.

RAW DATA

Employee head counts as of June, 1993 and percentage change from one year ago. (Source: Software Industry Bulletin)

EA	999	+89.9%
MicroProse	399	+11.8%
Soft. Toolworks	360	+10.8%
Sierra	356	-34.9%
Acclaim	214	+74%
Accolade	113	+14.1%
Maxis	90	+45.2%
Activision	65	0.0%

Who's the cat who won't cut out when there's danger all about?

Point Man

Can you dig it?

Have you ever wondered why things work the way they do at ORIGIN? (Or why they don't work?) Answers are as close as your keyboard. Just e-mail them to the Point Man at the "Point of ORIGIN" address. Or, if you have a yearning for anonymity, drop it by Galen's office in Creative Services on the second floor (#221). Identities will be protected (no one's been fired for a Point letter yet, have they?)