

### **Death & Destruction: The Mad Scientist Simulator**

The player takes the part of a mad scientist who wants nothing more than to be left alone so he can experiment with things man was not meant to know.

First, he builds his castle. (In the introductory game, we'll provide some basic designs and let the player modify them...) Does he build an underground dungeon? Does he put a huge lightning rod on top? Does he build on the site of an ancient indian burial ground?

Then, he adds traps designed to catch potential experimental subjects or kill intruders (the pesky good guys who always seem to be lurking about).

What kind of followers does the player want to attract? Is he creating a diabolical religion so he can call a Cthulhoid beast into our dimension? Is he a vampire who requires a willing dupe who can draw victims to his door? Is he a mad scientist who requires strong-armed thugs who can dig up corpses so he can sew them together and build a new man?

The real fun here is building the castle and then watching the pitiful forces of good try to penetrate the defenses. Their failures are shown in graphic, but humorous, detail (sort of like the death of the lemmings in Lemmings).

1. Lemmings meets Sim City: A Constructive Game of Destruction. Build the death traps that allow you to stop the good guys before they put an end to your exploration of things man was not meant to know.
2. Lots of Lemmings-like levels playable separately, but adding up to a big, continuing story. The first level involves running off the inhabitants of a middle-European town and razing the town so you can build your castle. Next you build the castle while staving off the attacks of the surviving locals. Then you acquire the body parts to build your monsters. Next, acquire equipment. Next send the monster to do something, etc. At the end of each level, you get a code so you don't have to replay earlier ones.
3. Employ lots of animation and lots of scaling, so player chooses how up-close and personal he/she wants to be. The closer you are, the more detail you see, but the less of the overall picture you get. Ideally, allow the player to position the camera wherever he/she wants to construct the death traps -- the world exists in 3D, not just a flat Lemmings world. not just overhead view of Sim City.
4. The death traps are constructed at the player's whim. Lots of rube Goldberg devices, made up of individual pieces, each of which has predefined qualities. Once you know the qualities, you can build anything -- this makes multiple solutions to puzzles possible. You can build one big, elaborate trap to kill lots of good guys or you can build lots of little ones to off a few at a time. Include lots of simple situations (rope bridges where you can cut through support ropes and watch good guy sway and wobble until rope snaps and he plummets, cartoon-like, e.g.)
5. You can operate alone or create/enlist monstrous assistants. If you go the latter route, the assistants assist intelligently (though not as effectively as if you gave them orders. How well they work is determined by the quality of the brain you steal for them?
6. Multiple goals, selectable at beginning of game, determined which levels you see, how difficult they are, and what story you play out. (Repeat playability)
7. Other levels:
  - a. Chopping Mall. A killer loose in a mall has to use materials in stores to stop police, increase body count.
  - b. Amusement Park Deathtrap. Construct the rides that lead straight to hell: The Roller Toaster (an electrifying thrill ride), The Splatterhorn, The Parachute Plummets, Runaway Railway, Bumper Cars, etc.
8. The Good Guys operate according to some fairly sophisticated rules which player can learn. Boy and Girl meet and they'll always go off alone together. The Scientist will always stop to inspect a machine he's never seen before. Knowing this, players can concoct funneling situations that lead to death traps.



9. We'll create licensable characters: The Evil Dr. Spector, e.g....
10. Animation must be terrific. Devices must seem real. Death must be so over the top it's funny.
11. Go it alone or enlist/dig up allies? Early levels, it's just you. Allies only become available after player masters basic game mechanics.
12. Do you give allies orders or do they have limited, pre-set behavior, like good guys? If the former, use the keyboard shortcuts or click mouse to cycle through iconic representations of options. Click on an ally with appropriate icon to change orders.
13. Play two ways -- solve puzzles or killing rampage. If latter, game should feel like Robotron. Either approach should work. A combination works best.
14. How do you get allies? All allies you need on any level are hidden there -- just find them/build them/dig them up? Carry them over from level to level? (Build monster on level one. If he survives, he appears with you on level two?) Vampires go away for sure -- daylight kills them. Werewolves go too (no full moon). Humans stay, etc.
15. Everything you need to solve a level is right there when you appear. If may be hidden or in need of assembly, but all components of machines, etc. are there. Trick is figuring out what to do with everything.
16. I'm really leaning toward side-scrolling with Sonic-size characters and LOTS of special animation for ALL characters.
17. Character development -- cartoon-like. Overzealous heads. Cute, but not too cute for Evil Doc and other bad guys. WAY too cute for good guys. People should WANT to kill them.
18. Some characters: The Evil Dr. Spector (lab coat, waxed/curled moustache), Boyden (Frankenstein monster from SI), Vasek (Hunchback from SI), the cat creature from SI, etc.

#### **How Does It Work? (Beneath the Surface, Layerings)**

Not a game, but an interactive teaching toy.

Computerized version of those overlay things in Britannica where top layer shows surface of an object. Remove a layer and see what's below. Remove another layer and see what's below that and so on.

For example, the human body. First layer is a human being (skin) remove first layer and hair goes away. Remove another layer and skin is removed. Remove another layer and see inner organs. Remove another layer and see the nerves and muscles. Remove another layer and see skeleton. Zoom in on any layer for more detail. Further in you zoom, the more you see.

We can allow user to reveal inner surfaces of anything. I favor doing things like buildings and machines -- systems. Click on a revealed object and get a detailed view and explanation of its function.

Turn time on and off. For a building, day turns to night. Lights go on and off, people come and go. Remove outer walls and watch what goes on inside (a la Little Computer People). Player can affect various things (causing power failures, storms, etc. and see how people react).

Examine any layer or object from any angle (all 3D modeled)

Maybe allow player to take object apart and see if he/she can put it back together in working order. (Can you build a computer out of its components? Can you build a structurally sound, functioning building? Then put people in the building and see how they fare.)

We can do skyscrapers, suburban homes, Egyptian pyramids, sports arenas. We can do cars, trucks, buses, planes, trains, boats. We can do the human body, dinosaurs, animals of all kinds. We can do gardens, terrariums, deserts, oceans -- the entire earth. We can do computers, VCRs, answering machines, you name it.

We can help people come to grips with all the modern technology they depend on but just don't understand.



The point of this is you can peel the layers off the onion, see how things work, how they're put together, how they interact with one another. Like David Macauley books brought to life.

Typical screen might show a skyscraper. You have several choices:

- a. Remove a layer (by clicking on appropriate icon? by clicking appropriate mouse button?)
- b. Zoom in (on an individual room or object or creature)
- c. Start/stop time
- d. Select event (power outage, thunderstorm, nuclear holocaust)
- e. Build item, (parts appear. Click and Drag to construct). Software tells you whether you built it correctly and whether it would work.

Windows multi-media. Real-time video or photo of object studied with appropriate sounds. True Windows application.

Skyscraper as menu.

A better name for this might be INNER SPACES or INNER WORKINGS. Core concept is you're a tiny flying camera, capable of passing through solid surfaces. You can fly right the wiring of an office building, as if it were a highway, fly into a computer, out the cable on the back, through the chips. Fly in a human ear or eye or mouth. Do a Fantastic Voyage. Stop and look at anything you want along the way.

Select the size of your camera (called a PROBE?) to determine kinds of things you see. At electron size you'll see stuff you can't see with a baseball size probe.

Possible to combine this fast-paced, 2D flying idea with the 3D puzzle idea. Tough.

### **Cartoon Commander**

Why not take the Commander technology and do wacky, cartoonish space adventures. We've been so serious to this point -- why not do a Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2 Century or a TOON-inspired Spaced Out SAPS adventure? How about a giant, transforming robot slug-fest? How about gigantic plush toys attacking an unsuspecting planet?

Well, it'd be different...

### **Hustler 3D Pool**

A pool game using UW technology.

Pick your scenario (Pool room hustler, Vegas pro, etc.) or start at the bottom and work your way up (another career game).

Pick your game (straight pool, nine ball, eight ball, etc.)

Pick your opponenet (seen in 3D as he/she shoots his/her game).

Pick table characteristics (cushion tension, level, surface felt condition, etc.)

Use your pool cue the way you use a sword in UW, but with finer control. You determine where on the cue ball you hit (determining spin), how hard, etc.

You can walk all the way around the table, crouch to get a low angle view, crane your neck to look down from above. Replays would be a breeze. Physics would be a breeze.

Gambling element.

Believable fantasy -- rising from the streets to a Vegas championship on ESPN

### **You Are There Sports Games (for Team Sports)**

First person team sports games where you see only what the player you select would see. Whole new approach.

You pick a team and then pick the position you'll play. Then select the characteristics of your player (or take historically accurate characteristics). All players other than the one you play are computer controlled.

In basketball, you could play center for the '69-'70 NY Knicks and see how you would have done against Wilt Chamberlain (or play AS Chamberlain). Watch from the center position as Walt Frazier drives to the hoop, swivel to the rebound, head to other end to play defense.

No knotty "Who am I controlling?" problems. Just problems real player have -- why won't Frazier pass to me? Gotta get the ball to Bradley, he's open in the corner; etc.



Emphasis on roleplaying, putting player right in the game. No one's done that before. Allow player to change positions during game (only at timeouts?), but discourage it.

### **Media Mogul**

It's the 1890's and the movies are little more than a gleam in the eye of inventors and entrepreneurs around the world.

The player has some investment funds available and must select a technology -- Edison-style peep shows with short strips of film...Mutoscope-style flip cards...etc.

Once a technology is selected, he must pick a distribution/exhibition system. Will he own all of his own venues? Will he license others to show his stuff and sell them films?

He must decide how to promote his work -- will he publicize his stars or keep their names a secret so he doesn't have to pay them as much?

As time passes, new technology becomes available -- will he move into projection devices capable of entertaining many people at once or stick to the peep shows? Will he use the huge, Edison-style cameras which require studios or will he go with a Lumiere-style portable camera?

Where will he set up shop? In New York, where actors are readily available? In New Jersey, nearby and with varied scenery? In Florida or California, where the weather is better?

How will the player respond when Edison tries to monopolize the film business? When wide screen becomes available shortly after the turn of the century? When sound becomes available in the early-20s? When scandal hits? When government regulators and Wall Street money men enter the picture?

Will the player diversify into radio and/or television? When and to what degree?

How will the TV mogul deal with the introduction of cable and satellite communication?

This isn't just a dry simulation, but a dynamic, multi-media experience. The choices the player makes determine what he/she sees and hears. We'll provide little movies/TV & radio shows. Which things the player sees and hears are determined by the choices -- art or commerce? quality or quantity? If we can license REAL film/TV/radio clips, so much the better. If we can't we can always generate our own...

### **Gumshoe**

Ultima technology has always been perfect for detective stories -- in Ultima AND in the world of criminal investigation, you talk to people, hoping they'll give you clues that will allow you to solve a mystery. In both, you must track down hidden or lost items and glean their significance. In both, you must take the knowledge and items gained and solve a puzzle.

I envision an urban setting. The player is a two-bit investigator in the Mike Hammer or Travis McGee style. A woman in distress comes to him with a seemingly simple request for aid. During the course of his investigation, the player picks up hints of other cases which he can pursue or not, as he wishes.

As he follows up on some of his new leads and solves the small cases he chooses to take, he begins to detect a pattern. Many (though NOT all) of the cases seem connected. Eventually, if the player picks up on the connections and chooses to follow them up, he stumbles upon a major political cover-up that, if revealed, could shake the very foundations of the American government.

Does he continue? Can he be bought off? Can he solve the case before he's killed or the government topples?

There are more mystery novels sold each year than any other form of literature. The market is adult, men and women. Action-oriented mysteries are a staple of film and television. Computer games are just beginning to tap into this market. The success of the Police Quest series and the Carmen Sandiego games (along with a new European entry, the name of which escapes me) shows that there's a market for this sort of game and no one has ever done it in Ultima style.

### **War Room**

To date, no one's done a computer war/board game that takes advantage of one of the computer's greatest strengths -- the ability to dole out information selectively.

It would be fairly simple to recreate the real "fog of war" in a computer game, a game where the player would have to make tactical decisions and deploy forces based on short, written intelligence reports. The player would never actually see the battlefield; he'd just see a map representing it. (Imagine the British war room, from which British commanding officers conducted the Battle of Britain.)



A Hypercard-style display might be the way to go. The lowest level would be a stylized battlefield map. Intelligence reports from observers at the front would come in periodically, appearing over the map. You deploy your forces based on this limited information and the situation as it appears on your map. You decide which information is accurate (this is used to update the map) and which is false or misleading (these messages are discarded).

Sometimes, 2-3 (or even 10-20) radio messages may come in at once, from various field positions. Messages may be garbled, or misunderstood by those manning the war room phones, or plain wrong.

Based on this information and the updated map, the player deploys forces. The enemy carries out a pre-determined plan. The results are reported (again, through intelligence reports). The reports are sometimes late, sometimes sketchy. The player learns, through trial and error, that some of his field observers are more reliable than others (though no one's perfect).

The player must decide where to move reliable observers. He must decide whether to wait for more accurate reports (the longer you wait, the better the report), or whether to move quickly on sketchy information.

This approach would work for a variety of battle-types. You could start with a single-building defense and build to huge campaign scenarios. The basic game could provide lots of battles or you could plan a whole line of games using the same system, with each new game featuring a single battle.

The War Room concept could be applied to air battles/naval battles (Battle of Britain, Midway) or land battles (D-Day, Battle of the Bulge).

The concept could even be applied to different time periods. There's no reason not to do a Spanish Armada game, a Napoleon's battles game, a WW3 game, a far future space fighters game, a Viet Nam game, and so on. Each era has different kind of intelligence, received at different rate of speed, etc.

### **SCCA Weekend Warrior**

A racing game with a difference -- it's a believable fantasy, a career.

Start out as an amateur racer on a shoestring budget, working out of your garage. Pick your class and your races based on starting income. Go for quick rise to the top by jumping into super-competitive class or start easy, build your skill in a less competitive class where you might have an easier time racking up victories? Go for more speed but risk mechanical dnf's and more frequent/expensive maintenance?

Win enough races and acquire sponsorship (adding a business element to the game). Then move into the ranks of professionals - but do you start as a backmarker on a shoestring or wait until a REAL offer comes your way from a big team? Do you go for Indy Lights or F3 or Trans Am? Eventually you become a solid pro and get lots of offers.

Technology required: Ideally, VR helmet, steering wheel with variable tension and a joystick for shifting gears.

### **Off-Road Race**

Strike technology.

1. Set in Strike Commander universe (Strike team uses Hummers and gun-laden dune buggies)
2. Historical
  - a. Magnificent men in their jaunty jalopies wound the world race in 1910
  - b. Carrera Pan America
  - c. Paris-Dakar Rally
  - d. SF Death race 2000

### **Firefighter**

First person, you are there approach combining strategic and tactical elements.

Fight a variety of fires -- urban, suburban, forest fires, etc.

Examine maps of locations, set strategy, pick equipment and personnel. Work together with other firemen.

Do you go into the building? Do you break down that door? Do you use your axe? Do you set up ladders outside? Do you call in (and fly?) fire-fighting planes? Careful of smoke and backdrafts, etc.

### **Tunnel Rats**



UW-style first-person game of Viet Nam war -- clean up tunnels.

### **The Newspaper Game**

You own a major metropolitan newspaper in a competitive market. What stories do you run? How much do you charge? How do you layout each section? How do you respond to competition? Deal with labor? Historical approach could recreate the Hearst-Pulitzer wars. Deal with competition from other media. Become a owner of a media empire.

### **Historic Recreations**

1. We model detailed, accurate versions of key locations in history (Gunfight at the OK Corral, construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, etc.) and allow viewer to watch and listen as the participants in events go through their actions. We select most revealing camera positions.
2. Can we allow viewers to position camera wherever they want? Change position during the scene? Go inside buildings? Look through the eyes of any participant?
3. Can we allow viewers to participate? Change the actions of participants? (What if Kennedy had been in the front seat? What if Wyatt Earp hadn't been at the OK Corral? What if Earp had shown up at the wrong place?)
4. give viewers an entirely new view of historical events. (What did Oswald see as he pulled the trigger?)

### **Gangster Game**

Player takes the role of a real-life organized crime boss. (How would you do in Capone's shoes?) At any point, player can access help function that describes how real-life gangster he's playing dealt with the specific situation causing trouble (or similar sort of situation).

### **Puzzles of Britannia**

A puzzle game using U7 technology. No story (or none to speak of). Just a lot of small dungeons you have to conquer and situations you must figure out. Each one solvable in 10-30 minutes.

Standard ULTIMA graphics. Nothing new. Simple conversations in a central location to set up puzzle goals and provide some logic puzzles. Maximum use of suecode traps, etc.

### **Real Life**

Graphic adventure about real world stuff -- getting ahead at work, falling in love, getting married, getting divorced, buying a house, etc.

Set in a variety of environments, some familiar (western family stuff), some unfamiliar (surviving as a black kid in South Africa).

Put player in shoes of people from a variety of cultures as they travel the road from youth to old age. Investigate customs of various cultures.

Make western choices in an eastern culture and you're screwed. Learn about foreign cultures (through trial and error and through documentation) and you can survive and thrive...



## COMPTIME ENTERTAINMENTS

Warren Spector

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*Comptimes* are *Computer Pastimes* -- not games, necessarily, though some of them could be, and certainly not interactive movies or in-depth roleplaying experiences. Rather, *Comptimes* are interactive entertainments designed to provide busy adults a few minutes of relaxation in otherwise hectic days.

If *Comptime* entertainments prove addictive (as I hope they will), maybe those minutes will stretch into hours (and result in guaranteed sales of future products in the line...).

The models for *Comptime* entertainments are Lemmings, Tetris, Pipe Dream, The Incredible Machine, Tristan (and other pinball games) and various computer puzzle packages.

From a **Marketing and Sales** standpoint, *Comptimes* allow us to reach an audience we have never reached before -- busy, adult people (the ones with high end computers...) who aren't into fantasy or science fiction and don't have 100 hours to devote to a *game* even if they counted themselves part of ORIGIN's traditional niche market. The short duration mission structure of Wing Commander allowed us to scratch the surface of this market. I'd like to target it directly.

From a **Product Development** standpoint, the appeal is clear:

- \* Smaller projects require fewer people and far less time and money than we currently spend. I'm shooting for teams of no more than four people for no more than nine months (usually less). Rather than spend \$500,000 on a single 12-18 month project, I want to spread those dollars over several projects and stagger the release of those projects over that same 12-18 month span.

- \* Lower financial risk. If one of these small projects doesn't pan out, we cut it (and cut our losses) without blowing a major amount of time or money.

- \* *Comptimes* would be designed to utilize major amounts of existing library code. The key is not developing new technology; the key is using existing technology in new and innovative ways.

- \* Reduced testing time. QA's job should be made dramatically easier because of the smaller scope of the projects.

- \* Even if we screw up our resource needs and scheduling by a factor of 100% (which, of course, I don't expect), we utilize fewer resources than an average ORIGIN game and we still ship within a 12 month period -- less time than we usually spend on a new project and about as much as the typical spin-off.

- \* We can use these small projects as warm-ups for bigger ones. I envision **Death & Destruction** (described below) as a testbed for ideas I'd like to use, someday, in a full-scale, cinematic cartoon game. **3Puzzles** (also described below) is a subset of the techniques I'd like to use in an educational CD project -- The Way Things Work. We can test ideas without the huge risks associated with full-scale projects.

Everyone benefits from the fact that *Comptimes*, as I envision them, are modular. This has several implications: First, it means we can predict schedules with a much higher degree of accuracy. If a project is running late, we simply cut modules and ship whatever is ready. (It would be great if we could adjust our SRP based on the number of modules we actually ship, but this may not be realistic.) Also, modularity means we can get projects into test earlier, by sending each module into QA as soon as it's ready -- days after the engine is done, we're testing. Finally, modularity means sequels are a piece of cake. If one of these really hits big, we can follow up with add-on modules quickly and easily.

I've proposed my own *Comptimes* below, but there are LOTS of appropriate ideas floating around this company. Personally, I think the Green Guns game Rich and Ken have been talking about would be ideal for this, if the design is handled properly. In his spare time, Jeff Everett is working on a small-scale strategy game that might be appropriate. I've heard that Tony Zurovec has a small helicopter simulation up and running -- that might work. Brendan Segreaves got a rough, but serviceable Mandinka game working in a matter of weeks -- we could resurrect the Games of the World idea.

We could start up several of these things (with no increase in personnel or budget), be guaranteed that SOME of them would be ready by whatever date anyone wants to pick, and be able to cherry-pick the best ones for release.

So when do we start? *Comptime's* a-wastin'!



### 3-PUZZLES

Here's a puzzling pastime unlike anything anyone's seen before -- instead of flat, cardboard cut-out puzzle pieces, the player manipulates 3-D pieces to build 3-D objects! Build weird, abstract shapes (like 3-D tangrams) and realistic 3-D objects (buildings, airplanes, the Statue of Liberty, cars, animals, a human head, etc.). Tired of puzzles? Create your own shapes, using the pieces we provide -- *3-Puzzles* is an adult toy box providing endless hours of diversion.

### IMPLEMENTATION

The right-hand side of the screen is the Component Window, where the texture-mapped, 3-D puzzle pieces are stacked. The player can rotate these pieces around and view them from any angle. More complex puzzles may require far more pieces than could fit on a single screen, so a scroll-up/scroll-down option will be built in.

To the left of the Component Window is the Construction Window, where the 3-D object is built. In the standard difficulty level of the game, the Construction Window is blank -- you just pick up pieces from the Component Window and drag them to the left into the Construction Window. When two pieces designed to fit together touch in the appropriate orientation, they lock into position, forming one seamless object. The player continues to move pieces until the 3-D object is complete.

I'd like to be able to build objects from the inside out, lending the "game" some educational value. (If you recall the "How Things Work" proposal I passed around last year, this is a stripped down version of that concept.) For example, if you're building a human head, the Component Window would display all the pieces to put together the brain, eyes, blood vessels, etc; then the skull; then the skin and hair. The user would have to figure out which pieces go with which layer, building the innards first, followed by the next layer and the next until the head is finished. This may be more art/programming work than it's worth, in which case, we'll ditch the idea and just deal with the surface of each object.

Whether we go with the layered approach or simply deal with outward appearances, when you put an object together properly, finishing the puzzle, it begins animating in the Construction Window.

For repeat playability, I'd like to build in a tinker-toy option where players can put pieces together any way they want, creating their own real or imaginary 3-D objects.

Much, if not most, of the technology required to create *3-Puzzles* already exists here at ORIGIN. We're just using it in a new and different way.

### *Levels of Difficulty*

To make the game tougher, players can turn off texture maps, leaving just 3-D polygons providing no clue what they're supposed to look like when they're put together.

To make the game easier, players can activate a wire-frame option which displays the outline of the 3-D object, then lay the 3-D pieces on this frame.

To make it easier still, the game can be locked in a 2-D mode, flattening out all of the pieces and the final object. (For variety, players can lock into 2-D mode from any angle!)

For greater challenge and interactivity, we may be able to create a Tetris-style, real-time mode, where pieces fall from the top of the screen and must be rotated and moved into position as they fall to build the 3-D object.

### PERSONNEL

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|---|--|
| 2 Artists (Renderers) -- full-time for 3-5 months; access to other artists, as their time permits |  |
| 1 Programmer -- full-time for 4-6 months  | 2 TDAs -- full-time for 3-5 months     |
| 1 Writer -- full-time for 1 month   | 1 Sound/Music -- full-time for 1 month |

### NOTES

Do we generate whole objects and break them apart or generate pieces and put them together?

Display and rotate LOTS of 3-D objects on right side of screen (100% or reduced? If reduced, blow up pieces as they're brought into construction window)

Display 3-D pieces differently each time a puzzle is selected. No two games alike.

Lock pieces in place based on proximity/alignment and fill in seams between locked pieces

Build in timer to encourage competition and repeat play

Animate image when object is complete

Turn texture maps on/off

Turn wire-frame on/off

Mouse/keyboard/joystick interface

Tetris-mode possible?

Lock in 2-D mode (from any angle)?

Use any existing art and music?

Windows?

640 x 480, 256 colors?



## WORLD-SAVER

Tired of protecting your valuable monitor with flying toasters and abstract "art" that doesn't even have the advantage of having been dreamed up by a human being? Well, here's a screen saver unlike any you've seen before -- it's a serious military module just right for blowing flying toasters, mandalas, and winged pigs off the screen! Who needs a screen saver when you can save the world?

## IMPLEMENTATION

At the most fundamental level, this is a straight-forward ORIGIN FX module with military themes, rather than whimsical or algorithmically generated screens. The imagery would be as realistic as we could make it.

A squadron of F-16's swoops down on a column of tanks and blows it to smithereens while an AWACS aircraft circles overhead. A platoon of infantrymen scurries over hills, hurling grenades into enemy foxholes while an A-10 provides air cover. An P-38 and a Zero battle it out for control of the skies above the jungles of a Pacific isle.

Units available and battlefields are basically unlimited: A Desert Storm module would have a desert setting and the highest of high tech weaponry; a D-Day module would have sandy beaches and forests with units like the P-51 Mustang and Sherman tanks; a Viet Nam module would have jungles just crying out for napalm and Agent Orange dropped by B-52's and F-4 Phantoms. For starters. I'd like to stick to wars of the 20th century, but there's no reason why we couldn't do earlier wars, too: A Gettysburg module would have guys on horses, cannon, the blue and the gray, and so on; an ancient battle could include everything up to and including the Trojan Horse! Sky's the limit.

I see this using a top-down perspective, though a side view could be used if appropriate. If possible, users will be given the option of zooming in on various parts of the battle -- they could zoom out and see an entire battle field, with tiny units moving around OR instruct the program to zoom in on a single tank and follow it wherever it goes.

From a **Marketing & Sales** standpoint, I think *World-saver* would have a seriousness and, therefore, an appeal far different from any other screen saver on the market.

From a **Product Development** standpoint, one of the most appealing aspects of such a screen saver is that it would allow us to make use of the bit-mapped graphics generated and junked when Strike Commander switched to shaded polygons. We'd have to generate new art, certainly, but at least we have a start. We also have the advantage of having done a Windows Screen Saver already -- this doesn't have to involve new technology -- it could be nothing more than a unique and very cool module for ORIGIN FX.

### *Pie in the Sky...*

That having been said, with just a bit more effort, *World-saver* could be much more than just a module (and I think the effort would be well worthwhile): We could allow the user to design his or her own mock battles:

Users could design (or, at least, select) their own battlefields -- hilly, flat, forested, barren, desert, arctic -- and then select their units. One side could have six F-16's, the other, three Sherman tanks, five infantrymen with M-1's, and a P-38 -- whatever users wanted.

We could stop there or go a step further and program in some basic AI for each unit type (e.g., troop carriers follow roads whenever possible; tanks move straight ahead until they encounter an obstacle; foot soldiers always seek cover as quickly as they can; etc.). Then, the new battle could be saved to disk and called up as a screen saver module at any time.

The key is to allow users to generate their own battles, to add a "what would happen if I did this?..." element to the screen saver. If we wanted to get really fancy (and, frankly, I don't THINK we do), we could allow users to save scenarios off at any time (so one player could generate terrain and a defensive force, then save the set-up to disk and give it to a friend who would then try to set up an offensive force capable of defeating the defenders).

## PERSONNEL

- 2 Programmers -- full-time for 4-6 (high end if we go with user-defined battles)
- 2 Artists (bit-mappers) -- full-time for 3-5 months
- 2 TDAs -- full-time for 3-5 months
- 1 Writer -- full-time for 1 month
- 1 Sound/Music -- full-time for 1 month

## NOTES

- Top-down perspective -- straight down or angled a la Ultima?
- Side view for some modules or all top-down?
- Can we allow player to zoom in for closer view of action?
- Minimal AI for units so each "battle" is different?
- User-created battle scenarios?



## AW RATS!

Mazes have been around forever, a staple of computer games and pen-and-paper games alike. *Aw Rats!* puts the player in the role of a lab rat who must be guided through a series of progressively tougher mazes.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Mazes are nothing new, but these are no ordinary mazes, for in them, cute, cuddly white lab rats can eat all sorts of irradiated goodies, allowing them to mutate in amazing and unpredictable ways. Mutated rats can use (and, possibly, create) tools and in extreme cases can even develop superhuman, er, *superrat* powers that make maze navigation easier. And the obstacles can range from the ordinary (twisting, turning corridors) to the ridiculous (whirling buzz saws, killer cats spitting hairballs of doom, secret doors -- electrified, of course -- you name it).

The specifics of implementation could take either of two paths: We could develop an entirely new engine or we might be able to use the Ultima VII engine (or, better, Ultima VIII, if it's far enough along). For the sake of simplicity, I favor the Ultima approach, but it may prove too limiting.

New engine or old, we'd develop new art for the mazes -- NO Ultima art would be used at all. I want a high-tech, shiny white look for this game. I'd also like to have lots more and better animation for the player rat and anything else that moves in the game, if possible. There wouldn't be any conversations or plot, no huge world to explore or map, but the basics -- drawing stuff to the screen, the editor, usecode to make objects/creatures do what the maze designers want them to do -- all of this could be straight out of an existing game.

## PERSONNEL

- 1 Programmer -- full-time for 3-4 months
- 2 Artists -- full-time for 3-4 months
- 2 TDAs -- full-time for 3-4 months
- 1 Writer -- full-time for 1 month
- 1 Sound -- full-time for 1 month
- 1 Music -- full-time for 1 month

## NOTES

Is it realistic to use the U7 engine, or would that prove too limiting (no jumping across chasms, no crawling under things, etc.)?



## Death & Destruction

### The Mad Scientist Simulator

In this "constructive game of destruction," the player takes the part of a mad scientist who wants nothing more than to be left alone to explore things man was not meant to know. Of course, pesky good guys are always trying to stop him. What's a good evil mad scientist to do? Why, build diabolical death traps to crush the good guys like bugs before they achieve their horribly virtuous goals!

Imagine Lemmings meets Sim City meets Sonic the Hedgehog by way of Rube Goldberg and Wile E. Coyote with a decidedly nasty twist.

Each level is playable independently of the others, but, taken together, the levels tell a small story. The game includes several stories (series of linked levels): There's the Transylvanian story, an amusement park story, a Something Evil in Suburbia story, and so on. At the end of each level, you get a code so you don't have to replay earlier ones, but can continue the story the next time you play.

Death & Destruction is for people who are tired of being virtuous, world-saving heroes. Being the bad guy is fun -- everyone knows that. Death & Destruction is designed to encourage terrible -- and hilarious -- behavior. It's designed to appeal to the adolescent in all of us (the market for Ren & Stimpy, the top-selling Warner Bros. cartoon laserdiscs, the Bullwinkle and Rocky videotapes now being marketed by Disney, and so on). When kids play it, my hope is that Death & Destruction will appall every parent in the land. How can it miss?

Death & Destruction defines the outer edge of acceptability in terms of scope and cost -- anything bigger might as well be a full-scale game -- but it has one major advantage over the other proposals: It would be designed to make a dynamite cartridge (or could even be conceived as a cart right from the start).

#### IMPLEMENTATION

The game can be played in two ways -- you can try to solve puzzles or simply go on a killing rampage. If the player chooses the former approach, the feel should be something along the lines of Sonic the Hedgehog meets Sim City; if the latter, the game should feel like Robotron. Either approach should work. A combination should work best.

First, you build your castle. Do you build an underground dungeon? Do you put a huge lightning rod on top? Do you build on the site of an ancient indian burial ground?

Then, add traps designed to catch potential experimental subjects or kill intruders (the pesky good guys who always seem to be lurking about). Everything you need to solve a level is right there when you appear. It may be hidden or in need of assembly, but all components of machines, etc. are there. The trick is figuring out what to do with everything.

What kind of followers do you want to attract? Are you creating a diabolical religion so you can call a Cthulhoid beast into our dimension? Are you a vampire who requires a willing dupe who can draw victims to his door? Are you a mad scientist who requires strong-armed thugs who can dig up corpses so you can sew them together and build a new man?

The real fun here is building the castle and then watching the pitiful forces of good try to penetrate the defenses. Their failures are shown in graphic, but humorous, detail (sort of like the death of the lemmings in Lemmings).

The Good Guys operate according to some simple rules which the player can learn: Boy and Girl meet and they'll always go off alone together. The Good Scientist will always stop to inspect a machine he's never seen before. Knowing this, players can concoct funneling situations that lead to death traps.

The death traps are constructed at the player's whim. Lots of Rube Goldberg devices, made up of individual pieces, each of which has predefined qualities. Once you know the qualities, you can build anything -- this makes multiple solutions to puzzles possible. You can build one big, elaborate trap to kill lots of good guys or you can build lots of little ones to off a few at a time. Include lots of simple situations (rope bridges where you can cut through support ropes and watch good guy sway and wobble until rope snaps and he plummets, cartoon-like, e.g.)

The first story is set in Transylvania. Here's the way the levels could work together to tell the story:

- \* Level 1: Run off the inhabitants of a middle-European town and raze the buildings so you can build your castle.
- \* Level 2: Build your castle while staving off the attacks of the surviving locals.
- \* Level 3: Acquire the body parts to build your monsters.
- \* Level 4: Acquire equipment and build your monster.
- \* Level 5: Kidnap the burgomaster's daughter so your monster will have a mate.

Other storylines might include the Chopping Mall (a killer loose in a mall has to use materials in stores to stop police, increase body count) and Amusement Park Deathtrap (construct the rides that lead straight to hell: The Roller Toaster (an electrifying thrill ride), The Splatterhorn, The Parachute Plummets, Runaway Railway, Bumper Cars, etc.).

Early levels, it's you against the world. Allies become available after player masters basic game mechanics. Then, you can operate alone or create/enlist monstrous assistants. If you go the latter route, the assistants assist intelligently.

From a Marketing standpoint, a game like this would allow us to create a host of licensable characters: The Evil



Dr. Spector, perhaps (lab coat, waxed/curled mustache), Boyden (Frankenstein-style monster from SI), Vasel (Hunchback from SI), etc. Character designs will be Warner Bros./MGM cartoon-like -- oversize heads, india rubber bodies. Cute, but not too cute for Evil Doc and other bad guys. WAY too cute for good guys. People should WANT to kill them. Just perfect for action figures, comic books and Saturday morning cartoons.

#### PERSONNEL

- 2 Programmers -- full-time for 6-9 months
- 2 Artists -- full-time for 6-8 months
- 2 TDAs -- full-time for 6-8 months
- 1 Writer -- full-time for 1 month
- 1 Sound -- full-time for 1 month
- 1 Music -- full-time for 1 month

#### NOTES

Side-scrolling game with Sonic-size characters?

Top-down for construction phase of game and side-scrolling for action sequences?

LOTS of special animation for ALL characters.

Player builds locales (e.g., castle) or just manipulates objects within each location?

How do you get allies? All allies you need on any level are hidden there -- just find them/build them/dig them up?

Carry them over from level to level? (Build monster on level one. If he survives, he appears with you on level two?)

Vampires go away for sure -- daylight kills them. Werewolves go too (no full moon). Frankenstein monsters won't do anything until you stitch them together and steal a brain for them, but then they're all but indestructible. Humans stay, etc.



### **Hustler 3-D Pool**

A pool game using Strike Commander technology. But this isn't just a pool game -- there's a roleplaying element, a believable fantasy -- you're a hustler, rising from two-bit pool halls to a Vegas championship televised on ESPN.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Pick your scenario (Pool room hustler, Vegas pro, etc.) or start at the bottom and work your way up to world champion pool player.

Pick your game (straight pool, nine ball, eight ball, etc.)

Pick your opponent (seen in 3D as he/she shoots his/her game.

Pick table characteristics (cushion tension, level, surface felt condition, etc.)

Use your pool cue the way you use a sword in UW, but with finer control. You determine where on the cue ball you hit (determining spin), how hard, etc.

You can walk all the way around the table, crouch to get a low angle view, crane your neck to look down from above.

Replay great shots.

Physics would be a breeze.

Place side bets, go for the big score. But don't get in over your head with bookies. You can even ditch a game here and there to make lots of money on the side, but the risks of such a ploy can be as great as the rewards.

#### **PERSONNEL**

1 Programmer -- full-time for 4-6 months

1 Artist -- full-time for 3-4 months

1 TDA -- full-time for 4-6 months

1 Writer -- full-time for 1 month

1 Sound -- full-time for 1 month

1 Music -- full-time for 1 month



## **Fashion Designer**

I don't think many women play our games -- they probably never will, but here's an idea conceived by Beth Loubet and embellished by me that could reach this entirely new market and crack it like a walnut.

The basic idea is to extend the paper doll idea used so effectively in Underworld and Serpent Isle to allow people to design their own clothes and print out their own patterns so the clothes "modeled" in the computer can be sewn and worn in the real world. (The technology would NOT be Serpent Isle -- just the concept.)

Fashions could be mundane as well as historical/fantasy/SF-oriented. The wider the range, the more likely we are to attract theatrical costume designers, SCA types, science fiction convention-goers, and so on. The expansion set capabilities of a product like this are enormous.

The major strengths of this concept are the likelihood that a majority of buyers will be women and there's a total lack of competition out there. I can't think of any products like this and the only ones remotely similar are recipe programs, of which there are several.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

You start out with a "blank" a realistically modeled human figure viewable from any angle. Enter your own measurements (or those of the person for whom the garment is being designed) and the blank changes shape to reflect the way you really look. (If we want to get fancy, we can probably allow users to scan in their own face and hair in and place that over the blank's head!)

We offer a variety of neck lines, hemlines, pants styles, coat styles, etc. users can put on their blank.

We offer a variety of materials and colors/patterns users can layer on the clothes.

We offer the capability of printing out patterns in a size determined by the measurements entered earlier.

We put Butterick out of business (or maybe we get a license...).

### **PERSONNEL**

1 Programmer -- full-time for 4-6 months

1 Artist -- full-time for 4-6 months

1 Writer -- full-time for 1 month

1 Sound -- full-time for 1 month



## Comptime Entertainments

### Part 2

Warren Spector

1/14/93

Here are still more *Comptime* proposals, proving (a) the intense interest in small games among the game players in Product Development and (b) that there are ideas -- worthwhile ideas -- all OVER this company. (I've revised and edited these proposals, and added an idea here and there, where appropriate, but these proposals belong to the folks whose names are listed below each title.)

I haven't had a chance to assess personnel requirements, scheduling information or projected costs on these, but all appear to fit the overall definition of a *Comptime* -- 6-8 people, 6-9 months, relatively low cost.

Let me know what you think.



## Aesop's Fables

Beth Loubet

1/13/93

Here's an opportunity to reach a younger home audience than usual *and* get into a lot of schools with an edutainment product that should have a long shelf-life. At the most basic level, the product presents Aesop's classic fables with a new twist – the player helps affect the outcome. The viewpoint is cinematic, something every kid is familiar with, with enough animation to hold the player's interest.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Each fable is "told" by a story-telling animal or person with whom the user can "converse" (through simple question keywords). The story-teller sets up the fable, up to the problem-solving phase common to all fables. The creature asks for the user's help in solving the problem.

The user can click on different items on the screen to try to solve the problem.

If the user clicks on the wrong item, the story-teller explains why that item won't work. Here's how it might work in the fable, "The Crow and The Pitcher":

The thirsty crow finds a pitcher of water, but the water level is too low, and he can't drink. He asks the user for help.

If the user clicks on the tree, a branch appears in the pitcher, and the bird explains that he cannot fit his beak around the branch to drink from the pitcher. If she or he clicks on the dirt, the bird explains that he doesn't want to drink mud. Click on the bird and the bird moves inside the pitcher and he explains that he can't bend over to drink, and he can't get back out.

If the user clicks on the right item, the creature thanks the user for the solution. Click on a rock and the bird drinks and thanks the user, explaining that the rock raises the level of the water, enabling him to reach it for a drink.

The story-teller then explains the moral of the story.

This game would be aimed at ages 6-10 (plus or minus 2 years). It would teach simple hand-eye coordination, the rudiments of computer use, basic problem-solving skills, and the historical myths (with their companion morals).

Future modules could use the same approach to explore different mythologies, such as Greek and Norse. We could extend the line to modern tales, adapted from existing works of literature or all-new and original.

Broderbund has sold approximately 200,000 copies of its Schoolroom software. Most elementary range software sells an average of 20,000 copies in its first year, followed by 2-4 years of sales at the same rate. It's a market where products sell steadily. While we couldn't count on going silver in the first ship, if it sells fairly well initially, it's likely to sell well for years. The possibility of a good product going silver, or even gold, over time is high.



## Motor Mayhem

Philip Brogden

1/13/93

You're racing along an interstate highway at a cool 120 miles per hour. In the lane next to you, your opponent is gaining ground steadily. His side guns are already blazing and his wheel spikes are spinning wildly, threatening to shred your tires. Can't worry about that now -- there's a nasty curve up ahead. There. You're through it. But what's that in front of you? A pedestrian! You plow right through the unsuspecting kid. 50 points! But your opponent slowed up to catch a nun crossing the road -- that netted him 200 points (nuns are rare...). Still, there's the finish line up ahead. Beat him there and you'll get enough points to win!

Motor Mayhem is a top-down car game for one or two players combining the best of Spy Hunter and Death Race 2000.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Start at the starting line where dragstrip-style Christmas-tree lights tell you when to put pedal to the metal. The road twists and turns, splits and merges. Try to pick the best roads through the course.

The music gets increasingly frenetic as you scream along the streets and roadways, shooting at your opponent (and robot-cars) while avoiding being shot by them. Avoid being hit by trains at crossings and, of course, avoid collisions with medians, buildings, and other big obstacles. When you get hit (or run into something!) you'll be rewarded with lots of big, dramatic explosions.

Whoever crosses the finish line first wins, with bonus points given for high score achieved en-route.

You can select a pregenerated course through the desert, the forest, the mountains or other types of terrain -- you can even select a real world setting (a Bullitt-style chase through the streets of San Francisco or a chase through the streets of Brooklyn like the one in French Connection). Played all the pregenerated courses? Try a randomly generated course or build one of your own! Each race is different, because you never know what the customizable, computer-controlled opposition is going to do. And if you play against a human opponent (in person or via network or modem), each game is guaranteed to pose its own unique challenges.

Customize your car by selecting body style and color (plus some cool graphic things, like flames and such).

Select weapons: Lay oil puddles behind you to slow your opponent; shoot missiles (fairly fast, long-range, shoot ahead only); throw grenades (short range, area effect, ahead or behind).

Select tires: High-traction tires (better handling, don't skid on oil slicks); spiked tires (blow out other people's tires when you hit them).

User-customizability and awesome repeat playability go hand in hand with very simple game-play. There's no hefty manual -- just boot it and run.

There's nothing like this for the IBM and it'd make a great cartridge, too.

### PERSONNEL

2 full time programmers	3 to 7 months
1 part time programmer/TDA	5 to 7 months for part 3 pages and 2 TDA's
2 full time artists	4 months
1 part time artist	2 months
1 full time TDA	3 to 7 months
1 writer	3 months
1 sound and music	1 month

### NOTES

Three views available to player: World map view (same as any map), Game view (close view and game resolution view (single perspective view of UI).

(a) World Map view: This is an overview mode to show territory, trade routes, alliances, and the landscape, terrain, and biotopes.

(b) Game view: A closer view than the World Map, this is for movement, making and maintaining settlements, diplomatic, villages, and troops.

(c) Game Resolution view: This has even closer view than the Game view. It's for combat, movement, alliances, messengers, alliances, and never view. It shows instead map, and character interaction.



## The House of Akalabeth

Glen Johnson

1/13/93

Looking for political intrigue? The challenge of diplomacy? Then test your power to govern, your ability to make history, and take on responsibility for the lives of the people of the land which will one day be called Britannia. Step forward and take your place as one of the seven lords of Akalabeth.

Adventure in the medieval world of Sosaria. Set out and claim territories and make alliances. Prepare to tame the wilderness and carve out a new civilization. Change what was, into what will be. Unite the continent under one ruler -- yourself! Become the leader of nations or plunge the world into ruin. Remember: The outcome is in your hands...

Other games in a similar vein include: Civilization, Bandit Kings of Ancient China, Romance of the Three Kingdoms (game of the year, 1989), Nobunaga's Ambition (game of the year Finalist), Genghis Khan (game of the year Finalist), Warsong (Genesis), Dune 1, Dune 2, Warlords, Master of Monsters (Genesis), and Empire.

### IMPLEMENTATION

This is an historical fantasy simulation set in the world of Ultima. The story takes place back before Akalabeth or Ultima I in the time of the original seven lords, before Lord British became sole ruler and christened the land Britannia. As one of the seven lords of Sosaria you control a few provinces. The land is partially explored and the world is still filled with danger from monster and beast. You control your realm through your actions and those of your followers. Each of these followers has different skills and abilities to aid in any task you set before them. Of course you possess more skills and abilities than they do, and can accomplish most tasks yourself, but even you can't be everywhere at once, and they may be better at certain things than you.

Here are some of the things you can do in a game turn:

- (a) Regulate taxes on the populace.
- (b) Use diplomacy, spy on lords, and make alliances with lesser lords or powerful foes; form and break alliances with other Realms,
- (c) Arrange marriages; deal with feuds, assassination and kidnapping attempts; and handle issues of succession.
- (d) Coordinate the efforts of military patrols to protect the land from brigands and beasts.
- (e) Maintain your kingdom's defenses.
- (f) Trade goods grown on your farmland or produced in your towns and cities.

The game allows the player to take on the challenges faced "in reality" by Lord British (a radical change from the Ultima roleplaying games in which you take the role of one of Lord British's followers). The game shows you the kinds of things that take place in the Ultima universe while the Avatar is busy saving the world.

The appeal of such a game is strong, especially for Ultima players (though not limited to them). Ultima diehards and newcomers alike will appreciate the open-endedness and repeat playability afforded by sophisticated opponent AI. As in Sid Meier's hit, Civilization, the game will never be played same way twice. As in all true simulations, several different strategies can lead to success. Modem-to-modem or computer-to-computer play and up to seven player game access will set us apart from the competition.

### PERSONNEL

2 full time programmers	5 to 7 months
1 part time programmer/TDA	5 to 7 months (or just 3 progs. and 2 TDA's)
2 full time artists	4 months
1 part time artist	2 months
1 full time TDA	5 to 7 months
1 writer	5 months
1 sound and music	2 months

### NOTES

Three views available to player: World map view (same as any map Mode), Game view (top down) and game resolution view (angle perceptive view of U8).

(a) **World Map view:** This is an overview mode, to show territory, trade routes, alliances, revolts, brigands, famine, and troublespots.

(b) **Game view:** A closer view than the World Map, this is for movement, making and manipulating caravans, diplomats, villages, and troops.

(c) **Game Resolution view:** This is an even closer view than the Game view. It's for combat maneuvers, allies, messengers, alliances, and news view. It shows instant troop loss and character interaction.



## Save the Wildlife (Green Saver?) Screen Saver

Brendan Segraves

1/13/93

This ORIGIN FX expansion is based on the theme of Endangered Species. Each module depicts an environment in which an endangered species (or several) can be found -- baby seals, whales, white tigers, whooping cranes...these and more preserved and protected on your screen.

With a product like this, we can position ORIGIN FX in an area no other publisher has touched. We could include literature from various wildlife organizations -- or, better, donate a percentage of profits to the Sierra Club or some such organization. We could probably get the World Wildlife Federation or some other "green" organization to endorse this project. We could promote the product as the game that saves wildlife while it saves your screen. Pretty compelling in this day and age.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Each element in the screen saver would have rudimentary AI associated with it so that changing the startup options would change what the user sees. For example, we could do a Panda. Poachers and Bamboo module:

The user could select the number of pandas, say, the number of poachers, the amount of bamboo in the area, perhaps even the thickness of the foliage so the panda can hide from the poachers. When the screen saver starts, the pandas will run around eating bamboo. Whenever they spot a poacher, they will go and hide in the denser parts of the foliage.

The poachers may find them and flush them out, or they may wander around aimlessly looking for a panda. When the poachers go off screen, the pandas will move back over to the bamboo grove and continue munching. This would be pretty accurate for pandas seeing that they spend something like 70% of their day eating bamboo, and the other 30% sleeping.

This is pretty simple and I am sure we can come up with more variables to introduce if we want and if time permits. In addition to Pandas, various endangered species we could do include:

- 1) Lions and wildebeests co-exist on the savanna. Wildebeests munch on the plants, lions munch on the wildebeests. Again, we could introduce poachers. We could have enormously long fences crossing the savanna, limiting the movement of the wildebeests. The number of humans in the area could be controlled separately from the number of poachers killing the lions. Without any human involvement (set to 0), the lions and wildebeests co-exist because their death rate is balanced by their birth rate. However, once humans enter the scene this balance is upset.
- 2) Dolphins swim through the ocean, following the tuna around, eating small fish as they come their way. Sharks also occasionally come by, which the dolphins may run off, if they are numerous enough, or may flee from. The dolphins also have to watch out for fishing nets from the tuna boats.
- 3) Baby snow seals lie ever-so-cutely on the frozen ocean snow. Uh-oh, better watch out for those clubbers!
- 4) Penguins waddle around, occasionally fall prey to the sea lions. We could have scientists go around and tag the helpless penguins. The scientists might even get attacked by those sea lions.
- 5) The ever-controversial spotted owl lives up in the trees, hooting away, swooping down on unsuspecting mice. Uh-oh, here comes a logger who's chopping down a tree. That's okay, there are more trees in the area, so the owl just goes to another. However, if the number of loggers is too high, then all the trees are chopped down and the owl will be homeless.
- 6) Whales crest the ocean waves and blow air out. What a beautiful sight. Too bad they didn't see that Japanese whale hunting vessel! We could have whales eating sea plankton and whatever else they eat. Since they have no natural predators, this is a pretty calm screen unless the user decides to add some harpooners for the fun of it.
- 7) White tigers move through the Indian jungle. The jungle is slowly replaced by encroaching civilization, forcing the white tiger's normal prey to disappear. The player, of course, can control the speed of the civilization advancement. When man encroaches enough the white tigers have too little food, so they skirt the edges of civilization eating farm animals and rooting through garbage. This, in turn, forces the Indian police to come out and try to kill the white tigers. Eventually, either civilization or the white tigers are gone.
- 8) Zebras run around, eating grass. Lions or cheetahs also run around, eating zebras. Pretty calm, unless the poachers are activated.
- 9) White rhinos run around, eating whatever it is that they eat. This is yet another peaceful co-existence with nature unless the poachers are turned on. They come out in their jeeps to attack the rhinos. The rhinos, however, have a chance of running into and knocking over the jeep as they have been known to do.
- 10) Crocodiles loll in the sun, getting up after a while to cool off in the water. They swim about and then crawl back out into the sun to bake. When they get hungry, they swim along the shore, following their prey (antelope or unaware poachers), moving ever-so-slowly toward land. When in striking distance, they move with lightning speed to capture their prey, then return to the water to digest their food. Poachers risk their lives to supply skins for handbags. Instead



of having the options menu say "# of poachers," we could have it say "consumer drive for crocodile leather."

11) Elephants run around in herds, eating tree foliage. Then come the poachers for their tusks. A few poachers may get trampled, and a few elephants may get shot. Of course, the poachers chop off the tusks and leave the bodies behind for the vultures.

12) Villagers move slowly and calmly, hunting game. Then they discover agriculture (the downfall of mankind) and start building huts and domesticating game. Civilization evolves, becoming more technologically advanced. The pace of technological change increases until we get to a future society where everything is zipping around at light speed until a missile comes in and nukes the city. Then there is a pause and people gradually return and start hunting the game again, then building huts, and so on. Music would add drama to this module, starting peacefully, then getting more and more harried and artificial until the nuclear strike when it becomes peaceful again. (This module would be quite easy -- there is no AI to worry about. All we have are different screens for each of the technological advances and different animations of the people moving around.)

Since all of these potential modules have user-modifiable options, all can have the poachers/civilization set to 0. That allows users to see their favorite animals living peacefully in their environments. Increasing that number ups the carnage level. Another slider bar might indicate the amount of support an endangered species gets from the animal organizations. If the support level (tied to dollar amounts?) is high enough, animal rights activists come in and drive off poachers or airlift endangered animals away to safety. This is a screen saver that teaches a few lessons about the endangered species.



## Other ORIGIN FX Module Ideas

Joye McBurnett  
1/13/93

### Refine the Quote of the Day Module

Categorize the quotes and bring up a new one each day in whatever categories the user selects. Quotes could be digitized and SPOKEN.

Possible categories include:

- Humorous
- Management
- Self-improvement
- Literature
- History
- Business
- Holiday/Seasonal/Calendar driven

### A story-telling module, *a la* Jeff Tunnell's "Johnny Castaway"

This could use existing Origin characters (an Ultima companion during times the Avatar's not around, or Thrakath's little brother, etc.) or we could come up with all new characters. Story events could be keyed to real dates.

### Wilderness scene

The scene changes over time, as seasons pass and development takes place.

### Simulate a working clock

Art of the pendulum, gears, etc., moving the hands

### Pool game

Top down pool game plays itself when left alone, or user can play.

### Swimming pool scene

Specify number of guys and girls in swim suits, people splashing around, diving board in use (dives can be specified)

### A module sequencer

User can choose what modules to display and the order in which to display them.



Under the assumption that it is useful to circulate thoughts about this before we get together, here are a few comments:

#### Warren's Comptime Entertainments

Obviously, these fall very closely with the LLL concept. On a scale of 1-5 (1 is good), I'll give three "ratings" for each individual game - anticipated consumer interest, anticipated ease of research and anticipated ease of programming:

#### 3-PUZZLES

- 3 Interest (those who like it will like it a lot, but how many will like it?)
- 1 Research (shouldn't really take research, if a program can crank out random patterns)
- 4 Programming (this could be a real bear - I don't know that we could predict how long it would take)

#### WORLD-SAVER

- 3 Interest (again, those who like it would like it a lot, but it could generate some heavy negative flak)
- 2 Research (shouldn't take much time)
- 5 Programming (we've got the basic mechanics down, but a lot of art time necessary)

#### AW RATS!

- 2 Interest (sounds like a lot of fun)
- 2 Research (just enough to explore the basics of maze design)
- 3 Programming (this shouldn't be real difficult, even with the special effects)

#### MAD SCIENTIST SIMULATOR

- 3 Interest (could be fun, but sort of iffy - it treads a fine line between hilarity and humorless tastelessness)
- 3 Research (have to put some work into researching all the related genres we'd be simulating)
- 4 Programming (lots of fine details have to look good, and that takes time, both for mechanics and for art)

#### 3-D POOL

- 2 Interest (lots of people play a little pool, and think they could clean up if they just practiced a bit more)
- 2 Research (shouldn't take much time)
- 3 Programming (basics are a piece of cake, but the timeline will be extended as we try to get all the icing just right)

#### FASHION DESIGNER

- 4 Interest (it should sell to a certain segment, but that's what we said about ORIGIN FX)
- 4 Research (whoever did this would almost have to start from scratch)
- 2 Programming (I can't see this taking much time - it should be pretty straightforward, unless we try to show exactly how a given pattern will look on a specific body)

#### AESOP'S FABLES

- 3 Interest (actually, there's an inverse scale between interest and ease of programming - the more intricate the programming, the higher consumer interest will be)
- 2 Research (the basic stories are very accessible)
- 3 Programming (see Interest)

#### MOTOR MAYHEM

I like the idea, but I think it would be easier, and just as effective, to port Road Rash into an LLL game. (See further comments below.)

#### HOUSE OF AKALABETH

- 3 Interest (possibly a nice idea, but I think it thoroughly violates one tenet of LLL games - that they be playable for 5 minute chunks, and that the player not need to remember what happened in previous sessions. On the other hand, if and when LLL games take off, it's worth exploring whether consumers are also interested in a longer-term game like this.)
- 5 Research and Programming (I suspect these will go through the roof)

#### SAVE THE WILDLIFE SCREEN SAVER

- 3 Interest (nice, but not exciting)
- 2 Research (shouldn't take much time)
- 3 Programming (basics are pretty straightforward, but icing could get complicated)



### SHOOTING SPORTS

- 3 Interest (not a lot of sport shooters out there, but might also appeal to a sizeable portion of the non-gunners)
- 2 Research (shouldn't take much time)
- 2 Programming (shouldn't take much time)

I've been taking shots at Warren's list, so here's a few of mine for y'all to take aim at:

### Crossword Puzzle Generator

A program that generates crossword puzzles - a new one every time you play, similar to maze generators. >>Lots<< of people work crossword puzzles, especially during pauses (travel, etc.). Two major tasks are involved - getting a large database of words matched to clues, and creating a program that can interconnect the words into respectable crossword puzzles. If that is doable, then we can easily have a sliding scale of puzzle difficulty, and can create genre-specific puzzles - baseball puzzles, Shakespeare puzzles, etc.

- 1 Interest
- 3 Research
- 4 Programming

### Trivia Generator

Again, a very popular type of game that is text-intensive and requires a huge database. Cross-references within the database (Country: Britain / Capital: London / Currency: Pound / Language: English / etc. -> "What is the ---- of ---- --?") reduce the list of facts required. This can be progressively harder, and/or there can be levels of difficulty. This type of game can easily be tailored to genre-specific information.

- 2 Interest
- 4 Research
- 2 Programming

### Logic Puzzle Generator

I've seen a logic puzzle called Sherlock Holmes that is easy to learn and takes about 15 minutes to play. (Beth Loubet, among others here, has it.) We can easily do better. A game that generates random logic puzzles, of varying sorts and at varying levels of difficulty, should be a snap. In addition, we can wrap a game around the game - every time you solve a puzzle, you get a clue to another puzzle that slowly unravels as you solve more puzzles.

- 1 Interest
- 2 Research
- 2 Programming

### Cartridge Ports

Unless there's something involved in the hardware of cartridge players that I'm unaware of (which is very possible), most cartridge games take less hard disk space and use fewer controls than what we're talking about here for laptop computers. Therefore, just about any game that's fun to play on a basic cartridge game system (no joysticks, target guns or CDs) should be just as fun on a laptop, and EA's line should be available to us. (The EA Sports games would be great, but there might be licensing problems.) It should be easy to attach a single screen to each game, allowing the player to customize it by changing controlling keys. Probable examples, other than Madden Football, NHL Hockey, etc., include:

Wing Commander I,II  
Ultima carts  
Road Rash 1,2  
Desert/Jungle Strike  
Lotus Turbo Challenge  
Marble Madness  
Virtual Pinball

(Some of these might involve technology/graphics that is too old - I'm not real familiar with most of them.)



#### SHAREWARE AND OTHER SOLITAIRE GAMES

There are lots of solitaire games that have been released over the last few years that can give us other good starting points for simple-to-program games, fun-to-play games. (I remember a game that was very favorably reviewed in CGW - but I didn't find the review in a quick scan of my back issues - composed entirely of nice, visually appealing solitaire games. The Fool's Errand is another example - about 50 puzzles, which, when solved, gave you access to about 10 more puzzles, which gave you access to a final series of four puzzles.)